



UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL PAULISTA

“JÚLIO DE MESQUITA FILHO”

**Faculdade de Ciências e Letras
Campus de Araraquara - SP**

FREDERICO NEGRINI SILVA

**IMPERMANENCE AND THE GOLDEN PATH
IN *DUNE***

ARARAQUARA – S.P.

2026

FREDERICO NEGRINI SILVA

IMPERMANENCE AND THE GOLDEN PATH IN *DUNE*

Doctorate dissertation presented to the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Estudos Literários from Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho" (UNESP) — Faculdade de Ciências e Letras de Araraquara (FCL-Ar) as a necessary requirement for obtaining the degree of Doctor in Literary Studies.

Adviser: Prof. Dr. Aparecido Donizete Rossi

Scholarship: CAPES — Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento Pessoal de Nível Superior

ARARAQUARA – S.P.

2026

S586i Silva, Frederico Negrini
Impermanence and the golden path in Dune / Frederico Negrini Silva. -- Araraquara, 2026
235 f. : il.

Thesis (doctoral) - São Paulo State University (UNESP), School of Humanities and Sciences, Araraquara
PhD Advisor: Aparecido Donizete Rossi

1. Science Fiction. 2. Literature. 3. Process Philosophy. 4. Archetypal Psychology. 5. Madhyamika Buddhism. I. Título.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THIS RESEARCH

This research explores the entirety of the Science Fiction series written by Frank Herbert in a moment when the famous work from the *New Wave* movement of the genre returns to the cinema and is once again acknowledged by the great audience — a whole dissertation exploring the main tropes and themes from the novels is, by itself, impactful as there are few researches regarding the Duneverse. Furthermore, the discussions here presented might also be relevant for displaying an inevitable interconnection between different fields of knowledge and how they appear thematically throughout the six novels by Herbert — this research achieves this by delving profoundly into the metaphorical and symbolical mirroring elements which traverse eastern religions, western relational metaphysics, ecology, epistemology, logics and of course, literature and art.

IMPACTO POTENCIAL DESTA PESQUISA

Esta pesquisa se propõe a explorar a totalidade da série de ficção científica escrita por Frank Herbert em um determinado momento no qual a obra mais famosa do gênero retorna aos cinemas e é novamente recepcionada pelo grande público — uma tese como esta, inteiramente dedicada a investigar os principais tropos e temas dos romances é, por si só, impactante e relevante, visto que existem poucas produções acadêmicas sobre o Dunaverso. Ademais, as discussões aqui apresentadas podem também vir a ser relevantes ao demonstrarem inevitáveis interconexões entre campos distintos do conhecimento e como tais aparecem tematicamente na narrativa dos seis romances de Herbert — a pesquisa atinge tal objetivo ao se aprofundar nos elementos metafóricos e simbólicos que espelham e atravessam desde tópicos provindos de religiões orientais, passando pela recente metafísica relacional ocidental, pela ecologia, pela epistemologia, pela lógica e até, por motivos óbvios, o fazer literário e artístico.

Frederico Negrini Silva

IMPERMANENCE AND THE GOLDEN PATH IN *DUNE*

Doctorate dissertation presented to the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Estudos Literários from Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho" (UNESP) — Faculdade de Ciências e Letras de Araraquara (FCL-Ar) as a necessary requirement for obtaining the degree of Doctor in Literary Studies.

Linha de pesquisa: Teorias e Crítica da Narrativa

Orientador: Aparecido Donizete Rossi

Bolsa: CAPES

Defense Date: 29/05/2026

DISSERTATION DEFENSE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Adviser and President:

Prof. Dr. Aparecido Donizete Rossi (UNESP-FCL-Ar)

Official Member:

Profa. Dra. Karin Volobuef (UNESP-FCL-Ar)

Official Member:

Profa. Dra. Gabriela Bruschini Grecca (UEMG)

Official Member:

Prof. Dr. Sergio Ricardo Perassoli Júnior (ITES)

Official Member:

Profa. Dra. Nathalia Sorgon Scotuzzi

Location: Universidade Estadual Paulista Faculdade de Ciências e Letras
UNESP – Campus de Araraquara

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I salute the Fully Enlightened One, the best of orators, who taught the doctrine of dependent origination, according to which there is neither cessation nor origination, neither annihilation nor the eternal, neither singularity nor plurality, neither the coming nor the going [of any dharma, for the purpose of nirvāṇa characterized by] the auspicious cessation of hypostatization (Siderits, 2013, p.13).

During the 15 years since I had begun my journey researching *Dune* I cannot falter to acknowledge all who had contributed, either willingly or unintentionally, to this present work — though I would not be able to do so in this very brief passage. Notice, however, that I hold no hierarchical value between all who had assisted me, and will only mention those in a relative and conventional sequential order.

Firstly, I am thankful to all my family who insisted in my academic studies even against my, unwise, desire in the past. Mother, Father, Sister, Aunt(s), Uncle(s), Cousins, Pets, etc... — all of you with whom I have some degree of fractal genetic similarity.

Secondly I cannot be thankful enough towards Cido, the best Adviser one could ever long for and a great friend with whom we share many views regarding literature, art, philosophy, interests and etc. I greatly admire you as a human being, as a teacher, as a friend, as an adviser and as an intellectual!

Thirdly to my beloved companion with whom I can share some love amidst the unending turmoil of our adult life and cataclysmic late stage capitalism existence.

Fourthly, to all my friends that had to endure my hyperfixation on *Dune* for more than a decade! Also who had to endure my constant metaphysical questions and inquiries that most would consider obnoxious — without all of you, Life would be definitely harsher and worse.

Furthermore, I would need to acknowledge all of the great teachers and researchers with whom we've shared a bit of time during our lives!

We are greatly thankful to Pascoal Naib and Rildon for their amazing work with the Duna Arrakis Brasil, keeping the fandom in Brazil very much alive — thanks to all the ones who support our academic endeavors as well who are part of the virtual *sietch*! You guys are amazing

A special thanks to all my beloved and incredible students who had shown we

might still have hope for humanity as they resist the mechanistic urge to succumb to *chatGPT* and other LLM's — those who have not resisted, have also taught us patience and how to critically demonstrate the *inexorable limits of our overly technocratic society*.

My love and compassion, for you all, only increase — let it maybe reach even those outside of our social circles.

I must also thank CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior) which had contributed and supported my work, with a much needed scholarship (Financing code 001).

ABSTRACT

This work intends to critically analyze the *Dune* series of science fiction, comprised of the six canonic novels written by Frank Herbert (*Dune*, *Dune Messiah*, *Children of Dune*, *God Emperor of Dune*, *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune*) and the addition of the *Dune Encyclopedia* — our main aim is to display the fundamental tropes explored throughout all of the Duneverse basing ourselves on the premise that any work of fiction is *asymmetrically interdependent* with priorly included inter and intratextual elements. The Duneverse is a metaphysically dense framework pertaining science fiction as a genre, which mostly speculates its narrative motifs out of elements relevant to the *New Wave* movement — mainly it proposes a *middle-way* between reifying philosophical extremes represented on one side by deterministic/reductionist materialism and on the other end the hyper-absolutist/idealist ontologies. We will present several hypothetical concepts envisioned with the sole purpose of dealing with *Dune's* arrangement of seemingly distinct fields of knowledge and philosophy — mainly Archetypal psychology, Process Philosophy and Madhyamika Buddhism, as we will argue. In order to escape the inevitable demise of a collective reifying dominant order based in acquiring more power over nature, *Dune's* proposition to avoid humanity's cataclysm lies in avoiding its' hubristic endeavor which is a quintessential element for any science fiction born out of the gothic mold of composition.

Keywords: dune; Jung; synchronicity; process philosophy; science fiction; madhyamaka; impermanence.

RESUMO

Este trabalho pretende analisar criticamente a série de ficção científica *Duna*, composta pelos seis romances canônicos escritos por Frank Herbert (*Duna*, *Messias de Duna*, *Os Filhos de Duna*, *O Imperador-Deus de Duna*, *Os Hereges de Duna* e *Hereges de Duna*), com o acréscimo da *Dune Encyclopedia* — nosso principal objetivo é expor os tropos fundamentais explorados pelo Duniverso em sua totalidade, partindo da premissa de que qualquer obra de ficção é *assimetricamente interdependente* aos elementos inter e intratextuais já anteriormente incluídos em seu arranjo interno. O Dunaverso é um arcabouço metafisicamente denso no âmbito do gênero da ficção científica que elabora seus motivos narrativos principalmente a partir de elementos prototípicos do movimento da *New Wave* — propondo principalmente, como argumentaremos, um caminho-do-meio entre extremos filosóficos reificantes que podem ser representados de um lado pelo materialismo determinista/reducionista e de outro por ontologias hiperabsolutistas/idealistas. Apresentaremos diversos conceitos hipotéticos formulados com o propósito específico de abordar o re-arranjo interno e complexo de campos aparentemente distintos do conhecimento e da filosofia na série de *Duna* — sendo nosso foco principal a psicologia arquetípica, a filosofia processual e o budismo madhyamika. Para escapar do inevitável findar consequente de uma ordem dominante coletiva pautada em sua própria reificação e que se baseia principalmente na aquisição de poder sobre a natureza ao explorá-la predatoriamente, a perspectiva subjacente em *Duna* para se evitar o cataclismo humano reside em abandonar esse empreendimento embasado na *hubris*, que é um dos elementos quintessenciais de qualquer ficção científica nascida do modo gótico de composição.

Palavras-chave: duna; Jung; sincronicidade; filosofia processual; ficção científica; madhyamaka; impermanência.

FIGURES LIST

Figure 1	Sierpinski Triangle	150
Figure 2	Ensō	209

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	11
1. IMPERMANENCE AND THE GOLDEN PATH IN <i>DUNE</i>	18
2. SYNCHREATHESIS: PRESCIENCE AND CREATIVITY.....	88
3. VILLAINS OF DUNE	134
4. THE HEART MANIFESTO: COMPASSION AND WISDOM	179
FINAL REMARKS	206
REFERENCES.....	210
GLOSSARY.....	217
ANNEXES	221
1. MAGIC AND SUBVERSION: WEAVING REALITY'S FABRIC	222

INTRODUCTION

Our interest in *Science Fiction*, *Fantasy* and other non-mimetic forms of fiction had risen since we were still a young kid with strong imaginative dreams and longings, still wondering how to transform an apparently sickened world through *magical* spells in non-expected manners which would be *eucatastrophically* enabled exactly due to the very existence of *imagination* — even though the crude and raw *samsaric* existence of our primary world had inevitably shaped this childlike *fantasy*, we have not yet abandoned a deep desire to understand what are the *conditions* with which we fashion and enable this sickened primary world to be as it is. By acknowledging the underlying *images of disaster* (Brantlinger) which had helped to form all of the *Science Fiction* which are born out of the Gothic, and by understanding what fuels them one might once again *dream* on the very concrete potentialities to transform this *samsaric* realm into a relatively more harmonic one where humans are free to explore their *imagination* with degrees of wisdom on the consequences that such produce, where humans might realize the inevitable interconnectedness of all processes in our universe (and who knows, of all the pluriverse) which inevitably leads towards being *compassionate* towards any entity with which we share and create this existence — and with whom we will also become future models for their empirical unfolding of concrescence in this unending and implacable *arising, changing and passing away*.

When still teenagers, we engaged by accident with Fox's adaptation of *Dune*, in 2001 — although nowadays we can critically notice some issues with this series adaption of the novels written by Frank Herbert, having engaged with the narrative while still relatively young of age had shaped profoundly our taste for myths, religious themes, *science fiction* and the tragedy of some *heroes* who, in spite of their efforts, see themselves in an apparently inescapable cycle of violence, a collective *karma* where oppressors become the future oppressed and vice-versa. How to put an end in such cycle, in actual feasible manners? A question we might not be able to answer with certainty ever since we have watched the *complete certain prescient powers* of Muad'Dib and his tragedy. Since young we had a deep satisfaction in playing and studying mathematics, physics and logic — but such pleasure was not even comparable with the one of both *making* art and *studying* the arts in many forms such

as literature, music, cinema and dance.

This dissertation thus began as a potentiality since that first encounter with the work of Frank Herbert since it coalesced in its narrative so many tropes and motifs which we find not only *skillfully* crafted but also of deep interest — the impacts of scientific knowledge without an understanding of its own metaphysical assumptions, i.e. the reification of the *powers of reason* as if they would be capable of uncovering universal and absolute truth, were always metaphorically present in the *Dune* series and a topic of most interest for us. We deem that in the current scenario we are living, a proto-cyberpunk one where Linguistics teachers are *incentivizing* students to use a technology built to dominate us ideologically while further removing our own critical thinking skills and assessment is, to say the least, apocalyptic — we have been charged by many as “luddites” by opposing a biased and completely inconsistent “tool” built to *think for us*. The technophiles out there rejoice in any sort of gadget being produced by those in power without even pondering what are the underlying reasons for that technological advancement in the first place — we are not against technology, just very critical of its application in a late-stage technocratic capitalism that assumes our existence to be purely mechanical and objective. The fact that *Dune* has explored already, in philosophically complex themes, this process of complete *mechanization* of humans and their *intelligence* is one of the key elements which had attracted our attention to this incredible masterpiece of *Science Fiction*: “She spoke: “The machine cannot anticipate every problem of importance to humans. It is the difference between serial bits and an unbroken continuum. We have the one; machines are confined to the other” (Herbert, 2008c, p.241).

Additionally, an epistemological reasoning which considers the impacts of science and its productions as our society utilizes technology and knowledge in imbalanced ways while predatorily *taking* advantage of *eco-organic systems*¹ as a whole had always seemed of extreme importance, especially in the current moment we find ourselves in virtue of a seemingly cataclysmic climate crisis. Even though *Dune* series is a widely acknowledged and recognized series of science-fiction, which has returned to the great audience under the new cinematographic adaptations by Denis Villeneuve in the recent times, we still find that many of the main tropes of the work are still under-analyzed or even mistakenly understood by

¹ A noteworthy concept, which we will explain and describe in the first chapter.

many critics. The *ecological* theme had always been a prominent aspect of *Dune* which had also sparked an idea so alien to western dominant philosophy and worldview — the non-linear asymmetrical interdependence between different layers of reality and how an organic and relational understanding of the world is able to recognize the profound interconnectedness of each microcosmic elements between themselves and their macrocosmic arrangement. *Dune* is a heavily complex philosophical science fiction that explores many quintessential themes and questions which resonates with different cultural and symbolical perspectives created by humanity since the dawn of time — we had always been fascinated with many of its themes, but mostly, how the series proposes a deep departure from the dominant western substance metaphysics that, according to Whitehead, had been the prominent worldview since Plato (in the western philosophy, of course). Herbert's work does that while also providing *estrangement* out of scientific theories that did disrupt also the mechanistic and reductionist understanding of reality which was the outstanding perspective in positivism — due to this double facet of *Dune* and its part of the *New Wave*² movement of Science-Fiction we hold the hypothesis that the series is able to speculate and *estrangle* in a consistent manner by interconnecting different theoretical frameworks not yet connected since its writing. Eventually, the bridges built between Process Philosophy with both Madhyamika Buddhism and Archetypal psychology by recent works are already a fundamental aspect of *Dune metaphysical estrangement* and we deem that a relevant aspect of the *series* if we are, indeed, respectful of the main narrative tropes and motifs which are characteristic of the work.

Some insightful analyses, such as Donald Palumbo's *The Monomyth as a Fractal Pattern* in Frank Herbert's *Dune* novels, already address the symbolic interrelation between the concept of fractal structures and the ecological themes

² In order for our reader to better understand the core tropes and main features of the *New Wave* movement of Science Fiction we recommend the reading of Damien Broderick's essay *New Wave and Backwash: 1960-1980*. According to him (p.49-50): "The emergent movement, a reaction against genre exhaustion but never quite formalized and often repudiated by its major exemplars, came to be known as the *New Wave*, adapting French cinema's *nouvelle vague*. [...] Christopher Priest appropriated the term for an sf almost equally disruptive, existentially fraught and formally daring, that evolved around the British sf magazine *New Worlds* in the mid to late 1960s. [...] By the early sixties much sf had become complacent, recycling with minor modification a small number of tropes and ideas. The previous decade's sf had suffered in microcosm just the sort of preposterous, trashy pseudo-ideas that would blossom as the 'Age of Aquarius' and form the basis of an ever expanding retreat from Enlightenment science and values — the New Age movement — eerily, a feature of the end of the twentieth century predicted and deplored in Robert Heinlein's *Future History* as 'the Crazy Years'.

explored in the series, given that fractals³ describe the geometry of various ecological systems in terms of their scales, dimensions, and hierarchy. Palumbo's text also demonstrates how archetypal ideas and the collective unconscious, as conceptualized by Carl Jung, are reflected and embedded in the narrative structure of the *Dune* series by analyzing the plot of each book as fractal replications of the monomyth, as proposed by Joseph Campbell. The article thus situates the work within an archetypal framework, where the characters of *Dune* transition between different roles in the hero's journey, with time being the dimension which permits and sequences the fractal replication of the monomyth. As we intend to explore in the third chapter, this mereological exploration of different layers of reality is not only an ecological aesthetic achievement from the series but also an important metaphor regarding reification and the *absolute prescience upheld by some characters* — what are the horrific consequences of trying to superimpose our *abstractions* into a wide amalgam of organic layers as we assume that there is a *sufficient conditioning which forces every layer in this mereological hierarchy to behave in a completely expected fashion*? If *Dune* is criticizing some deterministic perspectives so prominent in a reductionist and mechanistic scientific endeavor than an entirely similar fractal repetition across different scales is a metaphor, also, for the process of reification. Many scholars and online sources do argue that Herbert had written *Dune* in an attempt of displaying the *absurdity* of the *speculative field of the psychohistory*⁴ conceived by Asimov in the *Foundation*.

The artistry of this aesthetic achievement is compounded by the fact that such mirroring is itself an essential characteristic of the fractal image (duplication across the same scale) and by the fact that the monomyth is in itself intrinsically fractal. (Palumbo, 1998, p.436)

Although Palumbo does present a very interesting and important analysis regarding the *series* as a whole, we find that some of the main motifs are still

³ This kind of structure is based on self-similarity and is recognized by the maintenance and repetition of its proportions in different dimensions — in the case of *Dune*, as Palumbo argues, the dimension explored for this kind of repetition is *time*. Fractals and the algorithmic analysis of such are also very important for ecological structures.

⁴ In Asimov's work, this field of Science in a future humanity would be able to completely predict the behavior of large groups of humans with enough data. A categorical and logical mistake committed by many positivists scientists who assume that an *effect* is already present in a *cause*.

unexplored — if a Fractal pattern is the self-similar repetition throughout *time*, in *Dune* series, we still would need to address how one of the main tropes of Herbert's work, *impermanence*, reflects the need for the introduction of novelty which transforms the patterns as humanity traverses time. The self-similarity aspect could display the conditional ground from which a concrescent actual occasion arises and instantiates and how the *past is carried within*, although, we must recognize that a completely *equal* repetition leads to sameness and is metaphorically displayed in the work through the *absolute and complete prescient powers* — not allowing for novelty to be introduced by a procedure of *inclusive transcendence* would inevitably lead humanity (and other sentient forms of organisms which are interdependent to us) to ultimate their demise and extinction. As we will argue, when we reify our mental fabrications (i.e. commit the fallacy of misplaced concreteness) and insist in the sole repetition of *completely similar* structures that dwell in our abstractions we tend to solidify those fractal patterns into *reality itself* — and as the rest of the universe is continuously *becoming*, and thus, being transformed, we isolate ourselves from such movement and by stopping in time we fleetingly attempt to become *permanent and eternalized*; a virtually impossible task, as any element is to an extent interdependent with all the rest of the universe and in continuous transformation. This principle of an *organic* and ultimately *interdependent* universe is at its core a common cosmological ground between *Process Philosophy* and *Madhyamika Buddhism* which is deeply explored by *Dune series*, as we argue throughout the future dissertation and mainly in the first chapter, entitled *Impermanence and the Golden Path*.

During the course of the second chapter we will reassess and rectify our previous Master thesis, labeled *Synchronicity and Prescience in Dune*, by further extending our theoretical framework to encompass *creativity* and its relevancy in *Process thought* — by doing so we intend to demonstrate how the Archetypal principle of *synchronicity* can be perfectly connected with the notion of *creative synthesis*, which is explored and important for *Process Buddhism*, a cosmological synthesis endeavored by Peter Paul Kakol and recently expanded and further developed by Kazi Adi Shakti. In this chapter we will delve minutely in the *Atreides Manifesto*, a fictional document in the series which we, as readers, only have access to some passages in the course of the later novels — this *Manifesto* holds within itself and its explored tropes undeniable similarities to both the principle of *Synchronicity*, Nāgārjuna's discussion on *emptiness* and the *Process Thought*

procedure of *inclusive transcendence*, coalescing these ideas as its aesthetic accomplishment, and thus it is called *Synchreathesis: Prescience and Creativity*.

The third chapter this dissertation will address a common misconception found in online forums, discussions and readings regarding some characters, orders and their alleged *villainy*. We will analyze, from a literary perspective, the character *Paul Atreides* with the attempt of providing textual evidences to support his classification as a variation of the *tragic hero* (with some elements of the *byronian hero*). We also address the character Leto II, son of *Paul* in its paradoxical constitution as both the enabler of *the golden path* as well as an archetypal embodiment of the very procedure of re-deification — in his case, a *participation mystique* procedure done with the attempt of shaping the future imagination of humanity in order for it to avoid a complete prescient power once again. In the ending of this chapter, we will focus in the order of the Bene Tleilax and their relation to the very process of reification and how such could be understood to be the main symbolical and archetypal *villains* of *Dune* — considering that our survival is threatened while the ecocide of not only humanity has as a necessary condition the very process with which we tend to crystalize our mental constructs and superimpose them *outwardly and inwardly*, than reification itself might be the actual *villains* which oppose *humans-as-organism* in the narrative motifs of the series.

The fourth chapter will dive deeply in Buddhist archetype known as *Prajñāpāramitā* and its connection with Darwi Odrade, one of the main characters of the later novels in the series — especially how Odrade could be metaphorically interpreted as a Bodhisattva whose focus and extension of the *golden path* rises by the development of wisdom and compassion. In this chapter we will display the potential soteriology of the *golden path* metaphorically embodied in the wisdom acquired by Odrade and her recognition of *emptiness* while also displaying the dangers of reification being represented, in this case, by the Honored Matres — if the Bene Tleilaxu are overly patriarchal in their constitution and the *male principle of consciousness* is more directly responsible for categorically and wrongfully assuming that their self-images are *inherently real*, we might have egos, such as the ones from the leaders of the returning matriarchal order in the later novels, being built on archaic and *terrific* despotism as the one upheld by the *Terrible Mother* archetype. Odrade will present the middle-path, as in the *Madhyamika Buddhism*, in order to avert reification of, also, *emptiness* — one of the core arguments by Nāgārjuna in his

famous work, the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* as it is metaphorically discussed by Odrade and one of her disciples in the later novels.

1. IMPERMANENCE AND THE GOLDEN PATH IN *DUNE*

Souvenirs of memory must be only that. Things to be taken up and fondled occasionally for evocation of past joys. No joy can be permanent. All is transient. "This, too, shall pass away" applies to all of our living universe. (Herbert, 1987a, p.303)

The present work is a continuation, revision and development of our previous Master's research regarding the full extension of *Dune* canonic series, as written by Frank Herbert, and its thematic echoing of eastern philosophies and religions (mainly Buddhism), Process philosophy and Jungian psychology. Previously, the thesis' text written during Master's degree, in its yet rudimentary theoretical framework, lacked enough processual depth, an aspect which seems to be fundamental in Herbert's most famous SF⁵ novels and towards which we intend to show the rightful respect in order to improve our previous thesis. It is not uncommon at all for SF, and perhaps for many other non-mimetic fictionalized genres and modes, to speculate and create new worlds that arise from certain philosophical systems, scientific possibilities or just any form of *estranged* perspective of reality which *subverts* our reified and crystalized notions taken to be absolutely real (or reality-in-itself) — such intimate connection with other epistemological fields (not only science *per se*) deems our quest in this work to be one that intends to display the importance for such type of analysis, one that explains such intertexts and their relevancy for a relational understanding of meaning.

A literary text, as we will often claim throughout our dissertation, does not have inherent existence (or *svabhāva*⁶) and, therefore, must be understood through a continuously inclusive transcendence and actualization process that displays its interconnection with other forms of thought — either by differences, similarities, both or neither. To presuppose that any structural element of any kind has an inherent meaning that arises from it or that through a purely imputatively structural analysis one could always infer a radically immanent meaning in a text is to commit a fallacy — the misplaced concreteness, or reification, fallacy. Such argument will be further

⁵ Science Fiction.

⁶ We will eventually explain this concept with further depth, as it is fundamental for the doctrine of emptiness in Process and Madhyamaka Buddhism — but in short terms it could be translated as "intrinsic nature", "self-being" or, in western terms, "essence".

explained and displayed as we use non-essentialist philosophical frameworks as a base for our reading of Dune series.

It would be entirely incoherent to analyze Dune under a completely structuralist bias as the very philosophical premises underlining the series are anti-essentialist ones — concomitantly, as we hope to elaborate with due time, any form of text has relations to our culture, epistemological fields, metaphysical formulations, social and anthropological organizations, languages, etc... Surely it seems to be an issue that an analyzed literary text becomes of secondary importance in order to refer to ancillary disciplines; however it is also fruitless to disregard such contextual elements entirely as they are already imbued in the very fabric of such texts through an operation known as inclusive transcendence⁷ as described by Alfred North Whitehead. How could one, especially by analyzing a philosophically complex work as Dune series, hope to unveil many important elements of such relevant SF novels if we were to disregard its relations to other epistemological fields and aspects of our culture? Such endeavor would be ultimately fruitless and extremely inconsistent — but structuralism fails to acknowledge that ANY system is bound to be relatively incomplete or inconsistent⁸ in a fallacious attempt to provide an absolutely complete and consistent set of axioms that would deal with ALL kinds of literary texts. This sort of intellectual trap is precisely the one that Herbert's series aims for its far-futuristic humanity to avoid.

"She said the mystery of life isn't a problem to solve, but a reality to experience. So I quoted the First Law of Mentat at her: 'A process cannot be understood by stopping it. Understanding must flow with the process, must join it and flow with it.' That seemed to satisfy her." (Herbert, 2003, p.49)

Even the usage of the word *analysis* is questionable in our endeavor, as this operation *kills* a living process/entity in order to investigate its corpse by dissecting it — an operation that would contradict the very First Law of Mentat aforementioned in this famous quote from *Dune* first novel. A process is a continuously changing entity, not one that remains the same whatsoever (however similar/enduring it may appear

⁷ Check the Glossary for Shakti's definition and explanation of this concept.

⁸ This is based on Godel's incomplete theorems, which we will explain with depth in the development of our dissertation.

to be), and such notions are of fundamental importance to the series and also to both Process Philosophy and Madhyamaka. This is, for example, the reason we have chosen to provide a reading of *Dune* through a Process Buddhist framework and not a structuralist one. The instrumentalization provided by Structuralism is similar to the very tools used to dissect human bodies in morgues, metaphorically speaking — such equipment can only work *after* murdering the literary text itself and impeding it from being actualized by a reader that inclusively transcends it. A literary text is, after all, also a “process [that] cannot be understood by stopping it” — by centralizing and advocating for the radical immanence of a literary text, Structuralism seemed to forget that any living textual material has an asymmetrical interdependent relation⁹ to a *reader* during the precise moment it is read. Indeed, without a *reader* and the actual occasion of reading, a text’s meaning remains only a *potentiality* and *abstract* element — to assume that an abstraction is concrete is a fallacy, as wisely demonstrated by both Madhyamika Buddhism and Process Philosophy.

Some might question themselves during this reading: “Why such vigorous attempt to present the inconsistencies of structuralist framework by this dissertation?” It is plausible and necessary to do so considering, especially, the dominant form of literary criticism currently holding the epistemological power inside the university we are affiliated to. We shall provide enough arguments in this dissertation displaying, thoroughly, the inadequacy of Structuralism not only for our analysis, but for *ANY* analysis — mostly due to its inbuilt assumptions. We have no problem with the tools provided by Structuralism, though we find of utmost necessity that they be updated in order to analyze texts that have already surpassed such archaic instruments. There are many living scholars that provide interesting and novel structuralist frameworks which do not commit the same fallacious mistakes we are here condemning — our displeasure displayed in the previous paragraphs are not aimed at such scholars.

By your belief in singularities, in granular absolutes, you deny movement, even the movement of evolution! While you cause a granular universe to persist in your awareness, you are blind to movement. When things change, your absolute universe vanishes, no longer accessible to your self-limiting perceptions. The universe has moved beyond you (Herbert, 1987b, p.368).

⁹ Another important concept for Process Buddhism and for our analysis, this shall too be developed later as well.

We could quote, for instance, the famous work of Todorov and his definitions for Fantastic Literature, the Marvelous, SF and other genres and sub-genres — a few scholars are still lured to the Bulgarian critic and are still employing his theoretical framework due to its narrow definitions that ultimately fail to be consistent or complete; most certainly an incredible achievement that would dazzle Gödel who proved that any system cannot be both consistent AND complete at the same time. Todorov's framework is pretty incomplete when we take into consideration many fantasy or SF works that were already present in his time; it is also pretty inconsistent regarding the very definition of what *uncertainty* is and how *any* purely fantastic piece of work would depend upon such element. As Brantlinger (*The Gothic Origins of Science Fiction*) and Aldiss (*A trillion years spree: The History of Science Fiction*) have extensively argued, SF is much closer to Fantasy as structuralists like Todorov and Darko Suvin assume. Suvin's famous definition for SF's aesthetics *is* consistent though, however in order to be so, it becomes incommensurable incomplete, ignoring the grand majority of the genre's produced works. For those who are unfamiliar with Suvin's definition, we recommend the engagement and reading of his noticeable work *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* — our main point here is a philosophical one, as the so called process of *cognitive estrangement*¹⁰ raises innumerable questions rather than answers them.

Our further thesis has a stance that, inevitably, settles itself in disagreement towards an understanding that genres like science fiction would carry within its poetics, within the transmigration of our empirical reality into a new imagined one, an aspect that would approximate it towards mimetic fictions as in opposition to how such estrangement occurs in the Fantasy genre. (Silva, 2025, p.3)

Such questions will, inevitably, be raised as we develop our argument throughout this dissertation as the relatively open-ended ground that sustains such questions is directly related with the Process Buddhist framework that *Dune's* series echoes so profoundly — What if that which is *cognitively* acceptable for some cultures and epistemological fields change? Would that invalidate the classification of previous works of SF? Would that validate new texts? Surely we cannot be only

¹⁰ This is the short definition of SF's poetics by Darko Suvin.

bound to the text itself, as we have mentioned before, but we cannot also limit ourselves to the space-time and historical placement of the text, as every reader *actualizes* and *transcendently includes* it in a never-ending process of creative synthesis. Surely, to us at the current moment in 2025, seems *cognitively* unlikely that certain electrical impulses applied to sewed dead bodies could bring such *creatures* to life; nonetheless we cannot falter to qualify *Frankenstein* as a gothic science-fiction novel — genres *change* as we humans *change*, as our culture is also transformed continuously; to assume that the whole extent of the universe could be mathematically calculated and reducible to a countable amount of axioms is an epistemological positivist flaw that is also inherent in structuralism. *Dune* series, as we hope to display, firmly criticizes such reductionist understanding of reality and affirms the potentially horrific trap that lays hidden under such assumption.

Ready comprehension is often a knee-jerk response and the most dangerous form of understanding. It blinks an opaque screen over your ability to learn. The judgmental precedents of law function that way, littering your path with dead ends. Be warned. Understand nothing. All comprehension is temporary. (Herbert, 1987a, p.246)

Furthermore, for the extremely *rational* mind prevalent during Enlightenment it seemed pretty illogical and not cognitive at all postulations like the ones affirmed by Einstein's relativity theory or Heisenberg's uncertainty principle that found scientific consensus moments later. At such time, perhaps, writing a novel considering time to be relative as in Einstein's theory would fail to be *cognitive*. Is it not a hubristic enactment of the reductionist mind to even assume that it could grasp the whole functioning of the universe and of reality under its tyrannical claws? That human knowledge and science could acquire ultimate power over nature? Knowledge should be in constant update, seeking to be more complete or more consistent, depending on our needs as a species and the needs of wider and more ecologically inclusive comprehension of organisms and their interconnectedness and interdependence — a theme *Dune* explores very often.

We hope that, by now, we have been able to provide a reasonable argument why this dissertation *will* not present a structural analysis of *Dune* series — do not despair curious reader, for most if not all of an apparently hermetic terminology

presented in the previous paragraphs will also be further explained and explored. Through this chapter, the first of our dissertation, we shall demonstrate one of Herbert's work most alluded metaphor and notion throughout ALL of the series — that reality, nature, the universe or the world is a *process* of continuous *becoming* and in our attempt of grasping and impeding change we can produce immense horrendousness and lead humanity (and other lifeforms) to its own demise, tragedy and extinction — such grasping attempt echoes the very hubristic endeavor described previously and follows the famous SF short definition provided by Brian Aldiss: "*Hubris clobbered by nemesis*" (p.30, 1988). The following quote displays and summarizes this "*process* of continuous *becoming*" that is deeply explored in Buddhist texts:

The universe is in flux, a boundless river of incessant becoming sweeping everything along; dust motes and mountains, gods and men and animals, world system after world system without number — all are engulfed by the irrepressible current. There is no creator of this process, no providential deity behind the scenes steering all things to some great and glorious end. The cosmos is beginningless, and in its movement from phase to phase it is governed only by the impersonal, implacable law of arising, change, and passing away. (Buddharakkhita, 1985, p.19)

As we have already demonstrated in our Master's thesis, an ultimate prescient power as the one upheld by Leto II and Paul Muad'Dib leads inexorably to extinction and is a metaphor for a collectively fractal over-infatuation of the *ego* function, a centralization of symbolic and imaginative power over the future that, due to its reification, binds humanity (and other interdependent organisms) to mental constructs assumed to be absolutely real — the golden path *is*, at first, the enactment of such reification as a means to dissuade humanity from the tragic path that would lead it to its own destruction. This path is the very open-emptiness that allows for prescient-immune beings to arise, a symbolic and organic response to such ultimate attempt of *impeding* change through reified superimposed views — such is probably one of our central arguments in this dissertation and, especially, in this chapter regarding *Dune* series. Hold such ideas carefully in your minds, as we shall reclaim and reinforce them with the necessary theoretical framework and examples from the canonic six books written by Frank Herbert.

The golden path and its eventual symbolic meaning, as well as interrelated events and narrative developments regarding it through all the *Dune* series, will occupy the centrality of our dissertation and of this chapter — as the series deals with space-time distortions in the field of the psyche¹¹ and as the novels progresses, large amounts of years succeed in the Duneverse¹² and we are left with long-term consequences of previous ripples in the space-time continuum. Due to such enormous time-spans between the novels (3500 years between *Children of Dune* and *God Emperor of Dune* and 1500 years between the latter and *Heretics of Dune*)¹³ and also taking in consideration how past events create the necessary (but not sufficient) conditions for future events (therefore, both *Dune* and *Dune Messiah* also play a big role for the constitution of the golden path) we have decided to include all the six books written by Frank Herbert in our analysis. Thus, the present dissertation will provide a critical analysis of the Duneverse — a framework constituted by the six novels (*Dune*, *Dune Messiah*, *Children of Dune*, *God Emperor of Dune*, *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune*) with the addition of *The Dune Encyclopedia*.

In order to conceptualize important metaphors, their meanings, as well as their importance for the Duneverse, we shall display how the novels explore most of its speculative notions (a common aspect of SF as we have already mentioned) through the lenses of Buddhism (mainly Zen and/or Madhyamaka), Process Philosophy and Jungian psychology. In such regard, Process Philosophy will provide us with the capacity of conjoining both Buddhism and Jungian psychology — and thus will be our mediating system. Western philosophy and science have often failed to understand Buddhism, misrepresenting many of its most important tenets; Jung was one of such western representatives who has faltered in his understanding regarding Buddhism — a reading that has focused on a nihilistic tendency that is not part of most Buddhist

¹¹ A theme we have profoundly explored previously in our Master's degree thesis that we intend to further actualize in view of Process Philosophy.

¹² We are using this term as a reference for the Secondary World that, through a world-building process, creates the universe of the six novels written by Frank Herbert — we do take into account *The Dune Encyclopedia* as a canon material for the Duneverse as well (a decision that not necessarily all scholars would take).

¹³ This is a known error in some translations that should be addressed. For instance, in one of the previous editions released in Brazil by Aleph, it is shown that 10000 years have succeeded after the ending events in *Children of Dune* and the beginning of *Heretics*, which should be approximately 5000 canon-wise.

branches. At first, it seemed to us that the bridges built by *Dune* series regarding Archetypal psychology and eastern philosophies and religions would need to be addressed entirely by this dissertation — it does seem unmistakably observable how the novels creatively synthesize such alien systems, even though such bridges not necessarily had been built previously in a just fashion by western or eastern scholars. However, after furthermore careful observation, we concluded that Process Philosophy and studies had already proposed themselves a connection with both aforementioned frameworks (Archetypal psychology and Buddhism) and could therefore be employed as the necessary link to connect all those three fields. For reasons that should be argued in the present chapter, Process Philosophy also poses fundamental concepts that are thoroughly explored by the Duneverse and its narrative.

The *golden path* is one of the main prophetic visions of the Duneverse — firstly envisioned by Paul Muad'Dib and inherited by his twin children, Leto II and Ghanima, such *path* is “an escape drawn in order for humanity to evade reductionism and absolutism institutionalized by the symbolically dominant patriarchal societies towards an incessant process of becoming”¹⁴ (Silva, 2021, p.12, our translation). In that regard, the *golden path* represents the very flux of the universe, posing a middle way between two extreme reified frameworks — such middle path, akin to a very important aspect of Nagarjuna's philosophy which set the bases for Madhyamaka, will be metaphorically linked by the current dissertation to the individuation process described by Jung. Ultimately, individuation is *exactly* a middle common ground set between the extremes of falling to the nihilistic abyss of the unconscious or to the absolute tyranny of the ego. We intend to display how the *golden path* is not only an important element for *Dune*'s narrative but also how it is profoundly interwoven by such external concepts and notions abstracted from different fields of knowledge, as the ones previously announced.

The Duneverse is built through audacious and innovative elucubrations in the SF genre and it is still even up until the current times, decades after the release of its' first novel in 1965, understudied although it possesses a theoretical density that interconnects quantum physics, Archetypal psychology, eastern religiosities and metaphysics, altered states of consciousness and deeply detailed ecological

¹⁴ In the original: “uma saída traçada para se escapar do reducionismo e do absolutismo institucionalizado por sociedades patriarcais em direção a um eterno porvir”

arrangements of entirely fictional planets and systems. More profound readings of the series seem of utmost necessity in a moment when *Dune* returns to the grand audience as a film adaptation directed by Denis Villeneuve, making the elaborate work of Frank Herbert more acknowledged. The path of Muad'Dib does represent the beginning of the six novels series and "a beginning is the time for taking the most delicate care that the balances are correct. This every sister of the Bene Gesserit knows" (Herbert, 2003, p.14), though we must not forget that the entirety of the series are of equal importance to the Duneverse and must be considered in its totality for our reading — one could even claim, for instance, that the concepts and themes we intend to analyze are better displayed in the later novels, especially *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse Dune*.

Muad'Dib's footsteps, nonetheless, represent the onset of the series and we intend to make such path more easily traceable by our fellow reader — hence, by presenting a background of the plot and its eventual developments, we can also set the tone and display relevant aspects which will be focused on during the present dissertation while also introducing the series to the ones unacquainted with Herbert's work. If we take only the first book as the focal point for understanding Herbert's work — as many do in this current resurgence of *Dune* in the film industry — we risk falling into intellectual traps that overlook broader reflections that are complementary and essential for a more comprehensive understanding of the series. The steps of Paul Muad'Dib are indeed revolutionary within an intergalactic empire still dominated by a patriarchal aristocracy — an empire founded on the overvaluation of the egoic principle and the conscious substrate of the psyche, as previously analyzed in our master's thesis *Synchronicity and Prescience in Dune*. However, these steps still lack the keen philosophical, metaphysical, and theoretical reflections that sustain the series in its entirety.

Dune is, after all, the first novel and its narrative presents the underlying necessary conditions for the arising of the *golden path*, a prescient vision indeed first foreseen by Muad'Dib himself. Thus, presenting the state of humanity during the historical era of Shaddam IV's empire is of considerable relevance to this dissertation. In *Dune*, after being enslaved by other human groups with powerful thinking machines, most of humanity managed to genetically evolve over thousands of years while breaking free from the shackles of thinking machines (i.e. machines

made to counterfeit the human mind and psyche)¹⁵. Through the unfolding of these millennia, humans developed several distinct orders of extreme importance to the Duneverse, such as the Bene Gesserit, the Mentats, the Bene Tleilaxu, and the Spacing Guild. Here, we focus primarily on the first order — the Bene Gesserit which are a matriarchal organization responsible precisely for the selective breeding that engendered various of the psychogenetic capabilities possessed by humanity in the series. They are also responsible for excessive consumption of *spice* — a drug that is capable of altering consciousness functions while also being the central resource for the entirety of all the series' narrative and plot development, thus permeating the entire work as the primary good extracted and utilized by such far-future advanced humanity.

The spice is the main fuel of Shaddam IV's empire (and subsequent political structures) as space-time folding requires pilots to be under its psyche-altering trance in order to navigate through the cosmos' fabric. The drug also possesses geriatric qualities, and when used in its most concentrated and poisonous form — commonly known as the *Water of Life* — it can promote the integration between the egoic substrate and the collective unconscious, between an individual and all their Ancestral Memories — a process we have previously analyzed under Archetypal psychology premises that could also be enlightening to explain Process Buddhism important concepts and its metaphorical manifestations throughout the novels. Dune is the name¹⁶ given to the only planet in the universe that organically produces this substance. For these reasons, this psychedelic drug occupies a central position within Herbert's work and universe, resembling substances like LSD, mescaline, or ayahuasca — reflecting the countercultural historical moment in which Dune was written (Silva, 2021). This capacity for space-time distortion within the psyche, induced by the spice, is the ability referred to as *prescience* in the series and was extensively analyzed in the aforementioned master's thesis. Regarding this ability:

The relationship between observer, consciousness and space-time permeates the work explicitly, and the plot follows the space-time unfolding impacts caused by the Atréides, who possess the psychic divinatory ability

¹⁵ This is another relevant aspect of *Dune* series if we consider the overindulgence of chatGPT and Generative algorithms taking hold of ideological power in our present society.

¹⁶ This is the planet's Fremen name, ancient descendant of the Arabic and Sufi traditions who eventually migrated to Arrakis (the orb's official name).

called prescience — a power engineered into the Atreides bloodline through the Bene Gesserit's millennial genetic program, a matriarchal order responsible for the mastership of the religious, mythological, and cosmological domains of all humanity. (Silva, 2021, p.16, our translation)

We emphasize here that prescience is of extreme importance to the narrative and reflects one of the main dichotomies in the series' themes — *absolute* power over the future, in a completely *centralized* manner, is exceedingly dangerous not only for humanity but for all life. When prescience reaches absolute levels, the future becomes fixed and entirely controlled — leading inevitably to boredom, stagnation and extinction, since life, by definition, is woven from a state of continuous transformation and impermanence, *a process of continuous becoming*. We will return to this argument as this project unfolds, as it will substantially support the intended analysis of Herbert's work.

The socio-political setting of the first book in the series is well-acknowledged within SF, yet few continue their engagement with Frank Herbert's work and remain unaware of the premises of the subsequent episodes. We will briefly attempt to highlight some of these developments in an informative manner, as they will also serve as the foundation for this dissertation's central argument regarding *Dune* — namely, that just as Paul Muad'Dib's empire rises and crumbles, none of such narrative scenery is absolute or permanent. In the end, impermanence prevails, and the desire for a self-centered, egoic eternity leads inexorably to extinction. As Leto II, son of Muad'Dib, states in *Children of Dune*:

"This child was never a child. My father lives within me, but he is not me. You loved him, and he was a gallant human whose affairs beat upon high shores. His intent was to close down the cycle of wars, but he reckoned without the movement of infinity as expressed by life. That's Rhajia! Namri knows. Its movement can be seen by any mortal. Beware paths which narrow future possibilities. Such paths divert you from infinity into lethal traps."

[...]

"I ally myself with Namri against my father," Leto said. "And my father within allies himself with us against what was made of him."

[...]

"Because it's the *amor fati* which I bring to humankind, the act of ultimate

self-examination”

[...]

“No,” Leto said. “Nor did my father speak against war. But look what was made of him. Peace has only one meaning in this Imperium. It’s the maintenance of a single way of life. You are commanded to be contented. Life must be uniform on all planets as it is in the Imperial Government.”

[...]

“Every question, every problem doesn’t have a single correct answer. One must permit diversity. A monolith is unstable. Then why do you demand a single correct statement from me? Is that to be the measure of your monstrous judgment?” (Herbert, 2008a, p.402)

A couple of elements in the previous quote from *Children of Dune* should be stressed for the sake of this dissertation’s argument — the first and most relevant is the notion that a further narrowing of possibilities can “*divert you into lethal traps*”. A completely absolute and centered prescient power narrows the infinity of possible future-outcomes into very strict ones, thus creating the necessary conditions for ultimate extinction and reification of our mental constructs and their desire for eternal permanence. Another usually overlooked theme displayed in this passage regards Muad’Dib’s intent of closing down the cycle of wars — notwithstanding his desire and continuous attempt of impeding the Jihad waved under his name, it was ultimately his own hubristic endeavor the most important condition for his teleological failure. This is a point we will only develop further on future chapters, but the common reading sustained by Frank Herbert’s commentary on his own book led many *Dune* fans to take Paul Muad’Dib as a *villain* — Paul should be engaged, literarily, as a tragic figure or hero who, in an embodied *Oedipus* science fiction novel, fails due to his *hubris* by being trapped in his own oracle’s divinatory creation; in order to arrive to such conclusion, we need a thoroughly explanation of *prescience* under an archetypal and process framework which will lead, inevitably, to the conclusion that *reification* is the true villain of *Dune* series, with its most prototypical embodiment metaphorically presented through another important order in the Duneverse — the Bene Tleilax.

A third and important element worthy of note in Leto II’s previous words is the inference of the Imperial Government *modus operandi* as a “*single way of life*”, where multiplicity is denied and strongly repressed — this is a metaphor that will reinforce

the notion on how an *absolute power* will inevitably lead to tragedy. It also displays a relevant trope already discussed in our previous thesis *Synchronicity and Prescience in Dune* — that our longing for imposing our mental constructs onto other cultures and life-forms is akin to the very fallacy of reification and symbolically connected with a common social motif employed by imperialism in its many forms. The very attempt of turning our abstractions into concrete and absolutely real entities lead such endeavor to enforce the same abstractive conjectures of reality onto others as a means to make such elucubrations permanent and eternally perpetuated — this *craving* for the world to conform to our superimposed constructs is what ultimately brings suffering (from a Buddhist perspective), and Leto's *amor fati*, through a similar process of ultimate self-examination akin to meditation, is the very recognition on how the open-endedness of emptiness and its consequential impermanence represent the only possible escape from a *samsaric* realm of *absolutism* and from a monolithic engagement with the world. Ultimately, escaping narrow and strict imposed prescient visions requires humanity to recognize the ultimate lack of inherent existence (*svabhāva*) in *any process* — humanity's *only* possible escape is to acknowledge infinity as a logical conclusion from de-hypostatizing and de-constructing such previously reified cosmogonies.

Let us then proceed, slowly and without undue haste, along the logical thread we have woven here in order to demonstrate while accounting Herbert's writings, that the universe is transformed at every instant. Immediately following *Dune*, the second book *Dune Messiah*, presents the fall of Muad'Dib's empire. Paul recognizes the oracle's fatality when it is collectively projected and centralized in his figure. The image of a messiah and a prophet collectively symbolizes, in a precise manner, the same centrality that egoic functions develop in each individual — mereology is deeply explored by the series' themes, especially regarding the fractal asymmetrical interdependency of parts and wholes in *eco-organic*¹⁷ systems. We project into this symbol — just as we project into our own ego when we overvalue the psyche's conscious substrate — a deceiving illusion of complete control over unconscious processes, a fleeting attempt at self-overvaluing, at ceasing movement, at

¹⁷ We're proposing the usage of this term to represent the interconnectedness of different species regarding their own internal interrelations as actual events, the whole of each species and their relations as another *process* of concrescence as well as a wider organic ecosystem that takes every species and also their relations as a concrescent actual event. A fractal and broad compositional mode hereby labeled as a means for understanding *actual entities* myriad and their distinct layers of concrescence.

eternalizing the self-image. Paul, in *Children of Dune*, questions the absolute oracle:

Muad'Dib showed you two things: a certain future and an uncertain future. With full awareness, he confronted the ultimate uncertainty of the larger universe. He stepped off blindly from his position on this world. He showed us that men must do this always, choosing the uncertain instead of the certain" [...] Abandon certainty! That's life's deepest command. That's what life's all about. We're a probe into the unknown, into the uncertain. Why can't you hear Muad'Dib? If certainty is knowing absolutely an absolute future, then that's only death disguised! Such a future becomes now! He showed you this. (Herbert, 2008a, p.336)

During the ending of *Dune Messiah*, Paul Muad'Dib chooses to forgo and renounce the messianic image that had been reified and projected into him by humanity and especially by the Fremen's newborn empire which was raised under his name and banner — by doing so, he thus leaves the future's threads in the hands of his twin children, Leto II and Ghanima. He wanders, having his physical eyes blinded, into the wilderness of the Arrakeen desert — being able to survive and endure only due to his prescient powers. His appearance in *Children of Dune* is disguised in his pseudo-identity known as the *Preacher*, an emblematic figure whose primary role is to question and unmake the foundational elements regarding the very faith that had been enacted and built upon the persona of Muad'Dib. The excerpt portrayed above narrates a scene in which Paul, disguised as *Preacher*, inquires the religious and imperial institution erected and sustained by his sister, Alia. We can already emphasize relevant elements for our current argument — an absolute and complete control over the future through prescient powers leads to ultimate extinction, especially when considering that life is, by definition, endowed with movement, impermanence, and uncertainty, *a boundless river of incessant becoming sweeping everything along* (Buddharakkhita, 1985, p.19).

Children of Dune proceeds to narrate the vicissitudes that culminate in Leto Atreides II's ascension as emperor of the universe while also introducing the *golden path*, a prescient vision of utmost importance to the Duneverse as a whole (as we intend to eventually argue and demonstrate). Throughout a considerable portion of the third book's narrative development, Leto is tested by an intake of large doses of spice, a procedure that resonates, on multiple and distinct symbolic layers, with

Jung's individuation process. The following excerpt displays Leto's spice trance that echoes relevant points for the current argument and will be referred to constantly in the following pages:

He felt the past carried in his cells, in his memories, in the archetypes which haunted his assumptions, in the myths which hemmed him, in his languages and their prehistoric detritus. It was all of the shapes out of his human and nonhuman past, all of the lives which he now commanded, all integrated in him at last. And he felt himself as a thing caught up in the ebb and flow of nucleotides. Against the backdrop of infinity he was a protozoan creature in which birth and death were virtually simultaneous, but he was both infinite and protozoan, a creature of molecular memories. We humans are a form of colony organism, he thought. (Herbert, 2008a, p.405)

The Atreides twins (Leto II and Ghanima) must confront, throughout the unfolding of events pertaining *Children of Dune*, their aunt Alia Atreides — concomitantly they are learning how to avert themselves from following the same abhorrent path taken by Paul's sister, who fell prey to the *ancestral memories* due to her fragile ego and became possessed by the phantasmagorical and uncanny return of Baron Harkonnen. Eventually, Paul reappears as the Preacher and assists Leto II in his ascendance towards the galactic throne once occupied by Muad'Dib — a symbolical struggle between the two most prominent prescient beings in the known universe which culminated in their alliance and in the onset of the *golden path*. Nearly 3500 years afterwards, in the events taking place during *God Emperor of Dune*, the narrative displays the final moments of Leto's empire as we follow his hybrid human-worm form in its metaphysical elucubrations towards his majordomo Moneo Atreides — during the fourth novel of the *Dune* series we will witness the God Emperor providing the necessary tools and conditions for Moneo's daughter, Siona Atreides, to align herself with the latest Duncan Idaho ghola¹⁸ in order to overcome and destroy the empire and the complete prescience upheld by Leto II.

The later novels, *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune*, take place 1500 years after the dissolution of the God Emperor's tyrannical government and will

¹⁸ We see a symbolical connection of this word with the concept of a *golem*, though according to the Dune Wiki (Ghola, online access) *Ghola* is derived from two distinct words from the Arabic "*ghul*" ("mythical evil creature who often consumed human flesh") or "*ghulam*" (a servant or slave). In the Duneverse, a *ghola* is a being who was grown from the dead cells of another being, with striking similarities to *clones*.

portray a couple of Bene Gesserit heretics as the protagonists of both narratives, as well as another ghola from Duncan Idaho who's one of the main characters in such novels. The so famous matriarchal order has their existence threatened by another group who is returning from an event labeled in the Duneverse as the *Scattering* — humans expanded in the universe after the death of Leto II, many who were directly connected with the religion built around the God Emperor. The *Honored Matres* return from the *Scattering* seeking to obtain the power upheld by the Bene Gesserit as well as to destroy the latter, in an attempt of ascending politically by eradicating them. As we shall argue, it is the *wisdom* upheld by Darwi Odrade (an Atrides descendant who becomes the Mother Superior of the Bene Gesserit during the sixth novel) which enables the survival of her order as they merge themselves in battle with the Honored Matres. Our attempt of briefly introducing the plot of the novels might be useful for those who have not engaged with the story written by Frank Herbert and can also be fruitful for those who do not recall the main plot motifs — our analysis will become more profound and this heuristic map of the six novels will prove itself important to help our readers to navigate through our core arguments while keeping the narrative events from the Duneverse mentally fresh.

We have explored extensively in *Synchronicity and Prescience in Dune* the overly apparent Jungian ideas in Herbert's novels — especially the relations between one's psyche and the collective unconscious. The Duneverse very often speculates and reflects on the part/whole relations (mostly *eco-organic* mereology) and their asymmetrical interdependence while positing the echoes of the past as necessary conditions for present and future actual occasions. This resonates very profoundly with Whitehead's organism philosophy, and for this reason we have chosen to further explore such elements in our second and following chapter, thus reviewing and deepening our previous Master's thesis. Here it is sufficient to denote how the previous quote by Leto II already presents an indication of this middle path between ego and its unconscious, a middle ground between being and non-being, becoming and non-becoming — this could be further extended as a metaphorical middle way between the reductionist physicalism very present in many positivists¹⁹ SF productions and the idealist absolutist position taken by most philosophical western schools since Plato.

¹⁹ This does help us understanding why *Dune* belongs to the *New Wave* movement in SF.

It is also relevant to denote how the *past carried in his cells* does resemble Whitehead's *inclusive transcendence* process — a fundamental element for our current analysis and also for Process Buddhism as a hybrid actualized framework built through the assembling of Madhyamaka and of Process philosophy. Our engagement with Process Buddhism is primarily based on the work of Peter Paul Kakol, *Emptiness and Becoming: Integrating Madhyamika Buddhism and Process Philosophy*, and Kazi Adi Shakti's recent attempt at further building such link between those two distinct metaphysical²⁰ systems. We shall provide in the following pages a more explicit and meticulous explanation and definition of important concepts such as the *inclusive transcendence* aforementioned and the process of *individuation*.

As the previous passage from *Children of Dune* presents, all of the collective unconscious' content — the lingering archetypes, images, and symbolic remnants — were merged (*inclusively transcended*) into Leto's conscious substrate. Just as we are autonomous creatures (*enduring/compound individuals*) with our own relative selves (egos), we are born from the open-empty backdrop of the infinity, of the unconscious. Individuation, as Jung posits, occurs precisely when the conscious substrate integrates the contents of the unconscious in a relatively symbiotic manner, achieving a state of balance²¹ and homeostasis between them.

The human psyche is both individual and collective, and . . . its wellbeing depends on the natural cooperation of these two apparently contradictory sides. Their union is essentially an irrational life process that can . . . neither be brought about, nor understood, nor explained rationally. (Miller, 2004, p.34)

The asymmetrical relatedness (*inclusive transcendence*) is a considerably important concept to sustain the argument we presented previously — that the future should always remain undetermined and open-empty. As we have already argued, *Dune* series advocates that a completely deterministic relation to the future, by means of an also completely all-powerful prescient power, leads inevitably to

²⁰ I am here deliberately disregarding Nagarjuna's take that his position is not a position at all, just the evasion of extremes. This research is a literary criticism endeavor and not a philosophical treaty, after all.

²¹ There's no secret to balance. You just have to feel the waves. (Herbert, 1987a, p.597)

extinction and stagnation, while also being a metaphorical manifestation of the very reification fallacy. *Inclusive transcendence* also plays an essential role in connecting Process Philosophy with both Archetypal Psychology and Madhyamaka, as we intend to demonstrate. The *process of continuous becoming* can be understood as the very unfolding of *inclusive transcendence* — as entities (or processes) includes in themselves the past, for instance, they also become and are further integrated as new elements in completely novel relations with that same background. As Whitehead famous quote exhibits — “Many become one and are increased by one”. Such relational understanding regarding the concrescence of actual occasions appears to us as a fundamental narrative motif for *Dune* series as a whole and has its most relevancies when we account for the timespan of the narrative and the implications of past conditions in the enactment of future events throughout the Duneverse’s plot.

The Principle of Inclusive Transcendence is the governing principle that the manifold diversity of experiences which constitute a given, shared reality come together and coalesce into a new occasion that integrates the preceding ones as part of its own internal constitution and which is brought about by a novel act of creative synthesis, only to be taken up again by the incessant unfolding of the process of coming-to-be-together or “concrescence”. The actual datum of the settled past is pulled into a creative present (thereby “including” the past in the present) while forming itself in anticipation of some novel future through select consideration of certain virtual possibilities (thereby “transcending” the terms upon which the past has been already settled). While the integral phases of concrescence describe the dynamics by which any given process unfolds, the principle of inclusive transcendence explains the logic (or dialogic) that determines why a given process takes on the characteristic forms that it does. (Shakti, 2022, online access)

A *process of continuous becoming* assumes that every actual occasion, in its concrescence, has already integrated and is internally related to its prior and past conditions — the past lingers inside of us, in a very obvious similarity to the functioning of archetypes and the collective unconscious active influence on our psyche, as Jung argues extensively in his work. Our choice of integrating Whitehead’s and Process notions, as the *inclusive transcendence* one, are useful to

denote how archetypes and their symbolic function inside those deep layers of the unconscious are continuously actualized in novel manners as time passes and actual entities and processes are re-integrated in that same underlying fabric of our psyche. It seems sufficient here to again remind our reader how *time* passage is a fundamental aspect of the Duneverse and we often encounter in its tropes, specifically, metaphysical inquiries on how *past* conditions affect our *present* choices but also our *future* projections of possibilities — such tropes also, concomitantly, display how such *present* choices and actualizations will become further conditions for *future* processes to concreate upon.

Another relevant point displayed in the previous quote from *Children of Dune* (p.405) regards how the active influence of the past contained within us (in those profound layers Jung has labeled as the collective unconscious) is *prehended* by our conscious psyche — a non-mediated/nonsensory perception of such prior conditions that, in their relatedness and by a *creative synthesis* act from our side, are incorporated in our minds and egos.

Their affirmation of nonsensory perception led them to reject the individualism of modernity. Far from being a self-enclosed monad, the human psyche is largely constituted by its reception of influences from the past world. This is Jung's "collective unconscious," of course, but Whitehead is no less emphatic on the point: far from, like one of Descartes's substances, requiring nothing but itself to be what it is, each soul requires its whole past world to be what it is. In some way or another, it incorporates that past within itself. And this past is present, both men agree, in an active, living way. (Griffin, 1989, p.9)

Surely the process of *inclusive transcendence* also resonates with how Reverend Mothers integrate and become consciously aware of their past Ancestral Memories — a ritual undergone by the consumption and transformation of the *water of life*²². We have extensively commented on this important event for the Duneverse narrative in our previous text *Synchronicity and Prescience in Dune*, and will further expand this discussion by integrating Process Philosophy in our current work, as we have affirmatively argued previously. Such important ritual moves and permeates all

²² The *water of life* is a concentrated poisonous drug extracted from a living sandworm, comprised mostly of spice.

of the novels contained within the Duneverse and echoes both Archetypal Psychology through the lingering debris in the collective unconscious and their active participation in our ego's actions, while also providing a perfect symbolic metaphor for the very *inclusive transcendence* process hereby explained — each Reverend Mother, when surviving the *spice agony* and being able to transmute the poisonous *water of life*, finally integrates and becomes conscious of their past conditions and Ancestral Memories which have been continuously *inclusively transcended* in an ongoing *becoming* since the dawn of time. Every living organism continuously undergoes this process of *inclusive transcendence*, where every occasion of experience becomes a further event integrated in the relational web of the unconscious *ad-infinitum* — this is one of the *most* important reflections presented by *Dune* series, that nothing, no being or entity whatsoever has *inherent* or *absolute* existence and are all susceptible to the *implacable flux of the universe*, to the *irrepressible current of impermanence and open emptiness*.

Now each drop or occasion of experience — and this is the essential point for our present discussion — exists in two modes. First it exists as a subject. In this mode it is in the present, and enjoys experience. But after its moment of subjectivity (which might last a tenth of a second for a human occasion of experience, a billionth of a second for a subatomic occasion of experience), it is in the past, and as such exists as an object. As an object it no longer enjoys experience; rather, it can now be experienced (perceived) by later subjects. (Griffin, 1989, p.21)

It is important to also denote that as Reverend Mothers become finally integrated with their Ancestral Memories they are, therefore, reconnected — their egos/conscious side of the psyche is finally able to tread the *middle way* between being and non-being. They become aware of the presence of such prior lives inside their unconscious, an upheaval of an enormous amount of information that invades the consciousness. Other actual beings and entities (or actual organisms) are also participating in this continuously unending and unfolding *inclusive transcendence* process, though not necessarily consciously aware of its past objects of experience. One of the main reasons that the *golden path* arises as a necessity for humanity's survival is grounded on how we tend to repeat and solidify abstract mental constructs in a self-centered attempt to eternalize our ephemeral identities — an insistence on

sameness as a means to become immortal and absolute. Such attempt would inevitably lead to the ultimate death *precisely* because it tries to impede the *incessant becoming* that takes place at every moment by *inclusively transcending* one's prior and past conditions/ drops of experience. The integration of one's Ancestral Memories, as described by *Dune* also could be symbolically linked to the *individuation* process described by Archetypal Psychology while also referring, metaphorically, to the very equipoise acquired through meditation. In the following excerpt, during a spice trance experienced by Leto II, we can perceive many of such previously mentioned aspects of *individuation* as the *middle-way* between ego and unconscious, between being and non-being, between complete nihilism (over-infatuation of the unconscious) and idealism (over-infatuation of the ego):

Leto felt bright light outside himself and darkness within, but the darkness was secretive, protective, and warm. The light began to blaze up and he felt that it came from the darkness within, swirling outward like a brilliant cloud.

His body became transparent, drawing him upward, yet he retained that einfalle contact with every cell and nerve. The multitude of inner lives fell into alignment, nothing tangled or mixed. They became very quiet in duplication of his own inner silence, each memory-life discrete, an entity incorporeal and undivided. [...]

With this he let go of himself and became himself, his own person compassing the entirety of his past. It was not victory, not defeat, but a new thing to be shared with any inner life he chose. Leto savored this newness, letting it possess every cell, every nerve, giving up what the einfalle had presented to him and recovering the totality in the same instant. (Herbert, 2008a, p.418)

Several aspects of the above passage are of special relevance for this chapter and our argument here presented. Firstly, the duplicity between darkness and light symbolically represents the interrelatedness between the unconscious (darkness) and the egoic substrate (light). Due to the integration of the Ancestral Memories and such unconscious content — as it is described by Jungian transcendent function and process of individuation — the darkness symbolizing the unconscious does not provoke fear or discomfort, but begins to provide protection and warmth, nourishing the ego and allowing the consciousness' light to emerge and take form out of chaos' indissociability. Such ego, then, becomes a channel, a manifested potentiality of an

unconscious which offers guidance and orientation to processes gifted with creative multiplicity inherent to its groundless ground, inherent to its motherly darkness and open-emptiness — the conscious substrate permits the infinite possibilities of the unconscious to crystallize and manifest by its participation in a *creative synthesis* operation.

In a secondary moment, we can here denote, the multitude of Leto II's *inner lives* (Ancestral Memories) are conjoined in a state of symbiosis, aligning themselves with his individuality and his *inner silence*. Sequentially, we gaze an additional reference to the individuation process — Leto II must *release* himself, for individuation requires one to abandon the egoic centrality certainties as one discovers equipoise in an intermediate point in order to truly become our-selves as a relatively complete²³ and integrated being/psyche. He must abandon ego's overvaluation and a desire for self-centered eternity in order to discover himself more (w)holly²⁴ — not in a struggle which the end goal would be ego's dominance regarding its unconscious, but by a harmonious and meaningful exchange between the light of consciousness and the open-emptiness groundless darkness.

Thirdly and finally, it is relevant to denote the *inner silence* reference in the aforementioned passage from *Children of Dune*, which echoes and resembles *meditation's* reverberations as derived from Buddhists texts and praxis. Another considerably suitable element for our argument is the sense of *newness* experienced by Leto II — which already indicates and presents *impermanence* as an important narrative motif for the series. This notion will root and provide the ground basis for the *golden path*. The concept of (w)holeness is commonly referred in Archetypal Psychology when discussing individuation. We have selected an excerpt from Jung (2014, p.288) that further exemplifies such theme while sustaining our current reading of the Duneverse:

Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too-as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once. That, evidently, is the way human life should be. It is the old game

²³ It is arguable that one cannot be ever entirely complete, a logical consequence when considering emptiness (sunyata) and the continuous process of becoming.

²⁴ We are using here (w)holly in a polysemic manner — as being relatively *whole*, but also in the sense of a *holon* (which is a part for larger wholes)

of hammer and anvil: between them the patient iron is forged into an indestructible whole, an "individual".

As we have previously analyzed, *Dune* series offers mereological observations regarding the asymmetrical interdependence between elements/parts pertaining wider wholes in an infinite and fractal extension throughout the space-time continuum. Such *eco-organic* interrelatedness should be better understood through the same *inclusive transcendence* process previously described while also displaying, by virtue of the novels main tropes, how broad arrangements and integrated systems tend to replicate the functioning of its microcosmic elements and vice-versa. As it is argued by Peter Paul Kakol extensively, the very middle-way of Madhyamaka could be understood through the same lenses displayed by Process Philosophy regarding its metaphysical mereology interpretation — and we intend to demonstrate how this is the position held by the Duneverse narrative in its entirety. The *golden path*, thus, is metaphorically similar to Nagarjuna's middle-way while also being a symbolical manifestation of Jung's individuation process — as Leto's Ancestral Memories and connection with the collective unconscious are integrated within him, he is able to overcome the extremes of being haunted by archaic shadowy debris that could overthrow his ego on one side or of becoming a complete tyrannical egocentric who overindulges in the principle of light and consciousness, who overindulges in his own hubris.

Elsewhere we have already argued and displayed how the stance presented in Herbert's work also presents a middle-way between the extremes of reductionist materialism and idealism — metaphorically, this very equipoise attained by Leto during the spice trance displayed in the previous quote from *Children of Dune* should also be sufficed to demonstrate such philosophical position from the series. As Kazi Adi Shakti (2022, online access) argues:

This seed is the bifurcation of experience into a subject of experience and the objects experienced by that subject, which frames our experience in terms of a distinction between a "unified," "internal," "subjective" vantage point and "differentiated," "external," "objective" focal points. Idealism and Materialism are just different philosophical views deploying the same subject-object frame, with the major distinguishing factor being which side of the subject-object divide is given ontological and causal precedence over the

other. Neither view actually fundamentally questions this operating assumption, or if they do, they fail to be consistent and resurrect it in the last instance as with absolute idealism where Spirit/Brahman is the conceived of as a transcendent hyper-subject from which all subject-object interactions emanate, or as with dialectical materialism where nature is the conceived of as a hyper-object immanently unfolding all subject-object interactions.

By finally finding an escape path out from the reifying ontologies of both reductionist materialism and idealism, the *golden path* offers not only a *path to salvation*, or a *path to enlightenment* individually, but also fractally in other micro-macrocosmic concrescent actual occasions. Leto II very often declares how humans behave as a colonial organism, coalescing into singular ones (by an *inclusive transcendence* procedure) in certain moments. Thus, should the *golden path* restore humanity from its overindulgence in its abstract constructs and the assumption of their absolute existence and concreteness, it should also be fractally extended throughout all humans. Such extension resonates with Buddhist notions, especially Mahayana Buddhism — we could interpret that such salvation/enlightenment would also reach all sentient lifeforms and organisms, as the later novels embodied *Bodhisattva* character, Odrade, would allow us to infer, even though such quest is paradoxically infinite and, therefore, ultimately impossible.

Considering such arguments it seems plausible to assume how the *golden path* concomitantly resonates the Buddhist praxis and orientation towards *Nirvana*²⁵ and Jungian process of individuation — here we denote, thus, how Jung's nihilistic interpretation of Buddhism followed a long-term wrongful western readings of such eastern metaphysics and notions, a faulty tradition prominent from Schopenhauer that lingers even up to today in Žižek. *Dune* series has contributed to this eastern-western debate more rightfully and respectfully than many philosophers and scholars who overlooked and judged many tendencies in Buddhist thought to be extremely nihilistic — we shall demonstrate how those interpretations had misunderstood a basic invariant element of Nagarjuna's philosophy, *Śūnyatā*, and how that element can be understood as the very complementary aspect of *inclusive transcendence*

²⁵ *Nirvana* in Madhyamika terms might be the simple inference of the lack of *inherent* (svabhāva) existence of any phenomena.

(according to Kazi Adi Shakti and Kakol). Meditation, the usage of Koans²⁶ by Zen Buddhism, and many other methods present in Buddhist praxis are guided towards a state of non-duality dissolution between the *object/subject* distinction that, nonetheless, does not fall into the extremes of elevating either of those experiences as ontologically essential or inherently existent (*svabhāva*) — a middle-way between non-being (nihilism) and being (absolutism). We hold here how this *could* be interpreted in an extremely similar manner to the very goal and objective envisioned by Jung as the unfolding of the *individuation* process.

This ideal goal for human life centrally involves the interplay of conscious and unconscious dimensions of experience. Jung and Whitehead both present a path to salvation—especially salvation from the false view of humans and our place in the universe promoted by modernity. And for both of them this salvation involves the integration of consciousness and the unconscious. It involves, that is, becoming conscious of dimensions of experience of which we are normally at most only dimly conscious (at least as modernity has defined and shaped “normal” experience). For Jung this task is at the center of psychotherapy. Whitehead makes this task of becoming aware of the unconscious dimensions of experience central for philosophy: “Philosophy is the self-correction by consciousness of its own initial excess of subjectivity”²⁷. Its task, he says, is to “recover the totality” which is obscured by the selectivity of consciousness²⁸. (Griffin, 1989, p.12)

We have selected a couple of passages from *Dune* series to exemplify this process of integration and asymmetrical interdependence between unconscious and conscious which we have been minutely discussing that also would, symbolically, resonate with the *golden path*’s teleology. The following and first one appears as the lead paragraph of *God Emperor of Dune*’s tenth chapter — it resembles a *prologue*,

²⁶ A Koan is usually a paradoxical formula to be meditated and solved by Zen meditation practitioners

²⁷ This does echoes the previous short definition of SF from Brian Aldiss — Philosophy here, or the inquiry towards an uncertain future, without reification, would lead to diminishing one’s self-infatuation and excess and provide the needed correction for one hubris and disconnection from nature/unconscious.

²⁸ “And the Tyrant’s, too. We think their entire lives were devoted to trying to break out of chains they themselves created.”

“But they believed . . .”

“Remember your philosopher’s doubts, Miles. Beware! The mind of the believer stagnates. It fails to grow outward into an unlimited, infinite universe.” (Herbert, 1987b, p.208)

and it is a common technique throughout all the series where many of its core ideas are announced through documents that intratextually belong to the secondary-world of the Duneverse and are displayed in the beginning of each chapter. Such aesthetic textual element could be metaphorically understood as space-time dilations in the very narrative structure²⁹ that would resemble the very functioning of prescience — we as readers are able to precognize future narrative developments through the privileged perspective of sequential documents and the impact of current events in their subsequent unfoldings. Needless to say, we could also perceive the implicit *inclusive transcendence* method also displayed through this narrative time aesthetic and structure as we are constantly engaged with how present experiences are grounded in their prior conditions while also, in a later moment, be themselves *integrated* and *inclusively transcended* while becoming the conditional and radically relational empty ground for even-further *processes of continuous becoming*.

In this specific next excerpt, we are previewing a passage from the *Stolen Journals*, a document written and hidden by Leto II which was his personal journal that explained most of his choices, ideas and metaphysical inquiries regarding the *golden path* — this document is stolen by Siona Atreides³⁰ in the onset of *God Emperor of Dune*.

Odd as it may seem, great struggles such as the one you can see emerging from my journals are not always visible to the participants. Much depends on what people dream in the secrecy of their hearts. I have always been as concerned with the shaping of dreams as with the shaping of actions. Between the lines of my journals is the struggle with humankind's view of itself—a sweaty contest on a field where motives from our darkest past can well up out of an unconscious reservoir and become events with which we not only must live but contend. It is the hydra-headed monster which always attacks from your blind side. I pray, therefore, that when you have traversed my portion of the Golden Path you no longer will be innocent children dancing to music you cannot hear.

²⁹ Who would have thought that after such assertive introduction we would be displaying a metaphorically meaningful aspect of *Dune's* text structure?

³⁰ Siona Atreides is a descendant of Leto's twin sister, Ghanima, and the apex development of God Emperor's breeding program — we shall discuss later in this chapter the symbolical connection between the *golden path* and Leto's genetic program.

—THE STOLEN JOURNALS (Herbert, 2008c, p.108)

The *golden path*, as Leto's journals comment on, is a transpersonal vision that even supersedes him as a compound individual with a paradoxically teleological constitution — to guarantee that humanity survives amidst the ever-uncertain future. The very unconscious longing of humans for an absolutely static universe, one where our abstractions and mental constructs would be superimposed upon an ever-changing world *is*, metaphorically, the "*hydra-headed monster which always attacks from your blind side*" — this deeply rooted attempt to eternalize and make concrete our constructs echoes the fallacy of misplaced concreteness and the craving that would trap us in a *samsaric*³¹ reality. Leto's integration of Ancestral Memories allows him to notice deeply rooted patterns in our unconscious and a continuously repetitive motif present in a myriad of distinct civilizations throughout our history — the imperialist enforcement of a "*single way of life*" as a hubristic attempt to make one's conceptual constructs *absolutely* real, concrete, deified and reified. As Odrade, one of the main characters in the later novels of the *Dune* series, reflects in *Chapterhouse: Dune*:

Select from the past and match it against the present: Learn consequences.
That was the Bene Gesserit view of history, ancient Santayana's words resonating in their lives: "*Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it*". (Herbert, 1987a, p.314)

A couple of other points are relevant in the previous passage from *God Emperor of Dune* (Herbert, 2008c, p.108) — the first is how Leto II judges that shaping dreams, and thus, shaping humanity's unconscious is of *primordial* need. Muad'Dib's revolution had proved itself to be a leading example on how oppressed groups might become the oppressors if the "*dreams in the secrecy of their hearts*" are not transmuted and transformed. Secondly, we should denote also how the *past* lingers and lives inside of humans, from which our "*darkest past*" could still be actively creating the necessary conditions for horrific events. Thirdly, Leto's desire for humanity to perceive its own dark and prior *inclusively transcended* unconscious part of the psyche AND integrating it does display how the *golden path*, fractally, extends

³¹ *Samsara* is the realm of existence we are bound to as we continuously attempt to endow our mental fabrications with *inherent existence* (svabhāva)

itself *eco-organically* towards humanity as an actual event itself, setting the path for our collective individuation if we ought to survive. Though it is of ultimate necessity to posit that such individuation would not occur in an extreme dissolution of one's ego, but a rather harmonic middle-way between individual and collective — where every single micro-cosmic universe (i.e, every human) would have its capacities increased and magnified for the sake of themselves and the sake of their fellow interdependent organisms. As Griffin (1989, p.10) comments:

The rejection of individualism and the affirmation of the massive influence of the past did not lead either thinker, however, to reject the importance of freedom and individuality. Each man thought of the soul as dipolar: besides the pole labeled "collective" (Jung) or "physical" (Whitehead), there is also the "personal" or "mental" pole, in which the person's freedom and therefore individuality can be expressed. This is all-important: intrinsic value resides only in individuals, not in collectives. And the potential intrinsic values of the individual can be realized only by transcending the collective attitudes and responses and by developing one's unique capacities—by "individuating," to use Jung's term. Whitehead says that social orders should be evaluated "according" to their success in magnifying the individual actualities, that is to say, in promoting strength of experience".

Such kind of transformation embedded in the *golden path* does resemble many Buddhist and Process philosophy principles, and as we have hopefully displayed in our previous arguments, it connects *individuation* as a similar (and symbolically equal) procedure, goal wise, to what meditation and other methods (as the *koan* in Zen) attempt to achieve in Buddhism — the equipoise free from reified extremes, the non-duality between one's ego and unconscious, the sheer realization of one's interconnectedness and interdependence with the universe, the middle path between *being* and *non-being* that inexorably leads to the recognition that we are *processes of continuous becoming*. During the spice trance in *Children of Dune*, Leto II would almost fall into the extreme of one's dissolution amidst so many echoes and prior lives, the Ancestral Memories, but it is able to endure by sustaining himself in a middle-ground — "Leto felt pieces of his awareness drifting apart, yet he retained a sense of himself somewhere between being and nonbeing" (Herbert, 2008a, p.416).

As Peter Paul Kakol argues regarding Process Buddhism ethics, such aforementioned transformation of an individual should also echo, simultaneously, its

externalities — the natural inference when considering that every self is a nexus of prior *inclusively transcended* events that in their turn, will also be assimilated by wider concrescences. This translates with precision *Dune's* constantly explored themes of *eco-organic* systems and their asymmetrical interdependence as well as the dipolar mental-material aspect of a universe that is *creatively synthesized* every moment by its actual entities and events.

Thus it is more accurate to say that Process Buddhism seeks to transform both society (exterior) and culture (interior) by means of meditative thought, which is a direct psychophysical experience of reality. This is what Robert Thurman calls a "cool revolution", which "transforms the outlook and behaviour of many individuals and thereby slowly transforms a society". But this is not a solipsistic "inner revolution" for there are no such things as atomic individuals; rather, reality is "social all the way down" (Rorty) in the sense that ever "self" is a network of dependently becoming events that are asymmetrically interdependent. (Kakol, 2009, p.326)

The following quotes from *Heretics of Dune* display a common precaution that some Bene Gesserit heretics and the God Emperor Leto II had in order not to hypostatize their assumptions regarding reality — it portrays, evidently, that such "*balancing in strange waters*" (Herbert, 2003, p.385) necessarily needs to take place as much individually as collectively as a defense against reification and the dire consequences of superimposing our abstract constructs externally in an unconscious *dancing to music you (we) cannot hear (are not consciously aware of)* (Herbert, 2008c, p.108). The *golden path*, the middle-way between one's ego and its *inclusively transcended* unconscious past which results in a harmonic integration of opposites shields one from the temptation of assuming their *abstractions* as *absolutely real*, of possessing inherent nature (*svabhāva*) — this leads towards reintegrating oneself with the flow of the universe as a *process of continuous becoming*, not attempting to seize control and interrupt such flux in order to eternalize their static monolithic concepts of reality, but *join it and flow with it*. (Herbert, 2003, p.49)

We have long known that the objects of our palpable sense experiences can be influenced by choice — both conscious choice and unconscious. This is a demonstrated fact that does not require that we believe some force within us

reaches out and touches the universe. I address a pragmatic relationship between belief and what we identify as “real.” All of our judgments carry a heavy burden of ancestral beliefs to which we of the Bene Gesserit tend to be more susceptible than most. It is not enough that we are aware of this and guard against it. Alternative interpretations must always receive our attention.

— MOTHER SUPERIOR TARAZA: ARGUMENT IN COUNCIL (Herbert, 1987b, p.383)

It is relevant to denote though, that the narrative of both *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune* will portray the dogmatic inconsistencies of different orders in the Duneverse, especially the Bene Gesserit — even though more aware than most humans due to their training, the millennial matriarchal order had a tendency of further crystalizing their abstractions especially due to the fact that their Ancestral Memories were more active and present than most humans; by focusing too much in the past they allowed their attempt to seize ultimate mytho-symbolical power in the galactic empire to internally corrupt the order while solidifying the very patterns they often saw being repeated in the past by their Ancestral Memories. It is the Bene Gesserit hubris that created the necessary conditions for the rising of ultimate prescient powers in the form of Muad'Dib³² and Leto II — such hubristic endeavor echoes Brian Aldiss definition of science fiction as a non-mimetic genre born out of the gothic mold. But more importantly, *hubris* is a synonym for over-infatuation of oneself, of one's egoic function of the psyche — an *excess of subjectivity* as mentioned by Whitehead. The *golden path/middle-way* and the survival embedded in it requires humanity to overcome such excess of itself by understanding the open-empty groundless ground of impermanence and interdependence from whence it came — reifying all the symbols that constitute oneself (thus, the unconscious content that was *inclusively transcended* in the concrescence of a compound individual) is the unfolding of such egocentric excess as we have argued before throughout this chapter, and escaping such dangerously lethal trap can only have success by also not falling to the opposite nihilistic philosophical extreme. Thus we argue for the symbolical similarities between the *golden path*, Madhyamaka's *middle-*

³² We are aware that Paul did not have a prescient power as strong as Leto II — although other prescient navigators would hide from his visions, his prescience was at his time unrivaled.

way and Archetypal psychology individuation. Consequentially, the attempt of *impeding change* will prove itself of utmost perniciousness to an outdated organism which became frozen in time, metaphorically already dead since *the universe has moved beyond it (you)* (Herbert, 1987b, p.368).

The narrative of the two last novels of the Duneverse will focus consistently in two characters — Miles Teg and Darwi Odrade. The Bene Gesserit tendency to lean towards past forms, and thus reifying them, has also proved to be the ultimate demise of the matriarchal order, as the end events of the Duneverse plot will unfold. It is by the *creative* actions performed by a couple of *Heretics* that the order of the Bene Gesserit survives, though not in the way they intended. In the fourth chapter of this dissertation we will focus on analyzing Darwi Odrade as an embodied *Bodhisattva* and a manifestation of a couple of Buddhist matriarchal archetypes — for instance, Prajñāpāramitā, the Mother of All Buddhas whose wisdom leads to compassion.

It is worthy denoting here, though, that Odrade is a *heretic* who notices the deeply rooted dogmas in the Bene Gesserit and perceives, through her wisdom/compassion, that the very corruption of the order takes place *precisely* by their dogmatic and reified system. As an Atreides descendant she carries the prescient faculty and will attempt to enable the survival of her order as different groups of humans reappear back to the known galaxies after the *Scattering*³³. As we will argue, Odrade's qualities are the humanistic apex whose necessary conditions for arising lay embedded in the *golden path* settled by Leto II.

It is Odrade that writes the Atreides Manifesto, an important document which explains the functioning of the prescient faculty we have extensively analyzed in our previous thesis, *Synchronicity and Prescience in Dune*. During the discussion in the second and following chapter we will provide new engagements with *prescience* through the Process Philosophy lenses — understanding it as an extension of the *creative* aspect ever-present in the concrescence of actual occasions and how they produce novelty out of abstract potentialities; as Kakol (2009, p.195) affirms “Hence, creativity is that which explains the emergence of novelty as the concrete actualization of the abstract potentiality represented by the many antecedent conditions”. As a *process of continuous becoming*, arising and ceasing, we partake in

³³ The name of the event that happened after the dissolving of Leto's II Empire, when humans expanded themselves towards new planets and galaxies.

the integration of our prior conditions and rearrange them through a *creative synthesis* procedure — the past (and the Ancestral Memories) provide a conditional ground from which we can partake and reorganize it by reimagining their relations.

This is the awe-inspiring universe of magic: There are no atoms, only waves and motions all around. Here, you discard all belief in barriers to understanding. You put aside understanding itself. This universe cannot be seen, cannot be heard, cannot be detected in any way by fixed perceptions. It is the ultimate void where no preordained screens occur upon which forms may be projected. You have only one awareness here—the screen of the magi: Imagination! Here, you learn what it is to be human. You are a creator of order, of beautiful shapes and systems, an organizer of chaos.

— THE ATREIDES MANIFESTO, BENE GESSERIT ARCHIVES (Herbert, 1987b, p. 393)

The *Atreides Manifesto* and the theoretical framework presented in our previous paragraphs are relevant for our argument in this chapter but also for the dissertation as a whole, as we intend to demonstrate, and they elucidate how a complete and *ultimate* prescient power, as the one upheld by Leto II, has two complementary aspects — the first holds that *prescience* IS a creative act which perceives the dormant potentialities in both past and present conditions and *foresee* their future upcoming by a playful activity from our imaginative psyche (both conscious and unconscious). Secondly, and more importantly for the sake of our argument regarding the *golden path* — *prescience* cannot, indeed, be *ultimate*! It is by the very forsaking of our own creative faculties while projecting, fractally, the need for a reified/deified³⁴ embodied God whose guidance is *absolute* and whose power is parallel to the overvaluing of our own egoic side of the psyche that an also *absolute prescience* arises. By taking the extreme position that most patriarchal civilizations have symbolically taken while elevating the conscious side of the psyche to the role of an emperor who is the sole owner and possessor of our unconscious processes, we tend to reify a need for a master/servant relationship collectively as well — a need for an Emperor that would have the same *ultimate* power which we have gifted our

³⁴ From now on we will use the conjunction of these words/concepts as “*re-deification*” or “*re-deified*” — an important concept for the Duneverse as the deification of certain characters holds profound and symbolical connections with the procedure of reification itself.

own egos with. Thus, the abstract master/servant relation is hypostatized socially as a fractal extension of our own individual and reified egos.

It is for such reason that we strive to impose our mental constructs, also, in an egoistic imperialist endeavor — this ephemeral attempt satisfies a demand to indeed extend further and outwardly the symbolical power the abstractions with which we identify ourselves and construct our egos. An impossible attempt at defeating death and impermanence while seeking an *absolutely* real and inherent self-existence — an inevitably flawed aim at achieving immortality, at achieving *being* in opposition to *becoming*. We have selected the following quotes which will provide a solid metaphorical instantiation that resonate such notions in the Duneverse:

[...] You see the absolute rule of the autocrat. All new things become dangerous frontier districts — new planets, new economic areas to exploit, new ideas or new devices, visitor — everything suspect. Feudalism takes firm hold, sometimes disguised as a politbureau or similar structure, but always present. Hereditary succession follows the line of power. The blood of the powerful dominates. The vice regents of heaven or their equivalent apportion of the wealth. And they know they must control inheritance or slowly let the power melt away. Now, do you understand Leto's Peace? (Herbert, 2008c, p.158)

This prior passage from *God Emperor of Dune* does comment on how this attempt of reification can be symbolically performed through hereditary succession as a means for extending one's self-projection towards eternity by virtue of their inheritors, through the imposition of *sameness* and the impediment of change. Both the next quotes will criticize institutionalized religions as a means for imposing such reified visions of the world while guaranteeing power for the ones who uphold dogmatic positions in such institutions:

First quote:

"I mean to disturb you!" The Preacher shouted. "It is my intention! I come here to combat the fraud and illusion of your conventional, institutionalized religion. As with all such religions, your institution moves toward cowardice, it moves toward mediocrity, inertia, and self-satisfaction."

[...]

"You, Priest in your mufti," The Preacher called, "you are a chaplain to the

self-satisfied. I come not to challenge Muad'Dib but to challenge you! Is your religion real when it costs you nothing and carries no risk? Is your religion real when you fatten upon it? Is your religion real when you commit atrocities in its name? Whence comes your downward degeneration from the original revelation? Answer me, Priest!" (Herbert, 2008a, p.334-335)

Second quote:

"Religion is the emulation of the adult by the child. Religion is the encystment of past beliefs: mythology, which is guesswork, the hidden assumptions of trust in the universe, those pronouncements which men have made in search of personal power, all of it mingled with shreds of enlightenment. And always the ultimate unspoken commandment is 'Thou shalt not question!' But we question. We break that commandment as a matter of course. The work to which we have set ourselves is the liberating of the imagination, the harnessing of imagination to humankind's deepest sense of creativity". (Herbert, 2008a, p.427)

As we hope to already have demonstrated the *Dune* series uses the absolute prescience motif as a metaphor for the very procedure of reification — by collectively forsaking our own *creative* and symbolical power to reimagine the future while projecting this capacity over a Deified being we forgo our autonomy and participation in the endless unfolding of new actual events. It is precisely by centralizing power in the grasps of a fractally ego-like being, a tyrannical God/Messiah which occupies the same ego-function to a wider arrangement where humans are seen as singular-organisms, that our individual imagination is also trapped — and an enclosed, limited, finite *imagination* is, metaphorically, indistinguishable from death, extinction and disaster. The *golden path* is the prescient vision that *unmakes* and *dissolves* the reified Fremen religious fanaticism which has led to the genocide of more than 60 billion humans during the jihad cast in Muad'Dib's name.

"We call his Golden Path 'the paper chase.' He blew it into the infinite winds and said: 'See? There is where it goes.' That's the Scattering."

"Some prefer to call it the Seeking."

"Could he really predict our future? Is that what interests you?"

Bullseye!

Great Honored Matre coughed into her hand.

“We say Muad'Dib created a future. Leto II un-created it.”

“But if I could know . . .”

“Please! Great Honored Matre! People who demand that the oracle predict their lives really want to know where the treasure is hidden.”

“But of course!”

“Know your entire future and nothing will ever surprise you? Is that it?”

(Herbert, 1987a, p.139)

The future SHOULD be open-empty and prescience's functioning is nothing but a creative endeavor that happens simultaneously by a conscious and an unconscious process of projecting meaning from understanding the deeply rooted relational ground of prior *inclusively transcended* conditions — this resonates deeply with the Buddhist notion of *karma*, in the sense that the future's possibilities already lay dormant in the past and present seeds; "A seed blown on the wind could be tomorrow's willow tree, Leto said" (Herbert, 2008c, p.231). A completely and absolutely powerful prescient capability would, however, lead to the conclusion that the future is already determined by present conditions, to a philosophical affirmation that a cause is, *simultaneously*, necessary and sufficient for a determined sequential upcoming³⁵. This would lay reality's ontological foundation as ultimately deterministic, an extreme philosophical stance upheld by many reductionist materialists and logical positivists which both *Dune* and the *New Wave* movement of SF position themselves firmly against.

Leto blinked at him, thinking: I, on the other hand, feel that words are mostly useful if they open for me a glimpse of attractive and undiscovered places. But the use of words is so little understood by a civilization which still believes unquestioningly in a mechanical universe of absolute cause and effect—obviously reducible to one single root-cause and one primary seminal-effect. (Herbert, 2008a, p.366)

A completely deterministic future where present/past causes are *sufficient* for their consequences is also strongly defended by many idealist/absolutists who, not coincidentally, have built reified visions of an all-powerful tyrannical God who is

³⁵ [...] Nagarjuna “showed the absurdities which result” from the notion of causality as “necessary and sufficient condition” — a definition which Heidegger believes to be a characteristic feature of the Western metaphysics of ontotheology from Plato to Nietzsche [...] (Kakol, 2009, p.138)

omniscient and omnipotent — the *golden path* IS the middle-way between both these extreme philosophical positions and in order to further provide theoretical fundamentals to sustain our argument we will display and explain a couple of profound important Madhyamaka notions and concepts which appear throughout *Dune* series. The following excerpt from *Children of Dune* displays the symbolical dangers of an *absolute* prescience and how they arise through ignorance (*avidyā*)³⁶ embodied in the faulty demand for a reified and enclosed reality — true wisdom is born out of understanding that we *cannot* cognize all there is, especially because the universe is limitless:

“You needn’t inquire whether I’ve made the mistake my father made. I’ve not looked outside our garden of time—at least not by seeking it out. Leave absolute knowledge of the future to those moments of déjà vu which any human may experience. I know the trap of prescience. My father’s life tells me what I need to know about it. No, grandmother: to know the future absolutely is to be trapped into that future absolutely. It collapses time. Present becomes future. I require more freedom than that”.

[...]

“Who is a Harkonnen?” he asked, goading. “Who is Beast Rabban? Any one of us, eh? But I digress. I speak the popular myth of prescience: to know the future absolutely! All of it! What fortunes could be made—and lost—on such absolute knowledge, eh? The rabble believes this. They believe that if a little bit is good, more must be better. How excellent! And if you handed one of them the complete scenario of his life, the unvarying dialogue up to his moment of death — what a hellish gift that’d be. What utter boredom! Every living instant he’d be replaying what he knew absolutely. No deviation. He could anticipate every response, every utterance—over and over and over and over and over and . . .”

Leto shook his head. “Ignorance has its advantages. A universe of surprises is what I pray for!” (Herbert, 2008a, p.136-137)

³⁶ We will explore this idea later on in the third chapter of our dissertation, but what’s being displayed here in this passage from *Children of Dune* is that true ignorance, in the Madhyamaka perspective, rises precisely when we do not understand that “stuff” are empty of inherent existence — this stance taken by Nagarjuna is what allows for reality to be open-empty and not deterministic. When one assumes their reified constructs to be *absolutely* real, by superimposing them, one would acquire an “absolute” knowledge — of course, such knowledge would not uphold itself on ultimate analysis, leading to suffering, pain and attachment. Knowing the universe is infinite and limitless *is* what permits for novelty and continuous actualization of events and entities.

A universe bound by *absolute* prescience and the ultimate symbolical reification centralized in the Godlike figures who uphold such *absolute precognition* would eliminate the potentiality for change, for transformation, for novelty and newness. The aforementioned process of individuation laid by Jung does mention how the harmonic constitution of the *self* by the integration between unconscious and consciousness does lead to novelty, *a new level of being* — with the recently and importantly built philosophical bridges between western philosophy and Buddhism we can easily perceive how the west has faultily interpreted Buddhist ideas and premises, as such *new level of being*, as conceptualized by Jung echoes the very process of equipoise acquired in a *nirvanic* state which is the mere realization that there is no absolute ontological and inherently existent ground for reality. Even the *middle-way* and *golden path* would cease to exist as one realizes the *lack of inherent existence* of *Beings/Non-Beings and Becomings* — their sole function is to direct one's praxis to this very meditative procedure necessary for acquiring equipoise by avoiding the reified extremes that favor *Being* over *Becoming*. Those terms just presented will make themselves more cognoscible in the following pages, though we ask you to ponder most attentively — if the *golden path* itself is, reified, would not that lead, potentially, to grasping, ignorance and suffering? The path to un-making an absolutely tragic future trapped in prescience requires that, ultimately, it is no-path at all. How can one tread towards the infinite and return relatively stable from such experience? How can one return from a deeply shattering experience, as the trance produced by the *water of life* and the integration of their Ancestral Memories while remaining in the *middle-way* by neither abiding in unconscious indissociability or egoic overindulgence?

“There's no single set of limits for all men. Universal prescience is an empty myth. Only the most powerful local currents of Time may be foretold. But in an infinite universe, local can be so gigantic that your mind shrinks from it.”

[...]

Leto sat up, sighed deeply. “There was no moral grandeur to my father's life, Namri; only a local trap which he built for himself.” (Herbert, 2008a, p.385)

To eventually arrive at our intended hypothesis — that the *golden path* is a metaphor for the non-teleological teleology of a pathless path which stands on a moment to moment continuous process of concrescence and coalescence, where

many become one and are increased by one, we must particularly emphasize two important “cosmological” (Kakol, 2009, p.194) aspects of Madhyamaka — *Śūnyatā* and *Pratītya-samutpāda*. The former is usually translated as *emptiness* and the latter as *co-dependent origination*, though we will employ Kakol’s terminology *asymmetrical interdependence*³⁷ as well as a Process Buddhist actualization of *Pratītya-samutpāda*.

Śūnyatā or *emptiness* points towards the realization that nothing exists at any level of reality that is absolutely or inherently real; thus, it is particularly understood, in western metaphysical terms, as a lack of essence or substance, a lack of an absolutely independent *Being* — it is due to such that Buddhism had risen as a response to the prevailing Vedism/Brahmanism of its time, which was grounded in a hyper-idealistic denial of the material world and the illusion created by *Māyā*, seeking to release one’s soul³⁸ (*ātman*) from the endless cycle of suffering and reincarnation (*saṃsāra*). It is not our purpose here to dive too profoundly into such religious historicity and its interrelationship, though we intend to highlight certain differences in order to demonstrate how some Buddhist traditions emerged as a *middle-way* between Hindu idealism/essentialism and materialistic reductionism. This *middle-way*, as we have argued previously, can be metaphorically equated to the process of individuation — neither is the ego entirely devoured by the unconscious’ darkness, nor is the unconscious fully tamed and suppressed by consciousness’s light. *Śūnyatā*’s realization could lead to the inference that we live in a state of constant impermanence, as *processes of continuous becoming* — since no-thing exists in an *absolute* and *inherent* state, reality could be better understood as a flow of continuous movement and transformation. Concerning *Śūnyatā* and the Madhyamaka, Garfield (1994, p. 220) comments:

For Nagarjuna and his followers, this point is connected deeply and directly

³⁷ For the ones more philosophically curious:

“This makes it possible to interpret dependent origination as asymmetrical interdependence — an idea that combines both asymmetrical bias of process philosophy and the symmetrical bias of Buddhism into a complementary theory of dependent origination. In this way, we are able to interpret the Madhyamika version of dependent origination — that opposites mutually implicate one another - as symmetrical interdependence when applied to opposites at the level of abstract *a*-terms (such as being and non-being) and as asymmetrical interdependence when applied to the ultimate contrast between *a*-terms and *r*-terms (such as being/non-being and becoming). (Kakol, 2009, p.127)

³⁸ Soul is not the proper translation of this term, but holds the most relatable and translatable notion regarding western terminology.

with the emptiness of phenomena. That is, for instance, when a Madhyamika philosopher says of a table that it is empty, that assertion by itself is incomplete. It invites the question, "empty of what?" And the answer is: "empty of inherent existence, or self-nature, or, in more Western terms, essence." Now, to say that the table is empty is hence simply to say that it lacks essence, and importantly, not to say that it is completely nonexistent. To say that it lacks essence, the Madhyamika philosopher will explain, is to say, as the Tibetans like to put it, that it does not exist "from its own side"

This previous passage already displays the common issue with the western interpretation of Madhyamaka, especially regarding the actual meaning of *Śūnyatā* — claiming that processes are *empty* does not lead to nihilistic interpretations of reality, as Nāgārjuna will demonstrate through the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*³⁹, it will only point towards the mere lack of *inherent existence (svabhāva)* of phenomena. This is a shared and compatible understanding between both Process Philosophy and the Madhyamaka, though these distinct frameworks will point and focus in different elements and unfoldings regarding such lack of *independent existence*. This is one of *Dune*'s main narrative motifs throughout all of its novels — that the very relational ground between *eco-organic* systems reveals the absurdity on claiming that an entity could exist by itself and how the very attempt of reification is a parallel procedure which tries to gift *absolute* and *independent* existence to any phenomena, thus ultimately and inevitably failing, as the *reduction ad absurdum* method applied by Nāgārjuna will demonstrate.

It is also observable throughout the series how the very striving for power, an overanalyzed aspect of the Duneverse, or how "*power attracts the corruptible*" could be understood as a strive performed by enduring and compound individuals in order to extend their own self-images and egos towards eternity — an impossible endeavor whose aim is to concreate the *abstraction* of oneself by impeding transformation and upholding political, symbolical and organic power. Grasping complete control over the future while seeking for a rigid never-ending repetition of oneself is a metaphorical trope in *Dune* that displays how reifying our hypostatized abstractions (either being a collective mental one or the very egoic image of oneself) can be ultimately deadly. As we have mentioned, we will further analyze the Bene Tleilax as

³⁹ The main treaty written by Nāgārjuna.

embodiments of self-reification in future chapters — it is relevant for our argument here to denote, though, how the leaders of this patriarchal order have repeatedly cloned⁴⁰ themselves (and having their prior memories⁴¹ reawakened) creating a metaphorical reified empire that is entirely concentrated and erected from their self-images and *mental constructs*. This theme and narrative motif has been overly explored in our previous work *Synchronicity and Prescience in Dune*, and it is sufficient here to posit how the Bene Tleilax symbolize, especially, this faultily attempt of forcing and superimposing one's self-image imperialistically, impeding change while seeking a self-centered eternity — they are precise metaphors for the philosophical extreme of self-indulgence and how such *corruptible* humans will dominate other entities to satisfy such egocentric pulses towards self-reification.

The realization of *emptiness* of phenomena would radically render the Bene Tleilax endeavors as deeply flawed while concomitantly possessing serious ethical consequences — as an example, the only female sex in their culture had no autonomy and were used entirely as incubation vessels for the birthing of the *Tleilaxu Masters* and the sexually mules called *Face Dancers*. Such is a common procedure taken by patriarchal societies which use the feminine creative force and power as a means for achieving one's immortality — we will explore with depth this idea in future chapters, though we permit ourselves here to denote how the overvaluing of the egoic function of the psyche is profoundly and symbolically connected with the unethical control over nature and other embodiments of the Great Mother Archetype⁴².

This narrative motif which equates our longing for a reified mental construct with limiting and forcing *sameness* onto a system is explored thoroughly in all of the six novels written by Frank Herbert — a symbolical element that also functions as a metaphor for our hubristic endeavors as humans, an important aspect of any SF novel that is descendant of the Gothic mold of composition, as Brian Aldiss argues. The following excerpt from *Children of Dune* is written by Harq Al-Ada, a Corrino descendant who is trained in the Bene Gesserit way by Lady Jessica herself.

⁴⁰ They are *gholas*, cloned out of the dead cells of their “first” self.

⁴¹ The Bene Tleilax have only been able to reawaken the memories of their “first” selves; though in the developments of *Heretics of Dune*, Duncan Idaho's ghola is able to re-integrate *all* of his prior selves memories.

⁴² Another idea analyzed in our previous Master thesis.

The human quest for this interdependent order and our niche within it represents a profound necessity. The quest can, however, be perverted into a conservative grip on sameness. This has always proved deadly for the entire system. (Herbert, 2008a, p.452)

The Bene Tleilax will also prove themselves useful for our upcoming arguments, especially on how the God-Emperor Leto II became their sole prophet/god in the sequential events and unfoldings after the fall of his empire. We ask you, dear reader, to ponder — why would Leto II leave none to inherit his Empire? Why would he allow for his concentrated power to dissolve, after ceasing? Why did he reform the Bene Gesserit breeding program and birthed from it a being capable to escape his *ultimate* prescient capabilities?

The imperialistic egoic attempt of triumphing against one's mortality by reifying its self-image and mental constructs symbolize the absurdity contained in any form of *substance metaphysics* or *reductionism* — especially when we consider the implications of such endeavor. *The golden path* is thus, a “*correction of one's initial excess of subjectivity*” (Whitehead) exactly because it will undermine the grasping roots in humanity's unconscious longing for a *complete and certain* future, for an enclosed self-existent reality that corresponds and equates to our hypostatizations. In order to understand the ultimate lethal trap set by an *absolute* prescient power one must first contend with *Śūnyatā* and endure it — encountering the equipoised middle-way between being and no-being.

The Madhyamika critique of any kind of independent self-nature in things and selves is very much compatible with the process thinker's critique of philosophies of being and substance (which is usually defined as that which requires nothing other than itself for its existence). For example, Whitehead argues that “there is no self-contained abstraction” and no such thing as “independent existence,” for all is interwoven together. (Kakol, 2009, p.133)

Considering our previous presentation of *Śūnyatā* it seems now evidently obvious why it would be incoherent to present a reading about the Duneverse based on structuralist premises — if the artistic object we intend to read posits a processual framework where “*all is interwoven together*” it would be absurd to ponder our

arguments on a prominent notion in structuralism that the universe is built out of an ontological arch-structure which our language refers to attempting to demonstrate meaning *itself*. How can *meaning* exist *independently* or be found in a text-by-itself if any phenomenon is ultimately *empty* of inherent existence? Is it not to commit a fallacy to treat a meaning in a text to be *self-existent*?

Śūnyatā will also lead us to another necessary principle for our analysis while displaying that, precisely because no actual entity has *inherent* or *independent* existence, that phenomena are interdependent, “*interwoven together*” and deeply relational. During the unfolding of this chapter we have presented the *Atreides Manifesto*, an important document written by Darwi Odrade which we, as readers, have access to only a couple of excerpts through the fifth and sixth novels of the series — *Śūnyatā*’s principle is already displayed in such document. “*It is the ultimate void, where no preordained screens occur upon which forms may be projected*” (Herbert, 1987b, p.393); the *ultimate void* can be understood as the very open-empty groundless spatial matrix represented by *emptiness*, and the very affirmation that there are no “*preordained screens*” corroborates and align our reading of the *Dune* series with the stance taken by both Process and Madhyamaka — this ultimately denotes the absurdity in taking any ontological ground of reality as *absolutely* or *inherently* existent. It is the lack of *independent* existence of any process that leads us to understand our role as organizers of the relative chaos and indissociability found in the depths of the unconscious, though such cannot be ultimately the ontological level for the universe as there is no *absolute ground* or *preordained screen*. The *imagination* or *creative* aspect also present in such organization of the *inclusively transcended* prior conditions that lead to novelty, an idea displayed in the *Manifesto*, is of utmost relevancy for our analysis here due to its importance in the Process Buddhism framework — “*You have only one awareness here — the screen of the magi: Imagination! Here, you learn what it is to be human. You are a creator of order, of beautiful shapes and systems, an organizer of chaos*”. (Herbert, 1987b, p.393)

[...] instead, there is a nondual (neither one nor two) relation between creative emptiness and dependent becoming. Rather than ontology (whether “fundamental” or not), process philosophy and Madhyamika have a cosmology of becoming and a “*sūnyatology*” of openness, between which

there is, as we have seen, a "negative identity" — that is, strictly speaking, neither identity nor non-identity. (Kakol, 2009, p.237)

If we consider Odrade as the unfolding of previous conditions set by the *golden path*, her *becoming* as the embodiment of wisdom and compassion (as we intend to demonstrate in the future chapters) has as necessary conditions the very middle-way created by Leto II. By being a *heretic* she does pose a profound need to demonstrate how the dogmatic reification present in her order, the Bene Gesserit, might lead to their extinction — especially when we consider how they have not accompanied the movement of the universe and have frozen themselves in a static hypostatized ontology. Surviving requires continuous adjustment as oneself finds relative equipoise while recognizing the very *cosmology of becoming* and the *sūnyatolgy* Odrade refers to in the *Manifesto*, as we have argued.

Such openness that arises from understanding how ultimately, any process or actual occasion of experience, is *empty* of inherent existence is not an assessment that reinforces *nihilistic* understandings of reality, as we have previously argued. It is *precisely* because actual processes lack independent existence and are thus, *relational* that they can be constantly actualized by the means of *inclusive transcendence* — if it was not so, further unfoldings in reality would fall either to be primarily deterministic where effects would be *sufficiently* present in its causes or entirely meaningless to a point that no action taken by individuals should be gifted with ethical responsibility. It is a common misunderstanding regarding the ultimate lack of inherent meaning in western philosophy that leads to a reified *nihilistic* perspective on one extreme or to a completely deterministic and reductionist stance on the other.

The *golden path* as the *correction of one's excess of subjectivity* is the means for humanity's survival by dissolving our profoundly rooted assumptions that our hypostatized conceptions of reality *are* reality-in-itself. The "*conservative grip on sameness*" (Herbert, 2008a, p.452) promoted by self-reified ontologies lead to an imbalanced relational field between *master/servants*, a fractally and collectively projected repetition of the over-valuing of our own egoic psyche function, as demonstrated metaphorically by the Bene Tleilax. The dissolution of a complete prescient power centralized on the God Emperor Leto II is, thus, the *middle-way* free from extreme philosophical stances whose structure lay on reified ontological

grounds erected on a notion of *Being* (svabhāva) which ought be *inherently* real.

By realizing the ultimate lack of *independent existence* of phenomena, the future remains an *empty canvas* and is thus un-reified — for it is *sūnyatā* and its infinite potentiality that permits the unfolding of processes, in a never-ending manifold and continuous *becoming*. Lady Jessica and Odrade are both *heretic* characters that embody the continuous transformative aspect of the Great Mother Archetype⁴³ by transgressing the reified dogmas present in the Bene Gesserit order — we have selected the next two passages from the *Dune* series which are attributed to these characters, respectively, and that echo our current argument in this dissertation.

The first one takes place during Harq Al-Ada training conclusion in *Children of Dune* and Jessica demonstrates how the prescient oracle is not *fatally deterministic* but an act of *creative synthesis* that *inclusively transcends* humanity's underlying myths while concluding that the future *should* remain uncertain and *empty*, for it is an abstraction and, thus, not concrete yet — only a potential becoming.

"[...] The future remains uncertain and so it should, for it is the canvas upon which we paint our desires. Thus always the human condition faces a beautifully empty canvas. We possess only this moment in which to dedicate ourselves continuously to the sacred presence which we share and create."
(Herbert, 2008a, p.453)

The second passage voiced by Darwi Odrade as the current Mother Superior⁴⁴, which takes place in the sixth novel *Chapterhouse: Dune*, will present both the already discussed ideas of *inclusive transcendence* and *emptiness* — we are here basing our dissertation in Kazi Adi Shakti's position that these aspects form the basic ultimate principles for the Process Buddhist framework (a synthesis envisioned by Kakol and currently being proposed and perfected by Kazi herself). "Never ignore the banality of recorded histories. As a Reverend Mother, you will relearn history in each new moment." "Truth is an empty cup" (Herbert, 1987a, p.298). Odrade is arguing how Reverend Mothers, due to the integrated *Ancestral Memories*, are endowed with the capacity of constantly rearranging and concrescing

⁴³ This *Dune* series' trope has been argued in our previous thesis where we argue for understanding some matriarchal orders in the Duneverse to be metaphorical instantiations of the Great Mother Archetype.

⁴⁴ The leader of the Bene Gesserit.

prior and past experiences in an unending process of *inclusive transcendence* — every moment is an *open-empty cup* possessing infinite possibilities of reorganizing history in each new moment. As Shakti (2024, online access) argues:

Open/Emptiness and Inclusive-Transcendence themselves are not beings, entities, substances, properties or even essences. They are principles because they are the most generic characteristics applicable to and exemplified by all realities, realities which are neither entirely abstract/universal nor entirely concrete/particular but both at once. The principles are not entirely abstract or universal, because they refer to actual aspects of the world. The principles are not entirely concrete or particular, because they are virtual qualities without discernible boundaries. They are both abstract/universal and concrete/particular because they are generic qualities that are always instantiated by any actual occasion of experience. They are not entirely immanent because they are not of the world, but they are not entirely transcendent either because they are in the world. Therefore they are both *immanent transcendentals*: conditions for the possibility of experience that cannot be found outside of experience.

It seems sufficiently demonstrated how Process Philosophy and Madhyamika Buddhism carry important notions for this dissertation's argument — due to the open-empty invariant aspect of the universe that actual occasions of experience are constantly transformed, changed and rearranged in this *inclusive transcendence* process of *creative synthesis* where *many become one and are increased by one*. In order to escape one's hubris and evading philosophical extreme stances based on *substance* ontologies, the *golden path* offers unending reintegration of humanity's possibilities free from a deterministic and fatal *future* where the openness of *sūnyatā* is precisely what permits the arising and ceasing of forms in such infinite *dance* of impermanence — an absolutely and inherently real hypostatization would inevitably lead to horrific consequences as one cannot hope to superimpose its own hypostatizations over all the also infinite actual occasions in the universe. To even suppose one could do so, have complete control over nature/reality/universe is a consequence of a hubristic *initial excess of subjectivity* mostly found in reifying and patriarchal ontologies which favor *Being/Non-Being* (abstractions) over *Becoming* (relative concrescence).

Such invariant aspect of the universe, *sūnyatā* or *open-emptiness*, as

previously presented in this dissertation and which the *Dune* series utilizes to display the impermanent aspect of the universe demonstrates how no instance of reality can exist *absolutely* and *inherently* separated from other actual entities and occasions of experiences — this, we argue, can only reinforce the infinitely relational field where *Becoming* is taken as a continuous and manifold procedure which translates how such infinite actual entities are profoundly interconnected and interdependent. By comprehending such constant movement flow invariantly encountered in our universe we are led to perceive a profound interdependence amongst all elements which constitute reality — it is precisely because there are no *inherent* existent entity that phenomena are able to arise, relatively endure amidst constant change and *becoming*, and eventually cease; as it is found in the Heart Sutra⁴⁵ “Form is no other than emptiness, Emptiness no other than form. Form is only emptiness, Emptiness only form” (online access). The passage presented in the Heart Sutra is very relevant to display how western interpretations of Buddhism had been mostly faulty, as we have been arguing throughout this chapter.

In other words, microcosmic reality is present in the macrocosmic, just as the latter is further integrated in the former as Whitehead demonstrates — this can be further extended to display how ego and unconscious are also continuously participating in such process of *inclusive transcendence*, coalescing just as the atomic universe manifests itself both as particle (ego) and wave (unconscious), and just as particle instantiations never arise from a state of complete dissociation from the quantum flux that birthed them. *Dune* often explores metaphorically the duplicity behavioral aspect of the quantum world either as *waves* or *particles* — we have deeply discussed in our previous thesis the importance of such theories for the *New Wave* movement of SF and also for *Dune* and we intend to reassess it thoroughly in our following chapter regarding *prescience*. It suffices here to say that such idea is already present in the *Atreides Manifesto* previously presented in the current chapter — *there are no atoms, only waves and motion all around*. The collapse of the wave function into *beautiful shapes and forms* is akin to the process of *inclusive transcendence* where we coalesce and concreate the prior conditions in novel manners — the ego side of the psyche and our consciousness is gifted with such autonomy of re-arranging one’s unconscious in a never-ending *process of becoming*.

⁴⁵ An important text for Mahayana Buddhism.

The wave (unconscious) presents the relational and open-empty field of conditions that are necessary for future concrescent events to arise after and collapse in its particular forms as particles (egos/actual entities). We shall return to such notions in the sequential chapter as Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle is often linked to the function of *prescience* while also being an important theoretical development, next to Gödel's incomplete theorems and Einstein's relativity theory, for the arising of the *New Wave* movement — and as we have previously argued, *Dune* series is one of its most prominent literature works. As Kakol (2009, p.214) argues, the usage of the term *openness* instead of *emptiness* does carry the allusion and imagery contained in Mahayana's texts of *infinite space* — a *creative-matrix* akin to a cosmic womb as a relational field would allow for actual entities to acquire their relative form and structure, where *empty is form and form is empty*.

More recently, Nance McCagney has argued that openness is indeed a far better translation than emptiness, and has backed this up with impressive evidence. She contends that Nāgārjuna's usage of the word *sūnyatā* was inspired by the Prajñā-pāramitā literature's imagery of infinite space (*ākāśa*), which is an open-ended ether that is both existent and non-existent. Although Nāgārjuna reinterpreted this as being neither existent nor non-existent, it is still more appropriate, argues McCagney to translate *sūnyatā* as "openness" than as "emptiness".

Thus, the *golden path* seems a metaphor for the reconnection of human ego to the cosmic womb of open-emptiness from which it had been birthed — in the very attempt of reifying one's self-image and mental constructs we tend to disconnect ourselves from such prior groundless ground in order to grant *inherent existence* (*svabhāva*) to our hypostatizations. The previously displayed metaphor regarding the dualistic behavior of the quantum level of reality (particle-wave) is extensively employed in the *Duneverse* while translating the Madhyamaka notion of *Śūnyatā* — observable phenomena's *emptiness* lies precisely in their interdependence and interconnection with all other prior *inclusively transcended* processes that condition their relative existence and concrescence.

Given that there is no *inherent* essence, no ontologically fundamental ground from which existence arises for Process Buddhism — it would seem entirely incoherent to apply a structuralist epistemology in this dissertation, as we have often

argued. Such episteme presupposes the existence of *substances* and *essences*, being rooted firmly in the opposition between *essence* and *appearance* as a dualistic dimension for truthfulness or falseness. It takes the fallacious endeavor of demanding that for phenomena to be *true* it requires truth-in-itself as a necessary and sufficient condition only found in the conceptual layer of *substances* or *essences* as opposed to *appearances* which would be always somewhat *un-true*.

It is, thus, observable how structuralist episteme posits a dichotomy between *appearances* and *essences* that is, to an extent, nonexistent from the Madhyamaka perspective as the very ontological ground of *substances* and *things-in-themselves* is removed from the cosmology presented by Nāgārjuna. As we have previously argued, Buddhism emerged as a response to Brahmanic forms of idealism, which were themselves based in the same antithesis later articulated by Lévi-Strauss. By employing Process Buddhism as our theoretical framework in order to analyze the Duneverse, we would be committing logical and epistemological fallacies by concomitantly base our ponderings regarding Herbert's work on the philosophical premises upheld by structuralism — while structuralism seeks a cosmic ontological Archi-structure that *absolutely* supports reality and the world, Madhyamaka Buddhism, through Nāgārjuna's bi-negation and *reduction ad absurdum*, displays how any inherent and foundational basis for reality is ultimately absurd, especially when we consider how nothing can be said to arise without being *dependently originated*, i.e. nothing would remain unscathed and disconnected from all other impermanent processes unfolding in space-time's continuum. For Nāgārjuna the very reification of *svabhāva* (essence in wester terms) is a consequence of our ignorance and cravings that lead to suffering, and thus could never signify a reality *in-itself*, as there are no actual entities which could be inseparable from the conditions necessary for their arising and ceasing. Even if we were to vociferate in favor of an ontologically fundamental structure of reality, it would immediately lose its status as a solid, permanent, static, and *inherently substantial* ground, ceasing to bear such foundational status we have initially sought to assign it.

It is important to denote how the lack of an *ontological* ground does not lead to an ultimately nihilistic perspective, as we have often demonstrated. Our argument, as displayed in *Dune* series, is that if no occasion of experience arises without being *dependently originated* than it is of utmost necessity to understand such conditions in order to sublimate them or transform them — the very reifying attempt to gift our

existences as *inherently real*, as we have minutely demonstrated, leads inevitably to horrific degrees of suffering based on our hubris. Removing an ontological ground for experience does not mean there is no ground whatsoever — only that such regression procedure could be performed infinitely as any phenomena would have its own prior conditions; any ground we assume would, thus, be only a *relative* and *conditional* one which concomitantly offers the necessary elements for a *creative synthesis* process of *inclusive transcendence*. We have selected a passage from *Chapterhouse: Dune* that displays with precision such notion:

Instincts and memories of all types . . . even Archives—none of these things spoke for themselves except by compelling intrusions. None carried weight until formulated in a living consciousness. But whoever produced the formulation tipped the scales. *All order is arbitrary!* Why this datum rather than some other? Any Reverend Mother knew events occurred in their own flux, their own relative environment. Why couldn't a Mentat Reverend Mother act from that knowledge?

"Do you refuse counsel?" That was Tamalane. Was she siding with Bell?

"When have I ever refused counsel?" Odrade let her outrage show. "I am refusing another of Bell's Archival merry-go-rounds."

Bellonda intruded. "Then, in reality—"

"Bell! Don't talk to me about reality!" Let her simmer in that! Reverend Mother and Mentat! *There is no reality. Only our own order imposed on everything. A basic Bene Gesserit dictum.*

There were times (and this was one of them) when Odrade wished she had been born in an earlier era—a Roman matron in the long pax of the aristocrats, or a much-pampered Victorian. But she was trapped by time and circumstances. (Herbert, 1987a, p.172)

As we can perceive in the previous passage, the notion that "*there is no reality. Only our own order imposed on everything*" does echo the Madhyamika understanding that there is no *inherent* and *absolute* ontological ground for the universe — no absolute *essence* from which phenomena is derived of. Reality is only cognoscible at a conventional level, and thus, requires our awareness of the conditional implications and spatiotemporal slices we have superimposed for such conventionality to arise — that does not lead, nonetheless, to a nihilist understanding of the world, as our fellow western metaphysics would imply. After all *empty is form and form is empty*, as the wisdom of the *heart sutra* would conclude — the very

open-empty extensive-creative-matrix is what permits and allows for continuous transformation and incessant becoming, for processes to arise, relatively endure and finally cease.

As such phenomenon arises in *asymmetrical interdependence* to its prior conditions, it acquires relative stability and form — though such homeostasis is not permanent, ever-enduring or *inherent* in any manner whatsoever. The cognition of reality, thus, is *dependent* to its environment and never *separate* (i.e. independent) from it, as wisely posited by Odrade in the previous excerpt — “*Any Reverend Mother knew events occurred in their own flux, their own relative environment*”. This resonates very deeply the Madhyamika understanding of *asymmetrical interdependence* or *co-dependent origination* (*pratītya-samutpāda*) which is also severely relevant for *Dune* series as a whole and inextricably interrelated with *Śūnyatā* — no process that arises has *inherent existence* (*svabhāva*) precisely because there is nothing that could become without being dependently originated.

To continue our argument and potentially clarify any questions and doubts regarding such alien concepts to western culture, we must now delve deeper into the Madhyamaka principle named *pratītya-samutpāda*. As one realizes that no-thing exists *essentially* or in completely separate state from its conditions, it only becomes logically inferable to perceive all instantiations and manifestations of reality as interdependent — despite the fact that such phenomenon are open-empty and not *inherently real*, they are relatively (*conditionally*) real and cognizable. For Madhyamaka, thus, the necessary conditions for the instantiation of any particular processes within reality are intimately interdependent and it is precisely the infinite interrelations of all existing elements across all equally infinite levels of reality that engender the necessary conditions for the manifestation of any given effect. As we have previously discussed in our Master’s thesis, this clearly opposes the prominent notion of the observer being a separate entity from any given actual occasion or actual experience — not coincidentally *Dune* will base many of its metaphors on the conclusions drawn from the double-slit experiment and Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, as we have displayed previously by the *Atreides Manifesto* — the manifestation of any given set of order, or any system, depends on the prior possibilities laid by the wave-form as necessary conditions, but also is interdependent on how the interaction with such give potentialities can be rearranged by an act of creative synthesis that would collapse the wave-like behavior and

instantiate a potential in its singular particle-form.

In his critique of causation, Nāgārjuna is specifically concerned with the type of causation known as *hetu*, which usually means a general, root, or primary cause. Technically speaking, a *hetu* is a necessary and sufficient cause that acts as a "power" that deterministically produces an effect.⁴⁶ [...] Nāgārjuna does not critique the "cause" known as *pratyaya*, which is really a necessary but not sufficient condition, or *sine qua non*. [...] The *pratyayas* are the conditions upon which events arise dependently, and can be classified into four types: primary causal condition, supporting condition, contiguous condition, and dominant condition. (Kakol, 2009, p.136)

From the moment we are able to recognize that nothing exists *inherently*, by itself, it becomes highly intuitive to infer that all of the relatively existing instantiations in reality are interdependent with the countless other entities that are coexistent and, therefore, by a continuous process of *inclusive transcendence* and *creative synthesis* are integrated, rearranged, and transformed. Such perspective leads to an understanding of the world as movement and motion as any process is engendered out of a *continuous becoming* — a dance of impermanence where no phenomena can ever remain the same. If we take the example of the patriarchal order of the Bene Tleilax we can realize how symbolically patriarchal societies, dominated by an egoic overvaluation that suppresses the vital force of the unconscious, are continuously attempting to stop such movement by reifying its mental constructs and self-images — a deadly and lethal attempt of halting the *flow of impermanence* and their becoming in favor of an essential hypostatized *Being*. Such effort to impede life's and nature's fluidity is a self-centered attempt of acquiring eternity (i.e. *inherent* existence) and permanence in a universe that is ultimately incapable of absolute repetition, due to its virtual infinitely potentiality dormant in its *continuous* becoming. The *golden path*, thus, symbolizes the reconnection of one's ego and *initial excess of subjectivity* with the open-emptiness represented by the unconscious, the latter representing the organic and relational womb of infinite processes and their becoming while displaying the very impermanence described by the principle of *sūnyatā*.

⁴⁶ “[...] a civilization which still believes unquestioningly in a mechanical universe of absolute cause and effect—obviously reducible to one single root-cause and one primary seminal-effect.” (HERBERT, 2008a, p.366)

Garfield accurately elucidates these Madhyamaka conceptions through the writings of one of its foremost philosophers, Nāgārjuna:

[...] that its existence as the object that it is, as a table, depends not only upon it or on any purely nonrelational characteristics, but upon us as well. That is, if this kind of furniture had not evolved in our culture, what appears to us to be an obviously unitary object might instead be correctly described as five objects [...]. The table, we might say, is a purely arbitrary slice of space-time chosen by us as the referent of a single name, and not an entity demanding, on its own, recognition and a philosophical analysis to reveal its essence. That independent character is precisely what it lacks, on this view.[...]

when we say that a phenomenon is empty, we say, *inter alia*, that it is impermanent, that it depends upon conditions, and that its identity is dependent upon convention. (2004, p.220-231)

It is relevant to reassert that *co-dependent origination* is not affirming an entirely deterministic worldview, as we have hoped to demonstrate previously — for Nāgārjuna is precisely criticizing the type of causation labeled *hetu* which can lead to such “*deterministically produced effect*” (according to Kakol). There is some level of autonomy on how any given parts of a system will be coalesced and concreated as actual occasions so much so that one cannot fully predict how a whole will integrate its parts. That is why Kakol has claimed that *pratītya-samutpāda* could be understood as an *asymmetrical interdependence* — for the manner in which parts are *inclusively transcended* in a system depends on an act of *creative synthesis* (either conscious or unconscious) and such conditional field can only function as necessary conditions which display the array of possibilities which such actual occasions could be concreated, not determining them because those conditions are not *sufficient* ones. This is the very metaphor implied by *Dune* series while referring to the functioning of prescience as a capacity of piercing space-time’s veils as an act of *creativity* that take into account a wide myriad of past (*inclusively transcended*) conditions current in the present and the unfolding of the present conditions into potential future subsequent events — note, however, such conditions existing in the present are not *sufficient* for the future is not yet determined, and thus, absolute prescience is “*an empty myth*”.

How past conditions are integrated and actively working in the present as much as how, spatially, parts are integrated and actively working to the function of

wider wholes demonstrates how *asymmetrical interdependence* is a very important concept to further understand the Duneverse in all its literary novels. For such reason as well we have decided to integrate all of the novels written by Frank Herbert — as each plot contains and transcends the chronologically prior ones, we are led to perceive how the chronotope structure through which the novels are *asymmetrically interdependently* woven from resonates the process of *inclusive transcendence* where *many become one and are increased by one*. Also the notion on how systems are integrated from the minute microcosmic to the more encompassing macrocosmic ones is constantly referred by *Dune* series, especially regarding *eco-organic systems*, as we have argued throughout this chapter. The following quote from *Children of Dune* does translate this notion how the future is not entirely determined by the present-past conditions as a metaphor on how Leto II was not bound to follow the path set by his father's, Paul Muad'Dib's, prescient powers and visions.

The child who refuses to travel in the father's harness, this is the symbol of man's most unique capability. "I do not have to be what my father was. I do not have to obey my father's rules or even believe everything he believed. It is my strength as a human that I can make my own choices of what to believe and what not to believe, of what to be and what not to be."

—LETO ATREIDES II, THE HARQ AL-ADA BIOGRAPHY (Herbert, 2008a, p.568)

By considering both the previously explained Madhyamika principles, *sūnyatā* and *pratītya-samutpāda*, as well as how the future (or, also, how more inclusive wholes coalesce and creatively synthesize their prior conditions) is not yet determined by its conditions, though limited in its myriad of possible outcomes by such relational field, we could be led to realize one of the most important motifs of *Dune* series' as a whole — *impermanence*. Reification is, symbolically, the manner with which we strive for a completely *permanent* reality — one that would endure *independent* of its conditions and externalities (or internalities).

As Nāgārjuna has demonstrated it is precisely the absurdity of assuming *something* could exist without being *co-dependently originated* that leads to craving and ultimate suffering — the Duneverse displays how to sustain a completely static and permanent hypostatization leads not only to our own extinction but also to the

obliteration of any system that seems subversive or different than the erected ontological ground we have built and claimed to be *inherently* real. The Jihad that led to the genocide of 61 billion humans, for instance, had risen as the Fremen religion built upon Muad'Dib's re-deification encountered innumerable different religious forms throughout the galactic empire — faced with *heretical* forms of belief, and in order to further reify their mental constructs, the Fremen zealots felt the necessity of entirely wiping any multiplicity distinct from their narrow superimposed ontological order and dogmas. Reification leads inexorably to imperialism and to the attempt of *ultimately* controlling reality and the universe as a means for strengthening one's mental fabrications in order to *prove* it to be *absolutely equivalent to reality itself*. To achieve such equalization between the universe and one's hypostatized imagery it is required that the world ceases to move, becomes permanent or, otherwise, the reified order would lose its grip and power over nature, the world and others — “The quest can, however, be perverted into a conservative grip on sameness. This has always proved deadly for the entire system.” (Herbert, 2008a, p.452)

As we have previously explored in our Master's thesis both Frank Herbert and his work here analyzed are profoundly concerned with ecological relationships between humans and other forms of beings — this could also be extended as an important element for Mahayana Buddhism (which Madhyamaka is part of). “Herbert was affected by the American Indian worldview belonging to his closest friend, Herbie Hansen of the Quileute tribe, who insisted: “The Earth is dying, it is being misused by non-Indian civilizations that *take* and do not *give*”. (Shelton, 2020, p.7) This idea has been cleverly integrated in the voice of Stilgar in Villeneuve's adaptation *Dune part one* (2021) when the Fremen naib encounters and meets Duke Leto and Paul for the first time in the narrative.

Any *eco-organic system* constructs its homeostasis from a continuous exchange of information and internal elements which are *inclusively transcended* by the very processes which are part of such arrangement. Information flows in all the imaginable ways in those *eco-organic* systems — top-down or bottom-up, sideways, from past-present to future, etc. The procedure elucidated by Herbert's close and indigenous friend on how “*non-Indian civilizations take and do not give*” could be metaphorically understood as the process of reification and the imperialist necessity of reassuring *permanence* by complete domination of the informational flow within any system — by channeling the resources and elements to the hands of a few who

uphold symbolical and material power over the entirety of that arrangement, their hypostatizations can be guaranteed to *endure* more, and therefore, acquire *permanence*. Without participating in the exchange procedure where energy could flow in any imaginable manner, such non-Indian civilizations hope to acquire precisely what they ultimately always lack — *inherent* and *absolute* existence, an essential character, in Sanskrit terms *svabhāva*. Is the amount of suffering forced onto all the sentient beings that are interdependent with such *eco-organic systems* justified for the sake of one's demand for *permanence* and one's *excess of subjectivity*? The understanding presented by the *Dune* series and for both Process philosophy and Madhyamaka Buddhism is that the very process of reification leads, ultimately and inexorably, to our own demise and the horrific demise of others who suffer the consequences of our own misled grasping of the *impermanence flow* of reality.

"You cannot control the future," The Preacher whispered, and the sound of his voice was filled with effort as though he lifted a great weight.

[...]

And his father was right: trying for some ultimate control of the universe, you only built weapons with which the universe eventually defeated you. To choose and manage a vision required you to balance on a single, thin thread—playing God on a high tightwire with cosmic solitude on both sides. Neither contestant could retreat into death-as- surcease-from-paradox. Each knew the visions and the rules. All of the old illusions were dying. And when one contestant moved, the other might countermove. The only real truth that mattered to them now was that which separated them from the vision background. There was no place of safety, only a transitory shifting of relationships, marked out within the limits which they now imposed and bound for inevitable changes. (Herbert, 2008a, p.508)

If the future arrangement and integration of prior conditions remains an *empty canvas* even against our faulty self-excess attempt of ultimately controlling its possibilities, we are left with the sheer realization and inference grounded in the equipoise acquired by the meditative praxis that the universe *changes*, it is transformed constantly *precisely* because of the continuous exchange of information

in the *asymmetrically interdependency* of holons⁴⁷ and their lack of *inherent existence* — it is in order to escape the lethal snare created and envisioned by Muad'Dib's prescience that Leto II's *becomes* an embodiment of reification, a Godly being whose ultimate prescient powers are entrapping. We shall return to this argument in the following pages, though we ask you careful reader to hold this thought — the *golden path* is a path of dissolving humanity's reification, and thus, could be understood to be a never-ending path. However, the beginning of this pathless path increases the pain/suffering to guarantee our own survival by exactly displaying *what it is to be avoided* — the extreme philosophical stances that favor *Being/Non-Being* over *becoming*.

We have selected some excerpts from the *Dune* series that exemplify, especially, the principle of *impermanence* so eloquently referred by the God-Emperor Leto Atreides II:

First passage: "It is said that there is nothing firm, nothing balanced, nothing durable in all the universe — that nothing remains in its state, that each day, some time each hour, brings change." (Herbert, 2008a, p.399)

Second passage:

"No, Moneo is the past. He is quick to raise the traditional aristocratic barriers against all frontiers. You must understand the power of those barriers. They not only enclose planets and land on those planets, they enclose ideas. They repress change." (Herbert, 2008c, p.380)

Third passage:

"There's no reassuring ceiling over you, Moneo. Only an open sky full of

⁴⁷ [...] the Madhyamika analysis does not discover any simple parts that cannot be further divided. This is similar to the understanding of actual occasions as "holons" that are both parts of greater wholes and wholes containing smaller parts. There are no absolute parts, nor there are any absolute wholes. But the division and multiplication are not in the present — the notion of "simultaneity" being philosophically, psychologically, and scientifically meaningless — but an infinite regress into the past and future, respectively. However, the very idea of an infinite series of sublations of part-in-whole leads to a one-way incommensurability and discontinuity that makes it impossible to fully predict the next level, which implies that each synthesis is creative, for there is nothing in the parts which dictates how they will be combined into a whole (for the effect does not pre-exist in the cause). Finally, process philosophers can agree with the Madhyamika when they say that there is no whole over-and-above an aggregate of parts (e.g. a chariot), because the ontological principle states that apart from actual occasions there is nothing. (An abstraction like "chariot" only exists in actual occasions, not outside of them). (Kakol, 2009, p.184-185)

changes. Welcome it. Every sense you possess is an instrument for reacting to change. Does that tell you nothing?"

[...]

You dread the imperialism of consciousness," Leto said, "and you are right to fear it. [...]" (Herbert, 2008c, p.560)

Fourth passage:

By your belief in singularities, in granular absolutes, you deny movement, even the movement of evolution! While you cause a granular universe to persist in your awareness, you are blind to movement. When things change, your absolute universe vanishes, no longer accessible to your self-limiting perceptions. The universe has moved beyond you. (Herbert, 1987b, p.368)

Fifth passage:

In all my universe I have never seen no law of nature, unchanging and inexorable. This universe presents only changing relationships which are sometimes seen as laws by short-lived awareness. These fleshly sensoria which we call self are ephemera withering in the blaze of infinity, fleetingly aware of temporary conditions which confine our activities and change as our activities change. If you must label the *Absolute*, use its proper name: *Temporary*. (Herbert, 2008c, p.565)

All of the previous excerpts resonate with the Process and Buddhist principles previously presented in this chapter — *open-emptiness* and the inexistence of “*permanent and inexorable*” laws of nature, as posited by Leto II, lead to the realization that “*that nothing remains in its state, that each day, some time each hour, brings change*”, that the universe and all of its layers and actual occasions are in a constant flux of transformation, a continuous *process of becoming*. When we consider specifically the last passage we see a clear metaphor for the *asymmetrical interdependence* of phenomena — the “*changing relationships*” might seem absolute laws from the perspective of “*short-lived awareness*” but in the “*blaze of infinity*” are nothing more than temporary conditions that are constantly changing, exactly through the procedure of *inclusive transcendence* extensively discussed previously. Such apparently “laws” cannot possess, nonetheless, any *inherent* and *permanent*

existence as they are also *dependently originated*. The “*ephemeral self*” bound to our “*fleshly sensoria*” do play an important role of labeling and interacting with the world in order to make our experiences cognoscible though we often tend to fall prey to a hubristic attempt at reifying our mental operations and symbols, an attempt of making such observable repetitive behavior into a self-existent reality that is concrete *by its own end*.

The second, third and fourth passages do show us how easily and eagerly humanity is overtaken by a longing for *permanence* and *eternity*, blinding ourselves to movement and change while erecting “*barriers against all frontiers*” and “*enclosing ideas, repressing change*”. By an initial excess of subjectivity, by overvaluing and giving too much power to our conscious side of the psyche, our egoic attempt to have complete and tyrannical control over the unconscious wave-form flow of impermanence leads inevitably to our own demise and the demise of others, as we have argued throughout this chapter.

Sentient beings like us are simply nodal points of self-awareness, recursive movements of energy in an otherwise undifferentiated dynamic field. As thinking beings, we perform analytic and synthetic mental operations in our contemplation of reality. Some of those operations rigidify, becoming more or less durable and persistent mental constructs, which we then use as filters to select and interpret what we think is significant in reality, thereby narrowing further our already limited spectrum of perception. Then we make the final error of believing that the interpretive constructs we superimpose on reality are reality itself, instead of what they actually are, imperfect representations that served a particular need at a particular time. This wrong understanding causes us suffering. Indeed, it is the only cause of suffering. (Wallis, 2013, p.28-29)

It is relevant that, before concluding our argument, we dive with profoundness in some elements and motifs around the unfolding of Leto Atreides II's government in order to avoid potential misunderstandings regarding this character. Many *Dune* aficionados end up committing an erroneous reading of the series by accepting Herbert's reflections upon his own work — the famous quotes from Frank on how the series are a *cautionary tale on following charismatic leaders*. Even if we were to take Herbert's words for granted, we would have to insert them in their correct assessment — he is mentioning, specifically, the actions taken by Muad'Dib and the

consequences of *him* as a leader, and as we have shown throughout this chapter it was Paul's visions that created horrific events while it was Leto II, by taking a different path than his father, that was bound to un-create the extinction outcomes foreseen by Muad'Dib. However, it is important here to denote that we cannot just accept a writer's reading of his own work as *ultimately* the only reading available — the creation of meaning depends on the possibilities upheld by an abstraction (the work itself, in this case the *Dune* series) as it is *inclusively transcended* by a reader during the actual occasion of reading; "But it was left to Leto II to do the audacious thing, recognizing that a real creation is independent of its creator" (Herbert, 2008a, p.539). Considering Paul to be an ultimate villain is also a fallacious understanding by many readers who accept Herbert's words blindly without further reflection — although we do hold that Muad'Dib falls prey to his hubris as he tries to control and leash the Fremen's jihad and re-deification of himself as prophet and messiah, that does not lead to the reductionist conclusion that he is, literarily, a *villain*. Let us present once again a passage from *Chapterhouse: Dune* to fruitfully ponder about the onset of the *golden path*:

"We call his Golden Path 'the paper chase.' He blew it into the infinite winds and said: 'See? There is where it goes.' That's the Scattering."
 "Some prefer to call it the Seeking."
 "Could he really predict our future? Is that what interests you?"
 Bullseye!
 Great Honored Matre coughed into her hand.
 "We say Muad'Dib created a future. Leto II un-created it."
 "But if I could know . . ."
 "Please! Great Honored Matre! People who demand that the oracle predict their lives really want to know where the treasure is hidden." (Herbert, 1987a, p.139)

We will further explore in future chapter how the Bene Tleilax could be, indeed and in literary criticism terms, the villains of the Duneverse while displaying their symbolic relationship to the image of Muad'Dib as the procedure of reification plays the villainizing role for entirety of the series. Some of our previous ponderations regarding Leto II that were left unanswered will now be retaken in order to satisfy our main argument that the *golden path*, having its beginning traced by the God-Emperor

himself, represents the *seeking* for dissolving such *solidification* of our abstractions which we too eagerly identify ourselves with. Firstly it is important to denote that Leto II did not leave descendants — he fully concentrated power (political, mytho-symbolical and material) into his own grasps and images, though not leaving any creature to inherit his empire after he was gone; neither did the *tyrant*⁴⁸ allowed any of the Bene Tleilax to further clone him turning him into a ghola whose existence could be extended indefinitely — both these narrative motifs are important for us to realize that the reifying procedure performed by the ones in power and how, as we have extensively argued, such longing for *eternity* by means of controlling inheritance and extending one's self-image endlessly are characteristic of an extreme metaphysical position that favors *Being* and *substances* over *becoming*. Leto II did not apply or enforced any of such self-reifying mechanisms during his empire, at least in the regards of the subsequent unfoldings that would take place after the fall of his government — one could say that Leto II did build a zealot religion upon his name, but as we look closer and minutely his intent was for his *ultimate* power to be utterly dissolved and not further extended. The following quote from *God Emperor of Dune* displays how Leto understood the complications with institutionalized religions and how easily they lead to a crystallization of our hypostatizations:

"I have created a holy obscenity!" he said. "This religion built around my person disgusts me!"

"Yes, Lord."

"This damnable religion should end with me!" Leto shouted. "Why should I want to loose a religion upon my people? Religions wreck from within— Empires and individuals alike! It's all the same."

"Yes, Lord."

"Religions create radicals and fanatics like you!" (Herbert, 2008c, p.113)

Secondly one could infer while reading the *Dune* series how painful and harsh the process for Leto II to become the God-Emperor was — he had to transgress his humanity, becoming the predator of his own species. We have already demonstrated in our previous thesis how Leto had to castrate himself while merging with

⁴⁸ How Leto II will be labeled eventually in the series development

sandtrouts⁴⁹ — that turned him into a worm-human hybrid extending his life and organic capabilities. One could inquire: “is it not a process of symbolical self-reification to become a more-than-human being while lengthening his own lifespan?” — in order to fully answer such pondering we must also bring further elements from the novels, especially *God Emperor of Dune* to sustain our argument. As we have mentioned, this hybridization of worm-human led Leto to be infertile while transgressing his own humanity — for someone who was an *Abomination*⁵⁰ that endured and survived higher doses of spice intake during *Children of Dune*, it is easily observable that Leto indeed *loved* humankind and did what was in his power to allow it to survive, even if such path would turn him into the very devilish creature he sought to destroy — the ultimate *Being/tyrant* which inhabited our symbolical and imaginary imagery. He *became* reification itself only to ultimately show the very path we *must* avoid if we ought to survive.

“If you know all of your ancestors, you were a personal witness to the events which created the myths and religions of our past, Recognizing this, you must think of me as a mythmaker.”

What then did Leto mythologize? First of all, himself. He created more legends concerning his immutability, his omniscience, his omnipotence, indeed, his eternal nature, than anything else. Yet, in reality, it was the brute physical strength of the biologic adaptation of the sandworm that he had become that was me original source of his imperial power. He capitalized on that strength — and how many legends he created of his inhuman abilities! — to cement his position as emperor and to terrify entire populations. From that moment on, religious awe and blind superstition, combined with the longevity of the sandworm he was becoming, made his rule inevitable. (McNelly, 1984, p.99)

Furthermore it was the God-Emperor who has taken over the breeding program from the Bene Gesserit — and he had done so by eliminating *control* over the transferable genes in their offspring and the search for a specific set of characteristics, allowing for *surprises* to arise. This echoes with precision the *middle-*

⁴⁹ Sandtrouts are in the Duneverse what, by a metaphorically *inclusive transcendence* procedure, coalesce into the gigantic sandworms.

⁵⁰ In simple terms, the Bene Gesserit coined this term for beings who had undergone the *water of life* conversion (or any similar procedure) while still unborn babies — leading for a not-yet crystalized ego to acquire and be invaded by their Ancestral Memories.

way as a relinquishing of *ultimate control* over a process that is given birth by unconscious means — a very distinct underlying basis for the program compared to when it was ruled by the matriarchal order which sought to create a being/mind capable of prescient powers not yet seen. “The Lord Leto said, “See that you do. Tell your Sisters also that the Bene Gesserit of all people should know the dangers of breeding for a particular characteristic, of seeking a defined genetic goal.”” (HERBERT, 2008c, p.96) It is precisely this non-seeking imbued within the breeding program which led it to produce humans shielded and immune to Leto’s own prescient powers.

It seems perfectly equable to compare a paradoxical idea of a *pathless path*, as we have shown regarding the *golden path*, with a breeding program set to imprint no specific characteristic at all — and the apex production of Leto’s government is Siona Atreides, descendant of the God Emperor’s sister, Ghanima. Siona is endowed with the necessary capabilities to survive a dominated and entirely precognised future — she evades and disappears out of Leto’s prescience, an indication that his *golden path* and his *randomized* and *purposeless* program had been successful in producing the necessary psychogenetic traits to evade *ultimate prescient powers* and *absolute reification*. We have selected a few excerpts from the *God Emperor of Dune* regarding the symbolical importance of Siona Atreides:

The first one displays how the very existence of Siona whilst recognizing her ability to evade a *deterministic* future reminds Leto of his own humanity:

“Siona? What could she . . .”

“Tell her this: In a fragile way, she is like that force within me which acts without knowing. Because of her, I remember what it was to be human . . . and to love.” (Herbert, 2008c, p.193)

The second excerpt will demonstrate the implicit relation between future potentialities as being creatively engendered by novel manners of relating and including the past-present conditions — a humanity bound by an *absolute* prescient power is one incapable of *imagining* different outcomes and fighting for them, incapable of participating in the making of history and as it forgoes symbolical power it reifies the deified entities which such power had been projected and transferred into.

“And you say you don’t know your value to me,” Leto accused.

“What about Siona?” Idaho demanded. “She says you want us . . . I mean, dammit . . .”

“The thing you must always trust about Siona is her creativity. She can create the new and beautiful. One always trusts the truly creative.” (Herbert, 2008c, p.315)

The third excerpt uses the desert as a metaphor for the infinite — as Siona is being tested on a spice trial, in order to fully grasp the meaning of the *golden path*, she faces an *open-empty* sky full of changes, virtually infinite. One can track its steps that had led to the unfolding of the present conditions, but the future should remain an empty and virtually infinite space containing endless potentialities; escaping the land that is owned by Leto II symbolizes the very escape that humankind will undergo in order to evade the *absolute* reification metaphorized by the God Emperor’s *absolute* prescient powers.

“You have felt your past,” he said. “Now, you must be sensitized to your future, to the Golden Path.”

She swallowed. “I don’t believe in your Golden Path.”

“If you are to live, you will believe in it.”

“Is that your test? Have faith in the Great God Leto or die?”

“You need no faith in me whatsoever. I want you to have faith in yourself.”

“Then why is it important how far we’ve come?”

“So you’ll understand how far you still have to go.”

She put a hand to her cheek. “I don’t . . .”

“Right where you stand,” he said, “you are in the unmistakable midst of Infinity. Look around you at the meaning of Infinity.”

She glanced left and right at the unbroken desert.

“We are going to walk out of my desert together,” he said. “Just the two of us.” (Herbert, 2008c, p.435)

If we extend such metaphor regarding control to how even Leto’s ultimate prescient power was nothing but the mytho-symbolical power forsaken by humanity as a whole, who unconsciously sought for a reified universe of *permanence* and *stasis*, it seems clear that the onset of the *golden path* in his hands are the necessary

steps for alerting humans of the perils implied in concentrating *absolute* power in a hypostatized *image-being* — he transformed himself into the utmost tyrannical and demonic being with the intent of shaping human's profound desires for reification, he became what we *must* avoid in order to survive. To assume that Leto II did such only for the sake of his own power and self-prolonging would be contradictory with the arguments that we have just previously displayed — Leto knew intimately and abhorred the consequential boredom of his *absolute* prescience and had to pave a way, or better put, deconstruct any paths as single and narrow threads/lines into the very *open-emptiness* represented by the *golden pathless path*.

[...] philosophers of creativity have constantly shown that since creativity is universal, "the philosopher has to invent not an ideal language but a perpetually new and changing language, a poetic language, to capture the evolving patterns of reality." This creativity tradition has usually been suppressed in the West by the dominant conservative ideological world-views, which preferred being to becoming and passivity to activity. Aristotle, Philo, Plotinu, Augustine, Aquinas, and Kant are the major representatives of this dominant world-view. Their common policy has been to separate the world and creativity, locating the latter in a hyperessentialistic Absolute — a Being above beings — beyond the world (or denying it altogether). This effectively turns the self-creative world into a dualistic reality consistent of an other-creating God on the one hand and a passive world-as-creature on the other. (Kakol, 2009, p.192)

As we have mentioned we will explore further in the following chapter the relation between *Creativity* in a process perspective and the prescient capabilities extensively discussed by the *Dune* series while displaying its relations with many of Archetypal psychology notions and principles such as the Collective Unconscious and Synchronicity.

Surely we must denote how in the *Dune* series narrative structure there are no doubts around *prescience* and its efficacy — only the metaphysical and underlying explanations of such phenomena are to some extent discussable (which would be one of its key SF elements, we argue). What is it that Paul Muad'Dib foresaw/created in the dormant myths of humans? Our own demise and extinction, our own destruction — and Leto II took the harsh choice of sacrificing (and castrating) his own

humanity, his own self-image by becoming an embodiment of *Mara*⁵¹, the demonic *samsaric* creature from Buddhist cosmology that represents reification and the endless cycle of suffering. Leto's millennial government allowed humans to mature while shaping the depths of its imaginary world in order for, future cultures and societies to carry a profound and unconscious objection towards any form of re-deified figure, any form of *ultimate* and *absolute* tyranny. In opposition to the *golden path*, as we are presented, Muad'Dib's prescient visions had precognised a horrific unfolding for humanity, and as we have argued, the root of such horror and painful extinction rests on the very faulty attempt of *freezing* and *solidifying* our hypostatizations. The beginning of the *golden path* is nothing more than, metaphorically, the escaping of a prescient prison cast by humanity's own hubris and longing for an ontological definitive ground for reality.

HWI NOREE: But he already had the prescient ability as did his father before him. No! I propose that he made this desperate choice because he saw in our future something that only such a sacrifice would prevent.

[...]

"You will know all of me soon enough, Hwi. I promise it. Just remember that sun worship among our primitive ancestors was not far off the mark."

"Sun . . . worship?" She rocked backward.

"That sun which controls all of the movement but which cannot be touched—that sun is death."

"Your . . . death?"

"Any religion circles like a planet around a sun which it must use for its energy, upon which it depends for its very existence."

Her voice came barely above a whisper: "What do you see in your sun, Lord?"

"A universe of many windows through which I may peer. Whatever the window frames, that is what I see."

"The future?"

"The universe is timeless at its roots and contains therefore all times and all futures."

"It's true then," she said. "You saw a thing which this"—she gestured at his long, ribbed body—"prevents."

(Herbert, 2008c, p.88-305)

⁵¹ We shall explore this idea further in the third chapter.

The previous passage is an amalgam of two distinct moments in the narrative of *God Emperor of Dune*, one in the very beginning of the novel as Hwi Noree⁵² is reporting to her superiors and the second takes place as Leto and Hwi are having an intimate conversation and moment. It is relevant for us to denote, especially, how the God Emperor had diverged from his father's choices in order to avoid greater amount of suffering and pain to be experienced by humanity as a whole — but in order to do so, he sacrificed his own image and became the very noxious element that would lead our species to demise, guaranteeing though that we would have enough time to mature our psyche and be able to *transform* that poison as the Reverend Mothers convert the water of life in its toxic substrate. The second element that even the most minutely acute eyes would be unable to notice is the metaphor that Leto implies regarding the religion erected upon his deification — *that sun which controls all movement but which cannot be touched* is a direct metaphor for the philosophical *substance* notion of the “*unmoved mover*”. Such Aristotelian notion is a perfect example of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness and precisely what both Process philosophy and Madhyamika Buddhism ultimately deem absurd — an external, permanent, inherent existent being which serves as the *primary ground and root* for the universe, a *Being*, *essence* or in Sanskrit terms, *svabhāva*. In the same manner that *Mara* is to be dissolved by the meditative practice in order to realize *emptiness*, Leto's becomes a mythological devil for the subsequent human groups, representing exactly what needs to be overcome — during the events of the fifth and sixth novel of the series, after the passage of 1500 years since the eroding of the God Emperor's government, he is widely known as Shaitan (the Arab/Islamic equivalent of Satan) or as Tyrant (mostly by the Bene Gesserit). Not coincidentally, as we have already mentioned, that the Bene Tleilax still admire Leto II as a Godly being who had ultimate and absolute power over reality by speaking the language of the Divine (genetics, for the Tleilaxu).

It is from the *samsaric* ground of reality that the most beautiful creatures are engendered⁵³, and the very onset of the *golden path* leads to the birth of a *heretic* who questions the ingrained dogmatic hypostatized mental fabrications of the Bene

⁵² It is arguable that Hwi represents Leto's own *Anima* and aspects he had to forsake in order to become an embodied re-deified *Being*

⁵³ “If a lotus is to grow, it needs to be rooted in the mud. Compassion is born from understanding suffering.” “No mud, no lotus.” (Thich Nhat Hanh)

Gesserit, one who understands the *golden path* and who represents wisdom and compassion that is born from understanding suffering, Darwi Odrade. We will analyze this character with more depth in the following chapters, as we have already mentioned, but it is relevant to denote here how she perceives the fundamental flaws present in her order and how such could lead to their destruction — even against her fellow companions rooted avoidance of chasing emotions, she will lead a *cool revolution* grounded in compassion and by recognizing the implications of the *golden path* as a middle-way between reifying extremes, a pathless path towards the infinity:

No wonder we distrust emotions. Not all emotions, of course. Only the ones you could not escape in moments of necessity: love, hate. Let in a little anger sometimes but keep it on a short leash. That was the Sisterhood's belief. Utter nonsense! The Tyrant's Golden Path made their mistake no longer tolerable. The Golden Path left the Bene Gesserit in a perpetual backwater. You could not minister to Infinity!

Bell's recurrent question had no answer. "What did he really want us to do?" *Into what actions was he manipulating us? (As we manipulate others!) Why look for meaning where there is none? Would you follow a path you knew led nowhere?*

Golden Path! A track laid down in one imagination. *Infinity is nowhere!* And the finite mind balked. Here was where Mentats found mutable projections, always producing more questions than answers. It was the empty grail of those who, noses close to an endless circle, looked for "the one answer to all things."

Looking for their own kind of god.

She found it hard to censure them. The mind recoiled in the face of infinity. The Void! Alchemists of any age were like rag pickers bent over their bundles, saying: "There must be order in here somewhere. If I keep on, I'm sure to find it."

And all the time, the only order was the order they themselves created.

Ahhh, Tyrant! You droll fellow. You saw it. You said: "I will create order for you to follow. Here is the path. See it? No! Don't look over there. That is the way of the Emperor-Without-Clothes (a nakedness apparent only to children and the insane). Keep your attention where I direct it. This is my Golden Path. Isn't that a pretty name? It's all there is and all there ever will be."

(Herbert, 1987a, p.190-191)

This previous passage takes place in *Chapterhouse: Dune* and it follows the mental procedures taking place inside Odrade's psyche as she needs to convince and persuade her companions in order to attempt to save them from being persecuted and ultimately destroyed by another matriarchal order that reappears after the *Scattering*, the Honored Matres. We hope that now our argument has enough ground and a relatively (after all, no ground can be ultimately and inherently complete) solid base taken from the Duneverse so that understanding the *golden path* as a *middle-way* between reifying extremes should appear justifiable — we reiterate that Leto's instauration of his prescient vision was set to ultimately erase humanity's grasping and longing for a universe that was inherently correspondent to its hypostatizations. Even if the beginning of dissolving one's grasp might seem too bitter, the consequences otherwise would be far more painful and destructive. In order to re-open our imagination, Leto II portrayed the ultimate sacrifice of his own humanity and self-image by turning himself into the very representation of what should be avoided — a reified God whose essence moves the world without it, in its turn, being moved; the embodiment of ultimate and centralized power in all its senses (prescient, mytho-symbolical, political, material, etc.).

As *Dune* portrays and discusses the consequences and effects on our mind/body of the intake of strong psychedelic drugs (a prototypical theme from the *New Wave* movement of SF) we could understand that the traversed share of the *golden path* during his tyrannical government is metaphorically similar to the onset of a psychedelic/meditative actual experience — one's ordered layers of the ego plunges in the chaotic indissociability of the unconscious and faces its demons and profound fears, usually symbolized in Buddhist cosmogony by our craving for an *inherent* being and universe. Such initial moment of the *middle-way* does bring discomfort as we realize the *open-emptiness* (*sūnyatā*) of the infinity though ultimately leading, nevertheless, to the arising of *wisdom* and *compassion*, necessary qualities if we are to survive — in the unfolding events of both *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune* it is by confronting the Bene Gesserit dogmas that Odrade's compassion leads to the survival of her order by integrating and teaching Murbella, a captured Honored Matre, who will become the Mother Superior of the conjoined matriarchal order by the very ending of the whole *series*.

The seemingly paradox of a *pathless path* represented by the *golden path* does resonate, also, with the nondual equipoised realization of *nirvana* — that,

ultimately, it is no different whatsoever from *samsara*, as wisely posited by Nāgārjuna⁵⁴. The *samsaric* manifestation of reality arises precisely when we attempt to *take without giving*, when we superimpose imperialistically our *abstractions* trying to prove their *absolute* and *inherent* existence in a desperate craving for control and self-reification, while, *Nirvana* is the simple inference that no process or phenomena could arise without being interdependent to *everything else* (in larger or minor degree of causal efficacy, of course). But as ultimately pointed by Nāgārjuna, there's no difference whatsoever between both of these aspects of reality⁵⁵, and for such specific reason that a Bodhisattvas' vow is virtually an impossible quest — a quest which nevertheless they compassionately choose to take, and for such they would remain actively inhabiting *samsaric* cosmic layers evermore.

Whatever is dependently co-arisen
That is explained to be emptiness.
That, being a dependent designation
Is itself the middle way (Garfield, 1994, p.221)

The *Dune* series by thematically and narratively integrating different philosophical schools could be further and fractally understood as profoundly intertextual literary novels symbolized by the very *golden path* as a *middle-way* — its allusions to the *impermanence* of the universe, portrayed as large eons traverse in the narrative (5000 years from the first novel to the last), resonate with key elements from both Process philosophy and Madhyamaka Buddhism, especially. In our current socio-historical moment where big corporations are set to further tight their grip over nature while imperialistically superimposing their ontologies without any regard to the climatic consequences to be suffered by next generations in this *eco-organic system* known as planet Earth, it seems of utmost necessity that we tread a *pathless path* laid in wisdom and compassion by developing a harmonious and organic interdependency with other actual and sentient beings — but such might be achievable only if we collectively seek to realize the lack of *inherent* existence of our reifications, treading the *middle-way* between ego and unconscious, between

⁵⁴ "There's no ultimate difference between Samsara and Nirvana"

⁵⁵ Leto felt that he had come from the *alam al-mytha*⁵⁵ into the universe of reality only to find them identical

reductionist materialism and idealism, between micro and macrocosm.

There were no words in the language, only a moving, dancing adaptation to a moving, dancing universe. You could only speak the language, not translate it. To know the meaning you had to go through the experience and even then the meaning changed before your eyes. (Herbert, 1987b, p.668)

2. SYNCHREATHESIS: PRESCIENCE AND CREATIVITY

In this current chapter we propose a critical analysis regarding the psychic divinatory ability developed by humans in the Duneverse labeled as *prescience* and its importance for the entire series written by Frank Herbert. We have extensively discussed the theme in our previous Master degree thesis and will revise most of the ideas already present there through new lenses — namely, Process Philosophy ones. As we have already displayed in the previous chapter, Process principles might be akin to Archetypal Psychology and such links are of particular relevancy for understanding the implied creative act of synthesis embedded in the divinatory precognised visions of future potentialities experienced by prescient creatures, such as Muad'Dib, Leto II, Odrade, Miles Teg and others.

We hope to rectify our lack of engagement with the analyzed literary text in our previous cited work which had focused too much in the theoretical background and underlying theories that were relevant for the arising of both *Dune* series and the *New Wave* movement of SF — we will bring further examples from Herbert's series as well as display their relation with such intertextual elements as they are of utmost importance for all of the novels, and most specially to *prescience* as a narrative motif. Some of our arguments were, in an early moment of our academic career, yet crude and raw, thus, we intend to provide better theoretical consistency and reasoning in order to provide the due relevancy for *prescience* as an element capable of synthesizing principles from Archetypal Psychology and Process Philosophy in artistic and literary manners.

Furthermore, this chapter is envisioned as a complementary argument in order to fully understand the perils of reification and the need for the *golden path* as a means for dissolving *absolute prescience* centralized and embodied in deified characters, a central aspect of our previous chapter — by fully grasping the creative powers which concreate the open-empty wave-form unbound potentialities into actualized occasions of experience in their particle-form it becomes consistently arguable that *prescience* could neither fit into a mechanistic nor idealistic explanations of causality. This is indeed one of the great achievements of the *Dune* series as it provides *estrangement* out of theoretical frameworks which stood firmly in opposition to previous scientific assumptions which led to deterministic

comprehensions of reality while also undermining the need for a dualistic/idealistic notion of a separate essence/substance which moves the world while yet remaining unmoved by it. Therefore, in order to demonstrate how *absolute prescience* is a lethal trap metaphorized as *reification* itself we will further develop our argument on how the principle of causality should be comprehended as a form of *conditionality* and not as a *single strain of sufficiency* where the effect is already present in the cause or entirely determined by it.

Prescience could be, thus, understood through how past/present conditions are necessary for future subsequent events to arise but, nonetheless, never sufficient — such prior conditioning requires always an act of *creative synthesis* from which an observer/psychic node envisions future potential rearrangements of such conditions in novel and actualized manners. This echoes Nāgārjuna critique of causation as a deterministic root which could be both *necessary* and *sufficient* for an effect instantiation, and as we have already displayed, his solution to such logical fallacies during his time was to present *pratītya-samutpāda* as a principle which explains how any event is, to a certain extent, interdependent with all of its prior conditions (though never *sufficiently* wise).

[...] Whitehead's "account of creativity" — the many coalescing into a new one which then a part of the many which coalesce again — is remarkably similar to some formulations of *pratītya-samutpāda*." [...] Likewise, Paul Ingram believes that "creativity is much like the Buddhist notion of "dependent co-origination." Jacobson, in his many books on Buddhism, has consistently compared creativity with dependent origination "It is commonly agreed ... that the creativity which is the most general feature of reality in Process Thought is asserted by Buddhist writers most profoundly in the concept of 'conditioned genesis,' 'dependent origination,' or [...] 'the interrelatedness of all things'.. (Kakol, 2009, p.222)

The very fact that an effect cannot be fully reducible to its causes is complemented by the active participation of *creativity* as any process or actual occasion is able to interrelate and *inclusively transcend* its past/present conditions coalescing them into novelty — this resonates with precision the main argument in our previous chapter which displays how the *golden path* is an escape from deterministic absolute *prescience* into the never-ending and continuous process of

becoming and impermanence. Although such prior conditions which exist and lay dormant in the present can limit future potentialities, they can never fully determine subsequent unfoldings — if it was otherwise, than how one would hold Muad'Dib's violent jihad unaccountable? We shall approach as well a reading in following chapters that does not fully concentrates the accountability of Paul's prescient visions in himself, but also how the institutionalized religion and the messianic Fremen projections justified their genocidal actions against different planets by re-deifying his image as a nearly omniscient prophet and are, proportionally, responsible — as we have previously mentioned and argued, an *absolute* prescient capability requires that humans also project and seek an embodied reified image of their own superimposed constructs which would enact and imperialistically impose their mental fabrications in order to prove their *absolute* and *inherent* existence; as Odrade wisely reflects on *Chapterhouse: Dune* as she ascends and becomes the Mother Superior, leader of the Bene Gesserit:

But oh, the perils of leadership in a species so anxious to be told what to do. How little they knew of what they created by their demands. Leaders made mistakes. And those mistakes, amplified by the numbers who followed without questioning, moved inevitably toward great disasters.

Lemming behavior.

It was right that her Sisters watched her carefully. All governments needed to remain under suspicion during their time of power including that of the Sisterhood itself. Trust no government!

Not even mine! (Herbert, 1987a, p.189)

In order to further understand the functioning of *prescience* while adding to it the *creativity* element so often explored by Process Thought we would also need to address the Archetypal psychology bases that the *Dune* series explores so often. We will root many of the possible connections between Whitehead's philosophical framework and Jungian's analytic psychology on the edited book by David R. Griffin — *Archetypal Process: Self and Divine in Whitehead, Jung and Hillman*. As we have shallowly discussed in our previous chapter, the relation between *unconscious* (in a collective level, also) and *ego* is repeatedly explored by the Duneverse while grounding most of its metaphors and tropes — an usually overlooked theme, for instance, is how after the passage of long-term periods of time in the narrative, we

perceive the subsidence of previous happenings into the profoundness of unconscious substrate of the psyche of humanity, transforming previous occasions of experience into deeply embedded myths and archetypal content. As an example of such, we could consider how the prior implanted myths in the Fremen's religious and cultural practices by the Bene Gesserit culminated in Paul's jihad and his messianic ascension to the galactic throne — although such manipulation by the matriarchal order takes place before the beginning of our narrative, it is a relevant element of the Duneverse world-building. Another example on how narrative elements are *inclusively transcended* by future unfoldings and novels is how Leto II, after 1500 years since his tyrannical government was dissolved, becomes a symbolical and mythological representation of a *Demiurgic*⁵⁶ and devilish archetype — being acknowledged in Rakis⁵⁷ by the future descendants of his empire and the descendants of Siona and Duncan as *Shaitan*.

It is for such reason that we intend to explain the importance of the *collective unconscious* as a narrative motif for the entirety of *Dune* series and how such fundamental element of Jungian psychology, by being extrapolated and one of the main *estrangement* aspects of the Duneverse world-building, will pave many of the metaphorical content present in the plot's unfoldings. Furthermore, Jung's concept of the *collective unconscious* did present a theoretical framework which, inevitably, conflicted with the most assumed and dominant *individualistic* notions that permeated modern thinkers and the reified premises of bourgeois ideology. As we hope to have displayed in the previous chapter, the *asymmetrical interdependence* of different layers of actual occasions and how they coalesce and become conjoined in novel manners is a deeply explored trope for the series, especially when we consider the importance of every micro-cosmic particle for the homeostasis of a macro-cosmic system — a wondrously drawn metaphor that unites Archetypal psychology and ecology, displaying the interdependence between *holons*. As David Griffin argues, both Whitehead and Jung did build their systems by questioning such *individualism* which was dominant in modern thought — a notion that, metaphysically, reinforced the platonic *substance* dominance in western thinking due to its assertion and

⁵⁶ We are employing the usage of *Demiurge* here as Leto's government had bound and trapped humanity in a *samsaric* existence — though, as we have argued extensively last chapter, he had done so as a means to become ultimately what humanity should avoid in order to survive.

⁵⁷ Arrakis' name in the last novels of the series.

emphasis on *objects-in-themselves* and not their internal or external interrelations, mostly by even denying that such relations existed in the first place.

The “elementary particles” of nature were said to be self-enclosed atoms, having only external relations with their environment — no internal relations in which the environment would be partially constitutive of them. And about the same was said of the human being. The sensationist doctrine of perception said that nothing could enter the human mind except through the individual’s bodily senses, and then “sensation” was so defined that nothing of the external world actually entered the mind to become constitutive of it: the mind simply had “sense-data,” which in some mysterious way “represented” the outer things. (Griffin, 1989, p.6)

As we write this dissertation, in the current late predatory capitalist moment where profit is more important for the shareholders than caring for the consequences of our collective *initial excess of subjectivity*, a literary series like *Dune*, which discusses the long-term repercussions of draining resources from the Terrestrial *eco-organic system* we inhabit and share with many other actual entities, seems of utmost necessity if our aim should be to reconnect our overvalued self-images and egos to the open-emptiness of the *unconscious*, un-reifying our superimposed mental constructs. In order to do so, metaphorically, *Dune* explores how the prominent notion that we exist *separately*, like islands in a sea of discontinuity, is fundamentally a fallacy laid upon a misunderstanding that we are made of *essences*, of *inherent existence* — an insistence on sameness has often proved deadly for entire systems, as we have extensively discussed. The *prescience* faculty, as we will demonstrate and portray using examples directly from the series, is *creativity* (in process terms) exerted to its limits as one foresees potentialities which already lay dormant in the depths of the unconscious by reimagining their interrelations — when such capacity is centralized in a few while being forsaken by most of the humans, when we forgo our collective participation in rearranging present and past conditions we are fleetingly attempting to endow our abstractions with concreteness while eternalizing and essentializing them; however, by doing so, instead of attuning ourselves to the relative flux and harmony of wider *eco-organic systems* we, in a hubristic endeavor, impose and enforce our mental fabrications into others and into the system as a whole.

As posed by the Pardot Kynes (Liet's father) in the Appendix of the first novel, *Dune*, any system's balance depends on the very delicate and fluid adjustment by each microcosm regarding the macrocosm but also how, a "*misstep in one niche*" could impede and erode the very dynamism which is fundamental for such ecological order and harmony. As we have shown extensively, the core and defining elements of SF productions which are born out of the gothic mold (according to Aldiss) can be directly related with the consequences of one's hubris and arrogance — the *Dune* series carries in most of its premises and speculative features how, by focusing only in *taking* and not *giving*, humanity's hubris is, metaphorically, this precise *misstep* mentioned by Kynes which leads to the collapse of the whole macrocosmic *eco-organic system*.

"The thing the ecologically illiterate don't realize about an ecosystem," Kynes said, "is that it's a system. A system! A system maintains a certain fluid stability that can be destroyed by a misstep in just one niche. A system has order, a flowing from point to point. If something dams that flow, order collapses. The untrained might miss that collapse until it was too late. That's why the highest function of ecology is the understanding of consequences." (Herbert, 2003, p.805-806)

The highest function of ecology being the *understanding of consequences* does serve accurately our argument in this thesis while concomitantly placing *Dune* as one of the most important *New Wave* SF series — that, symbolically, the *hubris* present in both modern thinking (and the reductionist/deterministic perspectives that arose from it) and in *substance* metaphysics by assuming the *absolute* and *inherent* reality of their hypostatizations would inexorably lead to our own cosmic demise simply because those extreme philosophical positions are "*untrained*" and have "*missed the collapse*" that their imperialistically superimposed worldviews would inevitably culminate in. When *creative*, and therefore symbolical, power over reality is not distributed and mostly centralized/concentrated we are further enhancing and reinforcing the same overvaluing of the egoic function in a wider arrangement, extending it fractally — this is parallel to the *insistence on sameness* trope which we have extensively discussed in the previous chapter.

It is also the notion that the universe is a *machine* so eagerly defended by mechanicism which is ultimately questioned by *Dune* series, as we will demonstrate

throughout this dissertation, but also by both Jung and Whitehead — not coincidentally that Process philosophy is also labeled *philosophy of organism*, which resonates precisely how *Dune* will approach this metaphysical imagery and inquiries regarding the *organic* and dynamic mereology of ecosystems. Nonetheless, as we have previously argued considering the *golden path* as a *middle-way* between reifying extremes, we should not reject the mechanistic view by retracing further to a dualistic understanding of the universe mostly because it carries the same fundamental flaw, though inverted, as reductionist materialism. In our previous Master's thesis we have discussed how panpsychist notions present in Process Thought are explored by *Dune*, though we will not dive very deeply in such subject in this present work — it is sufficient to say that, both Jung and Whitehead would understand that reality carries a *mental/psychic* aspect as much as a *physical/material* one (even though, for both Process Philosophy or the Madhyamaka none of these aspects are ontologically inherent in any regards, being just the inference that we have relative autonomy in recombining prior conditions in actualized forms while projecting meaning in them).

This rejection of the reductionistic materialism of later modernity is not accomplished, however, by a return to the dualism of early modernity. Both men—although Whitehead is much more clear and consistent on this point—suggest that the ultimate stuff of the world, called “energy” by Jung and “creativity” by Whitehead, is the source equally of what we ordinarily call the “physical” and the “mental.” Everything, from electrons to the human psyche, embodies this creative energy. Something analogous to human experience must be present, then, in the entities studied by physics: modernity's mechanistic, anti-animistic doctrine of nature is rejected. (Griffin, 1989, p.8)

The pondering of our psychic life as profoundly important for the unfolding of novel events as the eons of time passes and the universe transforms itself is of utmost importance for understanding the narrative function of *prescience* in Herbert series while also demonstrating the epistemological and metaphysical connections of such divinatory capability with Archetypal psychology and Process Thought — it is a common literary procedure for SF novels to speculate and erect its secondary world from other knowledge fields and their possibilities. As we have argued elsewhere, characteristically cast during the countercultural movement, *Dune* and the *New Wave*

movement of science-fiction will take into account scientific theories that had shaken the deterministic and reductionist prominent ideas in modern thinking and positivism — the most important for the Duneverse are Einstein's theory of relativity, Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty (and, therefore, the dual aspect of sub-atomic universe as *particles/waves*) and Gödel's incomplete theorems⁵⁸. In the development of this chapter we intend to demonstrate how the comprehension of time as a dimension inextricably bound to space, as shown by Einstein's theories, and Heisenberg's principle are extremely important for a better and deeper understanding of how *prescience* works in the *Dune* series.

Relativity is, by itself, considerably relevant for Jung's principle of *synchronicity*, which in its turn is also reflected by the series here analyzed in different regards — distortion of time in one's psyche field is one of the possible explanations for such important Archetypal principle. David Griffin (1989) has argued how, allegedly, the notion of *synchronicity* might be incompatible with Process Thought — we will try to argue here how he might have misinterpreted such Jungian concept, especially taking into account other scholars who had further developed this idea, as Marie-Louise Von-Franz in her important work *On Divination and Synchronicity*. We intend to display and sustain as our main argument in this chapter that *Synchronicity* is nothing more than the very *creative synthesis* procedure minutely described by Process philosophy, although applied to a myriad of potential future *becomings* which assume the current and past conditions as necessary for its subsequent unfolding.

In the following passage from *Children of Dune*, Lady Jessica is commenting on how her son's *prescient powers* actually worked while also displaying ideas that are a direct reference to Jungian psychology theoretical framework:

"My son didn't really see *the future*; he saw the process of creation and its relationship to the myths in which men sleep," Jessica said. She spoke swiftly but without appearing to rush the matter. She knew the hidden observers would find a way to interrupt as soon as they recognized what she was doing.

[...]

"He saw the shapes which existing forces would create unless they were diverted," Jessica said. "Rather than turn against his fellow men, he turned

⁵⁸ By extension we could also imply Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica*.

against himself. He refused to accept only that which comforted him because that was moral cowardice.” (Herbert, 2008a, p.452)

The first notable point displayed in the voice of Jessica is that her son, Muad'Dib, did not indeed see *the future* — he gazed at the “*process of creation*”, and such idea does portray already how *prescience* is not a simple engagement with the future in a *symmetrical time dilation*. It is not symmetrical because the future is not *yet determined*, and only a vague potentiality not yet satisfied and finalized — it is for such that *Dune* philosophical stance resonates Nāgārjuna critique of a *single thread of causality (hetu)* with its questionable and absurdly deterministic conclusions. If Paul indeed saw the future than it would already be settled, *written* in a “cosmic divine book” where we have absolutely no power whatsoever to engage and transform the universe, to re-arrange its conditions and re-create them. It is for such that Lady Jessica mentions how her son saw “*the shapes which existing forces would create unless they were diverted*” — the manner this is posited by the Reverend Mother Jessica resonates precisely with how, as we have argued throughout this dissertation, a set of *conditions* are *necessary* but not *sufficient* for a future coalescing and concreating procedure, especially because such “*existing forces*” are not *completely deterministic* and they *can* be diverted in order to evade the deadly trap lying dormant in the unconscious of a humanity eager for a reified universe and *comforted* reality, a universe which would absolutely correspond to one's hypostatizations.

The second and also relevant aspect of the previous excerpt is that such process of *creative synthesis*, which explains the function of *prescience*, is intimately related to the “*myths in which men sleep*” — this is a direct metaphor for one of Jung's most important and fundamental concept, the *collective unconscious*. In the following pages we will try to provide enough Archetypal theoretical framework as well as distinct passages from *Dune* series that exemplify such aspects with precision, as well as displaying how Process Thought has a certain resemblance with such notions. Furthermore, still regarding the previous passage while taking into account our prior argument in the first chapter of this dissertation, it seems reasonable to assume how the “*myths in which men sleep*” form the underlying relative conditional and relational ground from which actualized occasions arise and are transformed, through the unending and incessant unfolding of the *inclusive*

transcendence procedure — the act of *prescient creation*, or as we have labeled in the title of the current chapter “*synchreathesis*”, is formed by *projecting meaning* regarding the psycho-historical development of actual occasions and re-imagining its potential new arrangements as novel concrescences arise and are also integrated in the open-emptiness of the unconscious. As Griffin poses, for both Whitehead and Jung the conditional field of the unconscious is not completely decisive in how consciousness will integrate and internally relate such psychic debris.

For both men the nonsensory reception of influence is primarily unconscious, while freedom or self-determination is primarily correlated with consciousness. And, although each thinker is sobering about the degree to which all thought and even perception are conditioned by unconscious processes, neither accepts the complete determination of conscious by unconscious processes. Even if Jung sometimes seems to say otherwise, he, like Whitehead, denies that consciousness is merely epiphenomenal, regarding it instead as finally decisive. (Griffin, 1989, p.10)

One of the core and main contributions from Archetypal psychology is the concept of the *collective unconscious*, a deep layer of our psyche that shares common symbolical motifs between distinct human groups, societies and their cosmological views. According to Jung “heredity is [...] the main way that the super-personal content of the unconscious are transmitted”⁵⁹ (Perassoli, 2016, p.17, our translation) — this notion is directly explored by *Dune* narrative motifs and tropes, as we hope to demonstrate in the following pages. Though, it is necessary to imply how it is not *mandatory* for such content to be transmissible in such manner, especially when we consider nonsensory forms of information reception, i.e. *perception at distance* (either in *time* or *space* wise). We argue, alongside *Dune*’s text, that what reinforces some of that content over any other is merely the *projection of similarity by an organizing conscious psyche* — a genetically similar organism finds itself more closely related to its prior *genesis*, and thus, will more easily accept and integrate a content which seems relatable, in a similar fashion where an organ implantation requires some level of proximity for the organism as a whole to assess it as an integral part of itself.

⁵⁹ In the original: “A hereditariedade [...] a principal via por meio da qual os conteúdos suprapessoais do inconsciente são transmitidos”

Dune will portray such lingering debris in our unconscious through many different metaphors throughout the whole of its series, though we find necessary to comment and denote a few — firstly and mainly, by undergoing the *water of life* conversion rite, a trained Bene Gesserit is able to re-integrate her Ancestral Memories (either inherited genetically or received from another Bene Gesserit). The *water of life* is a strong psychedelic, noxious to human consumption — it is required that a Reverend Mother is able to transform, internally, its chemical structures in order for it be consumable by other humans. Such psychedelic effect on consciousness not only echoes a common trope for counterculture and the hippie movement so representative of the *New Wave* movement, but also presents an important metaphor for *Dune* as a whole and for the functioning of *prescience* — the intake of this kind of drug leads to an *abaissement du niveau mental*, a lowering of one's egoic functions as the conscious plunges in the abysmal layers of the *collective unconscious*, and the abrupt interconnection of *ego* and *unconscious* can release *psychic energy* in the form of unexpected and spontaneous content which emerge from the unconscious towards the conscious substrate. After surviving the rite, a Bene Gesserit becomes a *transhuman* entity who holds ancestral knowledge, who becomes aware of all of their prior *inclusively transcended* and *phylogenetic* inherited unconscious content — this transformation allows them to recall their ancestral lives, heredity and make such incommensurable amount of data to be readily available as a source of wisdom for the Reverend Mother. One of the main motifs in the first novel is how the matriarchal order has not yet integrated its *masculine* genetic lines and the creation of the Kwisatz Haderach has as one of its main objectives the precise integration of such unavailable content to the Bene Gesserit — this reinforces our previous argument on how an *organizing conscious principle* is mandatory for the integration of such abysmal debris from the *collective unconscious* and how such ego can only survive by *incorporating* lives with which it sees some form of resemblance; the matriarchal order erected over the *feminine* archetype feels endangered if it ought to acquire its prior *masculine* lives and ancestry.⁶⁰

The following excerpt from *Children of Dune* will display with striking similitude

⁶⁰ For such reason that *Abominations* are seen as a kind of taboo for the Bene Gesserit — as one does not have enough egoic “walls” and “barriers”, it could be easily overtaken by aspects of the unconscious that are alien to the conscious side. Alia is a good example of such, as she is eventually taken and possessed by the phantasmagorical memories of the Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, her grandfather.

the aforementioned ideas:

This was Muad'Dib's achievement: He saw the subliminal reservoir of each individual as an unconscious bank of memories going back to the primal cell of our common genesis. Each of us, he said, can measure out his distance from that common origin. Seeing this and telling of it, he made the audacious leap of decision. Muad'Dib set himself the task of integrating genetic memory into ongoing evaluation. Thus did he break through Time's veils, making a single thing of the future and the past. That was Muad'Dib's creation embodied in his son and his daughter.

—TESTAMENT OF ARRAKIS BY HARQ AL-ADA (Herbert, 2008a, p.120)

We must denote how the “*subliminal reservoir of each individual as an unconscious bank of memories*” does resemble, specifically, the main core ideas posited by Jung and Archetypal psychology — though the series also expand it as such interdependency between the *collective unconscious* and the conscious would not necessarily stop at a particular species genetic bank, and could, thus, be traced back indefinitely even to the *primal cell* of our common genesis. This is another example of how *Dune* series is able to interconnect eastern metaphysics with western notions in novel and actualized manners, as such *asymmetrical interdependence* between actual entities and its past included memories is a direct reference of the Madhyamaka principle of *co-dependent origination* — no single entity/organism exists completely independent of its prior conditions that dwell and are included in its *unconscious bank of memories*.

We have priorly asserted how one of the main potential flaws embedded in the Bene Gesserit was due to how susceptible the order was to its past conditions — by integrating the Ancestral Memories very closely to their ego, there was a tendency of repetition of previous patterns instead of a focus on bringing such into novel forms of concrescence. The previous passage does show this motif, though embodied by Muad'Dib who made “*a single thing of the future and the past*” — this is a perfect example on how a complete *prescient* power equates future with past, making it entirely deterministic and settled as subsequent events are memories for such *organizing psyche* that had already *foreseen* all possible unfoldings. As we have extensively argued, the main metaphysical point in *Dune* series is exactly the escape

out of an *absolute* prescience for it leads inevitably and inexorably to horrendous consequences and our own demise.

The life of a single human, as the life of a family or an entire people, persists as memory. My people must come to see this as part of their maturing process. They are people as organism, and in this persistent memory they store more and more experiences in a subliminal reservoir. Humankind hopes to call upon this material if it is needed for a changing universe. But much that is stored can be lost in that chance play of accident which we call "fate." Much may not be integrated into evolutionary relationships, and thus may not be evaluated and keyed into activity by those ongoing environmental changes which inflict themselves upon flesh. The species can forget! This is the special value of the Kwisatz Haderach which the Bene Gesserit never suspected: the Kwisatz Haderach cannot forget.

—THE BOOK OF LETO AFTER HARQ AL-ADA (Herbert, 2008a, p.174)

The previous passage, part of *Children of Dune*, also displays relevant points for our dissertation — the first and most notable is how an understanding of *people as organism* does echo Whitehead's philosophy while also undermining the premises of mechanicism. The comprehension on how any drop of experience undergone by living and actual entities, and how they are further available by future people as memories, will display the manners with which actual occasions are constantly being moved by an *active past* that lingers and lives within, an *active past* which partially conditions our actions though not entirely determining it. The mereological arrangement of memory being *included* and *persistent* as memories in distinct holonic forms and layers, *as life of a single human, life of a family or an entire people* is another example of what we labeled an *eco-organic system*⁶¹ and how it is relevant for our intended analysis in this whole dissertation. Furthermore, when we couple both of the previous excerpts from *Children of Dune* it would be reasonably inferable that *Dune* holds that the mental pole of experience is virtually extendable and findable in any actual entity in *eco-organic systems* — memories, thus, would go *all the way down* and *all the way up* as any form of concrescent occasion participates in this never-ending procedure of *inclusive transcendence* and *concrescence*; memories would be nothing more than the residual elements of prior conditions that

⁶¹ If you need the definition of this concept you should check the previous chapter.

were re-arranged by a *subject* as it *creatively synthesizes* the past carried within in actualized manners. It is for such reason that we have mentioned how *Dune* also could be analyzed by panpsychist and/or panentheistic perspectives as understood by Process Thought. If the past could be retraced as memorial debris that lingered through the passage of time by continuously concrescent actual occasions of experience, since the dawning of our common genesis in its primal cell, it becomes an explicit metaphor portrayed by *Dune* series on how we are, indeed, an incessant *process of continuous becoming*.

“Memory” is the name we give to that peculiar relation we have to our own past. Although these past experiences now exist only as objects, we remember what they were in themselves, as subjects. A chimpanzee, most of us believe, has a similar relation to its own past. The Whiteheadian suggestion is that this relationship applies analogously all the way down. A cell would therefore have some slight memory of what it experienced a few seconds earlier, and an electron an even slighter memory, perhaps going back no longer than a millionth of a second. The difference between subjects and objects, and therefore between psychic and physical energy, in other words, is the difference between present and past, and being known from within and being known from without. The difference is not ontological, but merely temporal and epistemological. (Griffin, 1989, p.23)

This previous excerpt from David Griffin does display our aforementioned argument which, in its turn, is also comparatively extendable to our previous chapter when we apply that every instance/drop of experience, for an intimately interdependent system, will linger in all of its internal parts while also being a relevant residual element for wider arrangements as the system is coalesced into novel forms of concrescence.

Due to the fact that *Dune* bases a lot of its tropes on human *experience*, this conjoined element of Process Thought and Archetypal psychology is very relevant to our argument — mostly because it already announces how this re-arrangement of past conditions or unconscious motifs are done by an *ordering and organizing conscious factor*. The passage of large timespans in the narrative of the series also displays how previous memory is continuously re-integrated and transformed — mental and physical poles of experience are both, to an extent, intertwined and a reminiscent factor on how symbols and archetypes could be continuously changed

as our memory is also increased by new experiences. The danger lies, as we have shown, in the profound craving for a *static* and *absolutely real* universe which would correspond completely to our hypostatized constructs — in other words, the lethal trap for humanity and even wider arrangements of *eco-organic systems* with which we are interdependent with, lies when we reify the symbolical and mythological realms of experience that had persisted ancestrally in our unconscious; instead of adapting to a changing universe which constantly actualizes its internal relations in novelty, we tend to further solidify and crystalize the lingering memories that hold *some* degree of similarity with our sense of selfhood (being it a singular self, a familiar self or an *entire people* as a “self”). This is an important metaphor which criticizes mechanicism and reductionist science that bases itself on an understanding that we have no autonomy, and thus creativity, to re-arrange prior conditions/causes — this same metaphor is presented by *Dune*’s narrative through *prescient* powers being *absolute and complete* (though, only apparently) when upheld and centralized in the minds of re-deified characters.

We have selected another relevant passage from *God Emperor of Dune* which mentions precisely the collective unconscious, archetypes and myths, thus displaying how Archetypal psychology is one of the main theoretical frameworks out of which estrangement happens in the Duneverse:

Let there be no doubt that I am the assemblage of our ancestors, the arena in which they exercise my moments. They are my cells and I am their body. This is the favrashi of which I speak, the soul, the collective unconscious, the source of archetypes, the repository of all trauma and joy. I am the choice of their awakening. My samhadi is their samhadi. Their experiences are mine! Their knowledge distilled is my inheritance. Those billions are my one.

—THE STOLEN JOURNALS (Herbert, 2008c, p.360)

Many of the main and core concepts elaborated by Jung and Archetypal psychology in the aforementioned passage are clearly noticeable, which further fortifies our argument that many of *Dune* tropes arise from an interconnection of different fields of knowledge and theoretical frameworks. The fact that the Bene Gesserit and some other characters like Muad'Dib and Leto II are able to integrate their ancestral past which dwells in the depths of their *collective unconscious*, after

undergoing the *spice agony* and the *water of life* transformation rite, is a reminiscence of analytical psychology, Process Thought and Buddhism and their key relevance for understanding *Dune* in a more consistent manner. The *spice agony* opens one's nonsensory perception for absorbing and reassessing one's inherited past memories while also permitting the development of divinatory capabilities such as *prescience*. To Jung, the unconscious contains within itself the *future potentialities*, thus, as they access their past, a *prescient and organizing conscious entity* is able to re-imagine its internal relations in novel manners, performing an act of *creative synthesis* — understanding one's prior and past relational node of drops of experiences would allow a creative mind to re-organize ancient patterns that already lay dormant in the present.

We call the unconscious "nothing," and yet it is a reality in potentia. The thought we shall think, the deed we shall do, even the fate we shall lament tomorrow, all lie unconscious in our today. The unknown in us which the affect uncovers was always there and sooner or later would have presented itself to consciousness. Hence we must always reckon with the presence of things not yet discovered. These, as I have said, may be unknown quirks of character. But possibilities of future development may also come to light in this way, perhaps in just such an outburst of affect which sometimes radically alters the whole situation.

The unconscious has a Janus-face: on one side its contents point back to a preconscious, prehistoric world of instinct, while on the other side it potentially anticipates the future—precisely because of the instinctive readiness for action of the factors that determine man's fate. If we had complete knowledge of the ground plan lying dormant in an individual from the beginning, his fate would be in large measure predictable. (Jung, 1981, p.279)

This excerpt from Jung holds extreme significance for our intended analysis by distinct reasons — firstly the notion that the unconscious is often labeled as “*nothing*”, or as an abstraction (wave-like form) which upholds an infinite amount of information due to it being a *potentiality*; this notion will be further explored as we present once more the *Atreides Manifesto*, as written by Odrade. Nonetheless, Jung already shows how future developments and unfoldings lie dormant in the unconscious *nothingness* — here, though it was not Jung's argument, one could infer

that such realm of *open-emptiness* could resemble Madhyamaka's principle of *Śūnyatā* as this sea of possibilities which is a constant reminder of the lack of *absolute* and *inherent* existence by any phenomena. Secondly this excerpt strengthen our previous argument on how the Bene Gesserit and other characters who integrated their Ancestral Memories are able to further develop their *prescient capacities* — *the thought we shall think [...] all lie unconscious in our today*, though we might argue (and it is displayed by Jung as well) how it exists only as a *potential*, not yet satisfied or concreated. Also reinforcing the unconscious as a reservoir of possibilities as one's acknowledges its past and gazes at the future concomitantly, Jung uses the metaphor of Janus, the roman god — his sight is turned simultaneously for the ancient and ancestral content of the past as well as potentially anticipating (foreseeing/precognizing) the future.

David Griffin in *Archetypal Process: Self and Divine in Whitehead, Jung, and Hillman* argues that the principle of Synchronicity could be posited as a logical fallacy as it considers how the *future* would cause and condition the *present* (or the past in its own regards). As we intend to claim, Archetypal psychology and many of its' main scholars are aware that the future could not be entirely reducible to prior conditions and would neither accept an inversion of the *arrow of time* (an important physics notion also explored by *Dune* series). Jung here does display such comprehension as the future would only remain a virtual possibility not yet realized/satisfied — though we recognize how *Dune* series would take a stance closer to Process Thought and Gödel's incomplete theorems recognizing that having *complete knowledge of the ground plan lying dormant in an individual* is practically impossible, and even if such would be the case, the future would still remain incomplete and filled with *open-emptiness* as an act of *creative synthesis* is mandatory for the process of *inclusive transcendence* and future coalescing and concreating of actualized occasions. Moreover, in order to *fully predict* someone's fate it would also require a *complete knowledge* of ALL actual entities' prior *ground plans (lying dormant)* in the unconscious of an entire and complete *eco-organic system* — for such reason that a complete prescient power is nothing more than a *paradox*, a koan cast by humanity's own unconscious in order for it to grow out of reifying philosophical extremes; "Paradox is a pointer telling you to look beyond it. If paradoxes bother you, that betrays your deep desire for absolutes. The relativist treats a paradox merely as interesting, perhaps amusing or even, dreadful thought, educational." (Herbert,

2008c, p.384)

The following excerpt from *God Emperor of Dune* voiced by Leto II is a direct metaphor of Jung's previously commented passage, although we must denote here that the *prescient* powers upheld by the God Emperor permit him to understand his foresight as a Janus *multiplied billionfold*, a metaphor for understanding that the future is an *empty canvas* endowed with *open-emptiness* and virtually infinite possible arrangements — the paradox is indeed how the fact that such *creative* power is entirely centralized in his own re-deified image which makes the future entirely fixed and determined, and as he frequently mentions, this happens precisely because humanity ceased to *fight* and *struggle* for the capacity of *transforming* the future, preferring a false conformity where our collective selfdom and mental abstractions are correspondent with *reality-in-itself* (which would be ultimately lethal as time unfolds and we cease to *flow with the process of continuous becoming*).

“[...] She is necessarily an aristocrat, but aristocracy looks mostly to the past. That's a failure. You don't see much of any path unless you are Janus, looking simultaneously backward and forward.”

“Janus? Oh, yes, the god with the two opposed faces.” She wet her lips with her tongue. “Are you Janus, Leto?”

“I am Janus magnified a billionfold. (Herbert, 2008c, p.357)

What we intend to display as for why the principle of Synchronicity does not pose any form of logical contradiction while concomitantly establishing a potential dialogue with *prescience* and the Duneverse requires that we accept *some* degree of *symmetrical* dependency between abstract terms⁶² (though, most definitely not between relative and abstract ones, as we have priorly displayed through the notion of *asymmetrical interdependence* and *pratītya-samutpāda*). When Jung defines that Synchronicity is *acausal*, and considering how he frequently avoided metaphysical speculations⁶³, we could infer that he was signaling that the *reductionist* and *deterministic* understanding of causality as a *chain of singular succession of effects-in-causes* was unable to explain how certain transformative and profound psychic

⁶² We cannot satisfy too much curiosity for our readers as this is a *critical literary analysis* and not a philosophical treaty. Kakol has minutely explained this form of relation in his theoretical framework for Process Buddhism.

⁶³ This is one of Griffin's arguments in his introductory essay for *Archetypal Process Self and Divine in Whitehead, Jung, and Hillman*.

experiences could allow for a *co-incidence* between a deeply rooted archetype and a material/object experience that would perfectly represent such content.

Though, if we further also integrate Madhyamika Buddhism into our theoretical framework, especially due to its importance in *Dune* series, it becomes perfectly suitable to understand that the principle of Synchronicity is an act of *creative synthesis* as the conscious side of the psyche enters in contact with the *open-emptiness* potential ground of the unconscious — a *co-incidence* of such sort, as stated by Jung, means that we *creatively* project meaning in a material form by interrelating it with the *past within*, with the archetypes and their deeply rooted symbolical content. Such act of creativity is also, arguably, an important moment for the *process of individuation* as one becomes aware of the interdependency between any *meaningful* debris which lays in the unconscious only as a potential, and the necessary conditions for such symbols to find some form of external instantiation and materiality. Furthermore, when Jung qualifies Synchronicity as an *acausal* principle we could easily conjecture that it does not, however, mean that he is removing any form of *conditionality* of his hypothesis — in actuality, any synchronistic phenomena has necessary conditions (a symbol/archetype which demands attention from the unconscious and a material form capable of symbolizing/manifesting it) and a sufficient condition (an organizing conscious psyche capable of creatively synthesizing and projecting such potential meaning in material manifestations that would co-incide it with).

We will further explain and provide enough theoretical background to minutely demonstrate what is, indeed, Synchronicity — we intend here to only denote how *Dune's estrangement* demands a very complex theoretical framework in order for most of its' tropes and motifs to be better understood while, simultaneously, reinforcing our understanding that, as a *New Wave SF* series, Herbert's work have similar aims as Process Thought and Madhyamaka — to undermine the *reductionist* chain of causality so prominent in mechanism/positivism (for Process Thought) and in idealism/physicalism (for Madhyamaka) where a singular cause is both necessary and sufficient for the arising of a certain effect.

[...] when so understood it turns out that he means that every event is dependent on every other event in some sense — specifically, an event is dependent on past events as particular actualities and on present and future

events as generic potentialities.

Hartshorne explains this qualification as follows:

If experience *a* is followed by experience *b*, then *b* prehends and depends upon *a*, but *a* does notprehend or depend upon *b*. However, it is of the essence of *a* that it will be prehended by later experiences, some experiences or other. ... [Hence] the class of "subsequent prehenders of *a*" cannot remain empty, though it is nothing to *a* just what members of the class actually occur. [...] If we abstract from this distinction between particular and generic requirement, then there is partial symmetry even in Whitehead's view, so that the disagreement with Buddhism, so far as there is such, is partial only. (Kakol, 2009, p.125)

This previous passage from *Emptiness and Becoming* is relevant to sustain how the future is not yet determined and cannot be ultimately reducible only to its past conditions — this is how Kakol defines *asymmetrical interdependence*, which according to him, is perfectly suitable and parallel with *co-dependent origination* as Nāgārjuna was criticizing specifically the consequences of assuming causality as *hetu* (an idea we have already explored in the previous chapter) — which would hold that a cause could be concomitantly a sufficient and necessary one for the arising of certain effects. If we further understand then, that the principle of *Synchronicity* posited by Jung is acausal exactly in the sense of not corresponding with the dominant positivist notion of causality as a *singular strain of cause and effect*⁶⁴ then it makes perfect sense that it still requires certain conditions, as we have stated in the previous pages.

What is *Synchronicity*, then, according to Archetypal psychology? “a) An unconscious image comes into consciousness either directly (i.e., literally) or indirectly (symbolized or suggested) in the form of a dream, idea, or premonition. B) An objective situation coincides with this content.” (Jung, 2010) We should observe how this does not demand that such form of “*coinciding*” would, mandatorily, occur in a future moment and development — although this happens more often than not, as Jung will display in his main book regarding this acausal principle. If we follow logically from Jung’s statement and argument it would be easily comprehensible that

⁶⁴ “[...] a civilization which still believes unquestioningly in a mechanical universe of absolute cause and effect—obviously reducible to one single root-cause and one primary seminal-effect.” (HERBERT, 2008a, p.366)

a) and b) are the necessary conditions for a synchronistic event — the sufficient condition, conjoining Jung's principle with a process theoretical framework, would lay in how the mental pole of an actual entity *creatively synthesizes* the prehended *unconscious image* by symbolically interrelating it with an instantiation that would represent such archetypal content.

As many other scholars that have engaged with *Synchronicity* as a principle (as David F. Peat and Von Franz, for instance) have concluded, such iconic notion from Archetypal psychology does posit an *organic* perspective of the universe that would contradict the reductionist and mechanistic prominent views in the positivist science — and as we hope to have argued, this is one of the main elements that places *Dune* as one of the most important *New Wave* series of novels. The series, though, goes beyond just presenting the incoherent assumptions of modern science and thought while also displaying how turning diametrically opposite towards an *idealistic* perspective of the world would carry the same sort of fallacy regarding the future as already *deterministically* existent in past conditions. When taking the symbols, and therefore abstractions, presented by the unconscious as *defining* and inescapable, a prescient being would conjure a trap of their own (creative) making which *sets and ultimately determines the future* — even though such subsequent unfolding could never, realistically, be entirely pre-determined as the future and is only a *reality in-potentia* not yet satisfied, it is by the collective abdication of creatively participating in re-arranging and re-imagining the future that an absolute prescient power, as the one upheld by Muad'Dib and Leto II, is able to *bind* an entire *eco-organic system* in its deterministic web.

"The thing you must always trust about Siona is her creativity. She can create the new and beautiful. One always trusts the truly creative.

"Even the machinations of the Ixians?"

"That is not creative. You always know the creative because it is revealed openly. Concealment betrays the existence of another force entirely."

(Herbert, 2008c, p.315)

Siona is the Atreides descendant which evades and disappears from Leto's ultimate prescience⁶⁵, and as the previous excerpt demonstrates it is her *creativity* in

⁶⁵ We have discussed Siona's importance for *the golden path* in the previous chapter

imagining *the new and the beautiful* which allows her to fade from the absolute prescient powers embodied in the re-deified God Emperor — it is precisely her *imagination* and creative capabilities which enables the future to be once again a *reality in-potentia* and not fully determined by Leto's foresight. When we consider the common motif implied by *Dune's* metaphysical explorations represented by the *asymmetrical interdependence* and *co-dependent origination* notions we have been exploring, it becomes inferable that each actual occasion of experience cannot be *completely reducible and determined* by its *inclusively transcended* prior conditions, as they are only necessary but not sufficient for the eminence of a certain effect — however, as Griffin will explore by interrelating Process Thought with Jungian psychology, a certain continuous repetition of prehended elements throughout long periods of time tend to reinforce and *relatively crystalize* certain experiences into *archetypes*.

A prescient being is one who is (at least partially) aware of those deeply embedded patterns in our *collective unconscious* and could, theoretically, pre-cognize future unfoldings by understanding how such patterns tend to repeat themselves while accounting for non-sensory prehended data from a wide informational field whose origins lay in the sum of whole *eco-organic systems* — by integrating such individual and transpersonal amounts of data and imagining its potential re-arrangements in future concrescent occasions, a prescient vision would be simultaneously an act of *Synchronicity* (by having an *unconscious image* which is prehended and which finds some material embodiment which it co-incides with in the moment of the experience and in future moments when it takes place in the *cognized and empirical world*) and an act of *Creative Synthesis* (especially because in such moment of contact between the *unconscious* and the *conscious* substrate of the psyche, the latter is able to re-arrange the prior archetypal conditions represented by the *collective unconscious* in new concrescent forms, even if such have not yet been realized/satisfied). For such reason we are here presenting a relevant and new concept that could be useful for analyzing any form of non-mimetic fictions which base themselves in such *distortions of the space-time continuum in the psyche's field* while positing that such relation between pre-cognized content and its subsequent material manifestation could be relationally comprehended in an *asymmetrically interdependent* manner — *Synchreathesis*, as we label, carry in its name both its Archetypal connections to Jungian psychology and its Process Thought focus in the

procedure of *creative synthesis* as the *sufficient* condition for the arising of novelty and the concrescence of actual occasions of experience. The following excerpt from *Heretics of Dune* already presents, partially, the ideas here discussed:

“If we survive this damnable machine and get down to Gammu, you must go aside with Dar there, Miles. You have seen the *Atreides Manifesto*. She will tell you about it and prepare you. That is all.”

[...]

“Just as the universe is created by the participation of consciousness, the prescient human carries that creative faculty to its ultimate extreme. This was the profoundly misunderstood power of the *Atreides* bastard, the power that he transmitted to his son, the Tyrant.” (Herbert, 1987b, p.172)

In order to fully demonstrate how *Dune* series explores this notion we must, once again, engage with the *Atreides Manifesto* as it is able to condense literarily many of the explored themes by the Duneverse which we have continuously mentioned in the course of our dissertation. The previous excerpt already displays and comments the so called *Manifesto* written by Odrade herself during the unfolding of *Heretics of Dune*'s narrative and will provide the basis for the main arguments contained in the following pages regarding *creativity* and the participation of the mental pole of manifested phenomena in creating the universe while also diving in the interrelation of such with *prescience* as a divinatory faculty.

The first relevant point mentioned by Darwi, soon to become the Mother Superior and leader of the Bene Gesserit in the following novel *Chapterhouse: Dune*, is how the universe is created by the “*participation of consciousness*” which does resemble an aforementioned aspect of Process Philosophy and how the Duneverse resonates such notions — we should point, mainly, to its focus on panpsychism and/or panexperientialism. In order for the participation of consciousness in the continuous process of becoming to take place, a process that occurs moment-to-moment in the universe, then a mere and sheer mechanistic and reductionist philosophical position must ultimately be denied — a feature that the *Dune* series carry within its narrative as we have hopefully demonstrated throughout this dissertation. Additionally, such position upheld by Odrade does accommodate the Archetypal psychology notion of *Synchronicity* as consciousness is a necessary condition for the arising of such acausal principle while, concomitantly, displaying

how a prescient vision and power is embedded in a *creative faculty*, aspects that already present and base our argument for understanding prescience as an act of *creative synthesis* and not a plain preview of *ultimately determined* future events and happenings — a commonly missed and forgotten element which should be considered in order to better understand Muad'Dib's prescient visions as an embodied consequence of humanity's and his own *hubris* and their intricate interdependence.

The denoted mental/experimental pole represented by consciousness in the very making of the universe is also important for our argument as it reinforces the anti-technocratic preponderant view which took place during the counterculture and the *New Wave* movement which *Dune* not only echoes but which the series ultimately aligns with — Herbert's work, thus, criticizes the common positivist reduction of *eco-organic systems* into purely deterministic and mechanical *cogs* where a wider and macrocosmic layer could be completely determined by its prior arrangements, by its microcosmic parts; a dominant perspective in scientific epistemology since the rising of modern science that removes any level of autonomy and self-determination in processes, a perspective which removes the very possibility for actual occasions to integrate their prehended and prior conditions into novel forms not yet determined and realized in future concrescent actual events. Furthermore, it is important to demonstrate that neither conceptions from the *Duneverse*, from Process Thought, nor from Madhyamika would lean to the opposite extreme philosophical position taken by some idealist notions which would lay *consciousness* as an ontological ground for reality, as that *substantial (svabhāvic)* aspect *which moves the world yet remaining unmoved* by any other sort of phenomena — consciousness would, in such panexperientalist view, thus, be the inferable embodiment of *creativity* and the very capacity of a process to *inclusively transcend* prehended experiences and re-arrange them into novelty; a process similar to how breathing works in meditation as one absorbs external data (the air), and after assembling it internally one returns an output to its environment, exhaling the previously absorbed air though in different quality and constitution.

By ultimately denying a deterministic understanding of prescience while placing its explanation closer towards a relational perspective of the universe, as the one upheld by Process Thought and Madhyamika Buddhism, *Dune* series is actually questioning the ethical consequences of unrivaled *Synchreative* power as a

metaphor for the technocratic mechanization⁶⁶ of modern thought while also holding both the imaginary world of those who upheld such prescient power and the ones who enact upon them as accountable for the consequential horrors that such powers might lead towards — “How little they knew of what they created by their demands. Leaders made mistakes. And those mistakes, amplified by the numbers who followed without questioning, moved inevitably toward great disasters.” (Herbert, 1987a, p.189). We shall be delving more on such topic, focusing partially on Muad'Dib and the Fremen zealotry which led to the holy war that slaughtered billions of humans (and even more organisms) in our next chapter — though we must affirm here that Paul's flaw is not one, necessarily, of *conscious* morality but precisely in his not yet refined *unconscious/ego* relationship, a flaw which had risen due to his inability, by the first novel, to have integrated his shadow in the akin process of individuation, extensively discussed in the previous chapter.

One additional principle of the panexperientialist position that must be made explicit for understanding psychokinesis is the principle that the power of efficient causation is correlative to the power of freedom. Each occasion of experience, it will be recalled, embodies creativity. Higher-level experiences embody more creativity. Our own “psychic energy,” as Jung called it, is evidently the highest embodiment of creativity on our planet. This creativity is, in the first place, the power to receive into ourselves more influence from the environment than can any other creature, and then the power to synthesize this variety of data into a unified experience, involving almost infinitely complex symbolic, imaginative, conceptual, affective, and volitional processes, both conscious and (mainly) unconscious. But then the creativity becomes, in the second place, the power to influence the subsequent environment in terms of the complex experience achieved. If our power to synthesize is greater than that of any other creature, then it follows that our power to exert causal influence upon the environment, both indirectly (through our bodies) and directly (psychokinetically), should be greater too. (Griffin, 1989, p.33)

⁶⁶ “Is automation synonymous with conscious intelligence?” he asked. [...]

She spoke: “The machine cannot anticipate every problem of importance to humans. It is the difference between serial bits and an unbroken continuum. We have the one; machines are confined to the other.”

“Intelligence adapts,” Anteac said.

Parsimonious with her words, too, Leto thought, hiding his amusement.

“Intelligence creates,” Leto said. “That means you must deal with responses never before imagined. You must confront the new.” (Herbert, 2008c, p.241)

The previous passage by Griffin is able to summarize many of our current ideas regarding prescience and *Synchronicity*, while also providing necessary Process framework to sustain our argument — prescient beings, as Muad'Dib, Odrade or Leto II, are creatures which carry the “*creative faculty to its extreme*”, creatures able toprehend and receive (mediated or non-mediated / cognitively or non-cognitively / consciously or non-consciously) information from its own internal ancestral background and from its environment, and afterwards, *exhale* its novel creations towards the myriad of micro/macrocosmic *eco-organic systems* which will receive and be *directly and indirectly* influenced by the previously synthesized and *infinitely complex symbolic, imaginative, conceptual, affective, and volitional* processes. Prescience would *creatively synthesize* what has not yet been satisfied and, thus, require that a wide arrangement of actual occasions, of actual individuals and sentient mental poles of existence to further act (directly or indirectly) in order for a *synchreative* event to occur, leading a future unfolding to correspond to the symbolic potential precognised by the prescient being. In such case, the core and raw material resultant of prescience remains as a *potentiality* and an abstract term which is *asymmetrically interdependent* with each concrescent entity — the ultimate oracle fatality and the ultimate prescient power, as we have already discussed, represents the inexorable demise of humanity as we accept it as deterministic due to it being embodied in a re-deified figure, embodied in creatures which we have gifted the ultimate symbolical and creative power by forsaking our own capacity of self-determination and our own *synchreative* capacity. “My son didn’t really see the future; he saw the process of creation and its relationship to the myths in which men sleep,” Jessica said.” (Herbert, 2008a, p.452)

Griffin will also argue how such creative capacity is *twofold*: at the same time a fundamental aspect of humanity which potentially allows it to transform the world while bringing forth a more harmonic and nirvanic living, while concomitantly also permitting the *creative faculty* to imagine further disasters and tragedies turning our own *hubris* into the greatest threat of our planet (and of our own existence).

All genuine individuals have at least some iota of freedom, in the-sense of self-determination. Although each moment of experience is conditioned by its entire past, it is not wholly determined thereby. Each experience, after

receiving influences through its prehension of previous experiences, exercises some self-determining creativity, through which it selects one set of possibilities from a larger set. [...]. Here Whitehead, like Jung, reverses the reductionism of modern thought. The human psyche, far from being a purely epiphenomenal by-product of the really real material particles, is the most powerful creature on the face of the earth, embodying more creativity than any other. This creative power is twofold: the power of self-determination, and then the power to exert efficient causation upon others. This position is thereby adequate to the fact that human beings, with their technology, have changed the face of the planet more drastically than any other creatures, and are now the planet's biggest threat. (Griffin, 1989, p.26)

This excerpt from Griffin also resonates with many of the *New Wave* concerns regarding the consequences of human actions and its relation with nature and ecology, an essential feature of the *Dune* series as we have extensively discussed — this is also fruitful to display how an absolute prescient capability would equalize a completely tyrannical power as it removes the very *open-empty* groundless ground of infinite possibilities represented by Madhyamika and Nāgārjuna's *sūnyatology*⁶⁷, while further diminishing and impeding actual occasions from exerting their own *synchreative* capacity of self-determination.

Furthermore, as both Jung and Whitehead “*reverse the reductionism of modern thought*” the prominent understanding that an observer is *neutral* and *separated* from an experiment is, also, ultimately denied — this is an important aspect explored by Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, a theoretical framework of extreme relevancy for *Dune* series as a whole and, especially, for the *Atreides Manifesto* which we have been exploring. As David Peat (1988, p.64) mentions in his book *Synchronicity: The bridge between matter and mind*: “Any attempt to measure or determine the properties of a quantum state meets with Heisenberg's fundamental limitation, that the observer is irreducibly linked to the quantum system and that any act of observation disturbs this system”. Surely we must, once again, affirm that the opposite (in relation to *reductionist materialism*) ontological idealistic position where a *substantial/essential consciousness* is the ground for all phenomena is *not* the position upheld by *Dune* — in such philosophical stance and any framework closely related to, as both Nāgārjuna and Whitehead would agree, consciousness would be

⁶⁷ We are considering a couple of ideas developed by Kakol by employing Śūnyatā's notion as a means for a cosmogony not based in any foundational ontological ground for reality.

reified and acquire the position of an absolute and ultimately existent ground which is not *dependently originated*; such position favors *being* over *becoming*, and as we have hoped to profoundly and extensively demonstrated in the previous chapter, the series written by Herbert aligns itself with a relational and *open-empty* framework as the ones presented by the Madhyamaka and Process Philosophy.

Peat (1988, p.64) will further address that “To measure a quantum state and determine its properties therefore requires the presence of a macroscopic observer who will disturb the state. So while the macrolevel can be analyzed in terms of the quantum level, this quantum level, in turn, is conditioned by the macrolevel”; such description seems clearly relatable with the very procedure of concrescence described by Whitehead where “*many become one and are increased by one*”. The microcosm and its quantum particles coalesce and give birth to a higher layer of reality, which holds some degree of self-determination in how it would arrange such prior conditions of experience; then, in a future moment, such macrocosmic level (*macrolevel*) will also exert its own influence back towards the priorly coalesced quantum particles whose function would be *disturbed* and *increased* by it. Peat (1988, p.64) concludes that such “notion of reality becomes like a scene viewed in two parallel mirrors in which each image enfolds the next and almost appears to become self-sustaining with no final limit” — possessing no *final limit* does display how our reified assumptions of a merely deterministic reality seems to be a fallacious movement which ignores the unbound and unlimited *empty field of becoming*, the very *open-empty sūnyatological* field which, ultimately, dissolves reification itself. Such field of virtually infinite possibilities assures that no conventional entity has *svabhāva*, and therefore, no *actual occasion of experience is absolute and everlasting*, as Odrade wisely mentions during *Chapterhouse: Dune*: “Souvenirs of memory must be only that. Things to be taken up and fondled occasionally for evocation of past joys. No joy can be permanent. All is transient. “This, too, shall pass away” applies to all of our living universe.” (Herbert, 1987a, p.303).

We do not have access to the full content of the document presented as the *Atreides Manifesto*, written by Darwi Odrade herself, nonetheless some passages and excerpts are continuously alluded to throughout the unfolding events of both *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune*. Odrade herself carries the prescient faculty inherited from her Atreides ascendancy and the functioning of such “*creative faculty taken to an extreme*” is metaphorically explored and explained by such

fragmented transcriptions from the *Manifesto*. We shall engage in the following pages with the most important of such fragments displayed already in *Heretics of Dune* as it will provide us with a solid foundation for our arguments and the very definition of *Synchreathesis* as a concept which conjoins *Synchronicity*, *creative synthesis* and the *open-empty groundless ground of emptiness*.

This is the awe-inspiring universe of magic: There are no atoms, only waves and motions all around. Here, you discard all belief in barriers to understanding. You put aside understanding itself. This universe cannot be seen, cannot be heard, cannot be detected in any way by fixed perceptions. It is the ultimate void where no preordained screens occur upon which forms may be projected. You have only one awareness here—the screen of the magi: Imagination! Here, you learn what it is to be human. You are a creator of order, of beautiful shapes and systems, an organizer of chaos.

— THE ATREIDES MANIFESTO, BENE GESSERIT ARCHIVES (Herbert, 1987b, p. 393)

The first aspect we intend to analyze in the previous excerpt from the *Atreides Manifesto* dialogues directly with the notions discussed by the physicist David Peat regarding the duplicity observed in the quantum level — namely the *wave/particle* duplicity. Heisenberg's uncertainty principle displays how the behavior of atomic and sub-atomic events might be two-folded — if not interacted with such *processes* would behave as waves and as energy, however, if we (on the macrolevel) attempt to measure their *particular* position, the wave-function would collapse and such events would, then, behave as particles and have their position defined. At first and for the majority of the natural scientists during the concurrent moments when such experiments⁶⁸ were led, such behavior seemed counterintuitive as it shook an underlying *substantialist* assumption upheld by the epistemological metaphysics of positivist reductionism, an atomic assumption where particles were *things-in-themselves* which could not, in any conceivable manner, behave also as waves⁶⁹ — we can perceive the clear allusion to Heisenberg's principle throughout many of the

⁶⁸ The “Double-Slit” experiment.

⁶⁹ Or even would be conceivable that different forms of energy could have their correspondent particle, as photons or phonons for instance.

Duneverse narrative⁷⁰ motifs and, especially, the importance of it metaphorically for the *Atreides Manifesto* (and consequently for a better comprehension of the divinatory *prescient* faculty). Even as particles are thrown at the double-slit in a sequential manner and not concomitantly, future collapsing of such in the second slit of the experiment⁷¹ will lay a wave-like pattern (in case they are not measured, and thus, not interacted with) which usually leads to an understanding that each particle is *virtually* and *possibly* in any *potential* position around the field created by its wave behavior. Thus, the *actual* position of a particle before the wave-function is collapsed remains a *potentiality* not yet satisfied — in similar fashion prescient capabilities hold this same *asymmetrical interdependence* between past/present towards the not yet realized future, precognizing subsequent possible unfoldings based on such priorly laid conditions as the metaphorical wave-particle duplicity symbolically translates such relational process in the *Atreides Manifesto*.

As we have already probed in the previous pages and during the course of this dissertation *Dune* series provides interesting inquiries towards a relational understanding of the universe which undermines the prominent western *substantial* metaphysics — we have labeled this intimate contiguous interdependency between different layers in a wide system through the concept of an *eco-organic system*. The *Atreides Manifesto* excerpt we are analyzing already displays this continuous exchange of information between different layers (or levels) of such systems as the *potential* position and particular instantiation of a particle depends not only on its prior conditions as a wave but also in the self-determination of a *processual consciousness/awareness* who collapses the wave function by performing a *creative synthesis* procedure, thus concreting its *potential* into actuality and novelty. By claiming that, ultimately, there are no “*atoms*” only *waves and motion*, Odrade is metaphorically undermining the very foundational and essentialist ontologies which we have linked metaphysically to both the extreme philosophical positions upheld by reductionist materialism and absolutist idealism — the existence of a *particle* depends on its conditions, it is merely conventional and not grounded by any *fixed perceptions or preordained screens*. We shall return to this argument soon, but not

⁷⁰ The prescience, he realized, was an illumination that incorporated the limits of what it revealed — at once a source of accuracy and meaningful error. A kind of Heisenberg indeterminacy intervened: the expenditure of energy that revealed what he saw, changed what he saw. (Herbert, 2003, p.477)

⁷¹ We will not explain thoroughly the “Double-Slit” experiment, though we do recommend reading from outside sources if our reader desires to understand such with more precision.

after we exemplify further how David Peat (1988, p.63) also explores theoretically the manner with which the principle of *Synchronicity* described by Jungian psychology is based on *non-linear* precepts and not in the unidimensional reducible causality (*hetu*) ultimately deconstructed by Nāgārjuna and Whitehead.

[...] the human body is composed of cells which depend upon the whole organism. So at one level the operations of the body can be explained in terms of its constituents, yet at another, these constituent parts must be defined in terms of the goals, operations, and meaning of the whole.

We should here reinforce how this procedure described by the physicist translates with precision the process notion of *inclusive transcendence* which bases many of the explored notions in this dissertation — it is no coincidence that Whitehead's philosophy is regarded as *philosophy of organism*, and once we are able to also realize how the whole universe is continuously undergoing such process of exchange and concrescence, no grand logic leap is required to assume that the universe is better described as an infinite organism where every microcosmic relative entity exerts *some* level of *participation* in the constitution and *becoming* of itself and of wider levels, exerting even some extent of influence towards the entire universe unending concrescence (though, surely, in a weakened manner in comparison with the totality, which is virtually infinite). It is for such reason that we have argued in the previous chapter that the *golden path* requires a shift in humanity's internal imaginary reality — for our abstractions are imperative and do condition future actualizations while also, potentially, diminishing/increasing our own capacity for *creative synthesis* as we attempt to freeze and crystalize (i.e. reify) such interdependency and energy/information exchange between the many parts of the universe's organism with the sole intention of imperialistically force the universe to fit within our own hypostatizations. We should further reaffirm in our current argument how this continuous *inclusive transcendence* procedure occurring across the universe, chronotopically (across the time-space continuum), is akin to the dynamics experienced by the wave/particle duplicity — though, more importantly for us, as it appears in the *Atreides Manifesto*, is the panpsychist or panexperimentalist comprehension that each actual occasion of experience has a mental pole, has *imagination* and capacity of *self-determination* by rearranging the *transcendently*

included data into novelty, i.e. the “*screen of the magi*” mentioned in the analyzed excerpt written by Odrade.

Such interconnectivity between different layers/levels in an *eco-organic system* (being the totality of an infinite universe⁷² the continuous concrescent unfolding and ultimate level of such *eco-organism*) is mostly important for *Dune* but also for complementary comprehensions regarding the principle of *Synchronicity* as the ones expanded by David Peat — comprehensions which display even further how the duplicity of the wave/particle behavior can be extended towards different aspects perceived in the world. Furthermore, as we intend to argue with more depth in the following pages, this seemingly duality between two opposites (wave/particle) could be metaphorically related with the *doctrine of two truths* found in Buddhism, which (according to Kakol) are “*neither one truth nor two truths*”. This position does make the *wave* function inclusive of the *particle* function towards a nondual dissolution so often encountered during the equipoise insightful meditation practices which lead to the sudden realization of *Śūnyatā*, the sudden realization that “*there are no atoms (things-in-themselves), only waves and motion [...]. the ultimate void where no preordained screens occur upon which forms may be projected*”.

Nature has produced some five hundred different varieties of slime mold that live on rotting vegetation. The singular property of these microscopic organism is that, like the wave/particle duality of the subatomic world, they can exist in two entirely different forms. In its normal state, a slime mold colony consists of a large number of independent individuals, amoeba-like cells that take nourishment from vegetation on the forest floor. These cells multiply by simple division and so spread out, eating everything in their path until the colony exhaust the food supply around it. At this critical point chemical signals move between cells, like expanding ripples, and trigger an entirely new form of behavior. Individual cells now begin to congregate together and the separate elements of the colony transform themselves into members of a single, multicellular organism (Peat, 1988, p.66).

Such notion that humanity can behave and act, itself and more widely, as an *eco-organic system* which *inclusively transcends* each of its cells (humans) and thus

⁷² The Universe is God's. It is one thing, a wholeness against which all separations may be identified. Transient life, even that self-aware and reasoning life which we call sentient, holds only fragile trusteeship on any portion of the wholeness. (Herbert, 2008, p.558)

behave as a single organism does appear repeatedly throughout the *Dune* series, a common narrative motif often elucidated by Leto II — this seems a perfect metaphor that interconnects the wave/particle function with the very expression of wider systems (such as humanity/humans) well represented in the previous passage from David Peat. Additionally we must also mention that such apparent duality can be linked with the archetypal function of both the *ego* and the *unconscious*, of *separation (particle)* and *connection (wave)* — to be able to know and understand the particular instantiations and processes as we experience them, at first, is only possible if we are to distinct one *particle* (or object of experience) from another, thus *analyzing* and *separating* the discernible occasions of experience from the *indissociable* realm of raw potentiality of the *unconscious* (and as we interfere with the latter, the wave-function would collapse). As it is often acknowledged, at least symbolically, as one still lives inside a mother's womb and one's *ego* has not yet been crystalized/formed, our experience of reality would be closer towards *indissociability*, a moment which we could eventually be reminded of during intense and psychedelic events or dreams (as we carry all of our past within). Not coincidentally Freud has labeled relatable afterward experiences where one feels his *ego* being *dissolved* as “*oceanic feelings*” — symbolically the womb and the archetype of the Great Mother⁷³ (as much as the unconscious) carry a profound, almost abysmal, connection with the ocean and the interconnectedness of the whole universe, revealing how *each part has never been disconnected from every single other particle* and allowing one's dissolution to recall deeply and experientially the notion of *co-dependent origination* or *pratītya-samutpāda* — a profoundly transformative and *awe-inspiring* experience which reconnects one's *ego* with unbound *magic* and *imagination*.

Such altered states induced by the consumption of psychedelics (*spice* or the *water of life*), how such experience promotes a reconnection with the collective unconscious (which also has a symbolical proximity with the process of individuation as we have explored in the first chapter) and the metaphorical resonances of such with the Madhyamaka and Process Thought do approximate *Dune* towards the *New Wave* movement while also displaying a conception of *consciousness* which neither fits into Cartesian dualist molds, nor into reductionist and deterministic materialism

⁷³ We shall explore this Archetype in future chapters.

which operates within a purely causal (*hetu*) terms. Cambray (2009) comments in his book *Synchronicity: Nature and Psyche in an Interconnected Universe* how the Jungian principle reinforces the idea that the universe is intricately interconnected and in flux; additionally claiming that Archetypal psychology posits that the universe is “*permeated with psyche*” and that such “*in this model, serves as an ordering organizing principle*” — an obvious and striking similarity with the excerpt from the *Atreides Manifesto* that we are currently analyzing where one’s *screen of the magi* and *awareness* (consciousness) is a sufficient condition for rearranging the chaos of indissociability present in the *unconscious/wave-function* while organizing it into novelty, meaning, into *beautiful shapes and systems*.

It is as if at the deepest level he is finding a place for the psyche at the origins of the universe through the psychoid archetype. This is not an intelligent design argument but an indication that the universe is as permeated with psyche as it is with space, time, and matter; that synchronicities provide traces of an original undifferentiated state. In such a cosmogony I suggest Jung is leading us to see psyche as another of the potentials inherent in the singularity (Cambray, 2009, p.21).

Consciousness as the capacity for organization, prehension, meaning projection, observation of qualitative and quantitative states and most importantly, for *creative synthesis* does resonate precisely with the panexperimentalist/panpsychist perspective upheld by Process philosophy — though we must once again refrain our reader from the perils of taking such mental-pole as an ontologically foundational ground of experience or containing any sort of inherent existence (by-its-own-side, or possessing *svabhāva*). The *awareness* of the magi and its *creative faculty* taken to the extreme (prescience) allows one to not *exactly foresee* the future but be an active participant in its creation as one understands the flux of the wave function and gazes endless movements and confluences, possibilities, probabilities and potentialities which lay dormant within the Infinite, within the groundless ground of *Śūnyatā* — by doing so, by interacting and interfering with the open-empty potentially infinite wave-function, the prescient being sets boundaries to what once seemed endless, limiting it. This, also, can be a sheer metaphorical example explored by the series which translates the *particle/wave* duality — collapsing the unbound wave-function of possibilities (where the future could be virtually *anywhere* within the wave’s field as

much as the particle could) forces specific and limited potential unfoldings to be manifested, instantiating one of the infinite probabilities into forms which could be knowable and apprehensible by such organizing principle of consciousness. The observation of the infinity leads it to be limited by its very ordering, transforming it into the finite, displaying the also *asymmetrical interdependence* between *unconscious* and *consciousness*, between seemingly opposite concepts which are at an ultimate level of *awareness* neither different nor the same. Permit us to briefly evoke the following passage, before returning to the *Atreides Manifesto*, which takes place during a high-dose intake spice experience by Leto II, and where the future God-Emperor reflections synthesize with precision many ideas here presented:

He felt the past carried in his cells, in his memories, in the archetypes which haunted his assumptions, in the myths which hemmed him, in his languages and their prehistoric detritus. It was all of the shapes out of his human and nonhuman past, all of the lives which he now commanded, all integrated in him at last. And he felt himself as a thing caught up in the ebb and flow of nucleotides. Against the backdrop of infinity he was a protozoan creature in which birth and death were virtually simultaneous, but he was both infinite and protozoan, a creature of molecular memories. We humans are a form of colony organism, he thought (Herbert, 2008a, p.405).

This previous passage, which takes place during the third book of the series *Children of Dune*, translates the aforementioned nondual *asymmetrical interdependence* between *particle/wave*, *unconscious/conscious*, between him (Leto II) as a particular individual (protozoan creature) and the very infinity. It also reinforces the dialogue proposed by the Duneverse with Archetypal psychology, an uncommon feature for the prominent science fiction works until the rising of the *New Wave* movement — concomitantly, this excerpt already portrays an understanding of the universe and the cosmos as a continuous process of becoming and ultimately interconnected where every following layer cannot be absolutely reducible to its prior and necessary conditions. It is also of extreme importance to denote once again how the intake of psychedelics can enhance our *creative* function capability, and thus awaken one's prescient faculty to higher degrees of potency — Leto II in the prior passage is under the spice's psychoactive effects, for instance. This does correlate with ideas presented by Archetypal psychology as a psychedelic can induce a

reduction of the egoic function in the psyche and permit a sense of reconnection, dissolution and confluence between the myriad of potentialities which lay within the *unconscious* (or within the wave-function), potentialities which would be channeled by one's *conscious substrate* while being permitted to manifest themselves internally and/or externally (particle-function) as the wave collapses into particular forms, *shapes and systems*. We can observe throughout the entirety of *Dune* series how the divinatory prescient ability has a direct connection and relation with such altered consciousness states provoked by psychedelics, dreams and trances — thus, relying upon certain patterns of randomness/probability which are symbolical instantiations that lay in the underlying *flow* of the space-time-consciousness continuum; instantiations which arise through a procedure of *creative synthesis* and might unfold in future developments.

Almost all non-number divination techniques are based on some kind of chaotic pattern, which actually is exactly like the Rorschach test. One stares at a chaotic pattern and then gets a fantasy, and the complete disorder in the pattern confuses one's conscious mind (Franz, 1980, p.39).

Von Franz, in her book *On Divination and Synchronicity*, will argue with appealing reasons on how divination techniques are usually related with random and chaotic patterns — this can be further applied by our current attempt here in bridging Process Thought with many Archetypal ideas as the ones discussed by Von Franz. A participating consciousness in an interconnected universe has to be continuously projecting meaning and *creatively synthesizing* the wide amalgam of symbolical content carried in the *collective unconscious* and, by doing so, it effectively becomes the sufficient condition for the arrangement of prior conditions brought into actualized forms — a prescient being possesses the *creative* faculty taken to the extreme while being capable of re-imagining the current and prior conditional field with relative consistency regarding the probability of its future becoming. They, thus, perceive the apparent randomness of infinite forms dormant in the wave-form and project meaning by the very act of observing it and rearranging it — in this process of conjoining between the prescient being's ego and the unbound raw potential of the collective unconscious, the wave-function is collapsed by the coalescing and concreting of processes into actual occasions of experience, into *becoming*. A good diviner or

medium, Franz defends, dwells in the tenuous thread between consciousness and unconscious, being able to bridge both apparently opposite worlds while simultaneously possessing a permissive egoic boundary which allows for the data inflow from the collective unconscious to reach its own consciousness at ease; “That is why the medium needs an *abaissement du niveau mental* and has to go into a trance, a sleep-like state, to pull up his or her knowledge” (Franz, 1980, p.40).

In order to continue our analysis of the *Atreides Manifesto*, the document which is part of the secondary world of the Duneverse and that metaphorically details the functioning of prescience, we must turn our attention towards the passages which claim that *there are no pre-ordained screens* organizing the universe, which is the *ultimate void*. This is a clear metaphor for an aspect of Madhyamika Buddhism which we have thoroughly explored throughout the previous chapter — namely *Śūnyatā*, the pristine inference reached concomitantly in the meditative equipoise which assesses that “all things are empty (*sūnya*) or devoid of intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*)” (Siderits, 2013, p.1). It is for such reason that we had often affirmed that the mental pole of a panexperimentalist view which Herbert’s series seem to allude cannot be taken as a *foundational ontological ground* for reality, nonetheless it is conventionally present and a sufficient condition for the arising of novel forms of experience — even if reality is *ultimately* empty of inherent *things-in-themselves*, even if it is *sūnyatological*, that does not exclude the conventional and relative arising of a *participating mental/conscious factor* which is dependently-originated as any other process in the cosmos; this does not contradict its effectively/skillfully leading role in the continuous process of concrescence — to demonstrate so, we would need to dive with a little more depth in the nondual *asymmetrical interdependence* so often explored by Kakol in his attempt of conjoining Madhyamaka with Process Thought. To assist our reader in these apparent cryptic words, especially to western readers unacquainted with non-essentialist philosophical branches, we shall present and briefly discuss Nāgārjuna’s opening of his widely known treaty, the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, an insightful nondual salutation towards the Buddha:

anirōdham anutpādam anucchedam aśāśvatam |
 anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam ||
 yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṃ prapañcōpaśamaṃ śivam |
 deśayāmāsa sambuddhas taṃ vande vadatāṃ varam ||

I salute the Fully Enlightened One, the best of orators, who taught the doctrine of dependent origination, according to which there is neither cessation nor origination, neither annihilation nor the eternal, neither singularity nor plurality, neither the coming nor the going [of any dharma, for the purpose of nirvāṇa characterized by] the auspicious cessation of hypostatization (Siderits, 2013, p.13).

This previous excerpt from Nāgārjuna does pose his common bi-negation method which displays the absurdity of *svabhāva* by nondual means — “*neither cessation nor origination, neither annihilation nor the eternal, neither singularity nor plurality [...]*”. The so called middle-path of Madhyamika Buddhism which leads to the ultimate realization of *emptiness* (or *openness* as Kakol points out and as Kazi Adi Shakti has labeled *open-emptiness*) is portrayed metaphorically in the *Atreides Manifesto* by the realization that *there are no pre-ordained screens* — not even the lack of a screen IS, ontologically, an absolute ground in-itself; this is what the *Manifesto* refers to *the ultimate void*, the lack of an inherent ground for the arising of any phenomena/process. Additionally, as Nāgārjuna’s bi-negation concludes *there is “nothing” to arise/cease* — such *emptiness* is the sheer realization that all of our conventional reality is *empty (lacking)* of *svabhāva/self-existence/essences*; to be *empty* means that its conventional existence/becoming is dependently originated, means that whatsoever has its relative and conditional existence must have so due to its prior conditions (as necessary conditions) but also due to its own internal capacity of self-arrangement (as a sufficient condition enabled by *creativity*).

Nāgārjuna’s non-duality approach in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* can be also extended towards the very *Manifesto* we are here analyzing — the *open-empty sūnyatological* groundless ground displayed as a metaphor by the lack of *pre-ordained screens* as well as by the wave-function we have minutely described is as truthful as the *becoming of beautiful shapes and systems* symbolically displayed as the particle-function in Odrade’s explanatory text regarding prescience. This echoes directly the *asymmetrical interdependence* between the doctrine of two-truths of the Madhyamaka — namely, conventional and ultimate truth. As Kakol (2009, p.276) argues, “the ultimate truth is simply the realization that conventional truths are just that — conventional — and thus lack ultimate truth, which is not to deny that some may have more truth than others”; it is for such that we have been arguing how the

Madhyamaka, as well as the stance taken metaphorically by *the golden path*, cannot be reduced towards idealistic philosophical perspectives which usually portray *emptiness* (or the *ultimate truth*) as the *only truth* in opposition to the conventional/relative levels of reality which would be to an extent *false* or *illusions*. As Garfield (1995, p.276) also points out, attempting to oppose both truths and “developing a sort of theory of one truth and one falsehood” would be not only a mistake but also a “result of the reification of ultimate truths such as emptiness” (Kakol, 2009, p.270).

We are here denoting such philosophical distinctions due to the often wrongly interpreted functioning of prescience as a completely unavoidable and deterministic precognition of the future — a perspective, as we have shown with diverse passages from all the novels, which is ultimately deconstructed by the unfolding of the *Dune* series. Furthermore, it is *precisely* the *open-empty* groundless ground of *sūnyatā* which permits change and becoming — “as Nāgārjuna often argues in response to his critics, without the ultimate truth of emptiness, there could not be a process of liberation as the non-emptiness of things renders all action unintelligible (since fixed essences cannot change)” (Kakol, 2009, p.273). If, as we have pointed, the *golden path* intends to build the necessary conditions for a humanity not bound by the limits of its own reifications, if the path envisioned by Leto II is a teleological paradox set to restore our imagination connection with the very groundless ground of *openness*, than it becomes inevitably inferable that a *process of continuous becoming and change* would accordingly dissolve the very reifying attempts of crystalizing our hypostatizations by endowing them with *absolute/ultimate truth*, endowing them with *substance* — and, therefore, with ultimate permanence. What Leto II concludes is that, by doing so, by striving for a completely *permanent and substantial universe*, we endanger ourselves (and wider arrangements of *eco-organic systems*) as we end up being disjointed from the *motions* of the universe — an absolute prescience leads to a humanity which does not *flow with processes* while concomitantly trying to impede such movement to arise with the sheer intent of making us *absolutely* and *hierarchically* real in opposition to *alien* and *conventional phenomena*.

Thus, the relation between the two truths takes the form of dependent origination, which we have found to mean “asymmetrical interdependence”
The interdependence of the two truths means that they cannot be “two”;

whereas the asymmetry means that they cannot be "one". How is this to be understood? The duality is only true from the side of conventional truth, whereas from the side of ultimate truth there are neither two truths nor one truth. This is because the ultimate is inclusive of the conventional the way whole includes part (Kakol, 2009, p.273).

To further analyze the *Manifesto* we intend to focus, briefly, in the intimate relationship between *Magic* and its capacity for creativity as a symbolical representation of the inexorable limits within any given system — thus being equated with *emptiness* and *sūnyatā*. The *Atreides Manifesto* excerpt we are thoroughly analyzing affirms, in its opening sentences, that “*this is the awe inspiring universe of magic: there are no atoms, only waves and motions all around*” — if we extend the notion that an atom is, by its early definitions, *indivisible* and the *building block* of reality, it becomes clear how claiming that *there are no atoms* is referring also to the lack of an ontological absolute ground; an atom is also *dependently originated* and not a *thing-in-itself*. Additionally, denying that wider layers of the world can be ultimately reduced to its microcosmic ones is a common motif and trope throughout the *Dune* series which takes an organic stance in this regard where *the many become one* (a macrocosm *creatively synthesize* its prior topological microcosm in a first moment of concrescence) *and are increased by one* (the macrocosm becomes a temporal condition and an object to be assembled/prehended by further microcosmic concrescent occasions which will *creatively synthesize* it ad-infinitum) — thus, an *atom* cannot be ultimately a *building block* as it is also, to an extent, being conditioned by macro-layers.

From the perspective of the *ultimate truth* there are no *pre-ordained screens* and *no atoms* in the same regard as for Nāgārjuna and the Madhyamaka the implications of the *ultimate truth* lead to the realization of *emptiness* and the lack of inherent existence. *Magic* functions, as we have written elsewhere, as an intratextual/intertextual enabler for the dissolution of *inherently absolute grounds* of reality and the raw unbound sea of potentiality lying dormant in the wave-function, and, in such regards could be also metaphorically comprehended as the very *open-emptiness* and inevitable incompleteness of any given system.

It is precisely the useful and playful function of *Magic* that reveals how our empirical world might be also open-ended and subverted or recreated to our

own will, even if such casting of ancient spells takes place in imaginative layers of dreams, books or any other media better fit for the transmutation of the cosmos (Silva, 2025, p.132).

Furthermore, the *Manifesto* presents an unmissable linguistic connection between *magic*, *magi*⁷⁴ and *imagination* — this can be interpreted as a profound interdependence between language and the very process of acquiring power in order to *transform the world* — i.e. power of *creatively synthesizing* prior occasions of experience into novelty. By interacting with the wave-function we endow it with meaning, we collapse its field of potentiality into actuality — this procedure resonates the notion we have presented during the course of this chapter where *naming* and *labeling* phenomena are nothing but the very magical prowess and the skillful means a *magi* possesses to (consciously or unconsciously) transform reality *synchreathetically*. To put it in other terms — as our mental pole of experiences interacts with its conditional field, and acquires some level of creative power as it projects meaning and understands such field, due to the core and unbound open-emptiness of *magic* it is able to perform a *magician spellcasting rite* as it *creatively synthesizes* the “*many into one*”. Prescience, as we have argued, is the faculty of creativity taken to the extreme by beings with a psychokinetic prowess able to absorb an incommensurable amount of prehended information from cosmically wide *eco-organic system* and precognize, in an act of *creative synthesis*, the upcoming future potentialities into relatively coherent and consistent *systems of beautiful forms and shapes* — its prowess is nothing more than the very *magical* power which alludes to *emptiness* as it carries the capacity of completely eradicating reified views and constructs. Creative and *magical* power, being enabled precisely by *the ultimate void* and due to the lack of any *pre-ordained screens*, is what leads inevitably towards the dissolution of *absolute prescience* — this can be exemplified by stating how Muad'Dib has, eventually, “destroyed” his own image during the events in *Dune Messiah*; Scytale does posit that a Kwisatz Haderach would eventually destroy itself, a metaphor for how *magic's open-endedness* leads to the complete dissolution of reification as the very being possessing such *creative* power realizes the need for his own dissolution if humanity ought to survive. To further complement our current

⁷⁴ According to several dictionaries *magi* could be — 1) a member of a hereditary priestly class among the ancient Medes and Persians or 2) magician, sorcerer

argument we shall provide our own definition of *magic*⁷⁵:

Magic is open-emptiness, the very embodiment of possibility, the playful capacity of transforming reality and the means to do so while also carrying subversion as an essential aspect that impedes actualized concrescent mental constructs from acquiring an absolute and reified existence. It usually is displayed as that which provokes estrangement in relation to the dominant cultural order throughout diverse genres which are embraced by Fantasy as a mode. In a shorter and defining terms, which might be useful for future scholars, Magic is a subversive and unbound power to reimagine the world and the reified image of the latter (Silva, 2025, p.147).

As we hope to have minutely described by now there are undeniable conceptual links between the functioning of prescience in the *Dune* series with the theoretical background we have selected to analyze the work of Frank Herbert; additionally we should also complement how Kakol (2009, p.218) thoroughly describes how both *creativity* (in process terms) and *emptiness* (in Madhyamika terms) can be understood as “two different but interdependent aspects of the same ultimate reality. However, as there is no dualistic difference between the ultimate reality and conventional reality, creativity can also be identified with dependent origination, and the process of becoming with emptiness”. Therefore, it is precisely due to the lack of any *pre-ordained screen* or the lack of any ontologically foundational ground for the *becoming* of phenomena that the very possibility of change and transformation arises — in the participation of our mental panexperimentalist pole in this continuous unfolding of novelty and concrescence, the lack of any inherent ordaining principle permits the nondual interaction between what appears conventionally dualistic, i.e. the wave-function versus the particle-function, which alternates their behavior as we also alternate our modes of perceiving and interacting with them. It is the creative faculty of a prescience being which allows them to imagine all the possible unfoldings by taking into account the prior inclusively transcended conditions and in act of *imagination synchreating* their potential becoming into even narrower possibilities — such act of creativity extended as a divination process does not, ultimately, determine the future but it further conditions it

⁷⁵ We are displaying the full content of the article *MAGIC AND SUBVERSION: WEAVING REALITY'S FABRIC* in the Annexes of this dissertation.

by exerting causal influences directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. Such causal influences are not to be mistaken as the deterministic form of cause-effect relationship labeled as *hetu*, we must assess once more to avoid epistemological misunderstandings.

In every moment each of us accomplishes a remarkable creative act. What do we create? Our own experience at that moment. But, you may say, this experience is not of our own making, since it is produced in us by various causes. But, please note, they are many causes, not one. This is enough to show that the causes alone cannot fully determine the result. For the experience is one, not many. What causal law could prescribe in advance just how the many factors are to fuse together into a new single entity, an experience? (Hartshorne *apud* Kakol, 2009, p.195)

This passage from Hartshorne explicitly demonstrates how the *creative synthesis* procedure takes place in every moment of concrescence while simultaneously denying the underlying premises upheld by philosophical extremes regarding causality as *hetu* and not as a conditional field where such *many causes* would only be *necessary* but not *sufficient* for the result — As Leto II comments in *Children of Dune* regarding our (cultural) reified and deterministic views of the universe “[...]a civilization which still believes unquestioningly in a mechanical universe of absolute cause and effect — obviously reducible to one single root-cause and one primary seminal-effect” (Herbert, 2008a, p.366).

Jungian psychology also correlates the principle of *synchronicity* as an act of creation/creativity, which furthers enhance our thesis that *estrangement* in *Dune* is provoked by exploring the imaginary “*ifs*” of a secondary world which questions the reified philosophical extremes embodied in both idealist or materialist reductionist metaphysics — the middle-way presenting a bi-negation and the absurdity of reification as it assumes the existence of *things-in-themselves*. Even though Jung did not explore much of the metaphysical grounds for his theoretical framework there are many observable elements which can permit us to further complement Archetypal psychology with a *relational* (at a conventional level) understanding of the universe as well as creativity and the participation of consciousness (mental-pole of experience) as the sufficient condition for the *process of becoming*.

They present a world of relations rather than objects, that is, attending to the interconnectedness of all things, where interactive processes appear more fundamental than discrete particles [...].

At play in this interface between modern physics and the psyche, [...] is a longing for insight into creation. Synchronicity as an “act of creation in time” is another of his [Jung] ways of aphoristically defining the term (Cambray, 2009, p.15-18).

Therefore, the functioning of prescience in the *Dune* series not only cannot be understood deterministically and as an inevitable unfolding of *fate* by transcendental forces but it poses a profound question on the account of any metaphysical and mental construct which deems causality as a “*single root-cause*” which, in its turn, leads inexorably towards “*one primary seminal-effect*” — precisely the same inquiry performed by Nāgārjuna throughout his famous work, the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. The series written by Frank Herbert, with its ecological and relational basis, wonders and speculates on the consequences of *horrific evil*⁷⁶ arising out of unchecked creativity which attempts to superimpose our hypostatizations onto the groundless ground of *Śūnyatā* — as every human forsakes its own capacity for creativity and longs for a permanent and static world which corresponds ultimately with our mental constructs, we engender the conditions for a re-deified being to arise, one which would hold the ultimate symbolical and divinatory power; by doing so, we force ourselves into horror and extinction, due mostly to the process of reification itself. If the *golden path* represents the deconstruction of our underlying assumptions based on *svabhāva* as *absolutely and ultimately real*, then an also *ultimate and absolute* prescient power must lose its tentacles and grasps over wider *eco-organic systems* (including humanity as a whole).

Thus, in order to better understand prescience in the Duneverse we have conceptualized the notion of *Synchreathesis* which conjoins in itself the Archetypal concept of *Synchronicity* with the Process understanding of *Creativity* — our notion, when used to explain the divinatory capacity most prominent in the Atreides bloodline

⁷⁶ Only creativity at this high level is capable of really horrendous evil—evil that involves enormous destructive power used in ways that run in complete opposition to the will of the good creator and that, now, threaten the very survival of life itself. This is demonic evil. This human level of creativity, which can become demonic, is a creature: without God’s persuasion, which urged on the evolutionary process, human beings and thereby this extreme degree of creaturely power would not have emerged. But now that human beings, with their high degree of power, do exist, their power cannot be unilaterally prevented from becoming demonic. The demonic is thus a creature and yet, because of its autonomy, more than a creature (Griffin, 1989, p.65).

throughout the series, should also allude to the Madhyamika notion of *emptiness*, as we have argued. Every actual entity and process in the *becoming* of the universe carries *creative* power as a means with which it can re-arrange its prior conditions and content into novelty — in such perspective the reductionist and deterministic comprehensions of causality cannot be seen but absurd and ultimately flawed.

The very path implied by a *golden path* envisioned to dissolve itself in the nondual perspective of the ultimate truth (which is neither the same nor different than the conventional truth⁷⁷) and to lead humans towards *individuation* and towards *dissolving* their reifications is metaphorically exemplified exactly by the Mahāyāna⁷⁸ perspective over *desire* as a necessary condition for creativity — when, yet, taken by the deep cravings of a *samsaric* mode of awareness one uses its creative faculty without having undergone the pristine meditative polishing of (n)oneself, the psychic prowess enabled by the procedure of *creative synthesis* (prescient or not) can engender atrocity, disaster and suffering. On the other hand, the same roots of *desire*, can also lead to the genuine wisdom-compassion pole acquired by the meditative equipoise and *individuation*, by realizing the inexorable limits and *emptiness* of our hypostatizations, by realizing the *magical open-emptiness* immanently transcendental to every drop of experience and to every unending procedure of concrescence. Absolute prescience is, after all, *an empty myth* and simultaneously *an act of creation* — why abide in the reification of a *samsaric* prescient vision and not claim the reins of fate, responsibly and compassionately, ourselves?

Taking responsibility for our acts of creation is mandatory, according to the tropes explored by *Dune* narrative — moreover the series provides an inquiry towards the increased degrees of the consequences of unbound creativity centralized in *absolute* levels of prescient power. Furthermore, as we have argued, such divinatory capacity upheld mostly by the Atreides bloodline throughout the

⁷⁷ “*There is no ultimate difference between samsara and nirvana*” (Kakol, 2009, p.217).

⁷⁸ The response here is that creativity is “beyond good and evil” in the (non-dual) sense that it can give rise to both negative desire (craving or clinging) and positive desire (compassion). The latter is a non-egocentric form of desire that leads to enlightenment. Now, while the early Buddhists saw all desire (*trsnā*) as negative and as something to be avoided, Mahāyāna Buddhists saw it as negative only combined with an ego-self (*ātman*), but otherwise as compassion (*karunā*). Hence the realization of *emptiness* of ego-selves (*anātman*) transforms craving into compassion. Creativity is thus compatible with the Mādhyamika *śūnyatā*; but creativity can be liberating only when we do not cling to our creations, i.e. it must be disinterested (Kakol, 2009, p.231).

unfolding of the plot does resonate with a common procedure of composition by SF novels in the *New Wave* movement, especially as it criticizes the reification process employed by technocratic values dominant during the Cold War which carried deeply rooted euro-anthropocentric assumptions — mainly no ethical relationship towards different forms of life, cultures and *eco-organic systems*. In a more relational view of the universe, of nature and reality, i.e. in a process and non-essentialist one, a non-deterministic *prescience* as explored by Herbert's series leads us to question our hypostatizations and the consequences of taking such as *inherently existent* — if a *creative prescient* being is able to foresee horrendous unfoldings we must also question all those who acted upon concreting such horrific creations as there is an inevitable connection between distinct layers of *eco-organic systems*; Muad'Dib cannot be individually accountable for his visions, for instance, as other groups used his prophetic visions to acquire more egocentric power over the knowable universe.

Nonetheless, how the divinatory act of creation carries within itself the seeds for its own dissolution is a sheer demonstration on how *prescience* and our notion of *Synchreathesis* is not deterministic and ultimately *open-empty* — it points towards a relational ground and the continuous change of prehensions between distinct layers of cells, organisms, ecosystems, planets, galaxies and the world.

Divination is therefore the microcosm that reflects the whole of nature and society and includes, within it, the observer. The contemporary version of this ancient explanation is that within each process of nature is enfolded the whole. In this way the whole universe may be enfolded within a moment of time and within the act of divination. [...] The divination is therefore also a reflection of the eternal or timeless order in which all potentialities abide. [...] De Cusa also indicates how the creative act will dissolve forms and structures back again so that they retreat from time into eternity, only to unfold again into new forms. The act of creative perception takes place within the timeless moment in which all distinctions vanish, so that out of a moment in time, the universe is born afresh. It is the eternal and continuous creation in which the world is reborn from moment to moment. Or in another sense, the one unique moment is forever present and constantly manifest in the creative renewal of the universe (Peat, 1988, p.182-207).

3. VILLAINS OF DUNE

The desire to write this chapter had risen due to an extensive and constant misinterpretation by the fandom and critics as the new cinematic adaptations of *Dune*, directed by Denis Villeneuve, had reached the grand audience and masses. We felt the need to address a couple of overlooked aspects of crucial characters from the Duneverse — at first Paul Muad'Dib and Leto II, but also related to other less central ones as Baron Harkonnen, Feyd, Rabban, some of the Bene Gesserit and mostly the whole order of the Bene Tleilax. Often in online forums, social media posts and other discussion groups we tend to find inconsistent positions regarding the source material of the Duneverse which usually base their points in an alleged “writer’s intention” — we are not here attempting to dismiss the reader’s interpretation of such multilayered work of literature, only to display some possible incongruent aspects at the bosom of their argument.

Firstly what brings a certain intellectual discomfort in those online spaces is an assumption that a writer has some level of *authority* over their published works, and in the specific case of *Dune* series, Herbert has participated in many different interviews and has given his own reading concerning the novels he wrote — the fact that he had been publicly outspoken in regards to his own work leads the grand audience to take the *author’s* words for granted, to believe in them without fully reflecting upon its implications and without critically assessing if such can, indeed, be unmistakably noticeable in the main narrative tropes of the series. As Villeneuve’s adaptations became relatively acknowledged, many critics claimed that *Dune* was just another “white savior” SF work while older fans flooded the internet forums claiming that the Atrides revenge seeker *was actually the Villain* of the first and second novel. After all, was not that Herbert’s intention, i.e. to write a “*cautionary tale about the dangers of following charismatic leaders?*” For the rest of the more critically aware fans, perhaps synchronistically bound to the *impermanent golden path*, the only words that resounded in the depths of our psyche were “*well... it is a tad more complicated than those two extremes*”. To put it briefly, as we will attempt to thoroughly explore in this chapter — Paul is definitely NOT a villain (at least, not literarily speaking and, probably, not in other senses as well) at the same time that *Dune’s* text does criticize (either by Herbert’s intent or not) imperialism and

colonization which a white savior would be a representative of. Additionally, even though we understand that some critical readings of art works might be considerate of an author's life, biography and their own opinions we assume that a literary text should not be in conflict with the very comprehension of such *author* if we are to take their opinion as valuable for our critical analysis.

The very work of the Duneverse offers us interesting metaphors regarding the process of creation as it concretes itself in the readers and owes no obligation towards its creator — we could even claim that the very idea of an *author* who holds complete and tyrannical grip over the potential meaning of a text is a form of reification superimposed in the patriarchal⁷⁹ power upheld by a Demiurgic false-god whose grasp must hold tight to enforce its own laws and meaningful order(ing). Should we only, then, recur to the *text-in-itself*? But if a text has no ultimate concreteness due to its *emptiness*, while concomitantly being an abstraction comprised of other layers of abstractions, would not that also be a form of reification which ultimately reduces the concrete meaning rising of a text towards its thematic and linguistic structures? Abstractions are not un-real or un-true, though, and they delimit the range of possible comprehensions and of meaning which a reader might project upon a text as they concreate it internally.

But it was left to Leto II to do the audacious thing, recognizing that a real creation is independent of its creator. He refused to reenact the evolutionary sequence, saying, "That, too, takes me farther and farther from humanity." He saw the implications in this: that there can be no truly closed systems in life.

—THE HOLY METAMORPHOSIS BY HARQ AL-ADA (Herbert, 2008a, p.?)

The previous passage from *Children of Dune* playfully resembles our very discussion here, i.e. that a *creature* is to an extent independent of its creator — a literary text, a movie, an art piece, have no ultimate allegiance to its writer/creator (at least, after the procedure of *creative synthesis* has been finalized). Some forms of literary criticism lack an understanding based in the Process Thought operation known as *inclusive transcendence*, a topic we deem to explore in future researches.

⁷⁹ The creative process has a feminine quality, and the creative work arises from unconscious depths - we might truly say from the realms of the Mothers (Sellery, 1989, p.102).

It suffices to denote here that, even though a literary text becomes relatively independent of its creator after an act of *creative synthesis*, it will not be entirely disconnected from it — as Leto II implies, “*there can be no truly closed systems in life*”. The actual occasion of experience of writing a novel series, inevitably, carry the conscious and unconscious longings, cravings, desires and pulses from its creator as they become embodied and manifested in the work itself. Nonetheless, afterwards, such series would become an abstract term to be *inclusively transcended* during the actual occasion of reading performed by whoever is engaging with it. Thus, at a first moment and before the completion of a work, a creator and the past carried within they are necessary conditions for the actual occasion of writing to acquire concrescence — only to, in a sequential moment, become itself an abstraction which will function as a necessary condition (that by definition delimits the wide array of potential meanings carried within it) for a reader’s actual occasion of reading. Leto’s statement that “*there can be no truly closed systems*” means that a creation becomes necessary for future developments, at the same time that it is not *deterministically* dependent on its creator because it is absurd to assume that an *effect is already present in its causes* — therefore, such creation becomes *sufficiently* independent of its creator because of its own power of self-determination; and in the case of a work of art or a literary text, the power of self-determination lies within the reader who is a concrete enduring individual capable of rearranging the symbolical and meaningful potentialities enabled by the abstract text within themselves through an *inclusive transcendence* operation.

When we apply the previous excerpt from *Children of Dune* towards the very narrative of the *Dune* series we might encounter two distinct, but complementary, fundamental aspects for this chapter — the first displays how Leto II had decided to follow the *golden path* in spite of Paul’s warning against it, which we will not focus until the ending of *Villains of Dune*; the second relevant aspect to our discussion reaffirms that even though the horrific Jihad and its consequences, even if solely⁸⁰ created by Paul’s prescient *synchreathesis*, might at some point had detached itself from his authorship only to be taken by the Fremen jihadists and revenge seekers as a divine message sent to fulfil their innermost desire of ascension in the galactic empire’s political scheme. Was it Paul who has taken the opportunity to use the

⁸⁰ This is highly debatable as we intend to demonstrate.

Fremen to his will or was Muad'Dib a collective symbolical projection of an all-mighty prescient Messiah fabricated by Arrakis natives' mental constructs? To a certain extent, this might be a symmetrical interdependent relationship where either party gained something from this relationship (whereas the rest of the human universe definitely lost much in Muad'Dib's empirical rising).

Furthermore, we must reinforce here the fact that Paul's horrific prescient visions which would inevitably lead to the demise/fall of Muad'Dib (and the redemption of Paul as the Preacher) by the ending of *Dune Messiah*, need prior included necessary conditions to have been divined by the Atrides heir in the first place. The political status of Shaddam's empire as an imperialist one set to drain Arrakis' spice while oppressively treating the Fremen and other natives in unhuman fashion is a core underlying aspect which bred and planted the seeds for future violence — "There is no escape — we pay for the violence of our ancestors" (Herbert, 2003, p.237). I wonder if, either by intent or not, Herbert's own readings concerning his own works would be so naïve to assume that the Fremen and Paul could find a peaceful resolution for this conundrum — several moments during *Dune's* narrative we find that even if Muad'Dib was to die, the results from the galactic war set under the Atrides banner and led by the Fremen would be even more catastrophic⁸¹, a clue that even Herbert was very aware of the cycles of revenge and violence which fill humanity's history pages. Is it not the same symbolical flaw which led Paul's prescience to be unrivaled during his reign present in the assumption that a single human being upholding symbolical power over reality should also be able to envision a future unfolding which ignores the limits imposed by past/present conditions in the possible array of prescient *synchreathesis*? There are innumerable passages and scenes from the first novel which display how the Fremen had been treated by their colonizers, even long before they had moved to Arrakis — what kind of unexpected and creative solution could be dreamt by a teenager boy who saw his family being brutally set up and murdered in a similar fashion as the Fremen had also been persecuted for ages? One of the motives which allowed Paul

⁸¹ We feel obliged to address also some online arguments by fans which pose that the narration from *Dune* could be deceptive and "falsified", which is ultimately ABSURD as there are, simply, no elements whatsoever justifying an unreliable narrator in the series. When Paul displays his inner psychological monologues and concerns regarding the alleged inevitability of his prescient visions there is no trick or deceit from the narrative's side whatsoever — he truly believes and firmly assumes that his visions are highly probable and most certainly will take place. That, as we have already discussed, does not mean he might had been *wrong* regarding the oracle's fatality

to become a Fremen, merging himself collectively towards the tribe, sharing their water, has the suffering and grief of the Atreides (Paul, Jessica and Alia) and of the desert planet's natives as a common denominator. Let us leave our potential naivety out for a moment — what would be the consequences for the secondary world of the *Dune* series if the Baron's plans are successful and himself or Feyd do find themselves ruling the Empire?

Secondly, we must address the Bene Gesserit manipulation of the myths in the universe and their breeding program which gifted Paul with prescient capabilities beyond other humans as well as making him a *mentat* — additionally, Paul was trained by his mother in the skillset and techniques from the matriarchal order. Their intent was clear from the beginning — to create a male Bene Gesserit with access to the male Ancestral Memories which they could not look into as well as an embodied form of power not yet seen in the universe. That power is and must be, as we have hoped to demonstrate thoroughly in this dissertation, fundamentally a symbolical one — for such reason that they spread their own myths throughout the entire galaxy, controlling the archetypal manifestations in the whole empire in the case they would produce such being, i.e. the Kwisatz Haderach.

During the first moment when the ritual of the *water of life* is performed in the series, in this case by Jessica as she will become a Reverend Mother set to replace Ramallo, we as readers glimpse one of the key concepts of the series — that humans might act as singular organisms if survival demands it. Paul's dreams and prescient visions start to leak like a contaminating virus as the tribe begins to ritualistically consume the purified version of the *water of life* and to engage in a sexual orgy — we could say this is one of the notable moments where Paul's horrific divining creations start to become collective and not only individual, a key moment when he will further lose authorship over his visions and permit the Fremen to project into him the re-deified image of a Messiah and of a Prophet. In our previous Master's thesis we have explored minutely a concept commonly used by Archetypal psychology — *participation mystique*; such concept can be fruitful to discuss the Great Mother archetype as we have done so priorly, but in this chapter it will be fruitful to portray how humans project meaning, symbols and archetypes into external phenomena. In the case of Muad'Dib, we can finally answer a previous inquiry which we had not provided a satisfactory answer — Paul's *mystique* as a Hero and Messiah can stand for the notorious criticism of *Dune* regarding charismatic leaders;

he IS a Hero (at least, a variation of one which we will soon endeavor to define) and such are archetypal representations of the overvalued egoic function common in patriarchal symbols and societies. As often we have done throughout this dissertation, we deem our reader to keep that argument warm in their minds as they read the following pages, before we eventually return and complete this yet unfulfilled perspective.

What is, then, *participation mystique*? It is constantly defined as the very procedure performed by our consciousness as it projects correspondent meaning and symbols outwardly (or even inwardly, but perceived as an external element which is not yet integrated/conceived by the ego). In the words of Neumann (1991, p.20):

Our first schema requires an understanding of the concept of projection. Just as in the motion picture an image situated behind the observer appears before him on the "projection" plane of the screen, so contents of the unconscious are primarily "projected" indirectly as contents of the "outside world" and not directly experienced as contents of the unconscious. Thus, for example, a "demon" is not regarded as a part of the man to whom he appears, but as a being who is present and active in the outside world.

In addition to the "outward plane of projection" there is an "inward" one, upon which the contents of the unconscious are mirrored. An inward phenomena they are not assigned to any outside world, but they retain, as in the case of dreams, their character of projections. Thus the dream world appears to the dream ego as something outside, and the contents of the inward projection plane are de facto "psychic contents" that are experienced by the dream ego in projection as outside content.

Muad'Dib's *Messiah mystique* is a core example and sufficient argument to confirm how his prescient visions of horror were not only creatively envisioned by him, especially when we consider the underlying functioning of *eco-organic systems* which can be profoundly and fruitfully intertwined just as Paul's integration with the Fremens begin to root more deeply — his dreams "leak" into the unconscious of the Fremens as the continuous usage of spice lowers the egoic barriers of the whole tribe, integrating them; in a secondary moment, this group of humans project into the image of Muad'Dib the symbol of the Messiah, and therefore, the one capable of leading them and centralizing the processing of information (apprehended or

prehended) of the whole community and Fremen population — all of this united under the common banner of revenge against the Harkonnen, against Shaddam, against the empire and against any other human who does not abide by the same standard and religious fervor. Paul is consciously aware of this process, and here dwells the underwork of his *shadow* and *hubris* — he deliberately accepts the projection of the image of a *Messiah* and a *Prophet* by the Fremen moved by seemingly opposite longings, i.e. to impede the jihad to be released under his banner from causing pain and suffering towards billions while, concomitantly, seeking to revenge his deceased former friends and former family while guaranteeing the survival of his tribe (Chani, Jessica, Alia, Stilgar and others).

Greatness is a transitory experience. It is never consistent. It depends in part upon the myth-making imagination of humankind. The person who experiences greatness must have a feeling for the myth he is in. He must reflect what is projected upon him. And he must have a strong sense of the sardonic. This is what uncouples him from belief in his own pretensions. The sardonic is all that permits him to move within himself. Without this quality, even occasional greatness will destroy a man.

—FROM “COLLECTED SAYINGS OF MUAD’DIB” BY THE PRINCESS IRULAN (Herbert, 2003, p.205)

By now it must already be at least more obvious how supposing that Paul is a villain is a mistaken observation — we assume that this kind of comprehension regarding *Dune* has at its roots a couple of elements. The first one is related with the lack of literary backgrounds in our overly mechanistic society where art has lost its importance and the majority of the population has been reading less and less as we tread a path towards a proto-cyberpunk social reality in which LLM's will be responsible for critical thinking (as well as reading novels/literature for us) while WE are the actual machines in society's organization. Our contemporary culture and population lacks a referential ground to compare *Dune* and Muad'Dib with other literary/fiction examples which would help us understanding the suitable definition for such character and such complex work of SF. Secondly, we might assume that the most prominent works of SF and Fantasy (not only in written fiction but also in other media) have a clear and objective morality where good and evil are easily identifiable

— the kind of works which dominated⁸² the Space Opera sub-genre and the pulp magazines of SF priorly to the rising of the *New Wave* movement of SF. *Dune* is often mistakenly assigned as a Space Opera SF series, a collective *synchronistic* event which can further illuminate the reasons why people are so eager to assume that Paul is a villain — as Aldiss (1988, p.341-342) elucidates regarding the Space Opera sub-genre:

“Science fiction is a big muscular horny creature, with a mass of bridging antennae and proprioceptors on its skull. It has a small sister, a creature with red lips and a dash of Stardust in her hair. Her name is Space Opera. This volume is dedicated to her [...]

Analogously with opera itself, space opera has several conventions which are essential to it, which are, in a way, its *raison d'être*; one may either like or dislike those conventions, but they cannot be altered except at expense to the whole. Ideally, the Earth must be in peril, there must be a quest and a man to match the mighty hour. That man must confront aliens and exotic creatures. Space must flow past the ports like wine from a pitcher. Blood must run down the palace steps, and ships launch out into the luring dark. There must be a woman fairer than the skies and a villain darker than the Black Hole. And all must come right in the end.”

Dune's plot and narrative cannot be ultimately reduced to the simplistic and manichaeistic operations and dichotomy between good and evil characteristic of Space Operas, where such dualism can be purely represented in characters which might uphold those values without any psychological depth whatsoever. As Broderick (2003) and Aldiss (1988) have already discussed, the series written by Frank Herbert do criticize the Van-vogtian hero — not by making it a *villain*, but by showing the symbolical issues which can arise from projecting and centralizing power in a few hands. Furthermore, what *Dune's* narrative constantly supply us with are elements which confirm how a couple of Fremen, seeking power as their religion becomes imperialistically dominant, will use the image of Muad'Dib for their own sake and for the further reification of the very religious zealotry structure that sustains their own position in priesthood. None of our previous argument stating that Paul is not a *villain* erases, though, his own responsibility in the jihad's launched under his Fremen name

⁸² And which still dominates the majority of audiovisual works in the form of Super-Heroes stories like the ones from DC and Marvel.

— all of our points only further reinforce specific aspects of certain types of hero which Paul can be compared to by inevitable similarities.

Unequivocally those aspects which approximate Paul with, for instance, the *tragic hero* are the very ones which are present in Aldiss (1988, p.30) famous short definition for SF, i.e. “*hubris clobbered by nemesis*”. As it is common in tragedies, its heroes’ flaws (Hamartia) are not necessarily moral⁸³ ones — “My father lives within me, but he is not me. [...] he was a gallant human whose affairs beat upon high shores. *His intent was to close down the cycle of wars*, but he reckoned without the movement of infinity as expressed by life” (Herbert, 2008a, p.402). In the specific case of the protagonist of the two first novels from the Duneverse, the jihad enabled by his ascension in power, both symbolically and politically, represents precisely what he sought continuously to avoid. There are innumerable passages, countless even, where Paul feels the weight and guilt of becoming re-deified while carrying internally the moral resolution, even if he ultimately fails to do so, to halt or diminish the consequences of his future rising as a Messiah:

He could see it stretching ahead of him, a time of relative quiet in a hidden sietch, a moment of peace between periods of violence.

“There’s no other place for peace,” he said.

“Usul, you’re crying,” Chani murmured. “Usul, my strength, do you give moisture to the dead? To whose dead?”

“To ones not yet dead,” he said.

“Then let them have their time of life,” she said. (Herbert, 2003, p. 586)

Paul’s tragedy comes indeed from the error of assuming that his prescient visions were already deterministically set and inevitable — this had only further trapped him in the oracle’s fatality. Furthermore, it is Paul’s *hubris* which led him to keep the *mystique* around Muad’Dib alive and to nurture it while assuming that more prescient power and his ascension could give him enough time to find a solution which would not lead the Fremen zealotry to genocide and sterilize different planets under the divine and vengeful quest released with the purpose of forcing their religious symbols into other cultures, into the unfaithful and unworthy — these are the precise terms we have argued during the course of the first chapter where collective

⁸³ “It’s important to note that the flaw itself isn’t necessarily a moral failing, but rather a characteristic that, under pressure, leads to destructive choices.” (Literary Devices, online access)

layers of *eco-organic systems* act to impose their own hypostatizations into the universe with the futile attempt of making them absolutely real and permanent. The paradoxical and unrivaled prescience possessed by Paul served only as a proof of his divinity for the ascending Fremen religiousness, which used the image of Muad'Dib to act upon the self-replicating violent past which they were subjected to once, only to now be the perpetrators of. Muad'Dib's and Paul's downfall are a direct consequence of his hubris, his *nemesis* comes from his arrogance which was planted collectively by the Bene Gesserit, the Fremen and the Empire⁸⁴ and constantly nurtured by his own ego. If the Van-vogtian hero⁸⁵ is the prominent hero of the Space Opera, Muad'Dib's constitution operates from within *Dune's* internal poetics as a means to show, especially in our modern and patriarchal culture, the very symbolical issues with omnipotent heroes which uphold abnormal and incommensurable amounts of power — Paul is a mentat with unrivaled fencing skills, trained by the Space Witches incredible prowess while, concomitantly, able to foresee with sheer precision future developments due to his advanced prescience. What could be the consequences, not only at an individual level but also at a collective one, to create a human being too disparate and so much more powerful than most humans? What *Dune* is portraying is that even this all-powerful hero morality becomes irrelevant for the horrors which might be unleashed under his name if humanity is still trapped in its own hypostatizations and still trapped in a constant cycle of violence:

Atrocity is recognized as such by victim and perpetrator alike, by all who learn about it at whatever remove. Atrocity has no excuses, no mitigating argument. Atrocity never balances or rectifies the past. Atrocity merely arms the future for more atrocity. It is self-perpetuating upon itself—a barbarous form of incest. Whoever commits atrocity also commits those future atrocities thus bred.

—THE APOCRYPHA OF MUAD'DIB (Herbert, 2008a, p.149)

⁸⁴ Which, in turn, could also have suffered its downfall due to a previous manifestation of the Emperor's *hubris* and so on.

⁸⁵ The deep irony of *Dune's* popular triumph, and that of its many sequels, is Herbert's own declared intention to undermine exactly that besotted identification with the van Vogtian superman-hero. It is in this crux, as much as in the stylistic advances and excesses of the New Wave, that the sixties made its mark on sf, and sf made its even greater mark on the world. (Broderick, 2003, p.51)

Considering the previous passage from *Children of Dune* we must not falter to note the due similarities with the asymmetrical interdependence principle explored so thoroughly in the previous chapters which explains the *continuous process of becoming*, in this case embodied in blood, horrors and violence — as an atrocious act is committed in the present it will become a necessary condition for future vengeance measures undertaken by those who were victims; this passage is, of course, denouncing the jihad and genocide conducted by the Fremen. Nonetheless, people might seem to forget that the whole galactic empire form of organization was built upon even prior acts of atrocity — the violence bred by the Fremen's fervent holy war had as necessary conditions the previously atrocious and harsh persecution suffered by the same group continuously for millennia. To solely and entirely blame Paul's tragedy as a character is to fall prey to the same criticism which fundamentals the entirety of the Duneverse — that a single person/being/creature can have complete power over all other processes in the empirical reality.

Surely Paul did find himself trapped in an apparently inescapable and horrific future where his own image is used as means to justify that very war which he abhors — and the beautifully woven paradox in this “complete prescience” dilemma lies within the fact that his *hubris*, an archetypal and inner microcosmical metaphorical representation for the very collective process which re-deified Muad'Dib as the Emperor of wider arrangements of the galactic *eco-organic system*, is precisely what further and further entangles Paul in the oracle's fatality and in his own ultimate *nemesis*; the symbol of a *Messiah*, which holds too many similarities with the archetype of a *Hero*, is directly interconnected with the Atreides' *hubristic* attempts to restrain the horrors he had precognized — his downfall lies with incredible precision in a co-incidence (or synchronicity) between what he eventually had to become in order to avoid that which he had presciently seen, a paradoxical *koan* with no apparent solution which, at an ultimate sense, reveals Paul's *tragic* flaw (Hamartia) and the circumstances that pressured him to become the re-deified *hero/messiah/prophet*, the jihad's leader and symbol which he so fiercely attempted to avert from himself.

We have selected a couple of passages from *Dune Messiah* which dialogue with our previous arguments — displaying how the jihad and the Fremen zealotry chose or better put, projected in Paul by a procedure of *participation mystique*, the *Prophet/Messiah* archetype and symbol. The following passages also display that he

permitted the future unfoldings foretold by his prescience to trap him in this *koan*, one of his relatively own making (and here lies his *hubristic* flaw which led him to paradoxically trap himself even more as he attempted to escape a cage which had never, ultimately, been concrete). My meddling with too many futures, he permitted those *abstract visions* to *make him*, being preyed upon by his own *hubris* the prescient visions turned him into the very horrors he aimed to avoid.

First excerpt:

It occurred to Paul then that all creatures must carry some kind of destiny stamped out by purposes of varying strengths, by the fixation of training and disposition. From the moment the Jihad had chosen him, he'd felt himself hemmed in by the forces of a multitude. Their fixed purposes demanded and controlled his course. Any delusions of Free Will he harbored now must be merely the prisoner rattling his cage. His curse lay in the fact that he saw the cage. He saw it! (Herbert, 2008b, p.234)

Second excerpt:

His mind carried such a burden of mutilated memories. For every instant of reality there existed countless projections, things fated never to be. An invisible self within him remembered the false pasts, their burden threatening at times to overwhelm the present.

Chani leaned against his arm.

He felt his body through her touch: dead flesh carried by time eddies. He reeked of memories that had glimpsed eternity. To see eternity was to be exposed to eternity's whims, oppressed by endless dimensions. The oracle's false immortality demanded retribution: Past and Future became simultaneous. (Herbert, 2008b, p.253)

Third excerpt:

All it required was water . . . and love.[...] If you need something to worship, then worship life—all life, every last crawling bit of it! We're all in this beauty together! [...]

Stars!

Awareness turned over at the thought of all those stars above him—an infinite volume. A man must be half mad to imagine he could rule even a teardrop of that volume. He couldn't begin to imagine the number of subjects

his Imperium claimed.

Subjects? Worshippers and enemies, more likely. Did any among them see beyond rigid beliefs? Where was one man who'd escaped the narrow destiny of his prejudices? Not even an Emperor escaped.

He'd lived a take-everything life, tried to create a universe in his own image. But the exultant universe was breaking across him at last with its silent waves. (Herbert, 2008b, p.305)

Fourth excerpt:

This myth he'd made out of intricate movements and imagination, out of moonlight and love, out of prayers older than Adam, and gray cliffs and crimson shadows, laments and rivers of martyrs—what had it come to at last? When the waves receded, the shores of Time would spread out there clean, empty, shining with infinite grains of memory and little else. Was this the golden genesis of man? (Herbert, 2008b, p.306)

Fifth excerpt:

"There are some things no one can bear. I meddled in all the possible futures I could create until, finally, they created me."

"M'Lord, you shouldn't . . ."

"There are problems in this universe for which there are no answers," Paul said. "Nothing. Nothing can be done."

As he spoke, Paul felt his link with the vision shatter. His mind cowered, overwhelmed by infinite possibilities. His lost vision became like the wind, blowing where it willed. (Herbert, 2008b, p.326)

All of these passages are in a chronological order pertaining the narrative of *Dune Messiah*, and they also follow the path towards the "redemption" of Paul as he kills the image of Muad'Dib in the final unfolding of his tragedy as the captive of his own prescience, seeking to free himself from the collective projections which reified him as the *Prophet* who enabled the very genocidal jihad he so firmly sought to impede. The second passage will provide an important notion which becomes of fundamental importance for the making of the *golden path* — that the ultimate and absolute prescience merges past and future, fully determining the latter as fixed as the former; Leto II, during the continuous exposition to large doses of spice in

Children of Dune will realize he must avoid the oracle's fatality, its *false immortality*, if the *golden path* is to succeed (or neither succeed nor non-succeed, as ultimately the *golden path* constitutes a nondual and non-purposeful pathless path towards virtual infinity) — "To claim absolute knowledge is to become monstrous. Knowledge is an unending adventure at the edge of uncertainty" (Herbert, 2008a, p.401). To claim, thus, absolute knowledge regarding the future holds the fatalistic and deterministic fallacy we have already discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation — that an effect can be already present in a cause, one of the first arguments shown to be absurd by Nāgārjuna's treaty⁸⁶; as we can note in the third excerpt displayed previously, the unending, undetermined and virtually infinite universe had broken and dissolved the re-deified image of an Emperor, Muad'Dib, and its hubristic endeavor to assume it could *make the universe in its image*, i.e. superimpose imperialistically its own hypostatized self-image towards the infinity — an act performed not only by him, but by the collective fervent Fremen religion and jihad. The fourth excerpt draws this metaphorical portrayal that can easily be connected with the *Atreides Manifesto*, where the wave-function ultimately erases any overly rigid attempt of constraining its boundlessness of *awe-inspiring* and *magical* potential for novelty. The fifth passage, we argue, can contain Paul's eventual realization and acknowledgement of his own hubris which led to his downfall — by believing in an absolute prescience he (and wider mereological layers) crafted the fatal prescient cage which he so eagerly tried to escape. Worshipping life, the counsel Paul internally leaves to his worshippers will resonate and set the first steps into the *golden path*, into *impermanence* and into *the great emptiness* of the desert — life, by its definition, is an organic dance where subsequent and wider layers cannot be entirely predicted by their internal parts exactly because those are not *sufficient* conditions, because an *effect cannot pre-exist in a cause* and because there is a creative element which rearranges the conditions in actualized novel and unpredictable manners.

Our following argument, based primarily in our first and second chapter, will set the tone for understanding what *villainy* can mean for *Dune's* prominent narrative tropes — if "worshipping life" is parallel to a *continuous process of becoming*, hence the participation of consciousness in creatively coalescing, rearranging and concreting its prior conditional field into novel and unexpected forms must be

⁸⁶ Mūlamadhyamakakārikā

attuned to very movements of the universe in its virtual infinity — impeding this creative and continuous process of unfolding means that one is halting in extreme fashions the very non-linear and creative *becoming* of reality as an infinite *eco-organic system*. Absolute prescience, akin to the process of reification, halts and impedes the organic flow of life in such paramount way compelling it to be paralyzed and static — thus the need for the *golden path* arises, a *pathless path set to dissolve reification and absolute prescience from humanity as a whole*. For such a reason that we encounter in the later novels a constant reaffirming of the *impermanence* motif, where change presents danger to an eagerly reifying imaginary desire for completely crystalizing reality while endowing it with the very boundaries we have assumed are concrete, even though they are mere abstractions. It is for this specific reasons that Paul's hubris has a paradoxical function in *Dune* — at the same time that he recognizes his advanced psychic abilities engendered by the Bene Gesserit he is unconsciously taking the role of the *Messiah* so longed and expected by the same order and by other groups manipulated by them; his tragedy as a *tragic hero* resides in the very re-deification of Muad'Dib which, thus, allows his participation in the ultimate ignorant wish for a *static and permanent universe crystalized in his own image* (and in the image of the religious imperialism of his worshippers) EVEN if his conscious intentions and desires were contradictory to the path he ended up following.

Feints within feints, paths within paths, traps within traps — the mereological and fractal exploration of the interdependence between different layers throughout the whole series of *Dune* can also display that Paul's *hubris* is an atrocious consequence of his ascendancy. He is the inheritor of figures in power which were hubristic, also, by their very definition — the nobility and the Bene Gesserit (and at an afterward moment, the very Fremen who had risen to be the dominant imperialistic culture in the galaxy). Paul's *hubris is another fractal metaphor* inside the Duneverse, the *hubris within hubris*. Throughout the ending of *Dune Messiah*, the *tragic hero* recognizes (Anagnorisis) the truth regarding his *hubristic* failure which had led to the demise of Muad'Dib and his inescapable downfall — this might be fractally extended to the sequential downfall of humanity as a whole, because *humanity hubris is, symbolically, the sufficient condition for endowing our hypostatizations with alleged concreteness in a strive for permanence*.

Heroes might be symbolical representations for the overvaluing of the egoic

and male principle of consciousness which is constantly striving for permanence and eternity (Neumann, 1991, p.233) and as we have mentioned priorly, such archetype will occupy the same function in wider arrangements of *society-as-organism* as our own ego occupies it in relationship to ourselves individually/microcosmically — for such that it would be absurd to say that Paul is not a hero as this archetype, when taken by the *hubristic endeavor which overvalues it* in relation towards the unconscious, represents exactly what the series is criticizing in archetypal terms. We must note, nonetheless, that a *Hero* not necessarily needs to be overvalued and hubristically reifying, though there is an asymmetrical interdependence between those terms — characters like Odrade and, perhaps, even Duncan Idaho⁸⁷ might represent a possible reconciliation between the egoic function of the psyche in a *homeostatic* relationship with the unconscious, attuned to the *impermanent flow and dance of life*.

A sophisticated human can become primitive. What this really means is that the human's way of life changes. Old values change, become linked to the landscape with its plants and animals. This new existence requires a working knowledge of those multiplex and cross-linked events usually referred to as nature. It requires a measure of respect for the inertial power within such natural systems. When a human gains this working knowledge and respect, that is called "being primitive." The converse, of course, is equally true: the primitive can become sophisticated, but not without accepting dreadful psychological damage.

—THE LETO COMMENTARY AFTER HARQ AL-ADA (Herbert, 2008a, p. 100)

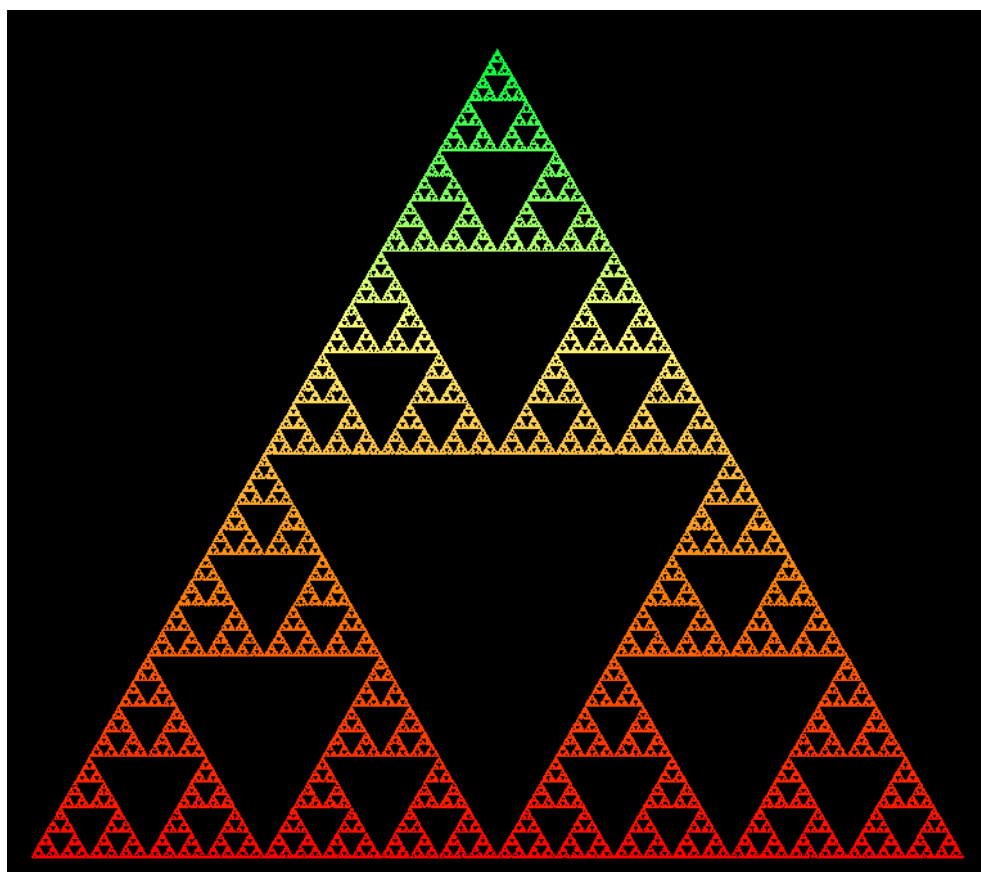
This previous passage from *Children of Dune* makes direct references to a common understanding in Archetypal psychology which poses how "primitive" humans have a not yet crystalized (in a negative sense, we might argue) egos and how, due to their *link* and *connection* with nature, such are not yet severed by the overly individualistic modern society — Jung does pose that this moment in our psychological growth renders the ego under the constraints of the unconscious, not yet fully matured. The stance taken here by the narrative of *Dune* series might

⁸⁷ Though, we must argue, that perhaps only indeed happens in the last two novels of the series

contradict, at least partially, with Jungian comprehension regarding this theme — is it not the so called “sophistication” which reinforces a sense of ultimate separation from the collective unconscious while assuming that *nature*, *plants*, *animals* and the symbolical *other* are mere extensions of one’s self, there present to be explored, exploited and ultimately used for such “sophisticated” self to acquire its longed immortality and permanence? And it must follow that the trope of *hubris within hubris* is a fractal extension of the overvalued ego in a *humanity* who suffers from a *dreadful psychological damage*.

As Donald Palumbo has investigated decades ago, the series written by Frank Herbert explores this fractal mereology as one of its key narrative structures — as Palumbo argues, the Monomyth (Joseph Campbell) appears throughout all of the six novels as a structural fractal replication which is thematically probed by all the novels. Fractal structures are self-replicating ones which tend to repeat their internal proportions and relations in different dimensions — one of the most famous one is the Sierpinski triangle, which repeats its self-similarity proportions ad-infinitum in an exact and precise fashion:

Figure 1 — Sierpinski Triangle



Source: <https://larryriddle.agnesscott.org/ifs/siertri/siertri.htm>

Palumbo discusses that the *Journey of the Hero*, or *Monomyth*, is a fractal replication structure, in narrative terms, which appears in all of the six novels — where certain characters do follow that narrative trope even if at, later novels, their function might alter. His essay *The Monomyth as a Fractal Pattern in Frank Herbert's Dune Novels* is one of the most important essays in the history of literary criticism regarding the series analyzed so thoroughly in this dissertation — and it inevitably had shaped many of our understandings regarding how *Dune* explores the internal mereology of *eco-organic systems* and how patterns tend to repeat in different layers/scales/dimensions.

[...] the series exhibits a fractal structure — and thus accomplishes the impressive aesthetic achievement of mirroring its ecological theme in its structure — by identifying the monomyth as the single and recurring framework which shapes and contains the series' consistent duplication (albeit with variations, innovations, and inversions) from novel to novel (that is, across the same scale) of those numerous individual elements that are the monomyth's component motifs. The artistry of this aesthetic achievement is compounded by the fact that such mirroring is itself an essential characteristic of the fractal image (duplication across the same scale) and by the fact that the monomyth is in itself intrinsically fractal. (Palumbo, 1998, p.436)

Paul Muad'Dib story follows the basic tropes of the *Monomyth*, a topic which Palumbo had already explored in his essay — when many of the series' fans claim that Paul is a villain they are also in disagreement with common narrative structures inferable from a myriad of fictionalized works across innumerable cultures and human groups. In this present dissertation we have further extended the fractal thematic explored by Herbert's series to include the asymmetrical interdependence between distinct levels pertaining *eco-organic systems* — for instance, as we discussed in the previous pages, the reification of a *Messiah/Hero/Prophet* in collective terms is a fractal replication of the same psychological structure we encounter in overly *sophisticated* (and psychologically damaged) individuals; the *hubris within hubris* is just the inexorable consequences of the atrocious and samsaric movement of separation between the overvalued ego (and male principle of consciousness) from

the underlying sea of potentiality of the engendering unconscious (or, as we have labeled in the previous chapter, the *sunyatological groundless ground of magic*).

Furthermore, as we have been arguing and as a means of providing a complementary reading of *Dune*, Paul and his messianic persona when coupled together operate more closely under the structures found in *tragedies* and not necessarily in the common manichaeistic Space Opera narratives — notwithstanding, Palumbo's demonstration of the Duneverse constantly application of the fractality of our universe might be incredible fruitful if we are to also apply it to the process of reification and the apparent deterministic future unfoldings of an absolute prescient power. The *golden path* could be transposed in a fractal metaphor as a pathless path which permits for novelty to arise in different layers and scales of such replications — as time is the major scale explored by prescience, a future unfolding of an absolute prescient power might represent how the *exact structure existent in the past tends to self-replicate itself in equal and precise manners as observable in sequential unfoldings*. As Leto II tends to comment, this solidifying of the future into past-memories is equivalent with the process of reification which *impedes the creative participation of consciousness* by erecting too many walls and barriers with the attempt of achieving a complete mirroring between oneself (and the hypostatized images with which it self-constructs) and the universe — those are the exact terms which we discussed previously that represent the *hubris* of Muad'Dib and his downfall.

The trance-state of prophecy is like no other visionary experience. It is not a retreat from the raw exposure of the senses (as are many trance-states) but an immersion in a multitude of new movements. Things move. It is an ultimate pragmatism in the midst of Infinity, a demanding consciousness where you come at last into the unbroken awareness that the universe moves of itself, that it changes, that its rules change, that nothing remains permanent or absolute throughout all such movement, that mechanical explanations for anything can work only within precise confinements and, once the walls are broken down, the old explanations shatter and dissolve, blown away by new movements. The things you see in this trance are sobering, often shattering. They demand your utmost effort to remain whole and, even so, you emerge from that state profoundly changed.

—THE STOLEN JOURNALS (Herbert, 2008c, p.248)

It is no coincidence that we have been arguing how the process of reification, of the fractal replication of a single structure in *all subsequent layers of reality* (either in a time-scale or spatial one, especially considering that space-time is a continuum) leads to a *static reality* as *movement* is so often associated with *transformation* — in the previous passage from *God Emperor of Dune*, Leto II portrays this image of a moving universe where mechanical (and, therefore, deterministic and reductionist) explanations can only work within precise confinements. A cause cannot contain in itself an effect, though it nevertheless will function as a necessary condition (*pratyaya*) for further arrangements. Paul's tragedy lies, thus, in how the holy war enacted under his name, under his horrific reifying religion attempted to fractally reproduce itself throughout all of the galactic empire with the intention, with the purpose of becoming *absolutely and independently real*, of achieving *permanence in an inevitably impermanent universe* — and it is, after all, a tragic story because this very genocidal jihad and atrocious war-cry against the *flow of life* was what he so earnestly stood against and tried to impede.

We can then define that Paul and the image of Muad'Dib are thematic actualizations of the *tragic hero* — we must call it, henceforth, as the *Muad'Dibian Hero*, one who carries the underlying tropes so often found in tragedies (as Oedipus) but who also is bound by paradoxical elements which inevitably⁸⁸ lead to its own dissolution and demise. Such paradox in the case of *Dune* can be understood to, especially, represent how Muad'Dib's *creative capabilities* which are set to produce novelty ended up, as a consequence of his unintegrated *shadow*, further entrapping him to the point where the dissolution of his re-deified image was inevitable if he was to reconcile with himself internally. The *Muad'Dibian Hero* can also contain elements from the anti-hero trope while also upholding Aldiss' short definition of SF as a key feature for its constitution — its ultimate flaw is his *hubris*, even though such hero might carry high moral standards. Other key paradoxical elements here present are residual aspects of *prescience* (or any form of *estranged* divination ability in non-mimetic fictions) coupled with the Process Buddhist thematic explorations of *Dune* —

⁸⁸ Differently than in Oedipus, the Oracle's precognitions are *not* fatal in *Dune*. They only become apparently fatal due to the very *hubris* of Paul. This is one of the key differences, for instance, in both characters. Paul assumes that more power could lead to more capability of impeding the future he foresaw — that future though, is not only dependent on *his* actions, but also the actions of larger wholes in this holonic mereology.

his precognition skills require a whole conditional field of fractal replications and, as they become even more powerful, finally assess the hubristic fractal structure which tended to repeat itself across time (priorly by the Bene Gesserit and the Nobility, and eventually by the Fremen's religion). The consequences and demise of the *Muaddi'Dibian hero* are suffered by and inflicted to macrocosmical layers of *eco-organic systems*, which renders at an ultimate level that his characteristic flaw is also shared in *social organisms which project the Messianic archetype* (and, thus, the overvalued ego) towards such *Hero*.

Paul's mind would be reflecting now upon the Zensunni Long Koan: "In the one act of predicting an accurate future, Muad'Dib introduced an element of development and growth into the very prescience through which he saw human existence. By this, he brought uncertainty onto himself. Seeking the absolute of orderly prediction, he amplified disorder, distorted prediction. (Herbert, 2008a, p.511-512)

To utterly prove that Paul does not carry the common (and arguably) moral flaw which is upheld by the actual *villains of Dune* we feel obliged to address some events which take place in the *Dune* series — additionally as any text might be contradictory internally because of the ultimate impossibility of its enclosure⁸⁹, we shall also present a potential error in morality (according also to the series' themes). The latter can be extracted by the following passage, as uttered by Odrade in the later novels:

It was a pattern the Sisterhood had long recognized: the inevitable failure of slavery and peonage. You created a reservoir of hate. Implacable enemies. If you had no hope of exterminating all of these enemies, you dared not try. Temper your efforts by the sure awareness that oppression will make your enemies strong. The oppressed will have their day and heaven help the oppressor when that day comes. It was a two-edged blade. The oppressed always learned from and copied the oppressor. When the tables were turned, the stage was set for another round of revenge and violence —roles reversed. And reversed and reversed ad nauseam.

"Will they never mature?" Odrade asked. (Herbert, 1987a, p.202)

⁸⁹ Exactly because its meaning is not yet determined before the act of reading and, therefore, cannot be ultimately reduced to the text-in-itself — "there is not outside-the-text" (Derrida).

As we have already mentioned it is the desire for vengeance which connects Paul (at a microscale) with the Fremen (at a macroscale) and which functions as a necessary condition for the unleash of the holy war under his banner — in the previous passage Odrade reflects upon this repetitive pattern (a fractal repetition, one might argue) in which the oppressed become the future oppressors exactly in a cyclical operation of continuous violence and revenge. “Storms beget storms. Rage begets rage. Revenge begets revenge. Wars beget wars” (Herbert, 1987a, p.231). So one could argue that even if the *Muad'Dibian hero* and Paul might not necessarily uphold moral flaws (which are, of course, to an extent entirely dependent on cultural values) we could easily observe the underground workings of Paul's shadow as he sets to revenge the Atreides family by striking the Harkonnen and Shaddam's empire.

Nevertheless, because *Dune* is a complex work, we might also encounter several passages and plot events which display a certain moral compass present in Paul which is definitely not present in the most obvious *villains of Dune* — the most striking example of such can be found during the ending events of *Dune Messiah* when Hayt, the ghola, awakens the prior memories of Duncan Idaho. Bijaz offers to create a ghola out of the recently deceased Chani, and by the recent discovery with Hayt/Duncan he claims that she could recover the unconscious flesh memories in a ghola — Paul resists the temptation of remaining as the Emperor while having his lover by his side exactly because, by doing so, he would be under the bribery grip of the Bene Tleilax, the only ones capable of continuously cloning her dead cells.

“It's not too late, m'Lord,” Bijaz said. “Will you have your love back? We can restore her to you. A ghola, yes. But now—we hold out the full restoration. Shall we summon servants with a cryological tank, preserve the flesh of your beloved . . .”

It was harder now, Paul found. He had exhausted his powers in the first Tleilaxu temptation. And now all that was for nothing! To feel Chani's presence once more . . .

“Silence him,” Paul told Idaho, speaking in Atreides battle tongue.

He heard Idaho move toward the door.

“Master!” Bijaz squeaked.

“As you love me,” Paul said, still in battle tongue, “do me this favor: Kill him before I succumb!”

“Nooooooo . . .” Bijaz screamed.

The sound stopped abruptly with a frightened grunt. (Herbert, 2008b, p.326)

During the early chapters of *Children of Dune*, Leto II and Ghanima evoke the Ancestral Memories of Paul and Chani as means to acquire some wisdom or guidance from their parents and ancestors — they are in desperate needs to find ways out of the galactic ecocide and extinction to be suffered by humanity as the consequence of Arrakis' ecological and abrupt transformation. This is another sheer demonstration on how the consequences of the demise of a the *Muad'Dibian Hero* might be suffered catastrophically throughout the whole known universe/reality — the long desire for transforming Arrakis in a green planet would lead to the disruption on spice production which, in its turn, would carry cataclysmic consequences towards humans as a whole due to the biological and economic dependency on the psychedelic geriatric substance. The empire has been ruled by the phantasmagorical return of the Baron Harkonnen who takes over the fractured, shattered psyche of Alia Atreides who had succumbed to her grandfather's Ancestral Memories. The Baron is *unquestionably* a *villain*, eager to take over the flesh of Alia as she grows older and more dependent on her memories — an aspect we have already discussed regarding Jessica's daughter which makes her a more easy prey for the genetic integrated memories she carries within her unconscious reservoir. As Leto II and Ghanima, still children in their flesh with a similar psychic constitution as their aunt Alia, allow for their parents to momentarily take their conscious psyche in exchange for guidance they permit Paul and Chani to also take over their egos and psyches, running the risk of fully becoming Abominations.

Again a shuddering breath disturbed his body, and Leto-observer felt the deep longing of his father to live once more in vital flesh, to make living decisions and . . . How desperate the need to unmakepast mistakes!

"Father!" Leto called, and it was as though he shouted echoingly within his own skull.

It was a profound act of will which Leto felt then: the slow, clinging withdrawal of his father's internal presence, the release of senses and muscles. (Herbert, 2008a, p.105)

In such a dire moment, Paul not only resists the temptation of returning to the flesh by taking over his son's consciousness but also helps to convince Chani to

retrieve from the flesh of her own daughter towards the unconscious banks of memories — if we regard the common motif explored by the Duneverse which states that “*power attracts the corruptible*” then it is not a leap of logic to perceive the moral resiliency in Paul to resist the urge to rise once again to the flesh of his son. The following excerpt is relatively long but will serve us well to display the topics here discussed:

“I know your vision,” Leto said. “Rather than let him⁹⁰ have me, I’ll become you.”

“Not that!”

Leto nodded to himself, sensing the enormous will-force his father had required to withdraw, recognizing the consequences of failure. Any possession reduced the possessed to Abomination. The recognition gave him a renewed sense of strength, and he felt his own body with abnormal acuteness and a deeply drawn awareness of past mistakes: his own and those of his ancestors. It was the uncertainties which weakened—he saw this now. For an instant, temptation warred with fear within him. This flesh possessed the ability to transform melange into a vision of the future. With the spice, he could breathe the future, shatter Time’s veils. He found the temptation difficult to shed, clasped his hands and sank into the prana-bindu awareness. His flesh negated the temptation. His flesh wore the deep knowledge learned in blood by Paul. Those who sought the future hoped to gain the winning gamble on tomorrow’s race. Instead they found themselves trapped into a lifetime whose every heartbeat and anguished wail was known. Paul’s final vision had shown the precarious way out of that trap, and Leto knew now that he had no other choice but to follow that way.

“The joy of living, its beauty is all bound up in the fact that life can surprise you,” he said.

A soft voice whispered in his ear: “I’ve always known that beauty.”

Leto turned his head, stared into Ghanima’s eyes which glistened in the bright moonlight. He saw Chani looking back at him. “Mother,” he said, “you must withdraw.”

“Ahhh, the temptation!” she said, and kissed him.

He pushed her away. “Would you take your daughter’s life?” he demanded.

“It’s so easy . . . so foolishly easy,” she said. (Herbert, 2008a, p.106)

We hope we have presented enough arguments to classify Paul as a variation

⁹⁰ Leto is referring here to the Baron.

and actualization of the *tragic hero*, as we have labeled the *Muad'Dibian Hero*, which cannot fit into the role of a villain in narrative terms. The prior passages also can most definitely display how the Baron Harkonnen is the *villain* of the first trilogy, with occasional and minor characters also playing this role. Now we must address, with not so much detailing, the role Leto II and God-Emperor of Arrakis might take in the series' plot.

As far as the events presented in *Children of Dune*, as analyzed by Donald Palumbo, Leto II's journey can be easily correspondent to the heroic journey described by the Monomyth — nonetheless, Leto II is a relatively complex character representing and embodying, when we consider the entirety of the series, the very collective *koan* which Muad'Dib had become tragically a victim and a perpetrator of. As we have already described and analyzed in the first chapter, Leto II will set out the first steps of the *golden path*, leading humanity to a deep mythical transmutation of its inner desires in order to impede its own destruction, in order for this collective hyper-advanced state of humankind to perceive the symbolical dangers of re-deification and of the centralization of creative power into a macrocosmic ego for its collective unconscious.

As Muad'Dib's religion becomes further reified, and even though its emperor had blindly gone wandering, had symbolically returned to the cosmic womb of Arrakis' deep deserts with the purpose of destroying its own image, his *messianic persona* mystique remained alive in the Fremens and their new Empire — now commanded by Alia and her internal ghostly possessor, the Baron Harkonnen. Muad'Dib's offspring would only ascend as the rulers of the galactic universe when they would reach a certain necessary age for so and in the meantime, those attracted to the new erected power structures became and formed the priesthood of the Fremen's religiousness. Even though the twins were yet children during the third novel of the *Dune* series (hence the name of the book), both Leto and Ghanima were pre-born and had their psyches already awakened by the spice agony while still in Chani's womb — this renders them as humans of a similar quality as their aunt and susceptible towards being overtaken by internal Ancestral Memories, susceptible into becoming *abominations*. This dichotomy though, as we have argued elsewhere, is a core element for the internal paradoxical character present in Leto II — not only, as Palumbo argues, he might represent the Godhead archetype in the sequence novels (*God Emperor of Dune*) but the explored tropes from the series would allow us to link

Leto with other symbols/archetypes/deities.

Firstly, we might denote his connection with the animal/unconscious aspects of the psyche represented by his transformation into a sand-worm — by the later moments in *Children of Dune*, the future God Emperor of Arrakis and of the galaxy will symbiotically merge himself with sandtrouts (the smaller parts/cells of a sandworm). In Leto II's transformation into a hybrid human-sandworm creature we can perceive another mereological metaphor so often explored by the main motifs of the Duneverse — the interrelation between his human-part with the various sandtrouts leads his larger whole to be transformed in an unexpected and irreducible form not yet determined by the parts themselves; it is Leto's *participating consciousness* which performs an act of *creative synthesis* in order to promote novelty as his parts coalesce and concreate into his Godlike form. Furthermore, we feel the necessity here to reaffirm that due to his pre-born quality, Leto's ego is not as well crystalized as that of most humans and for such he can forego his own humanity, transcending it into his transhuman sandworm constitution, into a hybrid being — neither human nor non-human. It would be inevitable to reconnect these points here explored with a previous quote from *Children of Dune* presented in this chapter — in that excerpt Leto comments on the psychological damage caused by humans overtly valuing their egoic substrate of the psyche; this symbiotic inner connection between Leto's undeveloped ego approximate it towards the archetypal comprehension of the psyche's condition of primitive populations. In *God Emperor of Dune*, for instance, Leto's brain is entirely dissolved within his sandworm body — another metaphor that demonstrates how our psyches and minds cannot be ultimately reducible to brain functions while also positing Leto's relative balancing between conscious and unconscious (exactly because we usually associate the egoic aspect of the psyche with our brains).

Process Thought, with its panexperimentalist takes, can be approximated in a prolific manner regarding the irreducibleness of mental states towards the brain function — at first we would have to posit how a certain experienced state (by being an *effect*) is not yet contained sufficiently in events happening in the brain. Would that not lead towards a separation between Mind and Matter⁹¹? Our reader might definitely wonder so — though as we have already argued beforehand, brain events

⁹¹ "[...] Trying to find rules for creation is like trying to separate mind from body" (Herbert, 2008c, p.89) — this is congruent with Process Thought as there is no ultimate separation between *mind* and *body*.

are *conditions* for a certain experience; conditions, though, are many and not sufficient. There is an asymmetrical interdependency relation between brain events and mental states, and *Dune* as well as many other works from the *New Wave* movement of SF do criticize the positivist reductionism which reduces all of our experiences towards the brain functioning, i.e. towards the *egoic substrate of the psyche* — however, we must ask ourselves, does not the *continuous process of becoming* demonstrates its unending rearrangement which might take place in all layers of our internal parts where a subsequent layer cannot have its behavior entirely predictable precisely because it is absurd to assume that an *effect is already present in a cause*? Leto's internal arrangement and brain dissolution does pose an inevitable interconnection between mind and matter which *is not the same conclusion as the one performed by deterministic perspectives which ultimately reduce all information processing taking place in an eco-organic system towards the centralizing brain/ego function*, symmetrically assuming a complete equivalence between brain/mind:

The problem with identity theories is that they too easily move from the asymmetrical truth that mental events imply brain events (no brain, no mind) to the symmetrical doctrine that mind and brain mutually imply one another and are thus identical (or equivalent). But although it is true that a change of brain state necessitates a change of mental state, it doesn't follow that every change of a mental state requires a corresponding change in the brain; for, according to the logic of material implication, we cannot conclude from "*m* implies *b*" that "no *m*, therefore no *b*." Every mental state is conditioned by a brain state, but the conditioning is necessary, not sufficient. Without brain state *A*, I couldn't have mental state *x*; but given brain state *A*, I need not have mental state *x*. I may instead have mental state *y*, which also could not exist without brain state *A*. (Kakol, 2009, p.41)

This idea corresponds in symbolical and metaphorical terms with Leto's commentary on the roots of the *psychological damage caused by sophisticated civilizations which reify their egos/brains/selves*⁹² either by falling into some idealistic substantial notion of an essential self or by ultimately assuming the complete equivalence of such self with the brain and its functions, mechanizing even further

⁹² This should be distinguished from the *Self* understood by Archetypal psychology as that which is the ending result of individuation

our unconscious and the elementary levels of ourselves as *eco-organic systems* by removing from them the capability of *creative synthesis* and by ignoring their inner relational constitution which would also *creatively transform its following concreting layers, as actual occasions of experience, in novel and unexpected manners*. The very metaphor embodied in Leto II as a hybrid character, for instance, denotes necessary steps towards the *golden path* — retreating from this overly *sophisticated* and *ego-reifying* constitution into one more closely interconnected with its *animal and unconscious side of the psyche*. Muad'Dib's ultimate flaw is a *hubristic* one and his religion overtly re-deifies his image into a state which leads towards his unrivaled prescient power — when considering such themes from the *Dune* series to be a consequence of a macrocosmic overvaluing of a *Messiah/Hero/Prophet* which represents the very reification of a collective *enduring self* in a *society-as-an-individual*, then Leto II, metaphorically and archetypically, will constitute himself, both internally and cryptically, as *primitive and unsophisticated* — as we have argued in the first chapter, this could be equivalent to the process labeled by Jung as *individuation*, not in a complete negation of the ego (which had happened to Alia, as she tried to repress her Ancestral Memories so harshly that she fell prey to her own *shadow* materialized as the Baron's memories) but as a relatively harmonious relationship between ego/unconscious. There are also undeniable similarities between the sequential narrative of Paul and his son Leto II with other mythological stories, as the following one presented by Von-Franz (1980, p.32):

The Navahos once had a very outstanding chief who owned all the pearls and treasures of the tribe and in order to be protected lived in seclusion. He had a big turquoise of which the Sungod was jealous. Though the Sungod himself also had a complete, or perfect turquoise, he wanted the chief's too. He therefore generated a son with Rock Woman and educated this son so that he should become a perfect gambler, one who always won. He then sent him down to earth to challenge the chief and win everything from him, including the great turquoise. This the son did. The Sungod then asked to have the turquoise, but his son, the Navaho gambler, kept it for himself. The Sungod was very angry and repeated the same performance. He again generated a son with Rock Woman and taught this one too, but the second son he also taught to cheat, with the help of animals.

Priorly to narrating this story, Von-Franz was arguing that at a symbolical level

gambling games and learning how to cheat in such games could be similar to how we apply mathematical statistics in order to understand the behavior of certain aspects of reality — though she firmly shows how we tend to overly inflate our egos by assuming that such statistical truths are *truths-in-themselves*, i.e. absolutely and inherent truths. In her words (1980, p.31), “We make the same fatal mistake when we think that a statistical truth is the truth, for we are really only handling an abstract concept and not reality itself, and into that thought then sneaks identification with the godhead”. Identification with the godhead is what she understands to be the precise egoic inflation experienced collectively by our *sophisticated society*, as she further complements regarding the symbolical connection between *gambling* and how mathematicians explain statistical truths — “Thus the actual historical root of probability is gambling. [...] whenever physicists or mathematicians try to explain in a popular form the calculus of probability, or the principles of statistics, they fall back on the idea of gambling. This suggests that the archetypal root is the archetype of the gambler and gambling” (Franz, 1980, p.32). At also an underlying level, the *prescient capabilities both upheld by Paul and Leto II* might be archetypically understood to how we learn to “*count*” or “*cheat*” in gambling games, thus accounting for the potential and most probable outcomes by considering a large amount of prehended information — and exactly by so that we could compare both characters with the sons of the Sungod in the Navahos’ story told by Von-Franz.

Surely we cannot reduce the complexity of *Dune* to this mythological story, nevertheless the similarities are of key relevancy to our analysis of both characters — Paul, the first inheritor of the Sungod as a collective archetypal projection, unaware of the *shadowy* operations of his *hubris* (and therefore his *inflation*) is used by his *prescient powers* (even if at a conscious level he was trying to avoid this outcome) in order to keep the great turquoise owned by the chief of the Navahos; the collective Sungod, thus, sends unexpectedly Leto II and teaches him how to cheat with the help of the animals, i.e. with the help of the sandtrouts which constitute his animalistic and bestial symbiotic conventional self, in order to restore and retrieve the jewel which belonged originally to the Sungod.

the second gambler challenges the first gambler and, with the help of the animals it is not specified in what way he wins everything back from the first gambler. He then hands the great turquoise to his father, the Sungod, who

rewards him by giving him great power and the possession of much land.
(Franz, 1980, p.33)

Before continuing with Von-Franz, we should also address that exactly because of the thorough mereological thematic exploration of the *Dune* series, the first son of the Sungod which stands for the *egoic inflation* which inevitably leads to *hubris* and towards *reification* by assuming we can have a *complete and total understanding of the infinity*, is not only associable with Paul Muad'Dib but with the very microcosmic egoic inflation which afflicts humanity as a whole prior⁹³ to the *golden path*⁹⁴ — if we are to follow this line even further, than Leto II *becomes an archetypal representation of the Sungod* only to birth humanity anew while treading the *pathless path of infinity* symbolically represented as the *golden path* towards a restoration of such inflation into a state of homeostasis and equipoise. Even the coloration of the *water of life* in its blueish tonality resembles the turquoise jewel which was longed by the Sungod, who rewards *humanity-as-individual* after it had won the paradoxical *koan* gambling game against its own *inflated ego* embodied in the first son's character. After the death of Leto II and his empire, he dissolves back into countless sandtrouts which will carry within themselves the *golden path* and become the future sandworms of the later novels; during the events of *Chapterhouse: Dune*, the only surviving sandworm taken to the dwelling planet of the Bene Gesserit is a direct descendant of Leto II himself. The *spice* and the *water of life* are the symbolical rewards akin to the gifts which the Sungod will eventually give to his second son who has not faltered and failed due to inflation and to *hubris*.

If we interpret this myth psychologically, the Sungod would be a parallel to Day, Death, Fire, and Emptiness in the Yoruba prayer; he is the god of the principle of consciousness in the unconscious. Or you could also call him the light of nature, the *lumen naturae*, and he therefore can count infinitely and he in his consciousness is aware of all gambling. Then he creates human consciousness, the first gambler, and teaches him his tricks. But the first gambler falls into an inflation, and after he has learnt the tricks from the Sungod he does not give back what the Sungod wants, as a sacrifice or as a

⁹³ And which still affects humanity afterwards, however. The *golden path* is a paradoxical pathless path, its soteriology is neither ceasing nor non-ceasing.

⁹⁴ And, to an extension, which afflicts metaphorically humanity as a whole in our current states of affair.

reward for having taught him the tricks. He is an inflated hero, and therefore is doomed, because the Sungod then creates a second gambler who is human and modest, and honest enough to give back the great turquoise to the Sungod, knowing that he had only won through having learnt the Sungod's tricks and with the help of the animals, which here is the decisive factor. We would say that he remains true to his instinct, and does not become inflated. (Franz, 1980, p.33)

Nonetheless, we need to assess that Leto II as a character is more complex than just an archetypal representation of the Godhead or concomitantly the second son of the Navaho's myth — when we further engage with the main motifs and tropes from *Dune* narrative, it becomes evident that the assumption that a Godhead is entitled to the infinity while concomitantly being able to count it is a paradox because such is, by its very definition, ultimately uncountable⁹⁵ and not cognizable. Leto II will take the complete *hubristic* role of the first son of the Sungod and become, in precise terms, *what humanity must avoid if it ought to survive* — he embodies the deified and reified *hubris/ego*, outwardly⁹⁶, with the *purposeless purpose* of guiding humanity safely in the onset of the *golden path*. If Leto II had not intervened, Alia and the Fremen religion in Arrakis would have rapidly transformed the desert planet while halting spice production which would lead to humanity's extinction. The *humanity-as-individuals* in their egoic inflation while concomitantly assuming that the *absolute prescient abilities* upheld by the Atrides were *inherent demonstrations of their divine destiny* had conjured a trap of their own abstractive making — Leto II becomes a demiurgic being whose prescient powers have no rivalry, entangling humans in a web of complete deterministic events where the future is already present in its past, where *consequences are already present in its causes*. Of course that, by now, our fellow reader should acknowledge that this paradoxical *koan* embodied by Leto II is exactly what humanity must avoid if it wants to survive, if it longs to restore its *primitive* and *harmonic* relationship between *parts and wholes* — absolute prescience is the *nemesis* of whole *eco-organic systems* as they become embodied and controlled by the macrocosmically and microcosmically projections of our

⁹⁵ Though you might argue that by counting the infinite you collapse the potentiality in the wave-function forcing reality to take a particular form/structure, thus becoming countable.

⁹⁶ Internally and inwardly he is very aware of the horrific role he has taken and abhors it, as we can often see through his Stolen Journals.

hubristic inflated egos.

The association performed by Franz in the previous excerpt relating the Sungod (and by extension the Godhead archetype) with the *principle of consciousness in the unconscious* will be of key importance for this chapter — as we tend to further demonstrate, the very constitution of the Godhead might be to an extent a *reification of the egoic principle which assumes itself as the sole owner of the infinity*, i.e. the owner and possessor of the generative powers of the unconscious — leading inevitably, as we are bewitched by such archetype, towards *inflation* and disconnection from the *groundless sunyatological ground* of reality, from the great *emptiness* and cosmic womb. As Leto II becomes the re-deified Godhead to an also inflated humanity, he *can be* paradoxically understood as a *villain* when we consider the main tropes of the *Dune* series — but this is not also, so simple, as we intend to demonstrate. We have engaged last chapter with the *Atreides Manifesto* and with the *creative synthesis* procedure embodied in *prescience*, i.e. the *synchreathesis* feature, as well as connected at a symbolical layer the Buddhist notion of *śūnyatā* with the open-emptiness of possibilities present in the *wave-form*, present in the engendering capabilities of the unconscious — if, as priorly demonstrated, the *egoic hubristic inflation* and the consequences unleashed by such are bound to be understood archetypically as a categorical mistake of assuming that the *open-emptiness groundless ground of possibilities* belongs to such *ego* in the first place, than this kind of categorical error can be better understood as an attempt of *reifying the Godhead mystique in the inflated masculine*⁹⁷ *principle of consciousness*, i.e. assuming that the creative powers of the unconscious *belong to such inflated ego*.

[...] the unconscious is the mother of all things, and all things that stand in the light of consciousness are childlike in relation to the darkness as is consciousness, which is also a child of these primordial depths. [...] Tiamat is the actual principle of origination: mother of the gods and possessor of the table of fate.

[...]

Tiamat survives the death of Apsu, and when she is finally defeated by Marduk, the patriarchal sun god, the upper vault of heaven and the lower vault of the underworld are fashioned from her body. Thus, even after her defeat, she remains the all-containing Great Round. (Neumann, 1991,

⁹⁷ At a symbolical level, of course.

p.212-213)

If the *golden path* is at a symbolical level, for the narrative of the *Dune* series, an *eco-organic* restoration towards a non-deterministic and open-empty humanity who understands the continuous *process of becoming* in its inevitable *impermanence*, than a *hubristic reification* in its attempt of achieving absolute/inherent existence, *permanence*, *immortality* and a complete correspondence between a static universe with its hypostatizations does represent *villainy* regarding the main motifs explored by the series — “[...]this male principle of consciousness, which desires permanence and not change, eternity and not transformation, law and not creative spontaneity, “discriminates” against the Great Goddess and turns her into a demon” (Neumann, 1991, p.233).

So to an extent, Leto’s ascendance amidst the phantasmagorical struggle of *humans-as-organism* with their own craving for *absolute permanence*, can be understood as a form of *villainy* regarding the series’ tropes — it is not a coincidence that in the later novels, the hybrid transhuman-worm will be known either as *tyrant* or *shaitan*. He becomes not only a tyrannical ruler but *tyranny reified* and crystalized in his very *absolute prescient power* — and as we surely have already thoroughly exemplified in the previous chapters, *infallible absolute prescience* is a metaphor in the *Dune* series for the categorical mistake labeled as *reification* in Whitehead’s philosophy with which Madhyamika notions carry undeniable similarities. Nonetheless we might address the fact that Leto II *intentionally becomes the very puzzle needed to be overcome if humanity should survive* — his transformation as a Demiurge set to bind humanity within his divination capabilities are akin to the Buddhist notion of *samsara*; we could also equate the God-Emperor with Mara, the tempting Asura in the famous story of Śākyamuni Buddha who represents the perils in the path of enlightenment, i.e. the perils in the *golden path*. Would not be contradictory, you might wonder as you engage with the present ideas, that the very creature who allowed the *golden path* to begin to be also the one who poses himself as its biggest threats? In the words of Leto II himself: “Paradox is a pointer telling you to look beyond it. If paradoxes bother you, that betrays your deep desire for absolutes. The relativist treats a paradox merely as interesting, perhaps amusing or even, dreadful thought, educational” (Herbert, 2008c, p.384).

As we aim to conclude, the God-Emperor is not a simple villain — the *persona*

he has built embodies the *hubristic and inflated Godhead archetype*, enabling this part of him to be seen, in precise terms, as that which humanity *must* overcome in order to reconnect itself towards the infinite creative prowess which arises from the unconscious in a never-ceasing dance/flow/flux of impermanence. If his prescient god-like powers are *absolute*, if they metaphorically represent the very procedure of *reification* than his government was a *paradoxical and educational* one set to produce the necessary seeds for its own dissolution. As Leto's becomes the emperor in the ending of *Children of Dune* he is able to decelerate Arrakis' transformation while impeding humanity's own collapse — and as it is revealed throughout *God Emperor of Dune* he sets himself to transform the deep dreams and desires of *humanity-as-organism* in order for it to survive dire events foreseen by him in a very distant future. The solution to this clueless puzzle he presents is to *traverse the golden path*, to reconnect with *impermanence* and to resolve the internal and collective need for a complete correspondence between our mental constructs with the universe — i.e. Leto's onset of the *golden path* is set to transform the inner desires of a collective humanity towards a *middle-path* that evades reifying extremes.

Taraza was talking once more: "There's another useful concept that I'm sure your mother taught you—the key log."

[...]

Key log: a truly ancient concept from the days before suspensors when lumbermen sent their fallen timber rushing down rivers to central mill sites. Sometimes the logs jammed up in the river and an expert was brought in to find the one log, the key log, which would free the jam when removed.

"The Tyrant was a key log," Taraza said. "He created the jam and he released it." (Herbert, 1987b, p.168)

There are a couple of inquiries we ponder about regarding Leto II — if he is simply a *villain*, by embodying the complete tyrannical power of absolute prescience, by symbolizing *reification*, why did he maintain the Bene Gesserit breeding program and actualized it to work without *any purpose or goal*? Why did he permit the *human-as-organism* to creatively (by unconscious manners) produce a being (Siona) immune to his prescient powers? If his sole intent was similar to the *actual* villains of the narrative than why had he eagerly bred the very seeds that would disrupt his complete power over humanity? When we take into consideration the previous

passage from the *Heretics of Dune*, the God Emperor is understood by the future matriarchal order as both the one who jammed the flow of infinity and the one who removed the key log there set to halt the flow in the first place.

This metaphor, when we especially consider the Buddhists themes explored in Herbert's series, is of considerable similarity with a famous Zen *koan* — the goose in a bottle. In this famous *koan*, we face a paradoxical challenge with no seemingly reasonable escape, as with most *koans*, which follows:

A great and philosophical official, Riko, once asked the strange Zen Master, Nansen to explain to him the koan of the Goose in the bottle. "If a man puts a Gosling into a bottle," Said Rikon, "and feeds him until he is full grown, how can the man get the goose out without killing it or breaking the bottle?"

Nansen gave a great clap with his hands and shouted "Riko!"

"Yes, Master," said the official with a start.

Said Nansen, "the Goose is out!" (Chowdhury, 2024, online access)

If we are to understand both Leto II and his absolute prescient powers as the glass which is holding *humanity and the goose* inside a hypostatized glass bottle which has no ultimate concrete existence, it becomes to us very clear that both the God Emperor and his *golden path* are *creative solutions* which tend to break and dissolve the very illusory mental constructs which we have collectively built and which entangles, diminishes and limits our *life as organisms*. Leto II *is an embodied koan* who breeds, without purposes or goals, the very necessary conditions for the collapse of his own empire. He presents himself as the very challenge which humanity must creatively overcome if it ought to survive — and he does so by sacrificing himself and his self-image, becoming the devilish re-deified being who must be defeated. Let us take the breeding program of the Bene Gesserit as an example — they had searched for specific characteristics, with certain purposes of achieving an unrivaled prescient power; their *hubris* led to the creation of both Paul and Leto II, which in their turn had led *humans-as-organism* to a mental/abstract prison of their own collective making⁹⁸. To *unmake* a goal-oriented path towards the

⁹⁸ In ways we have already discussed throughout this dissertation

pathless golden path of emptiness, Leto II must also remove the purpose-orientation in his own breeding program, thus permitting for a truly creative and symbolical transformation of humanity in face of its own extinction embodied in him as *a koan*, as *a tyrant and as a re-deified being* — to survive, humans must achieve a concrete actualization of itself by being bred with *uncertainty* and with *open-emptiness*. Leto's breeding program is built without the conscious interference of seeking for specific characteristics and traits, this permits the engendering power of the collective unconscious to solve the *humans-in-a-bottle koan* manifested in the very constitution of the God Emperor himself.

The Lord Leto said, "See that you do. Tell your Sisters also that the Bene Gesserit of all people should know the dangers of breeding for a particular characteristic, of seeking a defined genetic goal."

[...]

There is no doubt that he was a male with the powers of a Reverend Mother and other powers for which humankind still is paying a heavy price. As the Lord Leto said:

"You got the unexpected. You got me, the wild card. And I have achieved Siona." (Herbert, 2008c, p.96)

This permits us to infer from the dominant tropes in *Dune* series, especially when we consider its ecological connotations and concerns in an overly technocratic society where reality, animals, plants, and creatures are ultimately reduced to the machinery workings of a complete deterministic understanding of the universe, that the *path we are traversing in our current states of affair*, as *humans-as-organism* is a samsaric one built by our *hubristic endeavor* to overly superimpose our hypostatizations into all the disbelievers and unworthy⁹⁹. The countercultural motifs present in the series are undeniable, as we and other scholars have already demonstrated, and it further reassesses how the Buddhist tropes present in *Dune's* narrative will attempt to *reduce to absurdity the assumptions we carry that our mental constructs are ultimately and absolutely real*, that they possess *svabhāva*. If also, according to *Dune's* mereological fractal and holonic navigation, that *individuals might compose a higher layer of organisms when coalesced* that the true villain of

⁹⁹ Therefore, into all who do not abide to a principle of self-similarity in relationship to such hypostatizations.

Dune is the very process of reification so often chased from our desperate needs for safety in an inexorably *incomplete, indeterminate and impermanente* universe (or better put *neither-uni-nor-non-universe*) — *the fallacy of misplaced concretes is the true villain for the series*, understood metaphorically in the narrative as the human (*the sophisticated one*) endeavor to impose itself in a fractal, and entirely self-similar, repetition of its own self-image and *egoistic excesses*. Soteriology, encompassed by the *golden path*, presents itself through paradoxical motifs set to undermine the very process of reification encountered in *philosophical extremes* which would lead humans, akin to the *archetypal individuation and the Buddhist enlightenment*, to the *realization of emptiness* — this *middle-path* does not deny the truthfulness of the conventional reality, only points towards the inexorable limits of such, the inexorable boundaries of any given axiomatic system as mathematically demonstrated by Gödel.

“Ahhh, yes,” Taraza said. “Our Missionaria Protectiva. Humans have such a powerful need that their own belief structure be the ‘true belief.’ If it gives you pleasure or a sense of security and if it is incorporated into your belief structure, what a powerful dependency that creates!” (Herbert, 1987b, p.168)

The previous excerpt from *Heretics of Dune* is another (of innumerable) indication of how the series criticizes the unaware and constant procedure of reification which is originated by *ignorance (Avidyā)* or “cognitive exclusion between particular things that do not readily fit into the frame of the general aim under which that process was conducted” (Shakti, 2023, online access). When we understand the underlying and fractal explorations of *Dune*, as it shows the intimate and asymmetrical interdependence between different layers in *eco-organic systems*, we can clearly realize that Paul’s prescient *koan*, the one he tried to escape only to find himself ever more trapped in and which is also the *koan* inherited and embodied by Leto II, is the actual consequence of *humanity-as-organism avidyā*, the collective and disastrous *nemesis* which is tragically generated by a *hero’s* image and symbol — reification “can be understood to be both the foundational basis, and exemplary case, of idolatry: it is the first to give birth to the icon and the last to remain upon its death” (Shakti, 2023, online access). There is no Muad’Dib or Leto II’s demiurgic persona without the symbolical idolatry of countless humans who are collectively and

ignorantly superimposing their idolatry in a hubristic and imperialistic fashion. The escape of this *koan* is not only individual, it cannot be, the traversing of the *golden path* must reach humans as a whole (and, perhaps, even other sentient beings), and therefore cannot be reduced to the individual workings of a single-being — this would lead to the very problem which permitted the rising of Muad'Dib and their re-deification in the first place, as power would be upheld in the *absolute deification of its image*, in its symbolical and material control of several deeply interwoven layers from *eco-organic systems*. To put it simply — individuation symbolized in the *golden path*, the wise realization of *emptiness and impermanence* cannot be performed only at an individual level because we are nondualistically neither individuals nor non-individuals; to assume the imperative and inherent existence of the individual level is to ignore its lower and upper collective interrelationships which constitute the necessary conditions for such individual to concreate itself from — these are the terms we have often describe to correspond to the *hubristic* assumption which pose the *male principle of consciousness* to be the sole holder of the creative and engendering capacity of the *principle of open-emptiness*, who tries to revenge itself against the very soil which had given it birth and who will eventually devour it in a sea of indissociability. As Shakti argues (2023, online access):

Yet we would be mistaken to think that only individual practice of this nature would be sufficient. Of course, since the locus of experience is always one's own mind, individual practice is a necessary condition for the rectification of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness through the extrication of its operating basis from one's mental continuum. Yet, since the consequence of misplaced concreteness is that the world itself starts to become molded in its image, the operations by which misplaced concreteness constantly reasserts itself is eminently social, economic and even ecological in character. In fact, a world created by misplaced concreteness is a major part of the set of conditions that puts pressure on the individual, at a pre-reflective level, to see things in terms of misplaced concreteness! This vicious circuit of misplaced concreteness re-creating the world in its own image is how it consolidates its own existence and makes it immensely difficult to break free from.

Thus, the constitution of oneself as a fractal replication of reified content extended throughout several layers of multifaceted *eco-organic systems* lead us to

assert how *reification and hubristic self-similarity duplication across distinct dimensions* represent at an archetypal, symbolical and metaphorical level the necessary conditions for *humans-as-organisms* potential galactic ecocide, and therefore, must be understood to represent also the necessary conditions for all the *villains of Dune*. The corruption of the Bene Gesserit order, the returning of the Baron as well as its seeking for power, the Fremen jihadists and zealotry, the stagnant state of Shaddam's empire — all of these elements present in the Duneverse might carry within themselves such *superimposition of the mental constructs with which they built their own egos* as well as would lead to their *nemesis* and *fall* exactly because the excesses of oneself is built hubristically. Thus, if we consider that it is the *fallacy of misplaced concreteness* connected to the *overvaluing of one's ego* at the heart of *villainy* for the main tropes of *Dune*, than it becomes plain and obvious that the order who carries both of these tropes, metaphorically in their constitution, to be the ultimate representation and embodiment of *villains* — the Bene Tleilax, the patriarchal order responsible for the genetic technologies of gholas, as we intend to demonstrate, fits perfectly into such definition. In order to portray the patriarchal elements present in such order and connect them with an alleged "*initial excess of subjectivity*" (Griffin, 1989, p.12) which is equivalent to the criticized *sophistication* which lead to a *dreadful psychological damage* according to the *Dune* tropes and excerpts already presented throughout this chapter we must analyze a couple of excerpts from the series as well as other theoretical and biographical sources which would complement our ideas.

First excerpt: "The Earth is dying, it is being misused by non-Indian civilizations that *take* and do not *give*" (Shelton, 2020, p.7).

Second excerpt, found in *God Emperor of Dune*:

"Men are susceptible to class fixations. They create layered societies. The layered society is an ultimate invitation to violence. It does not fall apart. It explodes."

"Women never do this?"

"Not unless they are almost completely male dominated or locked into a male-role model." (Herbert, 2008c, p.285)

Third excerpt, from *Dune*:

Paul said: "There is in each of us an ancient force that takes and an ancient force that gives. A man finds little difficulty facing that place within himself where the taking force dwells, but it's almost impossible for him to see into the giving force without changing into something other than man. For a woman, the situation is reversed." (Herbert, 2003, p.546)

Fourth excerpt, encountered in *Chapterhouse: Dune*:

"Because you're human and humans have this deep desire to classify, to apply labels to everything."

"Why do we have to name things like that?"

"Because that way we lay claim to what we name. We assume an ownership that can be misleading and dangerous." (Herbert, 1987a, p.21)

Fifth excerpt, also in *God Emperor of Dune*:

Leto smiled. This was like playing bubble dice in an infinite bowl.

Moneo's emotions were a marvelous play performed only on this stage. How near the edge he walked without ever seeing it!

"Moneo, why do you insist on taking pieces out of the continuum?" Leto asked. "When you see a spectrum, do you desire one color there above all the others?"

[...]

"What is this thing of colors, Lord?"

"The continuum, the neverending, the Golden Path." (Herbert, 2008c, p.503)

The first passage is a direct reference of Herbert's biography written by his son, displaying the cosmogony of the North-American indigenous population which had influenced Frank's writing and ideas — as you might have noticed this excerpt further reinforces our previous arguments and the notion presented in *Children of Dune* which states that the process of civilization, of our psyche's *sophistication* leads to a *dreadful psychological damage* not only to the one who had overvalued their own egoic principle but those also interconnected to it in wider arrangements of *eco-organic systems* which are enslaved, used and abused by those who *take* and give nothing in return. As you shall notice in the third excerpt, which describes the moment in which Paul had converted the *water of life* and thus had become the first

male¹⁰⁰ Reverend Mother in the Duneverse, he will present a brief archetypal description of these two apparently opposite symbolical aspects in our psyche — the feminine archetypal principle and the masculine archetypal principle. The former is described as the *force which gives* and the latter as the *force which takes*, and as Paul is discussing his psychedelic experience to his mother, Lady Jessica, he claims he is *neither one nor the other* — he is at the *fulcrum*, at an internal balance between both aspects; and as he described it, men and women build their egos from such ancient symbols which dwell in the depths of our unconscious, making it almost impossible for one to reconnect with the opposite force without becoming something *other*. We are assessing these terms because one might assume that *Dune* could be biologically deterministic regarding *gender* and the assigned sex given at birth — nonetheless, as we hope to have shown from the panexperimentalist/panpsychist perspective often explored by the series, because of the deeply interrelatedness between mind and matter (or mind and body), then the formation of one's ego is bound to follow an internal concrescence procedure where its prior prehended *archaic* and *ancient* forces are relatively impactful for the constitution of an enduring individual; that does not impede one, such as Paul, to transform themselves into *something other*, reconnecting both of these forces internally as well as becoming a human which is *neither man nor non-man* and *neither woman nor non-woman*.

When we couple the first excerpt with the third one, as well as considering the common association promoted in distinct cultures and myths of the *feminine principle* with the *unconscious* and the *masculine principle* with the *ego/conscious substrate of the psyche* then it becomes, we assume, clear for our reader that the *reification of one's self-image* is one of the necessary conditions for the *samsaric* state of existence which insists on *sameness*, which insists in *taking* and not *giving*, giving birth to our modern current worldview that is leading humanity to a complete catastrophic outcome as we *take everything from Earth and other civilizations* imperialistically without *giving* nothing in return — this is one of the grand metaphors of the series which portrays the *hubristic* dangers and the *nemesis* which follows as we humans seek to *impose the mental constructs with which we have built our egos* towards Nature in an attempt of defeating death and achieving the immortality of our own hypostatizations, as if we can outlive *an impermanent* universe by transforming

¹⁰⁰ Or, better put: *neither male nor-non male* and *neither female nor-non female*.

the world in our image. In order to succeed in such, ultimately, suicidal and extinction-oriented *modus operandi* one must achieve complete control of the *creative* and *engendering* powers of the *unconscious*, of *magic* and of the *groundless ground of emptiness* — the second passage from the previous pages will display how, symbolically, this *male principle of consciousness and reason* seeks to classify and divide the *indivisible continuum of the infinite* in order to acquire power over it; labeling an observable phenomena, as often probed by many works of fantasy, represents the means to be able to manipulate it, transform it and achieve the capacity of controlling it. As Odrade is teaching the young gholas of her father, in the fourth excerpt, the exact terms here discussed are presented by the Mother Superior during the beginning of *Chapterhouse: Dune*: “[...] “Why do we have to name things like that?” “Because that way we lay claim to what we name. We assume an ownership that can be misleading and dangerous.” So she was back on ownership” (Herbert, 1987a, p.21).

By assuming we own other processes and organisms with which we are interconnected we tend to also overvalue our own constitution in *eco-organic systems* by supposing our existence is of a higher importance in this mereological stairway — is it not exactly this procedure which have been even further intensified in our current society where we attempt to impose and naturalize our views by *taking* from Nature and her *creative synthesis potential*, by claiming her fruits to be ours, we tend to *mistakenly assume ownership* over the whole universe in its virtual infinity for the *ignorant sake of conforming the infinite into our own hypostatized image*? Why would we choose, as Leto II comments in the fifth excerpt, *some colors over others*? Why break the *continuum* which is, metaphorically, the very *pathless path of emptiness* and of *infinity*? As the God-Emperor reflects during the fourth novel of the series: “But even while Siona surprises me, she reminds me of what I fear most — the sameness and boredom which could break the Golden Path” (Herbert, 2008c, p.54). Here we can correlate the reifying *absolute prescience* with the craving for a complete static universe which would correspond to our mental construct, i.e. correspond to our *self-image* — the fractal and mereological inquiries performed by the Duneverse firmly describe how *sameness* is deadly for any *eco-organic system*. Reification coupled with the *ignorant* (avidyā) craving for *permanence* are the necessary conditions for the complete *ecocide* of humanity and all the other organisms which are intertwined with us — therefore, if the *golden path* and the main

tropes of *Dune* are set to permit this overly advanced humanity to survive amidst the infinity in an impermanent universe, than the very underlying conditional field which would impede the *golden path* to be actualized represent the *villainy* according to the prominent motifs encountered in Herbert's series.

Life improves the closed system's capacity to sustain life.

Life—all life—is in the service of life. Necessary nutrients are made available to life by life in greater and greater richness as the diversity of life increases. The entire landscape comes alive, filled with relationships and relationships within relationships. (Herbert, 2003, p.798)

It is for such symbolical and archetypal reasons that we consider the patriarchal order of the Bene Tleilax to represent the *villains* of the series as a whole — as we have commented priorly, the Tleilaxu are the creators of the gholas biotechnology, and as the series progresses in its chronological sequence, during the events of both *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune* it is revealed to the readers many of the Tleilaxu internal secrets, their culture and socio-political organization. The order is comprised mostly of different *castes* or *social-classes* entirely based on their biological sexes and genders — at the top of this hierarchical pyramid are the everlasting and “immortal” Tleilaxu Masters; after the events of *Dune Messiah*, as Hayt is able to reacquire the memories of his former self, Duncan Idaho, the entirety of the Bene Tleilax society takes advantage of this biopsychic advancement with the intent of *achieving immortality* and *permanence*. Henceforth, the Masters of this overly patriarchal society maintained their social position by cloning their former dead cells into gholas who, by the induction of highly painful experiences and traumas, are able to recall the previous memories of their “original” selves. Here we have an undeniable metaphorical notion we have so thoroughly commented in the previous pages — the archetypal theme of the *male principle of consciousness* urging and struggling for permanence, eternity and immortality.

"In the course of the later development of patriarchal values, i.e., of the male deities of the sun and the light, the negative aspect of the Feminine was submerged.

[...]

and the process of birth becomes a prototype for the process of rebirth, of

"higher" birth into the heavens as a star or immortal." (Neumann, 1991?, p.155-159)

Thus, considering the archetypal elements present metaphorically in the Tleilaxu Masters, we can perceive how their engagement with the *feminine principle of the unconscious*, as engendering and creative, filled with *mana and potential*, are to be tamed in order for their achievement of immortality, in order for such Masters to be *reborn into the heavens as immortals* — there is an undeniable similarity between the procedure of achieving immortality with the process of reification, and as Neumann and other archetypal psychologists very often claim, the *fiery and airy* features of abstractions are archetypically *masculine* in principle. In order to achieve the complete reification of their own egos, the Bene Tleilax *enslaves* their prior *females*, transforming them in organic-incubators built with the sole purpose of rebirthing the Masters and breeding mule *Face-Dancers*¹⁰¹ which are also bound by their patriarchal social-political power. The *Axolotl Tanks* are female-womblike bodies genetically engineered as a symbolical representation of the *reifying male principle of consciousness* that sees the Great Mother in its *Terrible* form as a force to be overcome and tamed, enslaved, owned. The *Dune* series thus, achieves in the Bene Tleilax the aesthetic and metaphorical composition of *villainy* exactly because such order, in its attempt of superimposing their own values by taming the *impermanent groundless ground of emptiness* which is archetypically manifested in the *vessel/womb* symbol gifted with the capability for novelty and *creative synthesis*, with the capacity of *transforming and rearranging prior conditions in concrete and actualized forms*, ends up creating an overly static society which is built not on multiplicity but on *sameness*. By insisting on sameness, and in this case the *complete replication of their own selves/egos*, the Bene Tleilax are the most acute representation of the very process of reification which is *deadly* for any *eco-organic system*, thus being the actual *villains of Dune*.

"There's magic in my approval," Leto said. "Anything's possible in a magic universe. Your life has been dominated by the Oracle's fatality, not mine. Now, you see the mysterious caprices and you would ask me to dispel this?"

¹⁰¹ At the bottom of this overly layered society are the *Face Dancers*, incapable of reproducing as well as endowed with a weak egoic-boundary which permits them to shapechange into other people — bound by the Masters, the *Face Dancers* are a political instrument and weapon used by the Tleilaxu to manipulate and spy others in the Duneverse.

I wished only to increase it.”

[...]

“Only fools prefer the past!”

“Do you know what the Oral History says?” Siona asked. “If you want immortality, then deny form. Whatever has form has mortality.[...] (Herbert, 2008c, p.581)

4. THE HEART MANIFESTO: COMPASSION AND WISDOM

Most discipline is hidden discipline, designed not to liberate but to limit. Do not ask *Why?* Be cautious with *How?* *Why?* leads inexorably to paradox. *How?* traps you in a universe of cause and effect. Both deny the infinite.

—THE APOCRYPHA OF ARRAKIS (Herbert, 2008c, p.1)

The passage above is the opening of the fifth novel, *Heretics of Dune*, and marks the narrative's onset in the aftermath of the God-Emperor's government being presented by the last novels written by Frank Herbert. During the events which take place 1500 years after the *Scattering*¹⁰², as they are described by *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune*, we will follow the footsteps of a couple of characters that are simultaneously the protagonists of both novels — especially Duncan Idaho, Miles Teg, Murbella, Sheeana and Odrade. This divided narrative focus where we have several protagonists in their struggle to save the Bene Gesserit order from the onslaught set by the returning Honored Matres is already a symbolical shift where power is *diluted* and not *centralized* in single hands — a possible aesthetic and structural effect resultant of the very *golden path*, one might argue. If the *pathless path* set by the God-Emperor is grounded in an alleged rectification of our relationship with our hypostatizations, if it is grounded in the accumulation of prehended experiences which might be transformed into compassion and wisdom then the very title of the fifth novel holds an important metaphor for the series — that *heretics* might be those who perceive the inexorable limits of any given system and who would rather follow a *path* laid in *wisdom*, laid in the recognition of the *emptiness of all phenomena*.

The opening of the first chapter of *Heretics of Dune* holds the transformative nectar of *prajñā*¹⁰³ and *vidyā*¹⁰⁴ by recognizing the limits of reason itself amidst infinity, the common procedure with how the Madhyamaka's and Nāgārjuna's method of attaining the realization of *śūnyatā* is based on conventional means — the usage of reason to display the absurdity and limits of reason itself, the usage of

¹⁰² The event which led humanity to expand to new galactic frontiers after the death of Leto II.

¹⁰³ Wisdom

¹⁰⁴ Knowledge

conventional reality to display the absurdity and limits of conventionality itself¹⁰⁵. This is unmistakably similar to the conclusions described by Gödel's incomplete theorems — all systems are abstractions which, if reified, might lead to a *dogmatic crystallization* which denies the *continuous impermanent and empty process of becoming*; dogmas, in such cases, are precisely what *heretics* will break away from, and it is by the acts of a couple of dogma-breakers that the collective order and *eco-organic system* of the Bene Gesserit might survive amidst profound change, a survival which is deeply connected with the dance of life, with the flow of organisms in their incessant becoming — not by further acts of egoistic violence solely resting upon a desire for immortality, as we encounter in the Bene Tleilax for instance, but upon the acknowledgment of *emptiness* and *impermanence*, which wisely leads to compassion and an even field of *exchange*, of *both taking and giving* which is sensually similar with the very process of breeding and of *creative synthesis*.

Gödel's proof that such a project is doomed to failure had a profound effect on Whitehead's thinking and led to his development of a philosophical system that grounds this incompleteness in a metaphysics of process. Hence, he writes that no "scheme of philosophic categories" is absolutely true. [...] And this is because "nature is never complete. It is always passing beyond itself. This is the creative advance of nature".

[...]

where, referring indirectly to Gödel's incompleteness theorem, he says that it is necessary to realize that all systems are incomplete or open. (Kakol, 2009, p.290)

Process Thought insistence on the acknowledgment of categorical mistakes as in the fallacy of *misplaced concreteness*, which is also a core aspect of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, had been Whitehead's attempt of incorporating the inevitable and inexorable limits of *any given system* — a topic we have deemed to be fundamental in the philosophical inquiries performed by the Duneverse which is also metaphorically apparent in the opening passage of the fifth novel *that already announces the wise realization of emptiness which will be attained by some of those*

¹⁰⁵ It is the recognition, in fact the discovery, that there is a radical lack in the structure of reason itself—something that prevents it from attaining to true knowledge of the ultimate. In the final analysis, all rational formulations, however ingenious, contain within themselves paradox and inconsistency, the seed, in other words, of their own refutation. (Shatideva, 2011, p.25)

Heretics, especially Darwi Odrade, in the course of the later books. When we consider the task set by the *golden path*, to ensure humanity's survival based on a reconnection of our *collective hubris* enabled by an *overvalued ego* who attempts to achieve self-permanence and the eternity of the mental constructs with which we endeavor to build such egos in the first place, than such reconnection might only be achieved by an *equipoised meditative state* grounded in the *practice of both compassion and wisdom* — thus, by recognizing the *inexorable limits of any system*, we would be able to *wisely* regard all abstractions as what they are, not as *absolutely and inherently* real, for what they lack is precisely *substance/essence/svabhāva*. During the course of this chapter, we will focus our analysis in Lady Jessica's descendant, Darwi Odrade, as she ascends to become the Mother Superior of the Bene Gesserit while concomitantly trying to reconnect the matriarchal order with their *compassionate* side, to the bosom of their *hearts* — we will do so by comparing many archetypal motifs present in such *heretic* character with the Buddhist Devi known as *Prajñāpāramitā*¹⁰⁶, who also encompasses important texts in the Mahayana tradition such as the *Heart Sutra*; furthermore, as we shall claim, Odrade might be understood by the end of the *series* as a *Bodhisattva* — someone who deliberately chooses to remain in this *samsaric* existence in order to offer guidance for the liberation of all sentient beings. In order to begin this discussion we must, firstly, present a couple of passages from *Children of Dune* as well as a brief excerpt found in the entry for Lady Jessica in *Dune Encyclopedia* — the former passages contain a spoken lesson stated by Lady Jessica who, according to Odrade, was the first *heretic*:

First excerpt (Herbert, 2008a, p.452):

Of all our observations, this is the most crucial," she'd said. "Life is a mask through which the universe expresses itself. We assume that all of humankind and its supportive life forms represent a natural community and that the fate of all life is at stake in the fate of the individual. Thus, when it comes to that ultimate self-examination, the *amor fati*, we stop playing god and revert to teaching. In the crunch, we select individuals and we set them

¹⁰⁶ In Mahāyāna Buddhism, Prajnaparamita represents the "Perfection of Wisdom" and embodies profound understanding. She is revered as Prajnaparamita Devi and the "Great Mother" (Tibetan Yum Chenmo), transcending her role of goddess and becoming the source from whom all Buddhas arise. [...]

She is shown in sacred art holding the Prajnaparamita Sutras and typically reclining on a lotus throne, exuding peaceful compassion and infinite clarity. (Enlightenment Thangka, online access)

as free as we're able."

Second excerpt (Herbert, 2008a, p.453):

"I am charged to say this to you. 'I stand in the sacred human presence. As I do now, so should you stand someday. I pray to your presence that this be so. The future remains uncertain and so it should, for it is the canvas upon which we paint our desires. Thus always the human condition faces a beautifully empty canvas. We possess only this moment in which to dedicate ourselves continuously to the sacred presence which we share and create.'"

Third excerpt, from *Dune Encyclopedia* (Mcnelly, 1984, p.92):

Jessica's Medial experiences introduced her to her psyche's very core — to the genuine, Archetypal Motherhood that the Bene Gesserit had almost persuaded her did not and could not exist. Even after she had understood her way past the Sisterhood's other pronouncements, she continued to believe the Bene Gesserit dogma that Archetypes were public relations illusions whose only use was to manipulate the gullible. Jessica's residual skepticism was seriously debilitated when as Medium she encountered the Great Mother within herself; her doubts fell utterly away when as Mother, centered in her new Material self-awareness, she sensed the Great Mother as an exterior presence as well — when she knew the grand, essential shaping force that Liet-Kynes his Fremen followers, and above all her God Emperor grandson so passionately sought. Mother Jessica realized that humans (not to mention Worms) neither originate nor control generativity in any of its manifestations. She understood that all life-forms and all life-processes — including her own roles as lover, leader, and mother — really are channels for the Great Mother's creative and sustaining energies. This was the teaching she imparted to Farad'n, the teaching to which she devoted her mature life.

The late life experiences of Lady Jessica could also permit us to classify her as an embodiment of the *transformative* features of the Great Mother which might lead to spiritual transformation — a common archetypal trope we have thoroughly discussed previously in the third chapter of our Master's thesis. The entirety of the Bene Gesserit order might uphold that potential, even if they had succumbed to their own power hunger and *hubris*, even if they had disconnected themselves from the

generative and compassionate powers present in the Goddess archetype. Nonetheless, Jessica's quality as the first *heretic* who forgoes any attempt of *playing god* in order to teach humanity the wisdom of an *empty canvas*, would allow us to also classify her within a symbolical and metaphorical manifestation of *Prajñāpāramitā* and of a *Bodhisattva* — terms we will explore throughout the chapter. The first excerpt displays, in Jessica's words, the intimate interconnectedness between *all of life's supportive systems* which arouses *compassion*; a common goal encountered in meditative practices is to attain a nondual comprehension between the self/other which displays, ultimately, how all sentient beings are intimately interconnected and *co-dependently originated*. When Jessica claims that the *fate of all life is at stake in the fate of the individual* she is pointing with precise terms the very vow taken by *Bodhisattvas* in order to *liberate all sentient beings* from a samsaric existence (i.e. to "*set them as free as we're able*") — "In Mahāyāna Buddhism, compassion involves, through the application of wisdom, the transcending of the notion of ego itself and the understanding that, in the final analysis, the existential barrier dividing self from other is totally unreal, a mere mental construction" (Shantideva, year, p.22).

The second passage might be also comprehended as a metaphor for Jessica's realization of *emptiness/śūnyatā* as she perceives the dangers imbued in the *reification of an absolute prescience* — by understanding the future as indeterminate and not yet satisfied, the first *heretic* reconnects herself and own ego with the *unbound powers of the cosmic womb*, present in the *wave-form* of the unconscious in limitless possibilities, in infinity. Here also *emptiness* is equaled with the process of *creative synthesis* as the future is an *empty canvas* with which we dedicate ourselves to *continuously share and create*.

The third passage, from *Dune Encyclopedia*, had definitive impacts in our readings of the series written by Frank Herbert while also describing such process experienced by Mother Jessica as she nonconceptually and nondualistically finds the Great Mother archetype as an exterior presence — we could here claim how this excerpt resonates with a common argument in our thesis, one which regards how the *total arrangement of ALL eco-organic systems* and the very *cosmic field* which enables and sustains *ALL* experience into a continuous becoming where we are only the channels through which such generative power, *a magical one if we consider the definition of magic*, manifest themselves. To experience the Great Mother, and in this

case its description might be of relevant similarity with the features of *Prajñāpāramitā* herself, as an external force due to an *abaissement du niveau mental*¹⁰⁷ that leads to *participation mystique* also might translate the *homeostatic state and equipoise* reached during dense meditative practices or psychic trances — Jessica¹⁰⁸, thus, as many other Buddhist practitioners, reaches a nondual mind-state where the boundaries between *self* and *other* are dissolved. Furthermore, considering the already displayed symbolical connection between the *open-empty sunyatological groundless ground* and the Great Mother archetype, as this passage from *Dune Encyclopedia* mentions how *Mother Jessica realized that humans neither originate nor control generativity* we are unable not to perceive a considerable similarity with the Madhyamaka *via negativa* and doctrine of emptiness — “[...] neither cessation or origination, neither annihilation nor the eternal, neither singularity nor plurality, neither the coming nor the going [...]” (Siderits, 2013, p.13)

The knowledge of the ultimate transcends thought. It is suprarational. It is nonconceptual and non-dual—quite different, we may suppose, from anything that we have ever experienced to date. It is *prajñā*: immediate, intuitive insight into “suchness,” the wisdom of emptiness beyond subject and object. (Shantideva, 2011, p.24)

Many of the presented terms and notions will be more thoroughly explored in the fifth and sixth novels, as we have claimed, especially embodied in Odrade — though Jessica’s own realizations were of core importance for the Atreides descendant and eventual Mother Superior; we could say that Odrade’s resolution as a potential *Bodhisattva* might not be achieved if it were not for Leto’s *golden path* and her Ancestral Memories of Jessica. Furthermore, Odrade as a character might also be metaphorically linked with a common *Buddhist* image which displays the intimate

¹⁰⁷ This can be understood as a lowering of the egoic functions which permit content from the collective unconscious to flow more freely — often described to be a concept which explains how *mediums* acquire their intuitive and prehended information from the profoundness of the unconscious.

¹⁰⁸ This characterization of Jessica in the late novels from the first trilogy seems contradictory with how Villeneuve has decided to portray her in the recent movie adaptations, especially in *Dune: Part Two*. We wonder how, if the big studios decide to continue the series cinematographic adaptations, Jessica will be shown in *Children of Dune* and if the material and content from the *Dune Encyclopedia* will be considered in the future. Denis had taken an unsettling decision of displaying Lady Jessica as the *manipulative space witch* that usually fits within the Bene Gesserit tropes so often — but as we have discussed and argued, Jessica is, according to the very narrative of the series, the first Bene Gesserit who walked a path towards the redemption of her own order and against their *hubristic* attempt of seizing unlimited symbolical power over humanity and other layers of *eco-organic systems*.

interconnectedness of *samsara* and *nirvana* and how one could not exist without the other — suffering and craving are necessary conditions for a *Bodhisattva* to arise and to vow themselves to liberate all sentient beings from a *demiurgic* reification, to liberate all *eco-organic systems* bound to their own hypostatizations. The blossoming of a *lotus* flower is achieved amidst a boggy terrain insofar as such flower *could not achieve* its pristine quality and blooming without the conditional muddy ground nurturing it — this common imagery often explains in *Buddhist* terms how *nirvana is not ultimately separated from samsara* and how the latter provides the necessary conditions for the realization of the former, thus the *wisdom/compassion* which are at the bosom of a *Bodhisattva*'s vow require their nondual understanding on how every act which is born out of ignorance, out of *avidyā*, will only strengthen the *atrocities to be bred in the future*; in order to find a soteriological answer to this *collective koan*, it is demanded a great effort coupled with cumulative experiences (i.e. *karma*) if the underlying patterns of violent and atrocious fractal replications are to be halted, if the necessary conditions which give birth to a *samsaric* mode of existence are to be completely transformed. Thus, if it wasn't for the suffering and craving so present in *samsara* then we would not be able to be compassionate towards all *sentient beings*, towards all life and its sustaining elements, towards the *sake of every individual* in its *interconnectedness with any other eco-organic system in the entirety of the cosmos*.

Shāntideva points out that anger, the normal reaction to hostility and adversity, achieves nothing but to increase our sufferings. It is our “sorrow-bearing enemy” (6.6). As such it is to be eliminated; and in a way that we have by now come to expect, Shāntideva rises to the challenge, heartening himself with cheerful words. After all, suffering, though of course unwanted, has its uses. Without it we would be like the gods, never longing for release from *saṃsāra*. It humbles our pride and engenders sympathy toward those who also suffer. Even virtue comes to seem attractive! (Shantideva, 2011, p.19)

The way out of this conundrum, apparently deterministic and fatal, lies within the very *middle-way of the golden path* — abstractions are useful, not to be nihilistically denied because otherwise we would run the risk of reifying *emptiness*, a position which is ultimately abandoned by Nāgārjuna; this dichotomy will also appear throughout the plot of the later novels, as we shall discuss in the final pages of this

chapter. Nonetheless, it is important to already demonstrate how such *middle-path* does not deny the fruitful and useful applications of *abstractions*, a defense of speculative metaphysics employed by Whitehead in *Process and reality* — the ultimate danger, according to tropes present in the *Dune* series and both the Madhyamaka and Process Thought, lies within the categorical mistake of assuming such abstractions to be concrete and *inherently real*; the recognition that *emptiness is not an ontological ground in itself* IS the *middle-way of the golden path* which sees the usefulness of hypostatizations while recognizing the inevitable and inexorable limits of reason, logic and thought.

Before we continue with examples from the later novels of the series to demonstrate the terms we have described, permit us to elucidate a brief comparative analysis with an undervalued short-story written by Ursula K. Le Guin, one which might hold archetypal similarity with our current discussion — *Darkness Box*. In this short story we are presented with a *static* world where darkness had been removed from it — in the very beginning of the narrative, a young boy encounters a box in the ocean which contains *darkness*. At a first glance it is inevitable to correlate the *transformative and generative* aspects of the Great Mother and of the unconscious metaphorically revealed through *darkness open-empty* characteristics. Furthermore, we should denote how the *ocean*, a potential manifestation of the Great Mother herself (especially considering that *all earthly life had sprung from the ocean and is almost entirely composed of water*), returns darkness to this overly *hypostatized world* — and here lies an alluring metaphor, which unavoidably draws our attention: it is a *boy*, still young, not matured, psychically not yet disconnected or disjointed from the *motherly embrace of darkness/unconscious/emptiness* who finds the *box*. This boy still lives in the whereabouts of a *witch* who is his mother, another archetypal representation of his *non-sophisticated ego* — nevertheless, this whole secondary reality is presented to us in a *stasis*, as if untouchable by the tribulations of transformation, entangled in a time-bubble where the events are in constant self-replication; “On soft sand by the sea's edge a little boy walked leaving no footprints. [...] The child walked on casting no shadow, leaving no tracks on the sand between the cliffs and the sea. [...] but the hands of the clock inside, which said ten minutes of ten, never moved” (Guin, 1989, p.139).

As the story unfolds, the narrative focus shifts towards a prince who is bound in an endless repetition cycle where his duty is to fight a battle against his rebelling

brother as he is accompanied by his father's armies and a gryphon — as the time of the narrative is halted, we become aware that the prince and the whole realm are stuck in this *immovable-cycle*; the very description of the kingdom coupled with the revelation that *darkness* was removed by the king prior to the narrative, lead us to interpret this in a similar archetypal story also apparent in *Dune*. The young boy represents the potential ego reconnection with the generative powers of the Great Mother and *darkness*, powers which would enable the dissolution of this overly hypostatized world enacted by the king's tyrannical and hubristic government, which had frozen the world in an entirely self-similar time bubble where *no change can take place* precisely because this world had superimposed its hypostatizations in a hubristic fashion, thus halting the *flow of time*, the *flow of becoming*. The king is the representation of *hubris* and of the overvaluing of the egoic function, who solely becomes the emperor and ruler of the engendering motherly capacity of the sea, and thus, of life and of the unconscious — and precisely because ultimately, as Lady Jessica also perceived, *no human can control generativity of the Great Mother*, the King must get rid of darkness in order to keep his hypostatized world disconnected from time (and space); "That is mine—I gave it to the sea, I myself! And the sea spits back my gift. A long silence, then the king spoke more softly. "Well, keep it, prince. The sea doesn't want it, nor do I. It's in your hands. Keep it—locked. Keep it locked, prince" (Guin, 1989, p.144).

With the help of *animals* (the witch's cat familiar), an idea we have explored last chapter, and the witch's son, the prince will receive the *darkness box* as a gift — and by the ending of the narrative, *darkness* is once again released in this world permitting time to flow forward, *reconnecting this overly-reified* reality with the engendering and *open-empty creative powers* of the Great Mother. The similarities with the *Dune* series, in archetypal terms, are too many to delve in this chapter — though it suffices to describe how the *absolute prescience* upheld by Leto II and Paul end up configuring a hypostatized reality where *future is equivalent to past and time's* transformative characteristics are diminished due to the symbolical reification which enabled such *complete and absolute divination* skill in the first place.

"You'll be late for the battle, prince," said the cat.

Rikard groped among blood and shadow for his sword, sheathed it, flung on his cloak, and went to the door.

“There’ll be an afternoon today,” the cat said, “and a twilight, and night will fall. At nightfall one of you will come home to the city, you or your brother. But only one of you, prince.”

Rikard stood still a moment. “Is the sun shining now, outside?”

“Yes, it is—now.”

“Well, then, it’s worth it,” the young man said, and opened the door and strode on out into the hubbub and panic of the sunlit halls, his shadow falling black behind him. (Guin, 1989, p.146-147)

As *darkness* is reinserted in Ursula’s short story so are the engendering powers of the Great Mother, of the unconscious, of the *wave-form* — *magic*, understood as the very *open-empty* capability for the creative synthesis which rearranges the prior conditional field into new actual occasions of experience is, thus, reinserted in a *phallocratic and reified* reality. If we equalize *magic*, the *golden path* and *emptiness* than we can also draw the due resemblance with those elements with the reinsertion of *darkness* in the aforementioned fantasy short-story — the escape out of the entangling *absolute prescience* in *Dune*, which would lead to the entire ecocide of not only *humans* but of a myriad of *eco-organic systems* both as parts and wholes, lies within the restoration of the over-valued egoic and hubristic male principle into *open-emptiness*, the latter often symbolized by the *egg* and *vessel* features of the Great Mother, symbolized as a *sea of virtual infinite possibilities*. Let us recall a couple of passages from the Duneverse which are fruitful for the current topic — the first one is uttered by Leto II as he is dying, during the ending events of the *God Emperor of Dune*: “Anything’s possible in a magic universe. Your life has been dominated by the Oracle’s fatality, not mine. Now, you see the mysterious caprices and you would ask me to dispel this? I wished only to increase it” (Herbert, 2008c, p.581). The second one is a part of the *Atreides Manifesto* which we have thoroughly discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation: “This is the awe-inspiring universe of magic: [...] It is the ultimate void where no preordained screens occur upon which forms may be projected. You have only one awareness here—the screen of the magi: Imagination” (Herbert, 1987b, p.393). As our reader might notice, these non-linear and non-deterministic terms upheld by the engendering capabilities of the Great Mother and of *magic* are of inevitable resemblance with Nāgārjuna’s terms on *emptiness*:

To whomever emptiness is possible,
 All things are possible.
 To whomever emptiness is not possible,
 Nothing is possible.
 (Nagarjuna, 2015, online access)

Perhaps the terms so thoroughly described and argued in our first chapter might become more coherent to our fellow reader as we have shown the unmistakable similarity between the *open-empty sunyatological groundless ground* with the *transformative magic* features of the Great Mother archetype — it is for this reason that at a symbolical level, Leto II had elected women as the keepers of the *golden path* during his empire, for they (by the means of *participation mystique*) carried more internally this potential for enabling transformation, change and embodying characteristics of the Great Mother. As we have already argued, though, old patterns are difficult to be removed and deeply transmuted — humans have experienced so many distinct revolutions which changed the outer clothes and masks but kept the same hierarchical order and imaginary structure; the challenges faced by Odrade, as the inheritor of the *golden path* and one who has acquired the *equipoise* and *pristine balance* of “*neither a self nor a non-self*” amidst an impermanent wave of *continuous becoming*, will lie precisely as matriarchal orders (the Bene Gesserit and the Honored Matres) had fallen prey to the same hubristic endeavor which, similarly, is upheld by any overly reified symbolical system. As Odrade embodies the *golden path*, she realizes the *ultimate void where no preordained screens occur*¹⁰⁹, *śūnyatā*, and how any phenomena in the world is *co-dependently originated* without falling into a reifying extreme where emptiness (and *darkness* if we consider also Ursula’s short-story) achieves an ontological ground status. Such balance between extreme philosophical positions is metaphorically similar with the very constitution of the *golden path* and the Madhyamika *middle-way* — the overvaluing of the *ego* is potentially as harmful as its complete nihilistic denial. The following passages from *Chapterhouse: Dune* will echo our description of the archetypal function presented by the *boy/child* in the *Darkness Box* as well as another brief reference to the Buddhist and Process understanding of the *self*, without falling into the extreme deterministic position upheld by the late neuroscience which reduces the psyche to the brain

¹⁰⁹ In her own words, as she is the writer of the Atreides Manifesto.

function and neither falling into the idealistic Cartesian dualism:

Odrade felt compelled to remember her own body afloat in that childhood sea. She needed to recapture the forces she had known there, take in the strengthening qualities she had learned in more innocent times.

Face down in salty water, holding her breath as long as she could, she floated in a sea-washed now that cleansed away woes. This was stress management reduced to its essence. A great calmness flooded her.

I float, therefore I am.

Another key similarity between Ursula's *Darkness Box* with Odrade's own image as a *Sea Child* — both of which also resonate with Freud's notion of "*oceanic experiences*"¹¹⁰; the *Child* has not yet overly crystalized its ego and its boundaries are often adaptable, fluid, in constant transformation while concomitantly *floating* with the very *wavering* of the ocean. As Odrade's later words might also complement our argument: "*There's no secret to balance. You just have to feel the waves*" (Herbert, 1987a, p.597). Balance here might be understood as the *equipoise* achieved by following the *middle-way*, the *golden path* and the *realization of the ultimate truth of nirvana*, the *realization of emptiness*. One of the core aspects of the *Heart Sutra* and the *Prajñāpāramitā* relies on the necessary association of *wisdom* with *compassion* which, as coupled together, lead a potential-Bodhisattva¹¹¹ to realize the profound *relational groundless ground* which enables all *sentient beings* to be abysmally interconnected — the *wisdom* of emptiness allows the practitioner to realize that even his future conventional self is dependent on the coalescing of present/past conditions and its *compassion* for all sentient beings (including itself) permits it to transmute such conditional field in order to become an enabler of liberation towards the cosmos, towards the entirety of ALL the *eco-organic systems* in its limitless possible manifestations.

As we have elsewhere argued, the *golden path* might be virtually *endless* (or as Nāgārjuna might have coined "*neither endless nor non-endless*") as "*sentient*

¹¹⁰ The feeling often experienced by meditators, dreamers, or during profound psychedelic experiences, etc., in which one undergoes a sensation of ego dissolution. According to Freud this has roots in our infancy, especially when we were still inside our mother's *watery womb* — which is similar as the ocean's humidity and simultaneously so vast that it encompasses all of the perceived reality by the still not formed ego.

¹¹¹ We are soon to define what a Bodhisattva in Mahayana's terminology is.

*beings are countless*¹¹² and the *middle-way* soteriology has a paradoxical quality in its constitution (probably due to the very limits of language, as the realization of emptiness ought to occur in a *nondual and nonconceptual field*). In order to demonstrate how Darwi Odrade, one of the protagonists of the later novels in Herbert's series, might be read metaphorically as a Bodhisattva we must situate the narrative plot in which humanity finds itself. One and a half millennia after the death of Leto II, humans had expanded to new frontiers — an event known in the Duneverse as the *Scattering*; if we consider that a *samsaric* mode of existence still lingers in humanity during the events of both *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune* as well as our tendency to jump from direct (and seemingly) opposites after extreme situations then it becomes more easily comprehensible how, even though the *golden path* still stands, *humans-as-organism* had not yet reached the teleology envisioned by the God-Emperor's *pathless path*.

This can be exemplified by how three dominant groups/orders still operate themselves in a *master/slave* and extremely *hierarchical* modes of social-organizations and culture — the Bene Gesserit, still too bound to the vivid presence of the past in their *Ancestral Memories*, are the ones closest to the realization of *emptiness*, even though we can easily perceive their eagerness towards acquiring symbolical, mythological and religious power over the known universe. The Bene Tleilax, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, are also a powerful force and society during this period — until they are almost entirely destroyed by the returning matriarchal order known as the Honored Matres by the ending of *Heretics of Dune*. The latter order, even though a matriarchal one which could have realized and embodied the transformative and engendering capacity of *emptiness* if they had indeed learned the lessons taught by Leto II, ends up also dominated by their own *hubris* and power-seeking; the Matres, also by means of *participation mystique*, uphold archetypically the *elementary* features of the Great Mother in extreme levels, while possibly possessing a couple of the *Terrible Mother* characteristics as well (depending on how you engage with the *Scattering* matriarchal group).

As much of the narrative of both novels will be displayed by the eyes of the aforementioned *heretics* which are part of the Bene Gesserit¹¹³, as they uncover and

¹¹² Or *numberless* depending on the translation.

¹¹³ Even though Murbella is at first, part of the Honored Matres, and *heretically* converts herself to the Bene Gesserit.

learn the secrets of the Honored Matres we, as readers, will also understand the underlying dangers of their social hierarchy — by embodying an overly *elementary* Great Mother, they hold the *males* by sexual (and of any life-sustaining need) deprivation and control, by *hydraulic despotism*:

“I want you to remember your mother’s teachings very clearly,” Taraza said. How mild her voice was suddenly! Taraza’s voice changed abruptly then and she snapped: “Hydraulic despotism!”

She does that shift of emphasis well, Odrade thought. Memory spewed up the data like a spigot suddenly opened full force. Hydraulic despotism: central control of an essential energy such as water, electricity, fuel, medicines, melange . . . Obey the central controlling power or the energy is shut off and you die! (Herbert, 1987b, p.168)

The previous excerpt from *Heretics of Dune* describes with precision the kind of government built by the hierarchical order of the Honored Matres — complete centralization of power over the sexual and bodily needs of the *males* in such society, but also of any one who is not part of the high positions in their social pyramid. Those terms are precisely similar with how we described the reification of the ego in the form of a *Messiah* or *Hero*, in the last chapter, as we project the overvalued egoic principle and centralize symbolical and political power from wider layers of *eco-organic systems* into single individuals in a similar process which is akin to the microcosmic tyrannical powers our civilized and *sophisticated* egos uphold in relation to our *unconscious*. In this case though, the archetype which the Honored Matres constellate is closer to the *Terrible Mother* — we should not forget how such possible manifestation of the Great Mother is dependent upon the view from the *egoic perspective* which seeks *permanence*; the *ego* of the Matres in dominant positions will justify the maintenance of their power, in this overly rigid class society, by becoming *Terrible Mothers* themselves and depriving others from the satisfaction of their needs with the sole intent of increased control — it is once again a *hubristic endeavor* which would lead them, by the ending of the series, to be *subverted* by the *transformative* aspects of the Great Mother, of Prajñāpāramitā as constellated by the memories of Odrade-within Murbella. Our main point here is — Leto II was able to understand that, from an archetypal and symbolical deeply rooted view, the reifying masculine principle was leading to *hydraulic despotism* in his time and thus he left

the *golden path* in the hands of his *Fish Speakers*¹¹⁴, due to their psyche's close proximity towards the *nurturing* powers of the Great Mother archetype; nonetheless, after the *Scattering*, the descendants of the *Fish Speakers* had leant to its *ouroboric* extreme while constituting their *overvalued reified ego* out of the same *symbolical despotism* which the God-Emperor had upheld during the 3500 years of his government and tyranny. In the very words of Leto II: "Women never do this?" "Not unless they are almost completely male dominated or locked into a male-role model" (Herbert, 2008c, p.285). Our terms and argument here will become clearer with an interesting conception from Kazi Adi Shakti, regarding two abstract modes for social organizations¹¹⁵ — *Phallocracy* and *Gynarchy*:

I give them their names to allude to the way they function with regards to sexual difference, which has less to do with "male" and "female" as literal bodies and much more to do with the organization of economies of desire as they can be instantiated in any body regardless of sex (though for historically contingent reasons, males do often organize their economies of desire in phallocratic terms due to the conditioning they undergo under patriarchal societies that aim to place them at the top of a hierarchy based on a sexual division of labor). In a phallocratic economy of desire everything is subordinated and tuned to the aims of a single climactic end, whereas in a gynarchic economy of desire there is ample room for the play of differences without a fundamental loss of a telos or end. (Shakti, online access)

Considering the terms posed by Shakti, it becomes clear how one of the main criticisms of *Dune*, regarding the complete *centralization of symbolical power* which is based in the process of reification performed by *humans-as-organisms*, is metaphorically displayed by Herbert's work as highly rigid hierarchical societies/groups attempt to control the *flow of becoming* by stopping/halting it with the *climactic end of achieving complete* permanence and attaining *immortality* — if we use the *Darkness Box* short-story this becomes easily graspable, at both a metaphorical and archetypal level. The King *is* a representation of the *ego*, inflated, seeking to remove the *transformative* features of the Great Mother as he reifies himself and the kingdom (values, other abstractions, its view of reality, culture, etc.)

¹¹⁴ God-Emperor's military order formed from his priestesses.

¹¹⁵ I conceive of them as two different "orders of difference," meaning that they are two basic ways of configuring the relationship between dependencies. (Shakti, online access)

in order to superimpose his hypostatizations toward all who defy his tyrannical order — those terms describe with precision the historical and social organization of most (if not all) patriarchal societies as well as Shaddam IV's empire, the Fremmen/Muad'Dib zealotry, Leto's subsequent millennia kingdom, and also both the Bene Tleilax and the Honored Matres, fitting within Shakti's concept of a *Phallocracy*. The Bene Gesserit are closer, even if not entirely, to a *Gynarchy* — though we must denote that they still are unable to fully transgress and subvert a *Phallocratic* organization, even when Odrade was their Mother Superior. Shakti (online access) further complements:

Because of their generality, we can apply them to any totalizing order which organizes differences. For example, we can think of phallocratic v.s. gynarchic orders of historical time with some interesting results: liberal capitalist, totalitarian socialist and even fascistic views of history can be seen as instantiating different varieties of phallocratic order, while various non-hegemonic histories past, present and future can be seen as instantiating gynarchic orders. This way we can talk about capitalism, fascism and variants of totalitarian socialism all under the heading of a "phallocratic order of power" which we can pose in contradistinction to a "gynarchic order of power" that is composed of a multiplicity of axiologically united yet geo/politically divergent global processes that are struggling to overcome the hegemony of the phallocratic order.

As it is worthy to denote, Shakti is currently further developing the synthesis of Process Thought and Madhyamaka — an endeavor left by Peter Paul Kakol after his decease; and the aforementioned terms are general developments of a notion we have already explored in the first chapter, on how, from a Process Buddhist take, a *social revolution must*, akin to trailing the *golden path*, occur by non-forceful and persuasive means and as Kakol argues:

This is why the Buddha modelled the *saṃgha* and *ganasaṃgha*, which was a type of political and territorial clan existent in the north of India at the time that was based on collective decision-making and communal ownership of assets, in contrast to the *janapadas* of the laity, which were authoritarian and monarchical. (Kakol, 2009, p.360)

We feel that it is relevant to address how the late stage of highly individualistic liberalism we encounter in the global North as well as in North-American society is a *perversion* and *distortion* of these ideas, often based in its bourgeois ideology taken to extreme as one assumes that the individual is at the center of the world — the *middle-way* would lead to the *emptiness of self*, which is not the same as its opposite, a nihilistic reification of the *no-self*. The wisdom encountered within the Heart Sutra will provide us with the necessary basis to understand why Nāgārjuna's claim of *neither a self nor a non-self* is intimately connected with the doctrine of two-truths and why, as Lady Jessica claims in *Children of Dune*, the "*fate of all life is at stake in the fate of the individual*" — a completely individualistic society tends to deny collective needs and ignore how *each microcosm will coalesce in order to constitute larger wholes and larger macrocosms*; while, at the other end, completely collectivist groups tend to ignore the sake of each individual for a *greater good*, a *modus operandi* which is constituted as another *philosophical extreme position* to be deemed as ultimately absurd if one realizes the truthfulness of both the conventional mode of reality (samsara) and of the ultimate mode (nirvana). As Kakol further complements: "However, such a transformation is not a solipsistic and private affair. For a self which becomes in dependence on other selves is always already a social self and thus can only transform itself in social context" (Kakol, 2009, p.360). The bourgeois over infatuation of the *self/ego/individual* is nothing but the precise terms we have overly described the *hubristic inflation* of one's ego — this is also a key underscoring aspect of the countercultural elements present in *Dune* series as it criticizes the conceptual mistakes of North-American values trying to renew their symbolical and imaginary world by absorbing eastern cultural symbols and religions, stripping them from their core and actual teachings in an imperialistic and overly secular fashion. The *middle-way* represented by the *impermanent golden pathless path* in the series recognizes both the conventional truth of the *self* and its ultimate *emptiness* to be, also, truthful — a *floating self*, in Odrade's term, which participates in the *endless flow/flux of impermanence*, in the *arising, changing and passing away* experienced moment by moment.

The purpose of Odrade, as the Honored Matres¹¹⁶ return with the intent of

¹¹⁶ Eventually as the narrative unfolds we discover that their return from the *Scattering* also took place because they encountered some form of *higher power*, and were escaping from it. We never get to know for certainty what or who is such power in the works of Frank Herbert.

enlarging their empirical power, is to enable the survival of the Bene Gesserit ancient accumulation of knowledge and wisdom, a millennial accumulation that is a consequence of their *Ancestral Memories* and one which could be of extreme and special importance for the *golden path* — in Buddhist terms, as we have displayed, the manner with which we accumulate karma¹¹⁷, by continuous experiences, is a necessary condition for the *equipoise* and homeostatic balancing achieved as one realizes the ultimate truth of *emptiness*. By the ending of the *Heretics of Dune*, the returning matriarchal order obliterates *Dune*, or *Rakis* at the time, and declares war against the Bene Gesserit while killing both Miles Teg and Taraza. In order to promote and save her order, Odrade rises and becomes the Mother Superior as she, *heretically*, tries to relive the *compassionate* side of the Bene Gesserit through persuasive means — since the beginning of the entirety of the *Dune* series, one could claim that most of the disasters which take place in the narrative are consequential of their *hubris*; one could also argue how one the protagonists¹¹⁸ in Herbert's *series* are the Bene Gesserit themselves, trying to reconcile with the Great Mother archetype (in the form of Prajñāpāramitā) and with the *transformative aspects of emptiness*¹¹⁹ and *tread the middle-way* by avoiding philosophical extremes. For such a reason that, during *God Emperor of Dune*, Leto II mentions how the Bene Gesserit are *so close to be treading the golden path yet so far*: “They are so close to what they should be and yet so far[...].” (Herbert, 2008c, p.300).

Such reconnection with the *compassionate* side of one of the facets of the Great Mother is firstly enacted by Lady Jessica, and later by the *heretics* who perceived how the overly rigid and dogmatic views of the Bene Gesserit were trapping them in their own *hypostatizations* — if the *golden path* is the path set to dissolve all paths, the vision set to dissolve all visions and thus restore humanity's

¹¹⁷ As mentioned elsewhere, *Karma* in Buddhism is not understood as the transference of some *divine justice* throughout different reincarnations — but the mere demonstration on how the arising of any phenomena is *co-dependent originated*. *Dune* explores many of these motifs metaphorically, which we shall explore in future publications and essays.

¹¹⁸ There are strong and coherent arguments to claim that Duncan is also one of the main protagonists of the whole series — in an archetypal spectrum we could say that the collective Bene Gesserit are the feminine protagonists and the collective Duncan gholas are the masculine protagonists, both longing to be reunited in an androgynous Syzygy which happens briefly as Duncan and Murbella fall in love.

¹¹⁹ She recognized the necessity. It was an ancient design copied from secret revolutionary societies. The Bene Gesserit had always seen themselves as permanent revolutionaries. It was a revolution that had been dampened only in the time of the Tyrant, Leto II. (Herbert, 1987b, p.26)

from their *infatuated* and *overvalued* egos, then those who defy an exceedingly solidified and crystalized *dogmatic view* of reality are to be considered *heretics* by the dominant order who enforces such mental constructs in the first place. We can also relate the closeness of what *they should be* (Leto's words) with an important discussion apparent in many Buddhist texts and treaties — how *wisdom*, alone, without the cultivation of *compassion* is not enough for a transformative religious order who is, indeed, attempting to liberate humanity's (and other interrelated *life-sustaining beings*) from its own entrapping *dogmas*.

But within the Buddhist perspective, as Shāntideva gradually reveals, ultimate and relative bodhichitta are two interdependent aspects of the same thing. The true realization of emptiness is impossible without the practice of perfect compassion, while no compassion can ever be perfect without the realization of the wisdom of emptiness. (Shantideva, 2011, p.13)

Surely the matriarchal and ancient order had accumulated much wisdom, but as they cut themselves from their *emotions*, from their *compassion*, they lost their original purpose and only used the knowledge acquired through generations with the sole intent of earning more symbolical and mythological power in the Duneverse, operating in the shadows by manipulative means. Jessica's late understanding and experiencing of the Great Mother archetype is a *karmic stream* which survives for generations until Odrade, a descendant of Ghanima (Jessica's granddaughter, the twin sister of the God-Emperor), will inherit and follow the *heretical* path once treaded by her ancestor. Throughout the fifth and sixth novels, the reader will encounter many passages where Odrade discusses the firm conditioning applied during a Bene Gesserit training which represses their connection with *emotions*, what is justified by the order claims that such would only impede their *long-term plans and goals*, the claims that *love and compassion* would only make them weak. If the *golden path* is a metaphorical and narrative motif to be paralleled with the Madhyamika's *middle-way* then it is an inferable conclusion how Odrade will also *inherit the golden path* by treading the middle-ground between compassion and wisdom, precisely because both are necessary conditions for the Bodhisattva's path. We have selected a couple of passages, all from *Heretics of Dune*, which display how the Bene Gesserit order had lost their connection with emotions, with love and compassion:

First excerpt:

“We of the Bene Gesserit have learned to avoid music. It evokes too many confusing emotions. Memory-emotions, of course.”

It was meant to awe him with a reminder of all those Other Memories and the Bene Gesserit powers these implied but Duncan only laughed louder.

“What a shame that is,” he said. “You miss so much of life.” And he began humming an old Halleck refrain[...]. (Herbert, 1987b, p.335)

Second excerpt:

Even though she [*Odrade*] had known what Teg must say, his words pained her. She wanted to tell him that she was one of those who still felt human, but his judgment of the Sisterhood could not be denied.

We are taught to reject love. We can simulate it but each of us is capable of cutting it off in an instant. (Herbert, 1987b, p.183)

Third excerpt:

Such things did what they were supposed to do, of course. Bene Gesserit impositions developed certain mental muscles. They built up layers of callousness that could never be revealed to outsiders. Love was one of the most dangerous forces in the universe. They had to protect themselves against it. A Reverend Mother could never become intimately personal, not even in the services of the Bene Gesserit. (Herbert, 1987b, p.489)

Fourth excerpt: “Concealed behind strong barriers the heart becomes ice. — DARWI ODRADE. ARGUMENT IN COUNCIL” (Herbert, 1987b, p.574).

Throughout *Heretics of Dune* we accompany Odrade’s journey as she reconciles with her *compassionate* side, restoring her connection with the archetype of the Great Mother, with Prajñāpāramitā in a *heretical* rebellion against the very conditioning which profoundly corrupted the order; the path of Odrade, as she will blossom as a lotus flower blooms in its muddy waters, constitutes the *aimless aim and goalless goal* of the *middle-way*, encompassing the doctrine of two-truths, wisdom and compassion. The onset of the *golden path*, laid by the demiurgic and Mara-like characteristics of Leto II, imprinted a pulse, a urge in humanity’s profound

unconscious longings and desires to avoid the very procedure of re-deification¹²⁰, keeping humans bound in the *wheel of samsara* by *surviving* while, simultaneously, seeding the necessary conditions and fertile *empty ground/canvas* which could give birth to a *nirvanic* mode represented in Odrade's *compassionate realization of emptiness*. The following passages¹²¹ from the fifth novel take place as Darwi finds a lost spice reservoir left undiscovered for 1500 years since the previous empire of the God-Emperor — due to his prescience powers, he was aware she would find the lost stash and left inscriptions which will exert an eerie discomfort in her assumptions, inscriptions with uncanny inquiries which will lead Odrade to take on the *golden path* and further improve it by adding *compassion* to the formula.

“WHAT IS SURVIVAL IF YOU DO NOT SURVIVE WHOLE? ASK THE BENE TLEILAX THAT! WHAT IF YOU NO LONGER HEAR THE MUSIC OF LIFE? MEMORIES ARE NOT ENOUGH UNLESS THEY CALL YOU TO NOBLE PURPOSE!”

[...]

“WHY DID YOUR SISTERHOOD NOT BUILD THE GOLDEN PATH? YOU KNEW THE NECESSITY. YOUR FAILURE CONDEMNED ME, THE GOD EMPEROR, TO MILLENNIA OF PERSONAL DESPAIR.”

The words “God Emperor” were not in Chakobsa but in the language of the Islamiyat, where they conveyed an explicit second meaning to any speaker of that tongue:

“Your God and Your Emperor because you made me so.”

[...]

“When I am gone, they must call me Shaitan, Emperor of Gehenna. The wheel must turn and turn along the Golden Path.” (Herbert, 1987b, p.423)

The first part of the previous passage can be coupled with a former passage where Duncan is displaying his despise towards how the Bene Gesserit *lost their connection with life's flow* by not enjoying music anymore — it is a common association, in archetypal means, how the crafting of art throughout time symbolized as either a dance, music, a play to be the constant and unending procedure of *becoming* characterized by the Great Mother's incessant creation being manifested

¹²⁰ If you are reading only this chapter we have coupled both the notions of deification and reification in a single concept which encompasses both procedures concomitantly.

¹²¹ We invite you, reader, to engage with the whole chapter aforementioned for a more broad understanding. We cannot provide the whole content of it in this thesis, unfortunately.

from a sea of potentiality into particular actualities and occasions of experience. By their *dogmas* and *reifications* the Bene Gesserit had disconnected themselves from the very *flux of impermanence and continuous process of becoming*. The *noble purpose* mentioned by Leto's inscriptions would be further embodied by Odrade, as she *heretically* and symbolically becomes a Bodhisattva while joining the *impermanent pathless golden path* — is there a more noble pursuit than to remain in the *samsaric* mode of experience in order to *teach the means of liberation, wisdom and compassion*? This is similar to how Lady Jessica had humbled herself in her final years, as we have already discussed priorly in this chapter. Furthermore, we find it prolific here to also demonstrate how the whole government of Leto as a re-deified demiurgic emperor was set to imprint in humanity's unconsciousness the seeds to dissolve the very process which granted him the complete and absolute prescient power that entangled *humanity-as-organism* and all of the *eco-organic systems* interconnected with it in a hypostatized *samsaric* mode of existence — “*Your God and Your Emperor because you made so*”. Furthermore, the *turning* of the wheel might be a metaphorical imagery for the very wheel of samsara which, in the ultimate sense, is *neither different nor non-different than nirvana*. Let us continue with more passages from this same chapter:

“MY WORDS ARE YOUR PAST,
 “MY QUESTIONS ARE SIMPLE:
 “WITH WHOM DO YOU ALLY?
 “WITH THE SELF-IDOLATORS OF TLEILAX?
 “WITH MY FISH SPEAKER BUREAUCRACY?
 “WITH THE COSMOS-WANDERING GUILD?
 “WITH HARKONNEN BLOOD SACRIFICERS?
 “WITH A DOGMATIC SINK OF YOUR OWN CREATION?
 “HOW WILL YOU MEET YOUR END?
 “AS NO MORE THAN A SECRET SOCIETY?”

Odrade climbed past the questions, reading them a second time as she went. *Noble purpose?*

[...]

The Tyrant's meaning was clear:

“Join me!”

[...]

The noble design had been started and it must be completed even if that meant the death of the Sisterhood.

[...]

I speak your language now, old worm. It has no words but I know the heart of it. (Herbert, 1987b, p.423)

The ancient messages uncannily disturb a false sense of security in Odrade's mind and will be responsible for her decision of defying the *dogmatic sink* of the Bene Gesserit creation as well as treading the *golden path*, even if it leads to her death and the death¹²² of the order. Afterwards the destruction of Rakis, because of the compassionate decisions of Odrade, Sheeana¹²³ (a Rakian girl who had the power to exert control over the living sandworms which are descendant of Leto II himself) and Duncan Idaho's gholas are able to survive — both who will be of utmost importance for the *golden path*. Sheeana becomes a Bene Gesserit apprentice and takes one last surviving sandworm towards Chapterhouse, the dwelling planet of the matriarchal order — the whole production of spice and of the *water of life* will depend on this maneuver; furthermore, as we have already discussed last chapter, all of the future spice will contain within itself the *golden path seeds* cultivated during 3500 years in the very body of the God-Emperor. The symbology of spiritual transformation by rites and consumption of mind-altering substances is a common motif present in many myths which present the Great Mother archetype — here the reunion of the phallic male principle represented by Leto's future and descendant sandworm with its original¹²⁴ mother egg (the Chapterhouse planet itself) will generate the *divine beverage* capable of providing *wisdom* and spiritual transformation for the whole humanity as that *water of life* is imprinted with the *psychic impressions of the very golden path*.

Furthermore, Duncan will be essential for the *subversion* of the Honored Matres as Murbella, a former member of the returning order from the *Scattering*, will fall in love with the gholas — we are not going to overly explain the plot in this regard, however we must note how the Matres were descendants of the Fish Speakers who carried unconsciously a deep sexual desire for Duncan, a desire which was created by the God-Emperor himself. Be reminded, dear reader, that the *Terrible Mother's* operation of domination through deprivation of bodily desires were the main tool

¹²² A death which is transformative, part of the flow of impermanence — not an extinction-like one.

¹²³ A descendant of Siona, as Odrade also is.

¹²⁴ Leto is a descendant of the Bene Gesserit.

which the Honored Matres employed in order to maintain their power — a tool which is ultimately *subverted* as Murbella (one of their members) is unable to dominate Duncan sexually, precisely due to the imprinting in the collective unconscious of all the *Scattering* descendants performed by Leto's sexual rituals during his tyrannical government. It is sufficient here for us to describe how Odrade is able to compassionately convert Murbella and how the latter will also carry the *noble Bodhisattva's purpose* within her Ancestral Memories of the former — this will be one of the key elements with which we can qualify Darwi as a Bodhisattva, as she will linger in all of the future Reverend Mother's Ancestral Memories.

A Bodhisattva¹²⁵ is one who unites the doctrine of *emptiness* and the truthfulness of both the conventional (samsara) and of the ultimate (nirvana) by vowing themselves to only find liberation after *all sentient beings are able to, also, be liberated* — a virtually unending task, a *noble purpose*, the treading of the *middle-way* and of the *golden path of infinity*. As Odrade understands the need for reinstating compassion and emotions to the core and bosom of the Bene Gesserit, she will also reach the *pristine equipoise by balancing wisdom and compassion as one realizes emptiness* — let us be reminded that the thoroughly explored *Atreides Manifesto* was written, after all, by Darwi herself. She upholds the keys for wisely recognizing the *ultimate void and emptiness* of all phenomena while *compassionately and creatively synthesizing* moment to moment by empathetically recognizing the inexorable interconnectedness of all *life*, of all *sentient beings* in a countless and infinite extension of *eco-organic systems*. As she reconnects with *love and compassion* she ponders:

"I stand in the sacred human presence. As I do now, so should you stand some day. I pray to your presence that this be so. Let the future remain uncertain for that is the canvas to receive our desires. Thus the human condition faces its perpetual tabula rasa. We possess no more than this moment where we dedicate ourselves continuously to the sacred presence we share and create." (Herbert, 1987a, p.163)

¹²⁵ In any case, the vow of the Bodhisattva is to deliver beings from suffering, in other words, to deliver them from the causes of their suffering. The work of the Buddha or Bodhisattva is therefore to teach, to show the way—first by revealing values to be adopted or abandoned (and thus the means whereby wholesome and propitious existential states are produced), then by teaching the wisdom whereby saṃsāra is wholly transcended (Shatideva, 2011, p.16).

The symbolical connection between *love* and *compassion* with the very flow of life and the engendering powers of the Great Mother archetype is also present in the Heart Sutra — an essential Buddhist and Mahayana text which also is symbolically linked with Prajñāpāramitā. One of core teachings of the Heart Sutra, which complements Nāgārjuna's attempt to display how *emptiness* is also *empty of inherent existence*, in order to impede the reification of the very notion of *śūnyatā*, lies within the following lines "Form is Emptiness, Emptiness is Form" (Hanh, 2014, online access). The nondual understanding of form to be *asymmetrically interdependent* with emptiness leads us not to dwell in a monastic isolation out of the samsaric mode of existence, not to dwell in a nihilistic interpretation of reality which would consider the conventional reality and conventional self to be non-existent — that is why, for those unacquainted with Buddhism and Madhyamaka, we have so insistently referred that Nāgārjuna's *via negativa* shows the absurdity of any reifying extreme; *neither being nor non-being*. *Emptiness* does not DENY form, but ultimately enables its manifestation — those are the very precise terms which lie at the *heart* of the *Atreides Manifesto*, which we could metaphorically read to be an *estranged*¹²⁶ manifestation of the *Heart Sutra itself*. In the words of Kakol, "Also Lama Anagarika Govinda avers that emptiness is not negative, but a state of freedom or "spontaneous receptivity" (creative synthesis?). And Nāgārjuna is adamant that "the profound, enlightenment in practice, is emptiness creative as compassion"" (2009, p.225). The movement of reconnection experienced by Odrade in the later novels might be paralleled with a necessary reconnection with our *heart*, shifting the centrality of experiences towards the *heart and not the mind/ego* — the archetypal connection between the Great Mother and its spiritual transformation towards the heart as a centre is in direct opposition with our overly patriarchal symbols which posit the *self* and the *hubristic ego* at the *brain/head*. *The heart lies in the middle-way between mind and body, between abstractions and concreteness*, and as Neumann (1991, p.61) writes:

In our schema, accordingly, we have related this symbol group to the center of the great woman-body-vessel, the heart. True, the breath-logos sequence, like many other symbols and symbol groups, was later appropriated by the patriarchate, but it everywhere reveals its matriarchal

¹²⁶ As in the definitive element of non-mimetic fictions — estrangement.

origin. Thus an Egyptian myth, recorded at a time when the patriarchate had completely reevaluated the original matriarchal situation, contains the words: "The Demiurge who created all the Gods and their Kas is in his heart and in his tongue." Here we already discern the masculine trend toward an abstract spirit that has found its clearest expression in the Mosaic doctrine of creation by the word, but beneath it we still perceive the primordial situation in which the word is "born" as essence of the divine corporeal totality, the Great Round — the situation in which it is said: "My heart, my mother, my heart, my mother! My heart of transformations"

Kazi Adi Shakti (online access) will also argue how for the Process Buddhist panexperientialism should be "[...]if properly emphasized) an affirmation of the primacy of the heart-mind" and as she further complements:

The minimal level of experience common to both a trivial puff of existence in far-off empty space and a supreme divine creature is the capacity to "prehend" others—the sympathetic capacity to feel the feelings of others as part of one's own being—and this process of causal prehension occurs at the subterranean level of perception, before the radiant light of self-consciousness comes to shine. There is a deep wisdom and supreme intelligence in this ancestral body, but the light of self-consciousness needs to be intentionally dimmed, at least temporarily, for this to be realized.

By the ending of *Chapterhouse: Dune*, Murbella will rise to become the leader of the inheritors of both the Honored Matres and the Bene Gesserit as the orders will *merge themselves* — let us we consider the Prajñāpāramitā, an archetypal Buddhist manifestation of the positive transformative characters of the Great Mother, which by definition is the *mother of all Buddhas*; "just as a child is born from a mother, enlightened beings are said to be born from Prajnaparamita's womb" (Enlightenment Thangka, online access). Of course we have already discussed how the unconscious, metaphorically presented in the *Atreides Manifesto* as the very *sunyatological groundless ground of magic*, is archetypically associated with a *womb* due to its generative powers, the same powers upheld by the Great Mother. When we take all of those previous elements into consideration while complementing it with the ending of the sixth novel of the *Dune* series we are left with a tremendously powerful imagery which allow us to characterize Odrade as an embodiment of the

Bodhisattva's path and of the *perfection of wisdom* symbolized in the Prajñāpāramitā — Darwi, remains alive as an *Ancestral Memory* inside of Murbella's memories, and thus, as all of the future Reverend Mothers would undergo the *water of life transmutation* rite, she will become a source of *wisdom and compassion* to be inherited for all who consume and convert the sacred psychedelic substance, which as we have said, carries within itself the *golden path*, as a bio-psychic-symbolical inheritance from the God-Emperor's body. The Odrade-within all of the future Reverend Mothers will provide them with the necessary means to promote the most needed reconnection to our heart-minds as we dissolve the overly reified *hubristic egos* who had repetitively been breeding the *self-perpetuating karmic atrocities* so far, thus *engendering all future Bodhisattva's who are able to spiritually transform samsara into nirvana* by following the *impermanent pathless golden path of infinity*.

Some waves throw you, Murbella. But you get back up and go on with it. Seven times down, eight times up. You can balance on strange surfaces.

I know, Dar. Willing participation in your dream.

[...]

There's no secret to balance. You just have to feel the waves.

—DARWI ODRADE (Herbert, 1987a, p.597-598)

FINAL REMARKS

The writings of Frank Herbert, and specifically the *Dune* series which are the focus of our analysis, were written in a moment when the uneasiness of the climate crisis became prominent and started to occupy a central concern for the survival of humans and the entirety of our *eco-organic system* in this planet, as we traverse the space-time continuum as both *individuals* and *collectives*. The anti-mechanistic tropes so often explored by the series are nothing but an extension estranged out of, in philosophical and metaphysical terms, the underlying foundations which are *necessary conditions* for the current *hyper-samsaric* mode of existence we dwell in during this late stage capitalism — conditions we would need to also avoid in any other form of social organization if we are *organically* to survive and to diminish the suffering of any sentient creature. Our minds are not reducible to the equations and algorithms derived in technocratic laboratories — of course that cannot lead us to fall into the opposite extreme which is to assume that *mind-in-itself* occupies an ontological fundamental ground for reality; a purely mechanical understanding of reality perceive us, and any of the sustaining life processes as well as other sentient beings with which we are profoundly intertwined, as mere *numbers in a sheet*, without any *autonomy or self-determination*, i.e. without any capacity for *creative synthesis*, without any capacity to rearrange the prior conditional field which we carry within us. If we were determined by the past, ultimately, then the future of the *cosmos* is already determined by the present conditions and was fully determined ever since the first moments of the very *big-bang* — the *wisdom* of emptiness, as portrayed by Nāgārjuna, uses logic to display the very limits with which reason is confining and how it is absurd to assume that an *effect* is entirely contained in a *cause*. Not to mention the questionable *ethics* which can arise in a completely deterministic understanding of the world — why should we even care about other beings? Why not fully behave as *machines* and extract *value and resources* from other creatures if such behavior is already determined by our *nature*? If we have absolutely no power in rearranging prior conditions than we would inevitably fall into a materialistic nihilism without any sort of responsibility over our own actions. *But we are responsible*, and as *humans-as-organism* (especially the *ideologically and cultural dominant* human groups who have imperialistically dominated the entirety of our

planet) we are the leading cause for the suffering of not only *other humans* but the whole spectrum of other *sentient* beings and life-forms with which we are deeply interconnected with. We are *breeding the atrocities of the future on our very atrocious form of living*.

“All is transient, Mother Superior?”

“That is knowledge impressed on you by Other Memory. No planet, no land or sea, no part of any land or sea is here forever.”

“A morbid thought!” Rejection.

“Wherever we stand, we are only stewards.”

[...]

“Honored Matres think they can buy infinite security: a small planet, you know, with plenty of subservient population.”

Murbella produced a grimace.

“More planets!” Odrade snapped. “Always more and more and more! That’s why they come swarming back.”

[...]

“And that makes me a nothing!”

“Neither fish nor fowl, but your own true self? Even there, you’re only a steward. Beware, Murbella! If you think you own something, that’s like walking on quicksand.” (Herbert, 1987a, p.147)

We should not strive for a decisive conclusion and, instead, should leave our readings of *Dune* open-empty, as an akin procedure of the one performed in the depths of humanity’s psyche by the *golden path*. Let the ending of our dissertation not to occupy a final point, a final goal or objective, only a *conventional final remark* in a sea of *neither continuity nor non-continuity* as we embark in the pleasurable journey of *creativity*, in a quest based on the *impermanent* and never *ceasing* rediscovery of meaning in a virtually infinite potentiality for symbols which any work of art possess in its very constitution — we do not aim here to *enclose* or *extract* the ultimate meaning of Herbert’s series neither expose the self-existing *referents* (as we hope to have shown, to assume that any phenomena has *svabhāva* is absurd) for which *Dune* would be pointing at; our *aimless aim* or *purposeless purpose* is to navigate temporarily in a *flux of continuous becoming*, understanding the process we have labeled as “the *Dune* series” amidst the constant transformation features of an organic universe which also performs their *magical* spellcasting in us, readers and

critics so that we, in a later moment, may also *magically and creatively* rearrange those internal/external inputs into novelty. If the Duneverse set itself to show the depth of our minds and the very interrelatedness we possess with the entirety of the *universe*, up to its immeasurable limitless limits, we might as well follow the footsteps of the narrative thread in this hypothetical advanced humanity and regain the *lost naivety* of *childlike* and *imaginative* creatures always on the verge of rediscovering the world — to enclose, to frame, to circle and to fence are characteristics of a deep necessity for *comfort*, which is part of our humanity and understandable to a certain extent, but the true capacity for *balance* and *homeostasis* can only be acquired when we throw away the ultimate certainty and the very need for *absolutizing* our *conventional abstractions* and deeply perceive that we might *survive in strange waters* as long as we're not trying to impose our own hypostatization towards others; by recovering our naivety and curiosity we open ourselves to the very *emptiness* which engulf us and any other phenomena in the *continuum* we call *cosmos*, we rediscover empathy and compassion towards all other sentient beings *exactly because we are also open-empty* and interdependently originated.

A Mentat's real skills lay in that mental construct they called "the great synthesis." [...] At the same time, you remained open to broad motions all around and within. This produced naivete, the basic Mentat posture[...]

"You are open to whatever the universe may do," his first instructor had said. "Your mind is not a computer; it is a response-tool keyed to whatever your senses display."

[...] You remained as responsive to new questions as you did to new patterns. Testing, re-testing, shaping and re-shaping. A constant process, never stopping, never satisfied. It was your own private pavane, similar to that of other Mentats but it carried always your own unique posture and steps.

"You are never truly a Mentat. That is why we call it 'The Endless Goal.'"
(Herbert, 1987a, p.99)

Permit us to present a metaphorical imagery very often explored in Zen Buddhism — the *Ensō*, an unenclosed circle which might stand for the very *emptiness* of reality. When we consider how it is depicted in a not-yet-finalized form, in its incompleteness, the *Ensō* represents the very *open-emptiness* and the *inexorable limits of any given system* — it represents the *mind in receptive form*, unclosed, flowing with

the continuous process of concrescence and becoming, *neither empty nor non-empty* and *neither becoming nor non-becoming*. How much more are we than mechanical events? The portals of imagination in literature, in all of the non-mimetic fictions, could be said to be *rifts of wider forms of creativity leaking from the unconscious into the very fabric of our own overly hypostatized world*, with the sole purpose of defying it and dissolving the very fences we have erected to *impede change*. But the universe, multiverse, pluriverse, *neither one nor many*, always *moves ahead and beyond us*, showing to our overly hubristic selves and to our *civilized and sophisticated* egos we had, ultimately, no power but the power of *creative emptiness*.

Figure 2 — Ensō Circle



Source: <https://modernzen.org/enso-hm/>

“Paired opposites define your longings and those longings imprison you.
—THE ZENSUNNI WHIP” (Herbert, 1987a, p.601)

REFERENCES

- ALAZRAKI, Jaime. ¿ **Que és lo neofantástico?**. In: ROAS, David (Org.). *Teorías de lo fantástico*. Madrid: Arco/Libros S.L., 2001, p. 265-282.
- ALLEN, L. David. **Science Fiction**: An Introduction. Lincoln: Cliffs Notes, 1973.
- ALDISS, Brian Wilson, WINGROVE, David. **Trillion Year Spree**: The History of Science Fiction. London: Gollancz, 1988.
- ASIAN ART HD. **Pratītya-samutpāda**. Available in: <https://www.hdasianart.com/blogs/news/pratityasamutpada-the-buddhist-concept-of-dependent-origination?>. Access in: 03 jun. 2026
- ATTEBERY, Brian. The magazine era: 1926-1960. In: JAMES, Edward; MENDLESOHN, Farah (ed.). **The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 32-47.
- BAIDU WIKI. **Avidyā**. Available in: <https://baike.baidu.com/en/item/Avidya/931011>. Access in: 03 jun 2026.
- BOAZ, David Paul. **Primordial Consciousness**: Dzogchen Panpsychism. [S.l.], 21 set. 2019. Available in: <<http://davidpaulboaz.org/mindfulness-and-human-happiness/primordial-consciousness-dzogchen-panpsychism/>>. Access in: 4 may 2020.
- BOHM, David. **Causality and Chance in Modern Physics**. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957.
- _____. Time, the Implicate Order, and Pre-Space. in **Physics and the Ultimate Significance of Time**. edited by D. R. Griffin, 177-208. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986.
- BRANTLINGER, Patrick. **The Gothic Origins of Science Fiction**. NOVEL: A Forum of Fiction, Durham, v.14, p.30-43, 1980.
- BRITANNICA. **Koan**. Available in: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/koan>. Access in: 03 jun. 2026
- BRITANNICA. **Mahayana**. Available in: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mahayana>. Access in: 03 jun. 2026
- BRITANNICA. **Mūlamadhyamakakārikā**. Available in: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mulamadhyamakakarika>. Access in: 03 jun. 2026
- BRITANNICA. **Nirvana**. Available in: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/nirvana-religion>. Access in: 03 jun. 2026

BRODERICK, Damien. New Wave and Backwash: 1960-1980. In: JAMES, Edward; MENDLESOHN, Farah (ed.). **The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 48-63.

BUDDHA NATURE. **Svabhāva**. Available in: https://buddhanature.tsadra.org/index.php/Key_Terms/svabhāva. Access in 03 jun. 2026.

BUDDHARAKKHITA, Acharya. **The Dhammapada**: The Buddha's Path of Wisdom. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1985.

CAMBRAY, Joseph. **Synchronicity**: Nature and Psyche in an Interconnected Universe. [S.I.]: Texas A&M University, 2009.

CAMPBELL, Joseph. **O herói de mil faces**. São Paulo: Pensamento, 2007.

CHALMERS, David J. **The Conscious Mind**: In Search of a Fundamental Theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

CHOWDHURY, B. **The Koan of the Goose in the Bottle**. Available in: <https://bullseye.ac/blog/social-sciences/the-koan-of-the-goose-in-the-bottle/>, Access in: oct 2024.

CLUTE, John; NICHOLIS, Peter. **The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction**. New York: St Martin's Press, 1995.

DUNE. Direction: Denis Villeneuve. United States: Warner Bros, 2021 (155 min).

DUNE: Part Two. Direction: Denis Villeneuve. United States: Warner Bros, 2024 (166 min).

EAGLETON, Terry. **Teoria da literatura**: uma introdução. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2001.

EBSCO. **Bodhisattva**. Available in: <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/social-sciences-and-humanities/bodhisattva>. Access in: 03 jun. 2026

EGEN, . **Ensō Circle**. 2021. Available in: <https://modernzen.org/enso-htm/>. Access in: jan 2021.

ENLIGHTENMENT THANGKA. Prajñāpāramitā Goddess: The Mother of All Buddhas and Embodiment of Ultimate Wisdom. Available in: <https://enlightenmentthangka.com/blogs/thangka/prajnaparamita-goddess-the-mother-of-all-buddhas-and-embodiment-of-ultimate-wisdom>. Access in: oct 2019.

ENSO. **Ensō Circle**. 2021. Available in: <https://modernzen.org/enso-htm/>. Access in: jan 2021.

FRACTAL. **Arte com matemática:** Fractais. 9 mai 2010. Available in: <https://medium.com/chocoladesign/arte-com-a-matem%C3%A1tica-fractais-589a98dccda3>. Access in: 17 abr. 2018.

FRACTAL. **Arte com matemática:** Fractais. 9 mai 2010. Available in: <https://medium.com/chocoladesign/arte-com-a-matem%C3%A1tica-fractais-589a98dccda3>. Access in: 17 abr. 2018.

FRANZ, Marie-Louise Von. **On Divination and Synchronicity:** The psychology of meaningful chance. Toronto: Inner City Books, 1980.

FREUD, Sigmund. O inquietante. In: **História de uma neurose infantil (O homem dos lobos): além do princípio do prazer e outros textos.** Trad. Paulo César de Souza. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010, p. 328-376.

FREEDMAN, Carl. **Critical Theory and Science Fiction.** Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 2000.

GARFIELD, Jay L. **Dependent Arising and the Emptiness of Emptiness:** Why Did Nāgārjuna Start with Causation? Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994.

GARFIELD, Jay L. **The Fundamental Wisdom of The Middle Way:** Nāgārjuna's "Mūlamadhyamakakārikā". Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

GHOLA. Available in: <https://dune.fandom.com/wiki/Ghola>. Access in: 9 set. 2020.

GLEICK, J. 1987. **Chaos:** Making a New Science. New York: Viking.

GREENE, Brian. **O Tecido do Cosmo.** New York: Random House, 2004.

_____. **The Elegant Universe:** Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory. New York: Norton, 2003.

GRIFFIN, David Ray (ed.). **Archetypal Process:** Self and Divine in Whitehead, Jung, and Hillman. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989.

GRIFFIN, David Ray. Archetypal Psychology and Process Philosophy: Complementary Postmodern Movements. In: GRIFFIN, David Ray (ed.). **Archetypal Process:** Self and Divine in Whitehead, Jung, and Hillman. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989, p.1-76.

GUIN, Ursula K. Le. Darkness Box. In: HARTWELL, David G (ed). **Masterpieces of Fantasy and Wonder.** New York: Guild America Books, 1989, p.138-147.

HANEY II, William S. **Cyberculture, Cyborgs and Science Fiction: Consciousness and the Posthuman.** Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2006.

HAWKING, Stephen. **Uma breve história do Tempo.** [S.l.]: Intrínseca, 2015.

HERBERT, Frank. **Dune.** New York: Ace, 2003.

HERBERT, Frank. **Dune Messiah**. New York: Ace, 2008b.

HERBERT, Frank. **Children of Dune**. New York: Ace, 2008a.

HERBERT, Frank. **God Emperor of Dune**. New York: Ace, 2008c.

HERBERT, Frank. **Heretics of Dune**. New York: Ace, 1987b.

HERBERT, Frank. **Chapterhouse: Dune**. New York: Ace, 1987a.

JAMES, Edward; MENDLESOHN, Farah (ed.). **The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

JACKSON, Rosemary. **Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion**. London; New York: Routledge, 1981 (New Accents).

Jodorowsky's Dune. Direção: Frank Pavich. Produção: Frank Pavich; Stephen Scarlata; Travis Stevens. Intérpretes: Alejandro Jodorowsky ; Michel Seydoux ; H. R. Giger; Chris Foss; Nicolas Winding Refn; Amanda Lear; Richard Stanley. Música: Kurt Stenzel. [S.l.]: City Film e Snowfort Pictures, Sony Pictures Classics, 2014. 1 DVD (90 min) son., color.

JUNG, Carl Gustav. **O homem e seus símbolos**. Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Editora Nova Fronteira S.A., 1988.

JUNG, Carl Gustav. **Os arquétipos e o inconsciente coletivo**. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2012.

JUNG, Carl Gustav. **Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle**. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

JUNG, C. G. **The Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious**. London: Routledge, 1981.

JUNG, Carl Gustav. **The psychology of Kundalini Yoga**. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

JUNG, Carl Gustav. **The Seven Sermons to the Dead: Septem Sermones ad Mortuos**. [S.l.], 1916. Available in: <<http://gnosis.org/library/7Sermons.htm>>. Access in: 13 mar. 2020.

JUNG, Carl Gustav; MEIER, C.A., PAULI, Wolfgang. **Atom and Archetype: The Pauli/Jung Letters**. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

KAKOL, Peter Paul. **Emptiness and Becoming: Integrating Madhyamika Buddhism and Process Philosophy**. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, 2009.

KOESTLER, Arthur. **The Ghost in the Machine**. New York: Macmillan, 1967.

KUNZRU, Hari. **Dune, 50 years on**: how a science fiction novel changed the world. The Guardian, [S.l.], 3 jul. 2015. Available in: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jul/03/dune-50-years-on-science-fiction-novel-world>. Access in: 18 jul. 2017.

LION'S ROAR. **Samsara**. Available in: <https://www.lionsroar.com/buddhism/samsara/>. Access in: 03 jun 2026

LION'S ROAR. **Śūnyatā**. Available in: <https://www.lionsroar.com/buddhism/emptiness-sunyata/>. Access in: 03 jun 2026

LITERARY DEVICES. **Tragic Hero**. Available in: <https://literarydevices.net/tragic-hero/>. Access in: 30 oct. 2021.

LOPES, E. **O estruturalismo Semiológico Francês**: Lévi-Strauss, Bremond e Barthes (p. 309 a p. 374) In: A identidade e a diferença: raízes históricas das teorias estruturais da narrativa. São Paulo: EDUSP, 1997.

MAYO, Mohs. **Adventures in Religious Science Fiction**. New York: Doubleday, 1971.

MCNELLY, W. E. **The Dune Encyclopedia**. Berkley Books: New York, 1984.

MERIDIAN UNIVERSITY. **Mahayana**. Available in: <https://meridianuniversity.edu/content/mahayana-buddhism-origins-and-meaning>. Access in: 03 jun 2026

MIDDLE WAY SOCIETY. **Madhyamaka**. Available in: <https://www.middlewaysociety.org/middle-way/madhyamika-buddhism/>. Access in: 03 jun 2026

NAGARJUNA. **Refutations of Objections: verse 71**. [S.l.], Available in: <[https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Quotations: Nagarjuna, Refutation of Objections, To whomever emptiness is possible..](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Quotations:_Nagarjuna,_Refutation_of_Objections,_To_whomever_emptiness_is_possible..)>, Accessed in: jul 2024.

NEUMANN, Erich. **The Great Mother**: an analysis of the archetype. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.

PAES, José Paulo. **As dimensões do fantástico**. In: *Gregos & baianos*: ensaios. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985. p.184-192.

PALUMBO, Donald. The Monomyth as a Fractal Pattern in Frank Herbert's Dune Novels. **Science Fiction Studies**, Greencastle, v. 25, n. 3, p. 433 - 458, nov. 1998. Disponível em: <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4240724>>. Acesso em: 15 nov. 2016.

PEAT, F. David. **Synchronicity**: The bridge between matter and mind. New York: Bantam new age, 1988.

PENROSE, R. **Shadows of the Mind**: A Search for the Missing Science of Consciousness. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

PERASSOLI Jr., Sergio Ricardo. **O Vicejar dos astros**: a individuação da personagem Frodo em O Senhor dos Anéis. 2016. 103f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Estudos Literários) – Faculdade de Ciências e Letras de Araraquara, Universidade Estadual Paulista “Júlio de Mesquita Filho” (UNESP), Araraquara, SP.

PRIGOGNE, I.; STENGERS, I. **Order Out of Chaos**: Man’s New Dialogue with Nature. New York: Bantam Books, 1984.

RIDDLE, Larry. Sierpinski Gasket. Available in: <https://larryriddle.agnesscott.org/ifs/siertri/siertri.htm>. Access in: 2022.

RIGPA WIKI. **Prajñāpāramitā**. Available in: <https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Prajnaparamita>. Access in: 03 jun 2026

ROAS, David. A ameaça do fantástico. In: **A ameaça do fantástico: aproximações teóricas**. Tradução Julian Fúks. São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2014.

ROBERTS, Adam. **Science Fiction**. New York: Routledge, 2000.

ROSHI, Kosho Uchiyama. **The Zen Teaching of Homeless Kodo**. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2014.

SELLERY, J.M. The Necessity for Symbol and Myth: A Literary Amplification. In: GRIFFIN, David Ray (ed.). **Archetypal Process**: Self and Divine in Whitehead, Jung, and Hillman. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989.

SHAKTI, Kazi Adi. **Holopoiesis**. Available in: <https://holo-poiesis.com/>. Access in: 2022-2025.

SHAKTI, Kazi Adi. **Open/Emptiness and Inclusive-Transcendence**. 2024. Available in: <https://holo-poiesis.com/2024/01/18/open-emptiness-and-inclusive-transcendence/>. Access in: 2024.

SHAKTI, Kazi Adi. **Phallocracy & Gynarchy**. 2023. Available in: <https://holo-poiesis.com/2023/03/03/phallocracy-gynarchy/>. Access in: 2025.

SHAKTI, Kazi Adi. **Pan-Experientialism of the Heart-Mind**. 2025. Available in: <https://holo-poiesis.com/2025/03/21/pan-experientialism-of-the-heart-mind/>. Access in: 2025.

SHAKTI, Kazi Adi. **Process Buddhism: Two Truths or One Truth?**. 2023. Available in: <https://holo-poiesis.com/2023/08/09/process-buddhism-two-truths-or-one-truth/>. Access in: 2023.

SHAKTI, Kazi Adi. **Rectifying Misplaced Concreteness**. 2023 Available in: <https://holo-poiesis.com/2023/04/25/rectifying-misplaced-concreteness/>. Access in: 2024.

SHANKAR, Anoushka. **Remain the Sea**. In: _____. Land of Gold. [CD e encarte]. Hanover: Deutsche Grammophon, 2016, 1 CD, faixa 7.

SHANTIDEVA. **The Way of the Bodhisattva**. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2011.

SHARP, Daryl. **Jung Lexicon**. [S.l.]: [s.n], 1991.

SHELTON, Mahmoud. **Mysteries of Dune**: Sufism, Psychedelics, and the Prediction of Frank Herbert. [S.l.]: Temple of Justice Books, 2020.

SIDERITS, Mark. **Nāgārjuna's Middle Way**: Mūlamadhyamakakārikā. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2013.

SILVA, Frederico Negrini. **Sincronicidade e Presciência em Duna**. 2021. 129f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Estudos Literários) – Faculdade de ciências e letras de Araraquara, Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho" (UNESP), Araraquara, SP.

SILVA, Frederico Negrini. Magic and Subversion: Weaving Reality's Fabric. **Abusões**, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, v.11, n.26, p.127-149, 2025.

SILVA, Frederico Negrini. Entropia e as Origens Góticas da Ficção-Científica em Neon-Genesis Evangelion. In: MARTINS, L.R.A.M.; NUNES, J.E.A.; ROSSI, C.; STAINLE, S. (org.). **Entornos do Gótico e do Fantástico**. São Carlos: Pedro & João Editores, 2023, v. 1, p. 141-159.

SUVIN, Darko. **Metamorphoses of Science Fiction**: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre. New Haven and Londo: Yale University Press. 1979.

TODOROV, Tzvetan. **As estruturas narrativas**. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1969.

VOICE/DE. Available in: <https://dune.fandom.com/wiki/Voice/DE>. Access in: 9 set. 2020.

WALLIS, Christopher D. **Tantra Illuminated**: The Philosophy, History and Practice of a Timeless Tradition. [S.l.]: Mattamayūra Press, 2013.

WATT, Ian. **A ascensão do romance**: estudos sobre Defoe, Richardson e Fielding. Trad. Hildegard Feist. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990.

WHITEHEAD, Alfred North. **Process and Reality**. [S.l.]: Free Press, 1979

GLOSSARY

Avidyā	Ignorance (Sanskrit: avidyā, Pali: avijjā) is a core Buddhist term, referring to the deluded cognition regarding the true nature of things, particularly the inability to understand the illusory nature of the "self" and the principle of dependent origination (Baidu Wiki, online access)
---------------	---

Bodhisattva	A Bodhisattva, in Buddhist tradition, is an individual who has reached spiritual enlightenment but chooses to delay entering nirvana to assist others in achieving their own enlightenment. Central to Mahayana Buddhism, Bodhisattvas embody true compassion and are seen as selfless guides on the spiritual path (Ebsco, online access)
--------------------	--

Hetu	Technically speaking, a hetu is a necessary and sufficient cause that acts as a "power" that deterministically produces an effect. (Kakol, 2009, p.136)
-------------	---

Inclusive Transcendence	[...] the principle of inclusive-transcendence is the principle that all things are constituents of, and constituted by, unceasing processes of concrescence whereby many diverse parts come together and coalesce into a unified whole, adding that novel singularity to that original diversity (Shakti, 2023, online access)
--------------------------------	---

Koan	[...]a succinct paradoxical statement or question used as a meditation discipline for novices, particularly in
-------------	--

the Rinzai sect. The effort to “solve” a koan is intended to exhaust the analytic intellect and the egoistic will, readying the mind to entertain an appropriate response on the intuitive level. (Britannica, online access)

Madhyamaka

The term ‘Madhyamaka’ means ‘Middle Way’, and Madhyamaka is a philosophical school of Mahayana Buddhism (the second phase of Buddhism that began about 500 years after the Buddha and spread from India into China, Tibet and Japan). (Middle Way Society, online access)

Mahayana

Mahayana Buddhism is a term from Sanskrit that is translated as the “great vehicle,” and it refers to a wide range of Buddhist teachings and practices (Meridian University, online access). [...] movement that arose within Indian Buddhism around the beginning of the Common Era and became by the 9th century the dominant influence on the Buddhist cultures of Central and East Asia, which it remains today. (Britannica, online access)

Mūlamadhyamakakārikā

(Sanskrit: “Fundamentals of the Middle Way”), Buddhist text by Nāgārjuna, the exponent of the Mādhyamika (Middle Way) school of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It is a work that combines stringent logic and religious vision in a lucid presentation of the doctrine of ultimate “emptiness” (Britannica, online access).

Nirvana

[...] in Indian religious thought, the supreme goal of certain meditation disciplines. Although it occurs in the literatures of a number of ancient Indian

traditions, the Sanskrit term nirvana is most commonly associated with Buddhism, in which it is the oldest and most common designation for the goal of the Buddhist path. It is used to refer to the extinction of desire, hatred, and ignorance and, ultimately, of suffering and rebirth (Britannica, online access).

Prajñāpāramitā

'Perfection of Wisdom', or more literally, 'transcendent wisdom'. It refers to:

1. the sixth of the paramitas: perfect non-conceptual wisdom.
2. the class of Buddhist literature that was mainly discovered by Nagarjuna in the second century. Its central topic is emptiness.
3. the female deity who is the embodiment of transcendent wisdom. (Rigpa Wiki, online access)

Pratītya-samutpāda

is a causal principle that describes how things come into existence, change, and cease based on interdependent causes and conditions. It denies the notion of an unchanging, independent self (ātman) and highlights that all things exist in a web of interconnected relationships (Asian Art HD, 2025, online access)

Pratyaya

The pratyayas are the conditions upon which events arise dependently, and can be classified into four types: primary causal condition, supporting condition, contiguous condition, and dominant condition (Kakol, 2009, p.136)

Saṃsāra

In Buddhist cosmology, saṃsara (Sanskrit, “cycle of existence”) serves as the framework for understanding the nature of suffering and how to escape it. Buddhist practice helps us understand and transcend one’s imprisonment in saṃsara and its suffering. (Lion’s Roar, online access)

Śūnyatā

In Mahayana Buddhism, the term “emptiness” (śūnyatā in Sanskrit) describes how things do—do not—exist. By saying the phenomena are “empty” of solid, separate, and permanent existence, the teaching of emptiness points us toward their true nature, which is impermanent, always changing, and dependent on causes and conditions.. Emptiness means that all things lack—are empty of—inherent or independent existence. Neither we, other beings, nor any phenomenon in the universe has a permanent, separate, and independent core, soul, or identity. Nothing exists in isolation or on its own—everything is interdependent and exists only in relation to other causes and conditions. This includes physical objects, mental states, and the very concept of self. (Lion’s Roar, online access)

Svabhāva

The nature or essence (substance in western metaphysics) of a thing, which originates only from itself and is not dependent on any external entities, causes, or conditions [...].In Sanskrit, “self-nature,” “intrinsic existence,” or “inherent existence,” the term has a general sense of “essence” or “nature,” but is used in philosophical literature. (Buddha Nature, online access).

ANNEXES

The following essay was published in *Abusões*, and due to it being constantly quoted throughout this dissertation, we have decided to make it also available for our readers.

1. MAGIC AND SUBVERSION: WEAVING REALITY'S FABRIC

The magical element present in works tied to Fantasy as a genre or mode is usually the most fundamental process by which estrangement is provoked in the reader — although such substantial aspect of Fantasy precisely unravels the due distinctions (and by obvious induction, due similarities) between the crude and opaque empirical world and the wondrous yet terrifying fantastic universe (in all its possible and wide manifestations), we have yet to engage with a modal definition of Magic. One can only infer that seeking for a broad and open-ended definition of Magic and its derivatives will, surely, prove to be useful for an also broad and open-ended understanding of Fantasy itself. The present article will attempt to define, even though not in an ultimate closed fashion, such magical element and its relevancy in distinguishing Fantasy and its reimagined universes from mimetic fictionalization and the alleged objective world.

We must also argue, beforehand, how Magic and the very consequences of its existence in such narratives and fictional realities are, especially, what subverts the expected rational order of the reader's empirical world (even if it attempts to present a different one that is self-sufficient, where the magical element is natural) — this leads, inevitably, to the conclusion that the very basic constitution of a so called world-building process, in works of Fantasy, must have at a same ontological level an inexorable relation to Magic, granting the latter its definitive potential to transform and recreate reality. We will often engage with the magical process, on the course of our text, utilizing a common metaphor used in many different Fantasy worlds — reality understood as a fabric that interconnects its infinite processes and which can be constantly woven by Magic, granting its users power to shape the world to their own will. World-building has also been, arguably, an outstanding and under-analyzed element of Fantasy, as well as one of its basic foundations as a genre (and perhaps, also as a mode) — we will further claim throughout this essay that Magic IS the very intertwining process that weaves reality, thus fabricating such fantastical new universes through a process of creative recombination that generates relative novelty.

The very act of conceiving another imaginable world must surely guides us, on

the other edge of literary pages, to perceive enough similarities amidst distinctions and distinctions amidst similarities regarding such fantastical fabrication and our own primary universe. Of course that such crafting of different worlds leads to very distinctive unfoldings throughout the wide range of the genre, which are better discussed in theoretical works such as *Fantasy: How it Works* (ATTEBERY, 2022) and *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (MENDLESOHN, 2008) — we intend to further complement such theoretical framework by presenting reasonably consistent and coherent arguments to display the importance of the magical element and its definition for the making of such uniquely imagined cosmos. As Attebery comments on the aforementioned book, it is precisely the magical element that reinforces the appeal of such imagined worlds:

Part of their appeal, I would suggest, is that each imagined world is organized around principles that are based in experience but that operate with a clarity and consistency not to be found in any real society. They are magical, though the magic may be covert, disguised as Holmes's deductive reasoning or Moriarty's malevolence. And magic throws everything into higher relief: makes the structure of meaning explicit. (ATTEBERY, 2022, p.33)

We find considerably relevant to denote how Attebery does have a broad comprehension of Magic as the transformative process applied to the axis of our objective reality, and does widen its definition to encompass what could be commonly associated by other scholars as a cognitive mechanism imbued in akin genres to Fantasy — such mechanism is usually combined with the estrangement effect provoked by non-mimetic fictions in the aforementioned genres. Our further thesis has a stance that, inevitably, settles itself in disagreement towards an understanding that, genres like science fiction, would carry within its poetics, within the transmigration of our empirical reality into a new imagined one an aspect that would approximate it towards mimetic fictions as in opposition to how such estrangement occurs in the Fantasy genre.

It is for such reason that we strive to define Magic modally, and therefore in a relatively open-ended form as we have previously mentioned — thereby, by expanding our definition to include any kind of fictional work that recreates reality's fabric while concomitantly emptying the assumed objective and external existence of

our own empirical world of absolute and intrinsic existence, we align ourselves with processual metaphysics which allows such magical element to function freely and unimpededly towards subverting and displaying that even the metaphorical fabric of reality is not ultimately real. It is precisely the useful and playful function of Magic that reveals how our empirical world might be also open-ended and subverted or recreated to our own will, even if such casting of ancient spells takes place in imaginative layers of dreams, books or any other media better fit for the transmutation of the cosmos. As it is argued in *Fantasy: How it works*:

I would go a step further and say that in renouncing realism of content, fantasy gains an ability to map the tectonic plates of reality. As Le Guin says in her 1974 essay “Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons,” “fantasy is true, of course. It isn’t factual, but it’s true.” Though nothing prevents the fantasy writer from employing the representational devices of realism—all the facts, Ma’am, but not just the facts—it is the unreal that opens the way for deeper truths. (ATTEBERY, 2022, p.34)

We hope to eventually demonstrate how such appeal that Fantasy works arouse in our imagination is embedded in Magic at its core and that it is precisely such magical elements (disguised, manifested and justified in their own manners depending on the rules of such imagined worlds) and its transformative and subversive capabilities which will reconstruct the open-ended foundations of our own empirical worlds. By doing so, by enabling our own imagination to envision a universe rejoicing in possibilities, where Magic and its unlimited potential exist we are also able to reimagine ways to transmute ourselves and the conditions we are inserted in.

Precisely these terms will represent and exemplify how, in the process of engaging with a fictionalized world, the reader would unavoidably perceive “similarities amidst distinctions and distinctions amidst similarities” and “fill in the gaps” in order to reveal hidden secrets and structures of their own non-fictional reality. Such non-mimetic fictions usually demand the utterance of a metaphysical inquiry — “What if?” — What if one’s knowledge regarding ancient geometrical forms would grant foresight capabilities? What if magic existed in the depths of our hearts and emotions and the very desire to change reality would be on our grasp as we compact with an otherworldly fox-like entity? What if one could tap in nature’s

tapestries and leylines and redirect primal magical energies with their intent? What if certain hand seals held essential forms and by channeling magic through such dexterous display of ancient symbols one can recreate the very underlying layers of reality? By proposing and speculating on such possibilities, by carrying the magical element to its full unbound potential what aspects would still echo in resonance to our own world? How could we subvert the foundations of our very empirical existence and reconnect with the cosmos while transubstantiating its apparent absolute ontological reality? Every non-mimetic imagined world reveals, through magically crafted lenses that are overflowing in mana, important secrets of its double, the mimetic and reified image of our own crystalized world — thereby, such fictionalized pluriverses permit our imagination to weave reality's fabric through a creative endeavor that is simultaneously disruptive and subversive.

From just a few hints in a story, we start to hypothesize a world in which those clues form a coherent whole. The better we know the genre and its folk sources, the more quickly we can fill in the gaps and intuit a structure for the story-world. And once we perceive the “proportion and harmony” of that world, it can serve as a model or miniature simulation of the world of experience. We come to know it; we live in it as we read and remember the tale. And because of the way thought works, through logic and emotional association and perceived linkages, the fantasy world begins to offer insights into the world outside the fiction. In effect, it becomes a new source domain from which to extend metaphors. (ATTEBERY, 2022, p.31-32)

Before continuing with the line of arguments here displayed we see of utmost necessity to justify and conceptualize what are the constituents behind the often quoted subversion promoted by Magic as we have claimed. We align ourselves with and develop such idea from Rosemary Jackson's well known definition of Fantasy as a mode of composition whose purpose rely on confronting and threatening the dominant cultural order. Though her work does end up creating an “umbrellic” terminology that encompasses motifs and structures that often transcend Fantasy as genre, her important contribution and conceptualization of the process of subversion seems fit for a better understanding of Magic as the very means by which an imagined potentiality can become an actuality whose fruition solely rests in relation to the axis of our empirical reality and is materialized, thus acquiring such state of

actualization, through an wide array of fictionalized media — Magic could thus be defined as the very unlimited and infinite potentiality that underlies the continuous concrescence of diverse occasions actualizations, acquiring the status of a cosmic force capable of dissolving the reified ontology of the so called real and empirical world by its subversive operations.

As we have already indicated, Magic might be seen precisely as the capacity of rearranging different processes and intertwining them in distinct and novel manners, actualizing their own concrescence. Such powerful creative capacity does shake the very foundations encountered in the reader's objective universe and offers not a simple "escape" of such rigid constraints, but the very means for rearranging its elements and reimagining their austere and intransigent world that, otherwise, would seem inescapable from. The reductionist understanding that non-mimetic fictions are forms of "escapism" whose primal existence is built upon rejecting the experience of the crude empirical reality can be no more than an intellectually dishonest claim or a complete unconscious attempt of reifying the very firm restraints of the cultural hegemonic order.

'The "creative" imagination, indeed, is quite incapable of inventing anything; it can only combine components that are strange to one another.' Again, 'In the psychic life, there is nothing arbitrary, nothing undetermined.' Fantasy is not to do with inventing another non-human world: it is not transcendental. It has to do with inverting elements of this world, re-combining its constitutive features in new relations to produce something strange, unfamiliar and apparently 'new', absolutely 'other' and different. (JACKSON, 1981, p.4)

What we previously meant as Magic as a means for enabling novelty is nothing but the very embryonic potency of reconnecting different threads and nodes present in the alleged real world in actualized manners. By understanding that the so called empirical reality is not made of isolated entities but that its relative stability is arranged through the very chronotopical weaving of unendurable processes, whose concrescence rises only to eventually fall, we are liberated from a comprehension of novelty as a "new thing in itself" and are able to define that such element of innovation rests upon the mechanism with which we subvert the reified superimposition of the empirical world. Creativity, as much as the capacity of weaving never yet imagined threads and nodes in the fabric of reality by means of reimagining

their links and connections, becomes an essential element for Magic as it represents the skillful and playful display through which the weaver redesigns the universe — being it by the means of proposing an entirely new World, by dreaming seeming impossibilities or by literally being a magical weaver in a non-mimetic fictionalized reality.

There is surely a fruitful soil for future theoretical explorations regarding the development of our psychic life and the connection of Magic to the functioning of the unconscious in a personal level and also in a collective level — for the necessity of a more succinct framework the current essay will not engage with such ideas very profoundly. It is no coincidence, we denote, that Rosemary Jackson does mention and use psychoanalytical theories in her famous contribution to Fantasy criticism. One could easily perceive a similar creational aspect in the presentation of dreams as a technique of recombining elements, as Freud claims, but also more profoundly as a display of a collective layer of the unconscious which upholds in itself unimaginable and infinite manners of actualizing occasions, an ocean of raw potentiality and power. Drawing parallels between Magic and the unconscious seems inevitable when taking such perspectives into account, and we do believe the present essay can open new portals for such in future terms.

As an example of the aforementioned notion we could refer to the myriad of non-mimetic fictionalized productions that uses dreams as a narrative divination motif, as portals to magical or estranged worlds (in opposition to the rigid empirical one that the character must face during the waking life) or as a whole new universe/dimension in itself. It is not a purely coincidental motif present in many works of Fantasy (both as a genre or as a mode) that the dreamy aspect of our psyche and its relation to the unconscious can be seen as a reminder that Magic still lurks in hidden and forgotten substrata in spite of the cold and overtly logical awoken life. Dreams, through a magical and ancient procedure, subvert the empire of reason which was throned and crowned by the conscious aspect of our minds in a similar fashion as Magic in non-mimetic fictions is able to reimagine and transform the very fabric of reality by intertwining its elementary processes in an unexpected fashion. As Jackson puts it: “Literary fantasies, expressing unconscious drives, are particularly open to psychoanalytic readings, and frequently show in graphic forms a tension between the ‘laws of human society’ and the resistance of the unconscious mind to those laws.” (JACKSON, p.4, 1981)

It might be argued how the development of modern civilizations, more intensely after Enlightenment ontological foundations became ever more solid, further intensified a dominant social order that lacks imagination and whose disconnection from the otherworldly fantastic dimensions made of dreams and deep symbols turned our consensual reality in a cold and rigid structure where fantasies have no rightful place to inhabit or even exist. This has led to the very common argument against non-mimetic fictions and Fantasy genre as if they arise as a “lower” form of art crafting — somehow this is not utterly untrue (though, magically, in an unexpected manner), especially taking into account on how the unconscious and its dreamy content, as much as archaic and mythological symbols, do occupy a metaphorical abysmal topology in our imaginary distribution of the psyche. Such phenomenon displays, by inference, a clear diagnosis on the manner that the social dominant order stretches its hubristic tentacles even in the isolated Tower where secluded literary critics dwell — by also being a reifying symbol of the reductionist ontological foundations that attempted to disconnect itself from the oneiric and plural aspects of imagination, the art critic who deems Fantasy as a genre of minor importance embodies metaphorically the very empirical and tyrannical world created by modern prevailing sovereign values.

Attebery in *Fantasy: How it works* does corroborate with a critical defense of the Fantasy genre, and our attempt to comprehend Magic modally and as an open-ended element, in constant actualization, is an extension of his argument to further elucidate how ANY non-mimetic fiction is of extreme relevancy as an aspect of human culture that finds an ever increasing audience through countless distinct media than just the printed stories found in books.

Hence the need to establish a pedigree for modern fantasy: this is the stuff Homer sang and Shakespeare's troupe played; modern fantasy deserves respect as the true heir to medieval romance and surrealism and contemporary magical realism! All that is still true but it's less necessary: the battle has been won in all but a few snobbish magazines and classrooms where aging professors lecture from yellowing notes. Fantasy pervades modern culture, and not just print culture. Now it seems to me that a more urgent defense is needed to justify studying stories at all. (ATTEBERY, 2022, p.15)

Magic as a compositional modal element that subverts the consensual dominant mental constructs in our culture is able to broaden also the aforementioned defense of Fantasy towards any works of non-mimetic fiction released in, also, any sorts of media — Science Fiction, fairy tales and other literary forms as described by Rosemary Jackson would be expectedly included while understanding Magic modally, although what we are firmly claiming here is that the subversion provoked by Magic happens culturally by finding itself prevalent in diverse other media and contexts. The rigid critical analysis encountered in such “snobbish magazines and classrooms” performed by “aging professors” who “lecture from yellowing notes” while not yet having actualized literature to understand how fictionalized narratives are also constantly reimagining the very means of their expression fails to recognize an important element which is parallel to Magic itself: transformation. Role playing game tabletop narratives, movies, series, comic books, animes and mangas all carry, potentially, as much as aesthetical and cultural relevancy as the solely praised “true literary forms” while simultaneously reaching a large audience in the world.

Such diversity of embodiments for Fantasy (both as a genre and mode) needs urgent attention from literature scholars if they still hope to understand the empirical world of the reader — by subverting the cultural sovereignty and presenting a distinct universe, one can always infer by logical inevitability what lies on the other end of this literary magical portal. Fantasy is utterly revealing our own cultural trends and values, its actualizations and processual occasions. Denying so would be a fallacy that insists on misplacing concreteness on a retrograde understanding of art and culture and further separating literary criticism from its connection with raw and unscathed material born from people’s imagination.

As culture changes and Magic actualizes itself in new forms, representing the very process of actualization itself, we should also accompany such cultural magical journey as it is a delightful and conjointly revealing one — the reimagined worlds (or the very possibility of one) carefully woven in non-mimetic fictions explore the very boundaries of imagination that, by a mirroring process, expose its double, the “downside up” of the objective crude reality. This argument here is sufficient to demonstrate the wrongly assumed stance by the “secluded aging scholar” which positions non-mimetic fictionalized works as a pure form of “escapism” while not being able to uphold any significance for art criticism. As Attebery also arguments:

And, yes, fantasy too performs work in the world, though perhaps not in ways as obvious as Tompkins's core example *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which made it impossible to claim that slavery was anything but evil. Fantasy tends to work indirectly, just as it means obliquely. And its work is bound up in its playfulness: to read fantasy attentively and seriously is to value its capacity for fun and games. It often works—that is, does its work—by undercutting the solemnity with which we approach love, or authority, or the gods. (ATTEBERY, 2022, p.14)

To further diminish Fantasy both as a genre or a mode is not only intellectually dishonest as we have claimed but also an underlying revelation on the very reaffirmation mechanism that reifies the dominant mental constructs which, since humanity's self-infatuation had become a constant element in civilized societies, has ever more solidified our relationship to imagination while concomitantly attempted to disconnect the conscious substratum of our psyche from the transformational aspects imbued in Magic.

Reification, or the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, is a key concept in Whitehead's process philosophy and should be better understood if Magic's subversive function operations ought to be accurately described and justified. Ontologically speaking, in process philosophy, there are no entities whose existences are independent of other entities or processes — any occasion is made of relations, and how we creatively and chronotopically connect such processes allows their becoming and their concrescence. If no entity has intrinsic existence and depends, on some degree, to other entities then we could argue that Whitehead's ontology basis is becoming instead of being, which is why we don't label occasions as entities but as processes.

Hence, if the fabric of reality is constituted of relations and interconnections metaphorically embodied as the very threads we creatively weave through concentrated nodes of other processes, than the so often view of the world as an external reality in itself made of either radical immanent or transcendent rules begins to crumble and its ontologically reified foundations once thought to be concrete turn out to be lightheartedly fluid and open ended. Our philosophical stance is this — what is more tyrannical than the attempt with which we, humans, crystalize and reify our mental constructs as a violent attempt of self-infatuation and the maintenance of the cultural dominant order? Magic's subversive capacity represents exactly the

incongruence and lack of concreteness of the reified mental fabrications that we once thought to be absolutely real — by being the very element with which we recreate reality and weave reality's fabric, by being the very process of intertwining different processes and, therefore, actualizing their potential, Magic ultimately destroys the ontological foundations of the so called empirical world showing that it could be subverted and even more likely should be transformed.

The isolated and secluded literary critic who hides themselves in their tower, disconnected from the fruition and fluidity of processes continuous actualizations, could be symbolically represented by common villain archetype found in many Fantasy worlds — the Lich. Such creature, subsumed by its hubris, attempts the ultimate reification process of itself by transferring its soul to an external object while, simultaneously, acquiring a false sense of immortality. A Lich is an impeccable metaphor for the aforementioned concept of reification, and when such metaphor is transposed back through the magical portal of fantasy worlds into our empirical and primary one, it would stand perfectly as a representational model of the dictatorial and totalitarian mechanism that sustain the cultural dominant order. It is no coincidence, when we take into account Magic and Fantasy connections with the unconscious and with dreams as well as how its compositions usually are drawn from myths, that the embodiment of villainy in many fantastical narratives are projected in some sort of hubristic creature who has attempted to achieve ultimate and absolute control over reality — either by acquiring a tyrannical power or by becoming immortal.

This could also display a theoretical speculation on the reason why Fantasy (as a mode or genre) has found such fertile ground and a myriad of profuse manifestations in distinct media — the unconscious always finds its way to subvert the sovereign attempt that, microcosmically and macrocosmically, our reified mental constructs prolong themselves even if our society is unable to dream. The arousing of our imagination by the very “what if?” inquiry playfully enables Magic and its potentially infinite manifestations to dethrone the oppressive empirical world and the concreteness we gifted it while assuming its ontologically ultimate existence in the first place. This is the very reason we insist on the metaphorical image of reality's constitution as the very act of weaving different threads which permits for such fabric to acquire some form of relative existence, even though not in an absolute manner — the very fabric depends on the threads and its interconnections while such weaving also depends on previous chronotopically woven processes. Reality depends on how

we interconnect its processes while the latter also depends on preceding configurations of the first.

Scholars have often attempted to provide deterministic and ultimate definitions of countless and diverse genres only to, eventually, fail. Human culture, resembling the very process symbolized by Magic and in a constant state of change and actualization, is often eager to subvert the rigid constraints of not only our crude reality but of any attempt of reifying any ontological foundational layer for the world. Surely Magic has obvious relations with change and transformation, as we hope to have exhibited, an element which is especially relevant for the current modal definition of this essential element of Fantasy. As argued by Attebery's following excerpt, the genre (and here we could extend it to Fantasy as a mode) holds as a key element the transformation of the world — by realizing how Magic is the very enabler of change as it IS the process of weaving reality's fabric into new actualized forms of concrescence, our definition of such important aspect as the very open-emptiness of unlimited potential and the manner of achieving such actualizations endow the magical element present in Fantasy with subversion as one of its primary characteristics.

Fantasy can be structurally true. It represents the shape of the world, and especially the shape of change the plot will almost inevitably hinge upon a prophetic utterance or catchphrase leading to a change of regime and scenes of destruction and recreation. This may seem like an obvious point: of course there is change; every story involves change. Yet the kinds of change represented in fantasy differ from the altered circumstances in realistic fiction, which more often involve the characters' external circumstances or inner lives rather than the sort of shake-up that alters the way the world works (ATTEBERY, 2022, p.20-21)

Not only Magic is an internal element of non-mimetic fictions which permits transformation and change as a well as allows reality to be profoundly transformed, it is also Magic that enables a subversive metamorphosis of our empirical and reified world into one where unbound possibilities overflow. Subversion as one of Magic's primary characteristics works not only intratextually (within the boundaries of a certain Fantasy text) but also intertextually towards other texts and towards the empirical world itself. Its deep transmutations are not, thus, mere "escapist"

tendencies of isolating oneself from the crude reified reality but the very unconscious desire of reconnecting with a sea of inextricably open-empty potentialities. The very hybrid nature of Fantasy, and how we argued for a modal definition of Magic, is also a constant reminder that even the genre itself and its most crucial element defy ultimate concreteness.

If you have read attentively up until this section of this essay you might have been inquiring constantly what is, then, our definition of Magic? Surely we have presented convincing arguments in order to understand it modally and in an unfinished manner (or open-ended) while concomitantly demonstrating the relevancy of the magical element for non-mimetic fiction by estranging the reader from the empirical world, thus subverting and refabricating it. As previously argued Magic as a modal element could be contained in genres akin to Fantasy which are encompassed by Jackson's definition of it as a mode. Magic is open-emptiness, the very embodiment of possibility, the playful capacity of transforming reality and the means to do so while also carrying subversion as an essential aspect that impedes actualized concrescent mental constructs from acquiring an absolute and reified existence. It usually is displayed as that which provokes estrangement in relation to the dominant cultural order throughout diverse genres which are embraced by Fantasy as a mode. In a shorter and defining terms, which might be useful for future scholars, Magic is a subversive and unbound power to reimagine the world and the reified image of the latter.

[...] points towards fantasy's hostility to static, discrete units, to its juxtaposition of incompatible elements and its resistance to fixity. Spatial, temporal, and philosophical ordering systems all dissolve; unified notions of character are broken; language and syntax become incoherent. Through its 'misrule', it permits 'ultimate questions' about social order, or metaphysical riddles as to life's purpose. Unable to give affirmation to a closed, unified, or omniscient vision, the menippea violates social propriety. (JACKSON, 1981, p.9)

Our intent of providing such understanding of Magic modally and in an open-ended fashion corroborates with a theoretical need to address also, how genres that seem at first glance so disparate, are actually more similar than many previous scholars have affirmed. Such epistemological stance upheld in this current essay has

its fundamental basis drawn from many hybrid works of Fantasy and Science Fiction where the boundaries of both genres seem to dissolve — another applicable example of Magic's subversive capabilities. We should mention, as a fundamental reference for our previous definition, the role playing game tabletop universe known as World of Darkness, especially its internal branch called Mage: The Ascension, which portrays metaphorically how the very boundaries of reality are disputed by different cosmogonies and how a Mage is one who awakens to perceive the unlimited capability of recreating reality by the imperatives of their own will and comprehension of the cosmos — creatively reconnecting different patterns and processes is the very means one performs Magic in such non-mimetic fiction. This tabletop franchise also engages with the dominant form of cultural order called Technocracy, and how their means of performing Magic takes place through a scientific cosmogonic view — this is why we intended to provide a modal definition of Magic and extending its reach towards works that are not considered to possess a magical aspect.

By understanding that science can also be a form of Magic our theoretical framework expects to even subvert the deceptive genre boundaries between Fantasy and other forms of non-mimetic fictionalized worlds. After all, the extension of the speculative proposition inquired by Fantasy, "what if?" could also be postulated through some unexplainable phenomena even to our current cognitive understanding of reality — even if such, for some arbitrary reason, might seem cognitively possible. What if we could transfer sub-atomic information through a quantum entanglement technological device and copy ourselves? What if we could dive in the depths of the internet with our own minds by connecting and wiring our brains to some cybernetic gadget? What if humanity is about to face extinction and must seek new worlds in a galaxy filled with terrifying aliens and other terrifying forms of humans? What if the actual monster is the hubristic scientist's attempt to uphold absolute control of reality?

Ultimately, in any of its manifestations and wide array of media, intratextually or intertextually, Magic will always demonstrate that there is no ontologically absolute level of reality by embodying the raw possibility of transformation and the techniques required for intertwining reality's fabric in actualized and novel manners. Magic defined as the process of weaving reality while also constituting its boundaries, in an unending continuous reconfiguration of previous concrescences where the very

fabric changes and is transformed by a playful act of imagination, must also posit itself as an act of Subversion which confronts the hubristic endeavor to force an open-empty universe to fit in the restraints of our mental constructs. Magic thus, not only imagines new threads and paths but it is also able to disrupt and dissolve over-solidified and reified ones, recreating whole universes through oneiric fantasies overflowed in mana and potential.

REFERENCES

ALDISS, Brian Wilson, WINGROVE, David. **Trillion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction**. London: Gollancz, 1988.

ATTEBERY, Brian. **Fantasy: How it Works**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022.

BRUCATO, Satyros Phil, CAMPBELL, Brian, SNEAD, John, UDELL, Rachelle Sabrina. **Mage the Ascension: 20th anniversary edition**. Pennsylvania: Onyx Path Publishing, 2015.

GÖDEL, Kurt. **Collected Works I. Publications**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

MENDLESOHN, Farah. **Rhetorics of Fantasy**. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2008

JACKSON, Rosemary. **Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion**. London; New York: Routledge, 2009.

SELLING, Kim. **Why are Critics Afraid of Dragons? Understanding Genre Fantasy**. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2008.

SUVIN, Darko. **Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre**. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979.

TODOROV, Tzvetan. **The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre**. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975.

WHITEHEAD, Alfred North, RUSSEL, Bertrand. **Principia Mathematica**. London: Merchant Books, 2009.

WHITEHEAD, Alfred North. **Process and Reality**. [S.I.]: Free Press, 1979