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**MAGIC AND SUBVERSION:
WEAVING REALITY'S FABRIC¹**

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Abstract: *Magic* is a fundamental element present in *Fantasy* works and an under-analyzed aspect of such genre and mode. We will attempt to provide an open-ended definition of *Magic* as a modal aspect of *Fantasy*, whose function lies in the very process that subverts and transforms reality intratextually and/or intertextually. Concomitantly we will argue that such definition is better fit within a processual and organic metaphysical framework, especially due to *Magic's* power to erase ontologically absolute layers of the world. Such subversive capacity, as *Magic* reimagines reality and weaves processes in new actualized concrescences, is a constant reminder of the inexorable limits of any given

1 Título em língua portuguesa: “Magia e subversão: tecendo a trama da realidade”.

system and its ultimate lack of concreteness — such latter terms are often understood as a reifying attempt forced by the collectively established mental constructs and the dominant cultural order. Due to its raw and core unbound potentiality and by understanding *Magic* modally, we can extend its presence to most if not all non-mimetic fictionalized productions through its defining capacity of enabling and performing subversion.

Keywords: Magic. Fantasy. Process philosophy. Subversion. Reality. Reification.

Resumo: A *Magia* é um elemento fundamental de trabalhos de *Fantasia* e também um aspecto pouco analisado desse gênero e modo. Nós tentaremos prover uma definição aberta para a *Magia* enquanto aspecto modal da *Fantasia*, cuja função reside precisamente no processo que subverte e transforma a realidade tanto intratextualmente quanto intertextualmente. Concomitantemente argumentaremos que tal definição é mais cabível dentro de uma conjuntura metafísica processual e orgânica, especificamente devido ao poder da *Magia* em apagar camadas ontologicamente absolutas do mundo. Tal capacidade subversiva, conforme a *Magia* reinventa o mundo e entrelaça seus processos em novas concreções atualizadas, é um constante lembrete dos limites inexoráveis de qualquer sistema e sua ausência derradeira de concretude — esses últimos termos são frequentemente entendidos como uma tentativa reificante que é imposta pelos construtos mentais coletivamente estabelecidos e pela ordem cultural dominante. Devido à sua potência ilimitada e fulcral além de entendermos a *Magia* modalmente, podemos estender sua presença para a maior parte das produções ficcionais não-miméticas por meio de sua capacidade determinante de possibilitar e realizar a subversão.

Palavras-chave: Magia. Fantasia. Filosofia processual. Subversão. Realidade. Reificação.

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 processual² metaphysics³ which

2 We shall demonstrate some and important premises of process philosophy during the development of our argument, though we do not see fit to delve too profoundly in such elucubrations that should be more fruitful in longer forms of writing.

3 We take a theoretical stance here that any form of speculation and readings regarding observed behavior are, to a certain extent, metaphysical. This takes into account the very often principle described by Processual philosophy on how, any system endowed with producing any form of "truth" and based on axioms, always carries certain limitations. For those curious regarding this topic we recommend the engagement with Kurt Godel *incompleteness theorems* or with Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica*.

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 ley lines 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 mana⁴, 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

4 A common element in many *Fantasy* secondary worlds — a quintessential substance one manipulates in order to effectively produce magical effects.

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 concrescence⁵ of diverse occasions

5 This term should be understood, in simple terms, on how processes are conjectured through the many interrelated elements that conditioned its becoming.

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, grifos do autor)

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, 1981, p. 4).

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 forms⁶ 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

6 “Out of this mode develops romance literature or ‘the marvellous’ (including fairy tales and science fiction), ‘fantastic’ literature (including stories by Poe, Isak Dinesen, Maupassant, Gautier, Kafka, H.P. Lovecraft) and related tales of abnormal psychic states, delusion, hallucination, etc” (JACKSON, 1981, p. 4).

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-infatuation⁷ 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

7 I shall not elaborate on this argument sufficiently, but we hope that by having inferred that *Magic* has a symbolical and archetypal connection with the unconscious and how the process of Civilization tends to overvalue narcissistic and egoistic tendencies, thus overvaluing the conscious side of the psyche, that others might follow this thread and use the presented framework in this essay fruitfully to develop such idea with greater care.

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*⁸ 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

8 This, for obvious reasons follows Clarke's Third Law: any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

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.

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