

**MESSIAHS AND MARTYRS: RELIGION IN SELECTED NOVELS OF FRANK  
HERBERT'S *DUNE CHRONICLES***

by

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## **Abstract**

The focus of this dissertation is Frank Herbert's use of messiahs and martyrs in selected novels of the *Dune Chronicles*. I make connections with Herbert's studies, inspirations and background to his treatment of religion, establishing the translation of these ideas in the texts. To identify and study every aspect of religion in the series is impossible; however, I will include other features that I deem important to my understanding of the religious theme in these texts. I intend to scrutinize these novels to find evidence of Herbert's claim that he studied religion at great length. I will also observe Herbert's attitude to and engagement with religion in the *Dune Chronicles*.

## **Key Terms**

Frank Herbert, *Dune*, *Dune Messiah*, *Children of Dune*, *God Emperor of Dune*, Messiahs, Martyrs, Religion, Science Fiction

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I declare that “Messiahs and Martyrs: Religion in Selected Novels of Frank Herbert’s *Dune Chronicles*” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE

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## Introduction

Of course I deal with religion in my books. I've studied them at great length. I've studied them both as a historical phenomenon and in their own lights. I see the thrust and necessity in some levels of consciousness for a prop to lean on. I can also make very interesting comparisons between the absolute monarchs of the early days and the forms that early religions took, and how that has carried over into present religions. The trail is there and you don't have to be an expert woodsman to follow the track of that wolf.

(Herbert quoted in O'Reilly, 1987: 243-244)

This quotation suggests that religion was a major preoccupation for Frank Herbert and this interest was translated into his novels. For instance, the *Dune Chronicles* consist of six novels: *Dune* (1965), *Dune Messiah* (1969), *Children of Dune* (1976), *God Emperor of Dune* (1981), *Heretics of Dune* (1984) and *Chapterhouse: Dune* (1985). Four of these titles contain words which connote religious themes: "Messiah", "God", "Heretics" and "Chapterhouse"; this implies that religion is a major theme in the series and deserves further deliberation.

I intend to scrutinize these novels to find evidence of Herbert's claim that he "studied them [religions] at great length", as "a historical phenomenon" and "in their own lights". To consider religion a "prop to lean on", even if Herbert deems it a "necessity", seems derisive to those who subscribe to a particular religion; therefore I will more closely examine Herbert's attitude to and engagement with religion in the *Dune Chronicles*. Herbert also incorporates absolute monarchs, in the form of deities, into the series. The focus of this assessment falls upon Herbert's use of messiahs and martyrs. The term "Messiah" can be understood in a variety of contexts – in terms of Judaism: "a king who will be sent by God to save the Jewish people"; from a Christian perspective: "Jesus Christ who was sent by God into the world to save people from evil and sin"; in a general sense: "a leader who people believe will solve the problems of a country or the world" (*The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 2012: s.v. Messiah). A "martyr" is defined as "a person who suffers very much or is killed because of their religious or political beliefs" (*The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 2012: s.v. Martyr). I make connections with Herbert's studies, inspirations and background to his treatment of religion, establishing the translation of these ideas in the texts. To identify and study every aspect of religion in the series is impossible; as noted, I will concentrate upon the messiah and martyr themes but will include other features that I deem important to my understanding of the texts. I will only investigate the first four novels in the *Dune Chronicles* due to length constraints.

Since science fiction (hereafter SF) is constantly evolving, criticism of it is also subject to similar changes. Westfahl, Evans, Hassler and Hollinger (1999: 161) were the first to undertake a historical survey of SF criticism because they recognised that the few sources available on the subject tended to be “incomplete, inchoate, cursory, or polemical”. My survey begins with Evans’s (1999) “The Origins of Science Fiction Criticism: From Kepler to Wells”. Evans (1999: 163) acknowledges that for some contemporary scholars of science fiction, there is no pre-twentieth century SF criticism. Since there is neither a universally accepted definition of SF, nor consensus about the progenitor of the genre, there is an impact upon criticism as well. If one cannot delineate the field, then it becomes impossible to identify the earliest criticism associated with the subject. Critics have no alternative but to provide their own suggestions and analysis. In the case of Evans (1999: 164), he chooses to begin his inquiry with SF critic and writer Johannes Kepler, from the Renaissance/post-Renaissance period in Europe. He terminates his study with the “father of modern sf”, H.G. Wells (Evans, 1999: 178). Donald M. Hassler (1999) continues the inquiry by focusing on the work of J.O. Bailey, Marjorie Hope Nicolson, Thomas D. Clareson, Philip Babcock Gove and a few other critics in “The Academic Pioneers of Science Fiction Criticism, 1940-1980”.

In contrast to Evans, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. (2005: 44) asserts that SF criticism emerged when he considers SF itself did, in the early nineteenth century. His approach is to divide SF criticism into three streams: popular, academic and literary – though he acknowledges that they are not always distinguishable (Csicsery-Ronay, Jr., 2005: 43). Gary Westfahl (1999: 187) explores the popular stream and all it encompasses in “The Popular Tradition of Science Fiction Criticism, 1926-1980”:

It has been, by any measure, one of history’s most extensive discussions about one particular branch of literature. The conversation was started in the 1920s by the editors and writers of American pulp magazines, who offered their thoughts in editorials, blurbs, articles, reviews, and ancillary materials; next, readers joined in with letters, followed by editorial replies and additional responses from other readers. The dialogue then moved outside the magazines into private correspondence, personal interactions at meetings and conventions, newsletters and amateur magazines called fanzines, and critical studies and bibliographies published by small presses. At first a conversation primarily involving Americans, it soon spread to England and Europe and, eventually, to countries all over the world. And before the last few decades, it has been a discussion with relatively little participation or input from those people formally trained and officially qualified to discuss literature. For want of a better term, call it the popular tradition of science fiction criticism.

This branch of literature continues to elicit attention on this scale. In the twenty-first century, the conversation that begun in the 1920s remains the same – it is only the mode in

which fans communicate that has changed. No doubt, early SF writers and fans would eagerly approve of this new method of communication. It is most fitting that technology enables and encourages fans to connect to one another: blogs, online forums, social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook as well as web sites dedicated to SF novels, television shows and movies, unite fans and serve as platforms for discussion and criticism. Writers themselves have chosen to communicate directly with their fans through their websites, Facebook and Twitter Pages; this adds to the discourse, since they discuss their work on occasion. For instance, Kevin J. Anderson regularly updates his fans on his Twitter page about *Dune* and his other projects. On the opposite end of the spectrum, a fan of Frank Herbert's named Ronald J. Craig (who uses the alias "Sandchigger") has begun a website, "Hairy Ticks of Dune blog" dedicated to criticising and exposing the inconsistencies of the new *Dune* novels by Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson.

Veronica Hollinger (1999) outlines academic and literary streams in "Contemporary Trends in Science Fiction Criticism, 1980-1999". She mentions *Science Fiction Studies* (SFS) and *Extrapolation* as examples of two journals that have acquired institutional "respectability" (Hollinger, 1999: 232). She provides a brief overview of recent histories, genre and media studies and research guides. She then discusses non-fiction work by SF writers and feminist and postmodern studies of SF. The last discussion I have come across that directly addresses SF criticism was a "roundtable" by some twenty critics (Aldiss et al., 2006) in *Science Fiction Studies*. Each critic contributed a paragraph on the subject, noting what they considered strengths and shortcomings in the field. Currently, the academic study of SF has aligned itself with the study of other literature – critics prefer established literary theoretical approaches (strains of Marxism, feminism, and so forth) and apply them to SF texts. Each literary theoretical approach is not rigid because there are many varieties within each stream (for example various Freudian, Lacanian and Jungian psychoanalytic approaches).

Deciding which literary theory to apply to my dissertation was a difficult process. From an academic perspective, I believed that the interdisciplinary approach of Theology and Literature would be appropriate; though upon further investigation it turned out not to be the case. David Jasper (1989: 1) believes that in any interaction between literature and theology, "theology is of ultimate and irreducible importance". When one is examining a sacred text this perspective is understandable; yet, I believe the study of religion in a science fiction



series does not require this extreme viewpoint. The word “interdisciplinary” suggests cooperation and a balanced approach to a study but in practice this would be unlikely to occur. The discipline in which one is trained might dominate as a result of one’s training and background. After eliminating other approaches which encompassed extremely different areas of study or were severely restrictive, I realised that my theoretical framework should be based upon Reader-Response theory. This approach appealed to me since I had read *Dune* as both a child and an adult. It is obvious that my level of knowledge of the novels evolved drastically and this difference profoundly impacted upon my understanding of the text. I wondered to what extent research and an emphasis upon a single theme would alter my interpretation of the series. In other words, I wanted to consider my own role as a reader.

Reader-Response criticism focuses on readers’ responses to literary texts (Tyson, 2006: 169). As each reader is unique, there is no “original” or “universal” meaning: rather, meaning is based upon one’s own interpretation. Reader-Response theorists believe that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature and that readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text (*ibid*: 170). Wolfgang Iser, a German critic, developed the phenomenological analysis of the reading process that was initially proposed by Roman Ingarden (Abrams, 2009: 299). Whereas Ingarden provided a description of reading in general, Iser applied Ingarden’s theory to the analysis of individual works (*ibid*). Iser views the literary text as a product of the writer’s intentional acts, which controls the reader’s response to a certain degree, but there will always be a number of “gaps” or “indeterminate elements” (*ibid*). In his own words:

These gaps have a different effect on the process of anticipation and retrospection, and thus on the ‘gestalt’ of the virtual dimension, for they may be filled in different ways. For this reason, one text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities; as he reads, he will make his own decision as to how the gap is to be filled.

(Iser, 1974: 280)

For reasons elaborated upon below, I agree with Iser’s theories and find that Herbert does not exhaustively detail religious aspects in his texts but provides enough clues for a reader to make connections. No text is created in a vacuum. While I may glean as much information from the texts as possible, consulting interviews, biographies, and other sources, I will not be able to exhaust all aspects of religion in the series. Curiously, I do not enjoy Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson’s efforts in the *Dune* series because there is an almost

stubborn refusal to leave any “gaps”. They continually and ruthlessly revisit Frank Herbert’s storylines and characters. Others also condemn these works for similar reasons. For instance, when reviewing the duo’s latest book (at that stage) *The Winds of Dune* (2009) in his blog, Adam Whitehead (2009) entitled his piece “The Winds of Dune...or should that be hot air?” The disgust in his article is evident; he makes a sarcastic remark that he expects “a full trilogy on the life-cycle of a Caladanian mollusc before we are done” and concludes with the damning reflection that he could no longer re-read *Dune* because “[t]he sound of Frank Herbert spinning in his grave made it impossible to concentrate on the text”. The “gaps” in a text are necessary to create the space for imagination to supply the details. Nevertheless, I do not believe that a single literary theory would fulfil every criterion of my investigation; for this reason I intend to apply other literary theories where applicable. Since literary theories influence each other, they may interpenetrate at times.

Given the massive interest and popularity of the series, one might assume that there would be an abundance of *literary* criticism dedicated to Herbert’s usage of religion, but this is not the case. A quick search for any of Herbert’s novels or short stories yields many results; however, upon closer inspection there are few articles that are critical and entirely focussed upon any of the novels. Considering the popularity of the series, I find this quite astonishing. William A. Senior (2007: 317) also noticed this shortcoming and declared “that there’s not much [literary criticism] on Herbert to begin with”. Many critics discuss the ecological theme of *Dune*; Brian Herbert believes that this is because it is easier to understand, and that the religious issues are often misunderstood (Herbert, 2003: 174).

It is usual to begin dissertations on science fiction novels by first providing a definition of “science fiction”. As mentioned earlier, there is no universally accepted definition. Any attempt on my part to furnish one would be hubris. Wikipedia (2012: s.v. Definitions of Science Fiction) contributors compiled a list of thirty definitions of SF, whilst a Turkish Fan, Neyir Cenk Gökçe (1996), assembled a list of fifty-two definitions. The numerous attempts to offer one have failed because they are either too generalised or because a comprehensive definition is too limiting for a genre that prides itself on being expansive.

Darko Suvin (1988: 37) defines SF as “a literary genre or verbal construct whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment”. Adam Roberts effectively dissects Suvin’s rigid definition:

“Cognition”, with its rational, logical implications, refers to that aspect of SF that prompts us to try and understand, to comprehend, the alien landscape of a given SF book, film or story. “Estrangement” is a term from Brecht, more usually rendered in English-language criticism as “alienation”; in this context it refers to that element of SF that we recognise as different, that “estranges” us from the familiar and everyday. If the SF text were entirely concerned with “estrangement”, then we would not be able to understand it; if it were entirely to do with “cognition”, then it would be scientific or documentary rather than science fiction.

(Roberts, 2006a: 8)

The online version of *The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (2012: s.v. Science Fiction) defines SF as “a type of book, film/movie, etc. that is based on imagined scientific discoveries of the future, and often deals with space travel and life on other planets”. This definition is flawed since it does not take into account the hybrid nature of SF; for instance, “alternative history” SF novels are thus excluded. The current academic trend is to step away from this delicate issue. It is revealing that David Seed, a notable SF critic, refuses to provide a definition, recently proclaiming: “That way madness lies” (2011: 1). *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (2003: 1) completely side-steps the definition issue by basing the structure of the companion upon a number of assumptions: “...it assumes that you, the reader, know what sf is, and that everyone who has contributed to this book shares the same criteria”. Farah Mendlesohn, the editor of the *Companion*, acknowledges that this is a highly contentious decision. It is a necessary sacrifice as a great deal of time has been spent on the definition and origins of SF; this, in turn, has led to the neglect of other aspects of SF that also deserve deliberation. *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* emphasises that SF cannot be reduced to a single idea – a principal aim being to “bring into dialogue some of the many perspectives on the genre, without striving to resolve this multiplicity into a single image of sf or a single story of its history and meaning” (Bould, Butler, Roberts & Vint, 2009: xx).

In a sea of variable definitions, it is propitious that we have access to Frank Herbert’s own thoughts on the definition of SF:

Science Fiction represents the modern heresy and the cutting edge of speculative imagination as it grapples with Mysterious Time—linear or non-linear time.  
Our motto is Nothing Secret, Nothing Sacred.

(Herbert quoted in Gökçe: 1996)

Once again, Herbert employs words with a religious connotation to convey his ideas. It is safe to assume that the “modern heresy” Herbert refers to is not religious in nature, but “a belief or opinion that disagrees strongly with what most people believe” (*The Oxford*

*Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 2012: s.v. Heresy). For Herbert, SF challenges the status quo and provides an author with the means to criticise widely held opinions and beliefs. By arming himself and fellow SF writers with the motto “Nothing Secret, Nothing Sacred” space is created for them to imaginatively explore any idea or opinion, in any manner they see fit, without reservation.

Certain definitions of SF tend to centre on exclusion; delineation of terms is important but may end up harming one's understanding of the genre. For instance, one may question whether it is appropriate to incorporate religious themes into SF novels. Moreover, “psi” phenomena are also present in the *Dune Chronicles*, since some of the characters, such as Paul and Leto II, are prophets. In the *Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology*, the term “psi” is used in parapsychology to indicate psychic or paranormal phenomena such as extrasensory perception (ESP) or psychokinesis (PK) (Melton, 2001: 1246). Sceptics regard the entire field of parapsychology as pseudoscientific (Stableford, 2006: 357). Would the “science” in science fiction balk at the idea of incorporating pseudoscientific aspects into a text? This may occur, as Roger Luckhurst (2009: 403) explains:

One of the enduring ways of defining sf and legitimating its intellectual weight is to argue that it is part of the scientific enlightenment. Sf is a literature of modernity in that it deploys the scientific method. It is secular, rationalist, and sceptical; its futures are rigorously extrapolated from known empirical data; it wages war on superstition, magical thinking, and any argument made from tradition or unexamined authority.

This line of thought would exclude the *Dune Chronicles* from being classified as SF novels; though I have yet to come across anyone who has challenged Frank Herbert on this issue. *Dune* clearly does not conform to Darko Suvin's standards:

The literary genres in which physics is in some magical or religious way determined by ethics, instead of being neutral toward the hero or the total human population of the presented world, deny the autonomy of physics and can properly be called *metaphysical*. ... SF is thus a *metaempirical* and *non-naturalistic*, that is, an *estranged*, literary genre which is not at the same time *metaphysical*.

(Suvin, 1979: 19-20, original emphasis)

It is possible that this may account for the reticence of critics to examine the texts too closely. Perhaps they frown upon the popularity of the texts, despite vaunted claims of the acceptance of SF studies that invariably preface textbooks on the subject. In the round table discussion about the current state of SF criticism, Paul K. Alkon (2006: 389-390) paints a grim picture of what life is like for a PhD student specialising in SF and attempting to obtain

a tenure track position: “Young scholars are well advised to disguise themselves as cultural studies, feminist, or minority lit gurus, a move that may lead to survival in the Darwinian halls of academe but also deflect focus from sf”. Despite this negative outlook, literary criticism in SF has evolved over the decades and the rigorous model that once was applied is now associated with so-called “hard sf” (2009: 494). Luckhurst (2009: 404) does not wish to “dethrone science”, or dismiss enlightened thought, but values a more inclusive approach to SF:

The genre need not be subsumed under the strict protocols of scientific truth, or texts be discarded if they generate fantasmatic versions of science (which of course they *always* do, even in the very hardest sf). Sf is an element in a heterogeneous assemblage, a hybrid form that loops together the material of science with mass cultural narrative, making it a fascinating social locus of conflict, cross-fertilization and negotiation.

(Luckhurst, 2009: 407-408, original emphasis)

Religion and belief in the paranormal is very much a part of the mass cultural narrative. Frank Herbert blends or combines religion and psi phenomena but seems to add a scientific rationale to these aspects; I will examine these instances in the forthcoming chapters. The *Dune* universe or *Duniverse* is a term that is pervasive amongst fans and critics – K.R. Grazier (2008: vii) uses the term in his anthology. The many religions of the *Duniverse* are adaptations and amalgamations of real religions. This is not an unusual or original concept: syncretism is “the mixing of different religions, philosophies or ideas” (*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 2012: s.v. Syncretism). While this is an interesting area of study, I will avoid using the term since it resists definition; moreover, it is highly contentious and considered to be perjorative. It often implies “inauthenticity” or “contamination” of pure traditions (Stewart & Shaw, 1994: 1). Although it is uncertain to what extent Herbert pursued an in-depth study of the subject, his apparent syncretism does indicate that he studied various religious concepts.

While readers may, at least, possess a cursory knowledge of a particular belief system, it is worth exploring a definition of religion. According to the online version of the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (2012: s.v. Religion), religion is defined as “one of the systems of faith that are based on the belief in the existence of a particular god or gods”. This generalised definition does not apply to the *Dune Chronicles*. Brian Stableford’s (2006: 433) definition in *Science Fact and Science Fiction: An Encyclopedia* is more pertinent to Herbert’s depiction of religion in the series:

A system of metaphysical beliefs associated with reverential rites. Most religions involve belief in and worship of one or more gods, although Buddhism reveres human teachers whose accounts of universal metaphysics do not include a personalised creator.

The relationship between SF and religion is important and needs to be addressed. I will utilise Stephen R.L. Clark's (2005: 98) approach to the relationship, in order to analyse religion in the series. He believes that in the association of SF and religion, there are "four roughly distinguishable aspects: how religion, and especially 'organized religion' is depicted; how religious myths and legends are replicated or explained; what religious themes or doctrines are actually endorsed in fiction; and what religions have taken their start from science fiction". To discuss which religions have their roots in science fiction is unnecessary for my study; I therefore omit this last aspect while considering the others where appropriate.

Frank Herbert is not alone in incorporating religious themes into SF novels. The history and development of SF itself seem to be inextricably linked to faith and ritual. According to Farah Mendlesohn (2003: 264), SF's interest in religion can be traced to its precursors – scientific romance and SF as it developed in pulp magazines. Even though scientific romance did not support a religious interpretation of the world, it "revelled in the immaterial and imparted to genre sf a desire for the transcendent" (*ibid*). SF in pulp magazines, however, leaned towards "a much more material and ritualistic understanding of religion and became the dominant mode of the sf encounter with religion" (*ibid*).

The intellectual atmosphere in which Herbert wrote *Dune* possibly provides clues to his attitude towards religion. Mendlesohn surmises that by the 1960s, when Herbert was writing *Dune*, secularism provided "an apparently hegemonic intellectual tradition in the USA" (*ibid*). Mendlesohn (2003: 264-265) goes on to state:

Consequent upon this, and stemming from the imperialist adventure-story model which much early genre fiction appropriated, the emerging sf world assumed it was the voice of a secularist future and treated religion with at best polite contempt: religion was essentially of the 'Other', the backward and the primitive, and its role in sf was either to be undermined or to indicate the level of civilization which any given race had achieved.

It is significant that even though *Dune* is set in the future, there is still a medieval ambience to the "Great Houses" with their feuding and scheming. The aristocrats (Atreides, Harkonnen and Corrinos) of this universe do not appear to be superstitious or religious, but instead agnostic, whilst the peasants (the Fremen) are fanatically religious. In Chapter One, I apply Marxist theory as it relates to religion in *Dune*, given that the *Duniverse* is class-based.

Mendlesohn (2003: 265) describes three plots which dominated this phase of SF's development: the incredible invention, the future war and the fantastic journey. She claims that the last plot offered the largest and greatest number of possibilities for exploring religion and faith; however, Herbert used the threat of a future war – a *Jihad* – throughout his series. Mendlesohn (2003: 270) notes that many SF writers take materialistic approaches to religion: religion is functionalist and provides a discourse of power. Herbert likewise adopts a materialistic approach to religion in the series, although there are writers who focus upon faith rather than ritual (Mendlesohn, 2003: 271).

In the article “Religious Imagination and Imagined Religion”, Adam J. Frisch and Joseph Martos (1985: 11-26) discuss three basic features of religious imagination and examine their development in selected works of science fiction. The said features are *fundamentalizing*, *ultimatizing*, and *moralizing*. Frisch and Martos (1985: 11-12) define these terms as follows: *fundamentalizing* as the “inclination toward reducing reality to its most essential features”; *ultimatizing* as “an inclination to look for and pronounce on the bottom-line meaning and value of life” and *moralizing* as “the way religious imagination seeks to describe the ethically good life”. All three features are present in the religions of the *Dune Chronicles* to varying degrees and will be referred to in the conclusion.

Frisch and Martos believe that these aspects are expressed in the major religions of the world: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They note further that these basic features of religious consciousness can also be found “when religion becomes trivialized into what we might term *religiosity*” (*ibid*). One disadvantage of religiosity is that insights into the fundamental nature of the cosmos become naive oversimplifications of reality, gods become idols, and teachings become dogmas (*ibid*). Frisch and Martos argue that what science fiction writers dismiss as unworthy of imitation or belief is not usually religion but its parody, religiosity, and that they may occasionally even reject religiosity in the name of genuinely religious fundamentalizing, ultimatizing and moralizing (*ibid*). This dissertation will explore whether Herbert's work reflects a criticism of religiosity or subscribes to upholding the features of religious imagination.

Chapter One, “Genesis: The Religion of *Dune*”, traces Herbert's inspiration for the religious elements of the *Dune Chronicles*. Appendix II, “The Religion of *Dune*”, at the end of *Dune*, provides the background and framework for the religions of the *Duniverse*. This is

an essential starting point in the study of religion in the series. My research methods will be described and a review of criticism based upon the *Dune Chronicles* will also be undertaken.

Chapter Two, “Paul: The Messiah”, explores the portrayal of the messiah in the first two novels of the *Dune Chronicles*: *Dune* and *Dune Messiah*. Furthermore, the depiction of religions in these novels will also be discussed. The *Dune Chronicles* is unique because of the use of fictional religions that are also amalgamations and adaptations of real ones. A study of the religions in this series should therefore be undertaken by utilising concepts from existing faiths and applying them to Herbert’s fictitious ones.

Chapter Three, “Leto: The Martyr”, examines martyrdom in the series. Both Paul and Leto appear to be martyrs, but I will demonstrate that Leto fulfils the definition to a greater extent and I will provide reasons why Paul falls short of the title. I will also submit evidence that clearly shows Herbert studied religion at great length. In addition, his attitude to and engagement with religion and the incorporation of absolute monarchs in the form of deities in the series will be considered.

The Conclusion summarises my findings. In addition, Herbert’s legacy, texts that demonstrate Herbert’s influence, and the messiah in modern SF novels and movies will be considered.



## Chapter One

### Genesis: The Religion of *Dune*

A beginning is the time for taking the most delicate care that the balances are correct.

(Herbert, 1965: 3)

A fitting tribute to mark the beginning of my study, the above quotation is the opening line for *Dune* and is part of an epigraph that heralds the beginning of the study of Muad'Dib. This advice is also applicable to the study of religion in the series. To trace the beginning or genesis of a novel may frequently appear impossible. Fortunately, Frank Herbert's account of the inspiration for *Dune* is well documented. This chapter will chart Herbert's inspiration for the religious elements of the *Dune Chronicles*.

My research method for this dissertation included a diachronic study of the series. The internet and the Unisa library have unquestionably been important in conducting research, and hopefully have been used discerningly. I consulted textbooks, journal articles and dissertations. Interviews, essays and biographies were also drawn upon. I am aware that in modern literary theory, authorial intent is frowned upon and considered to be irrelevant to understanding a work of literature. New Critics Wimsatt and Beardsley (1954: 3) advanced this view in defining the *intentional fallacy*: "The design or intention of the author is neither available or [*sic*] desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art". Frank Herbert declared his intentions for his novels – this cannot be disputed. I have no intention of judging any of his works a literary success or failure; I merely wish to explore a theme in this dissertation.

The poststructuralist Roland Barthes famously declared: "[T]he reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination...[T]he birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (1972: 148). This theory would appear to align itself with Reader-Response theory and would suggest a complete disregard for the author. I do not believe that a choice between the reader and author is necessary. Both entities are themselves subjective and an attempt to privilege an author, reader or even the text over one another would surely yield an unbalanced result. To ignore Frank Herbert's background and influences would be a mistake, as no text is created in a vacuum. My dissertation will attest that external material greatly enriches the reading experience as several authors,

philosophers, psychologists, historical figures and religious texts have informed the structure and content of the texts. Gabriele Griffin's *Research Methods for English Studies* (2005) has been extremely useful to me, particularly the chapters based on the benefits and pitfalls of using auto/biographies and textual analysis.

My research objective is to investigate Frank Herbert's use of religion, specifically the messiah and martyr theme in the *Dune Chronicles*. While the literature I have reviewed has analysed different aspects of the novels, including the messiah theme, I will attempt not to repeat discussions unless necessary. My research strategy was to read widely in terms of SF theory and religious text books. I do not subscribe to an Abrahamic faith; therefore my knowledge was extremely limited. I believe my fresh perspective may make unique connections. I engaged in close reading of the novels, before I read introductions to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Over time, I looked at more specialised texts and made some intriguing discoveries. I bore in mind that if I were to make assumptions about Herbert's inspirations or conclusions, I should look at sources that originated from his time, i.e. I did not want to make anachronistic remarks about religion based upon recent discoveries. I am optimistic that my findings will inspire more discourse upon the subject of religion in the series.

The journey to *Dune* began in 1957, the year Sputnik I, the world's first artificial satellite, was successfully launched by the Russians into space, heralding the beginning of the space age (Garber, 2007). This was an exhilarating moment in history, especially for SF writers and fans, because the dream of space travel suddenly seemed tangible. This event also triggered the space race between the Russians and the United States of America; tensions between the two countries escalated, since they were already engaged in the Cold War (McNeill, 2005: 376-381).

In Appendix II: "The Religion of Dune", Herbert describes five forces that are responsible for shaping religions, before Maud'Dib's arrival on Arrakis: The followers of the Fourteen Sages; the Bene Gesserit; the agnostic ruling class; the so-called Ancient Teachings and space travel (Herbert, 1965: 500). It is possible that the fifth force, space travel, shows the influence that the Sputnik might have exerted on Herbert's thinking at the time:

Immediately, space gave a different flavor and sense to ideas of Creation. That difference is seen even in the highest religious achievements of the period. All through religion, the feeling of the sacred was touched by anarchy from the outer dark.

(Herbert, 1965: 501)

In the Bible, Genesis describes creation: how God shaped “the heaven and the earth”, but the formation of the rest of the universe is not mentioned (KJV, Gen. 1:1).<sup>1</sup> Light and darkness are divided because light is “good” (Gen. 1:4). Space travel challenges the belief system of most religions that simply do not take it into account since they emerged in non-technologically advanced societies. The prospect of planets inhabited by sentient beings, who have their own belief systems, may challenge a faith that might not even entertain the possibility of extraterrestrial life-forms.

In the same year as the Sputnik launch, Herbert chartered a small plane and flew to Florence, Oregon, to write an article about a research project being conducted by the United States of America’s Department of Agriculture (USDA) (Herbert, 2005: 263). The USDA had developed a successful method of stabilising sand dunes by planting poverty grasses on the crests of dunes to keep them from encroaching upon roads and buildings (*ibid*). While the article did not come to fruition, the seed idea for *Dune* was firmly planted within Herbert’s imagination:

I had too much for an article and far too much for a short story. So I didn’t know really what I had – but I had an enormous amount of data and avenues shooting off at all angles to get more... I finally saw that I had something enormously interesting going for me about the ecology of deserts, and it was, for a science-fiction writer anyway, an easy step from that to think: What if I had an entire planet that was desert?

(Herbert quoted in O’Reilly, 1981: 39)

Herbert named his imaginary desert planet “Arrakis”; nevertheless “Dune” is the name that characters and readers associate with the planet. One would not necessarily expect an environment to have religious implications; yet Frank Herbert’s choice reveals keen insight and foresight. A desert setting lends itself well to the messiahs and martyrs theme in the texts. Three of the world’s religions began in the desert: Judaism, Christianity and Islam (*Encyclopædia of Religion*, 2005: s.v. Deserts). In an interview with Willis McNelly (1969), Herbert confirmed that he had studied religions and deserts and was aware of their relationship:

During my studies of deserts, of course, and previous studies of religions, we all know that many religions began in a desert atmosphere, so I decided to put the two together [religion and ecology] because I don’t think that any one story should have any one thread. I build on a layer technique, and of course putting in religion and religious ideas you can play one against the other.

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<sup>1</sup> KJV - All Biblical verses are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Paul, in a clear parallel to Jesus, emerges from the desert as a messiah. Later, Leto II also comes forth from the desert; he announces that he is a god – Shai-Hulud personified and a messiah for humankind. In the last two novels of the *Chronicles*, Sheeana, a descendant of the Atrides, is discovered by Leto’s priests in the desert. She is revered because Shai-Hulud obeys her; shortly thereafter the Cult of Sheeana is born. Throughout the series, the Atrides (Jessica, Paul, Leto, Siona and Sheeana) are tested in the desert. Jessica, Siona and Sheeana are not messiahs; they do, however, perform “saviour” functions to a certain extent. In this respect Herbert does not deviate from traditional gender roles or scripture, thereby eliminating the possibility of a female messiah. The Bible, through the use of gender and pronouns, excludes this prospect. The following is a limited list of such occurrences, with my emphasis:

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a *son*, and shall call his name Immanuel.

(Is. 7:14)

For unto us a child is born, unto us a *son* is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

(Is. 9:6)

But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his *Son*, born of woman, born under the law,

(Gal. 4:4)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the *son* of David, the *son* of Abraham.

(Mt. 1:1)

the *son* of Jacob, the *son* of Isaac, the *son* of Abraham, the *son* of Terah, the *son* of Nahor,

(Lk. 3:34)

Jack Hand (1985) approaches *Dune* with gender roles in mind and finds that women still fulfil traditional roles in the text. He comments that in Herbert’s world one of the few provinces in which women are allowed to operate religion and adds that in the Western world, women have always exerted official or unofficial power in the area of religion (Hand, 1985: 25). Strangely, Hand’s first example of this power is to cite women who have “been involved in the making and breaking of male preachers” (*ibid*). He does not realise that he cites an example where a woman’s power is only established through a relationship or

interaction with a man. The role of the woman in this example is negative, a temptress, gathering infamy rather than respect. He then names three female religious leaders with whom I am unfamiliar and a nun who influenced Pope Pius XII; his argument that “religion is the most natural and traditional method for women in a world like that of Dune to gain and wield power” is thus unconvincing (*ibid*).

The main religious force in *Dune* is the Bene Gesserit – an organisation composed almost entirely of women “who privately denied they were a religious order, but who operated behind an almost impenetrable screen of ritual mysticism, and whose training, whose symbolism, organization, and internal teaching methods were almost wholly religious” (Herbert, 1965: 500-501). It seems even the Bene Gesserit are oblivious to the fact that religion shapes the design and character of the organisation.

The series demonstrates that despite great promise, the Bene Gesserit exercise fairly limited powers and inevitably are subject to, accountable to or dependent upon a single man, be it the Emperor Shaddam IV, Paul, Leto II, Duncan Idaho or Miles Teg (as the series progresses). Over time their need for a messiah is replaced by great terror. Up until the arrival of Paul, the Bene Gesserit exercise absolute control over the men around them. It finally occurs to them that their hope of manipulating a messiah is impossible. This is demonstrated when members of the Sisterhood disobey orders (an unheard of action) and assassinate Duncan Idaho gholas in *Heretics of Dune* out of fear that he may become a *Kwisatz Haderach*, a messiah. While the inner workings of the organisation are revealed in the fifth and sixth books in the series, the reader is introduced to three members of the Sisterhood who all fail horrendously in their missions: Jessica disregards orders to bear a female child and cannot exercise control over Paul or Leto; the Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohaim fails to identify Paul as the *Kwisatz Haderach* and is executed for conspiring against Paul; Princess Irulan is unable to seduce Paul, her husband, and does not recognise Alia’s possession. None of the Bene Gesserit delegations are able to assassinate or manipulate Leto throughout his reign.

Herbert’s attitude towards women begins to change marginally with the introduction of the Fish Speakers in *God Emperor of Dune*; despite their power, they are still subject to Leto’s command. Despite Siona being the Atreides heir, the Fish Speakers will choose to follow Idaho’s directives. It is only in *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune* that Herbert begins to place women in positions of power, where women report to women in turn.

Yet the Bene Gesserit's evolution is incomplete: when the Honored Matres threaten to exterminate the Bene Gesserit, the Sisterhood look to Duncan Idaho and Miles Teg to strategise and protect them. While they control Idaho and Teg for most of the fifth and sixth novels, Idaho and Teg are able to escape from them eventually. Hand's assertion that the women of *Dune* may "express themselves as wives, mothers, sisters, and literary women, but always define themselves by male standards" (1985: 28) rings true. Herbert's distrust towards messiahs is ongoing and is revealed by his eliminating messiahs, but not martyrs or religion, from the series.

Herbert reinforces the perception of the Atreides males as messianic figures by drawing from the "Temptation of Christ" (Mt. 4:1-11; Mk. 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-13). According to the Synoptic Gospels, after Jesus was baptised, he fasted for forty days and nights in the Judean desert. During his fast, he was constantly tested by Satan with various temptations. He did not succumb to temptation, thereby passing the test. The parallel with the Atreides is that when they take the "Water of Life" – the spice concentrate – they experience visions of the future and / or past (depending on their gender). The phrase "water of life" appears in the Book of Revelation and the Gospel of John and can be interpreted as the "Holy Spirit" (Rev. 21:6; 22:1; Jn. 4:10-26). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, which descends upon Jesus when he is baptised in the River Jordan by John the Baptist; it takes possession of Christians at baptism, removing evil spirits and filling them with the life of Christ (Woodhead, 2004: 20; 43). The link is established in the *Duniverse*: those who attempt to ingest the Water of Life risk death and possession for "enlightenment". In a desert environment, water imagery would logically be particularly effective. The desert in the *Duniverse* is a vehicle for the religions in the series as at times it inspires religious contemplation. A scene in *God Emperor of Dune* illustrates this: Siona is moved to religious contemplation in the desert, whilst Leto, on the other hand, is reluctant to discuss religion:

One of these tiny "wind devils" danced across the middle distance to the south. Siona's gaze followed its track. She spoke abruptly: "Do you have a personal religion?"  
Leto took a moment composing his reply. It always astonished him how a desert provoked thoughts of religion.

(Herbert, 1981: 311)

At this stage in the novel, Leto is over three and a half thousand years old and is alternatively venerated or interrogated about religion by other characters; his reticence is understandable, yet his reluctance also stems from a desire for his people to search for their

own answers rather than seeking esoteric solutions. Herbert's own physical environment undoubtedly influenced the mystical atmosphere of the novels. During the 1960s, Herbert and his family moved to San Francisco's Bay Area (Herbert, 2003: 160). The intellectual milieu proved beneficial to Herbert, who interacted with artists, poets, psychologists, and newspapermen (Herbert, 2003: 161). Residing in San Francisco also afforded Herbert the opportunity to socialise with fellow SF writers Robert Heinlein, Poul Anderson, Jack Vance, and Isaac Asimov (Herbert, 2003: 168).

In the same period, a new movement in SF referred to as "New Wave" developed amongst writers, lasting from the 1960s to the 1980s (Merrick, 2009: 102). The term "New Wave" is problematic, since there is no universally accepted definition and there is also disagreement about how long the movement lasted. Adam Roberts attempts a broad definition: "The term 'New Wave' describes a loose grouping of writers from the 1960s and 1970s who, in reaction to the established conventions of SF, produced avant-garde, radical or fractured science fictions" (Roberts, 2006a: 62). Although usually linked to the British SF magazine *New Worlds* (Latham, 2005: 205), some authors associated with the New Wave refused to accept the label (Merrick, 2009: 105). Herbert can be classified as a New Wave writer, given his propensity to include psi phenomena and pseudoscience in his texts.

The New Wave movement arose as "a reaction against genre exhaustion" (Broderick, 2003: 49). This "exhaustion" can be attributed to Golden Age SF. John W. Campbell's legendary editorship of *Astounding Science-Fiction* magazine heralded the beginning of this stage of SF (Atterbery, 2003: 37), which preceded the New Wave movement. Campbell's agenda for *Astounding* was to avoid mysticism and to extrapolate scientific ideas (*ibid*: 38); the New Wave writers responded in a classic counter-cultural manner by embracing mysticism and pseudoscience in the novels. Up until the period Herbert wrote *Dune* (from 1926 to 1960) SF magazines shaped the identity of the genre (*ibid*: 32). When SF novels such as *Dune* began to be published, SF reached the general public and libraries (Aldiss & Wingrove, 1988: 287). It began to gain a respectability and visibility which disturbed the older, established writers of the Golden Age who believed that the integrity of the "genre" was under threat (Merrick, 2009: 102-103). Broderick also refers to Herbert's unease at the worship of the "superman-hero" [*sic*] (cf. Chapter Two).

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 [*sic*] Vogtian superman-hero [*sic*]. 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: 51)

It is also ironic that one of Campbell's favourite writers of psionic fiction was A.E. Van Vogt, who produced "dreamlike narratives about psychic supermen in hiding" and protagonists who "resemble fairy-tale heroes more than Heinlein's competent engineers. They are guided along the way by characters who might as well be wizards; their psychic gifts are thinly disguised wishing-rings and cloaks of invisibility" (Atterbery, 2003: 40). Both Paul and Leto are "psychic supermen" who are forced into hiding at different stages of the novels; they do not display any characteristics that would remotely classify them as "competent engineers". Herbert sets out to undermine the Van Vogtian "super-man hero" and is effective in doing so because initially the parallels between his characters and Van Vogt's are self-evident. It is only later in the series that Herbert enacts a reversal and is able to accomplish his objective.

The New Wave movement is thus, at times, almost antithetical to Golden Age ideals. Adam Roberts astutely notes: "The half dozen most important texts from this period [the 1960s / New Wave movement] are fascinated with one subject: notions of the messiah" (2006b: 232). Instead of a half dozen, he names seven: Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961), Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965), John Barth's *Giles Goat Boy, or the Revised New Syllabus of George Giles Our Grand Tutor* (1966), Michael Moorcock's *Jerry Cornelius* sequence, and three novels by Philip K. Dick, *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (1965), *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) and *Ubik* (1969). Roberts attributes the success of novels like *Stranger in a Strange Land*, *Dune* and *Lord of the Rings* (1954-55) to the popularity of these novels amongst students at campuses.

The plot of *Dune* is summarised by Roberts (2006b: 235); unfortunately he incorrectly asserts that Paul's daughter would have been the *Kwisatz Haderach*. His commentary on the religious aspects of the novel is brief. He notices that Herbert uses a desert setting to explore the Judaic-Christian concept of a messiah and the "Mahdi" or Islamic human saviour (*ibid*). Roberts (2006b: 236) observes that there is no separation between Church and State in the novels and that as the novels progress, this issue becomes more complex. He argues that the messiah is disastrous for humans in terms of political upheaval, with the qualification that



this is comparable to the devastation an ordinary politician could have wrought (*ibid*). These general observations have merit and are discussed in detail when pertinent.

In terms of Leto II, however, he is delineated as infinitely more disastrous since Leto is both ruler and god (*ibid*). Roberts advances his theory that Leto's tyranny goes beyond totalitarianism because as a god, "his total knowledge of the cosmos hems in humanity in a far more metaphysically constrictive way" (*ibid*). I disagree with Robert's assessment – Leto's knowledge is not absolute because he is not omnipresent, omniscient or omnipotent. He restricts travel for the ordinary citizens, knowing that this action will fan their desire to explore, scattering the species throughout the universe. Leto does not seek to know everyone's actions seeing that this would result in the Golden Path's failure (cf. Chapter Three). He uses his prescience in a limited arena, to confirm that the Golden Path endures. Leto wills his own death to create a new sandworm cycle; not to end a "deadlock" (Roberts, 2006b: 236). This is confirmed in the last two novels of the *Chronicles*; the Bene Gesserit manipulate the Honored Matres into destroying "Rakis" (Dune) in order to kill all but one of the sandworms. Each sandworm contains a "pearl" of Leto's consciousness (cf. Chapter Three); therefore the universe was still subject to his will. The lone sandworm would begin a new cycle, but not before the Bene Gesserit had created a new path. Roberts (2006b: 236) concludes that Herbert's portrayal of the messiah is negative because of the political context:

Herbert's achievement, in other words, was to render the coming of the messiah in an accurately observed political context, noting as he did so how close the messianic impulse is to the fascistic (*God Emperor of Dune*, with its powerful central image of the dictator as a monstrous worm, may be one of the most effective satires on fascism yet written).

Julia List (2009) also explores three novels written in the 1960s that she believes share a messianic theme. Like Roberts, List chooses *Stranger in a Strange Land* and *Dune*; her third choice is *Lord of Light* (1967). I do not regard her third choice as suitable since Zelazny was creating characters based upon deities (avatars) from Hinduism and Buddhism in his novel; while in common usage the terms "avatar" and "messiah" seem to be interchangeable, they are, in fact, distinct concepts (cf. Chapter Two).

List (2009: 21) argues that *Stranger in a Strange Land*, *Dune* and *Lord of Light* differ from typical New Wave critiques of messianism in that they affirm "the power and responsibility of the individual to resist the frequently malign influence of institutionalized religion". In List's view, the messiahs in the novels are not at fault, but rather the institutions

that spring up around or after them. The onus is upon Paul and Leto to resist any undue influence from the Fremen who are now also in positions of power within the religion of Muad'Dib. List (2009: 21; 22) contends that the novels advance a "secular" approach and "manifest the values of a Protestant heritage". *Dune* is secular in that the Emperor Shaddam IV does not impose a religion upon his subjects. The values of the Protestant heritage present in *Dune* are manifested in a pluralistic, secular empire. Furthermore, she states, "[a]ll three novels establish a dominant philosophical framework that is essentially agnostic, relativistic, and tolerant" (List, 2009: 22). These qualities resonate, in List's (2009:21-22) view, with the "liberal and well-educated segments of 1960s American society, the mainline Protestant upper and middle classes". In view of these assertions, it appears that *Stranger in a Strange Land*, *Dune* and *Lord of Light* are not only products of their time, but products of a socio-economic group.

A messiah or martyr inevitably challenges the status quo; messiahs and martyrs are agents that instigate change. A messiah destabilises the ruling authority; a martyr's death is normally a result of coming into conflict with a power. Paul confronts Harkonnen and Corrino (Emperor Shaddam IV) rule; Leto challenges humanity's mindset; both institute great and sweeping changes across the realm. Their deaths have major consequences and once again result in a transformation of prevailing conditions.

List's choice of the term "Protestant" instead of "Christian" is significant – she is deliberately excluding Catholicism or other denominations not affiliated to Protestantism. One can only speculate about this line of reasoning as there is no examination of Protestantism in her article. There seems to be an expectation that a reader would have a basic understanding of the term. One may surmise that at the very least List expects a reader to know the difference between the Roman Catholic Church and the numerous denominations that fall under the banner of "Protestant". Without investigating further, a reader should know that the Catholic Church has a central authority: the Pope. Protestants, on the other hand, do not have a leader comparable to the Pope. The Bible is the central authority – *sola scriptura* (by Scripture alone) – for Protestants (Mcgrath & Marks, 2004: 5). Despite the differences, the belief in the Messiah and martyrs plays a central role in both Catholicism and Protestantism since Jesus Christ is regarded as the saviour in both branches of Christianity. In terms of List's usage of the term, Alister E. Mcgrath and Darren C. Marks's analysis seems to be most relevant. They point out how Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Weber and H.

Richard Niebuhr argued that “‘Protestantism’ designates an ethos that has certain specific political and economic overtones, namely those associated with Western European capitalism and politics and present-day American-style democracy” (McGrath & Marks, 2004: 2). It is perhaps for this reason that Protestantism is viewed as secular and individual-centric.

List (2009: 22) asserts, “[i]n all three works, aspects of religious belief and practice are portrayed positively only if they have a useful social function”. She furnishes two examples of how the Fremen religion performs a beneficial and protective communal function (List, 2009: 22-23): Jessica is deeply moved when she witnesses the discipline and restraint involved in a Fremen ritual to bless the water that will be used to transform Arrakis. While the Fremen are sincerely devout, Jessica is agnostic – her detachment enables her to manipulate their belief. List then discusses Dr Yueh’s secular appreciation for the Orange Catholic Bible which he hands over to Paul as a gift.

A feudal system in the empire encourages political and economic inequality. Religion does not transform the circumstances of the Fremen in *Dune Messiah* who, even with new found wealth as Muad’Dib’s warriors, struggle to survive on Dune. Their situation deteriorates in *God Emperor of Dune* when Leto becomes God Emperor; he enforces a theocracy across the universe and outlaws other religions. As there are no more sandworms, Leto controls a large stockpile and therefore exercises control over all the currency. Over time, citizens of the empire eventually settle into an oppressed socio-economic stratum. In Appendix II of *Dune*, List notes the correlation between religious belief and one’s socio-economic status:

...The agnostic ruling class (including the Guild) for whom religion was a kind of puppet show to amuse the populace and keep it docile, and who believed essentially that all phenomena -- even religious phenomena -- could be reduced to mechanical explanations...

(Herbert, 1965: 501)

This logic mirrors Karl Marx’s criticism of religion. For both Herbert and Marx religion is a mechanism to preserve the status quo and to cement political and economic inequality. There is a degree of arrogance in the ruling class; the language used to convey their opinion about religion is rather condescending: “puppet show”, “amuse”, “docile”. These words connote that the masses are ignorant, petulant school children who are too immature to be left to their own devices. A famous quote by Marx that summarises this attitude is found in *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* (1970: 3):

Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.

The “puppet show” for the masses is first engineered by the Bene Gesserit; Paul orchestrates the next performance, whilst Leto provides them with an unrivalled finale. Leto’s spectacle, his enforced tyranny, results in the masses preferring reality to his show. In *Dune*, Stilgar is the face of the masses. List (2009: 23) recounts the incident where Paul tells Stilgar about rain on his home planet of Caladan. While it rains on other planets, Arrakis is a desert planet with no precipitation. As Stilgar has never witnessed such a spectacle, his reaction is one of reverence. His ignorance thus becomes a key to being manipulated. When the Fremen’s sacred dreams of witnessing rivers and rain firsthand are realised and they recognise the latter as an ordinary event on other planets, their faith in Muad’Dib is tested (cf. Chapter Two). Paul, on the other hand, was brought up surrounded by oceans, river and rain; he cannot sympathise with Stilgar’s reaction and loses faith in Stilgar’s ability to rule:

In that instant, Paul saw how Stilgar had been transformed from the Fremen naib [leader] to a *creature* of the Lisan al-Gaib [messiah], a receptacle for awe and obedience. It was a lessening of the man, and Paul felt the ghost-wind of the jihad in it.

(Herbert, 1965: 469, original emphasis)

Herbert, no doubt, was inspired by the Zeitgeist of the 1960s, given that all of the major Protestant denominations, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, were affected by either the formation of special purpose groups or by schismatic movements that resulted in separate denominations (Wuthnow, 1988: 150). This period of great upheaval would have unsettled members; this may account for the interest in alternative religions or the attraction to secularism. In fact, movements were established with secularity as their goal. For instance, in 1963, Madeline Murray O’Hair’s group successfully petitioned the US Supreme Court to outlaw prayer in schools (Wuthnow, 1986: 4).

List’s (2009: 44) closing remarks are that the combination of Protestant and secular humanist values is used to adapt the figure of the messiah to “fit within a non-theistic philosophical framework and provide an alternative value system for the modern world that does not rely on reference to personal omnipotent deity”. While there are no references to an omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient God, Shai-Hulud is considered to be a deity in *Dune*. Whereas the Fremen wish to convert the masses to the religion of Muad’Dib, Paul never voices a belief in god or any supernatural entities. The focus of *Dune* is a messiah who

is fallible, harnessing the fanaticism of his followers to his own ends. List's (2009: 44) last assertion is that *Dune* reflects the 1960s' theologically liberal atmosphere (cf. Chapter Three). The questioning and challenging of authority, both religious and political, characterised the 1960s.

Adam Roberts (2006b: 233) proposes a motive for the obvious interest in *Dune* in the 1960s: "Certainly, the mysticism and the presentation of psychotropic drugs as gateways to transcendental transformation in *Dune* insinuated it into the affections of mystically-inclined drug-taking youngsters; although there is much more to the novel than that". Herbert was not immune to the drug culture prevalent at the time, unwittingly ingesting North African hashish and tea made from morning glory seeds (Herbert, 2003: 85). While these two experiences were unintentional, his third and final experience with drugs was a deliberate choice – he brewed and ingested a cup of peyote tea. The experience was disastrous; he promptly threw up (Herbert, 2003: 102). Brian Herbert (Frank Herbert's son) relates his father's experience with the drug:

Soon he [Frank Herbert] seemed to be upon the waters of Puget Sound, with sunlight glinting off wave tops in a rhythmic pattern. He experienced sound with each beat of light – an eerie, beautiful pealing. The water was choppy, almost forming whitecaps, and sunlight glinted upon it. Suddenly he realized he was *hearing* each glint of light – the most dulcet, soothing chimes he had ever experienced in his life. Thus when he wrote in the *Dune* series of a "vision echo," he was writing from firsthand experience, from an experience of sensory mixing.

(Herbert, 2003: 102, original emphasis)

Each of Herbert's experiences was unique: this informed the various reactions to melange by the various characters of the *Dune* series. Herbert extrapolated that the hyperawareness and "visions" produced by drugs is the closest a human being may come to experiencing the supernatural. As a writer, he surmised that the hyperawareness he experienced in this episode would lend itself well to articulating what a messiah would possibly experience. O'Reilly (1981: 78) connects the Fremmen religious rituals involving the Water of Life with the hallucinogens consumed by American Indians for religious rites. The Native American Church / Peyote Movement object to the claim that peyote is a hallucinogenic substance "used for getting high"; they insist it has a serious religious purpose (Crawford, 2005: 614). O'Reilly (1981: 78) provides convincing evidence to substantiate his theory that Herbert was inspired by Native Americans in this aspect:

There are two principal traditions in native [sic] American use of hallucinogens. In ancient times, they were used by many tribes in a number of shamanic contexts--divination, initiation into manhood, healing. But in the "Native American church," which emerged in North America in the 1880s, peyote served an additional purpose. Replacing such militaristic rituals as the ghost dance, the peyote religion helped the Indians accommodate themselves to the inevitable takeover of their lands by the white man. It may have become a form of social control, a safety valve for the pressures of the untenable situation in which they had been placed--and possibly the model for the Fremmen "mysticism of the oppressed."

In view of the fact that this dissertation is a study of the use of religion in the series, it would be incomplete without taking into consideration alternative and Eastern religions. It was also in the 1960s that Herbert became friends with Zen Master, Alan Watts. Esoteric movements external to the Judaeo-Christian traditions became popular during this period in San Francisco (Wuthnow, 1978: 15). Herbert's interactions during this period profoundly influenced the *Dune Chronicles*; aside from Zen teachings, it is highly likely that Herbert would have been exposed to many other Eastern religious traditions prevalent in San Francisco, including "Transcendental Meditation (TM), various yoga groups, the Happy-Healthy-Holy-Organization (3HO), Meher Baba, and Divine Light" (*ibid*).

The Bene Gesserit prana-bindu mind-body exercises were undoubtedly inspired by these various movements. The concepts of "prana" and "bindu" are sourced from Hinduism. "Prana" is the vital air or life's breath while "Bindu" (drop or dot) is an esoteric concept denoting the spaceless, timeless point that is the source of all manifestation (Jones & Ryan, 2007, 333; 85). Herbert adapts these concepts for his purposes; those familiar with Hinduism would associate these concepts with yoga, while a reader unfamiliar with the terms would be able to formulate the gist of the meaning through the texts. Paul and Leto establish a sense of equilibrium through the Bene Gesserit prana-bindu exercises. The "Terminology of the Imperium" also provides information about the concepts: *prana* is defined as "(Prana-musculature): the body's muscles when considered as units for ultimate training" (Herbert, 1965: 526) and *bindu* as "relating to the human nervous system, especially to nerve training. Often expressed as Bindu-nervature" (Herbert, 1965: 514).

The critic Leonard M. Scigaj (1983: 345) argues that the spice of Arrakis is a metaphor for the life-sustaining properties of the state of *prana*. He observes that when Paul becomes obsessed with the future, "the messianic absolutes reign and the spice supply dwindles. For both yogin and ecologist *prana* is the spice of life" (*ibid*). Scigaj argues that Paul's actions are essentially destructive; as a result, Leto must intervene and assume the

sandtrout skin to correct his father's mistakes; thereby restoring balance (*ibid*). Herbert bases Paul and Leto's prescience on a basic Hindu belief; despite Paul and Leto's messianic powers, they remain mortal:

Yogins can acquire extraordinary powers and psychic abilities through their practice of the yogas. Highly developed yogins may ascend to various divine realms where they become godlike. However, becoming godlike is not the same as moksha or liberation, because, while the godlike status may persist for long periods of time, it is ultimately temporary. Liberation or moksha, on the other hand, is permanent.

(Robinson, 2004: 45)

Paul and Leto acquire powers to liberate humankind; by combining yoga and messianic doctrine, Herbert creates a hybrid that is united in an Eastern and Western temporal religious frame. Leonard M. Scigaj (1983) discusses Frank Herbert's distrust in a commitment to absolute goals and how it is applied to the *Dune* tetralogy. Based upon Herbert's interviews and essays, Scigaj (1983: 340) posits that Herbert believed any "single-track solution" (be it, for instance, a messianic hero or religion) can "blind us to contingencies operating in the present, and thus increase the likelihood that unnoticed factors may upset plans". Paul's focus on the future renders him paralysed towards the necessities of the present. In an article entitled "Dune Genesis", Herbert (1980) likened Paul's prescience to a "Presbyterian fixation", which Scigaj (1983: 341) believes "is analogous in some respects to the politician's obsession with his New Frontier or Great Society, the technologist's fascination with the ultimate computer, or even Isaac Asimov's unswerving belief that the scientist can solve all problems by creating more technology". In these examples, the politician, technologist and Asimov ignore the present in favour of an idealistic happening in the future. Ignoring the present may result in compromising the desired outcome in the future.

Presbyterian Churches fall in the category of "Reformed Churches" and subscribe to Calvinist theology, which means that they trace their roots back to sixteenth-century French reformer John Calvin (1509-1564) (Bahr, 2004: 11). Predestination is a central tenet in Calvin's belief; the Presbyterian fixation on it aligns with Paul's obsession with visions. In Book III, chapter XXI of Volume II of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the following remarks are made about the concept:

If it be evidently the result of the Divine will, that salvation is freely offered to some, and others are prevented from attaining it, - this immediately gives rise to important and difficult questions, which are incapable of any other explication, than by the

establishment of pious minds in what ought to be received concerning election and predestination – a question, in the opinion of many, full of perplexity; for they consider nothing more unreasonable, than that, of the common mass of mankind [*sic*], some should be predestinated to salvation and others to destruction.

(Calvin, 1844: 140)

In other words, Calvin teaches that God's grace cannot be rejected by any individual whom God has chosen, whilst those who are not chosen can do nothing to attain grace. This belief is not shared by other Christian denominations; for instance, Methodist theology advances a belief that God's offer of salvation is universal (Bahr, 2004: 12). Just as Presbyterians do not believe human beings have a choice in their salvation, Paul does not feel he has a choice when it comes to his visions.

Scigaj (1983: 341) acknowledges Paul's desperate circumstances when the Harkonnen and Sardaukar attack Arrakis; nevertheless, he argues that Paul could have rejected the Mahdinate and consequently prevented the *jihad*, given that he altered a long-standing Fremen ritual to prevent Stilgar's death. It is a reasonable argument; Duncan Idaho appears to be accepted by the Fremen fairly easily. Whether this is a plot error, or another failing in Paul's character, is open to interpretation. There are inconsistencies and errors in the plots of the series; for instance, the first ghola of Duncan Idaho remembers Ghanima and Leto as babies. This is impossible since the original Idaho died defending the fifteen year old Paul, before Paul had even met Chani. Another argument that Scigaj (1983: 342) puts forward is with regard to the events after Paul and the Fremen defeat the Harkonnen and the Emperor. He questions the Fremen need to convert the galaxy. If Paul had led the Fremen as an ordinary political leader, there would have been no cause for a *jihad*. While Scigaj's arguments have merit, it is worth considering that without the religious elements of the novel, *Dune* would be a drastically shorter and undemanding text.

Leto II avoids his father's mistake – the "Presbyterian fixation" – by not depending upon his prescience; instead, by employing Zen awareness, Leto avoids unexamined assumptions. Scigaj (1983: 343) concludes his study by analysing Leto's Zen awareness in relation to ecology and technology, but before doing so he accurately describes how Leto escapes his father's fate – by assuming an adaptive and flexible attitude:

Leto bases his alternative approach upon a tripartite philosophy: a grasp of intuitions emanating from his Jungian unconscious; facility with a Zen precognitive, egoless awareness of the present moment as a fluid matrix of possibilities; and an adaptation of the Chinese respect for chance.



Another critic who recognises the influence of Zen on *God Emperor of Dune* is Stephen Fjellman (1986: 50); however he primarily discusses the appeal of this particular text of *Dune* to Western intellectuals who “identify with Leto’s god-like perspective”. While Leto’s personal sacrifice to save humankind is undeniable, Fjellman questions whether the ends justify the means. He suggests that Herbert causes the reader “to become conscious of her or his complicity with a man who in his exercise of power intervenes in history, manipulates people, and kills” (Fjellman, 1986: 51).

Leto commands. He kills. He toys with people. He acts with the unanswerable cruelty possible to a God or an Emperor. People asked for a Messiah and they got Paul and the Jihad. They asked for a God and they got Leto. In the long run he will teach people not to ask for gods, but to rely on themselves.

(Fjellman, 1986: 53)

If one is reading for pleasure, then the *Dune Chronicles* might be reduced to a good vs. evil scenario, thereby assigning the label of good to the Atreides and the label of evil to, essentially, everyone who opposes them. If this is the case, then the reader would be less likely to accept a reversal. Thus, a complicit reader would resist evaluating Leto as anything but heroic; his actions would be deemed necessary and would remain questioned. Leto’s knowledge and prescience would encourage the reader to accept his judgement, thereby falling into the trap of becoming a complicit reader.

Reader-Response theorist, Nita Schechet (2005: 30) distinguishes between two types of readers: “The reader I am calling a ‘resisting reader’ is one who is cued by a text to resist the text’s narrator. The reader I am calling a ‘complicit reader’ is one who is cued to follow a text’s narrator without questioning his/her reliability”. I identify with the former category on account of my resistance to the text’s narrator. My reluctance to unquestioningly trust the narrator stems from a combination of being manipulated by Herbert and the close reading skills I developed as an English major.

The narrative structure of the *Dune* series yields more important information, which provides interpretive cues for the reader. Gérard Genette (1980) distinguishes and defines a number of binary oppositions that form structural elements of a narrative: homodiegetic / heterodiegetic – the narrator is either present or absent as a character in the narrative (Genette, 1980: 245; 244); extradiegetic / intradiegetic – the act of narration occurs outside or inside the narrative (*ibid*: 228). Genette chose the term “focalization” which corresponds to the phrase “focus of narration” to avoid the visual connotations associated with “vision”,

“field” and “point of view” (*ibid*: 189). Genette provides three categories for focalization: interne – the perspective is restricted to that of a single character (*ibid*); externe – the view of the world is restricted to the outside with no insight into the character’s minds (Genette, 1980: 190); zero – the narrator is above the world of the action, looks down on it and is able to see into the characters’ minds as well as shifting between various locations where the story takes place (*ibid*: 189). The *Dune Chronicles* displays the following attributes: heterodiegetic – the narrator and characters are different individuals;<sup>2</sup> extradiegetic level – the narrator is external to the story;<sup>3</sup> zero focalization – the narrator is not restricted and is able to shift between locations and characters’ minds.<sup>4</sup> By the author’s separating the narrator from the characters, de-personalising the narrator, reporting the character’s thoughts and dialogue and providing zero focalization, the reader may be lulled into a false sense of complacency. After all, the impression that the narrator creates is one of a faithful rendition of events that take place in the novel. Later in the dissertation, the question whether the narrator is reliable or unreliable will be raised and answered.

Fjellman identifies two themes in *God Emperor of Dune*: the therapeutic double-bind and Leto’s apologia. Fjellman (1986: 54) identifies the theory of the double-bind as being first presented by George Bateson: “The double-bind describes a complex structure of paradoxical communication wherein messages and meta-messages are contradictory”. Fjellman (1986: 55) draws parallels between the double-bind theory and Zen Buddhism, which specialises in paradoxes: “The Zenmaster manipulates the student by means of a long-term series of paradoxical riddles until, presumably, satori or enlightenment is reached”.

Like the Zen student, the subject is placed in paradox. The “interventive” belief is that this experience will cause a kind of “dialectical rupture” through which the patient will come to understand both her or his previous, deleterious assumptions and the counter-assumptions. The patient will consequently “pop out” of that system into a new, more inclusive resolution. Herbert’s myth (and perhaps myth in general) cognitively functions in a similar manner; and it is therefore useful to look to Leto’s practices of the therapeutic double-bind as a way to help us think through our relations to institutions and to change.

(Fjellman, 1986: 55)

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<sup>2</sup> I provide some examples for context. Heterodiegetic – “In the week before their departure to Arrakis, when all the final scurrying about had reached a nearly unbearable frenzy, an old crone came to visit the mother of the boy, Paul” (Herbert, 1965: 3).

<sup>3</sup> Extradiegetic – “Paul lay awake wondering: *What’s a gom jabbar?*” (Herbert, 1965: 4, original emphasis).

<sup>4</sup> Zero focalization – “*What does she fear?* Paul wondered.

The old woman studied Paul in one gestalten flicker: face oval like Jessica’s, but strong bones...hair: the Duke’s black-black but with the browline of the maternal grandfather who cannot be named, and that thin, disdainful nose; shape of directly staring green eyes: like the old Duke, the paternal grandfather who is dead, *Now, there was a man who appreciated the power of bravura-even in death*, the Reverend Mother thought [Herbert’s emphasis] (Herbert, 1965: 6).

There is a great deal of speculation surrounding the reasons for the migration from conventional religions of the time to the exotic, Asian traditions in the 1960s. Some observers have attributed the stress of modern living, the alienation of urban life, instability amongst families and communities, inequality and bureaucracy, as possible causes for the dissatisfaction that would drive people to alternative belief systems (Wuthnow, 1978: 16-17). In 1961, Frank Herbert was at the lowest point of his career, unable to write (Herbert, 2003: 185). Brian Herbert says “He [Frank Herbert] had been forty-one at the time, with a chronic sick feeling in the pit of his stomach, a fear that he had wasted his life” (*ibid*). Perhaps this anxiety prompted Herbert to study alternative religions; the religious atmosphere of San Francisco certainly allowed relatively easy access to information about alternative systems. Herbert drew upon both Eastern and Western religious concepts to enrich his texts, but this allusion would have resonated with a Western audience who had only been recently interested in and introduced to Zen and Hindu perspectives.

Lorenzo DiTommaso (1992) scrutinises Herbert’s use of history as a structuring effect in *Dune*. He focuses upon the “Vitality struggle” as a major theme in the novel (DiTommaso, 1992: 311). He believes that history is not cyclic; rather, “Herbert’s treatments of the diverse religious traditions and the politico-social history of all aspects of the Imperium clearly reveal the evolutionary nature of his vision of history” (*ibid*). In *Dune*, the Fremen religion evolves into the religion of Muad’Dib; thereafter, Muad’Dib’s religion evolves into Leto’s, and so forth. DiTommaso analyses the development of religious traditions in the first novel; he includes a useful diagram based upon information gleaned from Appendix II of *Dune* to depict the various religious relationships in *Dune*.

DiTommaso (1992: 317) argues that Herbert’s creation of a religious history facilitates the plot and themes of the novel. For instance, he notes that the combination of law and religion is based upon real religious injunctions:

Rom. 13.1-2(RSV): Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. (2) Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

Qur-an,<sup>20</sup> S.4 A.80: He who obeys The Messenger, obeys Allah: But if any turn away, we have not sent thee to watch over them.

S.17 A.96: Say: “Enough is Allah for a witness between me and you: for He is well acquainted with his servants, and He sees (all things).”

“The Religion of Dune” (408/503/508): When religion and politics ride the same cart, when that cart is driven by a living holy man (baraka), nothing can stand in their path. (390/481/488): We Fremen have a saying: “God created Arrakis to train the faithful.” One cannot go against the word of God.

Brent Stypczynski (2005) is also interested in the role that history plays in a work of speculative fiction. His interest lies with another series, but he mentions *Dune* once in his article “No Roads Lead to Rome: Alternative History and Secondary Worlds”:

History can do many things in the speculative genres. It can aid the reader in suspending disbelief by providing a “realistic” backstory or backdrop for the current story, as in Frank Herbert’s *Dune*. Alternatively, it can, as in Robert Howard’s Conan series or Tolkien’s the Lord of the Rings trilogy, place the world and story within our own (pre-) history. The world is thus made familiar through the author’s use of historical cultures from Earth to lend a degree of reality for the reader, a sense of understanding, and a sense of place. In time, the reader can feel that (s)he recognizes the place and can go there, at least imaginatively.

(Stypczynski, 2005: 453)

I agree with Stypczynski’s comments about the role that history plays in speculative fiction. The history of *Dune* is firmly rooted in Earth’s history: The Atreides are descendants of the Greeks, specifically The House of Atreus (cf. Chapter Two). While vast tracts of time are covered between events in the *Dune* novels, some of the cultural and historical aspects of Earth history surface periodically in the novels; for instance, the Fremen desert culture may be compared to the Arabic tribes of the Middle East. If one is familiar with Arabic culture, then the nomadic Bedouin tribes may create a sense of familiarity that one may associate with the Fremen.

Robert L. Mack (2011) asks the question “Why is *Dune* so popular?” in his article “Voice Lessons: The Seductive Appeal of Vocal Control in Frank Herbert’s *Dune*”. As the title of his article suggests, he believes that the use of “Voice” in the series “significantly contributes to the novel’s enduring appeal” (Mack, 2011: 40). While there is certainly a novelty about Herbert’s use of voice in the series, I do not believe that it is a “significant” reason why the *Dune* continues to generate interest. Rather, it is a combination of different factors ranging from the ecological perspective (long before environmentalism was popularised) to the religious themes; nevertheless, Mack shows that there is always an element or theme in the series that readers will find appealing.

There is a tendency amongst critics to compare *Dune* to other works. For instance, John L. Grigsby (1981) contrasts Asimov’s *Foundation* trilogy with Herbert’s; he notes, in

passing, that both trilogies establish a religious system on primitive planets in order to pave the way for the ascendancy of a new Empire (Grigsby, 1981: 151). Soon after the publication of Grigsby's study, both Asimov and Herbert added another novel to their canon. Grigsby (1984) was forced to reconsider his findings from the original article; he did not deliberate upon the religious aspects of the novels in his latter study.

Other critics have sought to compare *Dune* with other texts. For instance, Kevin Mulcahy (1996) investigates the politics of *Dune* by comparing it to Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* in an article entitled "The Prince on Arrakis: Frank Herbert's dialogue with Machiavelli". Susan Stratton (2001) contrasts the ecological themes of *Dune* and *Pacific Edge* in "The Messiah and the Greens: The shape of environmental action in *Dune* and *Pacific Edge*". Ronny W. Parkerson (1998) does not examine religion either, but nevertheless studies language, meaning, and ecology in his article: "Semantics, General Semantics and Ecology in Frank Herbert's *Dune*". The representation of spice in *Dune* is the subject of Timothy Morton's (2001) "Imperial Measures: *Dune*, Ecology and Romantic Consumerism".

Psychoanalytical themes permeate the novels; many critics have taken this cue and approached the texts from this perspective. Susan McLean (1982) examined the Oedipal theme and applied the Jungian concept of the "Terrible Mother" to the texts in her study. She correctly asserts that Herbert alludes to Jesus through the use of the communion wafers at Leto's ritual at Siaynoq and the identification of Nayla with Judas (McLean, 1982: 157). She also observes the similarity between Leto and Dionysus, the Greek god of wine:

Like Dionysus, Leto II is the offspring of a "divine" father and a mortal mother who dies at his birth. Leto becomes a god, like his father, and surrounds himself with a band of fanatical female followers who, like the maenads of Dionysus, are ready to kill their own children or rip enemies apart with their bare hands at a word from their god. Finally, like Dionysus, Leto is himself torn apart by his enemies.

(McLean, 1982: 157)

Another critic, Marie-Noelle Zeender (1995: 226), offers an interpretation of Leto II's character based upon a psychoanalytical approach. Her study was inspired by French psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu's work *Le Moi-peau*, which posits a parallel between the skin and what he refers to as a "psychic envelope". Because Leto II assumes the sandtrout's skin, this is an interesting investigation; however, she does not delve into the religious concerns of the text. Another critic, Gwenyth Jones (1997) in "Metempsychosis of the Machine: Science

Fiction in the Halls of Karma”, does not offer any interesting insights into *Dune*. While she initially compliments *Dune* for being a “highly entertaining story”, her summary of the novel is unflattering: “What happens in *Dune* (amidst a wealth of future-Byzantine court intrigue) is that a rich white boy in a clearly recognisable fictional Middle East is adopted by some quasi-Islamic tribesfolk and becomes a version of Mohammed” (Jones, 1997: 3; 4).

Donald Palumbo (1998) is more interested in the structure of the *Dune* series; in his article “The Monomyth as Fractal Pattern in Frank Herbert’s *Dune* novels”, he provides evidence to support the theory that Herbert used fractal geometry and chaos-theory concepts in his series. Palumbo also explores the fractal reiteration of Joseph Campbell’s Monomyth and the use of archetypes in each novel. Palumbo (1998: 443) does not pursue any religious themes in the novel, but classifies Paul, Leto and some of the Idaho gholas as “mystics” by virtue of their prescient abilities.

David M. Miller (1985) evaluates religion in Frank Herbert’s novel in “Toward a Structural Metaphysic: Religion in the Novels of Frank Herbert”. Miller (1985: 146) does not undertake a traditional approach to Herbert’s use of religion in the series; in its place he poses the question “Is there a Supreme Being who is qualitatively different from man?” [*sic*]. Miller responds “no” for ten novels and “yes” for six (*ibid*). In his discussion of the four *Dune* novels, he postulates that Paul, Alia and Leto are worshipped by their inferiors, since they are not only superior, but are a “complex of superiors”; this implies that a “Complex Superior is indistinguishable from a Supreme” (Miller, 1985: 146). This argument negates any possibility of a supernatural ability; for instance, Paul challenges each superior being he meets and then extracts their superiority and adds it to his own being; unlike Leto, he does not incorporate nonhuman superiors (Miller, 1985: 146-147). Miller (1985: 147) contends that Paul discovers a Supreme exists – “God” is a “pattern of organization” – and that Herbert’s borrowing from various traditions does not result in a “Jungian-Platonic-Christian” metaphysic, but a “structural metaphysic”. Miller (1985: 147, original emphasis) explains his position:

Shai-hulud, despite the glossary entry on page 537 of *Dune*, is not a sandworm. Even the granddaddy of all worms is but a spectacular instance of the climatic phase of a pattern, as that pattern is manifest within the capacities of the planet Arrakis. ... *Humanity* is another such instance of the pattern. Paul is not humanity any more than a sandworm is Shai-hulud. But each bears a responsibility as the *Alpha* of its present pattern instance. The sandworm lives and dies to perpetuate its species, its version of the pattern. At the next level, the species lives and dies to make way for the next more complex version of the pattern. Paul must do the same. One might say that Paul and the master worm

occupy functionally identical niches in parallel structures. Both structures are branches of a taxonomy that has increasing complexity as its hierarchical principle. ...Only Paul (in *Dune*) seems to understand this. Everyone feels the power of the pattern only as that power is manifest in a being. Thus, they take the Alpha of their instance of the pattern as *Supreme*, rather than as a *Complex Superior*.

Paul is therefore at the apex of the pattern for humanity, but must give way to a superior form in order to perpetuate the species. Paul's physical death will seal Leto's Godhead and kingship, yet his personality will continue to "live" in Leto. There is also the possibility that he may be resurrected as a ghola. Once again Paul is engineered to be analogous to Jesus whose death and resurrection signal his ascension to deity: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness [*sic*] of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

The Fremen initially worship the sandworms, then Paul, followed by Alia and finally, Leto. Miller (1985: 148) distinguishes between the pattern and an instance of the pattern, by comparing Paul and Alia; Paul is a "solution of superiors" and knows that he is an instance of the pattern. A solution, "also called a homogeneous mixture, is a mixture whose particles are so evenly distributed that the relative concentrations of the components are the same throughout" (Bishop, 2009: 133). Alia is a "suspension of superiors" and mistakenly believes she is the pattern. Suspensions "are heterogeneous, nonuniform mixtures that are very different from solutions... The particles of a suspension are so large that they can often be seen with the naked eye" (Timberlake, 2012: 270). Paul is therefore an equal blend of superiors, whilst Alia is unbalanced because her superiors refuse to blend into the background. Miller's observations are validated when Leto becomes the next iteration of this pattern. He cannot die until he has created a superior version of his pattern. This occurs in *God Emperor of Dune* when Siona passes his test and ensures the survival of the Golden Path. This novel does not add or change any of Miller's (1985: 155) observations: "man finally gets the right answer" [*sic*]. His original question is answered – there is no Supreme Being in the *Dune* novels. Those beings referred to as "gods" are neither "supreme" nor qualitatively different from other men; they are "Complex Superiors" (Miller, 1985: 149).

Judith Ann Winzenz's (1984) thesis entitled "The Messiah and The Bible in Frank Herbert's *Dune* Novels" examines Herbert's presentation of a Messiah and the Biblical references in the *Dune* novels. Winzenz identified the story of Christ, the chapters related to John the Baptist and Revelation as especially relevant to the *Dune* novels. She also draws parallels with Moses leading the Hebrews from Egypt and their wandering in the wilderness. In each novel, Winzenz contends, a different aspect of the messianic story is utilised: In

*Dune*, the creation and influence of prophecies on the development of a messianic movement; in *Dune Messiah*, the Messiah assumes control; in *Children of Dune*, the messianic movement is extended when the first Messiah is unable to complete his destiny, leaving the task to his son while in *God Emperor of Dune*, the Messiah is compared to God. Winzenz (1984: 2-3) describes how Herbert establishes a messianic movement in *Dune*:

By drawing parallels between the beginning of Christ and the beginning of Paul on Dune, he shows how a successful messianic movement occurs. First, a people must be persecuted and believe themselves helpless to control their own destiny so they dream of a better world and a savior. Next prophecies must exist to create the right atmosphere so a Messiah can come forth. Third, a savior must arrive who fulfils those prophecies thus adding to the belief that the persecuted people can gain control of their destiny. Last, the Messiah, a savior, must be persecuted yet lead his people. These are the beginning steps Herbert uses to show how a messianic movement was created on Dune and on Earth.

This suggests that Winzenz (1984: 5) believes a Messiah serves a practical purpose rather than a spiritual one; this is confirmed when she states that in the novels, the Messianic movement is more politically than religiously motivated. She discusses in detail the environmental and cultural similarities between Palestine and Arrakis and by extension, the Hebrews and Fremen – the Hebrews were oppressed by the Romans, as the Fremen are oppressed by the Harkonnen (Winzenz, 1984: 10-12). For instance, she cites the incident where Feyd-Rautha Harkonnen engages in combat in an arena with spectators (Winzenz, 1984: 9). She correctly recognises that the scene is informed by Roman gladiatorial combat. Unfortunately, she incorrectly asserts that Feyd's opponent is a Fremen slave, when he is actually an Atreides prisoner (*ibid*). In terms of the comparison between the Hebrews and the Fremen, she provides the example of the Biblical account in Exodus 16 when “the Hebrews grumbled because of their hunger in the wildness [*sic*] where Moses had led them. God then rained manna to feed the Hebrews” (Winzenz, 1984: 11). Winzenz (1984: 11) notes that “in one place a character sang: ‘Our Father ate manna in the desert / In the burning places where whirlwinds came...’ [Herbert, 1965: 114]”. Winzenz omits the fact that it is Gurney Halleck, a retainer for House Atreides, who sings this song; Halleck does not mention where he learnt the tune, and consequently it has no direct link to the Fremen in *Dune*.

Winzenz (1984: 13-14) proposes several factors which she believes contribute to the beginning of the Messiah movement on *Dune* and ensure its development: the Atreides family being sent to a trap (Arrakis); the Bene Gesserit schemes and Jessica, Duncan Idaho, Thufir Hawat, Gurney Halleck and Dr. Yueh's roles as teachers to Paul. She also makes an interesting connection:



Further, Herbert indicates a few comparisons between the Bene Gesserit and an order of nuns in that within their clan their training was called the Way, an allusion to Christ's statement in Job [*sic*] [not Job, but John] 14:6. "I am the way, the truth and the life." Members of the Bene Gesserit were also taught complete obedience, and a head female was called Reverend Mother.

(Winzenz, 1984: 13)

The early instruction that Paul received is in Winzenz's (1984: 14) view similar to Christ's and began the process that eventually led to his becoming the Messiah. When Paul seems to fulfil the Fremen prophecies, the Fremen slowly begin to accept him as their saviour.

Winzenz's brief thesis provides an overview of the development, fall and resurrection of the messiah. She recognises biblical allusions and contrasts them with Herbert's interpretation. Winzenz accomplishes her objectives of describing the presentation of the messiah and the biblical aspects. Unfortunately, at times, she confuses events and characters and occasionally her interpretations are contrary to the evidence provided in the novels. Her thesis begins quite strongly, but as it progresses she begins to rely increasingly upon summary.

Donnie Collette's (1986) thesis is entitled "The Messianic Hero in Frank Herbert's *Dune* novels". Collette believes that the theme of heroes and messiahs being disastrous for a society unifies the novels. He claims that the Fremen and Bene Gesserit place their hopes upon Paul out of a need to seek control and certainty in a chaotic universe but that Paul's prediction is a trap. He identifies Duncan Idaho as the key to understanding the series. Collette questions Herbert's indictment of heroes and messiahs because he views Leto's plan as a success.

Collette (1986: 10-11) does not hold that *Dune* should be approached as a religious novel, because it is completely unconcerned with questions that are of primary importance in religious thought. I concur with Collette's position and conclusion; I do not suppose anyone would mistake the *Dune* novels to be religious, considering the fact that most of the religions in the series are fictitious. Like Winzenz, Collette (1986: 11; 19) also believes that religion is a political tool in the novels and that Herbert carefully prepares a society that would welcome a messiah. Collette (1986: 20-28) shares Winzenz's logic of comparing the Fremen to the Hebrews.

When Collette turns his attention to Idaho, the focus is no longer upon the messiah. Unfortunately, his discussions about Idaho and Leto's Golden Path subside mostly into a summary of the novels; however he addresses the issue as to whether Herbert's indictment of the hero and messiah is effective in his conclusion (Collette, 1986: 60). He does not believe so, challenging the technical and thematic aspects of the novels (Collette, 1986: 60-61). He mistakenly asserts that Herbert never specifies what the alternative to the Golden Path would be and that Leto's reasoning is never made clear (Collette, 1986: 61). In Collette's (1986: 61-63) opinion, even if *Dune* had been technically flawless, it would not have been effective because the flexibility of the genre sacrifices credibility. He does not deem SF as being of less value than "mainstream works of social criticism" since *Dune* is a form of mythmaking (Collette, 1986: 63). Collette concludes that the novels are admirable in the scope of their undertaking (*ibid*).

A thesis entitled "Christian Concepts and Doctrine in Selected Works of Science Fiction" written by Katherine Anderson (1981) considers *The Dune Trilogy* amongst *A Canticle for Leibowitz* and C.S. Lewis's works. She examines political, ecological and mythological aspects of the novels and describes characters and their motivation. While Anderson (1981: 101) observes that Paul is a "fusion of Mohammed, Jesus, and Fremmen deity", she believes that he is a "secular-religious ruler". Anderson's work is similar to that of Winzenz and Collette; therefore for the sake of expediency, I will not repeat discussions.

Hopefully, the objective of obtaining balance for this chapter has been achieved. I have traced the seed idea for *Dune* and charted Herbert's inspiration for the religious elements. Appendix II: "The Religion of Dune", at the end of *Dune*, provided the background and framework for the religions of the *Duniverse*. This was an essential starting point for the study of religion in the series and a review of criticism based upon the *Dune Chronicles* covered previous research and assessments. In the next chapter my attention will be turned to the messiah – Paul-Muad'Dib Atreides.

## Chapter Two

### Paul: The Messiah

I wanted to do a book about the messianic impulse in human society, looking at why we follow the leader. Because, in my view, taking what I think is a dispassionate look at charismatic leaders, they ought to come with a warning on the package that they're dangerous to your health.

(Herbert quoted in O'Reilly, 1981: 5)

This quotation, amongst others of a similar ilk, suggests that Frank Herbert believed that the messianic impulse in society is ultimately disastrous. This chapter will explore the portrayal of the messiah in the first two novels of the *Dune Chronicles: Dune* and *Dune Messiah* and the depiction of religions in these novels. As mentioned earlier, the *Dune Chronicles* is unique because of the use of fictional religions that are also amalgamations and adaptations of real ones; therefore I reiterate that a study of the religions in this series in my view is best undertaken by utilising concepts from existing faiths and showing how Herbert applied them to fictitious ones.

William Varner (2004: 6, original emphasis) provides a more thorough definition of "Messiah":

The term Messiah is a translation of the Hebrew word *mashiach*, a verbal noun meaning "anointed one." The Greek translation of that word is *christos* and it is utilized in both the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the LXX) and the New Testament. From this Greek word comes the English title, Christ. The Hebrew verb and noun are primarily applied to three types of individuals in the OT period - priests (Ex. 28:41; Lev. 4:3), kings (I Sam. 16:13; I Sam. 12:3), and prophets (I Kings 19:16; Ps. 105:15). The idea of being "anointed" is that the person so anointed is consecrated and equipped to do a sacred task; i.e., to perform a special function in the theocratic program of Israel.

Paul-Muad'Dib Atreides can be considered a messiah in *Dune* because he is the saviour of the Fremen people: he frees them from Harkonnen persecution and exploitation. *Dune Messiah* reverses Paul's role, seeing that he was unable to prevent the *jihad* of his prescient visions. Paul compares himself to Hitler and claims that at a conservative estimate, he has killed sixty-one billion people, sterilized ninety planets, and completely demoralized five hundred others. Moreover, he has wiped out the adherents of forty religions (Herbert, 1969: 135-136). There is no evidence in the text to support or refute Paul's claims, but the *jihad* is ongoing. One may question whether Paul deserves the title of messiah or anti-messiah at this stage; nevertheless he reappears briefly in *Children of Dune* and attempts to

undermine the false religion that has spread in his name. At the risk of oversimplifying, *Dune* is the tale of the coming of the messiah; *Dune Messiah* is the account of his reign as messiah while *Children of Dune* examines, in part, his “resurrection”.

In the interview with Willis McNelly, Frank Herbert also discussed the theme of the messiah in the series:

Well, one of the threads in the story is to trace a possible way a messiah is created in our society, and I hope I was successful in making it believable. Here we have the entire process, or at least the large and some of the subtle elements of the construction of this, both from the individual standpoint, and from the way society demands this of you. It's the references in there, you know, that the man must recognize the myth he is living in, because the creation of an avatar is a mythmaking process.

(Herbert & Herbert, 1969)

The term “avatar” or “avatāra” possesses a different connotation to the concept of a messiah, seeing that it is an idea central to Hinduism. “Literally the term means ‘a descent’ and suggests the idea of a deity coming down from heaven to earth” (Butler, 2005: 707). The deity most closely associated with avatāra is Viṣṇu, who assumes the form for the purpose of maintaining or restoring cosmic order (*ibid*). It is impossible to verify whether Herbert understood the distinction between a messiah and an avatāra. He successfully applies the messiah concept to Paul; conversely Leto II conforms more closely to the avatāra model. This model will be investigated in the third chapter of the dissertation.

Herbert establishes Paul as a messiah through a variety of methods. Initially, he describes Paul’s background, family and education. *Dune* begins on the planet Caladan with a fifteen-year-old Paul. Paul, heir of House Atreides, is the son of Duke Leto and Lady Jessica, a Bene Gesserit-trained concubine. The “Atreides” name is quite enigmatic and would probably arouse the reader’s curiosity if unaware of the Greek connotation. If one is familiar with Greek mythology, the name “Atreides” would suggest descent from the House of Atreus (as mentioned in Chapter One). The most famous members of the Atreus family are Agamemnon and Menelaus, from Homer’s *Iliad* (Morford & Lenardon, 2003: 406). The Atreus ancestry is confirmed separately by Paul’s sister, Alia, and Ghanima, Paul’s daughter (Herbert, 1976: 60; 287).

Herbert connects the Atreides, an alien family from the future, with a famously cursed family from Earth’s past. Pelops, ancestor of the Atreus family, killed a man who had attempted to rape his wife. The dying man, Myrtilus, cursed the descendants of Pelops

(Morford & Lenardon, 2003: 407). Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter and was later stabbed by his wife's lover, Aegisthus, in retaliation (*ibid*: 409). This pattern of family members slaughtering each other is repeated by Atreides descendants throughout the *Dune* series: Duke Leto is killed by his concubine's father, Baron Vladimir Harkonnen; Alia has her brother Paul assassinated; Siona causes her ancestor Leto II to be assassinated, and so forth. If a reader is aware of the connection, it immediately gives the impression that they are reading a story that is epic in scale.

Carmelo Rafala (2001) compares *Dune* to *The Odyssey* as mythic / heroic epic in chapter one of his dissertation. Rafala questions whether *Dune* can be placed within the realm of the traditional mythic epic. He argues that since the term "epic" does not have set parameters, *Dune* and other science fiction novels that contain elements of traditional epic may be included in the genre. Thereafter he uses *The Odyssey*, a universally acknowledged traditional epic, to compare and contrast with *Dune*. Rafala applies Jungian archetypes and Jung's theory of the collective unconscious to both texts. As Herbert was vocal about his interest in Jung's theories, Rafala's methodology is sound. In a related article, Robert Cirasa (1984) discusses suspense and prophetic conventions in classical epics and *Dune*. Like Rafala, he notes that *Dune* is filled with many commonly declared epic characteristics: great events and figures; additionally, martial confrontations that can be associated with heroic poetry (Cirasa, 1984: 205-206). The main aspect that seems to tie *Dune* to epic, in Cirasa's view, is the use of prophetic conventions. The Bene Gesserit believe in the prophecy of the coming of the Kwisatz Haderach, but ironically use false prophecies for social and political intrigue (*ibid*: 206). Cirasa goes on to examine the development and limitations of Paul's prescience in relation to epic. Even though Cirasa recognises Paul's "messianic nature", he relates Paul's prescience to the prophecy one would associate with epic and not messianism (*ibid*: 213).

Paul is the "hero" of the narrative; as such, Herbert implements Lord Raglan's theory of the hero. In *Dreamer of Dune*, Brian Herbert (2003: 178) confirmed that his father studied Lord Raglan's *The Hero* (2003). Raglan identified twenty-two typical occurrences in hero-myths. Brian Herbert describes some of the characteristics that *Dune* fulfils and sometimes adapts:

These included (all of which closely approximate the life of Paul Muad'Dib): (a) the hero's father is a king (a duke in Paul's case); (b) the circumstances of his conception are unusual; (c) he is reputed to be the son of a god (Paul is reputed to be a returning god, a

messiah); (d) an attempt is made to kill him at birth (in Paul's case, the attempt occurred in his youth); (e) after a victory over the king and / or a giant, dragon, or wild beast, he (f) marries a princess (Irulan, his wife in name only, is the daughter of Emperor Shaddam Corrino). The mother of Paul's children, Chani, is the daughter of a kinglike figure to the Fremmen, Liet-Kynes) and (g) becomes king.

(Herbert, 2003:178-179)

As a footnote, Brian Herbert continues:

In the sequel to *Dune*, *Dune Messiah*, Paul continues in the classical pattern of a hero, when: (h) for a time he reigns uneventfully, and (i) prescribes laws, but (j) later he loses favour and (k) he meets with a mysterious death and (l) his body is not buried.

(*ibid*: 179).

While Raglan discusses some figures from the Old Testament, he seems to prefer literary heroes. Otto Rank's *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (1914) expounds upon "founders of religions", amongst others, who shared similar circumstances surrounding their births. For example, the circumstances of Jesus's conception are unusual; he is reputed to be the son of God and an attempt is made to kill him at birth. By ensuring that Paul shares similarities with other religious figures, Herbert creates a credible messiah. The incorporation of religious elements adds depth to Herbert's characters. In addition, various themes and sub-themes that include politics, leadership and law are shown to form relationships with religion in his texts.

Paul is a product of the Bene Gesserit breeding programme. The Bene Gesserit Sisterhood practise politics; moreover they create and manipulate religions for their own purposes. They claim that their organisation is dedicated to the maturation of humankind and wish to accomplish this through a breeding programme and training. The ultimate aim of the Sisterhood is to create a "Kwisatz Haderach". According to the "Terminology of the Imperium", the term "Kwisatz Haderach" is defined as the "Shortening of the Way". "This is the label applied by the Bene Gesserit to the *unknown* for which they sought a genetic solution: a male Bene Gesserit whose organic mental powers would bridge space and time" (Herbert, 1965: 522, original emphasis). The Sisterhood do not wish to be the focus of power; they would rather wield it through an individual whom they can control, i.e. the Kwisatz Haderach. Their plan is thrown into disarray when Jessica, a member of their Sisterhood, disobeys their order to bear a daughter.

Herbert seems to have adapted the idea of the Kwisatz Haderach from the Hebrew term, *kefitzat ha-derekh*. Gedalyah Nigal provides the following definition, “*Kefitzat ha-derekh* (the miraculous shortening of the way) was one of the activities attributed to *baalei shem...*” (Nigal, 1994: 33-34, original emphasis). Nigal states that the term only appears in the Talmud. In Judaism, the written Torah basically comprises the same books as the Old Testament, whilst the oral Torah added the writings of the sages, beginning with the Mishnah and the two Talmuds (Neusner, 2003: 17). Nigal (1994: 37) cites a text from a thirteenth-century Spanish kabbalist that presents additional information about the *kefitzat ha-derekh*:

There is a tradition possessed by the *baalei shemot*: at known times [it is possible to use] the air of demons, in order to attain a bit of the power of prophecy, which is [the use] of the air of the Holy One, blessed be He, and *kefitzat ha-derekh* for them, which makes use of a sort of means called “the air in use by the demons.” The great wise man – the kabbalist – with whom we were in Narbonne, attested regarding his master, the rabbi and pietist Rabbi Eleazar of Worms, and many others who came from there and who knew him from there attest regarding him that in instances such as this, when a religious duty in a distant place was incumbent on him, he would ride in the cloud shape which was appointed for this purpose, arrive in the distant place, perform his religious duty, and return to his place. And several days [times?] he rode on a beast, as other people.

While there is no guarantee that Herbert read this document, there are interesting concurrences: Paul attains his power of prophecy through the use of spice; it is not a natural ability. According to the Spanish kabbalist, the power of prophecy in a *kefitzat ha-derekh* is gained through the use of the “air of demons”. Rabbi Eleazar of Worms was a *kefitzat ha-derekh* and on Arrakis, there are giant sandworms which are worshipped by the Fremmen as “Shai-hulud”. It seems reasonable to suggest that if Herbert was aware of the connection, he was inspired to take the title “of Worms” literally. Hence it is possible that Herbert used “Worms” as a pun. The Fremmen frequently exclaim, “Great gods below!” (Herbert, 1965, 282). This is a radical departure from Abrahamic religions, which suppose God to be in heaven, above, whereas the devil reigns in hell below. Perhaps “[the Rabbi] rode on a beast” was the inspiration behind the Fremmen’s travelling on the back of the giant worms as a mode of transportation. The Rabbi rode on mystical beasts — there is an account of a horse that was able to travel at supernatural speed because the tetragrammaton was inscribed on each of its hooves (Dennis, 2007: 255).

There is another description of *kefitzat ha-derekh* in *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Myth, Magic and Mysticism*, which defines it as “Jumping the Way” (Dennis, 2007: 255). Dennis (*ibid*, original emphasis) explains:

Physical teleportation is first mentioned in the **Midrash**, where the saintly Sage **Chanina ben Dosa** is instantaneously transported to Jerusalem by a team of angels (S of S R. 1:4; Eccl. R. 1:1). The **Talmud** lists three biblical figures, **Eliezer, Jacob**, and Abishai [*sic*], who traversed huge distances at miraculous speeds (Sanh. 95a; Chul. 91b).

The name “Chanina” is similar to that of Paul’s concubine “Chani” and his daughter “Ghanima”. Herbert did not think in terms of physical teleportation for Paul; instead the Spacing Guild Navigators, who possess similar but much weaker abilities than Paul, “Jump the Way” through space. This accounts for their monopoly over space travel. The Guild sensed the danger of Paul’s prescience and sought to exterminate him.

Paul is more readily embraced by the Fremens as the messiah, owing to his leadership abilities. The contribution of Paul’s teachers and companions to the development of his character is crucial: Dr Yueh, a Suk Doctor, Gurney Halleck, a troubadour warrior, Duncan Idaho, Sword Master of the Ginaz and Thufir Hawat, a Mentat Master of Assassins. Even though all four men care for Paul, two of his teachers (Yueh and Thufir) betray him. The betrayal by both men is a result of external manipulation. Yueh betrays the Atrides family because he believes that the Baron has kidnapped his wife, while Thufir is tricked into believing that Jessica betrayed the Atrides. Even Gurney believes this lie and tries to kill Jessica; he is convinced by Paul that Yueh was the traitor and repents his attack. If one approaches the text with religious themes in mind, it may occur to the reader that Yueh’s role is to reinforce the perception of Paul as a messiah: Jesus was likewise betrayed by a trusted disciple, Judas Iscariot. Judas was motivated by avarice but Yueh’s desire to save his wife is commendable.

Yueh presents a rare and valuable copy of the “Orange Catholic Bible” (OCB) to Paul. The latter seems to be familiar with this religious text; he had earlier quoted a verse to the Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohaim, “Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a man’s mind” (Herbert, 1965: 12). At this point in the novel, it is not revealed whether Paul has received any formal religious instruction. Yueh does not present the Bible with this purpose in mind: “I salve my own conscience. I give him the surcease of religion before betraying him. Thus may I say to myself that he has gone where I cannot go” (*ibid*: 40). Yueh knows that it is highly likely that they will die as a result of his betrayal; in order to ease his conscience he believes he can save Paul’s soul. The place that he “cannot go” is probably heaven because his actions are damning of himself.



The OCB is not divided according to chapter or verse but by “kalimas”. “Kalima” is an Arabic term, reinforcing the theme of Islam as a dominant influence on the novel. Richard Bonney (2004: xxii) translates the word *kalimah* as “declarations of faith”, while Michael Carter (2006: 128) translates it as “word, logos”. The religious significance of the text is highlighted and one expects the language and style of a sacred text. Yueh asks Paul to read a kalima:

“Open it to four-sixty-seven Kalima -- where it says: ‘From water does all life begin.’ There’s a slight notch on the edge of the cover to mark the place.”  
Paul felt the cover, detected two notches, one shallower than the other. He pressed the shallower one and the book spread open on his palm, its magnifier sliding into place.  
“Read it aloud,” Yueh said.  
Paul wet his lips with his tongue, read: “Think you of the fact that a deaf person cannot hear. Then, what deafness may we not all possess? What senses do we lack that we cannot see and cannot hear another world all around us? What is there around us that we cannot —”

(Herbert, 1965: 40)

While Paul does not read the page Yueh described, the phrase “from water does all life begin” is also gleaned from the Qur’an. “Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation), before we clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?” (Q, 21:30). From a scientific standpoint human beings can only speculate about how or why life appeared, but the importance of water in a desert environment is inestimable. The senses that human beings lack reiterate that humankind’s knowledge is limited. Paul possesses a sense that others lack in the *Dune* universe, prescience; however it has limitations. Any limited resource may be imbued with sacred properties as a result of its rarity. This accounts for the Fremen’s reverence for water.

The concept of the messiah is common to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Prophet Muhammad was a great military leader; as a result, Paul’s military exploits resonate more with Muhammad than Jesus. During the course of *Dune*, House Atreides becomes a “guerrilla House”: hunted and persecuted (Herbert, 1965: 105). Guerrilla warfare is the only means available to Paul for him to fight against the Harkonnen. Paul is not simply a messiah: his character is more nuanced, as he is also a military leader. Richard Gabriel summarises Muhammad’s aptitudes:

In the space of a single decade he fought eight major battles, led eighteen raids, and planned thirty-eight other military operations where others were in command but operating under his orders and strategic direction. ...He was a military theorist,

organizational reformer, strategic thinker, operational level combat commander, political and military leader, heroic soldier, revolutionary, and inventor of the theory of insurgency and history's first successful practitioner [of insurgency].

(Gabriel, 2007: xviii-xix)

The hierarchal nature of the military is duplicated in the *Dune* universe. Herbert employs a feudal system: an emperor and various noble houses are in positions of power. The economic system revolves around spice and is facilitated by Combine Honnete Ober Advancer Mercantiles (CHOAM), a development corporation controlled by the Emperor and Great Houses, the Guild and Bene Gesserit being silent partners. CHOAM decides which House is awarded the contract to mine the spice. By replacing the Harkonnen with the Atreides, on Arrakis, the enmity between the two Houses is sealed. The Harkonnen outrage at this decision is a farce, since the Emperor Shaddam IV and Baron Vladimir Harkonnen are conspiring against the Atreides.

The relationship between the Atreides and Harkonnen is integral to the plot of the first few novels. Princess Irulan says in her "Manual of Muad'Dib":

To attempt an understanding of Muad'Dib without understanding his mortal enemies, the Harkonnens, is to attempt seeing Truth without knowing Falsehood. It is the attempt to see the Light without knowing Darkness. It cannot be.

(Herbert, 1965: 9)

The relationship between the families appears to be a simple binary opposition of good versus evil – the noble Atreides versus the barbaric Harkonnen. Once it is revealed that Paul is the Baron's grandson, the line between Harkonnen and Atreides is no longer distinct. As the novel progresses and Paul's character evolves, his actions seem at odds with the noble image of the Atreides. The reader is invited to re-evaluate their opinion of the Atreides.

When the Atreides arrive on Arrakis, they find a planet occupied by Harkonnen and the Emperor's spies, spice miners, smugglers, traders and Fremen. The legend of the Kwisatz Haderach has been implanted on Arrakis by the Bene Gesserit. The Fremen refer to Paul as "Lisan-Al-Gaib" (Voice from the Outer World) or "Mahdi". Herbert draws parallels with the gospels by echoing the arrival of Jesus at Jerusalem: "And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed [is] he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Mt. 21:9). Jessica's "holiness" is also noted:

On that first day when Muad'Dib rode through the streets of Arrakeen with his family, some of the people along the way recalled the legends and the prophecy and they ventured to shout: "Mahdi!" But their shout was more a question than a statement, for as

yet they could only hope he was the one foretold as the Lisan al-Gaib, the Voice from the Outer World. Their attention was focused, too, on the mother, because they had heard she was a Bene Gesserit and it was obvious to them that she was like the other Lisan al-Gaib.

(Herbert, 1965: 97)

In the “Terminology of the Imperium”, “Lisan al-Gaib” is defined by Herbert as “‘The Voice from the Outer World.’ In Fremen messianic legends, an off-world prophet. Sometimes translated as ‘Giver of Water’ (*See Mahdi*)” (Herbert, 1965: 522-523). The link between the Lisan al-Gaib and Mahdi is made explicit in the definition, which also reinforces the reason why the Fremen used these terms interchangeably to describe Paul. “Mahdi” is defined in the Fremen messianic legend as “The One Who Will Lead Us to Paradise” (*ibid*, 523). The term “Mahdi” also appears in Islam: one translation is “Awaited One” (Bonney, 2004: xxii); another interpretation is “Guided One” (Jackson, 2006: 71). As stated previously, “messiah” means “anointed one” and suggests that the person so anointed is consecrated and equipped to do a sacred task (Varner, 2004: 6). Paul’s sacred task is to save the Fremen and transform Arrakis into a paradise.

Paradise for the Fremen needs to be understood in terms of their bitter experiences. The Fremen feel isolated due to Harkonnen persecution and are forced to bribe the Spacing Guild to ensure their privacy; consequently they are naturally suspicious of outsiders and live in an unforgiving, hostile environment. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, three of the world’s religions began in the desert: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. David Jasper (2004: 5) points out, “[i]n the space of the desert, where life itself becomes almost impossible and unbearable, language is transfigured and the impossible necessity of theology may be rediscovered”. The Fremen’s most sacred and secret dream is to live on a planet that is rich with water, teeming with life. The Fremen Messiah should share this dream and make it a reality. Associating a garden with paradise is not an unfamiliar concept in religion: “The imagery of heaven as an Edenic garden is a dominant motif in Christian thinking of the afterlife” (Pippin, 2007: 718). In a treacherous environment, a strong leader, such as a Messiah, is necessary to ensure survival of the group / tribe.

The Bene Gesserit have for millennia implemented protective measures for their personnel, including the creation and manipulation of religions. They accomplish this through the “Missionaria Protectiva”: a branch dedicated to “...sowing infectious superstitions on primitive worlds, thus opening those regions to exploitation...” (Herbert, 1965: 524). These “infectious superstitions” are referred to as the “panoplia propheticus”

(*ibid*, 525). The Fremen, amongst other races in the universe, are subjected to these processes by the Bene Gesserit. Consequently, they believe in the Kwisatz Haderach and obey Reverend Mothers without question.

The first indication of the highly superstitious nature of the Fremen appears in the interaction between Jessica and the Housekeeper, the Shadout Mapes. Both rehearse a set piece, though only Jessica is aware of it. Mapes is filled with religious awe; she is completely unaware that her responses were inculcated through generations of conditioning. The legends indicate Jessica will understand the meaning of the crysknife (the tooth of a sandworm). Jessica discerns the meaning, “Maker”, from observing Mapes’s body language (*ibid*: 54). Mapes holds great reverence for the sandworms or “Shai-hulud”, believing Jessica will fulfil the prophecy that a Reverend Mother will set them free since Jessica answers the questions correctly. The reader is painfully aware that Jessica does not possess any mystical knowledge; she merely discerns the answers from Mapes’s reactions. Jessica senses violence in Mapes; instead of subduing her, she chooses to perpetuate the myth and legend of Paul and herself. The precarious position of the Atreides has been noted, but there is no excuse for the manipulation of belief in the face of their vast resources.

In an assassination attempt against Paul, Mapes is almost killed in his stead. Paul risks his life to save her; an inconceivable act given the social hierarchy of the *Dune* universe. Paul’s action is not motivated by strategy; his instinctual response is to save her life. Mapes does not feel grateful: “I must cleanse the way between us. You’ve put a water burden on me that I’m not sure I care to support. But we Fremen pay our debts – be they black or white debts” (*ibid*: 68). The Fremen are driven by ritual, as evident in her conversation with Jessica and her need to “cleanse the way” with Paul, so that she is not indebted to him.

The Fremen, perhaps as a result of the harsh environment and persecution by the Harkonnen, have been particularly conducive to the Bene Gesserit’s machinations and believe that Paul may be their messiah. They are constantly on the lookout for “signs”. This approach may lead them to see what they wish to: they project their prejudices onto an event or person. Their most interesting physical feature is totally blue eyes which have no whites in them (*ibid*: 39). This attribute is a metaphor for their single-mindedness – they do not perceive issues from different perspectives. In *Dune Messiah* Bronso of IX also notes this flaw, “Your eyes, your organs of *sight*, become one thing without contrast, a single view” (Herbert, 1969: 2, original emphasis). The positive side of this is that it accounts for their

loyalty and devotion. Duke Leto recognises the strength and character of the Fremen and attempts to recruit them, ordering Duncan to infiltrate the Fremen and convince them that the Atreides are not tyrants like the Harkonnens. He is aware of the treachery of the Emperor and Baron; his desperation means that he is willing to exploit, if necessary, the Fremen's religious beliefs. He tells Paul, "[t]hat filmclip there – they call you 'Mahdi' – 'Lisan al-Gaib' – as a last resort, you might capitalize on that" (Herbert, 1965: 105). Duke Leto is the first person to explicitly advocate to Paul that manipulation of religion is essential (*ibid*: 275-276).

The ruthlessness of the Duke towards Harkonnen spies necessitates scrutiny, forcing the reader to question if there is any difference between the Atreides and Harkonnen. He has "Harkonnen creatures" "eliminated" and their properties confiscated through forgery (*ibid*: 90). Paul and Gurney are dissatisfied with Leto's actions and believe that the Duke has made a wrong decision. Gurney Halleck seems to be obsessed by a religious preoccupation since he frequently cites religious quotations. For this particular occasion he states, "I have been a stranger in a strange land", a quotation Paul recognises from the OCB (*ibid*). The original source of this quotation is from the second book of the Hebrew Bible (Ex. 2:22). The Book of Exodus narrates the events concerning the departure, or exodus, of Moses and the Hebrews from Egypt. It contains many laws, also called Torah, which Moses received on Mount Sinai. Gurney voices his sense of alienation in this new environment which imposes new rules. As discussed in Chapter One, Herbert's contemporaries also explored messianism in their novels. Robert Heinlein, a contemporary of Herbert, explored the theme of religion in an SF novel entitled *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961). This allusion reinforces the messianic quality and "otherness" of Paul. Paul agrees with Gurney and wants "an end to devious plots" (Herbert, 1965: 90). Paul is still interested in taking the moral high ground; it is hard to reconcile this attitude with Irulan's report that claimed Muad'Dib "ordered battle drums made from his enemies' skins" (*ibid*: 466). It is unclear if there is any merit to this statement or whether it is part of the myth that surrounds him.

The Duke wishes to acquire more equipment from two hundred advance bases that have been abandoned. The Fremen refuse to reveal their location and merely respond, "Liet knows" (*ibid*: 95). The answer deliberately echoes the phrase "God knows" and Leto in exasperation also responds with this phrase. Hawat proposes that perhaps Liet is a person and not a deity, which is a correct extrapolation. The Fremen responses suggest that they

obey Liet's directives as if they were divinely ordained. Their behaviour and devotion towards Liet are easily transferred to Paul, when Liet dies. Gurney observes, "Serving two masters...It sounds like a religious quotation" (*ibid*). Gurney is correct for two reasons: firstly, Liet is Kynes, a man who serves the Emperor and the Fremmen. Secondly, this *is* a religious quotation: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt. 6:24) and "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Lk. 16:13). Kynes's loyalty is first and foremost to the Fremmen, which is ironic given that he is the "Judge of Change" yet not impartial.

Dr Kynes is an ecologist i.e. a scientist. His encounter with the Atrides leaves him unsettled as he "prided himself on being a scientist to whom legends were merely interesting clues, pointing toward cultural roots" (Herbert, 1965: 106). He tries to escape the prophetic legends of his people but an internal dialogue reveals his inner conflict: "[y]et the boy fitted the ancient prophecy so precisely" and then "[o]f course, the prophecy left certain latitude..." (*ibid*). The disadvantage of allowing "latitude" to an interpretation is that there is a danger of overlooking facts, or instead, of forcing the details to fit the situation. Kynes is a Fremmen first, so that every word and action by Paul appears to be a sign:

"We are indebted to you, Dr. Kynes," Leto said. "These suits and the consideration for our welfare will be remembered."

On impulse, Paul called to mind a quotation from the O.C. Bible, said: "The gift is the blessing of the river."

The words rang out overloud in the still air. The Fremmen escort Kynes had left in the shade of the administration building leaped up from their squatting repose, muttering in open agitation. One cried out: "Lisan al-Gaib!"

Kynes whirled, gave a curt, chopping signal with a hand, waved the guard away. They fell back, grumbling among themselves, trailed away around the building.

"Most interesting," Leto said.

Kynes passed a hard glare over the Duke and Paul, said: "Most of the desert natives here are a superstitious lot. Pay no attention to them. They mean no harm." But he thought of the words of the legend: "*They will greet you with Holy Words and your gifts will be a blessing.*"

(Herbert, 1969: 108, original emphasis)

There is nothing simple about the Bene Gesserit conditioning. It is not "on impulse" that Paul utters these words; he is also subject to the same conditioning. This suggests that the narrator is unreliable, dishonest, or alternatively, Herbert made a mistake by using the phrase "on impulse". Once again, I find myself in the role of the "resisting" reader since I am suspicious of the reliability or honesty of the narrator. A reader may associate a third-person

or omniscient narrator with one who is truthful and consistent as opposed to the subjectivity of a first person narrator. As mentioned earlier, Genette distinguishes between a homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator. He substituted the term “heterodiegetic” for “omniscient”; either term can be associated with zero focalization. On the other hand, Wayne C Booth (1983: 157-158, original emphasis) distinguished between two categories of narrators: “I have called a narrator *reliable* when he [*sic*] speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author’s norms), *unreliable* when he does not”. Booth does not explicitly provide a definition for an implied author. He argues that the author is distinct from the narrator; in addition, he proposes that readers are always aware of the author behind any text and will inevitably draw conclusions about the text’s implied author:

However impersonal he [*sic*] may try to be, his [*sic*] readers will inevitably construct a picture of the official scribe who writes in this manner -- and of course that official scribe will never be neutral toward all values. Our reaction to his [*sic*] various commitments, secret or overt, will help to determine our response to the work.

(Booth, 1983: 71)

Ansgar F. Nünning revised Booth’s theory of the unreliable narrator from within a Reader-Response framework (Fludernik, 2009: 28). Nünning (2005: 93) points out that a weakness in this definition of an unreliable narrator is that most theories do not detail what unreliability actually is and also fail to distinguish between moral and epistemological shortcomings. Additionally, he agrees with criticism against the concept of an implied author:

Structuralist narratologists have pointed out that it is a contradiction in terms to define the implied author as the structure of the text’s norms and to thus conflate it with the text as a whole, while also casting it in the role of the addresser in the communication model of narrative. They have argued that an entity cannot be both a distinct agent in the sequence of narrative transmission and the text itself; furthermore, if the implied author is equivalent to the whole text, and if his or her counterpart the implied reader is also presumed to be a textual function, then the implied author is equivalent to or a subsumption of the implied reader...

(Nünning, 2005: 92)

Wolfgang Iser (1974: xii) states, “This term [implied reader] incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader’s actualization of this potential through the reading process. It refers to the active nature of this process”. I find the following explanation more accessible:

The term 'reader' can be subdivided into 'implied reader' and 'actual reader'. The first is the reader whom the text creates for itself and amounts to 'a network of response-inviting structures' which predispose us to read in certain ways. The 'actual reader' receives certain mental images in the process of reading: however, the images will inevitably be coloured by the reader's 'existing stock of experience'.

(Selden, Widdowson & Brooker, 2005: 53)

Personally, I believe that the implied reader follows the cues of the narrator and recognises when the narrator is inconsistent, unreliable, attempting to misdirect the reader or simply does not have access to all the information that is available. The implied reader should be familiar with the historical, cultural, attitudes, socio-political and other texts and contextual influences on the author in order to gain a better understanding of the text. I found that the more I researched these aspects, the more connections I made in the text. Without accessing this information, my interpretation was dramatically narrowed. Whether Herbert envisioned an implied reader or not is irrelevant; he seems to demand that readers think for themselves and draw their own conclusions.

The reader is in danger of responding to Paul in the same manner as the Fremmen. The struggle of Kynes to remain objective should signal to the reader that they should attempt objectivity as well. If the reader recognises the unreliable narrator or the role of the implied reader, then a sceptical approach to the text is inevitable. There is another consequence in employing an unreliable narrator:

Note that a reliable narrator is not necessarily one that I – as a reader – always agree with: after all, however honest and trustworthy he [*sic*] may be portrayed as, I may find his values repugnant and his conclusions stupid. Conversely, I may find the attitudes of an unreliable narrator very attractive indeed.

(Prince, 1982: 12)

Nünning (2005: 91) challenges Prince's definition: "...this definition is marred by vagueness, because the only yardstick it offers for gauging a narrator's unreliability is the implied author, whose status and norms are more difficult to ascertain than one might think". A recurring issue throughout English, literary and religious studies is the constant challenging of definitions. While Nünning and other critics wrestle with trying to establish universal acceptance for their definitions, ultimately a student must weigh their arguments in practice.

I accept Prince's explanation on this issue since the reader is more than willing to accept Paul as a hero and saviour – the attitude of the unreliable narrator would therefore tie in with this expectation. It is only Leto II who brings into focus and who fully understands



the implications of these “unconscious” responses, thereby being able to break free from the conditioning and outmanoeuvre the Bene Gesserit. Kynes is impressed when the Duke risks his life and Paul’s to save men working on a harvester of spice. By being more concerned about the lives of his men rather than the spice, the Duke distinguishes himself from the Harkonnen and earns Kynes’s respect. When the worm departs, ritual-conditioned Kynes is compelled to deliver a prayer that echoes Mapes’s reverence for the “Maker”: “‘Bless the Maker and His water,’ Kynes murmured. ‘Bless the coming and going of Him. May His passage cleanse the world. May He keep the world for His people’” (Herbert, 1965: 124). Despite his belief that he is a rational scientist, he unwittingly displays the superstitious and devoted characteristics of a Fremen. Moreover, he exemplifies the fatalistic tendency of his people, “[w]hen God hath ordained a creature to die in a particular place, He causeth that creature’s wants to direct him to that place” (*ibid*:126).

The Duke’s attempts to secure their position fail as a result of Yueh’s betrayal. The Harkonnen and Sardaukar crush the Atrides forces, while Jessica and Paul escape into the desert. Thufir is captured; Duncan is killed and Gurney gains sanctuary with the Smugglers. The Duke is captured and dies attempting to kill the Baron. Before he dies, one of the Duke’s last thoughts is biblical in nature:

Leto suddenly recalled a thing Gurney Halleck had said once, seeing a picture of the Baron: *‘And I stood upon the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea . . . and upon his heads the name of blasphemy’*

(*ibid*: 181, original emphasis)

This line deliberately echoes (Rev. 13:1):

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

The interpretation of the Book of Revelation has been widely debated, with

some claiming that it refers entirely to events in the first century A.D., others insisting that it contains a prophetic account of the end of the world, and a third group saying it provides a description of the situation of the Church in all times and places.

(Bahr, 2004: 45)

The main theme in the Book of Revelation, though, is the confrontation between good and evil. The Baron is physically and morally reprehensible: he is morbidly obese and he drugs and rapes young boys (Herbert, 1965: 186). In order to teach Feyd a lesson, he forces

Feyd to murder all of his courtesans (*ibid*: 372). These actions greatly serve the suggestion that the Atreides are morally superior because of their opposition to someone so blatantly evil. In this battle, good is vanquished by evil. The Duke dies; yet there is still hope because Paul has survived.

The Baron is the only character in *Dune* who underestimates the power of religion, to his destruction. The Baron has sent his nephew, “the Beast Rabban”, to govern Arrakis. He receives reports about the Fremen’s growing fanaticism but his tone is condescending and dismissive:

“They’ve a new prophet or religious leader of some kind among the Fremen,” the Baron said. “They call him Muad’Dib. Very funny, really. It means ‘the Mouse.’ I’ve told Rabban to let them have their religion. It’ll keep them occupied.”

(Herbert, 1965: 368)

Thufir Hawat advises the Baron to let the religion flourish (*ibid*: 379); Thufir is aware that repression only increases devotion to a religion. This is a logical outcome — Rabban was instructed by the Baron to repress the population. The Baron wishes to install Feyd as a saviour after executing Rabban; nonetheless it is Paul who assumes the role of saviour. Feyd is a foil for Paul: it is suggested by Count Fenring that Feyd would have been honourable if he had been given an Atreides upbringing (Herbert, 1965: 339). After re-reading this I found myself wondering about what kind of man would Paul have developed into if he had been raised as a Harkonnen, and found the implications disturbing.

Paul and Jessica attempt to gain sanctuary amongst the Fremen. On Arrakis, the spice is omnipresent. In an ordinary person the effects are unnoticed because the changes remain unconscious. For Paul, though, Bene Gesserit training, breeding and concentrated doses of spice make the change conscious. The spice saturation upon Arrakis triggers new-found abilities: he discovers that the Baron is Jessica’s father. His mother’s obvious manipulation disgusts him and he considers himself a “freak” (*ibid*: 192). At this point Paul has not taken spice essence, so he lacks the full capabilities of the Kwisatz Haderech. Paul is alarmed by his inability to grieve for his father, whom he had loved and respected deeply. He realises the limits of his prescience:

“The things that can happen here, I cannot begin to tell you,” he said. “I cannot even begin to tell myself, although I’ve seen them. This sense of the future--I seem to have no control over it. The thing just happens. The immediate future--say, a year--I can see some of that . . . a road as broad as our Central Avenue on Caladan. Some places I don’t see . .

. shadowed places . . . as though it went behind a hill” (and again he thought of the surface of a blowing kerchief) “. . . and there are branchings . . .”

(*ibid*: 197)

In the Bible, Jesus predicts, for example, the destruction of the Temple in Mark 13 and the end of Jerusalem in Luke 21:5-24. I have not come across a Biblical verse which confirms or denies that Jesus had any restrictions imposed upon his vision; therefore one must use other verses to make a deduction about his prescient abilities. We may infer that a messiah cannot predict every single aspect of the future because only God possesses total and complete knowledge:

Remember the former things of old: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else; [I am] God, and [there is] none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times [the things] that are not [yet] done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure...

(Is. 46:9-10)

Paul’s prescience does not extend to every given moment. The branching is a result of different decisions. The period that he refers to as “blind time” occurs when he is in a valley (behind a hill) during a vision. He gains insight to why this occurs and reaches a devastating realisation: he creates and shapes the future. Even his inaction has consequences.

It gave him a new understanding of his prescience, and he saw the source of blind time, the source of error in it, with an immediate sensation of fear. 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. And what he saw was a time nexus within this cave, a boiling of possibilities focused here, wherein the most minute action--the wink of an eye, a careless word, a misplaced grain of sand--moved a gigantic lever across the known universe. He saw violence with the outcome subject to so many variables that his slightest movement created vast shiftings in the pattern. The vision made him want to freeze into immobility, but this, too, was action with its consequences. The countless consequences--lines fanned out from this cave, and along most of these consequence-lines he saw his own dead body with blood flowing from a gaping knife wound.

(*ibid*: 296)

Paul fulfils the prophecies that the Bene Gesserit handed down to the Fremen. The latter do not question the source of their legends. Paul’s prophecy of a *jihad* comes to pass, cementing his role as a messiah. Only in *Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune* does the reader learn how Paul and Leto II sever the threads of possible futures until they lock themselves onto a single path.

Herbert makes use of a scientific principle, that of uncertainty, to govern a concept that is essentially “psi” in nature. By establishing a scientific rationale, he wishes to legitimise the prophetic conventions in *Dune*. The said principle was established by German physicist Werner Heisenberg who postulated:

In quantum mechanics, the principle that it is impossible to know with unlimited accuracy is the position and momentum of a particle. The principle arises because in order to locate a particle exactly, an observer must bounce light (in the form of a photon) off the particle, which must alter its position in an unpredictable way.

(*The Unabridged Hutchinson Encyclopedia*, 2009: s.v. Heisenberg indeterminacy principle)

Paul attempts several times throughout *Dune* and *Dune Messiah* to explain his prescience and is unable to provide a satisfactory answer. Similarly, Herbert was averse to providing a single explanation for phenomena. In an interview with *Mother Earth News*, he said:

The bulk of science fiction authors—and there are some notable exceptions to this rule—are heavily into what I call the technological toy syndrome.

Writers and scientists who believe that technology alone can solve problems have fallen into a common scientific fallacy . . . the belief that science can answer any question in absolute terms, that it’s possible to reduce phenomena to one explanation that will operate in a vacuum. That’s not the way the universe appears to me. And it quite clearly didn’t appear that way to Albert Einstein or Werner Heisenberg, either.

(Herbert, 1981)

Using prescience, Paul is able to secure his position with the Fremen and takes the Fremen name “Muad’Dib” and a tribe-specific name, “Usul”. He combines his first name, Paul, with Muad’Dib to honour his father. Paul’s visions of *jihad* create new priorities. He wants do everything in his power to prevent the war:

He had seen two main branchings along the way ahead--in one he confronted an evil old Baron and said: “Hello, Grandfather.” The thought of that path and what lay along it sickened him. The other path held long patches of grey obscurity except for peaks of violence. He had seen a warrior religion there, a fire spreading across the universe with the Atreides green and black banner waving at the head of fanatic legions drunk on spice liquor. Gurney Halleck and a few others of his father’s men--a pitiful few--were among them, all marked by the hawk symbol from the shrine of his father’s skull.

“I can’t go that way,” he muttered. “That’s what the old witches of your schools really want.”

“I don’t understand you, Paul,” his mother said.

He remained silent, thinking like the seed he was, thinking with the race consciousness he had first experienced as terrible purpose. He found that he no longer could hate the Bene Gesserit or the Emperor or even the Harkonnens. They were all caught up in the need of their race to renew its scattered inheritance, to cross and mingle and infuse their bloodlines in a great new pooling of genes. And the race knew only one sure way for

this--the ancient way, the tried and certain way that rolled over everything in its path: jihad.

*Surely, I cannot choose that way*, he thought.

But he saw again in his mind's eye the shrine of his father's skull and the violence with the green and black banner waving in its midst.

(Herbert, 1965: 199, original emphasis)

The image of Paul as a seed is significant. From a positive perspective, a seed has potential to germinate and grow into a tree that will eventually bear wholesome fruit that will in due course repeat the cycle. From a neutral angle, the seed may never germinate and never reach its true potential. Lastly, from a negative standpoint, the seed may grow into a tree that bears poisonous fruit. Each character in the novel would ultimately view Paul and his children (his "fruit") from one of these positions.

To Paul's credit he does not choose to join the Harkonnens; he is not tempted to take an easier path. He does not wish to create a "warrior religion" either, but unfortunately this will come to pass. A common misconception is that *jihad* means "holy war"; Michael Bonner (2006: 2) explains:

It literally means "striving". When followed by the modifying phrase *fi sabil Allah*, "in the path of God," or when—as often—this phrase is absent but assumed to be in force, *jihad* has the specific sense of fighting for the sake of God (whatever we understand that to mean).

Paul does not mention fighting for the sake of God; rather, he perceives evolution at work. Both Islam and Christianity dismiss evolution since both faiths believe that human beings are descended from Adam and Eve (Gen. 2; Q, 4:1). By implicitly advocating evolution (as opposed to creationism), Paul indirectly displays scepticism towards the religions that have informed his messianism. The desire for war is sanctioned in the name of religion. Leto II also engages in *jihad* but his motives are more in line with those of the Prophet Muhammad:

Unlike conventional generals Muhammad's goal was not the defeat of a foreign enemy or invader but the replacement of the existing Arabian social order with a new one based on a radically different ideological view of the world.

(Gabriel, 2007: xx)

In the interim, Paul meets Kynes's daughter Chani, who becomes his concubine. They have much in common because both of their fathers were killed by Harkonnen. The death of Kynes is ironic; the ecologist is killed by the environment. The Harkonnen abandon him in

the desert without provisions. Kynes hallucinates about his father, Pardot Kynes, whose words about religion anticipate the actions of Paul and later of Leto II:

Religion and law among our masses must be one and the same,” his father said. “An act of disobedience must be a sin and require religious penalties. This will have the dual benefit of bringing both greater obedience and greater bravery. We must depend not so much on the bravery of individuals, you see, as upon the bravery of a whole population.”

(Herbert, 1965: 275-276)

Throughout history, there has been co-operation between religion and law. There are obvious benefits for religious leaders, if religion and law are combined. The population is less likely to question decisions made in the name of God. Fear is a powerful weapon; many are unwilling to risk damnation. The consequence of Kynes’s support of Paul becomes abundantly clear when his father declares, “No more terrible disaster could befall your people than for them to fall into the hands of a Hero” (*ibid*: 276). The death of Kynes creates a vacuum in the overall leadership of the Fremen.

Paul teaches the Fremen advanced fighting skills and military strategy. Thereafter he prepares a small group to become elite commandos and his bodyguard, the “Fedaykin”. The Prophet Muhammad also surrounded himself with a group of loyal soldiers, the *suffah*. Muhammad recruited the most “pious”, “enthusiastic” and “fanatical” followers for this purpose (Gabriel, 2007: xxv).

Jessica’s position vis á vis the Fremen is far more tenuous, so she agrees to become their Reverend Mother, a Sayyadina. She takes the Water of Life (spice essence) even though she is pregnant, thereby awakening her daughter Alia in the womb. Since Alia is “preborn”, she had no time to develop and strengthen her own character before being overwhelmed by the memories of her ancestors. The Bene Geserrit refer to “preborns” as “abominations” and kill them to prevent a strong ancestor from “possessing” or taking over the person.

Alia is an adult in a child’s body; hence the Fremen are initially afraid of her. They believe she is a witch and needs to be exorcised. The Fremen women quote scripture to Jessica: “Suffer not a witch to live among us” (Herbert, 1965: 387). This “scripture” is found in the Bible, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live” (Ex. 22:18). The Fremen accept Alia when it is revealed that the Water of Life turned her into a Reverend Mother in the womb,

being manipulated into believing that she is a goddess. In *Dune Messiah*, Alia discloses her feelings about her perceived divinity:

There was only a distant feeling of anger deep within her at the obvious thoughts in the attendants' minds. It was a product of the damned religious mystery. She and her brother could not be *people*. They had to be something more. The Bene Gesserit had seen to that by manipulating Atreides ancestry. Their mother had contributed to it by thrusting them onto the path of witchery.  
And Paul perpetuated the difference.

(Herbert, 1969: 143, original emphasis)

The short, choppy sentence, “And Paul perpetuated the difference”, creates a sense of finality and resignation. It suggests that despite every other drawback that Alia encountered, Paul was primarily responsible for the religious mystery that threatens to overwhelm both Paul and Alia. There is no room for Alia to manoeuvre; she is helpless, merely a vassal for the state, despite her considerable individual power. Throughout the novel, Jessica ruthlessly exploits Fremen superstition, religion and her own children. By becoming a Reverend Mother, she risks Alia's life for the sake of herself. Eventually Jessica becomes fearful of the religious relationship between Paul and the Fremen. Paul is aware that she does not like people referring to him as “*Him*” (Herbert, 1969: 382, original emphasis). She quotes a Bene Gesserit proverb to him:

When religion and politics travel in the same cart, the riders believe nothing can stand in their way. Their movement become headlong – faster and faster and faster. They put aside all thought of obstacles and forget that a precipice does not show itself to the man in a blind rush until it's too late.

(*ibid*)

Another danger of combining religion and politics is that those wielding the power become too confident or arrogant. Her lecture on religion to Paul is hypocritical in the light of her actions. She does however realise that “[n]othing about religion is simple” (*ibid*: 383), a point Paul fails to understand or acknowledge. He correctly asserts that religion unites forces — but it can also be divisive.

Paul and the Fremen wage a guerrilla war against the Harkonnen and, in a skirmish with smugglers, Paul and Gurney are reunited. Paul becomes increasingly reliant on visions although his increasing tolerance of the spice limits their scope. This prompts him to take the Water of Life, after which he falls into a coma for weeks until Chani revives him with spice essence. This is irrevocable proof to the Fremen that Muad'Dib is their messiah. He reveals

that he is at the fulcrum: taking without giving and giving without taking, and now accepts that he is the *Kwisatz Hadarech* because he has survived taking the spice essence.

*Dune* concludes with Paul victorious and fulfilling his role as the messiah of the Fremen people. This conclusion is incongruent with the various remarks by Herbert who stated he wished to demonstrate the dangers of a hero:

This, then, was one of my themes: *Don't give over all of your critical faculties to people in power, no matter how admirable those people may appear.* Beneath the hero's facade, you will find a human being who makes human mistakes. Enormous problems arise when human mistakes are made on the grand scale available to a superhero.

(O'Reilly, 1987: 98, original emphasis)

Tim O'Reilly (1981: 84, original emphasis) notes that “[t]he question remains, however: If Paul were intended to demonstrate the error of faith in messiahs and superheroes, why was he rendered SO effective as both?” Only after reading the other books in the series does the reader discover that the various issues introduced in *Dune* are explored later. The series is effective because *Dune* constructs Paul skilfully in a superhero / messiah role. In *Dune Messiah*, a reversal of *Dune*, Herbert demonstrates the error of faith in messiahs.

The conclusion of *Dune* is abrupt and feels incomplete. Herbert explained to Willis McNelly that he intended the ending of *Dune* to be “high camp” (Herbert & Herbert, 1969). In the same interview, Herbert states, “[t]he stories that are remembered are the ones that strike sparks from your mind, one way or another” and “I want the person to go on and construct for himself all of these marvellous flights of fantasy and imagination” (*ibid*). This approach was effective, since there was a demand for more sequels and, as noted, *Dune* has never been out of print.

Another theme introduced in *Dune* is the interplay between religion and politics. Princess Irulan, also Bene Gesserit trained, posits possible outcomes for this relationship:

You cannot avoid the interplay of politics within an orthodox religion. This power struggle permeates the training, educating and disciplining of the orthodox community. Because of this pressure, the leaders of such a community inevitably must face that ultimate internal question: to succumb to complete opportunism as the price of maintaining their rule, or risk sacrificing themselves for the sake of the orthodox ethic.

(Herbert, 1965: 401)

Paul does not succumb to opportunism, but indeed sacrifices himself for the sake of the orthodox ethic. As he says, “When law and duty are one, united by religion, you never



become fully conscious, fully aware of yourself. You are always less than an individual” (*ibid*: 408). Paul the messiah is less than an individual; he must put the needs of his people first. This is an issue with which Paul struggles throughout *Dune* and *Dune Messiah*; a messiah lives and dies for his or her people. Neither the prophet Muhammad nor Jesus could avoid the connection between religion and politics. Muhammad embraced politics and military action in order to unify the Arab people. Jesus tried to distance himself from politics: When his followers wished for him to become king, he withdrew to the mountains (Jn. 6:15).

Herbert does not utilise chapters in the *Chronicles*; he employs epigraphs to designate the beginning of a new scene so that the epigraphs serve as “thresholds”. Such paratexts are liminal (threshold) devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader: titles, forewords, epigraphs, and publisher’s jackets (Genette, 1997: xi). Genette identifies four functions of the epigraph: commenting (sometimes authoritatively) and thus elucidating and thereby justifying not the text but the title of the work; commenting on the text, whose meaning it indirectly specifies or emphasizes; the main thing is not what the epigraph says but the author of the piece (the author of the epigraph is more important than the wording); the presence or absence of an epigraph generally marks the period, genre or tenor of a piece of writing. The epigraphs in *Dune* are attributed entirely to Princess Irulan: providing a single point of view. Her character only appears at the end of *Dune* but her role is expanded in *Dune Messiah*. The epigraphs in *Dune Messiah* are attributed to various characters and organisations: thereby offering differing opinions. The main function of the epigraph in the *Dune Chronicles* is to provide more in-depth perspectives of various characters on situations, by the characters themselves. The epigraphs serve as limited first-person narrative devices. The reader is given access to Muad’dib’s [the “d” in the second half of “Muad’dib” is no longer capitalised] thoughts and actions as well as to those of a broader circle of characters. *Dune Messiah* opens with an interview rather than an epigraph; another departure in format. The absence of the epigraph is jarring to the implied reader and notes a change in the tenor of the piece of writing. These noticeable changes signal that *Dune Messiah* will not be a simple repetition of the themes and plot of *Dune*.

*Dune Messiah* is set twelve years after the events of *Dune*. Paul-Muad’dib Atreides, though Emperor of the known universe, has been unable to prevent the *jihad* and the deaths

of billions of people. The *jihad* has almost run its course and the survivors have converted to the religion of Muad'dib. There are no testimonies from the religiously colonised peoples but there are pilgrims who travel to Arrakis on "hajj". Herbert does not introduce any characters who have been subject to this religious colonisation; this is a theme that is sadly lacking and if it had been included, it would have considerably enriched the text. The reader may speculate that the motivation for the *hajj* may stem from fear, awe or an attempt by the colonised to ingratiate themselves with their new rulers.

The *hajj* is extremely important to Muslims as it is one of the five pillars of Islam. "Making pilgrimage or hajj to Mecca once in a lifetime is a duty for every Muslim who is physically and financially capable of doing so" (Ali & Leaman, 2008: 99). The purpose of the pilgrimage to Mecca is the Ka'bah, which was the centre of pilgrimage rites among pre-Islamic Arabs. Muslim tradition holds that it was originally built by Abraham and his son Ishmael (*ibid*). Once again, adaptations of Islamic traditions and rituals are used to draw similarities between the Fremen and Muslims.

In *Dune*, during the Water of Life ceremony, Jessica learns of the origin of the Fremen through visions of their violent past: "Far down the corridor, an image-voice screamed: 'They denied us the Hajj!'" (Herbert, 1965: 358). Later in *Dune*, Jessica, Alia and Harah enact a ritual that specifically ties the Fremen religion with Islam: "When the sound had dimmed sufficiently, Jessica began the ritual, the sadness in her voice: 'It was Ramadhan and April on Bela Tegeuse'" (*ibid*: 398). Fasting (*sawm*) is one of the five pillars of Islam as well. The obligatory fast occurs during the lunar month of *Ramadan*, when Muslims believe the first revelation of the Qu'ran occurred (Ali & Leaman, 2008: 34). Furthermore, Ali mentions that *Ramadan* is the ninth month of a lunar year. Since April is the fourth month in a calendar year, Herbert may not have been rigid in his interpretation or he may have wished to draw attention to the fact that other worlds employ different calendars.

As the *jihad* is in decline, the Fedaykin are no longer a necessity. They have become the Priests of Muad'dib – officially recognised as the "Quizarate". Bronso of IX has been charged with heresy; consequently he is interviewed by a priest. Heresy is a capital offence, which confirms that Muad'dib has combined religion and law. While most of the universe adheres to the law, rebels like Bronso resist the system. Leto II also implements this system, but for a different purpose that will be discussed later.

Even though the scene is labelled an interview, it resembles an interrogation. The heresy charges and the interrogation by priests evoke scenes of the Inquisition. The origin and context of the term assists one's understanding and significance of the scene and the motives of the Qizarate. Wakefield (1974: 16, my emphasis) discusses the origin of the term "heresy" and its context:

'Heresy' (in Latin *haeresis*) derives from a Greek word meaning 'a choosing'. Long before the twelfth century Christians were using the word to designate a wrong choice, a personal and wilful contradiction of common and necessary beliefs. But in debatable cases where was to be found the standard of right belief, that is, orthodoxy? In practice, when non-conformity or dissent seemed to exist, the first decision about what was permissible and what was pernicious had to be made on the spot by local authority, bishop or synod, who would condemn errors discerned, demand that they be corrected, and excommunicate the individuals who persisted in them. *Obedience thus became a crucial issue*. The heretic was one who was declared to be such because he did not choose to accept correction from ecclesiastical authority in a certain time and place.

In this case, Bronso has defied the orthodox religion of Muad'dib and does not accept "correction" from the Qizarate. The evidence against Bronso is a text that he has written entitled "Analysis of History: Muad'dib". Bronso does not contradict the events of *Dune*; he presents them in a factual manner, whilst the Qizarate view the events of *Dune* as miraculous and of divine ordinance. There is no logical reason to condemn Bronso; it appears Muad'dib or his followers have strayed far from a moral course.

The exchange between Bronso and the Fremen Priest contextualises what is now Muad'dib's universe. Bronso describes Arrakis as a "one-crop planet" because it solely produces the spice, melange (Herbert, 1969: 2). The Priest, on the other hand, refers to the spice as "sacred" (*ibid*). Herbert juxtaposes two vastly differing attitudes: Bronso regards the spice as a commodity, albeit possessing unique properties, but the Priest regards the spice as holy. Any "sacred" object is expected to be imbued with only positive qualities; yet the spice is in fact a drug. Bronso declares:

Sacred! As with all things sacred, it gives with one hand and takes with the other. It extends life and allows the adept to foresee his future, but it ties him to a cruel addiction and marks his eyes as yours are marked: total blue without any white.

(*ibid*)

Bronso rebukes the Priest's refusal to allow a dissenting opinion, which has led to his prosecution. The parallel between the Inquisition and the Priest is underlined by the suggestion that prisoners are tortured and executed: "There are deaths and there are deaths," and "Tell me, does Muad'dib know what you do in these dungeons?" (*ibid*: 3). Additionally,

the Priests seem to be both the judge and jury of the prisoners. The Priest's response, "[w]e do not trouble the Holy Family with trivia" (*ibid*), implies that the Qizarate have become an autonomous body.

The theme of martyrdom is introduced early in *Dune Messiah*, when Bronso of Ix warns the Priest, "Beware lest you make a martyr of *me*" (Herbert, 1969: 3, original emphasis). Whenever a person opposes an oppressive regime, and is killed or executed in that fight, they are considered a martyr. The emphasis on "me" implies that in this case another character has become a martyr. There are subtle indications that the martyr is Muad'dib as Bronso refers to him in the past tense: "You don't want attention called to the fact that Muad'dib was the Sisterhood's hoped for captive messiah, that he was their *kwisatz haderach* before he was your prophet" (*ibid*). Since Jesus was a martyr, Muad'dib's martyrdom would further reaffirm his position as a messiah.

Turberville (1920) explored the history of the Inquisition in *Medieval Heresy and Inquisition* and traced the origin of the organisation to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Previously, the ecclesiastical courts had investigated those accused of heresy. Gradually, these courts became overburdened by the increasing number of such cases and found it difficult to deal with other offences (Turberville, 1920: 140). The Inquisition developed as a specialised body, dealing exclusively with cases of heresy. Wakefield's description of the Inquisition supports the assumption that Herbert has applied this model to the Qizarate. When Alia questions Korba at his trial, she suggests that he accuses himself (Herbert, 1969: 256). The Fremen both fear and revere Alia's powers to the extent that she may accuse anyone without providing physical evidence.

In the Middle Ages inquest or inquisition (*inquisitio*) was a method of inquiry to ascertain facts in all kinds of affairs. It also designated one of several procedures in civil and canon law for detecting and punishing violations. The others were 'accusation,' in which a charge was laid by an accuser at his [*sic*] own peril if it proved false, and 'denunciation,' in which an official with knowledge of the crime began the action. In an inquisition, one who was suspect could be summoned and interrogated under oath, *his answers making him, in effect, his own accuser*, while other testimony could also be taken against him. This was relatively more efficient than other procedures when the crime, as often was the case with heresy, was difficult to discover and prove unless suspicion alone was cause for action and the witness could be required to inculpate himself.

(Wakefield, 1974: 133, my emphasis)

After the interview, there is an extract from Bronso's offending text, which restates the events of *Dune* but also discloses key plot elements of *Dune Messiah*. By revealing briefly what will transpire in the text, Herbert permits the reader to shift their focus to other elements of the text, such as the theme of religion. The text then resumes the normal format of epigraph followed by scene, beginning with a meeting of the Bene Gesserit, Bene Tleilaxu, Spacing Guild and Princess Irulan. The reason for the meeting is to form a conspiracy against Paul. Korba is not present at the meeting, but is part of a Fremen conspiracy to make Muad'dib a martyr. These individuals and organisations are not altruistic. No-one opposes Paul because they consider him evil; rather, they are driven by material concerns.

During the meeting, Scytale describes Paul as a *potential* messiah (Herbert, 1969: 13). Once again, Herbert's portrayal of religious themes reflects reality – there is no universally accepted interpretation or revelation, even within the same religion. Judaism has not been replaced by Christianity for the same reason: disagreement about whether Jesus is the messiah. There is still no unanimous accord that Paul is the messiah. By not preventing the *jihad*, Paul is responsible for billions of deaths. On one hand, this gives further credence to the idea that he is an anti-messiah. In his defence, Paul stated that there was nothing he could do to prevent the *jihad*:

He had thought to oppose the jihad within himself, but the jihad would be. His legions would rage [in other texts, "range"] out from Arrakis even without him. They needed only the legend he already had become. He had shown them the way, given them mastery over the Guild which must have the spice to exist.

(Herbert, 1965: 482)

His assertion is false: he gave the Fremen his legend, knowledge and skills to colonise the universe, religiously at least. In *Dune*, only Paul's thoughts about the *jihad* are revealed; nonetheless the Fremen believe that they are religiously superior to everyone else in the universe: "God created Arrakis to train the faithful" (Herbert, 1965: 488). Perhaps Paul correctly avers that even without him, the Fremen would wage *jihad* to convert unbelievers to their faith. The Fremen belief in *jihad* is equivalent to the Islamic principle. Bonner states that Islam promises rewards to those who fight on its behalf, so that adherents who survive battles are rewarded with both the victory and spoils, whilst those who die receive a privileged place in heaven (Bonner, 2006: 72). Muad'dib has proven that he is the messiah of the Fremen, but is a blight upon the rest of the universe.

Scytale shares Paul's belief that the *jihad* was unavoidable and unites the idea of messianism and martyrdom: "We're dealing with a potential messiah. You don't launch a frontal attack upon such a one. Martyrdom would defeat us" (Herbert, 1969: 13). Paul's martyrdom would only increase fanaticism amongst the Fremens; converts would become more faithful. The Bene Tleilaxu decide that the best way to destroy Paul is to make him realise that he has become the antithesis of his former self. The Bene Tleilaxu had created a *kwisatz haderach*, which destroyed itself: "A creature who has spent his life creating one particular representation of his selfhood will die rather than become the antithesis of that representation," Scytale said (Herbert, 1969: 24). Paul has represented himself as a messiah for a long time – thus he makes an appropriate target. The Bene Tleilaxu plan to present Paul with a ghola (discussed below) of Duncan Idaho, a paragon of Atreides honour. Duncan sacrificed himself to save Paul and Jessica, creating a water burden for Paul as remarked above. More importantly, Duncan is the only teacher who did not betray Paul. The latter will be forced to recognise how far he has deviated from his original path. Scytale believes that the logical outcome of the plan is that Paul will destroy himself.

Thus far, Paul is being judged negatively by the other characters; a scene containing Paul might either confirm or repudiate these opinions of him. By deliberately delaying such a scene, Herbert forces the implied reader to re-evaluate Paul and be more critical of his actions. Paul's desire to be anonymous by disguising himself for walks in the city does not fit the image of a megalomaniacal oligarch. His bedchamber is simple and his thoughts express sincere regret and guilt about the *jihad*:

"Chani, beloved," he whispered, "do you know what I'd spend to end the Jihad -- to separate myself from the damnable godhead the Qizarate forces onto me?"

She trembled. "You have but to command it," she said.

"Oh, no. Even if I died now, my name would still lead them. When I think of the Atreides name tied to this religious butchery . . ."

"But you're the Emperor! You've --"

"I'm a figurehead. When godhead's given, that's the one thing the so-called god no longer controls."

A bitter laugh shook him. He sensed the future looking back at him out of dynasties not even dreamed. He felt his being cast out, crying, unchained from the rings of fate -- only his name continued. "I was chosen," he said. "Perhaps at birth . . . certainly before I had much say in it. I was chosen."

(Herbert, 1969: 44)

Paul does not believe that he is holy; rather, he essentially feels helpless. The Fremens' fatalistic tendency has infected him. He wishes to escape his godhead and the

*Jihad*, except he carries on believing that the  *Jihad* would continue without him. He is trapped within exceptional circumstances – he does not want to be a messiah, but he was “chosen” to be one. Paul wishes to relinquish his position, but cannot do so without disastrous repercussions. He can only prepare for an exit that inflicts the least possible collateral damage on his loved ones.

*I'll yield up myself, he thought. I'll rush out while I yet have the strength, fly through a space a bird might not find. It was a useless thought, and he knew it. The Jihad would follow his ghost.*

What could he answer? he wondered. How explain when people taxed him with brutal foolishness? Who might understand?

*I wanted only to look back and say: "There! There's an existence which couldn't hold me. See! I vanish! No restraint or net of human devising can trap me ever again. I renounce my religion! This glorious instant is mine! I'm free!"*

*What empty words!*

( *ibid*: 45-46, original emphasis)

Paul's reflections and his interaction with Chani do not reveal any major shift in personality. He is still consumed by the same issues that plagued him throughout  *Dune*. The only difference is that he is now Emperor; not a young boy fighting for survival. Twelve years have passed and his gifts of prescience, position, education and advisors have not brought any change. It seems he has wrought disaster upon the universe, by ascending the throne. Worst of all, the conspirators demonstrate that even a messiah and martyr can be manipulated: all of Paul's actions are a reaction to the threat against Chani. Later in the text, Hayt recounts a conversation with Paul, who discloses his self loathing:

*"I've had a bellyful of the god and priest business! You think I don't see my own mythos? Consult your data once more, Hayt. I've insinuated my rites into the most elementary of human acts. The people eat in the name of Muad'dib! They make love in my name, are born in my name – cross the street in my name. A roof beam cannot be raised in the lowliest hovel of far Gangishree without invoking the blessing of Muad'dib!"*

( *ibid*: 183)

Considering the fanatical loyalty of the Fremmen to Muad'dib in  *Dune*, it is implausible that any one of them would engage in a conspiracy against him. Yet, Scytale recruits Farok, a member of Sietch Tabr and a Bashar of the Ninth Legion in the  *Jihad*. Sietch Tabr owes allegiance to Stilgar; Farok would have known Muad'dib personally. Farok's motivation thus deserves analysis.

Farok is the first Fremen to be encountered by the reader since the onset of the *jihad*. His perception of Paul is decidedly negative: he expresses his disillusionment with Muad'dib. The effects of war on soldiers and civilians are inestimable; physical and mental anguish is commonplace. Farok's son has been blinded in the *jihad*. As indicated, the Fremen consider the blind a burden – no Fremen woman would marry a blind man and they are left alone in the desert to perish. Farok has disobeyed this tradition and is understandably bitter. In addition, he was disgusted by what he had witnessed at a feast held by Muad'dib. Many of the men attending were maimed, bearing physical reminders of what they had lost (*ibid*: 56). He is disturbed that Muad'dib uses men who are implanted with *distrans* messages: "It demeans men to implant wave translators in them..." (*ibid*: 57). A *distrans* is "a device for producing a temporary neural imprint on the nervous system of *Chiroptera* or birds. The creature's normal cry then carries the message imprint which can be sorted from that carrier wave by another *distrans*" (Herbert, 1965: 517). Previously, the Fremen utilised small animals, such as bats, to send messages. This was suitable for the desert, but obviously not appropriate for sending and receiving important messages across the universe. A messiah would care about his people and treat them with dignity and respect. From Farok's listing his grievances against Muad'dib, it is evident that he does not consider Muad'dib to be a messiah.

Scytale queries the general perception of Muad'dib's *jihad* and whether the Fremen "object to making a god out of their Emperor" (Herbert, 1969: 58). Farok replies:

"Most of them don't even consider this," Farok said. "They think of the Jihad the way I thought of it -- most of them. It is a source of strange experiences, adventure, wealth. This graben hovel in which I live" – Farok gestured at the courtyard -- "it cost sixty lidas of spice. Ninety kontars! There was a time when I could not even imagine such riches." He shook his head.

(*ibid*)

He emphasises "most of them" by repeating the phrase. He implies that the majority of the Fremen enlisted for adventure and wealth; in spite of this assertion, the Fremen have repeatedly stated throughout *Dune* that they are not motivated by the latter. They are surrounded by spice, the only notable coinage in the Universe; Farok's response seems disparate from the fundamentalist image of them in *Dune*. To those who are oppressed and persecuted, survival is the predominant concern. The Fremen were demoralised to such a degree in *Dune* that they were unable even to dream of escaping from Arrakis. Farok expresses disapproval of Liet's decision to end the practice of sacrificing virgins to Shai-



hulud (Herbert, 1969: 59). Chani had earlier mentioned to Paul that the Fremen have taken up the old rites and blood sacrifices again (*ibid*: 47); at least some of Farok's feelings are shared by other Fremen. By both criticising Liet and disregarding his orders, the Fremen have reverted to their "pagan" ancestral customs: another step away from Paul's messianism.

Farok makes the important declaration that it was Muad'dib who had called for the *jihad* (*ibid*: 59). It is impossible to verify this statement; nevertheless, Farok's claim that he was reluctant to fight is doubtful, given the warlike tendencies of the Fremen. He alleges that he enlisted solely to observe a sea personally (*ibid*: 60), but the Fremen had gained freedom and guaranteed wealth after the defeat of the Emperor. If he had indeed been motivated by that particular aspiration, other options would have been available to him. The description of the effect of the sea on him is plausible since the image echoes a baptismal scene:

"I immersed myself in that sea," Farok said, looking down at the water creatures worked into the tiles of his floor. "One man sank beneath that water . . . another man arose from it. I felt that I could remember a past which had never been. I stared around me with eyes which could accept anything . . . anything at all."

(*ibid*: 61)

In this respect Ann Marie B. Bahr (2004: 69) declares, "Christians officially enter the Church by being baptized". Furthermore, she states that the purpose of a baptism is to outwardly show one's cleansing from sin; on the other hand, R.A. Torrey (1895: 14) had much earlier contradicted this popular opinion and asserted it meant to "empower for service". While the manner of a baptism varies amongst the Protestant denominations, Baptists and some other sects favour total immersion in a river. There is no baptism in Islam as there is no mention of the practice in the Qu'ran. Baptists do not baptise infants, because they believe a person should be old enough to understand that they are making a commitment to Jesus Christ (Bahr, 2004: 12). The second important characteristic of Baptists is the notion of being "born again". To be "born again" means to "realize that one is a sinner who needs salvation offered by Jesus, and to choose to turn one's life over to Christ" (*ibid*: 12-13). The implications of Farok's baptism are that he recognises the folly of the *jihad*; he feels cleansed of sin. He is "born again" and is able to view events from the past and present in a new light.

Liet-Kynes and Paul's ability to transform Arrakis is perceived as a religious and miraculous gift. The naiveté and despondency of the Fremen ensured that they were obedient to Kynes and Paul. Once they had personally set eyes on seas and oceans without religious intervention, it diminished (for some of the Fremen) Paul's hold upon them. Farok maintains

that “the sea healed me of the jihad” (Herbert, 1969: 62). This statement suggests that Farok had initially enlisted because of the *jihad*, implying the sea had cured him of the need for war. Possibly Farok’s guilt about his actions during the *jihad* forced him to downplay his role and responsibility, and blame Paul instead.

The following extract shows that not all Fremmen embraced the alien episodes; most notably the Qizara Tafwid, whose own religious trepidation denies him these experiences:

“A Qizara Tafwid stood nearby when I came dripping from that water. He had not entered the sea. He stood on the sand . . . it was wet sand . . . with some of my men who shared his fear. He watched me with eyes that knew I had learned something which was denied to him. I had become a sea creature and I frightened him. The sea healed me of the Jihad and I think he saw this.”

(*ibid*)

The negative portrayal of the Qizarate continues with Korba, another Qizara, who is a panegyrist (Herbert, 1969: 9) and a member of the Imperial Council. A panegyrist writes or speaks in praise of someone; in this case, Muad’dib. In South Africa, the Xhosa people hold praise singers in great esteem. Former President, Nelson Mandela and current president Jacob Zuma use praise singers to perform for important occasions. According to the *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, “The Imbongi, or praise singer, is one of the central components of community solidarity. The Imbongi, praise singers, usually live near the king’s house. They are always found at events that are historically, politically, or socially important” (Asante & Mazama, 2009: 730). Korba is a typical sycophant; while he fulfils the basic requirements of a panegyrist, he does not possess any wisdom. His first statement is ludicrous: “What I mean, m’Lord, is that there aren’t as many gods as once there were” (Herbert, 1969: 67). Religious colonisation has resulted in Muad’dib’s religion supplanting the religions of the indigenous populations of each planet. Alia calls the Qizarate “spies” as well (*ibid*: 68). Korba assumes an ostentatious tone to defend this practice: “We are sent by the writ of Muad’dib, that He shall know the truth of His people and they shall know the truth of Him” (*ibid*). Paul does not contradict him.

Paul instructs Korba to lead the prayer for the pilgrims. The latter dons a turban and pretends to be Muad’dib. His remark, “They’ll never know at this distance” (*ibid*), serves as a metaphor — the masses are unable to differentiate between Muad’dib and the Qizarate. This does not bode well for Muad’dib’s religion, considering the interview with Bronso. Moreover, Paul is dismissive of and disrespectful to his followers. The first interaction in the

text between the founder of the religion and the Court Qizara is a deceitful act. Moreover, it is damning that this act relates to a religious matter and is casually executed. When the prayer is offered, Stilgar witnesses a scene of foreboding:

Korba raised outstretched arms for the benediction and a trick of the afternoon sun cast a red halo onto the window behind him. For a moment, Stilgar saw the Court Qizara as a figure crucified on a fiery wheel. Korba lowered his arms, destroyed the illusion, but Stilgar remained shaken by it.

(Herbert, 1969: 69)

Stilgar is understandably distressed by this image. Crucifixion is mostly associated with Christ; the “red halo” and “fiery wheel” suggests another reading. In Greek mythology, Zeus orders Hermes to bind Ixion to a fiery wheel as punishment for his crimes (Morford, 2003: 353). Ixion is a famous sinner who was the first person to shed his kindred’s blood (*ibid*: 603). This is a common theme in Greek mythology; as discussed earlier, many family members of the House of Atreus are kin slayers. Korba is likened to a sinner: he is involved in a conspiracy against Muad’dib. Many would envy his close association with Muad’dib and Alia; yet he takes pleasure in religious authority:

Paul’s gaze followed the Qizara. Korba took his seat at Paul’s left, dark features composed, eyes glazed by fanaticism. He’d enjoyed that moment of religious power. “The spirit presence has been invoked,” he said.  
“Thank the lord for that,” Alia said.  
Korba’s lips went white.

(Herbert, 1969: 69-70)

Alia provokes and antagonises Korba because she hates the religious charade. Paul and Alia understand that without Fremen support, they will lose control of the empire. The Fremen support Atreides rule because they believe in the religious authority of Paul and Alia. Even if the siblings recanted their religion, Paul’s visions attest that the Fremen would continue to fight in his name. Religions survive their founders; centuries after their death, adherents commit atrocities in the name of the founder. Paul wishes to give up the throne but he cannot because his visions show that the future holds greater horrors (*ibid*: 75).

According to the plan of the conspirators, Edric presents the gholia of Duncan Idaho to Paul. “Gholia” sounds very similar to the word “golem”, a Hebrew term; it is probable that Herbert utilised this concept from Judaism. *The Encyclopedia of Judaism* states:

The word *golem* literally means ‘unformed matter’; it has come to refer to an artificial man created from earth. According to the lore of the KABBALAH, a highly trained

Kabbalist can create a golem by shaping earth into human form and animating it by various methods: reciting secret names of God, or placing the name of God or other magical words under its tongue or on its forehead. There are many legends about sages who created golems, usually to act as servants, but then destroyed them when the golems' stupidity made them useless.

(Karesh & Hurvitz, 2006: 181, Karesh's emphasis)

While golems are created through magical means, the Bene Tleilaxu reconstruct gholas from the cells of a corpse. In this regard the scientific rationale of cloning helps differentiate the *Dune* series from mythology. Gholas do not have memories from their previous life. This one is Duncan Idaho in form but not in personality; they name him "Hayt". Hayt is phonetically equivalent to "hate" (Herbert, 1969: 286); a feeling the conspirators share for Paul. Hayt is trained as a mentat and philosopher of the Zensunni, but is unaware that he has been conditioned to kill Paul. A mentat is "that class of Imperial citizens trained for supreme accomplishments of logic. 'Human computers'" (Herbert, 1965: 523). The Fremen loathe gholas because they consider them to be unnatural. Paul correctly recognises that the gholas is dangerous because it is a product of the Bene Tleilaxu: "What might they have incorporated in Idaho's flesh – out of design or whim?" (*ibid*: 88). A sense of obligation nonetheless forces Paul to accept Hayt.

The most significant conversation about religion in *Dune Messiah* takes place between Edric and Paul (*ibid*: 123-131). Edric adopts an adversarial position, subtly challenging the latter. He knows Paul is able to either execute or assassinate him and cannot risk an outright confrontation; they both employ rhetoric to engage in a battle of wits. When Paul confronts Edric with Hayt's claim that he was designed to destroy Paul, Edric deftly asks whether it is possible to destroy a god. His insinuation is that if Paul is a god, he has nothing to fear.

"To kill a god," Paul said. "That's very interesting. But who says I'm a god?"

"Those who worship you," Edric said, glancing pointedly at Stilgar.

"Is this what you believe?" Paul asked.

"What I believe is of no moment, Sire," Edric said. "It seems to most observers, however, that you conspire to make a god of yourself. And one might ask if that is something any mortal can do . . . safely?"

Paul studied the Guildsman. Repellent creature, but perceptive. It was a question Paul had asked himself time and again. But he had seen enough alternate Timelines to know of worse possibilities than accepting godhead for himself. Much worse.

(*ibid*: 126)

Edric is careful not to admit or refute adherence to the religion of Muad'dib. Once again, Paul claims that there was no better alternative to the course he has taken. He does not

describe the “worse possibilities” of the alternative timelines; the reader is left to ponder unimaginable horrors and accept Paul’s word that he had chosen the lesser of many evils. A messiah is never without choice, though he submits to the will of God, even if it means accepting suffering and death. When Paul walks into the desert and chooses to live, this implies that he is a false messiah. Eventually he is redeemed when he submits to Leto and accepts death. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was distraught and prayed: “...O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou [wilt]” (Mt. 26:39). Unfortunately, Paul does not receive any divine guidance; he makes decisions based on visions. Since it was established that the prophet shapes the visions, they tend to be self-fulfilling prophecies. Leto II recognises this trap, which is why he is able to surpass Paul.

Edric accuses the Qizarate of complicity in a conspiracy to make Paul a god, by being both sincere and filled with self-interest. He implies that Paul and the Qizarate are engaged in holy fraud and provocatively states: “What religion and self-interest cannot hide, governments can” (*ibid*: 129). Governments enjoy access to tax money; they are able to fund various secret, nefarious activities to maintain their control. For example a government may employ spies, control the media, use the police to intimidate dissidents, and so forth.

Paul realises that Edric is directing his speech to others present and baits him, professing a cynical view. Edric’s smug response is, “And rulers are notoriously cynical where religions are concerned. Religion, too, is a weapon. What manner of weapon is religion when it becomes the government?” (*ibid*: 130). Religion can become the ultimate weapon of a government, since breaking a law is a sin and cannot be challenged. There is no recourse; the worst case scenario involves the whims and prejudice of a priest. Later in the text, Jessica discusses the difficulties of governing from a religious base:

“You produce a deadly paradox,” Jessica had written. “Government cannot be religious and self-assertive at the same time. Religious experience needs a spontaneity which laws inevitably suppress. And you cannot govern without laws. Your laws eventually must replace morality, replace conscience, replace even the religion by which you think to govern. Sacred ritual must spring from praise and holy yearnings which hammer out a significant morality. Government, on the other hand, is a cultural organism particularly attractive to doubts, questions and contentions. I see the day coming when ceremony must take the place of faith and symbolism replaces morality.”

(*ibid*: 252)

Paul used religion as a tool to obtain the ultimate position of power in his universe. A political leader, as opposed to a religious or military ruler, is often associated with a democratic choice (even when this is not the case, the appearance of democracy is promoted) and is considered easier to depose through elections or impeachment. In a feudal system, Paul must still marry Irulan to legitimise his position as Emperor; yet, without indoctrinating the Fremmen into believing that he is the messiah, he would not have been able to force Emperor Shaddam IV to step down from the throne and consent to his marriage to the Emperor's daughter.

Religion cannot evolve, because it is often subject to scripture or an oral revelation. As a "cultural organism" government and laws are subject to re-evaluation. Paul is aware of these arguments and successfully routs Edric. The speculation surrounding Paul's abilities is eclipsed by Alia, an unknown variable. This factor should give the conspirators pause and create great anxiety when they plot against him.

"Religious *mana* was thrust upon me," Paul said. "I did not seek it." And he thought: *There! Let this man-fish think himself victorious in our battle of words!*

"Then why have you not disavowed it, Sire?" Edric asked.

"Because of my sister Alia," Paul said, watching Edric carefully. "She is a goddess. Let me urge caution where Alia is concerned lest she strike you dead with her glance."

*(ibid: 130)*

Mana, a Polynesian word, signifies "a concept of life force, believed to be seated in the head, and associated with high social status and ritual power" and in a general sense "any power achieved by ritual means; prestige; authority" (*Collins English Dictionary*, 2012: s.v. Mana). Paul embodies supernatural power derived from a ritual (the spice trance); in addition, his prestige and authority are derived both from being a son of a Duke and his current position as Emperor and the leader of a new religion. Paul wants Edric to believe that he has lost, in order to instil doubt in their minds about Alia. Before a visibly shaken Edric leaves, Scytale cannot help but interpolate:

"Some say," Scytale said, "that people cling to Imperial leadership because space is infinite. They feel lonely without a unifying symbol. For a lonely people, the Emperor is a definite place. They can turn toward him and say: 'See, there He is. He makes us one.' Perhaps religion serves the same purpose, m'Lord."

*(ibid: 131)*

Scytale advances a familiar atheist argument: the prospect of infinite space is too terrifying for contemplation. Religion and the Emperor (in this instance) offer solace or a

sense of belonging. Professor A.C. Grayling (2008: 6) proposed a similar line of thought in an interview published in *Conversations on Religion*:

Religion can give some people a sense of certainty, or a sense of security in a world which is otherwise very uncertain; it can help you face the fear of death and what supposedly lies after death; it gives you the comfort of having a hand to hold in the dark; it can provide explanations and make things neat; these are all things that people want from religion.

Grayling believes religion consoles the masses who are too terrified to face life without a mysterious force governing them. Scytale frequently invokes atheistic arguments: impressing the Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohaim and outwitting Edric. His observations suggest he has spent considerable time analysing Muad'dib. The following extract supports what Paul has observed, giving credence to Scytale's interpretation:

"He didn't use the Jihad," Scytale said. "The Jihad had used him. I think he would've stopped it if he could."

"If he could? All he had to do was –"

"Oh, be still!" Scytale barked. "You can't stop a mental epidemic. It leaps from person to person across parsecs. It's overwhelmingly contagious. It strikes at the unprotected side, in the place where we lodge the fragments of such other plagues. Who can stop such a thing? Muad'dib hasn't the antidote. The thing has roots in chaos. Can orders reach there?"

(Herbert, 1969: 187)

"The mental epidemic" remark anticipates Richard Dawkins's (2006: 186) proposition in *The God Delusion* that religion is like a virus of the mind. Dawkins believes the religious indoctrination of a child by a parent is similar to a virus transmission, which is constantly perpetuated. Neither Paul nor Scytale are able to provide an antidote for such an infection. The problem is compounded by the fact that the conspirators have to contend with a theocratic government. Power is entrenched in individuals who govern their own principalities. There is no central mechanism to destroy the government. The chaos that would ensue would stem from individuals not willing to surrender their territory.

"This whole thing is explosive," Scytale said in a calmer voice. "It's ready to shatter. When it goes, it will send bits of itself out through the centuries. Don't you see this?"

"We've dealt with religions before," Edric protested. "If this new –"

"It is *not* just a religion!" Scytale said, wondering what the Reverend Mother would say to this harsh education of their fellow conspirator. "Religious government is something else. Muad'dib has crowded his Qizarate in everywhere, displaced the old functions of government. But he has no permanent civil service, no interlocking embassies. He has bishoprics, islands of authority. At the center of each island is a man. Men learn how to gain and hold personal power. Men are jealous."

(Herbert, 1969: 188)

Paul has become increasingly reliant on visions in order to make decisions, which always represent his reaction against a possible timeline. When the number of oracles increases as a result of the “Dune Tarot”, he can no longer rely on prophecies. He succumbs to a siege mentality, almost unable to manoeuvre. Hayt has metallic eyes, enabling him to see, physically and metaphorically, extremely clearly. He advises Paul to destroy his enemies and save his loved ones. It is to this end that Paul chooses one strand of vision and does not deviate it from it. Paul no longer concerns himself with the fate of humankind; instead he creates a situation in which he can withdraw from his position, while ensuring the safety of his family and friends. The narrator, in a parallel to God, employs zero focalization; Paul and Hayt observe from restricted perspectives. The fact that Hayt can see clearly whilst Paul cannot undermines Paul’s superiority and thus his position as a messiah.

Paul loses his eyesight and Chani, but is able to defeat his enemies. He provides heirs for the throne, and ensures Fremen loyalty by accepting all of their customs. His vision-sight has run its course and, as mentioned earlier, he obeys the Fremen tradition of walking into the desert alone, a free man. The portrayal of the messiah in *Dune Messiah* is consequently negative. Paul is unable to learn from the past or make decisions based on the present. Instead, he becomes obsessed with the future and is unable to adapt or change his course. He frees the Fremen, only to enslave the rest of the universe. The promise of a messiah is disseminated throughout the universe; nonetheless people pray to be saved from him. The citizens of Muad’Dib’s universe who rely solely on his judgement, without question, bring the universe to the brink of destruction. At the end of *Dune Messiah*, Paul does not submit to God’s will or become a martyr for his people. He chooses his family, when a messiah would consider all of humankind his family. Nevertheless, this is not the end of Paul’s story as he returns briefly in *Children of Dune*, not as a “Redeemer”, but in an attempt to “redeem” himself. His “resurrection” will be discussed in the next chapter.



## Chapter Three

### Leto: The Martyr

Martyrdom is a voluntary laying down of one's life for the sake of some ultimate values such as truth, love, justice and freedom. In the last analysis, religions and religious communities possess the great power to interpret death in ultimate terms. In most cases, religions have viewed the natural process of ageing and dissolution as a poor mode of death, while they have extolled violent death faced with courage.

(Wilfred, 2003: 75)

The messiah-martyr-resurrection cycle concludes for Paul in *Children of Dune*; yet heralds the beginning of Leto's journey as a messiah, culminating with his martyrdom in *God Emperor of Dune*. The conclusion of *Dune Messiah* advocates the position that Paul fulfilled his role as a messiah by voluntarily laying down his life. As mentioned earlier, the reader learns in *Children of Dune* that this was not the case; instead, Paul is "resurrected" in order to pass the baton to his son, Leto. The implied reader must question whether Paul is a messiah or whether he is a false messiah. Paul and Leto's messiahship, martyrdom and "resurrection" mirror the pattern established by Jesus.

The theme of martyrdom is first introduced in *Dune Messiah*. Bronso of Ix almost certainly became a martyr when he was executed, presumably for defying the orthodox religion prescribed by Muad'Dib's [once again, the second "D" in Muad'Dib is capitalised] Quizarate (Herbert, 1969: 5). The conspirators against Muad'Dib voiced concerns about the meanings that would be attached to Paul's death (*ibid*: 13). They understood that a martyr can provoke extreme emotions; reactions to a newly created one could develop into an unstable, unstoppable and unpredictable force, which might envelop everyone. At the other end of the spectrum, Korba the Panegyrist formed his own conspiracy with a group of Fremen to make Paul a martyr, in order to assume power in the vacuum and chaos that would follow the death of a messiah. None of this occurs, since Paul's "martyrdom" ensures the failure of both groups of conspirators, leaving Alia ruling as Regent until Paul's children and heirs reach maturity. The main martyrs who will be discussed in this chapter will be Paul and Leto II with reference to the next two books of the series, *Children of Dune* and *God Emperor of Dune*.

The narrative arc of the messiah reaches a conclusion in *Children of Dune* with Paul's "resurrection" and subsequent martyrdom. As noted in the previous chapter, according to Fremen tradition, the blind are abandoned in the desert as sacrifices to Shai-Hulud, the

Fremen deity. When Muad'Dib accepts this belief and voluntarily walks into the desert alone, he secures his position as a proper Fremen. Paul does not yield to death. Previous prescient visions guided him to the Cast Out, a Fremen tribe from the "tabu" sietch, Jacurutu. The word "tabu" is used as a variation of "taboo" and was probably derived from *The Golden Bough* (Frazer, 2009: 688). This sietch was declared "tabu" when the Jacurutu tribe began to murder fellow Fremen for their water. In consequence, the other Fremen tribes sought to exterminate the Cast Out; the survivors became smugglers. When they discovered Paul they plied him with women and spice in an attempt to extract visions from him (Herbert, 1976: 347). Paul did not provide them with any information; nevertheless, this is a disappointing fate for him to embrace. Unknown to the Cast Out, Paul still experiences visions and wishes to correct the mistakes he has made; hence his "resurrection" or return. Until fairly late in the novel, Herbert does not reveal how Paul survived. He chooses instead to introduce a mysterious character who identifies himself as "The Preacher". By not disclosing The Preacher's true identity, the narrator ensures that the readers share the other characters' uncertainty when speculating about The Preacher's identity. This implies that the narrator is unreliable; while the narrator does not lie about The Preacher's real persona, the withholding of information can be considered dishonest. The implied reader would notice the omission and would probably find their scepticism reinforced. By not revealing information, Herbert creates suspense and surprises a complicit reader.

The Preacher creates doubt about Muad'Dib's death because no corpse was recovered to confirm this event. Given the nature of the planet and the likelihood that a worm would consume a person whole, it would be virtually impossible to find any remains. Nevertheless, The Preacher is able to exploit the speculations that Paul might have survived, since Muad'Dib was not an ordinary man. Even though The Preacher is Paul Atreides / Usul / Muad'Dib, he clearly feels that those designations no longer conform to his present identity: he is no longer an Emperor, mate, or religious leader. He is unwilling to return to the roles of emperor and or religious leader and Chani is no longer alive. His name, "The Preacher", is also his primary function and he will not be swayed from it.

Another role of a preacher is also to bear witness. In the Bible, Paul is reported to have said:

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

(Acts 20:24)

The concept of a witness can be traced to the Old Testament. The Book of the Prophet Isaiah is particularly relevant. When The Preacher addresses the pilgrims of Muad'Dib, there is a sense that Herbert may have mined the following verse from Isaiah for his scenes:

Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, [It is] truth. Ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I [am] he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, [even] I, [am] the LORD; and beside me [there is] no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when [there was] no strange [god] among you: therefore ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I [am] God. Yea, before the day [was] I [am] he; and [there is] none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?

(Is. 43:8-13)

It is ironical that this verse refers to blind people, when The Preacher himself is blind. Perhaps the verse implies that the crowd are blind and deaf to reality. This would seem to be the case with the people that have come to Arrakis from all over the *Duniverse*. They are assembled at the temple because they are on pilgrimage; yet they will hear the testimony of The Preacher who bears witness against Alia, a false God. The Biblical concept of a witness is also linked to the idea of a martyr:

The original meaning of the Greek word *martys* was “witness”; in this sense it is often used in the New Testament. Since the most striking witness that Christians could bear to their faith was to die rather than deny it, the word soon began to be used in reference to one who was not only a witness but specifically a witness unto death. This usage is present, at least implicitly, in Acts. 22:20 and Revelation 2:13.

(*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2012: s.v. Martyr)

Jesus's resurrection is integral to Christian belief because it confirms Christ's divinity. Yet the reaction to the prospect of Muad'Dib's return is unfavourable: “there had come to be an awesome fear among many on Arrakis that he might be Muad'Dib returned from the desert, not dead at all” (Herbert, 1976: 38). There is no sense of relief or happiness that Muad'Dib may have survived; a war-weary population seems to look upon his return with dread. The gholas' existence in the *Dune* universe diminishes any return; it is not a supernatural occurrence but a scientific outcome. Paul is not a ghola; he merely hid in an obscure sietch for nine years. Furthermore, he does not return in a pristine form: he has aged and is still physically blind. Herbert's decision to transform Paul's appearance serves a

dramatic purpose; it is difficult for both the other characters and the implied reader to confirm whether The Preacher is Paul.

The Preacher's first scene is dramatic and is reminiscent of the Cleansing of the Temple by Jesus as described in the four gospels: (Mk. 11:15–19, 11:27–33), (Mt. 21:12–17, 21:23–27), (Lk. 19:45–48, 20:1–8) and (Jn. 2:13–16). Jesus strongly disapproved of the commercial activities prevalent at the Temple in Jerusalem and expelled the money-changers, thus enabling pilgrims to concentrate on prayer instead. The Preacher witnesses the economic activity practised in the name of Muad'Dib and is similarly disgusted. Paul does not try to physically remove anyone from the terrace; rather, he disrupts the activities with his words. By drawing parallels between Jesus and Paul, Herbert establishes that Paul / The Preacher is still attempting to fulfil the role of the messiah.

The Preacher is escorted by a fourteen-year-old Fremen boy, Assan Tariq. The pair stand on a terrace before Alia's temple, where pilgrims, Mahdi Spirit Cultists, vendors and the like are assembled. The vendors sell many items: decorative stillsuits, the Dune tarot and items with which Muad'Dib ostensibly had contact. Fremen culture is now subject to fetishism by the pilgrims and is perpetuated by the Fremen who sell items as well. The Dune tarot signals the compulsive need for prophecy now shared by the masses – everyone seeks to become an oracle. The decorative stillsuits, some sold by Fremen no less, serve as a metaphor for the religion of Muad'Dib. Real stillsuits play a life-saving function, but a decorative stillsuit would have no purpose; it suggests a mindless fashion trend and a need to emulate the Fremen. Later in the novel, Leto and Muriz discuss the function of an imitation stillsuit: a wise subservient population will imitate the ruling class, either out of fear or in order to curry favour.

“Good!” Namri said. “Your awareness has been prepared. I’ve sunk home the barbs. One more thing, then. Have you heard that they use imitation stillsuits in the cities of far Kadrish?”

As Namri waited, Leto quested in his mind for a hidden meaning. *Imitation stillsuits? They were worn on many planets.* He said: “The foppish habits of Kadrish are an old story often repeated. The wise animal blends into its surroundings.”

(Herbert, 1976: 248, original emphasis)

The stillsuit is uniquely Fremen, since the planet was once a giant desert. Perhaps Muad'Dib's religion was only suitable for the Fremen, for a certain period, so that as the stillsuit is gradually growing obsolete, so does the need for Muad'Dib's religion. Both The

Preacher and Leto seek to create a religion that would free everyone of the desire for a messiah.

Not only does Herbert criticise the commercialisation of religion, but also the obsession with relics evidenced by some adherents of various faiths. Herbert does not treat relics as objects worthy of veneration; they are bought and sold with ease. It is clear that the sale of these relics serves only to enrich the sellers of these objects. There is no guarantee that these items had anything to do with Muad'Dib; if they did, what value would one attach to these objects? While the effects of the spice may be perceived as mystical, the relics are not imbued with any supernatural powers. Because countless pilgrims flock to the planet daily, it is highly doubtful that Muad'Dib would have had any contact with these objects. They may therefore be only of psychological value or merely endow the pilgrim with a higher status when they return home.

In *A Companion to Chaucer*, Scott D. Westrem describes how pilgrims similar to those described in *The Canterbury Tales* would have distinguished themselves upon their return:

Returning pilgrims often wore badges, by the 1300s made of lead or pewter, with an emblem of their destination: a cockleshell for Compostela, crossed keys for Rome, palm branches for Jerusalem and a head with mitre between crossed swords for Canterbury; the last of these likely carried with them ampullae filled with 'water of St Thomas', a dilution of the martyr's own blood that was obtained from a great cistern and was consumed as one of the great medicines of the later Middle Ages.

(Westrem, 2002: 201)

Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* is arguably the most famous work in English literature, where pilgrims from various walks of life are the chief characters. Herbert does not describe any testimonies from the pilgrims or accounts of the pilgrims' homecoming. Herbert, instead, has another purpose for Chaucer.

Leto crouched in the lee of his dune and waited for the night to settle into its own rhythms. Patience and caution -- caution and patience. For a time he amused himself by reviewing Chaucer's route from London to Canterbury, listing the places from Southwark: two miles to the watering-place of St. Thomas, five miles to Deptford, six miles to Greenwich, thirty miles to Rochester, forty miles to Sittingbourne, fifty-five miles to Boughton under Blean, fifty-eight miles to Harbledown, and sixty miles to Canterbury. It gave him a sense of timeless buoyancy to know that few in his universe would recall Chaucer or know any London except the village on Gansireed. St. Thomas was preserved in the Orange Catholic Bible and the Azhar Book, but Canterbury was gone from the memories of men, as was the planet which had known it. There lay the

burden of his memories, of all those lives which threatened to engulf him. He had made that trip to Canterbury once.

(Herbert, 1976: 238)

It is peculiar that Leto does not recount *The Canterbury Tales*; instead, he reviews the physical distance between each stage of Chaucer's journey. While a pilgrimage generally takes place over a large distance, this aspect is not normally dwelt upon. The purpose of a pilgrimage is hopefully to achieve a spiritual awakening or at least a renewal of faith for the believer. By mechanically relating and focusing upon the physical distances of the pilgrimage, Leto seems to have missed the entire point of such an event. This is ironic, considering his own journey into the desert will result in his awakening. As his Other Memory allows him to experience Chaucer's journey, he should have grasped this concept. Furthermore, Leto notes that Earth is "gone"; yet new pilgrims and pilgrimage sites are available upon Arrakis. This suggests that the inner transformation a pilgrim seeks is independent of the nature of the relics or the destination. Rather, it is the pilgrimage itself which brings forth that awakening. According to Bonnie Greenwell (2012), "The true meaning of spiritual awakening, as it has been known classically in both Christian and Buddhist traditions is the waking up of consciousness to the remembrance of its original nature". In Leto's case, he will be forced repeatedly into a spice trance where he will be forced to see the past and future, while reconciling all of the personalities that live within him.

Passing through the doors of Alia's temple supposedly reduces a "pilgrim's soul to *motedom*, sufficiently small that it could pass through the eye of a needle and enter heaven" (Herbert, 1976: 39, original emphasis). This is similar to the biblical verse (Mt. 19:23-24): "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God". Parallel versions of this verse appear in the synoptic gospels: (Mk. 10:24-25) and (Lk. 18:24-25). It emphasises that it is virtually impossible for a rich man to enter heaven because he may be obsessed with his possessions and position. Similarly, pilgrims travel to Arrakis to ingratiate themselves with the Atrides and Quizarate or perhaps to "buy" a place in heaven. Either way, they have undergone great expense to reach Arrakis on Hajj, and expect to be compensated. If one is aware of the biblical allusion, the commercial activity that surrounds the temple is made more ironic. By implanting this rumour, Alia is no better than the Bene Gesserit, who routinely use older religious beliefs for their own objectives.

The spectacle in front of the temple is too much for The Preacher to bear. He berates everyone present in the plaza: his words could be interpreted either as a prophecy or as a curse. To accuse the crowd of being blasphemers and idolaters is interpreted by Alia's priests as heresy. Even though The Preacher is Muad'Dib, he no longer subscribes to the official doctrine of the religion, which he believes is antithetical to his teachings. It is for this reason that he feels compelled to preach and destabilise Alia. Akin to Jesus's words and actions, The Preacher's words have the desired effect of unsettling the populace and the priesthood:

This was too much for The Preacher. He raised both arms and roared in a voice which surely had commanded worm riders: "*Silence!*" The entire throng in the plaza went still at that battle cry.

The Preacher pointed a thin hand toward the dancers, and the illusion that he actually saw them was uncanny. "Did you not hear that man? Blasphemers and idolaters! All of you! The religion of Muad'Dib is not Muad'Dib. He spurns it as he spurns you! Sand will cover this place. Sand will cover you."

(Herbert, 1976: 41, original emphasis)

In the Book of Acts, all of the Apostles used prophecy when preaching and in bearing witness to the Gospel of Jesus (Acts 3:18-26; 7:37; 10:39-45; 13:15-41; 17:10-12; 18:24-28; 24:14-15; 26:22-28; 28:22-29). It is uncertain whether the crowd's silence is due to the "battle cry" or rather the Bene Gesserit use of Voice (cf. Chapter One). At this stage, Herbert has not revealed that The Preacher is Paul; nevertheless, his accusation would elicit anger and denial in pilgrim and priest alike. Before The Preacher leaves the plaza, he brings forth a desert-mummified human hand. It is a gruesome piece of theatre, effective in securing the attention and horror of the crowd:

The Preacher stopped, reached into the purse beneath his bourka, and removed an object which only those nearby recognized. It was a desert-mummified human hand, one of the planet's jokes on mortality which occasionally turned up in the sand and were universally regarded as communications from Shai-Hulud. The hand had been desiccated into a tight fist which ended in white bone scarred by sandblast winds.

"I bring the Hand of God, and that is all I bring!" The Preacher shouted. "I speak for the Hand of God. I am The Preacher."

Some took him to mean that the hand was Muad'Dib's, but others fastened on that commanding presence and the terrible voice -- and that was how Arrakis came to know his name. But it was not the last time his voice was heard.

(Herbert, 1976: 41-42)

The "Hand of God" is an instrument of God; this suggests that The Preacher believes that he is executing the will of God. The mummified hand signifies mortality on Arrakis; the grisly sight would be profoundly disconcerting for the pilgrims. Since The Preacher had brought the mummified hand with him, he either repeats a set piece or possibly he carries it

as a reminder of his own mortality. The members of the crowd who believe that the hand was Muad'Dib's would consider it a powerful relic. Perhaps, in this sense, Herbert might have been influenced by the Pardoner in *The Canterbury Tales*. The Pardoner hypocritically preaches to impress people with his skills in oratory, but mostly to make money by selling fake relics (Chaucer, 2007: 188). If Paul is not the messiah, then his preaching is hypocritical. Before The Preacher delivers this judgment, an actor had concluded a performance near him that adds to the implied reader's understanding of the "Hand of God":

"Bah! The universe can be grasped only by the sentient hand. That hand is what drives your precious brain, and it drives everything else that derives from the brain. You see what you have created, you *become* sentient, only after the hand has done its work!"

(Herbert, 1976:40, original emphasis)

Herbert included this brief monologue for an important reason. Conceivably, these words are pertinent to The Preacher's situation; even though he had the benefit of prescient visions, these visions could not prepare him for the reality of the situation. He could not bear facing the consequences of the jihad; i.e. "after the hand had done its work". This suggests that The Preacher is motivated, out of guilt, to correct some of his mistakes. This interpretation is confirmed later in the novel, during the confrontation between Paul and Leto:

"Then they'll begin to wonder and, finally, they'll understand. You didn't take your vision far enough, father. Your hands did good things and evil."

"But the evil was known after the event!"

"Which is the way of many great evils," Leto said. "You crossed over only into a part of my vision. Was your strength not enough?"

"You know I couldn't stay there. I could never do an evil act which was known before the act. I'm not Jacurutu." He clambered to his feet. "Do you think me one of those who laughs alone at night?"

(Herbert, 1976: 349)

If one begins to question how it was possible for Paul to commit "evil acts" in the light of his prescient powers, then one can assume that the decisions were made during the "valley" or "shadow" periods of his visions. Leto mentions here that Paul's prescience is limited compared to his own. Paul's morality would not let him commit an action if he knew in advance that it would have evil consequences. The question "Do you think me one of those who laughs alone at night?" is posed a few times during the course of the novel, and suggests that those who do laugh alone at night are mentally unbalanced. Paul does not view himself as mentally ill and there is no evidence from the narrator, other characters or Paul himself to suggest otherwise; in stark contrast, Alia's descent into madness is well documented. While Paul does not initially agree with Leto's decision, there is nothing in the



text that implies he questions Leto's sanity. If one considers the question in a literal sense, there is a scene in *God Emperor of Dune* where Leto does not laugh, but cries, alone at night. Leto's sacrifice outweighs Paul's actions – Leto is the real messiah in the series.

*The Preacher* is also the alternative name for the Old Testament *Book of Ecclesiastes* (Whybray, 1997: 15), significant because there are similarities between *Ecclesiastes* and the role of The Preacher in *Children of Dune*. The Hebrew title of the book is Qoheleth, a term related to “the verb *qāhal*, ‘to gather, assemble’” (Jones, 2005a: 2599). This is exactly what The Preacher accomplishes: he attracts curious onlookers who assemble to hear his discourse. Qoheleth is a title or epithet as well as the speaker in *Ecclesiastes* (Whybray, 1997: 15). The book identifies Qoheleth as “the son of David, king in Jerusalem” that is, Solomon (Ec. 1:1). Paul also qualifies for the dual role of preacher and king; even though he has walked away from the throne, he does not formally abdicate his position. William P. Brown's analysis of Qoheleth's sermons provides insight into a possible motivation of Paul:

Proclaiming the Word, Qoheleth reminds us, is about courageously confronting the bewildering complex and convoluted world in which people live and move and have their being in God... Speaking only from the top down, from a pedestal rather than from a pulpit, yields only patronizing pronouncements delicately suspended above the fray of the living, unreachable and irrelevant. The preacher must also be a keen observer of life from the bottom up, as well as a discerning interpreter of the Word given from on high.

(Brown, 2011: 20)

The “faufreluches” system of the *Dune* universe is “the rigid rule of class distinction enforced by the Imperium” (Herbert, 1965: 518). The aristocracy in a feudal society tends to be isolated from the masses: as a child Paul did not have any friends – his only companions were his teachers and family (Herbert, 1965: 4). Even amongst the Fremen he was revered as Muad'Dib. He is no longer an Emperor – the most important person in the universe – he is now merely a blind Fremen, who has rejected the tradition of walking into the desert and dying. The nine years in the desert, away from the comfort of court, have endowed The Preacher with the “common levels of experience”. It is from this levelled stature that he is able to attack the priests – the new aristocracy – gaining the admiration and acceptance of the crowd.

When The Preacher makes another appearance at Alia's temple, he utters four prophecies for various members of the Atrides household; nevertheless it is his sermon that requires scrutiny:

“Now I will preach to you,” The Preacher said. “This is a sermon of the desert. I direct it to the ears of Muad’Dib’s priesthood, those who practice the ecumenism of the sword. Ohhh, you believers in manifest destiny! Know you not that manifest destiny has its demoniac side? You cry out that you find yourselves exalted merely to have lived in the blessed generations of Muad’Dib. I say to you that you have abandoned Muad’Dib. Holiness has replaced love in your religion! You court the vengeance of the desert!”

(Herbert, 1976: 106-107)

Ecumenism generally refers to “the principle or aim of uniting different branches of the Christian Church” (*The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 2012: s.v. Ecumenism). Appendix II of *Dune* refers to “The Commission of Ecumenical Translators” who convened on “Old Earth, spawning ground of the mother religions” because they held the belief that “there exists a Divine Essence in the universe” (Herbert, 1965: 502). This confirms that all of the religions of *Duniverse* are based upon terrestrial religion and there is a belief in a “Divine Essence”, which is not explicitly named as God. They are careful with the language they use to prevent dissension in the meeting. This is verified by their primary purpose: “to remove a primary weapon from the hands of disputant religions. That weapon — the claim to possession of the one and only revelation” (*ibid*). Despite the noble and magnanimous intentions, this gesture leads to chaos (Herbert, 1965: 502-504). Perhaps Herbert is lampooning the ecumenical efforts of the various Church denominations of the time.

There are many denominations in the Christian faith; the purpose of ecumenism is to unite all of them. Herbert uses the term with a different intention, though: the “ecumenism of the sword” would denote the practice, by Muad’Dib’s priesthood, of violently enforcing its single religious system upon everyone in the empire. Herbert connects the idea of the “ecumenism of the sword” to that of “manifest destiny”. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, American proponents of “manifest destiny” believed that it was the fate of the United States to expand across the North American continent (Mountjoy, 2009: 9). John O’Sullivan, who coined the term, believed that it was God’s will to expand the borders of the U.S (*ibid*: 10) — though the rights of the indigenous population were not factored into the colonisers’ vision. The Preacher condemns the priesthood who seek to unify the people through perpetuating violence in the name of Muad’Dib. He criticises the superiority and sanctimonious approach of the priests, whom he believes have abandoned Muad’Dib’s original teachings. In another sermon, The Preacher wishes to expose the corruption of organised religion in his name:

“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.”

(Herbert, 1976: 224)

The Preacher challenges the people not to be blind, but to question what they are told and to think for themselves. He is upset because he observes that the masses have surrendered their decision-making abilities to the members of the priesthood who act according to their own interests. The Preacher suggests that after the death of a Messiah, the public should have gained the knowledge and skills to handle difficult situations; however the opposite has occurred: “moral suicide”.

“I come only to ask a simple question,” The Preacher said. “Is Muad’Dib’s death to be followed by the moral suicide of all men? [*sic*] Is that the inevitable aftermath of a Messiah?”

“Then you admit him Messiah!” the voice from the crowd shouted.

“Why not, since I’m the prophet of his times?” The Preacher asked.

(Herbert, 1976: 224)

The Preacher can only discuss, from his point of view, what he perceives to be the denigration of Muad’Dib’s teachings. It should be noted that other opinions exist concerning the way(s) in which the original teachings of Muad’Dib have deviated in the intervening years. In the first epigraph of *Children of Dune*, which is ascribed to Duncan Idaho, there is a brief summary of the variety of approaches to Muad’Dib’s teachings, after Paul’s apparent death:

*Muad’Dib’s teachings have become the playground of scholastics, of the superstitious and the corrupt. He taught a balanced way of life, a philosophy with which a human can meet problems arising from an ever-changing universe. He said humankind is still evolving, in a process which will never end. He said this evolution moves on changing principles which are known only to eternity. How can corrupted reasoning play with such an essence?* [All of the epigraphs in *Children of Dune* are italicised]

(Herbert, 1976: 1)

Herbert may have observed that when the founder of a religion dies, the original teachings are subjected to an onslaught from scholars, the superstitious, corrupt and sometimes from the followers themselves who may leave the original group and proceed to form different groups. Once again, Herbert uses Muad’Dib’s religion to criticise individuals and organisations that manipulate and reinterpret religion to advance their own agenda. He creates a scenario where there is understandable chaos in the aftermath of the founder’s death. Nine years have passed since the events of *Dune*, yet the priests continue to disseminate Muad’Dib’s revelations. According to Duncan, Muad’Dib understood that the universe is subject to constant change; therefore his teachings should provide the necessary knowledge to manage and adapt to various situations.

Belief in Muad'Dib's religion had already begun to wane during his reign: some of his most loyal supporters, the Fremen, had betrayed him. This betrayal seems likely to continue with Stilgar, who appears in a dramatic opening scene in which he considers killing the nine-year-old twins, Leto II (henceforth referred to as Leto) and Ghanima. The horror of the scene is compounded by the fact that they are asleep, when they are at their most vulnerable. Worse still, they are orphans and he is related to them through Chani, their mother. Yet it is a mistake to consider them children: they are preborn, like their aunt, Alia. Stilgar's religious motivations and actions deserve consideration; given that he is one of the few characters who is an adherent, and not a manipulator, of religions in the series.

*How simple things were when our Messiah was only a dream, he thought. By finding our Mahdi we loosed upon the universe countless messianic dreams. Every people subjugated by the jihad now dreams of a leader to come.*

Stilgar glanced into the darkened bedchamber.

*If my knife liberated all of those people, would they make a messiah of me?*

(Herbert, 1976: 2-3, original emphasis)

This is another religious theme which Herbert investigates: Perception is subjective; whilst Paul was the Fremen messiah, he is considered a tyrant by the rest of the universe. If Stilgar kills the twins, he may be regarded as a Saviour or Judas, depending on whether a person considers the Atreides holy or not. Ironically, the Fremen have inadvertently sown the seeds of messianism throughout the empire, with each population expecting a messiah of their own to save them from Muad'Dib. Stilgar, trusted Fremen *naib* (leader) and friend to Muad'Dib, feels sufficiently threatened to consider committing treason; in addition, according to his beliefs, he is also risking damnation. Even though Stilgar was manipulated by both Muad'Dib and Jessica, his judgment in the previous two novels was always respected; if this aspect is kept in mind, the reader should pay attention to his reasoning:

It was the religion of Muad'Dib which upset Stilgar most. Why did they make a god of Muad'Dib? Why deify a man known to be flesh? Muad'Dib's *Golden Elixir of Life* had created a bureaucratic monster which sat astride human affairs. Government and religion united, and breaking a law became sin. A smell of blasphemy arose like smoke around any questioning of governmental edicts. The guilt of rebellion invoked hellfire and self-righteous judgments.

Yet it was men who created these governmental edicts.

(Herbert, 1976: 5, original emphasis)

In chapter one of the dissertation, the possible negative consequences of combining religion and law were discussed; these conjectures have become a reality. It is not the religion or laws that are criticised, but the fact that imperfect humans, not God, are creating

these edicts. Stilgar is uncertain about Paul's divinity because he knew Paul was a mortal man. Stilgar's belief that a man cannot be God resonates with the Qu'ran, which states that Jesus (Q, 4:171) and Muhammad (Q, 18:110) were human, and not divine in nature. Herbert adds an eastern element by mentioning the "Golden Elixir of Life", which Taoist alchemists believed could result in immortality (Fowler, 2005: 166). The opinions of Reverend Mothers are assimilated by Stilgar who is troubled by their judgement of the preborn: "Abomination" (Herbert, 1976: 5). His thoughts summarise the root of his concern:

There could be no doubt these twins went beyond their father. But in which direction? The boy spoke of an ability to *be* his father -- and had proved it. Even as an infant, Leto had revealed memories which only Muad'Dib should have known. Were there other ancestors waiting in that vast spectrum of memories -- ancestors whose beliefs and habits created unspeakable dangers for living humans?

(*ibid*, original emphasis)

The omniscient narrator reveals Stilgar's thoughts; in this instance, it appears as the narrator is relating the shape and bends in Stilgar's thought processes quite reliably. Seeing that the narrator has been unreliable in the past and possibly dishonest, the implied reader would wonder if some information may have been omitted. The reader is aware that the Atreides are descended from the House of Atreus and the Baron Vladimir Harkonnen; the implied reader would have noted the kin slayers and autocrats amongst them. More alarmingly, there are many other ancestors that have not been mentioned. The possibility of countless good and evil ancestors lurking in Leto's consciousness, each awaiting an opportunity to possess or influence him, is disturbing to the implied reader. Stilgar is understandably repulsed by the idea of possession; immortality does not tempt the pragmatic Fremen. He is able to resolve his doubts by seeking comfort in his knowledge of the previously established Fremen religion:

In torment, his mind reverted to primary Fremen beliefs, and he thought:  
*God's command comes; so seek not to hasten it. God's it is to show the way; and some do swerve from it.*

(*ibid*, original emphasis)

And

*I am an attendant yet, he told himself. And my master is God the Merciful, the Compassionate. And he quoted to himself: "Surely, We have put on their necks fetters up to the chin, so their heads are raised; and We have put before them a barrier and behind them a barrier; and We have covered them, so they do not see."*

Thus was it written in the old Fremen religion.

(*ibid*: 6, original emphasis)

Once again, Herbert uses the Qu'ran to keep the Fremen religion consistent. Contextually, these verses address the punishment that will be meted out to non-believers. Stilgar believes that his thoughts and doubts emanate from the “left hand of the damned” (Herbert, 1976: 2) and is determined to meet challenges when they arise, rather than question God's will. He is aware of the guilt and hellfire that threaten doubters and unbelievers and chooses to remain faithful to the children of Muad'Dib. The Qu'ranic verses that are alluded to are as follows:

The Event (the Hour or the punishment of disbelievers and polytheists or the Islâmic laws or commandments) ordained by Allâh will come to pass, so seek not to hasten it. Glorified and Exalted be He above all that they associate as partners with Him.

(Q, 16:1)

And

Verily. We have put on their necks iron collars reaching to the chins, so that their heads are raised up.  
And We have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them up, so that they cannot see.

(Q, 36:8-9)

Stilgar's fears of abomination will bear fruit in Alia: the first preborn who is introduced in the series. As discussed in chapter one of this dissertation, preborns are awoken in the womb through exposure to spice essence and are thus born with all of their ancestors' memories; consequently they can never be considered children because they possess the knowledge of adults. This has a disconcerting effect on observers – the Fremen wanted to exorcise Alia. They are manipulated into believing that Alia is a goddess and initially treat her with awe and respect. The twins are viewed similarly; they are considered “objects of veneration and fear” (Herbert, 1976: 2), which also stems from their “divine” lineage.

The main preoccupation of Leto, Ghanima and Alia in *Children of Dune* is the fear that they may be possessed by another persona in their own consciousness. When Alia succumbs, it becomes imperative for the twins to escape a similar fate. They speculate about the circumstances that led to Alia's fall and what may aid them in avoiding it: the protection of their parents, the fact that the spice trance lowers resistance to an ancestor's persona, as well as resistance to the other personalities, and so forth (Herbert, 1976: 11-12). If preborns become possessed by another persona, they are deemed “Abominations”. The “Trial of

Possession” is used to determine whether someone is possessed. If the accused is judged to be possessed, the sentence exacted by both the Bene Gesserit and Fremen is execution.

Herbert provides a pseudo-scientific explanation for the preborn: the ancestral memories of the preborn are genetically passed down. Alia differs from the twins because she gained access to the memories of the line of Reverend Mothers as well. In *Dune*, the Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohaim explains to Paul how the Truthsayer Drug (spice essence) works:

“The drug’s dangerous,” she said, “but it gives insight. When a Truthsayer’s gifted by the drug, she can look many places in her memory – in her body’s memory. We look down so many avenues of the past... but only feminine avenues.”

(Herbert, 1965: 13)

The phrase “in her body’s memory” suggests a pseudo-scientific explanation for the Other Memory that the Reverend Mother, *Kwisatz Haderach*, and preborn possess. Body memory is not a unique concept; according to the online version of the Skeptic’s Dictionary (2012), “[c]ellular memory is the speculative notion that human body cells contain clues to our personalities, tastes, and histories, independently of either genetic codes or brain cells”. Once again, Herbert undermines a supernatural explanation, an act which emphasises the science fictional elements of the novel. From a scientific and sceptical perspective, possession is associated with psychiatric disorders; however, from a religious viewpoint, possession is defined as “the situation when somebody’s mind is believed to be controlled by the Devil or by an evil spirit” (*The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 2012: s.v. Possession). Herbert makes it clear that it is not a spirit that is responsible for Alia’s possession; yet he employs religious language to create a more visceral effect on both the reader and other characters. To compare the Baron to the Beast of Revelation in *Dune* is more effective than merely proclaiming him evil. “Possession” and the “Beast of Revelation” might stir feelings of disquiet in a reader, whereas a clinical description would not engage an ordinary reader’s emotions.

Ghanima inadvertently finds a “cure” for the condition through the use of self-hypnosis (Herbert, 1976: 188-189). It is significant that an exorcist does not help Ghanima; hypnosis is used to treat mental or personality disorders and it is for this very reason that it is effective for a preborn. On the other hand, Leto utilises all the memories and experiences of the ancestors to provide him with the skills and willpower to commit himself to the Golden

Path. The twins sought co-operation with their inner lives and were assisted by the Other Memories of their mother and father. Leto attempts to inform Jessica about the inner tumult and his solution:

“How do I know this isn’t another Abomination speaking?”

He shrugged. “That’s where your heart comes in. Ghani and I know how she fell. It isn’t easy to adjust to the clamor of that inner multitude. Suppress their egos and they will come crowding back every time you invoke a memory. One day --” He swallowed in a dry throat. “-- a strong one from that inner pack decides it’s time to share the flesh.”

“And there’s nothing you can do?” She asked the question although she feared the answer.

“We believe there is something . . . yes. We cannot succumb to the spice; that’s paramount. And we must not suppress the past entirely. We must use it, make an amalgam of it. Finally we will mix them all into ourselves. We will no longer be our original selves -- *but we will not be possessed.*”

(Herbert, 1976: 96, original emphasis)

Jessica does not accept Leto’s explanation and requires that Leto undergo the Trial of Possession to determine whether he is an Abomination. Leto’s prescience reveals that both the sandworms (*ibid*: 33) and humans are heading for extinction (Herbert, 1976: 350); he must also confront The Preacher, his father (*ibid*: 338-350). There is only one way to prevent the extinction of both races: the “Golden Path” (*ibid*: 346-347). Leto requires a physical transformation to perform this task. Spice essence has saturated his blood to the extent that the sandworms can adhere to and fuse with his skin; in addition, he uses the information gained from the spice trance to adapt his enzyme balance to keep the sandtrout attached (*ibid*: 329). Physically, he will continue to transform himself over the millennia until he becomes an evolved, human-sandworm hybrid. The story of the virgin birth of Jesus indicates that his nature was hybrid as well: Mary miraculously conceived Jesus while remaining a virgin since she was impregnated by the Holy Spirit, not a mortal man (Mt. 1:18; Lk. 1:26-35).

Leto still needs to confront The Preacher, in order to engage in a battle of visions. It is an emotional reunion for both father and son, even though their abilities have set them apart from the human race. Paul feels tremendous sorrow and horror that Leto has chosen to pursue the Golden Path. The physical and mental transformation that would be required revolted Paul, and he was unwilling to pay the price. One interpretation might be that this proves Paul was not the Messiah, because while Jesus accepted his fate, Paul did not.



One should keep in mind that Paul's limited vision did not reveal the extinction of humankind; this shortcoming demonstrates conclusively that Leto had surpassed him. Paul claims that he failed in his principles only once: when he accepted the Mahdinate for Chani (Herbert, 1976: 349). He first asserted that he accepted the Mahdinate to prevent the *jihad* (cf. Chapter Two). Later he declared that the *jihad* was inevitable and that he needed to remain in power to guide the course and outcome of the war (cf. Chapter Two). It is uncertain whether Paul is dishonest or whether his opinions changed with his experience and prophetic visions. Leto does not contradict his father, but the reader is aware that by accepting this religious mantle Paul instigated the war.

Was Muad'Dib the Messiah of the Fremen? Certainly, he saved them from Harkonnen brutality; yet they had since degenerated to such an extent that one may argue that it would have been better to abandon them to the Harkonnen. From a moral perspective, this decision would have been wrong; besides, the Harkonnen had already begun to entertain the idea of moulding the Fremen into Sardaukar-style warriors. After Paul freed the Fremen, they had the choice to behave in whatever manner they saw fit; yet Farok claimed that Muad'Dib had called for the *jihad*. The weight of these actions initiates Paul's return as The Preacher. He wishes for the citizens of his former empire to become independent and self-aware. His sermons are well received by the common people who resent the Priesthood. During one of his sermons, he directly challenges a heckler who is evidently a priest; it is apparent that the challenge is directed at every cleric:

"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!"

But the challenger remained silent. And Alia noted that the crowd once more was listening with avid submission to The Preacher's every word. By attacking the Priesthood, he had their sympathy! And if her spies were correct, most of the pilgrims and Fremen on Arrakis believed this man was Muad'Dib.

"The son of Muad'Dib risked!" The Preacher shouted, and Alia heard tears in his voice. "Muad'Dib risked! They paid their price! And what did Muad'Dib achieve? A religion which is doing away with him!"

(Herbert, 1976: 225)

Paul's attempt to be messiah for the entire empire fails. He recognises this failure, thereafter accepting Leto's directives. Leto learns about Kralizec, the Typhoon Struggle in the spice trance: "Kralizec? That wasn't merely war or revolution; that was the Typhoon Struggle. It was a word from the furthestmost Fremen legends: the battle at the end of the

universe” (*ibid*: 318). If Leto does not choose the path to Kralizec, then humankind will be extinguished (*ibid*: 350). Kralizec is an apocalyptic scenario. In terms of prophecy and Christianity, Revelation is the only apocalyptic book in the New Testament. Today fundamentalist and conservative evangelical Christians believe the book was written to predict the end of the world in our own time (Achte-meier, 1996: 932). By prophesying Kralizec, once again, Herbert models Leto upon Jesus, who foresaw great upheaval:

Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:  
And great earthquakes shall be in diverse places, and famines, and pestilences; and  
fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

(Lk. 21:10-11)

The only hope for humanity’s survival is the Golden Path. One of its key elements, besides Leto’s mental and physical transformation, is to reduce Muad’Dib to human stature (*ibid*: 113). Paul accepts death to pave the way for Leto’s godhood, thereby becoming a martyr. In this respect, Paul is modelled after John the Baptist in this case of self-renunciation and subsequent martyrdom. According to the Bible, the multitude was ready to embrace John as the Messiah. John answered, “saying unto [them] all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire...” (Lk. 3:16). After preparing people for the arrival of Jesus, John was put into prison by the Galilean King, Herod Antipas (Mt. 14:3). John became a martyr when he was beheaded at Herod’s step-daughter, Salome’s, behest (Mt. 14:8-10). Like John, Paul acknowledges his superior. He understands that Leto will save humanity though it will be a baptism of fire for the latter.

The Preacher goes to Arakeen, where he knows his death awaits, in order to deliver a final sermon in which he will endorse Leto as Shai-Hulud. Before his crucifixion, Jesus similarly delivers his final sermon during the Last Supper, knowing he will die soon, and predicts that one of his disciples will betray him (Jn. 13:21-30). After The Preacher’s death, his identity as Muad’Dib will be confirmed. His last sermon will consequently be recognised as his final commandment to his followers to obey Leto. He promises them death and destruction if they do not submit to God’s will; Leto is their only possible saviour:

“Wild beasts lie upon your lands,” The Preacher said, his voice booming across the plaza. “Doleful creatures fill your houses. You who fled your homes no longer multiply your days upon the sand. Yea, you who have forsaken our ways, you will die in a fouled nest if you continue on this path. But if you heed my warning, the Lord shall lead you through a land of pits into the Mountains of God. Yea, Shai-Hulud shall lead you.”

(*ibid*: 388)

The Preacher's last words are to declare Alia a blasphemy (*ibid*: 390). Her enraged priests kill him; it is now inevitable that his real identity will be publicised. While it seems that The Preacher's heresy provoked the priests, his assassination was more probably the result of the factor which the latter and Alia perceived to be a threat to their power: the crowds had begun to speculate that The Preacher was Muad'Dib. His death is similar to that of Jesus, who was executed for the capital offence of being "The King of the Jews" (Mt. 27:37; Mk. 15:26; Lk. 23:38; Jn. 19:19–22). Both of them were executed without the perpetrators realising their true identities. Alia realises the enormity of her actions: Paul, acknowledged as the Messiah by the majority of Fremen, is now a martyr. His death will engulf her, the blasphemy he spoke against, while Muad'Dib's adherents will want to avenge his death.

Alia is exposed as an Abomination; from the shards of her existence she sees no alternative but to take her own life. Her decision to throw herself from the window of her temple is extremely dramatic; suicide in a temple would profane it. It confirms her status as a "blasphemy" in the eyes of the Bene Gesserit and Fremen. Her succumbing to possession was a self-fulfilling prophecy born of Bene Gesserit training: they would not entertain any alternative perspectives on the preborn, so that Alia was denied any hope of salvation.

Leto Atrides, as heir presumptive, steps into his role as both Emperor and Shai-Hulud. The sandtrout that covers Leto's body endows him with extraordinary strength and speed. He is invulnerable to most physical harm; he can withstand fire, knives, acids, poisons and so forth (Herbert, 1976: 400). Most importantly, the sandworms refuse to attack him. Leto's superhuman feats easily surpass those of Muad'Dib. Some of the Fremen believe that he is the "Desert Demon" (*ibid*: 375), while Leto identifies himself as "Shai-Hulud" (*ibid*), i.e. he is an avatar. The Fremen experience terror in the face of his overwhelming powers, and comply with his demands, thereby securing his position; *Children of Dune* concludes with Leto trying to come to terms with his sandtrout skin.

Leto will go on to become the ultimate martyr in the series, easily eclipsing Paul's sacrifice. He is acutely aware of this fate and makes this bold statement: "I am not overly fond of creating martyrs. Martyrs tend to set dramatic events adrift in human affairs" (Herbert, 1981: 70). In order to combat the "theatrical" consequences of martyrdom, Leto ensures that his martyrdom is not apparent to his subjects. He accomplishes this through

systematically undermining and diminishing his position. The fourth book in the series, *God Emperor of Dune*, chronicles his sacrifices and horrific fate. Herbert originally wrote the entire narrative in the first person with Leto as the narrator (Touponce, 1988: 87). When he converted it to a third-person narrative (akin to the previous novels), he also added material in the form of speeches, dialogue fragments, interviews and translations of Leto's journals. Perhaps Herbert realised that a first-person narrative would be less effective than one in the third person. A first-person narrative would only provide the perceptions or observations of the main character, which may or may not be reliable. The view of this narrator is limited: due to his or her being denied access to all the information available in the text, or being misled by other characters, the narrator's perspective does not translate into unreliability or dishonesty. There is a degree of trustworthiness associated with a third-person narrative; yet there is no guarantee that an omniscient narrator will not withhold information or be dishonest.

If one considers scripture, it is often presented as a report of miraculous events and spiritual teachings. A reader would be more inclined to trust reports from observers, rather than any self-made claims by a single character. The entire novel is firmly focussed upon Leto. Even the additional material demonstrates a preoccupation with Leto that mirrors the atmosphere of the empire. Ghanima and Jessica knew that Leto would be the dominant force in the universe:

“But everyone longs for the Golden Age,” Ghanima said. “Isn't that so, grandmother?”  
“Everyone,” Jessica agreed.  
“They long for the Pharaonic Empire which Leto will give them,” Ghanima said. “They long for a rich peace with abundant harvests, plentiful trade, a leveling of all except the Golden Ruler.”

(Herbert, 1976: 398)

The novel begins with a speech by Hadi Benotto announcing the discovery at Dar-es-Balat, on the planet “Rakis” (previously known as Arrakis) of the original journals of Leto II, the God Emperor. Once again, Herbert draws inspiration from a real event: the finding of the Dead Sea scrolls at Qumran (Magness, 2002: 1). “The Dead Sea scrolls” is a popular term, designating the discovery of various manuscripts and manuscript fragments found in eleven caves near Qumran (Magness, 2002: 32). Most notably, scrolls of the various books of the Hebrew Bible were discovered (Magness, 2002: 34) between 1947 and 1956 in eleven caves (Charlesworth, 2006: xxiii). They became a household name in the 1950s, beginning with Edmund Wilson's publications (*ibid*: 4). It is supremely unlikely that Herbert did not hear

about the discovery. Given his interest in religion, by the time *God Emperor of Dune* was published in 1981, he must have been at the very least generally acquainted with the subject matter and controversy surrounding the scrolls. This is important because by comparing a contemporary Hebrew Bible to these early manuscripts any deviations can be investigated. A reader who understands this connection will realise that Herbert is signalling how some religious teaching may deviate over time. James H. Charlesworth summarised the popular belief surrounding the Scrolls in four points:

First, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947. Second, they were given to Christian scholars to publish. Third, they have not all been published. Fourth, it must follow, therefore, that these Christian scholars came to realize that the Dead Sea Scrolls disprove the essential beliefs of Christianity.

(Charlesworth, 2006: 5)

The similarities between the discoveries at Dar-es-Balat and Qumran are notable: Leto knew that the facts surrounding his teachings and biography would not be able to stand the test of time; he attempts to preserve his ideas in the hope that someone eventually may understand or appreciate his sacrifice. His teachings, like the scrolls, were discovered long after they were initially hidden and his priests controlled what information was published.

Another character is introduced by Benotto, the poet Rebeth Vreeb, who reads the first page of the first volume of Leto's journals. This introductory scene successfully conveys the great ceremony that surrounds the presentation of a major archaeological find. The inscription on the storehouse states that the journals will only be found some four thousand years later (Herbert, 1981: 43). The function of Leto's journals is to portray his feelings and thoughts, in the hope that they will generate a better understanding of his actions.

The main narrative of *God Emperor of Dune* begins thirty-five hundred years after the events of *Children of Dune* (*ibid*: 45). By creating different historical epochs for the characters, Herbert establishes the distance between events and also conveys a strong mythological framework for the characters to manoeuvre within. All is still not well in the empire; the conspiracies and plots that once surrounded Paul are now visited upon Leto. Sandworms have become extinct (*ibid*: 14); peace is more or less maintained because Leto possesses the largest stockpile of spice in the universe (*ibid*: 20). When through prescience he anticipates violence, he is able to dispatch his female army, the Fish Speakers, beforehand (*ibid*: 119). The Fish Speakers are his followers, in the same manner as Jesus's apostles,

“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt. 4:19). Jesus’s apostles were not an army and discouraged violence, as opposed to the Fish Speakers. Local populations benefit from the Fish Speakers’ garrisons and were happy to host them (*ibid*: 73); though the enforced peace has led to stagnation (*ibid*: 195). The Bene Tleilaxu, Bene Gesserit, Ixians, Guild and others hate the complete control that Leto exercises over the populations and attempt to undermine and assassinate him. In this respect they are cautious and only attack him if they believe they will be successful.

Part of the immense sacrifice that Leto has made is his physical transformation. His appearance serves to further alienate him from the human race; he is well into his metamorphosis as a worm. In fact, he can be classified as a “pre-worm”:

At this writing, the *whole* could be considered rather gross. I am what could be called a pre-worm. My body is about seven meters long and somewhat more than two meters in diameter, ribbed for most of its length, with my Atreides face positioned man-height at one end, the arms and hands (still quite recognizable as human) just below. My legs and feet? Well, they are mostly atrophied. Just flippers, really, and they have wandered back along my body. The whole of me weighs approximately five old tons. These items I append because I know they will have historical interest.

(Herbert, 1981: 15)

The entire transformation would encompass approximately four thousand years (Herbert, 1976: 396). By referring to his form as “gross”, Leto indicates an awareness of how he may be perceived. Yet his exterior conforms to Fremen religious belief, which was spread during Muad’Dib’s *jihad*; he *is* Shai-Hulud. One can imagine that Stilgar would worship Leto in this form without question. The reader begins to realise the terrible price Leto has paid to ensure the survival of the Golden Path. His appearance would inspire reverence or disgust in his subjects, depending on their belief or non-belief in his divinity. He tells Duncan, “The curse of holiness is as offensive to me as it is to you!” (Herbert, 1981: 92). Duncan witnesses the extreme reactions Leto receives: the privileged do not cheer when they see the latter (*ibid*: 148); yet the Fish Speakers are fanatical and overwhelming in their response. Duncan notes that despite Leto’s protestations, he basks in the glow of their worship (Herbert, 1981: 203).

There is a deliberate design to the empire, which Leto has based upon the information gleaned from the spice trance in *Children of Dune*. He learned that the Bene Gesserit wanted to revive Pharaonic Imperialism using the twins (Herbert, 1976: 290); they had previously suggested incest to Paul and Alia, but were refused (Herbert, 1969: 178). It was a common

practice for Egyptian kings to marry their sisters (Strouhal, 1992: 52), but the twins expressed their distaste for incest (Herbert, 1976: 81). Initially, Ghanima is uncertain that Leto will accept this course of action; she reminds him that he is not Osiris (*ibid*: 77). He responds that he will not try to be Osiris (*ibid*: 78); nevertheless he will fulfil the role to a certain extent. Incestuous marriages of Egyptian kings and queens emulated the relationship between the Egyptian gods Osiris and Isis, who were brother and sister (Strouhal, 1992: 52).

Leto accepts Pharaonic Imperialism, but will implement it in his own manner. He marries Ghanima, except that Farad'n Corrino (renamed Harq-al-Ada by Leto) will father the dynasty (Herbert, 1976: 406-407). Most of the epigraphs of *Children of Dune* are attributed to Harq-al-Ada: this complements the epigraphs of his aunt Irulan in *Dune*, which gives the implied reader a sense that the Atreides are a scholarly, learned and grandiose dynasty. Leto guarantees that his dynasty will solely be according to his design and seizes control of the Bene Gesserit breeding scheme (*ibid*: 396). During his reign, he will work on the Golden Path:

It will be the most intensive, the most inclusive training program in all of history. We'll be an ecosystem in miniature. You see, whatever system animals choose to survive by must be based on the pattern of interlocking communities, interdependence, working together in the common design which is the system. And this system will produce the most knowledgeable rulers ever seen.

(*ibid*: 406)

As already remarked, the Golden Path is the survival of humankind (Herbert, 1981: 13): an intensive breeding programme with the ultimate aim of creating a human being that is invisible to oracles. If an oracle has evil intentions or is forced to reveal a person's position – all of humanity is at risk. If people are invisible to oracles, human beings can escape being hunted to extinction. Leto's purpose is therefore similar to that of Jesus: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have [it] more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). Furthermore, Leto intends to mould the descendants of Farad'n and Ghanima in his own image. The Atreides descendants and his subjects will be inculcated with skills to survive Kralizec or any apocalyptic situation, eliminating the possibility of extinction.

Ancient Egypt is significant for the general phenomenon of kingship, both as an exceptionally long-lived example of the institution and because it strongly poses the problem of the king's divinity. Kingship is almost always associated with religious values: rulers are very often credited with divine power and status as well as divine sanction and support. The characteristics were present in full measure in Egypt.

(Baines, 1995: 3)

A strong Egyptian mythological influence is evident in both *Children of Dune* and *God Emperor of Dune*. The term “Pharaoh” is “[a] title meaning Great House (the Palace); a respectful way of referring to an Egyptian king” (Pinch, 2002: 230). The Atrides, Harkonnen, Corrinos and so forth are referred to as “Great Houses” (Herbert, 1981: 14).<sup>5</sup> The inspiration that Herbert drew from Egyptian kingship involved, primarily, the divine aspect of the ruler. Leto is a God Emperor: he is the supreme deity. Like the Egyptian kings, Leto is the ruler of a theocracy.

The earlier fundamental studies of kingship focused on the divine aspects of the ruler and hence helped to create an image of a pharaoh who was truly a god on earth, who led a highly ritualized life, and to whom heaven and earth were responsive. In these works, pharaoh’s [sic] more human aspects are noted, but paradoxically they are not explored in depth and are regarded as a superficiality, an overlay upon his essentially divine nature.

(O’Connor & Silverman, 1995: xxiii)

The Osiris myth is of enormous significance to the religious interpretation of *God Emperor of Dune*. According to the *Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses*, “Osiris is among the most significant and widely revered deities of the Egyptian pantheon” and, as intimated, his sister, Isis, is also his consort (Jordan, 2004: 235). Osiris was a grain god, who was worshipped in the form of a sack filled with seed which sprouted green (*ibid*). Leto’s pre-sandworm body in *God Emperor of Dune* contains the “seeds” of melange: evolved sandtrout. As explained earlier, the sandtrout form the first part of the melange cycle. When Leto “dies” the sandtrout detach themselves from his body to begin a new cycle (Herbert, 1981: 414-415). This exhibits a parallel to the myth of Osiris: Seth, another Egyptian deity, hacked the body of Osiris into fourteen pieces, which he scattered along the Nile valley. He kept Osiris’s penis and fed it to a crocodile. The scattering of Osiris’s body parts was allegorically compared to the winnowing and scattering of grain in the fields (Jordan, 2004: 236). Osiris is a martyr because his death and resurrection represent the cycles of agriculture. Leto’s inability to reproduce may have been inspired by this account, but it is clear that parts of his body (the sandtrout) will spread and breed; perhaps the scattering of the sandtrout alludes to the scattering of the grain. Leto must die near water, otherwise there will be no more spice (Herbert, 1981: 20). This embodies another correlation between agriculture and Leto: seeds require water to sprout. Leto is a martyr because his death and resurrection

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<sup>5</sup> Ancient Egyptian study is a wide and varied subject, which undergoes constant revision due to new studies or evidence being unearthed; the Egyptian Society of South Africa is dedicated to “the study and enjoyment of the glories of ancient Egypt” (Smith, 2009). There is also another group, the Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Society (AENES), which “strives to unite those interested in the fields of ancient history, culture, religion and technology” (Vermaak, 2012).



ensure the sandworm-spice cycle. He bears witness to the impending extinction of humankind and sacrifices himself in order to prevent it.

Ancient Egyptian religion pre-dates Judaic messianism; in recent years scholars have begun to investigate the influence Egyptian religion exerted upon Judaism and Christianity. Osiris was not considered a messiah but he shares considerable similarities with Jesus. As stated above, Osiris died and was resurrected. Jesus also died (Mk. 15:44-45) and was resurrected (Acts 1:22). The similarities do not end here: by the third millennium BCE Osiris had replaced Anubis as judge of the dead (Pinch, 2002: 27). Moreover, Jesus is also said to judge the dead (2 Tim. 4:1). Perhaps the strangest correlation between Osiris and Jesus is that Osiris was sealed in a coffin by seventy-two conspirators, whilst Jesus was condemned by the Sanhedrin, a Jewish tribunal composed of seventy-two judges (Foster, 2010: unpag.). Judging from the overlap between the religious concepts, it is apparent that Herbert recognised similarities and played them off against each other. The messiah theme is apparent, but is reinvented in the latter books to prevent the texts from being too similar to one another. As Osiris is not Jesus, Leto is not Paul – they share commonalities but are different enough to hold the reader’s interest.

Egyptian kings were the divine embodiment of Horus in life, but became Osiris upon their death (Jordan, 2004: 236). Horus’s father was Osiris; his symbol is the falcon (*ibid*: 128). He is generally depicted either wholly as a hawk or in human form with a falcon’s head. The Atreides symbol is also a hawk (Herbert, 1965: 5). Horus is a form of the sun god; Leto in Roman mythology is mother of Apollo, likewise a sun god (Roman & Roman, 2010: 73). Apollo shares many attributes with Leto Atreides: he also has a twin sister, Artemis (*ibid*: 74). Apollo’s domain is prophecy (*ibid*: 73) and he is referred to as a “mouse-god” (Coleman, 2007: 80). As mentioned earlier, “Muad’Dib” means “mouse” in Fremen (Herbert, 1965: 307). Both Muad’Dib and Leto are endowed with the gift of prophecy and both were deified for a period. There are too many similarities between Apollo and the Atreides to dismiss the connections. Not only did Herbert adapt and form amalgamations of contemporary religions, he also adapted and utilised Greek, Roman and Egyptian religion to build upon the mythic properties of his narrative. Leto claimed that he did not wish to create any more Atreides gods; despite this sentiment, he achieves godhood because of the myth that encapsulates his entire existence (Herbert, 1976: 80).

Jesus prophesied his own death and resurrection (Jn. 2:19; 21 and Jn. 3:14-17). While Paul and Leto uttered prophecies about their own deaths, it is only Leto who will be resurrected. Generally prophets claim to have encountered God in a visionary state (Isa. 6; Jer. 1; Ezek. 1; Jn. 1:9-11). Visions of the apocalypse also appear to them as revelations (Dan. 7-12; 2 Enoch. 3:1-4:1; Isa. 7; Jn. 4:1-2). Leto's apocalyptic visions distinguish him from Muad'Dib. Moreover, Leto has the power to prevent it; this elevates his position over Muad'Dib who declines to make the necessary sacrifice of resurrection for eternity.

In this respect, "The Welbeck Fragment" contains a brief dialogue between Moneo and Siona, when Siona was a teenager. The fragment reveals that Siona had questioned and rebelled against Leto from a young age. Her opinion of Leto is decidedly negative; she suggests that Leto's character is unscrupulous and that he kills people who are close to him. If her sentiments are true, then the reader may sympathise with her rebellion. Moneo's answers do not exonerate Leto; he places responsibility for the deaths upon the Worm. Moneo distinguishes between the Worm and Leto; he believes that two separate entities inhabit the same body. When Leto loses control over his body, this is interpreted by Moneo as the approach of Shai-Hulud. Siona's statement about the Duncan Idahos would appear to damn Leto, as the original Duncan and subsequent Duncan ghola in *Dune Messiah* and *Children of Dune* had sacrificed their lives for the Atreides. To Siona, Moneo's faith is interpreted as madness; however, Moneo is an adherent – he does not doubt that he serves God.

SIONA: How have you survived with him for so long a time, father? He kills those who are close to him. Everyone knows that.

MONEO: No! You are wrong. He kills no one.

SIONA: You needn't lie about him.

MONEO: I mean it. He kills no one.

SIONA: Then how do you account for the known deaths?

MONEO: It is the Worm that kills. The Worm is God. Leto lives in the bosom of God, but he kills no one.

SIONA: Then how do you survive?

MONEO: I can recognize the Worm. I can see it in his face and in his movements. I know when Shai-Hulud approaches.

SIONA: He is not Shai-Hulud!

MONEO: Well, that's what they called the Worm in the Fremmen days.

SIONA: I've read about that. But he is not the God of the desert.

MONEO: Be quiet, you foolish girl! You know nothing of such things.

SIONA: I know that you are a coward.

MONEO: How little you know. You have never stood where I have stood and seen it in his eyes, in the movements of his hands.

SIONA: What do you do when the Worm approaches?

MONEO: I leave.

SIONA: That's prudent. He has killed nine Duncan Idahos that we know about for sure.  
MONEO: I tell you he kills no one!  
SIONA: What's the difference? Leto or Worm, they are one body now.  
MONEO: But they are two separate beings-Leto the Emperor and The Worm Who Is God.  
SIONA: You're mad!  
MONEO: Perhaps. But I do serve God.

(Herbert, 1981: 17-18)

The concept that Leto and the Worm inhabit one body is inspired by the concept of religious dualism: "in religion, the doctrine that the world (or reality) consists of two basic, opposed, and irreducible principles that account for all that exists. It has played an important role in the history of thought and of religion" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2012: s.v. Dualism). Religious dualism is considered unbiblical in terms of orthodox Christianity because it suggests that good and evil are equal. There is no explicit dualism in ancient Egyptian religion, but it is implicit in the contrast between Seth and Osiris:

Seth, a violent, aggressive, "foreign," sterile god, connected with disorder, the desert, and loneliness, was opposed to Osiris, the god of fertility and life, active in the waters of the Nile. Seth also possessed some typically dualistic marks of a mythological character: his action, as well as his personality itself, was ambivalent; and, as a typical trickster, he was also capable, at times, of constructive action in the cosmos.

(*ibid*)

Earlier, the similarities between Osiris and Jesus were discussed; there is evidence to support the fact that the concept of Satan may have derived from that of Seth (Murdock, 2009: 75). The relationship between Seth and Osiris was adversarial (Pinch, 2002: 23); just as Jesus and Satan are considered opposing forces. A difference between Satan and Seth is that there are divergent views surrounding Seth's character throughout history – he was not always considered evil and does redeem himself eventually (Jones, 2005c: 8234). Seth's thoughtless actions are bad but they lead to positive outcomes; moreover, his strength is needed by the other gods to defend them against the chaos monster (Pinch, 2002: 191).

Leto displays the qualities of both Seth and Osiris throughout the text. Leto is violent and aggressive upon occasion; he uses his body to crush the old Duncan Idaho ghola (Herbert, 1981: 29) and the Bene Tleilaxu Face Dancers (*ibid*: 248-249). His alien appearance distinguishes him as "foreign"; he is sterile and lives in a Citadel in the Sareer, a desert. His loneliness is most apparent when he meets and falls in love with the Ixian Ambassador Hwi Noree. When he dies, he fulfills the Osiris role, by releasing the sandtrout, which are "prolific breeders" (*ibid*: 121), into the Idaho river. As with Seth, opinions

surrounding Leto will also be subject to revision. Leto tells Paul: “For a time they’ll call me the missionary of *shaitan*, too” (Herbert, 1976: 349, original emphasis). The devil appears in the Qu’ran as *Iblis* or *al-shaytan*, which sounds similar to *shaitan* (Ali & Leaman, 2008: 26). By harking back to ancient religious belief Herbert displays further signs of influence from *The Golden Bough* (2009). The hard decisions that Leto took to save humankind may not be recognised in the immediate future; however, generations in the *distant* future might value the gift he has given them.

Time is running out for Leto, who must establish the Golden Path within approximately five hundred years. Moneo, conscious of this, is hyper-vigilant when he is with Leto. He notices “the signs of the Worm growing more dominant in the God Emperor’s Body” and is helpless in the face of them (Herbert, 1981: 124). Leto is aware that his body has begun to have a will of its own; like an animal it obeys instinct:

“Part of me dwells forever underground without thought,” Leto said. “That part reacts. It does things without a care for knowing or logic.”

Moneo nodded, his attention glued on the God Emperor’s face. Were the eyes about to glaze?

“I am forced to stand off and watch such things, nothing more,” Leto said. “Such a reaction could cause your death. The choice is not mine. Do you hear?”

“I hear you, Lord,” Moneo whispered.

(*ibid*)

Throughout the novel, Leto teeters on the edge of control or sometimes loses it completely. The need to establish the Golden Path is paramount. There is no doubt in Leto’s mind that he will accomplish his task; Siona shows great promise. He can therefore turn his attention to other matters, namely the need to demystify his godhead and limit his subjects’ dependence upon messiahs and gods.

Leto employs several approaches to discredit and diminish his godhead. For instance, he accused nine historians of lying; he had them rendered unconscious and burned them on pyres of their own published works (Herbert, 1981: 70). News of this incident spreads through the empire; the Bene Gesserit suspect it is Leto who deliberately spreads the account (*ibid*). Leto wishes his people to believe he is a tyrant; he is conditioning them to reject the handing over of power to a single individual.

After a failed assassination attempt by the Bene Tleilaxu, Leto has all signs of the attack removed and the Bene Tleilaxu ambassador flogged and expelled (*ibid*: 133-140).

Initially, Leto decides not to provide an explanation for the flogging (Herbert, 1981: 140); this would create the impression that he is a tyrant engaging in random violence. After he meets Hwi, he follows an alternative course of action: he accuses the Bene Tleilaxu ambassador of creating rumours about his “disgusting sexual habits” (*ibid*: 160). Leto’s lie cannot be refuted; the result of this action is that the rumour spreads throughout the empire that Leto and the ambassador have these habits.

Leto’s attraction to Hwi is immediate (*ibid*: 156): when he becomes engaged to her, it gives credence to the rumours (*ibid*: 256). Hwi is upset, but Leto explains to her that some will believe the rumours while others will continue to worship him (*ibid*). When questioned about the flogging of the ambassador, he elucidates to the Bene Gesserit: “I gain nothing. I am diminished” (Herbert, 1981: 168) and does his best to explain his reasoning to Moneo: “The defiling of the god is an ancient human tradition, Moneo. Why should I be an exception?” (*ibid*: 262).

The defiling and killing of a god are themes in Sir James George Frazer’s *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (2009). As mentioned earlier, strong evidence exists that this text was a pervasive influence on *God Emperor of Dune*. Brian Herbert (2003: 114) averred that *The Golden Bough* was one of his father’s favourite and most closely studied works; while Brian Herbert did not draw any comparisons to *God Emperor of Dune*, he observed:

Frazer described the golden fleece of the sacred ram sacrificed to Zeus, given by Phrixus to his wife’s father and nailed to an oak tree, where it was guarded by a dragon that never slept. ... This theme would later become central to Frank Herbert’s *Dune*, a world in which massive, fire-breathing sandworms guarded the greatest treasure in the universe, the spice melange.

(*ibid*)

*The Golden Bough* explores similarities within religious belief; ancient and contemporary religions are examined. Frazer’s main thesis is that ancient religions were fertility cults, centred upon a sacred king who was eventually sacrificed. This offers an obvious parallel to the Fish Speakers and Leto. There is a direct correlation between the well-being of the king and the state; therefore it was imperative that the king was sacrificed before he could display any symptoms of aging or ill-health. In Leto’s case, he engineered his defilement and he was losing the battle with the Worm; once he had secured the Golden Path, his existence was no longer necessary.

The only unquestioningly loyal devotees Leto has created are his Fish Speakers. They are also understandably confused and disturbed by his decision to wed Hwi: “‘*You are my only brides,*’ he had said. Was that not the meaning of Siaynoq?” (Herbert, 1981: 260, original emphasis). He has effectively begun to erode his relationship with them, which is similar to the relationship nuns share with Christ. In terms of Christianity, nuns are commonly referred to as “brides of Christ” (Catechism 923). The church itself is also regarded as a bride (Rev. 19:7; 21:2; 21:9-10; Eph. 5:22-33). Both the nuns and the Fish Speakers’ main purpose is to worship God; the Bene Gesserit have noted separately that the religious character of the Fish Speakers had begun to deteriorate (Herbert, 1981: 73). Unlike nuns, the latter are not celibate. They do not use birth control and are encouraged to bring their babies to Siaynoq (*ibid*: 101; 204).

The main purpose of Siaynoq is to bind the members of the Fish Speaker army to each other and to its commander, Leto. Siaynoq exerts other mysterious effects, which are hinted at in the next two novels in the series. In *God Emperor of Dune*, it is the only ritual that Leto has given to the Fish Speakers, occurring every ten years (*ibid*: 144; 146). They elect three representatives from each planetary garrison to attend the Decennial Festival (*ibid*: 72). Siaynoq – “The Feast of Leto” – is the adoration of Leto’s person in his presence and a “Great Sharing” (*ibid*: 144; 201). Leto attempts to explain the mysterious ritual to Moneo:

“Very well. Siaynoq means giving honor to one who speaks with sincerity. It signifies the remembrance of things which are spoken with sincerity.”

“But, Lord, doesn’t sincerity really mean that the speaker *believes* . . . has faith in what is said?”

“Yes, but Siaynoq also contains the idea of light as that which reveals reality. You continue to shine light on what you see.”

“Reality. . . that is a very ambiguous word, Lord.”

“Indeed! But Siaynoq also stands for fermentation because reality - or the belief that you know a reality, which is the same thing - always sets up a ferment in the universe.”

“All of that in a single word, Lord?”

“And more! Siaynoq also contains the summoning to prayer *and* the name of the Recording Angel, Sihaya, who interrogates the newly dead.”

(*ibid*: 144-145, original emphasis)

The fermentation process associated with the Siaynoq ritual will result in turbulent change in the universe, which is exactly what Leto wishes to achieve. Leto does not speak about absolutes – Siaynoq can contain multiple meanings. He is aware of the fluidity of meaning and perception. To Leto, sincerity and reality do not convey a fixed significance. If one believes in absolutes, then there is a risk of stagnation. The “summoning to prayer” is a

call to remember God, while the interrogation of the dead involves a summary of the lessons learnt throughout a lifetime. The Fish Speakers do not wish to share the ritual with a male, but nonetheless do share it with Duncan.

Leto binds Duncan to them during Siaynoq. Leto requires a successor after he is gone and Duncan is an ideal candidate because he represents the nobility of the Atrides. Leto does not explicitly name Duncan as his successor, but it is apparent that the latter is favoured above all others. Once again Herbert draws parallels between Jesus and Leto: it is also explicit that Jesus appoints Simon Peter as his successor (Mt. 16:18). Leto makes Duncan walk ahead of him; once they enter the underground chamber, they are surrounded by the representatives (Herbert, 1981: 201). Leto directs the Fish Speakers' overwhelming emotions towards Duncan, who is understandably terrified but also tempted by the power that Leto offers him:

"I give you my beloved Duncan!" Leto said.  
"Love!" they screamed.  
Idaho felt his whole body trembling. He felt that he might collapse from the weight of this adulation. He wanted to run away and he wanted to stay and accept this. There was power in this room. Power!

(*ibid*: 204)

The Siaynoq ritual conforms to what one would expect from a religious rite: Leto makes statements which are repeated; the Fish Speakers give stock answers to the stock questions that are asked. Throughout the ritual, there is no doubt that the Fish Speakers feel overwhelming awe and reverence for Leto and are fanatical in their belief. There is not even a hint of disgust at his form. Leto is very brief in describing the ritual to Duncan; he says that they share a wafer (*ibid*: 202). Duncan immediately associates this with the "Orange Catholic ritual"; despite this, Leto claims that it is not his flesh, but the sharing of "all" (*ibid*).

Despite Leto's obfuscations regarding the Siaynoq ritual, there are obvious parallels to the Eucharist which "is understood by all Christians to commemorate the saving death and resurrection of Jesus, and to mediate communion with God and community among the worshipers" (Jones, 2005b: 2877). Leto's "death" and "resurrection" will also be a saving event.

...the Eucharist has as its essential elements the breaking and sharing of bread and the pouring and sharing of wine (in some Protestant churches, unfermented grape juice) among the worshipers in commemoration of the actions of Jesus Christ on the eve of his death.

(*ibid*)

Leto adapts the ritual to a certain extent, following the format of asking questions and providing answers, thereafter concluding the rite with wafers and the crysknife of Paul (Herbert, 1981: 203-209). Contrary to his denials, the melange-wafer does represent Leto's body. While Protestant denominations believe that eating the wafer is symbolic, this is a literal act in Catholicism. The act is also literal in Siaynoq: melange is part of the sandworm cycle. Just as Jesus performed the actions of what would become the Eucharistic ritual on the eve of his betrayal and death, Leto performs the Siaynoq ceremony not long before his own betrayal and death. Leto knows his machinations have been successful and declares some time after the ritual: "I am binding the Fish Speakers to the Commander of my Guard [Duncan]" (*ibid*: 223). They are energised and inspired by Duncan and begin to report to him (*ibid*: 200; 356).

Hwi Noree is the only one whom Leto trusts; he believes that she is in spirit a true Fish Speaker (*ibid*: 364). She shows remarkable insight into Leto's plight before she even meets him; she proposes to the Ixian Inquisitors that Leto saw something in the future and that his decision to sacrifice his humanity prevented this unknown thing from occurring (*ibid*: 61). Her insights reveal a compassionate disposition; she feels profoundly moved by Leto's sacrifice and is unreservedly loyal to him. The Ixians attempt to manipulate Leto by tempting him with Hwi. He succumbs to her charm because he knows that she will be loyal to him. Unlike Paul, who allowed Chani's future to determine his decisions, despite the temptation, Leto does not allow her to affect his plans. A true messiah and martyr should be able to resist manipulation by any individual or organisation.

The human aspect of Leto's character is foregrounded through his love for Hwi. She is profoundly seductive towards Leto (*ibid*: 156), and Leto's reaction to her is quite sympathetic. She represents everything that he sacrificed in order to achieve the Golden Path: "By just standing there in front of him, Hwi cried out to his lost humanity" (*ibid*: 156). The sacrifice of Leto's humanity is brought into sharp relief against his feelings for Hwi; this additional burden adds to the weightiness of his martyrdom. Hwi is a genetically modified product of the Ixians, specially bred to beguile Leto (*ibid*: 244). As her genesis was outside Leto's prescient purview, it demonstrates that the Ixians had created a machine which had destroyed the space travel monopoly of the Guild (*ibid*: 158). Leto's repression has led to this important success for the Golden Path.



Leto is the ultimate martyr in the series, for a number of reasons: he sacrifices his humanity and he cannot enjoy the relationship he desires with Hwi. These reasons pale into insignificance, when one realises the horror of Leto's fate:

"Your death will not be like other deaths," she said.

"Precious Hwi," he murmured.

"I wonder that you do not fear the judgment of a true Supreme Deity," she said.

"Do you judge me, Hwi?"

"No, but I fear for you."

"Think on the price I pay," he said. "Every descendant part of me will carry some of my awareness locked away within it, lost and helpless."

She put both hands over her mouth and stared at him.

"This is the horror which my father could not face and which he tried to prevent: the infinite division and subdivision of a blind identity."

She lowered her hands and whispered: "You will be conscious?"

"In a way . . . but mute. A little pearl of my awareness will go with every sandworm and every sandtrout - knowing yet unable to move a single cell, aware in an endless dream."

She shuddered.

(*ibid*: 219)

Each sandtrout will contain part of his awareness, yet he will not be able to act. This fate is inconceivably cruel. One begins to understand Paul's refusal to submit to it, a destiny which seems to be an equivalent of hell: eternal damnation, since it is unlikely that every worm and sandtrout could be killed at the same time. While Paul's fate was cruel, Leto's fate is worse because his suffering will be eternal. The suffering at the end of a messiah's life is a recurring theme: for example, Jesus Christ was crucified (Mk. 15:24; Lk. 23:33; Jn. 19:18). While Jesus cried out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mk. 15:34), Leto cannot turn to God because as God Emperor he does not acknowledge a higher authority than himself – he is alone in his suffering.

The massive price for saving the human race that Leto is willing to pay for a race of which he is no longer part is commendable. Worst of all, in terms of his deliberate design his sacrifice is unacknowledged by his subjects – he wants them to value their independence. In many respects, Leto embodies the Prometheus myth; he will be punished throughout eternity for an essentially magnanimous decision:

He is said to be the creator of mankind [*sic*], making men [*sic*] from mud, and their saviour when he stole fire from heaven and gave it to man [*sic*]. For this act of defiance, Zeus had him chained to a rock where, for 30,000 years, an eagle or a vulture pecked his liver by day only for it to renew itself every night.

(Coleman, 2007: 846)

In *Dune Messiah*, the various conspirators sought to control Paul by threatening Chani. They are aware that Hwi is Leto's weakness and are eager to exploit it. Leto's love for Hwi threatens the existence of the Golden Path; he briefly considers abandoning everything for her (Herbert, 1981: 181). She represents an enormous temptation; Leto is tested as Jesus was tested in the desert, which is recounted in the various versions of the Synoptic Gospels: (Mt. 4:1-11), (Mk. 1:12-13) and (Lk. 4:1-13). Leto is not tempted by Satan, but by the Ixians. In many ways they may be likened to Satan; it is strongly suggested that in Leto's prescient visions they were responsible for the extinction of humankind (Herbert, 1981: 235).

The reason for humankind's extinction is not revealed until Leto takes Siona into the desert to be tested. She has the option of dying of thirst or by consuming spice essence; she opts for the latter, which at least provides her with an opportunity to survive (*ibid*: 347). During the spice trance she shares Leto's vision:

No ancestral presences would remain in her consciousness, but she would carry with her forever afterward the clear sights and sounds and smells. The seeking machines would be there, the smell of blood and entrails, the cowering humans in their burrows aware only that they could not escape . . . while all the time the mechanical movement approached, nearer and nearer and nearer ...louder...louder!

(*ibid*: 348)

Siona's importance stems from the fact that she ensures the Golden Path's survival. She is not prescient, but she fades from both Leto and the Guild Navigators' visions (*ibid*: 39; 114). Her descendants would also be invisible to oracles, so that it would therefore be impossible to kill off the entire species. The compulsive need for prophecy will no longer be as intense if oracles cannot make predictions. After the spice trance she accepts the fact that she will have to breed to preserve this trait. She is still implacable and will continue to plot Leto's assassination; this is according to his design and he manoeuvres himself into a position where his assassination near water may take place.

One of Siona's rebel associates is a woman named Nayla. Initially, Siona is unaware that Nayla is a fiercely, fanatical Fish Speaker commanded by the God Emperor to swear an oath of obedience to Siona:

*In many ways, she is the most useful assistant I have ever had. I am her God. She worships me quite unquestioningly. Even when I playfully attack her faith, she takes this merely as testing. She knows herself superior to any test. ...*"Even if Siona sends you to kill me, you must obey. She must never learn that you serve me."

“No one can kill you, Lord.”  
“But you must obey Siona.”  
“Of course, Lord. That is your command.”  
“You must obey her in all things.”  
“I will do it, Lord.”

(*ibid*: 81, original emphasis)

Nayla personifies all that is negative in a fanatic; she is unable to question or doubt her lord. Herbert presents a very disturbing image of such a person – she represents the extreme result of religious manipulation. She has no will of her own; she requires direction from God. In an interview with Leto, he is unable to shake her resolve. Everything he says or does is interpreted as a test, to which she feels herself superior. She completely ignores his criticism of his religion and her subservience and belief:

Still in his memories, Leto said: “Look at me, woman!”  
She obeyed.  
“I have created a holy obscenity!” he said. “This religion built around my person disgusts me!”  
“Yes, Lord.”  
Nayla’s green eyes on the gilded cushions of her cheeks stared out at him without questioning, without comprehension, without the need of either response.  
*If I sent her out to collect the stars, she would go and she would attempt it. She thinks I am testing her again. I do believe she could anger me.*  
“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!”  
“Thank You, Lord.”

(*ibid*: 82-83, original emphasis)

Once again, the narrator provides access to Leto’s thoughts and reveals Nayla’s total subservience and obedience. I do not believe that her answers are tinged with sarcasm; everything that she does not understand or wants to accept is reduced to a question of faith and testing. It is for this reason that Leto is able to play her like a musical instrument, producing the response that he desires. Fanatics or zealots and even messiahs and martyrs are susceptible to manipulation: Nayla exemplifies her role as a fanatic, whilst Leto knows and plays his own role as a messiah. Both Leto and Siona exploit her belief to accomplish their own goals. Her unquestioning belief not only results in the death of Leto, Hwi, Moneo and the wedding party, but also her own. Whether Leto is really God or not is of no consequence – her belief in him, as well as her death in his service, assures her the title of martyr. An interesting correlation emerges, between Leto and Nayla on the one hand and the relationship between Jesus and the Zealots on the other. Simon, one of Jesus’s Twelve Apostles, is

identified as a Zealot in modern translations of the bible (New International Version, Mt. 10:4). Zealots were members of an ancient Jewish sect intent upon creating a world Jewish theocracy and resisting Roman rule (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2011: s.v. Zealot). According to S.G.F. Brandon (1967: 355), “Zealotism produced a long roll of martyrs for Israel’s freedom”, identifying a relationship between zealots and martyrs. Siona and Duncan wish to overthrow Leto’s rule as well, and it is Nayla who is tasked with the actual assassination. When Hwi dies in the process, Duncan kills Nayla. Unfortunately, in the epilogue, she is condemned by historians, ignominiously being associated with another Apostle – Judas (Herbert, 1981: 422).

It is not clear whether Herbert was aware of the discovery of the “Gospel of Judas” in 1978 (Ehrman, 2006: 70); if he was conscious of the general import of this gospel, Nayla’s association with Judas would be particularly significant. At no stage does Nayla believe that she is betraying her Lord. The various contemporary versions of the New Testament are unequivocal that Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Mt. 26:14-16). In the “Gospel of Judas”, Judas claims to have been instructed by Jesus to “betray” him because “Jesus needs to die so that he can escape the material trappings of his body and return to the divine Pleroma from which he has come” (Ehrman, 2006: 88). This interpretation suggests that Jesus had accomplished all of his tasks upon Earth and no longer required a physical form for Heaven. Similarly, Leto has achieved his task and needs to die near water to begin a new spice cycle. He instructs Nayla to obey Siona even if she orders her to kill him (Herbert, 1981: 81). This clearly mirrors the obedience of Judas as he is portrayed in the eponymous gospel. Yet the women cannot defend their obedience and are forever judged as betrayers.

William F. Touponce (1988: 65) is uneasy about the implications of the Golden Path and believes that this concept informs our understanding of the entire series:

Initially we think – and Herbert deliberately leads us to believe – that the Golden Path is Leto’s three thousand years of enforced tyranny and stagnation. This prospect is truly appalling, and Leto seems willing to admit it, but it is the only way apparently to survive Kralizec and racial extinction. We are, I think, morally troubled by his decision, and may wonder where in the realm of values we are to situate ourselves. Is he really Satan?

Touponce touches on an age old point of contention: do the rights of a few (the populations that were subjugated by Leto) triumph over the rights of the many (the infinite populations that the Golden Path ensures)? This question can never be answered satisfactorily; however, the zero focalization evident in the narrator ensures that the reader is

privity to Leto's reasoning: he considers humankind to be his only child (Herbert, 1981: 68). The implied reader would challenge Leto's logic, whereas a complicit reader might be entirely sympathetic to his decisions. If people become extinct, his sacrifice is for naught.

The "secret summation on the discoveries at Dar-Es-Balat" by Hadi Benotto represents a minority report (*ibid*: 422-423). Leto's religion endures, but the "Holy Church of the Divided God" desires to censor his journals. Most importantly, a few sandworms are held in a reservation, now in the hope that Benotto may learn to communicate with Leto's "pearls of awareness". By suppressing the information relating to Leto's sacrifice, his martyrdom seems doomed to be unacknowledged. The promise that someday a way to communicate with him may be established is somewhat conciliatory. Perhaps, as Prometheus was saved by Herakles, Leto's suffering will also end.

Leto ensured the survival of the human race, thus fulfilling his role as messiah. What human beings do with the future is solely their decision and responsibility. At first it appears that his martyrdom was unnecessary when the Bene Tleilaxu develop artificial spice in the future (*ibid*: 422). Even though there is no longer a need for worms, this does not detract from the enormity of his sacrifice. Leto's martyrdom was necessary to ensure the creation and continuity of the Golden Path; without his efforts, the Bene Tleilaxu would not have had the time it required to develop the artificial spice. Leto's martyrdom is unparalleled in the series, and concludes the messiah and martyr cycle in the *Duniverse*.

Paul refused to surrender his humanity and "afterlife" (in terms of the "pearls of awareness"). The implied reader may sympathise with Paul, but would not associate these actions with a messiah. His "resurrection" is an attempt to correct his failings and place himself in a more sympathetic light; though later Leto has to force Paul to accept martyrdom. An alternative interpretation of Paul's character is that he was not a messiah but a prophet in the vein of Elijah:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

(Mal. 4:5-6)

In this interpretation, Paul's purpose was to prepare the people for Leto's coming. Earlier, his similarity to John the Baptist was also analysed, giving credence to this view. At the opposite end of the spectrum, by surrendering his humanity, afterlife and love interest,

Leto proves that he is the ultimate messiah and martyr in the series. Even though Paul does not qualify as a messiah in a strict sense, he and Leto demonstrate that the role of a messiah culminates in martyrdom. This relationship was established by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The next chapter, the conclusion, looks at Herbert's legacy at the same time as movies and novels appear to be inspired by *Dune*. The messiah and martyr in other recent works of science fiction will also be discussed briefly.

## Conclusion

When I was younger Frank Herbert's *Dune Chronicles* completely absorbed my attention – to the extent that I still find myself rereading them annually. Taking into consideration that *Dune* is frequently cited as “the best-selling science fiction novel of all time”, this demonstrates that I am not alone in my interest (Touponce, 1988: 119). *Dune* has sold twelve million copies worldwide, surpassing all other science fiction novels (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2010: s.v. Frank Herbert). *Dune* won the inaugural Nebula Award for Best Novel in 1965 and the Hugo Award in 1966 (D’Amassa, 2005: 438; 441). The sequels are also successful, which has enabled the series to evolve into a franchise (D’Amassa, 2005: 124-125). Brian Herbert and another author, Kevin J. Anderson, decided to co-write novels set in the *Duniverse* (*ibid*). The *Duniverse* is ever-expanding. There are numerous games of differing media types, including card (Colville & Seyler, 1997), board (Eberle, Kittredge & Olotka, 1979; Stock, 1984; Herriot, 2009), role-playing (Bishop, Colville, Dakan, Emmet, Grau, Long, Moore & Seyler, 2000) and PC games (Chaubin, Bouchon & Ty, 1992; Bostic, 1992; Golding & Curtice, 1998; Dalys, Garnier, Ghariani, Nguyen, Poquet & Seytre, 2001; Veale, 2001). David Lynch directed a film version of *Dune* in 1984, whilst the SCIFI (now known as SyFy) Channel developed a television mini-series, *Frank Herbert's Dune* (2000). The success of the first mini-series resulted in the commissioning of a second: *Frank Herbert's Children of Dune* (2003) combined the second and third novels in the series (Fries, 2003). Both mini-series were two of the three highest-rated programmes ever to be broadcast on the SCIFI Channel (Ascher, 2004). Recently, Paramount Studios attempted to remake *Dune*, but unfortunately let their option expire (Child, 2010). The *Dune* novels are also now available as “Ebooks” and can be purchased from most bookseller websites. The constant multimedia interest in the *Dune Chronicles* guarantees that the original series continues to be revisited; hopefully my contribution has added to the discourse on Frank Herbert's works.

Several movies, television programmes and novels have drawn inspiration from *Dune*. For instance, in Robert Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series of novels, Rand al-Thor (Paul Atreides) is a messianic figure. The Aiel (Fremen) are nomadic desert dwellers who are influenced by the Aes Sedai (Bene Gesserit), a female-only organisation that wields power. The TV-series *Dark Angel* (2000-2002) has two organisations: Manticore and the Conclave that is similar to the Bene Tleilax and Bene Gesserit respectively. Manticore use science and genetics to produce a warrior whereas the Conclave and Bene Gesserit use selective breeding. Most

notably, *Star Wars* seems to have been influenced by *Dune*. Kristen Brennan (2006) compiled a compelling list of similarities between the two movies: Princess Leia vs Princess Alia; Villain is hero's father vs Villain is hero's grandfather; Tatooine (desert planet) vs Arrakis (desert planet); Sandcrawler vs Sandcrawler; Moisture Farmers vs Dew Collectors; Spice Mines of Kessel vs Spice mining on Arrakis; Jedi Mind Trick vs The Voice; Jedi Bendu vs Prana Bindu; and so forth.

The role of the messiah in modern SF novels and movies has become more popular. One critic, John Brownlee (2007), is not pleased by these turn of events. He believes that the use of the "messiah protagonist" in SF is "ubiquitous" and "tiresome". He charges the eponymous Superman, Neo from *The Matrix*, Luke and Anakin Skywalker from *Star Wars* and Paul Atreides with being such figures. The article is a brief rant with no insight or argument; it ends mystifyingly with the idea that "Jesus in Outer Space, Fighting Aliens isn't that shabby".

"SFGirl" discusses the idea of Christ-Figures in fiction. Another blogger, Erik Hare, lamented the separation between "Jesus the Teacher" and "Christ the Redeemer", using the examples of *Harry Potter* and *The Matrix*. She states that today's "Christ-like hero suffers for the sins of the world and prepares himself [*sic*] (often struggling with this considerably) to deliver salvation, usually through fighting or violent confrontation and often with an incredible arsenal of weapons". This obviously goes against the teachings of Jesus. Erik Hare suggests that the Western culture's "concept of Redemption has invariably separated from the Grace that created it". Grace is associated with compassion, humility and gentleness, so why does Redemption hold a greater sway over audiences? SFGirl resolves this issue by asserting that several characters woven together form a tapestry. She uses the example of *The Matrix*. Neo is not the only Jesus-figure present in the story; Trinity and the Oracle demonstrate Christ's traits of mercy, grace and love. Neo would not have succeeded without learning these traits from Trinity and the Oracle.

This dissertation has investigated messiahs and martyrs in the first four novels of the *Dune Chronicles*. By utilising Reader-Response criticism, I reported my reading experience of the series. I incorporated other literary theories where relevant; narratology was especially useful in applying Reader-Response concepts. I attempted to undertake the role of the implied reader, by following the cues of the narrator and resisting any unreliability, dishonesty or incomplete information on the narrator's part. It was my responsibility to



investigate and research additional texts, historical, cultural, socio-economic and other important information that I deemed relevant to the study of the religious theme of the novels. I learned that even though a heterodiegetic narrator utilises zero focalization, this does not mean that the implied reader should trust the narrator unreservedly.

The role of an implied reader is always active; passivity is associated with a complicit reader. An actual reader's own experiences would obviously influence the interpretation of a text, but by attempting to fulfil the role of an implied reader means passivity is circumvented to a certain extent. I acknowledge my own limitations and accept that there is no single correct interpretation of a text. As stated earlier, my intention to employ Reader-Response theory stemmed from a desire to report my own experience of reading the *Dune Chronicles* through a religious lens.

In this study, the aim was to assess Herbert's use of messiahs and martyrs and other important religious issues that were identified in the series. These findings demonstrate that Herbert distrusted messiahs because he felt that one should not hand over one's judgement and fate over to any charismatic leader, especially someone who exercises both political and religious influence. Herbert's attitude towards messiahs is negative; he proclaims his attitude towards messiah in various sources, yet he does not object to religion itself.

The term "messiah" is understood in a variety of contexts in the series. Herbert first employs the term to establish Paul as a leader who saves the Fremen from the Harkonnen. Paul later establishes a theocracy; the Fremen begin a *jihad* against the rest of the known universe, killing and converting those who oppose Muad'Dib. Paul is not a messiah in the Judeo-Christian sense; neither is he considered an Islamic prophet. Herbert assembles concepts and ideas about the messiah from the Judeo-Christian religions, at the same time as utilising some characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad to create Paul's character. The term "martyr" is generally understood to be a person who suffers or is killed because of their religious or political beliefs; alternatively, another meaning is to "bear witness". The first meaning pertains to both Paul and Leto; Bronso of IX is executed when he bears witness at his interrogation by Muad'Dib's Quizarate. As Jesus was both a messiah and martyr, Herbert appropriates this model for Paul and Leto: The fate of a messiah is that of a martyr. Consequently, Herbert does not seem to trust martyrs either because their deaths also generate numerous and unpredictable effects.

The theme of messiahs and martyrs falls under the dominant religious theme of the *Dune Chronicles*. This research has shown that Frank Herbert studied religion extensively, as evidenced by the implementation of ideas gleaned from historical (Ancient Egyptian), Abrahamic and Eastern religions. His theory that religion is a psychological aid plays out in the strength that the Fremen and Fish Speakers derive from their faith. The comparisons Herbert made between the absolute monarchs of early days and how those aspects carried over into present religions is evidenced in the character of Leto and the evolution of his character.

The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that Herbert felt the need to criticise organised religion, the unquestioning obedience of the masses towards a messiah and the dangers of fanaticism in some adherents. Despite this, he still felt that religion was a necessary part of culture and the collective unconscious. For instance, in the novel, religion is seen in a positive light when it plays an important social function. The Fremen water rituals play a practical purpose, instilling respect and discipline towards water as well as uniting and comforting its adherents.

SF criticism is as broad as the field itself. In my opinion, the literary theory that would best suit my study was Reader-Response Theory. It had the most appeal for me because other literary approaches were fixated on different areas of study or were too limiting for a study of religion in a science fiction series. As its name suggests, Reader-Response criticism deals with the reader's response to literary texts, in this case, my own. While it appears to be a simple theory to implement, one must be meticulous in providing evidence for one's assertions. Both science fiction and religion resist definition; a basic attempt to provide definitions was made but it was Frank Herbert's definition of SF that seemed most relevant to my dissertation.

Taking into consideration Stephen R.L. Clark's (2005: 98) approach to the relationship between SF and religion, a discussion about how the religions of the Fremen, Muad'Dib and Leto are depicted was undertaken. An account of how existing religious myths and legends are replicated, explained and adapted for these fictional religions was given. Herbert actually endorsed certain religious themes or doctrines, namely the Zen Buddhism espoused by Alan Watts. These beliefs were expounded in *Heretics of Dune* and *Chapterhouse: Dune*.

The three features of religious imagination proposed by Adam J. Frisch and Joseph Martos (1985: 11-26) were applied in this dissertation. The religion of the Fremen, Muad'Dib and Leto are fundamentalist, in that they divide and reduce the complexities of the cosmos into basic sets of realities (such as Shai-Hulud/Shaitan, God/Worm or Creation/Golden Path/Krazelic). The religion of the Fremen, Muad'Dib and Leto is ultimatizing because they seek and make pronouncements on the value of life. Leto constructs the Golden Path because he values life to the extent that he will not allow humankind / sandworms to become extinct. There is not much moralizing in the religious consciousness of the *Duniverse* since ethics takes a back seat to power and prestige. The Fremen religion was practical, with no greed evident before the advent of Muad'Dib. The priests of Muad'Dib behave unethically, so The Preacher arrives to denounce them. Leto sets aside all questions of morality because he believes the greater good is to save the race at the cost of many individual lives. Herbert upholds the features of religious imagination. Bearing in mind that there is no trivialising of religion in the series, one can conclude that there is no evidence of religiosity.

Chapter One relates the Genesis of *Dune*. The research method for this dissertation included a diachronic study of the series. My research objective was to investigate Frank Herbert's use of religion, particularly the messiah and martyr theme in the sequence. His inspiration for the novel and the relationship between religion and the desert were outlined. A comprehensive literary review revealed that while there were articles and dissertations devoted to *Dune*, there were very few devoted exclusively to religion. The subject of study was *Dune* in relation to other novels, New Wave, history, gender, politics, Marxism, psychoanalysis, ecology, 1960s, drugs, Eastern religion, Presbyterianism, messianism, monomyths and *God Emperor of Dune*. The narratological aspects of the *Chronicles* were discussed briefly.

Chapter Two centres on Paul's role as the messiah. At the risk of oversimplifying, I summarised *Dune* as the tale of the coming of the messiah, *Dune Messiah* as the reign of the messiah and *Children of Dune*, in part, as the "resurrection" of the messiah. Paul's role is complex; at times one is forced to question whether he is a false messiah. In *Dune*, he is clearly the messiah. The Bene Gesserit have planted legends amongst the Fremen about the messiah who is meant to deliver them. When Paul arrives on Arrakis, they require proof that he is "the one". Slowly, as a result of his Bene Gesserit breeding, training and the spice, he

begins to prove to the Fremen that he is their long-awaited saviour. In *Dune Messiah*, Paul compares himself to Hitler by discussing the genocide of billions of people and the eradication of various other religions in his name. This would lead one as an implied reader to question his status as a messiah. In *Children of Dune*, Paul is “resurrected” as The Preacher. He is intent on destroying the false religion that has spread in his name in order to redeem his name. When Leto calls upon Paul to martyr himself, this leaves the implied reader to deliberate his status again.

Is Paul a messiah and a martyr? Briefly: Yes. Herbert constructs a perfect background for Paul. His royal lineage and education are the best that an heir can expect from a ducal father. His ancestors are from the terrible house of Atreus; Paul is a descendant of not only a famous family, but is associated with Earth as well. Rafala and Cirasa discuss how Paul’s Greek heritage is also played on by incorporating elements of heroic epic into the novel. Both Raglan and Rank analyse the necessary characteristics of a hero, yet it is only Rank who describes a hero in relation to “founders of religion”. Through these methods, Herbert establishes Paul as a messiah.

The Bene Gesserit seek a male who can take the “Water of life” and survive; they name this male the Kwisatz Haderach. Herbert derived this idea from Judaism: *kefitzat ha-derekh* – the shortening of the way. As Jesus had a disciple that betrayed him, Paul’s teacher Dr. Yueh betrays the family and Duke Leto is murdered. Before the betrayal, Dr. Yueh presents an Orange Catholic Bible to Paul, which is divided into “kalimas”. By using an Arabic term (kalimas), Herbert seamlessly blends Judaism, Christianity and Islamic concepts into a messiah/prophet hybrid. Paul’s prophetic abilities enable him to defeat the Harkonnen and Corrinos, the Atreides and Fremen’s enemies. At the conclusion of *Dune*, Paul is accepted as the messiah of the Fremen. There are hints that he will not be viewed by everyone as their saviour though.

*Dune Messiah* is set twelve years after the events of *Dune*. The reign of the messiah has resulted in an ongoing *jihad* that has resulted in billions of lives lost. There is understandably disillusionment and rebellion in the face of this bleakness. Bronso of Ix is executed when he is charged with heresy and interrogated; hence he is the first martyr of the series since he challenges an oppressive regime. None of the other organisations and individuals who oppose Muad’dib [as pointed out, the second letter “d” is not capitalised in *Dune Messiah*] is motivated by altruistic reasons. Paul does not believe he is holy; he wishes

to escape his position; except it would be a disastrous decision. From a Christian perspective, the messiah would know he is the son of God. The Bible does not clearly state at what point Jesus knew he was the son of God, a knowledge which is only alluded to from John 8:58 onwards. Paul also feels that the position was thrust onto him; he was chosen to be the one.

Paul's increasing reliance on visions means that he no longer takes the initiative in any decisions. He chooses to no longer concern himself with the fate of humankind. Once he makes this choice, he can no longer in good conscience be called a messiah. He walks into the desert, presumably to his death. As a blind man lacking even prescience, he makes a Fremen choice that binds their loyalty to his children. In this respect, his "sacrifice" can be considered a martyr's decision, as he voluntarily lays down his life for the Fremen belief system.

Paul does not die and returns in *Children of Dune*. His "resurrection" as The Preacher is an attempt to redeem himself. He preaches against the corrupt religion that has spread in Muad'Dib's name. His adversary is his sister Alia, who is possessed by the Baron Vladimir Harkonnen, his first enemy, causing the story to come full circle for Paul. Paul bears witness by preaching and stirring up the resentment of the crowds of pilgrims against the priests. In a clear parallel to Jesus, The Preacher "cleanses the temple". Pilgrims to Arrakis spend enormous amounts of money buying false relics; The Preacher is disgusted that such activities occur around the temple, a place of prayer, not economics. Like Jesus, The Preacher draws anger and resentment from the priests and pilgrims.

Leto, Paul's son, spends most of *Children of Dune* endeavouring to escape possession. He does not succeed; he becomes a co-operation of personalities headed by an ancestor named Harum. During the Trial of Possession, he experiences prescient visions. He realises that the sandworms and humanity are headed for extinction. The only way to prevent that outcome is to assume a sandtrout skin and transform himself over millennia to guide the Golden Path.

In order to accomplish his plan, he must force Paul to accept martyrdom. They challenge each other, upon which Paul submits. Paul's refusal to take on the Golden Path (effectively allowing extinction) indicates that he is not a messiah. Instead, he is a John the Baptist-type figure – preparing the way for the real messiah: Leto. His decision to voluntarily give himself to death at the hands of Alia's priests re-establishes him as a martyr.

Leto defeats Alia, seemingly to restore balance in the empire. Once firmly established in his power, he begins his breeding scheme: to create heirs that will not only know how to rule, but more importantly be free from the sight of an oracle. If they are invisible they can escape to the furthest corners of the universe, where they may escape detection. This would prevent the extinction of the human race.

Leto is the real messiah of the series because his only concern is the fate of humankind. He makes the necessary sacrifices required of him. It is a lonely task and he is despised by many; yet he perseveres. Once the implied reader learns that his “pearls of awareness” will be trapped in all future sandworms, even more pity is elicited for his plight. The magnitude of his sacrifice makes him the ultimate martyr in the series.

Leto’s actions are in the name of saving humanity; yet more lives are lost in the pursuit of The Golden Path than in Paul’s life-time. Life in his universe is stagnant and oppressive; the implied reader is forced to question whether the ends justify the means. Would one choose Leto’s tyranny over humanity’s extinction? This is a difficult question to answer, even on intense reflection. Herbert never provides easy answers to his readers – Herbert is not the reader’s messiah.

Another issue that needs to be addressed is that apparently Herbert did not finish the series; if he had planned an additional novel, this would also have affected the overall interpretation of the religious theme. Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson have claimed that they possess notes about the *Duniverse*, specifically “Dune 7” – the last novel of the *Dune Chronicles*. As mentioned earlier, many websites document and criticise the contradictions and inconsistencies that riddle the new novels in relation to the “canon” established by Frank Herbert. One of those websites, “Jacurutu – The Cast Out”, hosts an interview with a member, “SandRider”, and Norman Spinrad (2009). Spinrad (2012) is a noted SF novelist, screenwriter, literary critic and political commentator. He claims in the interview that Frank Herbert told him that he planned to end the series with a “transition to a fictional universe of democratic rule” (Spinrad, 2009). If this is true, then this would mark the end of theocracies in favour of secular government.

Spinrad also alleges that the third *Dune* novel should have been the last; i.e. the rest of the novels in the series were “mostly about money” (*ibid*). It is pure conjecture upon Spinrad’s part that Herbert wrote the rest of the *Dune* sequence for mercenary reasons. Brian

Herbert corroborates Spinrad's assertion that his father had intended to end the series with *Children of Dune*; except that Frank Herbert bowed to the demand from fans and editors to revisit his decision (Herbert, 2003: 294). At first there appears to be evidence to support Spinrad's conclusions about the monetary aspect of Herbert's decision: In the summer of 1981, *Heretics of Dune* received the biggest science fiction book contract in history: Herbert expected twice the amount of money he received for *Heretics* for "Dune 6" (later named *Chapterhouse: Dune*) (Herbert, 2003: 338). An alternative reading of this situation would be that Herbert was merely receiving his just deserts for his labour. It is true that he required money, but it was not in the name of avarice: in 1974, Beverly Herbert, Frank Herbert's wife, was undergoing extensive treatment for lung cancer (*ibid*: 268). These treatments were extremely expensive and Herbert needed money quite urgently (*ibid*: 270). Writing is not a philanthropic activity; like any other profession, writers require payment to survive. Did Herbert compromise his artistic integrity for money? The quality of the latter novels in the *Chronicles* is certainly not of the standard established by *Dune*; in this respect, Herbert can be criticised. Sometimes it is impossible for a sequel to eclipse the original. Furthermore, another criticism can be levied against Herbert: no single theme is fully developed on account of the numerous issues that permeate the texts; indubitably more could be written on the religious theme of the novels.

Possibly the clearest indication of what Herbert sought to establish with religion in his series can be deduced from the conclusion of the Commission of Ecumenical Translators. Religion should be an exercise of love, not war. One should enjoy life and take action to embrace that happiness. True religion does not consist of rigid guidelines and mindless ritual; one should instinctively recognise and realise the essence of religious teaching.

"Much that was called religion has carried an unconscious attitude of hostility toward life. True religion must teach that life is filled with joys pleasing to the eye of God, that knowledge without action is empty. All men [*sic*] must see that the teaching of religion by rules and rote is a largely a hoax. The proper teaching recognized with ease. You can know it without fail because it awakens within you that sensation which tells you this is something you've always known."

(Herbert, 1965: 505)

It is hoped that this dissertation will serve as a base for future studies about religion in the series or, at the very least, inspire alternative lines of thought. A few caveats need to be noted regarding the present study. The most important limitation lies in the fact that this research is by no means exhaustive. I have not studied all of the books in the series, so that

my sense of their evolution in religious thought is incomplete. The Abrahamic elements discussed in this dissertation are also far from complete; certainly new connections would be established in later studies. The role that Eastern religion plays would also yield great dividends in adding to the understanding of the novels. Frank Herbert produced numerous short stories and novels that have not garnered nearly enough attention as *Dune*. Perhaps it is time to look seriously at his other works as well.

The *Duniverse* boasts many religions which flourish or become extinct. Even though the various cultures become more technologically advanced, religion is never eliminated from the series. It has been established that Herbert experienced distrust towards messiahs and martyrs and felt that religion served as a psychological “crutch”. Why would Herbert have continued to make use of religion in the series? Despite his misgivings, it is conceivable that Herbert realised religion, though ambivalent in its origins and effects, is also an intrinsic and essential component of society. In my opinion, eradicating religion would have resulted in a diminished *Duniverse*. The religious theme considerably enriched my reading experience of the novels.

I argue that adventure is a necessary component of science fiction and without adventure a novel is destined for failure. Religion is a spiritual adventure; a journey that many might consider the most significant and exhilarating experience of one’s life. There are many themes and approaches to a text, and my study has examined one aspect of a series that remains popular and will in all probability continue to inspire future generations.



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