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Anticolonialism in the movie adaptations of Dune by
Frank Herbert

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Anotace práce:	<p>Závěrečná práce je zaměřena na zkoumání antikolonialismu jako motivu v příběhu Duna od Franka Herberta se speciálním zaměřením na proměny tohoto motivu v jeho filmových zpracováních. Teoretická část nejprve zahrnuje představení antikolonialismu jako pojmu. V další části se text zaměřuje na významná antikolonialistická hnutí a pojmy s nimi spojené, jež jsou relevantní pro následnou analýzu. Významná část teoretické části je také věnována představení nejdůležitějších pojmů ze světa Duny. Uvedeny jsou ekonomické i politické organizace. Také je zde vysvětlen politický systém a historické pozadí příběhu Duna.</p> <p>Hlavním cílem praktické části bylo analyzovat příběh Duny z hlediska antikoloniálních motivů. První část analýzy se zaměřuje na hlavní příběh Duny, druhou část tvoří srovnání obou filmových adaptací a jejich přístupu k antikoloniálním motivům z hlavní dějové linie.</p>
Klíčová slova:	Americká literatura antikolonialismus, historie, film
Anotace v angličtině:	<p>This final thesis focuses on the study of anticolonialism as a theme in Frank Herbert's story Dune, with a special focus being placed on the transformations of these themes in its movie adaptations. The theoretical part first includes the introduction of anticolonialism as a concept. In the next section, the text focuses on the major anticolonial movements and concepts associated with them, that are relevant to the subsequent analysis. A significant part of the theoretical section is devoted to introducing</p>

	<p>the most important concepts from the world of Dune. It introduces both the economic and political organizations. It also explains the political system and the historical background of Dune.</p> <p>The main aim of the practical part was to analyse the story of Dune in terms of anticolonial themes. First part of the analysis focuses on the main story of Dune, with the second part being a comparison of the two movie adaptations and their approach to the established anticolonial themes from the main storyline.</p>
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	American literature, anticolonialism, history, movie
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Introduction

The story of Dune by Frank Herbert has been popularised in the recent years by the release of its new adaptation *Dune: Part One* in 2021. Its predecessor, the 1984 adaptation was not nearly as successful and has brought forth many controversies about its deviation from the original storyline. One of the objectives for this thesis is to examine the differences between the two movie adaptations and determine how these differences effect the main themes of the original story.

One of the themes which presumably will be prevalent within the story of Dune is the theme of anticolonialism. The main aim of this work is to verify the existence of anticolonial themes in Dune by Frank Herbert and explore different ways in which the anticolonial theme is expressed.

The first part of this bachelor thesis will focus on introducing anticolonialism as a term and presenting several movements, conflicts or terms connected to anticolonialism. Within this part there will also be a brief introduction of the most important concepts from the universe of Dune.

The second part of this theses will focus on analysis, which will rely on the facts presented in the first part. The analysis itself will be split into two parts. One, which will centre around anticolonial themes within the main storyline of Dune. Second, will focus on comparing the two movie adaptations with the focus being on how the differences between them affect the portrayal of anticolonial themes.

1 The differences between colonialism and anticolonialism

1.1 Colonialism

The term colonialism can be defined as the expansion of one nation, whilst taking control of other people's lands and goods. It could be said that this phenomenon has been prevalent throughout the history of humanity, with conquest and subsequent conquering of new territories being the most common form of new land acquisition. If looking for early historical examples one has to only look at the Roman empire.

In the year 510 BC, it was known as the Roman Dominion and covered only a small part of the Italic Peninsula.¹ By the end of the second century AD the Roman Empire stretched from Armenia to the Atlantic Ocean with vast territories around the Mediterranean Sea in southern Europe, North Africa and Western Asia. Most of these territories were gained through conquest. By examining the society and culture in the Roman region and its changes throughout this period we can see the influence of colonialism. The Romans brought many technological advancements and cultural changes to the places they conquered, but it can also be said that Romans themselves gained even more from the conquered nations. These gains were in part material, but mainly they were cultural. The Roman pantheon of gods is a perfect representative of this cultural impact. Many of the Roman gods were inspired by the gods of the Greek pantheon. Most of them even retaining their powers and alleged personalities in such a way that a direct line of influence can be drawn between the gods of the two pantheons.²

Other examples of early colonialism include the expansion of the Mongol Empire under Genghis Khan or the Aztec and Inca Empires. The last two examples of empires from Latin America serve as excellent examples of colonialism in regards to colonial trade policies.³

The beginnings of early modern colonialism are strongly connected with what is known as the Age of Discovery, a period of overseas exploration starting in the fifteenth century.⁴ These explorations not only led to the discovery of new lands, but also to their subjugation to

¹ CESAR, Jaroslav. *Britská říše v období imperialismu: (1870-1945)*. Praha: Academia, nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1970, p. 35.

² KOHOUTKOVÁ, Helena a Martina KOMSOVÁ. *Dějepis na dlani*. Olomouc: Rubico, 2005. ISBN 8073460572, p. 44.

³ LOOMBA, Ania. *Colonialism-postcolonialism*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2005. ISBN 0415350638, pp. 7-8

⁴ KOHOUTKOVÁ, Helena a Martina KOMSOVÁ. *Dějepis na dlani*. Olomouc: Rubico, 2005. ISBN 8073460572, pp. 95-96.

the rule of the colonizers. Early modern colonization started a trend of new colonialism which was prevalent in the European culture till the second half of the twentieth century.⁵

Due to the mass colonization of the newly discovered areas, there soon emerged very powerful nations, whose economy was fuelled by goods and other resources gained from the colonised nations. The most famous example and the biggest one of these nations became known as The British Empire.⁶ It can be said that roughly one-quarter of Earth's total population was at one point controlled by this mighty empire, together with the same amount of land mass and almost all the oceans. The last one was achieved and maintained through the impressive navy force of The British Empire.⁷

1.2 Anticolonialism

There are two undeniably connected concepts, which can be labelled as anticolonialism. First is the philosophical predecessor of postcolonialism. A movement concerned with the critical analysis of colonialism, whose representatives wanted the colonies to regain their independence, but in addition to that they strived for international cooperation and political solidarity. The aim was to create a world where each country has its national pride, but which at the same time allows for better relationships between nations. Within this concept contracts assuring international cooperation would not be enforced but would be sought after by every nation.⁸

The second is not so much a concept as it is a series of historical events during which the people of the colonies have expressed dissatisfaction with the colonizers or the colonization process. This includes not only the organized resistance movements but all actions and changes that were a direct response to colonization. This form of anticolonialism can also encompass all the instances of people protesting or showing displeasure in regards to the changes made by the colonizers.⁹

⁵ TUMIS, Stanislav a Hanuš NYKL, ed. *Prekolonialismus, kolonialismus a postkolonialismus: impéria a ti ostatní ve východní a jihovýchodní Evropě*. Praha: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy, 2015. Varia, 37. svazek. ISBN 978-80-7308-582-7, pp. 9-13.

⁶ SAMSON, Jane, ed. *The British Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, xii. ISBN 0192892932. 2001.

⁷ FERGUSON, Niall. *Empire: how Britain made the modern world*. London: Penguin Books, 2004, xxviii. ISBN 978-0-141-00754-0, p. xi.

⁸ ELAM, J. Daniel. *Anticolonialism*. Global South Studies: A Collective Publication with The Global South. 2017 [Accessed 5 April 2023]. Available from: <https://globalsouthstudies.as.virginia.edu/key-concepts/anticolonialism>.

⁹ AUNG-THWIN, Maitrii. *Anticolonialism: Southeast Asia*. New Dictionary of the History of Ideas. [Accessed 5 April 2023] Available from: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/anticolonialism-southeast-asia>

Anticolonial sentiments, whether it be silent disagreement with the colonizers or active revolts against the colonial rule, have been expressed by every colonized nation. This meant that as the countries differed from one another, so did their response to colonization. Thus it is very hard to say that there are definite types of anticolonialism, as there are sure to be events that are in nature anticolonial, but cannot be attributed to any of the outlined categories. Despite this fact, there exists a sorting system made by Maitrii Aung-Thwin which suggests that anticolonial events can be sorted into three overlapping categories.¹⁰

The first and also the most common one is known as “traditional” anti-colonialism. It is generally considered to be the initial reaction of a nation to an enemy threat usurping their land and as such can be identified in almost all colonized nations. These movements were traditionally led by the existing, pre-colonial, governing force or by the elites of the nation. Their goal was to protect their land and their people. These efforts were usually localized to places of high importance, such as capital cities, and were thus mostly unsuccessful in fending off the colonizers.¹¹

The way the second category of anticolonial movements manifested itself showcases the level of integration the colonial forces and their culture had achieved within the colonized nations. For this type of thought to arise the colonial power had to be fully integrated within the colonized nation. The educated elites of the colonies, most often those who were schooled in Europe, wanted to reform their nation through the colonial system. Working within the parameters of colonial law and convention, not changing it completely, but bringing forth traditions and beliefs of the natives which were lost during the process of colonization. This change, in most cases, could only be achieved by the natives regaining control of the governing body. If this were achieved the governing system would stay mostly unchanged. In some cases, this type of an anticolonial movement could be simplified as people wanting the colonizers to leave, but to keep their system of government.¹² These attempts often failed due

¹⁰ AUNG-THWIN, Maitrii. *Anticolonialism: Southeast Asia*. New Dictionary of the History of Ideas. [Accessed 5 April 2023] Available from: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/anticolonialism-southeast-asia>

¹¹ AUNG-THWIN, Maitrii. *Anticolonialism: Southeast Asia*. New Dictionary of the History of Ideas. [Accessed 5 April 2023] Available from: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/anticolonialism-southeast-asia>

¹² GÁNDHÍ, Mahátma. *Hind svarádž: indická samospráva*. Přeložil Jiří ZAVADIL. Brno: Doplněk, Společensko-ekologická edice, svazek 10. ISBN 80-7239-154-2, 2003, pp. 27-28

to the inability of the elites to convince the uneducated people or those who had not received a European education that these steps were necessary.¹³

The third type of anticolonial response is significantly more radical than the previous ones. During these the anticolonial activists not only wanted to achieve complete independence from the colonial authority, but they also wanted to replace the colonial governing system in its entirety. This notion had historically been the most successful one, gaining supporters not only in cities but also in rural areas. Nationalism and the colonial experience itself were used as a motivator towards independence. The radicality of this response is rooted in the fallouts it caused. Due to it being widespread across the colonised country and having a large number of supporters, these movements more often than not resulted in a revolutionary war.¹⁴

¹³ AUNG-THWIN, Maitrii. *Anticolonialism: Southeast Asia*. New Dictionary of the History of Ideas. [Accessed 5 April 2023] Available from: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/anticolonialism-southeast-asia>

¹⁴ AUNG-THWIN, Maitrii. *Anticolonialism: Southeast Asia*. New Dictionary of the History of Ideas. [Accessed 5 April 2023] Available from: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/anticolonialism-southeast-asia>

2 Historical events connected to anticolonialism

Although many historical countries fall under the definition of a colonial power, this term is mostly reserved for the countries which took part in the colonial boom of the early modern period. Towards the end of the early modern period there have been many conflicts and movements that could be described as anticolonial. But only a handful of them have characteristics similar to those portrayed in *Dune*. The examples listed are here to provide a deeper understanding of colonial times and of anticolonial movements and are the ones most relevant for the analysis of *Dune*.

2.1 The Algerian Revolution

The Algerian Revolution, spanning from 1954 to 1962, marks a significant chapter in the history of decolonization and anticolonial resistance. Emerging from decades of French colonial rule, the Algerian people have taken on a prolonged struggle for independence, that is similarly to other anticolonial movements characterized by armed resistance, political mobilization, and social upheaval.

The roots of the Algerian Revolution can be traced back to the colonization of Algeria by the French, which began in 1830. The French colonial rule was marked by economic exploitation, social inequality, and cultural repression, all of which led to heightened tensions between the colonizers and the native Algerian population. The implementation of discriminatory policies, such as land confiscation further fuelled mutual resentment.¹⁵ The failure of France to recognize Algerian aspirations for self-determination and the suppression of nationalist demands by successive French administrations did nothing to ease the brewing tensions and subsequently led the way towards the revolution.¹⁶

The Algerian Revolution can be divided into several key phases, each characterized by distinct form of resistance and political development. The first phase marks the outbreak of armed struggle. Beginning on November 1, 1954, when the National Liberation Front launched coordinated attacks against French military and civilian targets across Algeria. The reaction of the French colonial power to these attacks, included extensive use of torture and mass arrests, further radicalizing Algerian society and allowing for the Algerian independence movement to gain more supporters.¹⁷

¹⁵ FANON, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Penguin, 1967, p. 27

¹⁶ AGERON, Charles-Robert, *Modern Algeria: a History from 1830 to the Present*. London, 1997, p. 142

¹⁷ STORA, Benjamin. *Algeria, 1830-2000: A Short History*. Cornell University Press, 2001, p. 82

The Algerian Revolution culminated in Algeria's independence from France on July 5, 1962, following a brutal and protracted conflict that claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. The revolution's success established Algeria as an independent state and inspired anti-colonial movements across Africa.¹⁸ However, the revolution has left its mark on Algerian society, including divisions along ethnic, ideological, and regional lines. The legacy of the revolution continues to shape Algeria's political landscape and national identity.¹⁹

2.2 The Arab Revolt

The Ottoman Empire ruled over most of the Arab world for centuries, including territories in what are now the countries of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. While the Ottoman Empire was an Islamic caliphate, its rule over Arab lands was often characterized by centralized control, economic exploitation, and political marginalization of local Arab populations.²⁰

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, a sense of Arab identity and nationalism started to emerge within the groups of intellectuals, activists, and political leaders in the Arab provinces. Their goal was to achieve greater autonomy on the Ottoman Empire. To accomplish this, they asked for a political representation for Arab peoples within the Empire. Through representation they could achieve cultural revival, bringing back customs and traditions lost in the process of colonization.²¹ Their key figures of this movement included intellectuals like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Ahmad Rida and political leaders such as Sharif Hussein bin Ali of the Hashemite dynasty.²²

The efforts of the Arab nationalist movement culminated into the Arab Revolt, also known as the Great Arab Revolt, which was an anti-Ottoman uprising during World War I, orchestrated in cooperation with the Great Britain and France. The revolt was led by Sharif Hussein bin Ali, who declared himself the King of the Arab Kingdom of Hejaz and launched a campaign to force Ottoman forces out of the Arabian Peninsula. The reason behind the British and French support of this movement was purely political. They saw it as an

¹⁸ Horne, Alistair. *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*. Viking Press, 1977, p. 289

¹⁹ Hadj-Moussa, Ratiba. *The Algerian Revolution: A Historic Turning Point or a Failure of Modernity?* International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 2(20), 123-132, 2012, p.128

²⁰ Khoury, Philip S. *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus 1860-1920*. Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 45

²¹ Hourani, Albert. *Arab Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939*. Oxford University Press. 1962, p.102

²² Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. Henry Holt and Company. 1989, pp. 218-228

opportunity to weaken the Ottoman Empire and gain Arab support for their war effort against the Central Powers.²³

The Arab Revolt was successful and contributed to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. However, the settlement after the first world war, led to the division and recolonization of much of the Arab world by European powers, particularly Britain and France. The promises of Arab independence and self-determination made by the British during the war remained unfulfilled, leading to disillusionment and resentment among Arab nationalists.²⁴

2.3 American revolutionary war

American revolutionary war is an atypical example of an anticolonial movement. A reason for this can be found in the very beginnings of colonialism in Northern America. Here unlike, in most other colonised countries the colonisers did not just take control. Due to the influx of people coming to America from Great Britain and other parts of Europe, the colonizers effectively eradicated all power and influence of the natives. This meant that the anticolonial movement was led by people who were themselves colonisers.

However, despite the unusual situation the conflict between American colonies and the colonial power of Great Britain is probably the most well-known anticolonial movement that led the way for many other countries and started a wave of revolutionary and anticolonial wars across the globe. This conflict officially started with the Declaration of independence of 1776, but the reasons behind it lie in the French and Indian War.²⁵

The French and Indian War, which took place in the British and French colonies in North America was just a small part of a larger conflict known as the Seven years' war, which in contrast raged all over Europe from 1756 to 1763. This meant that Great Britain had to fight on two separate fronts, which increased the amount of capital needed and left Great Britain in a slight financial crisis.²⁶ To improve the situation the British parliament decided to increase the amount of taxes imposed on the colonies and increase the dependence of colonies on the colonial power. To achieve this, they ratified the Sugar Tax of 1764 and the Stamp Act of 1765. Both meant an increased taxation upon the colonies. These acts caused tensions to

²³ McMEEKIN, Sean. *The Ottoman Endgame: War, Revolution, and the Making of the Modern Middle East, 1908-1923*. Penguin, 2015, p.167

²⁴ OSMAN, Tarek. *Why border lines drawn with a ruler in WWI still rock the Middle East*. BBC News 14, 2013.

²⁵ GIPSON, Lawrence Henry. *The American Revolution as an Aftermath of the Great War for the Empire, 1754-1763*. *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 1, 1950, pp. 86–104

²⁶ GIPSON, Lawrence Henry. *The American Revolution as an Aftermath of the Great War for the Empire, 1754-1763*. *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 1, 1950, pp. 86–1044

arise in the American colonies to such degree, that the British later repealed the Stamp act. This action has temporarily eased the tensions, but when the parliament passed a new group of taxes through the Townshend Acts they rose again. The British sent troops to Boston in an effort to control the situation. This act did not improve the situation and the increased tension has resulted in the Boston Massacre of 1770. After this, the parliament decided to abandon the Townshend Acts leaving only the tax on tea. But by this point, it was already too late.²⁷

As a response, the colonists called the First Continental Congress. During this meeting in 1774, the anticolonial sentiments were only very mild. At this point the colonies did not want total independence from Great Britain, but rather representation within the British parliament.²⁸

During the first and second Continental Congress, the colonies issued lists of demands for the British government. Most important of these demands were the ones, which called for a seat in the British parliament for a representative from the colonies and the withdrawal of British troops from the colonies. These demands were not accepted by Britain, which led to an increase in anticolonial thoughts. Notably the ones calling for total independence from Great Britain. This resulted in the Declaration of Independence being issued in 1776.²⁹

The path to independence was not an easy one for the American colonies, the revolutionary war lasting five years, before the British surrendered during the battle of Yorktown in 1781 and it took two more years of negotiations before Britain recognised the United States of America as an independent country.³⁰

2.4 The Island of Java

The Island of Java, located in the Republic of Indonesia, has one a long history and colourful history. One that with all probability started more than 1.5 million years ago, when the Island of Java was inhabited by the representatives of the Homo erectus species. This has been proven by the discovery of a hominid fossil in 1891. Due to the island's rich history, there have been many different kingdoms, states and empires located on this island throughout the years, including the Mataram kingdom, one of the first kingdoms in the area

²⁷ GIPSON, Lawrence Henry. *The American Revolution as an Aftermath of the Great War for the Empire, 1754-1763. Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 1, 1950, pp. 86–104

²⁸ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2023, October 8). *Continental Congress. Encyclopedia Britannica.* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Continental-Congress>

²⁹ KOHOUTKOVÁ, Helena a Martina KOMSOVÁ. *Dějepis na dlani*. Olomouc: Rubico, 2005. ISBN 8073460572, pp.128-129

³⁰ KOHOUTKOVÁ, Helena a Martina KOMSOVÁ. *Dějepis na dlani*. Olomouc: Rubico, 2005. ISBN 8073460572, pp.128-129

and a result of Hindu Indian influence. An Indian influence lasted on Java for another seven hundred years, however in time, most of the island's population converted to Buddhism. With the arrival of Buddhism the state of Kediri soon became the leading force on the island. Its dominance lasted for almost three hundred years, during which time the island became an important centre for spice trade.³¹

Due to its growing spice trade, the Island of Java became more and more important for the Muslim international trade. The Muslim influence became so great with time, that in the fifteenth century several Muslim kingdoms were created on the island. Those that lasted gradually achieved independency on the Muslim traders. One of these kingdoms, bearing the historical name of Mataram, managed to gain enough power and influence to unite the kingdoms in the eastern and central parts of the Java Island becoming a dominant force on the island.³²

Since the beginning of the seventeenth century the island of Java was under the control of the Dutch East India Company. This period began with the arrival of several Dutch ships and the establishment of Dutch trading posts along the Java coast.³³ Through time the Dutch managed to seize control over most of the Java Island, even going so far as to seize control over the kingdom of Mataram and dividing it into two Surakarta kingdoms, which served as vassal states. In the year 1755 came a successful rebellion against the Dutch and the establishment of the Yogyakarta sultanate, a small independent sultanate. Despite this the Dutch remained in control of the two kingdoms of Surakarta, thus controlling the majority of the island.³⁴

After the establishment of Yogyakarta and during the reign of its first sultan Mangkubumi, the sultanate seemed to thrive. Despite being a military state born of rebellion, the Yogyakarta has grown to be a prosperous country and it soon passed both Surakarta kingdoms. Sultan Mangkubumi proved to be a capable ruler, understanding that further conflict with the Dutch would not be in Yogyakarta's best interest.³⁵ Instead, he kept peace

³¹ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2023, November 2). Java. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Java-island-Indonesia>

³² Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2023, November 2). Java. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Java-island-Indonesia>

³³ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2023, November 2). Java. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Java-island-Indonesia>

³⁴ CAREY, Peter. *The Origins of the Java War (1825-30)*. *The English Historical Review*, 91(358), 52–78. 1976, p. 53-54

³⁵ CAREY, Peter. *The Origins of the Java War (1825-30)*. *The English Historical Review*, 91(358), 52–78. 1976, p. 53-54

with them, possibly hoping for the fall of the Dutch East India Company, a situation that could give Mangkubumi enough power to seize control over the rest of the island. This came to pass in 1799 as The Dutch East India Company lost its power in.³⁶ Sultan Mangkubumi never saw the dissolution of the Dutch East India Company as he died seven years prior.³⁷ The successor to the throne of Yogyakarta was not as capable of a ruler as Mangkubumi and the Dutch managed to maintain control.³⁸

A new hope for the people of Java to escape the Dutch rule came in the form of prince Dipanagara. He was born in 1785 as the eldest son of the Sultan of Yogyakarta. His mother was not the sultan's wife, but his mistress, because of this he was not easily accepted by the court. His position in life was not improved when he turned away from Islamic traditions, instead choosing to practice the religion of the old Mataram dynasty. Eventually he managed to gain a strong position within the court, even becoming a favourite in the battle for succession. Despite this, following the death of his father Dipanaraga refused the position of Sultan, when it was offered to him.³⁹

Around the year 1804 Dipanaraga married Radèn Ayu Retna Madubrangta, a daughter of one of the teachers of the old Mataram religion. This union has deepened his relationship with the old religion, and he even took part in a pilgrimage to the south coast of Java. It was there, that Dipanaraga has allegedly received a prophetic warning about a danger coming for the Island of Java.⁴⁰

In 1825 prince Dipanaraga was the leader of an uprising against the Dutch rule. Many Javanese people followed him, proclaiming him to be a Messiah. Due to Dipanaraga's involvement with the old Mataram religion the uprising is sometimes given the modicum of holy war. Unfortunately for Dipanaraga the conflict did not last very long and ended in his defeat.⁴¹

³⁶ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2023, November 2). Java. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Java-island-Indonesia>

³⁷ CAREY, Peter. *The Origins of the Java War (1825-30)*. *The English Historical Review*, 91(358), 52–78. 1976, p. 53-54

³⁸ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2023, November 2). Java. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Java-island-Indonesia>

³⁹ CAREY, Peter. *The Origins of the Java War (1825-30)*. *The English Historical Review*, 91(358), 52–78. 1976, p. 52-61

⁴⁰ CAREY, Peter. *The Power of Prophecy: Prince Dipanagara and the End of an Old Order in Java, 1785-1855*. Vol. 249. Brill, 2007, pp. 97-204

⁴¹ CAREY, Peter. *The Origins of the Java War (1825-30)*. *The English Historical Review*, 91(358), 52–78. 1976, p. 52-78

2.5 Dutch and English East India Companies

East India Companies played a very important role in the colonial period, not only controlling the trade with the colonies, but in the later parts of the colonial period taking military control over some of the colonised nations.

The Dutch started their trade with Asia in 1595. For the first few years this trading relationship functioned in the manner of several merchants organizing separate voyages to different parts of Asia. These voyages were backed up by shareholders, who turned profit when the fleet successfully returned with cargo to sell. As the competition between the individual merchants grew it became harder to turn profit.⁴² The situation worsening for the Dutch in 1600, when a group of London merchants were granted the monopoly for English trade on the Asian market. This meant that there was suddenly an additional competitor for the Dutch regarding the European market.⁴³

The Dutch tried to regain the upper hand in the year 1602 when they created the United East India Company. Unlike the British, who managed to create a united company almost from the very beginning of the international trade, the Dutch had to deal with a large number of already existing companies. Through a lot of compromise, they managed to negotiate several deals merging most of the already existing companies into one big corporation.⁴⁴

From the 1602 onwards there were two powerful trading companies both with a monopoly for the whole of Asia and Pacific granted by their respective governments.⁴⁵ Through the growing profit they began establishing port cities in the colonies that were entirely under the control of the East India Companies. To protect these cities, they often resorted to apprehending a large part of the city's surrounding land, thus creating a barrier against anyone wishing to seize control. An example of this practice could be the Dutch East India Company seizing control of large parts of the Island of Java. This form of protection

⁴² GELDERBLUM, O., DE JONG, A., & JONKER, J. *The Formative Years of the Modern Corporation: The Dutch East India Company VOC, 1602–1623*. *The Journal of Economic History*, 73(4), 1050-1076, 2013, pp. 1050-1055

⁴³ MAKEPEACE, Margaret. *A Brief History of the English East India Company 1600–1858*, Qatar Digital Library [Accessed 20 November 2023]. Available from: <https://www.qdl.qa/en/brief-history-english-east-india-company-1600-1858>

⁴⁴ GELDERBLUM, O., DE JONG, A., & JONKER, J. *The Formative Years of the Modern Corporation: The Dutch East India Company VOC, 1602–1623*. *The Journal of Economic History*, 73(4), 1050-1076, 2013, pp. 1050-1055

⁴⁵ GELDERBLUM, O., DE JONG, A., & JONKER, J. *The Formative Years of the Modern Corporation: The Dutch East India Company VOC, 1602–1623*. *The Journal of Economic History*, 73(4), 1050-1076, 2013, pp. 1050-1055

was often necessary as the port cities were the centres of colonial force within the colonised nations.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ CAREY, Peter. *The Origins of the Java War (1825-30)*. *The English Historical Review*, 91(358), 52–78. 1976, p. 53-54

3 Basic information about the political background of the Dune universe

One cannot analyse a story, looking for one specific element within it, without first laying out the specific environment in which this story takes place. In this chapter, there is an overview of the political structure and its constituents necessary for any further analysis. This chapter describes the political structure as a whole, while also introducing the smaller groups functioning within the universe of Dune that are essential for our understanding of the system.

3.1 The Imperium

The political system of Dune viewed through the lens of history is distinctly feudal with the emperor as the head of the Imperium and the Great Houses bound to him as vassals.⁴⁷ There is also an early structure that could be considered a predecessor to a legislative body—the Landsraad.

The Landsraad is a body representing all of the Great Houses. It serves not only as a forum through which the houses communicate with one another but also as a protection against the Imperium, as even the Emperor, the overseer, has to answer to it.⁴⁸ It is governed by the High Council and motions are passed with a vote. However, not all houses are equal within the Landsraad, and the more powerful the house the more power their vote has. This means that the most power, even within the Landsraad is held within the Imperial house. Despite this, if all the remaining houses voted against the Imperial house their votes have to surpass the number of votes held by the Imperial house.⁴⁹

The story of Dune takes place during the reign of the Padishah Emperor Shaddam Corrino IV from the Imperial House Corrino. Apart from the House Corrino, there are nine other houses present in the Dune universe during the reign of the Padishah Emperor Shaddam Corrino IV. However, only two others are significant for the story. The Houses Atreides and Harkonnen.

⁴⁷ KENNEDY, Kara. *Frank Herbert, the Bene Gesserit, and the Complexity of Women in the World of Dune* September 2021 [Accessed 29 January 2023] Available from: <https://www.tor.com/2021/09/08/frank-herbert-the-bene-gesserit-and-the-complexity-of-women-in-the-world-of-dune/>.

⁴⁸ McNELLY, Willis. *The Dune Encyclopedia*. NY, 1984, p. 339.

⁴⁹ McNELLY, Willis. *The Dune Encyclopedia*. NY, 1984, p. 359.

All houses were ruled by the patriarch of the family, whose name the house bore. This person usually received a title. For House Atreides, it was the title of Duke, whereas for House Harkonnen it was the title of Baron.⁵⁰

Each of the Great Houses received a planet from the Emperor as an estate of inheritance.⁵¹ This also meant that the Emperor could take away a planet from one house and give it to another as he did with the planet Arrakis, which he took from the House Harkonnen and gave it to House Atreides before the events of the main story.⁵²

3.2 A world without computers

Even though the Dune takes place in the future, there is a distinct lack of technology, namely robots and computers. This is because, in the history of the Imperium, there was a great war between the humans and the computers with artificial intelligence, which the humans won.⁵³ After the war, the surviving humans established a treaty banning all production and development of computing machines. So, within the Imperium there is modern technology, but there are no machines with artificial intelligence.

To make up for the lack of computing mechanisms, new organizations emerged taking advantage of human intelligence.⁵⁴ These organizations or schools for mental-physical training are educating their pupils in computing skills essentially turning them into human computers with different abilities, depending on the school in question.⁵⁵ Their skills are also heavily dependent on Spice Melange. A product which after the great war quickly became the most precious and most sought-after substance in the Imperium.⁵⁶

3.2.1 Spacing Guild

One of the organizations that gained its power from the lack of computing technology, also known as mental-physical training schools, is the Spacing Guild. This organization had a

⁵⁰ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2.

⁵¹ McNELLY, Willis. *The Dune Encyclopedia*. NY, 1984.

⁵² HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2.

⁵³ GRIGSBY, John L. *Asimov's Foundation Trilogy and Herbert's Dune Trilogy: A Vision Reversed*. SFS 8:149-55, #24, July 1981. [Accessed 28 January 2023] Available from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4239405.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ab015110020a67b46cd9d58d0dc18e51e&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1, pp. 149-155.

⁵⁴ DITOMMASO, Lorenzo. *History and Historical Effect in Frank Herbert's "Dune"*. *Science Fiction Studies*, 19 (3). 1992, pp. 311-325

⁵⁵ GRIGSBY, John L. *Asimov's Foundation Trilogy and Herbert's Dune Trilogy: A Vision Reversed*. SFS 8:149-55, #24, July 1981. [Accessed 28 January 2023] Available from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4239405.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ab015110020a67b46cd9d58d0dc18e51e&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1, pp. 145-155.

⁵⁶ McNELLY, Willis. *The Dune Encyclopedia*. NY, 1984, p. 157

monopoly on interstellar shipping and trade. It gained said monopoly because, since its Navigators were the only ones capable of space travel.⁵⁷ They transported goods, people, and even whole fleets across the universe at speeds faster than the speed of light. To avoid any conflict from ensuing aboard the carrier ships there existed a peace treaty. This treaty ensured that even the sides that were actively at war would not attack while on board. Achieving this by banning the passengers from leaving their respective ships, which effectively ended any potential for conflict. The members of the Spacing Guild, known as Guildsmen, put a lot of importance on their secrets, going as far as to remain hidden for the whole duration of the journey.⁵⁸

3.2.2 Mentats

Mentats are individuals who had undergone difficult training, which most often started during infancy.⁵⁹ They have the ability to gather large amounts of data, analyse them, and draw conclusions from them. They can process this data without any preconceptions or prejudices. For their skills, they are highly sought after, and they usually serve as advisors to the patriarchs of the Great Houses.⁶⁰

Parts of the Mentat training are also used during the training of future leaders and military commanders. This means that the Mentats served not only as advisors, but also as instructors to their masters. However, to complete, even a part of the Mentat training requires a certain degree of mental capability.⁶¹

Because of the vast powers a Mentat possesses, one of the requirements for a Mentat is a high ethical code. This for some political leaders could be viewed as a disadvantage, which is why they conditioned some of the Mentats to lose their ethical code, thus creating a new branch of Mentats, Twisted Mentats. These Twisted Mentats were then able to design plans and strategies without any ethical restraints.⁶²

3.2.3 The Bene Gesserit Order

Unlike the two previously mentioned schools of thought the Bene Gesserit is a strictly female organization and is being run by the Reverend Mother Superior. The sisters of the

⁵⁷ McNELLY, Willis. *The Dune Encyclopedia*. NY, 1984, p. 547

⁵⁸ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2. p. 49

⁵⁹ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2. p. 49-50

⁶⁰ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2.

⁶¹ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2

⁶² McNELLY, Willis. *The Dune Encyclopedia*. NY, 1984, pp. 357-358

Bene Gesserit order have an absolute control over their bodies, which even allows them to change the sex of their children in the womb.⁶³

They are the grey eminences of the Imperium. They have their spies not only in the Imperial court but also within the Great Houses. Their main force of influence was the services they provided, ranging from meditating disputes and overseeing important negotiations to the training of noble females. These noble females were often daughters of one of the sisters from the order.⁶⁴

Their goal, for generations, was to create the ultimate being, the Kwisatz Haderach.⁶⁵ This man should embody the powers of both the female and male line,⁶⁶ making him capable of seeing the future, as well as the past.⁶⁷ To achieve this goal, they resorted to what can only be called a breeding program. Where they carefully mix certain bloodlines to gain powerful genes.⁶⁸ This meant that a part of the members of the Bene Gesserit sisterhood retained roles as concubines or wives, where they had a direct influence over their partners and a hand in raising their daughters in the Bene Gesserit ways.⁶⁹

Others took on the roles of Reverend Mothers and the Kwisatz Mother. The Reverent Mothers had to undergo a procedure called the Spice Agony and survive it.⁷⁰ When the Reverend Mother Superior is chosen by her predecessor from the lines of Reverend Mothers, she must undergo a ritual that links her consciousness to all the Reverend Mother Superiors that came before her, giving her the knowledge of all things that had happened in the past.⁷¹ They then filled the roles of advisors, historians and geneticists. Thanks to these roles they

⁶³ KENNEDY, Kara. *Frank Herbert, the Bene Gesserit, and the Complexity of Women in the World of Dune* September 2021 [Accessed 29 January 2023] Available from: <https://www.tor.com/2021/09/08/frank-herbert-the-bene-gesserit-and-the-complexity-of-women-in-the-world-of-dune/>.

⁶⁴ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2, pp. 3-14

⁶⁵ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2, pp. 3-14

⁶⁶ McNELLY, Willis. *The Dune Encyclopedia*. NY, 1984, pp. 144-146

⁶⁷ DITOMMASO, Lorenzo. *History and Historical Effect in Frank Herbert's "Dune"*. *Science Fiction Studies*, 19 (3). 1992, pp. 311-325

⁶⁸ KENNEDY, Kara. *Frank Herbert, the Bene Gesserit, and the Complexity of Women in the World of Dune* September 2021 [Accessed 29 January 2023] Available from: <https://www.tor.com/2021/09/08/frank-herbert-the-bene-gesserit-and-the-complexity-of-women-in-the-world-of-dune/>.

⁶⁹ KENNEDY, Kara. *Frank Herbert, the Bene Gesserit, and the Complexity of Women in the World of Dune* September 2021 [Accessed 29 January 2023] Available from: <https://www.tor.com/2021/09/08/frank-herbert-the-bene-gesserit-and-the-complexity-of-women-in-the-world-of-dune/>.

⁷⁰ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2

⁷¹ KENNEDY, Kara. *Frank Herbert, the Bene Gesserit, and the Complexity of Women in the World of Dune* September 2021 [Accessed 29 January 2023] Available from: <https://www.tor.com/2021/09/08/frank-herbert-the-bene-gesserit-and-the-complexity-of-women-in-the-world-of-dune/>.

maintained the Bene Gesserit's political influence. Unlike the Reverend Mothers there was only one Kwisatz Mother who was the sole director of the breeding program.⁷²

3.2.4 Truthsayer

Generally speaking, a Truthsayer is anyone who can detect whether the speaker is saying the truth or not. The ability itself is called truthsense. The skill was developed almost exclusively by the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, however there are accounts of other individuals being born with it. At least one Truthsayer is always employed by the Padishah Emperor and serves as his advisor.⁷³

3.2.5 CHOAM

Combine Honnete Over Advancer Mercantiles otherwise known as CHOAM is one of the biggest organizations in the Imperium, whose monopoly over the commerce sector encompassed all economic transactions. Its biggest weakness was how much it relied on the Spacing Guild for transport, due to their monopoly on faster-than-light travel and navigation across the cosmos.⁷⁴

The management of CHOAM and its board of directors were indirectly controlled by the Padishah Emperor and the Landsraad.⁷⁵ The Spacing Guild and the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood were connected to CHOAM as silent partners.⁷⁶

With its hold over the commerce sector, CHOAM became the most profitable organization in the Imperium.⁷⁷ As such all influence over CHOAM was one of the major goals of political manoeuvring. Control over CHOAM could for example be reached by controlling one of the centres from which CHOAM gets produce. Such as the planet Arrakis with its reserves of Spice Melange.⁷⁸

3.3 Arrakis

The planet Arrakis, also known as Dune is a desert planet on the far edge of the Imperium. Arrakis is considered to be one of the harshest and deadliest planets in the cosmos, mostly for its lack of water and scorching heat. Large stretches of desert cover most of the

⁷² HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2

⁷³ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2

⁷⁴ McNELLY, Willis. *The Dune Encyclopedia*. NY, 1984, pp. 297-339

⁷⁵ McNELLY, Willis. *The Dune Encyclopedia*. NY, 1984, p. 301

⁷⁶ KENNEDY, Kara. *Frank Herbert, the Bene Gesserit, and the Complexity of Women in the World of Dune* September 2021 [Accessed 29 January 2023] Available from: <https://www.tor.com/2021/09/08/frank-herbert-the-bene-gesserit-and-the-complexity-of-women-in-the-world-of-dune/>.

⁷⁷ McNELLY, Willis. *The Dune Encyclopedia*. NY, 1984, pp. 297-339

⁷⁸ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2

planet's surface. A man could die in the desert simply by dehydration, but those stranded there rarely get the chance, because before that they are killed either by one of the vicious sandstorms or by a sandworm.⁷⁹

3.3.1 Water management

Despite the dangerous essence of Arrakis, humanoid life has found ways to survive. One of the most important elements of the fight for survival is the recirculation of all water. Where all the water expelled from the body is filtered and used again. In large cities, such as the capital city of Arakeen, rooms are sealed and the redundant water is filtered out of the air. The same system works in most of the vehicles used on Arrakis. When on the move, people wear filtering clothes known as Stillsuits that catch all the repelled moisture, filter it and give it back to the user as clean water ready to drink.⁸⁰

3.3.2 Spice Melange

As was previously mentioned, Spice Melange or, as it is usually referred to “the spice” is the most precious substance in the Imperium and presumably even outside it. It can only be found on planet Arrakis whose environment conditions make the task of the spice production a very difficult one. The spice is collected in the depths of the desert where the harvesting process is often compromised by territorial sandworms, Fremen tribes and by the desert itself.⁸¹

The difficulty in obtaining the spice is far outweighed by its properties. One of the biggest advantages of consuming spice on regular basis is an increased life expectancy. For this reason, it was used by many members of the Great houses. However, even though it possesses many positive qualities, spice usage has severe consequences. Those who consume spice are getting increasingly more addicted to it and can suffer from undesired side effects to their bodies and mental state. People who ingested larger amounts of spice are easily recognizable due to their discoloured eyes. The phenomenon where the whole eye is stained blue is called “Eyes of Ibad”.⁸²

⁷⁹ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2

⁸⁰ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2

⁸¹ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2

⁸² DITOMMASO, Lorenzo. *History and Historical Effect in Frank Herbert's "Dune"*. *Science Fiction Studies*, 19 (3). 1992, pp. 311-325

Spice is most important for groups like the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, Mentats and the Spacing Guild who use spice not to prolong their lives, but for its mind-altering properties. To achieve this, they turn rough melange into a liquid called the Water of Life.⁸³

3.3.3 Fremen

This hardened group considers the planet Arrakis their home and takes very harshly towards outsiders who do not understand their ways and intrude on what they consider to be their land. They take especially harshly towards people mining Spice Melange and they often attack the Spice harvesters, special machines designed to mine spice, which are dropped down from carriers onto spice fields. These attacks, hindering spice production, often resulted in retaliation from the ruling House on Arrakis and harsh punishments for the Fremen⁸⁴

The Fremen typically live in patriarchal tribes known as sietches, which are led by a Naib. The whole Fremen culture is built upon their fight for survival and so understandably, taking into account the lack of water supply on Arrakis, Fremen lives revolve around water. When moving around in the desert they not only use stillsuits, but also masks and noseplugs. Thanks to these methods they manage to only loose about a thimbleful of water a day.⁸⁵

According to Fremen tradition all water the tribesman possessed is the property of the tribe, by water they mean all the fluids contained within the human body, including blood. So, when a Fremen dies their remains are striped of all water, which is then filtrated and added to the tribe's water reserves.⁸⁶

⁸³ DITOMMASO, Lorenzo. *History and Historical Effect in Frank Herbert's "Dune"*. Science Fiction Studies, 19 (3). 1992, pp. 311-325

⁸⁴ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2, pp. 120-136

⁸⁵ McNELLY, Willis. *The Dune Encyclopedia*. NY, 1984, pp. 536-537

⁸⁶ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2.

4 Anti-colonial themes in Dune

Anti-colonial themes in Dune are mostly expressed through colonial imagery, showing a convincing image of imperialism. These images have been analysed using the original book by David Herbert,⁸⁷ the movie adaptation of Dune from 1984 directed by David Lynch⁸⁸ and the second movie adaptation from 2021 directed by Denis Villeneuve.⁸⁹

4.1 Arrakis

The planet Arrakis itself is a representation of a colonised land. Hundreds of years before the house Atreides came to Arrakis, the planet was seized by the Empire. Its indigenous people, the Fremen have been used as workforce by the colonizers or banished into the desert. The Empire took political control over Arrakis and began assigning it as fief to the patriarch of one of the Great Houses.

There have been several conflicts between the colonisers and the native Fremen, all of which received a brutal answer from the Great House currently in control of Arrakis. In between the conflicts the Fremen were ostracised by the colonisers and excluded from their own cities. Most of the Fremens stayed within the deserts of Arrakis, where unlike the colonisers, they were able to survive.

The fear of the desert, or rather the planet itself, is clearly visible in the colonisers. Afterall, they call Arrakis the deadliest planet in the universe. This is a clear call back to colonial times. When the colonisers arrived in a newly subjugated colony, their biggest problems were not the natives, but their new environment. They often died after they first encountered dangerous animals and indigenous plants, some of which were unbeknownst to the colonisers poisonous. Many died of poisoning, starvation or dehydration. Since Dune is a work of fiction, these dangers are taken into extremes. A desert in itself is a very dangerous place, with deadly sandstorms, lack of water and unbearable heat. On Earth the biggest problem a coloniser could encounter in a desert apart from those previously mentioned, would be a poisonous snake or a scorpion. On Arrakis, they have giant worms capable of devouring entire harvesting machines.

The contrast between the homeland of colonizers and the colonies is best shown on the example of house Atreides. Their home planet Caladan is described as being mostly covered

⁸⁷ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2.

⁸⁸ Lynch, D. (Director). (1984). *Dune* [Film]. Dino De Laurentiis Corporation.

⁸⁹ Villeneuve, D. (Director). (2021). *Dune: Part One* [Film]. Legendary Pictures.

by water. Comparing that with the realities of Arrakis where water is so scarce, its inhabitants must use filtration systems to prevent the loss of water from the environment, illustrates the various environmental differences the colonizers might have faced.

4.2 Fremen

Fremen, the indigenous people whose land was stolen by colonial power. They were not only governed by colonizers, but they were also exiled from their own land and forced to live only in places mandated by the colonial power. The same approach as the Empire has taken towards the Fremen can be seen, for example, in the way the British Empire has treated the Native Americans.⁹⁰ Indigenous people mistreated and even killed by a colonial power who has usurped their resources and exiled them from their own land. With many conflicts between the two sides, most of which ended very badly for the natives.

In regard to Fremen there is also a theme of cultural appreciation. Before their arrival on Arrakis, Paul and Jessica have both learned a lot about the Fremen culture and their way of life. This gives them an advantage when they are accepted among the Fremen. Both spend a lot of time trying to understand the Fremen culture and finding ways of honouring the Fremen traditions. In the end they are the ones who have to adapt, and they do so without trying to change the ways of Fremen people or being in any way disrespectful towards them.

In contrast to the cultural appreciation shown by Paul and Jessica, certain actions taken by the Imperium could come across as cultural appropriation. Meaning that the Imperium has taken important elements from the Fremen culture and exploited it. An example of this would be the mining of Melange. Spice or Melange is a central element of the Fremen culture, especially in connection with their spirituality. The fact that the Imperium has taken to using spice in a similar fashion to the Fremen, meaning the process of broadening one's mind, and the fact that they attempt to control and limit Fremen access to it makes it an example of cultural appropriation.

4.3 Melange as a natural resource

Connected to the previous subchapter there is the importance of spice as an anticolonial theme. As previously mentioned, the mining of spice, could be considered an element of

⁹⁰ KOHOUTKOVÁ, Helena a Martina KOMSOVÁ. *Dějepis na dlani*. Olomouc: Rubico, 2005. ISBN 8073460572, pp. 127-128.

cultural appropriation, there is however another theme connected to it that refers back to the early colonial period.

It was the case in all colonised nations, that the colonisers exploited the natural resources of the conquered land. They usually did so without consideration for sustainability of these resources. They had no problems mining precious materials from the ground, undermining whole cities, or deforesting large swaths of natural rainforests to make place for plantations. Since it was not their homeland they were destroying.

On Arrakis the spice is the most important natural resource, in fact it is probably the most valuable natural resource in the whole Imperium. This means that the colonial power currently in charge of Arrakis has only one goal. Mining as much spice as possible, sacrificing much in the process. This sacrifice is mostly on the side of the Fremen. It is their land that is being exploited and when they try to protest, they are killed.

4.4 Imported plants on Arrakis

As previously mentioned, Arrakis is a desert planet with very limited water supplies. This makes water very important to its inhabitants. The Fremen spend their lives in stillsuits that allow them to minimise the loss of bodily fluids that occurs through sweating or breathing. Others, those with enough money to be able to afford such luxury, live in hermetically sealed houses with the filtration system build in. Wasting water on Arrakis would be the equivalent to killing someone.

The house, the Atreides family moves into, was previously owned by the Fenrings family,⁹¹ who have built a conservatory inside the house. Inside this space they managed to grow many exotic flowers, all of which were brought to Arrakis from other planets and require a lot of water to survive. It is not stated how many litres of water it takes to sustain such luxury but considering the general lack of water in the environment of Arrakis and in its atmosphere, the amount of water needed to maintain the permanently wet and humid environment of the conservatory must be excessive.⁹²

Another example of water wastage is the upkeep of date palms. There are twenty palm trees maintained within the Arrakis residence of the Atreides. These palm trees require forty

⁹¹ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2, pp. 76-78

⁹² HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2, pp. 76-78

litres of water a day to stay alive. On Arrakis the amount of water needed to sustain twenty palm trees for just a day could sustain one hundred men for the same amount of time.⁹³

There are several ways, thematically related to anticolonialism, in which the presence of palm trees on Arrakis can be interpreted. First and the simplest interpretation is that the trees were brought to Arrakis to remind the colonizers of their homeland. Considering the amount of water necessary to sustain the trees it would be a pure irresponsibility on the side of the colonizers to waste this water solely for a reminder. However, if their intention was also to show the Fremen how powerful and rich they are it would be an effective way to do so. A historical example for such behaviour can be found in India, where the British colonisers constructed numerous buildings.⁹⁴ These buildings included grand residences such as the Viceroy's House. This opulent mansion, which is now known as the Rashtrapati Bhavan was constructed in such a manner as to portray the power and the riches of the Empire.⁹⁵

Other interpretation is that perhaps it was the intention of the colonizers to see, whether the plants could survive in the harsh conditions and spread in which case the colonizers could succeed in transforming Arrakis in their own planet's image. This notion was not unusual during the colonial period as many colonisers brought with them seeds and animals from their homeland. These invasive species either not surviving in the hard conditions or thriving to the point, where they became dangerous for the indigenous species of the colonies. It depended on the specific examples whether a thriving invasive species would be predominantly a positive or a negative thing. For instance, the Spanish have in their colonisation of the Americas brought with them cattle. At first the few herds present in the Americas provided the settlers with a food source and free labour as cattle was also used for transport, ploughing the fields and turning the mills. Even though later on the cattle became wildly spread and contributed to lasting alterations in the local landscape, the disadvantages did not outweigh the positive influence of cattle in the colonies.⁹⁶ Whether the colonisers of Dune had similar intentions to the Spanish regarding the palm trees is not a certainty, but it is an option that cannot be discarded.

⁹³ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2, pp. 63-64

⁹⁴ CAREY, Simon. *The Legacy of British Colonialism in India Post 1947*. Vol. 2, New Zealand Review of Economics and Finance, 2012.

⁹⁵ Davies, Philip. *Splendours of the Raj: British Architecture in India, 1660–1947*. Penguin. ISBN 978-0-14-009247-9, 1987.

⁹⁶ FICEK, Rosa E. *Cattle, Capital, Colonization: Tracking Creatures of the Anthropocene In and Out of Human Projects*. *Current Anthropology* 60:S20, S260-S271, 2019, pp.260-270

There is also the interpretation in which the palm trees serve as a symbolic representation for the colonizers themselves. They are in a foreign land, fighting for survival in conditions where they are incapable of surviving on their own. To survive and even thrive they need for the natives to sacrifice precious materials or natural resources to the colonisers. Same as the palm trees require the most precious resource on Arrakis, water.

The issue of water wastage on Arrakis is closely connected to the theme of natural resources. In both cases the colonizers disregard the needs of the natives in order to gain more profit, or in order to live in luxury. One could argue that both the conservatory and the palm trees were brought by the colonizers to serve a purpose, but they still show a blatant disregard to the lack of water on Arrakis. The topic of water wastage on Arrakis is an extreme example of the disregard of the Empire towards the Fremen, showing the reader how ruthless or blind to the needs of their people colonizers could be.

4.5 The Spacing Guild

An important element of the story which was heavily inspired by the colonial period is the Spacing Guild. This large organization, which holds the monopoly on interstellar travel was probably inspired by the East India Companies.

Both the Spacing Guild and the East India Companies hold the monopoly for their respective fields of influence. Albeit each for a slightly different reason. The Spacing Guild holds the monopoly over interstellar travel, because of the ban on computing machinery, were the machines capable of calculating the course of travel widely available, the situation could be different. As it stands the Spacing Guild is the only company capable of computing the difficult routes between two different points in the universe, due to the use of melange by its navigators.

It cannot be said that the journey from Europe to Asia in the 17th century was an easy one, but the East India Companies were certainly not the only ones capable of undergoing it. The reason why these companies held the monopoly within their field lies more in the competitive nature of trade. In which case the rule is that the bigger the number of competitors the smaller the gains for each of them would be. With more fleets undergoing the journey, more commodities would reach the European market driving the price of produce down. That is why the East India companies were given the monopoly and were thus capable of controlling the market, ensuring profitability. Even if the monopoly were not granted, smaller companies would not be able to carry the risks which came with the journey. An

accident, be it an attack on the ships or a violent storm, that would lead to the loss of produce, could be withstood by a large company, but could mean bankruptcy for a small one.⁹⁷

Despite the reasoning behind their monopoly, both the Spacing Guild and The East India Companies share many similarities. They both hold a powerful position within their respective empires acquired through trade. From which they are capable of influencing the imperial politics.

Whether this similarity between the East India Companies and the Spacing Guild could be considered a colonial or an anticolonial theme lies entirely upon the chosen interpretation. If analysing the 1984 movie version, where the Spacing Guild is painted as one of the villains, the similarities would render it an anticolonial theme.

4.6 The fight against the Empire

The fight between the Fremen of Arrakis and the Empire, represented by the Harkonnens and the Emperor himself is also an anticolonial theme, since the Fremen, together with Paul Atreides are the protagonists of the story and the Empire is portrayed as the enemy. The story itself puts the Empire into the role of the coloniser making their fight with the Fremen an effort of the colonised nation to gain freedom.

The conflict itself shares many similarities with real life historical anticolonial movements. Some of these similarities can even be found within the American revolutionary war. In both conflicts the battle rages far away from the heart of the Empire, with the Empire sending troops to help aid those they appointed as keepers of the colonised land. In both cases the man leading the colonial armies hails from the Empire, at least through ancestry, and has held an important position within the structure of the Empire prior to the beginning of the conflict. Other similarity is the Empire intervening in the colonial affairs, either through taxation, given quotes for trade or by changing the leadership, all without the colonies having any impact upon the decisions. And lastly in both conflicts the colonies are at least partially supported by the native people of the colonised land.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ GELDERBLUM, O., DE JONG, A., & JONKER, J. *The Formative Years of the Modern Corporation: The Dutch East India Company VOC, 1602–1623*. *The Journal of Economic History*, 73(4), 1050-1076Gip, 2013, pp. 1050-1055

⁹⁸ GIPSON, Lawrence Henry. *The American Revolution as an Aftermath of the Great War for the Empire, 1754-1763*. *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 1, 1950, pp. 86–104

One of the lesser-known anticolonial movements that bears clear similarities to the conflict Dune is the Java war. In this case the similarities are most prominent in the leaders of both conflicts. Both Paul Atreides and prince Dipanaraga are the illegitimate sons of important political figures. Despite this they both manage to retain the title of heir, but neither one of them can properly claim it. They both abandon the religion of their ancestors, instead choosing to follow the religion worshipped by the people who first inhabited their respective lands. Both experience visions and are revered as Messiahs. Even though the end results of the conflicts differ, the similarities are undeniable.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ CAREY, Peter. *The Origins of the Java War (1825-30)*. *The English Historical Review*, 91(358), 52–78. 1976, p. 52-61

5 Comparison of the movie adaptations

In this chapter there will be an analysis and a comparison of the two movie adaptations of *Dune* by Frank Herbert, the 1984 movie *Dune*,¹⁰⁰ directed by David Lynch and the 2021 movie *Dune: Part One*,¹⁰¹ directed by Denis Villeneuve. The analyses and comparison will concentrate on how the two movies managed to portray the key concepts and elements of the story as well as a deeper look into the inclusion or exclusion of the anticolonial themes, which were featured in the original book version.

When comparing these two movies several factors must be considered. Firstly, each of these movies was made in a different era, in fact they were released almost forty years apart. In those forty years many things have changed, within the movie industry technological advancements allow, beside other things, a greater use of special effects. Due to its technical disadvantage, one would assume that the 1984 version would use simpler effects and would concentrate more on the story itself. However, David Lynch decided on a concept, that relies heavily on the use of special effects. This was typical for science fiction movies of this era as their goal was to make them look very futuristic in a way that took away from their realism. This is also evident in the costuming of that era. In contrast the 2021 version uses special effects in a very different manner. They are present throughout the movie, but they are not there to make the movie look futuristic as the focus is on making the movie look as realistic and natural as possible.

Secondly the time frame of both movies. The 1984 version encompasses the whole of the original storyline in its running time of 137 minutes.¹⁰² Whereas the 2021 version with its running time of 155 minutes,¹⁰³ is only the first part of the story, with the second part set to come out in 2024. This allowed Denis Villeneuve to keep a lot of the detail from the original story in the movie, as he does not have to worry about time management. Logically this means that a certain number of scenes from the original storyline had to be omitted by David Lynch. Due to the fact that the 2021 version only covers half of the storyline, the comparison will be focussing solely on the first part of the story, that is up to the point, where Paul and his mother join the Fremen.

¹⁰⁰ Lynch, D. (Director). (1984). *Dune* [Film]. Dino De Laurentiis Corporation.

¹⁰¹ Villeneuve, D. (Director). (2021). *Dune: Part One* [Film]. Legendary Pictures.

¹⁰² Lynch, D. (Director). (1984). *Dune* [Film]. Dino De Laurentiis Corporation

¹⁰³ Villeneuve, D. (Director). (2021). *Dune: Part One* [Film]. Legendary Pictures.

The Denis Villeneuve version stays, in general, truer to the original storyline by Frank Herbert, whereas David Lynch has taken several artistic liberties, changing many of the facts given to the readers in the book.¹⁰⁴ This means that many of the comparisons will focus on the ways in which the 1984 version differs from the original storyline.

5.1 Princess Irulan

One of the fey ways in which the 1984 version stayed truer to the book than the 2021 version is the inclusion of princess Irulan. At the beginning of each chapter of the book there is an excerpt from one of the books of Princess Irulan, the wife of Paul Atreides. These excerpts usually carry the form of a biography written about Paul Atreides by princess Irulan. David Lynch took this element from the book and adapted it for the big screen, in a narrating manner. At the very beginning and throughout the whole movie the voice of princess Irulan is giving the viewer additional information about the world of Dune.

In the 2021 version they have yet to introduce the character of Irulan, but that is not to say they do not use narration in any way. It is less prominent than in the older version, but it is most definitely there. Instead of Irulan the opening words are spoken by Chani, the concubine of Paul Atreides, who gives the viewer an inside look into the life of Fremen on Arrakis. In other parts of the 2021 version, we hear many different characters. The choice of multiple speakers may leave the viewer confused as to who is speaking.

5.2 The opening scenes

Each of the directors has opted for a different opening scene, both of which are very different from the book opening and give the movies each about twenty minutes of additional run time. These scenes are mostly based on information the reader receives in later parts of the book, but which would be difficult to add into conversations between characters and it is easier to show them to the viewer.

In the 1984 version, David Lynch begins the story by introducing the viewer to the Padishah Emperor Shaddam IV who in an argument with the Spacing guild gives away the plan, that will lead to the destruction of the house Atreides. The viewer learns that the planet Arrakis has been taken from the Harkonnens and given to the Atreides.

¹⁰⁴ HERBERT, Frank. *Dune*. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1965. 978-1-529-34785-2

There are several elements in this opening scene, which will be explored in other subchapters. One of them stands out however, and that is the fact that Emperor's Truthsayer, the Reverend Mother from the Bene Gesserit order, only learns of the existence of Paul Atreides at that very moment. This would not be possible in the original storyline. Not only is she a high-ranking member of the court and should thus be aware of the heir to one of the Great Houses, especially since it is the house, the Emperor is vary of. But even more so, because she is the Reverend Mother of the Bene Gesserit sisterhood. She should have been aware of Paul's existence because their whole breeding program, meant to produce the Kwisatz Haderach, depended on Lady Jessica bearing a girl.

In contrast to the formality of the Emperor's court, the 2021 opening gives the viewer an inside look into the life the Atreides family has led on their home planet Caladan. The opening scenes showcase Paul's training both at the hands of Gurney Halleck and his mother Jessica. The training Paul receives from his mother in the 2021 adaptation is similar to the one portrayed in the book and very different from the 1984 version, where Jessica only starts training Paul in the Bene Gesserit ways after the visit from the Reverend Mother.

5.3 The portrayal of houses Atreides and Harkonnen

The way the great houses Atreides and Harkonnen are portrayed in each adaptation understandably has a big impact on how the viewers perceive them. There are several differences in the way each of the directors had approached this particular topic. Denis Villeneuve chose to keep close to the spirit of the book in portraying the House Atreides as tragic heroes, showing them in the best light possible. Leto Atreides is shown as a family man, as a just ruler, who only wants peace and safety for his people and his family. To achieve the desired effect they mention that Leto never wanted to be a Duke, never wanted power and only accepted this position due to the sense of responsibility and would thus be okay if Paul decided not to take on the role of Duke.

The approach taken in the 2021 version shows the Emperor as the main villain of the story. Harkonnens are the ones who attack, but the way they are portrayed in the movie makes it seem as if they would not attack without direct orders from the Emperor. The main reason for this is the fact that in the 2021 version there is no mention of an ongoing feud between the houses Atreides and Harkonnen. Baron Harkonnen just wants to get Arrakis back. He does so mercilessly, but the director makes the viewers question whether the Harkonnens would have attacked without the imperial interference.

In the 2021 version the opening narration by Chani at the beginning of the movie tells the viewers that the house Harkonnen has been very cruel towards the native people of Arrakis, the Fremen. Compared to them the house Atreides seems to occupy the role of saviours to the natives of Arrakis, when they want to cooperate with the Fremen and honour their rights and their traditions.

In the adaptation by David Lynch, the viewer can see a clear influence of anticolonial thoughts. His approach to the portrayal of House Atreides is to paint them as power hungry. The Emperor is not afraid of Leto Atreides only because of his popularity with the Landsraad, but also because Leto is building an army. Army trained to be more powerful and deadlier than almost any other in the imperium. This makes it seem as if the house Atreides is no better than the rest of the Great houses.

Their portrayal as villains is supported by the costuming. The uniforms of house Atreides are similar in style, cut and colouring to those used by Germany in the second world war. Their most prominent feature is the symbol of house Atreides, the red hawk. The way it is displayed is very similar to the Reichsadler. A symbol used by the Nazi Germany.¹⁰⁵ German imagery could be a reference to the German colonial Empire. Imperial Germany in years prior to the first world war gained several colonies in Africa and Asia. They have subsequently lost these colonies to France and the British Empire.¹⁰⁶ This seems familiar to the way the house Atreides has gained Arrakis to then lose to the larger colonial power.

The animosity between the houses is also much more prominent in the 1984 movie. The feud between the houses supposedly going on for decades, with Paul's trainers naming the Harkonnens as the mortal enemies to House Atreides. The Harkonnens in general are portrayed as very violent and merciless, with several scenes showing them abusing and exploiting animals and humans alike. Their own animosity towards the House of Atreides is shown through the Baron. Who claims he wants all members of the House Atreides dead.

Even Paul Atreides is much more bloodthirsty in the 1984 adaptation. Where he balks at killing or hurting anyone and is seen mourning his father in the 2021 version, in the older movie he wants all the members of House Harkonnen to pay for what they did. This would be understandable, if he intended to do so based on strong emotions, instead he is shown as incapable of experiencing any emotions upon learning of his father's death. This general

¹⁰⁵ SANCHEZ, Cardona. *Německé armádní uniformy a výstroj*. Naše vojsko, 2017.

¹⁰⁶ STEINBACH, Daniel. *The End of Germany's Colonial Empire*. Historian, 134, 2017, pp. 30–33.

proclivity towards violence might be the reason why David Lynch decided to omit the fight between Paul and Jannis, a fremen warrior who challenged the stay of Paul and his mother within the Fremens siege and who was thus killed by Paul in a duel, as it would be redundant. In the original story this duel signifies a loss of innocence for Paul, and it carries similar meaning in the 2021 version, where Denis Villeneuve decided upon keeping the scene.

5.4 The palm trees and the terraforming project

One of the key differences between the two movies was the omitting of important ecological and anticolonial themes in the 1984 adaptations, concretely the symbolism of palm trees and the terraforming project. Although the approach to the theme differs slightly between the 2021 movie and the book version, Denis Villeneuve has mostly succeeded in getting the most important message across to the viewers.

The information given to the viewer about the palm trees mostly corresponds with the book version, that is the viewer learns, that the amount of water needed for maintaining the trees is equivalent to the amount of water necessary for sustaining one hundred grown men. However, they add one important thing that changes the whole meaning. In the book, the palm trees are a symbol of wealth unattainable by the natives and are therefore hated by them. In the 2021 movie, they claim the trees to be sacred, a symbol of hope for the Fremens.

This symbolism is later used again during the attack, where the Harkonnens reclaim the city of Arakeen and burn down the palm trees. Burning down the palm trees in this context would symbolize the end of hope for the Fremens. It would not make sense without the added context of them being sacred. Without it the burning could be viewed as a merciful gesture toward the native people of Arrakis, given the amount of water needed to sustain the trees.

Because of this little change, the symbol of the palm tree is no longer connected to anticolonialism, but to the ecology of Dune. In the 2021 version the palm trees are said to be a remnant from the time before the discovery of spice, when the colonizers wanted to terraform Arrakis, something the Fremens have been trying to achieve for centuries. Essentially it means changing Arrakis from a desert planet to one capable of sustaining vegetation. In this context the palm trees serve as proof that this project is not hopeless.

This is not the only mention of terraforming in the 2021 movie. The other comes when the characters hide in one of the many old botanical testing stations. These stations date back to the time Arrakis was first discovered and were a place for scientists to test different ways of

terraforming Arrakis. In this instance the anticolonial theme is rather clear. Although the original intention of the colonizers was good, they abandoned the project the moment they discovered melange and its properties, thus sacrificing a project that would improve the lives of the natives in favour of their own enrichment.

5.5 The Spacing Guild

There are also several differences in how the different adaptations of Dune decided to portray the Spacing Guild. In the book the Spacing Guild is introduced as an impartial party. They transport both of the opposing forces without giving any an advantage. Their only true interest is the continuation of the spice production, because without it the Spacing Guild would not exist. In the 2021 movie adaptation they assume a similar role, however in a much smaller capacity, as the Spacing Guild does not have a lot of screentime.

In the 1984 movie adaptation by David Lynch, the Spacing Guild is introduced to the viewer in the opening scene, where the representative of the Guild clearly holds power over the Emperor himself. They are shown to have a more proactive role within the story as they demand the death of Paul Atreides, who they see as a thread to the production of spice. The navigators also seem to be fully transformed after the continuous use of melange and are made to look almost wormlike. This is in direct contrast with the other melange users who seem to be almost wholly unaffected by the spice, there are some slight changes in their appearance such as a blue tinge to their eyes, but nothing as extreme.

One other difference can be seen in the way the Spacing Guild can travel through space. In the 1984 adaptations it is said that the navigators are capable of folding space in a way that allows them to travel vast distances within the universe, whilst not moving. This is very different to the way space travel and the Spacing Guild itself were described in the books. In the book the only advantage the navigators gain from using spice is the ability to compute distances and routes, which allows them to effectively pilot their large fleets of ships through the universe.

Conclusion

The main aim of this work was to verify the existence of anticolonial themes within the story of Dune and explore the ways in which these themes are expressed. Based on the analysis of the story it was evident that anticolonial themes are present throughout the story and are expressed in many different ways.

The author of the original storyline, Frank Herbert, took inspiration from many important events from the colonial era. From the general topics such as the relationship between the colonisers and the colonies, to the more specific such as taking inspiration from important historical figures and organisations. Besides taking inspiration from historical events, Frank Herbert also often used symbolism to convey additional meaning to the reader, one that could carry a different meaning for each reader, as shown by the example of different meanings behind the palm trees.

One of the objectives of this work was also the comparison of the two movie adaptations of Dune. There were many differences between the two movies, but what was unexpected was the difference in the overall message. The 2021 adaptation puts all the blame on the shoulders of the emperor and paints the Atreides man as tragic heroes. Even the Harkonnens are painted only as tools in the plans of the Empire. It cannot be said that the 2021 adaptation has lost all anticolonial themes, but they seem to be less punctuated. In direct contrast to the approach taken by Villeneuve the 1984 adaptation does not have a hero, that would be wholly good. The Emperor, the Harkonnens and even the Atreides are shown in an unfavourable light. This makes the anticolonial message more preeminent, since all the colonisers are portrayed as power-hungry and evil.

It cannot be said that one adaptation is significantly better than the other or that the messages they carry are less important. They are simply different retellings of the same story influenced by the era in which they were made.

The lesser portrayal of anticolonial themes in the 2021 version does not mean that the theme of anticolonialism has lost on significance or is somehow less important in the society of today. Quite the opposite. The 2021 movie portrays the colonisers as humans, with their own ambitions and goals. Which is in alliance with the general narrative that the history of our world was not black and white, with clear distinctions between the heroes and the villains. It shows that even good people can do bad things for the right reasons.

This distinction better than anything else shows how the topic of anticolonialism did not disappear but has evolved through the decades to better fit the view and opinions of the society today.

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