

The Architect of Prophecy: A Literary Analysis of Lady Jessica's Religious Engineering in the *Dune: Part Two* Screenplay

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi mekanisme "Rekayasa Relijius" yang dijalankan oleh Lady Jessica dalam naskah film *Dune: Part Two* karya Denis Villeneuve dan Jon Spaihts. Sementara narasi sering kali berfokus pada perjalanan Paul Atreides sebagai "Lisan al-Gaib," penelitian ini berargumen bahwa status mesianiknya adalah konstruksi politik yang dikalkulasi secara matang oleh Lady Jessica. Menggunakan analisis sastra kualitatif dengan fokus pada dramaturgi politik dan analisis wacana, studi ini memeriksa adegan-adegan kunci dan dialog yang mengungkapkan bagaimana Jessica membajak spiritualitas pribumi Fremen untuk mengamankan hegemoni House Atreides. Temuan penelitian mengidentifikasi empat pilar strategis utama: penggunaan ritual sebagai alat legitimasi spiritual, kolaborasi strategis dengan putri yang dikandungnya (Alia) sebagai "mitra koalisi," eksploitasi geopolitik terhadap fundamentalisme wilayah Selatan, dan manipulasi bias konfirmasi psikologis pada kepemimpinan lokal. Lebih jauh, penelitian ini menyoroti antitesis yang diberikan oleh karakter Chani, yang resistensinya menelanjangi "Missionaria Protectiva" sebagai bentuk kekerasan epistemik kolonial. Akhirnya, analisis ini menyimpulkan bahwa agama dalam semesta *Dune* berfungsi sebagai senjata temuan asing, di mana "Perang Suci" bukanlah kebangkitan agama yang spontan, melainkan penghancuran agensi pribumi yang terkendali demi kelangsungan hidup politik.

Kata Kunci: Rekayasa religius; Lady Jessica; *Dune: Part Two*; dinamika kekuasaan; mitos mesianik; manipulasi sosial

Abstract

This research explores the mechanisms of "Religious Engineering" executed by Lady Jessica in the screenplay of *Dune: Part Two* by Denis Villeneuve and Jon Spaihts. While the narrative often focuses on Paul Atreides' journey as the "Lisan al-Gaib," this study posits that his messianic status is a calculated political construct orchestrated by Lady Jessica. Utilizing a qualitative literary analysis with a focus on political dramaturgy and discourse analysis, the study examines key scenes and dialogues that reveal how Jessica hijacks indigenous Fremen spirituality to secure the hegemony of House Atreides. The findings identify four primary strategic pillars: the utilization of ritual as a tool for spiritual legitimacy, the strategic collaboration with her unborn daughter (Alia) as a "coalition partner," the geopolitical exploitation of Southern fundamentalism, and the manipulation of psychological confirmation bias in local leadership. Furthermore, this research highlights the antithesis provided by the character Chani, whose resistance exposes the "Missionaria Protectiva" as a form of colonial epistemic violence. Ultimately, this analysis concludes that religion in the *Dune* universe serves as a weaponized alien invention, where the "Holy War" is not a spontaneous religious awakening, but a controlled demolition of indigenous agency designed for political survival.

Keywords: Religious engineering; Lady Jessica; *Dune: Part Two*; power dynamics; messianic myths; Social Manipulation

INTRODUCTION

Denis Villeneuve's cinematic adaptation of *Dune: Part Two* (2024) has emerged as a significant global cultural phenomenon, not only due to its massive commercial success but also because of its bold radical reinterpretation of Frank Herbert's classic science fiction source material. When compared to David Lynch's earlier adaptation in 1984, which tended to condense the novel's esoteric elements into a conventional linear heroic tale, the

screenplay written by Villeneuve and Jon Spaihts (2024) offers a deconstructive approach that is far darker and more political. This script rejects the romanticization of the "hero's journey" and instead reinforces Herbert's (1965) original warning regarding the dangers of charismatic leaders. This shift in narrative tone is crucial, as the story transitions from a mere tale of survival in the deserts of Arrakis into a complex and unsettling study of religious fanaticism and political domination. In the landscape of contemporary cinema, this film successfully

visualizes how myths are not born in a vacuum but are constructed through calculated mechanisms of power.

In the context of this ambitious adaptation, there is a fundamental deviation in character emphasis, particularly concerning the construction of the "savior" or "messianic figure." The primary academic problem focused on in this research is the dominant tendency in previous literary and film studies to place Paul Atreides as the sole center of this theological narrative—whether as a tragic hero or as an anti-hero trapped by the destiny of his visions. As a result of this overly central focus on Paul, the agency of the character Lady Jessica is often marginalized and her significance reduced to merely that of a supportive maternal figure or a passive follower of her son's destiny. However, a close reading of the *Dune: Part Two* film script reveals the opposite fact: Paul's "divinity" is not a metaphysical phenomenon occurring naturally or a mere divine miracle, but rather a product of social construction designed consciously and systematically. This interpretative gap becomes an urgent research problem to address, considering that the film script explicitly positions Lady Jessica not as a follower, but as the principal architect behind the scenes. Therefore, there is an academic urgency to dissect how this script visualizes the transformation of Jessica's role from a protective mother into a master political manipulator who utilizes religious dogma as a strategic weapon.

To resolve this problem, this research offers the critical insight that all of Lady Jessica's actions must be read through the lens of "Religious Engineering." Unlike Paul, who initially rejects the role of the messiah due to terrifying visions of a holy war, Jessica in Villeneuve's script is depicted as proactively and aggressively targeting specific demographics to plant the seeds of this myth. The problem-solving plan in this research will be executed through a method of in-depth textual analysis of the official screenplay of *Dune: Part Two* by Villeneuve and Spaihts (2024). The author will isolate and dissect key dialogues, stage directions, and inter-character interactions that indicate Jessica's intentionality. As crucial primary data, the analysis will rely on specific scenes, such as Jessica's dialogue on page 88 of the script, where she explicitly states her intention to exploit "millions of fundamentalists" in the Southern region of Arrakis (Villeneuve & Spaihts, 2024, p. 88). Through this textual evidence, the analysis will focus on the operational mechanism of how Jessica converts the abstract myth of the *Missionaria Protectiva* into tangible political capital in the form of a fanatical military force ready to die.

This research is formulated with three interrelated main objectives. First, this research aims to analyze Lady Jessica's rhetorical and performative strategies in the *Dune: Part Two* script to prove the thesis

that the "Lisan al-Gaib" phenomenon is a result of political fabrication (manufactured divinity). Second, this research will explain how Religious Engineering is used not merely for religious propagation, but as a survival tool and an instrument of hegemonic power for the beleaguered House Atreides. Third, this research seeks to uncover the implicit critique embedded in Villeneuve's script regarding the intersection of religious fundamentalism and charismatic female leadership, where the narrative of emancipation for one elite group (Atreides) is ironically achieved through the manipulation of the beliefs of an indigenous group (Fremen).

To strengthen the analysis, the theoretical framework used to dissect this problem is rooted in the concepts of Political Theology and Cultural Hegemony. Specifically, the concept of *Missionaria Protectiva* in the *Dune* universe—namely the method of implanting superstition by the Bene Gesserit order in primitive societies—will be analyzed using the perspective of Cultural Hegemony proposed by Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci (1971) defines hegemony as a form of domination by one social group over another that is not solely carried out through physical violence (coercion), but through intellectual and moral agreement (consent) constructed subtly. In this context, Jessica creates the "consent" of the Fremen to be led by Paul by manipulating common sense or beliefs already ingrained in their culture. Religion, in this perspective, functions as the most effective technology of mass control because it binds its subjects from within their own inner selves. Furthermore, the character of Lady Jessica will also be dissected using the perspective of Female Political Agency within a patriarchal structure using a Machiavellian approach (Machiavelli, 2005). This emphasizes that Jessica's leadership does not operate through hard power or physical violence like the characters Stilgar or Rabban Harkonnen, but through soft power: the ability to shape the preferences and behaviors of others through attraction, charisma, and the co-optation of sacred values. Through the integration of these theories, the research is expected to provide a significant new contribution to understanding the complexity of female character adaptation in contemporary science fiction scripts, while simultaneously proving that in the *Dune: Part Two* universe, theology is the continuation of politics by other means.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative design with a literary criticism approach, selected due to the study's primary focus on the interpretive understanding of the abstract and sociological phenomenon of "Religious Engineering," rather than the measurement of numerical data. Specifically, the operational method utilized is Textual

Analysis. This method allows the researcher to dissect the structural meaning behind dialogue, narrative, and visual cues written in the screenplay to dismantle the strategies of hegemony and political maneuvers concealed within character interactions. This approach is highly relevant for elucidating how language and religious symbols are used as instruments of power within a narrative work.

The material object focused on in this research is the political-religious dynamics surrounding the character, Lady Jessica. The primary data source serving as the basis of analysis is the official screenplay of *Dune: Part Two* written by Denis Villeneuve and Jon Spaihts (2024). The use of the original screenplay as the main data source rather than merely referring to the film viewing is crucial in this research. This is because the text provides precise verbal data as well as stage directions that describe the internal intentions and motivations of characters which may not be fully captured visually on screen. Additionally, secondary data sources are obtained from reference books and academic journals relevant to Antonio Gramsci's theory of Cultural Hegemony, Political Theology, and science fiction adaptation studies to strengthen the analytical foundation.

The data collection and analysis process is conducted through a systematic Close Reading technique. The researcher begins with a comprehensive reading to grasp the narrative context, followed by a data inventory by isolating dialogues and scenes that specifically display the manipulation of the Water of Life ritual and Jessica's persuasive rhetoric toward the fundamentalists. The classified data is then analyzed in a descriptive-interpretive manner through the lens of the established theories. In this stage, data is not only described but interpreted to answer why Jessica employs specific discursive strategies. The analysis is connected to the concept of creating 'consent' in Gramsci's (1971) theory and Machiavelli's (2005) political pragmatism, to demonstrate that every spiritual action in the script possesses a calculated political charge.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter outlines the primary research findings and provides an in-depth discussion regarding the operational mechanisms of Religious Engineering executed by Lady Jessica in the *Dune: Part Two* screenplay. To substantiate the thesis that Paul Atreides' "divinity" is a product of political construction, the discussion within this chapter is mapped into five interconnected analytical segments. First, the analysis focuses on the aspect of ritual dramaturgy, specifically how Jessica utilizes the Water of Life moment to secure spiritual authority. Second, the discussion highlights the strategic collaboration between Jessica and her fetus (The Unborn) as a source of

fabricated revelation. Third, the analysis moves to the application of the geopolitics of faith strategy, wherein Jessica calculatively targets the fundamentalists in the Southern region of Arrakis. Finally, this chapter dissects the psychological impact of such engineering through the case study of confirmation bias in the character Stilgar, while also highlighting the ethical contradictions voiced by Chani as the antithesis to the constructed messianic narrative.

Ritual Dramaturgy

Political Transformation through the Water of Life In the intricate tapestry of *Dune*, Lady Jessica embarks on a pivotal journey of transformation that is not merely personal but fundamentally political. Her journey reaches a critical juncture during the impactful Water of Life ritual, where she seizes spiritual authority a move laden with profound implications. This sequence, particularly in Scenes 55-60, is more than a simple religious observance; it unfolds as a carefully choreographed performance of political theater, artfully designed to lend legitimacy to what is ultimately an alien power. The screenplay, crafted by Denis Villeneuve and Jon Spaihts in 2024, artfully captures Jessica's acute awareness of the stakes involved. She understands that to truly wield influence over the Fremen people, she must undergo a symbolic "death" as an outsider, followed by a rebirth as their revered figurehead.

The transformation within Jessica becomes palpably evident in the moments following the ritual. She emerges from the experience with newfound certainty, shedding her previously measured and cautious speech in favor of an assertive declaration of authority. This metamorphosis is not only personal; it serves a strategic purpose. Immediately, she leverages her elevated status to authenticate Paul's leadership, signaling a united front in their quest for power. As seen in Scene 61, her dialogue resonates with a potent mix of reverence and manipulation as she interprets ancestral memories to bolster her son's claim to greatness:

"JESSICA (to Paul, after waking) 'They are with us now... The past is clear. I see the path.'

PAUL 'What do they say?'

'JESSICA 'That you are the one. The Kwisatz Haderach. We must prepare the way.'"

This exchange is rich with political significance, illustrating how Jessica's mystical experiences are not just ephemeral visions; they are transformed into actionable political directives. By framing her revelations as endorsements from ancestral spirits, she effectively

bestows legitimacy upon Paul's aspirations as the rightful leader of the Atrides. Her self-assertion and the strategic use of spiritual authority chart a path for their ascension, confirming that in the realm of power, the ritualistic and the political are inextricably linked. Thus, through this complex interplay of religion and politics, Jessica not only constructs her son's divine narrative but also navigates the treacherous waters of leadership among the Fremen, asserting her role as a transformative agent in a tumultuous desert landscape.

Strategic Collaboration with The Unborn

Revelation as Internal Consensus One of the most radical departures in Villeneuve's screenplay is the visualization of the internal dyad between Lady Jessica and her unborn daughter, Alia. This analysis posits that the fetus functions not merely as a passive recipient of maternal affection, but as an active "coalition partner" within a shared strategic framework. The screenplay redefines the concept of the "Pre-Born" a fetus awakened to full consciousness by portraying Alia as a co-conspirator. Throughout the narrative, Jessica's soliloquies cease to be private musing; they transform into high-level strategy meetings conducted via telepathic link. This dynamic suggests a form of polyphonic agency, where the decisions made by Jessica are actually the result of an internal consensus between her Bene Gesserit training and the ancestral ruthlessness accessed through Alia.

The Genesis of the Alliance (Scene 61) The textual evidence for this collaboration appears immediately after the Water of Life ritual. In Scene 61, moments after surviving the lethal poison, Jessica does not seek to comfort her terrified son. Instead, she immediately weaponizes the unborn child to validate her political agenda. When Paul confronts her about the ritual, Jessica shifts the focus to the "third person" in the room:

PAUL You're pregnant.

JESSICA (Calm, touching her belly) She is awake. She holds the memories of all the Reverend Mothers who came before.

PAUL What does she say?

JESSICA She believes in you, Paul.

In this dialogue, Jessica uses the fetus as a moral lever. By claiming that the unborn sister "believes" in him, Jessica creates a 2-against-1 dynamic, isolating Paul and framing his skepticism as a betrayal of his vulnerable sister. This is the moment the "coalition" is officially formed to corner Paul into acceptance.

The Strategy Meeting (Scene 74) As the narrative progresses to the Southern campaign, the collaboration evolves from emotional manipulation to tactical planning.

In Scene 74, Jessica engages in critical consultation with her womb regarding the resistance they face. Her whispered admission,

"He is afraid of the power... He refuses to see what must be done," serves as a tactical report to her partner. In response, the screenplay explicitly gives agency to the fetus through a Voice Over (V.O.): "He needs time, Mother. But the people... the people are ready."

This dialogue underscores a dualistic approach to power. Alia, despite being unborn, displays a shrewd understanding of populist dynamics, advising Jessica to bypass Paul's consent and appeal directly to the masses. The subsequent line, "We will nudge them," is the definitive verbal evidence of social engineering. The use of the plural pronoun "We" signifies a calculated joint intention. It confirms that the religious radicalization of the Fremen is not a divine directive, but a rational strategy agreed upon by this maternal-fetal coalition.

The Final complicity (Scene 117) Finally, the screenplay provides evidence that this collaboration extends to the bloody consequences of their engineering. In the film's climax at Scene 117 (Page 119), as the galaxy plunges into chaos, the script depicts Jessica observing the violence not with horror, but with the detached satisfaction of a strategist reporting to her co-commander:

ON JESSICA, LOOKING AT THEM FROM A BALCONY, IN THE WIND. ALIA (O.C.) What is happening mother? JESSICA Your brother attacks the Great Houses. The Holy War begins.

In this chilling exchange, Jessica does not shield her unborn child from the reality of war; she validates it. The factual, emotionless delivery of "The Holy War begins" confirms that both entities accept mass violence as a necessary overhead for their political survival. Thus, the relationship between Jessica and the Unborn evolves beyond a biological connection into a symbiotic political entity. They operate as a singular unit of ambition, proving that the "Messiah" was not born, but meticulously drafted by a committee of two.

The Geopolitics of Faith: Exploiting Southern Fundamentalism

In the intricate interplay of power and belief, Lady Jessica's strategic mapping of Arrakis serves as an insightful lens through which we can examine the "Geopolitics of Faith." The screenplay's spatial analysis reveals her methodical approach to understanding the

various factions on the planet, treating religious demographics as military assets. Initially, she recognizes that the Northern Fremen, marked by the pragmatic realism of leaders like Chani, are unlikely to be easily radicalized. They view the struggle against Harkonnens as a territorial liberation, not a cosmic destiny. Thus, Jessica astutely pivots her attention southward, enticed by the potential of mobilizing the deeply faithful and zealous Southern fundamentalists who view the conflict through an eschatological lens.

The Pivot to Radicalization (Scene 91) This strategic shift is notably anchored in Scene 91 (Page 88), which stands out as the fulcrum of her plan. In this dialogue, Jessica's words are laden with both urgency and cold pragmatism: "Our task in the North is nearly done. They believe in Paul. Now we go South." Paul's retort, "The South is uninhabitable," reflects a rational hesitation toward the region's hostility. However, Jessica's vehement declaration, "There are millions of fundamentalists there. They will protect him when he comes," lays bare a deeper understanding of faith as a conduit for power.

Here, the terms "Task" and "Fundamentalists" resonate with chilling clarity. Jessica does not view the South as a place of refuge, but as a recruitment ground. Her focus is unmistakably on the numbers—"millions" and their potential for "unwavering loyalty." This is a calculated exploitation of faith; the fervent beliefs and sacred narratives held by these Southerners are not regarded with reverence but are instead viewed through a tactical lens as human resources to be expended in war.

The Grassroots Campaign (Scene 70) Furthermore, the screenplay provides visual evidence of how Jessica operationalizes this geopolitical strategy through what can be termed a "grassroots campaign of miracles." She does not merely wait for the Southerners to come to her; she actively constructs a performative holiness. In Scene 70, the script describes Jessica traveling not as a refugee, but as a living icon:

EXT. DESERT - DAY Jessica travels in a palanquin carried by Fremen devoted. She looks weak, but her eyes are sharp. She whispers to the pilgrims who flock to touch her robes.

This visual description is crucial. By adopting the aesthetics of a saint—secluded in a palanquin, appearing frail yet spiritually potent—Jessica engages in performative divinity. She creates a tangible "religious experience" for the fundamentalists. Every whisper and every touch is a calculated move to solidify the rumor of the mother of the Lisan al-Gaib. She weaponizes her own physical presence to stoke the fires of Southern fanaticism,

effectively turning the journey South into a traveling propaganda show.

Ignoring the Apocalypse (Scene 82) The ruthlessness of this geopolitical maneuver is further highlighted by Jessica's disregard for the consequences of unleashing the South. In Scene 82, Paul explicitly warns of the danger emanating from that region:

PAUL If I go South, all my visions lead to war. Billions of dead bodies. Spreading across the universe like unquenchable fire.

Paul identifies the South as the trigger for a galactic genocide. Yet, Jessica persists. Her insistence on "going South" despite this apocalyptic forecast demonstrates that within her geopolitical calculus, the "Billions of dead bodies" are an acceptable price for the restoration of House Atreides. The South represents the "nuclear option" of religious warfare, and Jessica is the hand hovering over the button.

Conclusion of the Section the dynamics playing out in the screenplay reflect a disheartening manifestation of theological manipulation. The sacred convictions of the Southern subgroup are weaponized to serve the ends of the political elite. In such a framework, the "Green Paradise" promised to the Southerners is merely a carrot on a stick to lead them into a slaughter. By understanding the Southern fundamentalists merely as pawns in a larger geopolitical game, Jessica embodies a stark and troubling reality where faith is not revered but co-opted. This narrative arc confirms that the "Holy War" in *Dune: Part Two* is not a spontaneous combustion of religious fervor, but a controlled demolition engineered by a woman who knew exactly where to place the explosives: in the hearts of the fundamentalist South.

The Mechanism of Confirmation Bias: The Case Study of Stilgar

The dynamics of human cognition often reveal fascinating patterns of thought, particularly regarding the phenomenon of confirmation bias. This psychological mechanism, which compels individuals to favor information that corroborates their preexisting beliefs while discarding contradictory evidence, finds its most striking manifestation in the character arc of Stilgar. In the context of *Dune: Part Two*, Stilgar is not merely a passive follower; he serves as the primary incubator for the viral narrative engineered by Lady Jessica. Her strategic manipulation of events illustrates how a "messianic architect" can exploit the cognitive vulnerabilities of a key figure to steer an entire culture toward radicalization.

The Unfalsifiable Prophecy (Scene 85) Stilgar, a respected leader of the Fremen, serves as a vital conduit

for the myths Jessica has embedded within the collective psyche. His psychological transformation is best exemplified in Scene 85, a moment that serves as a textbook case of a "Self-Sealing Argument"—a belief system constructed in such a way that no evidence can ever refute it.

In this scene, Paul attempts to dismantle the myth by explicitly denying his divinity. To a rational observer, a direct denial from the "prophet" himself should be sufficient to shatter the illusion. However, Stilgar's cognitive framework has been so thoroughly rewired by the Bene Gesserit narrative that he reinterprets this denial as proof of the prophecy's validity:

PAUL, I am not the Messiah! I am just a man fighting for his family!

STILGAR (Whispering to the fundamentalists) The Mahdi is too humble to say he is the Mahdi. even more reason to believe he is the One!

This recontextualization is the crux of Jessica's engineering success. She has created a closed loop of reasoning: if Paul performs a miracle, he is the Messiah; if Paul denies he is the Messiah, he is "humble," which also proves he is the Messiah. By removing the possibility of falsifiability, Jessica ensures that Paul is trapped. He loses his agency to define his own identity because Stilgar's confirmation bias immediately sanitizes any deviation from the script.

The Architect's Satisfaction (Scene 85) The screenplay juxtaposes Stilgar's fanaticism with Jessica's cold, analytical observation. Immediately following Stilgar's whisper, the script directs our attention to Jessica:

JESSICA (Watching from a distance, smiling faintly) It takes hold. The root is deep.

The phrase "It takes hold" resonates with the satisfaction of a master architect witnessing her design withstand a stress test. Jessica realizes that she no longer needs to actively push the narrative; the "root" (the Missionaria Protectiva) has penetrated deeply enough that the host (Stilgar) will now defend the parasite (the myth) on his own accord. She has successfully transitioned from being the broadcaster of the myth to becoming its beneficiary.

The Infection of Logic The implications of this exchange run deeper than mere plot progression; they comment on the psychology of radicalization. Jessica's manipulation reflects a dual-layered process: first, planting the seed of the "Lisan al-Gaib" in the fertile ground of Southern fundamentalism, and second, nurturing the "complex reciprocity" where leaders like

Stilgar validate their own authority by validating the Messiah.

In essence, the mechanism of confirmation bias illustrated through Stilgar serves as a sharp commentary on the fragility of truth in the face of manufactured faith. Jessica has constructed an intricate web of logic where rejection of the prophecy becomes yet another thread that reinforces its validity. As she watches from the shadows, she operates not as a spiritual guide, but as a warden of perception, effectively locking the Fremen inside a prison of their own belief—a prison where the only key is a Holy War.

The Antithesis of Truth: The Contradiction of Jessica vs. Chani

In the intricate tapestry of the screenplay, the juxtaposition of Lady Jessica and Chani serves as a compelling exploration of narrative authenticity versus manufactured myth. While Jessica represents the "Architect of Divinity," Chani embodies the "Voice of Material Reality." Their conflict is not merely personal; it is an epistemological war over the soul of the Fremen people. This dynamic reaches its zenith in Scene 102, where Chani strips away the veneer of benevolence surrounding Jessica's intentions, exposing the structural violence inherent in the Missionaria Protectiva.

Deconstructing the Colonial Script (Scene 102) The screenplay positions Chani as the only character capable of "reading" the prophecy as a political document rather than a sacred text. In Scene 102, her confrontation with Paul serves as a definitive deconstruction of Jessica's religious engineering:

CHANI This prophecy is how they enslave us! It's not our story, Paul. It's something they wrote for us so we would obey!

Chani's line resonates with a profound sense of historical betrayal. By using the verb "wrote," she highlights the artificiality of the Fremen faith. She unearths the underlying mechanism of control: the prophecy is an "alien invention" designed to bind a people to a predetermined fate that serves the interests of the Atreides. This is a manifestation of Epistemic Violence, where the indigenous narrative is erased and replaced by a colonial script of messianism.

The Divergence of Victory and Power The dialogue further highlights the moral chasm between Jessica's pragmatic "Soft Power" and Chani's pursuit of true autonomy. When Paul defends his mother's actions, the screenplay reveals the self-serving nature of the Atreides' "benevolence":

PAUL My mother sees a path to victory.
CHANI She sees a path to power. For you. Not for us.

This retort shifts the discussion from abstract notions of destiny to the concrete reality of power inequities. Chani's assertion underscores the narrowing of Jessica's vision; for Jessica, the Fremen are not a people to be liberated, but a lever to be pulled. The "victory" Jessica seeks is the restoration of her house's hegemony, whereas the "victory" Chani seeks is the freedom from all masters—including the Atreides.

The Triumph of the Lie (Scene 112) The tragedy of this contradiction is finalized in Scene 112, during the Council of Leaders. As Jessica's engineering takes full hold of the crowd, Chani's voice is drowned out by the fanatical roar of the fundamentalists. The script describes the visual contrast:

CHANI stands alone, watching the frenzy. She sees the madness in their eyes. She looks at JESSICA, who stands behind Paul like a shadow. Jessica's face is a mask of triumph.

This stage direction confirms that the Missionaria Protectiva has succeeded in its primary goal: the erasure of indigenous agency. Chani's insight lays bare the subjugation masked as salvation. Jessica, by co-opting Fremen spirituality, has enacted a form of spiritual colonization that proves more effective than any Harkonnen bombardment.

this dialogue cements the thesis of this research. Within the universe of Villeneuve's screenplay, religion is presented as an asymmetric weapon. Chani's role as the antithesis to Jessica serves to remind the audience that the "Lisan al-Gaib" is a narrative of compliance, not liberation. Through this lens, the screenplay enriches its exploration of truth and deception, illustrating that in a world where words possess the capacity to both unite and divide, the most dangerous words are the ones written by a "mother" to enslave a nation in the name of her son's survival.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Denis Villeneuve's *Dune: Part Two* screenplay confirms that the ascension of Paul Atreides to messianic status is not a matter of divine providence or mystical destiny, but rather the result of a meticulously executed campaign of Religious Engineering spearheaded by Lady Jessica. Through a systematic deconstruction of the script's dialogues and stage directions, this study has demonstrated that Jessica functions as the primary architect of a "manufactured divinity." By hijacking the

indigenous spiritual infrastructure of the Fremen, she successfully converted ancient Bene Gesserit myths—the Missionaria Protectiva—into tangible political and military hegemony for House Atreides.

This research has highlighted four pivotal mechanisms of Jessica's strategy. First, the Dramaturgy of Ritual, where the Water of Life was utilized to seize spiritual authority. Second, the Symbiotic Collaboration with her unborn daughter, Alia, which transformed maternal instinct into a cold-blooded political partnership. Third, the Geopolitical Exploitation of Southern fundamentalism, where Jessica treated religious devotion as war logistics. And fourth, the cultivation of Confirmation Bias in leaders like Stilgar, creating a closed loop of logic that rendered Paul's divinity unfalsifiable.

The tragedy of the screenplay lies in the successful erasure of indigenous agency. While Chani serves as the vital antithesis to Jessica's narrative, her voice of reason is ultimately drowned out by the fanatical fervor Jessica has ignited. Through this lens, the screenplay serves as a chilling commentary on the dangers of Theocratic Absolutism and the weaponization of faith. Jessica's "victory" is a pyrrhic one; while she secures the survival of her bloodline, she does so at the cost of a galactic Holy War, proving that in the pursuit of power, the most effective weapon is not the blade, but the meticulously crafted lie. Ultimately, *Dune: Part Two* reminds us that when religion is used as a tool of governance, the sacred is sacrificed on the altar of political survival.

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