

RECONSTRUCTING THE CHOSEN ONE ARCHETYPE IN FRANK HERBERT'S *DUNE*: A JUNGIAN READING OF COLLECTIVE BELIEF AND INDIVIDUATION

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Abstract

This study explores the archetype of the Chosen One in Frank Herbert's *Dune* through Carl Jung's concepts of archetype and individuation. While previous studies have largely focused on Paul Atreides as a heroic or messianic figure, they have given limited attention to how his identity is constructed through collective belief and how this process affects individuation. Using a qualitative approach and textual analysis, this study focused on the development of Paul Atreides as a messianic figure shaped not only by internal transformation but also by myths, prophecies, and collective belief within the narrative. The findings reveal that Paul's position as the Chosen One emerges through the influence of the 'Bene Gesserit', the expectations of the Fremen, and the continuous interpretation of his actions within a prophetic framework. This construction also serves as a story engine, driving the story and shaping the novel's ideological dimension of power. The study also finds that Paul's individuation does not develop according to Jung's ideal model, as his identity becomes increasingly shaped by collective expectations rather than personal integration. These findings suggest that Jungian literary criticism may benefit from greater attention to the role of collective belief in shaping archetypal identity and disrupting individuation. Through the main character, Frank Herbert presents a critique of messianism and the dangers of placing excessive faith in a savior figure.

Keywords: *archetype; character development; collective belief; the chosen one*

1. Introduction

The concept of archetype occupies a significant position in literary studies because it offers a framework for understanding recurring patterns, symbols, and character types that transcend individual texts, cultures, and historical periods. Among these recurring patterns, the Chosen One archetype is among the most enduring and influential archetypes, particularly in fantasy and science fiction narratives. According to Jung (1969), archetypes are primordial images and universal patterns embedded within the collective unconscious that shape human perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of the world. Building upon Jungian and post-Jungian perspectives, archetypal criticism has emerged as a major approach in literary scholarship for examining recurring symbols, character configurations, and narrative structures across diverse literary works. This critical framework enables scholars to explore how archetypal patterns operate within texts, reveal shared cultural and psychological meanings, and contribute to the construction of literary significance.

Archetypal criticism remains a significant approach in literary studies because it explores recurring symbolic patterns, characters, and narratives that recur across cultures and literary traditions (Gijo & George, 2021). Recent scholarship, however, suggests that the approach is frequently oversimplified through the repetitive identification of archetypal figures without sufficient attention to its broader theoretical and methodological dimensions (Jamshidi R, Ghasemipour G, & Abshirini A, 2023). This indicates the continuing relevance of archetypal criticism while underscoring the need for more focused, theoretically grounded analyses.

Among the many archetypes discussed in literary studies, the Chosen One archetype remains one of the most recognizable figures in fantasy and science fiction narratives. Literature plays an important role in shaping both individual and collective identities by providing narratives through which people understand themselves and their social environment (Altun, 2023). One recurring narrative pattern through which these issues are explored is the archetype of the Chosen One. In fantasy literature and imaginary settings, the Chosen One symbolizes an individual selected by prophecy, fate, or a specific quest (Wisniewski, 2019). The archetype is commonly associated with transformation, leadership, and the fulfillment of a larger purpose (Wisniewski, 2019; Muştak, 2025). Studies of hero narratives similarly emphasize the role of exceptional individuals who undergo psychological or spiritual transformation while pursuing goals that extend beyond personal interests (Campbell, 1988). Recent discussions of identity formation further suggest that exemplary figures and social expectations play an important role in shaping individual self-understanding (Klimstra et al., 2023). Closely related to this idea is messianism, which often emerges as a collective socio-religious expectation centered on a figure believed to bring renewal, salvation, or significant social change to a community (Pace, 2007). Because of these characteristics, the archetype of the Chosen One is frequently associated with heroic journeys, prophetic expectations, and messianic leadership. Harry Potter by J. K. Rowling has frequently been interpreted as a Chosen One narrative (Shiong & Wang, 2022).

One of the most influential examples of the Chosen One archetype is *Dune* (1965), a science fiction novel by Frank Herbert. Widely regarded as a landmark work of science fiction, *Dune* has influenced numerous later works, including *Star Wars*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Alien*, and *Mad Max*. The novel follows Paul Atreides, a young nobleman whose arrival on the desert planet Arrakis gradually leads many people to believe that he is the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy. Unlike many conventional Chosen One narratives, however, *Dune* presents a more complex portrayal of the archetype. Paul's status as a savior figure is not established solely through destiny or personal qualities but is also shaped by myths, prophecies, and collective belief systems already embedded within Fremen society. Through this portrayal, Herbert raises broader questions about leadership, legitimacy, belief, and the relationship between individuals and the social structures that surround them.

Recent scholarship has examined *Dune* from a variety of perspectives, including gender, technology, politics, religion, adaptation, and heroism (Dridi, 2022; Immerwahr, 2022; Dewandaru, 2025). These studies demonstrate the richness of Herbert's novel and highlight its continuing relevance in literary scholarship. However, previous studies have primarily focused on issues such as ideology, power, adaptation, and heroic representation. Existing studies treat Paul primarily as an outcome of prophecy rather than examining prophecy as a mechanism of identity construction. Existing scholarship has also tended to interpret Paul Atreides through heroic or leadership frameworks rather than examining how his authority emerges through collective belief. Consequently, limited attention has been

devoted to understanding how Paul's messianic identity is socially constructed through prophecy, myth, and shared expectations within Fremmen society. Likewise, the relationship between this process and Jung's concept of individuation remains underexplored. This omission is significant because it overlooks the possibility that archetypal identities are shaped not only by internal psychological development but also by external social and ideological forces.

Therefore, this study investigates the construction of the Chosen One archetype in Frank Herbert's *Dune*, its narrative and ideological functions, and its implications for Jungian individuation. Theoretically, this study contributes to Jungian literary criticism by extending discussions of individuation beyond individual psychological development and highlighting the influence of collective belief on the formation of identity. From a literary perspective, this study offers a reinterpretation of Paul Atreides as a socially constructed messianic figure whose authority arises from myth, prophecy, and collective belief rather than from destiny alone.

Unlike previous Jungian readings that emphasize intrapsychic transformation, this study conceptualizes individuation as partially mediated by collective belief and symbolic recognition. Based on these considerations, this study addresses three research questions: How is the Chosen One archetype constructed in Frank Herbert's *Dune*? What are its narrative and ideological functions within the novel? And what are its theoretical implications for Jung's concept of individuation?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Chosen One Archetype

Building on Jung's concept of archetypes, literary scholars have examined recurring character patterns across myths and narratives. One of the most recognizable archetypal figures in fantasy and science fiction is the Chosen One, a character associated with destiny, prophecy, and social transformation.

The archetype of the Chosen One generally refers to an individual believed to possess a unique destiny or a special role in transforming society (Wisniewski, 2019). Such characters are frequently associated with prophecy, exceptional abilities, and expectations that extend beyond ordinary human experience. Their narratives often center on personal transformation, conflict, sacrifice, and the fulfillment of a larger purpose.

The development of the Chosen One archetype is closely related to hero narratives. Campbell, in *The Power of Myth* (1988), argues that heroic stories commonly follow a journey in which an individual leaves an ordinary condition, undergoes trials and transformations, and eventually returns with knowledge or power that benefits a wider community. Vogler (1992), with *The Writer's Journey*, later adapted Campbell's model for narrative analysis, emphasizing the Hero as a recurring archetypal figure who grows through challenges and self-discovery. Similarly, Booker (2004) identifies recurring narrative patterns across literary traditions and argues that many stories revolve around the development and transformation of a central protagonist. Frye (1957), through *The Archetypes of Literature*, also argues that literary works are shaped by recurring archetypal and mythic patterns that reappear across texts and cultural traditions.

Recent Jungian literary scholarship has expanded the application of archetypal criticism beyond the identification of recurring symbols and character types. Contemporary studies increasingly examine how archetypes interact with identity formation, cultural narratives, and social contexts, suggesting that archetypal figures should be understood as

dynamic constructs rather than fixed psychological patterns (Armbrust, 2025; Kechan, 2020; Muştak, 2025). Similarly, recent discussions of identity formation highlight the role of exemplary figures, social expectations, and collective recognition in shaping individual self-understanding (Klimstra et al., 2023). These perspectives are particularly relevant to the present study because Paul Atreides' identity is shaped not only by internal psychological development but also by the Fremen's prophetic expectations and collective beliefs. Within this framework, the Chosen One archetype in *Dune* can be examined not only as a psychological structure rooted in archetypal patterns but also as a socially constructed identity shaped through collective recognition, belief, and expectation.

In fantasy and science fiction, the archetype of the Chosen One often arises from these heroic traditions. However, unlike conventional heroes, chosen figures are often connected to prophecies and collective expectations that position them as individuals destined to alter the course of history. Their identities are therefore shaped not only by personal transformation but also by social recognition and belief. Popular examples include Harry Potter in the Harry Potter series (Shiong & Wang, 2022) and other protagonists whose identities emerge through the interaction between individual development and collective expectations. Viewed from this perspective, the archetype functions not only as a narrative device but also as a means of exploring identity, leadership, legitimacy, power, and the psychological process of becoming.

2.2 Jungian Archetypes and Individuation

Jung's analytical psychology provides an important framework for understanding the psychological dimensions of literary characters. Jung (1969) proposes that archetypes emerge from the collective unconscious and influence human behavior, imagination, and symbolic expression. These archetypes frequently appear in myths, dreams, religious traditions, and literary narratives.

One of the most significant archetypes in Jungian theory is the Hero. Although Jung did not explicitly define the Chosen One as a separate archetype, many of its characteristics overlap with the Hero archetype, particularly in relation to transformation, struggle, and the pursuit of a higher purpose (Jung, 1969; Wisniewski, 2019). Both figures are associated with transformation, confrontation with challenges, and the pursuit of a higher purpose. Through these experiences, the individual gradually develops a more complete understanding of the self.

Jung (1969) argues that the psyche also contains other major archetypal dimensions, including the Persona, the Shadow, and the Self. The Persona refers to the social identity or public image presented to others and is often shaped by cultural expectations and social roles. In contrast, the Shadow consists of repressed desires, fears, weaknesses, and impulses that individuals may refuse to acknowledge. The Self functions as the organizing center of the psyche and symbolizes the integration of conscious and unconscious elements into a unified whole. The tension among these archetypal dimensions frequently becomes a source of psychological conflict in literary narratives.

Central to Jungian psychology is the concept of individuation, which refers to the process through which individuals move toward psychological wholeness by integrating different aspects of the psyche (Jung, 1969). Individuation involves recognizing the limitations of the Persona, confronting the Shadow, and gradually integrating these elements into the Self (Klimstra et al., 2023). In literary narratives, this process is often

reflected through a character's struggles, decisions, and encounters with symbolic forces that reshape their understanding of themselves and the world.

2.3 Messianic Narratives and Collective Belief

The archetype of the Chosen One is closely connected to messianic narratives. Messianism is commonly understood as a collective expectation centered on the emergence of a figure capable of bringing renewal, salvation, or significant social transformation (Pace, 2007). Unlike conventional heroic narratives, messianic narratives involve not only the individual but also the collective beliefs of the community that recognizes and legitimizes the figure.

Prophecy often plays a central role in this process. Prophetic narratives shape expectations about the arrival of a particular individual and provide communities with a framework for interpreting events and assigning meaning to specific figures. As a result, the legitimacy of a messianic figure frequently depends not only on personal actions but also on society's willingness to accept and sustain belief in that individual. Such forms of authority resemble what Weber (1978) describes as charismatic authority, in which followers grant legitimacy to individuals perceived as possessing extraordinary qualities or a special mission.

This relationship between prophecy and collective belief distinguishes messianic figures from ordinary heroes. Whereas heroic narratives primarily emphasize personal transformation, messianic narratives involve broader social processes through which communities construct, validate, and reinforce the identity of a savior figure. The interaction between individual development and collective expectation, therefore, becomes a crucial element in understanding the formation of the Chosen One archetype.

2.4 Previous Studies on *Dune*

Previous scholarship on *Dune* has examined a wide range of themes, including imperialism, religion, identity, adaptation, and political power. Immerwahr (2022) explores issues of empire and indigeneity in Herbert's depiction of Arrakis, while Dridi (2022) analyzes how Denis Villeneuve's adaptation reinterprets Herbert's narrative through contemporary cultural perspectives. Studies have also investigated the novel's psychological and ideological dimensions, including Paul Atreides' internal conflicts (Alfarisi et al., 2022) and the deification of the messianic figure Lisan al-Gaib (Dewandaru, 2025). More recently, Zamfir (2025) discusses the relationship between identity formation and heroic representation in *Dune* and *Dune Messiah*.

Despite these contributions, existing studies generally examine Paul Atreides as a heroic, political, or religious figure rather than investigating how the Chosen One identity is constructed through the interaction between archetypal patterns, prophecy, and collective belief. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to the relationship between the construction of the Chosen One archetype and the process of individuation. This gap is significant because it suggests that archetypal identities may emerge not only through internal psychological transformation but also through external social forces that influence how individuals are perceived and legitimized by others.

The reviewed studies demonstrate the richness of *Dune* scholarship while indicating the need for further research on the relationship between prophecy, collective belief, and identity formation.

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative literary research approach using textual analysis and close reading of Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965). The study examines the construction of the Chosen One archetype through the character of Paul Atreides and analyzes its relationship to Jung's concept of individuation. Since the research investigates meanings, symbols, and narrative patterns embedded in the text, an interpretive, qualitative approach is considered appropriate.

3.1 Data Collection

The primary source of data is Frank Herbert's *Dune*. The data consist of narrative descriptions, dialogues, internal monologues, epigraphs, and character interactions that construct Paul Atreides as the Chosen One. Particular attention is given to passages related to prophecy, messianic expectations, social recognition, collective belief, identity transformation, and the responses of other characters toward Paul.

Data selection was conducted purposively. Passages were selected based on three criteria: (1) their relevance to the development of the Chosen One archetype, (2) their contribution to understanding Paul's identity transformation, and (3) their significance in illustrating the role of collective belief and social legitimization within the narrative. Through this process, approximately 11 key passages were identified and analyzed as the primary textual evidence for the study. The selected passages were considered sufficient because they repeatedly represented the major stages of the Chosen One archetype construction and directly addressed the research questions.

Secondary data were obtained from books, journal articles, and previous studies related to archetypal criticism, Jungian psychology, hero narratives, messianic figures, and *Dune* scholarship. These sources were used to provide theoretical support and contextualize the findings within existing academic discussions.

3.2 Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted in four stages. First, the selected passages were examined through close reading to identify recurring archetypal patterns associated with the Chosen One archetype, including prophecy, destiny, social recognition, exceptional ability, and leadership. Through this process, the analysis focused on language, characterization, symbolism, and narrative context to understand how the novel constructs and reinforces Paul Atreides' archetypal identity. Second, the identified passages were categorized into six thematic groups: the first encounter and the activation of prophetic expectations; rejection and validation; collective legitimization; narrative function; justification and power; and theoretical implications related to Jungian individuation. Third, the categorized textual evidence was interpreted using Jung's concepts of archetype and individuation. Particular attention was given to how Paul's identity develops through the interaction between internal psychological transformation and external social influences. Finally, the findings were connected to the research questions to explain how the archetype of Chosen One is constructed, how it functions narratively and ideologically within the novel, and what implications this construction has for understanding Jungian individuation.

3.3 Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the analysis's credibility, the study employs theoretical triangulation by integrating archetypal criticism, Jungian psychology, hero-narrative studies, and discussions

of messianic belief. These perspectives were used in complementary ways to examine the interaction among archetypal identity, heroic transformation, collective belief, and psychological development. The interpretation of textual evidence was consistent, relating each quotation to both its narrative context and its theoretical significance. In addition, interpretive consistency was maintained by applying the same analytical framework throughout the study, ensuring that conclusions were derived from patterns repeatedly supported by textual evidence rather than isolated passages.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Chosen One Construction

In *Dune* (1965), Frank Herbert makes the Chosen One construction central to the story. In the novel, the Chosen One archetype is shaped not only by prophecy or destiny but also by society's expectations, myths, and collective beliefs. The main point of this construct is Paul Atreides, with the planet Arrakis as the primary setting.

4.1.1 The First Encounter and the Activation of Prophetic Expectations

The construction of the Chosen One archetype in *Dune* begins before Paul performs any heroic action. Rather than emerging from individual achievement, his identity is initially shaped by prophetic expectations already embedded in Fremen society. This reflects one of the defining characteristics of the Chosen One archetype, in which an individual is recognized through prophecy and collective belief before receiving social validation through action.

Herbert complicates the conventional Chosen One narrative through the role of the Bene Gesserit and the Missionaria Protectiva. The prophetic traditions associated with the *Kwisatz Haderach* and the *Lisan al-Gaib* provide a pre-existing framework for interpreting Paul by the Fremen. Consequently, the archetype is presented not as the result of destiny alone, but as a social construction sustained by myth, prophecy, and collective expectation.

Paul's arrival on Arrakis shows that the Fremen already had expectations about a savior figure before he proved himself. His presence is not viewed neutrally, but is connected to prophecies and myths previously spread through 'Missionaria Protectiva', as seen in the conversation between Stilgar and the other Fremen:

"He's certainly the one Liet told us to seek."

"But . . . a child, Stil"

"Yet he could be the Lisan al-Gaib" (p.451)

The passage demonstrates that Paul's identity is constructed through interpretation rather than objective evidence. Although Paul has not yet proven himself, Stilgar already associates him with the prophecy. This finding suggests that the archetype of the Chosen One is activated through collective expectation before it is validated through action. In this sense, belief precedes proof.

This idea becomes stronger through the internal reflection of Jessica, Paul's mother, and a member of the 'Bene Gesserit', after hearing the term 'Voice of Cielago':

"You heard the voice of cielago, Jamis," Stilgar said. "Why do you press me?"

And Jessica Thought: Cielago! The Clue of the tongue opened wide avenues of understanding: this was the language of Ilm and Fiqh, and cielago meant

bat, a small flying mammal. Voice of the cielago: they had received a distrans message to seek Paul and herself. (p. 452)

Jessica's realization further reveals the prophecy's artificial nature. Rather than representing a spontaneous religious belief, the expectation surrounding Paul can be traced to narratives deliberately planted by the Bene Gesserit. Herbert, therefore, portrays the Chosen One archetype not as an entirely natural archetypal emergence but as an identity constructed through cultural narratives and maintained through collective belief.

This indicates that the construction of the Chosen One archetype does not begin from Paul's own actions, but from expectations that already exist before his arrival. These expectations later become the foundation for Paul's more readily accepted status as a savior figure among the Fremen.

4.1.2 Rejection and Validation

The second stage of the Chosen One's construction involves validation. Although prophetic expectations prepare the Fremen to recognize Paul as a potential savior, collective belief alone is insufficient. The prophecy must be reinforced through events that appear to confirm its legitimacy.

From an archetypal perspective, rejection functions as an important stage in the development of the Chosen One archetype. Hero narratives frequently present moments of doubt that test whether a seemingly extraordinary figure truly deserves recognition. In *Dune*, Jamis functions not merely as Paul's opponent but as a symbolic challenge to the prophetic identity being projected onto him. The conflict therefore operates on two levels: a physical confrontation between individuals and a symbolic confrontation between belief and uncertainty.

The tension intensifies after Jessica assumes the position of 'Sayyadina' and reflects on the consequences of the duel:

I can take him, Jessica thought, but that might conflict with the way they interpret the legend. And again she wondered at the way the Missonaria Protectiva's work had been twisted on this planet. (p.483)

This passage illustrates the fragile nature of prophetic authority. Although the Fremen already possess a framework for interpreting Paul as a messianic figure, Jessica understands that belief requires continual confirmation. Her concern demonstrates that the prophecy does not function automatically; it depends upon events that can be interpreted as evidence supporting the legend. The passage, therefore, reveals how collective belief operates through a process of selective interpretation in which actions acquire meaning only when they correspond to existing expectations.

The duel consequently becomes a mechanism of archetypal validation. Rather than functioning as a simple test of combat ability, it serves as a public event through which the community evaluates whether Paul corresponds to the role already prepared for him by prophecy.

The Fremen's interpretation of the duel serves as another form of recognition of the prophecy. Paul's victory over Jamis is perceived not merely as a successful combat outcome but as tangible confirmation that the long-awaited savior figure has begun to emerge. This perception is reflected in the Fremen's astonishment when they observe that, despite facing a skilled and experienced fighter, Paul remains unharmed: "him against Jamis and not a

single mark on him" (p. 494). For the Fremen, this remarkable outcome signifies more than physical superiority; it is interpreted as evidence of an extraordinary quality that aligns with their prophetic expectations.

Rather than viewing the duel as an isolated event, the Fremen immediately incorporate it into their existing prophetic framework. Paul's success is thus transformed into symbolic proof that validates the legend of the Mahdi. This reaction demonstrates how archetypal identities gain legitimacy and authority through collective interpretation, particularly when ordinary events are reframed within established systems of belief. Consequently, Paul's victory functions not only as a personal achievement but also as a pivotal moment in the construction and reinforcement of his archetypal role as the prophesied savior.

This situation shows that conflict does not weaken the construction of the Chosen One archetype. Instead, doubt becomes an essential component in strengthening belief. By overcoming opposition, Paul acquires the validation necessary for the prophecy to appear credible. This reveals that Frank Herbert presents the Chosen One archetype as still in flux, with an uncertain outcome, as reflected in Jessica's fear that the prophecy may lead to an outcome different from what was expected.

4.1.3 Collective Legitimization

Following the duel, the construction of the Chosen One archetype enters a stage of collective legitimization. What initially exists as a possibility gradually becomes a shared conviction. Recognition is no longer limited to individual figures such as Stilgar or Jessica but expands throughout the wider Fremen community.

From the perspective of collective belief, legitimacy emerges when a community reaches a common interpretation of reality. The Chosen One becomes meaningful not because the individual claims the role, but because others repeatedly recognize and reinforce that identity. In Dune, this process can be observed in the Fremen's response after Paul is accepted into their society:

Again a murmuring response went through the troop as man turned to man: "Wisdom with strength . . . Couldn't ask more . . . It's the legend for sure . . . Lisan al-Gaib . . . Lisan al-Gaib . . ." (p.497)

The dialogue indicates a transition from individual interpretation to collective consensus. The repeated invocation of "Lisan al-Gaib" demonstrates that Paul's identity is becoming institutionalized within the community's belief system. At this stage, the prophecy no longer functions merely as an expectation of the future; it becomes an accepted explanation of the present.

This pattern resembles what Pace (2007) describes as messianic authority, in which collective belief elevates an individual into a symbolic figure whose legitimacy extends beyond ordinary social structures. In Paul's case, recognition by the Fremen transforms him from a potential leader into a prophetic figure whose authority is reinforced through collective belief rather than individual achievement alone.

The passage further illustrates that collective belief is self-reinforcing. As more members of the community recognize Paul as the fulfillment of prophecy, alternative interpretations become increasingly difficult to sustain. Legitimacy emerges not from objective proof but from repeated communal affirmation. The Fremen do not simply observe Paul; they actively participate in constructing the meaning of his identity.

This process reveals an important aspect of Herbert's reconstruction of the Chosen One archetype. Traditional narratives often present extraordinary qualities as the primary reason for a hero's recognition. In contrast, *Dune* suggests that recognition itself plays a crucial role in producing the heroic identity. Paul's authority is therefore not solely the result of personal qualities but also the product of collective belief that continuously validates and reinforces his status.

The findings demonstrate that the construction of the Chosen One archetype in *Dune* occurs through a gradual process consisting of prophetic expectation, validation, and collective legitimization. Elements commonly associated with the archetype, including prophecy, exceptional ability, and eventual leadership, do not emerge naturally but are produced through the interaction between myth, social interpretation, and collective belief. Herbert therefore reconstructs the Chosen One archetype as a socially mediated identity rather than a purely destiny-driven role. This interpretation supports the argument that Paul's authority is shaped not only by personal transformation but also by others' willingness to recognize and sustain his messianic status.

4.2 Narrative and Ideological Functions of the Chosen One in *Dune*

As Paul begins to be recognized as a savior figure, his presence starts to shape the story and how others see him. Paul is no longer viewed only as a savior figure, but also becomes the center that shapes conflict and influences how power is understood within the narrative. In this context, the Chosen One is not only an identity attached to Paul, but also becomes a framework through which other characters view, respond to, and believe in his existence. Therefore, the following discussion focuses on how this construction functions both as a force that drives the story forward and as an element that shapes the novel's ideological dimension.

4.2.1 Narrative function: Driving and Shaping the Direction of the Story

The narrative significance of the Chosen One archetype extends beyond character identity, functioning as a structural mechanism that organizes conflict and directs plot development.

In the *Dune* novel, the archetype of the Chosen One serves as one of the main driving forces of the story, as the conflicts and expectations within the narrative gradually center on Paul. From the beginning, Paul's existence has already been placed within a prophetic framework that shapes expectations about his future role.

This can be seen in one of the epigraphs of *Dune* with the title *Manual of Muad'Dib* (p. 158).

Some of the people along the way recalled the legends and the prophecy and they ventured to shout: "Mahdi!" But their shout was more a question than a statement, for as yet they could only hope he was the one foretold as the Lisan-al-Gaib, the Voice from the Outer World

The epigraph reflects the Fremens' early perception of Paul. When Paul first appears before the public, some people shout "Mahdi," yet the narration explains that the shout is more a question than a statement.

This shows that recognition of Paul as a messianic figure is not fully certain but instead grows from expectations already formed. Because of this, the construction of the Chosen One functions as a trigger for the narrative's development, where Paul's actions are

understood not only as personal actions but also as part of a larger process connected to the fulfillment, or even the possible failure, of the prophecy.

This construction also creates continuous narrative tension throughout the novel. *Dune* not only questions whether Paul is truly the figure described in the prophecy, but also explores the consequences that may emerge if the prophecy is fulfilled. Therefore, the narrative function of this construction not only moves the plot forward but also shapes the story's direction through uncertainty and ambiguity.

4.2.2 The Function of the Chosen One Archetype: Justification and Power

Beyond its narrative function, the Chosen One archetype also serves as a source of symbolic authority, shaping social relations and legitimizing power within the narrative. As belief in such figures grows stronger, their actions become harder to question.

In the *Dune* novel, the construction surrounding Paul does not stop at collective belief, but gradually develops into a real form of power within the story. This change can be seen when Paul is no longer understood simply, but is instead portrayed as a contradictory and difficult figure to measure.

"he was a warrior and mystic, ogre and saint, the fox and the innocent, chivalrous, ruthless, less than a god, more than a man... there is no measuring Muad'Dib's motives by ordinary standards" (p.757).

At this point, Paul is recognized as Muad'Dib, a new identity that enhances his role as both leader and savior among the Fremen. The quote indicates that Paul is no longer viewed solely as a prophecy fulfiller but as a figure who transcends typical moral judgments and human standards.

Paul's position as Muad'Dib places him in the middle of political conflict and betrayal. However, he still chooses to continue his path. This decision shows that his actions are no longer based on moral considerations in the usual sense. This can be seen in his statement: *"I am the Kwisatz Haderach. That is reason enough."* (p.757). The quotation shows that Paul's actions are no longer grounded in ordinary moral values, but in his belief that he is the 'Kwisatz Haderach', the figure long expected and believed in by many people.

This becomes evidence that the construction of the Chosen One Archetype in *Dune* does not function only as a form of collective recognition but also as the foundation for the formation of absolute power. In this condition, Paul no longer acts as an ordinary individual but becomes increasingly identified with his role as a messianic figure.

This transformation can also be understood through Weber's concept of charismatic authority. According to Weber in *Economy and Society*, charismatic authority emerges when followers obey a leader because they believe in the leader's extraordinary qualities, revelations, heroism, or exemplary character (Weber, 1978). In *Dune*, Paul's authority does not rely solely on political inheritance or institutional power. This resembles Weber's concept of charismatic authority because legitimacy is derived from belief rather than institutional structures. The Fremen obey Paul not primarily because of legal authority or hereditary status, but because they interpret him as the fulfillment of prophecy. It becomes increasingly grounded in the Fremen's belief that he is the fulfillment of prophecy and the long-awaited Lisan al-Gaib. As a result, his legitimacy derives not only from his actions but also from the collective trust placed in his exceptional status.

This identity gradually justifies his actions, even as they begin to cross moral lines. The story suggests that believing in a savior figure does not always lead to positive outcomes and can sometimes pave the way for destructive forms of power.

4.3 Theoretical Implications in *Dune*

The relationship between archetypal identity and psychological development becomes particularly significant in Paul Atreides' character arc. When someone is repeatedly treated as a certain symbol, they may slowly lose the boundary between their true self and the role they are expected to perform. This can also be seen in *Dune*, especially when Paul becomes increasingly tied to his identity as a savior figure believed in by many.

Paul's identity as the Chosen One starts to influence his psychological development and can be examined through Carl Jung's concepts of archetypes and individuation. In Jungian theory, individuation is the process of integrating the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche to achieve the 'self'. In *Dune*, this process does not unfold smoothly because Paul's character is disturbed by external pressures stemming from collective beliefs and social expectations within the narrative, not only from the internal psyche.

This becomes clear when Paul realizes he no longer has full control over the direction of his life. In one reflective moment, he states: *"this sense of the future—I seem to have no control over it. The thing just happens"* (p.320). This suggests that Paul's awareness does not lead him toward freedom but instead places him on a predetermined path that already seems impossible to escape. Here, awareness no longer serves to achieve self-integration but becomes a burden that pushes him in a certain direction.

This condition later becomes more complex when Paul begins to realize the existence of a 'terrible purpose' connected to the coming jihad. He sees the future as something unavoidable, even when he tries to resist it. This can be seen in the following narration: *"he had thought to oppose the jihad within himself, but the jihad would be... they needed only the legend he already had become"* (p.783). This scene marks the point at which Paul's status as a long-awaited figure has transcended his individual identity. He no longer controls the archetype of the Chosen One, but slowly becomes controlled by that role instead.

From a Jungian perspective, this condition can be understood as an excessive identification with the archetype, in which the individual no longer integrates it into the 'self' but is instead dominated by it. This becomes even clearer when Paul realizes that his future moves like something unstoppable: *"like a river hurtling toward a chasm"* (p.629). This reveals that his journey no longer moves toward balance but toward a point he cannot control. This situation reflects the dominance of the archetype over the individual. Jung explains that the main danger appears when individuals are "succumbing to the fascinating influence of the archetypes" (Jung, 1969, p. 53), especially when the archetype is not fully recognized consciously. In this context, Paul's awareness does not bring him freedom but instead binds him more closely to his identity as the Chosen One. Because of this, Paul's individuation process no longer develops entirely as a personal journey but is shaped by external pressures and expectations.

This condition shows that the archetype of the Chosen One in *Dune* not only reflects the pattern of the 'hero' archetype, but also demonstrates a shift in its function. Frank Herbert does not use this archetype as a path toward self-unity, but instead presents it as something that gradually traps the individual in a role already constructed. As a result, Paul no longer develops freely but moves in a direction shaped by prophecy, myth, and the social expectations surrounding him.

From a broader theoretical perspective, these findings suggest that individuation in literary narratives cannot always be understood as an exclusively internal psychological process. In Jungian psychology, individuation primarily refers to the integration of unconscious and conscious elements within the psyche in order to achieve psychological wholeness (Jung, 1969). However, Paul's experience demonstrates that forces outside the individual may also shape identity formation. Throughout the novel, prophecy, myth, and collective belief repeatedly influence how Paul understands himself and how others interpret his role. As a result, external social pressures become active factors in shaping the direction of his psychological development.

This finding also contributes to discussions of the Chosen One archetype. In conventional hero narratives, the chosen figure often progresses toward self-realization through personal growth, self-discovery, and the successful completion of a heroic quest (Campbell, 1988; Vogler, 1992). The archetype is commonly associated with empowerment, transformation, and the fulfillment of destiny. In *Dune*, however, Frank Herbert presents a different pattern. Rather than functioning as a path toward greater autonomy, the archetype gradually limits Paul's freedom. The more he is recognized as the fulfillment of prophecy, the less control he possesses over his own future. Consequently, the Chosen One archetype is reconstructed not as a symbol of liberation but as a mechanism that increasingly constrains individual agency.

The findings further indicate that the construction of the Chosen One in *Dune* depends not only on the protagonist's personal qualities but also on collective recognition. Paul becomes the Lisan al-Gaib and Muad'Dib not solely because of his abilities, but because the Fremen interpret his actions through a prophetic framework that already exists before his arrival. This suggests that archetypal identities are not formed entirely through individual transformation. Instead, they may emerge through an interaction between personal development and collective belief. In this sense, *Dune* demonstrates that archetypes can function as social constructions sustained by cultural narratives, myths, and shared expectations.

Furthermore, the novel can be read as a critique of Herbert's messianic leadership. Although Paul initially appears to embody the familiar role of a heroic savior, the narrative gradually reveals the dangers of collective devotion to a single figure. The prophecy surrounding Paul provides legitimacy, authority, and influence, yet it also contributes to the emergence of violence and the inevitability of jihad. Herbert challenges the conventional assumption that a messianic figure necessarily produces positive outcomes. Instead, *Dune* suggests that elevating an individual to the status of a symbolic savior may create conditions that justify domination, obedience, and large-scale destruction.

These findings extend Jungian literary criticism by demonstrating that archetypal development may be influenced not only by intrapsychic processes but also by external social and ideological forces. While Jung emphasizes the integration of archetypal elements within the individual psyche, *Dune* illustrates how collective belief can shape, redirect, and even constrain the process of individuation. Consequently, the novel offers a more complex understanding of identity formation, one in which psychological development is inseparable from the cultural and social systems that surround the individual.

Overall, the findings indicate that *Dune* reconfigures the relationship between archetype and individuation. The novel extends conventional understandings of both the Chosen One archetype and Jungian individuation by demonstrating how external forces may redirect the process of identity formation.

5. Conclusion

This study argues that the archetype of the Chosen One in *Dune* is not formed solely by destiny, but is shaped by myths, prophecies, and prepared collective expectations. Through the character of Paul Atreides, Frank Herbert tells how a savior figure can be socially constructed until he is eventually accepted as truth by those around him. This construction serves not only as a driving force but also as a foundation that strengthens power and shapes the main character's identity.

From a Jungian perspective, this study also shows that the process of individuation in *Dune* does not go as Carl Jung described. Paul's growth is influenced not only by his own efforts but also by societal pressures, expectations, and roles that shape him. Frank Herbert presents the archetype of the Chosen One not as a path toward self-unity, but as something that slowly traps the main character in a role that is already constructed.

Dune not only tells a story about a savior figure but also critiques how society creates, believes in, and eventually grants power to certain individuals. Through the character of Paul Atreides, Frank Herbert shows that when someone is excessively trusted as a symbol of hope, that identity can develop into a form of power that becomes difficult to control and may lead to greater destruction.

The findings contribute to Jungian literary criticism by suggesting that individuation in literary narratives may be influenced not only by internal psychological processes but also by external social and ideological forces. While Jung's model primarily emphasizes the integration of archetypal elements within the individual psyche, *Dune* demonstrates that collective beliefs, prophecy, and social expectations can significantly shape identity formation. Consequently, the novel expands conventional understandings of individuation by illustrating how psychological development may be redirected or constrained by broader cultural and social structures.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The analysis focuses exclusively on Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965) and does not examine later novels in the series. As a result, the discussion is limited to the initial construction of Paul Atreides as the Chosen One and does not explore how this identity develops in subsequent narratives. In addition, the study concentrates on archetypal construction, narrative function, ideological function, and individuation, leaving other possible perspectives open for further investigation.

Future studies may expand this discussion by examining the continuation of Paul Atreides' development in *Dune Messiah*, particularly in relation to the consequences of messianic leadership and the evolution of his identity. Comparative studies may also be conducted with other prominent Chosen One narratives, such as *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, and *The Matrix*, in order to explore similarities and differences in the construction of prophecy, heroism, collective belief, and individuation across different literary and popular culture texts. Such studies would contribute to a broader understanding of how the Chosen One archetype is adapted, reconstructed, and challenged in contemporary narratives. More broadly, the study invites literary scholars to reconsider archetypes as dynamic cultural constructions rather than exclusively psychological structures.

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