



Dune and Philosophy: Weirding Way of the Mentat (Popular Culture and Philosophy)

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Frank Herbert's *Dune* is the biggest-selling science fiction story of all time; the original book and its numerous sequels have transported millions of readers into the alternate reality of the Duniverse. *Dune and Philosophy* raises intriguing questions about the Duniverse in ways that will be instantly meaningful to fans. Those well-known characters—Paul Atreides, Baron Harkonnen, Duncan Idaho, Stilgar, the Bene Gesserit witches—come alive again in this fearless philosophical probing of some of life's most basic questions.

Dune presents us with a vast world in which fanaticism is merciless and history is made by the interplay of ruthless conspiracies. Computers have long been outlawed, so that the abilities of human beings are developed to an almost supernatural level. The intergalactic empire controlled by a privileged aristocracy raises all the old questions of human interaction in a strange yet weirdly familiar setting.

Do secret conspiracies direct the future course of human political evolution? Can manipulation of the gene pool create a godlike individual? Are strife and bloodshed essential to progress? Can we know so much about the future that we lose the power to make a difference? Does reliance on valuable resources—such as “spice,” oil, and water—place us at the mercy of those who can destroy those resources? When gholas are reconstructed from the cells of dead people and given those people's memories, is the gholas the dead person resurrected? Can the exploitation of religion for political ends be reduced to a technique?

Philosophers who are fans of *Dune* will trek through the desert of the Duniverse seeing answers to these and other questions.

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