

Female Leadership Portrayed Through Lady Jessica In Frank Herbert' S *Dune 2* Movie Script

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the representation of female leadership through the character of Lady Jessica in Frank Herbert's Dune 2. Grounded in feminist literary criticism and Catalyst's theory of female leadership, the study examines how Lady Jessica's qualities of female leadership, decisiveness, collaboration, authority, inclusivity, and strategic thinking, affect her son and their society. The findings of this thesis are 1) Lady Jessica's female leadership has a huge positive effect, both on Paul as a future leader and on the Fremen as a society evolving towards political and spiritual awakening.

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi representasi kepemimpinan perempuan melalui karakter Lady Jessica dalam *Dune 2* karya Frank Herbert. Berdasarkan kritik sastra feminis dan teori kepemimpinan perempuan Catalyst, penelitian ini meneliti bagaimana Lady Jessica... Temuan tesis ini adalah 1) Lady Jessica memiliki kualitas kepemimpinan perempuan, yaitu ketegasan, kolaborasi, otoritas, inklusivitas, dan pemikiran strategis. 2) Dampak kepemimpinan perempuan Lady Jessica terhadap putranya dan masyarakat mereka.

Kepemimpinan Lady Jessica memiliki dampak positif yang besar, baik terhadap Paul sebagai pemimpin masa depan maupun terhadap Fremen sebagai masyarakat yang berevolusi menuju kebangkitan politik dan spiritual.

PENDAHULUAN

The role of women in Indonesian society has evolved significantly over the past century. Traditionally, women's leadership roles were limited, often confined to specific contexts within families or royal courts. In recent decades, however, Indonesian women have made remarkable strides in various fields, including politics, business, and academia (Evans and Pfister 2021).

Prominent women such as Sri Mulyani, Retno Marsudi, and Susi Pudjiastuti have served as ministers, demonstrating that women can effectively lead at the highest levels of government. In addition, Megawati Sukarnoputri's presidency marked a historic milestone for women in Indonesian politics. These achievements demonstrate the potential and ability of women to make meaningful contributions to society.

Despite this progress, gender inequality persists in Indonesia. Patriarchal attitudes and cultural norms continue to hinder women's progress, leading to issues such as gender-based violence and discrimination. However, the increasing presence of women in leadership positions signifies a growing recognition of women's rights and capabilities.

Women's roles in society have evolved significantly over time, particularly in areas such as employment, education, politics, and domestic relationships. These societal changes are often reflected in cultural products such as literature, film, and music.

Literature, in particular, can serve as a powerful tool for exploring and challenging traditional gender roles. By portraying strong, independent female characters, literature can contribute to the advancement of women's rights and empowerment. For example, characters such as Lady Jessica in *Dune 2* can inspire and challenge societal expectations of women and demonstrate their potential as leaders and decision-makers.

Through literature, people can examine the historical and contemporary experiences of women, highlighting both their triumphs and their challenges. By analyzing the representation of women in various literary works, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between gender, power, and society.

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Literary works often serve as mirrors that reflect the social issues of their time. As Abraham has argued, literature can be seen as a consequence of society, reflecting its values, norms, and problems. This concept is particularly relevant when examining the representation of women in literature.

Feminist themes, including the portrayal of female leadership, are often explored in various literary forms, such as film, novels, and poetry. By analyzing these works, we can gain insight into the historical and contemporary struggles and triumphs of women. These literary representations can challenge traditional gender roles, inspire social change, and empower readers to question societal norms.

Frank Herbert, a renowned science fiction author, has made significant contributions to the exploration of feminist themes in literature. His most famous work, *Dune*, tackles complex social and political issues, including the role of women in society. Herbert's exploration of the Bene Gesserit sisterhood, a powerful order of women who manipulate genetics and exert influence through subtle means, challenges traditional gender roles and highlights the potential for female empowerment.

In examining the Bene Gesserit and their impact on the *Dune* universe, Herbert raises questions about the nature of power, control, and the limits imposed by societal expectations. His work invites readers to consider the ways in which gender can be a tool of both oppression and liberation.

Frank Herbert's *Dune* series provides a fascinating lens through which to examine the complex role of women in leadership. Lady Jessica, a central character in the series, embodies the power and influence that women can wield even in a patriarchal society. By analyzing her character and the broader themes of the series, we can gain valuable insights into the construction of gender and power dynamics.

Through Lady Jessica, Herbert explores the potential for women to challenge traditional gender roles and assume positions of authority. Her role as a Bene Gesserit, a powerful sisterhood of women, allows her to navigate a complex political landscape and shape the fate of entire civilizations. By examining her character and the broader themes of the *Dune* series, the thesis writer and supposedly the readers of this thesis can gain valuable insights into the construction of gender and power dynamics.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative research design, specifically a textual analysis, to examine the portrayal of female leadership through the character of Lady Jessica in Frank Herbert's *Dune* series, focusing on *Dune 2*.

The writer uses qualitative method to author this research according to Creswell with the technique of document analysis the object of this study is a movie script from the movie *Dune 2*, a movie on Cinema that was released in 2021. It is a textual document that provides valuable insights into the research topic. According to Creswell, "Qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups give to social or human issues. The research process includes questions and procedures that arise, data that is typically collected from participants, data analysis that inductively builds from specific items to general themes, and the researcher interpreting the meaning of the data." (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The definition highlights that this method is exploratory and interpretative.

The primary data source is the text of *Dune 2*, which will be closely read to analyze Lady Jessica's dialogue, actions, and interactions with other characters. Additionally, relevant secondary sources, including scholarly articles, books, and essays, will be consulted to provide a broader theoretical and critical context for the analysis.

Feminist literary theory will be used as a theoretical framework to explore the gendered power dynamics, societal norms, and cultural expectations that shape Lady Jessica's role and influence. This analysis will draw on the work of feminist theorists such as Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, and Kate Millett, as well as intersectional feminist theorists like Kimberlé Crenshaw, bell hooks, and Audre Lorde, to examine the complex interplay of gender, race, and class in the *Dune* universe.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This article finds there are 5 data of female leadership.

Decisiveness

The first proofs of the decisiveness is supported by the following quotation:

JESSICA:

"We must get a message to Stilgar at once. He must call for a Council of Naibs. We must bring a Trial of Possession against Alia." (Herbert, 2021: 90)

From the statement above Jessica demonstrates her decisiveness by outlining a clear plan of action in response to the escalating situation. Her use of "must" emphasizes her urgency and determination to take control of the circumstances, indicating that she is not merely reacting but actively seeking to influence the outcome. As it is stated before on the theoretical background that decisiveness is the quality of being able to make choices quickly and confidently. From the quotation above, it is very clear that Jessica uses the

word "must" to convince her subordinates to do what she orders. It is about taking action without hesitation and being able to stick to your decisions. A decisive person is often seen as assertive, confident, and reliable.

JESSICA: *"I know what it means. But Alia has made her choice. There is no turning back now."* (Herbert, 2021:90)

From the statement above Jessica acknowledges the gravity of the situation and the implications of Alia's actions. Her statement reflects a decisive mindset, as she recognizes the finality of Alia's choices and the necessity of moving forward with their own plans. This clarity in her thinking showcases her ability to confront difficult realities and make tough decisions.

These examples illustrate Jessica's decisiveness as she navigates complex challenges, asserting her agency and leadership in critical moments

Authority

there are some proofs which show that Jessica as a female leadership has appealability of authority. In the movie script, Jessica's authority is expressed through her dialogue, showcasing her strength, wisdom, and maternal influence. Here are a couple of examples that reflect her authoritative presence:

JESSICA: *"Perhaps...you should rest, Alia."* (Herbert, 2021: 68)

From the above quotation, the thesis writer studies that Lady Jessica uses authority to command her subordinates. As it stated on chapter two that authority deals with Authority is refers to the legitimate power or right to give commands and enforce obedience. The quotation happens when Jessica subtly asserts her authority over Alia by suggesting that her daughter needs to take a break. This statement reflects Jessica's experience and wisdom, as she recognizes the signs of Alia's distress and attempts to guide her. The suggestion carries an implicit authority, as it comes from a mother who understands the pressures her daughter faces.

JESSICA: *"I hope we can find time to shed formality and finally get to know each other..."* (Herbert, 2021:21)

From the above quotation, the thesis writer studies that Jessica expresses her desire to connect with her grandchildren while also hinting at her position within the family and society. By emphasizing the need to move past formalities, she asserts her role as a matriarch who values genuine relationships over rigid protocols. This reflects her authority not just as a leader but as a nurturing figure within her family.

The quotation above also illustrates how Jessica's authority is rooted in her experience, maternal instincts, and the respect she commands from those around her, reinforcing her significant role in the narrative.

Strategic thinking

There are some proofs which show that Jessica has a female leadership quality has appealability of Strategic thinking. In the movie script, Jessica's strategic thinking is evident in her dialogue as she assesses situations, anticipates consequences, and formulates plans. The statement below highlights her strategic mindset. The statement is supported by the following quotation:

JESSICA: *"You must forgive my daughter, Irulan. She has let temper get in the way of judgement this afternoon... You are in serious danger, Irulan."* (Herbert 2021 69)

From the above quotation, the thesis writer studies that in this exchange, Jessica not only addresses Irulan's feelings but also strategically positions herself to mitigate potential conflict. By acknowledging her daughter's emotional state while simultaneously warning Irulan of the danger, she demonstrates her ability to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics and protect her interests. The statement is supported by the below quotation:

JESSICA: *"We must get a message to Stilgar at once. He must call for a Council of Naibs. We must bring a Trial of Possession against Alia."* (Herbert, 2021: 90)

From the above quotation, the thesis writer studies that it shows Jessica's strategic thinking as she outlines a clear and actionable plan to address the threat posed by Alia. By calling for a Council of Naibs and a Trial of Possession, she is not only reacting to the immediate crisis but also leveraging the political structures in place to regain control and ensure the safety of her family and the empire.

These examples illustrate Jessica's ability to think strategically, considering both the immediate and long-term implications of her actions while navigating the complexities of her environment.

Collaboration

There are some proofs which show that Jessica has a female leadership quality for Collaborative action. Here are some examples from the movie script that highlight Jessica's collaborative nature through her dialogue. The first quotation is shown on the following quotation. The statement is supported by the following quotation:

JESSICA: *"You must take the twins into the desert. To Stilgar at Sietch Tabr. Do you have men you can trust?"* (Herbert, 2021:70)

From the quotation above, the thesis writer studies that Jessica is actively involving Irulan in the plan to protect the twins. By asking if Irulan has trustworthy men, she is fostering collaboration and recognizing Irulan's role in the situation, which emphasizes the importance of working together for a common goal. The statement is supported by the following quotation:

JESSICA: "We must get a message to Stilgar at once. He must call for a Council of Naibs." (Herbert, 2021: 90)

From the above quotation, Here, Jessica is calling for a collective response to the threat posed by Alia. By suggesting that Stilgar convene a Council of Naibs, she is emphasizing the need for collaboration among the leaders to address the crisis effectively. This shows her understanding that unity and cooperation are essential in navigating the political landscape.

These examples illustrate Jessica's collaborative approach as she seeks to engage others in decision-making and emphasizes the importance of teamwork in achieving their objectives

Inclusivity

there are some proofs which show that Jessica as a female leadership has capability of inclusivity. In the movie script, Jessica's inclusivity is reflected in her dialogue as she acknowledges others' roles, seeks their involvement, and emphasizes unity. Here are a couple of examples that highlight her inclusive approach. The statement is supported by the following quotation:

JESSICA: "I hope we can find time to shed formality and finally get to know each other..." (Herbert, 2021: 21)

From the statement above Jessica expresses a desire to connect with her grandchildren, Leto and Ghanima, beyond the formalities that separate them. Her invitation to "shed formality" indicates her wish to create a more inclusive and personal relationship, emphasizing the importance of family bonds.

JESSICA: "You must take the twins into the desert. To Stilgar at Sietch Tabr. Do you have men you can trust?" (Herbert, 2021: 70)

From the statement above Jessica is not only giving instructions but also involving Irulan in the decision-making process. By asking if Irulan has men she can trust, Jessica acknowledges Irulan's agency and importance in the plan, fostering a sense of inclusivity in their collaboration to protect the twins.

These examples illustrate Jessica's inclusive nature as she seeks to build connections and involve others in critical decisions, highlighting her commitment to unity and collaboration within her family and community.

CONCLUSION

Lady Jessica, a pivotal figure in Frank Herbert's *Dune*, represents a multifaceted portrayal of female leadership within a rigidly patriarchal society. As a Bene Gesserit trained in physical, mental, and political disciplines, Jessica wields remarkable influence despite operating within the constraints of a male-dominated world. Her character is central to the intricate power dynamics of Arrakis, where she deftly navigates political intrigue and cultural tensions. Beyond her own role, Jessica's impact is magnified through her son, Paul Atreides, whom she mentors with profound dedication, shaping his path toward leadership and destiny.

Jessica's influence on Paul extends beyond conventional maternal guidance. Her training in the Bene Gesserit arts allows her to instill critical strategic and political insights, preparing Paul to confront the complex challenges of leading on Arrakis. This influence, coupled with her mastery of techniques like the Voice, establishes Jessica as both a mentor and a tactical ally. However, her defiance of the Bene Gesserit directive to bear a daughter instead of a son sets in motion events that destabilize the Sisterhood's plans, illustrating her willingness to prioritize personal loyalty and love over institutional obedience.

At the core of Jessica's character lies a compelling duality: her immense power is tempered by vulnerability and the societal constraints that shape her existence. Her role as a Bene Gesserit places her in the shadows of leadership, where her influence must be wielded subtly and strategically. Yet, her defiance of patriarchal norms and her integration into Fremen culture showcase her adaptability and resilience. This duality underscores her struggles with the consequences of her actions, revealing a complex leader torn between ambition, responsibility, and the personal cost of her decisions.

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