



# Comparative Analysis of David Lynch *Dune* (1984) and Denis Villeneuve *Dune* (2021 & 2024)

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## ABSTRACT

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This study examines the similarities and differences in intrinsic elements such as plot, characterization, and settings between the movies *Dune* (1984) by David Lynch and *Dune* (2021 & 2024) by Denis Villeneuve. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method using a comparative approach. The data are derived from the two film adaptations as primary sources. The findings indicate that while both adaptations follow the same foundational narrative structure derived from Frank Herbert's novel, significant differences emerge in their depiction of plot progression, character development, setting, and narrative resolution. These differences are largely influenced by the historical era in which each film was produced. Lynch's adaptation reflects the cinematic conventions and technological limitations of the 1980s, resulting in a more direct heroic narrative, simplified characterization, and stylized setting. In contrast, Villeneuve's adaptation, shaped by contemporary filmmaking practices and technological advancements, presents a more complex plot structure, psychologically nuanced characters, immersive world-building, and a more critical approach to messianic power. Therefore, this study concludes that the era serves as the central factor shaping the divergent interpretations of *Dune*, demonstrating that film adaptation is influenced not only by the source text but also by the cultural, technological, and cinematic context of its production.

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## INTRODUCTION

Frank Herbert's *Dune*, first published in 1965, stands as a seminal work in the science fiction literary canon. Rich in philosophical, political, ecological, and religious themes, the novel has inspired critical acclaim and a devoted readership. Due to its complexity and cultural influence, *Dune* has been adapted into film on multiple occasions. The first major adaptation was directed by David Lynch and released in 1984, while a more recent, large-scale adaptation directed by Denis Villeneuve was released in two parts *Dune: Part One* in 2021 and *Dune: Part Two* in 2024. Both versions are based on the same source material, yet they differ significantly in cinematic approach, storytelling structure, technological execution, and public reception. Despite sharing a common origin, the 1984 and 2021–2024 adaptations of *Dune* offer distinct interpretations of Herbert's narrative. The 1984 version condenses the entire novel into a single 137-minute film, relying heavily on narration and internal monologue to deliver exposition.

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In contrast, Villeneuve's adaptation divides the story into two lengthy films Part One runs 155 minutes, and Part Two runs 166 minutes allowing for greater narrative depth and world-building. The ratings reflect these differences: as of 2025, the Lynch adaptation holds a 6.3/10 rating on IMDb, while *Dune: Part One* (2021) and *Part Two* (2024) enjoy significantly higher ratings of 8.0/10 and 8.6/10, respectively. These ratings suggest that the recent adaptations have been better received by contemporary audiences and critics alike. The variation in ratings between adaptations of the same source material is not unique to *Dune*. In cinematic history, there are multiple instances where earlier or later adaptations have been perceived as superior or inferior to one another. For example, Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man* trilogy (2002–2007) is widely considered more successful than Marc Webb's *The Amazing Spider-Man* series (2012–2014). Raimi's *Spider-Man* (2002) holds an IMDb rating of 7.4, while *The Amazing Spider-Man* (2012) holds 6.9, with its sequel rated even lower at 6.6. Similarly, the original *Robocop* (1987) is regarded more favorably (IMDb 7.5) than its 2014 remake, which received a more lukewarm reception (IMDb 6.1). Conversely, there are examples where modern remakes or reinterpretations have surpassed their predecessors. Tim Burton's *Batman* (1989), which was once considered iconic (IMDb 7.5), has since been overshadowed by Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight* trilogy, particularly *The Dark Knight* (2008), which holds an exceptional rating of 9.0. Another case is Marvel's *Daredevil* (2003) starring Ben Affleck, which was poorly received (IMDb 5.3), while the Netflix adaptation (2015–2018) has been praised for its depth and character development, earning strong critical approval with IMDb scores consistently above 8.5.

Based on the discussion above, this study aims to examine the similarities and differences in narrative construction and reception between the 1984 and 2021–2024 *Dune* adaptations. This research is significant for several reasons, particularly within the fields of comparative literature, film studies, and adaptation theory. First, it offers a diachronic comparative analysis of two adaptations of the same literary source, providing insights into how intrinsic narrative elements such as plot, character, setting, and stylistic features are interpreted differently depending on the vision of the director and cinematic periods.

Accordingly, the scope of this study is limited to the comparative analysis of two cinematic adaptations of Frank Herbert's *Dune* novel: the 1984 version directed by David Lynch and the two-part adaptation directed by Denis Villeneuve released in 2021 and 2024. The study does not include the *Dune* novel itself as a primary object of analysis; instead, it focuses on how the source material is interpreted differently in each adaptation. The analysis centers on intrinsic literary elements including plot, character, and setting as applied to the medium of film. These elements are examined comparatively across the two adaptations using a diachronic framework. Additionally, the study includes an evaluation of how technological developments between the two periods influenced the presentation of these narrative elements.

In alignment with this comparative focus, four previous studies have examined differences between various film versions; however, they approach the topic from perspectives that differ from the present study. The first study is titled "An Analysis of Cultural Differences as seen in Korean Film *Miss Granny* (2014)" And its Indonesian Remake *Sweet 20*. According to this study, there are a significant cultural shift in the Indonesian remake version. For instance, scene depicting Korean religious culture in the original movie and in the remake version. It is changed into an Islamic culture. The second study is titled "The Vicious Cycle of Colonization in the Cinematic Adaptations of *Dune*". Here Monfared argues that the narrative of liberation in *Dune* (2021–2024) masks a deeper cycle of colonial dominance, as the protagonist Paul Atreides ultimately replaces one imperial regime with another. The study critiques the romanticized portrayal of Paul as a messianic figure, suggesting that his leadership continues the logic of conquest and resource control. The third study entitled "A Comparison of the 1940 Animated *Pinocchio* Movie and Walt Disney Studios' 2022 Live-action Version of *Pinocchio* Movie" by Dzulfikar Fickri Rosyid and Kankan Kasmana". Based on this article, there are significance differences between the animated version of the film and the live action version of the film. According to this article, In the animated version, the focus is on *Pinocchio*'s journey to become a real boy through moral challenges and personal sacrifice. In contrast, the live-action adaptation places greater emphasis on the emotional bond between *Pinocchio* and *Gepetto*. The fourth study entitled "Anticolonialism in the Movie Adaptations of *Dune* by Frank Herbert". According to this study, several elements in *Dune* reflect strong anticolonial themes. For example, Arrakis functions as a representation of colonized land, the Fremen symbolize the indigenous people oppressed

under colonial rule, and the spice melange serves as a metaphor for natural resources exploited by imperial powers. Likewise, the struggle of the Fremen against the Empire and House Harkonnen mirrors the resistance of colonized peoples against their oppressors. Furthermore, the study argues that Lynch's version presents anticolonial themes more prominently than Villeneuve's.

While the previous studies offer valuable insights into film adaptation, cultural transformation, and postcolonial critique, a clear research gap remains. Previous studies primarily focus on specific aspects such as cultural transformation, postcolonial interpretation, or thematic shifts within a single adaptation. While some research examines *Dune* (2021–2024), it often does so without a direct comparison to David Lynch's 1984 version. Moreover, existing studies rarely analyze how intrinsic literary elements—such as plot, characterization, and setting—are structurally transformed across different cinematic periods. In addition, the role of technological development and historical context in shaping these narrative differences remains underexplored. This study is grounded in the framework of comparative literature, particularly through a diachronic approach that examines how literary and narrative elements evolve across different time periods. In addition, the analysis draws on the concept of intrinsic elements as proposed by Mario Klarer (1999), which includes plot, characterization, and setting as the fundamental components of narrative structure. By combining these perspectives, this study analyzes how the same source material is reinterpreted across different cinematic eras, allowing for a structured comparison of narrative construction.

## METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. In this research, the descriptive qualitative method is used to compare and analyze the story and visuals of *Dune* in the 1984 film directed by David Lynch and the newer versions directed by Denis Villeneuve in 2021 and 2024. The data for this research are primarily drawn from the analysis of the film adaptations of Frank Herbert's seminal science fiction novel, *Dune*. Specifically, this research examines three key adaptations: the first being the 1984 film adaptation, titled *Dune*, directed by David Lynch, the second is the more recent adaptation *Dune: Part One*, directed by Denis Villeneuve and released in 2021, and the third is its direct sequel, *Dune: Part Two*, released in 2024. The researcher applied the intrinsic literary analysis approach as outlined by Mario Klarer (1999) in examining the two adaptations of *Dune*. This method involves analyzing the internal elements of a narrative, such as plot, character, and setting, in order to understand how meaning is constructed within a literary or cinematic work. The researcher utilizes note-taking as the primary instrument for collecting data. The researcher watched both the 1984 adaptation of *Dune*, directed by David Lynch, and the 2021 and 2024 adaptations directed by Denis Villeneuve. During these viewings, detailed notes will be taken, focusing on differences in plot, characterization, and setting and the influence of technological advancement in the recent adaptation. The researcher collected the data by undergoing several procedures: (1) The researcher watched both versions in full the original adaptation directed by David Lynch in 1984 and the recent adaptations directed by Denis Villeneuve in 2021 and 2024. (2) The researcher noted down the plot, characterization, and settings of the three movie adaptation. (3) The researcher identified and analyze similarity and differences, in term of plot, characterization and setting between the 1984 adaptation and 2021-2024 adaptation.

The data were analyzed through a systematic comparative procedure. First, all collected notes were categorized based on intrinsic elements following Mario Klarer (1999), namely plot, characterization, and setting. Each category was further organized into specific analytical units. For plot, the analysis was structured according to narrative stages, including exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. For characterization, the analysis focused on dominant traits, character development, and the complexity of major figures such as Paul Atreides and Chani. For setting, the analysis examined spatial representation (indoor vs. outdoor environments), visual scale, and social context. Second, the data from the 1984 adaptation directed by David Lynch and the 2021–2024 adaptations directed by Denis Villeneuve were compared across these categories to identify similarities and differences. This comparison was conducted using a diachronic approach to observe how narrative elements change across different cinematic periods. Third, the identified differences were interpreted using defined criteria, including narrative complexity, character depth, and visual representation. These criteria were

used to evaluate how each adaptation constructs meaning and to determine how historical era and technological development influence the presentation of narrative elements. Through this structured process, the analysis ensures consistency and analytical rigor in comparing the two adaptations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the comparative analysis of David Lynch's *Dune* (1984) and Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* (2021–2024), this research finds that while both adaptations share the same narrative foundation, they diverge significantly in their treatment of plot, character, setting, and the thematic implications of prophecy and power.

### A. Plot

TABLE 1. Plot Similarities

| Plot Part      | David Lynch (1984)                                                                                                                                                                 | Villeneuve (2021,2024)                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Exposition     | 1. House of Atreides fiefdom of Arrakis (M1:H00:Mo8:S4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I have ordered House Atreides to occupy Arrakis to mine the spice...”</li> </ul> | 1. House of Atreides given order to occupy Arrakis. (M2:H00:Mo7:S55) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “....House Atreides shall immediately take control of Arrakis and serve as its steward</li> </ul> |
| Rising Action  | 1. House of Atreides's night attack (M1:Ho1:Mo5:So7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Get that shield up! The shield! The shield!”</li> </ul>                             | 1. The Harkonnen and Emperor Attack House of Atreides (M2:Ho1:M15:S36) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “ Sir. Sir. The shield's come down.”</li> </ul>                                                 |
| Climax         | 1. Paul and Fremen war against The Emperor (M1:Ho1:M55:S5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Emperor, we come for you!”</li> </ul>                                         | 1. Paul and Fremen War Against the Emperor (M3Ho2:M10:S50) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LONG LIVE THE FIGHTERS!</li> </ul>                                                                          |
| Falling Action | 1. Paul duels with feyd rautha (M1:Ho2:Mo9:S26) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Why prolong the inevitable?”</li> </ul>                                                  | 2. Paul duels to death with feyd Rautha (M3:Ho2:M27:S58) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “May thy knife chip and shatter.”</li> </ul>                                                                  |
| Resolution     | 1. No Data                                                                                                                                                                         | 1. No Data                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

TABLE 2. Plot Differences

| Plot Part  | David Lynch (1984)                                                                                                                                                                | Villeneuve (2021,2024)                                                                         |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Exposition | 1. The Emperor reveals his scheme to destroy house of Atreides (M1:H00:Mo8:S4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “...Baron Harkonnen will return to Arrakis and</li> </ul> | 1. Duke leto suspect that Arrakis fiefdom is The Emperor's plan to Destroy him (M2:H00:M13:S3) |

|                |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                |    | launch a sneak attack on House Atreides                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“...he sets the stage for a war which would weaken both houses”</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Rising Action  | 1. | Paul and Jessica accepted into the Fremen and train them (M1:Ho1:M27:S22) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Teach us this weirding way, and you both shall have sanctuary.”</li> </ul>                                                                                                                      | 1. Paul duel with Jamis to be accepted among the fremen (M2:Ho2:M11:S53) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I accept her champion.”</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                    |
| Climax         | 1. | Paul drink the water of life and fulfill the prophecy (M1:Ho1:M50:S05) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I try to become what I may be.”</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                         | 1. Paul forcibly drinks the water of life despite his terrifying future foresight (M3:Ho1:M49:S10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“If I go South, all my visions lead to horror. Billions of corpses scattered across the galaxy.”</li> <li>“And then I will do what must be done.”</li> </ul> |
| Falling Action | 1. | Paul told the Emperor to order the great houses to retreat (M1:Ho2:Mo7:S46) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“...many great Houses of the Landsraad, Send them back!”</li> </ul>                                                                                                                            | 1. Paul threaten the great houses to destroy the spices if they dare to attack (M3:Ho2:M26:S19) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“If the Great Houses attack, our atomics will obliterate all spice fields.”</li> </ul>                                                                          |
| Resolution     | 1. | Paul become the hands of god and will bring peace. (M1:Ho2:M11:S12) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Muad'Dib had become the hand of God, fulfilling the Fremen prophecy”</li> <li>“...Where there was war, Muad'Dib would now bring peace, where there was hatred, Muad'Dib would bring love,”</li> </ul> | 1. Paul start the holy war against great houses (M3:Ho2:M35:S40) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>...they refuse to honor your ascendancy, Lead them to Paradise.”</li> <li>“The Holy War begins.”</li> </ul>                                                                                    |

In the exposition, Lynch adopts a direct and explicit narrative strategy by immediately revealing the emperor's deliberate scheme to destroy House Atreides. This early disclosure establishes a clear antagonist and frames the story as a straightforward political conspiracy. As a result, the audience is positioned as an informed observer, fully aware of the impending betrayal long before the Atreides family faces its consequences. Villeneuve, on the other hand, employs a more restrained and ambiguous exposition. Rather than openly stating the Emperor's plan, the film presents Duke Leto's growing suspicion toward the Arrakis fiefdom. This approach delays narrative certainty and creates a sense of unease, encouraging viewers to gradually uncover the political danger alongside the characters. Consequently, Villeneuve's exposition emphasizes tension, uncertainty, and realism rather than immediate narrative clarity.

The differences become more pronounced in the rising action, particularly in Paul and Jessica's interaction with the Fremen. In Lynch's adaptation, their integration into Fremen society occurs relatively quickly. Once their abilities are demonstrated, Paul is readily accepted

and soon assumes a leadership role by teaching the Weirding Way. This rapid progression reinforces a traditional heroic structure in which the protagonist's superiority is swiftly recognized. Villeneuve, by contrast, constructs the rising action as a prolonged and conflict-driven process. Paul must earn acceptance through ritual combat with Jamis, an event that underscores Fremen customs, resistance to outsiders, and the seriousness of belonging to their society. This narrative choice highlights cultural friction and portrays leadership as something that must be earned through sacrifice rather than destiny alone.

The climax further reveals the contrasting narrative visions of the two directors. In Lynch's version, Paul's decision to drink the Water of Life functions as a triumphant culmination of the prophecy. The act confirms his identity as the Kwisatz Haderach and reinforces a heroic narrative in which destiny is fulfilled without significant moral hesitation. Villeneuve reframes this moment as deeply tragic and psychologically complex. Paul drinks the Water of Life fully aware that his transformation will unleash a devastating holy war. Rather than celebrating destiny, the climax emphasizes inevitability and loss of agency, redefining prophecy as a burden rather than a blessing. This shift fundamentally alters the thematic meaning of Paul's transformation.

In the falling action, Lynch's Paul consolidates power through established political structures by ordering the Emperor to command the Great Houses to withdraw from Arrakis. Authority is restored through formal hierarchy and imperial command. Villeneuve's Paul, however, demonstrates a more radical exercise of power by threatening to destroy the spice itself, the foundation of the Imperium's economy. This act signals a departure from traditional authority and reveals how absolute power reshapes Paul's moral boundaries. The falling action thus reinforces Villeneuve's darker portrayal of leadership as coercive and destructive.

The resolution marks the most striking divergence between the two adaptations. Lynch concludes with a mythic and optimistic resolution in which Paul fulfills the Fremen prophecy, brings rain to Arrakis, and is hailed as the "Hand of God." This ending suggests harmony, renewal, and the restoration of balance. Villeneuve's resolution deliberately subverts this expectation. Paul's ascension to the imperial throne is presented not as an end, but as the beginning of a catastrophic holy war spreading across the galaxy. By ending on this note, Villeneuve reframes the narrative as a cautionary tale about messianic power, fanaticism, and the unintended consequences of prophecy.

## B. Characters

TABLE 3. Characters Similarities

| Character     | David Lynch                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Villeneuve                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Paul Atreides | a. Round Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The heir of House of Atreides (M1:H00:M16:S02)</li> <li>Prophesized as the Messiah (M1:H00:M28:S41)</li> <li>Becoming the leader of Fremen and Fulfilling the prophecy (M1:H02:M11:S12)</li> </ul> | a. Round Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The heir of House of Atreides (M2:H00:M13:S04)</li> <li>Prophesized as the Messiah (M2:H00:M28:S27)</li> <li>Becoming The leader of Fremen and Fulfilling the prophecy (M3:H02:M05:S33)</li> </ul> |
| Chani         | a. Round Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paul Love Interest (M1:H01:M51:S40)</li> <li>A brave warrior (M1:H01:M28:S09)</li> </ul>                                                                                                           | a. Round Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paul love interest (M3:H02:M25:S34)</li> <li>A brave warrior (M2:H02:M10:S28)</li> </ul>                                                                                                           |

|                          |                                                                          |                                                                           |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Feyd                     | a. Flat Character<br>• Psychotic and Sadistic traits<br>(M1:Ho2:M10:S30) | a. Round Character<br>• Psychotic and Sadistic traits<br>(M3:Ho1:M11:S36) |
| Stilgar                  | a. Flat Character<br>• Leader of The Fremen<br>(M1:Ho1:M27:S32)          | a. Round Character<br>• Leader of The Fremen<br>(M2:H00:M49:S42)          |
| Baron Vladimir Harkonnen | a. Flat Character<br>• Cruel and Greedy<br>(M1:Ho1:31:59)                | a. Flat Character<br>• Cruel and Greedy<br>(M2:Ho1:M55:S41)               |

TABLE 4. Characters Differences

| Character     | David Lynch                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Villeneuve                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Paul Atreides | a. Round Characters<br>• An excellent leadership ability and confident being one<br>(M1:H00:M16:S02)<br>(M1:H00:M19:S41)<br>• Determine to accept the leadership role<br>(M1:Ho1:M41:S15)<br>• Becomes the messiah and bring hope<br>(M1:Ho2:M11:S18) | a. Round Character<br>• Sometimes doubt his ability as leader<br>(M2:H00:M14:S18)<br>• Prophecy that shows terrifying vision<br>(M2:Ho1:M35:S39)<br>(M3:Ho1:M32:S40)<br>• Reluctant being a leader<br>(M3:H00:M27:S56)<br>• Forcefully accepting his role and realizing his terrifying future<br>(M3:Ho1:M58:S17)<br>(M3:Ho2:M36:S43) |
| Chani         | a. Round Character<br>• No Data                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | a. Round Character<br>• Skeptical against the prophecy<br>(M3:Ho2:Mo1:S43)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Feyd          | a. Flat Character<br>• No Data                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | a. Round Character<br>• Posses High Intellectual capabilities<br>(M3:Ho1:M24:S49)<br>(M3:Ho1:M43:S19)<br>• Have a sense of respect to enemy that satisfy him<br>(M3:Ho2:M32:S22)                                                                                                                                                      |

|                          |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stilgar                  | a. Flat Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Data</li> </ul>                                                | a. Round Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A fanatic who strongly believe in Prophecy (M3:Ho1:M16:S44)</li> <li>A mentor who taught Paul way of Fremen life (M3:Hoo:M29:S32)</li> </ul> |
| Baron Vladimir Harkonnen | a. Flat Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More over the top and act like maniac (M1:Hoo:M35:S28)</li> </ul> | a. Flat Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More calmer and calculated (M2:Hoo:M19:S34)</li> </ul>                                                                                        |

Characterization reveals some of the most significant contrasts between the two adaptations. According to Klarer (1999), characters can be classified as *flat*, defined by a single dominant trait, or *round*, characterized by psychological depth and complexity. Although David Lynch's and Denis Villeneuve's films feature the same principal characters, the degree to which these characters are developed differs greatly, with Villeneuve consistently presenting more layered and nuanced portrayals.

Paul Atreides exemplifies this difference most clearly. In Lynch's adaptation, Paul is depicted as confident, decisive, and largely certain of his destiny. His dominant traits leadership, determination, and messianic authority remain stable throughout the narrative, positioning him as a heroic figure who readily accepts his role as the Kwisatz Haderach. His transformation is portrayed as a triumphant fulfillment of prophecy, with little emphasis on inner struggle. By contrast, Villeneuve's Paul is defined by hesitation, fear, and moral awareness. He is burdened by visions of a violent future and repeatedly questions whether embracing his destiny will lead to salvation or destruction. This internal conflict deepens his characterization, making him a reluctant leader whose rise to power is shaped by anxiety and ethical doubt rather than confidence alone.

The supporting characters further reinforce this contrast in characterization. Chani, for instance, functions mainly as a supportive figure and love interest in Lynch's version, aligning herself fully with Paul's prophetic role. In Villeneuve's adaptation, however, she emerges as a more independent and skeptical character who questions the legitimacy of the prophecy and resists blind religious devotion. This skepticism gives her a stronger narrative voice and positions her as a counterbalance to the growing fanaticism among the Fremen. Similarly, Feyd-Rautha undergoes a notable transformation. Lynch portrays him as a flat antagonist driven almost entirely by sadism and excess. Villeneuve reimagines him as a more intellectually capable and disciplined figure, whose brutality is paired with strategic intelligence and a disturbing sense of honor toward worthy opponents.

Other characters are also enriched in Villeneuve's adaptation. Stilgar, who functions largely as a straightforward tribal leader in Lynch's film, becomes a complex figure whose defining traits are religious fanaticism and mentorship. His unwavering belief in prophecy illustrates how faith can shape authority and influence communal behavior. Baron Harkonnen likewise shifts from an exaggerated, grotesque villain in Lynch's version to a calmer and more calculating antagonist in Villeneuve's film. While both portray him as cruel and greedy, Villeneuve's Baron is defined by control and strategic thinking rather than theatrical madness, making his menace more subtle yet more intimidating. Overall, these differences demonstrate how Villeneuve's adaptation emphasizes dominant traits such as doubt, fanaticism, and calculation to create rounder and more psychologically complex characters compared to Lynch's more simplified character portrayals.

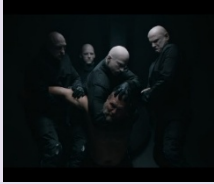
## C. Settings

TABLE 5. Setting Similarities

| Type of Settings      | David Lynch                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Villeneuve                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Geographical Settings | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Calladan (M1:H00:Mo4:S10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Planet Caladan, home of House Atreides.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Giedi Prime (M1:H00:Mo4:S15) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Planet Giedi Prime, home of House Harkonnen.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Arrakis (M1:H00:Mo4:So6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Planet Arrakis, source of the spice.”</li> </ul> </li> </ol>                                                                    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Calladan (M2:H00:Mo3:S35) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caladan Homeworld Of House Atreides</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Giedi Prime (M1:H00:M18:S21) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeworld Of House Harkonnen</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Arrakis (M2:H00:Mo0:S52) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “My planet, Arrakis, is so beautiful”</li> </ul> </li> </ol>                                                                                       |
| Historical Settings   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. year 10,191. (M1:H00:Mo0:S54)</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Year 10191 (M2:H00:Mo3:S31)</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Social Settings       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. House of Atreides (M1:H00:Mo4:S10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “...House Atreides.”</li> <li>• </li> </ul> </li> <li>2. House Harkonnen (M1:H00:Mo4:S15) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “...Home of House Harkonnen.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. The Fremen (M1:H00:Mo2:So6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “...people known as the Fremen.”</li> </ul> </li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. House of Atreides (M2:H00:Mo3:S35) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ...House Atreides</li> <li>• </li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Harkonnen (M2:H00:M18:S21) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ...House Harkonnen</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. The Fremen (M2:H00:Mo5:S38) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only the native tribes known as the Fremen...</li> </ul> </li> </ol> |

TABLE 5. **Setting Differences**

| Type of Settings      | David Lynch                                                                         | Villeneuve                                                                           |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Geographical Settings | 1. Calladan                                                                         | 1. Calladan                                                                          |
|                       |    |    |
|                       |    |    |
|                       | 2. Giedi Prime                                                                      | 2. Giedi Prime                                                                       |
|                       |    |   |
|                       |  |  |
|                       | 3. Arrakis                                                                          | 3. Arrakis                                                                           |
|                       |  |  |
|                       |  |  |
| Historical Settings   | No Data                                                                             | No Data                                                                              |

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Social Settings | 1. Harkonnen                                                                                                                                                         | 1. Harkonnen                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                 |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                 | 2. Fremen                                                                                                                                                            | 2. Fremen                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                 |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                 | No Data                                                                                                                                                              | 3. Different Language                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                 |                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign Language</li> </ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Hesshyashaho sa vothash birsii! “Ru Kala dhika ekker a-Kwad”! Hi ho vejii ! Qithlas ha!”</li> <li>• “O Arraksa gasas isru haiyataha birsiiya!”</li> <li>• “So vahii sanai!”</li> </ul> |

Both adaptations of Dune share several fundamental similarities in their settings. Geographically, they are built around the same three major locations Caladan, Giedi Prime, and Arrakis which function as the central environments for the story. They also take place in the same historical period, the year 10,191, maintaining consistency with the timeline of the original universe. Socially, both films focus on the interactions between House Atreides, House Harkonnen, and the Fremen, and both portray Atreides members wearing formal, uniform-style attire, reflecting their noble and orderly background.

However, despite these similarities both adaptations differ notably in how these settings are visualized. Lynch's version relies heavily on indoor settings, especially on Caladan, and presents Giedi Prime as an industrial factory-like world with limited outdoor scenes of Arrakis. In contrast, Villeneuve uses wide outdoor landscapes across multiple planets, depicts Giedi Prime in a striking black-and-white aesthetic, and offers more detailed views of Arrakis, including Arrakeen and the sietches. Socially, Lynch portrays the Harkonnens with alien-like appearances and shows the Fremen mostly in stillsuits, while Villeneuve depicts the Harkonnens as bald, intimidating figures in black coats and gives the Fremen Middle Eastern-inspired clothing, scarves, turbans, and even introduces their spoken and sign languages, giving their culture more depth.

#### **D. The Role of Historical Era in Shaping the Adaptations**

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that historical era plays a decisive role in shaping the differences between David Lynch's *Dune* (1984) and Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* (2021–2024). Although both films adapt the same source material, they are products of different cinematic, technological, and cultural contexts, which significantly influence their narrative construction and thematic emphasis.

In terms of plot, the difference in era affects narrative complexity. Villeneuve's adaptation, produced in a contemporary cinematic environment with longer runtime expectations, allows for a more layered and carefully developed plot. This results in a slower exposition, prolonged rising action, and a more morally complex climax and resolution. Lynch's version, shaped by the filmmaking conventions and runtime limitations of the 1980s, follows a more direct and traditional heroic structure.

Character development is likewise influenced by era. Villeneuve's adaptation reflects modern storytelling tendencies that favor psychological depth and moral ambiguity. As a result, characters such as Paul and Chani are portrayed with greater nuance, internal conflict, and ideological tension. In contrast, Lynch's characters tend to embody clearer and more stable traits, aligning with a classical heroic narrative common to its time.

The influence of era is most visible in the depiction of setting. Technological advancements enable Villeneuve to present expansive outdoor environments, detailed architecture, and immersive landscapes, while also reflecting contemporary concerns with cultural diversity and representation. Lynch's reliance on indoor and stylized settings reflects both the technological constraints and cinematic aesthetics of the earlier period.

Therefore, this study concludes that era is the central factor explaining the differences between the two adaptations. Through changes in narrative expectations, character complexity, technological capability, and ideological perspective, each era produces a distinct interpretation of *Dune*, demonstrating how adaptation is not only shaped by the source text but also by the time in which it is created. Finally, the difference in era shapes how each adaptation concludes its narrative. Lynch's film ends with a closed and optimistic resolution that reinforces mythic heroism, while Villeneuve's version deliberately adopts an open ending that positions Paul's ascension as the beginning of large-scale conflict. This reflects a modern critical approach to the messianic and "chosen one" trope and signifies a possible continuity.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This study examines the differences between David Lynch's *Dune* (1984) and Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* (2021–2024) by focusing on plot, character, and setting. Although both films adapt the same novel by Frank Herbert, the findings of this research show that the two adaptations present significant differences in narrative structure, characterization, and visual representation. These differences are not accidental but are strongly influenced by the historical era in which each film was produced.

In terms of plot, the study finds that Villeneuve's adaptation presents a more complex and carefully developed narrative compared to Lynch's version. This difference is largely influenced by runtime and contemporary storytelling conventions. Lynch's film follows a more traditional heroic structure with a direct exposition, rapid progression, and a closed, optimistic ending. Villeneuve's version, on the other hand, develops the plot gradually, emphasizing tension,

uncertainty, and moral conflict. The climax and resolution in Villeneuve's adaptation critically question the idea of prophecy and messianic destiny, presenting Paul's rise to power as the beginning of large-scale violence rather than a final resolution.

Regarding characterization, the influence of era is evident in the depth and complexity of the characters. Lynch's characters tend to display stable and clearly defined traits, reflecting a classical heroic narrative. In contrast, Villeneuve's adaptation portrays characters with greater psychological depth and moral ambiguity. Paul Atreides is depicted as a reluctant leader burdened by doubt and fear, while Chani functions as a critical voice that questions blind religious belief. Supporting characters such as Stilgar, Feyd-Rautha, and Baron Harkonnen are also presented with more nuance, reflecting modern cinematic preferences for complex and layered character portrayals.

The setting further demonstrates the impact of era, particularly in terms of technology and social values. Lynch's adaptation relies heavily on enclosed and stylized indoor settings, reflecting the technological limitations of its time. Villeneuve's adaptation benefits from advancements in film technology, allowing for expansive outdoor landscapes and immersive environmental design, especially in the depiction of Arrakis. In addition, Villeneuve's film reflects contemporary concerns with diversity and cultural representation, presenting a richer and more varied social setting than Lynch's version.

Based on these findings, This study concludes that historical era functions as the central factor shaping the divergent interpretations of *Dune*. More broadly, the findings suggest that film adaptation is not merely a process of transferring narrative content from text to screen, but a dynamic reinterpretation influenced by evolving cinematic practices, technological advancements, and ideological contexts. In this way, the study contributes to adaptation studies by demonstrating the importance of a diachronic perspective in understanding how meaning is reshaped across different periods, highlighting that each adaptation reflects not only the source text but also the values and expectations of its time.

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