Frank Herbert

Frank Herbert

For the New Jersey politician, see Frank Herbert (politician).

Franklin Patrick Herbert, Jr. (October 8, 1920 – February 11, 1986) was an American science fiction writer best known for the novel *Dune* and its five sequels. Though he became famous for his long novels, he was also a newspaper journalist, photographer, short story writer, book reviewer, ecological consultant and lecturer.

Frank Herbert

Born 
October 8, 1920
Tacoma, Washington, U.S.

Died 
February 11, 1986 (aged 65)
Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.

Occupation 
Novelist

Nationality 
American

Alma mater 
University of Washington (no degree)

Period 
1945–1986

Genre 
Science fiction

Herbert's novella "The Priests of Psi" was the cover story for
Sterling E. Lanier, an editor of One editor prophetically wrote, "I might be making the mistake of the decade, but ...". Installments, "Dune World" from December 1963 and "Prophet of Dune" in 1965, were the only students who had sold any work for publication; Herbert had sold two pulp adventure stories to magazines, the first to Esquire in 1945, and Stuart had sold a story to Modern Romance magazine. They married in Seattle, Washington on June 20, 1946, and had two sons, Brian Patrick Herbert (b. June 29, 1947, Seattle, Washington) and Bruce Calvin Herbert (b. June 26, 1951, Santa Rosa, California). In 1949 Herbert and his wife moved to California to work on the Santa Rosa Press-Democrat. Here they befriended the psychologists Ralph and Irene Slattery. The Slatterys introduced Herbert to the work of several thinkers who would influence his writing, including Freud, Jung, Jaspers and Heidegger; they also familiarized Herbert with Zen Buddhism.

Herbert did not graduate from the university; according to his son Brian, he wanted to study only what interested him and so did not complete the required curriculum. He returned to journalism and worked at the Seattle Star and the Oregon Statesman. He was a writer and editor for the San Francisco Examiner's California Living magazine for a decade. In 1973 interview, Herbert stated that he had been reading science fiction "about ten years" before he began writing in the genre, and he listed his favorite authors as H. G. Wells, Robert A. Heinlein, Poul Anderson and Jack Vance. Herbert's first science fiction story, "Looking for Something", was published in the April 1952 issue of Startling Stories, then a monthly edited by Samuel Mines. Three more of his stories appeared in 1954 issues of Astounding Science Fiction and Amazing Stories. His career as a novelist began in 1955 with the serial publication of Under Pressure in Astounding from November 1955; afterward it was issued as a book by Doubleday, The Dragon in the Sea. The story explored sanity and madness in the environment of a 21st-century submarine and predicted worldwide conflicts over oil consumption and production. It was a critical success but not a major commercial one. During this time Herbert also worked as a speechwriter for Republican senator Guy Cordon.

Dune

The Oregon Dunes, near Florence, Oregon, served as an inspiration for the Dune saga. Herbert began researching Dune in 1959. He was able to devote himself wholeheartedly to his writing career because his wife returned to work full-time as an advertising writer for department stores, becoming the breadwinner during the 1960s. He later told Willis E. McNelly that the novel originated when he was supposed to do a magazine article on sand dunes in the Oregon Dunes near Florence, Oregon. He became too involved and ended up with far more raw material than needed for an article. The article was never written, but instead planted the seed that led to Dune.

Dune took six years of research and writing to complete and it was much longer than commercial science fiction of the time was supposed to be. Analog (the renamed Astounding, still edited by John W. Campbell) published it in two parts comprising eight installments, "Dune World" from December 1963 and "Prophet of Dune" in 1965. It was then rejected by nearly twenty book publishers. One editor prophetically wrote, "I might be making the mistake of the decade, but ...".

Sterling E. Lanier, an editor of Chilton Book Company (known mainly for its auto-repair manuals) had read the Dune serials and offered
A $7,500 advance plus future royalties for the rights to publish them as a hardcover book. Herbert rewrote much of his text. Dune was soon a critical success. It won the Nebula Award for Best Novel in 1965 and shared the Hugo Award in 1966 with *...And Call Me Conrad* by Roger Zelazny. *Dune* was the first major ecological science fiction novel, embracing a multitude of sweeping, interrelated themes and multiple character viewpoints, a method that ran through all Herbert's mature work.

*Dune* was not an immediate bestseller. By 1968 Herbert had made $20,000 from it, far more than most science fiction novels of the time were generating, but not enough to let him take up full-time writing. However, the publication of *Dune* did open doors for him. He was the Seattle Post-Intelligencer's education writer from 1969 to 1972 and lecturer in general studies and interdisciplinary studies at the University of Washington (1970–1972). He worked in Vietnam and Pakistan as a social and ecological consultant in 1972. In 1973 he was director-photographer of the television show *The Tillers*. After Beverly's death, Herbert married Theresa Shackleford in 1985, the year he published *The tillers*. 

A man is a fool not to put everything he has, at any given moment, into what he is creating. You're there now doing the thing on paper. You're not killing the goose, you're just producing an egg. So I don't worry about inspiration, or anything like that. It's a matter of just sitting down and working. I have never had the problem of a writing block. I've heard about it. I've felt reluctant to write on some days, for whole weeks, or sometimes even longer. I'd much rather go fishing, for example, or go sharpen pencils, or go swimming, or what not. But, later, coming back and reading what I have produced, I am unable to detect the difference between what came easily and when I had to sit down and say, "Well, now it's writing time and now I'll write." There's no difference on paper between the two.

— Frank Herbert

By the end of 1972, Herbert had retired from newspaper writing and become a full-time fiction writer. During the 1970s and 1980s, Herbert enjoyed considerable commercial success as an author. He divided his time between homes in Hawaii and Washington's Olympic Peninsula; his home in Port Townsend on the peninsula was intended to be an "ecological demonstration project". During this time he wrote numerous books and pushed ecological and philosophical ideas. He continued his *Dune* saga, following it with *Dune Messiah, Children of Dune*, and *God Emperor of Dune*. Other highlights were *The Dossi, Experiment*, *The Godmakers*, *The White Plague* and the books he wrote in partnership with *Bill Ransom: The Jesus Incident, The Lazarus Effect*, and *The Ascension Factor* which were sequels to *Destination: Void*. He also helped launch the career of *Terry Brooks* with a very positive review of Brooks' first novel, *The Sword of Shannara* in 1977.

Success, family changes, and death

Herbert's change in fortune was shadowed by tragedy. In 1974, Beverly underwent an operation for cancer. She lived ten more years, but her health was adversely affected by the surgery.

In 1973 he met anthropologist James Funaro with whom he conceived the *Contact Conference*. Beverly Herbert died on February 7, 1984, the same year that *Heretics of Dune* was published; in his afterword to 1985's *Chapterhouse: Dune*, Frank Herbert wrote a eulogy for her.

In 1983, British heavy metal band Iron Maiden requested permission from Herbert's publisher to name a song on their album *Piece of Mind* after *Dune*, but were told that the author had had a long distaste for their style of music. They instead titled the song "To Tame a Land".

1984 was a tumultuous year in Herbert's life. During this same year of his wife's death, his career took off with the release *David Lynch*’s film version of *Dune*. Despite high expectations, a big-budget production design and an A-list cast, the movie drew mostly poor reviews in the United States. However, despite a disappointing response in the US, the film was a critical and commercial success in Europe and Japan.

After Beverly's death, Herbert married Theresa Shackleford in 1985, the year he published *Chapterhouse: Dune*, which tied up many of the saga's story threads. This would be Herbert's final single work (the collection *Eye* was published that year, and *Man of Two Worlds* was published in 1986). He died of a massive pulmonary embolism while recovering from surgery for pancreatic cancer on February 11, 1986, in Madison, Wisconsin, age 65. He was raised a Catholic but adopted Zen Buddhism as an adult.

Criticism of government

Herbert was a strong critic of the Soviet Union. He was a distant relative of the controversial Republican senator, Joseph McCarthy, whom he referred to as "Cousin Joe." Herbert was appalled to learn of McCarthy's blacklisting of suspected Communists from working in certain careers and believed that he was endangering essential freedoms of citizens of the United States. Herbert believed that governments lie to protect themselves and that, following the infamous Watergate scandal, President Richard Nixon had unwittingly taught an important lesson in not trusting government. Herbert also opposed American involvement in the US war in Vietnam.

In *Chapterhouse: Dune,* he wrote: 

All governments suffer a recurring problem: Power attracts pathological personalities. It is not that power corrupts but that it is magnetic to the corruptible. Such people have a tendency to become drunk on violence, a condition to which they are quickly
I think science fiction does help, and it points in very interesting directions. It points in relativistic directions. It says that we have the imagination for these other opportunities, these other choices. We tend to tie ourselves down to limited choices. We say, "Well, the only answer is ..." or, "If you would just ...". Whatever follows these two statements narrows the choices right there. It gets the vision right down close to the ground so that you don't see anything happening outside. Humans tend not to see over a long range. Now we are required, in these generations, to have a longer range view of what we inflict on the world around us. This is where, I think, science fiction is helping. I don't think that the mere writing of such a book as *Brave New World* or *1984* prevents those things which are portrayed in those books from happening. But I do think they alert us to that possibility and make that possibility less likely. They make us aware that we may be going in that direction. [citation needed]

— Frank Herbert

Frank Herbert used his science fiction novels to explore complex ideas involving philosophy, religion, psychology, politics and ecology. The underlying thrust of his work was a fascination with the question of human survival and evolution. Herbert has attracted a sometimes fanatical fan base, many of whom have tried to read everything he wrote, fiction or non-fiction, and see Herbert as something of an authority on the subject matters of his books. Indeed, such was the devotion of some of his readers that Herbert was at times asked if he was founding a cult, something he was very much against.

There are a number of key themes in Herbert's work:

- A concern with leadership. He explored the human tendency to slavishly follow charismatic leaders. He delved into both the flaws and potentials of bureaucracy and government.
- Herbert was the first science fiction author to popularize ideas about ecology and systems thinking. He stressed the need for humans to think both systematically and long-term.
- The relationship between religion, politics and power.
- Human survival and evolution: Herbert writes of the Fremen, the Sardaukar, and the Dosadi, who are molded by their terrible living conditions into dangerous super races.
- Human possibilities and potential: Herbert offered Mentats, the Bene Gesserit and the Bene Tleilax as different visions of human potential.
- The nature of sanity and madness. Frank Herbert was interested in the work of Thomas Szasz and the anti-psychiatry movement. Often, Herbert poses the question, "What is sane?", and while there are clearly insane behaviors and psychopathies as evinced by characters (Piter De Vries for instance), it is often suggested that normal and abnormal are relative terms which humans are sometimes ill-equipped to apply to one another, especially on the basis of statistical regularity.
- The possible effects and consequences of consciousness-altering chemicals, such as the spice in the *Dune* saga, as well as the "Jaspers" fungus in *The Santaroga Barrier*, and the Kelp in the *Destination: Void* sequence.
- How language shapes thought. More specifically, Herbert was influenced by Alfred Korzybski's *General Semantics*. Algis Budrys wrote that his knowledge of language and linguistics "is worth at least one Ph.D. and the Chair of Philology at a good New England college".
- Sociobiology. How our instincts unconsciously influence our behavior and society.
- Learning, teaching, and thinking.

Frank Herbert refrained from offering his readers formulaic answers to many of the questions he explored.

**Status and influence on science fiction**

*Dune* and the *Dune* saga constitute one of the world's best-selling science fiction series and novels; *Dune* in particular has received widespread critical acclaim, winning the Nebula Award in 1965 and sharing the Hugo Award in 1966, and is frequently considered one of the best science fiction novels ever, if not the best. *Locus* subscribers voted it the all-time best SF novel in 1975, again in 1987, and the best "before 1990" in 1998.

*Dune* is considered a landmark novel for a number of reasons:

- *Dune* is a landmark of soft science fiction. Herbert deliberately suppressed technology in his *Dune* universe so he could address the future of humanity, rather than the future of humanity's technology. *Dune* considers the way humans and their institutions might change over time.
- *Dune* was the first major ecological science fiction novel. Frank Herbert was a great popularizer of scientific ideas; many of his fans credit Frank Herbert for introducing them to philosophy and psychology. In *Dune* he helped popularize the term ecology and some of the field's concepts, vividly imparting a sense of planetary awareness.
- *Dune* is considered a landmark novel for a number of reasons: [citation needed] Gerald Jonas explains in *The New York Times Book Review*: "So completely did Mr. Herbert work out the interactions of man and beast and geography and climate..."
that *Dune* became the standard for a new subgenre of 'ecological' science fiction.” As popularity of *Dune* rose, Herbert embarked on a lecture tour of college campuses, explaining how the environmental concerns of Dune's inhabitants were analogous to our own. [citation needed]

- *Dune* is considered an epic example of literary world-building. *The Library Journal* reports that "*Dune* is to science fiction what *The Lord of the Rings* is to fantasy". Arthur C. Clarke is quoted as making a similar statement on the back cover of a paper edition of *Dune*. [55] Frank Herbert imagined every facet of his creation. He lovingly included glossaries, quotes, documents, and histories, to bring his universe alive to his readers. No science fiction novel before it had so vividly realized life on another world. [56]

Herbert never again equaled the critical acclaim he received for *Dune* nor any of his other books won a Hugo or Nebula Award, although almost all of them were *New York Times Best Sellers* [citation needed][36] Some felt that *Children of Dune* was almost too literary and too dark to get the recognition it may have deserved; others felt that *The Dosadi Experiment* lacked an epic quality that fans had come to expect. [citation needed]

Malcolm Edwards in the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* wrote:

Much of Herbert's work makes difficult reading. His ideas were genuinely developed concepts, not merely decorative notions, but they were sometimes embodied in excessively complicated plots and articulated in prose which did not always match the level of thinking [...] His best novels, however, were the work of a speculative intellect with few rivals in modern science fiction. [37]

The *Science Fiction Hall of Fame* inducted Herbert in 2006.[36][38][39]

California State University, Fullerton's Pollack Library has several of Herbert's draft manuscripts of *Dune* and other works, with the author's notes, in their Frank Herbert Archives.[40]

### Bibliography

#### Edit

Main article: Frank Herbert bibliography

#### Posthumously published works


In recent years, Frank Herbert's son Brian Herbert and author Kevin J. Anderson have added to the *Dune* franchise, using notes left behind by Frank Herbert and discovered over a decade after his death. Brian Herbert and Anderson have written two prequel trilogies (*Prelude to Dune* and *Legends of Dune*) exploring the history of the *Dune* universe before the events within *Dune*, as well as two post-Chapterhouse *Dune* novels that complete the original series (*Hunters of Dune* and *Sandworms of Dune*) based on Frank Herbert's own *Dune* outline.[45][46][47][48][49][50][51][52]

#### See also

Edit

### References

1. ["Google Books - Dune". Retrieved January 21, 2018. "Frank Herbert was born Franklin Patrick Herbert, Jr. in Tacoma, Washington on October 8, 1920."]
2. ["SCI FI Channel Auction to Benefit Reading Is Fundamental" PNNonline.org (Internet Archive). March 18, 2003. Archived from the original on September 28, 2007. Retrieved September 28, 2007. "Since its debut in 1965, Frank Herbert's *Dune* has sold over 12 million copies worldwide, making it the best-selling science fiction novel of all time ... Frank Herbert's *Dune* saga is one of the greatest 20th Century contributions to literature."
8. [Herbert at the Internet Speculative Fiction Database (ISFDB). Retrieved 2013-04-24. Select a title to see its linked publication history and general information. Select a particular edition (title) for more data at that level, such as a front cover image or linked contents.
More of the Bene Gesserit technology of consciousness is based on the insights of general semantics, a philosophy and training objects (things) and not on systems (processes)." Frank Herbert, "Doll Factory, Gun Factory", (1973 Essay), reprinted in February 14, 1969 elaborates the intrigue at the cost of other elements, but "Children of Dune" (1976) recaptures much of the strength of the original work and addresses another recurrent theme in FH's work – the evolution of Man, in this case into SUPERMAN;..." "Frank Herbert," The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction.

"When I was quite young ... I began to suspect there must be flaws in my sense of reality ... But I had been produced to focus on ... to focus his attention on Byzantine intrigue. Dune provided a template for FH's more significant later works. Sequels soon began to appear which carried on the arguments of the original in testing various manners and with an intensity of discourse seldom encountered in the sf field. Dune Messiah (1969) elaborates the intrigue at the cost of other elements, but Children of Dune (1976) recaptures much of the strength of the original work and addresses another recurrent theme in FH's work – the evolution of Man, in this case into SUPERMAN;..." "Frank Herbert," The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction.

"With its blend (or sometimes clash) of complex intellectual discourse and Byzantine intrigue, Dune provided a template for FH's more significant later works. Sequels soon began to appear which carried on the arguments of the original in testing various manners and with an intensity of discourse seldom encountered in the sf field. Dune Messiah (1969) elaborates the intrigue at the cost of other elements, but Children of Dune (1976) recaptures much of the strength of the original work and addresses another recurrent theme in FH's work – the evolution of Man, in this case into SUPERMAN;..." "Frank Herbert," The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction.

"When I was quite young ... I began to suspect there must be flaws in my sense of reality ... But I had been produced to focus on objects (things) and not on systems (processes)." Frank Herbert, "Doll Factory, Gun Factory", (1973 Essay), reprinted in The Maker of Dune: Thoughts of a Science Fiction Master edited by Tim O'Reilly. Berkley Books, 1987 ISBN 0425097854

"Frank Herbert's true stroke of genius consisted ... in inviting a way of thinking about humanity, history, religion, and politics as complex and interdependent as ecosystems themselves". Jeffery Nicholas, Dune and Philosophy: Weirding Way of Mental Open Court Publishing, 2011 ISBN 0812697154, p.149.

"Much of the Bene Gesserit technology of consciousness is based on the insights of general semantics, a philosophy and training method developed in the 1930s by Alfred Korzybski. Herbert had studied general semantics in San Francisco at about the time he was writing Dune. (At one point, he worked as a ghostwriter for a nationally syndicated column by S. I. Hayakawa, one of the foremost proponents of general semantics.)"
Study

1984 interview with 


"Frank Herbert

O'Reilly, Timothy (ed.)

O'Reilly, Timothy.

Levack, Daniel JH; Willard, Mark.

Grazier, Kevin R.

Clarke, Jason.

on Herbert's brief outline

\(^\text{3}\) different things,' he said. 'Brian and I had a lot to work with and a lot to expand...'

deal of character background information. 'But having a roadmap of the U.S. and actually driving across the country are two

19, 2007

he found ... over three thousand pages of Frank Herbert's other notes, background material, and character sketches.

... Later, when Brian was cleaning out his garage, in the back he found ... over three thousand pages of Frank Herbert's other notes, background material, and character sketches."

Ascher, Ian (2004). "Kevin J. Anderson Interview", DigitalWebbing.com. Archived from the original on July 3, 2007. Retrieved July 3, 2007. "... we are ready to tackle the next major challenge—writing the grand climax of the saga that Frank Herbert left in his original notes sealed in a safe deposit box ... after we'd already decided what we wanted to write ... They opened up the safe deposit box and found inside the full and complete outline for Dune 7— it was a 30-page outline. So I went up in my attic and found another 1,000 pages of working notes."

A "Before Dune, After Frank Herbert", Amazon.com. 2004. Archived from the original on April 9, 2009. Retrieved November 12, 2008. "Brian was cleaning out his garage to make an office space and he found all these boxes that had Dune Notes' on the side. And we used a lot of them for our House books."

A "Interview with Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson"; Arrakis.ru. 2004. Archived from the original on September 8, 2012. Retrieved November 12, 2008. "We had already started work on House Atreides ... After we already had our general outline written and the proposal sent to publishers, then we found the outlines and notes. (This necessitated some changes, of course.)"


Further reading


External links

- Official website for Brian Herbert and Kevin Anderson
- Frank Herbert SF Hall of Fame induction (Kevin Anderson report with his speech)
- "Frank Herbert biography", Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame
- 1984 interview with L. A. Reader. part 1, 2, 3

Biography and criticism

- Frank Herbert biography at the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction
- Arabic and Islamic themes in Frank Herbert's Dune novels
- Study by Tim O'Reilly of Frank Herbert's work up to the Jesus Incident; one of the more in-depth studies of Frank Herbert's
thoughts and ideas
- Article on the inspirations for Dune
- "Frank Herbert, the Dune Man"- (Frederik Pohl)
  - "Frank Herbert, the Dune Man, Part 2"

Bibliography and works Edit

- Works by Frank Herbert at Project Gutenberg
- Works by or about Frank Herbert at Internet Archive
- Works by Frank Herbert at LibriVox (public domain audiobooks)
- Frank Herbert at the Internet Speculative Fiction Database
- Frank Herbert at the Internet Book List
- Frank Herbert at the Internet Book Database of Fiction
- Works by Frank Herbert at Open Library
- Frank Herbert at Library of Congress Authorities, with 69 catalog records

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1346 quotes from Frank Herbert: 'I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.',
'There is no real ending.  Frank Herbert quotes Showing 1-30 of 1,346. 'I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Franklin Patrick Herbert, Jr. (October 8, 1920 – February 11, 1986) was an American science fiction writer best known for the novel Dune and its five sequels. Though he became famous for his long novels, he was also a newspaper journalist, photographer, short story writer, book reviewer, ecological consultant and lecturer. The Dune saga, set in the distant future and taking place over millennia, deals with complex themes such as human survival and evolution, ecology, and the intersection of religion