

Research Article

The Interplay of Science and Religion in Isaac Asimov's Foundation Series and Frank Herbert's *Dune*

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Abstract

This paper compares the interplay of science and religion in the *Foundation* series (Isaac Asimov) to the *Dune* series (Frank Herbert). In the *Foundation* series, science has displaced religion in the future, though religion is present on various planets at various times, but only as a calculated political hoax or a false system of belief and practice. Salvor Hardin passes technological devices off as magical in the Four Kingdoms surrounding Terminus and a naïve priesthood emerges. On Comporellon, Trevis, who is in search of the Second Foundation, is immediately arrested. He meets with First Minister Lizalor and learns that Comporellon is a fundamentalist religious state which regards marriage as a sacrament, condemning the sexual relationship of two of his companions. But in *Dune*, religion and science go hand in hand with Paul Atreides (*Muadib*) becoming the Dune Messiah, and using his own powers (the voice), the Fremen, sandworms and blasters to defeat House Harkonnen. The religion is later codified and reified following the triumph and disappearance of *Muadib*. The Fremen and the Bene Gesserit are deeply religious groups who develop narratives to justify their oft times questionable practices. Leto, the son of *Muadib*, becomes the God Emperor of Dune, half human and half divine. So, in the *Dune* series the power of religion is central from the rise and disappearance of *Muadib* to the transmutation of Leto.

Keywords

Asimov, Herbert, Science Fiction, Fantasy, Foundation, Dune, Technology, Religion

1. Introduction

This paper compares the interplay of science and religion in the *Foundation* series (Asimov) to the *Dune* series (Herbert). In Asimov, science has displaced religion in the future, but in *Dune*, religion and science go hand in hand with Paul Atreides (*Muadib*) becoming the Dune Messiah, and using his own powers (the voice), the Fremen, sandworms and blasters to defeat House Harkonnen. The religion is later codified and reified following the triumph and disappearance of *Muadib*. The Fremen, the Bene Gesserit and later Leto, the transmutation

God Emperor of Dune, continue to vie for control of the planet and its dwindling supply of mēlange. So, in the *Dune* series the power of religion is central from the rise and disappearance of *Muadib* to the transmutation of Leto. But post-modern critics argue that religion and metanarratives seem to have died, which provides a clear indicator of the shift to post-modernism. In *The Illusion of the End*, Jean Baudrillard declares that the notion of a final end (*telos*)—"as set forth in the stabilizing myths of the western religions"—has disappeared.

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Received: 30 November 2025; **Accepted:** 16 December 2025; **Published:** 19 January 2026



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The happy consciousness of eternity and immortality is ended. The problem of the end becomes crucial and insoluble. *There will no longer be an end.* We enter upon a kind of radical indeterminacy” [8]. Jean-Francois Lyotard (“simplifying to the extreme”) defines postmodernism as “incredulity toward metanarratives,” to wit, the two alternative myths to science and technology: the French myth of the “liberation of humanity” and the German myth of “the speculative unity of all knowledge” (Hegelian and Marxist) [17]. But this also includes religious metanarratives. In short, according to Baudrillard and Lyotard, the big stories with the big endings are either inimical or incredulous to postmodern sensibility. Hans Blumenberg, though, has argued that religious stories *kill*—they kill both time and fear, and make the world a little less frightening and a little more familiar [9]. Further, these stories ameliorate and quell “panic and paralysis the two extremes of anxiety behavior” [10]. Science and technology, for him, lack the explanatory powers of the older religious metanarratives, providing a rationale for the continued presence of religion in Herbert’s *Dune* series while other postmodern writers, like Baudrillard and Lyotard, argue the opposite, helping to explain why religion has disappeared in Asimov’s *Foundation* series.

2. Religion in Foundation

Hari Seldon, at the opening of *Foundation*, through the mathematical deductions of his “Psychohistory,” predicts the dissolution of the Galactic Empire in the next 300 years and a 30,000 year “dark ages” to follow unless the Empire creates a foundation to produce an “Encyclopedia Galactica” [1] on a remote planet, Terminus, far from Trantor, the Empire’s capitol. If this were done, Seldon predicts, the dark ages could be reduced to a mere millennium as stellar systems descended into war and chaos. During his trial for treason, Seldon asserts,

The Empire will vanish and all its good with it. Its accumulated knowledge will decay and the order it has imposed will vanish. Interstellar wars will be endless; interstellar trade will decay; population will decline; worlds will lose touch with the main body of the Galaxy. [1]

But, according to Seldon, there is a solution—if the 100,000 people currently working on his psychohistory are permitted to move to a far end of the Galaxy to work on the encyclopedia, the dark ages might be cut short:

But, if we now prepare a giant summary of *all* knowledge, it will never be lost. Coming generations will build on it, and will not have to rediscover it for themselves. One millennium will do the work of thirty thousand. [1]

The treason trial ends and Seldon gets his wish and more—one scientific collective is to be established on Terminus at one end of the Galaxy and a Second Foundation is to be established at “Star’s End,” on the other end.

The narrative continues, fifty years later, on Terminus, with the rise of Salvor Hardin, now Mayor of Terminus, preparing

to face the first “Seldon Crisis,” namely the uprising of Anacreon and the plan to crown sixteen-year old Leopold as king. Sermak, a councilman on Terminus, chides Hardin for turning science into religion by giving scientific gadgets based on nuclear power to the Four Kingdoms surrounding Terminus: “You’ve made half religion, half balderdash out of it. You’ve erected a hierarchy of priests and complicated, meaningless ritual” (Asimov 1951, 92). Hardin admits to the fraud, “because the barbarians looked upon our science as a sort of magical sorcery, and it was easiest to get them to accept it on the basis” [1]. In short, though the Four Kingdoms possess nuclear technologies, they haven’t a clue how they actually work and when the nuclear kitchen utensils, cars and ships break down, they are unable to repair them.

So, religion is a manufactured hoax to further Terminus’ control over the Four Kingdoms; it is a cover for Hardin’s work and an outright obfuscation, but it has become a burden to Poly Verisof, the High Priest of the “Galactic Spirit” on Anacreon whose “double status” as priest and liar “reminded him often and unpleasantly of a dance performed barefoot on hot metal” [1].

To the people of Anacreon he was high priest, representative of that Foundation, which, to those ‘barbarians,’ was the acme of mystery and the physical center of this religion they had created—with Hardin’s help—in the last three decades” [1].

But King Lepold’s Uncle Wienis, the vice regent, sees only the power held over Anacreon by Hardin and Terminus and senses an opportunity to throw off this oppressive yoke after an Anacreon vessel discovers an abandoned Imperial Cruiser, which, if repaired, could be used to destroy Terminus. So, Anacreon requests that Hardin repair the vessel and give it back as a gift, which Hardin does, to the dismay of his advisors. But Lepold has doubts and wonders if it would be “blasphemous” to the Galactic Spirit if Anacreon attacks the Foundation [1]. Wienis doesn’t believe any of this “balderdash,” but notes that since Lepold is perceived by his subjects to be king “by divine right” he would have unlimited power were the Foundation neutralized.

Hardin attends Lepold’s coronation, which corresponds exactly to the time when Anacreon has launched its ships, including the repaired Imperial Cruiser. So, at exactly midnight of the night of the Coronation and the imminent attack on the Foundation, the lights go out, literally, all over Anacreon. On the royal airship *Wienis*, Theo Aporat warns the crew of the ship that if they launch an attack on the Foundation they will be cursed:

In the name of the Galactic Spirit and of his prophet, Hari Seldon, and of his interpreters, the holy men of the Foundation, I curse this ship. [1]

It is a comprehensive curse which blinds, paralyzes and disables the ship, caused by a microwave relay in Hardin’s hand. As the ship goes dark the crew members gather around Aporat and confront Prince Lefkin, Wienis’ son, who reluctantly calls off the dog [1]. And so, the first “Seldon Crisis” is averted as

the Anacreon provocation is quelled.

Foundation ends with the ascension of Hober Mallow, a trader, to Mayor of Terminus. He faces a crisis with Korell, a communist planetary system, which appears to have Imperial nuclear plants, and which wants nothing to do with the religion offered with the nuclear devices Mallow sells. Mallow lands on the planet and is thrust into a crisis—a missionary has been taken captive by the people who wish to kill him. After questioning the missionary, Mallow releases him to the people who ostensibly torture and kill him.

Back on Terminus Mallow now faces murder charges brought on by the High Priest for the death of the missionary. But Mallow has recorded the confrontation and demonstrates that the “missionary” was actually an agent of the Korell Secret Police. As it turns out, Korell poses no threat to the Foundation, because their Imperial nuclear plants are old, outdated and cumbersome. Mallow contemplates the difference between the Empire and the Foundation:

The Empire has always been a realm of colossal resources. They’ve calculated everything in planets, in stellar systems, in whole sectors of the Galaxy. But we our little Foundation have had to work with brute economy. Our generators are the size of our thumb, because it was all the metal we could afford. We had to develop new techniques and new methods,—techniques and methods the Empire can’t follow because they have degenerated past the stage where they can make any really vital scientific advance. [1]

So, science and technological innovation trump religion and also trump the older technologies of the Empire. *Foundation*, the first of the book in the series, reveals a pattern of crisis, creative response on the part of Terminus, and the preservation of the First Foundation via clever manipulation of technological devices which appear magical to the “barbarian” kingdoms in the stellar neighborhood.

Foundation and Empire (Book II) opens two hundred years after the inception of the Foundation, as General Bel Riose searches for the “Magicians” (read Traders) who continue a rebellion against what’s left of the Empire. For the Foundation this constitutes the Fourth Seldon Crisis. The four commissioners who run Terminus still believe that the Seldon plan is in play and that any threat will be somehow thwarted, but how? Riose, after all, is approaching the Four Kingdoms and Terminus with ten Imperial space ships. It is Dulcem Barr, an old Siwennian Patrician and Lathan Devers, a trader from the region, captured by Riose, who save Terminus this time. They manage to foil Riose and escape from his ship, which causes the Emperor, Cleon II, to recall Riose and his fleet to Trantor.

The fifth Seldon crisis approaches three hundred years after the inception of the First Foundation, but Mayor Indbur III, who came to office by way of succession, does not believe in the Seldon Plan and is far more interested in collecting tax revenue from delinquent planets through the agency of Captain Han Pritcher, an intelligence officer for Terminus. Pritcher has obtained intelligence about a shadowy figure

called “The Mule” who apparently has taken the Kalgan planetary system with barely a fight. Pritcher goes to Kalgan and teams up with a newly married couple, Bayta and Toran, who have just rescued the Mule’s clown, Magnifico. They are joined by Ebling Mis, one of the only practicing psychologists on Terminus. As the five of them head to Trantor’s Library to learn about the Second Foundation, Pritcher gets Magnifico to talk a bit about the Mule, who is apparently a mutant with mental powers he uses to manipulate his enemies. Meanwhile, back on Terminus, the Vault is opened on the 300th anniversary of the planet’s founding and Seldon appears with an unwelcome message just as the Mule’s forces attack: “The attack at present is that of a too-undisciplined outer group of the Foundation [traders and Mule] against the too-authoritarian central government [Indbur et al.]. The procedure was necessary, the result obvious” [2]. The Foundation is sacked and the Mule’s forces occupy the planet.

Though the Mule is able to conquer the first Foundation, the second Foundation remains hidden from him and, as Bayta, Toran, Mis and Magnifico travel to Trantor, Pritcher and company apprehend them. At Trantor they find the old library still intact and Mis begins to study documents related to the establishment of the two foundations. Magnifico helps Mis sift through documents, but Mis grows weaker by the day, until he informs the group he has found the location of the Second Foundation. He is about to reveal the location when Bayta kills him with a blaster. Stunned, Toran confronts Bayta and she explains that she has figured out who the mule is and it is Magnifico. Unmasked, the Mule tells his story, explains the extent and limitations of his telepathic powers, and vows to defeat the Second Foundation as “the most powerful man in the Galaxy” [2, 3]. And he will spare Bayta and Toran, because Bayta was the first person the Mule ever met who accepted him for what he was. The saga continues without the mere mention of the religion invented by Hardin and used so effectively by Mallow. It is science, technology and yes, the telepathic powers of a mutant human which continue to drive the narrative.

Second Foundation (1953) is all about, well, the Second Foundation, including attempts on the part of First Foundation members to find it and successful attempts on the part of the Second Foundation to keep it hidden. Bail Channis and now General Pritcher travel to Tazenda, thinking that the name sounds like “Star’s End,” the alleged location of the Second Foundation. They are followed by the Mule to the planet Rossem where they encounter the First Speaker of the Second Foundation who successfully “converts” the Mule who returns to Terminus as a peaceful despot. But the search continues as Dr. Darrel, Peleas Anthor and three other scientists continue the search for the Second Foundation. They send Homir Munn to Kalgan with Darrel’s daughter, Arkady, a stowaway. On Kalgan the two meet Lord Stetting the “First Citizen” and his wife Callia, who turns out to be a member of the Second Foundation. Arkady flees Stettin to Trantor with Mamma and Pappa, an older couple who rescue her from Stettin at the

Spaceport. Meanwhile, Kalgan attacks Terminus and is roundly defeated while the five plotters continue to speculate about the location of the Second Foundation. Kalgan? Terminus? Where is “the opposite end of the Galaxy,” “Star’s End”? It turns out to be Trantor, where it all began, Preem Palver, aka “Pappa,” the First Speaker of the Second Foundation, explains to his understudy, for Trantor was the center of the old empire and “star’s end” to the millions of star systems in the empire.

Five hundred years have passed when *Foundation’s Edge* (Book IV) opens and Harla Branno is now Mayor of Terminus. She has decided to “exile” the arrogant Councilman, Golan Trevise, together with historian Pelorat, but, in fact she is sending Pelorat to search for Earth and Trevise to locate the Second Foundation. And she sends Munn Li Comporellon to follow them and report back to her since she does not trust Trevise. Both groups travel on gravitic ships which are far more sophisticated and efficient than the old nuclear ships. Trevise and Pelorat don’t find Earth, but they do find Gaia shortly before they are located by Stor Gendibal, a First Speaker from the Second Foundation, who has taken over Comporellon’s space ship. Rather, Gaia finds them and pulls their ship to the planet to encounter a collectivist culture more powerful than either the First or Second Foundation. There is a final standoff between a fleet of First Foundation ships, the Second Foundation Speaker and Bliss (who is with Pelorat and Trevise) and Gaia manages to keep its existence secret while sending Branno and Gendibal back to their respective planets, satisfied that they have triumphed one over the other, not knowing they have both been bested by Gaia. And it is Golan Trevise who makes the choice for Gaia, for a future Galaxia similar to the communalism of Gaia and not a future involving the hegemony of either the First or Second Foundation.

But Trevise has doubts about his choice when he, Bliss and Pelorat return to Gaia in *Foundation and Earth* (Book V) and prepare to search for Earth in the Comporellon stellar system, since history and rumors point to this system as being directly settled from the original planet. Trevise believes that if he can find Earth he will be able to articulate what’s he’s sensing as a fundamental flaw in Psychohistory and the Seldon Plan. On Comporellon, Trevise et al. are immediately arrested and separated. Trevise meets with First Minister Lizalor and learns that Comporellon is a fundamentalist religious state which regards marriage as a sacrament, condemning Pelorat and Bliss’s sexual relationship. One also is not permitted to say “Earth” but must substitute “the Oldest” for the taboo word, which requires one to cross one’s fingers lest “He Who Punishes” punish [5]. From Comporellon, the three set out to explore the 50 “Spacer” worlds established by the first space travelers from Earth and encounter wild dogs on Aurora, a deadly hermaphrodite (Bander) on Solaria, a killer moss on Melpomenia, and a fatal infection on New Earth. Having near death encounters on five worlds, Pelorat suggests Trevise find the central point of the 50 worlds and the closest star to that point, which should be Earth’s sun. They do find Earth, but it

is a dead world, too radioactive to even risk a landing, so they circle the planet, wondering what to do next. As Fallom, the hermaphrodite child picked up on Solaria, attempts to direct the ship’s computer to head to Earth’s Moon, Trevise catches her, confronts her and broods long over their predicament, then realizes that Fallom may have been on to something, so they explore the surface of the Moon and are eventually admitted to a colony below the surface by a 20,000 year old robot, Daneel Olivaw.

So, the five volume saga ends with a final negative encounter with a fundamentalist religion on Comporellon, but Trevise et al. press on to earth, escaping hostile worlds in their swift gravitic ship. Science, technology and a 20,000 year old robot have trumped religion, indeed shown its various forms to be impotent and false, and have kept the Galaxy intact, moving forward to its new configuration as Galaxia. But Daneel has had to modify the Three Laws of Robotics by adding another, the Zeroth Law: “A robot may not injure humanity or, through inaction, allow humanity to come to harm” [4, 5], which has allowed him to actively intervene in Galactic affairs to save humanity from its worst impulses. Daneel created Gaia, inspired Seldon’s Psychohistory, and helped establish both Foundations. As Trevise listens to Daneel’s story he realizes why he has chosen Galaxia for the future and also identified the flaw in Psychohistory. The two are related. Humans are the only form of intelligence in *this* Galaxy, but what of other galaxies? Galaxia, an interconnected, Gaia-like community is the only defense against a hostile incursion from an alien galaxy.

So, science has displaced religion in the first five hundred years covered in the first five books of the Foundation series. The final books of the series, *Prelude to Foundation* (1988) and *Forward the Foundation* (1993) take deep dives into the early life of Hari Seldon and though rich in detail about Seldon’s life, do not add to the main narrative described above, and neither book changes the central premise of the series, which is that science and technology have displaced religion, and when religion does arise on this or that planet it is either a hoax (Hardin, Mallow et al.) or simply false and dangerous (Comporellon) [6, 7].

3. Religion in Dune

Whereas religion has been assigned to the dustbins of future galactic history in the *Foundation* series, religion continues to play a vital part in the *Dune* series. In fact, the influences of and state of religion on Dune when Paul Atreides arrived are described in an appendix of *Dune*. A serious drive toward ecumenism among Earth’s diverse religions occurred during the Imperium. The Commission on Ecumenical Translators (C.E.T.) “convened on a neutral island of Old Earth, spawning ground of the mother religions” [11]. Every faith that had over a million adherents was represented at the C.E.T., recognizing that all religions had one common commandment: “Thou shalt not disfigure the soul” [11] and also that all religions shared a

“common belief that there exists a Divine Essence in the universe” [11]. Another purpose of this liberal movement was to “remove a primary weapon from the hands of disputant religions the claim to the one and only true revelation” [11]. The C.E.T. was quickly discredited, ecumenism died and the planets of the Imperium returned to a state of religious diversity and intolerance.

The Appendix also identifies the main groups involved in influencing religion on Dune: the Followers of the Fourteen Stages who embraced the Orange Catholic Bible (an ecumenical, one world religion document), the Bene Gesserit, who denied it was a religious organization, but “operated behind an almost impenetrable screen of ritual mysticism, and whose training, whose symbolism, organization, and internal teaching methods were almost wholly religious,” the agnostic ruling class “for whom religion was a kind of puppet show to amuse the people and keep it docile,” and the “so-called Ancient Teachings,” which include a list of Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu texts. [11]. But Space Travel is also included, noting that movement through deep space for 1100 years has challenged traditional notions of creation leading up to the Butlerian Jihad, which apparently “spilled the blood of Billions” [11]. Meanwhile the Landsraad continued to serve as an economic force binding the worlds together and the Space Guild continued to move people between the worlds with increasing speed and acuity. Into this stew of religion, politics and economics, fifteen-year old Paul Atreides arrives on Arrakis (Dune) as son of Duke Leto Atreides and the Lady Jessica, a Bene Gesserit Sister, which arrival is noted to be “religiously timely” [11]. But it was the Fremen who recognized Paul as the Dune Messiah, come to free the planet of Imperial rule and the Bene Gesserit who foretold this as well: “When religion and politics ride the same cart, when that cart is driven by a living holy man (baraka), nothing can stand in their path” [11].

And nothing stands in the path of the Fremen Juggernaut, which defeats the Harkonnens and the Emperor’s Sardaukar on Arrakis. Herbert has created a complex futuristic culture with long-standing religious, political, social and economic institutions, alliances and competitions—all vying for control of the spice, *mélange*, which provides a range of psychic abilities for the Bene Gesserit, the Fremen, the Guild Steersmen, etc. Paul Mua’Dib, the Kwisatch Haderach, and his Fremen army defeat the Harkonnens and the Sardaukar handily, but Paul and Chani lose their son and Duncan Idaho, long time sword master and friend. Paul makes a deal with the devil by marrying Shaddam IV’s daughter, Irulan, and *Dune* ends with Paul’s defeat of Feyd-Rautha, the na Baron Harkonnen, in kanly, hand to hand combat and sends the Emperor into exile on Salusa Secundus.

Dune Messiah opens twelve years later with a fully developed religious cult centered in Paul and his sister, Alia. His Jihad is still in full swing as his fanatical troops conquer the planets of the known universe, but 60 Billion people have died and resentments fester among the vanquished. Still, millions

of pilgrims make the *Hajj* to Arrakis each year as a “place of rebirth” and the “holy place” of the messianic religion of Muad’dib. And there is now peace everywhere “except in the heart of Muad’dib” [12]. Alia makes daily appearances for the pilgrims in her huge temple where she drinks unaltered *mélange* from a golden chalice, “the subtle poison, her sacrament of the oracle” [12]. And there is a call and response between the high priestess and her congregants reminiscent of the Roman Catholic Communion:

“In the beginning we were empty,” she said.

“Ignorant of all things,” the chorus sang. “We did not know the power that abides in every place,” Alia said.

“And in every Time,” the chorus sang.

“Here is the power,” Alia said, raising the chalice slightly.

“It brings us joy,” sang the chorus.

“It awakens the soul,” Alia said.

“It dispels all doubts,” the chorus sang. [12]

While the pilgrims rejoice, a sophisticated assassination plot is hatched against Paul by the Bene Gesserit, Scytale (a face dancer), Edric (Guild steersman), Princess Irulan and a newly minted ghola of Duncan Idaho, Hayt, who is given as a gift to Paul by Edric, but Hayt tells Paul the truth—he has been rejuvenated to kill him. A stone burner (nuclear rocket) blinds Paul after the service and *Dune Messiah* ends with him walking off into the desert alone, the “fool saint” [12] having survived the assassination plot, but required by Fremen tradition to be abandoned. Hayt has transformed himself into Duncan Idaho, Scytale is knifed by Paul, the Reverend Mother Mohiam is killed, but Chani dies giving birth to twins—Leto and Ghanima. Irulan will raise the twins with her now beloved Duncan Idaho. But who will rule the empire?

Children of Dune (Volume III) opens with Stilgar at Sietch Tabr contemplating killing Paul and Chani’s children—Leto II and Ghanima—but he relents, because it is unthinkable, in spite of the fact that the Messianic religion under Alia, Paul’s sister, has become the very opposite of what Paul had intended, which Stilgar understands. Alia rules the Imperium as Head of State and Head of the Religion—a veritable theocracy [13]. The Lady Jessica is perceived as the “Mother of God” [13] and Alia is suspected of having become an “Abomination,” possessed by one or more of her inner lives. A new figure, the Prophet, has arrived to preach in the streets of Arrakeen and rails against this religion and Alia. He is blind, and all wonder if this is Paul returned from the dessert. Meanwhile the Bene Geeserit, through Jessica, arrange the marriage of Ghanima and Farad’n, the nephew of Shaddam IV of Salusa Secundus in order to unite the Imperium [13].

But Leto and Ghani have their own plans, and after besting two Laza tigers sent by Farad’n’s mother to assassinate them, Leto goes in search of his “Golden Path” and Ghani pledges to kill Farad’n when he comes to Arrakis to seal the marriage deal. Ghani returns to Sietch Tabr, wounded by the tigers, with the faux news that Leto has been killed. On the 28th day of mourning for Leto, the Preacher reappears in Arrakeen. This is also “the day of the Kwisatz Haderach, the first holy day of

those who followed Muad'Dib. It recognized the deified Paul Atreides as that person who was everywhere simultaneously [who had] become the One-with-All. The faithful called this day *Ayil*, the Sacrifice, to commemorate the death which made his presence 'real in all places'" [13]. The Preacher rails against this messianic theology, which resembles a Protestant view of Christ's death and a Lutheran view of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The Preacher calls for the people to abandon the "certainty" of this religion and embrace uncertainty:

I come here to combat the fraud and illusion of your conventional, institutionalized religion. As with all such religions, your institution moves toward cowardice mediocrity, inertia, and self-satisfaction. [13]

Alia descends the temple steps and confronts the Preacher and during the interchange she realizes to her horror that the Preacher is Paul.

Leto is being held captive in Sietch Shuloch, watched over by Muriz and Sabiha, who administer mēlange in large doses, hoping for him to provide a vision of the future, but the vision never comes. Instead, Leto escapes to the canyon and covers himself with sand trout who begin to form a membrane over his whole body, providing him with super-human strength and agility. This is the beginning of the Incarnation, Leto's enfleshment of Shai-Hulud, and Leto realizes he is no longer human [13]. The stage is set for a final showdown with Farad'n arriving at Arrakeen, the Preacher condemning Alia and the false religion, and the now transmogrified Leto joining Ghanima. Paul is killed in the courtyard by a temple priest and Leto and Ghani confront Alia, who jumps out the window of her Keep after revealing the Abomination—she is possessed by none other than the old Baron Harkonnen.

And so, Muad'Dib's religion with Alia as High Priestess is torn apart. "What they needed was a living god, and they didn't have one, a situation which Muad'Dib's son has corrected. And Leto as a human sand worm declares there will be peace now for 4000 years while he lives, Kralizec now, but there is also a Kralizec "yet to come" [13]. The sand worms will die out on Arrakis, but when Leto goes into the sand in 4000 years the worms will return and Arrakis will be rejuvenated [14-16]. What we have here is the language of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, the Word become flesh but we also have the first and second coming of Christ or for that matter the Muslim doctrine of the return of Mohammed (Sunni) or the return of Ali (Shia).

4. Conclusion

So, in the Dune series the power of religion is central from the rise and disappearance of Muadib to the transmogrification of Leto. Postmodern critics Lyotard and Baudrillard argue that religion and metanarratives seem to have died, which disappearance provides a clear indicator of the shift to postmodernism. And this seems to be the case in Asimov's *Foundation*

series. Hans Blumenberg, though, has pointed out that religious stories *kill*--they kill both time and fear, and make the world a little less frightening and a little more familiar [10]. Further, these stories ameliorate and quell "panic and paralyze the two extremes of anxiety behavior" [9]. Science and technology, for him, lack the explanatory powers of the older religious metanarratives providing a rationale for the continued presence of religion in Herbert's and other science fiction series.

Author Contributions

Arthur Grant is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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