

THE FIVE MAJOR NOVELS OF FRANK HERBERT

In analyzing Frank Herbert's writings, there are five novels which can be identified as his best in addition to the Dune series. These novels reveal Herbert the philosopher at the height of his literary power and expression of thought. Each novel is like a different door into the complex world of the man, and each carries within its structure a central concern in Herbert's life. These novels are: The Eyes of Heisenberg, The Godmakers, Soul Catcher, Hellstrom's Hive, and The White Plague. Had these novels been the only ones he lived to create, they would have assured him a literary position of high esteem in American literature. There has been only one Great American Novel written, and it is Mark Twain's The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Yet, there are novels that come afterwards which express a certain feel of time, place, and characterization that reflect a given writer's understanding of his or her times. Such expression is given vent in the five major novels of Frank Herbert.

The Eyes of Heisenberg (1966) is a cautionary novel dealing with genetic engineering and immortality. The flipside of immortality is reincarnation and the concept of soul. Humankind seeks immortality in the flesh so that the soul may have access to physical essence; with continued physical essence -- the ability to enjoy the senses in all of their beauty -- the soul does not have to pass through a new body each time the old one wears out, nor does it lose continuity of memory through the rebirthing process which reincarnation demands. To live a thousand lifetimes is one thing but to have total recall of each life is another thing altogether. When reincarnation is proven, death will indeed lose its sting, and humankind will no longer fear it but

will realize and accept it for what it actually is: A portal or door into another existence which is the mystical experience prior to rebirth and living in the flesh. As a species still developing its symbols of religion and philosophy, humankind is still a child; elsewhere in the universe, reincarnation has already been proven as a simple truth, and when humankind becomes an adult, it, too, will discover this simple truth.

The Eyes of Heisenberg opens with Dr. Thei Svengard confronting Harvey and Lizbeth Durant who wish to watch the genetic alterations of their gametes by skilled genetic surgeons. Public Law 10927 guarantees the right of parents to watch but it also guarantees the right of the surgeon to make the cut at his decision; humankind has a planned future which excludes deviants and genetic monsters. The parents are allowed to see as little as possible, which is the subtle plan of the control authority referred to as the Optimen. The Optimen knows what is good for society; society does not. Due to some outside force of energy, an adjustment is made within the embryo which makes it a genetic unknown. Dr. Vyaslav Potter is the surgeon who will make the cut.

The thought that an outside power, greater than humankind, is present directing the creation of the Durant child is revealed; predestination of events and shaping of role are introduced early in the plot.

Max Allgood, Central's chief of Tachy-Security, arrives to investigate the unusualness of the situation. Code of honor is seen in how the characters accommodate or embrace the authority structure under which they are forced to exist. Intrigue and philosophical dialogues ensue as events become more complex; Svengard and the Durants vanish adding to the mystery. Allgood is pulled into the confusion and seeks answers.

As the invisible hand of fate continues to lead Allgood and the other characters to their destiny, the vision of the ordered world of the Optimen is found fallible. Perfect control of the environment and

its society at the cost of individuality carries within it seeds of destruction. Society is not free, and as a result of genetic engineering, individuals do not evolve despite their extended life range of up to four-hundred years. The Optimen is perceived as an aberration which has stolen humankind's ability to evolve through genetic manipulation.

The cast of characters widens, pulling them towards final confrontation and realization: Calapine, Nourse, Schruille, Boumour, Glisson, Igan, Svenggaard, the Durants -- their predestined fates reflect the interaction process and individual role conflicts as the controlled social environment attempts to maintain equilibrium. Svenggaard and the Durants escape, and the outsider vs. insider theme surfaces as they are hunted. By extending life, and delaying death, the Optimen have destroyed aliveness; death is a respite between rebirth and further evolution of the soul, and by denying it, the Optimen have denied true immortality and individuality. Calapine realizes that death is part of the process of existence that has been denied, and realizes, too, that the immortality the Optimen possessed was mere illusion not reality. Life cannot be totally planned or controlled against the interests of living a meaningful existence. The true power that loves and cares for humanity is not the Optimen but a transcendent being; through the acceptance of the being's directives, and faith, salvation is received by the seekers. For the Optimen to see the errors of their ways and understand their fall from grace, they must realize that strict societal engineering at the cost of individuality is a mistake, which they do. The novel closes as Harvey and Lizbeth Durant plan to have a natural birth for their child; the child will be born of woman rather than through scientific means.

Svenggaard is pleased with the final developments, and silently,

he contemplates that the genetic environment has been shaped into a new pattern which he can visualize; although the pattern is indefinite, and full of indeterminacy, he senses that an unseen power is directing it towards a predetermined purpose which will benefit all of humankind. Svenggaard pays homage to the memory of the work of Heisenberg, and feels Heisenberg would like this new pattern of change.

On a subtle level, Frank Herbert is giving homage and respect to two unseen figures in his novel: Werner Karl Heisenberg (1901 - 1976), a German theoretical and nuclear physicist, and to Aldous Leonard Huxley (1894 - 1963) an English novelist and essayist, whose novels Brave New World, Eyeless in Gaza, After Many a Summer Dies the Swan, and Time Must Have a Stop have a direct philosophical link to Herbert's novel.

The Eyes of Heisenberg is one of Frank Herbert's shortest novels, and it reveals the impact of Aldous Huxley on his early work. A detailed study of the work of Aldous Huxley and Frank Herbert will reveal the philosophical direction toward mysticism and religion each writer traveled, and it will also reveal a shared perspective in certain areas of investigation. In understanding Herbert's complexity as a writer, the reader and scholar should read Leo Tolstoy's works, What Men Live By (1881), What I Believe (1883), A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology (1885), What Then Must We Do? (1886), Alyosha Gorshok (1905), Resurrection (1904), Two Old Men (1885), Master and Man (1895), and God Sees the Truth But Waits (1872) as a comparison of two kindred spirits at work. This applies as well to Aldous Huxley's novels and essays. For the reader and scholar seeking a direct link between Huxley and Herbert, compare Herbert's Dune series themes of mysticism and consciousness (including "Water of Life" and "spice") with Huxley's The Perennial Philosophy (1946), The Doors of Perception (1954), Heaven and Hell (1958), and Island (1962). There

is a shared temperament between Frank Herbert and Leo Tolstoy and Aldous Huxley; that each expresses it within a different situational context is not surprising, for one is coming from the American perspective, one is coming from the Russian perspective, and one is coming from the English perspective which links all three in a unique shared individuality of response.

The Godmakers (1972) concerns the creation of a God through human efforts. A careful reading of the prefaces, which is Frank Herbert personally addressing his reading audience and revealing his philosophical persona, reveal a pragmatic yet Americanized approach to Eastern and Western religious attitudes. How a God functions, how to achieve this state, what a God does, is examined in detail.

The themes of outsider vs. insider, role, predestination, individuality, freedom from interference, code of honor, and conflict emerge early in this narrative tracing the fate of Lewis Orne, Umbo Stetson, Tanub the High Path Chief of the Grazzi, Polly Bullone, Diana Bullone, Sobat Spencer, Emolirido, Bakrish, among others. Psi powers, priesthood, violence, government, and code of honor are examined. Meditation and prayer are seen as important aspects of achieving consciousness with the transcendent. War in the guise of religious precepts is discussed, and the point is made that during the course of a religious or holy war more people are maimed and tortured than in a war for territory; in a war for territory, possession of land and physical control is sought, but in a holy war the emphasis is on enforcement of a dominant ideology that will displace all others and soul control, which means displacement of any religious attitude that is viewed as deviant from the perceived good of the superior force.

Lewis Orne becomes the God and states that to look at the universe in the right way, which is called Maya from the Sanskrit, one must create

internalized faith through projecting personal consciousness upon the universe. By doing this, one is allowed to receive salvation and grace, and the predestination of role requirements is fulfilled. Through Orne's power, conflict ends, and peace and harmony is restored. The novel concludes with Orne taking infinity one step at a time and accepting his destiny as a God. An unusual novel, The Godmakers deals with mysticism, psi powers, and immortality of the soul.

Soul Catcher (1972) is Frank Herbert's most complex philosophical novel dealing with the transcendent world, and it focuses on Charles Hobuhet, known also as Katsuk the avenging balancer of heaven and earth; he is an American Indian who captures thirteen-year-old David Marshall. Charles Hobuhet is David Marshall's teacher, friend, kidnapper, and executioner. Each character is predestined to fulfill his role and meet a pre-determined fate; code of honor and individuality are major themes in this fast-paced, intense novel of conflict. The word, katsuk, is defined as the center of the universe from which all perception radiates and where an individual fully aware of consciousness stands. Symbolically, katsuk signifies a "humand bird." The word is taken from Charles Hobuhet native tongue; set in Washinton state, Hobuhet's early motives are governed by the misery he is suffering from the knowledge surrounding the raping of his sister Janiktaht and her suicide.

Hobuhet, remembering the shaman lore of his Grandfather seeks inner awareness in the wilderness. During the ritual, a bee lands on his skin and he realizes it is Soul Catcher; the bee stings his hand, and he is chosen to kill a white innocent to avenge what the white man has done to the American Indian. Spirit transference is completed, and Charles Hobuhet becomes Katsuk. Soul Catcher possesses Hobuhet's soul. Hobuhet/Katsuk begins his search for the white innocent.

Knowing that Soul Catcher will not reveal Katsuk hidden in the flesh, Hobuhet strolls into Six Rivers Camp and meets the boys there, even having his photograph taken. Secure in the knowledge of his role as Katsuk, the center of the universe, he knows he will take the innocent without difficulty; just as his role is pre-determined, so is the role of the young white innocent, David Marshall, whose father is United States Undersecretary of State. The kidnapping will receive wide coverage in the media, and the hunt for the outcast will be intense; the insiders will, symbolically, focus a death hunt on the outsider to eliminate the outsider's act of deviance against society. During the night, Katsuk convinces Marshall that they are to become spirit brothers, and an act of spirit brotherhood must take place; not wakening the other sleeping boys at the camp, Marshall willingly goes with the Indian. Marshall becomes uneasy when Katsuk says he is the shaman spirit come to drive out the sickness from the world, but he continues to follow.

In a ceremony of name exchange, Marshall becomes identified as Hoquat, the message of the Soul Catcher. Marshall understands this ceremony is initiation into something far more sinister than he dared imagine, but he is trapped; he is tied-up, and then led away. He is taken to a cave; inside, the shadows play, and outside the mouth of the cave is sunlight. Katsuk and Hoquat are now in the untouched wilderness of the Olympic National Park; during conversation, each come to know something about the other and there are several comments about what white culture has done to American Indian culture. The theme of white guilt and Indian innocence surfaces, and with it, the theme of atonement needed to balance the scales of justice and honor. Throughout the plot there is reference to Katsuk's writings when he was Charles Hobuhet, a twenty-five-year-old genius and doctoral candidate in anthropology; his writings deal with Indian religious myths

and legends, and the transcendent world of spirit.

Communication is established between Katsuk and Hoquat. They rise above words and symbols, and they overcome words as perpetrators of illusion. Power is only valid and beneficial if it derives its strength from a transcendent authority; otherwise, power is fleeting. Earthly power is always doomed to failure and changes hands quickly in the conflict between opposing groups because it is of the flesh and not of the spirit; spiritual-based power is everlasting whereas temporal power inevitably carries within it the seeds for its own destruction and overthrow. As the world of Katsuk has marked Hoquat's world, so has Hoquat's world marked Katsuk's world; the hunt for the kidnapper and his victim intensifies in the wilderness. Until time for the act of atonement, Katsuk must become teacher and friend to Hoquat in an effort to secure the continued survival of the innocent. Individuality for each remains strong yet each has shared responsibility for the other's existence so that each may fulfill his predestined role. The wilderness acts as a sacred area for rite of passage and initiation, and it holds at bay and restricts any interference from the outside. Anyone or anything that disrupts or interferes with Katsuk's mission meets with disaster. This becomes apparent when Katsuk encounters a hiker named Vince Debay -- an acquaintance from a college anthropology course -- and is forced to kill him; he slits the hiker's throat with a knife and leaves the body fall to the ground. Hoquat witnesses the killing and attempts escape but fails; Katsuk hides the dead body of Vince Debay. Katsuk and Hoquat continue towards their shared fate, each having learned to accommodate the other.

At one point, they encounter a couple, but there is only communication between them, and Hoquat realizes Ish and Tskanay are friends of Katsuk; escape is impossible, and Katsuk temporarily leaves the innocent in the couple's protection. Through this couple, Hoquat learns what is planned

for him and attempts to escape it. He flees but is directly brought back. The appearance of Cally (Charles Hobuhet's aunt) allows the innocent to understand more fully why he is to be sacrificed for what the white man has done to the Indian culture. Hoquat is given shelter in the wilderness home of Ish and Tskanay. Tskanay bears malice towards Katsuk for the punishment he administered to her when Hoquat first attempted escape. She plans to seduce the boy so he will no longer be an innocent; there is a sexual initiation scene that is intense and detailed, and the boy loses his virginity to the lovely Tskanay, a twenty-year-old Indian woman. This does not take away from his true innocence, Katsuk assures them after the act of sexual intercourse; naked, they face him, but he does harm to neither. In the boy's heart and mind, he is still a true innocent, and the act of sexual intercourse between Tskanay and Hoquat has merely intensified the sensitivity of that innocence. Before leaving the scene of sexual initiation, Katsuk looks first at the woman then at the boy; he tells the boy they are truly brothers now, bound together by fate, and wonders which one of them is Cain and which one is Abel. Afterwards, Tskanay dresses and leaves; she has not taken away the boy's innocence, only used it.

Relationships are explored in this Indian camp of twenty people, and the wilderness hides them; outside the wilderness, the search for the boy continues. The cave, or old mine, symbol resurfaces, and in a moving scene inside between hunter and prey, Hoquat apologizes to Katsuk for what the white culture has done to the Indian culture. There is a tenderness between the two, a feeling of spiritual brotherhood, and Katsuk explains to Hoquat why he is to be sacrificed. Hoquat's death will be a message to the white culture from Soul Catcher. Paradoxical perception weaves a web of illusion and reality throughout the plot, and this scene is one example. Reality becomes illusion and illusion becomes reality.

As the plot develops, Katsuk senses that it will be a kindness to sacrifice the boy, thus preserving the boy's unspoiled innocence forever and avoiding its contamination by civilization. As the bond of friendship grows between the two, Katsuk finds he is spending time explaining himself to his sacrificial victim and begins to wonder why. Katsuk starts the ceremonial process of forming the sacrificial knife out of obsidian.

A discussion of body-talk -- word fitting the deed -- and the destructive aspects of modern civilization takes place between Katsuk and Hoquat; Katsuk shows the boy the dangers of words and language in the communication process, and how actions are more honest than spoken words. If you care for someone, show it, but don't say you do then carry through an action that says you don't. Actions speak louder than words, is the point Katsuk impresses upon Hoquat. The body must be a pure expression of self, and body and self must be in harmony and at peace. Honesty of action is the preferred manner of expression.

Hoquat makes a final bid for freedom, seeking to escape his fate of death and takes refuge in the forest while Katsuk searches for him. In this section of the novel, Hoquat illustrates the effect of Katsuk's teaching upon him and utilizes every lesson to survive on his own. He is found by Katsuk and sees that the Indian is sick; Katsuk tells him that Tskanay has put the curse of Cedar sickness upon him, and that he is unable to stay warm and is cold. Katsuk becomes chilled and falls into delirium; during these vulnerable times, he drifts in and out of wakefulness, but Hoquat remains to help him in whatever way he can.

They remain together, and the searchers from the outside move closer to finding them. In the final scene of the novel, Hoquat is sacrificed and Katsuk finishes the ceremony; the innocent is given to the spirits, and the message is imparted. The searchers find Charles Hobuhet cradling the body of his dead friend, the young boy named David Marshall. Sheriff

Pallat finds them first, seeing that Hoquat is holding the Marshall boy and crying over the child; Hoquat is swaying, and he chants the Indian death song one sings for a friend. Charles Hobuhet and David Marshall have met their fate and shared its sacrifice together through shared responsibility for each other's existence: Marshall is predestined in his role to be the innocent sacrificed first; Charles Hobuhet is predestined to follow him, and society will see that he does in one form or another. Symbolically, Charles Hobuhet will become the sacrificial victim and innocent to his own lost heritage. Soul Catcher catches the essence of Frank Herbert, revealing the writer's sensitivity and analytical mind.

Hellstrom's Hive (1973) is the story of an underground colony near Tymna, Oregon; this human colony has selectively bred insect-hive principles and goals into vat specializations. In this hive society, individuality is of prime importance to a functioning whole. Known as Hellstrom's Project 40, these insect-humans eventually end their lives to nourish future generations of its kind by going into selected vats; government interference has made the colony a much sought after item for control and manipulation, and failing this, then seeks the destruction of the colony before its power engulfs the government. The principle characters in this novel include Carlos Depeaux, Joseph Merrivale, Edward Janvert, Clovis Carr, Dzule Peruge, Trova Hellstrom, Nils Hellstrom, Saldo, Fancy, Old Harvey, Lincoln Kraft, Mimeca, Myerlie, and Gammel.

The outsider vs. insider theme is intricately interwoven throughout the plot; code of honor, conflict, role, individuality vs. the system, individuality, immortality, predestination -- dominant motifs in any Frank Herbert novel -- are in ample evidence in Hellstrom's Hive. In this novel, the utopian-like hive colony is the insider and the government agency seeking to penetrate it is the outsider, and by extension, anything outside of the hive colony is the outsider. As Nils Hellstrom represents

the insiders, Joseph Merrivale represents the outsiders. Hellstrom is loyal to the hive, and Merrivale is loyal to the government agency he works for, and each has a code of honor dedicated to the protection of what each man believes in and holds worthy.

Since threat is good for a species to avoid stagnation and entropy, the hive prepares to fight the outsiders; it is up to the hive leadership to see that stimulation of threat does not have a destructive effect on the hive by diverting it from its true goals of evolution and shared responsibility toward hive consciousness. Awareness of mutual identity is important to the hive members, and ecology and evolution must work in unison. Communication with language and use of word symbols from the outsiders is utilized by the hive to further their ability at concealment.

Nils Hellstrom knows that the key to survival rests on the absorption of the outsiders into the hive unity, but for the time being, a truce of accomodation must act as the stablizer of temporary harmony and peace between the two factions. The hive has been in existence for over three-hundred years among humankind.

As the plot progresses, paradoxical perception comes into play, and just what is real and what is illusion becomes confusing to the outsiders as they penetrate the workings of the hive. This is seen in the interrogation scene between Tymiena and Nils Hellstrom, and the sexual intercourse-breeding scene between hive member, Fancy, and the government agent, Peruge, who having been injected with a sex hormone has eighteen successful orgasms during sexual intercourse with her. Peruge dies not long after his sexual encounter with Fancy; the autopsy report shows Peruge had a massive heart attack as a result of too much sex with Fancy. Other scenes show how the insiders manipulate the outsiders in order to protect themselves from destruction.

An attack is made against the hive. The hive members, predestined to

enter the vats at death to fulfill their fate so that consciousness and identity can be passed on to future generations, know that a successful attack by the outsider humans could destroy the hive colony and their directive to pass on their individuality to the whole. Through shared individuality comes mutual dependence within the social structure of the hive, and this must be preserved from destruction at all costs. Violence is met with violence. Janvert penetrates the hive and witnesses the breeding process and realizes, that although hive members appear human in form, their true nature is insect and like insects, they breed accordingly; their sexual activity is unrestrained, and Janvert understands why a normal human could not achieve such actions or sexual activity. He discovers parts of hive members, and realizing they are reproductive stumps, comprehends how the insects reproduce their kind.

Nils Hellstrom wants Janvert captured alive sensing the human's uniqueness and resourcefulness; Janvert's contribution to the hive reproduction cycle will lead to diversity and diversity is a prime strength in designing the hive future. Janvert is captured, and with his help, Nils Hellstrom is able to reveal the hive's superior weaponry to Merrivale -- the stinger could destroy earth. The hive is ready to swarm, and Hellstrom promises the doomsday weapon will not be used if the hive is granted accomodation with humans and permitted to co-exist with humans as a separate species. Accomodation is reached, and the hive will not use the stinger against humankind.

Merrivale accepts this pre-determined accomodation as the only logical outcome and tolerates the fact that earth is destined to have two separate forms of humanity -- one human, and one insect-human, and both must share responsibility because continuity of each's evolution is dependent upon survival of the other. Hellstrom's hive will be allowed to continue mimicing human existence among humankind.

Conflict ends, and harmony and peace is restored; balance is achieved. The novel concludes as each species goes its separate yet intertwined way. After reading the Hellstrom's Hive novel, the reader will find the philosophical precepts of the Jains, in particular their seven tatvas (principles) which are jiva, ajiva, asrava, bandha, samvara, nirjara, and moksha, interesting as an applied approach to hive consciousness and evolution. A reference and starting point for comparative analysis would be: The Jainas in the History of Indian Literature by Maurice Winternitz (1946), Elements of Jainism by C. Sen Amlyachandra (1953), The Doctrine of the Jainas by Walther Schubring (1962), and The Indian Sect of the Jainas by Johann Georg Buhler (1963). Nils Hellstrom is one of Frank Herbert's most memorable character creations.

The White Plague (1982) is an existential vision of revenge and code of honor. A tragedy, this novel showcases Frank Herbert's skills and techniques as a master storyteller; the plot is complicated, and the characterizations are finely structured. Following an act of terrorism in Dublin, Ireland, which results in the deaths of his wife and children, an American scientist plans a terrible revenge against not only the perpetrators but in retribution for any such act. Molecular biologist John Roe O'Neill creates a synthesized plague that kills only women. The plague is fatal, selective, and is O'Neill's avenging agent. Set adrift in the chaos of his shattered world of loneliness, O'Neill finds retaliation against the terrorists gives meaning to his existence and becomes his reason for struggle against the unknown factors which brought about the death of his loved ones. Rebellion, resistance, and the spectre of death become O'Neill's courage to be and reason for living; as his family was predestined to die as they did, so is O'Neill predestined to fulfill his role in the manner he does, and his terrible swift sword of justice is the plague itself.

O'Neil's disease becomes identified as the White Plague due to the pallor its victims and also because white blotches appear on the extremities the plague spreads through Ireland, Britain, and Libya. A group of international scientists are called to stop O'Neill, who signs his letters of threat as the "Madman." These scientists come from different countries: William Beckett of the United States, who becomes chairman of The Team; Francois Danzas, French; Josp Hupp, French; Sergei Alexandrovich Lepikov, Soviet Union; Dorena Godelinsky, Soviet Union; and, Ariane Foss, United States. The white plague spreads throughout the world; key cultural centers are infested. Areas within countries begin to fragment, protecting their women and setting up boundards to keep outsiders from bringing in the plague; it is the end of centralized governments as units within their control revolt to survive and isolate themselves. It is a time of disaster, distress, breakup of power, isolation, and conflict for power.

Frank Herbert points out a simple truth in a world of hightechnology: With the proper tools, and access, one person can now destroy the world, and in this novel it is O'Neill. As the plague spreads, more women die. It becomes apparent that shared responsibility, according to President of the United States, Adam Prescott, will be the only way that the nations of the world will survive the white plague. Society is on the verge of collasp; pockets of individuality and resistance are arising from its ashes. Code of honor is seen in all participants of this complex morality play, and each acts according to his or her beliefs.

O'Neill makes it back to Ireland and tells those he encounters that he is a molecular biologist come to aid in stopping the plague. O'Neill comes into contact with Father Michael Flannery of the Maynooth Fathers, and Joseph Herity. Unbeknown to O'Neill is that it was Joseph Herity who killed his wife, Mary, and their five-year-old twins, Kevin and Mairead O'Neill, through the act of terroism involving a car bomb

explosion. Mary and the children had been innocent bystanders to die alongside the intended victim, Francis Bley. Through dialog, it is revealed that ministers, priests, and religion are taking the blame for their role in the plague, which symbolically signifies they have failed to offer a way out -- a direction towards salvation -- and like the rest of humankind, have fallen from grace. As humankind faces the extinction of its women, men face a bleak future which in turn will end in extinction; there is a growing loss of compassion and mercy among men towards each other in the affected areas hit by plague. The outsider vs. the insider theme shows the lengths to which men will go, in the plague-free areas, to protect their women from contact; power is fragmented, but those who possess women in plague-free areas have the control of the definition of the situation and intend to hold it. Communication, on several levels, is breaking down in the world. The Team continues its search for O'Neill, knowing he is the key to everything.

As the hunt continues -- another symbolic approach to the traditional death hunt -- The Team becomes frustrated in its attempts to locate O'Neill. An interesting facet to Herbert's work becomes seen in regard to free will or free choice. The characters act out of a sense of predestined involvement. Yet, there is this gray area wherein they appear to have choice or will. The irony is, and it is in perfect alignment to the idea of predestination, free will is affected by pre-determined action. A character may truly believe he or she has free will in a given situation; that character may have many options open, or many choices to consider from which to act upon, yet, no matter how many such choices, whichever one is taken has already been predestined. Code of honor and guilt and individuality, tempered by the act of predestination, require that the said choice be predestined, too; no matter what choice is finally made, it remains in harmony with the character's predestined role. This

is a mystical interpretation of the concept of predestination; be it one or two choices, or even a hundred possible choices, the act of free choice will be invariably influenced by the over-riding attributes of predestination. Only through the afterworld or death will the true pattern of decision be revealed to the character; whatever choice was made from his or her application of free will is actually a reflection of harmony and balance demanded by predestination.

Code of honor dictates that the choice based on application of free will be a decision based on moral considerations which reflect the true spiritual quality of the individuality of the person involved. The choice can be interfered with, temporarily displaced, and it can be delayed, but in the final analysis it will be made and come to pass. Philosophically, in keeping with the motif that at the heart of universal consciousness is a transcendent goodness and morality, then regardless of the choice's appearances in any given situation, it will reflect a moral good that is in keeping with that universal consciousness. Assumed individuality gives perspective to the choice.

However, if the choice made is not in keeping with the overall good, the person making the choice pays the penalty and suffers accordingly through mental, physical, or spiritual death, or dishonorment. Depending upon the character, and the situation, dishonorment oftentimes is the same thing as death. A person without honor is a person without morality.

As the white plague continues to weave its destructive path, men find themselves bound together in a brotherhood of existential despair. Herity realizes that O'Neill may be the one who has set loose the white plague; he realizes, too, that his guilt cannot be overlooked, or excused, because it was he who caused the death of O'Neill's family. O'Neill has become the ultimate gombeen: He makes Ireland and the

world which permits acts of terrorism pay for its immorality and misuse of power. Terrorism goes against code of honor, and when there is no code of honor, there is no justice or morality.

O'Neill's plague continues to devastate the women, and it is a terrifying revenge against a world that has failed to reason and act morally. The role of earthly church, and its use of guilt to ensure its continued use of power, is seen in the novel; other aspects of church are examined, such as separation of sexuality from the act of sexual intercourse because of its sinful attributes, and collaboration between church, government, and leaders as agents of interference in the individual's life. Kate and Stephen continue their struggle to survive through shared responsibility for each other. And in a discussion with Fintan Craig Doherty, O'Neil is told the plague is mutating and spreading to mammals -- suspecting O'Neill to be the madman responsible for the plague, Doherty seeks to motivate the scientist's conscience in an effort to find a cure; he appeals directly to O'Neill's scientific self.

During a poignant scene, O'Neill makes confession of his identity to Father Michael Flannery. The priest accepts the burden of O'Neill's confession, telling O'Neill his penance is to find a cure for the plague.

The White Plague echoes a belief of Herbert's prevalent in his fiction: Better to be a moral, just, and honorable person than a religious fanatic. Paradoxical perception is found throughout the novel as each character struggles to discover the difference between illusion and reality. Moral stance in the struggle between good and evil, from whatever directions those concepts are interpreted, is illustrated as are the themes of self-help and self-reliance. The theme of the individual vs. the system is evident as well as ecological concerns surrounding what new order will arise from the white plague's destruction.

Scientists decide to give a disease to a disease, hoping it

will kill the plague, thus eliminating the plague's unstoppable ability to attack the DNA helix at critical places; a genetic disease, perhaps it can be destroyed in the same manner through which it destroys.

As the novel builds towards its climax, John O'Neill suffers a psychotic break becoming John of old before the death of his loved ones, and O'Neill the Avenger of the present. His identity is disclosed, and in a tense confrontation, finds the priest is the only one who will come to his defense; at this time, Herity is poisoned and dies. Doherty knows O'Neill is suffering from a controlled displacement of identity, and any attempt to restore him would be disastrous. The difficulties O'Neill encountered after returning to Ireland have led to the disruption in his individuality and code of honor; his mind is adrift but functioning still as a scientist who has achieved revenge.

O'Neill still remains a man of conscience despite his break from reality, and he is aided to escape; during this time he comprehends the full extent of his revenge upon an unsuspecting humankind. Seeking reality and displacement of illusion's interference in this global state of conflict and intrigue, O'Neill flees into the Irish wilderness to wander throughout Ireland. Although a cure is found, in the wake of the white plague new diseases suddenly crop up for the world to combat. The women survivors of various countries have become a prized commodity for the salvation of the human race.

The novel concludes with O'Neill wandering insanely throughout Ireland; he has displaced the Little Folk in the people's imagination, and ironically, they protect him while the world struggles to rebuild itself in all respects. A new world order with shared responsibility must be established, which will mean shared responsibility for the useage of power, and where the importance of women will be of major concern to every man living.

Out of chaos, and nothingness, has developed the courage to be among the survivors, and with it, hope for a better world in which understanding and communication can exist and function so that such an incident as the white plague will never come to pass again. O'Neill is never seen again, roaming Ireland as a living symbol -- an uncrucified Jesus Christ walking the Earth as a reminder to humankind, his existence as a true existential outcast passing into myth and legend. He came to humankind this time to right moral wrongs; he came with a view to a kill, instigated and perpetuated it, and achieved his message through the horror of the white plague.

For those interested in a comparison, they should follow the reading of the Herbert novel with a reading of Albert Camus' three works: The Plague (1948), The Fall (1956), and Resistance, Rebellion, and Death (1960). Both writers share a concern for morality and ethics, and although their approaches are different, both share a philosophical perspective that reflects the despair and crisis facing humankind in the twentieth century.

As a novel, Frank Herbert's The White Plague is one of his finest literary creations. The themes, structure, point of view, philosophy, religious concerns, concept of power, conflict, and characterizations achieve a perfect degree of integrated harmony and balance in this complex, well-plotted novel.

Any work written by Frank Herbert is cast against a Jungian landscape of rich textures and patternizations. Whether it is The White Plague or the Dune Cycle, or Chapterhouse: Dune, the influence of Carl Gustav Jung (1875 - 1961) is seen at work in Herbert's designs by way of archetypal images and symbols; an understanding of Jung's collective unconscious theories is essential to comprehending Herbert's psychological approach.