



Surviving Lynch's *Dune*

My first encounter with David Lynch and his interesting vision of *Dune*



It was my first impression of David Lynch, and let's say that I am not as disappointed as I expected to be. As part of the Festival Ville des Langues, Clémence and Florine decided to present and debate around the movie *Dune*. The 1984 version is the very first adaptation of Frank Herbert's science-fiction novel. It follows the Atrides being sent to Arrakis, a planet where the spice is cultivated, and the Harkonnens allied to the emperor who are planning to kill them. I watched the remastered version in a movie theater, therefore the aesthetic is quite remarkable and of a high quality, with stable shots that go smoothly. However, I found the transitions a bit too much, especially when we enter Paul Atrides' head. The editing is jerky and it gave me headaches at some point. Another spectator underlined that it was in those transitions that Lynch's touch was seen, his aesthetic was only found here. Actually, it was the parts I hated the most because of these gory images combined with beautiful images of water drops, it confused me even though I already knew the purpose of these scenes.



Photo: Arrivé Chloé · Clémence, Florine and Fred introducing the movie.

For the acting, I was really expecting worse but I ended up liking the overall cast. Kyle MacLachlan is the most remarkable actor. His role as Paul Atrides transmits the emotions the spectator has to feel, even if his facial expressions are too neutral. Other actors were not as good, and I was scared it might tarnish the movie. But, like Sting's character, they do not appear as much so it is not bothering. Furthermore, the lack of people of color playing Fremen, the indigenous people of Arrakis, is disturbing even for a 1984 movie. Indeed, the term was inspired by Berber people, therefore it would have been more clever to be able to differentiate the Atrides from the Fremen physically.

I found the music so beautifully made and well combined with the images and the plot of the movie. Toto's work made me feel the emotions of the characters and events, especially the tension. However, it did not erase the poor pacing of the movie. In fact, I found the beginning extremely long, I almost fell asleep and all of the sudden everything accelerated. It was like watching the movie in x2. It lost me a bit because of this sudden change. But the script is still well written with good dialogue and coherence. I especially liked the inner dialogues, which bring another dimension to the movie.



“It was like watching the movie in x2.”

I think that makeup and costumes need an honorable mention because they are quite impressive for a 1984 movie. For example the makeup of Vladimir Harkonnen is so well done that I couldn't even look at him. And the costumes are quite detailed especially the stillsuit that I found quite successful. These details may seem less important but in reality I found them essential to the perception of the characters I had. I could also mention the settings that are impressive. I was scared that it would be too kitsch but not at all. Especially those indoors that are so beautifully executed and add a good layer of setting to the scenes. I can't say the same for the exterior ones, especially when special effects are added, you can feel it is a 1984 movie in those moments. They made me laugh because it really impacted the credibility of the movie.



Photo: Universal Pictures · Paul Atreides played by Kyle MacLachlan in a stillsuit.

Overall, I would give it a 2 star rating out of 5, because I was more surprised than disappointed. I think it is not a good idea to enter Dune universe with this movie because it is quite confusing. Besides, I was told it was clearly not the best Lynch's movie either, he even disowned his own work. Still, I think when you know a bit of both worlds, it is quite interesting and a fun watch. It is a movie that conveys an anti-colonial message with a very beautiful aesthetic, although this version is only staying at the surface, it is too superficial. If you already know Dune and Lynch I recommend you this watch, you will either love it or hate it.

AUTHOR CREDIT BOX

By:	Chloé Arrivé
Role / Title:	Staff Writer
Bio:	Current Master's student in Cultural Transfers and Digital Media
Pronouns:	she/her
Date:	May 2026

