89. From the cocoon into a butterfly: Wyndham's theocratic dystopia as a bildungsroman

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Abstract

The Chrysalids (1955), previously titled *Re-Birth* in the U.S. edition, is set in a post-apocalyptic fictional country called Labrador and narrates the story of a small agricultural community striving to live for thousands of years after the world was devastated by a massive nuclear disaster. It is regarded as one of Wyndham's science fiction masterpieces together with other novels written after 1940s. However, *The Chrysalids* has generally been regarded as a post-apocalyptic novel focusing on a speculative future where a new generation with telepathic abilities emerge. The severe criticism of a theocratic dystopia in the book has been neglected by most of the critics. The current paper aims to present the way religious dystopia is established in *The Chrysalids* by elaborating on how Wyndham uses narratives of Christian theology as a context in constructing the dystopian religious society in the novel. It further discusses how individuality is oppressed by religious authority in the hands of religious devices and presents the bildungsroman perspective of the story by depicting the spiritual metamorphosis David, the protagonist, undergoes in parallel with what the title of the novel allegorically signifies. In this regard, the study tries to figure out how Wyndham's dystopian narrative include the characteristics of bildungsroman tradition.

Keywords: John Wyndham, dystopia. the chrysalids, religion, bildungsroman

Kozadan kelebeğe: Bir bildungsroman olarak Wyndham'ın teokratik distopyası

Öz

Krizalitler (1955) romanı, daha önce ABD baskısında *Yeniden Doğuş* adıyla basılmış ve Labrador adında bir hayali ülkede geçer. Kitap, dünyayı büyük bir nükleer felaketin yıkımından binlerce yıl sonra yaşamaya çalışan küçük bir tarım topluluğunun hikâyesini anlatır. 1940'lardan sonra yazılan diğer romanlarıyla birlikte, John Wyndham'ın bilim kurgu başyapıtlarından biri olarak kabul edilir. Ancak söz konusu roman genellikle telepatik yetenekleri olan yeni bir neslin öngörülebilen gelecekte ortaya çıktığı bir post-apokaliptik roman olarak görülmüştür. Romanın teokratik distopyaya getirdiği sert eleştiri, çoğu eleştirmen tarafından göz ardı edilmiştir. Bu makale, Wyndham'ın Krizalitler romanında distopik dini toplumu nasıl inşa ettiğini açıklayarak romanda Hristiyan teolojik anlatılarının bu toplumun inşasında nasıl kullandığını irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma ayrıca, bireyselliğin dini otorite tarafından dini argümanlar kullanılarak nasıl bastırıldığını tartışır ve romanın isminin de alegorik olarak ifade ettiği paralelde başkahraman David'in geçirdiği ruhsal başkalaşımı betimleyerek öykünün bildungsroman perspektifini sunar. Bu bağlamda çalışma,

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Wyndham'ın distopik anlatısının bildungsroman geleneğinin özelliklerini nasıl içerdiğini ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: John Wyndham, distopya. krizalitler, din, bildungsroman

John Wyndham Parkes Lucas Beynon Harris, born into a middle-class family in 1903, became one of the prominent authors of science fiction, contemplating the social and political turmoil of the 20th century with an erudite depth. Throughout his career, he wrote various short stories and novels, fostering the genre by using numerous pen names that were variations of his own name. The scandalous divorce of his parents dragged Wyndham and his mother to different cities to avoid direct contact with the father, and thus the young boy was educated at various schools. Though sent to study law in Oxford in 1924, his interests differed from what he was offered. Having tried other jobs ranging from farming to advertising, Wyndham finally took the first steps of his literary career by writing short stories for American science fiction magazines under pseudonyms such as John Benyon Harris, Johnson Harris, John Benyon and Lucas Parkes. In terms of his literary style, Wyndham's career can be divided into two parts: a) the young science fiction author writing detective stories and science fiction romances under different pen names, and b) John Wyndham who "began to take the dystopian novel in a new direction, emphasizing afresh the genre's strong links to the fantastic premises and transformations of science fiction" (Stock, 2011, p. 206) following the publication of *The Day of the Triffids* in 1951. Priest describes Wyndham's former career as:

> the stories that Wyndham sold before the war, the ones as Beynon or Beynon Harris, were not particularly well-executed and were of their period, not giving much idea of what the writer might later become capable of producing. They were, for the most part, adventure stories about rocketry, death rays, voyages to other planets, lost races living in subterranean worlds, and so on. (*John Wyndham & H G Wells – Christopher Priest*, n.d.)

Priest's critique of Wyndham's early writings actually aims to emphasize the author's efforts to follow the popular footsteps rather than bring novelty into the genre. Contrary to his pre-war writings, *The Day of the Triffids* presented Wyndham's "incarnation in his literary life" (The Invisible Man of Science Fiction 0:25-0:32) by giving a new impulse to his oeuvre followed by his other works, *The Kraken Wake* (1953), *The Chrysalids* (1955) and *The Midwich Cuckoos* (1957). In a letter to Frederik Pohl, Wyndham clearly reveals this transition in his style by stating that "the original idea of John Wyndham [as a penname] was that I was using it for a different style or stuff… not cluttered up with memories of early Wonder Stories" (quoted in Ketterer 375). Wyndham also hints that his dissatisfaction with popular science fiction was prevalent before the 1940s by defining the genre as "the adventures of galactic gangsters" (Guardian, 2008) in space, and he believed that such stories eschewed logic and reason in favour of popularity and horror (Rees, 2019, p. 280). In a sense, he opposed the stereotypical form of science-fiction repeating itself for the sake of being read by fan readership. That is why he named his fiction "logical fantasy" (Stock 215) instead of science fiction. In this form of fiction, the story exhibits a logical flaw with more predictable outcomes than typical science-fiction stories. Wyndham may have intended to reform science fiction to preserve the genre from clichés and make it more accessible to a larger audience than just fan readers. He also intertwined science fiction and dystopia in his apocalyptic novels to present a sarcastic backdrop to his writings that would serve the reality he offered with logical fantasy. The apocalyptic books by Wyndham meet this criterion because they differ from works published in the first half of the author's career in that they all deal with the bleak post-war environment by speculating on disastrous scenarios. These scenarios also help Wyndham elaborate on the social and moral consequences of scientific discoveries and technological inventions of the age. Wyndham

personally witnessed the tragedy while working with the Civil Service as a postal censor at the Ministry of Information, as a firewatcher with the Home Guard, and as a corporal in the Royal Corps of Signals during WWII (Ketterer & Harris, 1999, p. 303) and thus disclosed much of his impression in his works mentioned above. Despite his reputation among readers at the time and his significant influence on the genre, he did not receive much attention from critics and academics. That is perhaps why the BBC defined him as the "invisible man of science fiction" in the biographical documentary made in 2005.

Wyndham's literary style was criticized depending on two general assertions. First, he was primarily influenced by H.G. Wells (James, 1994, p. 79) and accused of imitating Well's fiction. The second criticism was that he was "the master of cosy catastrophe" and his novels were "totally devoid of ideas but read smoothly, and thus reached a maximum audience" (Aldiss, 1974, p. 294), especially for his first two post-war novels, *The Day of the Triffids* and *The Kraken Wakes*. As, H.G. Wells was a pioneering figure, Wyndham's influence from such an author was unavoidable, especially for his early writings; yet, this did not mean that Wyndham's writing was only an imitation of Wellsian writing. Moreover, this inspiration is the case for almost all early science fiction works, and Wyndham's attempts to establish a form of logical fantasy may indicate how his writing seeks to depart from the earlier style or at least give the Wellsian concept of science fiction a fresh face as he viewed Well's fiction as a "plausible narrative [with] the reality of characters" (Gillings, 1969, p. 11). This fresh face was to "adapt and update Wells's themes" (Stock, 2015, p. 433) to the social issues of the 1950s. Accusing Wyndham of crafting stories devoid of ideas would be based on a naive reading of his major novels that misses the philosophical texture of the works. Aldiss defines cosy catastrophism as a setting in which "the hero should have a pretty good time while everyone else is dying off" (Aldiss, 1974, p. 280). This critique stresses the clichés repeated throughout Wyndham's works, taking *The Day of the Triffids* and *The Kraken Wakes* into account, yet the critique itself turns into a catchphrase generalizing all Wyndham's works. Though this is somewhat accurate, especially in *The Day of the Triffids*, where the protagonist Masen survives by coincidence amid a disaster, it reduces the entire story to a single definition and eliminates the text's diversity. Atwood sharply refutes this charge against Wyndham, claiming that from their perspective, World War II was "a cosy war because not everyone died in it" (Atwood, 2015). Ironically, Wyndham addresses the issue much earlier in *Chrysalids*, without being aware of any criticism, by extrapolating that "this is not a nice cosy world for anyone ... especially not for anyone that's different... maybe you are not the kind to survive it, after all" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 96). Much has been written about the two allegations for Wyndham's writings; nevertheless, as they are constrained to only two of his novels, it would be unfair to judge the author's whole literary career with such criticisms. Apart from such general statements, Wyndham enjoyed enormous success due to both the freshness he introduced to the genre and his popularity among fans, particularly for the works published in the 1950s.

Wyndham's personal experiences during WWII influenced the themes and patterns of his subsequent works, which are now considered masterpieces of science fiction. Further, the Cold War era presented various subtexts for these works and as Booker states it became a dominant factor from the end of the 1940s till the 1990s (173). As "Western science fiction during cold-war tended to have a dystopian inclination" (Booker, 2005, p. 173) this might have prompted Wyndham's anxiety to imagine apocalyptic scenarios just like other dystopian authors of his time. Besides, the focus on the cold war, the 1950s witnessed many advancements in other fields of science and technology and thus raised the question of whether all these developments could escape human control. Wyndham expresses his concerns in *Trouble with Lichen* by stating that the "goings-on of science had got so far beyond ordinary human control" (Wyndham, 2008b, p. 185). Wyndham harmonizes all these social, political and scientific developments in his four major speculative fictions. Genetically modified crops and the catastrophe they

may lead to are presented in *The Day of the Triffids*, while genetic mutations and their results were subject matters in *The Chrysalids* and *The Midwich Cuckoos*. *The Chrysalids*, on the other hand, is different from Wyndham's other significant works in that it contains a subtextual critique of a fundamentalist religious society. In the subtext, Wyndham uses religious blindness and its practices as a target board towards his fictional religious society.

The Chrysalids (1955), previously titled *Re-Birth* in the U.S. edition, is set in a post-apocalyptic fictional country called Labrador and narrates the story of a small agricultural community striving to live for thousands of years after the world was devastated by a massive nuclear disaster. Survivors of this disaster define it as a "Tribulation" by God, and thus, the novel turns into a modern narrative speculating on what would happen in a possible post-apocalyptic world resembling Noah's Flood. However, this narrative lacks a prophetic figure, and people try to find their ways from *The Bible*, left from the "Old People" and Nicholson's *Repentances*, which are the only remaining books left to survivors. Therefore, social rules and norms are shaped according to the teachings in these books. This fanatical religious sect preaches, depending on its religious interpretation, preserving all living things in their "pure" form, while condemning genetic changes resulting from the nuclear disaster. David, the 10-year-old protagonist of the story, realizes that he has telepathic abilities with his friends, and the novel portrays how the community ostracizes these children. While David reveals how his non-conformity within the society's norms impacts his life owing to his telepathic talent, he also subtly expresses the persecution of individuals who oppose the society's beliefs, raising issues about religion which is pictured as the society's highly valued normative asset. Through David's mental interrogation of norms that are prevalent throughout the story, Wyndham presents his readers the destruction of a possible theocratic society supressing individuals from different perspectives.

The narrative opens with David's prophetic dream of a metropolis, which occurs several times in other forms throughout the story, full of vehicles and aircrafts far away from Labrador civilization. After "God sent Tribulation", which people set as the beginning of their collective memory, the Waknuk society has lost all its ties with the past and thus David is unable to define whether the city he imagines belongs to the future or to "the old people" in the past. This civilization may even exist in the present somewhere out of his country. The civilization before the tribulation is built by "the old people", and nobody exactly knows who they are; only rumours exist about them. As the sole relics of the past are the two holy books, the Waknuk civilization has based its historical narrative on interpreting these writings. The times before what "these two books told…was a long oblivion" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 39). In this regard, the community, having lost all its memory, remains deeply entrenched in religious beliefs and constructs its own history/memory in parallel with its interpretation of holy books. Without these books, there are only a "few strands of legends" that are told by some "successive minds" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 39), just like the legends about old people. Wyndham sets the Waknuk society as a "no place" dystopic community where a hybrid kind of totalitarian post-Christian religion is in practice, and as Krome et al. states, it resembles New England Puritanism in certain aspects, such as seeing natural calamities as a kind of retribution or reward from God (53).

The religious practices in Waknuk are nourished by the government to keep its citizens strictly adhering to laws against any form of deviations and mutations. Such deviations and mutations, both spiritually and physically, are totally cursed by constantly reminding people of the dread of God, who has the power to bring another affliction in case of any blasphemy. David's family is the most devout in the district with a considerable influence on society owing to its political ties and wealth insisting on the strict execution of religious laws. His father, Joseph Strorm is a devout Christian, following his grandfather, Elias

Strorm. In a community that has lost all its ties with the religious rituals and traditions before the tribulation, Elias Strorm as one of the first inhabitants of the settlement with religious concerns built a church in Waknuk. In this context, Wyndham delivers a fundamental critique of the formation of institutionalized religion. The grandfather Elias, who brought Christianity to the region, had actually been exiled from the east.

> "Why he came is not quite clear. He himself maintained that it was the ungodly ways of the East which drove him to search for a less sophisticated, stauncher-minded region; though I [David] have heard it suggested that there came a point when his native parts refused to tolerate him any longer. (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 16)

Although the reason for his exile is not apparent, the narrative reveals that the norms of the society in the east were strictly opposed to his religious values, and therefore he could have been excluded from a more secular community owing to his strict ideas or behaviours. The godly society he envisioned might be established in "a less-sophisticated, stauncher-minded region" where the true believers would not dare to question Elias's interpretation of the Bible. In Elias's society, heretics are not allowed, just like the easterners did not accept him to their community. Wyndham thus implies that the seeds of a religious society can be sown in less questioning and obedient societies. Through the grandfather's banishment from the East, Wyndham also criticizes the theological texture of Christianity as Elias is the prophet who, along with Moses, is credited with preventing Yahweh's religion from being corrupted by Baal's nature worship[2]. Although the Christian narrative presents Elias as a peacemaker who put the corruption and blasphemy to end, Wyndham pictures Elias's establishment of organized religion in the novel as the start of the corruption itself, at the end of which heretics are exiled to Fringes or killed. In an interview for the BBC documentary with Sister Bede, a family friend of Wyndham's, she reveals Wyndham's religious view:

> Wyndham did not believe in organized religion, and religious worship, and the fact that my mother and myself both became Catholics… that I wanted to come to the abbey and live a religious life was just… he [Wyndham] considered I was committing suicide, just throwing my life away ("The Invisible Man of Science Fiction")

Wyndham in fact narrates the suicide of a whole community in the hands of organized religious fundamentalism in *The Chrysalids*. By introducing Elias' story implicitly at the beginning of the novel and then depicting Waknuk society, Wyndham also illustrates that he is less interested in the story of how individuals are redeemed from the decay but more interested in the speculation of what would happen after a religious prophetic figure saved people. While Elias in the Bible has a success story of saving people from the rotten faithlessness, Wyndham retells the story from another aspect depicting it as a failure in the novel.

Apart from the story of corruption, Elias's drought story may be regarded as another religious narrative that sets the context for *The Chrysalids*. According to the story, Elias once appears in Israel to warn King Ahab of the divine punishment that will befall his kingdom if he does not eliminate idol worship and bring all of Israel back to God. Ahab mocks Elias, and the Land of Israel suffers years of drought and hunger as a result. Later, on Mount Carmel, Elijah engages in a fight of strength with 450 prophets of Baal (idol worshipers) to determine which deity is the real God of Israel. Both Elias and the other Baal prophets begin praying to their Gods after presenting their sacrifices. Elias's prayer is accepted while the others are rejected, and finally, the drought ends with rain (Smyth, n.d.). The idea of divine

[2] According to the Hebrew Scriptures, the Israelites worshipped Baal Berith following Gideon's death, a leader of the Israelites, when they "went astray." Smith states that as Elias and Moses were to warn people against the corruption by Baal's nature worship and stress the monotheism by claiming that there was no reality except the God of Israel.

punishment in this drought narrative may refer to the idea of tribulation in the book which constitutes the dominance of the fear of God prevalent in Waknuk society. Wyndham describes the Waknuk civilization in such a manner that the people who live there perceive God as a punitive presence that should be absolutely dreaded. Anyone doing wrong in Waknuk will be "hateful in the sight of God" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 14). Wyndham's sarcastic tone towards this fear is observable in David's account of his grandfather: "Respect for God was frequently on his [Elias] lips, and the fear of the devil constantly in his heart, and it seems to have been hard to say which inspired him the more" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 16).

In Waknuk society, the conflict between respect and fear is skewed toward fear since people are continually reminded of God's wrath and anger. This is what Wyndham's criticism of religion primarily focuses on. Delumeau underlines two terrible sources of fear haunting Western civilisation: the "horror" of sin and the "obsession" of damnation (Delumeau, 1990, p. 27), and these two forms of fear clearly shown in the novel are the sources of founding a religious order. That is why Wyndham bases his religious society primarily upon fear which stems from the obsession with damnation, just as Waknuk people are obsessed with the idea of tribulation. He problematizes this insoluble knot between fear and religion at the beginning of the novel and presents it to the reader's discretion. The reader keeps struggling with whether religion is the cause of fear or fear is the cause of religion throughout the novel. Surprisingly, there is no single event in the novel that depicts God's compassion and love, and as David indicates, it is a "God-fearing community". When Aunt Harriet, David's aunt and one of the first victims of the religious order as a result of giving birth to a mutant baby, is dismissed from Joseph's farm, she opposes this complete dreadfulness by stating that she "shall pray God to send charity into this hideous world…sympathy for the weak…love for the unhappy and unfortunate" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 73). The religious society that claimed to have ended corruption has swept away all of the individuals' rights to live, and the Fringes, where heretics are banished in the novel, is crowded with people in need of God's mercy, and it stands in opposition to religious orthodoxy.

With the setting above, Wyndham presents a formula that hints at basic requirements for a religious order. First, it requires people who can be easily duped with the threat of divine vengeance. It then necessitates the presence of a religious person who feels obliged to save people from infidelity. However, Wyndham does not criticize the religious structure solely on these two grounds. The structure that Elias built through the church is passed from father to son, with each generation bringing additional depravity as is seen in David's confession that "the evangelical flash [of Elias] did not appear in my father's [Joseph's] eye, his [Joseph's] virtue was more legalistic" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 17). At this point, Wyndham starts narrating how the atmosphere of fear has become a tool in the hands of the church, resulting in a society that is gradually becoming vicious. Elias's fire of faith turns into an institutionalized organization over time and one generation later it turns into the most potent instrument of Joseph's authority, which ends up with the victimization of his son David and many other members of the society. This institutional identity provides the church with a semipolitical authority as well, through which it gains a more substantial power over individuals and the communal life. Joseph's position in the society is not restricted with Sunday addresses; he also "administers the laws temporal, as a magistrate" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 17). Hence, Joseph considers it his responsibility to resolve temporal concerns within his jurisdiction; he even sometimes opposes the central government's actions.

David, who has experienced first-hand the negative effects of religious bigotry through his upbringing in a preacher's family, has his first encounter with the harmful aspects of religion when he meets Sophia and her family. Sophia is a girl with six toes, and David meets her in the countryside. This encounter

brings to light the negative consequences of religious discrimination and intolerance. The moment David realizes that Sophia has six toes, he remembers verses from the Bible and finds out exactly what the verses he memorized actually mean. At this point, yet unaware that he is also a kind of mutant, he starts to question how the biblical verses in the nature of law could affect his own life and others. Wyndham, in this way, uses children's innocence as a weapon in his interrogation of religious dogmas because David is unable to find a logical reason behind "the Definition" set by the Bible. Sophia and her family have nothing to do with blasphemy because they have treated him well, but the definition he is supposed to trust commands just the opposite. With a child's mind, David tries to overcome "the puzzling ways of the world" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 14) established by adults and ultimately becomes the victimized figure who was compelled to run away from the place he could not identify himself with. This escape is a physical struggle to survive and raises a mental conflict in which he has to leave aside his religious part and become a secular member of the New People, Sealanders. Through David's mental journey, Wyndham uses the characteristics of bildungsroman to illustrate David's transformation from a religious son into a more secular being. In this regard, the novel's title finds its meaning by representing David's transformation from a caterpillar into a butterfly. Chrysalids is the stage in which an insect is wrapped in a cocoon before transforming into a butterfly, and it is at this cocoon stage, David is fed by religious ideas without having any idea about the outside world. As he is threatened by the norms of society, he comes out of the cocoon with his own mutation. Just as the metamorphosis of an insect into a butterfly has biological stages, David's mutation throughout the story has three steps: his personal experience of the horrific side of religious practices in Waknuk, the time when he questions norms and values, his encounter with people in Fringes and finally the Sealanders.

In the first stage, David realizes that it is not just the dread of another tribulation that establishes the order; the religious authority may resort to any violence at any moment when necessary. In this regard, though God's vengeance may be the beginning point for fear in religious discourse, it is the wrath of authority that stops people deviate from purification. When David confronts the Wender family as a young kid raised by a Christian fundamentalist father figure, he senses the lack of affection in his own family. The Wenders' house does not have verses hanging on the wall "for people to point to disapproval" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 11), and it is the first time someone has told David that he is "a good boy" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 12). The affection he gains and feels for the family pushes him to assist Sophie's escape. However, this humane sympathy is regarded as treason to God's order, and thus, he is met with physical violence, ending up with the trauma of the young boy. This traumatizing experience is not confined to physical violence; the young child's mental collapse causes him to become estranged from his family. That is, "the bodily hurts" of violence turn into "bitterness, self-contempt, and abasement" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 52) in his spirit. This spiritual trauma stems from his fear that he would become the primary target of violence in the future due to his telepathic abilities. The violence entrenches David's subconscious so much that he has visions in which his father sacrifices his beloved ones. He relates his punishment by the father with the moment he has once watched his father sacrificing a calf during a purification ceremony, an act of worship to avert the wrath of God. In this sense, the dreams in which Sophie and Petra, his young sister with telepathic abilities, were sacrificed are actually the embodiment of David's subconscious dreams.

The brutality of bigotry on people is not restricted to David's punishment only. Sophie is exiled to the Fringes after being sterilized as the authority does not want the mutation to spread even outside of Waknuk. When David encounters Sophie on the outskirts, he realizes that Sophie is unable to have children due to her sterilization, and hence has no worth in her husband's eyes. In this sense, the religious authority gains the power to intervene in an individual's body and, in a sense, assumes the role

of God. Sophie's punishment includes exile from Waknuk and a life devoid of all humane values such as motherhood and affection in a much primitive community, far from basic needs like food and shelter. Like all deviants and mutations in the Fringe, she is doomed to an endless torment with an "awful emptiness" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 167) awaiting extinction. David's aunt who gives birth to a mutant, Aunt Harriet's mysterious death as a result of her maternal instinct to keep her child alive, and Anne's, one of the telepathic children, tragic suicide as a result of her desire to live like the rest of the Waknuk society, are just two more examples of how the Waknuk society's bigotry has spiralled into violence.

With David's encounter with all these forms of violence, Wyndham first points to the rotten family structure in the hands of religion. The deteriorated father-child relationship in the case of Joseph and David stems from the father's pious personality, who holds religious values above all other values in his life. The preacher's brutality towards his own child exemplifies how religious intolerance has infiltrated all levels of society. David is hesitant about how he should feel about his father since he does not know whether his father loves him or not. He cannot even decide whether to pity him or not at the end of the novel when his father is about to die. The conflict that arises in his mind at the end is between his religious side and the secular self. While the former side reminds him of verses from the Bible appealing to his conscience to "honour thy [his] father" and "forgive him" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 182), the Sealander woman telepathically appeals to his rational side, asserting in an apathetic manner that he should "let him [his father] be" as religious minded Joseph and people like him were "crown of creation" and had "nowhere more to go" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 182). Wyndham emphasizes that individuals' feeling of compassion will stay totally inscribed in Biblical verses in a society where seeds of love are not rooted inside the family. Moreover, the intolerance and fear of authority are predestined to lose as symbolised by the father's death.

In the second stage, David realizes how religious zealotry is established and maintained in his conversation with Axel, his step-uncle married to his aunt Elizabeth. He also notices that he is not alone in his mental interrogation of religion. Uncle Axel, who does not accept the established order and guides David to question society's values, indicates that there are individuals in this narrow-minded society who do not believe in its values but need to hide them. As Joseph Strorm embodies the necessity for a rigid society with set rules, he is a man who is always on the lookout for sin. Because of the authority's paranoid mentality, people cannot express their existing ideas, and only apparent deviations, such as mutations, are punished. As a telepath who is able to hide his deviation, David feels secure in his relationship with Axel. Axel also represents the intellectual mind, who seeks to explain events without resorting to religious reasoning. He encourages David to question the beliefs of the society he grew up in by instilling in him the idea that all of the religious rhetoric he had previously been exposed to may only be myths created by "successive minds" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 39). As David listens to the sailor uncle telling him about other people from distant places, he discovers that each culture has its own interpretation of the true image, God, and deviations yet the central authority in Waknuk forces its own truths because "when people are used to believe a thing is such, and such a way, and the preachers want them to believe that that's the way it is; it is trouble you get, not thanks, for upsetting their ideas." (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 57)

Wyndham ponders at this point how the paranoid mentality of preachers in the society spreads to other members, resulting in the entire society becoming a tight community where individuals are frightened to voice their own thoughts.

The third stage of David's metamorphosis is his first-hand observation of Fringes, the "Godless" community in the eyes of Waknuk society. His confrontation with exiled inhabitants demonstrates how the Waknuk culture is established on the sacrifice of victims. Fringes stands as the binary settlement for the Waknuk where all mutations and deviations in the eyes of the religious authority are kept. Joseph Strorm ironically describes Fringes as a place in which "the Devil struts his wide estate, and the laws of God are mocked" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 20) without being aware that this demonic society was actually crafted in the hands of devout people like him. Confronting this massive violence towards him, his friends and their exile for the sake of divine order helps David question his life and thus creates the desire to live with people in Sealand. David also realizes how religion has different interpretations in different districts in a dialogue with one of the Fringe guys capturing him as the man accuses Waknuk people of "arrogancy" who wish to be like the old people and did not learn from tribulation (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 153). The Fringes people also blame Waknuk society for playing the divine role and thus committing "the great sin by strangling the life out of life" (Wyndham, 2008a, p. 153). By presenting the two societies falsifying each other's beliefs, Wyndham exemplifies how religious sects may turn people into intolerable beings. Fringes stands as a heterotopic place opposed to the ideal utopian Waknuk city in the eyes of faithful people in many ways and this utopia vs heterotopia relationship between the two places helps David realize that Fringe actually holds a mirror to the hypocrisy of the community he is banished when he gets in touch with the people in this counter-city. Before elaborating on this realization, a further definition of Foucault's heterotopic spaces is required. As its name suggests, "hetero" meaning different and "topos" meaning place, heterotopia stands as an alternative space or another site to utopias. They are, in other words, real or mental spaces that act as other spaces alongside existing spaces. These are spaces where norms of behaviour are suspended. Foucault states that there is a sort of mirror relationship between utopias and heterotopias and asserts that this relationship presents "a sort of mixed, joint experience" (Foucault, 1986, p. 4). He further describes this connection by stating that:

> In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy.(Foucault, 1986, p. 4)

Through the description above, Foucault draws a blurring line between utopias and heterotopias by creating a disorienting image of the self in and outside the mirror. The image in the mirror is a heterotopia because it helps the being to realize that via the virtual space on the other side of the glass, he comes back to himself, starts to direct his eyes toward himself and more importantly reconstitute himself there where he is (Foucault, 1986, p. 4).

Michel Foucault, according to Heidi Sohn, borrowed the word heterotopia from medical studies and adapted it to his writings. The concept has been defined in medical literature as "a phenomenon occurring in an unusual place, or to indicate 'a spatial displacement of normal tissue" (Sohn, 2008, p. 41). However, this displacement has no effect on the organism's general functioning and growth as tissues still carry similar metabolic features. In this regard, just like tissues, heterotopias do not harm utopic spaces and the two places stay in harmony despite their differences at first glance. Foucault divides heterotopic places into two: heterotopias of crisis and heterotopias of deviation. Heterotopias of crisis are privileged sacred or forbidden spaces reserved for individuals who are in relation to their society in crisis. These are individuals like adolescents, pregnant women or the elderly. On the other hand, heterotopias of deviation are places where behaviour outside the norm can be exercised. These

places can be psychiatric hospitals, prisons etc. In the context of above-mentioned framework, Wyndham presents two different spaces in the novel: Waknuk society functioning as a religious utopia for the believers and the Fringes placed as a heterotopic space for the people out of the religious norms. It also, as Foucault defines, holds a mirror to the utopian Waknuk. As David moves from the utopian realm created by his father to the heterotopic realm, through the conversation he has with the people there, he understands that his father's values he was exposed to were not absolute religious truths and each interpretation of God's teachings could make way for new perspectives. Before coming to Fringe, David has heard different beliefs of different societies outside Waknuk from Uncle Axel; however, his first-hand observation of such people in the Fringes depicts more than what his uncle told him. The people of Fringes excluded from Waknuk society seemed to belong to the heterotopic space outside the utopia but they are actually people who have roots and relatives in Waknuk. In this regard, they are both in and outside of utopian and heterotopic spaces at the same time. This state of Fringes being both inside and outside the Waknuk society shows similarities with Foucault's cemetery example in his definition of heterotopia in his article entitle *Of Other Spaces*. Foucault defines heterotopia of cemetery as "a place unlike ordinary cultural spaces…however [it is] connected with all the sites of the city, state or society since each individual, each family has relatives in the cemetery" (1986, p. 5). He further states that cemetery was at the centre of cities, next to the church as a sacred space until the end of eighteenth century yet when modern civilization became atheistic with the loss of belief in immortality of the soul, cemetery was taken out of the cities from nineteenth century on due to the "obsession with death as an illness" (1986, p. 6). Thus, cemetery turns into "the other city, where each family possesses its dark resting place" (1986, p. 6). Although Foucault discusses the physical presence of heterotopic spaces and gives example of a cemetery to show how these spaces change over time in his article, The Fringes in Wyndham's novel symbolically represents a heterotopic society that stands against the utopia constructed in Waknuk. Just like the displaced tissue, Fringes carries similar metabolic features with Waknuk society as all the members of both societies have close family relations. Even David's uncle is exiled to the Fringes. Since members of this deviant community are sterilized and exiled to outside the city, Fringes represents a sort of cemetery full of starving people waiting for their death and turns into an obsession for the people inside Waknuk city, especially for the religious people keeping authority in hand. As people once lived together with Waknuk people, members of the fringes are well aware of the religious rhetoric uttered in Waknuk and thus able to hold a critical mirror to it. This critical mirror helps David discover both himself and the deficiencies of his father's religious order. When he is captured in Fringes, he tells the Fringes man that he was taught the Fringes was ruled by the Devil. In exchange, he discovers that Fringes people accuse Waknuk people of arrogance, claiming that they are still playing God's role as the Old People and haven't learned anything from the tribulation. At this point, David realizes where he stands both as a boy raised by Waknuk truths and a deviant to be a member of Fringes. He is himself in and outside the utopian and heterotopic spaces now. As a deviant in the eyes of his hometown, he learns that the truth changes depending on which space you live, or which part of the mirror you stand. With this dilemma David keeps struggling, Wyndham pinpoints that religious truths are nothing but different interpretations of religious books, which are the Bible and Nicholson's *Repentances* in the case of Waknuk society. With the second book authored by a person called Repentances, Wyndham indirectly criticizes Christianity in the sense that it has different versions of the Bible that causes different understandings of religion. In spite of all the above-mentioned ties keeping the two societies together, Wyndham constructs his narration accusing religious bigotry as the only source of separation among people at micro level and societies in general.

This separation urges David to get away from all the religious doctrines no matter how they are understood or interpreted. From the beginning of the story, David continuously realizes that the

methods of religious authority are much darker and more destructive, and feels that it is religion itself that causes the trouble. Thus, he comes one step closer to seeing himself as part of the godless Sealand society because this new civilization totally offers a new way of life far from the speculation that any religion can cause. As an alternative to the present understandings of religion, David tries to find a place for himself in the truth of a world where words will not be misunderstood or interpreted differently. In this regard, Sealanders represent the New People, who will eliminate this fragmentation among people by using telepathic powers that enable them to think collectively without misunderstandings rather than words. This collective conscious in telepathic community is "able to think together and understand one another as they never could" (2008a, p. 196). Wyndham makes the distinction between The Old People and the alternative Sealanders in the novel by accusing the old people of talking with words which have something missing and "however old they grow, they will never be able to understand one another" (2008a, p. 127). He further accuses people in favour of religious order as people who "aspired greedily, and then refused to face the responsibilities they had created. They created vast problems, and then buried their heads in the sand of idle faith" (137).

Contrary to blind faith in Waknuk and the Fringes societies, Selanders define themselves as people "who do not mechanistically attempt to hammer [themselves] into geometrical patterns of society, or policy; [They] are not dogmatists teaching God how he should have ordered the world" (2008a, p. 171). This new community is not interested in God's order and even God himself. They are rather interested in human and his capacity to transform all the evil surrounding the world. Actually, they believe that the present chaotic situation is the result of wrongdoings of the old people because "the old people brought down Tribulation, and were broken into fragments by it." (2008a, p. 158) and it is their generation that will create a new fresh order. This order will be constructed with a sort of telepathic society and Wyndham's suggestion of such a society probably comes from his science fiction tradition he is nourished. However, beyond the telepathic society, he imagines a new order that prioritises a collective conscious which will take precedence over misleading religious doctrines. This order will not be deceived with by religious bigotry in the name of God. It puts emphasis on the desires of people with common sense. David chooses neither the brutalization in Waknuk nor the victimization in the Fringes. Instead of living in a society where the truth is blurring and religious dogmas demolish individuality, David finds solution in escape to Sealand. His rescue from such dystopic communities in an aircraft into the world of new people signifies the final stage of his metamorphosis. The aircraft itself symbolizes the butterfly form of metamorphosis and it stands for the independence the protagonist gains.

Overall, through the bildungsroman elements of the novel by picturing the journey of the protagonist into a more secular self, Wyndham metaphorically portrays the terror lying in the essence of dystopian theocratic society by posing his readers that once a member starts to question the religious authority, the final destination of his journey is the moment when he becomes fully independent of all dogmas. In this regard, the butterfly symbolizes the self-realization of the free mind that reaches his own freedom and personality.

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