

Critical analysis of the  
book the chrysalids  
by john wyndham



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The Chrysalids is a book that touches on some pretty interesting themes such as discrimination, religion and conformity. This causes us to think further into the deeper meaning of the novel and how you can relate to other things present in our everyday lives and reflect upon ourselves.

Understanding a text can increase how you are affected by the writing.

Understanding socially, historically, and culturally can make the text much more meaningful, and increase your understanding of what the author is trying to portray.

In this book the understanding comes from the story, you need to know some basic historical knowledge but since it takes place in a fictional universe that simulates earth all understood as rules of that universe. Aside from needing to use some critical thinking in some of the scenarios presented you can treat this text as an independent source. If you are a critical reader all the influence is from the author himself.

In writing you're usually very influenced by your upbringing and bring some details from your childhood into your texts, so let's take a deeper look into John Wyndham's childhood and how it may have affected the writing of this book. There is a strong theme of self-governance in the chrysalids and it would seem it shares some similar themes and patterns with other types of government, these types of governments rising at this time may have influenced the government type in the novel. This book is very science fiction based because parts of the nuclear war section are true but in this book, it is taken to an extreme. This book was written in the golden age of science fiction so it would make sense to have these prominent themes.

John Wyndham was born July 10, 1903, England and died March 11, 1969, in London. He was an English science-fiction writer who typically wrote about the human's struggle for survival when a natural event suddenly invades a comfortable setting. Wyndham had various jobs throughout his years before he finally decided on writing, from farming to advertising. When he was 8 years old his parents divorced, which may affect his story writing when it comes to the disconnect between David and his parents and why David sees his parents as these evil controlling people in his life. He continued writing until 1939 when World War II came to Britain. He worked during the war as a government censor for the Ministry of Information. This may have given him the base for the chrysalids, he got to see all the information and he is the one that censored it, he got to read first hand the details of the war and how terrible it truly was. Only short after the war did he write the chrysalids so his real-world knowledge of the war that he lived through was probably still in his mind.

Nazism In almost every respect it was an anti-intellectual and atheoretical movement, emphasizing the will of the charismatic dictator as the sole source of inspiration of a people and a nation, as well as a vision of annihilation of all enemies was the only goal of Nazi policy. Similar to the way that the government is depicted in Waknuk, they believe all their teachings are from that of god and they follow blindly in what they have interpreted as gods will. Nazism has come to stand for a belief in the superiority, and to the people in the book, they believe they are superior to the fringes people and that is why they cast them away because they feel like they are the proper portrayal of man.

Communism, however, is the opposite theme in this book concerning government. Communism follows the overthrow of capitalism, a society without class divisions or government structure. A classless system in which means of production are owned communally and private property doesn't exist. In the book we specifically see that each of the farmers own their land and are forced to buy from others, we also see very much class division when it comes to the fringes people and even those who live closer to the centre of town, when the main government won't even discharge the arm to help with the fringes raids.

Science fiction is based on an imagined futuristic dystopia or technologically advanced world with major social changes or environmental changes.

Science fiction is to expand beyond the limits of humanity. Many old books depict scenarios where man traverses beyond the limits of the world, and dive into space, which is very present with this book. During the time this book was written in the golden age of science fiction when it was the most popular writing style but I think what made this book stand out the most was the fact that it was so similar to our world and was so close to being within the realm of possibility.

In conclusion, Wyndham's work was influenced by so many factors, many of them related to his environment in the past and in the time in which he was creating the book. To read this book you need no background knowledge but knowing about his upbringing and the different types of government may bring you a whole new perspective to the themes and scenarios in the book.

Wyndhams writing is so strong individually so the added knowledge may

bring you into his mindset. He creates scenes that are so vivid and realistic

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that contributed to his books success not only because of his inclusion of science fiction but because he was a very talented writer, to begin with.