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## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

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More, Thomas. *Utopia*. New York: Penguin, 1965.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. New York: Penguin, 1970.

Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels*. London: David Campbell, 1991.

Wyndham, John. *The Web*. New York: Penguin, 1980.

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## **ANNOTATION**

This bachelor thesis deals with the depiction of the island topos in the novel *Web* (1980) by John Wyndham. The theoretical part deals with the terms closely related with the thesis and outlines the perception of islands throughout history. The frequent island motives that appear in literature are then used for the analytical part. The core part of this thesis is to analyze the island topos in the aforementioned novel and compare it with the chosen island literature.

## **KEY WORDS**

island, topos, place, utopia, *Web*, Wyndham

## **NÁZEV PRÁCE**

Topos ostrova v románu *Web* Johna Wyndhama

## **ANOTACE**

Bakalářská práce se zabývá zobrazením toposu ostrova v románu *Pavučina* (1980) Johna Wyndhama. Teoretická část se zabývá termíny úzce souvisejícími s prací a nastíní vnímání ostrova v průběhu historie. Časté používané ostrovní motivy, které se vyskytují v literatuře tvoří podklad pro analytickou část. Jádrem celé práce je analýza ostrovního toposu ve výše zmíněném románu a jeho porovnání s vybranou ostrovní literaturou.

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

místo, ostrov, *Pavučina*, topos, utopie, Wyndham,

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## INTRODUCTION

Islands are mysterious places. Throughout history, they have been perceived as symbols of perfection because they are not connected to the mainland and therefore cannot be negatively influenced by it. The importance of the perception of islands lies in the imaginative realm.<sup>1</sup> In other words, islands have a special place in people's minds, especially for British authors since they belong to an insular culture. Their imagination works differently from people that live on the mainland. It is not a coincidence that "English refer to Europe as the 'Continent'"<sup>2</sup> even though, the British Isles are geographically a part of Europe the British do not feel to be a part of it. Every individual perceives islands differently, but people that were born or live on an island are both physically and mentally connected with it. Tuan supports this argument in his article, "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective" when he writes that, "[t]he space that we perceive and construct, the space that provides cues for our behaviour, varies with the individual and cultural group."<sup>3</sup> In *Web* by John Wyndham, a native will perceive his island differently from a non-native person. Moreover, Stephanos Stephanides and Susan Bassnett acknowledge, "[p]erhaps those who inhabit islands have a particular kind of special awareness, aware as they always are that sooner or later the land stops and the sea begins. Non-island cultures inhabit different spaces."<sup>4</sup> A person with no real physical experience with living on an island has distorted images and ideas of that place.

These images are caused by the media and literature and as a result, people experience different feelings in their mind than when being physically in the place. As Claudia Bell and John Lyall claim, "[b]eing physically present is the only way to experience such a sense."<sup>5</sup> This distortion leads to the accrument of an island topos. Apparently people perceive islands differently, depending on their physical location. The English may perceive islands as a home, a place where they feel safe and comfortable. Whereas people from "the Continent"<sup>6</sup> perceive islands as secluded places, prisons or places of relaxation, a paradise. Besides mental and

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<sup>1</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 118.

<sup>2</sup> Stephanos Stephanides and Susan Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," *Transtext(s) Transcultures Special issue* (2008): 6-21, accessed February 3, 2017, <https://transtexts.revues.org/212>, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective," in *Philosophy in Geography*, Stephen Gale and Gunnar Olsson (Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel, 1979), 389.

<sup>4</sup> Stephanides and Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," 7.

<sup>5</sup> Claudia Bell and John Lyall, *The Accelerated Sublime: Landscape, Tourism, and Identity* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 16.

<sup>6</sup> Stephanides and Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," 7.

physical connections, it is also essential to take the cultural background and relationships to places under consideration.

The contribution to the island imagination is predominantly in non-fiction literature such as epic poetry. John Gillis, the author of "Island Sojourns", says that islands were mythologised in Western cultures and that they have been associated with heroic journeys and imaginative realms of magical transformation.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, islands were seen as ambivalent places. In ancient Greece, islands were a place where Cyclopes lived but also where heroes led easy-going lives.<sup>8</sup> This explains the frequent choice of islands for adventurous literature such as *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson. The ways of imagining islands in literature is Janus-faced. They represent danger and fear as well as adventure and serenity. Isles were used by architects of utopian societies as a perfect place for creating new communities not only in fictional literature but also in reality. Islands are mysterious places where "things rise to the surface and are made visible, often things that we wish we did not have to see."<sup>9</sup> An island is a place of transformation which can be seen in Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, where innocent children become savages and kill each other. The island environment forces the children to behave in a way that they would have never behaved before. Due to such overlapping interpretations of islands in literature, they were depicted as a place of relaxation, ease from social confrontation, meditation and escapism. These perceptions contributed to the foundation of the island topos. The common image of an island is that of beautiful sandy beaches with palm trees and tropical, green, virginal forests. This natural depiction of an island resembles Eden, the land of plenty, which is a frequent perception in ancient Greece in the Western world.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, islands became a place of no return for shipwrecked sailors like Robinson Crusoe, the children from *Lord of the Flies* and Gulliver.

This thesis deals with frequently used island motives, such as island as a prison, home or Eden. These island perceptions were reused in literature throughout history and helped their readers to picture an island in their mind. The novel *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift depicts islands as mysterious places where the main hero has to live, whereas the paradisiacal island in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* serves as a place of transformation and religious contemplation. The islands in Fowles' *The Magus* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* serve as

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<sup>7</sup> John R. Gillis, "Island Sojourns," *Geographical Review* 97, no. 2 (2007): 274, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30034166>.

<sup>8</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 121.

<sup>9</sup> Stephanides and Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," 7.

<sup>10</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 118.

places for surveying people as if they are locked up in a prison. The prison motive can be also seen in More's *Utopia*, where the lack of freedom is apparent. The island literature thrived during certain centuries and some of these motives kept similar features even though they were reused.

John Wyndham (1903-1969) wrote *Web* in 1969 but the novel was published posthumously in 1979.<sup>11</sup> The book is ingeniously written because it combines fiction with non-fiction by creating a fictional tropical island which has been influenced by colonialism. This is how Wyndham shows the clash of the native and European cultures. The natives see the island as their home, whereas the British see it as an opportunity to gain new territory. *Web* is a utopian novel, which takes place on a fictional island called Tanakuatua and like the island Utopia, "the phantom island is sustained only in the imagination: nowhere, if it is anywhere, is in the mind."<sup>12</sup> The fictional island of Tanakuatua is a perfect place for elaboration on the island topos for this bachelor thesis.

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<sup>11</sup> Alastair Horne, "Wyndham, John, 1903-1969," Literature Online, accessed February 21, 2017, [http://literature.proquest.com/searchFulltext.do?id=BIO005986&divLevel=0&trailId=15A33A21E04&area=ref&forward=critref\\_ft](http://literature.proquest.com/searchFulltext.do?id=BIO005986&divLevel=0&trailId=15A33A21E04&area=ref&forward=critref_ft).

<sup>12</sup> Steven Hutchinson, "Mapping Utopias," *Modern Philology* 85, no. 2 (1987): 172, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/437184>.

# 1 THE ISLAND TOPOS

It is essential to define the term topos and the connection between this term and an island as a place, to fully understand the paper. There are slightly different viewpoints when it comes to determining the origin of the word topos. Therefore, it is important to elaborate on the origin of the word to define the meaning of topos and the terminology closely related to it. Works of domestic and foreign scholars will serve the purpose of the definition.

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines the word topos as “a traditional subject or idea in literature,”<sup>13</sup> and states that the plural form is “topoi.”<sup>14</sup> The term has a tight connection to a place and space. The Online Etymology Dictionary defines topos as a literary theme which is from the same Greek word *topos*<sup>15</sup> and literally means place, region and space.<sup>16</sup> Michal Peprník works with the literary theme definition and says, “[t]opos as a space element has many similar features to a literary work.”<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Daniela Hodrová operates with the plural form topoi, and claims that this form is a rhetorical formula from ancient Greece, which changed into a cliché.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, based on the work of Ernest Curtis, Hodrová explains topoi as “a repeatable place stylization.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore one can assume that topos is a perception of a place that has been re-used over the centuries.

Another Latin word that is closely related with the term topos is the word utopia. This term is essential for the understanding of this paper because *Web* is a utopian novel. Lyman Sargent, the author of *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction*, claims that the word “was coined by Thomas More as the name of the imaginary country he described in his short 1516 book [...] known as Utopia.”<sup>20</sup> Sargent further discusses the origin of the word utopia and says, “[t]he word is based on the Greek *topos* meaning place or where, and ‘u’ from the prefix ‘ou’ meaning no or not. [...] [T]he word ‘utopia’, which simply means no place or nowhere, has come to refer to a non-existent good place.”<sup>21</sup> In *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, the term utopia is similarly described, “[e]tymologically, utopia is thus a place which is a non-place,

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<sup>13</sup> Albert Sidney Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Joanna Turnbull, Diana Lea, Dily's Parkinson, et. al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1633.

<sup>14</sup> Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 1633.

<sup>15</sup> My italics.

<sup>16</sup> “Topos,” Online Etymology Dictionary, accessed March 3, 2017, [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=topos&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=topos&allowed_in_frame=0).

<sup>17</sup> Michal Peprník, *Topos lesa* (Brno: Host, 2005), 14. My translation („Topos jakožto prostorový prvek jeví mnohé společné rysy s literárním dílem.“)

<sup>18</sup> Daniela Hodrová et al., *Poetika míst* (Praha: H&H, 1997), 8.

<sup>19</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika míst*, 8. My translation („vracející se stylizace místa“)

<sup>20</sup> Lyman T. Sargent, *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2.

<sup>21</sup> Sargent, *Utopianism*, 2.

simultaneously constituted by a movement of affirmation and denial.”<sup>22</sup> The word is considered to be something better than the present. People dream of utopias, when they do not feel well. Sargent calls everything concerned with the utopian vision as utopianism, a vision of hope, and claims, “utopianism refers to the dreams and nightmares that concern the ways in which group of people arrange their lives and which usually envision a radically different society from the one in which the dreamers live.”<sup>23</sup> Utopia refers to a better place than where the dreamer currently is. Fátima Vieira fuels this idea and argues that More’s *Utopia* worked on,

a tradition of thought that goes back to ancient Greece and is nourished by the myth of the Golden Age, among other mythical and religious archetypes [...] having been influenced by the promise of happy afterlife, as well as by the myth of Cockayne (a land of plenty).<sup>24</sup>

The utopian visions are based on something from the past such as the Biblical garden of Eden. Yet it is focused on the future, to create that desirous Eden again. Sargent supports this argument by saying, “[i]mages of the utopian past (Eden) and the utopian future [...] relate to both this world and the next one.”<sup>25</sup> Imagination and the perception of a place is closely related to the term topos and utopia and therefore discussion about the environmental perception is valid.

Place means two things. The first is one’s position in society and the second is spatial location.<sup>26</sup> For this paper the latter is essential. People perceive places and the environment with their five senses. According to Tuan, human beings perceive place around them individually, depending on their cultural group.<sup>27</sup> Besides perceiving place individually, people experience places in groups. Tuan comes up with a term ‘crowdedness’ which means sharing the feeling of a certain place in a group.<sup>28</sup> He also states that people get to know the world through experience.<sup>29</sup> Yet, the island importance is in the imaginative realm.<sup>30</sup>

Imagination is predominantly fixed with non-personal experience and people gain the image of a place from the media and literature. Tuan claims in his *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* that tourism gives a person a longer lasting experience of a landscape as well as physical contact with the place.<sup>31</sup> The imagination of an island helps a person when visiting or living on an island. In *The Accelerated Sublime:*

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<sup>22</sup> Fátima Vieira, “The Concept of Utopia,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, Gregory Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4.

<sup>23</sup> Sargent, *Utopianism*, 5.

<sup>24</sup> Vieira, “The Concept of Utopia,” *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, 5-6.

<sup>25</sup> Sargent, *Utopianism*, 86.

<sup>26</sup> Tuan, “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,” in *Philosophy in Geography*, 408.

<sup>27</sup> Tuan, “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,” in *Philosophy in Geography*, 389.

<sup>28</sup> Tuan, “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,” in *Philosophy in Geography*, 403.

<sup>29</sup> Tuan, “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,” in *Philosophy in Geography*, 388

<sup>30</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 118.

<sup>31</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 95.

*Landscape, Tourism, and Identity*, the authors claim that photographs help one's imagination of a place and the re-used imagination of a place becomes over-familiar.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, islands have been mythologized, which led to the creation of the island topos. A geographical perception is essential for this paper as well as the perception of one's surroundings.

The perception of a place as a prison is part of the island topos. According to Hodrová, "prison belongs to the topos of an enclosed space."<sup>33</sup> Moreover Hodrová states that a prison is a place a person wishes to enter or a place where a person is involuntarily enclosed.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, a prison is a place of change.<sup>35</sup> A stranded person might perceive his isolation as a place for religious contemplation as seen in *Robinson Crusoe*. Places that are bound with this perception are towers and mountains. Both places share the same values as a prison, for example, isolation, remoteness and loneliness. In fairytales or chivalric romances a princess is usually imprisoned in a tower.<sup>36</sup> Yet, islands can also be perceived as a home.

The home perception is very common in island literature. Tuan claims in his *Space and Place the perspective of Experience* that "[h]omeland is an important type of place [...] It is a region [...] large enough to support a people's livelihood. Attachment to the homeland can be intense."<sup>37</sup> People create strong bonds with a place which is their home. Islands became a home for shipwrecked sailors. All human perceptions of a place are closely related to islands. Not only is the island topos created by the imagination and perception of a place, but also by the island myths that appeared throughout history.

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<sup>32</sup> Bell and Lyall, *The Accelerated Sublime*, 16.

<sup>33</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika míst*, 103. My translation („vězení patří k toposům uzavřeného prostoru“)

<sup>34</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika míst*, 103.

<sup>35</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika míst*, 108.

<sup>36</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika míst*, 202.

<sup>37</sup> Yi- Fu Tuan, *Space and Place the Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 149.

## 1.1 A MYTHICAL ISLAND

The island topos has its roots deep in history. Islands were mythologized over the centuries and people imagined islands as some kind of wonderful and magical places. Tuan claims that the island imagination is very important in the Western world.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to elaborate on the perception of the early myths about islands.

The authors of "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability" discuss the early island myths and claim that islands were "already present in the classical literature of the ancient Mediterranean such as the island world of *Odyssey* and other islands including Delos, Atlantis, and Thule."<sup>39</sup> It is obvious that the ancient Greeks were fascinated by islands because in Homeric epics, islands were a place where Cyclopes lived.<sup>40</sup> This led to adventurous mythical explorations in order to fight the ancient creatures. Shakespeare used this concept with Caliban in *The Tempest*. For Greeks, "islands were anchors of security or oases of life in the ocean waters."<sup>41</sup> Tuan claims that "[t]he legend of the Island of the Blessed first appeared in archaic Greece: it was described as a place that provided heroes with unusual harvests thrice a year."<sup>42</sup> Sargent supports this early myth idea and combines it with utopianism and says, "[t]he most influential of these early myths are creation myths like the golden age and earthly paradise and myths of the afterlife like the Island of the Blest, where heroes go after death."<sup>43</sup> The first perceptions of islands led to the creation of utopias, desired paradises, where people could go. This imagination of Eden on an island led to the creation of the island topos.

A similar mythical island appeared in Celtic legends. It was about a "Celtic island on which no one toiled, its climate was exquisite, its air steeped in fragrance."<sup>44</sup> From this it is certain that islands were seen as paradises even in cultures that were far from ancient Greece. The perception of islands as paradises was transcultural. Tuan writes about the Abbot of Clonfort, a seafaring hero who discovered paradisiacal islands full of blissful ease and abundance.<sup>45</sup> These images persisted until the Middle Ages.

In the Middle Ages, nations tended to explore the seas and tried to search for Eden. An example of this imagery dates back to the 13th century. Pierre d'Ailly, who was respected by

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<sup>38</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 118.

<sup>39</sup> Stephanides and Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," 8.

<sup>40</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 121.

<sup>41</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 120.

<sup>42</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 118.

<sup>43</sup> Sargent, *Utopianism*, 13.

<sup>44</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 119.

<sup>45</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 119.

Colombus, claimed that he had found the earthly paradise and that it was located near the Fortunate Isles. The only explanation for this was that the islands were fertile as well as the climate.<sup>46</sup> The vision of paradisiacal islands was embedded in people's minds, so that "Ponce de Leon was reported to have searched for the Fountain of Youth in Florida, [...] by thinking of Florida as an island."<sup>47</sup> Moreover, in 1493 the New World had a huge impact on people's imagination because they began to imagine island-gardens.<sup>48</sup> During the Renaissance the European expansion through colonization boosted this imagination and new island themes such as Edenic, arcadian and utopian arose. The most significant works are *Utopia* and *The Tempest*.<sup>49</sup> Yet, the island of Utopia is more like a prison. In *Island Paradise: The Myth: an Examination of Contemporary Caribbean and Sri Lankan Writing* the author claims that colonization changed the notion of islands as paradises and that "[t]he notion of paradise is traced from a religious context to that of economics as the search for paradise changes from a religious quest to a search for gold."<sup>50</sup> This can be seen in *Treasure Island*, where pirates hunt for a treasure on an island.

Colonialism is closely related to utopian images of places and therefore Sargent wrote a chapter about colonialism in *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* in which he states, "Europeans established two types of colonies. One was designed primarily to exploit the labour of the inhabitants and the natural resources of the country. [...] The second, [...] was primarily for settlement."<sup>51</sup> During the colonial period the islands in the Caribbean were perceived as paradises. The colonists interfered with the natives and savages which boosted the island-like literature. Stephanides and Bassnett claim, "[i]slands are often represented as sites of some kind of magical transaction or exchange, places where individuals encounter different cultures and find that they can no longer relate in the same way to the places they have left."<sup>52</sup> The settlers saw paradises in islands and wanted to stay there. Sargent adds, "[b]ut the dreams of the settlers clashed with the expectation of the people already living in these countries and generally produced actual dystopias for them."<sup>53</sup> The clash of cultures resulted in oppression of the native cultures and their eventual eviction.

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<sup>46</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 119.

<sup>47</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 119.

<sup>48</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 119.

<sup>49</sup> Stephanides and Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," 12.

<sup>50</sup> Melanie A. Murray, *Island Paradise: The Myth: an Examination of Contemporary Caribbean and Sri Lankan Writing*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), XV.

<sup>51</sup> Lyman Sargent, "Colonial and postcolonial Utopias," *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, 200.

<sup>52</sup> Stephanides and Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," 13.

<sup>53</sup> Sargent, *Utopianism*, 51.

Islands were pictured variously in literature over the centuries. Ancient Greeks perceived islands as their homes as did the natives that lived on islands. During the Middle Ages, islands were seen as heavenly places that were associated with purity and virginity. Islands became a prison for shipwrecked sailors, adventurers and colonists that were searching for these paradises. These motives are shared transculturally and therefore *Web*, where the clash of cultures is apparent, is a suitable book for this elaboration.

## 2 AN EDEN-LIKE ISLAND

Another Athens shall arise,  
And to remoter time  
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,  
The splendour of its prime.<sup>54</sup>

The perception of an island as a paradisiacal place is depicted in British island literature that contains adventurous or religious themes. Tuan claims that an island “symbolizes a state of prelapsarian innocence and bliss, quarantined by the sea from the ills of the continent.”<sup>55</sup> The purity and isolation on an island serves as a perfect place for one’s reverie. It is not a coincidence that Robinson Crusoe was left on a paradisiacal island for religious contemplation. Stephanides and Bassnett claim that “islands are also repositories of fearful elements: accounts of voyages to the Caribbean, for example, abound in fantasies about cannibals.”<sup>56</sup> Tanakuatua in Wyndham’s *Web* is a fictional tropical island with a cannibal and colonial history. This island is later used for the purpose of building a utopian society.

Prior to the examination of the island topos as Eden, it is necessary to debate the topic of the utopian group that arrives in Tanakuatua as well as its geographical importance for them. Unlike other utopian novels, Wyndham introduces the first planning and realization of the utopian idea in *Web*. The narrator, Arnold Delgrange, talks about the utopian idea,

[t]he intention, though ambitious, was in essence simple- in fact, in essence it was unoriginal. Its difference lay in the intention and the ability to remove it from the ineffective minds of dreamers, and give it practical existence.<sup>57</sup>

Further he continues, “[i]t was to set up a free, politically independent community endowed with the opportunity, and the means, to create a new climate of living.”<sup>58</sup> The founders call their effort of creating a utopian society a “Project.”<sup>59</sup> The choice of a place for the Project has utopian features.

The founder Lord Foxfield explains the choice of place for the Project establishment, “[t]he best that can be done is to provide a place where there is freedom to question the axioms, the prejudices, traditions, loyalties, and all those attitudes implanted in us before

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<sup>54</sup> Wyndham, *Web* (New York: Penguin, 1980), 20.

<sup>55</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 118.

<sup>56</sup> Stephanides and Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," 6.

<sup>57</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 9.

<sup>58</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 9.

<sup>59</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 9.

we could think.”<sup>60</sup> The best place for allowing people to believe in new virtues is an island. People cut from the mainland in a beautiful environment will obey the newly written rules. This is one of the reasons why Prospero from the play *The Tempest* chose an island or why Thomas More set his *Utopia* on an island. Arnold mentions another founder Walter Tirrie, who is searching for the place which is “ideal for the purpose”<sup>61</sup> and provides the reader with the first mention of the island, “[w]e raised our glasses and drank to a long, successful life for the Project [...] ‘It is a place, an island, called Tanakuatua, he [Walter Tirrie] told me.’”<sup>62</sup> A tropical island situated in the Pacific Ocean far from home. It is clear, that the Project founders consider an island as the perfect place for its creation. The founders of new Utopias knew that by encouraging people to join them in the creation of new societies, the mentioning of a tropical island would be crucial.

The vision of an island as paradise was embedded in one’s mind far before the encounter. Arnold describes Tanakuatua as follows, “[a]t first sight Tanakuatua was like a romantic tourist literature come to life.”<sup>63</sup> This tends to be a common response by newcomers to islands. Nicholas Urfe, the character from *The Magus*, has a similar view on islands. He borrows books about the Greek country, “I read and read; and I was like a medieval king, I had fallen in love with the picture long before I saw the reality.”<sup>64</sup> It is certain that Nicholas and Arnold perceive islands and experience them in a similar way. Both are British, well-educated and both read novels and travel journals. Thus, it is no surprise that they both perceive islands as romantic places. Arnold continues,

[p]hotographs had prepared me for the shape of it but not the colour. That was dazzling. [...] A line of white beach, a vivid band of green above it, and beyond, the expected shape of the twin hills, but now green for two thirds of their height, and blue-brown for the rest. My first feeling was of disbelief that such a gem of an island could have been left deserted. My second, a twinge of misgiving: it looked too good to be true.<sup>65</sup>

The very first impression is gained from photographs of Tanakuatua. Arnold falls in love with the island, as did Nicholas, who thinks that “Phraxos was beautiful. There was no other adjective; it was not just pretty picturesque, charming- it was simply and effortlessly beautiful. It took my breath away when I first saw it.”<sup>66</sup> Even Arnold, when asked by Camilla, a biologist, if he likes the island replies, “[i]t’s beautiful’ I said. ‘But it’s intimidating.’”<sup>67</sup> Arnold and

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<sup>60</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 9.

<sup>61</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 13.

<sup>62</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 13-14.

<sup>63</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 59.

<sup>64</sup> John Fowles, *The Magus* (New York: Brown and Company, 1965), 27.

<sup>65</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 59.

<sup>66</sup> Fowles, *The Magus*, 37.

<sup>67</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 62.

Nicholas see something mysterious in their islands. Bell and Lyall claim that “[n]atural landmarks [...] have been photographed from every angle and under every condition to titillate a tourist’ appetite.”<sup>68</sup> Arnold’s appetite grew with the vision of the island but unfortunately after landing on the beach he did not feel this enthusiasm anymore. This is later elaborated in the chapter concerned with the perception of an island as a prison.

Tuan discusses the importance of seashores in his book *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values*. Beaches play an important role in the island perception because beaches are the first thing one sees when arriving on an island. They may denote security or adventure.<sup>69</sup> Tuan argues that it is possible that seashores were the first human habitats and asks, “[c]ould it be that our earliest home was a sort of Eden located near a lake or a sea?”<sup>70</sup> Considering the attractiveness of seashores it is very likely. Therefore, Arnold’s very first impression of Tanakuatua was evoked by the white sandy beaches. The tropical island of Tanakuatua may spring to one’s mind and reflect Eden. For further discussion, it is important to consider the fact that Tanakuatua was part of a British colony.

The British colonies were scattered all around the world, including the Caribbean Sea. The islands were depicted as paradises and as Melanie Murray claims, “the perception of ‘paradise’ is used to justify economic opportunity and how depictions of idealized landscapes have been used to justify slavery and exploitation.”<sup>71</sup> It is no surprise that Arnold and the others accept going to a tropical island, because they idealized the island as a paradisiacal place, full of adventures. Even before seeing the island some are puzzled by the fact of “the availability of an uninhabited, but richly fertile island.”<sup>72</sup> The travelers are more concerned with the evidence of uninhabited Tanakuatua than by the fact that it might not be as richly fertile as they think. This is probably caused by colonial literature. Arnold is very enthusiastic about the island when he sees it at night,

[t]he young moon rose higher, silvering the sea, turning the island from a dark mass to a shimmering shape which seemed to float on the water. I forgot the emptiness of it, the neglect, the choking vegetation. In my mind’s eye I saw it in order; planted, cultivated, cut by wide roads, set with fine buildings where unimaginable discoveries were being made.<sup>73</sup>

Arnold’s enthusiasm grows. He sees Tanakuatua as a perfect place for living. Moreover, Murray claims that “[t]he island as an idyllic space ideologically provided solutions to problems at

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<sup>68</sup> Bell and Lyall, *The Accelerated Sublime*, 16.

<sup>69</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 115.

<sup>70</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 115.

<sup>71</sup> Murray, *Island Paradise*, XV.

<sup>72</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 23.

<sup>73</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 67.

home in England. These island fictions are pertinent to colonial ideology.”<sup>74</sup> Arnold, as a new colonizer, is related to this argument because he lost his daughter and wife in a car accident in England.<sup>75</sup> Tanakuatua is a perfect place for him to loosen up, enclose himself, escape from the outer world and contemplate life. Islands are a perfect place for escapism, relaxation and serenity. For him, Tanakuatua is an ideal place for starting again. He begins to picture the island thanks to a record of Tanakuatua from the colonial period.

Arnold reads about the island’s history, “[t]he soil is of volcanic origin, rich in mineral salts, productive of good taro crops, bread fruit, coconuts, and a variety of vegetables.”<sup>76</sup> The fictional island is described as very colorful, fertile and abundant in vegetation. Even Robinson Crusoe writes about his island as a place rich in fruits and fertile during one of his island explorations.<sup>77</sup> He writes, “[w]hen I came home from this journey, I contemplated with great pleasure the fruitfulness of that valley and the pleasantness of the situation.”<sup>78</sup> In Defoe’s imagination a tropical island had to be a place of plenty, possibly a place with paradisiacal means.

Wyndham writes in *Web* about the British expansion. He presents a representative of the British governor trying to force the natives off their island. He tells them that an atomic bomb will be tested near the island and that they must leave.<sup>79</sup> For the natives the island was their ideal home. When the tribe had a dispute over whether to leave the island or not, Nokiki, a warrior, was against leaving and remembered his ancestors,

the pictures in his mind came from faraway places and long-ago tales. He was seeing the great fleets of canoes and the floating villages of huts that had borne his ancestors over thousands of miles of ocean. He was remembering the names of the islands where they had paused for a few years, for a generation, for two or three generations, until the young men and women had grown restive again, and set out once more on the eternal search for paradise.<sup>80</sup>

It is obvious that the natives think that they can find paradise only on islands. Nokiki’s ancestors settled in Tanakuatua and therefore one can assume that this island might be the paradise that they were searching for. The imagination plays an important role in Nokiki’s contemplation. He sees the pictures of his ancestors traveling from one island to another. He thinks about them all the time, “[t]hat was his people’s life. So it had been ever since Nakaa expelled men and women from the Happy Land: wandering across the ocean, fighting, travelling on again,

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<sup>74</sup> Murray, *Island Paradise*, XVIII.

<sup>75</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 5.

<sup>76</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 28.

<sup>77</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (London: David Campbell, 1992), 85.

<sup>78</sup> Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 84.

<sup>79</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 35.

<sup>80</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 42

searching eternally for the lost paradise.”<sup>81</sup> The natives suggest that paradises can only exist on islands. There is a similarity between the Tanakuatua’s legends and the early myths from ancient Greece. The Happy Land might be considered to be the golden age or earthly paradise like Islands of the Blest.<sup>82</sup> It is certain that the natives and people from ancient Greece have the same perceptions and imaginations of islands. Steven Hutchinson, the author of “Mapping Utopias”, compares Plato’s *Republic* with More’s *Utopia* and works with the view of an unknown poet Anemolius, “the Utopian poet-laureate Anemolius [...] claims that Utopia surpasses Plato’s *Republic* because it exists in more than just words and should therefore be called Eutopia or Happy Land.”<sup>83</sup> Moreover, this argument is supported in *Utopia*, where Peter Gilles writes in his letter, “[a]t present, very few people know about this island, but everyone should want to, for it’s like Plato’s *Republic*, only better.”<sup>84</sup> One can assume that the ideal place is considered to be an island and therefore the ideal paradisiacal place called Happy Land is more likely to be an island.

Furthermore, in Gilles’ letter he writes about the account of the island given by Raphael Nonsenco and says, “[h]e [Raphael] made us feel that Vespucci had seen absolutely nothing.”<sup>85</sup> To Raphael the island of Utopia seems to be a paradisiacal place, because Vespucci says after landing in the later known America, “[a]nd surely if the terrestrial paradise be in any part of this earth, I esteem that it is not far distant from those parts.”<sup>86</sup> This means that Utopia is an extraordinary paradisiacal place if it is better than Vespucci’s discovery. Sargent supports this statement and says, “[t]hus, to many in the 16th century, Utopia would have seemed like paradise.”<sup>87</sup> One can therefore consider that paradises are islands for the natives as they were for people in the 16th century. Moreover, the natives knew nothing but islands, which can be seen in Nokiki’s pondering. As Sargent claims, the Happy Land refers to a place where fallen warriors go, which is similar to what the Happy Land may represent in *Web*.<sup>88</sup> Nokiki curses the island and puts Tanakuatua under a spell, “and that when the ghosts of such men should come to be judged they might not go on to the Happy Land, but suffer, as all

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<sup>81</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 42

<sup>82</sup> Sargent, *Utopianism*, 13.

<sup>83</sup> Steven Hutchinson, “Mapping Utopias,” (*Modern Philology* 85, no. 2, 1987), 171, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/437184>.

<sup>84</sup> Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Paul Turner (New York: Penguin, 1965), 33.

<sup>85</sup> More, *Utopia*, 33.

<sup>86</sup> Pramod K. Nayar, *The Transnational in English Literature: Shakespeare to the Modern* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 19.

<sup>87</sup> Sargent, *Utopianism*, 23.

<sup>88</sup> Sargent, *Utopianism*, 13.

tabu-breakers do.”<sup>89</sup> The taboo was placed on the island and with radioactive dust from the nuclear test the fauna thrived and resembled a paradisiacal island for the newcomers.

Walter Tirrie, the Project founder, chooses Tanakuatua because it serves perfectly the utopian idea and because the size, location and climate is perfect for the cause.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, Camilla, a biologist, is intrigued by this fictional island, “[b]esides, as a biologist, the idea of an island that has been uninhabited for twenty years fascinates me.”<sup>91</sup> Even Arnold thinks the island is beautiful.<sup>92</sup> Tanakuatua seems to lure people in. Later in *Web*, the group of people is overrun by poisonous spiders that kill everybody except for Camilla and Arnold. When considering the beauty of Tanakuatua, there is no wonder that even after the death of the Project members, the island still lured people.

Camilla and Arnold, are waiting for their rescue while defending their settlement against the spiders. One day a plane flies over to the island.<sup>93</sup> The pilots see no danger so they land in its lagoon. The image that the pilots see from the air is, as Tuan claims “a mountainous island rising out of the sea.”<sup>94</sup> This enormous and lonely piece of rock intrigues them. A tropical sublime island does not seem to cause any danger to anyone. Then, the pilots are killed by the spiders and a ship arrives five days later. Again the ship is lured to the island by the island’s appeal but this time they rescue both characters even though they are suspicious about the deaths of the others. It is almost as if it was impossible to feel fear of something on a paradisiacal island.

An Eden-like island has had and will have a place in one’s mind. Daniel Brinton, the author of *Current Notes on Anthropology* says, “[w]e have not yet done with seeking on the earthly plane the pristine Paradise, Eden, ‘the land of joy.’”<sup>95</sup> People will tend to find the idealized paradisiacal islands, the gardens of Eden where they can live happily ever after. This imagination has been embedded in people’s minds for centuries and will continue to be so. Yet, the ancestors of the natives in *Web* found Eden in the past. When the two main protagonists are captured by the natives, Camilla tells them about the utopian society that they wanted to create in Tanakuatua and the only reply she gets is “[t]here is no place in the world

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<sup>89</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 45.

<sup>90</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 50.

<sup>91</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 55.

<sup>92</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 62.

<sup>93</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 132.

<sup>94</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 121.

<sup>95</sup> Daniel G. Brinton, *Current Notes on Anthropology (VII.)*, (American Association for the Advancement of Science, Vol. 1, No. 18 (1895)), 488, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1624573>.

like that. No more.”<sup>96</sup> The Tanakuatua's eternal search for paradise continues by traveling from one island to another. This statement, made by one of the natives, supports the argument that people believe that something paradisiacal was in the past. Thus, people will continue this eternal search like the natives from *Web*. The idealized, fertile, tropical island resembling Eden will always be embedded in one's mind. The paradisiacal island topos is certainly in *Web*. Despite cultural differences, the utopian society and the natives idealize Tanakuatua in the same way. This particular topos will continue to appear in island literature as it has done for centuries.

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<sup>96</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 119.

### 3 IMPRISONED IN EDEN

Islands were predominantly seen in literature in a positive way. They have been associated with purity, fertility and escapism. The feeling of being imprisoned on an island appears in literature dealing with shipwrecked sailors, utopian societies and explorers. The perception is associated with other notions closely related to the topos of prison such as isolation, seclusion and loneliness. All these aspects can be found in *Web*. Tanakuatua is a Janus-faced island. It seduces characters with its lovely beaches and isolates them from the rest of the world. The characters perceive Tanakuatua as an “island that draw people in and never let them leave.”<sup>97</sup> According to Hodrová, there are two types of literary forms for a closed space. The first is that into which “the person wishes to pervade and examine the place, or a place in which a person appears to be involuntarily, mainly as a punishment. The second form represents the concept of a prison.”<sup>98</sup> Both attributes of closed space are included in *Web* and therefore the perception of an island as a prison is included in this paper.

When dealing with one’s attitudes towards a prison motive, it is important to elaborate on the perceptions of islanders and insularity. Kenneth Olwig provides the reader with an interesting argument about insularity and the perception of islands in ancient Greece and claims,

Odysseus would probably have asked an average ancient Greek stranger [...], “What city-state/island (in the wine dark sea) are you from?” In fact, when Odysseus returns home incognito to the island of Ithaca and is asked by his son (who does not recognize him) where he comes from, followed by the question, in the form of a local saying, “What ship brought you here, I don't think you walked all the way,” the answer was from Crete, as if an island would be the only believable reply.<sup>99</sup>

This speculation is also very clearly seen in *Web*. Tanakuatua’s natives would have probably thought and reacted in the same way as Odysseus. The evidence supporting this statement is confirmed in the words of a ship's doctor that landed in Tanakuatua, “they were an example of degeneration induced by prolonged interbreeding.”<sup>100</sup> This idea reflects living on an island as living in complete isolation, in a prison. Moreover, Stephanides and Bassnett claim, “[i]nhabitants of an island define themselves against those who are not islanders.”<sup>101</sup> Considering this statement, islanders are proud of being from an island. Islanders do not possibly even realize that they are isolated and locked on an island like a prisoner in his cell.

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<sup>97</sup> Stephanides and Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," 6.

<sup>98</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika míst*, 103. My translation („do něhož postava touží proniknout a jež zkoumá, a jednak místem, v němž se postava ocitá nedobrovolně, především z trestu. Tento druhý typ představuje právě vězení.“)

<sup>99</sup> Kenneth R. Olwig, "Are Islanders Insular? a Personal View," *Geographical Review* 97, no. 2 (2007): 179, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30034160>.

<sup>100</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 28.

<sup>101</sup> Stephanides and Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," 7.

The first signs of an island as a prison can be seen when Arnold introduces the history of the island, “[i]n deed, there seem to be few legends of any kind about the island. It is as if it existed in its isolation without a history until less than two centuries ago.”<sup>102</sup> To Arnold the island seems to be an isolated place. As he reads more about its history he finds out that the island was a prison for some shipwrecked sailors. Their letter was then found on the beaches, “[h]ere werkked from the ship Fortitude 10 day of May A.D. 1812. All et by the cannibal savidges.”<sup>103</sup> An analogy is available to Robinson Crusoe, who kept an account of his life on the island by carving days on wood, “[u]pon the sides of this square post I cut every day of the month as long again as that long one, and thus I kept my kalender,”<sup>104</sup> Carving days on walls is associated with inmates in their cell, where they count their days until released.

Tanakuatua was a prison not only for the shipwrecked sailors, but also for its inhabitants. The cannibals lived on the island cut off from civilization just as people who are locked up in prison. Like a prisoner and his cell, these people knew nothing but Tanakuatua. The cannibals lived among their siblings for centuries just as prisoners live among their inmates for a long time. Even though Tanakuatua is their home, it may not have been seen by everyone as the ideal homeland. Some may perceive this same feeling of a home as a prison in *Utopia*, where people live completely isolated from the outer world.

An island serves the purpose of a prison very well. For example, the aforementioned book introduces a fictional island, where people live in great harmony. The lack of freedom is clear when reading *Utopia*. The Utopians have a strict regime,

[i]n Utopia they have six-hour working day- three hours in the morning, then lunch- then a two-hour break- then three more hours in the afternoon followed by supper. They go to bed at 8 p.m., and sleep for eight hours.<sup>105</sup>

This kind of a program resembles a prison schedule. When the Utopians want to travel across the island, they need permission and cannot take their luggage.<sup>106</sup> This is one of the reasons for choosing an island over the mainland. One can survey over the island inhabitants and be assured that no one can escape. Utopia is a great example of the prison motive in island-like literature.

The cannibals in *Web* were overrun by a much stronger tribe. The isolation is distorted by this advanced tribe and, as Hodrová says, they became the “‘conquerors’ of an enclosed place.”<sup>107</sup> It is possible to apply this statement to *Web* where the new tribe conquers an already

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<sup>102</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 22.

<sup>103</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 26.

<sup>104</sup> Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 53.

<sup>105</sup> More, *Utopia*, 76.

<sup>106</sup> More, *Utopia*, 84.

<sup>107</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika míst*, 107. My translation („dobyvatelé“ „uzavřeného prostoru“)

existing prison of the cannibals and Tanakuatua becomes their prison as well. Still, even after the conquest “Tanakuatuans had learnt a little of the world outside,”<sup>108</sup> which corresponds with Olwig’s argument that Tanakuatuans would probably have reacted in the same way as the Greek hero.<sup>109</sup> This lack of knowledge is later illustrated in *Web*. Before giving an example it is important to mention the fact that even though Tanakuatua and the whole Project is fictional, Wyndham combines fiction with non-fiction by including colonial history in his novel.

When the utopian group arrives in Tanakuatua the main character falls in love with the island. He describes the island at night (see page 19 of the thesis). Arnold was sceptical about the Project before seeing the island. Something changed when the island was lit by the moon and the picture of Tanakuatua plunged in night finally induced something positive and pleasant about it.<sup>110</sup> The colonial adventure of new discoveries, exploring the island and living there excited Arnold. These feelings were about to change when the utopian group lands.

The newcomers say their goodbyes to the departing ship, and Arnold’s last comment is not filled with excitement like the night before, “[i]t was to be six months before she returned with more supplies and, we hoped, more personnel for the project. Until then we were on our own.”<sup>111</sup> At first, he is influenced by the beauty of the island, but when stepping on it, he is not the only one to experience the strange feeling. The accompanying group of people that land with him feel the same,

[i]t was remarkable how palpable that feeling of being on our own became. As long as the ship had been anchored in the lagoon we were linked with the outside world, but as she [the ship] disappeared below the horizon the sense of isolation closed in. Everybody, even the children, felt it. We found ourselves looking at one another speculatively as if seeing ourselves afresh, with the reality of the situation only now coming home to us.<sup>112</sup>

Arnold is no longer experiencing the island by himself but with the group. Tuan calls this experience of a place in a group intersubjectivity.<sup>113</sup> The term means, “spatial experience that is defined by the presence of other people.”<sup>114</sup> One perceives space and place individually, but when in a group the feeling is mostly similar to that of the individual.

The newcomers in *Web* share the same feeling. The isolation, the aloneness on this island and the consciousness of the time they have to spend there, scares them. The island begins to slowly absorb the newcomers and the prison-like feeling is about to take over. Arnold then

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<sup>108</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 29.

<sup>109</sup> Olwig, “Are Islanders Insular? a Personal View,” 179.

<sup>110</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 67.

<sup>111</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 68.

<sup>112</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 68.

<sup>113</sup> Tuan, “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,” 403.

<sup>114</sup> Tuan, “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,” 403.

continues, “[w]hether some of the others had the same sensation I don’t know, but the departure of the ship left us all in a subdued mood...”<sup>115</sup> It is the feeling of loneliness that crept among them. In this context Tuan claims that “[p]lace may be said to have ‘spirit’ or ‘personality’, but only human beings have a sense of place. People demonstrate their sense of place when they apply their moral and aesthetic discernment to sites and locations.”<sup>116</sup> Arnold’s attitudes towards Tanakuatua change rapidly. The newcomers create an island-like feeling of a prison right after the landing. Nevertheless, within a few minutes the group begins to build their dreams, “within half an hour the oppressive sense of isolation had lifted and everyone’s spirits appeared to rise.”<sup>117</sup>

The prison-like feeling grows even stronger, when two of the new inhabitants plus Arnold, discover that their radio transmitter is destroyed. The three agree not to say anything about it to the others, “[b]etter say nothing at present. Let them think the messages have gone off. I’ll break it to them later.”<sup>118</sup> These three people are the first to know about their imprisonment on the island. The feeling of being enclosed and isolated in Tanakuatua from day one would spread panic among other people. The radio was the only connection with the mainland, their homes, the ship and more generally, the rest of the world. This panic is later illustrated when the first people die due to poisonous spiders and the leaders have to tell the truth,

Joe lost his temper and refused to believe him until he was taken to see the damaged transmitter. [...] The following morning, faced by a state of subdued mutiny, Charles called everyone together, and put the situation squarely before us. It was that without means of communication we were on our own for six months.<sup>119</sup>

The prison-like feeling now grew among all participants of the Project. Robinson Crusoe experienced the same feeling. He was shipwrecked on an unknown island and appropriately called the island, “Island of Despair.”<sup>120</sup> This reflects the feeling an island creates in people when there is no way to leave. A similar of fear of being isolated is well illustrated in *Lord of the Flies*,

‘This is an island, isn’t it?’ [said Piggy] ‘I climbed a rock’ said Ralph slowly, ‘and I think this is an island.’ [...] ‘They’re all dead,’ said Piggy, ‘an’ this is an island. Nobody don’t know we’re here. Your dad don’t know, nobody don’t know.’ His lips quivered and the spectacles were dimmed with mist.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 68.

<sup>116</sup> Tuan, “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,” 410.

<sup>117</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 69.

<sup>118</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 70.

<sup>119</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 85.

<sup>120</sup> Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 58.

<sup>121</sup> William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 15.

The boys are scared when they find out they are left alone on an island. The group from *Web* has the same feeling.

For further discussion of the prison topos, it is necessary to examine the topographical features of the island. Arnold describes Tanakuatua as a place from romantic tourist literature.<sup>122</sup> This tends to be a common response by newcomers because islands are mythologized in literature. Nicholas Urfe, the character from *The Magus*, who moves to the Greek island Phraxos, also falls in love with the island before seeing it.<sup>123</sup> Yet, Phraxos becomes a prison to him later in the novel, when he is played like a puppet by Conchis. It is noteworthy, that the island's name Phraxos means in Greek "fenced,"<sup>124</sup> which shows the island connection with a prison.

The geographical account of Tanakuatua is very simple, as it is depicted only in a few photographs. The photograph, "however, can be considered as one picture since each photographer has been struck by the same scenic quality of precisely the same view."<sup>125</sup> The photographers show only one particular side of the island consisting of white beaches which are then used for landing and settlement. According to Bell and Lyall, "[n]atural landmarks [...] have been photographed from every angle and under every condition to titillate a tourist's appetite."<sup>126</sup> Arnold finds out that beautiful white beaches are only on one part of the island, whereas the other part consists of cliffs, rocks and other obstacles.

On the far side of the cape the coastline changed entirely. Instead of the white beaches we found low basalt cliffs standing sometimes with their feet in the water, here and there separated from it by a narrow strand of greyish sand, and shouldered at intervals by falls of boulders that projected into the sea. They stretched away to the north like an irregular wall [...] without a break. The sombre, forbidding aspect of them was made the more cheerless by the lack of movement.<sup>127</sup>

Arnold begins to realize that besides living on an isolated island, the group is also living in a quasi-enclosed space. One side is accessible, but the other is forbidding, preventing anyone from entering. The huge, massive stone walls that run along the coastline resemble the walls of a prison compound. The colossal stone wall prevents anyone crossing it and fleeing. Arnold feels even more cheated and isolated. Cliffs and rocks were never welcoming to sailors. They always symbolised death by drowning and lost hopes as in *Gulliver's Travels* where, "the weather being very hazy, the seamen spied a rock, within half a cable's length of the ship; but

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<sup>122</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 59.

<sup>123</sup> Fowles, *The Magus*, 27.

<sup>124</sup> Roula Ikonomakis, *Post-war British Fiction as 'Metaphysical Arhography': 'Gods, Godgames and Goodness' in John Fowles's The Magus and Iris Murdoch's The Sea, the Sea*, (Oxford: Peter Land, 2008) 59.

<sup>125</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 22.

<sup>126</sup> Bell and Lyall, *The Accelerated Sublime*, 16.

<sup>127</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 71-72.

the wind was so strong. That we were driven directly upon it, and immediately split.”<sup>128</sup> Natural features form obstacles like dykes and walls. This may be one of the reasons for building prisons on islands. Utopia is also surrounded by rocks, even in its harbour as Raphael describes, “[t]he harbour mouth is alarmingly full of rocks and shoals.”<sup>129</sup> Moreover, rocks, cliffs and reefs in the sea are mostly associated with the feeling of a nearby island. For example, in *Lord of the Flies*, the boys’ first thought about where their plane might have crashed is presented in this manner, “[t]his is an island. At least I think it’s an island. That’s a reef out in the sea.”<sup>130</sup> The feeling of Tanakuatua can be summed up by one of the participants of the expedition, “[i]t’s like the dead end of the world.”<sup>131</sup>

Further in the book, Camilla and Arnold are captured by a group of natives. Both protagonists are imprisoned in an already existing prison. They are taken to a native camp on a volcano. Mountains and volcanos are an important aspect of literary islands. As if they were a magical place revealing the whole island to people who climb it. In books, set on an island, the characters usually climb a mountain to have a good look around. It is one of the first things Ralph does in *Lord of the Flies*, “Ralph shaded his eyes and followed the jagged outline of the crags up towards the mountain.”<sup>132</sup> Even Robinson Crusoe does the same thing, “[t]here was a hill not above a mile from me, [...] this arm’d I travell’d for discovery up to the top of that hill, [...] I saw my fate to my great affliction, viz. that I was in an island.”<sup>133</sup> A mountain or a volcano can have an abstract meaning.

When imagining a prison, it is an enclosed compound with watch towers and a guardhouse. A building or a tower may resemble a mountain or a volcano on an island. Daniela Hodrová writes about the tower topos and associates it with a mountain because both have a vertical character.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, Hodrová claims that a tower was often used as a real prison.<sup>135</sup> The natives have chosen to build a camp on the peak of the volcano to have a better view, “[t]he situation gave us [Arnold and Camilla] the best view of Tanakuatua we had yet had- and a very curious sight it was.”<sup>136</sup> The natives are able to watch the spider webs spread towards the settlement. The prison guards represented by the natives are surveying the inmates from top of the volcano.

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<sup>128</sup> Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (London: David Campbell, 1991), 15.

<sup>129</sup> More, *Utopia*, 69.

<sup>130</sup> Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 8.

<sup>131</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 73.

<sup>132</sup> William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 27.

<sup>133</sup> Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 43.

<sup>134</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika míst*, 201.

<sup>135</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika míst*, 202.

<sup>136</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 109.

Prior to Arnolds and Camilla's imprisonment they discover spider webs covering the tops of the trees. At first, they think it is a mysterious static mist with a dingy white colour.<sup>137</sup> One of their friends decides to go and have a look at it up close and is killed instantly due to the spider bites.<sup>138</sup> The group is intimidated and decides to head back to the camp. Arnold remembers Walter Tirrie, one of the Project founders, who was unable to take photos of the island on the eastern side due to a fog.<sup>139</sup> Arnold begins to put pieces of the puzzle together and he realizes that without a radio and with only one temporary-safe-side of the island they are trapped. In *Robinson Crusoe*, the main character realizes that he is in a prison and writes about this feeling in his journal, "for tho' I was indeed at large in the place, yet the island was certainly a prison to me, and that in the worst sense in the world."<sup>140</sup> Even in an earlier island literature, Prospero in *The Tempest* uses the island as a prison.

The spiders feast on the island fauna since the natives were forced to leave the island under the danger of an atomic bomb test conducted by the British. The natives cursed the island and the spiders were there to prevent life in Tanakuatua if anyone broke the taboo. The spiders cooperate by building webs, with which they catch birds. Wyndham also describes their way of life, how they scan for food and how they hunt in large numbers. It is noteworthy, that Wyndham uses similar concept in his book *The Day of the Triffids*, in which plants conquer the planet and cooperate much better than people. In comparison to the group in Tanakuatua, the spiders are building a much more cooperative and capable society. It seems that Nature encloses people in its own prison formed by an island and wants to get rid of them since they are constantly destroying the environment.

Camilla is amused by the cooperation, "such a little thing; such a tremendous thing- the ability to co-operate...It makes you wonder what we could do if we were really to co-operate.' [Arnold replies] 'Surely we've been destructive enough with partial co-operation.'"<sup>141</sup> Spiders are creating a prison wall from webs and anyone who dares to get over it will die. It seems as if Wyndham constructed Tanakuatua and the spiders to show that Mother Nature is strong and works in a symbiosis, whereas people are not capable of building a secluded society. According to Hodrová, a spider is, "a traditional prison creature,"<sup>142</sup> and therefore spiders are perfect representatives of the island prison. Spiders may be seen as the system that is surveying the

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<sup>137</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 72.

<sup>138</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 74.

<sup>139</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 50.

<sup>140</sup> Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 81.

<sup>141</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 127.

<sup>142</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika místa*, 121. My translation („tradičního vězeňského tvora“)

inmates in a prison and since people that are put into prison are considered unable to live under normal conditions, the spiders are getting rid of them. Hodrová also claims that, “prison is a place of transformation.”<sup>143</sup> The people from *Web* ought to work together to survive.

The perception of an island as a prison is a common motive in British literature. An island as an isolated place serves the image of a prison for centuries because it is widely perceived as a place from where is no escape. Islands in *Utopia*, *The Tempest* and *The Magus* may be the best representatives of a prison motive. Islands have always terrified people and were used as a place of salvation and solitude for castaways and shipwrecked sailors. Books concerned with this topos were written in a manner that being alone on an isolated island was an adventure, which for many characters turned out to be the exact opposite. These adventures turned out to be a struggle for survival. Robinson Crusoe hated his island and referred to it as a horrid island<sup>144</sup> and kept on asking God, if he deserved such fate. It is certain that islands in British literature, were seen as an opportunity to fascinate people by throwing a person in complete isolation and watching his every move. This is best shown in *The Magus*, where Nicholas had exactly the same feeling of being watched as if he were in a prison. Islands will always have this prison-like feeling in people’s minds. This motive is depicted in *Web* and will continue to appear in British literature.

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<sup>143</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika místa*, 108. My translation („je vězení často místem proměny“)

<sup>144</sup> Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 52.

## 4 AN ISLAND AS A HOME

Apart from perceiving an island as Eden or a prison, the island is also seen as a home. This perception was common in ancient Greece. Olwig supports this argument by claiming that in ancient Greece people knew only islands and therefore, he claims that Odysseus would have asked a stranger what island he came from, as if an island were the only possible answer.<sup>145</sup> Odysseus lived in Ithaka, Conchis from *The Magus* lived in Phraxos and Robinson Crusoe had to inhabit his island since he spent almost three decades as a castaway there. Moreover, the Caribbean islands were an important stopover for colonists. Islands became their temporary or permanent home. The island is a home in real life as well as in literature. Tuan defines home as follows, “[i]t is the one place in which we can openly and comfortably admit our frailty and our bodily needs.”<sup>146</sup> The natives in *Web* had to submit to the British and were moved from their home island to another island. The natives in this book knew nothing but islands and would have probably asked the same question as Odysseus. The ancestors of the natives had lived on an island and travelled between islands. The natives regard Tanakuatua as the only thing that has meaning for them. Tuan reflects this perception by saying, “[h]uman groups nearly everywhere tend to regard their own homeland as the center of the world.”<sup>147</sup> Tanakuatua was home for the natives, shipwrecked sailors and colonists.

Prior to elaborating on the island topos as a home it is necessary to consider Tanakuatua in a more abstract way, as a house. According to Hodrová, “a house is a space that provides a haven that acts as protection against ‘the terrible world.’”<sup>148</sup> This description can be applied to an island. An island is also a space that provides protection for its inhabitants from the outer world. Moreover, a house is an enclosed space where walls define its borders. An island is also an enclosed space and has its borders defined by water. The natives in *Web* considered Tanakuatua as their safe place, their home, which kept them hidden from other nations. This argument is supported by Tuan, who claims, “[t]he space that we perceive and construct, the space that provides cues for our behaviour, varies with the individual and cultural group.”<sup>149</sup> The natives in *Web* perceive Tanakuatua differently from the colonists and the utopian group.

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<sup>145</sup> Olwig, “Are Islanders Insular? a Personal View,” 179.

<sup>146</sup> Tuan, “American Geographical Society,” *Geographical Review* 65, no. 2 (1975): 154, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/213970>.

<sup>147</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place the Perspective of Experience*, 149.

<sup>148</sup> Daniela Hodrová, *Místa s tajemstvím* (Praha: Koniasch Latin Press, 1994), 70. My translation („dům jako prostor skýtající útočiště před ‘hrozným světem.’“)

<sup>149</sup> Tuan, “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,” 389.

The natives have a closer relationship with the island since their ancestors had lived there for centuries. This different perception is due to their cultural background which is illustrated in the book.

Before the utopian project takes place on this fictional island, Arnold decides to read about Tanakuatua's history. He reads that the island was discovered in 1794 by a British fleet and the captain's journal notes the very first account of habitation on this island.

'Set about this were seven or eight huts, exceedingly mean and poorly constructed, being the main of pieces of bark lashed together. [...] At the centre of the clearing was a pit of ashes, with several large stones of the kind which natives of these parts use for their cooking, lying therein. One of our men, thinking the place long deserted, found this not to be so, and suffered a slightly scotched foot. [...] In one hut was found a human leg bone decorated in part by craving, and a stone knife lying among chips of bone from the work. Also in this hut was a human skull, more recently fresh than the leg bone.'<sup>150</sup>

The island was inhabited by cannibals, which is according to Stephanides and Bassnett a very common association with islands.<sup>151</sup> This familiar image of a tropical island that is inhabited by cannibals is in *Web* and can be also found in *Robinson Crusoe*.

It was now the month December, as I said above, in my twenty third year [...] I was surpriz'd with seeing a light of some fire upon the shore, at a distance from me of about two miles towards the end of the island, where I had observ'd some savages had been as before; but not on the other side; but to my great affliction, it was on my side of the island.<sup>152</sup>

It is noteworthy, that Robinson takes the island for his own place by using the possessive pronoun. He then doesn't interfere with the savages and just watches them feast, "[t]his was a dreadful sight to me [...] I could see the marks of horror which the dismal work they had been about left behind it, viz. the blood, the bones, and part of the flesh of humane bodies."<sup>153</sup> Crusoe's island later becomes a home to one savage that Robinson saves. His name is Friday. Robinson shares his part of the island with Friday and refers to their home as "our castle."<sup>154</sup> This imagination of a house as a castle is caused by the close relationship to a certain place. Moreover, Hodrová claims, a castle "evokes feelings exceeding thoughts and words."<sup>155</sup> It is a place, where a person is safe from the outer world. By combining a castle and an island one is provided with an almost safe and unconquerable place. Yet, an island can be conquered.

Tanakuatua has changed its owners over time, "[i]n or about the year 1852 there was an invasion. Details are sketchy, but it appears to have been conducted by a force some three hundred strong, in a fleet of canoes."<sup>156</sup> The cannibals were overthrown by a stronger tribe.

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<sup>150</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 24.

<sup>151</sup> Stephanides and Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," 6.

<sup>152</sup> Defore, *Robinson Crusoe*, 152.

<sup>153</sup> Defore, *Robinson Crusoe*, 154.

<sup>154</sup> Defore, *Robinson Crusoe*, 175.

<sup>155</sup> Hodrová, *Poetika míst*, 31. My translation („vzbuzuje pocity přesahující myšlenky a slova.“)

<sup>156</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 28-29.

The original inhabitants lost their home and were killed by the newcomers. Tanakuatua became home to the new tribe because they “brought with them their wives and families, and even fowls and small livestock houses in huts supported catamaran fashion upon lashed-together, it is clear that they were engaged in purposeful migration.”<sup>157</sup> The reason for their migration might be because they did not feel as if their original island was a paradisiacal home. Later in *Web*, the natives talk about their eternal search for paradise.<sup>158</sup> In order to find the paradise they inhabit Tanakuatua considering it as a possible paradise and therefore a suitable home. The natives see Tanakuatua as an ideal place. Tuan supports this claim by saying that “[p]eople dream of ideal places.”<sup>159</sup> In *Web* the natives see their island as a paradise to which they belong and in which they live. The natives hoped that Tanakuatua would fulfil this dream of paradise.<sup>160</sup> Yet they were forced away from their homeland by the British.

The natives are heartbroken and furious that “[t]hey were being told to hand over their land, their homes, the bones of their ancestors who had won it for them as a present to the Governor.”<sup>161</sup> People are closely connected to their home. It is a place where they eat, wash and recover from illness.<sup>162</sup> It is a place with which they have emotional bonds. One can see the criticism of colonialism in *Web* when reading about the dehumanizing eviction of the natives from their island. “With the power of their [white men] weapons they had annexed territories as they chose – and the people who lived in them too. And from that they had gone to impose their own laws, setting them above tradition, and their own prudish God above the old gods.”<sup>163</sup> This is an example of the expansion of colonial empires. The deep grief for the leader’s people is depicted in *Web*. The natives had created tight bonds with Tanakuatua. Tuan claims that, “[a]ttachment to the homeland is a common human emotion.”<sup>164</sup> The tribe argues about leaving their home. The anger is in Nokiki’s description of this loss of home as “an end of an era”<sup>165</sup> and he knows that “the deterioration of his own people had set in.”<sup>166</sup> The connection to their home island is clear.

After the natives are forced off their island, a few of them resist and escape the soldiers who are gathering the tribe together and forcing them on a boat. Nokiki, decides to put the

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<sup>157</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 29.

<sup>158</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 42.

<sup>159</sup> Tuan, *Topophilia*, 114.

<sup>160</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 42.

<sup>161</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 37.

<sup>162</sup> Tuan, “American Geographical Society,” *Geographical Review* 65, no. 2 (1975): 154, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/213970>.

<sup>163</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 42.

<sup>164</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place the Perspective of Experience*, 158.

<sup>165</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 43.

<sup>166</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 42-43.

island under a spell and builds an altar. This is understandable, because he wants revenge for what the British did. The connection to the home-island is strong. According to Tuan,

[a] homeland has its landmarks, which may be features of high visibility and public significance, such as monuments, shrines, a hallowed battlefield or cemetery. These signs serve to enhance a people's sense of identity; they encourage awareness of and loyalty to place.<sup>167</sup>

This is exactly what Nokiki does. He wants everybody to know that visitors are not welcome in Tanakuatua and that anyone who breaks the taboo will pay for it. "The altar was finished by noon, and they rested. Then Nokiki marked out a plot the size of a grave in front of the altar. There he began to dig."<sup>168</sup> Nokiki then sacrifices himself and puts a spell on Tanakuatua. This sacrifice only highlights the emotional value that an island can have to the natives. A similar monument-like feeling might be seen in *Gulliver's Travels*, where the main protagonist Gulliver visits the flying island of Laputa.<sup>169</sup> The flying island might be considered as a monument that symbolizes the country, its power and its identity. The sacrifice and significant monuments fuel the idea that an island can have its place in one's heart. Moreover, a monument on an island represents something much more significant than just religious beliefs. The monument on Tanakuatua represents the native's home. Later in the book, the two main protagonists Arnold and Camilla are captured by the natives, who decide to come to their home island to ensure that all taboo-breakers die. The natives lead them both to their secret camp set on a volcano. Arnold and Camilla pass the altar,

[I]t was the sole constructional work of the former inhabitants that we had seen since we landed: possibly their only monument. [...] 'Could it be some sort of altar?' Camilla suggested. When we reached it any doubt about that was dispelled. The top of it was smeared with dark, caked blood.<sup>170</sup>

It is not a coincidence that the Tanakuatuans march them past their monument. The natives probably want them to know that this island is their homeland and anyone who dares to step on their soil will be killed.

Prior to this monument discovery, the home of the natives becomes a place where an atomic bomb test takes place and the government does not want to send them back. Most of the natives have already assimilated with other evicted natives and do not want to return. The government then moves the natives to a different island because the Tanakuatua's chief insists on staying on an island, "the Government must give us another island instead – a good island – and help us to move there."<sup>171</sup> The reason is simple. Only an island is a place where the

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<sup>167</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place the Perspective of Experience*, 159.

<sup>168</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 44.

<sup>169</sup> Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, 172.

<sup>170</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 110.

<sup>171</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 48.

natives can feel home again. Tanakuatua provided them with shelter, safety and food. The island is still deeply embedded in their hearts. The British sell it to the utopian group.

Tanakuatua becomes a home for the utopian group. Arnold talks with Camilla and he likens their group to the first American colonists by saying, “[s]maller ships than this took the first settlers to America,”<sup>172</sup> by which he means that Tanakuatua is from now on their new home, as America became a home to the colonists. Arnold imagines the first steps towards creating their new home, “[a]ll those plants fighting one another for existence. And we’ve got to fight them. A great neglected tangle that will have to be cleared by sheer hard work- and then kept clear.”<sup>173</sup> These are the first steps that must be made when inhabiting virgin lands. They have to clear the place of the trees, bushes and shrubs so the houses can be built and a new episode can begin. Tuan claims that,

[m]anmade space can refine human feeling and perception [...] the built environment clarifies social roles and relations. People know better who they are and how they ought to behave when the arena is humanly designed rather than nature’s raw stage.<sup>174</sup>

Since the newcomers are from a much more advanced culture than the natives, it is natural that they want to customize Tanakuatua to a vision to which the group is used to in England. Yet, Arnold does not like this kind of urbanization,

‘In fact I’ve rather skipped over the beginnings. I’ve tended to see it in later stages.’ She [Camilla] glanced at me. [Camilla replies] ‘Ah, yes. A kind of Arcady. A wide, rolling, tree-dotted scene with flocks of sheep grazing on Downs turf watched by contented, pipe-playing shepherds, with, here and there, a small city, all white, severe and beautiful.’ [...] [Arnold replies] ‘one of the troubles of this century is that people have learnt to patronize Nature.’<sup>175</sup>

Both are influenced by the depiction of colonized territories. They know that the tropical island will look like their original home in the United Kingdom. People want to stick to their traditions and values, which is demonstrated by colonial history. The British colonized many nations and wanted to *civilize*<sup>176</sup> them in their own image. As Theano Terkenli claims in her article, “the sense of home varies in space: some places are conceived as more homelike than are others.”<sup>177</sup> Considering this fact, it is obvious that the utopian group wants to build a settlement which resembles their homeland. An isolated tropical island appears to be hostile to them. Unlike England, the rich and varied vegetation does not offer many places appropriate for living.

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<sup>172</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 57.

<sup>173</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 62.

<sup>174</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place the Perspective of Experience*, 102.

<sup>175</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 62.

<sup>176</sup> My italics.

<sup>177</sup> Theano S. Terkenli, "Home as a Region," *Geographical Review* 85, no. 3 (1995): 324, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/215276>.

Therefore, the group finds it logical that Tanakuatua needs to be formed in accordance to their living standards.

Robinson Crusoe has the same approach as the group from *Web*. He forms the environment in his own image by creating a considerably safe settlement,

if the island was subject to these earthquakes, there would be no living for me in a cave, but I must consider of building me some little hut in an open place which I might surround with a wall as I had done here, and so make my self secure from the wild beasts or men.<sup>178</sup>

Robinson lived in a city before being shipwrecked on an island. It is obvious that he wants to feel civilized again. The island functions as his new home for almost three decades. Ralph from *Lord of the Flies* stresses the importance of shelters to the boys that are left on the island with him.<sup>179</sup> It is one of the first things that the boys and other characters in island-like novels do.

Before the group begins to build their settlement, Arnold watches the island the night before landing, “[i]n my mind’s eye I saw it in order; planted, cultivated, cut by wide roads, set with fine buildings where unimaginable discoveries were being made.”<sup>180</sup> The utopian group begins to realize the Project right after landing. The side of the island where the group lands is cleared by a bulldozer.<sup>181</sup> The modern technology helps the group to build their settlement. The settlers think that they will be protected from the wildlife but later in the book the settlement is overrun by poisonous spiders. Arnold arrives in the settlement with Camilla after they are left on the volcano by the natives. They find dead bodies in the settlement. Wyndham ends this chapter with the words, “[t]he men who were to be like gods had met their match in Nakaa [a native God], the Judge. The Lawgiver had upheld Nokiki; the tabu on Tanakuatua had been preserved.”<sup>182</sup> One can interpret this quote that the island of Tanakuatua only serves as a home to its rightful inhabitants. Nevertheless, the island serves as a home to the two survivors. They see the settlement as the only possible place where they can be safe, “[o]ur first move, [...] had been to spray a zone about one yard wide all round the building and then wipe out all the spiders we could find inside it.”<sup>183</sup> The survivors have nowhere to go. They feel safer being on an island that is swarming with spiders than trying to swim somewhere else. Tanakuatua becomes their home until they are saved.

Tanakuatua is a place where the natives felt at home. They considered Tanakuatua their homeland and their center of the world.<sup>184</sup> The argument that supports this is that they did not

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<sup>178</sup> Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 68.

<sup>179</sup> Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 56.

<sup>180</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 67.

<sup>181</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 70.

<sup>182</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 129.

<sup>183</sup> Wyndham, *Web*, 130.

<sup>184</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place the Perspective of Experience*, 149.

feel the need of travelling somewhere else. Until they were evicted from their home island, they wanted to stay there as their ancestors had. An island has a special bond when the person is born there. This might be one of the reasons why the British love their island and feel that they are distant from “the Continent.”<sup>185</sup> The British as well as the Tanakuatians have a home-like connection to an island. During colonial times, the island-like literature thrived and books like *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver’s Travels* offered people the chance to imagine far tropical islands as adventurous places. To quote Sargent, “the dreams of the settlers clashed with the expectations of the people already living in these countries [referring to America] and generally produced actual dystopias for them.”<sup>186</sup> Therefore, many native nations were evicted from their homeland or had to submit to the colonists. Besides the imagination of an island as an adventurous place, the authors isolated their characters on an island, where they had to survive. Islands became a home to shipwrecked sailors and cannibals. This led to the foundation of the topos of a home on an island.

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<sup>185</sup> Stephanides and Bassnett, "Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability," 7.

<sup>186</sup> Sargent, *Utopianism*, 51.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this thesis is to define the island topos in Wyndham's novel *Web*. The island has a prominent place in the human mind, especially for British authors. This perception of islands is transferred into written form and island-like literature depicts islands in various ways. Yet, it is common that the perceptions and attitudes towards islands feel strikingly similar. This paper works with the three main depictions of islands and tries to analyze each one of them. The perceptions of the island from *Web* are compared with alternative island-like literature such as, *The Tempest*, *The Magus*, *Utopia*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Lord of the Flies* and *Robinson Crusoe*. With the help of the chosen secondary sources the paper raises three main island perceptions, which forms the basis for the analytical chapters, An Eden-like Island, Imprisoned in Eden and An Island as a Home. John Wyndham's style of writing helps the paper to identify the island topos.

The author of *Web* manages to write a book that is a mixture of motives and standpoints. Wyndham creates a fictional remote island called Tanakuatua which catches the attention of a utopian group that wishes to create a new society on this isolated island. Wyndham provides the reader with fictional history of this island and blends it with real colonial history. This mix helps to depict the island in different ways. Wyndham also writes about the clash of two different cultures, the native culture and the British culture. The cultural clash helps to define the island topos.

The first analytical chapter depicts an island as an Eden-like place. This perception of an island was frequent over the centuries and therefore it is possible to elaborate on this topos. The depiction of islands as gardens of Eden has been embedded in people's minds throughout history. This paradisiacal island perception is common transculturally. Despite cultural differences, people saw island-like paradises as something special, where there was plenty of food, the weather was extraordinary and no work was needed. People dreamt about these utopias and these imaginations led to the creation of the island topos. The fictional island of Tanakuatua serves the topic best. The island meets all the idealized requirements. Tanakuatua is a tropical isolated island left on its own for centuries in its pure state. This fact fueled the idea of it being a paradise and therefore the utopian society thinks of it as an ideal place for establishing a new colony. Colonialism is closely related to the perception of an Eden-like island. Colonists dreamt of paradise-like islands as it is depicted in *Web*. Yet, an island was often inhabited by its original inhabitants. The natives in *Web* see islands as paradises and therefore they consider living on an island as living in Eden. Wyndham writes about this

perception of the natives as well as the inevitable clash of cultures, even though the island imagination of the two cultures is the same. It is clear from *Web* that an island can offer potential utopic visions as well as paradises. Yet, a paradisiacal island may weary of its magic.

The second analytical chapter deals with the perception of an island as a prison. Therefore, this chapter is called *Imprisoned in Eden*. An island can also appear as a forlorn place that is isolated and cut from civilization. Wyndham embeds this perception in *Web* and the reader can see that the feeling of isolation evokes anxiety in characters' minds. The author introduces the island history in which the stories of captured sailors create the prison-like feeling of an island. This island topos is depicted after the utopian group lands on the island. From day one, the main characters feel the sense of isolation among them, which creates a prison of the island. Moreover, the island in *Web* combines two more motives alongside the island topos. The motive of a mountain and a tower.

The three motives have a prison-like feeling in common. Tanakuatua does not have a mountain but a volcano. For the sake of this thesis a volcano is considered to have the same features as the mountain topos. The utopian group is observed from the volcano by the natives and thus it may represent a surveillance tower in a prison. The geographical aspects such as, the volcano, high cliffs and dangerous reefs of the island only support the prison-like perception. Apart from *Web*, an island as a prison also appears in other literature such as, *Utopia*, *The Tempest*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Magus* and *Lord of the Flies*. Even inmates must consider a prison as their temporary or permanent home.

In the third analytical chapter, Tanakuatua is depicted as a home for the natives and the utopian newcomers. The natives had lived in Tanakuatua for centuries. Wyndham illustrates the emotional impact that one can have to an island, when he writes about the eviction of the natives during colonialism. The natives feel fearful because they have lost their home and a few of them decide to mark their territory by building an altar. One warrior even sacrifices himself in the name of the island. When the island is sold to the utopian group, the newcomers travel to Tanakuatua to build settlements and form the island in their own image. Wyndham depicts the tendency to preserve one's culture and traditions on both sides. The natives want to stay on an island because they know nothing but islands. On the other hand, the British newcomers fight nature in Tanakuatua by cutting down trees and building houses. To have the home-like feeling on a tropical island, the British try to build a utopian civilization, which immediately fails and cannot fulfil the utopian dream. The motive of an island as a home is apparent in *Web* as Tanakuatua serves as a home to two totally different groups of people with distinctive traditions and cultural values.

This bachelor thesis proves that despite cultural differences, characters in *Web* associate islands similarly with frequent motives. These motives and perceptions are always created when a person reads a book about islands or visits a real island. The imagination conjures up the island topos, which then represents motives such as, Eden, prison and home. These motives have appeared in literature over the centuries and they will continue to appear in island literature. Frequently used island topoi do appear in *Web* as well as in other books like *Robinson Crusoe*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Tempest*, *The Magus* and *Utopia*. The thesis proves that even though some of the authors lived in different centuries the island motives are repeated and that the chosen island perceptions in *Web* are connected. At first the characters think they are in a paradise, then comes a point in which they find out that they are trapped and cannot leave the island. While being trapped, they are surveyed as if in a prison. During the transformation, the characters have to live on the island and therefore they temporarily inhabit it. This island habitation creates the topos of a home. Wyndham connects all three main motives with the mountain topos, which is similar to the topos of a tower. The connection of the island topos with the mountain and tower topos helps to form the island into a prison. Wyndham creates a perfect place for the elaboration of the island topos in *Web*, by creating a fictional island and mixing it with non-fictive colonial history.

## RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá zobrazením toposu ostrova v románu Johna Wyndhama *Pavučina*. Ten byl vydán deset let po jeho smrti v roce 1979. Děj románu se odehrává na fiktivním ostrově Tanakuatua v Tichém oceánu, kam se vydá britská skupina budovat utopickou kolonii. Tento projekt ovšem selže ihned během několik prvních dnů po příjezdu na ostrov a skupina je až na dva hlavní protagonisty zabita jedovatými pavouky. V knize Wyndham prolíná fikci s fakty, když hlavní postava čte o historii ostrova. Fiktivní ostrov Tanakuatua je totiž ovlivněn skutečnou koloniální historií. Autor vyobrazuje expanzi koloniálních mocností a jejich vliv na životy domorodců. Vzhledem k tomu, že se celý děj odehrává na ostrově, skýtá dílo ideální příležitost ke zkoumání ostrova z pohledu poetiky místa.

Nedílnou součástí bakalářské práce je část teoretická. V této části jsou vysvětleny důležité a frekventovaně používané pojmy jako je topos a utopie. Pojmy jsou vysvětleny od jejich nejjednodušších definicí, a proto čtenář může lépe pochopit náplň celé práce. Topos doslova znamená v řečtině „místo,“ a v literatuře topos vyjadřuje jakési klišé, opakovaný motiv místa, který si lidé s ním lidé spojují. Práce se tak zabývá vyobrazením vnímání ostrova a nabízí mnoho odlišných, ale propojených motivů, které tvoří podklad k analytické části. Na pojem topos se váže i termín od toposu odvozený, a to pojem utopie. Tento latinský pojem je složeninou „ou“ čili ne a „topos,“ neboli místo. Termín doslova znamená „žádné místo.“ Tento pojem byl zaveden anglickým spisovatelem Thomasem Morem, který napsal knihu *Utopie o neexistujícím stejnojmenném ostrově*. Pojem utopie je důležitý pro porozumění vnímání ostrova utopickou skupinou.

Jedna z nejlepších pojednání o místě napsal čínsko–americký autor Yi- Fu Tuan, a proto je na jeho díla v práci nejčastěji odkazováno. Tvrdí, že význam ostrova tkví v lidské představivosti. Lidé si odjakživa přiřazují k místům různé spjitosti a předsudky. Například ostrov byl vnímán jako místo možného výskytu pozemského ráje. Práce tedy vychází z těchto předpojatostí k ostrovu a definuje motivy s ním spojené. Dále Tuan tvrdí, že vnímání místa se mění podle toho, zdali je člověk sám nebo ve skupině. V díle je vidět rozdíl mezi kolektivním vnímáním místa a vnímáním místa jedincem. Dále je místo vnímáno z pohledu kulturního. Domorodci v díle vidí ostrov podobně jako britská skupina. S různě geograficky postavenými místy je spojována různá symbolika a motivy. K lidské představivosti a vnímání místa často napomáhá turistika. Člověk je pak často velmi zklamán, když místo které navštívil neodpovídá katalogu. Fotografie cestovních kanceláří slouží ke klamání člověka a výsledek mnohdy neodpovídá realitě. To napomáhá k tvoření vlastních představ o určitém místě.

Další důležitou kapitolou v teoretické části je kapitola s názvem Mýtický ostrov. Vnímání ostrova se v průběhu staletí měnilo, a proto je důležité, aby práce zmínila představy o něm z různých období. Jedním z těchto období je antické Řecko. Zdroje sekundární literatury operují na tomto poli ve velké míře a za zmínku stojí bájně ostrovy jako Ithaka, Delos nebo Atlantis, které vedly k vytvoření bájných mýtů a legend. Tyto legendy často představovaly ostrov jako místo s tajemstvím. V dávném Řecku byly ostrovy spojovány s Kyklopy a různými bájnými příšerami. Na druhou stranu, ostrovy byly domovem řeckých hrdinů a Řeků samotných, a proto byly do jisté míry zmytologizovány. Mýtický ostrov se také stal místem, kde padlí hrdinové našli ráj.

Napříč kulturami se pojetí ostrova jako ráje kupodivu neliší. Keltové věřili v jisté Ostrovy požehnaných, které byly zobrazením ráje. Tato představa ráje je často spojována s utopickými vizemi. Tyto utopie byly během Středověku popoháněny vírou v pozemský ráj, a tak se údajné pozemské ráje začaly kreslit do map. Během období renesance hledaly nejvyspělejší národy rajske ostrovy. Kolonialismus napomohl pojetí ostrova jako ráje s objevením tropických ostrovů. Námořníci a kolonizátoři si tvořili vlastní představy o ráji a impéria začala obsazovat nová teritoria. V této době vznikala významná literární díla jako *Robinson Crusoe* a *Gulliverovy cesty*. Během kolonialismu docházelo k rozsáhlým vystěhováním domorodých národů nebo k jejich asimilaci. To vedlo k nepokojům, neboť kulturní rozdíly byly veliké. Podle amerického utopisty Lymana Sargenta tyto kulturní rozdíly často utvořily dystopie pro příchozí kolonisty, kteří hledali pozemský ráj. Tyto různorodé představy se tak promítají v literatuře a vedly k vytvoření ostrovního toposu.

V analytické části práce dokazuje vyobrazení ostrova jakožto místa skýtající ráj, vězení a domov. *Pavučina* je porovnávána s vybranou literaturou, která také nabízí ostrovní topos. Jedná se o díla *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliverovy cesty*, *Mág*, *Bouře*, *Utopie* a *Pán much*. Ostrov ve výše zmíněných dílech hraje značnou roli v představivosti hlavních postav. Ostrov tak je často vyobrazen jako místo proměny. Například Robinson Crusoe vidí ostrov jako místo vhodné k náboženskému rozjímání a nevinné děti z *Pána much* se díky ostrovu začnou mezi sebou zabíjet.

V první části analýzy je rozebírán ostrov jako ráj z pohledu poetiky místa. Nejprve se práce zabývá vnímání ostrova z pohledu utopické skupiny. Ta si určila místo založení nové civilizace právě na fiktivním ostrově Tanakuatua. Práce zdůrazňuje důležitost ostrova v utopické vizi a vnímání onoho místa z utopického pohledu. Ostrov jako ráj je velmi častým motivem v koloniální literatuře, a proto podklad pro zobrazení je postaven i na tomto druhu literatury. Dále je nutné podotknout důležitou roli ostrova ve vnímání domorodců. Ti svůj

ostrov zbožňují a také ho považují za svůj ráj. Vidina rajskeho ostrova je pro utopickou skupinu vyvolána výše zmíněnou koloniální literaturou a fotografiemi místa. Avšak realita je jiná a z ostrova po příjezdu již nelze uniknout.

Další analytická kapitola se zabývá vnímáním ostrova jakožto vězení. Tanakuatua bývala vězením již během kolonialismu pro mnohé námořníky a také pro samotné domorodce. Pocit izolovanosti ostrova napomáhá představě, že ostrov je jistým vězením. Dále jeho geografické parametry a zeměpisná poloha naznačují, že ostrov je uzavřené místo, stejně jako vězení. Právě onen pocit izolovanosti a stísněnosti pocítuje utopická skupina ihned po příjezdu. Z ráje se tak pro ně stává ostrov vězením, čemuž napomáhá i fakt, že je skupina obklíčena jedovatými pavouky. Tento pocit stísněnosti a vězení je možné najít i v dílech, jako je *Mág*, *Pán much*, *Utopie*, *Bouře* nebo *Robinson Crusoe*. Kromě vnímání ostrova jako ráje nebo vězení, nabízí ostrov i útočiště a domov svým obyvatelům.

Ostrov jako domov je tématem závěrečné analytické kapitoly. Toto vnímání ostrova je patrné již od antického Řecka, kdy ostrovy byly domovem pro Odysea a jiné hrdiny řeckých bájí. Utopická skupina míří na Tanakuatuu za účelem jejího obydlení. Chtějí na ostrově vybudovat novou civilizaci. Dále je ostrov místem domova i pro domorodce. Ti žijí na ostrově již celá staletí a je pro ně jediným domovem. Wyndham v *Pavučině* popisuje srdcervoucí momenty, kdy je rozhodnuto o odebrání ostrova domorodcům. Následně je ostrov obydlen utopickou skupinou.

Tato bakalářská práce vyvozuje obecnější závěr z analytických kapitol. Wyndhamova *Pavučina* je ideálním dílem pro rozbor ostrova z pohledu poetiky místa, jelikož se děj odehrává na tropickém ostrově, o kterém mají Britští autoři jisté představy. Tyto představy jsou základem toposu ostrova a jsou patrné jak ve Wyndhamově *Pavučině* tak i v ostrovní literatuře jako je *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliverovy cesty*, *Mág*, *Bouře*, *Utopie* a *Pán much*. Různé motivy ostrova se prolínají jednotlivými díly a pojetí ostrova jako ráj, domov a vězení vyznívá v těchto dílech obdobně a je sjednocujícím prvkem.

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