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Life and Literary Work of Iain Banks with Emphasis
on the Novel *The Wasp Factory*
(Bachelor's thesis)

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(Bakalářská práce)

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ZÁSADY PRO VYPRACOVÁNÍ:

This thesis named Life and Literary Work of Iain Banks with Emphasis on the Novel The Wasp Factory deals with the Scottish author Iain Banks, who focused mainly on the fiction and science-fiction novels and short stories. The main purpose of this thesis is to give a complex image of his first novel - The Wasp Factory, to explain important thoughts, meanings and symbolism of the work and to show, how the characters reflect the fact that the human personality is formed since childhood mainly because of the people in the immediate vicinity.

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1 Introduction

Scottish literature used to be considered only as a side product or a part of English literature. This idea was connected mainly with the position of Scotland in history, because it was seen as a small nation in comparison with England. However, Scottish literature began to flourish in the past, and today it is connected with several important names. In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, there were for example James MacPherson, Walter Scott or Robert Burns. The Victorian era introduced writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson, J. M. Barrie and Arthur Conan Doyle. The twentieth century was connected with modern authors including Muriel Spark, James Kelman and Irvine Welsh. And that was also the era when Iain Banks entered literary history and published his first novels.

Even though he is probably not the best-known Scottish author, Iain Banks belongs to very important writers who influenced the development of the contemporary literature. He focused on two different genres – mainstream fiction and science fiction. His first novel named *The Wasp Factory* won him international recognition, but it also shocked readers all over the world. This novel, which divided reviewers into two different camps, is the main source of my thesis. My aim is to give a complex image of Banks's first novel. I would like to show the fact that human personality is formed mainly by the upbringing and by the influence of people in the immediate vicinity.

In the first chapter, I will introduce the Scottish novelist Iain Banks and his life. His social and family background and also the key moments of his life will be described and I will discuss the beginning of his literary career and his early works, which established him as one of the leaders of contemporary Scottish literature. His premature death and later events and publications will be mentioned as well.

In the second chapter, I will talk about Banks's literary work. Iain Banks focused mostly on two different genres including mainstream fiction and science fiction published under the name of Iain M. Banks. I will describe similarities and

differences between them, and I will also mention the minor parts of his work, such as short stories, poetry and non-fiction.

The subsequent chapters will be dedicated to the complex analysis of the novel *The Wasp Factory*. The events accompanying the publication of the book will be described. I will then focus on the content of the novel and mainly on the protagonist Frank Cauldhame, who represents the literary monster and the evidence that the young personality is shaped by the upbringing and also by the influential people in the immediate vicinity. I will compare Frank with other monsters from English literature, because lives of these monsters were also influenced by the people around them and mostly by the father figure. Important symbols and their meanings will be described, and the analysis of the personality of young Frank, based on these symbols and meanings, will be introduced.

My main sources include primarily the first novel published by Iain Banks – *The Wasp Factory*. Next, I will use another works of Iain Banks to describe his style and the type of literature he focused on. Other important sources are for example the official websites of Iain Banks and various newspaper articles about him. During his life, Banks gave many interviews, therefore I also chose the book called *Scottish writers talking 2: In Interview* written by Isobel Murray, where Banks describes important moments of his life. The crucial part of this thesis focuses on the child's upbringing and its effect on the development of its personality and behaviour, and that is why I decided to use several research papers focusing on the theme of child's upbringing, education and neglect.

2 Iain Banks

In literary history, there were not many writers who succeeded as respected authors of both fiction and science fiction. However, Iain Banks, who focused on these two genres, was able to gain popularity in both fields. As Nick Rennison points out, Banks was popular both with his fans and literary critics:

Very few writers succeeded in combining real bestseller status with 'literary' credibility. Mass-market sales of hundreds of thousands of copies and respectful attention from the critics are rarely the reward of the same writer. Iain Banks is one of the few who have managed to achieve this difficult double.¹

Iain Menzies Banks was born on 16 February 1954 in Dunfermline, Fife in Scotland. His mother's occupation was a professional ice skater. His father worked as an Admiralty officer. Iain Banks had no brothers or sisters, he was their only child.² Iain Banks later claimed that being alone influenced his literary career:

I guess it was something obvious like the cliché about the only child who retreats into their own little private world. I imagine that there probably is a higher preponderance of only children who become writers, because it is a more reasonably solitary profession than even the other narrative arts.³

Banks spent his childhood in North Queensferry, but later his family decided to move because of his father's work requirement. In 1963, they settled in Gourock and Banks received his early education from Gourock and Greenock High Schools. At that time, his father was promoted to a First Officer of the Admiralty.⁴

Iain Banks claimed that he discovered science fiction when he was still in Gourock High School. He decided to start writing at the age of eleven and

¹ Nick Rennison, *Contemporary British Novelists* (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005), 14.

² Isobel Murray, ed. *Scottish Writers Talking 2: In Interview* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press Ltd, 2002), 2.

³ Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking 2*, 2.

⁴ Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking 2*, 2.

wrote his first novel when he was sixteen years old. It was called *The Hungarian Lift-Jet*. He later attended Stirling University from 1972 to 1975, where he studied English Literature, Philosophy and Psychology. During the first year here, he wrote his second novel called *TTR* (it stood for *The Tashkent Rambler*), which was his first science fiction book.⁵ He also wrote poems for some time at Stirling, but he was more interested in writing prose. He later claimed that ‘poetry was just a phase I was going through’⁶.

After university, Banks travelled through Europe, North America and Scandinavia. During that time, he was employed as an analyzer for IBM, a technician and a costing clerk in a law firm. ‘He moved to London in the late 1970s and began writing while he was working as a computer programmer.’⁷

Banks’s debut novel was *The Wasp Factory* published in 1984. The reviews of this novel were divided into two different groups - one group supported his innovative way of writing, while the other one was greatly shocked. Rennison described the reactions of readers: ‘Reviewers were divided between those who were immediately impressed by the power of Banks’s imagination and those who were apoplectically outraged by the book’s subject matter and the prose he used to describe it.’⁸

The second Banks’s novel was called *Walking on Glass* (1985), but it was received as quite a disappointment. However, it was followed by *The Bridge* (1986), which was successful and Iain Banks himself considered it as one of his favourite novels.

In addition to mainstream fiction, Iain Banks later started to focus also on science fiction. In 1987, he published the book called *Consider Phlebas* under the name of Iain M. Banks. He decided to add the initial letter M. of his middle name Menzies to his name while writing science fiction. On the other hand, his realistic prose works were still published under the name of Iain Banks.

⁵ Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking 2*, 7.

⁶ Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking 2*, 16.

⁷ Rennison, *Contemporary British Novelists*, 14.

⁸ Rennison, *Contemporary British Novelists*, 14.

Iain Banks became successful both with his mainstream fiction novels and science fiction works. He was considered one of the best English novelists. He was also selected as one of Granta's Twenty Best Young Novelists in 1993. As Rennison claims, his increasing success with both fiction and science fiction allowed him to move back to his native Fife in 1990s.⁹ In 1992, he married his first wife Annie and they lived together until 2007. His second wife was Adele Hartley, the founder of the Dead by Dawn film festival. They got married on 29 March 2013. Although he was married twice, he never had any children.

In April 2013, Iain Banks announced that he had been diagnosed with inoperable cancer. He wrote a letter to his fans, where he described his disease and what it means to him:

(...) I have cancer. (...) The bottom line, now, I'm afraid, is that as a late stage gall bladder cancer patient, I'm expected to live for 'several months' and it's extremely unlikely I'll live beyond a year. So it looks like my latest novel, *The Quarry*, will be my last.¹⁰

Although he was expected to live for several months, Iain Banks died at the age of 59 on 9 June 2013. It came very soon after his announcement, and it was a great shock to his fans and admirers all around the world. His last novel, *The Quarry*, was published in late June 2013, shortly after his death.

As a tribute to Iain Banks, who was a great fan and an admired writer of science fiction, one of the new-found asteroids was named after him when he died. Its name is 5099 Iainbanks.¹¹ There is also a collection of poems of Iain Banks and his friend Ken MacLeod, which was published posthumously by MacLeod on 16 February 2015, the day Iain Banks would celebrate the 60th birthday.

⁹ Rennison, *Contemporary British Novelists*, 14.

¹⁰ Iain Banks, "A Personal Statement from Iain Banks," *Little, Brown Book Group UK/ Hachette Book Group US*, published April 3, 2013, accessed March 25, 2016, <http://www.iainbanks.net/2013/04/03/a-personal-statement-from-iain-banks/>.

¹¹ J. L. Galache, "Sci-Fi Author Iain M. Banks Gets Asteroid Named after Him," *The Minor Planet Center*, published July 1, 2013, accessed March 25, 2016, <http://minorplanetcenter.net/blog/sci-fi-author-iain-m-banks-gets-asteroid-named-after-him/>.

3 The Literary Work

After the publication of his first novel *The Wasp Factory* in 1984, Iain Banks suddenly became a very successful and famous author. Although his debut shocked both the audience and literary critics, this only led to the situation that people wanted to learn more about this bizarre writer and to read more of his works. Iain Banks himself was shocked by his success, as he described in the interview with Isobel Murray:

I got such a flying start with *The Wasp Factory*. I'd assumed that after maybe five or six years, if I was able to write a book a year, if I was able to get the damned things published, I might just be able to scrape by and make a living, and give up my day job. But because *The Wasp Factory* was so sudden (...), I thought, wait a minute! This doesn't happen to everybody!¹²

When Banks found out that people were interested in his work, he started to focus on writing even more than before. In 1980s, he managed to publish a book every year and his fast tempo continued also in 1990s. Banks himself claimed that for him writing is not such a hard job as some authors tend to say: 'One thing I did have and still have is I can write quite quickly. When I'm really on song I can do about 5,000 words a day, and shouldn't need too much revision.'¹³

During the period of almost thirty years (from 1984 to 2013), Iain Banks published twenty-nine of his works. This includes fourteen novels of mainstream fiction, twelve novels of science fiction, two short story collections and one book of non-fiction called *Raw Spirit*. One of Banks's fiction novels, *The Quarry*, was published posthumously, shortly after his death. In 2015, Banks's friend and collaborator Ken MacLeod published their joint collection of poems.

¹² Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking* 2, 19-20.

¹³ Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking* 2, 22.

3.1 Fiction

As mentioned before, Iain Banks published fifteen fiction novels. His mainstream works were published simply under the name of Iain Banks without his middle name Menzies. Although it does not have to be seen at first sight, his books contain a lot of similarities.

Banks's novels often begin with a shocking opening sentence. This can be best illustrated in *The Crow Road* - 'It was the day my grandmother exploded.'¹⁴ Another example is the cover of *The Wasp Factory*: 'Two years after I killed Blyth I murdered my young brother Paul, for quite different reasons than I'd disposed of Blyth, and then a year after that I did for my young cousin Esmerelda more or less on a whim.'¹⁵

Both in books of mainstream fiction and science fiction, Iain Banks plays with exposing small pieces of information and memories from the past of main characters. He gradually reveals the most important moments of protagonist's life. He often switches fluently from the past to the present and back.

We can see that Banks uses the retrospective way of story-telling in some way. The present comes first and it is interwoven with some parts of the past, and people are only later able to assemble all the pieces together. These 'series of flashbacks and parallel narratives'¹⁶, as they are called by Roderick Watson, are one of the important traits typical for Banks's style.

Banks often presents a shocking idea at the beginning of his novel. Then it is developed and we slowly reveal the whole story. Banks does not use long introductions. The reader is often thrown right into an important moment of the plot, and he gets more information about the setting, the protagonist and the plot itself only as the story continues.

Sometimes, an important moment or a clue are revealed only in one or two paragraphs at the beginning, then another topic is developed, and Banks gets back

¹⁴ Iain Banks, *The Crow Road* (London: Abacus, 1992), cover page.

¹⁵ Iain Banks, *The Wasp Factory* (London: Abacus, 2013), cover page.

¹⁶ Roderick Watson, *The Literature of Scotland: The Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 253-254.

to the original idea in the end. Finally, all the clues usually lead to a surprising ending, where all the pieces are connected together, and we discover the whole story with all the reasons, connections and consequences.

Another technique used by Iain Banks is multiple changing of points of view. For example in *Transition*, Banks creates several important characters, who take turns in telling the story. He shows everyone who has something to say to the development of the story, and by this the whole book is put together.

As a Scottish author, Iain Banks featured Scotland in many of his novels. Some of them take place in Scotland, some of them just mention his homeland. The novels mentioning Scotland are for example *The Wasp Factory*, *The Bridge*, *Espedair Street*, *The Crow Road* or *Dead Air*. Banks spoke about the Scottish influence during his interview with Isobel Murray, where he describes his novel *The Bridge*:

The Bridge (...) was much more of a Scottish novel in a lot of ways. The actual experience of the guy, upwardly mobile from working to middle class as a background, that probably was transferrable from university to university, probably fairly similar in a lot of big cities. Even so, I think there is a very definite Scottish atmosphere to *The Bridge*.¹⁷

Banks often focuses on Scotland even if it is not visible at first sight. He uses Scottish dialect, Scottish names, he discusses Scotland even when the characters do not live right there. He mentions Scotland also in his collection of short stories called *The State of the Art*.

Another important trait typical for Banks's style is the focus on the past of his characters and their previous deeds. He shows the world full of people who are not ideal. People sometimes make mistakes and they must later deal with them. Some dark secrets are often revealed in Banks's stories, he shows different kinds of them - murder, incest, betrayal and many others.

¹⁷ Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking 2*, 20.

People with the feeling of alienation from the world are presented to the reader. These characters often feel alone or different from others, because of their past, their deeds and their upbringing. Banks focuses on these intense feelings, he describes the way of thinking of his characters and reveals their secret fears and desires, often through their dreams.

Banks is not afraid to reveal the bad traits of his characters, because he knows that the reader is ready to accept the person who makes mistakes and to identify himself with this person rather than with a perfect human being. That is why Banks shows many weaknesses and mistakes of his heroes, for example alcohol or drug addiction, free sexual relationships or the ability to manipulate people to gain whatever they just need.

As one of the main topics in his books, Iain Banks shows the importance of the family. Close people, friends and relatives of the protagonist are shown one by one, and the relations to each of them are revealed gradually. The role of the family is discussed in many novels, for example in *Stonemouth*, *The Wasp Factory* or *The Steep Approach to Garbadale*. Banks shows how important role the family plays mostly in forming of a young personality, because the person is always marked by its upbringing, and it can be seen in the later behaviour.

Banks also shows the interest in different doubles and repetitions of various sorts in his books. The enumeration of doppelgangers is suggested by the Scottish literary critic Craig Cairns:

In Banks's novels Frank and Frances in *The Wasp Factory* represent a sexualized version of the double, in *The Bridge* Orr knows he has an alternative life somewhere else that he is trying to reconnect with, in *Espedair Street*, Daniel Weir is 'weird' precisely because he has come to live a double life, being an internationally famous rock star who poses as the caretaker of a converted Church in Glasgow, while in

Canal Dreams Hisako Onoda is a Jekyll-and-Hyde figure, both cellist and killer.¹⁸

In some novels, Banks focuses also on the latest news and problems of the world. The destruction of the World Trade Centre, new technologies or popular computer games are examples of these important issues discussed in Banks's books. Some of his novels are even closely related to science fiction. *Walking on Glass*, *The Bridge* or *Transition* all contain elements of the science fiction genre.

There is seemingly a happy ending in many of Banks's novels, but it is always connected with some pain, revelation or disappointment. The faith is shaken, the secrets are revealed, and people have to learn how to accept them and live with them. But even if they manage to get over the things which happened to them, they cannot forget and they are marked forever.

Banks's mainstream fiction novels draw not only the attention of readers, but also the attention of critics, screenwriters and directors. Some of his novels were transformed into movies or other types of shows:

His 1992 novel, *The Crow Road*, was successfully adapted by the BBC into a four-part television series, and *Espedair Street* (1987) was produced as a BBC Radio 4 Series, for which Banks wrote the accompanying music and lyrics.¹⁹

3.2 *Science Fiction*

During his life, Iain Banks published twelve novels of science fiction, including nine novels of the Culture series, and three other science fiction novels. He was a great fan of science fiction since high school and he decided to publish his own works of this genre. His science fiction novels were published under the name of Iain M. Banks, which contains also the first letter of his middle name Menzies.

¹⁸ "Iain Banks," *British Council*, accessed March 20, 2016, <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/iain-banks>.

¹⁹ "Iain Banks," *British Council*, accessed March 20, 2016, <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/iain-banks>.

The first science fiction novel was *Consider Phlebas* published in 1987. Since this year, Iain Banks continued to publish both mainstream fiction and science fiction and he enjoyed both genres, as he commented in the interview with Patrick Ward from 2008:

I enjoy writing science fiction, but there's not a great amount in it. In a way the mainstream is more rewarding because it's more difficult, I've got to restrain my imagination a bit more and rein it in. So I get a lot of pleasure writing both, but I also get a lot of pleasure independently from being able to write in two genres.²⁰

The books of science fiction are different from Banks's mainstream fiction, but there are also several similarities. The flashes from the past are used in both types, but they are not so frequent in science fiction books and sometimes they do not even appear at all.

Some of Banks's science fiction novels were written a long time before they were published. In fact, Banks decided to re-do his old books written before *The Wasp Factory*. He wanted to keep the stories, because according to him the ideas were good, but the way they were written was not. For example, *The Player of Games*, *Against a Dark Background* and *Use of Weapons* were all Banks's old ideas which were later rewritten.²¹

The only three novels of science fiction which do not belong to the famous Culture series are *Against a Dark Background* (1993), *Feersum Endjinn* (1994) and *The Algebraist* (2004). The novel from 2009 called *Transition* is sometimes also included in the list of science fiction works. It was published under the name of Iain Banks in the UK, but under the name of Iain M. Banks in the USA, because Banks's science fiction novels were better sold in America at that time.²²

²⁰ Patrick Ward and Iain Banks, "Interview: Changing society, imagining the future," *Socialist Review* 322 (February 2008), accessed March 25, 2016. <http://socialistreview.org.uk/322/interview-changing-society-imagining-future>.

²¹ Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking* 2, 28.

²² "Transition by Iain Banks - UK & US Covers," *Little, Brown Book Group UK/ Hachette Book Group US*, published July 28, 2009, accessed February 6, 2016, <http://www.iain-banks.net/2009/07/28/transition-by-iain-banks-uk-us-covers/>.

Iain Banks gained huge popularity not only as the author of shocking mainstream novels, but also with his science fiction novels which belong to the famous Culture series. This series includes nine novels and one collection of short stories.

The books of the Culture series focus on the world in the faraway future. Iain Banks showed his great imagination and sophisticated plots in these novels, and he also presented himself to the readers as a skilful author of science fiction, who is able to create the whole new world and even the whole universe.

The Culture is a new civilisation full of new technologies with different attitudes to life. It was described by Berthold Schoene-Harwood:

The Culture is a vast civilisation of genetically modified humanoids who live in a partnership with artificial life forms whose superior intelligence directs a wholly automated economy. There is no scarcity in the Culture, work has become play, and the state has withered away.²³

Culture citizens usually do not fear death, because they can duplicate their mind and reload themselves into a new-grown body. They can also change their sex from male to female and the other way round as they like. Banks focuses on the genetics and offers his readers the idea that human mind is similar to some kind of a program:

For Banks, computer science and genetics reveal that we are the effects of coding upon matter: mind is a program that could conceivably be copied and transcribed into different matter, and the brain itself is a bodily pattern programmed by evolution.²⁴

The Culture does not operate with money. The citizens are not as obsessed with possession of things as people nowadays tend to be. Banks seems to be perceiving life and society as feminine, even the artificial intelligences, ships and Minds act

²³ Berthold Schoene-Harwood, ed., *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 203.

²⁴ Schoene-Harwood, *Contemporary Scottish Literature*, 205.

as feminine. Gavin Miller describes that Banks represents the decentralized ethic as particularly feminine:

The prototypical Culture world is a Culture ship, a structure within which its inhabitants are contained rather than a territory which they claim to possess. Even on the rare occasions when Culture citizens live on the outside of their ship, Banks still manages to emphasize the femininity of the sheltering world.²⁵

In the Culture series, Iain Banks does not reveal all information about the Culture at the beginning of the first book of the series, but he keeps the reader in ignorance. Therefore, the reader enters something unknown, he must collect bits of information to find out something about the setting, people, their behaviour and other facts about the Culture. The Culture is a big puzzle for the reader.

Banks describes its citizens, its enemies, he focuses on the development of new technologies like drones, weapons, spaceships and the technologies supporting the long-standing and healthy life of the Culture inhabitants. He does not only show these things, but he is also able to describe how everything works. During reading the whole Culture series, people get the full image of the futuristic world created by Iain Banks. They can understand the history of the Culture and the connections among all situations that happened in these books. Banks usually provides the necessary dates and background for better understanding.

Similarly to reflections from the past in the fiction books, the bits of information in individual novels of the Culture series allow the reader to understand the Culture as a whole. It reveals what the people are like, what they believe in, their religion, their politics, and also their thoughts about their universe. Finally, after reading all the books of this series, the reader gets the complete picture of the new world of Culture created by Iain Banks.

3.3 Short Stories

During his life, Iain Banks created two collections of short stories. The first of them called *The State of the Art* was published in 1991. This collection is often

²⁵ Schoene-Harwood, *Contemporary Scottish Literature*, 207.

included in the list of the Culture series books, because it contains several stories about the citizens of the Culture and their lives and acts.

The State of the Art contains eight stories, for example ‘A Gift from the Culture’, ‘Descendant’ or ‘Odd Attachment’. The longest of the stories has the same title as the book – ‘The State of the Art’. This novella, which forms the bulk of the whole book, tells a story of a Culture mission to the Earth. It introduces the character of Diziet Sma, who is the protagonist of the earlier published science fiction novel called *Use of Weapons*.

In the longest story of *The State of the Art*, we can see the contrast between the Culture as a superior empire in the universe and the Earth of 1977. This story also raises the question whether it is better to live in a society full of modern technologies and artificial intelligences where you can live almost forever, or to enjoy the fleeting beauty of the moment even when you know that you will die sooner than it is necessary. On the question whether the Culture is Banks’s vision of what humanity could or should be in the future, he answered:

We’ll be lucky ever to achieve it. I think the only way a species like us could ever get to be like the Culture in the first place would be through genetic manipulation. (...) But I’m not that confident we’re capable of getting somewhere that benign. I’d certainly like to think we could. (...) For me it’s the ideal functioning utopia.²⁶

Some of the short stories, including ‘The State of the Art’ and ‘Piece’, were later adapted for radio broadcast.

The second short story collection is called *The Spheres*. It was published in 2010 as the limited edition of 500 pieces for the annual science fiction convention called Novacon, which Banks attended as a guest of honour. This collection includes two stories - an excerpt from the original draft of *Transition* called ‘The Spheres’ and an excerpt from *Matter* called ‘The Secret Courtyard’.

²⁶ Patrick Ward and Iain Banks, “Interview: Changing society, imagining the future,” *Socialist Review* 322 (February 2008), accessed March 25, 2016. <http://socialistreview.org.uk/322/interview-changing-society-imagining-future>.

3.4 Poetry

Nowadays, Iain Banks is considered to be a prolific author of fiction and science fiction. However, in his early years, Banks focused mostly on poetry, and that is why he can be also called a poet. Actually, his first published work was a poem called '041', which appeared in *New Writing Scotland* in 1983.²⁷

Banks started to write poetry during his high school years and continued until 1981. He wrote several poems during his studies at Stirling University including 'Damage', which was inspired by T. S. Eliot and his long poem called *The Waste Land*.²⁸

Later, Banks focused mostly on fiction and science fiction. He abandoned writing poetry. However, some of his poems are hidden in his novels. There are for example two poems in *Use of Weapons* - 'Slight Mechanical Destruction' and 'Zakalwe's Song'. Other books containing Banks's poetry are for example *Espedair Street* or *The Crow Road*.

Banks later returned to his poetry in 2012. He decided to publish some of the poems written between 1973 and 1981, so he asked his life-long friend and collaborator Ken MacLeod for help. MacLeod comments on his demand in the introduction to their book of poetry: 'Some time in 2012, well before he had any inkling of his illness, Iain said to me that he wanted to see his poems and mine published, preferably together. I demurred; he insisted, and I agreed.'²⁹

Banks and MacLeod started to work together on their project in 2012, and they continued even after Banks's diagnosis of the terminal cancer of the gallbladder. After his death, MacLeod made only a few final revisions. Their poetry was finally published together in a book called simply *Poems*. The date of publication was 16th February 2015, the day Iain Banks would celebrate his 60th birthday.

²⁷ "Poems," *Little, Brown Book Group UK/ Hachette Book Group US*, accessed March 25, 2016, <http://www.iain-banks.net/us/poems/>.

²⁸ Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking 2*, 16.

²⁹ Ken MacLeod, "Ken MacLeod's Introduction to Poems, Published Today," *Little, Brown Book Group UK/ Hachette Book Group US*, published February 16, 2015, accessed March 25, 2016, <http://www.iain-banks.net/2015/02/16/ken-mcleods-introduction-to-poems-published-today/>.

Ken MacLeod wrote the introduction to the book, where he commented on his friendship with Banks and on Banks's poems:

Iain's poems vary greatly in length and theme, ranging from discursive meditation on landscape and relationships through highly crafted love poems and take-no-prisoners polemics to witty squibs. Few are science fiction poetry as such.³⁰

3.5 Non-fiction

The only non-fiction work written by Iain Banks is called *Raw Spirit: In Search of the Perfect Dram*. This book was published in 2003 and it tells about whiskey and perfect dram. The recurring themes are for example Scotland, motor vehicles or invasion to Iraq. James Procter described this non-fiction book as Banks's personal journey: 'He has written *Raw Spirit: In Search of the Perfect Dram* (2003), a personal journey through the highlands and islands of Scotland in exploration of the history and mystery of malt whiskey.'³¹

³⁰ Ken MacLeod, "Readers of Iain Banks's prose will find in his poems much that is familiar," *The Guardian*, published February 14, 2015, accessed February 12, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/feb/14/iain-banks-prose-poems-ken-macleod>.

³¹ "Iain Banks," *British Council*, accessed March 20, 2016, <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/iain-banks>.

4 The Wasp Factory

4.1 Publication

In his Preface of *The Wasp Factory* Iain Banks explains that mainstream fiction was not really the kind of literature he wanted to write in the beginning. He says: ‘At the start of 1980 I thought of myself as a science fiction writer, albeit a profoundly unpublished one.’³²

But his science fiction works were rejected by many publishers and he was not able to tolerate rejection any more. He felt disappointed as he described in his Preface: ‘Maybe I wasn’t just a science fiction writer after all. Maybe I should try writing an ordinary, boring, mainstream novel.’³³

He decided to try writing something different than science fiction, and he created *The Wasp Factory* in the summer of 1980. It took him about ten weeks and he directly decided to make a second draft. He offered the copy to his friends, so he could get independent comments before he sent the manuscript to publishers.³⁴

Although he was disappointed by abandoning science fiction, Banks considered *The Wasp Factory* as something not so distant from his favourite genre. He claimed that this book allowed him to keep something of the freedom of science fiction genre:

In the end I went for something that kept me closer to my by-then comfort zone; a first-person narrative set on a remote Scottish nearly-island told by a normality-challenged teenage eccentric (...) allowed me to treat it as something resembling science fiction. The island can be envisaged as a planet, Frank, the protagonist, almost as an alien.³⁵

³² Iain Banks, Preface to *The Wasp Factory*, by Iain Banks (London: Abacus, 2013), ix.

³³ Banks, Preface, x.

³⁴ Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking* 2, 29.

³⁵ Banks, Preface, x-xi.

The Wasp Factory was published on 16 February 1984 on his thirtieth birthday by Macmillan Publishers. It became Banks's first published novel and also a great success.

4.2 *Reception and Awards*

The initial reviews of *The Wasp Factory* showed the different opinions of critics. Some of them were fascinated and considered the book as something new and original in literature, while others were shocked and thought that this novel should not be a part of literature at all. One of the strongest negative reviews was written by Andrew Gimson for *The Times* (16/02/84), and it later appeared in the Futura paperback edition of *The Wasp Factory*: 'Perhaps it is all a joke, meant to fool literary London, terrified of seeming prudish, into respect for rubbish.'³⁶

However, there were also many positive reviews which helped to establish the novel as one of the famous works of 1980s and Iain Banks as the acclaimed Scottish writer. *The Financial Times* wrote about *The Wasp Factory*:

A Gothic horror story of quite exceptional quality. It is a macabre, bizarre and impossible to put down. There is a control and assurance in the book, an originality rare in established writers twice the author's age. This is an outstandingly good read.³⁷

Although the critic from *The Mail on Sunday* was shocked, he considered the novel a great literary work: 'If a nastier, more vicious or distasteful novel appears this spring, I shall be surprised. But there is unlikely to be a better one either. (...)'³⁸

The popularity of the first novel published by Iain Banks has increased over the years. In 1992, Iain Banks won the Kurd-Laßwitz Preis for Foreign novel with *The Wasp Factory*.³⁹ In 1997, his debut novel was included in the list of the top 100 books of the 20th century according to *The Independent*. After the poll of

³⁶ "The Wasp Factory at 20," *The Banksonian 1* (February 2004): 7, accessed February 6, 2016, <http://efanzines.com/Banksoniain/Banksoniain01.pdf>.

³⁷ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, cover.

³⁸ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, cover.

³⁹ "Die besten Werke von 1991," *Kurd Laßwitz Preis*, accessed March 4, 2016, http://www.kurd-lasswitz-preis.de/1992/KLP_1992_Preistraeger.htm.

more than 25,000 readers, the book occupied the 32nd place and it outclassed such classics as John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* or Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*.⁴⁰

4.3 *Content*

The novel *The Wasp Factory* consists of twelve chapters and Preface where Banks describes when and how this book was created. It also explains what the book represents for the writer himself:

The Wasp Factory represented me admitting partial defeat, heaving a slightly theatrical sigh, stepping reluctantly away from the gaudy wall-size canvasses of science/space fiction (...) lower myself to using a more restricted palette and produce what felt like a miniature in comparison.⁴¹

The story is a first person narrative told from the point of view of Francis L. Cauldhame. Frank is a sixteen-year-old boy who lives alone only with his father Angus on a remote Scottish nearly-island. His mother left when he was a child, and his older half-brother Eric is kept in a mental hospital because 'he set fire to dogs'⁴² and he also terrorized local children by feeding them with worms.

Frank is eccentric and prone to violence. For him, the island is something as a remote planet, where he operates. He occupies his time with building dams and Sacrifice Poles with animal totems, killing his enemies, which are mostly different kinds of animals, and doing his own rituals while he is led by the Wasp Factory, his personal oracle.

However, there is one big problem. Frank does not have a birth certificate, which is considered a crime. He could not be educated at school and he must spend most of his time on the island. The only contact with the nearby town Porteneil is made

⁴⁰ Marianne MacDonald, "No Sartre, no Lessing, no Mailer: Frodo the hobbit beats them all," *The Independent* (January 20, 1997), accessed March 4, 1997, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/no-sartre-no-lessing-no-mailer-frodo-the-hobbit-beats-them-all-1284175.html>

⁴¹ Banks, Preface, x.

⁴² Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 5.

through Frank's only friend—dwarf Jamie. Frank thus spends most of his time with his father, who has a controlling nature and a great influence on Frank.

In the opening of the book, Eric escapes from the mental hospital, and the local policeman Diggs warns Frank and his father that Eric will probably try to head home. Angus Cauldhame is scared, but Frank is excited. Eric has always been Frank's soulmate.

As the story proceeds, the reader learns that Frank not only has a violent nature, but he is also the murderer. That is why he feels the kinship between himself and Eric. Eric's mother Mary died during the childbirth in 1960. According to Frank, it influenced Eric for the whole life. And for him, it was also important—it means that Eric is a killer.

Frank's first victim was his cousin Blyth Cauldhame. He decided to kill him because Blyth incinerated his and Eric's rabbits. Frank was only five years old at that time, but he was able to devise a special plan. He waited for a year until the next holidays and then, during his brothers and cousin were asleep, he arranged the snake into Blyth's plastic leg. Blyth later put it on, the snake bit him several times, and he died.

The second victim was Frank's younger brother Paul. Frank was eight when he killed him, and in this case he did not have any particular reason to do it: 'Not that I bore him any personal ill-will, it was simply that I knew he couldn't stay.'⁴³ Frank killed him during a walk around the island. They discovered an old bomb and Frank told Paul it was a bell and he should hit it with all the power he had. In the meantime Frank hid behind the dune and watched what happened. Later he appeared to be traumatised by this accident and nobody suspected him.

The last person killed by Frank was his cousin Esmerelda. He felt that he must renew the balance between sexes after the murder of two male children:

I killed little Esmerelda because I felt I owed it to myself and to the world in general. I had, after all, accounted for two male children and

⁴³ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 83.

thus done womankind something of a statistical favour. If I really had the courage of my convictions, I reasoned, I ought to redress the balance at least slightly. My cousin was simply the easiest and most obvious target.⁴⁴

During the summer when he decided to kill little Esmerelda, Frank's favourite activity was flying kites. So he built a special big kite, and during a walk, he tied the little girl to it. She was dragged off her feet and the kite disappeared. Frank then pretended to be mad with grief for a long time, but in fact he enjoyed the situation when everyone around him cared for him.

With the development of the story, Frank is more and more excited about the return of his beloved brother. Eric calls home several times, but he never reveals any information about his location. However, it is obvious that he continues in torturing dogs. People from the town begin to search for him because they are afraid of his return. Frank tries to prepare for it as best as he can and he consults his Factory, which shows the fire again: 'Everywhere I turned there was fire. The Factory had said it twice, I had turned to it instinctively when attacked by the rogue buck, and it was squeezed into every spare corner of my memory. Eric brought it closer all the time, too.'⁴⁵ Frank also visits his Bunker, where he keeps the skull of their dog called Old Saul, and tries to connect with Eric. However, he is not very successful. But the skull reminds him of his mother.

Frank's mother Agnes disappeared immediately after his birth. When he was three years old, she came back expecting another baby. She did not explain where she had been for all those years. Her arrival was also connected with Frank's accident. According to his father, Frank was attacked by their dog during the childbirth. He lost his genitalia and became only a 'half-man'. His father shot the dog and Frank later excavated his skull and decided to keep it. Two days after the birth of Frank's brother Paul, Agnes broke his father's leg quite badly and ran away again. This is one of the reasons why Frank hates women and considers them repulsive and weak.

⁴⁴ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 111.

⁴⁵ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 164.

As Eric calls again to say he is very close to his home, Frank recalls the incident which caused Eric's madness. Eric had suffered from migraines since childhood. When he left the island because of his studies, he still called home and visited Frank, but it was not the same as before. Then the incident happened. Eric helped in the hospital because he considered it a good activity when he had migraines. One night, he visited a baby who could not control its muscles properly, and its bones of the skull never grew together and were paper thin. During the period of heats, a fly deposited its eggs under the ward which supported the child's head. Eric saw maggots consuming the child's brain and it changed him forever.

After several days from the last Eric's call, Frank decides to go for a walk around the island. Suddenly, he hears a terrible scream of an animal. He finds out it is a burning dog and he is immediately sure that Eric is here. His father is also aware that something is happening and gets drunk in a local pub. After his arrival, he forgets to hide his bunch of keys. Frank is finally able to go to his father's study, where he hopes to find something important, because he has been forbidden to go there since childhood.

The first surprise which awaits Frank in the study is a specimen-jar with a set of male genitalia. He assumes these once belonged to him and cries. However, the other things which he finds later are even more disturbing. Frank discovers some male hormones and women tampons and immediately tries to confront his father, assuming that he is actually a female.

However, their confrontation is interrupted by screams from the outside. Frank comes out and sees burning sheep approaching the house. Eric follows them with a big torch and tries to ignite the bombs hidden in the cellar under the house. Frank stops him and Eric escapes. Although there are some explosions, nobody is hurt.

After Eric's getaway, Frank confronts his father once more and finds out the horrible truth. Frank was born as a woman—Frances Leslie Cauldhame. Frank's father, who used to be a doctor, decided to try an experiment after the departure of his wife Agnes and the attack of the dog on Frank. The father also

wanted to dispose of women in his life, so he started to give Frank male hormones and claimed everybody that Frank was a boy. He even made a false set of male genitalia of wax to support his claim.

Frank is shocked by this revelation and he/she is not able to understand it at first. Frank has hated women during all his life, and now he/she is supposed to be one of them. It forces him/her to think about his previous deeds:

Now I find I was the fool all along. Believing in my great hurt, my literal cutting off from society's mainland, it seems to me that I look life in a sense too seriously, and the lives of others, for the same reason, too lightly. The murders were my own conception; my sex. The Factory was my attempt to construct life, to replace the involvement which otherwise I did not want.⁴⁶

In the end, Frank discovers his brother Eric lying on the grass on the island. He sits beside him and knows that he will have to tell him the truth: 'Poor Eric came home to see his brother, only to find (...) he's got a sister.'⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 243.

⁴⁷ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 244.

5 Monsters in Literature

Nowadays, the expression ‘monster’ has many different meanings. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the original meaning was ‘a mythical creature which is part animal and part human, or combines elements of two or more animal forms, and is frequently of great size and ferocious appearance. Later, more generally: any imaginary creature that is large, ugly and frightening’⁴⁸. However, as the word evolved during the time, the expression has been connected also with another meaning: ‘a person of repulsively unnatural character, or exhibiting such extreme cruelty or wickedness as to appear inhuman; a monstrous example of evil, a vice, etc.’⁴⁹.

There are many examples of monsters in English literature. We can count here for instance Grendel from the epic poem *Beowulf*, Dracula or Bogeyman. But probably the most famous example, which connects both mentioned definitions, is the monster created by Mary Shelley in her novel called *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. And this is also a monster which similarly to Frank Cauldhame from *The Wasp Factory* shows how the upbringing can determine development of an individual.

Literature is full of examples showing the importance of upbringing and the importance of the presence of loving and caring fathers in children’s lives. The significance of the father figure is described by Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox: ‘Even from birth, children who have an involved father are more likely to be emotionally secure, be confident to explore their surroundings, and, as they grow older, have better social connections with peers.’⁵⁰

And so we can see for example Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* written by Emily Brönte, who was found as a homeless boy by Mr Earnshaw and adopted by him. Earnshaw loved him and raised him as his own child, but his stepbrother Hindley

⁴⁸ “monster, n., adv., and adj.”. OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/121738> (accessed February 28, 2016).

⁴⁹ “monster, n., adv., and adj.”. OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/121738> (accessed February 28, 2016).

⁵⁰ Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children* (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006), 12.

was always jealous and treated Heathcliff really badly after the death of their father. Furthermore, Heathcliff was rejected by his only close person, his beloved Catherine, and he could not bear this anymore. He left the place and became a cruel young man with no mercy. He was obsessed with revenge and when he came back home, he was the main source of several horrible events. He managed to destroy everything that his enemies loved and later to destroy also them. Because of him, Catherine felt distressed, she was filled with remorse, and after giving birth to a child she died.

Although Heathcliff was successful in his plans, and he finally became a master of Wuthering Heights, there was nobody who loved him or felt sympathy with him. Instead of this, everyone thought that he was cruel, violent and vicious. He was in fact seen as a monster.

However, in *Wuthering Heights*, we can also see a person greatly influenced by Heathcliff. Hareton Earnshaw is the son of Heathcliff's enemy Hindley Earnshaw. After his death, Heathcliff takes responsibility of Hareton, but he neglects him and he does not show any affection to him. Because of the wrong upbringing, Hareton becomes a cruel young man, who avoids any contact with people around him, because he is afraid of another rejection.

We can find other examples of monsters also in Scottish literature. In Robert Louis Stevenson's novella called *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Jekyll and Hyde represent two different sides of human personality, the good and the evil. Henry Jekyll is a good amiable man, while Edward Hyde, his alter ego, is the one who represents the worse part of human nature. He is the inner monster—remorseless, cruel and violent. Firstly Hyde appears only after consuming a special potion, but as the novel proceeds, Hyde is getting stronger and we can see as the evil and monstrous side of the personality slowly wins. Another example of a monster in the Scottish literature is the criminal anti-hero Robert Wringhim in James Hogg's novel called *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*.

One of the best examples of the impact of upbringing and the relationship with father/creator in literature is the story of Frankenstein's monster. We can see

here that the neglecting of the child can have tragic consequences. We can say that people are not usually born as monsters. The monstrosity in them is created by their upbringing and the people in their immediate vicinity. Also Frankenstein's monster was innocent as a newborn at the beginning of a story.

Victor Frankenstein studied natural sciences during his school years. His big desire was to create life in a dead body. Driven by this wish, he made various experiments and finally achieved his goal. But he was no longer excited, he was scared of his creation:

I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation, but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart.⁵¹

The main reason of Frankenstein's horror was the creature's appearance. He created something different from a normal human being and immediately considered it a monster. Frankenstein was so terrified by his work that he left his creation without a name or any explanation. The creature was abandoned, and there was nobody who would care for him or teach him good manners. Later, during the confrontation with his creator Victor Frankenstein, he explained his feelings:

Believe me, Frankenstein, I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity; but I am not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow creatures, who owe me nothing? They spurn me and hate me.⁵²

Because of the abandonment and absence of his creator or 'father', who was unable to provide him with the basic things like food, clothes and some shelter, Frankenstein's monster was terribly neglected. According to the study called *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children*, the neglect can

⁵¹ Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus*, ed. David Lorne MacDonald and Kathleen Dorothy Scherf (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1999), 85.

⁵² Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 126.

have various horrible consequences: 'Neglect is associated with 'non-organic failure to thrive,' which is characterised by below-average weight, height, and intellectual development; neglect is also linked to attachment disorders, aggression, and difficulty dealing with others.'⁵³

The second important thing missing in the creature's life was a loving person who would care for his feelings and proper education. The creature was isolated from the world and it led to the change of his nature. At the beginning, Frankenstein's creation was called a monster only because of his disgusting and terrifying appearance. It was easy for the reader to sympathize with this miserable creature. During the time, however, he became also a monster in the second meaning of the word. He became cruel and aggressive because he missed someone who would love him, especially his father/creator, and people in his vicinity had no mercy for him. He started killing people to achieve his goals. He felt abandoned and disappointed. When his creator finally refused to make him a partner, who would end the creature's loneliness and suffering, he killed Frankenstein's loved ones, and Frankenstein died alone seeking for revenge. Jean-Jacques Rousseau claims: 'Father's ambition, avarice, tyranny, and false foresight, their negligence, their harsh insensitivity are a hundred times more disastrous for children than is the blind tenderness of mothers.'⁵⁴ At this point, when Frankenstein's creation begins to act as a real monster, it is hard for the reader to sympathize with someone who coldly kills so many people.

The story of Frank Cauldhame is similar to Shelley's *Frankenstein* in many aspects. Frank appears to be a monster similar to Frankenstein's creation. Firstly, there is the physical difference from the 'normal' human body. Frank feels to be strange and isolated from people around him. Frankenstein's monster was created as a disgusting and terrifying creature, someone both death and alive, while Frank is presented as a character who is neither a proper man, nor a woman.

Secondly, Frank appears as a monster also because of his nature and behaviour. Both Frankenstein's monster and Frank show the aggressiveness, violence and

⁵³ Rosenberg and Wilcox, *Importance of Fathers*, 15.

⁵⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, Or, On Education*, ed. Christopher Kelly and Allan Bloom (Hanover, New Hampshire: Press of New England, 2010), 161-162.

the need of control over the people around them. They both commit murders in cold blood to achieve their goals. Frank thus connects both definitions of the word 'monster'.

As mentioned earlier, the life and monstrousness of Frankenstein's creature was crucially influenced by his upbringing and by his father/creator. The case of Frank Cauldhame is not different. His nature and his physical appearance were influenced by his father, the important figure in his whole life. Angus Cauldhame reminds of Victor Frankenstein in many aspects. As Frankenstein gave life to his monster, Angus is the 'creator' of his own monster. Not only he decided to change the sex of his child to escape his own isolation from women, but he is also unable to find love for what he had created. Frank is provided with food, clothes and basic things which he needs for his life, but he is neglected emotionally.

Frank's monstrousness is shocking for the reader. Frank is only a sixteen-year-old boy who is capable of violent behaviour, torturing animals and killing his own relatives. What makes it even more astounding is the way how little Frank creatively invents terrible ways of his murders and calmly disposes of his victims. Despite being a child, Frank behaves as mentally mature. Banks points this out in his Preface to *The Wasp Factory*: 'I was also trying to make the point that childhood innocence isn't – and wasn't – as most people seem to imagine it; children probably harbour quite as many violent thoughts as adults, they just don't usually possess a sophisticated moral framework within which to place them.'⁵⁵

People often fear the unknown or something different from what they consider as 'standard' or 'normal'. When the reader discovers that Frank is not a male, but a female, it is something strange and outside the 'norm'. It is also even more shocking for the reader, because the idea of such monstrousness and cruelty which Frank shows is usually connected with male characters. The sixteen-year-old girl is not a prototype of a monster in literature. Therefore, people are shocked that Frank could behave in such a horrible and violent manner.

⁵⁵ Banks, Preface, xi.

However, when Frank finds out the truth about his/her gender, he/she no longer seems to be the same person as before. On the few last pages the reader sees the character who doubts his life goals and motives. Frank does not appear as monstrous as at the beginning. On the contrary, he/she is protective of his brother and shows compassion. Berthold Schoene-Harwood claims that Frank is no longer presented as a monster:

Banks's newly born female is introduced not as a monster or domineering mother figure but as her brother's sister. Promisingly, Eric and Frank's final embrace signals a liberating reconstitution of gender relations beyond patriarchal pressure in an ambience of equality and mutual affection.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Berthold Schoene-Harwood, "Dams Burst. Devolving Gender in Iain Banks's *The Wasp Factory*," *ARIEL* vol. 30, issue 1 (1999), 146.

6 Frank's Upbringing

Child's character, personality and behaviour are strongly influenced by his upbringing and also by the people who occur in his vicinity. Parents are usually the most important characters in child's life. Dr. Stuart Crisp says: 'Parents are the most influential role models children are likely to have. Parents who pay compliments and show respect, kindness, honesty, friendliness, hospitality and generosity to their children will encourage them to behave in the same way.'⁵⁷ Unfortunately, this is not the case of Angus Cauldhame, the father of the protagonist of *The Wasp Factory*.

Frank Cauldhame is certainly one of the examples of child maltreatment. He is influenced by the absence of his mother and by the way his father Angus behaves and treats him. According to Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, there are four major ways of child maltreatment, including physical abuse (beating, kicking or punching), sexual abuse (any sexual contact with children), neglect (a failure to secure basic needs of children) and psychological maltreatment (terrorizing or denying affection to children).⁵⁸ Frank is exposed mostly to two latter types - neglect and psychological maltreatment. Because of these factors, Frank is prone to violent behaviour and cruelty.

Violent behaviour of children and adolescents is a serious problem of modern society. It is manifested primarily by physical aggression, attempts to hurt people, mistreating animals, using weapons or other ways. According to American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, one of the important factors which increase the risk of violent behaviour in children is combination of stressful family factors like single parenting and loss of support from family.⁵⁹ The upbringing of a child thus plays an important role in forming young personality. Frank is not an exception here. He is influenced mostly by three people in his life - his father Angus, his absent mother Agnes and his brother Eric.

⁵⁷ Stuart Crisp, "Bringing up children," *NetDoctor*, published November 14, 2014, accessed March 12, 2016, <http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/parenting/a4462/bringing-up-children/>.

⁵⁸ Rosenberg and Wilcox, *Importance of Fathers*, 15.

⁵⁹ "Violent Behavior in Children and Adolescents," *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, published December 2015, accessed March 12, 2016, https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Understanding-Violent-Behavior-In-Children-and-Adolescents-055.aspx.

6.1 *Father*

The most important person who plays the biggest role in forming Frank's personality is certainly his father Angus Cauldhame. Angus is a tall and slim man with a delicate face and dark eyes. He probably used to be a 'doctor of chemistry or perhaps biochemistry'⁶⁰. His age is unknown to the reader because, as Frank points out, he refuses to tell him his real age. However, Frank thinks his father must be around forty-five years old. The important feature of his appearance is his left leg, which is almost totally stiff because it was badly broken by his second wife. That is why Angus limps and has to use a stick almost all the time.

One could say that Angus lost four of the most important people of his life—his first wife died during the childbirth, his second wife left him, his son Paul died, and his eldest son Eric became mentally deranged. The only remaining close person is his daughter Frances, who is changed into a man because of her father's experiment.

Angus provides Frank with basic things he needs, including shelter, food, clothes and money. However, he is not able to give him loving and safe environment. Angus is not able to give him the affection he deserves, and he maintains a big distance from his child. Although he tries to compensate for this by giving him money whenever Frank wants, it is not sufficient. As Alexandra Murphy describes, the affection is also important in raising a child: 'Sometimes, just being physically present is not enough. Parents that may be nearby but that are not emotionally interested or responsive tend to raise children that are more distressed and less engaged with their play or activities.'⁶¹

One of the most important traits of Angus's nature is the need to control people and things around him. It probably arose from the emotional disappointment when his second wife left him and their children. She even ridiculed him and hurt him. Until now, Angus has had the reminder of this act in his stiff leg. He decided to

⁶⁰ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 11.

⁶¹ Bethel Moges and Kristi Weber, "Parental Influence on the Emotional Development of Children," *Vanderbilt University*, published May 7, 2014, accessed March 13, 2016, <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/developmentalpsychologyblog/2014/05/parental-influence-on-the-emotional-development-of-children/>.

get women out of his life after that, dispose of bad memories and gain control over his life again. That is why he also tries to change his daughter to a boy. He cannot stand the presence of a woman in the vicinity.

Angus's hurt pride and low self-esteem are the reason why he neglects his child. Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox claim that the desire for dominance is one of the causes of child maltreatment:

Fathers with a low sense of self-worth are also more likely to abuse their children. Those experiencing psychological distress or low self-esteem may seek diversion from their problems or may abuse their children as a way to dominate and thus to derive a perverse sense of personal power. Fathers also may abuse their children as a way of exacting revenge on a spouse or partner by whom they feel humiliated.⁶²

Angus is hard on Frank, he uses many orders and prohibitions during their communication instead of talking with him as with any equal human being. Sometimes he even offends him or says that Frank should be in the mental hospital, because he is more insane than his brother Eric. He does that just to hurt Frank's feelings and show him that he is not normal. It helps Angus to feel superior. He is also afraid that otherwise Frank could leave the island and discover the world rather than stay attached to him. Then he would be totally alone. Therefore, after all these insults his father tells him, Frank is really fixed on the island: 'I don't like leaving the island for that long (...), I get this horrible feeling in my stomach, as though there is a big knot in it. I just can't go that far away, not overnight (...).'

Angus is not always honest with his son. He often lies to him or just gives him wrong information because he considers it to be a fun. Frank later realizes the truth and he is so deeply influenced by his father's mind games that he no longer knows what to think about his words and acts. He does not believe anything he says, because it could be a bluff or even a double bluff. It can be seen during their

⁶² Rosenberg and Wilcox, *Importance of Fathers*, 17.

⁶³ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 17.

initial conversation, when Frank thinks about the behaviour of his father: ‘It crossed my mind that my father looked worried, but he was good at acting and perhaps that was just what he wanted me to think, so deep down I remained unconvinced.’⁶⁴

Angus tries to keep control over Frank also by other means. He has a secret study which stays locked all the time, and Frank is not allowed to visit it. During the years, Frank’s desire to finally see what secrets are kept there has risen every day. Another controlling element helping Angus to maintain his dominance and power are for example his Measurement Book and the way he provides education for his child.

6.1.1 Education

Frank has no birth certificate and therefore he cannot attend school with other children. Angus decided to act as his teacher. He gave him lessons from mathematics, history and other subjects and Frank obtained at least the basic education. However, Angus found a way to control him also there. He sometimes provided Frank with a wrong information just to fool him. Frank believed these facts the whole childhood. He only discovered his father’s mischief later when he was able to visit the local library.

Frank was later really angry at his father because of the way he educated him: ‘(...) when I was younger he used to fool me time after time, answering my honest if naïve questions with utter rubbish.’⁶⁵ For example, Frank believed that the Earth is not a sphere but a Möbius strip. Angus’s deception in Frank’s education contributed to forming his personality, because Frank learned not to trust other people than himself, not even his closest relatives.

6.1.2 Obsession with Measurement

Angus Cauldhame is obsessed with measuring his property and with the knowledge of the exact numbers for all the things in his house. With this knowledge, he thinks that he can control the environment, and he can have power

⁶⁴ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 4.

⁶⁵ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 11.

over everything. Therefore, the whole house has been full of hundreds of little stickers of paper since Frank's childhood. They contain the right measures of individual pieces of furniture, dishes or even plants. Angus also keeps the Measurement Book with all data. However, he knows them also by heart.

As a little child, Frank could not understand his father's obsession: 'When I was a child I once went round the house tearing all the stickers off; I was belted and sent to my room for two days.'⁶⁶ It was the time when Angus decided that Frank should learn it too. Frank had to study from the Measurement Book and he had to make his own notes. He resented it, because he had no time for playing games.

When Frank learned the measures, Angus found a new way of assuring the control over him. He started to surprise him with random questions mostly when someone was around, and demanded the right answers. Even now, Frank still feels embarrassed by these questions, but he claims that he is no longer afraid of them: 'There was a time when I was genuinely afraid of these idiotic questions, but now, apart from the fact that I must know the height, length, breadth, area and volume of just about every part of the house and everything in it, I can see my father's obsession for what it is.'⁶⁷

Frank is able to see his father's desire for power and control and he thinks he is able to escape it, but on the contrary, he takes this trait over from him. Not only that he probably still fears his father and his controlling questions, but he creates also his own way to control things around him and his own obsession in naming things.

6.1.3 Affection

Angus is not accustomed to show any affection to his child. He bought only few presents (mostly books) for him when he was younger. Frank realized that his father is not really interested in him and he refused to read any book given by him. As mentioned before, Angus tried to compensate the lack of affection and interest by money, but it did not really work.

⁶⁶ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 7.

⁶⁷ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 6-7.

Frank is strongly influenced by the controlling nature of his father. He had to study with him or learn from the Measurement Book and he had almost no time for games. And when he had, his father did not play with him or spend any time with him. Frank escaped to his own imaginary world, and his plays became different from the plays of other children. His favourite 'game' called War consisted of well-thought-out scenarios of the war between two different sides, which involved such things as real explosions on the island. His other games were connected with destroying things, cruel behaviour or violence towards animals. His father did not care about his violent behaviour, because he focused only on people, and animals seemed to him as inferior beings. However, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry claims that the violent behaviour in child should be stopped at the beginning: 'Violent behavior in a child at any age always needs to be taken seriously. It should not be quickly dismissed as 'just a phase they're going through'.'⁶⁸

Frank is compensating the lack of love and support by trying to hurt others. He feels insecure and he is not able to handle his own feelings like anger. He even doubts his father's feelings towards him and he does not feel the affection to him as a child should feel to his parents. He expresses his insecurity: 'I never know exactly how much he really feels for me. Come to think of it, I never know exactly how much I really feel for him.'⁶⁹

Frank appears to see his father's true nature, and he realizes his obsessions and his need to control things: 'Only these little bits of bogus power enable him to think he is in control of what he sees as the correct father-son relationship. It's pathetic really, but with his little games and his secrets and his hurtful remarks he tries to keep his security intact.'⁷⁰ However, even if Frank knows this, he is not able to stay away and he is influenced by his father. He slowly becomes similar to him and obtains the same desire to control everything and everyone around him.

Although Frank tries to be aloof and he tries to convince himself that he hates his father, he still respects him as the only source of his education and upbringing:

⁶⁸ "Violent Behavior in Children and Adolescents," 2015.

⁶⁹ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 62.

⁷⁰ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 13.

‘My father is an educated man, and he passed a lot of what he already knew on to me, as well as doing a fair bit of study himself into areas he didn’t know all that much about just so that he could teach me.’⁷¹ It does not have to be seen at first sight, but Angus Cauldhame is Frank’s role model. Because of the lack of other influences and people in his life, Frank appreciates mostly his father and his work and considers him one of the most important people for him.

6.1.4 Isolation

The substantive thing achieved by Angus Cauldhame is keeping Frances/Frank in isolation. He has the total control over his child, and thus he is not left alone in his life. Frank’s isolation is manifested in many different ways. The initial way which isolates Frank from the world is the absence of his birth certificate. Secondly, there is the geographical isolation. Frank spends almost all his time on their remote island and in their house, which is not surrounded by any other houses, and that is why Frank lacks contact with other people.

Frank is also isolated through his education, because he does not attend the school with other children. Instead of standard educating methods, his father manipulates Frank and tries to construct his ideas about the world according to his desires. This is connected with isolation from other people who could be able to shape or change Frank’s nature and personality. Frank is also isolated from both genders—he does not consider himself a woman but he is not a proper man either. This is related to isolation from women, because Frank cannot understand them and hates them.

6.2 Mother

Agnes Cauldhame was the second wife of Angus. She lived with him for some time, but she disappeared immediately after giving birth to Frances. She came back only once, when Frank was three years old. She gave birth to Paul and left again immediately. Frank was only a little child at that time. That is why he has no memories of her, but still, he feels abandoned by her.

⁷¹ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 11.

Because of the absence of the mother figure in his life, Frank is isolated from female influence. The only woman he regularly meets is Mrs Cramp, who delivers them groceries every week. The feeling of abandonment and also his father's bitterness related to women led Frank to make his own ideas about women. He started to despise them especially because his mother left him and he blamed her for what happened to Eric and for his own accident. He is happy that he cannot remember her, because it could only increase his hatred and disappointment.

In his imagination, Frank created the picture of the man as a strong and superior gender, while the picture of the woman was connected only with weakness and subordination. Since childhood, he has seen women as his enemies: 'My greatest enemies are Women and the Sea. These things I hate. Women because they are weak and stupid and live in the shadow of men and are nothing compared to them (...)',⁷²

Frank tries to isolate himself from any presence of women around him. He tries to remain aloof and have nothing in common with them, because they are seen as worse version of men, and the only ability they have is giving birth. That is why he tries to act as a strong, fearless and cruel representative of male gender even if he is not a 'proper man' after his accident. He overcompensates his lost genitals with the effort to be the best example of the powerful male gender. It leads to his cruelty, violence and denial of feelings like compassion or regret. According to him, these feelings belong only to weak women:

Women, I know from watching hundreds – maybe thousands – of films and television programmes, cannot withstand really major things happening to them; they get raped, or their loved one dies, and they go to pieces, go crazy and commit suicide, or just pine away until they die.⁷³

The absence of Frank's mother and her part in his upbringing has also played a crucial role in the development of his personality. It led to the situation when Frank created a distorted idea about the world and mostly about genders.

⁷² Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 50.

⁷³ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 195.

6.3 *Brother*

Eric is Frank's elder brother. He spent the beginning of his childhood with his aunt and uncle. When he came back home, Frank immediately started to see him as his hero, his role model. He also tried to imitate his behaviour. Eric became the only person left who manifested affection towards Frank. Frank loved him and he loved playing games with him. Eric was the one Frank really cared for, which could be seen for example during Eric's frequent migraines.

According to Frank, Eric possesses one weakness, which is his gentleness and aversion to violence. Frank was sure that he cannot share his secrets about the murders with him, because he could not handle it. Except for this, Frank always admired his older brother when he was a child.

However, when Eric left the island, Frank started to feel abandoned again. Eric had to devote himself to his studies and he found also a girlfriend and other friends. The amount of time left for Frank was smaller and smaller. Frank realized that even if Eric plays with him, it is not to his own pleasure and it is not the same as it used to be. He only tries to please Frank. At that time, Frank felt hurt by his closest person in the whole world. Eric later had an accident, and he became mentally deranged and thus withdrew from Frank even more.

After the accident, Frank sees Eric as a weaker person, which is according to him a characteristic of women: 'Whatever it was that disintegrated in Eric then, it was a weakness, a fundamental flaw that a real man should not have.'⁷⁴ However, Frank still loves him and thinks a lot about him. Eric is one of the people with the greatest influence on Frank. Nevertheless, he cannot procure his proper upbringing. He was still a boy when Frank was born and later he had to leave the island.

In a way, Frank and Eric are described as contrastive personalities, Berthold Schoene-Harwood claims that they complement each other: '(...) Eric and Frank crucially complement each other's masculinity. Only superficially does Banks perpetrate a confrontation of two different discourses: one of heroic normality, the

⁷⁴ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 195.

other of psychopatic madness.⁷⁵ The contrast between these siblings can be seen also in the idea of gender - Frank, who is in fact a girl the whole time, considers himself a strong example of male population, and on the other hand, although Eric is a man, he is presented with the signs of femininity.

⁷⁵ Schoene-Harwood, "Dams Burst," 136.

7 Symbols of Frank's Desire for Control

Even if Frank refuses to see that, he is extremely influenced by his father. His character traits are similar to those of Angus Cauldhame. His upbringing shaped his personality and the way he understands the world around him. There are also some symptoms of schizophrenia, which are displayed in him. According to National Health Service, schizophrenia can be demonstrated by several symptoms, such as hallucinations, delusions affecting the behaviour of people, changes in behaviour and thoughts, not wanting to leave the house or a place, lack of emotion, or social withdrawal.⁷⁶ Throughout the novel, we can see that Frank manifests several of these symptoms, including the lack of emotion, delusions or social withdrawal.

Frank is insecure and also not able to handle his anger well. However, he is steadfast in his belief that he would do anything to reach his goals and prove himself that he is better than women and than his father. Banks claims: 'Frank is supposed to stand for all of us, in some ways, deceived, misled, harking back to something that never existed, vengeful for no good reason and trying too hard to live up to some oversold ideal that is of no real relevance anyway.'⁷⁷

One of the traits which Frank takes over from his father are his rituals and obsessions. Angus keeps his Measurement Book to be able to control all the things in their house. Frank expresses his desire to dominate in a slightly different way. He is obsessed with naming his possessions, because it helps him to maintain control over them. He not only names his weapons during special rituals, but he also gives names to individual places of their island, especially those connected with his violent deeds or unforgettable memories. We can see that Frank attaches a great importance to the act of naming: 'I stroked the long handle of the trowel, wondering if my father had a name for that stick of his. I doubted it. He doesn't attach the same importance to them as I do. I know they are important.'⁷⁸

⁷⁶ "Symptoms of Schizophrenia," *National Health Service*, last reviewed October 1, 2014, accessed March 18, 2016, <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Schizophrenia/Pages/Symptoms.aspx#>.

⁷⁷ Banks, Preface, xi.

⁷⁸ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 13.

Frank's another obsession are various rituals which help him to keep balance. It is important for him to do everything the same way as always. It calms him because it brings some order into his life. The best example of this is his morning ritual: 'I take the same number of strokes of the same length in the same sequence each morning.'⁷⁹

Frank's desire to control everything around him goes even further. Although he does not want to hurt his father, he likes the idea that at least for a moment, he is the superior person in their house. He likes watching his father asleep: 'Not that I had any particular reason for watching him; I just liked doing it. It made me feel good to know that I could see him and he couldn't see me, and that I was aware and fully conscious and he wasn't.'⁸⁰

The most apparent personality traits of Frank are certainly his violent tendencies, the need to control everything around him and keep the balance, stubbornness and his internal inconsistency. All these traits are reflected in many symbols connected with his life.

7.1 *The Wasp Factory*

The Wasp Factory is Frank's best and most important creation. He describes it as 'silent, living and still'⁸¹. It serves as some kind of a machine, which is able to predict the future by killing wasps in different manners. Frank holds it secured in the loft because his father cannot reach the place with his injured leg. The Factory is his pride, he attaches it a great importance, and he is really influenced by its 'predictions'. It helps him to control the environment around him. He is really amazed by it: 'The Wasp Factory is beautiful and deadly and perfect. It would give me some idea of what was going to happen, it would help me to know what to do (...)'⁸²

The Factory was made from the face of an old clock which used to hang above the door of the Royal Bank of Scotland in the town of Porteneil where Frank lives.

⁷⁹ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 52.

⁸⁰ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 148.

⁸¹ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 6.

⁸² Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 154.

It covers an area of several square meters, it is 'slightly ramshackle tangle of metal, wood, glass and plastic'⁸³. The face is about a metre in diameter. Frank found out that the clock was made in 1864, exactly one hundred years before his birth, and he considered it an obvious sign that he should use it for something spectacular.

When Frank found the clock, he decided to repair it and transform it into one of his most deadly creations. In the middle of the face, there is a hole which serves as the entrance. Once a wasp is trapped inside, it can see the candles with heads of other wasps. The main purpose of putting the wasp in is to let it proceed to one of its twelve corridors from which it cannot escape. The monstrosity of the Factory lies in the fact that Frank invented twelve different ways how to kill a wasp and many alternatives.

According to the corridor and also the way in which the wasp chooses to die, Frank predicts the future. Each death means another message for him. All corridors are named according to the way of killing the wasp. If it chooses the Gents, it falls into Frank's fresh urine and drowns. If it visits the Blade Corridor, it is chopped. If it goes to the Spider's Parlour, Venus Cave or the Antery, it is killed by the appropriate animal.

Before Frank consults the Factory, he always says his own secret catechism. After the death of the wasp, he usually thinks of its significance and removes the body into the small matchbox. These wasp coffins are then kept on the special altar. Frank takes the predictions of his Factory very seriously. He consults it about all important things in his life, because he thinks that it will help him to understand what is happening, and how it is possible to be in charge of things. He absolutely trusts his creation: 'The Factory hadn't been specific (it rarely is), but I had the feeling that whatever it was warning me about was important, and I also suspected it would be bad, but I had been wise enough to take the hint (...)'.⁸⁴

⁸³ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 158.

⁸⁴ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 2.

7.2 *Sacrifice Poles*

The other aspect which shows Frank's need for control is his desire to protect the island. He builds something called Sacrifice Poles all around the island. These Poles contain animal heads or other parts of their bodies tied to wooden limbs by black ribbons. Frank hopes that these totems will protect the island from external influences. He describes his Poles as his 'early-warning system and deterrent rolled into one, infected potent things which looked out from the island, warding off'⁸⁵.

Frank wants to be the master of the island and have the full control over the events happening here. He even does not like leaving the island, because he could lose control there. That is why he builds his Poles. He also made a ritual of going around the island and observing his totems almost every day. To gain even bigger control over these totems, Frank is 'infecting them with my scent and power'⁸⁶. He expects that they will threaten his enemies and people will immediately know what to expect here.

Building Sacrifice Poles is related to Frank's violent nature. He kills little animals and adds them to the bodies he found. Sometimes he only drains his anger by hurting animals, and then he gives their bodies to totems as the trophies showing that he overpowered the animals. His father sees this and points out that he kills little creatures, but he does not do anything about it. And Frank considers it to be normal: 'Of course I was out killing things. How the hell am I supposed to get heads and bodies for the Poles and the Bunker if I don't kill things? There just aren't enough natural deaths. You can't explain that sort of things to people, though.'⁸⁷

7.3 *The Bunker*

Another thing which helps Frank to control the environment around him is certainly his Bunker. It is an old shelter from the war which was later abandoned and no longer used. Frank discovered it on the island and repaired it. Since his

⁸⁵ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 5.

⁸⁶ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 14.

⁸⁷ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 9.

childhood, he has been using the Bunker as his secret base and hiding place. It is one of the symbols of his power over the island.

Frank keeps almost all his tools in the Bunker. When he was younger, he built there a special altar with candles. He brings there all the bodies of wasps which went through the Factory in the past. He uses the place for his rituals and keeps here the skull of their old dog Saul, which Frank discovered a few years ago.

The Bunker serves also as a depository of Frank's trophies. He keeps here the collection of skulls of various animals like horses, dogs, birds, fish and others. He brings here the animals which he kills to prepare them for totems on Sacrifice Poles. The Bunker is a perfect secret place for Frank, because his father does not have an access here. Frank is able to control all places around the Bunker and he plans here the important events, like getting rid of Esmerelda using a huge kite.

7.4 Dams

Building dams has been Frank's favourite game since childhood. Even as a sixteen-year-old boy he often spends days by this occupation. At first sight, it can look like an innocent game. Frank used to have various fantasies of saving their house by building a dam: 'There would be a fire in the grass on the dunes or a plane would have crashed, and all that stopped the cordite in the cellar from going up would be me diverting some of the water from a dam system down a channel and into the house.'⁸⁸

On the other hand, building dams also reflects Frank's desire for control and his violent nature. Frank wanted to be the master of the island, and he could not accept that he cannot win against natural elements, mostly the water. He has been constantly trying to divert it or block it to gain some power over it. His violent behaviour and the pleasure of it is also associated with building dams. Frank usually builds some villages or towns with little people which he can control and destroy. He discharges the anger by this and killing those people pleases him. He claims that it is very satisfying:

⁸⁸ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 24.

Bursting a good big dam, or even just letting it overflow, is almost as satisfying as planning and building it in the first place. I used little shells to represent the people in the town, as usual. Also as usual, none of the shells survived the flood when the dam burst; they all sank, which meant that everybody died.⁸⁹

7.5 *Weapons*

According to Michael G. Conner from American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, the destructive, violent and dangerous behaviour of children can be expressed for example by interest in weapons or the obsession by them, increasing anger and aggression or cruelty towards pets and animals.⁹⁰ Frank reflects all these suggestions and even more. He is really obsessed with weapons of all kinds. Because his father gives him money for whatever he wants, Frank now owns an air rifle, a small knife and also his favourite weapon - a catapult named Black Destroyer. But it is not enough for him. He wants to buy a crossbow and have even a greater power: 'I have my catapults and slings and air-rifle, and they could all be lethal in the right circumstances, but they just don't have the long-range hitting power I really hanker after.'⁹¹

However, Frank has to leave the plans for buying the crossbow because his favourite catapult is destroyed by a buck, and he has to buy a new one. It is also connected with the naming ceremony, because Frank is obsessed with giving names to his possessions. He is convinced that this kind of ritual gives him some sort of power and control over the thing. He tries to infect the new catapult with his power:

'In the ceremony I smeared the metal, rubber and plastic of the new device with earwax, snot, blood, urine, belly-button fluff and toenail cheese, christened it by firing the empty sling at a wingless wasp

⁸⁹ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 25-26.

⁹⁰ Michael G. Conner, "The Risk of Violent and Homicidal Behavior in Children," *American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress*, accessed March 18, 2016, <http://www.aaets.org/article203.htm>.

⁹¹ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 70.

crawling on the face of the Factory, and also fired it at my bared foot, raising a bruise.’⁹²

The other device used for the protection of their island is Frank’s secret system of caches kept for the case of invasion. These caches contain maps, summaries of various tactics, stones, snares and even his home-made bombs. Frank draws the maps of the island himself and he incorporates primarily the areas named by him according to all special events.

Keeping all kinds of weapons can seem only as a symbol of childhood and children’s games. It is not anything unusual that children imitate warriors, Indians or soldiers, and they use various pieces of wood or other things they find as weapons. On the other hand, Frank uses his weapons not only for games, but he also kills all kinds of animals or just hurts them. His catapult is a deadly weapon. It helps him to obtain animals for his Sacrifice Poles and to drain his anger.

7.6 Old Saul’s Skull

According to the story which Angus told Frank, their dog called Old Saul bit him when he was three years old. Angus then killed the animal and buried it in the slope behind the house. It happened the day when little Paul was born and that is why Frank considered him a reincarnated version of the dog: ‘Paul, of course, was Saul. That enemy was – must have been – cunning enough to transfer to the boy. That was why my father chose such a name for my new brother.’⁹³

Frank believed that if Paul grew up, Saul’s soul would possess him, and he would hurt Frank or even do something much worse. That was also one of the reasons why he ‘could not stay’. Frank later decided that he must find the skull of Old Saul to achieve revenge, but he was not allowed to dig in the garden. He could only bury their pets there. Therefore, he bought many animals - mice, gerbils and hamsters - and killed them so that he could have funerals on the place where Saul was buried. He had to use thirty-seven animals before he reached his goal.

⁹² Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 78.

⁹³ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 140.

When Frank found the skull, he hid it in his Bunker. He put it on his special altar. The skull became another of the symbols of his need to control everything around him. He assumes that once he has his old enemy in his power, it cannot hurt him again, and he has total control over its soul.

7.7 *Sea*

The sea is a symbol of Frank's lack of control, his defeat. He hates the sea, because it has greater power than him. He describes it as an enemy: 'My greatest enemies are Women and the Sea. These things I hate. (...) the Sea because it has always frustrated me, destroying what I have built, washing away what I have left, wiping clean the marks I have made.'⁹⁴

The sea symbolizes a destructive power which Frank cannot control and cannot fight. It reminds him of other things in his life that are not under his control. The sea destroys Frank's dams and other creations. He admits that he is even a little bit afraid of it and he must respect it: 'The Sea is a sort of mythological enemy, and I make what you might call sacrifices to it in my soul, fearing it a little, respecting it as you're supposed to, but in many ways treating it as an equal.'⁹⁵

Frank considers the sea not only his enemy, but also his equal. He thinks that he is as powerful as the sea. It is as deadly as he is, and Frank says that they both should be feared.

7.8 *Murders*

The main instruments, which help Frank to gain control over the events around him, are the murders. Firstly, there is his need to obtain animal parts for his Sacrifice Poles. He considers killing animals primarily as a matter of routine and he does not ascribe it any greater significance. Secondly, he enjoys killing animals as a game. His favourite victims are birds. He has been shooting them, tying them to stakes at low tide, he has been putting bombs into their nests. But his favourite invention was a 'game' during which he ties two birds together. The birds are

⁹⁴ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 50.

⁹⁵ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 50.

confused, they fight each other, and subsequently they die. Frank feels to be more mature when he watches the torment of these animals and knows that he is responsible for that.

The most terrifying are, however, the murders of Frank's relatives. Frank sees death as something exciting, and he even tries to find some benefits of his terrible deeds:

A death is always exciting, always makes you realise how alive you are, how vulnerable but so-far-lucky; but the death of somebody close gives you a good excuse to go a bit crazy for a while and do things that would otherwise be inexcusable. What delight to behave badly and still get loads of sympathy.⁹⁶

Frank kills for various reasons. Blyth died because he destroyed something that Frank loved. Therefore, Frank killed him because he needed to gain control over things once again and he wanted revenge. Paul died because, according to Frank, he was a reincarnation of their dog Old Saul, and he could be dangerous. Frank ensured himself that he will not lose control in the future. Esmerelda died because Frank wanted to keep balance between genders. All those deaths were needless, but Frank thought that he did the world around him a great favour. However, he claims that he will not kill again: 'That's my score to date. Three. I haven't killed anybody for years, and don't intend to ever again. It was just a stage I was going through.'⁹⁷

On the other hand, even if Frank does not want to commit any other murders, he is really proud of his three hits. He keeps little talismans reminding him of his victims—the skull of the snake which killed Blyth, the fragment of the bomb which killed Paul and also the flowers dropped by Esmerelda when she was dragged away by a kite. His murders are represented as individual parlours of the Wasp Factory and by individual places around the island named specifically to remind him of the murders. The Snake Park is a place where Blyth was attacked by a snake. The Bomb Circle marks the spot where Paul hit the bomb and died.

⁹⁶ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 48.

⁹⁷ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 49.

The Kite Pyre Dell denotes the place where all Frank's kites were burned when Esmerelda disappeared.

Frank is proud of his murders. He thinks that he has helped to keep the balance of things and that he has the ultimate control over everything around him. He refuses to see his own violent nature and the monstrosity of his deeds.

7.9 The Change

Throughout the whole novel, Frank appears to be a heartless and cruel monster killing his relatives and trying to gain some appreciation for what he has done. He tries to break free from the influence of his father and be the one who controls everything around him. However, he is not able to free himself from his father's will. He still tries to overcompensate for the lack of love around him and also the lost masculinity. That is why Frank resorts to violence according to Berthold Schoene-Harwood: 'The boy she becomes (...) appears as a manufactured, entirely fictitious creation, obsessively overcompensating for a patriarchally inflicted lack of natural manliness by pursuing an extremist ideal of violent masculine perfection.'⁹⁸

When Frank finally finds out that she is actually a girl, she cannot believe it. Her whole world is shaken, and she realizes the power her father has always had over her. She realizes how the upbringing has influenced her. She is also depressed that her father was lying not only during her education, but in fact almost all her life. She wants to believe that this situation is another of her father's mind games, but internally she knows that she is a woman. Frank is finally able to see her emotional instability and she realizes that it is her father who is primarily responsible for that. Michael G. Conner claims: 'Children raised in homes where adult behavior is confusing and emotionally unstable and where communication is poor will develop problems relating to other people.'⁹⁹ And that is also Frank's case.

⁹⁸ Schoene-Harwood, "Dams Burst," 133.

⁹⁹ Conner, "The Risk of Violent and Homicidal Behavior in Children."

Eventually, Frank realizes the monstrosity of her deeds: ‘How could I have done those things? (...) I believe that I decided if I could never become a man, I – the unmanned – would out-man those around me, and so I became the killer, a small image of the ruthless soldier-hero almost all I’ve ever seen or read seems to pay strict homage to.’¹⁰⁰

Frank realizes that she only wanted to compensate something. The way she behaved did not mirror her true nature and those murders were for nothing—needless, only a disguise for her inner insecurity. She used to be proud of herself, and now she is only terrified of her own deeds and lost. However, she is finally able to break free from her father’s influence. She does not believe him and she no longer sees him as her role model. Instead, she tries to find some support in her brother, the only loving person she has. She suddenly does not appear as such a monster, but mostly as a hurt young woman seeking for help. She knows she cannot stay with her father, because he betrayed her, and her final decision is to change herself and leave: ‘I don’t know what I’m going to do. I can’t stay here, and I’m frightened of everywhere else. But I suppose I’ll have to go.’¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 242-243.

¹⁰¹ Banks, *Wasp Factory*, 241.

8 Conclusion

After the publication of *The Wasp Factory*, Iain Banks became very popular, but also hated modern novelist. His work shocked so many people because it showed something new and different in literature and it questioned the way people had observed the world until that time. Banks was not afraid to discuss topics such as children violence, neglect, sexuality, alcohol, drugs and other subjects which used to be a taboo in our society.

The aim of this thesis was to introduce this popular Scottish author of mainstream fiction, science fiction and poetry, and also to describe his work. His life and work were depicted in the first two chapters of this thesis. I described the life and achievements of Iain Banks and I introduced his books and various topics and genres he used. However, the main part of this thesis is dedicated to his first novel *The Wasp Factory*. My main aim was to describe this book and show the way how the upbringing and people in the immediate vicinity shape the personality of a child.

Frank Cauldham, a protagonist of *The Wasp Factory*, is a clear proof that the upbringing plays a crucial part in forming human personality. Frank represents a neglected child whose life was certainly influenced by people in his vicinity and mostly his father, who is obsessed with control and power. Frank appears as a monster, as the creation of his father and his tough order. It leads us to the similar story of Victor Frankenstein and his monster, who was also deeply affected by the lack of love, support and education provided by his father/creator. The focus on the father figure and the pre-given order is suggested also by Berthold Schoene-Harwood:

The neo-Gothic design of Banks's novel, its macabre celebration of violence, horror and death, is not an end in itself but aim to unmask the fraudulence of the order and, ultimately, to demolish the Law of Father by probing the subliminal turmoil that both upholds and potentially subverts it.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Schoene-Harwood, "Dams Burst," 132.

As I showed in the previous chapters, the upbringing plays a crucial role in forming a young personality. Frank's upbringing was deeply neglected, and that is why he became 'a monster'. Due to the lack of self-confidence, love, support and someone who would teach him good manners and show him that violence is not the right way of dealing with problems, Frank sees the world in his own irrational way. He is insecure, he is violent, and he even displays the symptoms of schizophrenia, for example the lack of emotion or social withdrawal. Such is the effect of the wrong upbringing and the father obsessed with power, as the only source of his education.

The aim of Iain Banks was to present his worldview and the things he considered are bad in our society. He described his intention in Preface to *The Wasp Factory*:

(...) it was supposed to be a pro-feminist, antimilitaristic work, satirising religion and commenting on the way we're shaped by our surroundings and upbringing and the usually skewed information we're presented with by those in power.¹⁰³

Banks also compared Frank Cauldhame to himself. He wanted to picture him as a teenage boy with slightly exaggerated traits and aims, so that he would be able to point out the impact of the upbringing, the people surrounding us and the way modern society works. He says: 'I'd build dams; Frank would too, though with a slightly psychotic über-motif involving women, water, the sea and revenge. I'd constructed big home-made kites; so would Frank, and use one as a murder weapon.'¹⁰⁴

Iain Banks introduced several very important topics in his work. He changed people's view on child's innocence. He showed that children can have the same violent thoughts and behaviour as their parents. The important thing he displayed was that the right upbringing can suppress these thoughts and actions, but neglect leads the child to the actual violent behaviour.

¹⁰³ Banks, Preface, xi.

¹⁰⁴ Banks, Preface, xi.

I described these thoughts in the previous chapters and my conclusion is that upbringing really plays an important role in the life of each person. It helps to shape human personality and also helps to establish the worldview of a person. The wrong upbringing can lead to a distorted view of the world, violent behaviour and other dangerous things. These are the people in the immediate vicinity who play the most important role in upbringing. They have the biggest influence on the young personality, and the child can even try to imitate them or take them as his role models. The child can also take over some of their character traits. Iain Banks was able to perfectly capture these conclusions in his novel *The Wasp Factory* and show the importance of upbringing in our society.

9 Resumé

Cílem této práce s názvem *Život a literární dílo Iaina Bankse* s důrazem na román *Vosí továrna* bylo představení známého skotského spisovatele Iaina Bankse, který významně přispěl k rozvoji skotské literatury. Tato práce shrnuje dílo tohoto spisovatele a soustředí se především na jeho první román *Vosí továrna*. Tento román vysloužil Banksovi jak obdiv, tak kritiku a soustředil se na některá témata, která byla do té doby ve společnosti považována za tabu. Mým cílem bylo především na příkladu Franka Cauldhama předvést, jaký vliv mají lidé v našem okolí na formování naší osobnosti, a dokázat, že výchova hraje v tomto procesu stěžejní roli.

První kapitola této práce je věnována životu spisovatele Iaina Bankse. Ten do povědomí lidí vstoupil okamžitě po publikaci své první knihy s názvem *Vosí továrna*. Tento román přitahoval pozornost čtenářů i kritiků především díky svému kontroverznímu námětu a názory na něj se velmi lišily. I přes některé negativní reakce se ale Iain Banks díky této knize proslavil a pokračoval ve své literární tvorbě.

Kromě mainstreamových románů se Banks soustředil také na svůj oblíbený žánr - science fiction. Velkou popularitu na tomto poli získal hlavně díky sci-fi sérii s názvem *The Culture*. Během života publikoval Iain Banks dvacet devět děl, včetně čtrnácti mainstreamových románů, dvanácti sci-fi románů, dvou povídkových sbírek a knihy o whisky s názvem *Raw Spirit*. Po Banksově smrti roku 2013 vyšla jeho poslední kniha s názvem *The Quarry*. Banksův přítel Ken MacLeod také na jeho přání publikoval u příležitosti jeho nedožitých 60. narozenin společnou sbírku poezie. Dílo Iaina Bankse je podrobněji představeno v druhé kapitole této práce.

Hlavním tématem práce a také zbývajících kapitol je román *Vosí továrna* publikovaný roku 1984. Tato kniha se soustředí na život mladého Franka Cauldhama, který žije sám se svým otcem na opuštěném ostrově, vyhýbá se kontaktu s dalšími lidmi a čeká na návrat svého bratra Erika. Ačkoli se tato situace může zdát zcela normální, čtenář se velmi brzy dozvídá, že s Frankem pravděpodobně není něco v pořádku. Po nehodě v dětství, kdy Franka pokousal

jejich pes Saul, Frank přišel o část svých genitálií a necítí se být správným mužem. To se snaží kompenzovat přílišnou snahou ovládat své okolí a násilím. Nejen, že jeho největší zálibou je zabíjení zvířat a vytváření totemů, které mají chránit jejich ostrov, Frank ale také podřizuje svůj život všemožným rituálům a věštbám jeho Vosí továrny. A co je nejvíce šokující, Frank sám přiznává, že je vrah, který zabil své tři příbuzné, aby tak napravil rovnováhu věcí a získal kontrolu nad lidmi kolem něj. Banks tak v románu Vosí továrna odkrývá téma dětského násilí a soustřeďuje se na důvod Frankova chování a způsob, jakým výchova dokáže ovlivnit lidskou osobnost.

Frank je příkladem dítěte, které je hluboce ovlivněné lidmi ve svém okolí. Když mu byly tři roky, jeho matka odešla a on si kvůli pocitu opuštění přiživovanému otcovou zahořklostí v sobě vytvořil nenávist ke všem ženám. Další důležitou postavou a Frankovým vzorem byl jeho bratr Erik, který ovšem působil zženštěle a po odchodu na univerzitu se kvůli tragické nehodě zbláznil. Frank tak po jeho odchodu do psychiatrické léčebny znovu zažil pocit opuštění. Nejdůležitější postavou jeho života byl ovšem Frankův otec Angus. Ten byl v podstatě jediným zdrojem Frankovy výchovy. Angus sice zajistil Frankovi střechu nad hlavou, jídlo, oblečení i domácí vzdělávání, nebyl však schopný poskytnout mu lásku a podporu a naučit ho dobrým mravům. Nikdy také Frankovi nezabránil v násilí proti zvířatům a neúmyslně tak podpořil jeho násilné sklony. Angus také celý život a především po odchodu své ženy projevoval přílišnou snahu kontrolovat své okolí a mít přehled o všem, co se kolem něj děje. Proto si pořídil knihu s rozměry a údaji o všech věcech v domě a nutil Franka se vše naučit, proto Franka tajně dopoval mužskými hormony a kontroloval jeho vzdělání i každý pohyb.

Frank byl touto výchovou hluboce ovlivněn. Ačkoli se snažil vymanit z vlivu otce, nikdy mu neunikl. Formování jeho osobnosti podlehl především vlivu jeho otce a Frank dokonce převzal některé z jeho rysů. Snaha kontrolovat své okolí, kterou se Frank od Anguse naučil, je zobrazena v několika symbolech, které jsou v románu Vosí továrna popsány. Frank opakuje stále stejné rituály, vytváří si totemy pro ochranu ostrova a také se snaží věštit budoucnost pomocí umírajících vos v jeho továrně, aby se mohl připravit na to, co přijde, a neztratil

tak kontrolu. Nejdůležitějším prostředkem kontroly jsou ale vraždy jeho příbuzných, kde se spojuje Frankova násilná povaha, snaha o pomstu a touha mít moc nad událostmi. Frank od otce převzal také nenávist vůči ženám a s tím spojený nedostatek sebevědomí. Důsledkem výchovy je, že Frank vidí svět svým vlastním iracionálním způsobem.

Iain Banks ve svém prvním románu poukázal na některé problémy naší společnosti jako například dětské násilí, zanedbání a špatnou výchovu dětí, které vedou k tomu, že dítě je ovlivněno lidmi ve svém okolí a během formování své povahy a osobnosti si vytvoří špatné návyky. Banks zobrazil Franka jako monstrum podobné tomu, které vytvořil během experimentu Viktor Frankenstein. Frank se cítí být po fyzické stránce odlišný od ostatních a tato myšlenka ho neustále pronásleduje. Kromě toho působí jako monstrum především kvůli své povaze a svým činům, násilí vůči zvířatům a vraždám, které chladnokrevně spáchal, aby tak zachoval jakousi rovnováhu.

V této práci jsem se soustředila na myšlenku, že lidská povaha a osobnost je formována výchovou a lidmi v bezprostřední blízkosti. Přesně k těmto závěrům jsem také došla a potvrdily se mi na konci této práce, po analýze hlavní postavy Franka Cauldhama z románu *Vosí továrna*. Iain Banks poukazuje na důležitost výchovy a zdůrazňuje, že špatná výchova, nedostatek lásky a podpory a nevhodné či násilné zacházení s dětmi může mít nedozírné následky v podobě špatných návyků dítěte, sklonů k násilí či reálného násilného chování, neschopnosti jednat s lidmi v okolí a iracionálního pohledu na svět.

10 Abstract

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This thesis named Life and literary work of Iain Banks with emphasis on the novel The Wasp Factory deals with the Scottish author Iain Banks, who focused mainly on fiction and science-fiction novels and short stories. The main purpose of this thesis is to give a complex image of his first novel - The Wasp Factory, to explain important thoughts, meanings and symbolism of the work and to show, how the characters reflect the fact that human personality is formed since childhood mainly because of the people in the immediate vicinity.

11 Anotace

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Klíčová slova:	Iain Banks, výchova, násilí, otec, monstrum

Tato bakalářská práce s názvem Život a literární dílo Iaina Bankse s důrazem na román Vosí továrna se zabývá skotským spisovatelem Iainem Banksem, který se soustředil především na tvorbu vědeckofantastických románů a povídek. Hlavním úkolem této práce je podat komplexní obraz jeho prvního románu Vosí továrna, vysvětlit důležité myšlenky, významy a symboliku díla a ukázat, jak se v postavách odráží skutečnost, že lidská osobnost je formována již od útlého věku především díky osobám v bezprostřední blízkosti.

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