

Previous Researches on the Wasp Factory

Feng Bo

Chongqing University, Chongqing, China

Abstract. *In recent years, the study of *The Wasp Factory* abroad has increased greatly, applying the theories of post-structuralism, psychology, philosophy, cognitive science, narratology to such themes as gender and religion. Meanwhile, this novel has attracted little attention in China.*

KEYWORDS: *Iain Banks, *The Wasp Factory**

1. Introduction

The Wasp Factory tells a story of 16-year-old Frank, psychologically twisted due to his father's control and the damage of his genitals when he was a child, who grows into a brutal teenager that worships supernatural power, mistreats and murders animals and his companions. But the story is suddenly reversed at the end, when Frank turns out to be "girl" Frances, whose identity as a boy is only the result of her father's secret experiment on her. The researches on *The Wasp Factory* abroad can be summarized into the following four categories.

2. Sex and gender are always hot topics

Alexis de Coning analyzes *The Wasp Factory* to prove that "the binaries of sex and gender" are "arbitrary and fluctuating" (Coning 3). Sarah Falcus illustrates in 2013 that "gender is therefore constructed and not innate" (8). Secondly, identity is an essential theme in *The Wasp Factory*. Besides gender identity, the theory of psychosocial development stages of identity by Erik Erikson is applied to explain Frank's failure in overcoming identity crisis in Raditya Maehendra Geni's paper in 2016. Thirdly, several critics align *The Wasp Factory* with the concepts of religion and philosophy. For instance, in 2012, Mgr. Radek Holcepl's analysis is dedicated to the relation between form and contents from the perspective of sociology of knowledge and depth psychology. In 2015, Samuel Finegan draws on adolescent occultism and the materialist philosophies of Walter Benjamin and Martin Heidegger to explain Frank's behaviors. Fourthly, Eleonora Bruttini in 2015 draws from cognitive studies to analyze the narrative structure of *The Wasp Factory*.

In China, from 2009 to present, there are 6 papers on *The Wasp Factory* mainly from the perspective of psychology, gender theory, and sociological theory. Three

papers of Liu Humin in 2009 with the theories of psychology and ethical literary criticism demonstrate women's miserable fate and men's alienated character in the patriarchal system, in which "male supremacy" is advocated. While Liu pays more attention to Frank, Jia Chunxia and Gao Liping analyze the three main figures Frank, Eric, and Angus with Erich Fromm's theory in 2010. They claim that lack of love causes their alienated personality. Shi Meifang analyzes the relationship between Frank and Angus in 2016 according to spatial practice and resistance, the crucial concepts of Michale de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Frank secretly resists his father and obtains his own space through his everyday life. However, at the end of the novel it turns out that Frank is a girl. The meaning of the resistance is completely deconstructed. In spite of the contributions of these four Chinese scholars, the study on *The Wasp Factory* can be extended.

References

- [1] Banks, Iain(1990). *The Wasp Factory*. London: Abacus.
- [2] De Coning, Alexis(2011). Perversity on Paper Taboo, Abjection and Literature: Iain Banks' *The Wasp Factory*, Ian McEwan's *The Cement Garden*, and Irvine Welsh's *Marabou Stork Nightmares*. MA thesis. Rhodes University.
- [3] Falcus, Sarah(2013). Contesting Gender in *The Wasp Factory*(1984), *Whit* (1995) and *The Business* (1999). Ed. Martyn Colebrook and Katharine Cox. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, pp.123-135.
- [4] Fetlińska, Katarzyna(2015). The Nature of Religion in Iain Banks's Novels: The Wasp Factory and Consider Phlebas. *Anglica: An International Journal of English Studies*, vol. 24, no.1, pp.12-19.
- [5] Finegan, Samuel(2015). Adolescent Occultism and the Philosophy of Things in Three Novels. *Transnational Literature*, no. 8, pp. 57-63