OF MONSTERS AND MEN:

MASCULINITY AND THE GOTHIC IN MARY SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN* AND IAIN BANKS' *THE WASP FACTORY*

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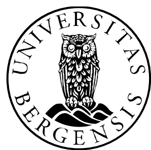

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Sammendrag

Denne oppgaven utforsker hvordan maskulinitet blir fremstilt og forstått i Mary Shelleys *Frankenstein* (1818) og Iain Banks *The Wasp Factory* (1984). Jeg knytter disse to bøkene sammen gjennom hvordan de tar opp mange av de samme temaene. Dette til tross for at det er 166 år som skiller dem. *The Wasp Factory* kan forstås som en moderne gjenfortelling av frankensteinmyten, hvor Monsteret nå har blitt Frank – en tenåring i utkanten av Skottland som har fått sitt fysiske (sex) og sosiale kjønn (gender) forandret av faren sin. Jeg argumenterer for at begge bøkene bruker sine gotiske monstre som en måte å kritisere det dominerende samtidspatriarkatet. Det ligger i det gotiske monsterets natur å være overtredende (transgressive) overfor samfunnets normer og å være et speilbilde av samfunnet og hva det frykter mest. Begge bøkenes monstre er dermed fremstillinger av hvordan samfunnet ikke klarer å akseptere andre maskuliniteter enn de som er dominerende.

I *Frankenstein* knytter jeg sammen en rekke forskjellige måter å tolke og analysere bokens karakterer på med et fokus på maskulinitet både i opprør mot og underlagt av patriarkatet. Disse forskjellige analysevinklene har blitt delt inn i fire kategorier: 1. Den patriarkalske familieordenen. 2. Hvordan narrativene og fortellerne i boken er maskuline forsøk på å kontrollere de andre karakterene i boken – og leseren. 3. Det homososiale begjæret mellom de mannlige karakterene. 4. Hvordan Monsteret som vesen både overtreder og fortsetter det patriarkalske samfunnets normer og regler. Det å samle disse fire tolkningsvinklingene i én oppgave gir et mer nyansert bilde av maskulinitet i *Frankenstein* enn hva som tidligere har blitt gjort.

Jeg argumenterer at Frank i *The Wasp Factory* er et gotisk monster som kritiserer samfunnets krav til maskulinitet og det mannlige kjønnet. Jeg foreslår en tolkning der Franks kjønnsstatus er uklar ved bokens slutt i stedet for den vanlige tolkningen hvor han ha gått over (eller tilbake) til å være kvinne. Patriarkatets begrensende definisjoner av kjønn kan ses på hvordan samfunnet håndterer Frank og Eric sine voldshandlinger forskjellig. Franks uklare kjønnsstatus gjør også kjønnsfremføringen (gender performance) hans tydeligere som en fremføring, siden hans fremføring av hypermaskulinitet gjøres utenom de tradisjonelle kroppslige kravene som stilles til kjønn. Som i *Frankenstein* er det også en kamp om den

narrative sannheten i boken. Denne kampen utkjempes mellom Angus og Frank hvor Frank til slutt vinner og kan endelig definere seg selv – uavhengig av hva patriarkatet mener han skal defineres som.

I mitt tredje kapittel sammenligner jeg de to bøkene gjennom hvordan de utforsker temaer som maskuline forsøk på å kontrollere kropper. Kampen om narrative sannheter og manipulering av leseren. Jeg konkluderer med at Shelley og Banks sine bøker kritiserer og portretterer det gotiske patriarkatet gjennom deres monstre. Begge bøkene viser en kamp om kontroll over narrativer etter som forskjellige maskuliniteter kjemper om makten over hva som er «sannheten». Sådan er de gotiske monstrene i bøkene overtredere av det patriarkalske status quo sine definisjoner over hva som er akseptabelt.

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A formal wish of thanks is also extended to musical composer Howard Shore, without whose soothing score for *The Lord of the Rings* I would not have been as effective a writer as I was in the last days of the thesis writing. To quote the always relevant Mary Shelley: “And now […] I bid my hideous progeny go forth and prosper” (10). Thank you, I could not have done it without the support of all of you.

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Introduction

Masculinity as a topic and gothic as a genre are two concepts which have been closely intertwined for centuries. This might be because, as Chris Baldick points out, “the imprisoning house of Gothic fiction has from the very beginning been that of patriarchy, in both its earlier and its expanded feminist senses” (1992, xxii). In the context of the gothic genre, the patriarchy is both the oppressive structures which aim to limit the freedom of the main characters as well as the comforting status quo against which the transgressive monster is rebelling. Masculinities are however not necessarily indefinitely tied to the patriarchy as they can also be in rebellion against the status quo which supposedly gives masculinity its power. Masculinity in fiction is therefore interesting because it can encapsulate different masculinities. Whether men are as Synnott (2009) summarises them in the title of his book “Heroes”, “Villains” or “Victims” they are an integral part of gothic storytelling.

In this thesis I will be exploring masculinity and gothic monsters in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818a) and Iain Banks’ *The Wasp Factory* (1984). I will do this through an analysis of how the novels understand masculinity and men, as well as how masculinity and patriarchy is subverted and upheld through the novels’ gothic monsters and their interactions with society. There are also other similar themes that are handled in the two novels such as men’s search to control over nature and the patriarchy’s aim at limiting femininity’s influence. For my analysis, I will be drawing on sources from different feminist and masculinist literary critics as well as social theorists. For the gothic genre aspects of the analysis several texts written about the genre and how it pertains to masculinity and gender will be my foundation. Literary criticism of gothic has a long history of analysis in relation to gender, especially popular in the 1990s, but not as much when it comes to the particular aspects of masculinity.

It is, however, hard to find an academic article about Iain Banks’ *The Wasp Factory* (1984) which does not include a comparison between that novel and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818a). This is partly because the two novels feature overlapping themes such as the moulding and shaping of bodies, and men meddling with nature. Shelley’s novel also seems to be a model for Banks’ novel with the underlying themes of men’s hubris in thinking

that they are in control of nature and father's constructing and changing their children. Angus Cauldhame and his quest to eradicate all female influence around him through changing the sex and gender of his child, has often been classified as 'Frankensteinian' in its scope (de Coning 2012, Pisarska 2014, Schoene-Harwood 1999). The focus on Frank's body and his incapability to fit in with society's norms can be drawn as a parallel to Victor Frankenstein's Monster. Critics' comparisons between the novels, however, often stop with this superficial comparison of the novels. For despite the frequent pairing of the novels by academics, no thorough analysis has, to my knowledge, been made on them together – until now.

The selected works

Frankenstein, by Mary Shelley, might be one of the most known and recognisable stories in the English-speaking world. The tale of the young scientist Victor Frankenstein, and his monster come to life through unchecked scientific experimentation, has etched itself into the public consciousness. As such it is a highly influential work in terms of themes and structure. The story is therefore also one that has gone under many different interpretations through the years. Is it a feminist or patriarchal work, a social critique or an enforcer of social discrimination against difference from the norm? The interpretations are many, and really do speak to the novel's impact as a cultural force.

Frankenstein is a novel that is open for such exploration because it already engages with social issues through its portrayal of characters who become doomed in the society in which they live. Heiland (2004) writes that one "of the more seductive details in the history of gothic fiction is that Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin were the parents of Mary Shelley" (98). It is indeed interesting that, including Shelley's husband Percy Bysshe Shelley, these four highly influential thinkers and authors should be so closely linked. This means that Shelley was surrounded by and engaged in debates about politics and social issues throughout her life and that those in her social circle could have provided inspiration for the characters in her book. There is in fact a prominent theory that the adventurers and scientists in *Frankenstein* were based on Shelley's husband and his beliefs. Hindle gives a summary of this theory in his introduction to the Penguin edition of the novel and explains that "The

Romantic idealism of [Percy] Shelley and his ‘overreaching’ heroes was, like all idealisms, based on a faith in man’s, or more correctly *men’s* ‘divine’ or creative powers” (1992, xix). Mary Shelley then took these ideas and put them into a scenario which displayed where such ideas might ultimately lead (Weissman 1976). The *Frankenstein* story is both one of triumph as well as a cautionary tale. Men do have the power to create life in Shelley’s story, but their detached masculine carelessness is also what ultimately becomes their undoing.

The story of how *Frankenstein* was conceived and written has become almost as famous as the story within its pages. Shelley, with her husband Percy, was at a holiday retreat in Switzerland along with Lord Byron. Caught in a rainstorm they dared each other to write ghost stories to entertain themselves (Shelley 1831). Out of this happenstance *Frankenstein* as well as the, arguably, first vampire[1] story were born (Hindle 1992). From there *Frankenstein* has become a cultural landmark. The writing of the novel has on the other hand sparked some controversy. Did Mary Shelley write a critique of her husband and his Enlightenment ideals? It is fairly certain that Percy Shelley helped Shelley form the narrative into a more structured and streamlined tale. On the other hand, Percy Shelley also wrote a preface in Shelley’s name in which he claimed the author’s motive was to exhibit “the amiableness of domestic affection, and the excellence of universal virtue” (1818b, 12) and so either deliberately or unintentionally missed a large part of the novel’s point. The writing of the novel is regardless a much-discussed topic (Dobson and Luce-Kapler 2005, Hindle 1992, London 1993, Weissman 1976).

There are also several different versions of the *Frankenstein* novel that have been published over the years because the novel has had several revisions done to it by Shelley and by others. This plethora of editions gives literary scholars a choice of which to analyse. Robinson (2012) has done research into the changing nature of the novel and pinpoints three editions where significant changes were made: First is the 1818 version of the novel. This is the first one that is published and contains Shelley’s original writing with some contributions by her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley. Second is the 1823 version, which contains certain

[1] During this time, Lord Byron also wrote “A Fragment” (1819) which was later turned into *The Vampyre* (1819) by John William Polidori – arguably the first vampire tale in the English language (Hindle 1992).

substantive variants made by William Godwin, Shelley's father. This edition is significant because it was the template for Shelley's later 1831 version. The 1831 version is the most read and published but has some big changes from the publication of 1818. When it comes to dealing with this plethora of versions, I will be using the 1831 publication as my main source of the novel because it has been the most widely distributed. There are however inclusions from the 1818 version where this is applicable because some of the changes are definitely interesting to this thesis, but they will be noted as such.

Far lesser known than *Frankenstein* is Iain Banks' *The Wasp Factory*. There is an underlying fascination with what makes society work in Iain Banks' oeuvre, from his science-fiction novels written under the name Iain M. Banks, to his more conventional books. Few places are these sentiments as clearly expressed as in his debut novel *The Wasp Factory* (1984). Despite its frequent comparisons to Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818a) due to its themes of 'monstrosity' created by a 'scientist' through tampering with nature (Pisarska 2014, Schoene-Harwood 1999), *The Wasp Factory* is more than a direct retelling of Shelley's story. The novel does interesting things on its own concerning gender and masculinity and is a good example of more contemporary gothic and its continuing fascination with masculinity and transgressions.

The novel is narrated in the first person by Francis "Frank" Leslie Cauldhame. Frank is a 17-year-old boy who lives on an island with his father, Angus Cauldhame, outside a village in Northern Scotland. Frank's life is one of isolation and routine as he patrols his island domain. He has also killed three of his relatives, two cousins and a brother, but according to him that was just "a stage I was going through" (49). When he was three years old, or so his father has told him, Frank was attacked and castrated by the family dog, Old Saul. Frank spends his days indulging himself in highly violent and ritualistic behaviour, constructed around a religion of his own making. This religion is centred on The Wasp Factory, an old clock that has been turned into a death contraption for wasps which Frank manages to trap and lure into it. Through 'the Factory's' cryptic signs, Frank thinks he is able to tell the future. He also hates women and anything that is feminine, and sees them as his "enemies". Frank's older half-brother Eric left the island to become a doctor in London before

the start of the novel. While there, Eric experienced a horrible and macabre incident involving a baby, and turned mad because of it. The novel begins with Eric having escaped an asylum and making his way towards his family home. With Eric approaching, the secrets of the Cauldhame family are revealed to the reader by Frank, while he goes through his daily life. When Eric arrives, Frank finds some female hormones and tampons in his father's study and confronts his father about them. His father then tells Frank that he was in fact never castrated. Frank was designated female at birth with the name Frances Lesley Cauldhame and has, seemingly, been part of some form of gender experiment on the hands of his father who used to be a scientist. The novel ends with Eric and Frank lying next to each other on the beach, where Frank is wondering what will happen to him next.

The story of Frank Cauldhame and his misadventures has been mostly regarded as being a part of the Scottish nationalist revival of the 1980s (Pattie 2013, Schoene-Harwood 1999). The story is however also a well-written gothic tale about masculinity, gender identity, and patriarchy. Banks said that he wrote the novel as "a pro-feminist, anti-militarist work, satirising religion and commenting on the way we're shaped by our surroundings and upbringing" (2013, xi). He also drew from experiences in his own childhood, albeit in a much more dark and sadistic context. The narrative of *The Wasp Factory* juxtaposes Scottish nature, information bias, and at times graphic violence against themes of masculinity and gender identity and formation. The novel received a fair amount of critique from reviewers at the time it came out, as they seemed uncertain what they should think of it. The *Irish Times* wrote that: "It is a sick, sick world when the confidence and investment of an astute firm of publishers is justified by a work of unparalleled depravity". Despite this, the reviewer had to admit that "There's no denying the bizarre fertility of the author's imagination: his brilliant dialogue, his cruel humour" (Freyne 2013). This quote is interesting because despite the reviewer's disgust with the novel, he cannot deny that it is a well-written piece of literature. It also highlights the transgressive nature of the novel's topic and the controversy it sparks within socety's status quo. The novel's reputation has improved greatly from its initial reception, however, and is today taught as part of many university curricula (Pisarska 2014).

As such the content matter and presentation in the novel is one that seems to both tantalise and shock readers even today with its transgressive violence and body horror.

The gothic genre

Defining the gothic genre is oftentimes difficult because it is a longstanding literary genre which has evolved over time. It can be seen as a genre preoccupied with the past, always tapping into a fear in the reader that the barbarity of preceding eras may return at a moment's notice. On the other hand, the genre can also be an analysis of the threats to the social status quo in the present. This ambiguity of meaning is also reflected within the gothic novels themselves. The stories often feature questionable morals and depravity which goes against, or are at the margins of, the established norms in society. It is however possible to talk about the 'classical' gothic which had its heyday in the latter half of the eighteenth century and the more contemporary gothic which has found its relevance continuously affirmed up until the present day.

The classical gothic originated in the late eighteenth century with the emergence of the middle class in Britain. In this period, there are many of the later gothic staples such as: acts of questionable morality performed by power hungry counts and bishops attempting to seduce innocent maidens in medieval times. Chris Baldick, in his introduction to the *Oxford Book of Gothic Tales* (1992), writes about how the gothic genre in the eighteenth century emerged as a critique of the past, because the past was understood to be a place of barbarity and oppression. According to Baldick, the gothic writers and readers of the eighteenth century did not understand the past as something to be glorified and elevated, as it might be in neo-gothic architecture, but rather something to be on constant vigilance against. Baldick ties the emergence of Gothic to the particular situation that the Protestant British and Anglo-Irish middle class found themselves in as the nineteenth century dawned on Britain. Their fear was the return of the, in their view, oppressive medieval period and Roman Catholicism in Britain. The idea that their "hard won liberties could at any moment be snatched from [them] by papal tyranny and the ruthless wiles of the Spanish inquisition" (Baldick 1992, xiv) was ever present in the minds of the Middle Class and so the gothic stories reflected this fear. Whereas

the Neo-Gothic revival some decades later glorifies the medieval past, the literary gothic is about the terrors that can be found there. The haunting return of tyranny and oppression is therefore an ongoing theme in early gothic works.

Gothic, according to Baldick (1992), is then ultimately about rejecting and fearing the past. The rejection is of the perceived cruelty and barbarity of the past, and the fear is of it returning again to haunt the living. Baldick makes the claim that "one would not be writing a Gothic tale unless one linked the subject-matter in some way to the antiquated tyrannies and dynastic corruptions of an aristocratic power or at least of a proud old provincial family" (p. xxi). According to Baldick, then, the Gothic tale can be set in the author's present, but it must deal with the antiquated ideals of aristocracy and mythology. This way the stories can be set in places that are seemingly timeless. However, Baldick also points out that "the imprisoning house of Gothic fiction has from the very beginning been that of patriarchy, in both its earlier and its expanded feminist senses" (1992, xxii). In this assertion, he ties the gothic genre to the patriarchy in the feminist sense; a social system which categorises people by gender and social standing with a cultural favouritism of men. Women in these early gothic stories are usually passive and are often thrown between the active male hero and the male aristocratic villain. There is an ongoing fear of the aristocracy within the population, Baldick argues, and a possible return to their symbolic bloodsucking and exploitative ways, which is explored through gothic. Baldick's claim that a gothic story must be linked to antiquated tyrannies and aristocracy is however, in my view, a very limiting way of looking at the genre.

This is partly because it ignores, to a certain extent, a genre's ability to change and morph as it grows with every literary contribution. Does the gothic genre have an origin within the hatred and fear of the aristocratic medieval Catholic past? Yes, but that does not mean it must remain as such, that is not to say that modern gothic does not feature themes of corruption and oppression. Fred Botting in his introductory book *Gothic* (1996) describes the gothic genre as an ever-evolving one. He points out that although at its core "Gothic signifies a writing of excess" (1996, 1) the genre has had several variations and developments through the ages. It starts as a fear that the transgressions of the past shall return upon the present, but then later evolves further:

> In a world which, since the eighteenth century, has become increasingly secular, the absence of a fixed religious framework as well as changing social and political conditions has meant that Gothic writing, and its reception, has undergone significant transformations. Gothic excesses, none the less, the fascination with transgression and the anxiety over cultural limits and boundaries, continue to produce ambivalent emotions and meanings in their tales of darkness, desire and power. (Botting 1996, 2)

There is an underlying understanding for Botting that gothic writers fear and despise the past, but there is also an understanding that they first and foremost draw upon feelings and sensibility. This is partly what Botting means by 'excess', because gothic is about overwhelming the reader through drawing upon deep underlying fears. Transgressions play a vital part in this because in "Gothic productions imagination and emotional effects exceed reason. Passion, excitement and sensation transgress social proprieties and moral laws" (*ibid.* 3). The sublime images of the natural world are often juxtaposed with the unnerving descriptions of transgressive acts and beings. Gothic is very much about feelings, albeit feelings of dread and despair. Both *Frankenstein* and *The Wasp Factory* contrast their main characters and acts with the mighty beauty of nature from Switzerland to the Scottish Highlands. They are certainly also occupied with feelings, and seek to overwhelm their readers with a sense of unease. Their preoccupation with transgressions are however focalised through a specific gothic trope – the gothic monster.

The gothic monster is a staple of modern gothic fiction. In its creation, the perceived corruption in society can be symbolically inhabited by a single being. Halberstam in her book *Skin Shows* (1995) talks about the gothic monster as a mirroring of the perceived threats to the status quo, which is usually the patriarchy. This is because gothic to Halberstam and to Heiland, who builds upon Halberstam's work, is "at its core is about transgressions of all sorts: across national boundaries, social boundaries, sexual boundaries, the boundaries of one's own identity" (Heiland 2004, 3). Rather than limiting the scope of gothic to Baldick's aristocratic repression, Heiland makes the argument that gothic concerns itself with all kinds of social repressions and transgressions. Heiland discusses the genre and its relation to gender in particular and makes the observation that

> Gothic novels are all about patriarchies, about how they function, what threatens them, what keeps them going. And what becomes ever clearer as one reads these novels is that patriarchy is not only the subject of gothic novels, but is itself a gothic structure. Patriarchy inevitably celebrates a male creative power that demands the suppression – and sometimes the outright sacrifice – of women. (2004, 10)

This suppression of the undesirable, often the feminine, comes from the gothic's ability to turn difference into the Freudian Other. Halberstam, in her book *Skin Shows* (1995), discusses how this creation of the Other also creates the gothic monster as a symbol for unwanted transgressions against the patriarchy. Revolting, scary, and transgressive, the monster can symbolise any form of horror that upsets the social order. The monster both is, and commits, the transgression through its very being.

The monster can by its design symbolise any fear the reader might feel. It is this ability that makes it such a staple of gothic, as the monster can show "features of deviant race, class, and gender" (Halberstam 1995, 4). Being such a popular genre, gothic can often work as a social thermometer. What fears and horrors that are depicted in gothic novels often correspond to the larger society's fear of a minority. Because of this function, Halberstam argues, gothic horror has both the role of championing the plight of those minorities and to further their oppression through its depiction of them as transgressors and deviants. The issues raised in gothic tales are according to Heiland about the

> corruption in, or resistance to, the patriarchal structures that shaped the country's political life and its family life, and gender roles within those structures come in for particular scrutiny. Further, and importantly, these acts are often violent, and always frightening. (2004, 5)

The function of the monster is therefore to always be a challenge to the norm and the patriarchal order, by its acts, or even by its mere existence. The violence is there as a grim reminder for the middle class of the social upheaval these frightening individuals can cause. Be it a social or political revolution, the monsters in many instances symbolise change to what is perceived as the natural norm.

This multiplicity of meanings and transgressions that can be portrayed, made Gothic capable of reaching out to an avid readership as it became one of the most read genres of nineteenth-century Britain (Halberstam 1995). Heiland therefore poses the interesting question "why were people in Britain thinking so much about transgression in the late eighteenth century, and how were they thinking about it?"(Heiland 2004, 3). This, she argues, can be for several reasons, but can be traced to how the "long eighteenth century (1660-1800)" was one framed by revolutions, as well as the emergence of economic, social, and political changes (Halberstam 1995, 3, Heiland 2004, 3). These changes created socio-political uncertainty amongst the upper and middle classes who feared that their positions in society might change violently. Gothic as a genre is exceedingly good at latching onto such fears and uncertainties and so became a staple of both the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Because of their symbolic meaning referring to social minorities, the gothic monsters are often marked by bodily descriptions from a variety of stigmatised groups. As Halberstam (1995) points out Count Dracula (Stoker 1897), with his long nose and ears, bears a striking resemblance to a Jewish caricature, and Buffalo Bill (Harris 1990), with his focus on the female skin is marked by connotations to transgenderism. This is also why Halberstam argues for Gothic as being a genre that reinforces the status quo rather than breaking it down and changing it. By planting marginalised groups in society into the narrative, and taking characteristics from them, the genre is also marking these people as the Other. For gothic monsters are often shunned due to their sex, gender, class, or race, and the things about this that scare the patriarchal order, is also what is employed in the novel. Halberstam's (1995) argument is therefore that by employing these frightening characteristics the novels may actually reinforce their scariness of social minorities in an attempt to criticise the attitudes that created them. Buffalo Bill is thus perpetuating the scariness of the transgendered, and Dracula is reinforcing the negative stereotypes surrounding Jews. They are marked as abnormal within the novel and readers who do not share characteristics with them become normal by proxy. This is an interesting point about the social ramifications of the gothic novel, but does not detract from gothic's keen ability to be a social thermometer for what is both problematic and upsetting both within and to the patriarchal status quo.

The gothic monster is then marked upon its body as Other by the readers and author. The bodily focus has been a part of Gothic for a long time. Halberstam argues that as Gothic and horror has progressed "the monster, for various reasons, tends to show clearly the markings of deviant sexualities and gendering but less clearly the signs of class and race" (1995, 4). This means that the gothic monsters have become increasingly defined by their sexuality and gendered behaviour as other meanings fall into the background. Although race, class, or foreign status is still present, Halberstam argues that this is now seen through their effect on sexuality and gender. The monster's problem and crisis with identifying itself in society becomes a gender identity crisis (Halberstam 1995, 6). Whether this is because of an increased awareness and subsequent fear in the patriarchy of sexual and gender deviancy from the norm in a world where the nature of gender as biology is increasingly questioned, is hard to say, but seems likely.

Gothic as a genre, on the other hand, has always dealt with sexuality and gender. Many of the early gothic romantic works can easily be summarised as a "melodramatic story of an innocent young woman trapped by one man and rescued by another" (Heiland 2004, 1). This also lays a groundwork for fundamental patriarchal gender relations. A man kidnaps a woman as a vessel to further his dynastic line, another man must save her so that she can do the same for him. The infringement on the 'virtue' of women is thus often a central theme within gothic. The gothic stories are after all often about the patriarchy and how it seeks to repress social deviation. The gothic monsters spark a feeling of threat within the patriarchy because they infringe on the laws which have supposedly been laid down by nature. In this sense, the increased focus on sex and gender within the monsters speaks to an increased perceived threat to the patriarchy's understanding of gender.

Masculinity and masculinities

In later years, there has been a backlash against understanding masculinity as being solely about relations of power, which is oftentimes how it seems to be understood in more feminist oriented critiques. This is because within the traditions of literary criticism and social sciences, masculinity has often found itself defined indirectly through feminist work on

gender and femininity. There is however a need to disconnect masculinity from the patriarchy which is very much about power and repression, because being a man cannot only be about the wielding of power over others. With the inclusion of gay and trans men in the debate about masculinity and gender, it becomes easier to talk about masculinity away from the discourses of power since these are traditionally repressed groups by the patriarchy.

There usually is a clear distinction between the biological sex and the gender of a person within feminist criticism (Butler 1999, Moi 1989). When talking about sex, it is usually the physical features related to biology and procreation which different people inhabit that is inferred. Whereas with gender it is the cultural expectations of traits associated with the sex (Muehlenhard and Peterson 2011). In the patriarchy, men and women are often distinguished by their behaviour and appearance and it is crucial for the patriarchy that it is possible to do so. This is because the patriarchy places a social value upon genders in favour of men. It is therefore a goal of the patriarchy that sex and gender be conflated and assumed to be the same. Thusly, when someone who does not adhere to the cultural marks of gender can be labelled as unnatural (Moi 1989). These patriarchal designs are not there by conscious choice as much as it has developed through human history.

The ideas of natural and behavioural differences between both genders and sexes is an idea that has often gone unquestioned. Pierre Bourdieu (2007) argues that this is because society as a whole enforces an invisible and paradoxical logic upon the concept of gender. He analyses masculinity and gender through the lens of 'doxa', which are the sides of culture and society that most people take for granted and don't find a reason to question. In the case of the division of genders this would be how such a division is already assumed to be present. For many there is a clear distinction between what is deemed male and female, masculine and feminine, but Bourdieu questions how natural and clear this distinction is. In order to succeed in dismantling gender restrictions, Bourdieu argues that there must be a restoration "of the paradoxical character of *doxa* while at the same time dismantling the processes responsible for this transformation of history into nature, of cultural arbitrariness into the *natural*" (2007, 2). The questioning of this gender division will, however, be met with social backlash because it is perceived as questioning the natural world and is almost unthinkable.

The belief in a gender division is deep to Bourdieu, but is primarily centred around the "active male and the passive female" (2007, 21) where the male is dominant and the female submissive. In this sense Bourdieu has observed the same as Seidler (1994), that there is a belief in that the male is understood as capable of superior reasoning and detachment from nature, while the female is tied closer to nature and inferior logic. Masculine domination in society at large is much the same way. It is often hard for men to see the power they wield in society because of how ingrained the system is as a part of their world. Masculine discourse, the language and culture which favours men, also seems so natural to those involved in it that it can be almost impossible to see. As Bourdieu summarises it: the "principle of division (*nomos*)" between male and female "as we (mis)recognize it is simultaneously arbitrary, contingent, and also socio-logically necessary" (2).

Feminism's mission is then to deconstruct these so far invisible relations of power in order to expose their artificialness. Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble* (1999) argues that both gender and sex are social constructions. This is because gender and sex, to Butler, are a performance in the sense that they are labels which are put on individuals after the fact. The performer must then coincide with certain marks and cues which are expected of the particular gender performance (Butler 1999, Strychacz 2008). The individual is then expected to conform to these identity restricting labels. The main problem arises if a person does not conform to the standards of the categories of "man" or "woman", because their very humanity is put into question as they do not fit the binary human categories of sex and gender.

Since the feminist movement started out by questioning the view and treatment of women, it is natural that 'woman' is the gender that has been analysed the most so far. However, as Hearn and Kimmel point out by "revealing the dynamics of gender [feminism also made] masculinity visible as a central concept of gendered ideology, names men as gendered, and problematizes the position of men" (2006, 53). Due to the close link between the patriarchy, masculinity, and men, it is often easy to conflate them. However, viewing masculinity as only something that gains from and perpetuates patriarchy, is warned about from most recent social theorists (Hearn and Kimmel 2006, MacInnes 1998, Seidler 2006, Synnott 2009). Masculinity is, on the other hand, something that is peddled and broadcasted

by the patriarchy which wants to define masculinity and femininity as a list of opposing qualities: Masculine is strong/feminine is weak, rational/irrational and prone to emotions, etc.

Power is often tied to masculinity in society's understanding of it. Synnott (2009) argues that there in the popular consciousness is a masculinity quotient which ranks people by their projected masculinity. The high end of the quotient "tends to be defined first in physical terms and by the male code of honour, bravery, duty, integrity" (2009, 22). This is also the end of the quotient which is idealised in society, male or female, those who exhibit a high masculinity are more often given medals and recognition. Despite this reward for masculine behaviour, Synnott also argues that men have to continually prove their masculinity to others and that their masculinity is continually tested. Any failure to adequately project one's masculinity outwards will bring with it social repercussions and loss of face in the eyes of others.

Seidler, in his book *Transforming Masculinities* (2006), warns against, and questions, the assumption that masculinities can be understood only as relationships of power. His book takes as its foundation that masculinity in early feminism was presented as "exclusively a relationship of power, as if there were no way of 'rediscovering masculinity'" (2006, xiii). Seidler emphasises that there is no one masculinity, but an array of masculinities that are different depending on culture, place and person. Synnott agrees with this notion, and adds that the belief in a "true masculinity" is a form of biologism – the belief that genders are biologically mandated, and essentialist (2009, 13). Masculinity is therefore multifaceted and multi-layered (Morgan 2006). While most discourse about masculinity is discussing Western-European masculinity, Seidler finds that even here there are many different variants and expectations associated with 'being a man'.

There are however some communalities between how cultures in Western Europe expect their men to behave. Despite his view on masculine power, Seidler presents some general commonalities between men: "Men may feel they should be 'in control' of their experience, so admitting that uncertainty can threaten their male identities. Rather, men learn to keep their anxieties and fears to themselves as they project a certain public image" (2006, xvi). The wish and desire to control their own bodies is an example of such control. The body

is something that belongs to you, and you need to be in control of it. When the body fails it therefore feels like a personal failure. The source of this 'need for control', can be traced back to the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. This period saw the rising understanding and control of man over nature, and cognitive reason came to be seen as separate from nature and the body (Seidler 1994). Since men are supposedly more reasonable and in control of nature and their own bodies, they are capable of leading and exerting power over women and children who are not (Seidler 2006). This also means that men cannot appear to be emotional, and any emotional reaction except for anger or calculated reason, is seen as unreasonable and therefore feminine.

European Enlightenment philosophy can this way be tied to patriarchal essentialist understandings of gender. Either men behave a certain way, or they are not men. Within the patriarchal society men have control over women like fathers over their children (Heiland 2004). There is therefore a distinction to be made between 'masculinity' and 'traditional masculinity'. The traditional is implying the past, and often current, connection between masculinity and the economic, political and social order (Morgan 2006). Within traditional masculinity this is also the arenas where masculinity was confirmed. It thus turns into a circle of power and confirmation of said power – men can enact control over others because men are in positons of power. Hearn and Kimmel (2006), talk of masculinity in, among other things, the relations of power between men and others: Heterosocial power relations, the power men hold over women. And homosocial power relations, the power men hold over other men. They position these two relations as the core of many surveys and research done on masculinity.

For this thesis, I will take the different discourses on masculinity into account. I understand that masculinities in the world outside of novels do not *only* concern themselves with power. I will however argue that the way masculinity is portrayed within the novels, power, and a felt loss of social power, is a central aspect. As Strychacz (2008) points out, we cannot hope to find *the* definition of maleness, but rather to analyse the myriad of different interpretations and performances in literature and society. Masculinity can therefore be roughly summarised and understood as certain behavioural traits which are favoured as strong

within a culture. What these traits are can vary quite a bit, but they often concern themselves with social power, perceived mental rationality, and physical and mental strength. Masculinity is often tied into the feeling of social identity and behaviour, and will in many instances inform an individual's actions. Because of this any threat to masculine ideals or questioning of someone's masculinity can cause a need to defend this identity. The qualities which masculinity promotes are in many cases not seen as cultural but rather as natural, but in most circles of social science and literary criticism it is viewed as social.

Masculinity and gothic

There are several reasons for why there should be a thesis which connects masculinity and gothic. Literary works are cultural works; they are influenced by and created within certain cultural parameters. In the theories of Bakhtin, the writer follows pre-set patterns when writing. These patterns come from the combination of the sociocultural and historical context, as well as the individual writer (Dysthe 1997, Smidt 2009). This means that when analysing a text, it is not only an analysis of the product of the individual writer, but also the culture's influence upon the writer that is analysed. When analysing two novels concerning masculinity which tell a story reminiscent of each other, despite there being 166 years between them, it is interesting to look at how the story is told differently. *Frankenstein* and *The Wasp Factory* were written in different eras and by different writers, yet they still tap into some of the same key elements and themes concerning masculinity, bodies, and gothic monsters. The novels can illustrate how the perceptions of masculinity and what threatens it have changed – or remained still – over time.

According to some modern scholars, the gothic genre is ultimately about social transgressions, in action or in being, and our fear of them (Baldick 1992, Halberstam 1995, Heiland 2004). It goes to follow that for these actions or beings to be transgressive, they must be committed against a social status quo which sees itself in opposition to these transgressions. This status quo must have rules and borders for the monster(s) to transgress. Halberstam (1995) theorises that the fascination with transgressions comes from how they both entice and scare the readers. The status quo can be understood as a circle where those in

the core perceive the rules to be solid and definite, but as one goes further out from the core the deviations from the perceived norm increase. The transgressors are then those who traverse the borders of the status quo and question the rules of the centre with their very existence. For those who exist at the centre or within the sphere, there is an understanding that the rules and borders of the sphere are there as a natural part of the world. Halberstam (1995) explains that the monsters in gothic threaten to ruin the narrative of sameness that the patriarchy is perpetuating. The monsters become unnatural or uncanny for transgressing those borders and rules, and in turn become 'Other' to those who do follow them.

This is, among other things, why *Frankenstein* and *The Wasp Factory* are ideal for this comparison. Both novels concern themselves with the idea of 'the monster' as a symbol of what we as a society fear. Gothic's ability to show and display what scares and makes society uncomfortable also makes it suitable for the analysis of masculinity and gender. Another point is that "Gothic novels are all about patriarchies, about how they function, what threatens them, what keeps them going" (Heiland 2004, 10). In fact the structure of gothic has since its very beginning been about patriarchal structures "in both its earlier and its expanded feminist senses" (Baldick 1992, xxii). This means that gothic novels by their nature are both in rebellion against and in support of the patriarchy. An analysis of gothic novels and the social structures depicted within, can thereby serve as an analysis of the patriarchal society which spawned them. If gothic is then the analysis of or fight against the patriarchal structures, masculinity is also often closely tied with it either as a part of the status quo or as a part of the rebellion against it.

Masculinity as a gender performance is something which must repeatedly be readjusted and confirmed. Strychacz (2008), as well as others such as Synnott (2009), argues in his theoretical framework that masculinity in the popular consciousness is something that must perpetually reiterate and confirm itself. Interestingly, Strychacz links Bertolt Brecht's theatrical innovations to Butler's (1999) theories of gender as a performance in that they capture social cues and gist. The performance grows and cements itself in its repetition. Strycharcz explains that "Gendered identities are always in process, always being repeated, always recuperated" (2008, 21). The idea of gender as a performance in more than one way is

interesting because it speaks to layers of truthfulness in the acts of those who are doing the performance. There is the surface where the performance itself is happening. Here there are social markers and actions which must be performed so the performer can attain acceptance by the society around them. But there is also what is underneath the surface where the motives behind the performance might be different from those that appear on the surface. The gender performance and its appearance to others is superficial and not necessarily reflective of the individual that is performing. A goal of the patriarchy is for the performance to become so embedded in the individual's consciousness that both individual and performance become the same. The idea of superficial sameness is enforced through social repercussions to apparent deviancy in the performance. There is then a double meaning to the gendered acts that are performed. It is the goal of the macro level of society that the individual underneath the performance in the end will become a genuine reflection of the performance itself, thus enforcing sameness on all. The performance of the self then becomes real through its repetition.

This thesis will take as its foundation that patriarchy and masculinity are both closely tied together and separate from one another. They both continue to influence each other, and their separation may not always be as clear as it might be for femininity and women. Masculinity is understood as being explicitly gendered and non-essentialist, but as the thesis concerns itself with how the novels understand and treat masculinity, it must also discuss 'traditional masculine' qualities and behaviour. The main point is however to discuss how the novels portray and discuss masculinity – both in the novel's gothic monsters and in the other characters.

Chapter 1: *Frankenstein*: patriarchal normativity and transgressions

Introduction, theoretical works, and chapter argument

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818a, 1831) is in many ways *the* gothic novel. It is one of the most iconic stories in fiction and has been retold and reinterpreted countless times. The novel concerns itself both with the fear of the past as well as the transgressions of monsters and has found its own relevance constantly reaffirmed throughout the years. First published in 1818, at the tail end of the French Revolution and Enlightenment, the novel encapsulates criticisms directed towards the social and scientific movements of the time. In some ways, *Frankenstein* redefined the gothic genre from its more past-oriented fears defined by Baldick (1992), to a genre dealing with the monster as a symbol of human fears. Heiland links the emergence of the gothic genre in general to "the 'long eighteenth century' (1660-1800)" (2004, 3), a period of political and industrial revolutions, and capitalism on the rise along with a middle class with a desire to read. Despite being a period of discoveries and perceived progress, it also brought with it increased uncertainty as the perceived immobility of the socioeconomic structure was undergoing a process of questioning and change. Shelley changes the genre by breaking many of its conventions, among them the story's refusal to have an ending which re-establishes the safety of the status quo (Heiland 2004, 99). The early nineteenth century was also a period of political changes as the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars were erupting across Europe. *Frankenstein* is then a novel which is written at the tail end of socio-political uncertainty in much the same way as *The Wasp Factory* is written after the rapid changes of the 1960s and 1970s.

Since *Frankenstein* is such a seminal novel within English literary canon much has already been written about it by other scholars. I will differentiate my analysis from these by combining academic material from four aspects of the novel: First, how the patriarchal family order works in the novel. Second, how the narrative of the novel is itself a masculinist attempt at controlling the narrative and the reader. Third, the homosocial desires which lay latent in the male characters of the novel. Fourth, how the Monster and his Bride are mirrors and subversions

of the society which they are born into. By combining these four aspects into an analysis, more nuances of how Shelley's text deals with patriarchy and masculinity are made clear. To my knowledge no one has so far combined these four aspects into an analysis on men and masculinity in *Frankenstein*. My analysis will have a focus towards the male characters in the novel with the female ones included when this is applicable.

Frankenstein is a classic novel which keeps findings its relevance confirmed because it engages in themes such as identity, sexuality, and the formation of the self. I argue that there in the novel is the idea of layered performativity of gender. This argument will be made from an understanding of Butler's (1999) theories about gender as performance,. The male characters are performing the patriarchal ideas about masculinity with a focus on self-sacrifice and social enlightenment to increase their own social reputation and power. The men's performance of masculinity is therefore layered. On the surface the characters want to become famous benefactors of humanity, while underneath there is the desire for recognition and prestige for the sake of social power and influence. The idea of appearance both in a physical and in a social sense is important in the novel, and for those who do not have a good appearance, social stigma and shame is wrought upon them. The characters' gender performances are thereby influenced by those around them. The nature of the gender system is however also unquestioned and doxic in the Bourdieusian sense (Bourdieu 2007), even by the Monster who is supposedly the outsider who can critique the system.

The sexed spheres of the patriarchy

The characters in the novel have a clear idea of what masculinity and femininity is and in whom these qualities supposedly occur. When Alphonse Frankenstein retires from his work as a public dignitary and settles down to marry, it is so that he can bestow "on the state sons who might carry his virtues and his name down to prosperity" (1818a, 18). In this sentiment, there are some key pieces of information that can help explain masculinity in *Frankenstein*. First, that Alphonse as a father will give his sons to the state, which is a testament to the duties that are laid upon men in the society of the novel. Second, that these sons will succeed their father and carry with them "his virtues and his name". The nature of this arrangement is derivative,

where the sons are seen as gifts given by Alphonse to society. Daffron claims that in the early nineteenth century reproduction was becoming “a driving force in the way in which individuals were conceiving of their place in the world, their relations to others, and their moment within an unfolding narrative of generations of offspring” (1999, 419). Rather than being an isolated moment in history, individuals were seeing themselves as part of a larger and overarching line of individuals. The observation on how Alphonse sees his sons is something which fits in with such an understanding. His sons are to “carry his virtues and his name down to prosperity” so that he will be remembered through the words and deeds of his sons as a larger part of their “unfolding narrative of generations of offspring”. In the mind of the novel’s central characters it is not so much about the individual as it is about the individual’s connection to a larger continuous line of patriarchs.

The way gender and sex work in *Frankenstein*, it is the men who are emphasised narratively while the women are pushed to the margins of both the story and society. There is an underlying belief among the characters in this gender binary, where the different genders have different tasks in Daffron’s “unfolding narrative of generations” (1999, 419). The characters are thereby embedded in what Bourdieu calls a “doxic experience” regarding the gender binary. The characters in the novel seldom question their place in society. The closest is in the 1818 version, where Elizabeth laments “that she had not the same opportunities of enlarging her experience” (110) as Victor has, since he can travel and she cannot. Shelley could here be critiquing the limits which are put on women in society, she was after all scorned by her father when she eloped with Percy Shelley to Europe. Simpkins (1987) places Shelley in a position of both submission and resistance to the male domination of her times and so I will argue that this lament by Elizabeth could be a part of this duality. For Elizabeth does not question why she also cannot travel away from her home, but merely points it out. Elizabeth’s musings on her own station in society are however removed in the 1831 version of the novel, possibly due to conservative backlash against liberalism at the time. The woman Elizabeth’s place in society is here also established within domesticity while Victor can inhabit the sphere of public affairs.

In *Frankenstein,* the men see and understand themselves as scientists and thinkers who seek to change and improve the world around them, while the women are seen as beautiful, caring, and mostly confined to the home. Women and men are thereby placed into their supposedly ‘natural’ roles in accordance with the traditional gender narrative. The men in this system are biological protectors of the ‘weaker’ and more ‘feebleminded’ women who cannot pursue matters of state or science. Mellor argues that the society in *Frankenstein* is separated into two gendered spheres "founded on a rigid division of sex roles" (1988, 220). There is the public sphere where the men receive their social power and the domestic sphere inhabited by the women. Mellor explains that there within the public sphere is an emphasis on “public (masculine) power” and is where the men do their work as “public servants (Alphonse Frankenstein), as scientists (Victor), as merchants (Clerval and his father), or as explorers (Walton)” (221). On the other hand, in the domestic sphere there is the “private (feminine) affection” that is on display, where the women “work as house wives, childcare providers, and nurses (Caroline Beaufort Frankenstein, Elizabeth Lavenza, Margaret Saville) or as servants (Justine Moritz)” (221).

Mellor argues that the division between the spheres and sexes means that the sexes cannot function properly in the other sphere. This inability to function in the other sphere, Mellor argues, “causes the destruction of many of the women in the novel" (1988, 221) as they try, and fail, to survive in the public sphere. Mellor uses as her example how Justine Moritz is executed for the murder of William Frankenstein by the public servants, and Elizabeth’s speech in Justine’s defence only makes the crowd more determined to end Justine’s life. According to Mellor, the division of the sex roles is “rigid” – meaning it cannot be broken. The division is also patriarchal at its centre as it organises society into strict labels that favour the ‘masculine’ qualities. I will argue that although there is such a distinction and division in the novel, they may not be as rigid as Mellor claims. The men in the novel do inhabit the domestic as well as the public sphere. This is particularly eminent in the case of Alphonse Frankenstein, the family patriarch. Throughout the timeframe of the novel he is retired and lives at home with his children. Alphonse’s largest contribution to the story is through emotional support and advice for his son Victor. In fact, the most important things he

does is failing to make Victor stop reading the forbidden books, and pushing for Victor's marriage to Elizabeth. Alphonse's failure is heavily entrenched in the domestic sphere where his masculine powers are ineffective, and he is incapable to use feminine language and ways of persuasion to get his way. It is interesting that Alphonse Frankenstein is introduced in the novel as a prominent member of the public sphere, yet spends the novel inside the domestic sphere. This might be because he to Victor has become feminised, and is therefore confined to the domestic sphere by the novel's principle narrator. The son has then taken Alphonse's place in the public sphere to continue "his virtues and his name down to prosperity" (1818a, 18).

The majority of the men in the novel are spending most of their time in Mellor's (1988) public sphere and it is here that Shelley makes some interesting portrayals of masculinity. Alphonse Frankenstein's goal to "bestow on the state sons who might carry his virtues and his name down to prosperity" (1818a, 18) establishes a connection between what can be called 'ideal masculinity' and public life. The idea of fathers and sons being in a continued service to the state and public is a hallmark of patriarchal society, where power passes through the men and away from the women. The ideal masculinity of Alphonse Frankenstein is through the quote connected to public service by Victor Frankenstein who narrates his father's life to Robert Walton. This connection with 'ideal masculinity' is seen through how the virtues and public functions of Alphonse Frankenstein are held up by Victor as an example of a good and masculine man. The language that he uses to explain his father paints him in nothing but an ideal light: Alphonse had "filled several public situations with *honour* and *reputation*. He was respected by all who knew him, for his *integrity* and indefatigable attention to public business" (1818a, 18, 1831, 31 emphasis mine). Despite confining his father to an emotional supportive role for the rest of the novel, Victor Frankenstein here establishes his father's public influence. The elevation of the father on the other hand also serves to highlight the contrast with the son's later misdeeds.

The rebellion of the sons against their fathers

For in *Frankenstein*, sons are actually not replacing their fathers' functions in society. Instead of honouring and respecting their father's wishes the sons, except for Henry Clerval, are rebelling against their fathers in some way or other: Robert Walton directly defies his father's wishes that he would not take up "a seafaring life" (1831, 14), and Victor Frankenstein actively defies his father's command not to study outdated books, thus enabling him to create a monster which destroys the Frankenstein family. The Monster is in the end the extreme version of this trend of rebellion, because he seeks to undo the entirety of the patriarchal system that went before him by killing his father and his relatives. The sons in *Frankenstein* are also interesting in that they both continue the social system of their fathers and are subverting it by rebelling against their fathers' authority. Victor Frankenstein finds himself a wife in much the same way as his father does, and he also tries to gain social power through a form of public service – the eradication of death. The Monster may seek to undo the patrilineage that has gone before him, but he still wishes to have a wife, not a friend, and to live in a heteronormative family relationship. It is a rebellion done within the confines of the patriarchy, with generations turning more and more extreme in their rebellion as time goes on.

The first introduction to this generational rebellion starts already in Robert Walton's letters to his sister. He explains how as a child he felt "regret […] on learning that my father's dying injunction had forbidden my uncle to allow me to embark in a seafaring life" (14). Walton later disregards his father's forbiddance when he comes upon the means of financing the expedition himself through inheritance. Likewise, when Victor Frankenstein's father Alphonse catches his son reading Cornelius Agrippa, he commands him to "not waste your time upon this; it is sad trash" (38). Despite this warning, Victor continues reading the book and, in fact, looks up more books in the same style. Heiland (2004) argues that Victor is also betraying his father's wish for a son who might "carry his virtues and his name down to prosperity" (1818a, 18). This betrayal stems from Victor's creation of a Monster which will destroy the Frankenstein family and therefore leave no legacy for Alphonse at all. The Monster, the child of Victor Frankenstein, dedicates himself to destroying his father/mother and in the process he betrays Victor's hope that "no father could claim the gratitude of his

child so completely as I should deserve theirs" (1831, 52). Victor seems to have thought that his offspring would be an end to this cycle of rebellion, but his remark turns to irony when the Monster seeks to take the rebellion even further. The Monster's act of disobedient destruction is an exaggerated version of those of Victor and Walton. The sons are in rebellion against their fathers' authority over them, but the Monster goes further and attempts to carefully dismantle his father's life around him.

The question remains if this rebellion exercised by the sons Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein, and the Monster is an attempted break with patriarchal authority, or if they are merely reasserting themselves as the next patriarchs. Donna Heiland argues that *Frankenstein* "can be read as a novel about patriarchy, exposing the instability of the father-son lines that seem so essential to its continuity" (2004, 100). This instability comes to the forefront when the Monster makes destroying his father his life-goal instead of 'peacefully succeeding' him as a patriarch. I will add that the father-son lines also seem to be founded on two contradictory expectations: The fathers expect their sons to listen to them and accept their authority, while the sons expect freedom to assert authority through their fathers. The fathers of Robert Walton and Victor Frankenstein expect them to heed their advice and refrain from their pursuits of knowledge, while their sons feel a need to pursue those desires and are willing to rebel to achieve them. Although the rebellion is presented by the sons for its beneficial value to society, it is also clear that the glory that would be bestowed upon them from these beneficial acts is just as motivating. Through this glory, the sons will become independent of their fathers as they establish their own sense of face and respect in the public sphere.

The patriarchal line of succession in the novel seems to rely on a rebellion of the sons against their fathers, but not a rebellion of change, but rather to continue the rigid hierarchal structure of the past with a new patriarch. Shelley could be making a comment on the nature of generations in the patriarchy's understanding of masculinity. There are three generations depicted and described in the novel: The first generation of Alphonse Frankenstein and Robert Walton's father; the second generation of Victor Frankenstein, Robert Walton, and Henry Clerval; and the third generation of The Monster, Victor Frankenstein's science created child.

The second generation, I argue, is trying to continue the patriarchy of their fathers. They do this by building on the prestige and social power accumulated by their fathers in the public sphere, while also trying to become independent of their father's influence over them. The third generation, is however a product of the rebellious need of the second, and so turns even more extreme and tries to undo all that has gone before. Despite his later goal of destruction, the Monster does want to continue the patriarchal family dynamic in that, even though he is created without a mother, he still wants a wife. Victor Frankenstein argues that if he gives the Monster his wife, she too will be "a thinking and reasoning animal" and can therefore "refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation" (160) to quit the world of man. Victor seems to fear that the Bride too will have agency, and if she were to continue the rebellious cycle of the patriarchy, she "might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate" (160). He therefore destroys this possible female encroachment on the patriarchal succession lines.

The nature of the men's gender performance

To fully understand how the gender performance of being a man functions in the novel, we must return to Mellor's (1988) sex-divided spheres. In my understanding, the public sphere is where the patriarchy and individuals meet and meld. This is where the men perform their public functions and gain their social prestige and power. The emphasis in the public sphere is on reputation as a part of the gender performance the men are doing. This reputation is the accumulation of the social prestige a person has, and is one of the principal factors for the inhabitants in the sphere. The notion of glory as a variant of social prestige, is introduced by Robert Walton early in the novel. He emphasises that he "preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in [his …] path" (p.15). The notion of glory as a reward for social benefactor status is however common among the second-generation sons in the novel. Victor Frankenstein confesses that wealth "was an inferior object; but what glory would attend the discovery" (p.39). Likewise, Victor Frankenstein also explains that his friend Henry Clerval wanted "to become one among those whose names are recorded in story, as the gallant and adventurous benefactors of our species" (37). Shared among these second-generation sons is the apparent refusal of wealth in exchange for social recognition and glory.

This is interesting when coupled with the Monster's understanding of the men's world as an outsider. The Monster explains that during his secret education by the De Laceys he learned that "the possessions most esteemed by your fellow creatures were, high and unsullied descent united with riches" (116). This is an analysis done by an outsider of the system, someone who indeed can question its nature more so than those within it. The De Laceys themselves are also outsiders of society after having been ostracised from it. Mellor (1988) makes the argument that the De Lacey family is the one time in the novel where the sexes are not separated into spheres, but rather working together to create harmony. Going by Bourdieu's (2007) idea of doxa as the hidden social structures around us, the Monster's assessment on how value is determined in patriarchal Geneva becomes even more valuable. It is hard to see and question the naturalised barriers that guide society when one is inside of it, but as outsiders, the Monster and the De Laceys can more easily point out what is and isn't inherent. It is however interesting to note that the young men in the novel who are trying to achieve prestige in the public sphere have already achieved the "unsullied descent and riches" through their patriarchs. They are all from rich families who wield major influence in their respective societies, and by the assessment done by the outsiders they should already have the 'esteem' described by the Monster. For these young men in the novel, it would seem that to simply want more power at any cost is an aspect of their performance of masculinity.

The way these young men achieve their power is through performing to social cues and expectations of behaviour. As earlier established it is social prestige and power the men in the novel are seeking, yet they try to achieve these through apparent humanist endeavours. Robert Walton first wanted to become a poet, a profession which had previously "entranced" his soul "and lifted it to heaven", but it was also so that he "might obtain a niche in the temple where the names of Homer and Shakespeare are consecrated" (1831, 14). There seems to be layers to the performance put on by the men, where they must follow certain social cues and marks to obtain the social recognition they so desire. Strychacz (2008) combines Judith Butler's (1999) theory on gender as a performance with Berthold Brecht's analysis of the "gestic theatre", which is "the dramatic moment that captures the gist of patterns of social behaviour within an overarching structure of power" (Strychacz 2008, 22). The combination

of Butler's theories with actual theatre performance highlights the similarities between how a gender performance is made and put on by the performer. Likewise, the male characters in *Frankenstein* follow certain "gists" of social behaviour in order to obtain the social power they really want and need. Robert Walton ends up exploring the Arctic to find new routes of transport and Victor Frankenstein seeks to abolish disease and death from the human frame. It must appear on the surface that their actions are purely magnanimous, but their ventures are also done for social self-advancement. The idea of how others perceive them is therefore crucial to the men's presentation of themselves.

The patriarchal hierarchy of the Frankenstein family

When finally introducing his origin to Robert Walton, Victor Frankenstein uses his father and lineage to establish his own authority and likability. He informs Walton that he is "by birth a Genevese, and my family is one of the most distinguished in that republic. My ancestors had been for many years counsellors and syndics; and my father had filled several public situations with honour and reputation" (31, *sic.*). Victor is here establishing a claim that he indeed has what the Monster calls "unsullied descent united with riches" (116). At first his place of origin is revealed, followed by the claim that his family is "one of the most distinguished in that republic". The idea of republicanism is something which can also be found in Shelley's social circle. She belonged to the society of liberals in England, and her husband also wrote about the French revolution (2016). Victor's emphasis on the nature of government in his country is therefore probably not a coincidence. The republicanism serves to further emphasise Victor's belonging to the liberal intelligentsia of the time the novel was written and could make him more likable to the readers as well.

For when Victor Frankenstein is introducing himself to Walton, Shelley is also introducing him to the readers. So Victor's next line about how the Frankensteins have "filled several public situations with honour and reputation" also says something about Victor Frankenstein's state of mind. Diamond (2006) writes about the disidentification hypothesis in the development of gender identity in boys. Within this theory there is the idea that "that in order to establish a normal, healthy sense of masculinity, the small boy must disidentify from his mother and counteridentify with his father" (Diamond 2006, 1100). In this sense, the

Frankensteins' legacy of public service for generations through the father-son lines is a driving motivator for Victor Frankenstein's work and motivation. Meanwhile Victor also tries to self-identify with his own father. His goal to abolish disease and death takes on a new dimension as he tries to outperform his father as a servant of the public good. This sheds light on the rebellious tendency of patriarchal ancestry where the son must seek to not only *be* his father, but also be *better* than him. Shelley as a socially conscious writer is critiquing this succession process, because the continuous one-upmanship of previous generations results in dire consequences in this novel; with the creation of the Monster, which is in direct conflict with what is seen as natural law.

It is not just his general family lineage Victor Frankenstein uses to gain respect, but more specifically the story and deeds of his father. After having introduced his place of origin and family credentials, Victor continues by using his father's life story and social standing to create a positive comparison to himself. Instead of starting his own biography with his birth, for instance, Victor introduces himself through the story of his father highlighting their patriarchal bond in the process. In fact, Victor spends the whole of Chapter I praising the virtue of his father and how he came to find his mother, Caroline Beaufort. The story of Alphonse Frankenstein's marriage to Caroline Beaufort is included, according to Victor, because "the circumstances of his marriage illustrate his [Alphonse's] character" (31). This story is itself interesting because it in some ways lay bare the patriarchal hold over women in the novel. Alphonse Frankenstein had a friend, Beaufort, a merchant who fell on hard times. As Victor describes it "This man […] was of a proud and unbending disposition and could not bear to live in poverty and oblivion in the same country where he had formerly been distinguished for his rank and magnificence" (31) and so he fled to a different town. Beaufort felt that he had lost his prestige and social standing in the public sphere and so had to retreat elsewhere lest the shame overtake him. Alphonse Frankenstein goes after his friend and finds him dead with his daughter, Caroline Beaufort, weeping by his bedside. With Caroline now lacking a male guardian Alphonse adopts her and later makes her his wife. When Victor Frankenstein then says that the circumstances of how his father met his mother "illustrate his

character" it may not be an illustration of what he thinks, for the adoptive guardian marrying his 'daughter' has some rather incestuous undertones.

The questionable nature of how the Frankensteins find their wives has not been lost on scholars (Burwick 1993, Vlasopolos 1983). Alphonse Frankenstein marries a woman whom he has taken under his wing as a paternal protector. Victor Frankenstein later follows in his father's footsteps and marries his adoptive sister Elizabeth Lavenza, who has been brought into the family in a comparable manner to his mother. In the 1818 version Shelley wrote Elizabeth as Victor's cousin by blood, but made her his adoptive sister in the 1831 version. This change is interesting because it makes their relationship incestuous in an emotional sense, in that they have been brought up as brother and sister, but not in a biological sense, as they are not really related by blood. This duality of their relationship also shines through in how they address each other. Victor Frankenstein explains that they "called each other familiarly by the name of cousin. No word, no expression could body forth the kind of relation in which she stood to me – my more than sister" (1831, 35). According to Victor they call each other "cousin", but Elizabeth is simultaneously Victor's "*more* than sister" in a conflicting series of terms of endearment. The potential taboo of their relationship is not diminished by Shelley making them unrelated by blood, but rather complicated.

Victor and Elizabeth's relationship also highlights Alphonse Frankenstein's relationship with Caroline Beaufort. This is because he effectively marries his 'adopted' daughter. There would seem to be a confusion in the Frankenstein family between the affection shown towards a family member and the sexual affection shown towards a spouse. Victor's obsession with his mother and its possible Oedipal characteristics is also something that has not gone unnoticed by critics. Halberstam (1995) points out that after creating his monster, Victor Frankenstein dreams of Elizabeth Lavenza turning into his mother after they kiss. The oedipal qualities of this dream are as strong as its premonitions of Elizabeth's death at the hands of the creature Victor has just created. When looked at through Diamond's (2006) explanation of disidentification theory it also illustrates a failed disenfranchisement by Victor from his mother who, for a short while, could have been his adopted sister before Alphonse made her his wife. In another interesting incident, the Monster seems titillated by

the picture of Victor's mother which he finds on the murdered William's body: "it softened and attracted me. For a few moments I gazed with delight on her dark eyes, fringed by deep lashes, and her lovely lips" (1831, 138). This attraction is again a complicated one, because the Monster's feelings are incestuous, since by heritage Caroline Beaufort is his grandmother, yet they are not related by blood. In yet another potentially incestuous relationship, the Monster wishes his father to create for him a bride, who would simultaneously be his sister. The Monster's attractions are then reminiscent of his father, in whose image he was created.

Victor's relationship with his own father is on the whole complicated as he tries to both connect himself to his father's work and deeds while possibly subconsciously seeking to do better than his father. As previously stated, the introduction to Victor Frankenstein is done through his father's story. Chapter I is mostly dedicated to Alphonse Frankenstein and his life; not until Chapter II are there many detailed descriptions of Victor himself. The story of how Alphonse came to marry Caroline is presented as a display of his good character by Victor, who seems blind to the undertones of suppression and understanding of the female as property. Caroline is after all transported between male protectors. Indeed, Victor later says he viewed Elizabeth as his own property in his "childish seriousness", although in the same passage he goes on to express that "till death she was to be *mine only*" (35), reiterating the theme of property as well as her future death because of his own creation of monstrosity. Like his father, Victor Frankenstein has an unusual segue into married life by marrying his "more than sister" (35).

The father-son succession lines and family bonds are after all unstable in the novel. Victor Frankenstein uses his family, his father in particular, as an introduction of himself to Robert Walton and the readers. As Victor Frankenstein describes it in the 1831 version, his father has "filled several public situations with honour and reputation", and he is in fact known for having "passed his younger days perpetually occupied by the affairs of his country; a variety of circumstances had prevented his marrying early, nor was it until the decline of life that he became a husband and the father of a family" (31). The emphasis on statesmanship and public service lies heavy within the quote, not to speak of the false dichotomy it sets up concerning domestic family life. According to Victor, Alphonse could have started a family

“early” in his career or in “the decline of life”. This false dichotomy gives the same result in that Alphonse would have spent the middle of his life “occupied by the affairs of his country”, regardless of his marrying “early” or ‘late’. Due to his father having led a life of “honour” while serving his country, Victor Frankenstein elevates him as the example of a good man.

Alphonse Frankenstein then spends his youth preoccupied with the public sphere, refraining from establishing a domestic one until “the *decline* of life”, as his son puts it. There is an inherent bias within Victor’s phrasing, one where the domestic sphere is not important until Alphonse has done all he can in the public one. The phrasing of it makes it sound like Alphonse’s life was in decline as he married and founded a family. It speaks to the small value that is given to matrimonial affairs in the world of the novel sans the production of sons for the continued operation of the state. Additionally, when Alphonse Frankenstein’s public deeds are the first to be mentioned while introducing him, they are simultaneously elevated as his greatest achievements and those best to understand his character. It is in the public sphere that Alphonse has been celebrated and honoured, while his roles as a father and husband seem almost as afterthoughts in the words of his son. It is not his qualities as a father Victor uses to introduce him, but rather how he is perceived by the public at large, despite this happening before Victor was born. The focus that is put on the men and their deeds in the public sphere surpasses that of the women in the domestic sphere.

The nature of Alphonse Frankenstein’s commitment to the public sphere is emphasised even further in the 1818 version, where it is said that “it was not until the decline of life that [his father] thought of marrying, and bestowing on the state sons who might carry his virtues and his name down to prosperity” (1818a, 18). Besides having Victor introducing himself through his patriarchal ties, I have argued that Shelley is also demonstrating the nuances of the generational divide in the novel. Alphonse Frankenstein is described as wanting his sons ‘bestowed on the state’ as well as carrying on his legacy. In the end, Victor Frankenstein does not end up working for the state, but rather as a scientist. It can of course be perceived that he is working for the state in the sense of the general public, but he is performing a rebellion against the patriarchal authority by pursuing forbidden science and knowledge. On another note the quote about Alphonse Frankenstein’s wish for sons is

interesting because the Frankensteins do not conceive daughters: Alphonse and Caroline adopt Elizabeth, and Victor ends up destroying his "daughter"; the intended bride of the Monster. Indeed, the women, and especially mothers, are pushed to the margins of the story.

The removal of mothers in the story is something that has been discussed elsewhere, especially in feminist analysis of the novel (Hoeveler 2003). As part of the greater discourse on gothic as a genre, Heiland has pointed out that patriarchy in gothic "inevitably celebrates a male creative power that demands the suppression – and sometimes the outright sacrifice – of women" (2004, 10). Shelley seems to continue this trend, but it has also been noted that she has a rather strained relationship with the concept of motherhood in general. After all her own mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, died from giving birth to her, and she had herself lost a child by the time the novel was written (Burwick 1993). Hill-Miller (1995) therefore argues that the idea of motherhood is tied to death in the novel: Caroline Beaufort dies from caring for the sick Elizabeth, Justine Moritz is falsely executed for the murder of the child she was nursing, the Bride is destroyed by Victor Frankenstein when he imagines her potential as a mother, and Elizabeth Lavenza is murdered on her wedding night. I would add that there is also Victor Frankenstein, who is both mother and father to his offspring the Monster and the Bride and so meets his death on Walton's ship. He does however also seek to eliminate the process of mothering from the birth process as a whole through his creations, by making the need of mothers void (Halberstam 1995). Consequently, Victor sees his life ruined around him when he fails to provide any sort of care, maternal or paternal, for his own child. In this regard, Hill-Miller (1995) also compares Victor Frankenstein to Shelley's father, William Godwin, who himself was distant from her life after she eloped with Percy Shelley, and didn't accept her until she and Shelley married years later. The autobiographical ties between Shelley and her novel has a strong tradition in academia, and so the aspect of social critique in her novel gains an even stronger foothold as something overt.

The masculinity of the narrative

Frankenstein is a depiction and illustration of the patriarchy through how the society it depicts places a focus on external perception and appearance. How one looks and conforms is

important within the patriarchy. Deviancy is stigmatised and so it becomes important to appear conformist to the societal norms or one could be perceived as dangerous (Butler 1999, Halberstam 1995, Moi 1989). The idea of perception is something that appears throughout the novel on various levels from the form of the novel to the individual characters. Even the framing of the story is trying to present itself as credible, as it is told through a frame story of a series of letters from Robert Walton, an explorer, to his sister Margaret Saville. Because of these letters, the story's appearance is that of a travel story or memoir – genres that were widely read at the time. The main story of the novel is then entrenched inside of these letters as something Walton has heard from Victor Frankenstein. Despite this appearance of credibility, the story is itself fictional and is merely using the framing as a device for relatability to the readers.

Framed at the heart of the story are its narrators. Most of these narrators are men who share their stories with one another, and so these men's understanding of the world become a central part of the story. *Frankenstein* is after all a novel of interwoven narratives and narrators. At its most convoluted the novel has as many as four different layers of narration before it supposedly reaches the reader: Felix De Lacey, The Monster, Victor Frankenstein, and Robert Walton. The narration being in the first person and done by narrators who are active in the story, means that the information given will be shaped by the individual narrating, but it also means that what is described and given is telling something about the character who describes it. However, Newman (1986) points out that the narration in *Frankenstein* is not the same as it is in later contemporary novels. The different narrators are not there to comment on information bias as the different narrators never really contradict one another when it comes to events. They never disagree on *how* something happened, but they may disagree on *why* it happened, as can be seen with the Monster and Victor's different ideas of why the Monster has turned to destruction and death. The Monster seems to think his evolution comes from how he has been scorned by those he meets, whereas Victor seems to think that the Monster was always wicked (Halberstam 1995).

The ability to speak and to shape narratives are important in *Frankenstein*. Newman (1986) writes about the power which comes from speech in the novel and how this seems to

take on a sexist dimension: All the male main characters have the ability to speak clearly and with purpose. The Monster, for instance, can through his speech convince Victor Frankenstein into giving him a bride, while Victor himself has the sailors and Robert Walton hanging on the edge of every word he utters. Robert Walton describes Victor's speech as such that "when he speaks, although his words are culled with the choicest art, yet they flow with rapidity and unparalleled eloquence" (1831, 26). This ability to control one's speech has a dark underside, Newman argues, when Justine Moritz fails to adequately shape a fitting narrative explaining the convincing proof levied against her. Her accusers create a believable narrative based on circumstantial evidence in which she murdered William Frankenstein over a necklace. Justine's failing to shape a counter-narrative to this circumstantial one, even makes her convinced herself of the narrative spun by her accusers – despite having no recollection of it happening. The power to shape the truth through speech is then central in the novel and something which predominantly belongs to the men. The readers are then themselves subjected to the male characters' narrative power as they read the novel.

The narrators in *Frankenstein* are all men and the structure of the story is that of several concentric narratives with a woman recipient in the margins. The male characters narrate their lives to each other with a female recipient, Margaret Saville or MS (Mary Shelley), as the ultimate addressee somewhere in the margins of the story. The novel thus mimics the author-book relationship where a woman is making a comment on masculinity and men. I argue that the femininity of the intended recipient of the story also labels the reader as feminine, because Robert Walton is addressing the readership through the affection that he bestows on his sister. His language also seeks to establish mutual understanding with the reader/sister, guiding them through his emotions while he narrates his story. The first words by Robert Walton, and therefore the first words of the novel after the address, are "You will rejoice" (13). At this point, it is clear that Walton is writing to his sister but as his narration continues, the line between sister and reader may blur while Walton repeatedly addresses the polysemous "you". Likewise, Walton's account of his upbringing and preparation for the voyage is much more a service for the readers than to remind his sister of their own childhood and recent past. This recounting of his past also puts an emphasis on his own masculinity.

Walton's masculinity and his sister's imagined femininity comes through in his continuing assumptions on her reactions and possible naiveté to the story he tells. There are times when he will make a comment on an assumed reaction to what he has told, followed by a redirection: "'What a noble fellow!' you will exclaim. He is so; but then he is wholly uneducated" (1831, 19); "You will smile at my allusion; but I will disclose a secret" (19); "Will you smile at the enthusiasm I express concerning this divine wanderer? You would not, if you saw him" (28). In these quotes, there is the assumption of a reaction from Margaret Saville/the reader before there is a redirection of it to another angle of understanding the subject. Through his narration, Walton attempts to guide the emotional reaction to the story being told, but the emotional reactions he anticipates are those of someone feminine and perceived opposite to him. Through him addressing his sister in this manner the reader is made feminine and in opposition to his masculinity. If masculinity embedded in the patriarchy is understood as relations of power, then Robert Walton is here used by Shelley to display masculinist attempts at controlling emotional reactions. The control of emotions is pinpointed by Seidler (2006) as an aspect of masculinity, arriving from an understanding that uncontrolled emotions are seen as belonging to nature and animals. Margaret may, in the eyes of Robert Walton, be fooled by the nostalgic notions which he portrays, but he thinks himself not so easily fooled.

The guidance of the reader through narration is not only something done by Walton, Victor Frankenstein will also at times attempt to guide his reader. He talks to the polysemous 'you' one time as a comment on his own storytelling:

> "I see by your eagerness and the wonder and hope which your eyes express, my friend, that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be: listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved upon that subject" (51).

Frankenstein's goal with his storytelling is to tell a morality tale. In this sense his story falls into the trend noted by Halberstam (1995) in which gothic stories will attempt to impact a lesson on the reader by the novel's end. In this sense, Victor is chastising Walton, his own reader surrogate, for his interest in how the Monster was created. Simultaneously Victor also

reprimands the reader for wanting the answer to the same question. Earlier on the same page, Victor must also re-establish his own credibility as a narrator by assuring the reader that "Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman. The sun does not more certainly shine in the heavens, than that which I now affirm is true" (51). Victor has a preoccupation with how he is seen by others throughout the novel. When he refuses to help Justine Moritz by confessing his knowledge about the true murderer, it because his "tale was not one to announce publicly; its astounding horror would be looked upon as madness by the vulgar" (77). Victor's fear of appearing mad to those with whom he speaks is then more important to him than saving Justine Moritz's life. The notion of being believed and able to shape narratives is then central to how the men talk and act in the novel.

The homosocial desire of men

Frankenstein is a novel which features men's need to interact with and gain recognition from other men as a central theme. For as has been remarked upon by other critics the men in *Frankenstein* seem to spend a lot of time in each other's company and in chasing after each other. Daffron (1999) writes about how the early nineteenth century saw an unease between men concerning their same sex relations as there was discovery of more and more so-called 'sodomites' in Britain. The relationship between men became more uncertain because of it since the line between heterosexual friendship and homosexual desire became blurred. The centrepiece of *Frankenstein* is a man, Victor, constructing another man, the Monster, as the beginning of a new species or race. The Monster's "features" were selected by Victor as "beautiful" (56) by his own admission, which gives the whole creation enterprise homosexual undertones as well (Hammond 1996). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2015) writes about what she considers a 'homosocial desire' among men. To Sedgwick, this is a term which describes "social bonds between persons of the same sex" (696) and has often been applied to mean 'male bonding' whilst removing any homosexual implications of such bonding. As Sedgwick points out, male heterosexual homosocial bonding is often marked by "intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality" (696) as an attempt at distancing oneself from the homosexual implications of the bonding. Yet Sedgwick proposes an understanding of such social bonding as a sliding scale between homosexual and homosocial desire.

In *Frankenstein*, the men spend a lot of time with each other and express desire for male companionship and emotional connection more overtly than for those of women. Robert Walton explains that what he longs for in the Arctic is a friend: "I have no friend, Margaret; when I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be none to participate in my joy; if I am assailed by disappointment, no one will endeavour to sustain me in dejection" (1831, 17). His longing is for that of someone who understands and can share in his emotions and victories. Walton's description of a friend is confusingly like the description of a lover or spouse – someone with whom one can share a deep emotional bond. Later, he believes to have found this friend in Victor Frankenstein: "[f]or my own part, I begin to love him as a brother" (26); "I said […] that I should find no friend on the wide ocean; yet I have found a man who, before his spirit had been broken by misery, I should have been happy to have possessed as the brother of my heart" (26). The fulfilled desire of homosocial interaction is indeed great in these passages. Walton believes himself to have found someone who understands him deeply, someone he could "begin to love" as a "brother of my heart". The familiarity between these two heterosexual friends is not necessarily so different from that of two homosexual partners who have found themselves in love. Sedgwick's (2015) sliding scale of social desire among men is then quite applicable to this relationship.

The emotional connection Robert Walton so desires is after all something he is looking for in a man and, ultimately, believes he has found in a man. Newman (1986) writes about how Victor's voice almost seems to seduce Walton the moment he regains his faculties on Walton's ship. Walton praises Victor for his gentleness and wisdom and notes that "when he speaks, although his words are culled with the choicest art, yet they flow with rapidity and unparalleled eloquence" (1831, 26). Victor's voice is spellbinding to Walton and his crew and they all must listen when he talks, but it seems to have the largest influence on Walton who remarks that "Even now […] his full-toned voice swells in my ears; his lustrous eyes dwell on me with all their melancholy sweetness; I see this thin hand raised in animation, while lineaments of his face are irradiated by the soul within" (1831, 29-30). Hammond (1996) writes about how in *Frankenstein* there are moments where the narration forces the reader to imagine and gaze upon the male body. I argue that Walton's quote here does just that as he

guides the reader's eyes towards separate parts of Victor's body. In a way, Walton tries to make the reader see Victor as he sees him and the "irradiated […] soul within" in a mixture of homosocial desire, and the never far away homosexual desire.

Emotional seduction through language is a central theme in *Frankenstein* according to Newman (1986). The Monster implies an attempted seduction of Justine Moritz through almost Shakespearian lover's language: "Awake, fairest, thy lover is near" (139). The Monster also uses his language to coerce Victor into building a bride for him. Seduction in a romantic sense is however most obvious when Victor Frankenstein and Robert Walton enter conversation. Walton's descriptions of how Victor receives and sees him continues his earlier word choices where the line between lover and friend is blurred:

> He [Victor] entered attentively into all my arguments in favour of my eventual success, and into every minute detail of the measures I had taken to secure it. I was easily led by the sympathy which he evinced, to use the language of my heart, to give utterance to the burning ardour of my soul. (27)

By using words and phrases such as "attentively", "the language of my heart", and "the burning ardour of my soul", Walton is expressing something more than superficial friendship – a deep emotional connection. The relationship and friendship between the two end at the death of Victor Frankenstein with Walton summarising that he cannot express his grief at the death of his "ill-fated and admirable friend" (210). There are possibly homosexual, or at least homosocial, desires in Walton's utterances. They are also unlike those he uses for his sister, whom he also claims a deep connection with. This is also a part of the larger narrative of Shelley eliminating and marginalising her female characters throughout the story and putting the male narrative into focus. And so, the social desire among the men in the novel seems to be much more with each other than with women.

This confusion of social desire is even more clear between Victor Frankenstein, his bride-to-be Elizabeth Lavenza, and best friend Henry Clerval. In Chapter II Frankenstein describes the perfect emotional unity of himself and Elizabeth Lavenza as: "Harmony was the soul of our companionship, and the diversity and contrast that subsided in our characters drew us nearer together" (36). He elevates their difference as the greatest strength in their union, yet

on the next page he also describes his friendship with Clerval, and how they "united [themselves] in the bonds of the closest friendship" (36), in a similar fashion. Clerval's difference from Victor in temper and interests are as different as with Elizabeth, and so Victor and Clerval's friendship seems to fall on Sedgwick's (2015) sliding scale of male bonding. While Victor confesses that "neither the structure of language, nor the code of governments, nor the politics of various states possessed attractions to me. It was the secrets of heaven and earth that I desired to learn" (37), he later contrasts himself with Henry Clerval who

> occupied himself so to speak, with the moral relations of things. The busy stage of life, the virtues of heroes, and the actions of men were his theme; and his hope and his dream was to become one among those whose names are recorded in story, as the gallant and adventurous benefactors of our species. (37)

The difference between Victor Frankenstein and Henry Clerval are no more than between Victor and Elizabeth. The degree of complementary traits between them makes a possible conflation for Victor between Clerval and Elizabeth likely. Indeed, the conflation between the two seems to be present for Victor as well, because right after comparing himself to Clerval he goes back to discussing Elizabeth. Henry Clerval and Elizabeth Lavenza thereby seem to generate an almost equal amount of social desire in Victor Frankenstein.

Through his own description of his childhood, Victor Frankenstein is equalling Elizabeth Lavenza and Henry Clerval in importance to his own upbringing. They are framed as having passed their time together equally, but as the novel progresses Victor seems to be spending more time with Clerval than he does with Elizabeth, at least in directly narrated encounters. The need for male social encounters and emotional bonding seems to be a central aspect of masculinity in the novel with the women pushed to the margins into Mellor's (1988) domestic sphere. So, if the patriarchy is ultimately about the hierarchal empowering of men at the expense of women this is also done to create an interdependence and solidarity among men (Sedgwick 2015). The relationship between men and women in *Frankenstein* is however more complicated than that, at least when looked at from the side of the men.

The transgressive monster

As pointed out by critics such as Halberstam (1995) and Mellor (1988), the story of Frankenstein has the overarching theme of patriarchal elimination of women. This patriarchal goal shines through in the homosocial desire among the men, and this desire for homosocial connection is physically manifested in the creation of the Monster. In his "workshop of filthy creation" (53), Victor Frankenstein attempts to create a man independent of woman. In fact, he plans there to be a whole race of beings made in his own image. As discussed by Halberstam, the major appeal and fright of gothic monsters is their ability to be a mirror and projection of us as readers. Frankenstein's Monster is a good example of this sentiment because it is a creature made in its creator's image and thus also in our image. Victor Frankenstein had thought of making a being "of simpler organisation" first, but then decided to create "a being like myself" (52) instead, elevating himself to a 'being of complex organisation' in the process. Victor states that he could not refrain from giving "life to an animal as complex and wonderful as man" (52) and therefore decides to model his creation on that. Later, he explains that his goal is to create "A new species" which "would bless me as its creator" (52). In an ultimate god complex, Victor wishes to create a new species in his own image, which will be a reflection of himself both in a physical as well as a social sense – and a reflection the Monster is.

Upon completion, the Monster's appearance is however the opposite of what was planned. Victor expresses that all the Monster's features were selected "as beautiful", meaning that it was to adhere to all his standards of male beauty. The way he describes the Monster's body, features of male beauty are however there:

> His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! – Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of *lustrous* black, and *flowing*; his teeth of *pearly whiteness*; but these *luxuriances* only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips (1831, 56 emphasis mine)

Despite his attempts at creating male beauty, Victor has failed. Paul Hammond points out that Victor "had taken care to select for his creature limbs and features which were beautiful in themselves and in the right proportion, yet the resulting body is monstrous" (1996, 124). This, to Hammond, is a subversion of the classic description of beauty in which the reader must gaze upon female beauty and focus on individual parts of the female body. In *Frankenstein*, the reader is instead made to look upon a naked male body through the eyes of appreciation of the individual parts, which combined are monstrous since it speaks to homosexual desire for the whole body. Such a reversal off the male gaze could help make the Monster more transgressive since its description most likely creates an uneasy feeling in a homophobic patriarchy. By making the reader a participant in envisioning the Monster's naked body they are also made to think about how he both does and does not differentiate from them.

When Victor describes the Monster's appearance, it is interesting to note what makes him so hideous from a physical standpoint is his skin since it "scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath" (56). The skin is transparent and so barely covers up what lies underneath the Monster's exterior. So, when looking upon the Monster, what hides beneath his skin-surface is never hidden from those looking at him. Underneath his transparent exterior, the onlookers see what also lies beneath their own skin as he is a replica of them. The Monster's transparency is a reminder of men's own materiality and biological constrictions. Scholars such as Dobson and Luce-Kapler (2005) points out that *Frankenstein* features a battle of control between man and nature – where nature is distinctively gendered as female. This they argue is showed in where the geographical location of the genders. The Monster is created in the urban and intellectual environment of Ingolstadt, whereas the Bride is to be created on the stormy and isolated Orkneys. The men, they argue, may travel through majestic natural landscapes in their intellectual pursuits, but the landscape hardly registers any more with them than do the women in their lives. Mellor (1988) points out that Victor Frankenstein himself makes nature gendered when he says that "I pursued nature to *her* hiding-places" (1831, 53). In the traditional understanding of men as intelligent and women as less so due to their approximation to nature, Victor's conquest of nature is also the masculine

conquest of the feminine. His Monster is thereby a symbol of the patriarchy's repression of women since he is the final result of this conquest.

The Monster however turns against Victor and seeks to destroy him. Victor Frankenstein believes himself able to control how nature works – to be separate from it and rational. As he moves through the novel nature seems to chase him down as vengeance for the transgression he has made by abolishing death. The Monster could stand as a symbol of nature's wrath in this interpretation, Dobson and Luce-Kapler (2005) argue. I will add that in a worldview where man is meant to be separate from nature and above it in a hierarchal sense, the Monster with its transparent skin is an unsettling reminder of the contrary. The skin reveals "the work of muscles and arteries beneath" (56) and so is reflection of man's connection to nature through his biology and own mortality. The Monster, although designed to be "beautiful" (56) and superior is instead a symbol of man's folly in thinking himself independent of nature's influence. It is not only in his exterior that the Monster reflects mankind, but also in his behaviour. Critics such as Weissman (1976) draw parallels between the Monster and Rousseau's Natural Man. The Natural Man is a tabula rasa, a blank tablet, and all that he experiences is imprinted on him. Likewise, the Monster is a tablet held up towards mankind and their deeds towards and around him are imprinted on it. The later violence and resentment the Monster exhibits are a result of mankind's cruelty towards him, because, at least according to himself, he was merely attempting to live among them in peace. The treatment of the Monster can then stand in for society's treatment of any marginalised group (Halberstam 1995). More concretely, Shelley's writing of the Monster can stand as a woman's critique of the patriarchal restrictions which has been put upon her.

Stryker (2006) puts forward the theory that the Monster speaks with the voice of a woman because the novel is a critique of society written by one. The Monster's act of speaking, to claim his voice and ability to express himself, is to Stryker a feminine act of resistance in a world where speaking and hearing "are gendered, respectively, as masculine and feminine" (2006, 247). Stryker also explains that the Monster "problematizes gender partly through its failure as a viable subject in the visual field; though referred to as "he", it thus offers a feminine, and potentially feminist, resistance to definition by a phallicized

scopophilia" (2006, 247). Although the Monster is referred to as a "he", he is then, to Stryker, feminised. His symbolic status can then be that of male femininity or female masculinity. Either way he is a transgression because he defies the doxic gender laws in the novel. The Monster is however not just a break with patriarchal notions of gender, but also ideas about race and social class.

There is an argument to be made that racial beauty and social class are seen in correlation in the novel and that the Monster's appearance represents a breaking of this correlation. Elizabeth Lavenza is singled out for adoption because she "appeared a different stock" than the other "dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants" she was found playing with (1831, 34). Consequently, she is brought into the Frankenstein family and raised as one of their own. Justine Moritz is also brought into the family in a similar manner, but is instead confined to the role of a servant. Her appearance is later described by the Monster as "not indeed so beautiful as her [Victor's mother …] but of an agreeable aspect" (139). To Halberstam this means that "Shelley betrays a class-biased belief that not only is nobility inherent but aristocratic class coincides with aristocratic race and is therefore *visible*" (1995, 40). This claim curiously seems to ignore the gothic monster's ability to critique society. I will argue that Shelley does not necessarily believe in a visible aristocratic race, but her characters do. Newman (1986) points out that the ability to speak fluently and seductively is an important ability in *Frankenstein* as well as appearance. Victor Frankenstein and the Monster show their surety and aristocracy in their talents for convincing others to get what they want. Victor seduces Walton with his well-articulated words, but is then subsequently himself seduced by the Monster's story and plight for a wife and companion. In contrast, the poor Justine Moritz finds herself completely overcome by the stories told her by her accusers when she is on trial. Her inability to form a story explaining the different proof that is laid against her becomes her undoing. The ability to speak and to speak convincingly in forming a narrative can then, to Newman, be a mark of aristocracy. The Monster's appearance is consequently a break with this patriarchal focus on beauty as a trait of the aristocracy and gender because his appearance is a transgression to all he meets.

The Monster does not have the appearance of nobility, for his exterior is continuously emphasised in the novel as hideous. Despite this he is able to speak and to get what he wants from it – to a certain extent. This duplicity makes the Monster into a transgression of the patriarchal narrative. He is by his looks supposed to be classified as a wretch, someone unintelligent and miserable, yet when he speaks clear and understandable words come out like that of nobility. If Shelley inhabits Halberstam's "class-biased belief" in appearance (1995, 40) then the Monster is an even larger threat to society for it, because he breaks with this belief. Halberstam however also makes the case that Shelley through this belief in racial class supplants social class with race. The Monster is supposed to be a new race of beings, rather than a human and in there lies another one of his threats to society – as a new race of beings. Shelley has however opted to make her monster a sympathetic one and to write his motivation and plight for the reader to read and understand. This humanises the Monster and makes him possibly less Other than if he was an unmotivated brute in the background of the story. However, the Monster's duplicity as both wretched and noble creates an interesting tension when he desires to duplicate other men's existence.

The Monster serves as a mirror of the men in the novel and through him their motivations are laid bare. It is therefore interesting how the Monster seems to yearn for a heteronormative existence. As previously argued the Monster is a mirroring of his creator Victor Frankenstein. Victor may have a homosocial desire for other men, but when the Monster asks for a companion for himself it is for a wife, not a friend: "You must create a female for me, with whom I can live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being" (140). The Monster instead of friendship seems to yearn for a relationship of uneven power. For women are after all according to the doxic rules of the novel's society placed in the domestic sphere, where they can wield little power over public affairs.

Victor on the other hand fears the creation of the Monster's wife because of her reproductive sexual power and the possibility that she will have as much agency as his first creation. He elaborates that "she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation" (160), meaning that he fears her possible free will and agency. The Bride will likely be as physically

strong as her husband, and can therefore force her will upon other men. Victor explains that he fears that "She also might turn with disgust from him [the Monster] to the superior beauty of man" (160). Mellor (1988) explains that the Bride's possible strength and agency can make her a sexual predator on men, reversing the notions of female submission, and Victor, in this moment, seems to fear this sexual power more than anything. This is because the Bride challenges the prevailing sexist idea that women are to be "small, delicate, modest, passive, and sexually pleasing – but available only to their lawful husbands" (Mellor 1988, 224). Victor has come to fear his creatures, who at one point were to be his superior creation, because they are truly out of balance with the separation of the genders established in the rest of the novel. Nothing makes him fear this unbalance more than the Bride, a woman, who would be able to inhabit, or even co-opt, the patriarchy through enacting her sexual will on men. Because of her gender, the Bride has the possibility to upturn the patriarchy even more than the Monster already can.

The Bride's reproductive powers are even more frightening to her creator. Victor explains that for the Monster "one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth" (160). This play goes against Victor's previous hope that a "new species would bless me as its creator and source" (52). The difference seems to be that Victor would supposedly be in control of this species, but the patriarch's inability to control any of his children has made him fear them. When the Monster then asks for a wife rather than a friend he becomes even more dangerous in Victor's opinion. Because of his previous singularity, the Monster has been an anomaly to Victor and perhaps even sexless. Bette London points out that it is first "when Frankenstein speculates on female monstrosity […] that he considers the threatening presence of the monster's male sexuality" (1993, 256). This reinforces masculinity and men as the perceived 'neutral' of storytelling and society whereas, women and others, as Halberstam (1995) points out, are marked as not-same and Other. The Bride's possible agency and freedom then reflects on the Monster's freedom from the reigns of patriarchal society. The fact that Victor fears the Bride might regain the same kind of independence as his first creation reflects on the tabula rasa they are both born with. The Monster has learned to long

for a heteronormative existence – the Bride may learn to long for something else entirely. Their independence and unpredictability makes them a transgressive threat to the patriarchy and so Victor must destroy them.

Preliminary conclusion

This chapter has sought to investigate the gender performance done by the different characters in the novel. At the outset, I looked into how patriarchal succession relies on a rebellion by the sons against their ruling fathers. This rebellion, I argued, becomes by its nature more and more extreme until it culminates in the Monster who seeks to end the life of the patriarchs who have gone before him. The sons are however also tied to their fathers and attempt to use their influence in the public sphere for their own gain. The chapter then looked at how the narrative structure as well as the male narrators favour masculine control, which could be seen in how the narrators addressed the readership and in how language and speech is treated in the novel. The next part looked even closer at the gendered performance and how the men seem to feel a homosocial desire for one another. This reflects upon the creation of the Monster because the experiment is taking away the need for women as a part of the procreational process in favour of men. The last part, considered how the Monster and the Bride are a transgression against the patriarchal order. The Monster's transgression can be several things: On a symbolic level, he mirrors the society around him and reflects on how they treat difference and minorities, but on a more fundamental level he questions their entire social order through his combination of wretchedness and nobility. Both the Monster and the Bride are a reflection upon the oppression of the feminine and fear of female agency. *Frankenstein* is thus an interesting look at how masculinity and patriarchy can be questioned and criticised in the nineteenth century through how men are depicted by themselves as well as how they are compared and contrasted to the monsters.

Chapter 2: *The Wasp Factory* and masculinity in a trans perspective

Introduction, theoretical works, and chapter argument

There is an inherent bleakness and isolation portrayed in Iain Banks' *The Wasp Factory* (1984). It was written right after the 1970s, a period which saw much social and political upheaval as the socio-political and economic orders were starting to get questioned and scrutinised. The novel, like *Frankenstein*, can then be interpreted as a reaction to an era of political instability. This is a common tendency amongst gothic novels because, as Heiland points out, gothic originally emerged as a response to the drastic changes of the "long eighteenth century (1660-1800)" (2004, 3). As a companion-piece to *Frankenstein*, the novel is a good illustration on how gothic as a genre, and the society which produces it, is still preoccupied with many of the same themes of identity and gender 166 years later.

The central argument of this chapter is that society in *The Wasp Factory* is founded upon a categorical and strictly binary understanding of gender. I argue that this understanding creates disastrous results for the characters as they try to fit into these dichotomist and exclusionary definitions which are in contradiction with how the characters, and people in general, are. Iain Banks' characters instead find themselves transgressing the gender binaries as they perform both masculinity and femininity despite their social genders. In opposition to how many others have interpreted the novel, I argue that Banks' story features explicit trans and intersex themes, especially in Frank Cauldhame's gender performance and identity. Not much has been written about *The Wasp Factory* by other scholars, but I have tried to engage with as many other analyses of the novel as possible in this chapter, but I by and large rely on social theorists for my framework.

For the work with this chapter I have read some core texts of theory in connection to gender studies and especially transgender studies. This is because although *The Wasp Factory* has been analysed and discussed as a novel dealing with gender (Alegre 2000, Pisarska 2014, Schoene-Harwood 1999), it also has, in my opinion, explicit transgender and intersex aspects to it. The main character, Frank, is attempting to perform a type of masculine persona

throughout the story despite being designated as female at birth. He is therefore performing a gender that is different from his given sex with a feeling and conviction that it is his gender identity. This performance makes Frank a character which transgresses the binary gender laws of the patriarchy. The trans angle is also a much better indicator of what the social expectations of masculinity are as it disconnects social gender further from biological sex.

Anthony Synnott (2009) writes about how masculinity is something men have to continually prove to others. Within society there is a scale of masculinity, a masculinity quotient (MQ), where those on the lower end are seen as weak and those at the higher are seen as strong. These latter ones are often promoted and rewarded for their perceived high masculinity. Synnott discusses how both men and women who exhibit strong masculine behaviour are idealised as heroes and how this "'macho' end [of the MQ] tends to be defined first in physical terms and by the male code of honour, bravery, duty, integrity" (2009, 22). The view on these "macho" male qualities is binary: There is the "male-positive" view, which tends to idealise men's roles as heroes such as policemen and firemen, and the "male-negative" view which tends to highlight men as "violent, oppressive of women, sexist and misogynistic, homophobic, perhaps emotionally stunted, work-obsessed" (Synnott 2009, 249). Masculinity then, according to Synnott, has a double understanding in society where men are both heroes and villains. On the other hand, he also explains that it "is not enough to be male to be masculine. That is a start, but it is not enough. Men have to *prove* their masculinity"(2009, 23). The idea is that men's masculinity is continually tested by other men and themselves, and so it almost becomes a continuing competition with no end. This endless competition leaves the men feeling insecure and under a constant psychological pressure to prove their masculinity.

The belief that masculinity is in any way or form connected to external appearance has been challenged by critics for some time (Halberstam 1998, Rubin 2006). The inclusion of transgender and intersex persons into the gender debate makes the debate even more complicated since there then is also a total disconnection between gender and body. The transgender person is born into a body which does not fit with the gender they themselves identify with, while the intersex person does not feel that any of the norms of sex fit them at

all. Trans criticism and writings is a field that has undergone huge changes throughout its existence. Whittle (2006, xi) writes about the terms “trans persons” or simply “trans” as the most inclusive of the terms. The inclusiveness is because the term can include all from transgender, transsexual, to cross-dresser. The term transgender is more understood as someone who is a gender other than their birth sex would imply.

In "Transsexuals in the Military: Flight into Hypermasculinity", Brown (2006) writes about studies made into the statistical anomaly between the percentage of male-to-female (MTF) individuals in the US military, compared to the rest of the population. Brown did research on the phenomena in the 1980s, and found that these soldiers, many of whom later transitioned to female, had throughout their lives been attempting to conform to some ‘hypermasculine’ ideal by exhibiting what could be considered extreme masculine behaviour. The behaviour these soldiers exhibited is termed as “hypermasculinity” by Brown, and is described as including “foolhardiness, overcompetitiveness, bellicosity, fragile hardiness and equations of ‘violence as manly’ and ‘danger as excitement’” (537). This behaviour, Brown theorises, comes from a rejection by these soldiers of their own draw towards femininity. For many, hypermasculinity was the opposite of femininity, and a flight into this type of behaviour was supposedly a ‘solution’ to their ‘feminine problem’.

Explicitly gendered masculinity

The Wasp Factory is a gothic novel which features issues and themes relating to gender identity much more overtly than *Frankenstein*. These themes are highlighted in the novel through the main character Frank’s ambiguous gender and sex identity. His gender fluidity brings with it a decoupling of masculinity from biological sex and a highlighting of his behaviour as a performance of gender rather than an inherent biological quality. This is because there in the novel is shown a dissonance between designated birth sex and gender.

Frank is unwittingly decoupling masculinity from biological sex through his performance of masculinity and attempts at proving himself a man – despite lacking male genitalia. In her writings on the topic of gender, Judith Butler (1999) renounces a connection between gender and inherent biological qualities. Gender is a performance to Butler. Those who perform it,

follow socially ‘scripted’ patterns of behaviour that are ascribed to their assigned gender. This also means that gender is a limitation on identity and personhood, and an attempt to force people into socially constructed categories that make it easier to presuppose personal qualities. Frank, who is designated female at birth, but hormonally transitioned to male without his knowledge, seeks through his behaviour to confirm to others and, especially, to himself, that he is a man. He does this by trying to conform to those socially scripted patterns of maleness. However, Frank finds that besides social expectations of gender, there are bodily expectations for a man which he cannot meet because of his emasculating ‘castration’. Both Frank and his half-brother Eric are caught in this conundrum where their bodies and behaviour do not fit in with the expectations that are laid upon them. In their attempts at conforming to societal norms, they also point out the restrictive notions and expectations of the genders in the society they occupy.

Strychacz (2008) argues that the inclusion of queer studies has made the discourse around maleness and masculinity more varied due to how it shows that not all masculinities give access to social power. The same kind of disconnection can be said to be happening with Frank because he illustrates the fault in tying maleness to the male body. When Frank exhibits what Brown (2006) calls hypermasculine behaviour, he does so with the explicit goal of being accepted as a ‘man’. His performance of hypermasculinity, however believable it might be, is always cut short because he does not fulfil the bodily demands for what a “man” should look like. Frank’s performance is therefore always in the making as he struggles to prove again and again that he is a man. Brown writes about hypermasculinity as one of negative definitions, where there is a rejection of all the “feminine aspects of the self” (538). The problem with such a rejection, and the definition of the self as an opposite, is that it becomes an identity that is always reactionary and could lead to a “frantic reoccupation” of identity in a “sexually dichotomized society” (Brown 2006, 538). Frank also rejects all feminine and female influences in his life as can be seen in his monologue about his enemies: “My greatest enemies are Women and the Sea. These things I hate” (50). In this quote, there is the militarist description of “enemies” that marks out two sides of himself that Frank has been fighting his whole life: “Women” (his own femininity) and “the Sea” (nature). Frank cannot change his

physical body from nature's biology, he may think that he has been castrated, but his lack of penis is a consequence of his birth. Nor can he change his own nature in the sense of who he is.

Frank's struggles are with different sides of himself that he cannot change or properly face. On the other hand, Frank is also in an ongoing fight with the Sea which he sees as his equal as well as enemy:

> 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. It does things to the world, and so do I; we should both be feared. Women … well, women are a bit too close for comfort as far as I'm concerned (50)

It is interesting how Frank seems to identify with his "enemies" to a large degree. He identifies the Sea as a "mythological enemy", an enemy that is created as a myth and an explanation for the woes of man. On the other hand, Frank also explains that the sea and he are "equal" because they both have an impact on the world. This impact, it is inferred, is one of destruction. Likewise, Frank also finds that women are "close" to him, in fact "too close for comfort". This felt closeness goes on to support my previous claim that women represent Frank's own femininity, something that is very close to him, closer than he would like because he was in fact born with female qualities. This would also play into the phenomena observed by Brown (2006) where hypermasculine MTF individuals were outright rejecting their feminine side by fleeing into a militarist existence.

The Sea is also part of a larger metaphor concerning water in the novel. One of Frank's pastimes is building dams in creeks on the island. Like Brown's (2006) hypermasculine men suppressing and withholding their own femininity, Frank suppresses and withholds water. It is therefore interesting that he should make the comparison between women and water as they are both aspects of his life that he is trying to build dams around. Water in this sense is the sea, Frank's submerged nature which he cannot change any more than he can stop the water from overflowing the dam. When Frank connects the sea to women, he is also conjoining the metaphorical damming of his own sense of self with his more physical damming of water. However, Frank doesn't subconsciously think the

withholding and damming is viable in the long run. While contemplating on the science of dam-building, Frank explains that

> you can never really win against the water; it will always triumph in the end, seeping and soaking and building up and undermining and overflowing. All you can really do is construct something that will divert it or block its way for a while; persuade it to do something it doesn't really want to do. The pleasure comes from the elegance of the compromise you strike between where the water wants to go [...] and what you want to do with it. (25)

As a metaphor, this passage can be about two things specifically: Firstly, it is about Frank and his ongoing battle with his own femininity and violent anger. He may try to dam it up, to ignore it and lead it into "something it doesn't really want to do", but in the end "you can never really win" because Frank can never really change or best himself. Secondly, the passage is a larger metaphor about the situation Frank finds himself in – as a part of his father's gender experiment. Angus Cauldhame is attempting to change his child into something he doesn't want to be, to block off his feminine side. In the end both metaphors have the same conclusion: that you cannot really change Frank's core identity. There can be made a "compromise" in the sense that aspects of him can be changed, but as Frank summarises himself at the end of the novel "I *am* still me; I *am* the same person" (242) and no matter what anyone tries to change about him, he is still himself.

Frank is not only building dams, but is also creating miniature villages and towns for the dams to protect, and when he blows the dams, for the water to destroy. Frank is here giving himself power through imagination. Few things seem to excite him as much as the destruction of these miniature societies he has made. After having built a large dam above some big miniature villages, he blows the dam up with a bomb. As the water destroys what he has created he describes it: "Dams were disintegrating, houses slipping into the water, bridges and tunnels falling and banks collapsing all over the place; a gorgeous feeling of excitement rose in my stomach like a wave and settled in my throat as I thrilled to the watery havoc around me" (152). Through this game of miniature dams, villages, and bombs, Frank seems to be imagining the collapse of society itself. The description can almost read like a disaster film

with the water pushing and washing away the innocent village. On a meta level the destruction of miniature society represents Frank's destructive influence on the status quo. His ambiguous gender and sex questions the doxa of those institutions and highlights how artificial it all is. On a smaller level, the dam building can be seen as a ritual. It symbolises Frank's desire to have his "marks" left evident in the world (50) when they are usually washed away by the sea. The dam building is not the only routine of Frank's that gives him symbolic power.

Masculine power rituals

Frank's behaviour and routines are designed to give himself power over his own life and island domain. His rituals seem in many instances to be founded on an understanding of 'native religions' similar to the children in Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1966). The decisions Frank makes are based around the Wasp Factory, a contraption designed to tell the future by having wasps led to their deaths. The island is protected by the Sacrifice Poles, sticks with the heads of mice and other animals put on top of them. Frank also has an altar with the skull of Old Saul, the dog which allegedly castrated him, to keep his "old enemy in *my* power" (141). These rituals, along with the dam building, seem to be designed to endue Frank with power – with a phallus, if you will. "My enemy is twice dead, and I *still* have him. I am not a full man, and nothing can ever alter that; but I am me, and I regard that as compensation enough" (142) is how Frank concludes the story about how he reclaimed Old Saul's skull. It would appear from this quote that by claiming possession over his attacker, Frank has regained a piece of control over his own masculine identity. By imprisoning his "enemy" Old Saul, the supposed origin of the emasculation which defines him, Frank is attempting to take charge of how he is himself defined as a man.

A contraption designed by Frank to determine fate and his own decisions, the Wasp Factory is itself a symbol for his life. A live wasp is put into a huge clock. By each number on the face of the clock there is a door to a corridor, which in turn leads to different kinds of death contraptions for the wasp. Frank seems to halfway believe that the death the wasp meets will have an outcome on his own life. On a symbolic level, the wasp is Frank, who believes himself to be in control of his actions, and to a certain degree he is, but he does not realise the

game is rigged. For any door the wasp enters, will ultimately lead it to its doom. Doom for Frank is changing into something unrecognisable. Eric is Frank's warning of this type of change since he left the island: "Eric went away. Eric […] chose a path and followed it. That path led to the destruction of most of what he was, changed him into quite a different person in whom the similarities to the sane young man he had been before only appeared obscene" (180). The best cause of action for anyone who does not wish to change in the Wasp Factory will be inaction, to remain within the clock face, or on Frank's secluded island, never to venture through one of the doors which will shut the moment anyone decides to go through. The Wasp Factory is also a rejection of responsibility on the hands of Frank. He does not determine the outcome of the Factory, and so in his mind he is not to blame for the actions it tells him to commit.

The Wasp Factory is after all a central tenet of the novel, to the point where the novel derives its name from it. Surrounding the Factory are trophies of Frank's previous victims: "the skull of the snake which killed Blyth […], a fragment of the bomb which had destroyed Paul […] "a piece of fabric from the kite which had elevated Esmeralda" and "the yellow, worn teeth of Old Saul" (157). These are trophies of times when Frank has had total control and been the judge of life and death. For this reason, he can also be at his most vulnerable as he is surrounded by these reassurances of his own phallic power:

> I held my crotch, closed my eyes and repeated my secret catechisms. […] They contained my confessions, my dreams and hopes, my fears and hates, and they still make me shiver whenever I say them […] The catechisms also tell the truth about who I am, what I want and what I feel, and it can be unsettling to hear yourself described as you have thought of yourself in your most honest and abject moods, just as it is humbling to hear what you have thought about in your most hopeful and unrealistic moments (157)

What these catechisms say is not revealed in the novel. They do however seem to be recited when Frank is at his most vulnerable. Since his life is dedicated to projecting a hypermasculine persona, this moment, when he is surrounded by all the trophies of his unquestionable power, is the only time when he can afford to be emotionally vulnerable. It

speaks to Frank's understanding of masculinity, which seems to relate to Synnott's (2009) observation that masculinity is something that is continually tested. Therefore, any display of weakness is not affordable or one will be labelled weak. Frank can therefore only blot himself even a little when he has these symbols of masculine violence around him.

Because of his lack of a penis, Frank finds himself in a constant battle against being labelled as feminine by the conventions of the larger society around him. In *Re-Thinking Men* (2009), Anthony Synnott writes about masculinity and how it is enforced in Western society. He observes that

> It is not enough to be male to be masculine. That is a start, but it is not enough. Men have to *prove* their masculinity. And other men are constantly testing the limits in their different ways […] Men have to compete to *prove* their masculinity and their worth, or risk being categorized as unmasculine, and they have to be successful, winners, number one, in at least some particular domain, and in their own eyes. (23)

The opposite of masculine, the "unmasculine", is most often the feminine within a binary understanding of gender. For the man to be masculine he must then distance himself from the feminine, but, as Synnott points out, masculinity is also closely tied to the idea of success, winning, to be powerful in the eyes of oneself and others. Whenever Frank acts out his violent displays of power – destroying the dam, blowing up the rabbit grounds, imprisoning Old Saul's skull – he does so to be "number one, in at least some particular domain, or in [his] own eyes" as Synnott described it. Through his distancing himself from the feminine, Frank is however escaping into militant hypermasculinity.

Hypermasculine behaviour is described by Brown (2006) as a behaviour in MTF individuals who seek to distance themselves from their own femininity. These individuals sometimes signed up for the military because they believed it might help them convince themselves and others of their own masculinity. This flight into hypermasculinity entailed an extreme behaviour where several behavioural characteristics were noted by Brown such as "bellicosity, fragile hardiness and equations of 'violence as manly' and 'danger as excitement'" (Brown 2006, 537). These characteristics certainly fit Frank's modus operandi, which attempts to cover up an ever-emerging uncertainty by proving his manliness through

violence and danger. A facet of Frank's violent behaviour is also that of his bellicosity, his warlike personality.

The legacy of war is ongoing in *The Wasp Factory* with its physical remnants scattered around Frank's island. Frank has elected an old bunker as his base of operations. From there he plans and directs his mini wars on animals and insects or just through his games of toy soldiers fighting aerosol. Frank and Eric used to play wargames together when they were young. These games were often about "brave soldiers in the dunes and fighting, winning and fighting and fighting and sometimes dying" (181). In the games they played, a certain mindset therefore seems to have been prevalent, 'you either win or you die, but you always fight'. The number of times the word "fighting" is mentioned in the above quote has an interesting resonance with Synnott's observation that men always "have to be successful" and that masculinity is something which must be repetitiously confirmed (2009, 26). In a society where fighting in a war is a way of solidifying one's masculinity (Seidler 2006), the continued use of the word "fighting" speaks to Synnott's observation that masculinity must be continuously solidified. The military focus also harkens back to Brown's hypermasculine understanding of "violence as manly" (2006, 537). By repeating the word "fighting" it becomes the centre of these foundational games played between Frank and Eric. It also echoes Frank's larger continuous fight against the world to secure his own surety and power.

The stories Frank and Eric play out also have similarities to the popular culture which surrounds them. The sentiment that Eric would "die" after "having just blown up the bridge or the dam or the enemy convoy and like as not saved me from death, too" (181, *sic.*), echoes many a war movie. The cultural influence of war seems to be seeping into all the games the boys play. As Pisarska points out, Frank reveals throughout the novel a "familiarity with the British culture of the 1980s, whose manifestations can be noticed in the popularity of punk music, electronic games, ubiquitous BBC documentaries, or the programmes of John Peel, a well-known English DJ from BBC Radio 1" (2014, 44). Added to this is Frank and Eric's re-enactments of cinematic war missions and perilous natural disasters. These are Frank's reflections of what Pisarska calls the "dominant semiosphere" which is pitted against "an alternative world model of Frank's own devising" (44). To Pisarska, Frank's world of

understanding is a subversion of the larger culture which surrounds him, while Frank himself concludes that he "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" (243). This line of thought also connects Frank as a gothic monster, who, through his transgressions, is a comment on the larger society.

A comment that is made through Frank, the gothic monster, is the role of militancy in the formation of masculinity. Seidler (2006) writes about the impact war had on the youth of the 1970s and the relationship to their fathers in Western Europe. The children came from families where generations of patriarchs had fought in or otherwise been connected to war. The mythos and shared experience of, particularly, the Second World War, both was and is central in British culture. Frank's generation would be one that grew up without a war but with constant reminders of it surrounding them. Frank is indeed surrounded by the remnants of war: there is the bunker, the German bomb, and the explosive cordite from the Royal Navy under the main house. These memories of a different time are there as a haunting reminder of what has passed in a similar manner to Baldick's (1992) gothic hauntings. Seidler writes about a consequent uncertainty "about being 'man enough' in [a] post-military culture" (2006, 14) where masculinity has been asserted and recognised through war and bellicosity. The patriarchy does not change its demands for what masculinity is as quickly as society changes. Therefore, Seidler argues, the young men growing up during this time would feel a bigger unease about their masculinity than their fathers and grandfathers did. Frank is an extreme example of this observation as he is supposedly emasculated through castration and constantly trying to engage in warlike behaviour and speech to make up for it. He sees women as his "enemies" (50), invades the rabbit grounds which is beyond his "territory" (29), and kills his half-brother Paul with a German bomb (88).

The killing of Paul is a reflection on warlike masculinity in society. Frank claims that Paul had to die because he was a continuation of Old Saul's soul. Paul then, symbolically to Frank, is a sort of continuation of Frank's misfortune – a symbol of his emasculating incident. When he sets out to kill Paul, it is by using a bomb from an old German warplane. As Frank discovers the bomb on the beach it is described as almost reaching out towards Paul, claiming

him: “It was […] casting a shell-shadow. I followed the line of the shadow along the sand, over the rocks, and found myself looking at little Paul” (85). The instrument of war is here either using or being used by Frank to kill the innocence of the young boy. Paul’s innocence is emphasised throughout the section. His childish mispronunciations are given phonetically (“brekast” (85), “prakiss” (87), “an’ry” (87)) to enhance his innocent nature. Out of the three victims, Paul and Esmeralda are victims who are apparently killed purely because of reasons that are no fault of their own.

Frank’s murders are a part the continuous erosion of his own childhood innocence. The spoken motives for Frank’s murders reflect this change where he goes from emotionally invested to cold and distant. When Frank kills his cousin Blyth with an adder, it is out of revenge because Blyth killed Frank and Eric’s pet rabbits. The motive of revenge is something understandable in the sense that it is done in a heat of passion. The motive of killing Paul is still revenge, according to Frank, but on a more symbolic level, since he is supposedly killing Old Saul. There is still a certain passionate rationale to this murder, although it is far more loosely applied than in the first one. When it comes to Frank’s last victim, Esmeralda, it is because he has “done womankind something of a statistical favour” (111) by previously only having male victims. Esmeralda is thus killed with mathematical logic rather than for any solid reasons relating to Frank. This statistical murder is also reminiscent of the notion of men as logical and rational beings. It is interesting that Frank would kill Esmeralda because of her gender since he earlier claims that “the very old and the very young are” practically “sexless” (51). This is later contradicted when Frank admits that “my victims would be those most recently produced by the one act I was incapable of” (243). This sexualisation of the children also marks them as gothic children as described by Bruhm (2006).

The gothic child derives its uncanniness from how it is entrenched both in the world of childhood innocence and the world of adult sin. Bruhm (2006) writes about how one of the gothic child’s keys to frightening the reader is how it can inhabit both of these worlds at the same time. Frank as a character inhabits Bruhm’s ambiguity where he has a childish construction of the world coupled with more adult undertones. He plays around on the island,

constructing dams and playing with toys, but he also has many hateful notions about women and is hurting animals for his own gratification. His violence comes from sexual frustration to the point where he kills children for their symbolism of sexual coupling. Frank's status as an outsider and a gothic monster makes him a dangerous element in society in general, and his destruction of children then makes him an intrinsic threat to society's future. On the other hand, Frank's fundamental hate towards women and his own mother can be as much of a factor. The idea that the children can be corrupted by forces unseen makes them even more scary in Bruhm's opinion. In one of his murders Frank kills Paul, his mother's son and the symbol of her having left them for good. Frank's murderous tendencies could also come from his fundamental belief that "Both sexes can do one thing specially well; women can give birth and men can kill" (154) – or maybe it comes from the fact that he is just himself. In *The Wasp Factory,* it is the children who suffer and not the adults. Blyth, Paul, and Esmeralda are killed by Frank, while Eric goes mad from societal pressure.

Frank and Eric's violence and its reflection on the patriarchy

Frank and Eric are the two surviving children of the Cauldhame family. They both have their own scars left from their upbringing and express seeming desires to perform acts beyond that of their assigned gender. Schoene-Harwood (1999) posits the idea that society reacts differently to Frank and Eric's violence and that this is because there are underlying gender differences behind their actions. Frank Cauldhame is the narrator of the story, and considers himself very masculine despite experiencing emasculation from a perceived castration complex. He spends most of his time performing a particular form of masculinity, by asserting his dominance over the various animals on his island domain. His half-brother Eric Cauldhame, on other hand, is characterised, through Frank's narration, as more feminine: "He was always a bit sentimental, always the sensitive one, the bright one" (43). They are both quite different except for the fact that they are both, according to Frank, murderers. Frank has killed three of his relatives, two cousins and a brother, along with numerous different animals, while Eric unintentionally caused his mother's death whilst being born, in addition to killing several dogs. The siblings' personal dispositions and acts of violence provoke different

reactions from the society around them, and through these reactions, the expectations that society places upon their designated gender are highlighted.

The reaction to Frank's behaviour by the society around him, appears to be tacit acceptance with minor protests. His father, Angus, comments that "I hope you [Frank] weren't out killing any of God's creatures" (9), but Frank also explains that Angus "never seemed bothered about the suffering lower forms of life" (141) and therefore doesn't really care about Frank torturing and killing them. Although Angus posits the idea that "Sometimes I think you're the one who should be in hospital, not Eric" (9), but he seems to leave it at that thought. This remark is also interpreted by Frank as "Once, that sort of talk would have scared me, but not now" (9). It is therefore not uncommon for Angus to try to scare his son like this, most likely as a form of control, but as the time has gone on it has become less effective. The fact that nothing has come from his threats might even have encouraged his son's behaviour.

It is not only Angus who tacitly accepts Frank's behaviour, the village people of Porteneil do it as well. The village people may, according to Frank, mock him for his lack of a penis and perceived mental faculties, "he's not all there, you know […] and sometimes, just to rub it in, they don't point to their heads as they say it" (10), but no one has made an inquiry into the dead animals around the village and island. Their mocking of Frank's castration may reinforce his notion that he must prove himself further to be a man, and so their mockery and silent complacency fuels his motivations to continue his violence. On the other hand, their supposed mockery may also be a projection of Frank's own insecurities. Whenever Frank interacts with people of the village, there is little to indicate any actual hostility. Their tacit acceptance of Frank's behaviour is however interesting, especially when compared to their reaction to Eric's spree of violence, which was met with fear and almost immediate institutionalisation.

Eric Cauldhame is in some ways his brother's opposite on the spectrum of gender performativity. It would seem that he throughout his life has found himself drawn towards feminine enterprises, rather than masculine. Eric was always "the sensitive one" (43), his father "dressed [him] in girl's clothes" (81) as a child, and he ultimately chose medical care as his profession. Schoene-Harwood (1999) theorises that it is the patriarchal pressure to

conform to masculinity that ultimately breaks Eric. The triggering incident comes after a prolonged period of pressure where Eric has been failing in many masculine endeavours: he failed to keep a girlfriend, and his migraine was making his studies increasingly hard. Eric was thereby failing both in romantic 'conquering' and in scientific pursuit. Additionally, although he studied as a doctor like his father, Eric seems "drawn to the nurturant and caring (traditionally feminine) rather than scientific (traditionally masculine) aspects of the profession" (Schoene-Harwood 1999, 138). Whilst having a bad migraine and working in a teaching hospital on the side, Eric discovers an infant with worms eating its brain. This event creates a mania that is described by Schoene-Harwood as not "hysteria [...] but in a mad, excessive emulation of phallic heroism" (139). After all of the previous patriarchal defeats, Eric's failure in protecting the baby would seem a last emasculating blow to his already strained psyche. Seidler discusses how men "may feel they should be 'in control' of their experience" (2006, xvi), meaning that admitting an emotional toll will be perceived as a weakness. Within the patriarchy emotional reaction to pressure, pain, and trauma is equalled to such weakness, and so Eric's failure to cope with his emotional trauma is a big emasculating blow.

The reaction of society to Eric's violence after his mental breakdown, is different from Frank's. This could be because of how Eric's violence bears with it a symbolism of male femininity and how it cannot thrive in the patriarchal social system. After Eric's traumatic incident he develops a modus operandi of lighting dogs on fire and forcing worms on small children. He is in many ways just as violent as his brother, he destroys several dogs and phone boxes on his way home from the asylum, but as Frank points out, their violence has a fundamental difference. Frank makes it clear that he is "not Eric [...] I don't bother people and they had best not bother me if they know what's good for them. *I* don't go giving people presents of burning dogs, or frighten the local toddlers with handfuls of maggots and mouthfuls of worms" (10). What Frank says is that *his* violence does not bother other people, and so they do not pay him much attention. His actions of blowing up rabbits and decapitating rodents are "never deviant or subversive but follow the normative guidelines of masculine propriety" (Schoene-Harwood 1999, 136). Frank can therefore go on doing what he wants

because his violence in no way bothers the established expectations of masculine actions. He even got away with killing three of his relatives by playing straight into the expectations of the adults around him. Eric's violence, on the other hand, is directed at things the village people care about, like their children and pets. They may also take issue with how Eric's violence is originating in a place of perceived masculine weakness, namely his emotional reaction to trauma.

Eric's transgression is that he couldn't cope under the surmounting patriarchal pressure and couldn't keep his emotions under control. Schoene-Harwood argues that Eric's violence affects the societal order more because it is performed publicly, as opposed to Frank's "peninsular seclusion" (1999, 137). By destroying other people's property and threatening their family stability, Eric becomes intrusive and Other to them. I would also argue that the nature of Eric's mental breakdown, through failure to live under patriarchal pressure, furthers the dynamic of him affecting the societal order more. After all, Eric's breakdown came from having failed in most of the endeavours masculinity told him to be good at: his (scientific) medicine studies, romantic conquest, and physical prowess (his migraine). When he finally breaks, it speaks of a system that is forcing its inhabitants to conform to categories that can be directly harmful to them. As Frank explains it in his own sexist way: "Whatever it was that disintegrated in Eric then, it was a weakness, a fundamental flaw that a real man should not have had" (195). On the other hand, Frank also ponders that: "Women […] 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" (195). Eric's psyche also seems to "go to pieces" after his traumatic incident, thus falling into Frank's description of feminine weakness.

Eric's trauma comes from a larger reaction towards how gender is treated in society. As mentioned earlier, Seidler (2006) talks about men striving to be in control of their emotions and emotional outbursts. After Eric fails to contain his emotions his own violent actions further the idea of his failure, because his violence comes as a reaction to the trauma he has experienced. Caruth (2001) writes about how trauma victims are forced to re-experience the traumatic event repeatedly as a part of their mind's inability to comprehend the

incident. The mind's reliving of the trauma therefore will not be a healing experience, because the victim's mind is unable to fully understand what has happened. Eric's reaction to his trauma is to stick worms and maggots into children's mouths, and so he mimics his inciting incident. His modus operandi is however doubled with the other part being setting dogs on fire. This part of his reaction does not fit with the catalysing incident since it involves neither children nor maggots.

The readers of the novel are never given any concrete form of explanation as to why Eric is harming dogs as a part of his reaction to trauma except for one incident. During Eric's second call to Frank, Frank questions why Eric is eating dogs. His response is one of bewilderment: "Are you *crazy*? What's the matter with you? What's the point of that? These are *dogs*, aren't they? It isn't as though I was killing cats or fieldmice or gold-fish or anything. I'm talking about *dogs*, you rabid dingbat! *Dogs*!" (74). It is interesting that Eric seems so incapable of understanding why Frank would question his violence towards dogs, especially when considering that Frank himself has qualms about one dog in particular (Old Saul). Trauma is sometimes something which will build up as the mind is put under more and more pressure. As such, the inciting traumatic incident may not always be the actual trigger as much as what came before it.

Dogs have a deeper meaning in *The Wasp Factory*. Old Saul is a symbol of turning Frank into a gendered Other. It could be that Eric is seeking to undo the harm done to his siblings through lighting these dogs on fire. Eric has certainly seen a lot of harm done to children throughout his life. He has lost two cousins (Blyth and Esmeralda) and an adopted brother (Paul), although that is because of Frank. Eric seems however to have been close to Frank as his sibling and playmate when they were younger. The image of the baby with its brain consumed by maggots can be as much of a symbol for Frank and Eric as anything else. Their brains are also being consumed and altered by the patriarchy around them in the figure of their father. Eric is after all older than Frank and could be aware of his gender change, even if it might be on an unconscious level. When Eric escapes from the asylum at the beginning of the novel, his mission seems to be going straight home to Frank and Angus. When he arrives, he tries to blow up the Cauldhame house by setting fire to the cordite which lies in its cellar.

The House of Cauldhame can represent one of the last remaining relics of an old and wealthy landowner family now fallen into disfavour. Through this representation, it is also a symbol for an old patriarchal order of the classical gothic as described by Baldick (1992). The house is an old structure sitting on top of large amounts of explosive cordite from the Second World War. As such, it is a metaphor for the militarist culture Frank and Eric have grown up in – and which Eric seeks to destroy. Going by the structure of the house, Frank and his Wasp Factory live at the top in the attic. Here Frank is free from his father's interference since his mother Agnes' wounding of Angus' leg limits his movement. The rest of the house is open to Frank, but under his father's supervision. The only rooms that are locked are his father's study, where the truth about Frank is hidden, and the cellar where the explosive cordite from the war is kept. The house, like the rest of the island, is a symbol for Frank's life. There is a sense of dormant danger to the arrangement of the house and its inhabitants. Frank is safe in his transgressive nature at the top of the house whilst underlying the house there is the destructive power to destroy the whole patriarchal structure. I therefore argue that Eric's mission is to upset and expose the patriarchal charade that has plagued the Cauldhame family. His mission seems to be to ignite the cordite and bring down the whole oppressive symbolism of the building. Just like how his actions are exposing the failures of the social order to accommodate for male femininity, so is his attempt at blowing up the house laying the groundwork for Frank to discover the truth about "What Happened to Me" (237). Eric's journey home is the framing device which counts down to the reveal of Frank's gender history, and Eric continues to be a force which showcases the inherent problems of the strictly binary and essentialist understanding of gender.

Interestingly, Frank's behavioural 'normality' and Eric's 'abnormality' within the society they are raised in is further reinforced by Iain Banks in his 25th anniversary preface of the novel. Banks wrote that he was trying to exaggerate real issues in the society around him when he was growing up and he therefore wrote Frank by following the

> write-what-you-know school but torqued with a dose of Skiffy [sci-fi] hyperbole, mining my own past for exaggerateable experiences. I'd built 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. Along with a pal, I'd indulged in the ten not-uncommon and perfectly innocent teenage boy pursuit of making bombs, flamethrowers, guns, giant catapults and more bombs; Frank would too, though alone and with a more determinedly harm-minded intensity (xi).

Banks here makes the distinction between what was considered 'normal'; what he was doing as a child; and what Frank is doing. Frank can almost be interpreted as a parody of Banks' own childhood, with every activity given some form of murderous edge. Although the preface is written years later, it does offer some form of contemplation on the environmental influences on the novel. The way Banks saw it, his main character's activities were, on the surface, seen as normal at the time the novel was written, but the novel would also reveal the underlying problems with such an understanding.

Steven Bruhm (2006) argues that the gothic child is scary and transgressive because it has one foot in the protected world of childhood innocence and another foot in the sinful world of adults. In this light, *The Wasp Factory* is unmasking the idea that children are oblivious to adult topics, while also making a statement about the very thin line between what is understood as 'normal' child behaviour and deviancy within society. Banks seems to agree with such an interpretation and writes that "I was also trying to make the point that childhood innocence isn't – and wasn't – as most people seem to imagine it; children harbour quite as many violent thoughts as adults, they just don't usually possess a sophisticated moral framework within which to place them" (xi). Eric's understanding about how their upbringing is negatively impacting their lives is even more interesting when such an understanding is considered. Frank points out that when he and Eric were playing soldiers, Eric would also die during the game: "I tried to change the story myself and he refused, slipping away from me and dying; too often dying" (181). Eric seems to understand that the social values they are growing up with, militancy and strict patriarchal rules about behaviour, will in the end be harmful to them. His very existence does in many ways disprove these values and the social reaction is to lock him up in an asylum by Diggs the policeman.

Like his brother, Eric's femininity decouples masculinity from biological sex. MacInnes (1998) explains that "masculinity exists only as various ideologies or fantasies, about what men *should* be like, which men and women develop to make sense of their lives" (2) and that "For masculinity and femininity to have anything to do with sex [...] there had to be something specifically male about masculinity, and female about femininity" (25). As previously stated by both Schoene-Harwood (1999) and myself, Eric seems to be drawn towards the feminine more than the masculine. He would then complicate an understanding of men as inherently masculine and women as inherently feminine. In the same manner, Frank is able to perform and exhibit masculinity to such extents that it becomes hypermasculine, despite his female birth status. The Cauldhame siblings are as such exposing this socially held fallacy through their actions and existence.

Women within patriarchal narratives

Like in *Frankenstein*, knowledge and the ability to shape narratives are portrayed as key components of patriarchal power in the novel. The chief wielder of these is Frank's father, Angus. He is perhaps the central character with the least amount of motivational exposition in the novel. This is mostly because the narrator, Frank, does not really know much about his own father. As the readers are limited to Frank's point of view, they are also subjected to his father's manipulations of his worldview and understanding. Angus is the one who has constructed the narrative of Frank's gender and castration story for his own reasons. He is also the one who keeps the experiment going by giving Frank hormones without his consent or knowledge. Throughout the novel, Angus is depicted as trying to retain his control over Frank by keeping him in uncertainty over what the truth is. As the novel unfolds, it is clear that most of the things Frank knows and tells the reader come from Angus. The story of Frank's castration, his mother, his and Eric's early childhood, even most of Frank's foundational education has been told to him by his father who home-schooled him. Most stories that are told to the reader, Frank will follow with some form of the caveat "or so I was told". This means that although Frank is the first-person narrator, and consequently in charge of the narrative, the information the narrative is based on mostly comes from his father.

The Wasp Factory as a gothic novel is to a large extent preoccupied with the past and its influence on the future. This can be seen through the structure of the novel where Frank spends a lot of the time recounting past stories. The past has however been defined and created by Angus. An example of this is how his sons remember their mothers. Like in *Frankenstein* there is an elimination of mothers in this novel both from the story itself and in the narrative shaped by Angus. There are few details shared about Mary Cauldhame, Angus' first wife, in the novel and they are only about her death. Frank tells that "Eric's head was too big for her; she haemorrhaged and bled to death on the marital bed back in 1960" (23). Mary died whilst giving birth to a son on the "marital bed", a symbol of a traditionally consummated marriage. Her name, a probable literary allusion to her virginal Biblical namesake, could help cement how she seems to be remembered in the family. She is remembered solely through her maternal death and not because of any other qualities she might have had in life. The narrative of her life and function in the family is retold to the readers, by Frank, from the perspective of her motherly sacrifice.

The next mother, Agnes, is represented as Mary's opposite in terms of characteristics. Her name is an inversion of Angus and illustrates her uprising against his patriarchal authority by trying to become independent of him. She left the family twice, both times shortly after giving birth to her children, Frank and Paul, thus abandoning all motherly responsibility. Her contribution to the family is like that of Mary, to give the patriarch more children. The patriarch Angus then turns their children into sons. Unlike Mary, Agnes did not leave because of maternal death in a literal sense, but rather to manifest her own independence. Agnes, the way she is depicted and remembered in the novel, finds herself in a rebellion against the limitations the patriarchy places upon her body. Like in *Frankenstein*, the notion of motherhood seems to be tied to death either in a literal or symbolic sense and so Frank explains that Agnes "didn't like children in general and Eric in particular; she thought he was bad for her karma in some way" (82). This distaste for children could be tied to the notion of motherhood as death. Agnes then must escape Angus' patriarchal grasp in order to avoid the fate of Mary.

However, Agnes gives birth to two children in the novel, Frank and Paul, each with different fathers. After each of the births she disappears without any explanation. Angus tries to question her about where she has been the three years after Frank's birth, but she "told him not to be so possessive about her and her body. She was well and with child; that was all he needed to know" (136). She is here reported as using the feminist slogan of the 1970s to reclaim her body to justify her abandonment – or so it was remembered at least by Angus. Agnes seems to refuse Angus access to her body beyond her children, using him instead for his house and wealth when it suits her – in the way she is remembered at least. Her assertion that her body is hers and not Angus' creates ripples in the patriarchy around her, and she becomes vilified because of it. To further emphasise how upsetting she is to the patriarchal family dynamic, Agnes runs over Angus' leg as she's leaving, giving him a limp for the rest of his life. Agnes' freedom sparks a furious hate within the patriarchy because she seeks to disconnect herself from its influence.

The memory of Agnes is therefore fragmented with few certainties scattered throughout the narrative Angus has formed. "I can't remember anything about [when they last saw her] at all", Frank admits, but then boasts that "From the little I've been able to piece together when my father has chosen to let slip some information, I've been able to get what I think is an accurate idea of what happened" (136). The memory of Agnes is then dictated by Angus, the literally wounded patriarch. This is of course a portrayal that would hardly be accurate. Agnes' memory can indeed be summarised by how Frank admits that "I can't remember my mother, because if I did I'd hate her. As it is, I hate her name, the idea of her" (81). Her name, the alternate of Angus, has taken on a symbolical meaning, one of betrayal and the breaking up of their nuclear family. The idea of her is of the one who rebelled, and as a result she is remembered much more vividly than Mary Cauldhame. Agnes' legacy is however tarnished and the hate towards her has been transferred to her child.

Knowledge as masculine displays of power

It is not only the narrative of the past Angus is shaping for as a scientist he also tries to shape and bend nature to his will. Angus is obsessed with the measurements of everything in his house, and so everything is labelled with its dimensions: "Ever since I [Frank] can remember

there have been little stickers of white paper all over the house with neat black-biro writing on them […] they give the appropriate measurement for the part of the object they're stuck to. There are even ones in pencil stuck to the leaves of plants" (7). At random times, Angus may ask Frank, or a guest, what measurements some object in the house is. This is done as some form of power ritual to prove Angus' own superiority in a similar manner to Frank's variety of rituals for the same purpose. Frank calls these moments "embarrassing" (7), but his father seems to think them important which in turn illustrates a semiotic difference between the two. One time Frank tore off all the stickers around the house and was promptly "belted and sent to [his] room for two days" (7). Considering this reaction from Angus within the larger narrative of power and the maintaining of power, this tearing down of his measurement stickers would be seen as a possible rebellion against his patriarchal authority.

Through his obsession with the measurements of objects, Angus is also shown clinging to the apparent objectivity of definitions. Seidler (2006) writes about a belief in "scientific rationality" (6) among men: that humans, through their logic and reasoning, can both understand and control nature. Through his measuring of objects around him, Angus is playing into the idea of men as logical and rational beings in control of their surroundings. Through narrowing things down to their respective numbers and dimensions, Angus is also distilling them into their basic 'knowable' premises. Empirically the things 'are' their measurements, but they do not say anything about their uses or behaviour. That Angus knows the measurements of things, and others do not, could supposedly heighten him as the more powerful man in his own eyes. This measuring experiment is then an echo of what Angus is doing with Frank. Angus tries to redefine the physical attributes of his daughter's body to be defined by the lack of a penis. This again instils a negative definition on Frank, who is no longer defined by his possession of a vagina, but an anti-penis within his father's measurements. Throughout the novel Angus' power over his sons is however waning.

There is an ongoing battle in information and secrets between Frank and his father in the novel. Frank keeps many secrets from his father: The Wasp Factory, his bunker, and the murder of his relatives. At one point, Frank is watching his father without his knowledge, because "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" (148). Frank seems to agree with the power that comes from knowledge and surveillance. His remark that he feels "aware and fully conscious" when his father is oblivious to him watching him, shows such an understanding. It also speaks to a feeling of relief to be outside of his father's sight and influence. Frank after all spends most of his days close to his father or within his sight with very few places where he can hide from him. In fact, it is later revealed that his father has always been keeping tabs on him by allying himself with people in the village. Knowing things that his father does not makes Frank feel powerful because he has very few secrets that he can keep from him.

Angus in turn both has and is feeding Frank misinformation about the world. Frank highlights some of them in the novel: "My father once had me believing that the earth was a Möbius strip, not a sphere" (8), "For *years* I believed Pathos was one of the Three Musketeers, Fellatio was a character in *Hamlet*, Vitreous a town in China, and that the Irish peasants had to tread the peat to make Guinness" (11). What Angus is doing is controlling his son's worldview, making him question most of the things he tells him. At the same time, Angus has left several clues for Frank about the nature of his existence. He has given him the novels *Myra Breckinridge* and *The Tin Drum* which contain clues to Frank's situation[2]. Frank has however never read them because of his mistrust and general dislike of his father (61). Angus seems to be keeping his child in a state of confusion where he can never truly be certain of what his father tells him. This confusion makes it harder for Frank to discover any truth about himself, because the story that he has been told is just as outlandish as the lies his father tells him. Despite this, Frank believes that now that he is older and can look up things himself, his father "has to tell [him] the truth" (11). As it turns out, that is not the case with the reveal that Angus has even warped the truth about Frank's biological body.

[2] Per an analysis done by Pisarska (2014, 52): *Myra Breckinridge* tells the story of a MTF who undergoes hormonal therapy to become a woman. While in this body she commits several violent actions before an accident stops her hormonal intake. This reverts her back to her male body. *The Tin Drum* tells the story of a young boy who never grows up beyond the age of three. The story is violent and fantastical and features a highly subjective narrator.

The eradication of the feminine from the patriarchal narrative

Throughout the novel Angus Cauldhame has been conducting an experiment on his youngest child Frank. The nature of this experiment has been to covertly feed Frank male hormones, turning his body into a hybrid of the male and female whilst raising him as a boy. What exactly this gender experiment is seeking to prove, if anything, is not explained that clearly in the novel. Frank reports that it is supposed to be "a way of lessening – perhaps removing entirely – the influence of the female around him [Angus] as I grew up" (240). Other scholars have interpreted this as a reaction to Agnes' betrayal against Angus' authority (de Coning 2012, Pisarska 2014, Schoene-Harwood 1999). However, I will point out some interesting contradictions in Angus' thought-pattern when he tries to remove the feminine in favour of the masculine.

Gender is often perceived by the patriarchal order as being something default, binary, and essentialist. According to Moi (1989), for the patriarchy to uphold its social power, gender needs to be binary and have essentialist categories. This is because only then can people be correctly categorised within the hierarchy. Using Moi's examples, feminine (cultural/behavioural) must be equalled to female (biological) in the patriarchy, because it means that any woman who is not feminine will not just be different, but unnatural. Using this principle, the same would apply to men, and so the masculine must be equalled to the male. Masculinity will also be featuring traits and characteristics that are seen as positive and powerful in the patriarchy, while the feminine will have characteristics that are seen as negative and weak. This desired connection between personality and biological body is also partly because the patriarchy is ultimately about empowering men. MacInnes (1998) seems to agree with Moi in that if men are to be superior and women inferior, there must be some real-world qualities that are inherently male and female. If these differences do not exist then making the social distinction between the genders becomes pointless. It is interesting to apply Moi's theory of patriarchal gender principles to the gender experiment performed in *The Wasp Factory*.

Angus seeks to remove the feminine (behavioural) from Frank and change his body (biological) from female to male. This act is in itself in accordance with the patriarchy

because it seeks to eradicate the inferior feminine until nothing but the masculine remains. I argue that there is an underlying contradiction of beliefs occurring in this gender experiment. While Angus is dealing with gender from a patriarchal standpoint of suppression and male dominance, he is also making an underlying assumption – that gender *can* be changed. When Angus tries to remove all essential female qualities from his daughter, he is also acknowledging that gender is something that can be taken away, otherwise what is the point of trying to change it. Through the advent of hormonal therapy, Angus has the ability to change both his child's gender and sex. On the other hand, such a realisation about gender would seem to contradict Moi's assertion that the patriarchy will want biology and behaviour to merge in order to keep the male in a position of power. The belief in a needed masculine superiority is then trumping the newfound understanding of gender as an artificial construction. The experiment is still about banishing the female and feminine, but the argument used cannot any longer be their biological inferiority because of this underlying understanding that gender is *not* something static or inert.

The gender experiment could be a reaction to the social movements of the 60s and 70s that happened before the novel. *The Wasp Factory* is a novel built upon the fragments of the past. As the story unfolds, the readers are introduced to more and more pieces of information and anecdotes until a fragmented past is put together. Throughout the novel Angus' past as a part of what Frank describes as the 'hippy movement' is brought up from time to time. Angus' involvement in this movement is never explained in detail. He does seem to have been a part of the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s going by the interactions with Agnes; the giant face painted on the house; and his underlying understanding of gender as a social construct. The memories of this past hang there faded on the wall emerging at times in the story. There used to be a big painting on the side of the house displaying a colourful face and other forms as "A relic from the days when my father was a hippy, they are worn and gone now […] Only the vaguest outlines are still discernible now, along with a few freak patches of real colour, like peeling skin" (151). Angus' countercultural past is much the same as these paintings, a faded memory with a few memories appearing now and then. The fragments of

the past are not just an illustration of a different time in the patriarch's life – they are also reminders of Agnes and her betrayal.

Agnes seems very much like a construction in the patriarchal memory of the novel. She is valued more for her symbolism and what she stands for – deviation and rebellion – than for her personality. Yet despite her absence from the novel she has had a big impact on the story and the characters. It is after her once-again-escape from the island after the birth of Paul that Angus supposedly decides to turn Frank into a boy. Likewise, her time together with Angus hangs over the island like the colourful painting of a face on the house. The experiment Angus is doing on Frank is then an attempt to remove the last vestiges of Agnes' memory. The experiment is an interesting fusion of Agnes' influence on him as well as his academic background as a scientist. Angus is after all conducting his gender experiment from the stance that gender can be changed. "My father is a doctor of chemistry, or perhaps biochemistry – I'm not sure" (11) is the little information that Frank gives about his father's education and former vocation. At some point, Angus was also a part of the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s where he might have picked up the notion of gender's social construction. The university background could then have granted Angus the access to male hormones as well as the knowledge of how they work. His attitude towards and attempts at changing gender then becomes a fusion of his old counterculture convictions with the patriarchal focus on science as manly and logical. The knowledge that gender is a construct and that bodies can be changed has made the patriarchal goal of suppressing, maybe even eradicating, the female much more a reality.

The rejection of the patriarchal narrative

However, by the novel's end the patriarchal power structures have become undone. Eric arrives to finish his mission of blowing up the cordite under the house, and Frank learns the truth about his upbringing. Angus has by the return of Eric lost his power. He gets drunk, is visibly shaken, and seems in general far less composed than he has through the rest of the novel. Frank on the other hand seems completely in control. After having stopped Eric from blowing up the house, he enters back into the kitchen. In this section, Angus' shock and lack of self-control is contrasted to Frank's surety: "My father stood looking old and stupid, his

eyes were bleary and wet and his hands shook. I felt myself calm down, gradually" (236). In this scene, Frank is taking control of the narrative as he says that "I'd like you to sit down and tell me one or two things I'd like to know" (236). Angus is nervous, his control totally gone, he shakes so much that the specimen jar with Frank's 'penis' slips out of his hands and breaks. Franks explains that:

> He gave me a nervous laugh, bent, and stood back up holding what had been inside the jar. He held it out for me to see, but I was looking into his face. He closed his hand, then opened it again, like a magician. He was holding a pink ball. Not a testicle; a pink ball, like a lump of plasticine, or wax. I stared back into his eyes. 'Tell me', I said. So he told me. (236)

The comparison to a magician is fitting to what is going on here. Angus' power over the narrative of who Frank is magically disappears the moment he closes his hand on Frank's penis and opens it with "a lump of plasticine". After this moment, Frank is free of the constraints that have been put on his body and he is now left with a choice: To stay on the island or to leave its sanctity and face the world at large.

The island has through the novel been kind of a constructed fantasy. It has been a place where Frank has found himself stuck in a moment of uncertainty while a battle to define him and who he is has been raging around him. Frank's body has never fitted the limitations which have been put on it by the culture surrounding him and so his masculinity has been constantly in question. He has no penis and his body has never looked "the way I'd like to look" (19). When he then takes power away from his father by the novels end, he has the choice to remain on the secluded island, where he will be in question as a person, or to leave the island and go out into the world. Leaving the island has been equalled to that of change in the novel – mostly for the worse. Frank explains the dangers of leaving the island through the example of Eric:

> Eric went away […] Eric with all his brightness, all his intelligence and sensitivity and promise, left the island and tried to make his way; chose a path and followed it. That path led to the destruction of most of what he was, changed him into a quite different

> person in whom the similarities to the sane young man he had been before only appeared obscene. (180)

The outer world beyond the island is scary to Frank, because it symbolises a commitment. On the island, he has the pre-planned routine of youth to live and organise his life, but out there he will have to change and become an adult. He summarises himself that "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" (241). The novel ends with Frank's ruminations on choice and what lies ahead of him:

> Each of us, in our own personal Factory, may believe we have stumbled down one corridor, and that our fate is sealed and certain […], but a word, a glance, a slip – anything can change that, alter it entirely, and our marble hall becomes a gutter, or our rat-maze a golden path. Our destination is the same in the end, but our journey – part chosen, part determined – is different for us all and changes even as we live and grow. I thought one door had snicked shut behind me years ago; in fact I was still crawling about the face. *Now* the door closes, and my journey begins. (243-44)

Frank believed himself locked in the definition that was put on him, "I thought one door had snicked shut behind me years ago". In fact, he was not destined to forever be an emasculated man for now he realises that there are other options viable to him. Leaving the static sphere of the island will, like with Eric, throw him into chaos, but it will also make it possible for him to define himself on his own terms.

Trans masculinity

Frank's gender experience appears to be a multi-layered one with trans undertones which makes it hard to define him. On the surface, he is channelling his best impression of the militant masculinities he sees on TV, but underneath he is also repressing an ever-emerging femininity. This gender experience is trans in its nature. Pisarska makes the argument that Frank's "secondary sexual features" are "persistently surfacing despite the hormonal diet" (2014, 60). This, she argues, is the reason Frank seems to still be "too fat", "chubby", "strong and fit, but still too plump" (19) in the novel. Like his larger battle with women, Frank's body

is battling the influence of men through its possible rejection of the hormones. It also is a real possibility for his body to reject the hormonal treatment since his father has tampons lying at the ready if it should. Frank's body and behaviour is then a combination of femininity and masculinity as both male and female hormones are battling within his body and mind. His existence is one of constant struggle with the socially constructed gender definitions around him which do not fit him or his body. Likewise, a trans person is someone who transcends the normative definitions of gender, identifying their gender differently than the society around them. Frank may deny his own trans status, but it is always there under the surface, because as he says himself: "women are a bit too close for comfort as a far as I'm concerned" (50).

The gender themes and issues in the novel makes the notion of a set of binary gender categories seem dubious and false. This is partly because Frank's gender identity can be interpreted in at least three ways: (1) Frank is female-to-male (FTM) through his performance of a male gender while biologically born female. (2) Frank is male-to-female (MTF) through the symbolism of a man realising that he is a woman. (3) Frank's gender identity is unverifiable because throughout his life he has always been told by others what he is, thus making it exceedingly harder for him to define himself on a gender binary scale – and he may not even fit on the scale at all. Additionally, his body is interlocked between the sexes as he is both female and male at the same time for most of the novel. The third interpretation is the more fruitful for this thesis when it comes to further discussion, because it raises the topic of gender and sex as socially constructed definitions, as well as the problems deriving from a binary understanding of gender. Frank's status as someone in-between, as intersex, also makes him possibly even more of a transgression as a gothic monster. The third interpretation will therefore be my overarching interpretation of gender in the novel: That Frank's gender identity and masculinity are intermediate and unverifiable by the reader at the novel's end, because Frank's life has been one of external definitions being applied to him by those around him.

In her article "Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transsexuality" (2006), Judith Butler writes about the John/Joan case which is a case remarkably similar to Frank's. "John" was born male, but was given sex reassignment surgery

at an early age due to a botched medical procedure on his penis. On the advice of a psychiatrist, Dr John Money, the parents were to raise John as "Joan" – a girl. Throughout her childhood, Joan showed signs of wanting to be a boy, but was repeatedly told by Money that she was a girl. She was also offered oestrogen and surgery that would provide her with a vagina, but she refused. This went on until Joan met Dr Milton Diamond, who argued that she was in fact a boy due to her possession of Y chromosomes. Surgery was eventually done on Joan to retransition her into a boy. The case has often been brought up for its supposedly condemning evidence against determining a child's sex at such a young age.

Butler (2006) sees the case differently and questions the understandings of gender which the doctors inhabit. Both experts involved in the case, Dr Money and Dr Diamond, are according to Butler defining gender in a limiting way through their practice. Their definitions for what constitutes a person's gender are rather simplistic, especially since gender is such a large basis for the formation of identity and how we are seen. Butler makes the following point about Money and Diamond's understandings of gender:

> So, on the one hand, how my anatomy looks, how it comes to appear, to others and to myself as I see others looking at me, is the basis of my social identity as woman or man [Money]. On the other hand, how the presence of the Y tacitly structures my feeling and self-understanding as a sexed person is decisive [Diamond]. (Butler 2006, 187)

Butler's point is that neither of these approaches to gender are helpful because they are binary definitions which make those that do not fit neatly with either of the male or female categories into Other. Money observes how a person's body appears on the outside and draws gender conclusions from that, while Diamond looks to the chromosomes within to explain a person's understanding of self. Gender cannot derive from either of these definitions, because they can leave someone misidentified, and by their ability to exclude people they are not good enough as identifiers of gender or sex.

These definitions also ignore how such exclusions and demands for change might affect those who do not necessarily fit them. Butler asks instead to look at the experience of gender from John/Joan's perspective:

> When Joan looked in the mirror and saw something nameless, freakish, something between the norms, was she not at that moment in question as a human, was she not the spectre of the freak against which and through which the norm installed itself? […] John seems to understand clearly that the norms are external to him, but what if the norms have become the means by which he sees the frame of his own seeing, his way of seeing himself? (Butler 2006, 190).

Butler's main argument on gender is that it is socially constructed and delimitating to identity formation (1999, 2006). In the end these socially constructed guidelines become how we see and shape our own identity as a sexed and gendered person. Throughout his life, John was constantly met with external expectations and definitions about who he was, with the focus either being on the outside or inside of his body. Butler is essentially asking why John cannot just be who he is without having to conform to categories based on 'either/or'. The moment gender becomes exclusionary it will turn those who do not fit into Other – "in question as a human". Another point would also be if John after having spent his formative years being dictated by others is even able to identify himself in a gender binary.

This is certainly an interesting argument when applied to *The Wasp Factory*. Frank has himself had his body and gender dictated by others throughout his life, particularly by his father who has both changed his bodily hormones as well as raised him as a boy. Frank has been continuously told he is a boy and to acts as a man to the point where he is performing a flight from all femininity into hypermasculinity. It can therefore be argued that "the norms have become the means by which he sees the frame of his own seeing, his way of seeing himself" (Butler 2006, 190). Frank after all considers himself nothing more than "honorary man" (154) which, in a binary understanding of gender, also makes him "in question as a human". For if Frank is not fully a man or a woman, then what is he within the gender binary? Throughout the novel Frank makes the reassurance that 'I am (still) me' (142, 242), but he seems uncappable of defining what or who "me" is. Frank's sense of identity for most the novel is reactionary, a definition of what he does not have, a penis, and so he is forever grasping for social value. Continuously readjusting to external expectations of body and behaviour does not make for a sound foundation on which to build an identity.

The Wasp Factory is then a story about how striving to live up to the external expectations of a binary and essentialist understanding of gender is not only futile, but also harmful. Frank has grown up hating and resenting himself. There is frequent imagery and deliberation about his hate and discomfort with his own body: “my body was a forlorn hope for any improvement, so only my mind was left” (11); “The shower is the only time in any twenty-four-hour period I take my underpants right off” (51); “I’m too fat. It isn’t that bad, and it isn’t my fault – but, all the same, I don’t look the way I’d like to look. Chubby, that’s me. Strong and fit, but still too plump” (19). This dichotomist view of self is most apparent in the last quote where Frank goes through a range of emotions concerning his own body image. He first complains that he is “too fat”. This is then mitigated by his admission that “It isn’t that bad, and it isn’t my fault”, thus absolving himself of blame for his appearance. This is again reverted in his summary and conclusion that “all the same, I don’t look the way I’d like to look”. When looking at his own body, Frank then seems to see himself as what Butler calls “the spectre of the freak against which and through which the norm installed itself” (2006, 190). Defined by a “lack of” rather by a “possession of” his body is forever made into Other by the comparison to the norm. Frank’s body is here also connected to his role as a gothic monster. The monster’s body is what defines normality, because normality defines itself by its own distance to the Other (Halberstam 1995, Heiland 2004).

Frank’s status as Other does not go away on the moment of his gender reveal. When Frank’s father Angus informs Frank that he is “a woman” (241) it is another instance of external definitions being put upon Frank and his body. The change of Frank’s gender is done through a literal rebranding. His name reverts from Francis Leslie Cauldhame to Frances Lesley Cauldhame and then he reiterates that “I’m a woman” (241). Even though Frank claims that “Part of me still wants to believe it’s just his [father’s] latest lie, but really I know it’s the truth” (241), he also could “feel it in my bones, in my uncastrated genes” (155) that he was a man. Frank’s surety of identity comes from others, and his father in particular, but the definitions for him are changing by the novel’s end. Frank is then remarkably similar to the John/Joan case. His lack of a penis is in the beginning defining him as being an emasculated

man. Later, his ‘anti-penis’ is defined as a vagina, supposedly making him a woman, “according to Dad a normal female” (241).

Frank’s sex status is however for the moment ambiguous. His body is intersexed; it has the qualities of both male and female. Throughout his life, Frank has performed hypermasculinity as a defence mechanism, and a rebranding of his body does not necessarily change such a thing. As he says, “I *am* still me; I *am* the same person, with the same memories and the same deeds done” (242). Frank remarks that he must now leave the island, “I can’t stay here, and I’m frightened of everywhere else” (241). Leaving the island has throughout the book been associated with changing radically, such as the example of Eric. Frank draws parallels between how Eric chose a path that “led to the destruction of most of what he was” (180) and how must now find himself anew: “my father’s truth has murdered what I was. But I *am* still me¸ I *am* the same person” (242). Frank leaving the island will presumably be to find out who this “me” is in the same way that John had to redefine himself. By making the choice to leave, Frank has set a new course for himself. A he points out “I thought one door had snicked shut behind me years ago; in fact I was still crawling about the face. *Now* the door closes, and my journey begins” (244). Frank’s life on the island was one of immobility with every door open for him to enter, with the reveal of his gender truth he has entered a path which he must now follow to its logical conclusion. Where the corridor ends, nobody knows – perhaps least of all Frank.

Preliminary conclusion

This chapter had as its goal to analyse masculinity and gender in *The Wasp Factory*. The novel has gender as a central theme throughout the story. I argued that society’s notion of what gender should be can be harmful to those who do not fit neatly with the binary gender categories. I have analysed Frank Cauldhame’s performance of hypermasculinity as he tries to escape his own underlying femininity. His war on women and the sea becomes a symbol for the patriarchal battle which is taking place to define his body. When compared to his brother Eric, Frank’s violence seems to fit the criteria of a young boy. Eric’s violence on the other hand carries with it social stigma towards male femininity and so he is incarcerated and shunned. Frank and his transgressive nature is however hidden from the world on his father’s

island. There his father is making all his best attempts at controlling Frank's sense of history and identity. This patriarchal struggle for the truth however falters by the novel's end as Frank prepares to make efforts to define himself rather than following the definitions of others.

Chapter 3: Comparing the novels' gothic masculinities and concluding thoughts

Introduction

This final part of the thesis concerns itself with masculinity, genre and my overall conclusion. The novels find themselves intertwined through how they deal with the themes of masculinity, men, and power. The idea to also interlock two novels, separated by 166 years, through genre and theme is appealing because it illustrates a continued interest amongst the readers of the gothic genre and the topics it can depict. Gothic today appears to be as alive and well as always, particularly through the medium of film where it seems to renew and re-establish itself on the regular. A good novel will often be aware of its own genre and use it to great effect in guiding and subverting the reader's expectations. *Frankenstein* and *The Wasp Factory* are a fusion of genres which they use to entice and guide the reader's understanding of the text. With their narratives of social taboos and transgressions both novels are well-fitted into the modern interpretation of gothic as done by Botting (1996), Halberstam (1995), and Heiland (2004), but they also have archetypes and tropes that make them fit in with the older version of the genre concerned with the past and its haunting as done by Baldick (1992). On a thematic level the novels are also closely linked in that they question the foundations of identity formation and are critical of masculinist ideas of male power.

The Wasp Factory has often been compared to *Frankenstein* by literary critics in their introductory passages as a form of explanation of the former novel (de Coning 2012, 1, Pisarska 2014, 64, Schoene-Harwood 1999, 132). The comparisons are usually in the vein of pointing out how Angus Cauldhame is "Frankensteinian" in his work on his young child. However, these critical works seldom go further into the parallels between Shelley and Banks' scientific rogues than this initial comparison. I aim to further explore this connection between the two novels and their apparent fascination with patriarchy, bodies, identity, and power. *The Wasp Factory* can be seen as a modern retelling of the Frankenstein myth with a monster which is now even closer to the reader. The themes raised in *Frankenstein*, it seems,

are as relevant today (identity, masculinity, patriarchal hubris). However, through Banks' narrative lens these themes receive a more contemporary approach and understanding.

The thematic comparisons between the novels

The most obvious common theme between the novels, when it comes to this thesis, are the disastrous results which stem from unchecked masculine intervention with nature. A central aspect of the Western European understanding of masculinity is how men believe themselves separate from nature in their thoughts and therefore better positioned to influence and change it (MacInnes 1998, Seidler 1994, 2006). Angus Cauldhame and Victor Frankenstein both follow this idea to extreme ends through their experiments on shaping and moulding their children's bodies with the tools science provides them. Both novels have characters with a fundamental belief in science's ability to accomplish anything, including bending nature to its will. There is on the other hand also a moral tale in both novels of the consequences such meddling will wreak.

When Victor Frankenstein sets out to create a man he does so as a way of asserting his own patriarchal authority within the public sphere. This act has been characterised as highly patriarchal because an unspoken consequence is also the elimination of women from the process of birth, and removing their remaining power in the process (Halberstam 1995, Mellor 1988). Victor's homosocial desires are thus extended to his creation of a new species which ends up being exclusively male (Sedgwick 2015). The being Victor constructs, is wholly within the masculine sphere of society without any female influence on its creation (Dobson and Luce-Kapler 2005, Mellor 1988). The same goal is more overtly confessed by Angus Cauldhame for his experiment. Frank reports that the experiment was "a way of lessening – perhaps removing entirely – the influence of the female around him [Angus]" (Banks 1984, 240). Angus Cauldhame's experiment is then more honest about its intentions, yet not as far reaching as Frankenstein's experiment. The lesser reach is because the Cauldhame experiment does not fully remove women from the process of birth like Frankenstein's could. The central assumption is however the same for both Angus and Victor: that they through their scientific

knowledge can change and control things which have been believed to be beyond man's control – bodies and gender.

There is therefore a lesson embedded in the novels of what will happen when the "antiquated tyrannies" described by Baldick (1992, xxi) are carried into the present. The antiquated tyranny in this case is the ancient patriarchy's goal to suppress "and sometimes outright sacrifice" women (Heiland 2004, 10). The patriarchy is very much alive in both novels. The Genevan society in *Frankenstein*, as Mellor (1988) argues, is founded upon the division of the sexes into spheres where the men can maintain their influence in society at the cost of the women. Likewise, in *The Wasp Factory*, Angus Cauldhame has created an island quarantine where all female influence is to be repressed after the betrayal of his wife Agnes. Both the Frankensteins and the Cauldhames are of the aristocracy, although the House of Cauldhame has found itself waning in influence and importance. Frank explains that "we used to own a lot of the land around here. Now all we have is the island, and that's pretty small, and hardly even an island at low tide" (12). As such, what used to separate the Cauldhames from the rest, their island seclusion, is waning along their wealth and influence. The emasculating symbolism of Agnes is then that she saw herself as equal with Angus. His antiquated and patriarchal aspirations to eliminate the female is then as much of an attempt at reversing this equalisation of his family as it is in getting revenge at her. The past thereby finds itself still haunting the present as the ancient patriarchy finds new ways of reasserting its dominance.

The power of science is central to both experiments, because through science it is believed that men have the power to change the world around them. This goes back to Seidler's (2006) theories of masculinity and its connection to science and rationality. Men are here linked to cognitive reason and can through this declare control over the natural world and their animal bodies. Women, on the other hand, are seen as closer to nature and therefore intellectually inferior. These sentiments are echoed, for instance, by Frank, who is himself a product of this male superiority assumption. Frank's ruminations on the topic of gender-differences also betray his own gender status and doubts. He puts women beneath men and marks them as his enemies and something he must remove himself from: "My greatest

enemies are Women and the Sea. Women because they are weak and stupid and live in the shadow of men and are nothing compared to them" (50), yet he also identifies with his enemies through comparing himself to the sea and how women are "too close for comfort". Even more overtly Frank ponders on the engineering of sheep into being more docile: "We didn't want them [sheep] to be smart […] Of course, the rams are brighter, but even they are demeaned by the idiotic females they have to associate with and inseminate" (193) before he admits that it "occasionally occurs to me that something the same might have happened to women but, attractive though the theory might be, I suspect I'm wrong" (193). The whole passage as it turns out is however an illustration of his own situation as he himself is a monstrous construct by his father to lessen "the influence of the female around him".

Frank Cauldhame, being a gothic monster, is however not only a reflection of his father and his opinions, but also of the society which created him. Pisarska (2014) points out that the popular culture of the larger semiosphere is a part of Frank's daily life and thoughts. Frank himself also admits to deriving lessons from the semiosphere: "Women" he says, "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" (195). In this quote, besides rejecting the validity of any female emotional experience, Frank singles out films and television programmes as contributors to how he views and understand feminine behaviour. He also later claims to have shaped his hypermasculine behaviour on popular culture as well (243). The influence of the larger society, what Pisarska terms the larger semiosphere, on Frank's understanding of the world is thereby also cemented. Frank is a reflection of that society, and his actions and thoughts mirror it.

The quote also reveals a belief in what masculinity is supposed to be. Masculinity, the perceived opposite of femininity, is then to be more in control of one's emotional reactions, in a similar fashion to how Victor Frankenstein notes that a "human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind, and never to allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquillity" (Shelley 1831, 54). Mellor (1988) argues that Victor identifies nature as female when he claims to pursue it "to *her* hiding places" (Shelley 1831, 53).

Likewise, Victor in a similar fashion labels the “human being in perfection” a ‘he’ in “*his* tranquillity”. The separation between ‘animalistic’ feminine and the ‘rational’ masculine is thus proclaimed within the novel. There may be an agreement among the male main characters in the novels what ideal emotional behaviour looks like, but that is not shown to be the case through their behaviour.

The notion of idealised emotional calmness in men is disputed in the novels by having men fail under emotional duress. Most of the male characters have some form of panic attack: Eric’s mind shatters from pressure, Frank reacts with horrible violence whenever his integrity is threatened, and Angus is shaking nervously at the end of *The Wasp Factory*. Whenever he suffers emotional distress, Victor Frankenstein finds himself entering a frantic state very much unlike the “calm and peaceful mind” of his “human being in perfection” (54). Before the creation of his Monster he is “oppressed by a slow fever” and “nervous to a most painful degree” (55) and after the creation is done, he falls into a fevered state for days. Indeed, throughout most of the rest of the novel Victor seems to fall into some form of despair or illness whenever a large emotional toll is wrought on him. Victor is thus echoing Frank’s earlier statement about women’s reactions to emotional trauma. The novel’s main characters are shown to be in disagreement with their own ideas about masculine emotional states – thus also questioning the validity of their claims. Their reactions vary depending on the characters. For instance, the creators Victor and Angus find themselves experiencing some form of catatonia when the consequences of their toils are made apparent to them.

Unlike their creators, the gothic monsters in the novels react to emotional distress with anger and violence. When Frank is put under pressure his reaction is anger rather than catatonia. This can be seen when he is attacked by the rabbit buck. Frank goes to the ‘Rabbit Grounds’ to shoot rabbits, but is there confronted by a new buck which tries to chase him off in a territorial battle. In the end, Frank comes out on top, but his reaction seems to be frantic anger rather than the composition and logic he holds so dear. “There’s only one way to react after something like this” (36) he says and goes home to find bombs to blow up the grounds and the other rabbits in a passionate revenge scheme. Anger is often portrayed as the only acceptable emotion in men, and it is certainly featured in both novels.

The Monster displays anger at how he is not allowed to pass in the society around him. After being rejected by the De Laceys, the Monster proclaims that "the feelings of revenge and hatred filled my bosom, and I did not strive to control them; but allowing myself to be borne away by the stream, I bent my mind towards injury and death" (134). Resentment and anger overflows the Monster who lets himself be taken "away by the stream" in much the same way that Victor Frankenstein's fear turns to anger when the Monster has killed most of his family. Likewise, Frank shows a profound anger at himself and those around him and he can barely dam up his own "stream". There is then an underlying facet to masculinity in the novels that the characters believe themselves to be composed and rational, and therefore above women who are discomposed and irrational. It is, however interesting that the monsters, who are created as an idea of men, seem to react more readily with anger than their creators. Thus, the masculine's notion of itself is presented in the monsters. It is however shown that these ideas of men and women are untrue through the characters' behaviour where the men show themselves to be just as discomposed and irrational as they proclaim women to be.

Masculine narratives and control

The Wasp Factory's retelling of the Frankenstein myth reaffirms the control of truth as a central aspect of masculine power in the story. Most of the characters in the novels are male, or identify as such, and they occupy the central stage in most of the events depicted. The women are marginalised and on the edges of the story and both Shelley and Banks only make their presence felt when the story demands it. Elizabeth Lavenza emerges to give Victor his motivation, first as the hope of a quiet, heteronormative, family life in his future, and later as a tragic motivation for him to finally go after the Monster. Likewise, Frank's status as possibly female emerges at the end of the story in order to explain the underlying plot of the novel.

The suppression of the female at both a narrational and narrative level is common in the gothic genre. As Donna Heiland (2004) points out, women seldom fare well in gothic stories, because "gothic novels are all about patriarchies, about how they function, what threatens them, what keeps them going […] Patriarchy inevitably celebrates a male creative

power that demands the suppression – and sometimes the outright sacrifice – of women" (2004, 10). The male creative power is in *Frankenstein* and *The Wasp Factory* celebrated in the form of male narrational authority as well as the power to meld and shape bodies. The women are however suppressed and removed from having a play in the stories. On another level, Frances Cauldhame must also sacrifice her own body to become Frank and ensure Angus a world without 'female influence'.

There is also a link between the two novels through the trans-gender nature of their narration. Stryker analyses Shelley's text and explains that it is "informed by – and critiques from a woman's point of view – the contemporary reordering of knowledge brought about by the increasingly compelling truth claims of Enlightenment science" (2006, 247). Due to its female author, *Frankenstein* has a female voice underlining the telling of its story and so there is fundamentally an analysis from a woman's perspective which is presented in the novel. Newman (1986) also points out that the characters in *Frankenstein* mostly talk the same way, with no differences in voice or phrasing. It can therefore be inferred that the characters are talking from Shelley's perspective. The structure of *Frankenstein's* frame narrative and its many different narrators are according to Newman not there to show different interpretations of situations. For despite being told by supposedly radically different characters, the different stories told in *Frankenstein* all follow one another and seldom contradict each other. Banks' story has a different relationship with narration and at times deliberately deceives the reader about what is going on. *The Wasp Factory* also has the narrational voice of a character who was designated female at birth, but was written by a man.

Because of Banks' understanding of gender at the time, however, he does not seem to see for himself that his main character problematises gender further than a story of attempted gender conversion. In his later preface to the novel, Banks claims that he envisioned the novel as a "pro-feminist, anti-militarist work" (2013, xi). This quote explains his own interpretation of the novel. The notion of its 'pro-feminism' is supposedly an interpretation of the story as a woman under the suppression of the patriarchy – a girl tricked into believing she's a boy and hating herself for it. There are however more interpretations possible from the text as its nuances are understood with more contemporary theory.

Banks' interpretation does not necessarily open for the trans experience his novel is also portraying. Interestingly, Newman (1986) points out a similar thing being done in *Frankenstein*. The novel was published with a preface written by Percy Shelley for Mary Shelley, who published the original novel anonymously. In this preface, Percy Shelley writes that the novelist's (Mary Shelley) "chief concern […] has been limited to […] the amiableness of domestic affection, and the excellence of universal virtue" (1818b, 12). As Newman points out, this claim contradicts many of the themes which are present in *Frankenstein*, because "the amiableness of domestic affection" is something that is continuously dismantled throughout the story. Percy Shelley's preface is, more overtly than Banks', limiting and to a certain extent working against the story it is prefacing. Mary Shelley later wrote her own preface where she instead heightened the aspects of horror which her story was to create in the reader rather than the novel's "domestic affection". She wrote that the story was to "speak to the mysterious fears of our nature and awaken thrilling horror – one to make the reader dread to look around, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart" (1831, 7). It is interesting that Shelley heightens the terror of her story and its effect on the reader because that means she understands that her story is anything but concerned with "the excellence of universal virtue" (1818b, 12) as her husband would have it. Both novels do however have male attempts at controlling the stories and how they are received, Banks with his directions towards pro-feminism, and Percy Shelley with his "amiableness of domestic affection".

Masculine attempts at controlling narrative truths are also present in the novels on the level of content as well as form. The narrators of the novels are, as discussed in the previous chapters, all displaying masculinist attempts at controlling their own stories and how they are received and perceived by those who listen to them. *The Wasp Factory* is however different than *Frankenstein* in that the narration may be masculinist, but at the heart there is an intersex person narrating it. As such *The Wasp Factory* is also a subversion of *Frankenstein's* masculinist narrative. In Shelley's novel, the narrators are all men and they address the readers in that manner, while within *The Wasp Factory* the narrator speaks as a man until he ultimately emerges with a more complex gender identity. Although the narrator, Frank, is

doing his best to convince the reader of his maleness, the fact is that this certainty is slowly getting chipped away as the story unfolds. By having the gothic monster be the only narrator of the story, Banks is also more directly forcing the reader to sympathise and maybe even empathise with the transgressive Other. Shelley does make the reader listen to her Monster, but it is done through several narrational layers. Frank speaks more directly to the reader as the whole story is told from his perspective and the reader will always only know what Frank chooses to tell them.

Frankenstein is a novel that is very much aware of its own narration. The story is framed through a series of letters where Robert Walton is writing down a story that has been told to him. The framing of the story through letters grounds the story in the world of the reader because it is told to them through supposedly personal accounts. The narration also speaks to the reader at times through how it is directed at an unseen character, Margaret Saville, who serves as a proxy for the reader. The nature of this framing, its derivation from classical travel stories for instance, grounds the story in a familiar world, but it also creates a larger distance from the Monster. The Monster's story is told by the Monster to Victor Frankenstein who later recounts it to Robert Walton who then writes it down in a letter to his sister. The Monster may then be formally buried within several layers of interpretation, but this does not seem to change what the Monster says. Newman (1986) writes about narrative truth in *Frankenstein* and how the characters never seem to contradict one another. There is no disagreement between characters as to *what* has happened, but they are however in conflict as to *why* it happened. The Monster proclaims himself to be a victim of the world around him, whereas Victor seems to think the Monster evil by the nature of his wicked form (Halberstam 1995). Compare this to *The Wasp Factory* where truth and narratives are highly subjective and changing. There are no layers of distance between Frank's thoughts and the reader. His truth becomes the reader's truth by necessity. This closeness between reader and gothic monster makes it much harder to dismiss him in all his uncanniness, as some readers might Frankenstein's Monster.

However, Frank's mind and thoughts are maybe even more uncanny to the reader than the Monster's thoughts. Frank's thought-patterns and understanding of the world is both

familiar and alien: “I had been making the round of the Sacrifice Poles the day we heard my brother had escaped. I already knew something was going to happen; the Factory told me” (1) is how Frank is introduced on the first page of the novel. The first part of the first line emphasises the ritualism of his life with the clarification that this is “*the* round of the Sacrifice Poles”, rather than ‘a’ round, stressing the repetitiveness and normality of this action to Frank. The action is however abnormal to the reader as it is a so-far unexplained piece of information. The latter sentence of the quote deals with Frank’s strange spiritualism. He believes he can tell the future, because the “Factory” told him. This strange vernacular sets him even further apart from the reader who is as of yet uninitiated with Frank’s world. By the end of the novel, Frank’s belief system has been explained to the reader and his worldview is much clearer to them. Frank goes from inaccessible alien to sympathetic protagonist as the novel progresses.

Compare this then to how the Monster speaks in *Frankenstein*. His language has been characterised by Newman as “the same kind of heightened language” (1986, 146) used by the other characters in the novel. When the Monster first speaks to Victor on the mountaintop, there is an almost unexpected finesse to his words: “I expected this reception’ […] ‘All men hate the wretched; how, then must I be hated, who am miserable beyond all living things! Yet you, my creator, detest and spurn me, thy creature, to whom thou art bound by ties only dissolute by the annihilation of one of us’” (Shelley 1831, 96). These words from the Monster are as interesting and telling as Frank’s introduction. First, the Monster uses the adjective “wretched” to describe himself which can mean both people living a state of misery as well as someone of a vile or unworthy character (OED 2017). This duplicity of meaning also serve as an illustration of the Monster who is both hated because of his wretched appearance as well as his seclusion from mankind. This seclusion, it is later revealed, is his primary motive for causing harm upon the Frankenstein family. Second, the Monster uses the old form of the second person singular possessive, “thy”, thus also subverting the expectations of the reader. Unlike Frank, the Monster has been built up over the preceding 96 pages as something Other and unnatural. It is therefore a tonal shift when he can express himself clearly and in what Newman calls “heightened language”. Frank’s thoughts are on the other hand introduced to

the readers front and centre on the first page of the book. The nature of how the two monsters express themselves is thereby different. There is little or nothing which sets the Monster apart from the two other principle narrators in the novel – Robert Walton or Victor Frankenstein – in the way he speaks.

The narration of *The Wasp Factory* however gives the reader a closer encounter with a gothic monster. At first Frank seems alien to the reader, but as they are continually exposed to him the reader may feel like they know and understand him the more they read. Banks later wrote that he envisaged "Frank, the protagonist, almost as an alien" (xi) and the story as "a first-person narrative set on a remote Scottish nearly-island told by a normality-challenged teenage eccentric" (Banks 2013, x). The notion of the protagonist as an alien is interesting because it serves to enhance Frank's uncanniness. His body looks like a human and his thoughts resemble that of a human, yet there is something different about him. His thoughts are violent and so are his actions, but as talked about in Chapter 2, his behaviour is also thought of as normal for a boy his age. As Banks emphasises, Frank is like "an alien", something different and Other, but is also a "teenage eccentric", someone who is human and relatable – "Frank is supposed to stand for all of us" (xi) as Banks sees it. In this he also summarises the fundamentals of how gothic monsters supposedly work.

Bodies reflecting society's monstrosity

A good gothic monster will often have something familiar about it, something that can be recognised by the reader as something also in themselves. The monster is the reader just as much as it is not the reader, because the reader both can and cannot recognise themselves in the monster. This blurring of the line between reader and monster creates the feeling of the uncanny or *Unheimlich* (Halberstam 1995). Frank is scary as a monster because he is simultaneously a sociopathic killer and an innocent child. He both knows things which he should not and is also in a state of innocence. As Halberstam (1995) points out, the Monster is scary because his being reflects the society around him and how it can create its own destruction . Bruhm (2006) writes about how contemporary gothic is fascinated with the idea of the child. He explains that the underlying fear in adults of their children is that "the Gothic

child knows too much, and that knowledge makes us more than a little nervous" (103). The child is supposed to know about things of innocence, not those of sexuality or other sinful things. Bruhm also explains an interesting ancestry of the gothic child with *Frankenstein* which makes it clear that "the child cannot be kept innocent. Knowledge is inevitable; it is the imperative of culture generally and parenting specifically" (2006, 104). The Monster who, from a state of natural innocence, is introduced to scorn and anger by those he meets can then be a prototype for the construction of the gothic child.

The image of the home, and its subsequent corruption, has a long history in the gothic genre as a representation for society. The increased focus on the child as a source or receptor of this corruption is however something that became more prevalent in the twentieth century (Bruhm 2006). Still, *Frankenstein* is a point of origin for the trope of the gothic child. The Monster is himself a child of science, something that at the time was often understood as logical and 'pure'. He is born into the world as a tabula rasa with no position or heritage to use for his own gain since his influential creator has abandoned him. Faced with the world he finds himself treated as naturally evil due to his appearance. Likewise, Frank is thought to be a tabula rasa for his father to edit to his own whims. The idea of gender as a social construction, which is imprinted on the blank slated child, is the underlying assumption for Angus Cauldhame's experiment. The Cauldhame experiment is thereby as much a warning about what the knowledge of gender's constructed nature can do for the patriarchy as Frankenstein's experiment is a warning against the masculine hubris in meddling with nature.

A central theme of gothic monsters is their ability to reflect society. When looking at how the Monster changes through his interactions with others, his corruption and transformation into a murderer is as much a comment on the society around him as it is on any perceived 'natural' character he exhibits. The Monster's encounters with people following his birth are more and more thorough attempts from him to integrate himself in society with a subsequent rejection from that society. The first two encounters are with people who flee the moment he meets them – Victor and a farmer. In the third encounter the Monster tries to physically enter a house in a village and so is attacked by the populace. For his fourth attempt, he embeds himself in a cottage, hiding in a shed whilst observing how other humans

live and interact – the De Lacey family. After having managed to infiltrate the family, and even being trusted by their patriarch, the Monster is yet again chased away when he is discovered by the rest of the family. Marked as an undesirable by the people he encounters, the Monster blames them, and his creator most of all, for turning him into the transgression they fear. In this sense, the child of Victor Frankenstein has become corrupted by society and is therefore a reflection of society's own corruption.

The gothic monster's strength lies in its ability to have a multiplicity of meanings. Halberstam (1995) writes about how the gothic monster's transgressive and scary qualities come from its ability to reflect many of the fears the reader might have, such as deviant sexualities, gender, class or race. On the other hand Halberstam also notes that as gothic monsters have progressed, the possible meanings they can inhabit have become more and more restricted until there in contemporary monsters is a tendency "to show clearly the markings of deviant sexualities and gendering but less clearly the signs of class and race" (1995, 4). Within the monsters portrayed in *The Wasp Factory* and *Frankenstein* this is also a tendency. The Monster is not exclusively a symbol for his gender status, but Frank's behaviour is very much marked by gender. This increase in a focus on gender and sex within the gothic monster is also a reflection of the society in which they are created.

If Frank's scariness comes from his gender ambiguity, and subsequent rage from not fitting into the gender binary that has been presented to him, then that is a reflection on the gender binary's position in society. The dubious naturalisation of gender was present in the political discourse at the time the novel was written and published. The second-wave feminist movement had openly questioned to what degree gender was biological or social and the idea had also entered academia and psychology. In this light, Banks' later claim that he wrote *The Wasp Factory* as a "pro-feminist, anti-militarist work […] commenting on the way we're shaped by our surroundings" (2013, xi) can be grounded in the second-wave feminist movement. Banks, who was in his early twenties at the time he wrote the novel, was presumably a feminist himself, but the gender transgressions in his story go further than a story about a girl who was fooled into thinking she was a boy. By having the changing of

gender be at the centre of his novel, Banks seems to have also tapped into another gender movement which was stirring at the same time – the trans movement.

Before the 1990s, the topic of trans people was one of medical curiosity in the academic world rather than a social one (Whittle 2006). The idea that someone can change their gender and sex, things that had been thought to be a doxic truth for identity and biology, is still something that is being challenged in the world today (Bourdieu 2007). In an article about the struggle of trans people, particularly in the 1980s, Susan Stryker imagines herself as Frankenstein's Monster:

> The transsexual body is an unnatural body. It is the product of medical science. It is a technological construction. It is flesh torn apart and sewn together again in a shape other than that in which it was born. In these circumstances, I find a deep affinity between myself as a transsexual woman and the monster in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Like the monster, I am too often perceived as less than fully human due to the means of my embodiment; like the monster's as well, my exclusion from human community fuels a deep and abiding rage in me that I, like the monster, direct against the conditions in which I must struggle to exist. (Stryker 2006, 245)

In this quote, Stryker identifies herself almost as a gothic monster. She says that the "transsexual body is an unnatural body" because of its creation through medical science. It thereby stands as a testament to mankind's power to meddle with nature in the same way that the Monster does. The ability to recreate life from dead flesh which has been "torn apart and sewn together again" lie as the fundamental physical aspect of both trans and monster. This alteration of the body marks the trans as something fundamentally different in the eyes of the patriarchy, because the trans body breaks with the doxic understanding of gender and sex as something which comes from nature. Since gender and sex are seen as the foundations upon which identity is built, the trans becomes "perceived as less than fully human" – as something Other or *Unheimlich*. The trans body thus sparks a challenge to the social status quo like many other gothic monsters also do.

Whereas Stryker connects her own experiences to the Monster metaphorically, her descriptions are also more directly linked to Frank's experiences. His flesh was also "torn

apart" between his legs when Old Saul attacked him, and he is also a "product of medical science" because of the induced male hormones. He seems to see himself as "less than fully human" when he considers himself "an honorary man" (Banks 1984, 154) rather than a 'full man'. For if gender is binary, and Frank is not fully a man nor fully a woman, what is he? And when it comes to Stryker's remarks that "my exclusion from human community fuels a deep and abiding rage in me that I […] direct against the conditions in which I must struggle to exist" (2006, 245), the exclusion is echoed in Frank's seclusion on a protected island he does not like to leave, and the rage in his destruction of that island around him.

There are, however, differences between Shelley's visually transgressive monster and the transgressive nature of the ambiguous Frank. Stryker makes the comment that unlike "the monster, we [trans persons] often successfully cite the culture's visual norms of gendered embodiment" (2006, 247). In this comment, Stryker pinpoints a difference between how Frank and the Monster are transgressive: The Monster's transgressive nature comes as much from his appearance as from his existence, which means that he is visually identifiable as transgressive and dangerous to those who see him. Frank's otherness, on the other hand, is hidden beneath his exterior. On the outside, he passes for a man, except for his castration which he hides under his clothes, but in his mind and state of being, he is a transgression of the gender binary. This hiding of his otherness, what makes him the 'not-same' to the reader's 'I', makes Frank even more dangerous to the social status quo than the Monster because he can go around unnoticed.

The fear that the social Other cannot always be identified as such is often a natural by-product of othering. Boyarin (2002), by using antisemitism in Europe as his example, discusses the process of othering. He argues that there is an underlying assumption that those who are Other can be identified as Other by those who fear them. There is however also, he explains, a corresponding fear in the status quo that the Other in actuality cannot always be identified. Those who are deemed inferior and unacceptable may not be easily distinguishable from those who are deemed superior and acceptable: "the Jew can be unknown in his Jewishness" (Fanon in Boyarin 2002, 277). When Frank can hide his otherness beneath his exterior, the notion that he is Other is also questioned. Because if he cannot be identified as

Other by the rules that have been agreed upon, then this also questions the rules which makes him Other.

Frank is both a gender transgressor and, on the surface, a normal 17-year-old boy. The games he plays are the same as what other children did at the time – dam building, explosives, kites – but with a murderous edge (Banks 2013). The idea that there are underlying murderous ideas behind these acts done by a childhood innocent further highlights how Frank is in a place of ambiguity – he is apparently normal, but also abnormal. With his trans status, he lives on the border of normality. His body does not fit into the idealised masculine body image and his gender is constantly questioned by himself as a result, but he is able to at times hide this ambiguity of his body and gender. The Monster, on the other hand, is always recognised as Other by those who see him; only when meeting someone who is blind is he able to hide from their judgment.

The process of othering is something that is central in the gothic genre's depiction of transgressions. By becoming Other, the transgressions are marked as unwanted and opposite of what is considered the Same or I. Through the othering process the gothic stories are also discourses of social definitions. When what is unacceptable is pointed out it makes what is acceptable clearer through the distancing between the unacceptable abnormal and the acceptable normal. According to Halberstam (1995) the modern gothic is predominantly occupied with the definitions of bodies, gender, and sexuality. This means that the genre frequently features elements that challenge the status quo's understanding of bodies and their connection to gender and sexuality. So, when Frank Cauldhame seeks to disconnect masculinity from its bodily demands, such as possessing a penis and a strong physique, he is attempting to redefine what a masculine body should look like and remove his own from being Other to the status quo. Likewise, the Monster's body is the primary focus of his otherness for those he meets. The Monster's hideousness marks his body and creates a barrier of understanding between him and others. Both gothic monsters, Frank and the Monster, seek to hide their otherness from the world, but whereas Frank wants to 'pass' in the world, the Monster wants to retreat from it. Frank's story is then one where he goes from hiding to

venturing away from his island seclusion, whereas the Monster begins in the open and later goes into hiding.

This fundamental difference in the monsters' motivations can also be an illustration of how society sees their otherness. Frank Cauldhame stands for gender and sex differences. His body had the markings of a female at birth, but he performs masculinity. He looks like a normal male teenager, but is actually a murderous psychopath with an inbred hate for himself and women, though his otherness is hidden from the world. Frank, as Boyarin (2002) would put it, can remain unknown in his otherness from the world around him. His existence therefore challenges the patriarchal notion of gender and sex as visible and binary. When Frank then emerges from the island and into the world at the novel's end, he will make himself visible as what he is. His otherness will be known. The Monster is however very much visible and identifiable in his otherness from the beginning.

Final conclusion

My goal with this thesis was to explore masculinity and gothic monsters in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Iain Banks' *The Wasp Factory*. I did this through analysing what Chris Baldick calls "the imprisoning house of Gothic" (1992, xxii) and its connection to the patriarchal structures that are embedded in society. The novels, I argued, illustrate a marked difference in how gothic society treats and understands difference over time. I have analysed different understandings of gender and masculinity in the novels, as well as how they reflect transgressive notions of sex and bodies. I have had as my main argument that the main monsters in the novels, Frank Cauldhame and the Monster, are reflections of the society in which they find themselves. How they are treated is a reflection of how society treats difference and otherness. The apparent transgressive nature of the monsters is thereby the transgressions of the societies which are unable to accept them for who they are. These novels are written in a specific time and place, yet the societal structures they reflect and react against, though morphed, are still at large. This means that the novels still hold relevance to readers who still live within such patriarchal structures.

It is indeed interesting that 199 years after the publishing of *Frankenstein*, the central themes within continues to find its relevance in society. In *Frankenstein* masculinity is in focus through the male main characters and their shaping of narratives. A battle for narrative truth is also happening in *The Wasp Factory* as the story of Frank's body is revealed over the course of the novel. Both novels are also united in how they sidestep women and focus on men as the defaults of storytelling and society. *The Wasp Factory* usurps this notion however because Frank's gender status is ambiguous by the novel's end. A battle for definitions is rampant in the novels: Is the Monster a different race or a reflection of humanity? Is Frank intersexed or a confused woman? The novels raise many issues surrounding how society seems to fail in accepting real difference into its ranks. The backlash against their gothic monsters is thereby the patriarchy trying to reassert its hold on the social order. In *Frankenstein*, this reassertion is accomplished as the Monster finally retreats after having undone his own patriarchal line, but nothing more. On the other hand, in *The Wasp Factory* Frank seeks to venture out into the world to assert his own definition of his body.

The novels also illustrate a continued fascination within the gothic genre for issues surrounding identity, sex and gender. Donna Heiland claims that "Gothic novels are all about patriarchies, about how they function, what threatens them, what keeps them going" (2004, 10). The gothic patriarchy can be seen attempting to retain its control over identity and body definitions in the novels, but it is also always challenged by monsters who transgress these limiting definitions. As such, the gothic genre continues to serve as a social thermometer for what sides of society the patriarchy is attempting to repress.

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