



Pedagogická  
fakulta  
Faculty  
of Education

Jihočeská univerzita  
v Českých Budějovicích  
University of South Bohemia  
in České Budějovice

**Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích**

**Pedagogická fakulta**

**Katedra anglistiky**

## **BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE**

### **Comparison of Stephen King's Novel The Green Mile with the Film Adaptation by Frank Darabont**

Porovnání novely Stephen Kinga *Zelená míle*  
s filmovou adaptací od Franka Darabonta

**Vypracoval:** Matěj Dynda

**Studijní kombinace:** Anglický jazyk / Zeměpis

**Vedoucí práce:** PhDr. Christopher Koy, M. A., Ph.D.

České Budějovice 2023

## **PROHLÁŠENÍ**

Prohlašuji, že svoji bakalářskou práci jsem vypracoval pouze s použitím pramenů a literatury uvedených v seznamu citované literatury.

Prohlašuji, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. v platném znění souhlasím se zveřejněním své bakalářské práce, a to v nezkrácené podobě elektronickou cestou ve veřejně přístupné části databáze STAG provozované Jihočeskou univerzitou v Českých Budějovicích na jejích internetových stránkách, a to se zachováním mého autorského práva k odevzdanému textu této kvalifikační práce. Souhlasím dále s tím, aby toutéž elektronickou cestou byly v souladu s uvedeným ustanovením zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. zveřejněny posudky školitele a oponentů práce i záznam o průběhu a výsledku obhajoby kvalifikační práce. Rovněž souhlasím s porovnáním textu mé kvalifikační práce s databází kvalifikačních prací Theses.cz provozovanou Národním registrem vysokoškolských kvalifikačních prací a systémem na odhalování plagiátů.

České Budějovice, dne 19. dubna 2023

.....

Matěj Dynda

## **PODĚKOVÁNÍ**

Rád bych poděkoval panu doktoru Koyovi za velkou podporu, trpělivost a pomoc při psaní bakalářské práce. Dále bych chtěl také poděkovat mé rodině za velkou podporu.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to thank PhDr. Christopher Koy M.A., Ph.D. for support, patience and help with writing my bachelor thesis. Also, I would like to express my thanks to my family for being a big support to me.

## **ANOTACE**

Práce má za úkol provést analýzu a porovnání románu *Zelená Mile* od Stephen Kinga a jeho filmového zpracování. V práci je věnována pozornost životopisu Stephen Kinga a jeho motivaci ke psaní. Analýza byla provedena na základě literárních podkladů zabývajících se problematikou díla *Zelená Mile*. Sekce obsahující porovnání románu s jeho filmovým zpracováním zahrnuje mimo jiné i děj každé epizody.

## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis aims to analyse and compare Stephen King's novel *The Green Mile* and its film adaptation. A special focus was given to Stephen King's biography and his writing motivation. The analysis was conducted based on literary sources dealing with the problematics of *The Green Mile*. The section containing a comparison of the novel with its film adaptation includes, among other things, the plot of each episode.

# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Stephen King: Biographical Sketch</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3. <i>The Green Mile</i>: Context</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>4. <i>The Green Mile</i> – The Novel</b> .....	<b>8</b>
4.1. Origin of the Story.....	8
4.2. Language and Structure.....	8
<b>5. <i>The Green Mile</i> – The Film</b> .....	<b>10</b>
5.1. Awards.....	11
<b>6. Thematic Analysis</b> .....	<b>12</b>
6.1. Death .....	12
6.2. Racism and Injustice .....	12
6.3. Presence of God.....	13
<b>7. Two Main Characters in <i>The Green Mile</i></b> .....	<b>14</b>
7.1. Paul Edgecombe .....	14
7.2. John Coffey .....	14
<b>8. Comparison of the Novel and the Film</b> .....	<b>16</b>
8.1. The First Episode – The Two Dead Girls.....	16
8.2. The Second Episode – The Mouse on the Mile.....	19
8.3. The Third Episode – Coffey’s Hands.....	21
8.4. The Fourth Episode – The Bad Death of Eduard Delacroix .....	24
8.5. The Fifth Episode – Night Journey .....	27
8.6. The Sixth Episode – Coffey on the Mile.....	30
<b>9. Conclusion</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>10. Summary</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>11. Resumé</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>12. Sources</b> .....	<b>42</b>
12.1. Primary sources .....	42
12.2. Secondary sources .....	42

# 1. Introduction

In this day and age, when it is unclear what is true and what is not, thinking rationally is important. This statement is completely contradicted by the novel *The Green Mile*, which fully undermines the rationality of human thinking and liberates the brain.

The author of this work, Stephen King, originally wrote this novel as a bedtime story, but it ended up becoming leaving one sitting in a corner with one's mouth open and their head full of deeper thoughts after reading it. The reasons why I chose this novel for my bachelor thesis are hard to explain, but I will summarize as follows I have read a lot of books in my two decades and I have also seen many movies, but none have ever affected me so powerfully as *The Green Mile*.

The geniality of Stephen King's work, depicted by various combinations of situations happening in the prison world, is utterly unexplainable but at the same time makes it impossible to take one's eyes off the pages of this book. Known as a master in the field of horror, here Stephen King has demonstrated his skills in the field of fiction as well. In the book, he plays with combinations of the supernatural, portrayed through the prisoner John Coffey, who acts as ambassador from heaven with supernatural abilities. To make this combination compelling, he has set this character in one of the most redeeming settings where a man alone returns to his original self and reflects on his personal, human values. It might also be portrayed as a combination of freedom and obligations, the freedom, to which the viewer's idea of a prisoner with supernatural abilities tempts, and the obligation, which is depicted as thought processes of the prison guard who narrates the whole story while telling us about life's troubles he and others face which are perfectly natural.

Firstly, in my bachelor thesis, I focus on Stephen King's life in general and obviously also his writing career, where I describe what motivated King to write fiction and how he began.

Secondly, I focus on facts about the writing of the novel *The Green Mile* and its film adaptation. In the section where I write about the book version of *The Green Mile*, the focus is mainly placed on Stephen King's view of his work how he conceived the story, and the overall structure and language employed in this work. In the section about the film adaptation, information about the film as well as the perspectives of prominent participants in the film-making and the collaboration between Frank Darabont and Stephen King is discussed.

The next section is the practical part, where the differences between the book and the film adaptation are specifically identified episode by episode. Finally, after the last episode, there is a summary, where the differences recurring in the book are generally summarized as well as an evaluation of the extent to which the novel differs from its film adaptation.

## 2. Stephen King: Biographical Sketch

The best-selling horror author Stephen Edwin King, regarded as the king of modern horror, as the media and fans usually like to call him, was born on 21st September 1947 in Portland, Maine. Stephen's parents were Donald Edwin King and Nellie Ruth Pillsbury King. His mother was a homemaker and his father worked as a merchant marine. His father abandoned the family when Stephen King was two years old and his older brother David was four years old. Stephen King developed a love for reading at a young age, and his early interests included science fiction and horror. The first mention of Stephen's writings come all the way back to first grade. Around the age of 7, he used to be sick and because he had a lot of time, he began writing stories and submitting them to magazines, although most of them were rejected. (King, 2000)

I read my way through approximately six tons of comic books, progressed to Tom Swift and Dave Dawson (a heroic World War II pilot whose various planes were always "prop-clawing for altitude"), then moved on to Jack London's bloodcurdling animal tales. At some point I began to write my own stories. Imitation preceded creation; I would copy Combat Casey comics word for word in my Blue Horse tablet, sometimes adding my own descriptions where they seemed appropriate. "They were camped in a big dratty farmhouse room," I might write; it was another year or two before I discovered that drat and draft were different words.

(King, *On Writing – Memoir of the Craft* 23 – 24)

According to King (2000), he attempted to submit his first publication to a magazine called the *Spacemen* which was edited by Forry Ackerman. The magazine involved science fiction stories that were covering films. King's first submission was not published but Forry Ackerman still kept his story.

In 1962 King attended Lisbon High School and in cooperation with his friend Chris Chesley, he published 18 short stories in a collection. In his biography King mentions that he and Chesley both loved big horror movies and their favorite ones were directed by Roger Corman with titles and plots adapted from stories by Edgar Allan Poe. In 1963 after his first unsuccessful attempt to publish his own story, King still kept on writing. The first story published under his own name was called *In a Half-World of Terror*. A horror fanzine was supposed to be named *I Was a Teen-Age Grave-Robber* but Mike Garrett who issued the story



held a different opinion about the title. During these times, King was still attending high school, but after his graduation in 1966 things changed. King attended the University of Maine specializing in English and teaching. *Getting It On* is the title of a novel King was working on since the beginning of his studies at university. During his university studies his love and passion for writing were expanding and his writing skills were developing positively. By the first year of his study at the University of Maine he finished his first novel called *The Long Walk*, which was rejected by publishing houses and later thrown away by King himself. (King, 2000)

1967 was the first year when nineteen year old Stephen King managed to first earn money from publishing. The story was named *The Glass Floor* and King earned thirty-five dollars from its sale. Stephen King graduated from the University of Maine in 1970. Also, the same year, his future wife Tabitha Jane Spruce, who also is a writer, gave birth to their daughter Tabitha Naomi King. (Skibiski, n.d.)

Stephen had multiple ideas about stories he would like to write, but his minor earning did not allow him to write full-time. He first found a job to finance his young family and his passion for writing books. Even though he was working full-time in industrial laundry, he managed to write stories published in newspapers, and over time it started to pay off. (King, 2000)

A year after their daughter was born King and Tabitha Jane Spruce decided to get married. King married her on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1971. Later that year King became a teacher at Hampden Academy, which improved his family's budget, and he had more opportunities to write with summers free from teaching. His new short story about a teenage girl called *Carrie* was written but incomplete at that time while King's family lived humbly in a trailer. Later King decided that *Carrie* has no potential and so he threw it away. His wife Tabitha picked the story up and read those few beginning pages of this story. She convinced her husband to keep on writing this story. This was one of the most important moments of his early career because later this story was submitted by King to Doubleday, which later sold the novel for four hundred thousand dollars. Based on his contract he received half of the money earned. This moment changed King's financial life so much, that he decided to quit his teaching job and chose a path to become a full-time writer. (King, 2000)

One Sunday not long after that call, I got another one from Bill Thompson at Doubleday. I was alone in the apartment; Tabby had packed the kids off to her mother's for a visit, and I was working on the new book, which I thought of as *Vampires in Our Town*. "Are you sitting down?" Bill asked. "No," I said. Our phone hung on the kitchen wall, and I was standing in the doorway between the kitchen and the living room. "Do I need to?" "You might," he said. "The paperback rights to *Carrie* went to Signet Books for four hundred thousand dollars." When I was a little kid, Daddy Guy had once said to my mother: "Why don't you shut that kid up, Ruth? When Stephen opens his mouth, all his guts fall out." It was true then, has been true all my life, but on that Mother's Day in May of 1973 I was completely speechless. I stood there in the doorway, casting the same shadow as always, but I couldn't talk. Bill asked if I was still there, kind of laughing as he said it. He knew I was. I hadn't heard him right. Couldn't have. The idea allowed me to find my voice again, at least. "Did you say it went for forty thousand dollars?" "Four hundred thousand dollars," he said.

(King, *On Writing – Memoir of the Craft* 86)

From that moment King's life completely changed. He started publishing many stories and novels after the success of the novel *Carrie*. Despite the death of his mother, King persevered and worked hard, eventually publishing another horror story, *Salem's Lot*, a year after he published *Carrie*. According to his autobiography (2000), King wrote *Carrie* and *Salem's Lot* in the laundry room of his trailer.

In 1977, King, now a full-time writer, published his scariest book to that date, entitled *The Shining*. The significant difference between *The Shining* and other horror titles by different horror authors helped Stephen King establish himself as an icon of horror and he accordingly gained a huge following. Every book that Stephen King subsequently wrote had successful sales because in 1980 Stanley Kubrick directed a movie called *The Shining* adapted from King's novel. The success of the movie was so remarkable that later many of Stephen King's novels were subsequently made into movies. (King, 2000)

Since 1975 King has been heavily addicted to alcohol, which was getting worse in the 1980s, and in 1985 he also added drugs to his collection of addictions. Despite his addiction, he still remained productive in writing and publishing books. His most famous ones from the 1980s are *It* (1986), *Cujo* (1981), *Pet Sematary* (1983), and *The Dark Tower: The Gunslinger* (1982).

By 1985 I had added drug addiction to my alcohol problem, yet I continued to function, as a good many substance abusers do, on a marginally competent level.

I was terrified not to; by then I had no idea of how to live any other life. I hid the drugs I was taking as well as I could, both out of terror—what would happen to me without dope? I had forgotten the trick of being straight—and out of shame.

(King, *On Writing – Memoir of the Craft* 96)

In the 1990s, Stephen King successfully overcame his addiction to drugs and alcohol, which marked a new beginning for his life and family. King claimed big success from novels he published in the 1990s including *Gerald's Game* (1992), *Needful Things* (1991), *Insomnia* (1994), *Desperation* (1996), and finally *The Green Mile* (1996). Many novels were adapted into movies and they were not only successful in the novel form but also in the movie adaptation. In 2000 King published his autobiography called *On Writing – Memoir of the Craft*, which reported many facts about his life, that his fans did not know, among others his drug and alcohol addiction which he candidly describes.

Despite his publishing success in the 1990s, hardship came in the summer of 1999, when a van hit King by the side of the road and almost killed him. King ended up temporarily in a wheelchair. He explained how painful and hard it was for him because he was suffering from some consequences of the accident. (King, 2000)

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Stephen King has remained to be one of the bestselling authors and he has managed to publish numerous novels and short stories, including *The Dark Tower* (1982 – 2012) series, *Under the Dome* (2009), *Doctor Sleep* (2013) and *The Outsider* (2018). He has also made a few appearances in movies. The 21<sup>st</sup> century was more about awards, which Stephen King received for his past publications. Nowadays, he is actively participating in philanthropy and charity.

### **3. *The Green Mile: Context***

The novel *The Green Mile* and its movie adaptation tells the story of Paul Edgecombe, who is a death row supervisor during the Great Depression in the 1930s in E Block of the prison called Cold Mountains Penitentiary in Louisiana. The title of the book is referring to a path that leads to an electric chair where death-row prisoners are executed. In the story, references to the Great Depression and its effects on people's lives are described. Paul and his colleagues express their hatred towards their job but they cannot leave it because of the economical crisis caused by the Great Depression. Since the setting is in a southern American town, signs of racism prevail in the story. Although Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery with his Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, there are some characters in the story that might seem like they are opposing this proclamation and disagreeing with racial equality.

As Strengell (2006) points out, to protest racism and hate in the Southern states, King chose a black man to play John Coffey, who discovers two white girls brutally raped and murdered. The fact that Coffey is covered in blood and crying over the dead girls while holding them in his hands was supposedly enough for the police and subsequently the criminal court to send Coffey to his execution. Strengell (2006) also states further that the overall appearance involving race, strength, and naivety that King gave his African American character only played into the white jury's hands to judge Coffey harshly. In this way, King partially reflects the social situation of the Southern states' society during the Great Depression, and according to Strengell (2006), Paul Edgecombe's subsequent cooperation and humanity with John Coffey evokes at least a partial sense of an end to injustice and racial intolerance.

We're in a Depression,' he said, 'that's how I explain it. People all over the roads. The Okies want to pick peaches in California, the poor whites from up in the brakes want to build cars in Detroit, the black folks from Mississippi want to go up to New England and work in the shoe factories or the textile mills. Everyone - black as well as white - thinks it's going to be better over the next jump of land. It's the American damn way. Even a giant like Coffey doesn't get noticed everywhere he goes until, that is, he decides to kill a couple of little girls. Little white girls.

(King, *The Green Mile* 131-132)

## **4. *The Green Mile* – The Novel**

### **4.1. Origin of the Story**

The origin of the story is based on King's version of the bedtime story *What Tricks your Eye*, where a huge black man named Luke Coffey is sentenced to death and while waiting for his time to come, he starts learning sleight-of-hand. (King, *The Green Mile* 2-3)

When it is time for his execution he somehow makes himself disappear. King was not satisfied with this story and its outcome so he gave up on it. Later he came back to the story but he improved it by adding a mouse to the story called Mr. Jingles. Then he changed basically everything about the co-main character except his appearance.

Then, about a year and a half later, the death-row idea recurred to me, only this time with a different slant – suppose, I thought, the big guy was a healer of some sort instead of an aspiring magician, a simpleton condemned for murders that he not only did not commit but had tried to reverse?

(King, *The Green Mile* 2)

King decided to change his name from Luke Coffey to John Coffey so his prisoner carries the name after the “most famous innocent man” with the same initials J.C.. (King, 2000) King is referring to the famous novel by the Nobel Prize winner from Mississippi William Faulkner called *Light in August*, where the “most innocent man” is killed, named Joe Christmas. King also divulged that he was not sure how *The Green Mile* would end, whether John Coffey will live or die because he liked him and pitied him.

### **4.2. Language and Structure**

As a prison story told in the first person by the co-main character Paul Edgecombe. it is told in informal language, and in the text curse words and also slang terms realistically convey the attitudes of characters in this setting. The title of this work can also be considered a slang term as the title *The Green Mile* is derived from prison slang where the path to the execution room is called the last mile but in Stephen King's book, he modified this path with a green floor.

While external descriptions, such as the appearance of characters, rooms, and objects, are common, Paul Edgecombe, the narrator of the story, gives an internal description of the nature of almost each character here, including brief biographical stories about these

characters. External descriptions are rarely followed by illustrations in the book found at the beginning of each episode. For example at the beginning of the first episode “The Two Dead” Girls a black-and-white illustration of an electric chair is depicted.

Compared to King's other books, *The Green Mile* was published episodically, so the reader had to wait anxiously for what would happen in the next episode. The book has a total of six episodes and the names of these episodes are:

- 1) The Two Dead Girls
- 2) The Mouse on the Mile
- 3) Coffey's hands
- 4) The Bad Death of Eduard Delacroix
- 5) Night Journey
- 6) Coffey on the Mile

King strategically constructed these episodes in such a way that after finishing each episode the reader would be compelled to purchase the next.

The unique narrative structure of *The Green Mile* was a significant contributing factor in getting readers to return for each new installment. Given the episodic nature of serial publication, each segment must leave the reader wanting more and motivate them enough to go buy the next month's installment, providing readers with a cliffhanger at each installment's conclusion. At the other end of this process, with the start of each new installment, it is often necessary to provide readers with a recap of the ongoing narrative and the previous installment's conclusion, which can serve to refresh the minds of readers and pull them back into the story or even to give new readers the background information they need to begin reading mid-series. Both of these stylistic approaches are characteristic of *The Green Mile*'s serial publication.

(Burger, *Teaching Stephen King – Horror, the Supernatural, and New Approaches to Literature* 124)

## 5. *The Green Mile* – The Film

*The Green Mile*, however, was not only a success in the world of publications but also in the film version. The film was released on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2000. According to Rottentomatoes (n.d.), the total box office was 136,8 million dollars. The film was directed by Frank Darabont, a famous director, who had made a name for himself with his work on the highly acclaimed film “The Shawshank Redemption” which was also based on another novel by Stephen King. When the public found out that Frank Darabont would direct a film based on Stephen King’s novel, the movie world expected another blockbuster. In an interview with Charlie Rose (2000) Darabont said, that when King told him about the idea of another story with a prison setting, Darabont responded, that he is not going to do it but he would at least like to hear his ideas. He changed his mind when the first episode of *The Green Mile* came out, Darabont was so impressed that he had to say yes to directing the story.

And, when I read that first book, the first of the six, that were-- that were-- that were published, I thought, "Oh, my gosh. Back in prison. I gotta-- I have no choice." could see where Steve is here.  
(DARABONT, *Charlie Rose Interview* 2000)

Tom Hanks stars as Paul Edgecombe, the narrator, who fits the role well, that Stephen King according to *The Green Mile* (n.d.) could not believe and that Tom Hanks was too good for this role. In cooperation with David Morse starring as Brutus “Brutal” Howell, who is Edgecombe’s colleague guard on the mile, the two actors create a perfect guard duo. Frank Darabont (WARNERBROS., 2012) divulged that while he was in the process of writing the movie script, he came up with the idea of Tom Hanks performing Paul Edgecombe. This idea could not leave his head. Darabont said that this idea did not land in his brain but in his heart. David Valdes, the film producer of *The Green Mile* (WARNERBROS, 2012), thinks that Tom Hanks agreeing to take this role is because of the integrity of the material and also because it speaks for itself.

The role of John Coffey is performed by Michael Clarke Duncan, who according to Internet Archive (n.d.) often typecast as a big tough guy or a bodyguard and not a role like this but when he found out what role he was being asked for and finished reading the novel, he said, “That’s me. I don’t care what I have to do, but I’ve got to play this role.” (WARNERBROS., *The Green Mile: Walking the Mile: The Making of The Green Mile*, 2012) The other significant

roles in the movie were James Cromwell as warden Hal Moores, Michael Jeter as Eduard Delacroix, Graham Greene as Arlen Bitterbuck, Doug Hutchison as Percy Wetmore, Sam Rockwell as "Wild Bill" Wharton.

Most of the movie was set in an old Tennessee State Penitentiary, in which according to Internet Archive (n.d.), Darabont planned to record *The Shawshank Redemption*, but later he decided not to. According to Internet Archive (n.d.), Darabont gave credit to Terrence Marsh for organizing the set for the picture which the viewer's eyes can marvel at, and even Stephen King himself was astonished by the look of the scene when he visited it, saying that he felt like he was entering his own imagination.

As Browning (2009) points out, that the work is slightly similar to John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, in which one can also encounter the theme of lynching, and overall *The Green Mile* raises awareness of this genre from a prison setting.

### **5.1. Awards**

*The Green Mile* was not a huge successful film at the box office but it certainly made up for it on the awards front and it was profitable. The film received a total of four Oscar nominations, which certainly influenced the spread of the film into the subconscious of film enthusiasts. According to IMDB (1999), these nominations were for Best Picture, Best Actor Supporting Role, which was performed by Michael Clarke Duncan, Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material Previously Published, and Best Sound, which was produced by Robert J. Litt, Elliot Tyson, Michael Herbick, and Willie D. Burton. Michael Clarke Duncan was also nominated for Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture at the Golden Globe Awards.



## 6. Thematic Analysis

### 6.1. Death

Since *The Green Mile* is named after the path to the execution room, which is painted green, one of the main themes is death which is developed in many forms in the novel. Sometimes it is the fear of death, sometimes it is resignation to the death sentence and waiting for it to be carried out, this was seen for example in the character of Eduard Delacroix, and sometimes it is just pure death, which the narrator of the story Paul Edgecombe sometimes talks about.

In a way, that was the worst; Old Sparky never burned what was inside them, and the drugs they inject them with today don't put it to sleep. It vacates, jumps to someone else, and leaves us to kill husks that aren't really alive anyway.

(King, *The Green Mile* 16)

According to Legros (2008), the theme of death is even more evident when people who the reader would not expect to die in the story do die. For instance the passing of Janice, Paul Edgecombe's wife tragically dies in a bus accident. According to King (1996), death is not what it ends with. In his words, death may end our physical existence, but the evil that one carries within oneself does not die and passes on to someone else. This might be considered like an intended message of *The Green Mile*.

### 6.2. Racism and Injustice

Since the story is set in a southern state during the Great Depression, King included racism, which many southern states struggled with, as one of the themes in his book. Racism can best be deduced from the behaviour of the people towards John Coffey and the position of society towards his sentence. While there is no definitive evidence for prosecutors to prove that he committed the rape and murder, he was still convicted and not even given a proper defence.

According to Burger (2017), *The Green Mile* also highlights the racial and general appearance biases of the legal system at this time and in this territory, John Coffey is not only not visited at all by his lawyer but also there is no mention of an appeal to the verdict in the book. Burger also alludes to the fact that Coffey was not only convicted by the court of law but

by the prejudiced thought processes of the people of the time, who, when they see a man of his race of such size near the scene of the crime, it is clear to them that this man must be guilty.

### 6.3. Presence of God

God's presence is a theme that readers feel in the context of John Coffey's supernatural abilities and their exploitation for good purposes. This theme also arises from the multiple mentions of God in the work by the narrator Paul Edgecombe.

According to Burger (2017), John Coffey may be partially compared to Jesus by his actions, since both he and Jesus performed good feats because of their supernatural abilities. These deeds are reflected in the work in the form of healing people, which Coffey did for example with the narrator Paul Edgecombe, and also both Jesus and Coffey eventually died despite their good deeds.

I helped it, didn't I? Except he hadn't. God had. John Coffey's use of 'I' could be chalked up to ignorance rather than pride, but I knew - believed, at least - what I had learned about healing in those churches of Praise Jesus, The Lord Is Mighty, piney-woods amen corners much beloved by my twenty-two-year-old mother and my aunts: that healing is never about the healed or the healer, but about God's will.

(King, *The Green Mile* 126)

In the work, the narrator also frequently associates with God the character of Mr. Jingles, a mouse who keeps Eduard Delacroix company along with the whole prison. The narrator refers to the mouse as having been sent by God himself.

It was as if God had decided Delacroix needed a guardian angel, but had decreed in His wisdom that only a mouse would do for a rat like our homicidal friend from Louisiana.

(King, *The Green Mile* 36)

As Spignesi (2003) points out, that what the book may be alluding to is the existence of a god who returns to earth among humans over and over again across the centuries, waiting for the moment when people will glorify him instead of executing him over and over again.

## **7. Two Main Characters in *The Green Mile***

Wood (2011) emphasizes recognizing that what draws readers to Stephen King's books is not just the stories, but also the characters who realistically represent how we would behave under such situations or if we were under certain pressures. Every reader usually chooses one character, that he becomes a fan of and relates to him.

### **7.1. Paul Edgecombe**

Paul Edgecombe is a prison guard, who narrates the whole story while suffering from a urinal infection. As a good person, Edgecombe treats his colleagues well, and also he treats well the prisoners, who are waiting for the reaper to come. Married to his wife Janice he is probably the first person to find out about John Coffey's superpowers, yet instead of abusing them for his own good or punishing John Coffey, he uses them for good purposes. In the story, he secretly brings John Coffey to warden Hal Moore's wife to cure her brain tumour, which appeared terminal.

According to Wood (2011), as a prison guard Paul Edgecombe does his job correctly, despite facing multiple moral problems in his job. The main dilemma he faces is the execution of John Coffey, who proved to Edgecombe that he is innocent just by his acts like curing Edgecombe of urinal infection and curing warden Hal Moore's wife.

### **7.2. John Coffey**

A huge black man, John Coffey arrives at *The Green Mile* in 1932 during the Great Depression. He was sentenced to death for the brutal double murder of two little girls who were found in his arms. He was wailing loudly when the police found him. Although it seemed that such brutality must have been perpetrated by a very strong man, and this played into the hands of the police who found the dead missing girls in the arms of the huge John Coffey, he was still innocent and falsely accused because he was black.

When first brought to prison, guards were afraid of John Coffey, but they did not treat him exceptionally until after Paul Edgecombe became interested in him. John Coffey's simplicity and strange behaviour took Edgecombe by surprise for such a large man. Lately in the story prison guard Edgecombe finds out about Coffey's superpowers and uses them in a good way, which makes him think, that Coffey was very likely innocent.

According to Wood (2011) John Coffey is one of the most “fan-favourite” characters that King has invented, which is also corresponded to the film version of *The Green Mile*, where the role of Coffey was taken by Michael Clarke Duncan, who played the role well and became popular for his portrayal of this character.

According to Tony Magistrale (2003), some critics faulted King for choosing a black character to portray John Coffey as the main character sentenced to death. However, King refuted this claim by saying that it was silly, that he had not known for a long time how to design the character, and that he had only one certainty and that was that he must die at the end of the film. Skin color and general appearance were determined by the story and its plot. This criticism was made by commentators such as black film director Spike Lee and Nobel Prize - winning novelist Toni Morrison, who called John Coffey's character a “magic Negro”.

## **8. Comparison of the Novel and the Film**

Although Stephen King provided Frank Darabont with a strong basis for a film that has the potential to fill the cinema benches on its own, Darabont still had to make few changes in the script including altering scenes, deleting scenes or adding scenes, as it usually is the case with films based on novels.

The practical part of this bachelor thesis is divided into several parts. Since *The Green Mile* was written episodically, this division will structure the thesis too. The comparison follows episode by episode. In these subsections, the plot of each episode will be outlined as well as the significant differences between the film and the novel *The Green Mile*.

The aim of this part of the thesis is to capture the differences and alterations made by the film director of *The Green Mile*, Frank Darabont and to try to deduce why certain scenes were altered as well as parts of the novel that were added or conversely removed to the film's script.

### **8.1. The First Episode – The Two Dead Girls**

The novel's story begins with Death Row supervisor, Paul Edgecombe, talking about life in prison. His description depicts how the inmates often joke about the electric chair which was transported from one Louisiana prison to another and called “Old Sparky”. He further explains, that although they joke before the execution, when it comes to the moment of execution, this mood passes.

At this point, the first difference between the novel and the film adaptation appears as the film starts with a completely different situation. A short scene of people armed with pitchforks and other tools looking for two lost girls, a background for the crime which Coffey was ultimately executed. Next comes a scene that already resembles the novel's opening, as we see old Paul Edgecombe in a nursing home narrating to his friend Ellie about what happened in 1935 when he served as a prison guard, Paul describes the appearance and other things about the prison which are the same as in the novel, though in the film they are more concise. In the novel the events take place in 1932 while in the movie it is 1935.

One of the main situations of this episode is when John Coffey arrives in prison. Convicted of the brutal rape and murder of two young twins, John Coffey is brought into the prison by

prison guards. During his arrival, warden Percy Wetmore, who has ties to high-ranking political figures, shouts “Dead man walking”. This annoys Paul, who is even more upset about the urinary infection that is tormenting him, and directs Wetmore away while bringing Coffey to his cell. On his way out, Percy hits prisoner Delacroix with a baton across his hand. He is incarcerated for the rape and murder of a young girl, and in his subsequent attempt to dispose of the body he accidentally set the entire building on fire, caused the deaths of six other people.

It is very important for the viewer's impression that Frank Darabont kept this scene with Percy in the script, as his shouting “Dead man walking!” immediately creates a negative impression of his character, so a bad authority figure appears in the film from the beginning. In the novel, the mouse Mr. Jingles is first mentioned in this scene as it sits in cell with Delacroix, but in the film, the mouse is introduced much later.

When Paul first sees John Coffey, he is terrified by his size and is advised by his other colleagues not to go into the cell with him alone. However after Paul initiates a dialogue with Coffey, he finds out that there is almost nothing to be afraid of. Paul is amazed at John Coffey's simplicity. When Coffey asks Paul if they leave the lights on overnight, Paul and his colleagues smile because they are not used to such a thing. The scene of Paul's conversation with John Coffey ended with the two characters shaking hands. This scene can be seen in both the book and film versions, only in the book version does Paul go on to explain how strange the whole situation was and he did not know why a handshake happened in the first place. By doing this, the reader or viewer may realize that Coffey is an abnormal example of a prisoner, as his behaviour catches even the guards themselves off guard several times in the story.

Paul wonders what exactly John Coffey did to end up in their prison, so he heads to the library to read the file on his conviction. As far as the novel and movie versions go, John Coffey's criminal case is nearly identical. While the novel version is more specific, the important information was retained in the film. The little Dettterick twins persuaded their parents to allow them sleep on the porch. However, when their mother called them for breakfast in the morning, they were gone and she only found traces of blood. Father and son went looking for the girls, later joined by the police, who demanded that everyone except the officers drop their weapons so that there would not be any rash action. They proceeded further until they found traces, and then suddenly they began to hear the loud wailing and crying of John Coffey holding two naked, bloodied, lifeless bodies. Next, Coffey is attacked by the girls' father, who was

subsequently dragged away from Coffey by police officers. Coffey was immediately interrogated about what happened and other routine questions to which Coffey responded , “I couldn't help it. I tried to take it back, but it was too late.” Coffey was subsequently arrested and later convicted of these crimes.

The difference between the film and the novel in this situation is that in King’s novel Coffey was also asked what was in his pocket, to which it turned out he had a sandwich, which was excluded from the film. Furthermore, Darabont altered the naked dead girls as dressed in the movie, because it would be very inappropriate to put them naked in the movie. Overall, this scene was explained in more detail in the novel.

Two more important moments in the first episode includes information that Paul Edgecombe learns from his superior, namely warden that Hal Moores, who tells him that Paul has been complained about for sending Percy away from Coffey. Paul tells Moores that Percy is not performing the essential functions he is supposed to do as warden. Later in the conversation, Paul asks Moores how his wife Melinda is doing, to which Moores replies that her condition is getting worse, that she is having severe headaches and seizures, so he will accompany her for a more detailed head examination. In the film and the novel this situation is very similar. The last important moment of the first episode is the introduction of Mr. Jingles in the story. He was already mentioned earlier in the novel when Percy hit Delacroix on the arm with the baton. Paul, both in the novel and in the film, recalls the first time this “magic” mouse showed up at prison when Paul and Dean were sitting in the office doing paperwork, whereupon their colleague Brutal called them in to take a quick look at something. There was a mouse in the middle of the hallway. Paul describes it as a brown mouse looking into the cells as if it were one of the guards. The guards then give her the pieces of food they have prepared there and wonder at the unusual behaviour of this mouse as it came to them fearlessly. Dean even declares that it is not a mouse, but a “rabid” by the way it approaches them, which makes Dean and Brutal laugh. After that, the mouse just looked at them and ran back to the restraint room where it first came out of earlier. The guards decided to try to find it in the restraint room since it would not be appropriate to have a mouse in prison. The problem is that the restraint room was more of a dumping ground for things since they did not use it much, so they had to clear the room first and then look for the mouse, which they failed to find.

Three nights later the mouse reappeared when Percy and Harry had their shift. Percy tried to kill the mouse with a mop but failed and when the mouse ran back into the restraint room he also cleared it all out but could not find the mouse.

The first encounter between Paul and the mouse was almost identical in the movie and the book, but Paul and Dean were doing different activities before Brutal called them in to say he had found the mouse. In contrast, Percy's first encounter with Mr. Jingles was severely cut, as the film listed their first encounter as the one that was later in the novel when he throws a baton at the mouse when his fellow prisoners were feeding it. After the mouse dodges the baton, it runs away to the restraint room. Essentially these first encounters when the mouse was not yet befriended by Delacroix were combined into one to reduce the already long film.

## **8.2. The Second Episode – The Mouse on the Mile**

In the second episode, one of the main plots is the execution of Arlen “The Chief” Bitterbuck. Bitterbuck, convicted of murder of a man with a cement cube during a dispute over shoes, is taken from his cell just as his family visits him. The guards take advantage of this situation to rehearse his entire execution. For practice, Bitterbuck is replaced by Toot-Toot, who, like Percy, Paul finds very annoying. Toot-Toot listens carefully to the guards' instructions and then repeats them, describing of his activities. When Toot-Toot is brought to the execution room by the guards and seated on “Old Sparky”, Paul tells Percy to move to the switch room to Van Hay, who controls the power supply to the electric chair. When Toot-Toot is strapped into the chair, Brutal says “Roll on one”, signaling Van Hay to turn on the generator. Brutal then asks Toot-Toot if he wants to say any last words, to which Toot-Toot responds with some very inappropriate jokes that make the guards and Paul himself laugh. When the laughter passes, Brutal says “Roll on two”, which is a command for Van Hay to drive electricity into the prisoner's body. Toot-Toot, imitating the executed man, begins to wail very loudly and then plays dead. During the final part of the execution rehearsal, when the electricity is running through the body of the executed, Dean and Harry notice that a mouse is watching them from the doorway. This scene is essentially identical in both the novel and its film adaptation.

The next scene is the actual execution of Arlen Bitterbuck, which Paul said went well. Bitterbuck was taken from his cell to Paul's office where he said his prayers and then was escorted across *the Green Mile* to the execution room. Bitterbuck appeared calm and unemotional the entire time, but showed a slight hint of emotion when he reached the room



where he was about to die. When Bitterbuck was executed in front of an audience, his mortal condition was checked by a doctor to see if the execution had gone well. Since the doctor heard light heartbeats, the execution was repeated one more time to be sure. During the execution, a strong smell filled the room. After removing the body from the execution room, the guards discovered that the smell was caused by the smoldering braid on Bitterbuck's head, which had been braided by his daughter. Paul slaps the braid to extinguish it, to which Percy responds with another unnecessary slap to Bitterbuck's dead body. This greatly angers Brutal, who grabs Percy and tells him "He's paid what he owed." Bitterbuck's body is then taken through the tunnel. In the film adaptation of this scene, the situation where Bitterbuck's daughter braids her father's hair, which subsequently burn, was completely omitted, accordingly cutting the strong smell in the execution room. Percy slaps Bitterbuck only because of his spiteful nature. Subsequently in the film adaptation, Paul asks Percy why he does not take the job at Briar Ridge where he will have better money for a better job, to which Percy replies that he will only take it if Paul lets him perform the execution from the role that Brutal took on during Bitterbuck's execution. Paul learns of this condition from Percy later in the plot of the novel.

After Bitterbuck's execution, negative interactions between Percy and Delacroix occur in the novel, forcing Paul and the other guards to once again react to Percy's inappropriate behavior. At this point, the guards do not understand why Percy is working at the E Block if he is unable to adapt and perform his duties properly. These situations that are missing in the film adaptation introduce another important scene when the guards notice that a mouse that regularly wanders between the cells has taken up residence with Delacroix, keeping him company. The guards run over to the cell and watch all the tricks Delacroix performs with Mr. Jingles, who by then was nicknamed Steamboat Willy by the guards. Astonished by the cheerfulness of the ever-terrified Delacroix, the guards look like they are going to allow him to keep the mouse. Then Percy arrives, which in the minds of the guards spelled trouble, as Percy had several conflicts with both Delacroix and Mr. Jingles. Percy completely catches the other guards by surprise with his approach to the situation, as he helps Delacroix secure accommodation in the form of a cigar box for Mr. Jingles. Paul suggests that this situation could be due to the threats that Brutal had made against Percy, and that Percy was vehemently trying play the main role of Delacroix's execution.

For the next few days after Mr. Jingles' surprise reception by Percy, Delacroix regularly calls the guards to his cell, where he shows them the tricks Mr. Jingles has learned. This part in

the novel is described by Paul as a peaceful period, but everything significantly changed after the reception of William Wharton took place. During this period, Paul develops a severe urinary infection, which forces him to go to warden Hal Moores and ask if Wharton's reception could be led by Brutal. However, the moment he enters the office, he is surprised by the devastated look on Moores' face, who informs him that his wife Melinda has a brain tumor. Because of such an overwhelming sight of a crying Moores, Paul forgets to tell him about his urinary infection, therefore he has to deal with Wharton's reception. In the film adaptation, Paul was called in by Moores, who told him that Paul would be in charge of Wharton's reception. The moment Moores finishes his speech about Wharton he bursts into tears for his wife Melinda. At the office, Paul had not yet shown signs of a severe urinary infection, which did not appear until the night of that day.

Paul instructs the guards to pick Wharton up from the hospital. As the guards pick Wharton up, they think he had been heavily sedated, because Wharton just stares into space and does not react to anything. Due to of his limp condition, the guards themselves had to put his pants on in the hospital. When Wharton is brought to the prison, he gives the same impression to the guards as before, as he does not move. Since the guards thought that Wharton had been heavily medicated, only three guards bring him into the cell, namely Harry, Dean and Percy. Then comes the crucial moment when Dean has to unlock the door. At that moment, Wharton jumps on Dean's back and begins to choke him with his handcuffs. Harry tries to save Dean, but Wharton manages to deflect his attacks and continues to crush Dean's neck with the chains. Harry yells at Percy to do something, but he cannot move due to the shock running through his body. When Paul discovers what is happening, he runs out of Wharton's cell and points his gun at Wharton, who is shielded from the barrel of the gun by Dean's body, which is why Paul cannot fire. This situation is replicated the same in the film adaptation. The only difference is that in the film adaptation we learn immediately how the whole situation ends up, whereas in the novel it is revealed much later.

### **8.3. The Third Episode – Coffey's Hands**

The third episode is introduced by a situation where an already old Paul in a nursing home decides to write a book about the strange occurrences that happened on the Green Mile. One night, Paul is unable to sleep because of the terrifying memories of William Wharton. He finds himself a place to stay overnight in the TV room. During that night he is visited by his friend

from the nursing home, Elaine Connelly. Paul opens up to her about Wharton and how the man still scares him, but Elaine encourages him to carry on writing anyway. The two then decide to go to bed, but Paul instead goes to another room where he continues to write. This part of the novel was absent in the film adaptation, where Paul narrates the whole story to Elaine since the beginning of the film.

As the story progresses, Paul comes back to Wharton's reception on the Mile and further explains how the whole situation ended up. When Paul pointed a gun at Wharton who was covering himself behind Dean's body, suddenly Brutal shows up out of nowhere with a baton in his hands and hits Wharton on the head and knocks him out. The guards drag Wharton to his cell and lock him there. When Wharton wakes up he tries to scare Paul while writing a report on the situation by telling him that he will do the same to him as he did to Dean. Despite these threats, Paul remains calm which surprises Wharton. His calmness is derived from the situation that happened while Wharton was asleep and all the guards were not present in the area of cells.

When all the guards had left the block, Paul visited the bathroom where he had to go through terrible pain while trying to urinate as his urinal infection was getting worse. When Paul left the toilet, he went to check on John Coffey's cell, as he has not heard a word from him during the whole scuffle over Wharton and was worried if everything was all right. When he saw that Coffey was all right he tried to go away from his cell but Coffey told him that he needs to talk to him. Paul told him that he does not have time for that at that moment and he has to wait but Coffey suggested he needs it now. When Paul decided to listen to what Coffey had to say, Coffey asked him if he could enter his cell because he could not speak through the bars. Despite Delacroix's warning that it is not safe for Paul, he still entered Coffey's cell and sat next to him. Curious about what Coffey, Paul learns that Coffey just wants help. Suddenly, Coffey grabbed Paul in the crotch and Paul completely froze. While Coffey was holding Paul in the crotch, Paul was crying out in the pain and fear. Coffey got his hand off Paul's crotch and Paul had noticed that Coffey looked like he was about to vomit but instead of normal human vomiting, Coffey opened his mouth and exhaled a dark cloud of a tiny insect. Paul, confused by the whole situation he had just experienced, stood up and found that all his crotch pain was gone. While Delacroix was yelling from behind, asking what had happened, Paul asked John Coffey what he did to which he responded that he helped. Paul was curious about how Coffey did it but the only response he got from him was a head shake from left to right.

While Paul was leaving Coffey's cell not knowing what just happened, he faced Delacroix asking him the same question. Paul replied to Delacroix but was silent about what happened, to which Delacroix replied that he thinks John Coffey is "gris-gris". Paul asked Delacroix why he thinks that. Delacroix replied that Mr. Jingles had told him. When the conversation was over, Paul visited the bathroom again, where he enjoyed the fact that his pain was gone and thought about the miracle that had just happened.

The film's handling of this subplot is somewhat different, as after the guards' fight with Wharton, Paul sent the guards out of the cell area, where he subsequently collapsed on the floor in pain. Coffey called out to him from his cell that he needed to talk to him. Paul did not need to enter John Coffey's cell at all, as Coffey did not even ask him to. In the film, Coffey grabbed Paul through the bars and did his entire "treatment" standing up through the bars. During Paul's exit from bars of Coffey's cell, there was no interaction between Delacroix and Paul. However, a scene was added where after the whole situation, Paul surprised his wife Janice at home, as he was no longer bothered by the pain in his private areas so he could still perform his marital duties in bed.

Another important part of third episode is when Paul the day after he was healed by Coffey visits Burt Hammersmith who reported Coffey's case. In this section, which is identical in the novel and the film adaptation, Paul visits Hammersmith for the reason that he wants to find out what is known about Coffey's case. During the conversation, Paul indicates that he kind of thinks the criminal case against him does not make sense and that Coffey has not been properly proven guilty, to which Hammersmith responds with a story about a mangrel dog that attacked his son despite the dog having been well-behaved all his life. In this story he compares Coffey to a mangrel dog, clearly indicating that he thinks Coffey is guilty.

The next scene back to the prison, problems with Wharton are shown, such as spitting and urinating on the guards. The guards dealt with this by punishing Wharton by using a firehose to spray Wharton with a strong stream of water and then locking him in the restraint room with a straitjacket on his body. When Wharton is released from the restraint room after some time, the guards expect him to be compliant. Unfortunately, this was not the case, as the following night Wharton immediately spits a pie in Brutal's face, resulting in more time spent in isolation for Wharton.

As the plot moves on, the guards prepare for Delacroix's execution. To be able to rehearse his execution, they must first get him out of his cell for a period of time, which they manage to do by arranging for Delacroix and Mr. Jingles a performance in front of an audience. With Delacroix gone, preparations are underway for the execution which Percy directs. The guards are impressed with how well Percy is prepared for the execution and his overall behavior. When Delacroix's show ends, Percy scares Delacroix, who subsequently falls and hits his head. When Percy tries to apologize to him, Wharton grabs Percy through the bars below his neck and starts making threats. When Wharton releases him, Percy steps away from Wharton's cell, wailing. After this commotion, a strong laughter comes from Delacroix's cell caused by Percy wetting his pants. When the guards notice, Percy threatens them that they must not tell anyone or he will have them fired. After that, Percy just looks at the laughing Delacroix and leaves the cell area. In the film adaptation, there was an interaction at the end between Percy and Delacroix, who made fun of him, and Percy then indirectly threatened him, which gives the viewer a hint of their relationship before Delacroix's execution.

The next day, Paul and Brutal discuss with Delacroix what is going to happen with Mr. Jingles. Delacroix disagrees with ideas coming from Paul, so Brutal has to improvise and comes up with the idea of a made-up place called Mouseville, which is a tourist attraction with mice. Delacroix smiles and says he likes it. When the conversation is almost over, Delacroix accidentally throws a spool way too hard, so it bounces and rolls out from cell followed by Mr. Jingles. When Percy sees this, he does not hesitate a second and steps with full force on Mr. Jingles and kills him. As Delacroix is crying out loud, Percy says he knew that he was going to get him and leaves the cell area. The handling of this entire scene in the film adaptation was identical to the novel, which can be justified by the importance of this scene to the entire story.

#### **8.4. The Fourth Episode – The Bad Death of Eduard Delacroix**

The fourth episode is introduced by Paul back in the nursing home going for a walk. When he is returning back, he suddenly meets Brad Dolan. Brad is a character unmentioned in the film adaptation at all, but in the novel Paul describes him very similarly to Percy Wetmore regarding his behaviour. When Brad grabs his hand, Paul is scared because he feels the same hatred coming from Brad towards him as he felt from Percy towards Delacroix. Brad is curious about Paul's secrets and he wants to know where he was but Paul does not respond. Brad tries to force the answer by squeezing Paul's hand, but Paul keeps on refusing to answer. When Brad

lets him go, Paul speaks to Elaine, who says that she saw their interaction and later she spoke to Brad, who asked her if she knows Paul's secrets, to which she responded that she does not but she would like to. After the dialogue with Elaine is over, Paul again describes how Brad reminds him of Percy and how Percy has taken his revenge on the man who laughed at him which takes the reader back to the prison.

Thus, the story takes us back to the situation where Percy stepped on Mr. Jingles. When the guards see the dead body of Mr. Jingles, they start screaming at Percy, to which John Coffey's voice is heard in the background telling the guards to give him the mouse. Paul looks at him and realizes what Coffey has done to his urinary infection and brings him the mouse. Coffey covers the mouse with his massive hands and at that moment his face shrinks as if a great pain is going through his body. The guards are watching closely to see what is going on when Brutal suddenly notices Mr. Jingles' tail starting to move. Coffey opens his mouth like he did with Paul's infection and exhales a large dark cloud of insects. Coffey then opens his hands and out runs a perfectly healthy Mr. Jingles. Delacroix is crying and smiling at the same time for getting his prison friend back. Paul and Brutal go to tell Percy who is in the execution room that Mr. Jingles is not injured. Percy does not believe them so he goes to take a look himself. When he sees Mr. Jingles, he returns back to Paul and Brutal and accuses them of switching Mr. Jingles with a different mouse. The conversation goes wrong as Brutal and Paul aggressively push Percy into the electric chair, where they make Percy promise to get transferred to Briar Ridge after executing Delacroix, which Percy finally accepts.

The following event is the very scene of Delacroix's execution. When Paul and the guards pick Delacroix up from his cell and lead him to his execution. Paul promises to him that nothing is going to happen to Mr. Jingles, whereupon Delacroix hands Mr. Jingles over. Before the actual execution, they stop by Paul's office where Delacroix can say his last prayers. The whole event is accompanied by a frightening storm, which from the start symbolizes that something bad is about to happen. When Delacroix is brought into the execution room in front of the audience, he notices Percy standing by the electric chair, at which point he looks fearfully and accusingly at Paul, who assures him that everything is going to be all right. Delacroix settles into the chair and is restrained by the guards. When Percy puts a sponge on his head, he purposely does not wet it, which he probably sees as revenge on Delacroix. Before putting on the mask, Delacroix apologizes for his actions and makes sure Paul takes care of Mr. Jingles. This conversation is interrupted by Percy, who tells Delacroix that there is no such place as

Mouseville. As Percy is about to begin the execution, Paul notices that the sponge is not wet. Paul tries to quickly inform the others, but when he gets to Percy, Percy throws a malicious look at Paul and says “Roll on two! ” When Van Hay runs the electricity into Delacroix's body, everyone witnesses the disgusting event as the electricity does not get through the sponge into Delacroix's body but only gradually fries him. Paul at first tries to stop the execution because of Delacroix's wailing, but Brutal stops Paul and tells him to just let it finish because there is nothing they can do. The strong smell of burnt human flesh and hair, combined with the burning sponge Delacroix has on his head fills the room. People begin to panic and Percy is horrified at what he has done. Curtis Anderson yells at Paul asking why he does not shut it down, to which Paul replies that he is still not dead. Then the mask on Delacroix's face catches fire and only when his body stops moving, does Van Hay shut the power down. Brutal in a rage gives a fire extinguisher to Percy and tells him to clean up his mess. After Delacroix is declared dead his body is transported away. In the film adaptation, the scene where Delacroix prays in Paul's office was omitted, and the character of Curtis Anderson was also replaced with warden Hal Moores, who demands Paul stop the execution.

This ugly incident surrounding Delacroix's death is handled by the guards in the room where all the corpses are taken. Here Brutal tries to punch Percy but Paul stops him. Subsequently, an angry, screaming Curtis enters the room asking about what just happened. As Curtis lists all the negatives of the incident he also mentions that Wharton is singing about the incident in the prison, to which Paul replies “Can he carry a tune, Curtis? ” for light relief. This line makes everyone in the room laugh. Afterwards, Brutal talks about how Delacroix's death is iconic because he served time for burning people to death, which is what eventually happened to him. Paul says that Percy made a mistake but makes sure that Percy gets reassigned to Briar Ridge. The whole situation ends with Curtis saying that he will talk to Moores about what happened. In the film adaptation, Curtis did not have reveal anything to Moores, as warden Hal Moores was in the room the whole time instead of Curtis.

Later in both the book and the film adaptation, Paul walks through the cells where he first tells Wharton to be quiet and then talks to Coffey about what happened. Coffey tells Paul that during the horrific event, Mr. Jingles escaped to the restraint room and believes he will never return. The only thing that differs between the novel and its film adaptation is that in the novel when Paul is about to leave Coffey's cell, he asks him for his shoe.

The last significant part of this episode is when Paul learns about Melinda Moores' deteriorating condition. Paul, full of thoughts about Delacroix and Coffey, gets an idea about how Melinda could be helped but needs to consult with the other guards. Paul decides to invite Dean, Harry and Brutal in their home for lunch. As he is about to tell them his plan, Janice decides to leave the table as she would rather not hear about it. Paul tells his colleagues about Melinda's condition and that he thinks John Coffey might be able to help. Then he starts to convince his colleagues that it is a good plan and the whole episode ends with them asking him how he can be so sure that Coffey is innocent, to which Paul replies that the first reason is his shoe. The film adaptation of this scene is a little different, as Janice is sitting at the table the whole time, so she knows what the men are up to. The conversation goes a little differently, as Paul tells Dean directly who is most worried, that he is not in any danger, since he will only be guarding the prison and the others will go with Paul and Coffey to see Melinda. There was also no mention of Coffey's shoe in the film.

### **8.5. The Fifth Episode – Night Journey**

Like some of the previous episodes, episode five also opens back at the nursing home. Paul is about to head back into the woods but is worried about running into Brad again, whose behavior last time brought back unpleasant memories of Percy. When Elaine notices Paul's fear of meeting Brad, she helps him come up with a plan to get out without Brad noticing. Paul, amazed at their chemistry together, tells Elaine that he loves her, and Elaine subsequently kisses him. When Elaine sets off the fire alarm with a cigarette, Paul heads into the woods with his food, telling us along the way how the conversation with his colleagues at lunch at his house went. This entire chapter was completely omitted from the film adaptation.

Paul gives his colleagues at the table two reasons why he thinks Coffey is innocent. When he took Coffey's shoe in prison and asked him to tie it, Coffey replied that he no longer knew how to do it. This is contrary to the evidence that was presented at trial because when Coffey was supposed to have kidnapped the Detterick twins, he had a sausage from his snack bag for the dog. This bag was afterward found tied in Coffey's pocket, which therefore contradicts the fact that Coffey could not even tie his shoelaces.

The second reason he gives his colleagues is that in the attempt to track down the Detterick twins, the dogs looking for them tried to split up. According to Paul, some of the dogs possibly



smelled the twins held by John Coffey and the rest smelled the killer, so they pulled in opposite directions.

The guards begin to believe Paul's reasoning and they decide to help him. Paul tells them his plan, saying that Dean will stay in prison as he is the only one with young children so he cannot afford to lose his job. The others will help Paul get Coffey to Melinda and then back. The film adaptation is not much different here, except that the two reasons why Paul thinks Coffey is innocent were left out, and, as mentioned earlier, Janice, who in the film adaptation sat by the table the whole time, only came at the end of the conversation and showed no interest in finding out what Paul's plan was.

The guards are going to perform the prearranged action that night. First, Paul puts Wharton to sleep with a drink containing a sedative substance that had Paul given him for good behavior. Percy, seeing this, moves to Paul's office and when the guards are sure that Wharton is really asleep, they visit Percy in the office. Percy senses something is wrong from the moment the guards enter the office. The three guards standing in front of him reveal that they want to put him in a straitjacket. Percy protests and screams loudly for help, to which Brutal responds by saying that if he does not get into the straitjacket, his ears will be ripped off. Brutal pulls Percy's ears which forces Percy to finally get into the straitjacket. The guards were amazed at what Percy was doing in Paul's office, looking at a book with pornographic content on his desk. As they take Percy towards the restraint room, Percy begs them not to put him with Wharton. Dean then comes running up from the background and is told to keep his mouth shut by Brutal, which was part of the plan to make Dean look like he was not in on it. The guards tape Percy's mouth and before locking him up, they tell him to think about what he did to Delacroix. The guards then come for Coffey, who is caught through the bars by Wharton as he is being led away. Wharton says a few unkind words, to which Coffey replies that he is a bad man. When the guards separate Wharton and Coffey, Wharton lies down and immediately falls asleep. At the end of the chapter, Brutal asks Coffey if he knows where they are going, and Coffey replies that they are going to help a lady. Brutal asks in surprise how he knows, to which Coffey replies that he does not. Again, the film adaptation of this scene is almost identical to the novel except for small variations in conversations.

During the pick-up truck ride to Moores' house, Paul becomes increasingly nervous. When they arrive at the Moores' front door, they notice that the lights are on inside, so they must have

noticed them. A few seconds later Hal Moores bursts open the door and comes out with a gun in his hand asking who is there. When he notices that they are prison guards he thinks something terrible must have happened. At that moment Paul had planned his speech about good and evil, but due to the events that have happened in the last few days combined with the stress he was unable to say a word. When Harry stepped out of the car with John Coffey at his side, Hal was horrified and pointed his gun right at huge Coffey. At that very moment, the screams of his sick wife Melinda echo from the house, so Harry uses this moment of Moores' inattention to put himself between the barrel of the gun and Coffey. They gradually advance closer to Moores. Harry says that everything is all right, that there is nothing to worry about. Moores is so distraught by the whole situation but also so desperate about his wife's condition that he easily resigns himself and lets Coffey come to him. He takes the gun from him and says he wants to help. Coffey then proceeds through the house followed by the guards and Moores towards the helpless Melinda lying in her bed. In the film adaptation, Paul does not speak about his prepared speech towards Hal, so there was no need to expect one. Although, Paul seems nervous, he is not that nervous to not speak at all. Coffey is indeed covered by Harry at the beginning of the situation, but not exactly with his body: Coffey just stands behind him the whole time and then gradually moves closer to Moores as he feels Melinda's pain.

When they arrive at Melinda's bedside, they notice that she is in a really bad condition. At first she gives Coffey a look of fear, but then when Coffey approaches, she starts telling him to take off his pants since she has never seen a naked black man. The men ignore these words due to her condition. When Coffey gets closer to her, Melinda asks him why Coffey has so many scars on his body, to which he replies that he does not remember. Melinda then asks for Coffey's name, to which Coffey responds with the traditional line that he has the same name as the drink, only spelled differently. Coffey approaches her as if he wanted to kiss her and says he sees it and tells Melinda to hold tight. At that moment, he puts his lips on Melinda's lips as if he is about to kiss her but instead he inhales heavily from her. Then the whole house starts to shake, the furniture falls and Melinda moves during this "kiss" as if she is suffering from severe convulsions. When Coffey removes his lips from Melinda's, Melinda can be seen as if she is brand new, healthy, and even looks younger. When Melinda wakes up, she says that she does not remember anything, to which her husband Hal tells her that they found nothing on the x-ray. When she sees John Coffey she asks who he is and subsequently that she saw him in her dream as they walk through the darkness together. Melinda gets up so she can hug Coffey and thank him. When the men decide to leave, Hal thanks Paul and Coffey, whereupon Melinda

gets up and hugs Coffey again, giving him a necklace to keep Coffey safe. Coffey is in very bad shape during the trip back, as he did not exhale what he absorbed from Melinda. The film adaptation omitted Melinda's perverse and racist references to Coffey but otherwise, everything was generally the same. The scene where, after Melinda wakes up, Melinda asks Coffey what his name is, to which he replies Coffey, but his line that the name is like a drink but spelled differently is said by Melinda, was kept in the film adaptation, as in my opinion, it is a powerful and emotional line.

## **8.6. The Sixth Episode – Coffey on the Mile**

The final episode of this book again features Paul in a nursing home writing the continuation of his story when he is suddenly visited by Brad, who once again tries to get Paul's secrets out of him. Again, it comes down to Brad squeezing Paul's hand, who does not give in. Suddenly Elaine comes in the room and forces Brad away, claiming that she has a highly positioned grandchild in the family and he may well step in if he does not stop treating Paul like that. Paul then thanks Elaine and lets her read what he has written so far. He also promises to show her the place he secretly goes in the woods when he is finished with the story. Elaine then kisses Paul on the forehead and leaves the room. This part was missing in the film adaptation.

The story continues with the return of the guards to the prison. The guards literally drag Coffey to prison as his condition is very bad. After they put him in a cell, they inform Dean how it went and together they pick Percy up from the restraint room. Percy has been calm pretty much of the whole time. When Paul tells him that he will take the tape off his mouth, but he must not scream, Percy of course does not follow through with the agreement and screams at them to take him out of the straitjacket. Subsequently, there is a long discussion between the guards and Percy in which they agree to keep quiet about what happened, but of course it is clear to Paul and Brutal that Percy will not keep it. As Percy leaves the restraint room, he is pulled through the bars by John Coffey to his side and Coffey breathes into Percy's mouth what he inhaled from Melinda Moores. The guards, shocked at what just happened in front of their eyes, walk over to Percy, who has a look on his face like he is dead inside, but Paul says that he thinks Percy will wake up and they should leave him alone. Percy, however, suddenly starts walking around the cells and when he gets to Wharton's cell, he pulls out a gun and shoots at sleeping Wharton. The guards try to stop Percy, but it is too late. Percy then coughs up a dark cloud of insects, which turns white in the air and disappears. According to Paul, Percy ended

up at Briar Ridge after the incident, where the guards had begged him all along to transfer. The guards actually got their wish, although Percy was not there as a guard, but as a patient. In the film adaptation, Wharton's death occurs slightly differently, as Percy does walk around the cells like a zombie, but when he looks at Wharton, who starts taunting him, Percy does not hesitate for a second and shoots him. Also in the film adaptation after the incident, Paul goes to see Coffey, who tells him that he punished the two bad men, which was not the case in the novel. In the novel, Coffey only nodded his head at Paul, who nodded back.

The next day, Paul opens up to Janice about what happened at the Mile and also about Coffey's healing powers. After a long debate, Paul tries to deduce why the Detterick twins did not scream when they were kidnapped, Janice tries to deduce why Coffey intentionally killed Wharton, whom he does not know and their only interaction was when Wharton touched him.

Paul tries to investigate what really happened to the Detterick twins, but after visiting people who could help him he is ultimately crushed as Paul realizes that Wharton is the killer, but can do nothing about it as Deputy McGee told him that he will not reopen the investigation due to a lack of evidence. Paul subsequently meets his colleagues at his home, where he tells them how he knows Wharton is the twins' killer. The guards also deduce together how Coffey knows Wharton is the killer. This is because Coffey is able to read minds based on touching someone, which he did with Wharton the night they went to cure Melinda Moores. At the table Janice gets very angry at Paul, calling him a murderer and a coward for not trying to do something to free Coffey and compares him to Wharton.

All of these scenes were missing in the film adaptation, as in the film adaptation right after Wharton's death, Coffey touches Paul and projects into his mind what really happened to the Detterick twins. Paul, therefore, saw with his own eyes how Wharton murdered them. That is why he did not have to investigate what happened at all as he needed to do in the novel. The only match from this part was the following scene when Paul talks to Janice at home. She apologizes to him for her anger at the table with her colleagues, tells Paul not to tell anyone about Coffey's innocence unless it is someone who can help. At the end of the conversation, Janice tells Paul to go to Coffey and ask him what he would wish for and what would make him happy. In the film adaptation, Janice does not apologize for her anger, as there was none. There is also a switch of sentences, as the sentence "I done a few things in my life that I'm not proud

of, but this is the first time I ever felt really actually in danger of hell,” which Paul utters when talking to Janice. This is actually uttered in the novel by Brutal towards Paul.

A few days later, the guards rehearse the execution of Coffey while he is taking a shower. When Coffey returns, Coffey begins to have a dialogue with Paul, who is amazed at Coffey's ability to read people's minds. During the conversation, Paul finds out from Coffey what he would like to have for his last meal, to which Coffey replies that he would like meatloaf. Paul then asks Coffey if he would like a preacher to read him a prayer, but Coffey refuses and says that Paul can say it for him. Coffey touches Paul, which makes him feel like he is going to explode, but he does not say anything. Coffey suddenly says not to worry about exploding. When Coffey takes his hand off, Paul realizes he feels like he can read people's minds. Coffey apologizes and tells him that it will pass in time. Before Paul leaves, Coffey answers the question Paul has been wondering the whole time, which is why the Detterick twins did not scream. Coffey explains to him that he knows everything because he touched Wharton and then emotionally explains that the twins did not scream for mutual love, as Wharton told them that if one screamed, he would kill the other. “He kill them with they love. That's how it is every day. All over the world.”

Coffey later implies that he does not want to live in a world where things like this happen. Subsequently, Paul leaves Coffey's cell feeling like he is full of energy. This scene is different in the film adaptation because Paul already knows what happened to the Detterick twins and the discussion is only about what Coffey would like to eat for his last day. Coffey's ability to read people's mind can be visible here as Paul wants to ask what Coffey wants him to do, to which Coffey responds that he knows what he is about to ask him and he does not want him to do anything and suggests Paul that he should just let him leave this world because he is tired of being alone and living in such a cruel world. Coffey does say that he would like to see a flicker show because he has never seen one. The next scene is Coffey and the guards watching the flicker show. This scene is not based on King's novel.

When the time comes for Coffey's execution, nervous guards pick Coffey up from his cell. Coffey, who is very calm compared to the guards, tells them about how the dream he had where Mr. Jingles was doing a show in Mouseville and the Detterick twins were in the audience. Paul asks Coffey to give him the necklace he got from Melinda Moores as it could be dangerous during the execution. Paul and Coffey make a prayer in Coffey's office, where Paul tells him

that he is sorry, to which Coffey responds that he does not have to be. In the film adaptation, it is visible that guards are struggling to hold their emotions. Viewers do not get to see the prayer being said by Paul in his office as the guards go with Coffey straight to the execution room.

When Coffey is brought into the execution room, Coffey says that he feels that everyone in the room hates him, to which Brutal gives him advice to feel how the guards feel. As Coffey is being led to the electric chair Marjorie Detterick spits in Coffey's direction and constantly curses at him. When Coffey is handcuffed, Brutal makes a speech with his hand on Coffey's shoulder, and when Paul asks if Coffey wants to make a final speech, Coffey utters "I'm sorry for what I am." As Brutal is putting on Coffey's mask, Coffey asks Brutal if he could be executed without it, as he is afraid of the dark. The guards comply. During the execution, Paul recalls how Dean got himself reassigned after Coffey's execution and then was murdered after a while. When Brutal utters the phrase "Roll on two," electric power surges through Coffey's body, causing the lights to flicker like they do when Coffey performed his healing abilities. Coffey dies in the electric chair and the last image he sees is of Paul. The film adaptation of this scene was almost identical, except that in the novel Marjorie Detterick shouted insults towards Coffey, but in the film adaptation they were also insults coming from her husband Klaus. The speech to Coffey is made by Paul, which highlighted the relationship between Paul and Coffey. While getting strapped to the chair, Coffey utters over and over that he is in heaven. The emotions on the faces of the guards are also more visible, as they almost all cry during the execution, and Brutal has to push Paul to say a sentence that triggers the release of electricity into Coffey's body. When Brutal tells him, Paul walks over to Coffey and shakes his hand. Paul hears Coffey's thoughts telling him again the lines about Wharton killing the twins with their own love.

Paul then returns home, where he cries, and Janice comforts him. There is also a scene in the film adaptation where the guards take Coffey's body away and Paul puts the necklace by Melinda on Coffey's dead body.

Then the story goes back to the nursing home, where Paul offers the whole story to Elaine to read. When Elaine returns, saying that she has read the story, she is amazed at Paul's advanced age. Paul tells her how all his loved ones have died and the only thing he does not tell her is what happened to Janice, as he is not ready for it yet. Elaine will never know this though, as she dies a few months later.

Paul takes Elaine to a shed in the woods, where Elaine sees Mr. Jingles for the first time. Old Mr. Jingles performs his best spool tricks and makes Elaine laugh and cry at the same time. Paul tells Elaine how by touching Coffey he and Mr. Jingles became basically invincible as they do not age. While they are having fun, Brad Dolan walks into the shed. Paul confronts him because he is afraid he might do something bad to Mr. Jingles, to which Brad says that he is already dead anyway. When Paul and Elaine turn around, they see a dead Mr. Jingles next to his favorite toy. Elaine then chases Brad out of the cabin. When Elaine and later Paul stop crying, they bury Mr. Jingles nearby the shed and then go to watch the sunset, where Paul says a prayer for Mr. Jingles.

In the last chapter, Paul reflects on his wife Janice and speaks about her passing. Janice died in a bus accident in 1956. Paul and Janice were on their way to their third grandchild's graduation in Florida when the bus's tire flattened and collided with a truck. Paul woke up after the accident and found his wife Janice lying among the dead bodies. Paul knelt down beside her and cried for help. During his trauma, he thought he saw John Coffey in the shadows, who subsequently disappeared. When Janice died in Paul's arms he wailed, asking why John Coffey could not have saved his wife too when he had saved Melinda. Later in the story, Paul tells how he is cursed by the fact that he cannot die and he has to bury everyone he has ever loved in his life. The only thing he looks forward to in his life is when he will die. The story ends with an iconic line that carries the message of the whole story. "We each owe a death, there are no exceptions, I know that, but sometimes, oh God, the Green Mile is so long." The ending of the film adaptation is different as no Brad Dolan appears in the film adaptation so Mr. Jingles does not die at all. Paul leads Elaine to the shed where Mr. Jingles is hiding and there he starts telling her about his friends and loved ones that died, to which he says that one day he will have to watch her funeral too, as it is his curse. Paul does not mention in the film adaptation how Janice died. He only hints at her and his son's death. In a subsequent scene, Paul is at Elaine's funeral and this event is covered by the words he says to Elaine in the shed. We also see a scene where Paul finds Mr. Jingles in the prison long after Coffey's funeral. The last scene is a shot of Paul lying in bed and subsequently Mr. Jingles lying in his own bed, questioning when he will die if Coffey made a mouse live so long. The film ends with the same line that ended the novel.

## 9. Conclusion

The bachelor thesis compares the book *The Green Mile* with its film adaptation. I found plenty of differences in this work, which I outlined, but in terms of the importance of these differences only a few of them were significant and therefore, the story stuck to its original.

Among the major differences that accompanied us throughout the story could be classified that at some points the film adaptation was significantly shortened and deprived of some scenes that appear in the novel. The shortening of the overall plot and the impoverishment of *The Green Mile* film adaptation by some of the scenes that were in the novel can be most noticeable in the situations taking place in the nursing home where already old Paul experiences unpleasant situations with Brad Dolan who brings back negative memories of Percy Wetmore to Paul. I would also include the scenes with Mr. Jingles among other significantly impoverished sequences as several interactions can be observed in the novel, mostly between Percy and Mr. Jingles. Since these scenes were not very essential to the plot as they only hinted the negative relationship between Percy and Mr. Jingles, Frank Darabont compensated this by including only the most dramatic interaction between the two mentioned, which was quite enough for the viewer to understand the relationship between these two characters.

The chronological order of the film adaptation versus the novel was few times slightly altered, as time plays a key role in the film adaptation, which pushed Frank Darabont in such a busy story and hence he had to deprive the film of some scenes causing a change to chronology of the story. Still the film adaptation is slightly over three hours long, so it is an unusually long film. This can be demonstrated by the example of William Wharton being brought into the prison and causing a great commotion in the prison. When the situation escalated in the novel, the reader had to read through the scene where the story takes us back to the nursing home and then the climax of the action in the prison comes. With the film adaptation, the viewer knew immediately how the scene would end as the story did not jump back to the nursing home. This can be justified by the fact that since *The Green Mile* was published in episodes, where the story did not continue at the beginning of almost every episode, the reader had to read through the introduction to get to the continuity of the ending of the previous episode.

In the film adaptation of the *The Green Mile*, Frank Darabont was able to create slight differences in the plot, but the same cannot be said for the inner nature of the characters, which is the cornerstone of this work. In the novel, the reader does not encounter much external



description of the characters, on the contrary, descriptions of their nature are frequent in the novels, accompanied by stories about them that help the reader in forming his own picture of the character. Therefore, in the film adaptation, Frank Darabont, with few exceptions, could not make a mistake with his choice of actors. On the other hand, what mattered was that the performer of a given character should be able to demonstrate the qualities of the character because the nature of each character was quite specific in the novel.

The last thing that was regularly but not significantly changed were the conversations. These changes were not only made because some of the conversations in the novel are considerably long, but also because previous changes in the chronology of the scenes could cause that some of the sentences would make no sense. This can be seen in the example mentioned in my thesis, where Paul utters a sentence in the film adaptation when he first time feels like he is in danger of hell, which is actually uttered by his colleague Brutal in the novel when he thinks about the execution of John Coffey. On the other hand, some conversations or speeches were retained because of their importance in the story. This can be seen, for example, in the last sentence uttered in the story.

In conclusion, I would like to recommend this book and the film adaptation, as many aspects of these works can be explored and they can change the impression of these pieces. An interesting area of exploration could be the influences of the period and setting in which the work is set and whether, beyond supernatural abilities, such a scenario of events could be plausible.

## 10. Summary

In this thesis I highlight the similarities and fundamental differences between Stephen King's novel *The Green Mile* and its film adaptation *The Green Mile* by Frank Darabont. The film adaptation fairly held on to plot of the novel that was written by Stephen King. At important moments of the story, Frank Darabont did not make any significant changes and kept the plot accurate to the source material.

The first chapter of the theoretical part of my thesis deals with Stephen King's life in general and his writing motivation. This includes the beginning of Stephen King's writing career and what life challenges he had to overcome to become one of the world's elite writers. Since he is not an author of only one famous work I dedicated a part of this section to his most famous works that helped him on his way to the top.

In the next chapter, the context of the novel *Green Mile* is discussed. I focus on the main problems of the period and location in which the story takes place. Among these problems, I include the two most visible problems in the novel, which are poverty and racism. These problems appear repeatedly in the story. In reference to racism, I mention that some of the characters who are talking or referring to John Coffey use racist labels. I also point out that Coffey's conviction was completely illegitimate because the judge did not have enough evidence to prove Coffey guilty but he was convicted anyway without any objection.

In the next two chapters, the information about the novel and film adaptation of this story is identified. The chapter focusing on the novel includes the structure in which the novel was written and the origin of the whole story, where I explain how Stephen King had to change the story since originally he planned it to be a bedtime story. In the subsequent chapter dealing with the film adaptation of *The Green Mile* one can read about information about the film and how Frank Darabont got into writing the screenplay for this film, which is explained through his dialogue with Stephen King. General pieces of information about the film include the cast of the film, opinions of the people involved in the film-making, as well as the setting where the film was shot. A chapter is then devoted to the awards that the film has won or been nominated for, as the film was successful in the awards field.

Next, thematic analysis is important for a work like *The Green Mile* because of the frequent presence of these themes, which is why the following chapter is devoted to themes. In this

section, I have identified three themes that I encountered the most in the story. These themes were drawn not only based on my feelings after reading the novel but also based on other literature related to *The Green Mile* problematics. The first theme that immediately impacts the reader from the beginning of the story is death, as the narrator of the story, Paul Edgecombe, often speculates about death and tells various stories about it. Another chosen theme is racism and injustice which can be sensed right from the sentencing of John Coffey and this is furthered by his bad defence in court. The last theme chosen is the presence of God, which I describe links to the supernatural abilities of John Coffey, but also the partnership of Mr. Jingles and Delacroix.

In order to clarify the nature of the characters for subsequent comparison of the two works, I also devote a section of my thesis to the two main characters of the work. The description of these characters includes mostly internal descriptions of the characters based on their actions as well as facts about their lives. For Paul Edgecombe, I mention his good character and his efforts to help John Coffey. To understand John Coffey's character, I provide his background, which is not fully known, but at least it is mentioned how he got to the prison and his subsequent good deeds. In relation to his character, I also list the criticisms raised against him by well known critics.

Finally, the last chapter is the most comprehensive as it captures the plot and the comparison of the novel with the film adaptation. I divided my practical part into 6 subchapters, which describe the plot of each episode. Because of the length of these chapters, I chose the approach where I select the most important scenes of each episode and describe them as they took place in the novel. After describing the plot of the episode, the differences are compared with a part of the film adaptation corresponding to given episode. In the comparison, I outline multiple differences that may differ from each other, as these are not only differences in the plot of the episode, but also differences in the chronology of the scenes in the episode, as well as differences in the conversations. On the other hand, I also mention when a scene does not contain a major difference or if a crucial moment of the plot is kept the same even if the preceding scenes have been altered. Such a situation is portrayed when Paul tried to look for evidence of Coffey's case, which is a scene missing in the film adaptation. Then, Paul returned to his wife Janice and had a dialogue with her, which was already an identical situation in both adaptations. The justification for each change made by Frank Darabont in the film's treatment

was mostly omitted, as it was most often an alteration to save some time. The last line of my analysis mentions one of the most powerful lines of the story which both adaptations end with.

## 11. Resumé

V této práci poukazuji na podobnosti a zásadní rozdíly mezi románem od Stephen Kinga *Zelená míle* a její filmovou adaptací od režiséra Franka Darabonta. Filmová zpracování *Zelené Mile* se po obsahové stránce příliš neodlišuje od původního knižního vydání, jelikož v důležitých momentech tohoto příběhu neprovedl Frank Darabont žádné výrazné změny a zachoval děj věrný předloze.

První kapitola teoretické části mé bakalářské práce se zabývá obecnými informacemi o životě Stephen Kinga a jeho motivací k psaní. Zahrnuty jsou i začátky autorovy spisovatelské kariéry, včetně životních výzev, které musel překonat, aby se stal jedním z elitních světových spisovatelů. Jelikož King vydal nejednu úspěšnou publikaci, věnoval jsem část této sekce jeho nejslavnějším dílům, která mu pomohla v cestě na vrchol.

V další kapitole se věnuji kontextu *Zelené míle*. Zde se zaměřuji na hlavní problémy období a lokace, v nichž se příběh odehrává. Mezi dva nejviditelnější problémy řadím chudobu a rasismus, jelikož na ně čtenář může narazit takřka od začátku děje. Tyto problémy se v příběhu objevují opakovaně. V souvislosti s rasismem zmiňuji, že některé postavy, které hovoří k Johnu Coffeymu, používají rasistická označení. Poukazuji také na to, že jeho odsouzení bylo naprosto neoprávněné, jelikož soudce neměl dostatek důkazů, které by prokázaly Coffeyho vinu, ale přesto byl odsouzen, aniž by proti tomu kdokoliv protestoval.

V dalších dvou kapitolách jsou uvedeny informace o knižní a filmové adaptaci tohoto příběhu. Kapitola zaměřená na knižní zpracování obsahuje strukturu, v níž byl příběh sepsán, a vznik celého příběhu, kde vysvětluji, jak Stephen King musel děj změnit, protože původní verze tohoto emotivního příběhu měla být pohádka na dobrou noc. V následující kapitole zabývající se filmovou adaptací *Zelené míle* se lze dočíst o tom, jak se Frank Darabont dostal k psaní scénáře k tomuto filmu, což je vysvětleno prostřednictvím jeho dialogu se Stephenem Kingem. Dále jsou zde uvedeny obecné informace o filmu, které zahrnují obsazení rolí ve filmu, názory osobností, které se na natáčení podílely a také prostředí, kde se film natáčel. Speciální podkapitola byla věnována oceněním a nominacím, které tento snímek získal, neboť byl velmi úspěšný na poli ocenění.

Následná analýza témat je pro dílo jako je *Zelená míle* důležitá kvůli jejich časté přítomnosti. Celkově jsem identifikoval tři zásadní témata, s nimiž se v příběhu lze setkat nejčastěji. Tato

témata byla vyvozena nejen na základě mých pocitů po přečtení knižní adaptace, ale také na základě odborné literatury související s problematikou *Zelené mile*. Prvním tématem, které na čtenáře působí hned od začátku příběhu, je smrt, neboť vypravěč příběhu Paul Edgecombe o ní často spekuluje a vypráví různé příběhy týkající se smrti. Dalším zvoleným tématem je rasismus a nespravedlnost, které lze vnímat hned od odsouzení Johna Coffeyho, což je ještě umocněno jeho špatnou obhajobou u soudu. Posledním zvoleným tématem byla přítomnost Boha, kterou popisují v souvislosti s nadpřirozenými schopnostmi Johna Coffeyho, ale také ji lze vnímat v návaznosti na partnerství Mr. Jinglese a Delacroixa.

Pro lepší pochopení děje a postav *Zelené Mile* věnuji část své práce také dvěma protagonistům tohoto díla. Popis postav je pojat převážně jako vnitřní charakteristika Johna Coffeyho a Paula Edgecomba na základě jejich jednání, včetně zmínek o jejich životě. U Paula Edgecomba je vytyčena jeho dobrá povaha a snaha pomoci Johnu Coffeymu. Pro pochopení charakteru Johna Coffeyho uvádím jeho minulost, která není zcela známá, ale je alespoň zmínka o tom, jak se do vězení dostal a opomenuty nejsou ani jeho následné dobré skutky. V souvislosti s jeho postavou uvádím také výtky, které proti jeho postavě vznesli známí kritici.

Závěrečná kapitola méj bakalářské práce je nejobsáhlejší, neboť zachycuje děj a srovnání knižní adaptace s filmovou. Praktickou část jsem rozdělil do šesti podkapitol, které popisují děj jednotlivých epizod. Vzhledem k rozsáhlé délce těchto epizod jsem zvolil postup, kdy jsem z každé epizody vybral nejdůležitější scény a popsal je tak, jak se odehrály v knižním provedení. Po popisu děje jednotlivé epizody následuje porovnání s částí filmové adaptace odpovídající dané epizodě. V porovnání uvádím více rozdílů, které se od sebe mohou lišit, neboť se jedná nejen o rozdíly v ději epizody, ale také o rozdíly v chronologii scén dané epizody a o rozdíly v rozhovorech. Na druhou stranu uvádím i případy, kdy scéna neobsahuje zásadní rozdíl, nebo když je zásadní moment děje zachován stejný vůči scénám předcházejícím, které byly pozměněny. Taková situace je uvedena na příkladu scény, která chybí ve filmové adaptaci, kdy se Paul snažil hledat důkazy o Coffeyho nevině. Paul se poté vrátil ke své ženě Janice a vedl s ní dialog, který už byl totožný v obou adaptacích. Zdůvodnění jednotlivých změn, které Frank Darabont ve filmovém zpracování provedl, je většinou vynecháno, protože se nejčastěji jednalo o změnu z důvodu úspory času. Poslední řádek mé analýzy zmiňuje jednu z nejsilnějších replik příběhu, která ukončuje obě adaptace.

## 12. Sources

### 12.1. Primary sources

Darabont, F. (1999). *The Green Mile*. Warner Bros.

King, S. (1996). *The Green Mile*. Signet.

### 12.2. Secondary sources

Browning, M. (2009). *Stephen King on the Big Screen*. Intellect Books.

Burger, A. (2017). *Teaching Stephen King: Horror, the supernatural, and new approaches to literature*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Darabont, F. (2000). *Charlie Rose Interview on "The Green Mile"*.  
<https://charlierose.com/videos/2634>

IMDB. (1999, 10. December). *The Green Mile*.  
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120689/>

Internet Archive. (n.d.). *The Green Mile*.  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20111108025126/http://thegreenmile.warnerbros.com/cmp/cast-fr.html>

King, S. (2000). *On writing: a memoir of the craft*. Hodder.

Legros, C. (2008, 12. April). *The Green Mile*. <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-green-mile/themes/death-and-the-death-penalty>

Magistrale, T. (2003). *Hollywood's Stephan King*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Rottentomatoes (n.d.). *The Green Mile*.  
[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/green\\_mile](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/green_mile)

Skibiski, Ch. (n.d.). *Stephen King: Biography*.  
[https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000175/bio?ref\\_=nm\\_ov\\_bio\\_sm](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000175/bio?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm)

Spignesi, S. (2003). *The Essential Stephen King: A Ranking of the Greatest Novels, Short Stories, Movies, and Other Creations of the World's Most Popular Writer*. New Page.

Strengell, H. (2006). *Dissecting Stephen King: From the Gothic to Literary Naturalism*. University of Wisconsin Press.

WARNERBROS. (2012). *The Green Mile: Walking the Mile: The Making of The Green Mile*,  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mW4jbu9gNt0&ab\\_channel=WarnerBros.Entertainment](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mW4jbu9gNt0&ab_channel=WarnerBros.Entertainment)

WOOD, R. (2011). *Stephen King: A literary companion*. McFarland & Company.