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The Green Mile – the comparison of the book with its film adaptation

Prohlášení:

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma, The Green Mile – the comparison of the book with its film adaptation, vypracovala samostatně a užila jsem jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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Abstract

The thesis *The Green Mile* - the comparison of the book with its film adaptation is primarily focused on the comparison of the book with its film version. The emphasis is put on the comparison of the plot, characters and moral dilemmas. One chapter is, however, dedicated to those parts of the film which were omitted or changed. Also, the thesis provides a brief biography of Stephen King, mentions his other books and the background of the book and the adaptation and their awards.

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1 Introduction

“A little talent is a good thing to have if you want to be a writer. But the only real requirement is the ability to remember every scar.”

Stephen King

I opened my thesis with a quote by Stephen King and the reason for choosing this very quotation is that in my opinion, it totally expresses the power of King’s work. It is beyond no doubt that Stephen King’s books have been an inspiration for numerous film directors during decades. Furthermore, a great amount of film adaptations based on his novels or short stories have had a roaring success in the field of public and film making. However, the first and most important thing needed for making a fantastic film is a fantastic piece of writing on which the film will be based. When one decides for a book written by Stephen King, he or she can be sure that it is a work deserving a film adaptation. To remember every scar is the foundation stone of his writing. This might be why his books are so celebrated. They are based on real events even though, in most cases, he makes science fiction of them.

The reason for me choosing specifically *The Green Mile* is that it is a great novel regarding not only reading between the lines but also there is a need for thinking about moral dilemmas that pervade the whole book. In addition, a few years after publication was created a film of the same name that is based on the novel. *The Green Mile*, the film, was also a huge success and is still considered to be one of the greatest and beloved films ever made.

In the first part of my thesis I, firstly, concentrate on Stephen King’s life. It is important, for understanding his works, to know what his life was like when he was young and what it is like today.

Secondly, I provide important features of *The Green Mile*, the book and the film adaptation separately. There is mentioned the background of its origin as well as its criticism. Mainly, it is concentrated on the origin of both versions and the main characters but also on the language King uses.

The second part of the thesis deals with the comparison of the book with its film adaptation. One section is focused on the plot, especially if it is faithful to the original story.

Another part concentrates on agreement between the main characters in the novel and their realisation in the adaptation. If the film catches the essence of the book is another part of this section. And one piece of the work, however, is focused on those parts of book that were omitted or changed in the film adaptation.

2 Stephen King

Stephen King, who is very often called 'the master of horror', is considered to be one of the greatest contemporary authors, not only in the USA but all through the world. His works are thrilling, gripping and most importantly, he captures the character of human being very well. Each of his books is not just about the fear, it is written for the reader to draw a lesson from it. In every book is expressed some human quality, which can be found inside every person, which is escalated to extreme and make people think about their possible reaction to the same situation.

It is of major importance to know that King draws inspiration from moments of his own life as well as from stories he was told. Without everything that had happened to him and what he had heard of, he would not be such writer as he is.

This chapter is dedicated to the Stephen King's life. It is focused on his childhood, difficult teen years and adulthood because his life experience highly influenced King as a writer. One part is also concentrated on Richard Bachman which is a pseudonym King used for writing some of his stories.

2.1 Life

Stephen King was born on the 21st September, 1947 in Portland, Maine. He is the second child of Nellie Ruth King and Donald Edwin King. As King (2002, p. 13) says, he has been through a lot in his life. His childhood was weird. The family moved a lot after his father left them and he and his brother often stayed at their aunts' or some of family friends. Incessant changes of address made Stephen a stranger in new places all over again. This is one of the facts why he had never been popular with his schoolmates. The other reason is that King's family belonged among the middle working class. Ruth worked hard to have enough money to provide necessity for both her children and herself. Thus, they had no money left for buying more clothes than needed, for instance (King, 2002).

As it has been already said, Stephen King did not have an easy and comfort life. His life was full of fear and horrifying moments. As for instance Lisa Rogak (2010, p. 27) claims,

at the age of four Stephen saw his friend being knocked down by a freight train. Such a thing must have left a mark in King's life.

As King (2002, p.23) says, he attended the secondary school in Durham and Lisbon Falls High School. While living in Durham, there was a place in close proximity of their house which was overgrown with wild bush and railway road crossing it. This is one of the places which he still uses in his books and short stories, for example in the novel *It*, under different names (King, 2002).

As Rogak (2010, p. 74) points out, while still attending the secondary school in Lisbon Falls, Stephen had a part time job in the spinning mill to earn some extra money. After graduating at secondary school, King went to the University of Maine at Orono to study the Science of English. It was a backup in case that he would not become a successful writer, however, he was very sure he would (Rogak, 2010).

While studying at University, Rogak (2010, p. 75-83) states, King had been involved in number of political and anti-war demonstrations. Teachers considered him an agitator and what shocked them even more was, when he offered them he would teach popular literature classes himself. Many of them were against his idea since they did not want to commercial literature been taught at the University and also because he had no university degree yet. Though, at the end King was allowed to teach this subject with one of the professors (Rogak, 2010).

According to DeFilippo (online, n.d), Stephen King met his future wife, Tabitha Spruce, in the Fogler Library at the University where they both worked while still studying. As King (2002, p. 47) remembers, a year and a half later they got married and are still happily together.

Rogak (2010, p. 94-101) mentions that King finished his studies at the University with the degree bachelor of science in the spring of 1970. After finishing his studies he could not find a job as a teacher but he needed money to pay for the living and also for his wife who had already been expecting their first child. Naomi Rachel, was born June 1, 1970. Since then Stephen must have changed his job several times in order to maintain his family (Rogak, 2010). "*Stephen King began his work at an industrial laundromat, then became a janitor, then finally became an English teacher at Hamden Public school in Maine in the Fall of 1971.*" (horrorking.com, n.d.)

In addition, as Rogak (2010, p. 143) claims, the Kings already had two kids before publishing any of Stephen's book, the second one, Joe Hillstrom, was born June 4, 1972. At this time King left his job as a teacher and gave the writing his undivided attention (Rogak, 2010).

As Rogak (2010, p.145-147) says, King loved his job but he desired some rest from writing because the burnout syndrome started to trouble him. Fortunately for him, in 1977, there occurred a new motivation for having a little rest from writing which was a birth of his third child, Owen Phillip. However, the break did not take too long because after a year he started to publish again (Rogak, 2010).

As King (2002, p. 75) says, even though that deep down he knew he had alcohol problems already in 1975 but was not able to admit it he started to take drugs, especially cocaine, in 1985. Alcohol and drugs kept him a good writer, as he supposed. Without it he could not manage to produce any other story (King, 2002).

According to Rogak (2010, p. 239-245) one of his books (*The Tommyknockers*, 1987) was not accepted well his drug problems grew bigger so Stephen's wife decided to give him an ultimatum – either he stops taking drugs and drinking alcohol or she and the children will not stay with him anymore (Rogak, 2010). Despite this fact, Justice (1989, p. 24) claims, he was the most popular and most profitable horror writer in history already in 1989. As Rogak (2010, p. 239) states, he tried to quit and went through horrible times but in the end he managed (Rogak, 2010).

Brockes (2013, online) points out that King had a very nice future ahead of him after he stopped taking drugs. Although, in 1999 he was close to death after being knocked down by a van. This incident made him seriously think about death (Brockes, 2013).

King is still writing and publishing at least one book a year. *“Stephen King is addicted to writing. It isn't a matter of liking to write or even loving it. He needs it, chemically, the way years ago he needed his cocaine and his beer, sometimes a case a day.”*(Dubner, 2000, online)

2.2 Richard Bachman

In order to find out whether people read his books only because Stephen King wrote them or because of their actual story, Rogak (2010, p. 140) points out, King decided to publish novels under a pseudonym.

According to horrorking.com (n.d.) Richard Bachman was born in New York, had a little farm and wrote only at nights. His first novel published in 1977 is called *Rage* (horrorking.com). As Rogak (2010, p. 141) states, few weeks after publication it disappeared from the bookshops in silence. The same happened with his second novel titled *The Long Walk*, released in 1979 (Rogak, 2010). HorrorKing.com (n. d.) presents the following three novels named *Roadwork* (1981), *The Running Man* (1982) and *Thinner* (1984). After publishing the last novel, Bachman was said to copy the works by Stephen King. Finally, Steve Brown found out that Bachman might actually be King and called him about the matter and Stephen King told him that he was right (horrorking.com). “*Bachman died suddenly in late 1985, of cancer of the pseudonym, a rare form of schizonomia.*” (horrorking.com, n. d.)

3 Work

This part of the thesis is concentrated on the beginning of King's publishing, then several important novels of his lifetime writings are dealt with and the last section is focused on the books which are thematically or stylistically close to the main topic of this thesis – *The Green Mile*.

3.1 The Beginnings of King's Writing

Rogak (2010, p. 80) presents that the first King's short story which was published in the magazine *Comics Review* in 1965 was called *I was a Teenage Grave Robber*. The editor changed the name to *In a Half World of Terror*. a tale about an insane scientist who bred worms huge as a person and he fed them on dead people dug out of their graves. Since then, King sold some other stories but usually he received negative letters from the magazines (Rogak, 2010).

While having a part time job at the spinning mill, King (2002, p. 46) states that he was told stories about extremely sadistic boss and rats as big as cats and some of them as big as dogs, which were in the basement of the spinning mill. Few years later, already at the University, he remembered the story and it inspired him for writing a short story called *The Night Shift*. It was his first sold work that earned him more than few dollars. To be more specific, it was two hundred dollars (King, 2002).

Stephen King (2002, p. 43) remembers who thought him the most about writing. It was not English seminar teachers at school but an editor of Lisbon's weekly magazine John Gould. When King brought him his first article, Gould gave him an advice that he should write for himself but rewrite for others (King, 2002).

Rogak (2010, p. 75-83) claims that while studying at University, King was highly occupied by writing short stories for men's magazines as *Cavalier* or *Gallery*, by teaching and reading, he also asked to write a weekly column for Maine Campus which he named *The Garbage Truck*. He wrote about different and very often controversial topics and used the columns to find out how the public feel about his point of view (Rogak, 2010).

Except for teaching, Rogak (2010, p. 108-111) points out, King still went on writing short stories whenever he had the opportunity. His decision proved to be the right one because in 1972 *Cavalier* released four of his stories: *Suffer the Little Children*, *The Fifth Quarter*, *Battleground* and *The Mangler* which was a security of livelihood for the Kings' (Rogak, 2010).

3.2 Novels

As Rogak (2010, p. 130) says, the first novel published by Stephen King was *Carrie*, a story about a young girl who develops an ability in telekinesis during her first period. The book originated from a bet which he made with one of his friends (Rogak, 2010).

"The novel was published in 1974 by publishing house Doubleday. Though he received a scanty amount for the novel, the reception of his book was warm and made him a known name in the literary world of America." (thefamouspeople.com, n. d.)

During the time when *Carrie* was being written, as Rogak (2010, p. 115-136) points out, King was also working on another book which was initially titled *Second Coming*, a novel about a small town in Maine which was attacked by vampires. By the time he finished this novel, he renamed it as *Salem's Lot*. The novel was released in 1975 (Rogak, 2010).

At the web site horrorking.com there is mentioned that King drew inspiration for his third novel, *The Shining*, from his weekend stay in a hotel from which he used characters he met there. According to Rogak (2010, p. 132-141) claims that he wrote *The Shining* without knowing that he was actually writing about himself and that Stephen started to feel hostility and anger to his children, so he kept writing in order to get rid of these feelings. *The Shining* was published in January 1977 and turned out to be Stephen's first bestseller although the readers criticised the murderous character of Jack Torrance (Rogak, 2010).

As Rogak (2010, p. 145-147) says, in September 1978 *The Stand* was released. King himself considered this book, which he was working on for two years, his masterpiece. It is an apocalyptic novel about an illness which eradicates almost the whole mankind. He viewed this novel as his version of *The Lord of the Rings* (Rogak, 2010).

The next novel, King published, as Rogak (2010, p. 157-176) presents, was *The Dead Zone* which he described as a love story but in fact, it was an answer to his growing problems connected to the fame. He also said that this story was the first real novel he has ever written.

Another chosen novel is called *Pet Sematary*. Rogak (2010, p. 156-282) points out that it is based on living in Bangor near a busy road where a lot of animals were crossed over by cars. Children always buried these animals near the road and so pet cemetery was created. But King changed the facts and wrote a story about a father who burry his dead child in the pet cemetery, a place which brings the dead animals back to life but only with one change – they became devils. King never really wanted to publish this story, he considered it too awful and thought that it does not even deserve to be published, but he did and it was the last book published at Doubleday and, what is more, his fans were very pleased by it. They loved the book (Rogak, 2010).

As King (2002, p. 75) states, in 1985, affected by alcohol and drugs he started to write a novel named *Misery* which means that kind of called for help by writing this fiction and the title depicted his state of mind precisely (King, 2002). Lisa Rogak (2010, p. 235) adds that his next novel, written in 1986, called *It*, he declared his climax of exploring topic covering children at hazard and also the last book dealing with monsters.

Rogak (2010, p. 268) presents that the first novel written when he was completely sober is called *Needful Things*, published in 1991. This was the first book he wrote alcohol free since he was sixteen (Rogak, 2010). At the web site StephenKing.com (n. d.) there is declared that the next year King wrote quite a disturbing novel titled *Gerald's Game* about sexual games but still it having features of King's horror. Rogak (2010, p. 300) points out that in the year 1996 King decided to experiment again, this time by writing a series of fiction books called *The Green Mile*. Each month, from March to August, one part was published (Rogak, 2010).

The rest of Stephen King's novels is mentioned in the appendix.

3.3 Books Chosen Thematically or Stylistically Close to *The Green Mile*

This part of the thesis will be dealing with two chosen books which are somehow close to *The Green Mile*. The two chosen stories are a novella *Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption* and a novel *Under the Dome*.

Firstly, *Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption* will be discussed. a story about a prison break, long-term planning, friendship. As Hendrix (2013, online, n. d.) says, the novella is a part of collection of short stories called *Different Seasons* published in 1982. There are four stories and each of them is given a subtitle having some connection to the seasons of the year. The subtitle for *Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption* is called *Hope Springs Eternal* (Hendrix, 2013).

The reason for choosing this story as the one close to *The Green Mile* is that it is situated in the prison environment as well as *The Green Mile* is. According to Hendrix (2013, online, n. d.), one of the reasons for writing this story was to persuade the readers that he is not 'just horror'writer. He also points out that the story is hopeful, sometimes funny which makes it an exception in King's repertoire (Hendrix, 2013).

Secondly, a novel *Under the Dome* will be talked about. As Berry (2009, online) says, this novel tells a story about a small Maine town which is one day closed by an invisible dome, no one can leave and no one can come in. It is a story about a human's cruelty when some people want power and also about desperation when nobody can do anything to prevent being terrorised by the powerful ones (Berry, 2009).

The link between *The Green Mile* and *Under the Dome* is in its desperation and helplessness. Like the guards on the Green Mile cannot do anything with Percy Wetmore, the people living under the dome cannot do anything with the powerful ones. Another common feature is the closed community. In the E Block there are only a few people living and working there, the same is happening under the dome.

According to StephenKing.com (n. d.), this novel has its roots in an unpublished King's story called *The Cannibals*. The Cannibals were to be imprisoned in their apartment building (StephenKing.com)

4 Factors That Influence King's Works

In this section of the thesis the main emphasis is put on the factors, occasions and life experience which had an effect on Stephen King's writing.

To start with, it is mostly believed that the crucial impact on King's works has his difficult childhood. Michael Collings in Rogak (2010, p. 237) claims that all of King's writings have their roots in childhood traumas and injustice. As it has been already said in the chapter covering his life, he had not have an easy life at all.

Another feature influencing his works is having a great interest in reading. Jim Bishop in Rogak, (2010, p. 74) King's English teacher says that already at the University King usually spoke about contemporary authors about which students nor teachers had heard and that creative writing for him was something like religion for a priest.

The last element which affected his writing was addiction to alcohol and later also to drugs, especially cocaine. According to King (2002, p. 75), deep down he knew he had drinking problems already in 1975 but he was not able to admit it. Alcohol and drugs kept him a good writer, as he supposed. Without it he could not manage to produce any other story. Even though he did not realised that at that time, he put his problems into his stories as it is clearly shown in *The Shining*, for example (King, 2002).

As Rogak (2010, p. 386-388) says, during the years of fame, King had the tendency to hide himself and deny who he was but now he claims that the day he denies his identity, that day he will stop writing for good (Rogak, 2010).

5 Film Adaptations

Since the first King's novel has been published the interest in transforming his stories into films has risen rapidly. Nearly all of his novels have been put into film adaptations as well as some of the short stories and novellas.

In this section, there are mentioned only some of them to demonstrate that not every adaptation based on his story is considered a successful one.

Rogak (2010, p. 138) points out that in fall of 1976 *Carrie*, the first film based on King's novel, came into the cinemas. It was a huge success and it made more people to read King's novels (Rogak, 2010).

Rogak (2010, p. 157-176) presents that in November 1979 the film adaptation of *The Salem's Lot* was released. It was even nominated on three Emmy Awards. The next King's novel which was made into a film version was *The Shining*. On the contrary, this adaptation was a big disappointment, especially for Stephen King (Rogak, 2010).

According to rottentomatoes.com, another adaptation which is considered to be a failure is *Pet Sematary* based on the same name novel. What is worth mentioning is the fact that script for the movie was written by Stephen King himself (rottentomatoes.com, n. d.).

In 1999, as Rogak (2010, p. 328-382) states, a keenly awaited film version of a successful serial-novel *The Green Mile* came to the cinemas.

6 The Green Mile – the Novel

“All that is best in King’s work . . . From 12 to 80, King brings his readers to tears of pity and wonder. Boston Globe” (King, 1999)

This book which is telling a story that happened in the state penitentiary in Cold Mountain in 1932 is said to belong among one of the most emotive stories written by King. It sometimes even happen that people do not know and do not believe that it was actually Stephen King who wrote it. It is considered to be a gentle and nice tale to be created by a person who is generally thought to publish only a cheap, scary horror stories.

The Green Mile proved the most of the people wrong about their opinion concerning Stephen King, just the horror writer.

6.1 The Origin of the Book

“In 1992 or ‘93, I was working on a bedtime story called ‘What Tricks Your Eye.’ It was about a man on death row – a huge black man – who develops an interest in sleight-of-hand as the date of his execution draws near.” (King, 1999, vii)

According to King (1999, vii) the story was to be told by a man who went with the handcart full of books through the cells and also sold cigarettes and other little stuff. At the end of the story, the huge man, named Luke Coffey, should make himself to disappear. But this way the story would not be satisfying for King, although he considered it as a nice thought. He tried to rewrite it several times but still none of it seemed to be good enough. So he put the story away and after a year and a half he got an idea how the death-row story might work. He changed the narrator, this time it was a death-house guard. Luke Coffey was no longer Luke but John Coffey whose ability now was not anymore a kind of magician but he had miraculous healing powers and was not only sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit but also for a crime he tried to undo (King, 1999). *“It was a good story, I knew that from the first, but it was a tremendously hard story to write.” (King, 1999, viii).*

King (1999, ix) admits that he did not know much about life on death row during the Depression but he did not want to study it because it would destroy the delicate sense of

wonder he discovered in the story. “*Some part of me knew the first that what I wanted was not reality but myth.*” (King, 1999, ix)

As King (1999, ix) points out, the turning point was when he got a fax from Ralph Vicinanza, asking if he might be interested in writing a serial-novel which was once done by Charles Dickens century ago.

According to Rogak (2010, p. 300) in 1996 King made a deal with Vicinanza and wrote as fast as he could to keep up with the schedule. The first book made its debut in March and each month was published other part of the novel. When the first two books were released he did not know yet how the story would end (Rogak, 2010). Till the end of the novel, King (2002, p. 155) points out, he was not sure if John Coffey would survive.

As King (1999, xv) says, he enjoyed the idea that the readers would not have the chance to skip the pages and find how the story develops. According to Carvajal (1996, online), since the first part was published, the readers were totally attracted by King’s invented prisoners. And even four of *The Green Mile* books held places at the same time on the New York Times best-seller register (Carvajal, 1996).

6. 1. 1 The Life in the United States During the Great Depression

As for the most of the story takes place in the south of America during the Great Depression, life in that period will be briefly described here.

As Nevins and Commager (2008, p. 344-347) point out, the crisis started in October 1929 when Herbert Hoover was in a position of the president of the USA. The crisis had been becoming a Great Depression which means that a great number of people lost their job a lot of people became homeless. In 1932 there were 12, 000, 000 people unemployed (Nevins; Commager, 2008).

According to Elder (1984, p.25; 61) the Great Depression caused large changes in many American families. The changes were in three sections: in family economy, in the social position of the family and in the atmosphere within the family. The loss of the father’s job was the substantial factor in the family’s economy (Elder, 1984).

The end of the Depression, as Purvis (2000, p. 488) says, came hand in hand with the United State's enter to the World War II.

6.2 Language

The story is written in very informal language, using lot of slang words (prison slang), for example Old Sparky instead of the electric chair. As a whole it makes the book open for all readers. King definitely knew how to work with different language features to make the story gripping and fluent.

A lot of description is used during the whole story, for example, quite detailed depiction of the block E, the death row. As well, at the beginning King portrayed very much into details John Coffey, the huge black prisoner. In fact, it is quite in contradiction to Rogak's (2010, p. 128) statement that King does not very often describes the characters in his stories and the reason for that is that he does not feel it is essential. In this case, in my opinion, the illustration of John Coffey was a good decision for it is possible to imagine exactly how really big Coffey was. On describing King (2002, p. 137) says that the description begins by the imagination of the writer but ends by the reader's.

However, instead of describing people's look King much often describes their personality. This has been done in many of his books. Concerning *The Green Mile* there are pretty much into details described the qualities of Percy Wetmore, John Coffey, Paul Edgecombe and almost everyone in the story.

Other characteristic of the whole text is that it is written rather in short paragraphs that govern the rhythm of the story. According to King (2002, p. 102-105) the appearance of the paragraphs is nearly as important as their content. He claims, that it is the paragraph what is the foundation stone of writing, not a sentence (King, 2002).

In the story is also very obvious another sign of King's writing which is not using too many adverbs. King (2002, p. 98) states that adverbs are useless words which only make the story slower. His quotation on adverbs only confirms the statement: "*The road to hell is paved with adverbs.*" (King, online, n. d.)

6.3 Formal Aspects

The novel was firstly published in 1996 and originally was written as six separated units. As King (1999, x) says, he wanted every part to have its own mini-climax. According to Rogak (2010, p. 300), the serial-novel was published monthly since March till August.

The six instalments are called:

- 1) *The Two Dead Gils*
- 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*

According to StephenKing.com, the original publisher was Signet, nevertheless, the complete serial-novel was published by Scribner in 2000.

6.4 Awards

According to StephenKing.com (n. d.), the novel won the Horror Writers Association Award in category Bram Stoker Award – Novel in 1996. It was also nominated on the Locus Awards in category Horror/Dark Fantasy Novel in 1997.

7 The Green Mile – the Film

King's books have become an inspiration for many film directors since his first novel had been published. Almost all of his tales have been turned into film version. Some of them gained a lot of popularity and success among people, some of them less, nevertheless, it does not change the fact, that people are still interested in his stories.

7.1 Why Adapt?

As Corrigan (2000, p. 25) says, there has always been a strong and continual bound between literature and film. Films have been made from a range of novels, from classical ones to popular (Corrigan, 2000).

“Adaptation is the most common practise in the exchange between literature and film, describing the transposition of a novel, play, or other literary source to film.” (Corrigan, 2000, p. 20)

According to Monaco (2000, p. 44) the relationship between literature and film is so strong because of the narrative potential of the film which cannot be found anywhere else than literature. Both arts tell long stories which can be either written or spoken (Monaco, 2000).

What is the disadvantage of a film, according to Corrigan (2000, p. 23), is the fact that adapting novel typically involves some cutting or shortening so the film does not take too long.

As Kracauer in Mast at all (1992, p. 9) also mentions, the film as a medium has got its properties which he divides into basic and technical ones. The most essential attribute is believed to be editing. It functions to create significant continuity of shots (Mast at all, 1992). *“Editing is one of the most significant instruments of effect possessed by the film technician and, therefore, by the scenarist also.”* (Pudovkin in Mast at all, 1992, p. 121) Pudovkin in Mast at all (1992, p. 121) also explains, that the role of the screenwriter is so important for he must be able to put his ideas on paper exactly as it will show upon the screen.

According to Corrigan (2000, p. 82-84) another important feature of film making, as well as writing a novel, is its point of view which gives us the strong idea of how an

individual sees everything happening around him. The next fundamental characteristic is setting or location where the movie takes place (Corrigan, 2000).

As Monaco (2000, p.47) states, novels are now split into two groups: the popular novel (Stephen King, Danielle Steel, et al.) which are very much connected to the film that they sometimes function as a sort of screenplay already at the beginning; and elite novel (Frederick Bush, Milan Kundera, et al.) where the screenwriter must do more job when adapting.

The most attention, as Corrigan (2000, p. 20) claims, attracts the term fidelity, which means in to what extent does the film adaptation capture the essence of the book, how is it devoted to the original story.

7.2 The Adaptation

The transformation of *The Green Mile* into a film, as Rogak (2010, p. 315) states, started in 1998. The direction was in hands of Frank Darabont, who was also a screenwriter and who directed *The Shawshank Redemption* four years back (Rogak, 2010).

As Frank Darabont (2012, *The Green Mile: The Art of Adaptation*) says, Stephen King told him about the story he had in his mind, that he would like to write and Darabont liked the idea as well, so when the first book of *The Green Mile* was brought out, he immediately went for it and he loved the story from the beginning. As he says, he wanted to make the film no matter how the story would end. So, he called King and told him that he wanted to make the film and if he could give him the rest of it and King replied no, he had to wait as others. And so, Darabont did. He was writing the script for eight weeks and, as he admits, the hours of working on it were absolutely endless (Darabont, 2012).

Tom Hanks and Stephen King (2012, *Walking the Mile: The Making of The Green Mile*) both agree, that the script was the best they have ever read. And so does even Terrence Marsh (2012, *The Green Mile: Designing the Mile*) who claims, that the script had no fault.

According to Darabont (2012, *Walking the Mile: The Making of The Green Mile*), while he was writing the script, he already knew who would be the most suitable person for Paul Edgecombe character. Tom Hank's name was in his head without any reasonable

explanation. But on the contrary, he had no idea of who would play John Coffey. As he says, the film would not work at all without the right person playing John Coffey. So, in search for him, he found Michael Clarke Duncan, who walked into his door one day and asked for that part (Darabont, 2012).

The next difficult job for the film makers, as Marsh (2012, *The Green Mile: Designing the Mile*) points out, was finding the right shade of green colour which was on the ground in the block E. Also searching for houses which looked like in thirties' was not a simple task to accomplish (Marsh, 2012). However, they managed and Stephen King (2012, *Walking the Mile: The Making of the Green Mile*) says that the way how everything worked was like his dream became real.

7.3 Criticism

Even though the film was awarded and nominated several times, not everybody felt the same way about it. As we can see in the criticism of Peter Bradshaw in *The Guardian* from February 25, 2000: "*If you can stand this three-hour-plus stretch of saccharine gibberish and patronising racial politics, you've got a stronger stomach than me.*" (Bradshaw, 2000) In contrast to Bradshaw, a criticism by Ebert (1999) claims that taking an extra time for developing the story was a good step. He states that in case of a two-hour film, it would definitely lost its essence (Ebert, 1999).

7.4 Awards

The biggest success of this film may be considered the nominations of Academy Awards in categories of the Best Actor in a Supporting Role, Best Picture, Best Sound and Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material Previously Produced or Published.

It was also nominated on Golden Globes in category of Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture. Both nominations took place in 2000.

The film was awarded by Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards in two categories in 2000 and by People's Choice Awards also in two categories in 2001. (IMDB, n.d.)

8 The Comparison of the Novel With Its Film Adaptation

So far, the life of Stephen King has been mentioned as well as some of his best-known novels among which is the one this thesis is concentrated on – *The Green Mile*. There has also been provided the background of writing the novel as well as the background of the film and awards which the book and adaptation have won.

This chapter of the thesis is, however, primarily focused on the comparison of the two pieces of art, mainly if the film catches the essences of the book which are the moral dilemmas, different forms of human personality and the helplessness of a person in his life. In one part, the plot is discussed most attention is given to the fact if the adaptation is in agreement with its book model. The next section is covering the correspondence of the main characters with their description in the novel. Also, there is a part dedicated to the moral dilemmas pervading the whole story. The last section of this part is focused on those parts of the novel which were changed or omitted in its film version.

The main goal of this part of the thesis is to find out in to what extent the mentioned topics are preserved in the film version. For the exact comparison are used selected dialogs and descriptions from both - the novel and the film.

8.1 The Plot

In the adaptation we can see that Frank Darabont was faithful to the original story. All of the significant moments of the story were left without any change, except for one which will be discussed in different section of the thesis.

8.1.1 The Finding of John Coffey

To keep almost the complete story the same as it was written in the books, Darabont made the right decision. We can have a look, for example, at the beginning, the founding of John Coffey with the two girls. He is sitting on the ground and in each arm is holding one

dead girl. Seeing John Coffey like this, everyone is one hundred percent sure that he did kill the girls, it is so evident.

Probably this was Stephen King's intention when writing the story. To demonstrate that people does not even try to have a look at a problem or situation from a different point of view if they see something which, according to them, must be true. They do not need to look for some other explanation of the situation because they experienced it, they were there and their verdict is that any other justification is possible. The problem is in people's minds, in being prejudiced, which does not allow people to accept a different clarification.

This particular scene would not have such an effect, as it has, if the family and police found Coffey under different conditions. For the next development of the story it is important to think that John Coffey is as bad as everyone claims him to be. The whole point would be lost because this part wants to show us that John Coffey is the worst living person.

What is more, Coffey's crying is also a cue that there is something different about him. He is crying over the girls but on the other hand he is still holding them which may be suggesting that he might be more vicious then other criminals. Holding the dead bodies for the whole time might serve as an indicator of enjoying it and the weeping may function as some kind of perversity.

8. 1. 2 Introduction of Percy Wetmore

Another illustration proving that to stick to the original story was a good decision is the scene where Percy Wetmore ushers John Coffey onto the block with cry of 'Dead man walking!' Those three words are enough for a viewer to come to know that this man is a pure evil. It shows perfectly, that he does not care about other people, his feelings are flat and what he wants is to feel like he is the one who determines people's life. Nothing more needs to be said nor done to get to know this character.

It is very praiseworthy that the director was aware of the importance of this scene and did not transform it. The fact, that King wrote it right that way, means that he must have had a good reason for doing so. The reason might be not to use too many words for describing something he wanted to be clear from the beginning. Having changed this scene, its primary meaning would vanish.

8. 1. 3 Scenes with Mr. Jingles

We can as well have a look at all the scenes with Mr. Jingles, the mouse. In the film, he is given approximately the same amount of attention as in the novel. Sticking to this exact feature of the story was a smart decision for the mouse brings to the death row hope, a little bit of fun and also distraction. However, it also demonstrates that even the worst killers and criminals are capable of nice feelings that they are not only cold-hearted creatures.

On the other hand, there is shown that some people do not care a bit about anything but themselves, as in a case of Percy Wetmore, who kills the mouse even after being tamed by Delacroix. *“Percy turned toward him, smiling. Toward me and Brutal, as well. ‘There,’ he said. ‘I knew I’d get him, sooner or later. Just a matter of time, really.’”* (King, 1999, p. 221)

To find a mouse which can do the exact tricks as described in the book was a nice goal, however not easy to reach, demonstrating us that Darabont cared a lot about making the film accurately according to its literary template. *“The mouse was out of his box in a flash and across after it, like a dog chasing after a stick.”* (King, 1999, p. 122)

8. 1. 4 The Miraculous Healing of Paul Edgecombe

The next example confirming that being faithful to the original story was the right decision is the scene where John Coffey heals Paul Edgecomb. Even though the scene is a bit different in the film than in the book, the main healing process stayed the same.

From the beginning of the story Paul was suffering from a serious infection which is in the book described as *“the worst urinary infection of my life”* (King, 1999, p. 8) John Coffey wants to help Edgecombe so he asks him to come to see him. When Paul does come close enough to John, John puts his hand on the part of Paul’s body which is hurting him and hold it there for a moment. When the moment is over something strange is happening to John.

In the movie, the healing process and strange thing happening to John are done thoughtfully and stay devoted to the original description. After letting Paul go, John Coffey really opens his mouth *“the way horses sometimes opens their mouths”* and he *“exhaled a cloud of tiny black insects that looked like gnats or noseems”* (King, 1999, 157-158) To

leave this scene without any change was essential for the following story because from now on we can see that John Coffey is not an ordinary human.

The importance of this scene is also in the fact that not every good deed done may cause nice feelings in the person who is responsible for it. In spite of knowing he would feel tired and sick for a while, John Coffey decided to help. In this scene is said a lot about Coffey's character and the director was obviously aware of it so he let it without much changes.

8. 1. 5 The Death of Eduard Delacroix

The death of Eduard Delacroix belongs among important scenes which stayed loyal to the book version. There is plainly confirmed the brutal character of Percy Wetmore which is escalated to the extreme when he intentionally causes a seriously bad death of Delacroix. Obviously, it was Percy's revenge on Delacroix for his laughing at Percy and making fun of him when Percy was caught by William Wharton – by the guards called Wild Bill – and urinated himself out of fear.

All of the guards wanted Percy to leave the job on the E Block and the only way of achieving it was *“to put him out for Delacroix”* (King, 1999, p.46) Eventually, they agree on Percy being in charge of Delacroix's execution. Percy does everything what he is supposed to except for one thing – he did not put the sponge into the salt water. This was the cause of the horrifying death of Delacroix.

Leaving this scene as it was written in the novel put into the film some of a horror-like feature. It also depicts the terror of the audience while watching Delacroix dying and Percy's realization of the consequences in that particular moment. The importance of preserving this part is as well in its helplessness which is one of the main topics of the story. The helplessness of the guards to stop the terrible dying because Delacroix was not dead immediately and switching off the electricity would not be any good and also their helplessness to do something with Percy in front of the spectators.

8. 1. 6 John Coffey Wants to Die

Another significant scene which sounds in the film nearly as it is written in the book is the minute where Paul is in John's cell asking him what he can do for him on his last day. Since Paul already knows that it was not John who killed the two girls he is feeling terribly sorry for doing his job. John can sense it from Paul and in the book he reacts "*I know you been worrying, but you ought to quit on it now. Because I want to go, boss.*" (King, 1999, p. 414) Very similar it is said in the adaptation, only few words changed.

John continues with explaining why he wants to die in the film by saying "*I'm tired, boss. Mostly, I'm tired of people being ugly to each other. I'm tired of all the pain I feel and hear in the world every day. There's too much of it.*" (Darabont, 1999) There are two more sentences which John says in the novel in the end of his speech which are: "*If I could end it, I would. But I can't.*" (King, 1999, p. 414)

The significance of this part is, again, seen in its morality and powerlessness. Paul knows that John is innocent of the crime and what is more, he wanted to help the dead girls. Now, Paul wants to help John because he knows very well that what he will be asked to do in a few days is wrong. John, on the contrary, wishes to die despite the fact that he did not even hurt anybody.

8. 2 The Characters

In every book as well as in every film the most essential function performs the characters. They create the story. The writer of the novel is advantaged because it is him or her who develops the characters from the beginning, describes them, gives them the qualities essential for the right story direction.

With the film makers it is different. They are given the description of the characters in the book. Their crucial task is to find such an actor or actress who looks like the person portrayed in the story. Nevertheless, it is not only about their look but also about their ability to play a person of such a quality given in the novel.

In this section, there is discussed the agreement of the characters described in the novel with the actors playing them. The most emphasis is put on their appearance, personality and on their performance of the characters.

8. 2. 1 John Coffey

To start with, John Coffey is in the book depicted into very details including his weight and height so everyone knows exactly how really huge he is. “...*he stood six feet, eight inches tall. He wasn't all willowy like the TV basketball fellows, though – he was broad in the shoulders and deep through the chest, laced over with muscle in every direction.*” (King, 1999, p. 9) Thus, any more suitable person could have been found for playing this part than Michael Clark Duncan. His appearance definitely meets with the description of John Coffey. This very actor accomplishes the role of making the distinctive differences between people's figures.

Again, take into consideration the part where they find Coffey with the two dead girls. The girls look so tiny in his giant black arms. They look like fragile porcelain dolls in comparison with Coffey, who gives the impression of being a clumsy heavy monster.

Michael Clark Duncan (2012, *The Green Mile – The Magic of the Mile*) says, that to make himself look a lot higher than everybody, he had to walk on apple boxes during the whole time of shooting. This is another fact proving that the entire filming crew wanted this film to be in complete agreement with the original story.

However, concerning the character of John Coffey not only his appearance is like described in the novel, the whole Duncan's performance is very close to the behaviour of John Coffey in the book. “*He didn't sound illiterate, but he didn't sound educated. In his speech as in so many other things, he was a mystery. Mostly it was his eyes that troubled me – a kind of peaceful absence in them, as if he were floating far, far away.*” (King, 1999, p. 14)

It might be said that there really was John Coffey living somewhere inside Duncan. a definitely believable performance was given by Duncan. It is easy to believe every word he said in the film as well as the fact that he is mentally disabled. This fact proves John's answers to Paul's questions such as when Paul is asking John: “*Your name is John Coffey.*” John replies: “*Yes, sir, boss, like the drink, only not spelled the same way.*” So Paul asks: “*So*

you can spell, can you?” John’s answer to this question is: “*Just my name, boss.*” (Darabont, 1999) This conversation is absolutely the same in the film as it is written in the novel and Duncan’s way of speaking and behaving completely meets with its book template. As it was already mentioned, no person would work for the part more than Michael Clark Duncan.

8. 2. 2 Paul Edgecombe

As the next, we can have a look at the character of Paul Edgecombe who is in the movie represented by Tom Hanks. Edgecombe represents a thoughtful and caring guard on the E Block. Evidently enough, almost all of the guards are good men, however, Paul is much more interested in people’s life and fate. As it was mentioned before, Frank Darabont knew from the beginning that he wanted only Hanks to take this part.

In the book, there is no description of Edgecombe’s appearance given for he is in the position of the narrator and he leads the readers through the whole story. His appearance is depended only on the imagination of the reader.

However, Edgecombe’s personality is evident from the way he behaves and the way he treats people. As an example of his human behaving can function this extract “*I’d known he was coming, of course, was there to welcome him and take charge of him, ...*” (King, 1999, p. 10) His sense of the good and interest in people can be easily demonstrated in the part where Paul goes to see the journalist who wrote all the articles about John Coffey’s case to find more information about what had happened and when the journalist asks him why is he curious about that case Paul thinks to himself: “*In spite of all the evidence against him I wonder that. Because a man who has a power like that in his hand, you don’t usually think of him as the kind of man who rapes and murders children.*” (King, 1999, p. 169)

The personality of Paul Edgecombe in the film is entirely in agreement with the nature of the original Paul Edgecombe. Tom Hanks’s performance is convincing and confident. He managed entirely to portray the good and humanity in Edgecombe’s character.

8. 2. 3 Percy Wetmore

As another character we will focus on the part of Percy Wetmore represented by Dough Hutchinson. According to the description available in the book, we do not know much of his appearance only that Percy was a small neat man who liked to brush his hair very often as written for example in *“He brushed his hair back from his forehead with his hands – soft and white and small, the hands of a girl in her early teens, ...”* (King, 1999, p. 10) Also Paul’s note that *“That boy just loved touching his hair.”*(King, 1999, p. 110) gives us valuable information about Percy’s character. Another thing Percy did habitually was to have his baton in his hand *“... Percy loved that hickory stick.”* (King, 1999, 135)

As a whole, Percy’s description is more concentrated on his egoistic and cruel personality which is described perfectly during the story. As an example may serve this piece: *“On a couple of occasions Percy got to ragging Delacroix ...”* and *“He had the heart of a cruel boy who goes to the zoo not so he can study the animals but so he can throw stones at them in their cages.”* (King, 1999, p. 110) We learn about his malicious nature piece by piece from different scenes and dialogs and as the story progresses we find out that Percy is even more spiteful than we could have ever imagined. *“It’s amazing how some men can change, given the right incentive; in Percy’s case, all Warden Moores had to offer was the chance to take the bald little Frenchman’s life.”* (King, 1999, p. 116)

Dough Hutchison played the part of Percy Wetmore with a piece of Percy hidden inside of him. Everything about Percy’s behaviour in the adaptation definitely meets with the description given in the novel. In the film, the evil is written in his face. a single look at him is enough to learn that this man is a cold-blooded human being which is the essence of this character. The task - to make the viewers believe that Dough Hutchison really is Percy Wetmore – was definitely accomplished.

8. 2. 4 William Wharton

The last character which will be spoken about is William Wharton, known as Wild Bill, represented by Sam Rockwell. Wharton is a 19-year-old boy transported from a mental institution into the Green Mile for killing several people. *“Wharton is 19 years old, has Billy*

the Kid tattooed on upper l. forearm.” More information given about him is that: *“He’s working appeals, and there’s the fact that he is a minor.”* (King, 1999, p. 42)

In the scene, where Wharton is strangling one of the guards who came for him to the mental institution, in the book is written another important feature of Wharton’s character. *“I didn’t doubt the story of Wharton’s blank face and dull eyes ...”* and the depiction continues that: *“What I saw was the face of an animal – not an intelligent animal, but one filled with cunning ... and meanness ... and joy. Yes. He was doing what he had been made to do.”* (King, 1999, p. 148)

The character of William Wharton is primarily a young boy, acting like a madman. In the book, he is said that *“... this man just doesn’t care.”* (King, 1999, p.42) which proves to be very true from the initial moment of meeting with him.

Sam Rockwell, chosen for playing William Wharton, does not fulfil the appearance completely. The main difficulty is that he looks too adult for a 19-year-old boy. Rockwell evokes the impression of a tricky, which he did very well, adult man. He gave a credible performance playing the part of Wharton - his insanity would be trusted without hesitation. In his face, we can really see ‘dull eyes’ in one moment and ‘the eyes of an animal’ in the other. Despite all this, the fact that his look is not in agreement with the appearance of a 19-year-old boy is the crucial problem here.

The importance of the character of William Wharton is primarily in his boyhood. The character is supposed to evoke a shocking and terrible feeling for what he had done in early years of his life. If William Wharton does not look young the strongest feeling is lost.

8.3 Moral dilemmas

In this part the moral dilemmas pervading the whole story is be discussed because they function as a fundamental stone of it. The most attention is given to Paul Edgecombe’s investigation to find out whether John Coffey really is guilty of killing the two little girls and his following struggling when he learns the truth. Nevertheless, the story also looks into another dilemma which is the deciding of the prison guards whether or not to take John Coffey to the warden’s house to cure his wife of tumour.

8. 3. 1 Edgecombe's Investigation and Finding Out the Truth

Firstly, the dilemma of the discovering of the innocence of John Coffey will be dealt with. In the film adaptation, there is relatively enough time devoted to this problem. From the beginning Paul Edgecombe has a strong feeling that there is something wrong with the Coffey's case. He goes through the notes and papers from the library discussing the case of John Coffey.

The hunch is even stronger from the moment when he is cured by Coffey. This act makes Edgecombe to go to Tefton to visit Burt Hammersmith in order to get more specific information about John Coffey from him. In the adaptation the conversation is very similar to the original text. Hammersmith says to Edgecombe: "*That dog attacked my boy for no reason. Just got it in his mind one day.*" In a while he continues by saying that: "*The same with John Coffey. Maybe he'd never done it before. My dog never bit before.*" (Darabont, 1999) After their conversation, everything seems to be against the kind-looking John Coffey, who rather helps than hurts. No one knows where did he came from, no one knows whether he has done something like this before, he is a complete mystery.

In comparison with the novel, it is evident that the film makers wanted the adaptation to give the same deep and thoughtful impression as the novel had. However, they did not donated enough time to this very problem. The need for searching for the truth and saving the innocent person from the death on the electric chair does not feel to be as strong as it does from the book.

To be more specific, in the novel Edgecombe searches for information several times. The last time of his searching is few days before Coffey's execution and this is when he discovers the truth.

Three day after he receives the letter with the date of Coffey's execution on it Paul goes to investigate again. "*... I had Janice call me sick.*" continuing with "*I got to the Purdom Country Courthouse just before it closed, looked at some records, ...*" (King, 1999, p. 393) He even got to talk to the Sheriff there who told Paul something interesting: "*It was sure something. I thought about it all the way home, ...*" (King, 1999, p. 393) The next day, Paul goes to the Trapingus Country to see Deputy Sheriff Rob McGee who tells him information witch assure Paul that John is innocent and that the true murderer was Wharton.

Any of this is not mentioned in the adaptation. The discovery of the truth is in the film made in easier, however, miraculous way. The purpose of changing this part of the story is probably in its complexity. The film is not devoted to Paul's looking for the truth so it would not work if he told the men that he was convinced about John's innocence without any proof. Also, it would make the motion picture a lot longer which would not be good for the adaptation because it is quite long the way it is now.

8.3.2 The Deciding About the Night Journey

The second dilemma is focused on deciding the prison guards whether or not to take John Coffey to cure warden's wife. In the film adaptation, the group of guards is sitting by the table one day and they are discussing how to take John to the warden's house. Their conversation begins with Paul's comment that they all know what John did with Mr. Jingles. Then Paul says: "*He did the same to me. He put his hands on me.*" (Darabont, 1999)

After that he tells them what is in his mind and discusses with the guards all the possible situations that might come to pass during the night journey. For example, Brutal is saying: "*If he tried anything, anything at all we'd have to take him down.*" (Darabont, 1999) Also a lot of time is concentrated on their jobs and the possibility of losing it and going to the prison if something goes wrong.

In the novel, however, there is more time devoted to another discussion. The conversation starts similarly to the one in the adaptation but when it comes to the topic of John's possible running away Paul tells them: "*That won't happen.*" One of the guards asks him what makes him to be so sure about it and other man only states: "*You don't think he did it, do you, Paul? You think that big lug is innocent.*" On this Paul answers: "*I'm positive he's innocent.*" (King, 1999, p. 292)

A lot of time afterwards is dedicated to Paul's explaining what makes him to be so certain that John Coffey did not commit the crime. He presents his idea that John might hear the girls and wanted to help them but he could not. That is also why John told the police: "*I couldn't help it. I tried to take it back, but it was too late.*" (King, 1999, p. 295) This statement, however, worked for the police the other way round, they thought this was Coffey's confession.

The reason for changing this important part might, again, be in the shortening the time of the adaptation. It is closely related to the part of the film when Paul learns from John the true and it is then when he tells the other guards what actually happened.

Another reason might be that Frank Darabont wanted to present John Coffey in even more mysterious way than he is presented in the book. He gave him the ability to show people what he wants to show then through his touch. In general, the adaptation is more concentrated on Coffey and his power and the novel is more focused on Edgecombe's searching for the truth.

8.4 Changed or Omitted Parts of the Novel

As it has been already mentioned, the film adaptation more or less stayed faithful to the original novel story. However, there are some parts, that were changed and some parts that were omitted in the film version of *The Green Mile*. Those sections are discussed in this chapter.

8.4.1 Discovering the Truth

First of all, the film director changed very fundamentally the way how Paul Edgecombe finds out the truth about the murder of the two girls. In the book, quite a lot of investigation is being made by Paul Edgecombe during the whole story.

At the beginning, he goes to the library to read through the newspaper articles focusing on Coffey's case. After being cured by Coffey he goes to visit the journalist who wrote most of the articles about Coffey's case. The journalist does not give him any satisfying information. As far as this part, the film version sticks to the book.

What is not in the film is Edgecombe's next visit this time to Deputy Sheriff Rob McGee. The motive for this is John's using Percy as a gun on Wharton. There with the help of the new crucial information, using his common sense and logic he discovers the appalling truth. He tells to his wife that: "*I know everything there is to know, ...*" and explains: "*... but it was William Wharton who killed the Detterick girls.*" (King, 1999, p. 395) The next day he

tells to his colleagues, too. After telling them, they want to help John but do not know how. Another problem is that John Coffey is a black man and those people are not given second chances in this time.

Later, when Edgecombe comes to Coffey's cell to ask him about his last wish John sensed it from Paul that he knows the truth. Nevertheless, there is also something else that troubles Paul - why the girls did not scream. When he asks John, he answers: "*He say to the one, 'If you make noise, it's your sister I kill, not you.'*" John continues with saying that: "*He kill them with they love. They love for each other.*" (King, 1999, 416)

In the film adaptation this part of the story is different. Paul learns the truth from John Coffey immediately after Percy kills William Wharton. John holds Paul's hand and Paul sees what Coffey saw that day.

This change of story makes the character of John Coffey a little bit more interesting, in a way that he is not just a kind of healer but has other ability too. However, for the story works better the novel version of discovering the truth. In the film the director did not pay so much attention to the Edgecombe's investigation that might be why he decided to transform this section.

8. 4. 2 Other Changed Parts

Another fact which is changed in the film is in the scene of finding John Coffey with the dead girls. Originally, they are found naked in the Coffey's arms. In the film, both of them are dressed. This little fact might be changed because the whole scene might give the viewer a much more dreadful impression than the director wanted. Also, there is the fact that naked children's bodies would not work well in terms of availability of the film from a certain age.

There is also difference in the way the old Paul Edgecombe is telling his story. In the book he is writing a letter for his girlfriend Elaine because he wanted to tell her his story but was not able to speak about it without breaks.

Nevertheless, in the adaptation Paul is telling Elaine the story one day while they are having a cup of coffee together. The reason for this change probably is the fact that the story in the film is told chronologically unlike in the novel which is full of backshifts. It was

possibly easier for the film makers to make the film in one parallel and also the movie is long enough even without the backshifts which would make it much longer and probably even difficult to follow.

In the film adaptation, there is fully omitted a character of a Brad Dolan, a worker in the Georgia Pines where Paul as an old man is living. The nature of this character is that he reminds Paul of Percy Wetmore. *“He’s always combing his hair, like Percy was, and he’s always got something to read stuffed into his back pocket. Like Percy, Brad is a dimwit who thinks nothing is funny unless it’s mean.”* (King, 1999, p. 67)

The reason for deciding not to present Brad Dolan in the adaptation might be the same as with the previous point. The adaptation would be much longer in case of creating the story from the Georgia Pines. When we consider that the film already has more than three hours there would be a chance that in a case of a longer version the movie would become uninteresting for some viewers.

8.5 Summary

To sum up, in the whole chapter is provided comparison of the book *The Green Mile* with its film adaptation. It is evident that the film adaptation stayed very close to the original story. However, there were made some changes, the most important one is the change of the way Paul Edgecombe learns who is the real murderer of the Deterrick girls. In the adaptation the way is very different from the way described in the novel. This very change is more focused on John Coffey rather than on Paul Edgecombe and it does not fulfil the Edgecombe’s part completely. For Paul Edgecombe is supposed to be the one who finds out the truth based on his own initiative.

The main purpose of the transformations and changes might be the length of the film. The film is already more than three hours long staying faithful to the changed parts would prolong the adaptation extensively.

The chapter is also focused on the agreement of the characters, mainly if they look and behave like described in the novel. For the appearance of the most of the characters is not given in the book, it depends on the imagination of every reader. Except for one character, William Wharton, the look of the actors is in agreement with the depiction available.

Nevertheless, the most significant feature of the characters is their personality. In comparison with the book, all of the actors mentioned definitely accomplished their tasks. All of them gave believable performances playing their part. It can be said that the way they brought their characters to life is very natural.

Another point of this section was devoted to the moral dilemmas pervading the whole story. In comparison with the novel, it is obvious, that the film adaptation did not give much attention to this feature of the story. The novel is more concentrated on Edgecombe's effort to discover the truth than the film adaptation is. On the other hand, the film more focuses on John Coffey's miraculous powers.

As a whole, the film version gives us a well portrayed and faithful picture of its book template. With only few changes, the film brings the novel to life in correspondence with the original story.

9 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to compare the novel *The Green Mile* written by Stephen King with its film adaptation directed by Frank Darabont. The emphasis was put mainly on the plot, the characters, moral dilemmas and changed or omitted parts in the film version and its fidelity to the original story.

In the introductory part was presented Stephen King, focusing mainly on his life because his experiences are the basis of his writing and also a part was devoted to Richard Bachman – King's pseudonym. There was as well a part dedicated to specific novels which are in some way significant. Another section of this part was concentrated on the two selected novels that are thematically or stylistically close to *The Green Mile*. Also factors that influence King's writing were mentioned there.

Another part was focused on *The Green Mile* - the novel, its background, language features and awards. The next chapter was concentrated on *The Green Mile* – the film adaptation, its background and awards. There was also a section devoted to the basis of the film adapting.

The practical part was devoted to the comparison itself. The main features which were compared were the plot, the characters, the moral dilemmas and the changed or omitted parts of the novel. By comparing the novel to its film adaptation it was discovered that the adaptation was made very faithful to its book template.

The plot stayed nearly the same except for few changes made by the director of the adaptation. The characters were not described much in the novel so their appearance was more or less up to the imagination of every reader, however, their personalities were depicted clearly and the actors gave believable performances absolutely in agreement with the original characters.

What did not stay very loyal to the original story, was the amount of attention paid to the moral dilemmas pervading the whole story. In the adaptation, there is some time devoted to this problem but not enough to have the same feeling of desperation from the film as the novel has.

To conclude, it can be said that the adaptation is very similar to its original model only with some changes made. All the actors gave very natural, believable and faithful performances and so the adaptation may be considered a nice and successful piece of art.

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11 Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Stephen King's novels

Appendix 1: List of Stephen King's novels

11/22/63	2011
Bag of Bones	1998
Black House	2001
Cell	2006
Christine	1983
Colorado Kid, The	2005
Cujo	1981
Cycle of the Werewolf	1985
Dark Half, The	1989
Dark Tower: Song for Susannah, The	2004
Dark Tower, The	2004
Dark Tower: The Drawing of the Three, The	2003
Dark Tower: The Gunslinger, The	2003
Dark Tower: The Waste Lands, The	2003
Dark Tower: The Wind Through the Keyhole, The	2012
Dark Tower: Wizard and Glass, The	2003
Dark Tower: Wolves of the Calla, The	2003
Desperation	1996
Doctor Sleep	2013
Dolores Claiborne	1993
Dreamcatcher	2001
Duma Key	2008
Eyes of the Dragon, The	1987
Firestarter	1980
From a Buick 8	2002
Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon, The	1999

Insomnia	1994
Joyland	2013
Lisey's Story	2006
Misery	1987
Mr. Mercedes	2014
Plant: Zenith Rising, The	2000
Rose Madder	1995
Talisman, The	1984
Tommyknockers, The	1987
Under the Dome	2009

Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Veronika Symonová
Katedra:	Katedra anglického jazyka
Rok obhajoby:	2014
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Blanka Babická, Ph.D.

Název práce:	Zelená míle – porovnání knihy a filmové adaptace
Název práce v angličtině:	The Green Mile – the comparison of the book with its film adaptation
Anotace práce:	Bakalářská práce na téma Zelená míle - porovnání knihy s filmovou adaptací má za cíl porovnat knižní a filmovou verzi Zelené míle. Hlavní důraz je kladen na porovnání děje, postav a morálních dilemat. Jedna kapitola je také věnována vynechaným nebo změněným částem děje ve filmové verzi Zelené míle. Zároveň je zde zmíněn život Stephena Kinga, jeho další díla a pozadí vzniku knihy i filmové adaptace a jejich ocenění.
Klíčová slova:	Zelená míle, román, film, filmová adaptace, Stephen King, John Coffey, Paul Edgecombe, William Wharton, Percy Wetmore
Anotace v angličtině:	The thesis titled The Green Mile - the comparison of the book with its film adaptation is primarily focused on the comparison of the book with its film version. The emphasis is put on the comparison of the plot, characters and moral dilemmas. One chapter is, however, dedicated to those parts of the film which were omitted or changed. Also, the thesis is provided with the life of Stephen King, his other books and the background of the book and the adaptation and their awards.

Klíčová slova v angličtině:	The Green Mile, novel, film, film adaptation, Stephen King, John Coffey, Paul Edgecombe, William Wharton, Percy Wetmore
Přílohy vázané v práci:	Apendix 1: List of Stephen King's novels
Rozsah práce:	47 s. (73 403 znaků)
Jazyk práce:	anglický

