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***The Talented Mr. Ripley* by Patricia Highsmith and Its
Film Adaptations**

Bakalářská práce

Studijní obor: Angličtina se zaměřením na aplikovanou
ekonomii

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Olomouc 2013

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci na téma „*The Talented Mr. Ripley* by Patricia Highsmith and Its Film Adaptations" vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne:

Podpis

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisor PhDr. Libor Práger, Ph.D. for his guidance, patience, material, and advice with which he provided me while writing my thesis.

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1. Introduction

As an author, Patricia Highsmith deserves an honourable place amongst famous American novelists. In my thesis I would like to prove that her novel *The Talented Mr. Ripley* is a unique and respectable piece of work, which is uneasy to categorize. There has been said a lot about her psychological novels and her as a person. A character that she made and that I am going to use in my thesis has drawn attention since this novel was published. This character of Tom Ripley represents a crucial subject of the thesis.

Highsmith's novels called *The Ripley Series* is a series of crime novels that describes a fate of Thomas Ripley; the main character. This series consists of five novels: *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *Ripley Under Ground*, *Ripley's Game*, *The Boy Who Followed Ripley* and *Ripley Under Water*; however, in my thesis I am going to focus just on the first one of them, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. I chose the first of the five books because, as you read, you observe a remarkable transformation of a human being. The transformation of an insecure, honest and grateful orphan and the following rise of a charming, yet cruel, schizophrenic freak with uncertain sexual orientation is going to be described in my thesis. Some may think that the readers cannot put it down for one reason, as Richard Rapson quotes in *Dangerous Characters*: 'There is a bit of the outlaw in all of us' (Hatfield and Rapson 2008). Such stories with the "how to kill a person and get away with it" theme are simply irresistible.

I decided to include some of Patricia Highsmith's biography in order to prove that her life choices and experience (such as her relationship to her mother, love life, political influence and antisemitism) influenced her work,.

A significant part of this thesis covers the analysis of the novel *The Talented Mr. Ripley* which she wrote in 1955. To understand the content better and to be able to compare it with the film adaptations, I supplied an overview of the plot along with the critical readings of Highsmith's texts.

Since there have been made two adaptations of this book, I supplied a chapter dealing with the “adaptation theory” concerning the fidelity issue of both adaptations. It is necessary to describe the transformation of literary narrative mode into the film narrative mode. As further described, it is necessary to change some aspects of the novel when remaking it, for it is impossible to simply transfer every scene from a book into a two-hour film.

However, once filmmakers make an adaptation based on a renowned novel, they draw much attention and the audience requires high standards, which may put them into a difficult position. Despite Highsmith’s reluctance towards film adaptations, majority of people know her characters thanks to film. The question is, whether the directors comply with the original version of the book. Hence, I would like to analyze the resemblance of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999) and *Purple Noon* (1960). Therefore, the fifth chapter encloses the major changes that the adaptations underwent. The major change that both of these films possess is the homosexuality theme. This theme is such a vast field of study that I decided to focus on it in a separate chapter. I would like to prove that although *The Talented Mr. Ripley* does not fully reveal his sexual orientation, it is included in the homosexual literature.

2. Life and background of Patricia Highsmith

I feel that it is necessary for this thesis to describe Highsmith's biography, because her life choices, experiences and the period of time, in which she was living, affected her work and characters. This chapter is attached in order to understand her work better, specifically *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, which represents her best piece of work. In 2003, Andrew Wilson's biography, *Beautiful Shadow: A Life of Patricia Highsmith*, was published, containing an abundance of information concerning her private life (he had unlimited access to her private diaries, prohibited to visitors at the Highsmith Archive in Bern, Switzerland, where they are kept).

2.1 Life and work of Patricia Highsmith

Life of Patricia Highsmith was difficult from the very beginning, even before she was born. Highsmith's parents Mary Coates and Jay Bernard Plangman got married on 16 July 1919, but a year later, the couple experienced a crisis that eventually resulted in divorce. In the summer of 1920, Mary discovered she was four months pregnant; she wanted to keep the child but Bernard suggested that she had an abortion. When she was four months pregnant, Mary tried to rid herself of her unborn child by drinking turpentine, 'It's funny you adore the smell of turpentine, Pat', her mother would tell her later. Fifty years later, Highsmith asked her parents to explain the exact circumstances surrounding the attempted termination (Wilson 2003, 29). However, despite all difficulties that her mother had undergone, Patricia Highsmith was born on January 19, 1921, in Fort Worth, Texas.

To understand the sequences and milestones of her life better, a brief chronology of important years and events of Highsmith's life is supplied, which *Beautiful Shadow: A Life of Patricia Highsmith* does not supply, although it is a

very detailed biography. Therefore, I decided to mention a brief chronology, which is published in Harrison's *Patricia Highsmith*, to highlight the most important events concerning her life and *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. Further, I mention facts about her life, memories of people that surrounded her, and her extraordinary behaviour.

2.1.1 Chronology of major milestones and works

- 1921** Mary Patricia Highsmith was born on 19 January 1921.
- 1927** Moved to New York.
- 1938** Graduated from Julia Richman High School in Manhattan.
- 1942** B.A. degree from Barnard College. She studied literature and zoology.
- 1945** Published first short story, "The Heroine", in *Harper's Bazaar*.
- 1948** Accepted at Yaddo artists's colony.
- 1950** *Strangers on Train* is published.
- 1952** *The Price of Salt* is published under the name of Claire Morgan after having been rejected by Harper and Brothers publishers.
- 1955** *The Talented Mr. Ripley* was published.
- 1957** Highsmith was awarded the Edgar Allan Poe Scroll from the Mystery Writers of America and the Grand Prix de Litterature Policière for *The Talented Mr. Ripley*.
- 1961** *The Talented Mr. Ripley* was filmed by René Clément as *Plein Soleil (Purple Noon)*.
- 1963** Moved to England, four years later to France.
- 1982** Moved to Aurigeno, near Locarno (Ticino) in Italian Switzerland.
- 1995** *Small g: A summer Idyl*, Highsmith's last novel, was published in England, France, and Germany. She died on February 4 from a

combination of lung cancer and aplastic anemia. She left estate of approximately \$5,000,000 (Harrison 1997).

2.1.2 Character of Patricia Highsmith and aspects affecting her work

'No writer would ever betray his secret life, it would be like standing naked in public.'

Patricia Highsmith, 1940

There is an avalanche of available information about Patricia Highsmith and the most useful part of it (if certain necessary correctives are applied) is revealed by Highsmith herself. She was fascinated by concealment and disguise and she remained silent about her complicated life in particular. It was not only journalists who had a problem getting close to her. Daniel Keel, her literary executor and president of Diogenes Verlag, the Zurich-based publishing company, stated that it took Highsmith twenty years before she trusted him enough to share her thoughts and feelings. 'Before that it was simply "yes" or "no"', he says. 'There were great holes in the conversation'. Some friends remember how Highsmith would tense up when touched. 'She was not a sensual person at all. When you embraced her, it was like holding a board' (Wilson 2003, 4).

Tenaciously, religiously, and in eight thousand pages of work that she kept for herself, she listed her states of mind, description of her current lovers, the quality of a past relationship, the cost of a Paris hotel breakfast, the number of rejections she received from publishers, the fees, the concerns, the factitiousness, as well as thousands of pages of notes for stories, novels, poems, and critical articles (Schenkar 2009, 14).

However, Highsmith was talkative at dinner and she was drinking. Fluids were her favourite nourishment because she did not like food in general (Schenkar 2009, 23).

Highsmith's love life was an inspiration for her work. She always fell in love vigorously with many women and small number of men. Despite being bisexual, Highsmith inclined more to women than men. She liked to explore sex intellectually, but not necessarily physically, with the young men she was seeing. She also began to date a few men (Schenkar 2009, 187). The majority of them were young Jewish males by whom she seemed to be both repelled and fascinated (Schenkar 2009, 188).

Highsmith projected a complex flow of emotions onto women. Like many a romantic, she was, at times, promiscuous but her promiscuity was an indicator, rather than a confutation, of her endless search for the ideal. She used these women in her life as muses, drawing upon her ambiguous responses to them and reworking these feeling into fiction. She could be called 'a balladeer of stalking', wrote Susannah Clapp in *The New Yorker*. 'The affixation of one person on another (oscillating between attraction and antagonism) figures prominently in almost every Highsmith tale' (Wilson 2003, 3).

The following quotation refers to one of the examples of Highsmith's immediate attraction resulting in an inspiration for her work:

In December 1948 she was working, temporarily, in the toy department of Bloomingdale's when into the store walked an elegant woman wearing a mink coat. That initial encounter lasted no longer than a few minutes, yet its effect on Highsmith was dramatic. After serving the woman, who bought a doll for one of her daughters, leaving her delivery details, Highsmith later confessed to feeling 'odd and swimmy in the head, near to fainting, yet at the same time uplifted, as if I had seen a vision'. At the end of her shift, she went home and wrote the plot for *The*

Price of Salt, published in 1952 under a pseudonym and, in 1990, re-issued under her own name as Carol. The Bloomingdale's woman had done nothing more than buy a doll from a shop assistant in a department store, yet Highsmith had infused the encounter with greater significance. She could not forget the blonde woman and on that day in the summer of 1950 she walked through Pennsylvania station with the intention of catching a train to the woman's home in New Jersey. She was going to seek her out, to spy on her. Highsmith recorded the incident – in almost photographic detail – in her diary. (Wilson 2003, 1)

Going back to the issue of Highsmith's hatred of the Jews, she was full of anti-Semitism and ugly expressions of the racial and ethnic prejudices, which found their first form in her high school notebooks. Highsmith took the copy of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* with her on high school boat trip. For the most part, her fictional work, the work she allowed to be published, escaped this hatred. Also, she disliked Blacks, Italians, Portuguese, Latinos, Catholics, Koreans, East Indians, "Red Indians", small, dark children, or, if you look closely at her work, Arabs, either (Schenkar 2009, 25).

Despite the anti-Semitism, she had serious love affairs and long, close relationship with many Jews. Highsmith was surrounded by them and they were her principal employers, her frequent publishers, and they numbered amongst her most consistent supporters (Schenkar 2009, 25).

Both her family and the interpersonal relationships, as described above, represented the major influence on her work. However, much of Highsmith's work might seem to resist a political reading, yet there are several indications that confirm her influence by the social and the political aspects. This is reflected in the dedication of her 1983 novel, *People Who Knock on the Door*. 'To the courage of the Palestinian people and their leaders in the struggle to regain a part of their homeland. This book has nothing to do with their problem' (Wilson 2003, 418).

Such a dedication has a political resonance, though it requires further elaboration. Harrison elaborates this statement that there is a deprecating tone in the last sentence, as if the author left the charge of bad faith. He also suggests a satirical undertone to the dedication, as for the novel *should* have something to do with “their” problem. But it also suggests that the author accepts a division between the politics of the writer and what she writes (Harrison 1997, 7).

Furthermore, Highsmith dedicated *Ripley under Water* ‘to the dead and the dying among the Intifadah and the Kurds, to those who fight aggression in whatever land, and stands up not only to be counted but to be shot’. These dedications are cited in order to demonstrate that Highsmith herself possessed political awareness and to suggest possible complications in this awareness as the novels express it (Harrison 1997, 7).

In a literary biography *The Talented Miss Highsmith: The Secret Life and Serious Art of Patricia Highsmith*, Schenkar describes Highsmith’s inspiration for her work was related to several authors. He stated that Highsmith recognized her own thoughts in theirs. In her teens and in her twenties, Highsmith read obsessively, using books, she said, as a “drug”. She was inspired by Dostoyevsky and his struggle with Christianity, which to her was more exciting, dangerous, and horrifying than any murder story he ever invented. Moreover, she was compelled by the cruder psycho-categories of Karl Menninger and Richard von Krafft-Ebing (Schenkar 2009, 15).

Another inspiration to Highsmith was American writer Julien Green, whose roots were also Southern and whose religious and sexual preoccupations were as guilty as hers. Highsmith felt a rare friendship with J. Green. She recognized her own thoughts in his. In Marcel Proust’s resplendent monologues and shimmering sense-memories, Highsmith found the explanation for her love life (Schenkar 2009, 15).

2.2 Critical reception of *The Ripley Series*

Highsmith's work drew a wide array of reviews over the years. Some would find her works depressing and disgusting, others were drawn to the negative elements, and still others focused on the impact of her writing. Several statements on Highsmith's *Ripley Series* are stated in Blakesley's *Great women mystery writers*:

Ripley drew attention from the beginning, with the reviewer for the *New Yorker* calling the novel "remarkably immoral" and Ripley as "one of the most repellent and fascinating characters". *Ripley Under Ground* was called a "sophisticated novel of crime", with Ripley "as charming as callous", so the readers cannot help but hope to meet him again. *The Boy Who Followed Ripley* was seen as engrossing and shiver packed. *Ripley Under Water* was praised for its display of Highsmith's trademark "chilling, knife-edge subtlety". The reviewers note that Highsmith will make readers look closer at their neighbours, and at themselves. (Blakesley 2007, 118)

3. *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955) - the novel

3.1 Critical readings of Highsmith's texts

Patricia Highsmith requires and deserves multiple readings. Her texts are never about solving a puzzle. She supplies the reader with clues at apposite intervals and allows the reader to engage in amateur detection. Highsmith is an enigma who deserves more than the dearth of critical material that her work has attracted (Peters 2011, 1).

Highsmith's work has proved to be impossible to categorise, either within the same crime fiction or that of "serious" literature. In other words, she is *missing*, missing an established place within any genre, missing a substantial body of critical texts, and missing any convincing in-depth analysis of her work that does not fall into cliché and banality. This is not to castigate those critics who have tackled Highsmith for their efforts, however. Fiona Peters' *Anxiety and Evil in the Writings of Patricia Highsmith* supplies the reason why she is *missing*:

Highsmith is *missing* because she is difficult not in her deceptively simple prose but primarily in the lack of anything substantial to hold onto in her work, the ways in which she hides herself within the vacuity of her texts. There is nothing of her to appeal to when confronted with the chasm that lies under the surface of her representations. Marx and Engels point out, apropos of modernity, that all that is solid melts into air (Marx and Engels 1985, 83), and the solidity of Highsmith is a discomfiting experience, and one would argue that a central element of that discomfort lies in the ways that the clarity of her writing is developed as a cover for the radical insubstantiality that it conceals. (Peters 2011, 2)

In this chapter, attention is drawn to a journalist Jeff Weinstein, who wrote an article for the New York *Village Voice Literary Supplement* in August 1982 entitled *The Case of the Misplaced Author*. He examines the reason why, in his belief, Highsmith had not been and continued not to be as commercially successful in her native United States as she had become in Europe. Weinstein's argument hinges on the fact that Highsmith's work is, on the surface, not difficult enough:

We should never discount the American academic's estimation of plot and content as the simple-minded parts of a novel. Highsmith admits that she uses language for clarity's sake and does not want to interfere, although she admits to an occasional Flaubertian *le mot juste*¹. Formalists prefer innovation of language and mode; humanists prefer incorporation of ideas into characters. A story is just a tool, with which you build a book. Highsmith, you see, is not difficult enough. (Weinstein 1982)

Hence, for Weinstein, there is a simple solution to his "case": the recognition that Highsmith deserves is missing or misplaced because she writes in a style that is considered too clear; according to him, the intransigent American academic audience refuses her not because of lack of clarity but, on the contrary, because of her unremitting and threatening transparency. Peters argues that something complex yet fundamental underlines Weinstein's point and asks, whether it is that Highsmith somehow has been wrongfully denied a place, and that she waits for her due critical recognition. In other words, has she always been there and not in fact been missing at all? Or is she missing in a more radical sense, as the author whose *raison d'être*² is continually and

¹ "The exact word" , "the right word"

Chandler, Edmund (1958), *Pater on style: an examination of the essay on "Style and the textual history of Marius the Epicurean"*, p. 17,

Peters quotes a French critic describing Flaubert's principle of "le mot juste", which, he believed, was the means to the quality in literary art (that is, "truth") that lies beyond incidental and ornamental beauty. Flaubert's obsession with the thought that there exists the precise word or phrase for everything to be expressed shows, Pater suggests, the influence of a philosophical idea — that exact correlations between the world of ideas and the world of words can be found.

² the purpose that justifies a thing's existence

consistently to refuse to become captured within any particular framework? In this way of thinking, Highsmith's texts work as disruptions of order and regulation. Readings of Highsmith are thwarted if and when one attempts an imposition of order onto her particular disturbance (Peters 2011, 3).

Highsmith herself considered that the main reason she had never been accepted as a serious writer within the United States was her categorisation as a crime fiction writer. Her champions have historically tended to be other writers of literature and crime fiction rather than critics or academics (Peters 2011, 4).

In 2003, Andrew Wilson's biography *Beautiful Shadow: A Life of Patricia Highsmith* was published and contains an abundance of information concerning her private life. Wilson had unlimited access to her private diaries, which prohibited to visitors at the Highsmith's archive in Bern, Switzerland, where they are kept. Prior to that, Russell Harrison's *Patricia Highsmith*, which was published in 1997, was the only book available on her. This critical study is used in the second chapter along with Wilson's *Beautiful Shadow*. In contrast to the bibliography, Harrison concentrated solely on the texts, attempting to account for them all in a short work, while simultaneously arguing for the validity of an existentialist explanation of the themes and motifs of her oeuvre (Peters 2011, 4).

The only recently published book on Highsmith is *A Critical Study of the Fiction of Patricia Highsmith - From the Psychological to the Political* (2004) by Noel Dorman Mawer. It forms part of the *Studies in American Literature Series*. Similarly to Harrison, Mawer offers an introduction to some of the major themes of Highsmith's work. Despite the publicity generated by the film adaptation of *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, Highsmith's work has yet to achieve the recognition that it deserves (Peters 2011, 7).

Other critical essay writer Anthony Channell Hilfer notes that readers of Highsmith's work are in general polarised between those who love and those who loathe her and this is echoed in relation to the characters around Ripley,

who are either drawn to or repulsed by him. In his article, Hilfer argues that it is Ripley's lack of a determinate identity that attracts both the reader and other characters. According to Hilfer, readers are interested in and care about Tom precisely because he is not anybody. It is his negative capability that exempts Tom from detection and exposure (Hilfer 1984, 380).

3.2 Overview of the plot

Russell Harrison's elaboration of an overview of the plot in is used in this chapter:

As the novel begins, Tom is down on his luck, unemployed and temporarily staying with a friend in a cheap rooming house on Manhattan's Third Avenue. One evening, leaving an East Side bar, Tom is followed by an older man who introduces himself as Herbert Greenleaf. He has recognized Tom as a friend of his son, Richard, who has been living in Italy for two years. Dickie Greenleaf shows no signs of returning to the United States to take up work as a boat designer in his father's small but profitable yacht-building firm, Burke-Greenleaf. Believing that Tom is a closer friend of Dickie's than he actually is, Mr. Greenleaf thinks that Tom might have some influence in persuading Dickie to return home. Mr. Greenleaf stakes Tom to a trip to Italy, where he will try to convince Dickie Greenleaf to come back to the United States. (Harrison 1997, 21)

A change of the scene and surroundings comes with Ripley's arriving to Mongibello:

On arriving to Mongibello, the small coastal town south of Naples where Dickie is living, Tom sets out to become Dickie's friend. In fact, their relationship has been so slight that Dickie does not at first sight recognize Tom. Ripley also comes to know Dickie's friend Marge

Sherwood, who lives in the town. Within a short time, Tom has made friends with Dickie but has had no luck at all in convincing him to return home. Moreover, he soon confesses that this is actually why he has come to Italy and that Dickie's father has paid for the trip. He has, however, sufficiently ingratiated himself with Dickie for Dickie to suggest that Tom moves into the house he rents. The two become something like good friends and take trip to Naples together, extending it to Rome. (Harrison 1997, 21)

After a calm inaction that flows during Tom's visit in Italy, a slight twist in plot happens:

The relationship continues, pleasantly enough, until one day Dickie discovers Tom in his room trying on his clothes and accessories. This produces a decided tension between them, and although there is no break as such, things are never again the same. Indeed, at this point they discuss the issue of Tom's sexuality, and Tom denies that he is homosexual. (Harrison 1997, 21)

An escalating tension occurs and culminates with the murder scene:

Tom and Dickie take another trip, and at San Remo, on the Ligurian Coast, they rent a motorboat. Precipitated by a premonition that Dickie is losing interest in him and by Dickie's innuendos that Tom is homosexual, Tom brutally murders Dickie, battering him to death with an oar. Moreover, the description of the murderer suggests that it provides a sexual release for Tom, sublimating his desire for Dickie into violence. After the murder, Tom sinks the body and then, with Dickie's money, travels back south. (Harrison 1997, 22)

After Dickie's murder, Tom intrigues and tries to smoothly disguise the evidence and gradually assume Dickie's personality. However, he commits another murder in order to silence Freddie Miles, who found out what Ripley did.

Although Dickie's body is found, Ripley gets away with the murder and enjoys Dickie's wealth:

At first he tells Dickie's people that Dickie has decided to stay in Rome for the winter and forges letters to this effect from Dickie to his friends. At one point, Tom rents an apartment in Rome as Richard Greenleaf and is tracked down by a friend of Dickie's, Freddie Miles, whom Tom had met earlier. Because Miles becomes suspicious, Tom kills him, too, and then assumes Dickie's identity completely, altering or fabricating documents to support the switch and picking up Dickie's monthly checks. Eventually, after Dickie's body is found, Tom forgets Dickie's will, bequeathing Dickie Greenleaf's money to Tom Ripley, and at the novel's end has succeeded to Dickie's money and possessions while reverting to Tom Ripley. (Harrison 1997, 22)

3.3 Analysis of the book

Highsmith's fourth published novel, now quite possibly her best known, introduces Tom Ripley, a character through which Highsmith has received the most attention of all her works. In the first book of the Ripley series, as the novel's fulcrum she used a relationship between two men with strong and now more openly thematized homoerotic overtones. The setting; however, shifted to Europe and the story unfolds among American expatriates living in Italy. In *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, Highsmith also introduces the theme of an individual transforming himself or herself, of the willed construction of a personality, once again suggesting existentialism's emphasis on individual choice free of any hint of determinism through history and genetics (Harrison 1997, 20).

Highsmith refused to provide a reader with Ripley's history, which could serve as a material for further analysis of the character. Tom Ripley is provided with only the vaguest of biographical data (Harrison 1997, 20). Although the reader

learns that Tom has been orphaned at an early age and raised by a maiden aunt, we know little of circumstances of his growing up, nothing of his education, and little about his work experiences. There are large gaps in where he has lived and what he has done. Hence, when the novel begins, we know only that Tom is 25 and living a hand-to-mouth existence. Somehow, though he has not graduated high school, he has managed to be accepted by them as one of their own. (Harrison 1997, 22)

Because the reader is not provided with the historical and personal particulars, the question of the motivation of Ripley's behaviour is thrown into the present. Tom has not completed high school. Three months on a banana boat and a similar length of time as a stockroom clerk with the IRS constitute is our knowledge of his jobs experience. For instance, Tom, as many of Highsmith's male protagonists, possesses superior taste in art, clothes and food (Harrison 1997, 23). This refusal to provide the reader with such knowledge about a protagonist's history reflects Highsmith's personal views on the unimportance of such data (Cooper-Clark 1981, 317).

The important twist in the novel, Tom's murder of Dickie, is significant for reasons of plot and for its revelation of the novel's amoral worldview. The reader has been skilfully led to sympathize with Tom, a murderer. Before the murder, Ripley's affectionate behaviour towards Dickie is perceived by the reader, as Harrison states:

Before the murder, Dickie had begun to tire of Tom, even making a casual inquiry as to when Tom was returning to the States. They had planned to take a trip together to Paris, but Dickie has now reduced that to San Remo. But Dickie's behaviour on the trip makes it clear that he no longer regards Tom as a friend. While strolling around Cannes with Dickie, Tom admires a group of acrobats practicing on the beach, and Dickie sardonically suggests Tom's interest is sexual. Dickie continues to behave in an unfriendly manner on the trip back to San Remo. On the train back to Italy, 'Tom stared at Dickie's closed eyelids. A crazy motion

of hate, of affection, of impatience and frustration was swelling in him, hampering his breathing. He wanted to kill Dickie. It was not the first time he had thought of it' (Highsmith 1999, 87). Hence, the motive for killing Dickie comes from Dickie's contempt for him and from what Tom sees as Dickie's rejection of his friendship. (Harrison 1997, 24)

The homosexual nature of Tom's feelings is described in a separate chapter. This complex topic deserves more complex analysis, which requires coherent theory. However, Tom's feelings towards Marge are very clear. Even Dickie observed that Tom does not fancy her at all. Dickie expresses it while commenting on his relationship to Marge:

'I can imagine that if you both were in New York you wouldn't have seen her nearly so often (or at all) but this village is being so lonely'. 'That's exactly right I have not been to bed with her and I do intend to keep her friendship'. 'Well, have I done anything to prevent you? I told you, Dickie, I would rather leave than to do anything to break up your friendship with Marge'. Dickie gave a glance, 'No, you have not done anything, specifically, but it is obvious you do not like her around. Whenever you make an effort to say anything nice to her, it is obviously an effort'. (Harrison 1997, 63)

Tom also comments on Marge's work but he thinks just for himself that the book must stink (Highsmith 1999, 73). He dislikes even touching Marge's letters and he is later repelled at the thought of her bras draping over his chairs at night or spilling wine over his beautiful table (Wilson 2003, 56).

Hilfer's critical essay reveals that Ripley has got the ability to adopt other personae. This moment becomes prominent, when he realises that Dickie does not reciprocate his attempt at proximity. He mentions that it is possible to explain Ripley with "Homosexual" and "Schizophrenic" terms, although he makes no attempt to justify either of those determinations (Hilfer 1984, 368).

Further, Hilfer claims that the protean man is, literally, fatherless, and thus able to endlessly reborn. He links the death of Tom's parents at a young age to his supposed lack of a Freudian super-ego:

Divested of past and parentage, Tom is remarkably free of the conventional restraints of super-ego, matching definition of protean man, 'what has actually disappeared is the *classical* super-ego, the internalization of clearly defined criteria of "right" and "wrong", transmitted within a particular culture by parents to their children. (Hilfer 1984, 370-71)

Ripley's lack of super-ego, according to Hilfer, thus allows him to remake himself and appropriate other people's identities at will. Placing his argument within a Freudian context, he states that Highsmith provides evidence of the trauma of an early loss. Tom's reflection on his subsequent upbringing by his Aunt Dottie concentrates on her verbal abuse and denigration of his dead father, 'Sissy! He's a sissy from the ground up. Just like his father!' (Highsmith 1999, 34).

Hilfer, in his reading, appears highlight Freud's argument concerning the ways, in which young children are free from internalised prohibitions. Freud claims that as it is well known, young children are amoral and possess no internal inhibitions against their impulses striving for pleasure (Freud 1975, 93). He explains that it is a parental agency, not necessarily the parents but a structural model of authority that twists external prohibition into moral sensibility that the super-ego represents:

Parental influence governs the child by offering proofs of love and by threatening punishments, which are signs to the child of loss of love and are bound to be feared on their own account. This realistic anxiety is the precursor of the later moral anxiety. (Freud 1975, 93)

While Hifler concentrates solely on Tom Ripley, the absence of parents (or parental concern) is echoed throughout other of Highsmith's texts (Peters 2011, 8). Hifler's Freudian reading indicates that a parental authority shifts from Tom Ripley's parents to his aunt. In the process love is lost. Aligned to that, the undermining of the original lost object - the parents, and especially the father in this case - could, according to Freud, disrupt the transition from identification to object-choice, fixing the subject in an endless cycle of attempts to assimilate the ego of the other into the self:

If one has lost an object or has been obliged to give it up, one often compensates oneself by identifying oneself with it and setting it up once more in one's ego, so that here object-choice regresses, as it were, to identification. (Freud 1975, 95)

Hifler pinpointed a clear and consistent aspect of Highsmith's character construction. Since Tom is "remarkably free from the super-ego", he is somehow free to remake and remodel himself in a liberate manner (Peters 2011, 9). That is why Tom Ripley can adopt other personality.

As implicated above, it is difficult to categorise Highsmith's novels. She does not write detective stories in the mode of police detective, private eye, or other detective fiction sub-genres. She is often categorised as a "mistress of suspense" because of the ways, in which she captures her readers in a web of anxiety, rather than turning the page to discover what happens next. In other words, to be held in a state of suspense, her readers are suspended in a haze of dread, anxiety and apprehension. The state of apprehension and anxiety, into which Highsmith plunges her readers, may be partially explained by her use of particular narrative strategies (Peters 2011, 18).

4. Film adaptations

In these days, one is surrounded by various types of adaptations on television screens, in cinemas, in theatres, on the internet, and in the comics. In this chapter, the history of adaptations as such is supplied. Subsequently, the types of the film adaptations and narrative structure are described. Thereafter, *Purple Noon* (1960) and *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999) are classified according to the theory of adaptation.

Adaptations are nothing new to the contemporary human culture. Shakespeare transferred pages of books to the stage and made it available for completely new audience. Aischylos, Racine, Goethe and da Ponte narrated old stories in “new coat” (Hutcheonová 2006, 18). But ever since the art of film integrated into the human culture, the adaptations of literary works have been made. It has caused a significant wave of antipathy amongst the writers and the literary critics. In 1926, Virginia Woolf commented on this former young art of film that it is a simplification of literary work and a film represents a “parasite” of literature, which is its “prey” and “victim” (Hutcheonová 2006, 19).

Although film adaptations have caused waves of rage, their directors make a fortune making such films because there is something irresistible about them that audience find. It might be the desire to compare a literary work with a film or audience might be slightly indolent to read a whole book and one wants to imagine, what the book is like in a short period of time. However, despite some negative and some positive aspects of film adaptations, they developed into area of academic study that has various theories and diversifications.

4.1 Types of adaptations

Pejorative terms of loss are usually mentioned when speaking of the film adaptations. This loss represents a reduction of the content that the original literary work has by contraction of length, details and indications to the detriment of the quality and quantity. This raises a question of *fidelity*, which is defined as the approach of categorization, where a simple comparison with the original text is supplied.

Various strategies have been proposed; therefore, *fidelity* is not an efficient approach of categorization. There is not; however, such a theory, which represents the perfect pattern for classification. Regarding simplicity and conciseness, Geoffrey Wagner's theory in *The Novel and the Cinema* has been chosen. Geoffrey Wagner suggests three possible categories, which are open to the film-maker and to the critic assessing his adaptation (McFarlane 1996, 10).

The three modes of adaptation he described consist of:

1. Transportation, in which a novel is given directly on the screen with a minimum of apparent interference (Wagner 1975, 222).
'This type of adaptation is the most faithful rendition of the original in cinematic form possible. The adapters view the end result as an illustration of the source, often including explicit reference to the source's medium'. (Starrs 2006, 74)
2. Commentary, where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect (Wagner 1975, 224). It could be also called "re-emphasis" or "re-structure" (Wagner 1975, 226).
'Locations, chronological periods and even endings may be changed and the adaptor manages to create something quite different, yet nevertheless similar to the original document'. (Starrs 2006, 74)

3. Analogy, which must represent a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art (Wagner 1975, 226).
'In the analogous adaptation, the new work of art is substantially different and may not even be initially understood by an audience as having anything to do with its source'. (Starrs 2006, 75)

Taking Wagner's theory into account, both adaptations of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* are suitable for the second type of this classification theory - the commentary. Both *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999) and *Purple Noon* (1960) are similar to the original document, yet the original somehow altered. However, both adaptations did not fulfil the fidelity issue enough; therefore, differences in these adaptations are further described in the fifth chapter.

4.2 Narrative structure

Considering the phenomenon of adapting a novel into a film, the novels represent source material for the films, which entirely rely on structure of the source material. Hence, one should consider the central importance of narrative to both novels and films (McFarlane 1996, 11).

According to David Bordwell's *Narration in the Fiction Film*, narration is the process whereby the film's *syuzhet* and *style* interact in the course of cueing and channelling the spectator's construction of the *fabula* (Bordwell 1985, 53). Bordwell described these terms as follows:

- The *fabula* (story) embodies the action as a chronological, cause-and-effect chain of events occurring within a given duration and spatial field.
- The *syuzhet* or plot is the actual arrangement and presentation of the *fabula* by the film.
- *Style* names a film's systematic use of cinematic devices. (Bordwell 1985, 53)

The distinctions between various narrative modes in the novel are difficult to sustain in film narrative. The novels exhibit notably different approaches to the question of narrative point of view; for example, first-person, omniscient, a mixture of both, the use of “restricted consciousness”. However, these different approaches are considerably elided in the narrative procedures adopted by the films (McFarlane 1996, 15).

A narrative mode expresses a narrative point of view, narrative voice and narrative time. *The Talented Mr. Ripley* is written in the third-person view, which is the most frequently used narrative mode in literature. The third-person novel recounts the thought, feelings and words. These types of novels have gone furthest in the inspection of what goes on inside minds (Ricoeur 1985, 89). The third-person points of view are accompanied by the third-person voices. They can be either subjective or objective. In this case, the narration voice of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* is subjective. It means that the narrator expresses thoughts and feelings of all characters.

However, literary narration does not correspond to the one that is seen in films. Narrative commentary in films tends to highly self-conscious narration. The viewer awaits the moments, in which the narration may interrupt progress of the plot and call attention to itself. The implied narrator is no longer invisible but calls attention to itself. Therefore, such interrupting narration is not seen in *Purple Noon* (1960) or *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999).

Films may lack these types of narrative modes as seen in literature, such as person and tense. However, a film must be shaped properly in the terms of montage and ways, in which shots are angled and framed and related to each other. This relation is required so that one could feel that they are witnessing almost a real spectacle. Film utterance, in relation to the transportation of novels to the screen, is a matter of adaptation proper, not of transfer (McFarlane 1996, 19).

5. The Talented Mr. Ripley on the screen

Two film adaptations have been made, since Highsmith published the novel. And since then, the directors of two film adaptations, Clément and Minghella, have received some criticism for their handling of their films' closure, and more specifically for having to condemn their anti-hero for his sexual and social deviation. This chapter covers the major differences that occur in the films. These major differences are described separately for each film. At the end of this chapter, an overview of these differences is supplied as a synoptic outline.

5.1 Comparison of the book and the film adaptations

5.1.1 Purple Noon (1960)

Five years after the book was published, in 1960, René Clément adapted it for a film. Highsmith herself approved of Delon's performance in the film, which she described as very beautiful to the eye and interesting for the intellect. What she did not like though, was the ending where Ripley was caught by justice. It was called a terrible concession.

The title of Clément's film gives us the immediate hint for the difference between this adaptation and the book. René Clément named it *Plein Soleil*, which in English speaking countries was released as *Purple Noon*. Alain Delon stars as Tom Ripley, Maurice Ronet stars as Philippe Greenleaf, which leads to another difference in this adaptation. Philippe is used instead of Dickie. And so is Greenleaf's girlfriend Marge Sherwood changed into Marge Duval, who is featured by Marie Laforêt.

While Highsmith's book contains some details about Ripley's life in New York before leaving for Italy, the two films' narratives have different starting points. *Purple Noon* omits it entirely and it plunges the viewer directly into a Roman

café into the men's relationship. What Clément loses by doing this, is revealing first meeting of Ripley with Dickie (Williams 2004, 56).

Clément's film finds Tom scheming from the start to kill Philippe (Dickie) and steal his identity. His motivations are fuelled by greed alone, as well as by his apparent attraction to Marge (Eggert 1999). Tom's feelings for Marge differ at this point from the hatred that the original Highsmith's Ripley feels towards Marge.

Clément's film resolves to be more like Highsmith's book, following a man who slowly learns the "ins" and "outs" of being a cold-blooded career criminal. Moreover, Clément resists the sexual ambiguity in any form. (Eggert 1999).

Another important twist that occurred in the film is the murder scene. When Greenleaf does not write an encouraging letter to his father, as he promised Ripley he would do, Ripley's expense account is cut off from Greenleaf's father (Straayer 2004, 387). Ripley stabbed Greenleaf to death during a poker game on a boat.

The most frequent negative comment on Clément's French adaptation is that it is rather difficult to convince the audience that the characters are American.

5.1.2 *The Talented Mr. Ripley (1999)*

Minghella's adaptation differs from the original as well as the Clément's does. In this adaptation, Matt Damon stars as Tom Ripley, Jude Law as Dickie Greenleaf. Bronski's *The Subversive Ms. Highsmith* covers the comments on the major differences between Minghella's film and the original novel. It is not only different identity that Minghella's Ripley has, but also he changed the original aspect of homosexuality that was in the book:

Ripley of Highsmith's novel embodies a number of the fears of the 1950's: a sociopathic, murderous homosexual with intense social-climbing aspirations. His identity is so shaky and unbounded that he has no trouble taking on other people's voices and personas, and indeed has an uncanny talent for impersonating others. But there is a telling difference between this characterization and Minghella's more sentimentalized and sanitized film version. He has softened Tom Ripley, made him less of a psychopath and more of a confused gay man who's at a social disadvantage in a world in which his social betters are often mean to him. Matt Damon's Ripley is "more guilty" of looking for love in all the wrong places. (Bronski 2000, 5)

Nonetheless, the aspect of homosexuality is covered in the following chapter. As far as the plot of Minghella's film is concerned, the opening scene differs from the book version. In the adaptation, the opening scene starts with Tom Ripley playing a piano at a fancy garden party. After having finished, Dickie Greenleaf's parents approach him and talk about Dickie himself.

The smaller changes that Minghella has made help underscore the major shift in Ripley's character. The novel begins with Ripley already acting as a petty thief, a freeloader, and a scam artist who spends part of his time living off of wealthy gay men. But in the film he plays the piano for concert soloists, works as a men's room attendant, and seems to be down on his luck (Bronski 2000, 5).

In the novel, Tom and Dickie meet on Mongibello's beach itself but in Minghella's film Dickie and Marge are first seen in a telescopic long-shot within the vignette of Ripley's binoculars, through which he gazes from his hotel room, as he practises his Italian (Williams 2004, 56).

The relationship between Marge and Tom differs. In the novel, Ripley literally hates Marge Sherwood, Dickie's sometimes girlfriend played by Gwyneth

Paltrow, with a misogynistic fervour. In the film, however, Minghella creates a close bond between the two (at least initially) and this conveys the message that Tom Ripley is not such a bad person (Bronski 2000, 5).

Bronski adds a comment on a motif of Dickie's murder and his different nature in the film.

In the novel, Ripley kills Dickie because he sees his chance and makes his move, while in the film he kills Dickie in a fit of anger after being humiliated and rejected. This is an action, with which most people can sympathize with. In an apparent attempt to make Ripley more sympathetic, Minghella has coarsened Dickie Greenleaf. The shallow, feckless, spoiled rich kid is now a heartless, callous womanizer responsible for the death of his Italian mistress, not to mention a cock-tease and a murderous hothead. (Bronski 2000, 5)

According to Bronski, the biggest change from the original that Minghella has made is that Ripley is now capable of love and by the end of the film, he has a boyfriend.

This is something completely alien to Highsmith's conceptualization of Ripley, one that violates her complicated, if perverse, moral universe. As with *Strangers on a Train*, Highsmith's original vision would not have been a crowd pleaser. There's a big difference between a confused gay con man and a charming, unfeeling sociopath. Movie audiences may have rejected a Ripley (and Matt Damon), who lacked certain conventional elements of sympathy. (Bronski 2000, 5)

Highsmith thinks that Ripley's getting away with murder is justice, but Minghella's mainstream sensibility could never allow this to happen. His solution to Highsmith's paradoxically perverse universe is to humanize Ripley by having him fall in love (Bronski 2000, 6).

If Minghella had remained true to Highsmith, this Talented Mr. Ripley would have been quite a different film; "bleaker" and "nastier", perhaps, but also more archly witty and more deeply unsettling. As it is, Tom Ripley is a homosexual hero for the new millennium: kinder, gentler, and far less threatening (Bronski 2000, 6).

5.1.3 Overview of the major differences"

– **Titles:**

- *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955,1999) x *Purple Noon* (1960)

– **Names:**

- *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955)

Dickie Greenleaf

Thomas Ripley

Marge Sherwood

- *Purple Noon* (1960)

Philippe Greenleaf

Thomas Ripley

Marge Duval

- *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999)

Corresponding with the book

– **Opening scene:**

- *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955)

Tom is followed by Dickie Greenleaf's father.

- *Purple Noon* (1960)

Tom and Dickie are already friends in Italy.

- *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999)

Tom Ripley is playing piano.

– **Relationship with Marge Sherwood:**

- *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955)

Tom Ripley was repelled by her.

- *Purple Noon* (1960)
Tom Ripley had feelings for her.
 - *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999)
Tom Ripley's and Marge's relationship was rather neutral.
- **Murder scene:**
- *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955)
Greenleaf was murdered by Ripley with an oar on a boat.
Ripley desired to become Greenleaf himself and possess his wealth.
 - *Purple Noon* (1960)
Greenleaf stabbed by Ripley on a boat.
Ripley desired to own Greenleaf's wealth, as well as his girlfriend.
 - *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999)
Ripley used the same tool as in the book but the motif differed. Ripley was rejected by Greenleaf after revealing his feelings for him.
- **Ending scene:**
- *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1955)
Ripley got away with the murders that he committed.
 - *Purple Noon* (1960)
Ripley was caught by police after Greenleaf's body had been found.
 - *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999)
Ripley got away with the murders and on the top of that he had an affair with a boy.

6. The Aspect of Homosexuality

In this chapter, the aspect of homosexuality in the literature is described and a prove is supplied that Patricia Highsmith deserves a place in this section according to survey on theories about homosexual literature. Since the Ancient Greece, the homosexuality has been mentioned in the literature and this topic has driven attention and has provoked many cultures and societies.

But yet, there has not been any complex system or hierarchy supplied, nor has there been a crucial work that could be placed in the core of homosexual literature.

6.1 Homosexuality in the Literature

There is a great amount of works, which deal with the aspect of homosexuality. Trušník's *Forms of the American Gay Novels Since 1945*³ has been chosen for this thesis because it clearly describes history, development, and forms of homosexuality in the literature.

Martin Putna describes the issue of the primary methodological approach to gay literature in our literary scholarship and he divides this approach into five sections:

- *psychoanalysis*,
- *apologetic biographism* (represents compiling of a list of famous gay writers regardless of quality of the literary text),

³*Podoby amerického homosexuálního románu po roce 1945*

- *homo-theme* (an association based on homosexual themes but this can sometimes detract from the literary quality issues),
- *homo-textuality* (an investigation of the method, into which the homosexuals motifs are encoded into texts),
- *personalism* (an approach including also some autobiographical information about particular authors). These sections and approaches try to make independent studies of “*gay literature*” (Putna 2004, 26).

In American literary criticism, examples of approaches are found and they emphasize a homosexual person or a text and their various combinations, sometimes even over-combined variations. Robert Drake’s manual *The Gay Canon* defines “*gay book*” as follows: ‘Gay book is a book that deals with topics of love between the same sex or a book written by the author whose (sexual) satisfaction is found at the same sex’ (Trušník 2011, 26). One may assume that the content is not prerequisite nor is the sexual orientation. Homosexual books can be written by heterosexuals and vice versa (Trušník 2011, 26). Some authors feel strong aversion against the term “*gay literature*”. These are for example Edward Albee or David Leavitt, who publicly admit their homosexual orientation and whose main themes are represented as homosexuality issues. These authors refuse to be included in the section of homosexual literature just because they happen to be gay (Trušník 2011, 28).

Although the usage of term “*homosexual literature*” could also cause a negative impact, it drew much attention. In the first half of the nineties, it was the independent merchants and big chains who enthusiastically responded to this new sales trend in the marketplace. It was the time, when the interest in the homosexual issues culminated. However, ten years later the interest waned and the period of reclosing of the homosexual literature began. This was a period of time during which literary agents, editors and critics refused to use terms such as “*gay novels*”. They claimed these novels to be “*novels about family dynamics*” or “*novels with adolescent themes*” (Trušník 2011, 28).

Although there is significant number of books dealing with the issue of homosexuality, the traditional publishers are reluctant to emphasize this fact in the attempt to attract wider audience. Moreover, they are trying to exclude the essential audience, i.e. homosexual readers (Trušník 2011, 28). It seems that American literature is starting to take the homosexuality issue for granted and it slowly interferes into people's daily lives (Trušník 2011, 29).

In addition, there is a need to include several titles of books and booklets that represent so-called "bibles of the homosexual issue in the literature" but considering how difficult stating of an ideal definition of the homosexual literature is it is also difficult to find fundamental and crucial literature, on which one can rely. According to Trušník, there is a demand for some hierarchization and systematization of this confusing literary production of homosexual issues (Trušník 2011, 30). David Bergman, one of the specialists of "homosexual literature", wrote:

There is so few crucial works, the homosexual issue is not completely recorded, many archives are not explored. This means that we are far from a situation when we are ready to list and write down the history of American homosexual literature. (Bergman 1991, 11)

In spite of some disputableness and uncertain future, the homosexual literature is useful for its didactical, educational, analytical and political contribution. In conclusion, according to the supplied literature, once there is a motif or a theme related to the homosexuality issue in any form in a book, one may include such publication in the homosexual literature. Also, one includes writers with homosexual orientation in this section (Trušník 2011, 28). This proves that Patricia Highsmith fulfils all the criteria needed for enlisting into this section because not only did she admit her affection for women but also many of her characters are homosexuals as well.

6.1.1 Highsmith's Tom Ripley as a homosexual

There was a whole chapter needed for this theme, which is going to cover the most disputable aspect of the book and the adaptations. Highsmith's personal opinion on Ripley's homosexuality is stated, so are the indications that reveal Ripley's self.

The sexual nature of Tom's feelings is clear in the scene before he bludgeons Dickie to death with an oar:

Dickie was swerving very slightly towards the right again, towards the long spit of fuzzy grey land, but he could have hit Dickie, sprung on him, or kissed him, or thrown him overboard, and anybody could have seen him at this distance. (Highsmith 1999, 90)

According to Harrison, Highsmith suggests that Ripley's violence results from his feelings of rejection and acts as a kind of substitute for sex (Harrison 1997, 24). Most striking is that Tom Ripley is not, in a point of fact, a homosexual. There is not a indication in the novel that he has had sex with a man (or a woman, for that matter), though there is a number of indications that he is interested in men. At the beginning of the novel, there is a hint that one of the bars he frequents is a gay bar, and this is recalled later when Tom is trying to decide if Dickie is homosexual. In New York, Tom is sharing a room with a man who does department store windows, which in 1950s Manhattan would suggest that the man is a homosexual (Harrison 1997, 24). When Mr. Greenleaf is showing Tom a photo album, preparatory to his trip to Europe, Tom thinks, 'The album was not interesting to him, until Richard got to be sixteen or so, long-legged, slim, with the wave tightening in his hair' (Highsmith 1999, 19).

However, Tom never comes close to making a sexual advance to Dickie. The best time they ever have, according to Harrison, is the night they spend wandering around Rome, when they take a girl home. In fact, the moment is particularly revealing:

Asexually, they “protect” the girl, the two of them chaperoning her home in a cab without making the least sexual advance to her. In Italy, the discussion that Tom and Dickie have concerning Tom’s sexuality ends with Dickie’s taunt that Marge thinks he doesn’t even *have* any sexual interest, something that Tom indirectly confirms in his own thoughts. (Harrison 1997, 25)

The plethora of hints never blossoms into full-fledged homosexuality. According to Harrison, Tom’s failing to act on his own sexual impulses has to be seen in connection to Dickie’s refusal to have a romance with Marge and with the absence of any rewarding relationship, whether it is homosexual or heterosexual, in the novel. This absence underscores the extreme isolation of these individuals (Harrison 1997, 25).

Tom’s emptiness, his lack of relatedness to others has further effects. It contributes to the enjoyment of isolation that envelops his character. Tom views such isolation positively (Harrison 1997, 26). Alone in Rome,

‘Every moment to Tom was a pleasure, alone in his room or walking the streets of Rome. It was impossible ever to be lonely or bored’. (Highsmith 1999, 106)

What, then, constitutes Tom Ripley’s pleasures is his fascination with objects that consumer society produces to be bought and possessed (Harrison 1997, 26). Sartre wrote in the phenomenological analyses entitled *Having, Doing and Being*:

With *all* possession there is made the crystallizing synthesis, which Stendhal has described for one case of love. Each possessed object, which raises itself on the foundation of the world, manifests the entire world. To appropriate this object is then to appropriate the world symbolically. (Sartre 1958, 760)

The example of Sartre's comment appears in an otherwise inconsequential description of Ripley's passage on a train back to southern Italy, after he has murdered Dickie:

The white taut sheets of his berth on the train seemed the most wonderful luxury he had ever known. He caressed them with his hand before he turned the light out. And the clean blue-grey blankets, the spanking efficiency of the little black net over his head - Tom had an ecstatic moment when he thought of all the pleasures that lay before him now with Dickie's money, other beds, tables seas, ships, suitcases, shirts, years of freedom, years of pleasure. Then he turned the light out and put his head down and almost at once fell asleep, happy, content, and utterly confident, as he had never been before in his life. (Highsmith 1999, 97)

According to Harrison, this passage is charged almost sexually with a passion, unlike anything else in the novel. For the only time in the novel, we see Tom truly fulfilled. Because things, rather than people, provide the objects for Tom's emotions and desires, have aesthetics, rather than an ethics (Harrison 1997, 27).

6.1.2 Homosexuality in the adaptations

As a disputable theme, Highsmith's Ripley and his self along with his sexual desires is covered in the previous chapter. However, what needed to be covered, is the Ripley's homosexuality in the adaptations.

In both adaptations, the homosexuality is present. Straayer claims that in the film *Purple Noon*, homosexuality remains sub-textual, coded primarily but not entirely through triangles involving two men and a woman. For example, early in the film, Ripley and Greenleaf are visiting Rome. During a game of pretending to be blind, Greenleaf induces a woman to join them. They take her on a buggy

ride during which she is positioned between them as they both kiss and fondle her⁴ (Straayer 2004, 386). In Straayer's work, an argument on this triangulation is supplemented by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. She argues that such triangulation is an instance of "homosexual desire", in which the desire of two (assumed heterosexual) men for each other is exchanged through a woman (Sedgwick 1985).

By contrast, the homosexuality is viewed differently in the Minghella's adaptation. He makes Ripley more overtly homosexual most notably through a new gay character, Peter Smith-Kingsley, who becomes Ripley's unfortunate partner in the final reel. One may claim that the adaptation becomes a more closed if not closeted text defining and limiting its protagonist (Williams 2004, 51). This scene utterly confirms Ripley's true sexual desires in the adaptation and it confirms that Ripley's motif for Greenleaf's murder was the rejection of his feelings.

⁴A corresponding scene occurs in the novel, but without kissing, when the two men escort a woman home in a taxi. 'Dickie and Tom sat very properly on the jump seats with their arms folded like a couple of footmen'(p.67). After dropping her off, Tom conjectures that other Americans would have raped her. This thought productively collapses the class enhancement of living abroad with heterosexual restraint (Straayer 2004).

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to analyze the novel *The Talented Mr. Ripley* by Patricia Highsmith, especially the main character Thomas Ripley, and compare it to its film adaptations. Although Patricia Highsmith wrote four novels about this particular character (*Ripley Under Ground*, *Ripley's Game*, *The Boy Who Followed Ripley*, and *Ripley Under Water*) I chose the first novel, which describes the crucial events that Ripley's character underwent.

In the introductory part, I analysed Patricia Highsmith's life in order to prove that her life and experience influenced her work. Highsmith moved several times during her life and a significant part of her life she spent in Europe. Here lies a resemblance with the setting that *The Talented Mr. Ripley* has. As far as her personality is concerned, she was described as not sensual and being unable to share her feelings. However, Highsmith was rather promiscuous and had relationship with many women and few men. Her love life represented an inspiration for her work, especially women. For example, she wrote the plot for *The Price of Salt* after meeting a woman in the toy department of Bloomingdale's. Highsmith's involvement in political and social issues was not significant in her novels, yet there are some insignificant indications. One may wonder why it is so because she disliked Jews, Blacks, Italians, Portuguese and many others.

In the third chapter, I dealt with critical readings of Highsmith's texts and with analysis of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* itself. It is uneasy to categorize Highsmith's novels partly because her not providing readers with further description of background of her characters; therefore, one is unable to conduct a further analysis. What a reader knows about Ripley's history though, is the fact that comes from poor environment and he was brought up by his aunt, who did not treat him nicely. He possesses superior taste in art, food and clothes. He sees his satisfaction in possessions rather than in men, as one can assume. Therefore there is no need to assume that he is a homosexual, who is in love

with Greenleaf. However, Ripley wanted to incept Greenleaf's personality and his wealth.

In the fourth chapter, I supplied the introduction to the film adaptations, because two film adaptations of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* represent a significant part of this thesis. These adaptations are *Purple Noon*, which was directed in 1960 by René Clément, and *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, which was directed in 1999 by Anthony Minghella. Literary and film narration differ; therefore, I described ways of transferring a novel into a film along with classification of these two adaptations. Neither of the adaptations covers entirely the narration of the novel, hence, they are classified as the commentary adaptations. An original is taken and wither purposely or inadvertently alters in some aspect.

In the fifth chapter, I focused on *The Talented Mr. Ripley* on the screen. I covered the major differences that occurred in the adaptations. At the end of the chapter, I supplied a review of the major changes that directors made. In *Purple Noon*, René Clément changed many aspects; for example, the title of the adaptation and names of the main characters. Most importantly, he changed the opening scene, relationship with Marge Sherwood, the murder scene itself and ending scene. So did Minghella with his adaptation. He though added one theme, which is Ripley's homosexuality.

In the last chapter, I described the theme of homosexuality in the novel and in the adaptations. Homosexuality in the literature is a vast field of study; thus, a methodological approach is mentioned. One learns that Highsmith's *Talented Mr. Ripley* belongs to the homosexual literature not because of his uncertain sexual orientation but because of Highsmith herself. According to her biography, her sexual orientation included women so that her work is viewed as homosexual literature.

All in all, this thesis represents a brief overview of the Highsmith's work, herself, and the film adaptations, which might be additional causes of Highsmith's popularity. The final conclusion infers that Highsmith's novels are not

unclassifiable at all, especially *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. It is viewed as a crime novel that is categorized in the homosexual literature.

Summary

Cílem této bakalářské práce byla analýza detektivního románu *Talentovaný pan Ripley* od Patricie Highsmithové, konkrétně tedy analýza hlavní postavy románu, Toma Ripleyho. Společně s analýzou je cílem této práce srovnání dvou filmových adaptací, které byly podle tohoto díla natočeny. Přestože Highsmithová napsala čtyři další knihy o této postavě, budu se zabývat pouze první z nich, a to již zmiňovaným *Talentovaným panem Ripleyem*. Důvodem tohoto rozhodnutí je fakt, že román popisuje zásadní události, které zformovaly charakter Ripleyho.

V úvodní části této bakalářské práce jsem analyzovala život autorky, abych prokázala, že její život, zkušenosti a zážitky měly vliv na její dílo. Highsmithová se několikrát za život stěhovala a velkou část života strávila v Evropě. Tato skutečnost je jedním z aspektů, které ovlivnily její dílo. Vidíme zde podobnost s *Talentovaným panem Ripleyem*, protože velká jeho část se odehrává právě v Evropě. Co se týče její povahy, o Highsmithové se mluví jako o chladné ženě, která není schopná vyjádřit své city. I přes všechna tato tvrzení je známo, že Highsmithová byla promiskuitní a měla vztah s mnoha ženami a několika muži. Milostný život byl její inspirací, zvláště pak ženy samotné. Příkladem takovéto inspirace je kniha *The Price of Salt*, kterou Highsmithová napsala poté, co potkala zajímavou ženu v oddělení hraček v obchodním domě. Highsmithová se nijak zásadně neangažovala v politickém a sociálním dění a podle toho tudíž ani nestylovala svoje díla. Tento fakt je vskutku celkem zarážející, vezmeme-li v potaz její nenávisť k Židům, černochům a k spoustě různých národů.

V třetí kapitole jsem se zabývala odborným čtením textů od této autorky. Zabývala jsem se zde také samotnou analýzou *Talentovaného pana Ripleyho*. Není vůbec jednoduché zařazovat díla autorky do jakýchkoliv kategorií, protože úmyslně vynechává hlubší popisy postav a jejich historii. Co je však možno vyčíst o historii Ripleyho, je fakt, že pochází z chudého prostředí a byl vychován svojí tetou, která s ním nezacházela příliš hezky. Zajímá ho umění, kvalitní oblečení a kvalitní jídlo. Jeho uspokojení pramení právě z bohatství a ne z jeho

mylné homosexuální sexuální orientace. Není tudíž nutno dále zvažovat Ripleyho orientace a jeho city k Dickiemu. Ripley se nicméně snažil přivlastnit Dickieho osobnost a majetek a chtěl se stát Greenleafem samotným.

Čtvrtá kapitola se zabývá úvodem do filmových adaptací. Těmito filmovými adaptacemi jsou míněny filmy *V Plném slunci* natočený režisérem René Clémentem v roce 1960, a *Talentovaný pan Ripley*, který byl natočen Anthonyem Minghellou v roce 1999. Jelikož se liší literární struktura vypravování od té filmové, popsala jsem způsob, jakým se dosáhne transformace vypravování z románu na film.

V páté kapitole jsem se zaměřila na filmové zpracování tohoto detektivního románu. Vyjmenovala jsem hlavní změny, které režiséři provedli. V závěru této kapitoly jsem umístila přehled hlavních rozdílů, které se v adaptacích objevily. *V Plném slunci* je zjevný rozdíl názvu filmu od názvu románu. Clément také změnil jména hlavních postav a hlavně onu vražednou scénu. Úvod a konec adaptace se také liší od románu. Minghella provedl také zásadní změny týkající se úvodu a závěru. Motiv vraždy byl v tomto případě taky pozměněn, stejně jako vztah, který Ripley choval vůči Marge. Hlavní změnou Minghellovy adaptace je fakt, že Ripley je zde opravdu homosexuál.

Závěrečná kapitola popisuje homosexualitu v literatuře. Homosexualita v literatuře představuje rozsáhlý obor, tudíž jsem uvedla metodologické postupy jak poznat, zda-li se ono dílo řadí do této kategorie, či nikoliv. Zde se dovídáme, že *Talentovaný pan Ripley* patří do kategorie homosexuální literatury. Ne však kvůli nejisté sexuální orientaci Ripleyho, ale kvůli faktu, že Highsmithová zahrнула ve svém osobním a sexuálním životě ženy.

Tato bakalářská práce zobrazuje stručný náhled na díla Highsmithové, náhled na biografii autorky a filmové adaptace, kterým by mohla z části vděčit za svoji popularitu. Závěrečné shrnutí vyvrací fakt o nezařaditelnosti autorčiných děl, zvláště pak toto tvrzení neplatí o *Talentovaném panu Ripleyem*. Na too dílo je nahlíženo jako na detektivní román, který se řadí do homosexuální literatury.

Abstract

Má bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na kriminální román *Talentovaný pan Ripley* od autorky Patricia Highsmithové a na jeho filmové adaptace. Cílem této bakalářské práce je analýza autorčina románu a uvedení aspektů, které ovlivnily její díla. Tato bakalářská práce uvádí teorie, podle kterých jsou prováděny a určovány filmové adaptace. Co se týče vlastních filmových adaptací románu, jsou zde zmíněny hlavní změny, které se liší od původního románu. Závěr bakalářské práce je věnován tématu homosexuality, které je přítomné v celé práci, a homosexuální literatuře.

My thesis is focused on the novel of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* by Patricia Highsmith and its film adaptations. Its aim is to analyze the author's novel and to supply aspects that affected her work. This thesis supplies theories, according to which film adaptations are made. As far as the film adaptations of the author's novel are concerned, major differences are mentioned. The end of this work describes the aspect of homosexuality, which is present throughout the thesis, along with the homosexual literature itself.

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Compared films:

Plein Soleil. Directed by René Clément. 1999.

The Talented Mr. Ripley. Directed by Anthony Minghella. 1999.

Annotation

Anotace česky:

Příjmení a jméno:	Bočková Tereza
Katedra:	Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky
Název práce anglicky:	<i>The Talented Mr. Ripley</i> by Patricia Highsmith and Its Film Adaptations
Název práce česky:	Talentovaný pan Ripley od Patricie Highsmithové a její filmové adaptace
Vedoucí práce:	PhDr. Libor Práger, Ph.D.
Jazyk:	AN
Počet stran (úvod – závěr):	42
Počet stran (celkově):	53
Počet znaků (úvod – závěr):	59 576
Počet znaků (celkově):	66 818
Počet titulů použité literatury:	39
Klíčová slova v AJ:	The Talented Mr. Ripley, Patricia Highsmith, film adaptations, narrative structure, narrative mode, Purple Noon, homosexual literature, comparison, analysis, biography
Klíčová slova v ČJ:	Talentovaný pan Ripley, Patricia Highsmith, filmové adaptace, struktura vyprávění, způsob vyprávění, V plném slunci, homosexualita v literatuře, srovnání, analýza, biografie

Annotation in English:

Surname and forename: Bočková Tereza
Department: Department of English and American studies
Title of thesis in English: *The Talented Mr. Ripley* by Patricia Highsmith and Its Film Adaptations
Title of thesis in Czech: *Talentovaný pan Ripley* od Patricie Highsmithové a její filmové adaptace
Supervisor: PhDr. Libor Práger, Ph.D.
Language: EN
Number of pages (introduction – summary): 42
Number of pages (overall): 53
Number of signs (introduction – summary): 59 576
Number of signs (overall): 65 818
Number of references used in thesis: 39
Key words in EN: The Talented Mr. Ripley, Patricia Highsmith, film adaptations, narrative structure, narrative mode, Purple Noon, homosexual literature, comparison, analysis, biography
Key words in CZ: Talentovaný pan Ripley, Patricia Highsmith, filmové adaptace, struktura vyprávění, způsob vyprávění, V plném slunci, homosexualita v literatuře, srovnání, analýza, biografie