UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

FILM ADAPTATIONS OF GRAHAM SWIFT'S NOVELS

Diplomová práce

Bc. Kristýna Bročková

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Libor Práger, Ph.D.

Olomouc 2017

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci na téma „Film Adaptations of Graham Swift's Novels" vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne: 14. 12. 2017

....

Kristýna Bročková

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION

Adapting novels into films has been a common phenomenon already from the very beginning of the history of film, which is now over one hundred years ago. Naturally, these two media differ considerably, namely in the perception, which can be either a sensory one in the case of visual images, or it can be perceived as a conceptional construct of the mental image as George Bluestone puts it.[1] At the same time, he points to the fundamental difference between the way the images are produced in the two media and how they are received.[2] From this notion it is quite clear that both of the media need a special treatment for their analysis. However, there is still something that unites these two as Brian McFarlane argues: "What novels and films most strikingly have in common is the potential and propensity for narrative. And narrative, at certain levels, is undeniably not only the chief factor novels and the films based on them have in common but is the chief transferable element."[3] On that account it can be assumed that narrative as such is a very important element for adaptations.

Adapting literature to film is very attractive and therefore a vast number of adaptations is in existence, and such an amount obviously has to be diverse. The adapted material varies from the bestselling novels to lesser-known ones. However, analyses of the most popular ones are easily to be found in both academic texts and laymen reviews. The popularity relates not only to the original novels but also to their film versions which is proved by the statistics: "Since the inception of the Academy Awards, more than ¾ of the awards for the 'best picture' have gone to adaptations."[4] This implies that adapting literature into film is very popular and it is also studied in detail. However, I would like to focus on a theme that lacks a detailed critical analysis and was not given this kind of special attention. This thesis will focus on a contemporary British novelist and short story writer, Graham Swift, who is a recognized author, and also on the film versions of some of his novels. Unlike his respected novels, the film versions received various critical responses—both positive and not so appreciative. Also, the directors and cast ranged from lesser-known figures

---

[1]   See Brian McFarlane, *Novel to film: an introduction to the theory of adaptation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 4.

[2]   Ibid.

[3]   McFarlane, 12.

[4]   McFarlane, 8.

to well-established ones, such as Jeremy Irons or Michael Caine. Therefore, there is a lot of diverse material to work with.

The theme of this diploma thesis is the comparison of film adaptations of three of Graham Swift's novels, more specifically the novels *Waterland* (1983), *Shuttlecock* (1981) and *Last Orders* (1996), and their eponymous film versions directed by Stephen Gyllenhaal (1992), Andrew Piddington (1993) and Fred Schepisi (2001) respectively. I have chosen Graham Swift's novels because I wanted to focus on a contemporary author, whose work might be a challenge for transferring into the film medium. And Swift's novels are exactly the case, particularly for their complicated narrative structure and focus on the first-person narrator. Nevertheless, only three of his novels were made into films, therefore I will analyse only the three aforementioned ones.

The aim of the thesis is to capture the way of how Swift's work, which is specific in terms of complicated structure and personal narrative, was transposed into film by means of an in-depth comparative analysis of the process of transposition of literary work into film. Firstly, I will analyse the narrative structure and all the other inherent features of Swift's novels, and subsequently, I will search for this phenomena in the respective film versions.

The basic methodological principles of Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006) and Brian *McFarlane's Novel to film: an introduction to the theory of adaptation* (1996) will be used as a theoretical background for the film adaptation theory. Swift's novels are characteristic for his specific narrative techniques and first-person narrator which I dare not to generalize for the three novels concerned. Nonetheless, narration and especially first-person narration is a key element of Swift's novels, therefore the thesis will focus also on the narrative features and the methodology will be drawn from David Bordwell's *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985) and Seymour Chatman's *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (1990). Obviously, I will come across other theoretical or critical works but these four aforementioned will provide the basic methodology.

1 METHODOLOGY

Before I start with the analysis itself, I will focus on the basic methodological principles that I will subsequently apply in the analysis. Firstly, I will sum up the theories of adaptation by Linda Hutcheon and Brian McFarlane and then I will continue to focus on narrative theories of David Bordwell and Seymour Chatman. Subsequently, I will come up with a definite method that will result from all these four theories and consequently will be applied as a methodological principle in this comparative analysis.

1.1 Theory of Adaptation

Naturally, there has been many works that theorized the phenomenon of transferring novels into films considering the amount of emerging adaptations. However, Hutcheon's and McFarlane's work belongs to the most crucial ones. Both theories were established in the 1990's and later, therefore they are the most recent ones, and they are respected among critics as well. In addition, they emerged on the basis of other and older theories. Since both of them derived some of their principles also from other literature, other authors will be mentioned as well throughout the text.

1.1.1 Linda Hutcheon

Linda Hutcheon's theory is not concerned only with adapting from literature to film, but she takes into account also other varieties, such as theatre, musicals, videogames and so on. Because of this diversity, she establishes her own definition of adaptation. Firstly, she discusses the negative perception of adaptations and then she draws on several other definitions to come up with her own. As she does so, she comes to a conclusion that "although adaptations are also aesthetic objects in their own right, it is only as inherently double- or multilaminated works that they can be theorized *as adaptations*."[5] In a simplified way, she sees adaptation as a palimpsest. The specificity of Hutcheon's theory lies primarily in her definition of adaptation as both a *product*

---

[5] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (London: Routledge, 2006), 6.

and a *process*. In fact, her definition is threefold because the process comprises of the process of creation and of reception, and it can be described from these three different perspectives successively as: "An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works; a creative *and* an interpretative act of appropriation/salvaging; and an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work."[6] In more detail, adaptation *as a formal entity or product* is announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works; *as a process of creation* it involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation; and *as process of reception* it is a form of intertextuality, as palimpsests.[7] Additionally, adaptation as product is often compared to translations because it involves intersemiotic transpositions from one sign system to another. Which means that it is a recording into a new set of conventions as well as signs.[8] When she deals with adaptation as a process, she argues that before the very creative process, there is a need for interpretation of the work, because adapting is not a case of a slavish copying.[9] Accordingly, my inquiry in this thesis will be, to what extent did the directors intervene in the original work of Graham Swift, and therefore, to which category of adaptations the films belong.

However, this double definition of adaptation as the product and the process is not sufficient, therefore Hutcheon takes into account also the medium specificity and she subsequently invents another division into three modes of engagement. These modes are *telling*, *showing* and *interactive* mode.[10] She calls all of these three modes "immersive" in that "the telling mode (a novel) immerses us through imagination in a fictional world; the showing mode (plays and films) immerses us through the perception of the aural and the visual; the participatory mode (videogames) immerses us physically and kinesthetically"[11] This "immersiveness" indicates the basic differences and characteristic features of those media in question. What her model is not interested in, is the fidelity to the original work.[12] It is the opposite attitude to her predecessor Brian McFarlane, as we will see in the following part of this chapter.

---

6   Hutcheon, 8.
7   See Hutcheon, 7–8.
8   See Hutcheon, 16.
9   See Hutcheon, 18–20.
10   See Hutcheon, 22.
11   Ibid.
12   Hutcheon, 7.

Despite *A Theory of Adaptation* is an extensive volume dedicated also to other questions, such as authorship, motivation, audiences, context, and transcultural adaptation, I will make use only of the first and the second chapters, for none of the others is relevant for the analysis of the respective novels and films. In Chapter 2, she describes the complexity of adaptation of a long novel with all its reductions and adding.[13] She also provides a list of features that must be dramatized in the transformation from telling to showing,[14] and this will be my concern as well. She ends this chapter with disproving four clichés related to the telling and the showing mode. Those clichés demonstrate, how it is generally assumed that the showing mode is unable to cover intimacy and distance in point of view; interiority; time-shifts among past, present, and future; or elements such as ambiguity, symbol, metaphor, etc.[15] All of those abovementioned elements of the clichés can be found in the novels of Graham Swift. Therefore, I would like to ascertain if those elements can be found also in their respective film versions, and thus whether those clichés could be disproved also for the chosen films.

1.1.2 Brian McFarlane

McFarlane's theory differs from that of Hutcheon's both in approach and in terminology. Unlike Hutcheon, he takes into consideration the adaptation process only between literature and film. He is concerned with the differences and the convergences of the two media, as well as their influence on each other. He is also summarizing the so far established theories and the interrelation of the two. He subsequently continues to speculate about the fidelity of the work to its source and the substance of faithfulness and he argues that "the insistence on fidelity has led to a suppression of potentially more rewarding approaches to the phenomenon of adaptation."[16] Then he adopts three kinds of adaptation according to the original work of Geoffrey Wagner and others. His sorting is as follows: "*Transposition*, in which a novel is given directly on the screen with a minimum of apparent interference; *Commentary*, where an original is taken and

---

[13] See Hutcheon, 36–37.
[14] See Hutcheon, 40.
[15] See Hutcheon, 52–71.
[16] Brian McFarlane, *Novel to film: an introduction to the theory of adaptation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 10.

either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect […]; and *Analogy*, which represents a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art."[17] This classification strongly resembles Hutcheon's threefold definition of adaptation.

However, the main theoretical and terminological difference from Hutcheon is McFarlane's division between transfer and adaptation. "*Transfer* is the process whereby certain narrative elements of novels are revealed as amenable to display in the film," as opposed to "*adaptation*, which is a process by which other novelistic elements must find quite different equivalences in the film medium, when such equivalences are sought or are available at all."[18]

In the subsequent part of his theory, he deals with various narrational modes and their sustainability in films as opposed to novels. The narrational modes are as follows: *the first-person narration*, in which there is only a precarious analogy between the attempts at first-person narration offered by films and the novel's first-person narration; *the omniscient novel*, which comprises of either direct speech or metalanguage; and *the mode of "restricted consciousness,"* which probably most approximates to the cinematic narrative mode.[19] Since Swift uses first-person narration in each of the selected novels, I will use this division to examine the film versions, because first-person narration is not a typical film device.

When dealing with the transfer, there is also an important concept, which is originally derived from Shklovsky (or Russian Formalists as such), and that is the distinction between *story* and *plot*. According to Terence Hawkes: "Novel and film can share the same story […], but [they] are distinguished by means of different plot strategies."[20] However, McFarlane applies two of his own terms in his analysis and these are *narrative* and *enunciation*. Nevertheless, Bordwell's terminology also comes from the Formalists, and that is why I will use only this particular division. This terminology will be useful in a distinct description of narrative strategies.

---

[17]   McFarlane, 10–11.
[18]   McFarlane, 13.
[19]   See McFarlane, 15–19.
[20]   McFarlane, 23.

McFarlane's theory comprises of various more or less complicated terminology with its quite diversified subdivisions and there are lots of other distinguishing features that I have intentionally omitted. Nevertheless, I am sure that I have captured the most important ones for the chosen topic and I will work with this terminology further on in this thesis. More specifically, I will focus on the process of transfer and adaptation and I will also look at the level of fidelity and authorial contribution to the film versions. One of the main objectives will be the first-person narration because it is a characteristic feature of Swift's novels. Also, as was aforementioned, it is the most difficult transferrable narrative mode according to McFarlane. I will thus look closely into this phenomenon and see how this mode was adapted in all of the three film versions.

1.2 Narrative Theory

I have chosen David Bordwell's and Seymour Chatman's theories because these two are the basic ones in film narratology. Both of them have something in common, such as their source theories—both of them stem from Aristotle and Russian Formalists—but naturally, they also differ. Yet, no matter how much these two may differ, they also reflect each other. I had to choose Bordwell's theory because he offers now probably the most employed terminology in film analysis, i.e. the terminology of the neoformalist approach. On the other hand, it would not be sufficient to base the analysis only on this particular theory, because firstly, the neoformalist approach does not cover the literary side of an analysis and secondly, I wanted to examine also the concept of an implied author. That is why I decided to make use of Chatman's theory as well, because he contradicts Bordwell's theory in several ways. In addition, I will draw also on the texts by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan and Sabine Schlickers because these texts provide some additional terminology and theory that will complete the methodological background for this thesis.

1.2.1 David Bordwell

David Bordwell refers to theories as old as Aristotle's or Plato's ones and their distinction between mimesis and diegesis.[21] He also draws on semiology and its definition of a narrative "as a transmission from sender to receiver."[22] This element is particularly important for Bordwell because it is basically his main interest—the study of the viewer's activity. However, as was aforementioned, this kind of analysis is not that significant for my thesis, therefore I will not use this part of Bordwell's theory. Nevertheless, his other sources will be employed considerably. Namely, the Russian Formalists and their terminology and methodology of a narrative.

The Formalists came up with crucial terms in analysing both literature and film; these terms are *fabula* and *syuzhet*, or *story* and *plot* respectively. Fabula is "the imaginary construct we create progressively and retroactively," and it "embodies the action as a chronological, cause-and-effect chain of events occurring within a given duration and a spatial field."[23] As opposed to syuzhet which is "the actual arrangement and presentation of the fabula in the film," and its "patterning is independent of the medium."[24] Among these two, Bordwell adds a third component, i.e. *style*, which complements them. Style "simply names the film's systematic use of cinematic devices," and it is "wholly ingredient to the medium."[25] Generally, "in the fiction film, narration is the process whereby the film's syuzhet and style interact in the course of cueing and channeling the spectator's construction of the fabula."[26] There are lots of factors that influence the fabula/syuzhet interaction, such as gaps, retardation, redundancy, all of which guide the spectator's activity.[27] I might come across these terms throughout the thesis but I will not go further in defining these at this point. However, there are other three terms which are crucial for defining a type of narrator, which is essential in Swift's case. Those terms in question are: *Knowledge*, which is the relevant knowledge for our construction of the fabula; *Self-consciousness*, which

---

[21] See David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 3–16.
[22] Bordwell, 17.
[23] Bordwell, 49.
[24] Bordwell, 50.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Bordwell, 53.
[27] See Bordwell, 54–57.

is the amount of addressing an audience; and *Communicativeness*, or the willingness of narration to share certain information.[28]

One of the specificities of David Bordwell's theory is the conception of the narrator. He does not agree with the concept of "implied author" as Seymour Chatman and others do. Bordwell rather concentrates on viewer's activity in constructing the story, and by doing this the viewer himself is the crucial element for the narration.[29]

1.2.2 Seymour Chatman

Chatman starts his *Coming to Terms* by defining different text-types. However, the most crucial part of his work for my analysis is the part on the "implied author," by which he differs from Bordwell, and also his description of both the literary and the cinematic narrators. Chatman reduces text-types to "Narrative, Description, and Argument,"[30] and he differentiates the Narrative from other text-types by "its 'chrono-logic', its doubly temporal logic," since "non-narrative text-types do not have an internal time sequence."[31]

As for the implied author, it is defined by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* as:

"A term coined by Wayne C. Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) to designate that source of a work's design and meaning which is inferred by reader from the text, and imagined as a personality standing behind the work. As an imaginary entity, it is to be distinguished clearly from the real author, who may well have written other works implying a different kind of persona or implied author behind them. The implied author is also to be distinguished from the narrator, since the implied author stands at a remove from the narrative

---

[28] See Bordwell, 57–59.
[29] See Bordwell, 29–47.
[30] Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 7.
[31] Chatman, 9.

voice, as the personage assumed to be responsible for deciding what kind of narrator will be presented to the reader."[32]

According to Chatman, the implied author, as well as implied reader, is important for explaining some of the characteristic features that would otherwise remained unexplained.[33] The implied author is a part of the work; it is the source of the work's invention and also its intention.[34] He argues that: "The act of reading a text … entails two intermediate constructs: one in the text, which invents it upon each reading (the implied author), and one outside the text, which construes it upon each reading (the implied reader)."[35] However, the implied author is not compatible with the "voice" for it belongs to the narrator.[36] This summary should provide a clear distinction between the real author, the implied author and the narrator.

1.2.3 Other narratological terms and theories

Apart from the narrative process, this thesis will focus also on narrators as such, and that is why I need to extend the terminology. I will do that by reflecting two more texts. More specifically an excerpt from a chapter from Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* and Sabine Schlickers' article "Focalization, Ocularization and Auricularization in Film and Literature."

Rimmon-Kenan establishes a typology of narrators according to factors in the reader's understanding of and attitude to the story; these are: "The narrative level to which the narrator belongs, the extent of his participation in the story, the degree of perceptibility of his role, and his reliability."[37] On the narrative level, she distinguishes extradiegetic, second degree/intradiegetic, hypo- and hypohypodiegetic narrators.[38] As for the extent of participation, we can differentiate between hetero- and

---

[32] Chris Baldick, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, s.v. "Implied author" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 107–108.
[33] See Chatman, 74.
[34] See ibid.
[35] Chatman, 75–76.
[36] See Chatman, 76.
[37] Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, "Typology of Narrators," in *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics,* ed. Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 2001), 94.
[38] Ibid.

homodiegetic narrators.[39] The last issue in classifying narrators is their reliability. According to Rimmon-Kenan: "A reliable narrator is one whose rendering of the story and commentary on it the reader is supposed to take as an authoritative account of the fictional truth. An unreliable narrator, on the other hand, is one whose rendering of the story and/or commentary on it the reader has reasons to suspect."[40]

Sabine Schlicker's article is focused on narrative perspective, i.e. focalization. That is why the definition of focalization should be introduced at first. It is the term established by Gérard Genette and it "denotes the perspectival restriction and orientation of narrative information relative to somebody's (usually, a character's) perception, imagination, knowledge, or point of view. Hence, focalization theory covers the various means of regulating, selecting, and channelling narrative information, particularly of seeing events from somebody's point of view, no matter how subjective or fallible this point of view might turn out to be."[41] Schlickers then accepts also Francois Jost's definition of focalization "as the knowledge of the narrator in relation to the characters."[42] According to this, focalization can be summarized as either a *zero focalization*—the narrator knows more than the character; an *internal focalization*—the narrator and the character equals in the range of knowledge; and an *external focalization*, in which the narrator knows less than the character.[43] Furthermore, even without a narrator, we can speak of focalization.[44] And similarly to focalization, we can also speak about similar division of zero and internal ocularization, as well as auricularization.[45]

---

[39] See Rimmon-Kenan, 95.
[40] Rimmon-Kenan, 100.
[41] David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan, ed., *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, s.v. "Focalization," (London: Routedge, 2008), 173.
[42] Sabine Schlickers, "Focalization, Ocularization and Auricularization in Film and Literature," in *Point of View, Perspective, and Focalization: Modelling Mediation in Narrative,* ed. Peter Hühn, Wolf Schmid, and Jörg Schönert (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 246.
[43] See "Focalization," The Living Handbook of Narratology, accessed December 4, 2017, http://wikis.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Focalization.
[44] See Schlickers, 247.
[45] See Schlickers, 248–250.

As for the narrative theories, the ones I drew upon were mostly dealing with film narratology. Nevertheless, they can still be applied on literary narratology, which I will now summarize. I will certainly concentrate on the fabula/syuzhet division and the terms of knowledge, self-consciousness, and communicativeness which are connected to the division. From Chatman, I will make use of the telling apart the narrator from the implied author and the real author—with the focus primarily on the narrator, as well as I will concentrate on the specificities of both the literary and the cinematic narrators. Rimmon-Kenan's characterization of narrators will help me with their in-depth analysis, as well as defining the narrative perspective according to the theory of focalization. After I will characterize and analyse the narrators in both the novels and the films, I will be able to concentrate on the matter of adaptation from novel to film.

2 WATERLAND

Waterland is Graham Swift's third novel and it is considered his premier novel. This is one of the reasons why I have chosen to start specifically with this one. The other reason is that it is only this novel, in which all the structural, narrative, or thematic aspects, which can be found also in his other novels that were adapted to films, interconnect. Some of them are developed in *Shuttlecock*, and some of them in *Last Orders*. This analysis will be terminologically anchored in the several methodological approaches that were aforementioned. Firstly, this analysis will outline some characteristic aspects of Swift's *Waterland* and after that, it will focus on the crucial elements that were complicated for adapting. Mainly, it will cover the adaptation of the complex structure of the novel, as well as the extensive time span that the novel pursues. Moreover, I will look into how the film succeeded in depicting this specific personal narrative, which is generally characteristic for Swift's writing.

Waterland is a story of one history teacher, Tom Crick, set in 1980's in London. Nevertheless, rather than about the present day, it is a story about the past in eastern England's Fenlands, and its narrator recurrently goes back in time; back to fulfil the school curriculum in history lessons, back to look into Tom Crick's personal history, and back to examine the past events that strongly, however obliquely, influenced the recent history. It is also a story about coming of age, happiness, exploring first love and sexuality, as well as pain, murder, or madness. It is also a somehow detailed history of the Fenland area with all its myths and legends.

In order to elaborate on particular phenomena of the novel, it is necessary to be familiar with the whole story: Young Tom Crick grows up with his simple-minded brother Dick and a widowed father Henry by the lock in the Fenland area. There is also his coeval Mary Metcalf with whom he is in love. Everything seems to be perfect until a child is conceived, which causes a murder. For Dick is in love with Mary too and does not seem to accept anybody else. So, when Mary gets pregnant, she tells Dick, that the baby is Freddie Parr's, who is another of their friends or rather contemporaries. This is something Dick cannot take and lures Freddie into his death. Nobody else but Tom and Mary know about it and that is the reason why they decide to get rid of the baby—in fear of Dick and for their own safety's sake. This decision

however ends up in an inability of Mary having another child in the future. Under the pressure of events—his younger brother being a father of Mary's child, and finding out that he is a son of his own grandfather—Dick disappears in the sea. For good. After those turbulent teenage years, Tom and Mary marry and settle down in London, where Tom starts to teach history. Everything seems to be fine and sedate up to the present day in 1980's when the past events catch up with Mary. After she tries to steal a child, she is sent to a mental asylum, and combined with recent change in Tom's teaching practice, this is the last straw of his retirement from the school.

2.1 Structure

The familiarization with the story (fabula), i.e. the chronological chain of events, is necessary for the subsequent structural analysis, as the structure of the novel is very specific and the plot is very fragmented and tangled. Therefore, the narration is not linear and as a result there are four main timelines of the story, which could be designated as follows: The olden times, the crucial teenage years of 1940's, recent history, and present. On the other hand, the division is much more complex than that. *Waterland* is a novel of skilfully interwoven stories both of the present and the past. As for the structure then, it is a very elaborate work. Divided into fifty-two chapters we may want to look for some pattern or regularity, which is seemingly there in the beginning of the novel. More specifically, there is a pattern up to the twentieth chapter, because up to this chapter, all the even-numbered chapters are referring to the present time, as opposed to the odd-numbered ones that refers to the past. The past and the present alternates fairly regularly, but since then the regularity disappears. However, there is a reason for this change; the story gains momentum at this point and needs to be narrated and paced slightly differently. At this point, the main turning points are revealed and from now on, they will be only developed further.

As for the timeline, the story spans from the distant past in the 7th century, to the then present, i.e. 1980's. On the other hand, those bygone times are not directly relevant for the main storyline. Those events are there to extend and enrich the whole fictional universe. Basically, we are given the full range of events that happened in the Fenland area from the 17th century up to the end of 20th century. By telling those stories

of the past, Tom describes the cultivation of the land in the Fens, the establishment of a business of the Atkinson's family, or the fortunes of the Crick's family. This seems like a vast time span, and together with the irregularity of alternating chapters, it might result in doubts about the consistency of the novel. Despite this assumption, the opposite is the truth. *Waterland* is a very consistent novel and as for the structural part of it, Swift achieves that mainly by two elements: By repetitiveness and by precise continuity of the chapters.

2.1.1 Continuity of chapters

One of the idiosyncrasies of *Waterland* is the continuity of subsequent chapters. Even though in most cases each of the chapters takes place in a different time frame and also in a different place, they are interlinked together. There are various ways of linking the chapters, but some of them repeats more than others. The most frequent way is an open continuation, a sort of a run-on chapter, and the principle of this virtual enjambment is this: The last sentence of the chapter is syntactically incomplete, there is no full stop or comma, and the title of the following chapter finishes the previous sentence. Or else, the title is just the middle part of it and the sentence is finished only with the first line of the following chapter. Such a technique gives the novel a quality of a continuous flow and it can easily connect various times and spaces. The first instance of this specific style can be found between chapters 2 and 3:

> "And since a fairy-tale must have a setting, a setting which, like the settings of all good fairy-tales, must be both palpable and unreal, let me tell you
>
>
> 3
>
> About the Fens
>
>
> Which are a low-lying region of eastern England […]."[46]

---

[46] Graham Swift, *Waterland* (London: Picador, 1983), 6–7.

Throughout the novel, there are several examples of this kind of link between the chapters. This link usually appears at the end of a chapter about a history lesson when Tom is trying to explain some subject matter, and to do that, he remembers a good example from one of his stories, and that is how he links it. Despite almost half of the chapters in the novel starts with the "About-phrase," not all of them are a continuation of the previous chapter.

The other type of binding chapters together is a direct continuation. For example, there is a strong link between chapters 15 and 17. The fifteenth chapter ends with the sentence: "And by the Leem, in the year 1943, lived a lock-keeper,"[47] followed by another chapter, and Chapter 17 starts with basically the same sentence: "And by the Leem lived a lock-keeper,"[48] which ties those chapters together. Moreover, it enhances their continuation, in spite of an inserted chapter from the present day right between these two. Thanks to those links, the narration sometimes feels as a stream of [Tom Crick's] consciousness, which is only occasionally broken up by actual events.

Despite the interruption, some of the chapters are connected by a theme. For example, there is a whole chain of links between chapters 19 and 22. Chapter 19 tells the story of Tom's grandfather, ending firstly with the notion of a special beer he was working on, and secondly with the notion of Price, the rebellious student of Tom's. Chapter 20 directly starts with scolding of Price and keeping him after school, which is followed by the actual lesson the other day in Chapter 21. And finally, Chapter 22 further develops the story of Chapter 19. From now on, the continuity of chapters becomes clearer. In fact, it starts right after the cessation of regularity. Furthermore, the interconnections get more and more complicated and entangled towards the end of the novel. From the middle part of the novel, the reader already has enough information, so that the chapters and the individual stories can be linked by a theme from now on. Some of the links are very simple, like the one with an eel; Tom tells his students a story about an eel that was put into Mary's panties once they were teenagers and the chapter ends with this story. And the following chapter is wholly

---

[47] Swift, *Waterland*, 127.
[48] Swift, *Waterland*, 129.

dedicated to the eel.[49] In addition, in this case, it is the combination of the run-on chapter and a connection by a theme. Yet he interlinks the chapters in another way. At the end of Chapter 28 he remembers a bottle thrown into the river.[50] This bottle is the link to two other chapters, of which both of them refer to different events in different timelines that would not connect otherwise.

Towards the end of the novel, the chapters start to follow each other more directly than it was in the beginning. Also, the pace begins to quicken and Swift starts to tie more than two chapters together. It starts probably by the visit of the pub with Price, but it is the most visible from the 33rd chapter on. It is the one, in which Price accidentally suggests Tom having a baby at the present time, which triggers a chain reaction—an explanation of what happened concerning the baby both back then and now. Chapter 34 directly follows its previous chapter, and in spite of not being interconnected by an unfinished sentence or a title of a chapter, it is linked by a theme; and causality. Price asks the ultimate question and he is given almost the whole story about Mary being pregnant when she was 16 years old.[51] Needless to say, the following chapter is about Mary stealing a child; a grown-up and disillusioned Mary, who cannot have a child anymore. This arrangement is only logical for the reader to understand the consequences of young carelessness. However, the story is not complete yet and even now, the reader cannot fully understand her actions and her pain. Not until he is told about the abortion. Chapter 36 brings us back into the reality to the pub in the present-day London and sets the stage for other stories to be continued.

There are other thematic or structural links among the chapters but this sample should be representative enough. Out of this listing, it is quite clear that connections among chapters and links among themes are interwoven with precision, and thanks to that, the novel is very coherent. On the other hand, a film version of *Waterland* does not have chapters, hence other transitions must be found. Naturally, the film language differs from the literary one and that is why also the means are different. The film version also alternates the past and the present scenes. However, it could be said that

---

[49] See Swift, *Waterland*, 169–177.
[50] See Swift, *Waterland*, 180.
[51] See Swift, *Waterland*, 224.

it does so in its own way. For example, the majority of the olden times timeline is completely missing and the furthest point in time is the beginning of the 20th century, which is directly related to the Crick's family. Understandably, with the exception of the references to the French Revolution, which is part of a history class curriculum. That means that the story is somehow shortened, while still maintaining the elemental and the crucial moments.

As for the plot, it is not linear and just like in the novel, the past and the present takes turns, apart from the fact that in the film version it is done on a more regular basis, although it is not utterly symmetrical. Yet those irregular parts are rather exceptions, compared to the structure of the novel. Even though the plot is not chronological even in the film, it is still much simpler than its literary counterpart. Despite all four timelines are maintained, they are basically reduced to two main timelines with two exceptional retrospects. Additionally, the narration at this level is mainly chronological—there is the past timeline covering Tom's teenage years, all through the week of the murder of Freddie Parr, up to Dick's disappearance and Mary's abortion. There is also this necessary retrospect to the early 20th century, so that the viewer can learn about Helen Crick, her father and their infamous Coronation Ale and the black old chest in the attic that will later unveil some secrets. The present timeline covers Tom's last weeks or months of teaching history and then his retirement. The retrospect in this case is focused on Mary stealing a child in the recent present. Compared to the aforementioned structure of the novel, it is indeed simplified. However, this is a general practice in adapting novels to films.

The coherency of Swift's linked chapters is achieved on one hand by the simplification of the story and by condensing it into couple of days. On the other hand, the links are mainly attained by interventions in Tom's narration by his students asking complementary questions or directly reacting to what he says. Furthermore, the thematic connections are also maintained. But importantly, Stephen Gyllenhaal works extensively and skilfully with flashbacks and flashforwards. This adroitness guarantees the film version of *Waterland* the degree of cohesion it deserves. This also proves one of Hutcheon's defence of the showing mode—that even the cinematographic equivalent could prove itself to be capable of skilful treatment of transitions in time.

2.1.2 Repetitiveness

This precision of writing goes hand in hand with another aspect, and that is repetitiveness and gradual uncovering of the story, and thus understanding the plot. Throughout reading the novel, we encounter dozens of motifs, phenomena or even the whole phrases that recur in the text. However, this is not the lack of creativity, but they are the motifs that drive the story ahead. Furthermore, some situations and themes develop throughout the story. Often in the text, the narrator repeats that history goes in circles, as well as he compares it to the reclamation of land. And that is exactly what Swift is doing in the novel—he narrates the story in sort of a circular way; coming back to certain themes again and again. In addition, in my opinion, it does not go in circles, but it rather winds like a spiral. Because the structure of it is as follows: There is some element, which is mentioned somewhere in the story, but it is mentioned a way too early in the plot. Several chapters later, the element is mentioned again, but it is usually more elaborated and detailed. But it is only near the end of the novel that it is fully developed and the reader is already familiar with all the pieces of the puzzle, so that his knowledge of the certain problem is complete.

The best example of that is for instance Mary saying to Tom after Freddie's death: "I know what I'm going to do."[52] The first time we read it, we might be just as confused as Tom is, but as the story unfolds, we came to realize what she meant by that phrase; and so is Tom. The first time this quote appears, there is only this sentence and nothing more. The second mention will expand the situation a little bit, mainly by putting the single phrase in context, but still without a further explanation. We learn that it was an answer to Tom's question, when the seemingly better situation goes askew. But Mary leaves and never answers his further question, when he is demanding to know, what it is that she is going to do.[53] Tom's knowledge unfolds gradually, as opposed to Mary, who is certain about some things right from the beginning. Firstly and importantly, Tom has to find out for himself that Freddie's death was no accident and that it was caused by Dick. Naturally, he does not want to believe this; he does not want to believe that his own brother is a murderer. So that he has to realize it by

---

[52] Swift, *Waterland*, 102.
[53] See Swift, *Waterland*, 115–116.

himself, which he eventually does.[54] Another piece of the puzzle is revealed when Tom tells Price the story about their baby. At that time the reader already knows that Dick killed Freddie, and now he can finally understand why; because Dick thought Mary conceived this baby with Freddie. Mary only told him that to protect Tom, who was the real father.[55] The penultimate repetition of that phrase does not clarify anything,[56] and Tom's ultimate understanding of Mary's phrase comes near the end of the novel, in Chapter 39, in which Mary tries to carry out an abortion on her own.[57] This particular example confirms the spiral theory of narration, rather than the circular one thanks to the gradual revealing of the story.

This has to do with communicativeness of the narration, and it is also an important constituent. It may be difficult to grasp it, because at the beginning, neither the novel nor the film are very communicative, let us say none at all. For instance, the film version starts with a scene that is explained only at the very end of the film. And such examples can be found throughout the film and the literary work. But all in all, both versions of *Waterland* can be said to be communicative ones. However, this communicativeness, that is all the information the viewer is presented with, is built gradually.

However, there are other examples of repetitiveness that are somewhat different. Be it various signs and premonitions or, to use a cinematographic term, flashforwards. Undoubtedly, they are either all those ominous signs that also appear throughout the whole story, or just symbols that enhances the atmosphere. For example several times we encounter the nearly deadly East Wind; or similarly strong and ominous is the situation with "marks upon marks." This second example enhances Tom's fear of Dick, as well as it proves him guilty of a murder: "And just as a bruise can appear beneath a bruise, so here there are marks upon marks."[58] Without this repetition and gradation, it would not have been that strong and terrifying. In a very similar way Swift works also with a word "accident." Just as with connections among

---

[54] See Swift, *Waterland*, 184.
[55] See Swift, *Waterland*, 227.
[56] Swift, *Waterland*, 228.
[57] See Swift, *Waterland*, 253–255.
[58] Swift, *Waterland*, 183.

the chapters, this element has also much more examples, but those aforementioned are the crucial ones, and the ones that can explain this means of building an atmosphere.

Generally, the film version mostly does not build the atmosphere with the use of repetition. However, two examples of using this means can be still found. Firstly, there is a scene, in which Tom sees, or rather remembers, his younger self pulling out a bottle out of the sluice.[59] This exact scene is repeated fifteen minutes later in the film and put into the context. Thus, even though it is a scene from the past, it works rather as a flashforward in this case; as an ominous portent. This example complies with those literary ones. The second example is a repetition of the first scene near the end of the film,[60] which also puts the events into the context, as well as it frames the story, for it is the event that is on one hand a consequence of the past, but on the other hand it is also a beginning of a breakdown for both Mary and Tom. None of the other elements repeat.

2.1.2.1 Reclamation of land

Repeated on many occasions in the novel, and itself being very close to repetition, is land reclamation and drainage, and Swift uses these processes as a metaphor on several times. It is understandable, for it is a continual cycle, such as history. By this process the land is regained from water. Namely in the Fens, this process was started by the Dutch people in 17th century.[61] There are several hints on reclamation of land, in which it is likened to other processes. One of them appears in the fifth chapter, when Henry Crick tries to save Freddie Parr by artificial respiration and Tom sees it and likens it to the reclamation of land, to a human drainage: "But whereas they [ancestors] reclaimed land, my father could not reclaim a life …"[62] Another time when Swift uses the comparison of reclamation of land is in the story of Sarah Atkinson and her losing her mind, when her husband is trying to make for his fatal mistake. Which is not possible anymore, because "this is an internal land which cannot be redeemed, cannot be reclaimed, once it is lost."[63] Swift comes back to this phrase again and again in

---

[59] See *Waterland*, DVD, directed by Stephen Gyllenhaal (1992; UK): Studiocanal, 2006, 00:44:50.
[60] See Gyllenhaal, *Waterland*, 01:06:05.
[61] See Swift, *Waterland*, 9.
[62] Swift, *Waterland*, 27.
[63] Swift, *Waterland*, 69.

different situations, such as: "The tenuous, reclaimed land of [our] marriage?"[64] He uses it also during his history classes:

> "There's this thing called progress. But it doesn't progress. It doesn't go anywhere. Because as progress progresses the world can slip away. It's progress if you can stop the world slipping away. My humble model for progress is the reclamation of land. Which is repeatedly, never-endingly retrieving what is lost. A dogged and vigilant business. A dull yet valuable business. A hard, inglorious business. But you shouldn't go mistaking the reclamation of land for the building of empires."[65]

Tom uses it one last time, namely when his father is dying: "It flowed back into him once more. Reclaimed him. Phlegm. The old Crick phlegm."[66]

This simile is likely to be used in such a novel. Because water is ubiquitous in it and the process of the land reclamation is a cyclic one. It also shows the interconnectedness with the setting and the influence it has on its inhabitants. Repetition, or let us use circularity, appears on many occasions as well. For example, when he describes the water cycle, he indirectly aims also at history, or more precisely at the fact that history goes in circles as well.[67] And the saying that "we are always stepping into the same river,"[68] might be metaphorical as well, considering what Tom had elaborated before.

---

[64] Swift, *Waterland*, 111.
[65] Swift, *Waterland*, 291.
[66] Swift, *Waterland*, 296.
[67] See Swift, *Waterland*, 127.
[68] Ibid.

2.2 History, reality and the supernatural

"Perhaps history is just story-telling."[69]

History captures past events that are subsequently presented either in written or spoken form. One usually encounters history in school where it is presented to him as a sort of a story, just like in *Waterland*. Does that mean that all those lecturers are always reliable? And what about misrepresentation? Such country as the Czech Republic does have an experience with the distortion of reality, or rather history. Those are unlikely and extreme cases, though. So, let us focus on personal history or a local history; those smaller ones that are prone to be influenced also by myths, legends or other stories. Exactly the type that can be found in this novel. Also, we can ask the question about where is the line between history, story and a fairy tale. Sometimes, it is very hard to distinguish it and this is one of the big issues in *Waterland*.

2.2.1 Several types of history

History is a very important theme of the novel. Not only is the main character, Tom Crick, a history teacher, who is besides other things indulged in the history of his homeland, but one could say, that Tom is almost obsessed with history. For when he moved to London, he moved to such a part of it, which is basically packed with history.[70] He also uses history in a creative way in his classroom; he starts to tell his students stories from his teenage years, but during that he also comes across the events of the "great history" many times, and he points out that when something important happened, other things happened in the Fens. Other things maybe not of the global impact, but very important for the Fenlanders, or more specifically for himself. He uses especially the events of the French Revolution, which is the content of the curriculum of his particular history class, and the Second World War, which was raging in Europe during his teenage years.

---

[69] Swift, *Waterland*, 133.
[70] See Swift, *Waterland*, 106–107.

As for the treatment of the historic theme, the film version managed to adapt it accurately. Naturally the history lessons on the French Revolution are shot in the usual and unexciting way, capturing the boredom of the students, for instance in the lesson about the French Revolution accompanied by a slide show.[71] Nevertheless, the setting into the 1940's Europe is ingenious. Firstly, we are introduced to the setting by hearing about the Luftwaffe on the radio and the narrator confirms that the scene is set during the WWII in a while.[72] The other example is when the students, more specifically only Tom with Price, are still in 1940's and Tom unfolds another part of the story, when suddenly a sound of a bomber is heard. Price is startled and ducks while Tom remains calm, for he grew up in this and he was used to it.[73] Besides these examples, there are other scenes that picture more personal history; that of Tom's teenage years, about which he starts to tell his classroom.

Not only that he digresses from the curriculum in his class, in fact, Tom's own notion of history is very specific, as he once defines it in one of his classes:

> "It goes in two directions at once. It goes backwards as it goes forwards. It loops. It takes detours. Do not fall into the illusion that history is a well disciplined and unflagging column marching unswervingly into the future."[74] And such is also the pattern of the novel in my opinion. Also at this point, he states that history goes in circles.[75] And maybe, this chapter, chapter fourteen offers the explanations of the structure of the novel: "And because history accumulates, because it gets always heavier and the frustration greater, so the attempts to throw it off (in order to go — which way was it?) become more violent and drastic. Which is why history undergoes periodic convulsions, and why, as history becomes inevitably more massive, more pressing and hard to support."[76]

---

[71] See Gyllenhaal, *Waterland*, 00:37:13.
[72] See Gyllenhaal, *Waterland*, 00:14:29.
[73] See Gyllenhaal, *Waterland*, 00:46:24.
[74] Swift, *Waterland*, 117.
[75] See Swift, *Waterland*, 117–118.
[76] Swift, *Waterland*, 119.

This tendency is an important one to mention, because this pattern can be also seen in the narrative practices of the novel; towards the end of the novel, the story gets almost oppressive as we are approaching the denouement.

The history in question in this novel, is meant mostly as a fictional history. Because, even though based on real places, the setting of *Waterland* is fictional, no matter how Swift's descriptions seem realistic. Namely the town of Gildsey, where the Atkinson's family held office, and the River Leem with its surroundings. Otherwise, Swift is describing real places, watercourses, etc. However, it is disputable to what extent are his descriptions of the Fenlanders accurate and realistic. Based upon an assumption that his descriptions are based mainly on people inhabiting the town of Gildsey and living around the River Leem, which are the fictitious elements of the setting, the reader may presume that even those qualities are fictitious.

2.2.2 (Un)Reality

The reader comes across upon this fictitiousness throughout the whole story. Namely, upon this thin line of what is real and what is not. This uncertainty is understandable, because Graham Swift builds a very specific atmosphere of the Fens by several key elements. First of all, there is this site-specific determination. For Fenlands are a unique area of the United Kingdom with unique landscape, which naturally influences its inhabitants. The land is flat, therefore even the weather is specific, and so is its position on the island of the United Kingdom—East Midlands. Flatness and straightness of the ditches and drains is accompanied by almost a haunting atmosphere: "Flat, with an unrelieved and monotonous flatness, enough of itself, some might say, to drive a man to unquiet and sleep-defeating thoughts."[77] Basically the people are influenced by the surrounding waters: The River Leem and other rivers, channels and the sea. The narrator goes even as far in this theory as calling his ancestors a water people, or later amphibians.[78] All in all, on several occasions he

---

[77] Swift, *Waterland*, 2.
[78] See Swift, *Waterland*, 9–11.

mentions that this landscape and water influences the very nature of its inhabitants—they seem to be phlegmatic as in the Ancient Greek's theory of four humours.[79]

Generally speaking, Swift does not depict the Fens very positively, describing it as "Backwater, sink of England." [80] It is quite clear that the nature of the people stems from their surroundings: "Perhaps because of that old, watery phlegm which cooled and made sluggish their spirits…"[81] Also, and this is very important for the novel, those people are extremely superstitious and fatalistic. It could be based on their fear of God, which is supposedly caused also by the flatness of the land: "Why are the Fens flat? So God has a clear view…"[82] Consequently, the Fenlanders truly believe in the destiny, which is supported on several occasions in the novel. For example when they find a body of Freddie Parr: "For when a body floats into a lock kept by a lock-keeper of my father's disposition, it is not an accident but a curse."[83] Importantly, this is not the only case of believing something to be an accident rather than admitting the fact and harsh reality. Furthermore, it is also not the only case in which the people of the Fens explain something by accepting it as a curse.

This is a good demonstration of how are the Fenlands inhabitants superstitious, which is also often highlighted by Swift and it is supported by all those stories and superstitions. Many times the will-o'-the-wisp is mentioned, as well as apparitions and fairies. Swift is building the ambiance straight away from the very first chapter when the narrator introduces the setting: "But we lived in the fairy-tale place. […] Far away from the wide world."[84] And he emphasizes it as much as he can when he continues with a description of his father: "And my father, who was a superstitious man, liked to do things in such a way as would make them seem magical and occult."[85] Besides the mere description, Swift tries to explain both the severe impact of reality to the Fenlanders, as well as their inclination to stories and the supernatural:

---

[79] See *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. "Phlegmatic," accessed October 20, 2017, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/phlegmatic.
[80] Swift, *Waterland*, 13.
[81] Swift, *Waterland*, 14.
[82] Swift, *Waterland*, 12.
[83] Swift, *Waterland*, 27.
[84] Swift, *Waterland*, 1.
[85] Ibid.

"Realism; fatalism; phlegm. To live in the Fens is to receive strong doses of reality. The great, flat monotony of reality; the wide, empty space of reality. Melancholia and self-murder are not unknown in the Fens. Heavy drinking, madness and sudden acts of violence are not uncommon. How do you surmount reality, children? How do you acquire, in a flat country, the tonic of elevated feelings? […] How did the Cricks outwit reality? By telling stories. Down to the last generation, they were not only phlegmatic but superstitious and credulous creatures. Suckers for stories. While the Atkinsons made history, the Cricks spun yarns. And it is strange - or perhaps not strange, not strange at all, only logical - how the bare and empty Fens yield so readily to the imaginary - and the supernatural. How the villages along the Leem were peopled with ghosts and earnestly recounted legends."[86]

Additionally, there are other particular examples of people influenced by superstition—one of them being Martha Clay[87] and the other for example Jack Parr.[88] Henry Crick is once likewise affected by the sight of the will-o'-the-wisp which is said to be a bad sign. This theory and Henry's superstition is encouraged by the appearance of Ernest Atkinson's old black wooden chest in his house, as well as Ernest's suicide, all of which happened one particular day.[89]

The author really seems to be toying with the reader, once clinging to the supernatural and once to the reality. He even offers both possible explanations—the supernatural one, the one a Fenlander would probably believe, and the materialistic and realistic one. He does so for instance in connection with the burning out of the brewery and the role of Ernest Atkinson in it. Those two possibilities are as follows: "Did the burning of the brewery give final and positive proof of the notion that a curse lay on the Atkinson family?" and "That Ernest himself, under cover of getting the whole town drunk, had set fire to the brewery."[90] However, he is still blaming the

---

[86] Swift, *Waterland*, 15.
[87] See Swift, *Waterland*, 274.
[88] See Swift, *Waterland*, 100.
[89] See Swift, *Waterland*, 200–203.
[90] Swift, *Waterland*, 153.

citizens of Gildsey for their fatalism and belief in the supernatural, for there is more to add in this case, because people of Gildsey saw something else in it—they saw the apparition of Sarah Atkinson once again, which made them remember her "prophetic" screams about fire.[91]

There are also several examples of natural elements that are interpreted as something supernatural, as if the nature was personified. Especially the elements of rain and wind. Including the rain that starts on the funeral day of Sarah Atkinson and causes a massive flood and much destruction.[92] And it is not only the destructive flood, but it is also accompanied by seeing a ghost of one Sarah Atkinson, as well as the fact, that after that, the then-famous beer becomes "watery."[93] This was not the only case, when the supernatural or the nature intervened. The nature itself seems to be really endowed with some unnatural powers, considering for example the East Wind, which is presented almost as an embodied death; and the capital letters in its description only emphasize that. From what the reader is indirectly told seems that it is the wind, who is responsible for the death of Helen Crick, Tom's mother. That wind bring with itself not only the cold, but also the influenza. And when the mother is gone, so is the wind.[94] This same wind appears in connection with another stigmatized element, and that is the forbidden Coronation Ale:

> "But something else happens after that strange performance of Dick's with the bottle. Something else starts to make itself felt, faintly and scarcely noticed at first, after the plunging of that same brown-glass vessel, like a mock-Excalibur, into the river. A breeze gets up. It gets stronger by the minute. It disperses the mists. It ruffles the Leem. No doubt it rustles the holly bushes in Hockwell churchyard and shakes the ivy on Hockwell church tower. It's blowing hard, fanning raw embers from the ashes of the western sky, by the time I get back—to rescue from the oven, before they too catch fire, a dozen blackened scones. The East Wind."[95]

---

[91] See Swift, *Waterland*, 154–155.
[92] See Swift, *Waterland*, 84–85.
[93] See Swift, *Waterland*, 88–90.
[94] See Swift, *Waterland*, 243.
[95] Swift, *Waterland*, 250.

And last but not least, the wind is also present when Mary is trying to rid of the baby by herself.[96] From those examples, it is quite clear, that the wind, as well as the water are perceived as bad signs and described as destructive elements.

Surprisingly, the film version remains in the realistic area and there are no hints or references to anything supernatural. No apparitions or ghosts, just facts and reality. The only mention of myths and legends is only at the very ending of the film, when Tom is very self-reflective and he talks about story-telling.[97] Nevertheless, there is one extraordinary element after all. It is the scene in which Tom depicts the events of 1911 and the effects of the Coronation Ale. This scene is presented as a field trip, however imaginary and symbolic one; the students with their teacher travel in some sort of a carriage towards the town of Gildsey, where they can see for themselves what happened in the past. The most unusual moment of this scene comes up when one of the students asks whether the people of the past can see them, which is answered evasively. However, in just a second there comes a contact with one of the men, be it a ghost or an illusion.[98] And it is up to the viewer how he would perceive it. That is the only example close enough to supernatural elements in the film version. On the other hand, there is this shift in the setting as Gyllenhaal sets the present to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1972, instead of London, 1980. This is probably an insignificant fact, used only to bring the story closer to the director's own environment, however thanks to that, the Fens might be perceived as an exotic and mysterious area by the students.

This example is also demonstrative of the difference between the two media— for the film uses the actual, though exaggerated, way of showing rather than telling. Gyllenhaal could have used just a voice-over over the scenes recounting past events, but he decided differently and presented those events more immersively. And it is done by original means, not only by this simple voice-over and flashback. This naturally enhances the self-reflectiveness of the work, which is in the novel achieved by the constant addressing of the audience.

---

[96] See Swift, *Waterland*, 251–254.
[97] See Gyllenhaal, *Waterland*, 01:29:50.
[98] See Gyllenhaal, *Waterland*, 00:31:25.

2.2.3 Fairy tale and story-telling

The aforementioned atmosphere contributes to the ever present and very thin boundary between reality and fairy tale. There are so many references to fairy tales, witches, fairies, or apparitions that one have to spend some time on it. Fairy tale as defined is: "A traditional folktale adapted and written down for the entertainment of children, usually featuring marvelous events and characters, […] ogres and witches,"[99] and Swift really employs many aspects of it. He is deliberately playing this game with the reader, for he uses too frequently phrases like "Once upon a time…," or "About…" He is also constantly speaking about curses, and the very term fairy tale is used extremely often as well. He even uses the title of a well-known fairy tale as a title of a chapter.[100] In addition, Swift is careful with the words he chooses in his descriptions; he describes the consequences of the burning brewery as shining with "an unearthly glare,"[101] which only adds to the atmosphere and the supernatural. This is of course one of the many examples.

One of the reasons for so much fairy-tale references is for sure the nature of the Fenlanders and their search for an explanation of the inexplicable, but also Tom's own keenness for story-telling, not to mention that he is basically telling stories to "children." The superstitious people of the Fens sought explanations especially in connection with two women: Sarah Atkinson and Helen Crick née Atkinson. And because the explanations did not come, they started to make their own stories. In the case of Sarah, they likened her to St. Gunnhilda, a local saint, or endowed her with prophetic powers,[102] which later came out only with the burning out of a brewery. Similarly Helen Atkinson provoked all sorts of theories, and by living in sequestration with her father people created a myth-like tales about ogre's castle and villainous father, almost a devil-like character. Added to that, it was said that in 1915 Helen

---

[99] Chris Baldick, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 124, accessed November 11, 2017, https://books.google.cz/books?id=mp0s9GgrafUC&pg=PA124&lpg=PA124&dq=dictionary+of+lite rary+terms+fairy+tale&source=bl&ots=aDOckt9ziH&sig=ZSvnhMtCfpdXbOTmWKOEkiBgSME &hl=cs&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi1q4GX4tHXAhXCVhoKHXnHCrwQ6AEIOjAC#v=onepage&q=f airy%20tale&f=false.

[100] See Swift, *Waterland*, 209.

[101] Swift, *Waterland*, 152.

[102] See Swift, *Waterland*, 71–72.

enchanted the parading soldiers by her beauty.[103] This is just a glimpse into the Fenlanders' mentality as presented by Tom Crick.

On the other hand, Tom really wants to clear history of fairy tale several times, and just after one of the supernatural and fairy-tale stories, he disproves all of this by clinging to realism:

> "Children, you are right. There are times when we have to disentangle history from fairy-tale. There are times (they come round really quite often) when good, dry, textbook history takes a plunge into the old swamps of myth and has to be retrieved with empirical fishing lines. History, being an accredited sub-science, only wants to know the facts. History, if it is to keep on constructing its road into the future, must do so on solid ground. At all costs let us avoid mystery-making and speculation, secrets and idle gossip. And, for God's sake, nothing supernatural. And, above all, let us not tell stories. Otherwise, how will the future be possible and how will anything get done? So let us get back to that clear and purified air and old Tom tucked up in his new white grave. Let us get back to solid ground . . ."[104]

This down-to-earth reality has also its strong roots in the novel. The reason for that is simple—during the events of Tom's teenage years, the WWII was raging in Europe. The notion of raging war kind of dismisses the fairy-tale flavour on several occasions in *Waterland*. The most ironic example is probably the one in which Swift refers to Tom and Mary as to a Prince coming for his Princess; this mention appears right after Tom is coming back from the war and Mary has just recovered from her condition after the abortion.[105] The Second World War was taken as a part of everyday life back then in the Fens, because the war did not affect this particular place, which might not be understandable for the contemporary schoolchildren: "But except for the Lancasters and B24s which favoured for their roosts the flat and strategic country of East Anglia, no hint of this universal strife reached us in our Fenland backwater."[106] This is also visible in the film, when there is a scene with Price being in Tom's old

---

[103] See Swift, *Waterland*, 186–188.
[104] Swift, *Waterland*, 74.
[105] See Swift, *Waterland*, 104.
[106] Swift, *Waterland*, 24.

house and suddenly a bunch of bombers flies above them. The Second World War is perceived as an everyday reality by those kids, it does not affect them, and moreover, for that moment they are dealing with much more thorny problem—when the bombers fly right above them, Tom and Mary are just on their way to Martha Clay: "But we scarcely noticed them, having other things on our minds, and having grown used in any case to these throbbing evening flights, as if they were a natural phenomenon, as if they were real geese."[107]

The atmosphere of a fairy tale and cruel reality takes turns fairly regularly: "But it's no longer story-time in the land of the Leem. Reality's already imposed itself in the form of a sodden corpse. And it's going to get more pressing, more palpable still…"[108] Actually, those morbid and the most pressing situations trigger the sense of reality and waking up from a dream. And especially there is this one particular story of awakening, the most poignant one, which Tom introduces as a fairy tale, but a darker one: "So, children, since these fairy-tales aren't all sweet and cosy (just dip into your Brothers Grimm), since no fairy-tale is complete without one, let me tell you […] About a Witch…"[109] The terrifying fairy tale becomes even more terrifying reality, which the children have to face, for there is no escape from it now; the reality caught up with then, no more fairy tales for them: "Some said that Martha Clay was a witch … But let's keep clear of fairy-tales."[110] For Tom and Mary, it is time to grow up and take responsibility of their acts: "No pointed hat, no broomstick, no grinning black cat on shoulder."[111] No fairy tale, just a badly done abortion with serious consequences for the future.

Quite the opposite of the fairy tale, Swift's characters can be dead serious, as Mary is when saying: "You know, don't you, that short of a miracle we can't have a child?"[112] And thus making miracles or anything supernatural impossible. At least for some time. After that moment, Tom perceives his wife as a realistic woman, a woman, "who did not believe any more in miracles and fairy-tales."[113] But Tom

---

[107] Swift, *Waterland*, 258.
[108] Swift, *Waterland*, 227–228.
[109] Swift, *Waterland*, 257–258.
[110] Swift, *Waterland*, 9.
[111] Swift, *Waterland*, 260.
[112] Swift, *Waterland*, 106.
[113] Swift, *Waterland*, 111.

seems to be also a down-to-earth character, because he tries to reason with things he do not understand: "The last thing he wants to believe is that he's in fairy-land."[114] On the other hand, thanks to his mother, Tom himself adopted some of her thoughts and ideas, such are these two: "Does Helen Atkinson, too, then, believe in miracles? No, but she believes in stories. She believes that they're a way of bearing what won't go away, a way of making sense of madness," and "Like frightened children, what they most want is to be told stories. And out of this discovery she evolves a precept: No, don't forget. Don't erase it. You can't erase it. But make it into a story. Just a story. Yes, everything's crazy. What's real? All a story. Only a story …"[115] Tom's own theory of history and story-telling is probably based on this idea, which he inherited from his mother. This is also the key for unravelling the excessive use of these elements and probably also for Tom's obsession with stories. It is a sort of an escape from the harsh reality for him, a sort of a therapy.

2.3 Personal Narrative

The narration of *Waterland*, despite its self-reflectiveness, is very personal too. The tentative definition of a personal narrative is as follows: "A personal narrative is typically written in first-person about something in the narrator's life. It centers on a certain event and relays the narrator's thoughts, feelings and experiences. A personal narrative may contain information about what the narrator read, encountered, or heard and his reactions to these encounters. Because a personal narrative is a narrative, it contains all the elements of a narrative, including setting, characterization, speech and plot. Furthermore, it is typically limited to the discussion of one particular event or incident."[116] Swift's *Waterland* satisfies the requirements of the definition. And this is true not only about *Waterland*, but about his other novels as well, as will be demonstrated subsequently in this thesis. However, it also differs crucially. It indeed

---

[114] Swift, *Waterland*, 129.
[115] Swift, *Waterland*, 194.
[116] Kate Prudchenko, "What Is the Difference Between a Memoir and a Personal Narrative?" The Pen & The Pad, accessed November 7, 2017, https://penandthepad.com/difference-between-memoir-personal-narrative-1729.html.

focuses on a certain event and related thoughts, feelings and experiences, but it expands it immensely beyond one certain event as well.

If we consider this novel, even without this definition, it can be defined as a personal narrative. For it is a strong and complex story, which may be extensive as for the material in question. But as the story unfolds, we find out that the over-extensive story and the whole fictional world is related directly or indirectly to the narrator after all, and all of it contributes to the wholeness of the story and the novel. It is a first-person narrative, even though the narrator sometimes speaks about himself as of a third person. This technique is first to be found in the second chapter, but it is used on many occasions throughout the novel.[117]

Understandably, the film version works with the personal narrative as well. The story is narrated by Tom Crick either by his voice-over, or by himself in the classroom. He is both the character and the narrator of the story, and that is why he is an intradiegetic narrator. If we consider the novel, we might expect mainly subjectivity also in the film. On one hand, the range of knowledge is almost completely restricted to Tom with one exception, when the story is told from Mary's perspective. In the novel it was clearly stated that it was Tom's construction of what Mary told him, however, this was not clarified in the film. Despite this deviation, the narration can be still perceived as restricted to Tom, i.e. it employs the internal focalization. The depth of knowledge is the anticipated "matter of […] degrees of subjectivity and objectivity."[118] As was mentioned before, the narration in *Waterland* might seem as a subjective one, because of its restriction to Tom Crick, but in fact, it is the other way around; based on Bordwell's theory, it is an objective narrative. The reason is simple, because we do not encounter any of Tom's inner activity or thoughts. If he does share something, it is a part of some story, or we can assume or guess some things only from his body language. Otherwise, even the film style, which is very close to the classical Hollywood one, is somewhat distant. Besides, there are examples of self-consciousness, and both the film and the novel are definitely self-conscious. For one thing, it is a story within a story; therefore, Tom is also often addressing the audience, i.e. his students, not the viewer/reader. And as for the film version alone, a couple of

---

[117] See Swift, *Waterland*, 4–6.
[118] Bordwell, 58.

scenes from the past, which are recounted extraordinarily as the pretended school trip, strongly implies a fictional construct.

2.3.1 Descriptions

What also makes the narrative special and different are those idiosyncratic descriptions. Swift's descriptions are very detailed and elaborated and their range is extensive. And even if those over too elaborated descriptions might seem redundant, it's the other way around. One convincing example can be found in the very first chapter of the novel. There is seemingly an unimportant description of the lock and all the work that needs to be done to keep it, such as cleaning the sluice of debris, etc.; but this is exactly the case in which all these things and activities need to be mentioned. Because Swift easily follows up this description with the finding of a dead body. Which was found just when maintaining the sluice.[119] Undoubtedly, this is the crucial point for the unfolding of the story.

Typical feature of those descriptions is also Swift's focus on onomatopoeia. He frequently uses interjections or onomatopoeic and cacophonic words to describe certain processes, especially those industrial ones: "The pumps were tump-tumping,"[120] or the description of a dredger at the very end of the novel: "[A] persistent rhythmic hubbub: Chung-gha-chung-gha-chung-gha! The dredger has started."[121] Some of the industrial sounds function as a link to other story or chapter, like in his description of guillotines during the French Revolution: "That hiss-hiss of the descending blades,"[122] which he subsequently likens to a sound of a wind, by which he starts the next chapter.

Not only does he describe the sounds of either machines or natural phenomena, he is also interested in how certain words sound themselves. This is made clear in the beginning of the fifteenth chapter, where he describes the Ouse: "The Great Ouse. Ouse. Say it. Ouse. Slowly. How else can you say it? A sound which exudes slowness. A sound which suggests the slow, sluggish, forever oozing thing it is. A sound which

---

[119] See Swift, *Waterland*, 3–4.
[120] Swift, *Waterland*, 1.
[121] Swift, *Waterland*, 303.
[122] Swift, *Waterland*, 233.

invokes quiet flux, minimum tempo; cool, impassive, unmoved motion. A sound which will calm even the hot blood racing in your veins. Ouse, Ouse, Oooooouse . . ."[123] By doing so, he evokes the exact image of the Ouse. For he is teaching in London and those London schoolkids had probably never seen the Ouse, or been to the Fens, not the mention the Pittsburgh kids from the film. For that reason he describes the Ouse the way he does, to evoke the exact feeling of it; his feeling probably.

There are a lot of situations, people, objects, etc. that he describes and describes them in great detail. I will not go further in listing all of them, for it would be redundant. However, there is one particular excerpt that is the most suggestive of them all. It is the description of Martha Clay. She and her surroundings are depicted in such a way, in which one can almost smell the terrible smell that is described and fear that ugly witch-like woman in her repugnant home. This begs the question of why does Swift try to awake such a repulsion in the reader, and why does he it do in this very evocative way. Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that he wants the reader to imagine the things exactly as they were. To imagine them the way he *personally* perceived them, i.e. that is the reason for using the term personal narrative. And that is also the reason I have included those descriptions right in this chapter. This particular scene with Martha Clay is a strong and terrifying one. And also a crucial one—for it is the scene of abortion, which will have a strong influence on the later lives of Tom and Mary. From this excerpt, it is also quite clear that mainly the crucial events are depicted in such an extensive way.

As for the descriptions, the practices naturally differ in film and in literature. Because the film uses also visual and aural devices, it does not need the verbal descriptions. It is able to just show the requested scenery, character, etc. The aforementioned descriptions of the sluice and the dredger are not given such an importance as in the novel, however, the depiction of Martha Clay's dwelling is a close one. By the use of the right props and lighting, the mise-en-scène makes an impression of a gruesome den, which emphasizes the atmosphere. Similarly, in the example of the description of the sluice, which led to revealing the dead body, there is an attempt in the film version for a comparable connection as was in the novel, although a slightly different one. There is the scene in which Tom describes what the sluice may catch as

---

[123] Swift, *Waterland*, 124.

well. Primarily thanks to this immersive approach of Tom and Price being *actually* at the sluice, Tom is able to see either a flashback or flashforward (depends on the standpoint we take); he sees the younger version of himself pulling out a beer bottle from the sluice. It is the same beer bottle that was used as a murder weapon by Dick. So the principle of describing and then connecting is the same, even though it is somewhat altered.

2.3.2 Reliability

Since it is a personal narrative, a question of reliability might occur. The point of view is given only through the eyes of Tom Crick, which is why we might suspect at least a little bit of unreliability, distortion of reality, or embellishment. There is no reason for doubts in the story itself, but Tom is questioning himself either by doubts: "Old Cricky's crazy yarns (true? false?),"[124] or by constantly referring to fairy tales and stories. Sometimes the reality is blurred and we have to read between the lines; for example there is a combination of the real newspaper headlines and those made up by Tom in his fantasies. The reader can come across this feature, when Tom takes Price for a drink. And because those headlines are ironical, it just adds to the story of his wife kidnapping a child.[125] On the other hand, we have to be careful, because true headlines occur earlier in the story. However, this time it is clear, that these headlines are not real—both because of their exaggeration and Tom's evident drunkenness.

With regard to reliability in the film version, there is no reason for questioning Tom's stories. There is no suggestion of the unreliability, unlike in the novel. Of course those stories might seem a little bit too eventful in the eyes of his students, and all this digression of the class' curriculum might be slightly suspicious as well. On the other hand, this only shows that something is wrong in the life of their history teacher, but anything that would trigger doubtfulness.

Nonetheless, the novel differs in this aspect. Moreover, the ending of the novel plays with the blurry memory as well, so that even the one who lived through all those events cannot be sure if he remembers it right: "But memory can't keep fixed and clear

---

[124] Swift, *Waterland*, 5.
[125] See Swift, *Waterland*, 206.

those final moments. Memory can't even be sure whether what I saw, I saw first in anticipation before I actually saw it, as if I had witnessed it somewhere already – a memory before it occurred."[126] When he introduces the events of Dick's disappearance like that, the reader might just think that Dick drowned at the end of the novel, although Tom implies the opposite, i.e. the supernatural ending. Maybe he does that just to overcome his pain—the pain from losing his brother, the pain from losing his own child, and for that moment also the pain from losing Mary. By accepting this theory, we may remember Helen Crick's theory of coping with the harsh reality and making it into a story. And perhaps this is exactly what the novel is trying to convey to the reader.

2.4 Summary

On the previous pages, it was shown what literary devices Graham Swift uses on the narrative level and in the specification of his novel. It was also outlined how those aspects of the novel were transferred into Stephen Gyllenhaal's film. Based on those findings, the film version of *Waterland* does not re-interpret the novel, neither does it create a whole new and different piece of work out of it. Therefore the type of adaptation is either *Adaptation as a product* or *Transposition*, depending on whose terminology we apply (Hutcheon or McFarlane respectively).

The language of the film and also its means are very straightforward and basically does not make use of the complex and complicated structure of Swift's in its completeness. Moreover, the structure is much simpler and without this "spiral" construction. Naturally, this makes the film more accessible to the audience. Another simplification is the explicit conveying of one idea that was concealed in the novel and the reader had to read between the lines.[127] Although, the plot of the film is *not* simple and it still makes use of non-linearity and numerous flashbacks. Also, the narration is very condensed; some of it is achieved by simply visualizing Tom's elaborated descriptions, albeit with less detail, but mostly by using voice-over. In those voice-over segments Tom describes one part of the story, while on the screen there

---

[126] Swift, *Waterland*, 308.
[127] See Swift, *Waterland*, 213–214.

already unfolds another part of the story which he yet did not start to tell. This technique makes the film more paced that the novel is. However, this use of the voice-over is not excessive or exclusive, as was also shown.

Notwithstanding the fact that the story had to be shortened and the plot simplified, it preserved both the main ideas and also its complexity to a considerable extent. Furthermore, the director of *Waterland* was able to find solutions for some of the narrative elements that might have seem as untransferable.

3 SHUTTLECOCK

On the example of *Waterland*, it was shown how complex the structure of a novel can be, and it is not going to be different in the case of *Shuttlecock* either. Yet, the structure is different and instead of covering vast time spans, it is concentrated rather on self-consciousness,

Shuttlecock is Graham Swift's second novel and in fact, it precedes the previously mentioned *Waterland*. However, I mention it as a second one only because its influence was not that enormous as the one of *Waterland*. Added to that, by the more complex *Waterland* chosen as the first example, all Swift's literary practices and devices could be established. Furthermore, there are also serious issues concerning the film version of *Shuttlecock*; the story of the film version of it is very unfortunate. Its ill-fated journey is described in detail in one period article in the *New York Times*, but in a nutshell, the film was screened for public only once, and on top of that, in the state of being unfinished at San Sebastian Film Festival in Spain, where it did not gain the credit. The second contact with the audience came only with its also single TV broadcast on Channel 4.[128] However, there was a glimmer of hope in 2015, when a sort of a remake of the film emerged. Almost 25 years later, the original crew led by the director Andrew Piddington and the producer Graham Leader made a new version out of it, by adding 25 minutes to the original material and extending it by a story of a third generation of the family. *Sins of a Father*, as the 2015 remake was called, was apparently screened only at Santa Barbara International Film Festival, and here the film's journey seems to end. I have not found any trace of further distribution of this film. Therefore, despite my effort, I was not able to manage to get to any of the film versions of *Shuttlecock*. That is why I will make use only of the analysis or viewer's reviews available.

In any case, the story of *Shuttlecock* is set into the unspecified present; although, we can assume from the calculation of the narrator's age that it is set to 1976, London. The narrator, Prentis, works at a police department, at one not very well-known department that stores and deals with closed-case files. Prentis has a feeling

---

[128] See William Grimes, "Filming Turns Out to Be Just the Beginning," *New York Times*, February 13, 1994, accessed November 12, 2017 http://www.nytimes.com/1994/02/13/movies/film-filming-turns-out-to-be-just-the-beginning.html?pagewanted=all.

that something is wrong at the department and he notices strange behaviour considering his boss Quinn. He tries to find out the truth on his own and he finally confronts him. Up to this point in the novel, the reader might suspect Prentis of being paranoid, but the opposite is the truth. Quinn admits that he was withholding certain information for the "greater good." Such information that would on one hand complete all sorts of stories, but on the other hand such information that could hurt those interested. One of those withheld information was also a file on a case concerning Prentis' father, a WWII successful spy and a hero; his father who was put into a mental hospital two years ago because of his breakdown, which led to his cessation of speech. Now there is a moral issue before Prentis for he is about to take over Quinn's job, because Quinn is going to retire, and he himself will soon find himself in Quinn's position.

From this preview, it might seem that there is not much in common with *Waterland*, for the story is fairly distinct, and so are presumably the themes. However, there are very similar practices and methods, especially those structural and narrational ones, or the integration of a historical theme. Moreover, a thematic connection can be found as well. I will have a closer look on all of it on the following pages.

3.1 Structure

Structurally, the novel is very specific again, even though in a different way than the previous one. As for the fabula, the story spans from the 1940's to 1970's, more specifically it covers the life of the main character, who is also the narrator. Also, it covers some of the war times even before Prentis was born. This is possible via his father's book of wartime memoirs, which he reads. The composition seems to be linear, however there are few flashbacks or excerpts from the aforementioned book that disprove the linearity.

Generally, the structure is governed by the content of the novel—it has the structure reminiscent of a detective story; it is also full of mysteries. That is why it is driven by the urge to know the truth—not only Prentis' one, but also the reader begins to desire to know what is really going on. Despite *Shuttlecock* is *not* a detective story, it has some of its elements and structurally it certainly resembles one. Above all, there

are the gaps in the narrative. Albeit it is not exactly a detective story, and even though some detective work can be found here, the narrative shares some features with the detective narrative. Those features are especially withholding certain information, structuring the syuzhet by the progress of "investigation," curiosity about the missing causal material and retardatory material.[129] This Bordwell's theory of gaps is supported and maybe over-elaborated on also in one study by Donald P. Kaczvinsky.[130] In this study, Prentis is seen as deliberately manipulating with the amount of information he shares with the reader; just as his father did in his book. I will get to this deliberate manipulation later in the thesis. Undoubtedly, gaps are to be found in the narrative and some of them are filled throughout the novel, as the plot gradually unfolds and we know more and more information.

Apart from the fact that the whole story is narrated in retrospect, because we are reading Prentis' notes, which only extended to a size of a book, there is also an example of a retrospective within this story. In Chapter 32, Prentis firstly comes home, and only after that he recalls and describes what happened at Quinn's place. Generally, Chapter 32 is a crucial point in the narrative—it is the part of it that finally fills all the gaps and reveals everything; everything that probably led Prentis to write this notes in the first place. It leads to Prentis' final understanding, and of course also to an internal struggle, for he has to cope with the fact that his father was not the hero he always thought he was, for he succumbed to the Germans. However, how justifiably Prentis questions his father's deeds is up to the reader.

3.1.1 Analogy

In *Waterland*, there was this circular, or rather spiral structure of the story and *Shuttlecock* seems to lack one of those. Nonetheless, after a close reading, we can still find one, even though of a slightly different kind. First of all, there is a story of a hamster; this story is seemingly unimportant, because it does not drive the story

---

[129] See Bordwell, 64.

[130] See Donald P. Kaczvinsky, "'For one thing, there are the gaps': history in Graham Swift's *Shuttlecock*," *CRITIQUE: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 40, no. 1 (1998): 3–14. EBSCO*host*, accessed November 18, 2017, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsglr&AN=edsgcl.21173629&lang=cs&site=eds-live&authtype=shib&custid=s7108593.

anywhere. It is just simply there—it opens the novel, as well as it closes it. Is it really necessary for the development of the story? It does not seem so. On the other hand, the reason for including the hamster is in fact there. There is one other chapter, in which Prentis explains why he wanted a hamster in the first place. He also adds that before he got the hamster, he was a very unruly child and this condition changed when he got somebody to look after, and sorry to say, even to torture. He became a well-behaved child then, but it changed to the previous state of unruliness after the hamster died. From that we can deduce that he is a man most probably suffering from some power issues. In other words, he is a man in want of power over the others. He finds himself in an analogous situation those twenty years later, because he is often harsh and strict to his family. This situation changes again when he gets promoted. So that after he becomes a head of the department, he becomes a dutiful husband and father. That is why we can consider the hamster story as an analogy or parallel. He also reflects on his power issues himself: "Or perhaps their explanation – the explanation which relaxes the looks in their faces – is simple. All Daddy needed was a little power. When he didn't have it, he tried to make up for it by acting the tyrant with us. But now that he has it, we go free."[131] So he is really self-aware of this problem and he reflected on it even before in the story. But self-consciousness will be the topic of another subchapter of this thesis.

Apart from that, the hamster is important not only for this aforementioned revelation, but also structurally, for the narrative is both started and ended with the notion of this particular hamster: "And then these same soft-gold hues and gentle contours made me think of the pale, furred creature who was the cause of my beginning these pages, and I remembered the magical words Mr Forster had spoken when I was a boy (Peter's age): 'a piece of nature'."[132] It closes the circle.

The first mention about a certain circularity even comes in words, in Chapter 24, while Prentis is pondering on the hospital treatment: "In the hospital everything goes in circles, or in irreversible regressions."[133] And of course there is a lot of cyclic features or references throughout the novel. For one thing, there is the situation at the

---

[131] Graham Swift, *Shuttlecock* (London: Picador, 2010), 237.
[132] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 249.
[133] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 137.

police department, more specifically the position of the head of the department at their work, which is sort of a cyclic one, and not just in terms of career advancement, but for the very nature of the job. For Quinn meant to work in the name of good, but he did it also for power; and so does Prentis later on. Indeed, the history repeats on a larger scale—just as Prentis gets Quinn's job with all its authorities, Prentis' place is also filled. On his place comes one of his co-workers, Eric, and just as he himself did before, even Eric starts to feel something unnatural in the department. But Prentis just continues Quinn's practice and he admits that: "He has every reason to be puzzled. Half the items in that file he is looking at now are missing,"[134] and summarizes it as follows: "After all, Eric sits in my place, just as I sit in Quinn's, and what I see are only the reproduced symptoms of a year ago."[135] Again, he is self-conscious and also aware of the presence of this cycle.

However, there are some critics that can see the connections even elsewhere. For example Professor Donald P. Kaczvinsky sees the connection in the ambivalent relationships of both young Prentis to his father, and present day Prentis to Quinn.[136] Those plots are also connected by the case C9, which is the one that is veiled in mystery. He sees more and more parallels, especially between Prentis and his dad: "Both Prentis and Dad are involved with uncovering, collecting, and assessing secret information; both narratives focus on the hero's escape from a prison."[137] But this critic goes even further in explaining the story of Prentis' promotion not as a likely advancement, but as an act managed by Prentis by blackmailing Quinn. He even considers the possibility that the case C9 they are solving might be the one, in which they find themselves in. He supports this opinion also by various examples. However, thanks to those gaps, the interpretation can vary and this is just a possibility. And this is not exactly my reading of the book. He finds more of these examples, like likening Prentis to a Nazi officer[138] and such. All of them even reinforces the notion of parallels and analogies, however this reading is a way too literal and it is only up to the reader how he will perceive it. The author of the article summarizes it nicely as: "As Prentis

---

[134] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 235.
[135] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 236.
[136] See Kaczvinsky, 5–8.
[137] Kaczvinsky, 7.
[138] See Kaczvinsky, 9.

discovered in reading Dad's 'Shuttlecock,' there are alternative interpretations to any narrative because there are always 'gaps.'"[139]

3.2 Personal narrative

In *Shuttlecock*, the notion of personal narrative is even more prominent than the one in *Waterland*. Firstly, it is narrated in a sort of a dairy way. Even though that we learn that only later in the novel. However, we will find out that what we are reading is in fact Prentis' own book of memories. Also, unlike in *Waterland*, Prentis is sharing his thoughts, doubts, feelings, etc. with the reader in *Shuttlecock*, and thus making the narration even more personal. It is noticeable for example in Chapter 4, when he has to defend his incompletion of one case. Nevertheless, the reader later gets to know, that it was not possible for Prentis to complete it in any way. However, at that time he cannot be sure, and so cannot the reader.

With regard to narration, Prentis is a first-person narrator, and he is an intradiegetic and homodiegetic one. The range of knowledge is not restricted only to Prentis, because we are given also the stories of Prentis' dad or Quinn. Nevertheless, both of them are delivered through Prentis. As for the depth of knowledge, it is much more subjective that in *Waterland*, and it is simply because of this sharing of train of thoughts with the reader. However, he certainly does not share everything, which is the matter of communicativeness; and it is a problematic one in this case. For we cannot be sure if Prentis is sharing with us all the information he knows. There are hints that he does not. And since there are lots of gaps, we cannot be sure. From my point of view, the narration in *Shuttlecock* is *not* a communicative one, for Prentis might be withholding information, such does Quinn, or his father. As for the degree of self-consciousness, it is relatively high, because we are dealing with novel within a novel within a novel in fact. The matters of communicativeness and self-consciousness seems to be the most problematic one, and that is why I will analyse principally these two.

---

[139] Kaczvinsky, 12.

3.2.1 Reliability

The matter of reliability is connected with the lack of communicativeness; it is a more serious subject in this novel than in the previous one. There is number of parts of the novel, in which the reader doubts about the narrator and his credibility.

In fact, the problem with reliability of the narrator is set right from the beginning, when Prentis is describing his department: "Do I begin to give the impression that something is wrong in our department?"[140] which he supports just right after that by admitting his own uncertainty: "Could I be wrong?"[141] However, the reader is naturally drawn to a conclusion of not entirely believing to Prentis because of his constantly showing symptoms of paranoia. For instance, he continually suspects his fellow-travellers in the Tube:

> "They look at each other beadily and inquisitively, and something goes on in their thoughts […] It is as if everybody is trying to search out everybody else's story, everybody else's secret, and the assumption is that this secret will always be a weakness; it must be something unpleasant and shameful which will make it possible for its owner to be humiliated and degraded. The fact that I am making these observations makes it clear, of course, that I am guilty myself of the activity I am describing."[142]

Moreover, Prentis is accused of being imaginative.[143] All of this are signs that does not speak in Prentis' favour. Despite all those indications, a theory that perceives Prentis as a reliable narrator can be still found.[144] I do not agree with this theory, which I have already started to prove and I will continue in that by giving other examples.

The notion of unreliability is enhanced by the atmosphere of suspense and mystery that is ever-present in the novel.

---

[140] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 16.
[141] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 17.
[142] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 23.
[143] See Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 204.
[144] See Del Ivan Janik, "History and the 'Here and Now': The Novels of Graham Swift," *Twentieth Century* Literature 35, no. 1 (1989): 80, accessed November 18, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/441776.

> "It was about three months after Dad's breakdown that I first began to suspect that something strange was happening at work. I remember I had been to the hospital one Sunday afternoon. […] And then, on the Monday morning, Quinn handed me the first of those inquiry dossiers, which he has been handing me from time to time ever since, in which the items have scarcely anything in common and seem to lead nowhere."[145]

In this particular example in Chapter 10, Prentis implies there might be a connection between the unusual practices in the office and his dad's breakdown. However, at this point of the story, Prentis is still not a believable narrator. He still seems as a narrator not to be trusted to. Furthermore, he implies that his mind might be disturbed himself: "Was all this a delusion brought about by my own unsettled state of mind? Or was it a consequence I ought to have foreseen […]"[146] His suspicion and paranoia, especially towards Quinn, grows more and more as the story unfolds: "Today (Monday) it struck me that Quinn could be inventing everything. Those inquiries. Supposing they are all in some extraordinary way figments of his imagination? How am I to know what's true and what isn't and what really stems from an official directive."[147] And along with it, the tension increases and the tempers fray.

Along with this uneasiness, there are also some obvious gaps in the story, as was already mentioned. Those gaps become noticeable especially in Chapter 13, when Prentis is called into Quinn's office and he is scolded for not seeing all the connections in a certain case—he is unable to see it though, because certain crucial files are missing for a considerable amount of time. Those are the gaps that cause the lack of knowledge both for Prentis and thus the reader. Those gaps are caused by the information that Quinn possesses, but he withholds it for the time being. Prentis makes his own plan of how to overcome those missing information; he decides to break the law a little, bypasses Quinn and asks the higher authorities for certain information in Quinn's name. After getting these, he finds out that there is a connection with the case C9 he is unable to solve, and his father.

---

[145] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 70.
[146] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 72–73.
[147] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 92.

Obviously, the notion of a detective fiction is really strong. Mainly for the "gapped" narration and also for Prentis' inquiry into a forbidden case. These almost detective-fiction like moments in the novel are completed and concluded with the final revelation of the truth. The gaps are filled and we, as well as Prentis, finally get to know the whole truth. Quinn confesses and it is a surprise for both Prentis and the reader: "'You've been withholding – or destroying – information so as to spare people – needless painful knowledge.'"[148] And then they ponder on the advantages of knowing and not knowing: "The straight course is to curb the imagination." […] "'– the best, the securest position to be in is not to know. But once you do know, you can't do anything about it. You can't get rid of knowledge.'"[149] The "horrible" truth is discovered in this particular chapter. The truth about Prentis' father, who was blackmailed; blackmailed because apparently he did not escape from the Germans during WWII, but he was allowed to escape after he shared some important information to them, thus giving his fellow-agents away. It is the type of information that can turn a big hero into a regular and even cowardly soldier. It was very difficult for Quinn to deal with retaining information about somebody he knew. They spent some while on speculations whether the revealed fact about Prentis' father can or cannot be true; it seems very important to Prentis. However, that is not all—the "lost" file includes also another blackmailing letter, and this one reveals that Prentis' father had an affair. In the end of the chapter, they come to an agreement that they will burn those files and thus destroy all those slanderous (despite truthful), evidence. The moral issue of it is up to the reader. Prentis agrees to burn the file without knowing what is in it. This also raises the question of knowledge and ignorance, as well as responsibility. Is uncertainty better than the cruel and harsh certainty? In the end of the novel, he comes to a conclusion about his feelings towards dad; feelings he probably was not able to convey in the immediate shock of revelation. But now he had grown up: "And it seems to me that I care very little for the morals, the rights and wrongs of the case – whether Dad betrayed those three agents, whether he slept with another man's wife. My feelings would not be immensely changed towards a father guilty of those acts. But what does interest me, intensely, exclusively – is whether Dad

---

[148] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 202.
[149] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 203.

cracked."[150] So finally, he took a stand on his father's matter. In the end, he can be perceived as most likely content with himself in terms both of power and also for that he is no longer in the shadow of his own dad. Which of course might be the reason for his power issues in the first place.

Therefore, the paranoia theme proofs false in the end, though unreliability still persists. The first hint of disproval of it is in the scene when Prentis is coming back from work and he feels that he is being watched—we might think that it is one of his paranoid feelings again, but the opposite is the truth—he is watched by his own son, Martin.[151] Still, more important revelation is yet to come. Chapter 23 is the crucial one in discovering that it was not Prentis' paranoia, but it was an actual fact that Quinn was tampering with the documents and files the whole time. This may come as a surprise to the reader. Prentis plucks up courage and finally confronts Quinn about it: "Today I did it. I went to see Quinn. To have it out with him. I said: 'Sir, I want to know what's going on.'"[152] They have a conversation for a while after that, Quinn brings some moral issues of their job—the benefits of certain information, but also the destructive nature of it on the other hand. He also confesses to messing up with the information and even erasing some of it. In order to know more, he invites Prentis to his house. This enhances the suspense even more, but disperses the paranoia. However, it does not really work for the reliability. And there is no reason to believe it even in the end of the novel, because there are also hints on blurred memory: "It's perfectly true, memories *do* get blurred."[153] That does not really assures the reader. And neither does the fact, that Prentis is self-consciously being unreliable: "And all that I've said so far about how I treat Eric – how do you know that I haven't made it up, it's not all in my imagination?"[154] In the end of the novel, the reader might get the feeling that there is more that Prentis withheld from him. And the usage of gaps in the narration also supports this theory.

---

[150] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 241.
[151] See Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 101–103.
[152] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 127.
[153] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 218.
[154] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 236.

3.2.2 Self-consciousness and metafiction

As was already mentioned, and as is obvious from the last image of Prentis being deliberately toying with the reader, we are looking at a self-conscious work of art. More specifically, we are reading the notes of the narrator that he probably intended as a book, most probably and likely inspired by his father; or there is another explanation and that is he needed to confess to somebody about the goings-on at his department. Moreover, this self-consciousness is self-confessed:

> "Today – But you will have gathered by now that I am writing all this as thoughts come to me and as things happen. […] I don't know that I ever intended to put pen to paper again, or, indeed, to write as much as I have already. It all began when I remembered my hamster in the Tube and I had this urge to set down my feelings and try to account for them. It's strange, I've never really wanted to put them on paper before. And then it seemed, no sooner had I written that first confession than there were lots of other things that had to be examined and written down – and now I'm at it again. I don't know where it's getting me. It's not as if anything extraordinary is happening. But I feel I have to go on."[155]

Not only is he writing his own novel, excerpts from another novel can be found in it; excerpts from the book by his father. Therefore, there is in fact a threefold division—there is a novel within the novel *Shuttlecock*, and within it is yet another novel. Not only that, but Prentis also analyses his father's writing, especially the two last chapters of his book, which he describes as being the most convincing ones. Despite the fact, that those were the ones that were most probably invented. To sum up, there is this inclusive structure of novels inside novels, but added to that, the narrator is also constantly addressing the reader; which is another means of self-consciousness. He is also very self-reflective to himself, for instance in the part, in which he reflects on his power issues—he openly admits it.[156] And this is not the only example of that.

---

[155] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 40.
[156] See Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 237.

Chapter 33 offers probably the most self-conscious part of the novel:

"Perhaps it is best not to probe too deeply into those invisible regions, but to accept on trust what is there on the page as the best showing the author could make. And the same is true perhaps of this book (for it has grown into a book) which I have resumed now after a six months' lapse, only to bring to its conclusion. Once you have read it, it may be better not to peer too hard beneath the surface of what it says – or (who knows if you may not be one of those happily left in peace of mind by my 'work' at the department?) what it doesn't say."[157]

In any case, it is a very good example of Swift's self-reflective writing, for there is both the example of addressing an audience, and speaking about the creative process of writing.

3.2.3 The implied author

Now is the convenient time to mention the implied author. Because only now it can be fully explained on actual examples. When we compare *Waterland* and *Shuttlecock*, some of the practices might be similar, but the tone of the book and the narrator itself is very much different. Therefore, we are not speaking of Graham Swift, who is of course the author of both novels, as of an implied author. Because thanks to the implied author, both the books can give a very distinct impression. It is an imaginary entity standing behind the work, and from all that was described and analysed, it is quite clear that the two differ considerably; even though using the same or similar literary devices, the persona behind it feels different.

Thematically, those two novels differ considerably. But it is not only the theme, but rather the whole style of the novel. For instance, *Waterland* combines a lot of literary styles in itself, such as memoir, saga, local history, or fairy tale. Whereas none of that is to be found in *Shuttlecock*. In fact, stylistically it resembles detective fiction, which is very distant from all of the above mentioned. So, even though both

---

[157] Swift, *Shuttlecock*, 242.

of the novels were written by Graham Swift, and it is also visible from all the literary devices he uses, on the face of it, it is concealed, because the tone differs extensively.

Also, this theory will be proven even more by the analysis of the last of the selected novels, *Last Orders*. Because this novel also differs considerably, for in it we will encounter yet another differences.

3.3 Film version

The unfortunate fate of both films was described earlier. However, some of the devices used can be still extracted from the reviews or articles to be found. Unfortunately (but understandably, considering the circumstances), no academic analysis is to be found. Furthermore, I am making an exception in the case of granting the film version a separate chapter, instead of composing it in the text, but this is the best solution in this case.

Fortunately enough, there is one summarizing review in *Sight and Sound* from 1993, from which at least the main points can be grasped. From the review can be noticed that some minor or major changes were made. Firstly, there is this shift of the whole story to 1962, Lisbon, Portugal. It does not make any sense other than that of some production reasons. The story might lose something of Swift's specificity of South London, and also it may be perceived rather as a commentary, than a transposition, according to McFarlane. However, the screenwriter changed also the roles of characters—Prentis stayed much the same, the father was a little bit alternated, but Quinn undergone the biggest change. He is not depicted as Prentis' boss and instead he is a head of Lisbon's mental institution, where Prentis' father is staying. There is also some shift in time, because the father is just finishing the autobiography, and the breakdown comes very soon after that. The motivation for Prentis' investigation is also different. In the novel, he was motivated by Quinn's discrepancies and impossible tasks. In the film, he somehow figures it out of thin air that there is any connection. Apparently by coincidence; and coincidence is a strong driving force in the film.[158] So Prentis breaks into Dr Quinn's office to get some information about his

---

[158] See Geoffrey Macnab, "Shuttlecock," *Sight & Sound* 3, (December 1993): 56, EBSCO*host*, accessed November 20, 2017,

father. He finds out that the father was not blackmailed but attempted to be shot at by his old lover and a sister of a man he once betrayed. She dies by accident and after this turmoil, the father falls into silence. In the film, unlike in the novel, Prentis confronts his dad, which changes the impression considerably. In the film, the father also saved Quinn's life. Those are the main differences between the stories of the literal and the visual version of *Shuttlecock* I was able to find.

From the structure of the novel and all that it is made of, it is obvious that adapting such a material is not easy, and as the reviewer Geoffrey Macnab put it: "On the face of it, Graham Swift's novel Shuttlecock resists adaptation: it is essentially two books cobbled into one, both tangled, opaque affairs which defy being neatly pigeon-holed."[159] However to interweave those two stories to the film was achieved in some way: "The filmmakers achieve something similar, but only by taking liberties with the plot and ruthlessly purging the minor characters."[160] As opposed to attributing some of them by more space. The role of Prentis' dad is emphasized and gained more space in the film compared to the novel. Supposedly because of the starring of the famous Alan Bates in the lead role.[161] As for the narrative drive of the novel, it is said to be kept: "Shuttlecock does preserve the novel's feverish narrative drive, with Prentis as the manic, bumbling detective, determined to discover the truth about his father's wartime exploits even if it means scuppering his own career and poisoning the family atmosphere."[162] Just as other specific means of Swift's material was used: "Still, director Andrew Piddington approaches his material in a resourceful way, meshing flashback, home movie footage, voice-overs and several giddy montage sequences: he may have bowdlerised Swift's story, but at least he has done so with an eye for a good shot."[163] From this point of view it seems that the film managed, if somehow in a simplified way, to maintain the novel's narrative and complicated structure. However, there were also opinions that may disagree with that and see the adaptation as a rather confusing one: "It's difficult to follow any thread of the story, difficult to

---

http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asu&AN=505641123&lang=cs&site=eds-live&authtype=shib&custid=s7108593.
[159] Macnab, 56.
[160] Ibid.
[161] See ibid.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.

engage any of the characters, and three-quarters of the time impossible for the audience to tell what the hell is going on."[164]

The 2015 remake, *Sins of a Father*, is surprisingly not a completely new film. The most of it is basically made out of the original material, to which another approximately 20 minutes of new material was added. The two timelines were interwoven with each other skilfully: "In various pasts and presents, the performance rhythms are stilted, though there's a handsome surface gloss to the original design contributions that's competently matched by the new sequences."[165] However, to the rest of it, the critics were not kind at all, especially with respect to the genius of the novel:

> "The original story was already somewhat diminished in impact by Brit tube veteran Piddington's histrionic yet remote handling, as well as the presumably funding-necessitated (but otherwise senseless) decision to relocate a fair amount of the action from England to Portugal. The new elements, stretching to three generations a story that already had trouble enough with two, only dilute the material further and feel obviously pasted-on."[166]

> "Screwing with the novel's cleaner plot mechanics in order to deal with this southern European setting."[167]

> "The novel more vividly paints John as a cold, borderline-abusive husband and father whose repressed daddy issues ultimately free him. That emotional payoff is missing here, poorly replaced by a gracelessly contrived reconciliation between next-generation father and son two decades later."[168]

All in all, none of the reviews I was able to find were positive. Maybe it is given only by the lack of viewers, but in any case, the adaptation is perceived overall as

---

[164] Grimes, "The Beginning."
[165] Dennis Harvey, "Film Review: 'Sins of a Father,'" *Variety*, February 24, 2015, accessed November 20, 2017 http://variety.com/2015/film/reviews/film-review-sins-of-a-father-1201436736/.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid.

unfavourable: "Those framing sequences, combined with the numerous dialogue-free flashbacks glued together by occasional voiceover narration, give 'Sins of a Father' a telltale patchwork feel that does nothing to alleviate problems the film had to begin with. (The original, presumably seen here more or less in its entirety, was 20 minutes shorter than the current version.) Packaging is superficially polished, yet the sum effect is of a well-mounted museum piece one waits in vain to come to life."[169]

3.4 Summary

Even though it does not seem like it from the beginning, *Shuttlecock* is almost a detective fiction. From that reason it does not get along without withholding information and gradual and slow uncovering of the plot. However, this unfolding is almost impossible without words, and that is the reason why I could not make use of the French film version of it. Since I cannot judge by myself for the film version, I have to draw conclusion based only on the literary basis. From the reviews seems that both films (in fact, just one) dealt with the material to some extent, but not in the way Swift's novel would deserve. There were also some changes in the setting, the characters, and even in the story itself. The question is, whether the changes were really necessary, for they did not seem to contribute to the story, or even to its simplification. Not to mention the critical attention.

Nevertheless, even in this early novel, we could see some devices and means that Swift used later in all of his novels; in addition, there are also certain themes that he further develops in his career. The interesting fact is also Swift's presumable fascination with the Second World War, which plays a considerable part also in this story; not to speak about the relation of past and present and their mutual influence, which is probably the most pervasive theme of them all throughout Swift's writings.

---

[169] Harvey, "Sins of a Father."

4 LAST ORDERS

Last Orders is a sixth novel by Graham Swift and it is also a Booker Prize winner. Furthermore, it seems to be the most challenging one for film adaptation out of the selected three novels in terms of narrative. So far we have encountered complicated structures or shifts in time, but this time added to all that, there is an employment of multiple narrators. On that account, I will firstly analyse the narrative strategies first, in order to be able to look for the solutions the director had to make to transfer this novel into film.

This novel depicts a journey of four friends to sprinkle the ashes of recently deceased Jack Dodds. The party comprises of three of Jack's old friends, Ray, Vic, and Lenny, and his stepson Vince. The four of them are driving from Bermondsey in London to Margate beach to fulfil Jack's last wish. On their way, they are thinking about various questions and evaluating their life and their relationship with Jack or the others. They are delving in their innermost feelings or memories, most of them connected with one or the other of the concerned party, and bringing back memories and events that definitely influenced their lives and the way they are. By the end of the novel, we learn their and their families' personal histories that are sometimes interconnected. The novel finishes with dispersing of the ashes, reconciliation of some of the relations, and finding an inner peace. There is also a side storyline concerning Jack's bereaved wife and her visit of their mentally handicapped daughter, which complements the stories of the main storyline.

The main storyline of *Last Orders* does not seem to be complicated, but it is the other way around. Once again, the novel is a series of precisely interwoven personal histories with the exception that this time we encounter an additional multiple points of views. This is something that is really difficult to get into the film media. Furthermore, there is a problem with differences in the media regarding the range of knowledge and communicativeness for example.

4.1 Structure

The analysis of the structure of the novel is twofold. Firstly, it can be analysed from the perspective of time, and secondly from the perspective of the narrator. In both cases we are speaking of the actual arrangement of the plot. I will get to the narrator's division in the next part of the thesis. As for the structure of a timeline, it is expectedly not linear, and since it is scattered among several different narrators, it is also fragmented. The story can be divided to three main timelines—the most important one is the present, which is twofold as well, covering both the Margate mission and at the same time Jack's wife Amy's other mission. The second one is concerned with recent past, i.e. Jack's illness, his stay in the hospital, and his subsequent death, which covers circa six weeks before the present. The last one is the past, spanning from approximately 1930's up to 1980's, covering the personal histories of all the involved characters. As a matter of fact, the main line, which is set in present, is narrated chronologically with the exception that it is constantly disrupted by flashbacks and recollections.

Although the narrative level is very complex, the novel is structurally built to be cooperative in that sense to guarantee the reader the orientation in the text and its coherence. The novel is divided into 75 chapters narrated by seven different narrators. However, the orientation is not that difficult, because each individual chapter is named after its narrator. There are other chapters that are named after particular places. This is also helpful because that enables us to orient not only in space, but also in time. Since those chapters are always set in the present, they are taking place on the way to Margate to spread the ashes. Unlike the ones called by names; they are also mostly set in the present, but they are inner representations of the individual pasts. Moreover, the stories also occasionally overlap. Because they are the representations of the past events and sometimes one event is given from the multiple perspectives.

Structurally, it is very similar to the previous two novels, yet still it is different. It starts with the setting; at first, we are introduced to the four, or more precisely five, main characters and their natural environment, their favourite pub The Coach. Right from the beginning there are hints on some of the aspects that are going to be developed only later in the story; the same practice as in *Waterland*. In those couple of constitutive chapters, there are the main characters introduced, as well as their wives

or children, just as for example such topic that Vince is not Jack's biological son, or that his biological daughter is in an institution the whole life. Chapter 4 (Ray) provides the last crucial information to the start, and that is Jack's letter in which he specifies his wish about scattering his ashes in Margate. From now on, the story begins to gradually unfold and elaborate on what has been already introduced. As for the film version, up to the eight chapter, the film really sticks to the structure of the novel, even though there are still some minor changes in it. Then it starts to diverge, but not to a great extent. There is no pattern in alternating past and present neither in the film, nor in the novel. However, the motivation for it in those two different media sometimes differs considerably.

4.1.1 Transitions among chapters

The motivation for the transitions among chapters is sometimes not easily discernible, and we can also suspect it is missing altogether. Because in the beginning of the novel, there are no structural or thematic links as we might have expected, considering the structure of *Waterland*. On the other hand, the film version of it does work with this means. For example, there is this part in the novel in which Ray reads the letter expressing Jack's wish, which in the novel is not tied to any other chapter and it goes basically unnoticed: "It's Jack's handwriting, but it's Jack's handwriting gone all wispy and weak and thin. It's not like the writing you used to see on that board at the front of the shop. Pork Chops – Down in Price."[170] However, in the film version, Ray speaks about Jack's handwriting, which initiates the cut to the butchery, more specifically, the cut is carried out by means of showing Jack writing on the board. Therefore, there is a link between this these subsequent scenes; a thematic transition.[171]

However, thematic links are not uncommon in the literary version of *Last Orders*. Even though they are not as frequent as for example in *Waterland*. The first thematic link can be found between chapters 13 and 14. The former chapter is narrated by Lenny and it ends up with the notion of Sally becoming pregnant with Vince's

---

[170] Graham Swift, *Last Orders* (London: Picador, 2010), 17.
[171] See *Last Orders*, DVD, directed by Fred Schepisi (2001; UK, Germany): Metrodome, 2003; 00:13:06.

baby, which he left and she got to get rid of it. The following chapter starts with Lenny asking Vince about his daughter.[172] Another thematic link can be found between chapters 19 and 20. The four of them are speculating about their arrangements after they are dead and Vic seems to be the only one who actually has some arrangement, which is probably connected to his undertaker's business. This is followed by Vic's narration describing his business.[173] Presumably, there could be a thematic link also between chapters 23 and 24, but in fact, it is not the case. Those chapters might be perceived as connected by the theme of vehicles, but the narrators are different, that is why it does not fit into this scheme. There are other examples, such as Vic's memories on the Navy that get triggered by the visiting of the war memorial, and so on.[174] Those thematic links appear not only among the chapters, but also inside them, such as the one in Chapter 23 (Ray), after Amy is telling Ray goodbye, he suddenly remembers Carol telling him goodbye, and thus he starts to tell their story—all of it inside one chapter.[175] On the contrary, the film version of *Last Orders* works with those thematic links among the scenes very often, which makes it very coherent. There are number of examples of it, such as connection of the scenes from the present to the past by a song,[176] explaining why they are going to Margate by remembering their old trips to the beach,[177] or for example the triggering of memories on the war by the memorial,[178] to name a few.

There are not only thematic links among the chapters; there is also a direct continuation to be found. Only with the exception that the narrators switch their roles. So it is not purely direct; and yet it is. It can be found in Chapter 51 (Ray), which is followed by this one chapter of rules, but directly after that the story continues in Chapter 53 (Lenny), but form a different angle. Firstly, Ray's perspective is given in the former chapter: "Then Vince catches up with them. He taps Lenny on the shoulder and Lenny turns and Vince holds out the plastic bag and Lenny takes it."[179] And after that, the perspective changes and in the next but one chapter we see it from Lenny's

---

[172] See Swift, *Last Orders*, 55.
[173] See Swift, *Last Orders*, 87–88.
[174] See Swift, *Last Orders*, 135–136.
[175] See Swift, *Last Orders*, 111.
[176] See Schepisi, *Last Orders*, 00:09:35.
[177] See Schepisi, *Last Orders*, 00:22:39.
[178] See Schepisi, *Last Orders*, 00:59:51.
[179] Swift, *Last Orders*, 223.

point of view: "He gives me the bag. He don't look at me, he looks at the guidebook."[180] This continues even to the next chapter, for at the end of this one, Lenny hands the bag over to Vic, which is reflected in the next one, narrated by Vic for a change. Those chapters sort of overlaps, because for example, Lenny's chapter ends with this handing over, but Vic's following chapter does not star with that; the handover is a matter of few paragraphs later. Naturally, this means is not entirely transferable to the film medium, and that is why none of this can be found in the film version of *Last Orders*.

4.1.2 Open-endedness

The idiosyncrasy of the literary version of *Last Orders*, as opposed to the film one, and also one of the main differences between the novel and the film, is that in the novel, many things and situations are not finished or concluded. There is one practical example, in the end of Chapter 4 (Ray), Ray and Amy are speaking about their debts. However, the reader does not find out the specific sum of money from this scene (although, we cannot be sure for Ray's knowledge): "I say, 'How much short?'"[181] With this sentence the chapter ends; without any conclusion. But this is not true about the film version; there is a particular sum of money mentioned. This is just one example, but situations like this repeat throughout the film.

The most telling example is from Vince's story, how Jack told him that he is adopted and that he has a stepsister. It starts in Chapter 16 (Vince), when there is only a hint that Jack is going to say something very important to young Vince:

> "He looks at me, and I know the reason I'm scared is because he is.
> And my dad Jack aint never scared. He doesn't look like my dad Jack,
> he looks as if he could be anyone. He takes a deep breath, then another
> one, quick, and I reckon he wanted to change his mind, but he was
> already teetering, toppling, on top of that hill, and he couldn't stop
> himself."[182]

---

[180] Swift, *Last Orders*, 225.
[181] Swift, *Last Orders*, 19.
[182] Swift, *Last Orders*, 74.

Later on, in Chapter 24 (Vince) the reader for the first time gets to know what Jack eventually told Vince on that occasion as a result of the previously mentioned example: "This is where."[183] In Chapter 37 (Wick's Farm), he spreads some of the ashes at this specific place and comments on it by this very phrase: "'This is where,' he says, wiping his face. 'This is where.'"[184] The novel never tells the reader what really happened on that hill between Jack and Vince, only that those words were uttered. So that the reader has to read between the lines and figure it out himself. On the other hand, the film version makes it clear by playing out the scene in its wholeness.[185] The novel employs rather unexpressed facts. This particular scene might be evocative of the spiral development of certain themes in *Waterland*. However, in this case, it is more like adding more personal depth and importance by repeating it, rather than elaborating on a theme.

The whole unfinished chapter can be found also at the end of the novel, when Amy is saying goodbye to June and when she is there to tell her that her father died:

> "I've got to be my own woman now. But I couldn't have just stopped coming without saying it to your face: Goodbye June. And I couldn't have said the one thing without saying the other. It won't mean anything to you but someone's got to tell you, no one else is going to. That your own daddy, who never came to see you, who you never knew because he never wanted to know you, that your own daddy"[186]

The comma is intentionally omitted at the end of the sentence, because it was never there in the novel, and so the chapter remained unfinished. However, there are not only unfinished conversations or chapters. There are rather opened-endings. Unlike in the film, where it was said straightforward, in the novel it is much more difficult and never said aloud; it is only in Ray's thoughts: "I'd have to put it to Amy first, ask her, take the gamble. You don't get nothing without asking, nothing ventured, nothing gained, first law of wagering. But you don't get nothing neither, sometimes, by stirring up old embers. You just get ash."[187] The film develops it further and makes it into a direct

[183] Swift, *Last Orders*, 114.
[184] Swift, *Last Orders*, 167.
[185] See Schepisi, *Last Orders*, 01:16:51.
[186] Swift, *Last Orders*, 307.
[187] Swift, *Last Orders*, 312.

question actually asked by Ray. But the novel does not answer the question. And there is also a strong uncertainty, because Amy's plans are concealed. On the other hand, she might be ready to leave by parting from June. However, it is an open-ended matter. Although, there is still hope for Ray.

From all that was said, it is quite clear that the film medium does not work with letting some parts of the story stay unfinished, unlike the novel that demand the reader to read between the lines. The reason for the need of the clear-cut ending in case of the film may be only the convenience of making the narration of the story consistent and fluent; or maybe just to make the plot easily accessible and understandable to the audience.

4.2 Personal narrative

As was already seen before, even in *Last Orders* the narrative is a very personal one. However, this time it is different and the narrative is a very complex one. It is because there are seven different narrators in one single novel. Though we can designate one of them as a main one, and this is Ray Lucky Johnson. The structure of the novel makes the orientation in the narration really easier, because of those individual chapters are named after its narrator. However, it takes some time to establish and confirm this assumption for the reader.

4.2.1 Multiplicity of narrators

It is worth noticing that each of the narrators does have an idiosyncratic way of narrating. All of them differ in terms of either stylistics, language, or the content. The differences are subtle ones, but they are there. For example, Vince is always discernible as a narrator, even if it was not indicated by the name of the chapter. He is always concerned about money or his business, i.e. cars and his showroom. For example, even in the hospital, when the doctor is trying to explain what is wrong with

the stomach of his dying father, he imagines it as an engine, because this is what he understands the most.[188] Needless to say, he is over-obsessed with cars:

> "And I always say it aint the motor by itself, it's the combination of man and motor, it's the intercombustion. A motor aint nothing without a man to tweak its buttons. And sometimes a man aint nothing without a motor, I see that. Motorvation, I call it. Fit the car to the customer, that's what I say. I aint just a car dealer, I'm a car tailor. I'm an ace mechanic too, as it happens, I know engines like you know your wife's fanny, but I've moved on from them days. A good motor's like a good suit."[189]

In this chapter it is also clearly visible how cold his relationship to his foster-father is. Even his customer is being sorry about the recently deceased Jack Dodds, while Vince is thinking only about selling him a car and making money.[190] In addition to that, his narration seems really arrogant. All in all, he is a very unsympathetic character; even in this Chapter 18 (Vince) there are hints that he sells out his own daughter in order to sell cars. And he is openly admitting it in the novel, which makes him even more unlikeable. He is also very aggressive, unfortunately not only towards men, but also to women, more specifically towards Sally Tate, which is described in Chapter 22 (Vince). This only adds to the disagreeableness of the character.

In contrast to that, Lenny's narration is characterized by his constant self-pity and by teasing Vince and envy towards Jack and Amy, and probably also towards Vince. However, we get to know that he and his family were altogether unlucky. At first, the bomb destroyed their house during WWII, and they remained poor after that. Interestingly enough, this is described only by visual means in the film. There is this excellent founding scene in the very beginning of the film. It introduces all of the four men that are setting on a journey without a single word. For example, Ray is characterised by the map of Australia and the picture of Sydney Opera House, as well as a picture of horses hanging on the wall. These are the implications about his life—he wants to visit his daughter in Australia and he is also an ardent better. Also, he

---

[188] See Swift, *Last Orders*, 29–30.
[189] Swift, *Last Orders*, 81.
[190] See Swift, *Last Orders*, 81–82.

leaves a house, as opposed to Lenny, who comes out of some modular home, which implies his poorness. Therefore, his dreams about a better life are understandable: "But then it was my dream too once, it was every poor bleeder's dream. A flash suit, a flash tie, a flash car, a wad of oncers always in your pocket."[191] He is constantly feeling aggrieved. He wanted Sally to marry Vince, not only for her current husband being in prison, but also for money:

> "And though it always seemed to me a touch-and-go operation and not what you'd hold up as a shining example of a career for a man, it worked for him, it's brought in more dosh than Dodds and Son ever did. Look at that suit. It's kept her in frocks and hairdos and holidays in the sun. Sometimes I wish my Sally had got back together again with Big Boy, sod him, I do."[192]

That is also the reason for his constant teasing of Vince. That, and the fact that he left his daughter with a child. Lenny also feels like he stands out from the party, that he is different: "Well I suppose I'm the odd man out here, I'm the odd man out on this whole caper, just along for the ride and the beer, and the hill-climbing."[193] Basically, he reflects on things that should have been better in life; and not only in his life, but in the life of his friends or family as well.

Compared to all of them, Vic is perceived as someone very calm and dignified. He is also the one that makes peace on board all the time. He is the most human one of them all. He is self-possessed and most dignified. All of it goes probably with the nature of his job:

> "And it's a privilege, to my mind, an education. You see humankind at its weakest and its strongest. You see it stripped bare of its everyday concerns when it can't help but take itself serious, when it needs a little wrapping up in solemnness and ceremony. But it doesn't do for an undertaker to get too solemn. That's why a joke's not out of place. That's why I say: Vic Tucker, at your disposal."[194]

---

[191] Swift, *Last Orders*, 52.
[192] Swift, *Last Orders*, 78.
[193] Swift, *Last Orders*, 145.
[194] Swift, *Last Orders*, 88.

Thanks to his nature, he keeps the balance in the party. However, in comparison to Vic, Amy is perceived as even more kind soul, and Lenny almost wishes she was there to subdue them and all their quarrels: "And if Amy was here I reckon she'd keep us all in check, she wouldn't have no misbehaving, we'd all have to clean up our acts. Which wouldn't be no bad thing. I can't see it passing off smooth. Four geezers and a box."[195] All of them are characterized by their stories, and all of them share their perception of both present and past with the reader.

It does not appear very often in the novel, but there are also examples of multiple views on a single event. The particular examples are those trips to Margate when Vince and Sally were just kids. There is a point of view given firstly from Lenny,[196] and several chapters later, there is also Vince's point of view.[197] Those two differ in the real reason why did Sally ceased to go with them, and the supposed reason by Lenny and Joan, in which they were wrong. Also, it is not the only case, in which a supposed reason is presented, when the reader knows the true one. Another example of two different points of view is Mandy Black's coming to town and the following taking care of her by Jack and Amy in Chapter 17 told by Lenny. A different point of view however is given in Chapter 39 directly from Mandy. The one last example was already mentioned in the analysis of the structure, as well as the fact that this aspect of a narrative was not employed in the film version.

Conversion of so many narrators into film is a very hard, or even an impossible task. And so we can see that there is not any prevalent narrator, or several of them in the film version of *Last Orders*. Most of the time, the omniscient narrator is predominant. Nevertheless, some of the scenes *are* personalized and narrated from a certain point of view. However, it is done by different means. For example, there is a scene covering the travellers' stop at Rochester, and the personalized narration is triggered by one character leaving the party to go to the restroom, where the grief overwhelms him and it provokes some memory of Jack. This type of flashback appears twice in this scene—once with Ray and once with Lenny. However, the narration is still omniscient even in this case, when it is clear whose point of view it is.

---

[195] Swift, *Last Orders*, 152.
[196] See Swift, *Last Orders*, 48–52.
[197] See Swift, *Last Orders*, 70–73.

Undoubtedly, there has to be some other motivation for setting off a personal story and connecting it to a certain character. One of the means is aforementioned, but there was also this other means used. The director of *Last Orders* came with the solution of the transitions among different narrators. Even though he had to rearrange the plot, he accomplished to piece it all together in a consistent way. In his interpretation, the motivation for some of the stories is a conversation between Ray and Amy after Jack died, during which some of the stories are recalled. By doing that, he slightly alters the story, but on the other hand, he achieves the required effect, and thus grants the narrative its continuity. Thus this slight infidelity from the original novel lead to the use of an alternative approach.

Moreover, the film did really well in depicting some other aspects. There is other example of Fred Schepisi's coping with the adaptation. In the novel, it is quite easy to express someone's thoughts, but less so in the film. However, there is an actual example of managing that in the film. For example, there is a scene, in which Vince visits Jack in the hospital and they have this dialogue, which is additionally supplemented by Vince's thoughts:

> "He says, 'Amy don't know what's happening, does she? Amy don't know if she's coming or going.'
>
> I say, 'She's okay, she's managing. She'll manage.'
>
> Knowing she isn't, even if she will. Knowing she'll come into the spare room again tonight, where Mandy and me are sleeping, and want me to hold her and hug her, right there in front of Mandy, like I'm her new husband, like I'm Jack."[198]

In the film this Vince's thought is depicted by a single world-less cut-in scene portraying Amy's despair, while he is lying about how she is managing.[199]

---

[198] Swift, *Last Orders*, 40–41.
[199] See Schepisi, *Last Orders*, 00:31:41.

4.2.2 Other narrative aspects

With the difficulty of transforming these multiple narrators in the film goes hand in hand the problem of other narrative means. Unquestionably, there are major differences between this novel and its film version. For example, the depth of knowledge is a subjective one in the novel, because we know what individual characters feel or think; we have access to this kind of information. However, the film version does not grant us the access to character's minds. Except maybe for this recently mentioned cut-in scene into Vince's thoughts. But this one is unique. As for the range of knowledge, it is a multifarious one, and it is simple because of that use of multiple narrators. This aspect is identical for both the novel and the film. The reader or the viewer constructs the story out of the plot thanks to various pieces of information, acquired from different characters. However, not all of it is known to other characters involved. From the point of view of the characters themselves, the narration can be rather constricted. For example, Amy does not know why Jack wanted to move to Margate in the first place. For her it was not the best choice and she was not very happy about it. Jack later explains to Ray, in Chapter 58 (Ray), that it was rather for financial reasons than under the pretext of a fresh start. So the reader, as well as Jack and Ray, does have the knowledge, but Amy does not.

As opposed to the previous two novels, this one is not self-conscious. The reason may be simple; it is not told so much as a story like in *Waterland*, and the story is presented rather in a conversation. It does not mean, that it does not contain any of the Swift's story-telling, because it does, and in a considerable amount, but it does not address the audience. Therefore, the film version uses a fair amount of the original dialogue. Communicativeness is also building gradually, just as it was in the case of either *Waterland* or *Shuttlecock*. Similarly, all of the narrators are intradiegetic and homodiegetic.

4.3 Personal history

Since history is a major interest of Graham Swift throughout his oeuvre, it is also not omitted in *Last Orders*. Even though this time there is more concern about the personal histories of each and every of the narrators rather than the "great history." It was like that even in those previous novels, but in this one it is the most striking. However, even the great history is captured here as well, but the extent is much smaller.

All of the characters were once part of the big historical events, for all of them fought in war, either in the Second World War, or in the Middle East decades later. However, those wars function here only as a background to more personal stories; for example, as a background to the first meeting of Jack and Ray. Therefore, rather than immersing in any of those historical events, the reader is delving into personal histories of several characters. And those characters become delving into their own pasts only because one of their friend had recently died and they are complying with Jack's last request.

Recalling some moments with Jack, or even their journey to Margate itself, triggers some of the old stories. And by telling them, other stories pile up upon it. Moreover, all of the concerned seem to have some issues, smaller or larger ones, with which they are trying to cope. They are also feeling sorry for some mistakes they might have done in their lives, or they have grievance about some distant issues. And they are reflecting on all of that during their way.

Also, for all of the partaking, there is something very personal in the fact that they decided to go and fulfil Jack's last wish. Lenny has a specific reason: "The only reason I'm here, if you don't count being his regular boozing partner for close on forty years, is because of Sally. Is because Jack took her to the seaside when we couldn't take her ourselves. It was a kindness, one of the few that girl ever got. And now I'm taking Jack."[200] He is dignified, he feels like it is a duty to fulfil Jack's wish. Others have similar reasons too, whether it is a case of fellowship or duty. Moreover, all of them seem to be men that somehow need to find themselves again, and this trip can

---

[200] Swift, *Last Orders*, 146.

make it happen: "But there aint none of the rest of us know who we really are. Boxer. Doctor. Jockey. Except Vic."[201]

Besides that, it is also a sort of a spiritual journey for them and the visiting of the Canterbury Cathedral only accentuates that. "And this was my idea, to come here. Dose of holiness. It wasn't for him. Who's he going to tell, who's he going to brag about it to over a slow beer at the end of the day? […] It was for us, to put us back on our best behaviour, to clean up our acts. Seeing as how Amy aint here."[202] Be it for the Cathedral only, or for the forthcoming of the end of their journey, the spirituality in them cannot be denied. Even Vince changes his attitude and Lenny reflects on that: "I reckon he's sorry, that's what he is. I reckon he's trying to make amends. We've all got a bit of that to do if you look back over the years. Excluding Vic maybe. Clean hands, as always."[203] In Lenny's case it is a regret for wanting from Sally to have an abortion. And that is just one example; all five of them, including Amy, undergo some sort of epiphany during the journey. And since all of it is a part of the story, it is also reflected in the film.

4.4 Summary

Contrary to the previous novels and their adaptations, this particular novel was even a bigger challenge for adaptation into film. Although it contains less of the historical theme and it focuses mainly on the stories of its main characters, it makes it easier for the transfer. As well as the fact that it is a frame narrative. However, the processing into the film media was much more difficult in terms of the narrative structure of the seven narrators. This is a part that was not adapted, although the director had found other means to accomplish the similar effect.

To sum up, despite some minor differences from the fabula and also differences in the structure, the adaptation passed successfully. It may have not complied with all of Swift's means of narration, but it substituted such ones with their own and original ones that functioned in the same way in the end.

---

[201] Swift, *Last Orders*, 232.
[202] Swift, *Last Orders*, 233.
[203] Swift, *Last Orders*, 225.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have analysed Graham Swift's three novels and their subsequent film versions in terms of the structure of the narrative, which showed an enormous level of complexity; the employment of the personal narrative; and Swift's concept of a history in all its variation. Since those are the main elements that all the novels share in a more or less similar way.

As for the results of my analysis, it is clear that Graham Swift is an author that immerses in the difficult narrative structures, but not in order to make it difficult for the reader, but for the compositional reasons. His work with gradation and unfolding of the story is very complex, but also subtle. He is very precise in arranging the chapters and making the transitions among them very fluent. No matter if the incidents of the stories are extremely distant in terms of time, or even in terms of different narrators. His stories can span from decades to centuries, and his plots are never in a chronological order, because they are full of flashbacks and reviews of personal histories of his characters. And still, his story-telling is a coherent one. Structurally, he is also interweaving various themes into the novels and making them comprehensible for the reader.

Swift's utilization of a certain type of the narrator is also consistent in all of the three novels. In addition to that, in all of them he uses only the first-person narrators. The ones that are the most complicated to transfer to the film medium. All of the narrators are always intradiegetic ones, i.e. they are the part of the fictional world; in fact, they are always one of the characters, usually the main one. The difference is only in the number of narrators, because *Last Orders* makes an exception with its multiple narrators.

All of the novels also share the sense of a personal narrative, or rather a personal history. This kind of narration appears in all three of them, despite the fact that the actual presentation might differ. In *Waterland*, the whole fictional universe is related to its main character and narrator Tom Crick. In *Shuttlecock* Swift uses self-conscious means of literary narration to immerse in oneself and coming to terms with some difficult life situations. Similarly, this coming to terms is also a theme of *Last*

Orders, but the way to achieve that immersion is different—the death of a friend and the subsequent fulfilment of his wish initiates this epiphany of several characters.

Swift's main concern is also the history as such, but also all of its variations. From the "great history" to the local ones, and preferably to the personal ones, which are the most important ones for him in his novels. His main focus is thus on the man and his inner struggles, which he is overcoming by story-telling, writing, or just revisiting his previous life.

Generally, Swift's work is a very complex one and it is very hard to transfer his novels into films. Or at least into conventional feature films of standard length with the aim of entertaining the audience. Nevertheless, there are few who attempted to adapt his novels. Naturally, it is not possible to transfer Swift's novel into film in full length. Either the time span is too vast, or the structure too complicated, or the narrators too many. However, the key to a good adaptation does not lie in the fidelity to the original work. Therefore, minor changes in the story or shortening and simplifying of it is not such an impediment.

The films I have analysed managed to transfer many of the key elements from Swift into this different medium, and they were still able to maintain the main themes, the atmosphere, and even the complexity of the structure. Undoubtedly, the film versions could not (and should not) have been a word for word translations, as both Hutcheon and McFarlane could confirm, and indeed they were not. Nonetheless, the directors showed a considerable amount of creativity and inventiveness while transforming those seemingly untransferable novels to films. And they managed to substitute some of the non-filmic material with some corresponding equivalent, as was shown many times in this thesis.

In conclusion, I would say that both film versions were successful ones, because they managed to transfer the spirit and the atmosphere of Swift's novels. Therefore, not even a complicated novel should prevent filmmakers from shooting its adaptation. And hopefully these selected ones were not the last adaptations of Swift's novels.

RESUMÉ

Tématem této diplomové práce je srovnání filmových adaptací tří románů současného britského autora Grahama Swifta. Konkrétně se jedná o romány *Waterland* (1983), *Shuttlecock* (1981) a *Last Orders* (1996) a jejich stejnojmenná filmová zpracování režiséry Stephenem Gyllenhaalem (1992), Andrew Piddingtonem (1993) a Fredem Schepisim (2001) v tomto pořadí. Romány Grahama Swifta se vyznačují velmi komplikovanou narativní strukturou se zaměřením výhradně na vyprávění v ich-formě, což je pro převod do filmu ta nejtěžší varianta. Dále je pro Swiftovy romány význačné osobní vyprávění a zaměření se na historii, přesněji řečeno na historii, která se vztahuje přímo k postavě románu. Cílem práce je tedy zachytit, jakým způsobem bylo tohle Swiftovo velmi specifické dílo převedeno do filmové podoby, na základě detailní analýzy procesu transpozice literárního díla do filmu. Každá analýza spočívá v popsání narativní struktury románu a jeho neodmyslitelných prvků, které následně nalézám v jednotlivých filmových zpracováních.

V první kapitole popisuji teorie filmové adaptace a narativní teorie, ze kterých v práci vycházím a také definuji svou metodologii. Druhá kapitola se zabývá románem *Waterland*, který sice nepředcházel následujícímu románu, ale byl natolik důležitý pro samotnou analýzu, že jsem se rozhodla pořadí prohodit, aby bylo možné nejprve ustálit některé Swiftovy literární postupy pro následující dvě analýzy. Tato kapitola tedy ustavuje Swiftovy základní naratologické a tematické postupy – rozebírám v ní strukturu díla a Swiftovu práci s textem, stejně jako základní tematické okruhy a práci s fikčními žánry, které se v románu objevují. V neposlední řadě se také věnuji osobnímu vyprávění. Všechny tyto poznatky dávám do kontextu a porovnávám s filmovým zpracováním. Třetí kapitola se věnuje románu *Shuttlecock* a čtvrtá kapitola románu *Last Orders*. Struktura těchto dvou kapitol je velmi podobná kapitole druhé, ale odvíjí se od charakteristických vlastností každého z románů. V závěru práce shrnuji veškeré své poznatky a zobecňuji tak výsledné postupy jak Swiftových románů, tak jejich filmových adaptací.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BALDICK, Chris, ed*. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

BALDICK, Chris, ed*. The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Accessed November 11, 2017. https://books.google.cz/books?id=mp0s9GgrafUC&pg=PA124&lpg=PA124&dq=dictionary+of+literary+terms+fairy+tale&source=bl&ots=aDOckt9ziH&sig=ZSvnhMtCfpdXbOTmWKOEkiBgSME&hl=cs&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi1q4GX4tHXAhXCVhoKHXnHCrwQ6AEIOjAC#v=onepage&q=fairy%20tale&f=false.

BORDWELL, David. *Narration in the Fiction Film*. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.

CHATMAN, Seymour. *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

"Focalization." The Living Handbook of Narratology. Accessed December 4, 2017. http://wikis.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Focalization.

GRIMES, William. "Filming Turns Out to Be Just the Beginning." *New York Times*, February 13, 1994. Accessed November 12, 2017. http://www.nytimes.com/1994/02/13/movies/film-filming-turns-out-to-be-just-the-beginning.html?pagewanted=all.

HARVEY, Dennis. "Film Review: 'Sins of a Father.'" *Variety*, February 24, 2015. Accessed November 20, 2017. http://variety.com/2015/film/reviews/film-review-sins-of-a-father-1201436736/.

HERMAN, David, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan, ed. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London: Routedge, 2008.

HUTCHEON, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. London: Routledge, 2006.

JANIK, Del Ivan. "History and the 'Here and Now': The Novels of Graham Swift." *Twentieth Century Literature* 35, no. 1 (1989): 74–88. Accessed November 18, 2017. http://www.jstor.org/stable/441776.

KACZVINSKY, Donald P. "'For one thing, there are the gaps': history in Graham Swift's *Shuttlecock*." *CRITIQUE: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 40, no. 1 (1998): 3–14. EBSCO*host*. Accessed November 18, 2017. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsglr&AN=edsgcl.21173629&lang=cs&site=eds-live&authtype=shib&custid=s7108593.

MACNAB, Geoffrey. "Shuttlecock." *Sight & Sound* 3, (December 1993): 56. EBSCO*host*. Accessed November 20, 2017. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asu&AN=505641123&lang=cs&site=eds-live&authtype=shib&custid=s7108593.

MCFARLANE, Brian. *Novel to film: an introduction to the theory of adaptation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Merriam-Webster. S.v. "Phlegmatic." Accessed October 20, 2017. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/phlegmatic.

PRUDCHENKO, Kate. "What Is the Difference Between a Memoir and a Personal Narrative?" The Pen & The Pad. Accessed November 7, 2017. https://penandthepad.com/difference-between-memoir-personal-narrative-1729.html.

RIMMON-KENAN, Shlomith. "Typology of Narrators." In *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*, edited by Terence Hawkes, 94–105. London: Routledge, 2001.

SCHLICKERS, Sabine. "Focalization, Ocularization and Auricularization in Film and Literature." In *Point of View, Perspective, and Focalization: Modelling Mediation in Narrative*, edited by Peter Hühn, Wolf Schmid, and Jörg Schönert, 243–258. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009.

SWIFT, Graham. *Shuttlecock*. London: Penguin, 2010.

SWIFT, Graham. *Last Orders*. London: Picador, 2010.

SWIFT, Graham. *Waterland*. London: Picador, 1983.

Films

GYLLENHAAL, Stephen, dir. *Waterland*. 1992; UK: Studiocanal, 2006. DVD.

SCHEPISI, Fred, dir. *Last Orders*. 2001; UK, Germany: Metrodome, 2003. DVD.

ANOTACE

Jméno: Bc. Kristýna Bročková

Katedra: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Název práce v češtině: Filmové adaptace románů Grahama Swifta

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Libor Práger, Ph.D.

Počet stran: 83

Počet příloh: 1

Klíčová slova: Graham Swift, filmová adaptace, osobní vyprávění, narativní analýza, současná britská literatura

Anotace: Tématem této diplomové práce je srovnání filmových adaptací tří románů současného britského autora Grahama Swifta. Konkrétně se jedná o romány *Waterland* (1983), *Shuttlecock* (1981) a *Last Orders* (1996) a jejich stejnojmenná filmová zpracování režiséry Stephenem Gyllenhaalem (1992), Andrew Piddingtonem (1993) a Fredem Schepisim (2001) v tomto pořadí. Práce se zaměřuje převážně na narativní stránku Swiftových románů, stejně jako na jeho tematická východiska. Tyto aspekty Swiftových románů není jednoduché zfilmovat. Práce tedy zkoumá, jakým způsobem jsou tyto těžko postižitelné aspekty literárního vyprávění převedeny do filmového média. Základní teoretická východiska pro analýzu jsou teorie adaptace Lindy Hutcheonové a Briana McFarlana, a narativní teorie Davida Bordwella a Seymoura Chatmana.

ANNOTATION

Name: Bc. Kristýna Bročková

Department: Department of English and American Studies

Name of the thesis in English: Film Adaptations of Graham Swift's Novels

Supervisor: PhDr. Libor Práger, Ph.D.

Number of pages: 83

Number of supplements: 1

Key words: Graham Swift, film adaptation, personal narrative, narrative analysis, contemporary British fiction

Annotation: The theme of this diploma thesis is the comparison of film adaptations of three of Graham Swift's novels, more specifically the novels *Waterland* (1983), *Shuttlecock* (1981) and *Last Orders* (1996), and their eponymous film versions directed by Stephen Gyllenhaal (1992), Andrew Piddington (1993) and Fred Shepisi (2001) respectively. The thesis focuses mainly on narrative aspects of Swift's novels, as well as on the thematic basis of the novels. Those aspects of Swift's novels are not easy to make into a film. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to capture how these elusive literary aspects are transferred into the film medium. The basic methodological principles of film adaptation theory of Linda Hutcheon and Brian McFarlane will be used as a theoretical background for the analysis, as well as the narrative theory of David Bordwell and Seymour Chatman.