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**Comparing Book and its Film Version: The Hours**

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## **ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE**

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### **Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :**

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<http://www.michaelcunninghamwriter.com/biography>  
[http://www.boxoffice.com/boxoffice\\_scr/movie\\_reviews\\_result.asp?terms=7037](http://www.boxoffice.com/boxoffice_scr/movie_reviews_result.asp?terms=7037)  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The film art and the literature are two different items. Each of them, however, is different in its essence as the film can use sounds, editing or performances of the actors to depict the plot, which the book cannot do. Some of the books are adapted for the screen since the film version can reach wider audience than the book. When comparing these two items, one has to realize which components they use to accomplish their goal – i.e. address a reader or a viewer.

This work deals with the similar matter – comparison of Michael Cunningham's book *The Hours* (2006) and its film adaptation (2002). It is supposed that the film version has the same plot structure and is generally similar to the book. To solve this problem, the work includes analysis of the book and the film as well and examines their plot, characters and themes. Since the *The Hours* is based on Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), both novels are compared as well. For this reason, the period of Modernism and literary style stream of consciousness are described for better understanding of both books. At the end, results of the paper are summarized, proving the thesis that the plot of the film version is very similar to the book even if some passages are either taken out or shot in different order.

## **ABSTRAKT**

Film a literatura jsou dvě různé složky umění. Každá z nich je ve své podstatě rozličná, protože film zachycuje děj prostřednictvím zvuků, střihu či výkonů herců, což kniha nedokáže. Některé knihy proto bývají zfilmovány, protože si najdou své diváky u početnějšího filmového obecenstva snáze než jako psané knihy. Když bychom srovnávali tyto dva druhy umění, musíme si uvědomit, jakým způsobem se obě složky snaží naplnit svůj cíl – tj. oslovit čtenáře nebo diváka.

Tato práce se zabývá podobným tématem – srovnáním románu *Hodiny* (2006) od Michaela Cunninghama a jeho filmové verze (2002). Při zpracování práce jsem vycházel z teze, že filmová verze bude mít stejný děj a všeobecně bude velmi podobná knižní předloze. Pro potvrzení a nebo vyvrácení této domněnky práce obsahuje analýzu knihy a filmu, která zkoumá jejich dějovou strukturu, postavy a motivy. Jelikož *Hodiny* vycházejí z knihy *Paní Dallowayová* (1925) od Virginie Woolfové, srovnání obou knih je provedeno taktéž. Z tohoto důvodu, pro lepší pochopení obou knih a vzájemných souvislostí, je popsáno i období modernismu a literárního proudu vědomí. Na úplný závěr jsou shrnuty výsledky práce, které potvrdili tezi, že filmová verze je téměř stejná co se týče děje, avšak některé pasáže jsou buď vynechány a nebo natočeny v jiném pořadí.

## **KEYWORDS**

Modernism, stream of consciousness, English prose, fiction, film, Virginia Woolf, Michael Cunningham, Mrs. Dalloway, The Hours, homosexuality

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

modernismus, proud vědomí, anglická próza, beletrie, film, Virginia Woolf, Michael Cunningham, Paní Dallowayová, Hodiny, homosexualita

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the paper is to make an analysis and comparison of the film *The Hours* and its model book of the same name by Michael Cunningham, made on the basis of Virginia Woolf's book *Mrs. Dalloway* with use of the secondary literature. The structure of the paper is divided into two main parts, theoretical and practical one.

The theoretical part deals with the period of Modernism. First, its historical background is explained, as it is essential for further understanding of the changes that happened. Then, various definitions and features of Modernism are contrasted since Modernism can have many interpretations. Finally, there is an effort to describe consequences that Modernism caused and which areas it influenced. Particularly, stress is put on the changes in literature and Modernist writing specifically. Such changes in literature were recognizable in all of its genres and resulted in new techniques of writing, such as stream of consciousness. Therefore, stream of consciousness, as it is the main technique used, is shown on the specific examples of prominent Modernist writers, comparing the style of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. Furthermore, since Virginia Woolf was an inspiration for Michael Cunningham, the process of writing of his novel *The Hours* is depicted as it is important for further analysis of the book.

The practical part of the paper focuses on the comparison of the book and its film version. Since the film version is based on the book, detailed analysis of the book is carried out first. It examines the structure of the plot, characters of the book and its themes with regard to *Mrs. Dalloway* and the differences between both novels. Afterwards, film is compared to the book in terms of its plot and characters. Such comparison is based on the assumption that the film uses different representation of the story than the book. To achieve the unbiased evaluation, opinions of film critics as well as Cunningham himself are confronted.



## **2. MODERNISM**

The period of Modernism is associated with great changes in the life of the people and their culture. Such changes are the subject of this chapter as it deals with historical term, definition and consequences of Modernism with focus on literature and stream-of-consciousness style. Different opinions of several authors are confronted for better illustration.

### **2.1 Historical Background**

When we are to evaluate what the modernism is, when it starts and ends, we have to keep in mind that there are several approaches to qualify it. In the viewpoint of Childs, Modernism can be considered 'timebound concept or a timeless one' because one can dispute when it began (probably 1890) and if it has finished or still continue in the form of neo-modernism or post-war art (2000, p. 2). Drabble points out that modernism started in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in France and in 1890 in Great Britain and Germany, and finished with the beginning of the Second World War (1998, p. 654).

Despite different time frames of Modernism, it has been agreed on that the roots of it reach to the Enlightenment at the end of the eighteenth century when the power of reason, order and science had more significance than ignorance, disorder or superstition. In other words, there was a need to qualify new values and develop them to the prejudice of the old and outmoded ideas (Burke, 2000). Similarly, more than one century later, Modernism brought in new things that created different ideas and changed the life of the people then. Childs suggests that Modernism is connected with the rise of modernity, i.e. development of technology, industry, urban society, new philosophical ideas and also with the war at the beginning of the twentieth century, which all resulted in the need of the people to comment on it (2000, p. 20-21). Such changes in human thinking and the new way of life were significant and gave rise to what is called now Modernism.

### **2.2 Definition of Modernism**

Despite its various historical development, the definition of Modernism is complicated and includes diverse opinions from different authors. Drabble argues that

Modernism can be viewed as both the literary and the collective term because during that period in Europe there were many rival groups, movements and schools which were focused on the wide range of issues, such as literature, art or music, for instance, Symbolism, Decadence, Cubism, Dadaism and many others. Ideas of these movements were presented to public in the form of manifestos, 'little magazines' or avant-garde works that were spreading rapidly (1998, p. 654).

In the viewpoint of Childs, Modernism is seen to be 'a period, style, genre, or combination of these' (2000, p. 12). In other words, such interpretation denotes that Modernism was in the motion during some period, it created certain styles and movements, and some of their features were combined and shared. Furthermore, Childs comes with the plurality of Modernism and therefore does not speak about single Modernism but about 'Modernisms'. He refers to the fact that Modernism has been mainly characteristic with the term denoted by white men, heterosexuals, living in Europe or America, having middle-class status, but any new challenges that appeared, contributed to new interpretations and, therefore, to the plurality of Modernism. For that reason any definition of Modernism is not explicit enough to include such changes (2000, p. 12-13).

Similarly, Rogers argues that the term Modernism is very difficult to define. He introduces the broadest definition, which lies in the fact that Modernism refers not only to the change and to the innovation in literature but also to a radical alteration of all the arts that were significant in Europe and America before the beginning of WW1 (2001, p. 408). From the above-mentioned definitions, it is obvious that Modernism is not easy to define because of its alterations during the particular time and influences that it caused, and therefore such definition deserves more precise and careful attention of the authors.

### **2.3 Consequences of Modernism**

Through different interpretations of Modernism, it is quite clear what it brought and which areas it affected. Generally, it brought something new, which was unknown until then, and which influenced many spheres of life and art. In the viewpoint of Childs, modernism is closely connected to the beginnings of modernity, which proved to bring changes in the way of peoples' life. Particularly, it included new meanings of time and space, which resulted in different viewing of 'speed, mobility, communication, travel,

dynamism, chaos and cultural revolution´ (2000, p. 14-15). Such things go hand in hand with the technological development and new inventions at the end of the nineteenth century, e.g. automobile, aeroplane, telephone and so on (2000, p. 21), which eminently contributed to faster and more chaotic way of life.

These changes caused a new perception of art, music or literature. In art, the reality and the function of art was perceived differently, with stress on sophistication and more conducted artwork. In music, atonalism was the main feature used by Modernists to react on the symphonies of the nineteenth century (2000, p. 22). However, the most significant changes were distinct in literature.

## **2.4 Modernist Writing**

Modernist writing reacted on the changes that arose at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, as well as on the weakening of some modes of writing. As Childs claims, long-time hegemony of realism was weakened by Modernism which tried to depict the reality and the world differently, offering the alternative way by bringing something new, innovative. All the attempts to replace realistic style of writing were regarded as Modernist (2000, p. 2-3). Drabble has expressed a similar view. She argues that realistic writers at the end of the nineteenth century to the Edwardian period did not have innovative techniques and their language used in their works was not experimental as well. Drabble further notes that the first man to break this style was Henry James who introduced a new direction in his novels, which lied in complexity, density and ambiguity of his works. Such writing was a model for many authors after him, for instance Virginia Woolf (1998, p. 654).

Changes that brought the modernist writing were substantial in both poetry and prose. In poetry, as Childs claims, there was an effort to divert from the traditional unit of verse – iambic pentameter, to a new form represented by symbolism and other modes of writing (2000, p. 3). Drabble has expressed a distinct view as she asserts that modernist poetry did not use rhyme and traditional forms of poetry but it concentrated more on fragmentation and juxtaposition, depicting dispersed times and cultures (1998, p. 654).

In prose, as Rogers claims, nothing can be regarded as definite because it gives us space for our further imagination. Things that we already know must not be reproduced

and remade because they have to draw our conscious attention. Rogers further notes that unconscious state of mind is equal to the conscious one, which is associated with the statement that our feelings of reality are only provisional and insecure. Then, such complex things of modern urban life must be depicted in literature (2001, p. 408). In other words, modernist writers used their unconsciousness mind to depict the reality and illustrated it on the modern urban life.

Childs expresses more specific and conducted opinion as he argues that Modernist writers attempted to capture human subjectivity in a different way than realism did. They tried to portray consciousness of individual characters, how they perceive things around them and express emotions with regard to the relation and significance of the individual to the society. To achieve all of that, they use modes like 'interior monologue, stream of consciousness, tunnelling, defamiliarisation, rhythm and other terms' (2000, p. 3). Such styles should have replaced the existing modes of representing the reality and bring something new, abstract. Drabble expands this idea as she points out that Modernist novel was often experimental with sudden jumps in time, juxtapositions and mostly non-chronological. Instead of chronological plot events, it often used jumps in the characters' consciousness into the past and back, without warning. Therefore, this spaciousness of time proved in long passages in the texts where nothing is going on for a long time in terms of plot or, on the contrary, in the dense plot where very many things occur in a small amount of text. In order they could realize it, techniques as free-indirect speech, inner monologue or stream of consciousness were used. Moreover, Modernists used open endings and some unique forms of narrating, e.g. narrative gaps, ellipsis and so on, to stress ambiguity and complexity of their works (1998, p. 654). By using such complicated techniques and modes of writing, describing emotions and perception of the characters, Modernist writers wanted to arouse emotions in their readers themselves.

## **2.5 Stream of Consciousness**

As already mentioned, stream of consciousness was a literary technique often used by Modernists. However, it is not associated only with literature. As Callev points out, the term can serve in the literature as well as in the film because it denotes the effort of the artists to create fancy of what they regard to be psychological activity, which they constitute by means of their medium, i.e. by the literature or the film (1997).

The term itself was coined by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* where he described the flow of the mind as it goes from the past to the present (Drabble, 1998, p. 939). In his work James writes that consciousness is 'nothing jointed; it flows. A "river" or a "stream" are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described' (qtd. in Childs, 2000, p. 52). By referring to the 'river' or the 'stream' James shows how the mind of the people is unstable, rubbing off from side to side, similarly as the water in the river.

In terms of literature, in the viewpoint of Callev, stream of consciousness acquired at least three meanings. First, the term can denote a narrative technique which tries to imitate the flow of mind. Second, it symbolizes the soul of the characters. Finally, it represents a literary genre associated with such writers as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson or William Faulkner (1997). Similarly, Childs views stream of consciousness as a technique that deals with the motion of thoughts, impressions and emotions as they proceed through the human mind (2000, p. 211).

There are various features of stream of consciousness in the literature. As Drabble argues, the most characteristic are the shifts of thoughts or emotions throughout the character's mind, using illogical structure or syntax. To depict such thoughts, 'interior monologue' is often used since it is a tool capable of catching inner movement of thoughts (1998, p. 940). Callev notes that the main attributes of the stream of consciousness are the symbiosis of all spaces of time, i.e. past, present and future, in the character's mind and their realization in every minute of human experience. Furthermore, the symbiosis of the real and unreal thoughts and their equality in the mind together with incessant motion of such thoughts are characteristic. Yet, Callev adds that linear structure is replaced by chaotic and incoherent one, which results in private inferences and in the creation of personal symbols and meanings (1997).

The technique of stream of consciousness explained above is perhaps the most prominent with the Modernist writers of that period – James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Even if they used the same technique, their methods are different. As Childs argues, when comparing their master-pieces, Joyce's *Ulysses* and Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, one can find at least three differences in the usage of the stream of consciousness. Particularly, Woolf uses more tags, for instance, 'he thought' or 'she wondered' (2000, p. 170-171). Next thing that is different is the interior monologue, which differs less from character to character with Woolf than with Joyce. Even the sentence structure, syntax or vocabulary of these

characters does not change so much, as it does in Joyce's work, which contributes to the better connectivity of the characters. Finally, Woolf always relies on the usage of the past tense for the interior monologues, as it is more convenient for emphasizing the personal history of the characters. All the above-mentioned facts in the stream-of-consciousness style allow her to skip between the characters and the narrator, without making any unwanted shift, and to evoke the idea that even if the characters are separated in time and space, their minds can function collectively and, therefore, connect them (2000, p. 170-171). These techniques were a motivation for many authors after her, such as Michael Cunningham, who tried to follow Woolf and her writing generally

### **3. MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM**

Michael Cunningham was born in 1952 in Cincinnati, Ohio. He has always been interested in literature and therefore graduated in creative writing from the University of Iowa, receiving his M.F.A (Michael Cunningham biography, 2006). There he decided for the career of a writer and wrote several novels as well as articles in the famous magazines, e.g. *The New Yorker* or *Vogue* (Ulmanova, 2002, p. 183). His writing is typical for the themes of insecurity and isolation and occurrence of gay characters, since he openly admits being gay, which was particularly distinct in his most famous novel, *The Hours* (Peregrin, 2003).

#### **3.1 Writing *The Hours***

When writing *The Hours*, Cunningham was much inspired by Virginia Woolf and her work *Mrs. Dalloway*. As he confessed in an interview, he regarded Woolf as one of the great writers of her period who brought many innovative features (Peregrin, 2003). Furthermore, he was so thrilled by the complexity and density of her writing that he decided to write a new version of *Mrs. Dalloway* that will depict one day of life of a lesbian woman, who is preparing for a party (Setoodeh, 2003). As Ulmanova claims, before he began writing, he had to go through and study both the diaries and letters written by Woolf, and other numerous biographies and literary-critic sources (2002, p. 185).

After studying various literary sources, he could finally start writing. During writing his first draft, he originally did not intend to write a new story of *Mrs. Dalloway*, but then,

he changed his mind and put Woolf herself in the book (Setoodeh, 2003). This act was a breakthrough to the structure of original *Mrs. Dalloway* and meant a completely new story and distraction from Woolf's novel. As Cunningham confirms, for him it was right that the book should include 'a character, a reader, and a writer' (Peregrin, 2003)

Concerning his characters, Cunningham, even if gay himself, argues that he did not want his characters to be easily distinguishable as straight or gay. Giving the example of Laura Brown, who felt fancy to Kitty but loved her husband as well, he shows how characteristic people's sexualities are. Furthermore, Cunningham acknowledges that none of his characters is exactly autobiographical; he only drew from the life of Woolf, his mother's life served him as an inspiration for Laura Brown and his own life is a bit reflected in the one of young Richie. He justifies such similarities between his real life and the characters of the book by his need to get closer to them, to a more intimate point so that all the characters might seem autobiographical (Doig, 2003).

After finishing the book, Cunningham thought that it would sell only a few thousand copies and then becomes secluded. He explained this by the fact that this book is an experiment in its essence in comparison with other of his works because it does not have a regular plot with a beginning, middle and end, and thus cannot be popular (Chambers, 2003). Similarly, on 18 February 1922, before writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf writes in her diary: 'I have made up my mind that I'm not going to be popular, and so genuinely that I look upon disregard or abuse as part of my bargain' (1953, p. 52). Thus, both Cunningham and Woolf have one thing in common, namely, their initial fear of being unpopular because their works do not cohere with the mainstream. They, however, failed in this opinion because nowadays, Woolf's works are very famous and still much read, and Cunningham's *The Hours* has sold more than two million copies all over the world. Furthermore, Cunningham achieved what he perhaps planned before writing his novel, namely, to draw the attention to Woolf's life and work because for the first time since 1925, when *Mrs. Dalloway* was published, it has been placed in the top bestsellers lists (Setoodeh, 2003).

#### **4. 'THE HOURS' - BOOK**

*The Hours* is the most successful novel of Cunningham because it received both Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and PEN/Faulkner Award in 1999 (Ulmanova, 2002, p. 184). Moreover, the novel is mostly praised by the critics; it was chosen as the Best Book of

2006 of such well-known newspapers as The New York Times, Boston Globe, Publishers Weekly and others (Chambers, 2003). Therefore, *The Hours* deserves deeper and more detailed analysis, which unravels why Cunningham was so successful with his writing.

In this chapter, the analysis of the book in terms of its plot, characters and themes is made, contrasting with Woolf's life and her *Mrs. Dalloway*. Special emphasis is put on the plot, as it is essential for further understanding of characters' minds and themes.

#### **4.1 Analysis of the plot**

The book deals with the life story of three women who share the same events throughout the time and intertwine each other. There are three novellas in the book composed to make one whole. Each of them has a different setting and characters, starting with the middle-aged novelist living in 1923 after-war England, through the incessant reader, who tries to live a happy family life with her husband and a son, to a woman – lesbian – who takes care about her dying once-lover in contemporary New York. Even if the book involves three stories, plot is not chronological, it goes back and forth in time in the form of thoughts and interior monologues, and occurs only in a one single day. These three novellas do not tell the entire story at once but alternate with each other. This interesting fact is repeated throughout the whole book until the end.

The book begins with a prologue in which Virginia Woolf, wife of Leonard Woolf, rushes out of their house to a river being watched by their maid. In the meantime, Leonard returns from the garden and finds a blue envelope with a letter inside intended for him. He begins to read:

‘Dearest,  
I feel certain that I am going mad again: I feel we can't go through another of these times. And I shant recover this time. I begin to hear voices, and cant concentrate. So I am doing what seems the best thing to do. You have given me the greatest possible happiness. You have been in every way all that anyone could be. I dont think two people could have been happier till this terrible disease came.’

...

‘I cant go on spoiling your life any longer. I dont think two people could have been happier than we have been. V.’ (Cunningham, 2006, p. 6-7)



From the above-mentioned letter, it is evident that Virginia was decided to kill herself for a long time because she suffered from mental disease, which appeared in the voices that she heard, and in the loss of concentration. Cunningham borrowed this letter from the real life of Virginia Woolf where she wrote it to her husband on March 28, 1941 (Bell, 1972, p. 226). As Bell argues, Virginia saw a doctor to consult her illness one day before her death. The doctor was the friend of Virginia so that she tried to encourage her mentally, which, as turned out the next day, failed by the suicide of Virginia (1972, p. 224-226).

The story continues as Virginia drowns herself in the river, her body is drifted by the river current. At the same time, a young boy with his mother throws a stick into the water, watching soldiers (WWII has already started) in a truck, which passes them (Cunningham, 2006, p. 7-8). Here Cunningham shows the contrast between the life, expressed by the young boy, and the death, symbolized by Virginia and the soldiers. Furthermore, the stick can be compared to the body of Virginia drifted by the current and stuck by the side of the bridge piling as it 'absorbs it all: the truck and the soldiers, the mother and the child' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 8).

After the prologue, chapters with different setting and characters begin. The first one, Mrs. Dalloway, retells the story in New York at the end of the twentieth century about Clarissa Vaughan who is giving a party that day for her former lover Richard, who won the prize for his poetry. She walks to the flower shop to buy some flowers for him, thinking about being eighteen, when she and Richard were lovers, and compares that beautiful morning to this one. 'She feels every bit as she did that day in Wellfleet, at the age of eighteen' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 9-10). This is for the first time in the book when Cunningham uses thoughts of characters related to the past, comparing it with their presence. These thoughts, going to the past, accompany Clarissa all the way to the flower shop where she chooses several types of the flowers. Symbol of the flowers appears in all three novellas, i.e. in the first one Virginia writes about Mrs. Dalloway who decides to buy the flowers herself, in the second one the husband of Laura Brown gets the flowers for his birthday himself instead of Laura, and finally in the third one Clarissa buys flowers herself as well.

When Clarissa is in the shop, she hears movie people filming outside all the morning, and she tries to identify the movie star out there, her tips include Meryl Streep or Vanessa Redgrave (Cunningham, 2006, p. 26-27). Particularly, the character of Meryl

Streep is interesting because she plays Clarissa in the film version of 'The hours' (2002). This fact indicates the mutual interconnectedness of the book and the film, which is even more surprising when one considers that the book was written before the film itself was shot (The Hours, 2006).

In the next novella, Cunningham depicts one day in the life of Virginia Woolf. Story moves to the suburb of London, 1923. Virginia talks with her husband Leonard about his work and about breakfast that she refuses to have because of the book she plans to write (Cunningham, 2006, p. 29-33). For Leonard, it is not a good sign that she does not want to eat, moreover, 'she has aged dramatically, just this year', he thinks, 'she's suddenly no longer beautiful' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 33). This perception of her can be caused by Leonard's feeling that she struggles an inner fight with her own caused by her illness and tenaciousness to writing. Similar view expressed Bell who claims that 'Virginia began the new year in a mood of depression and of introspection' (1972, p. 89). Cunningham used this mental state of Virginia and perfectly developed it in the book in the form of her thoughts and ideas, using stream of consciousness.

At the end of this chapter, Virginia finally thinks up the first sentence of *Mrs. Dalloway* and writes down 'Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 35). By writing so, Cunningham referred to the book *Mrs. Dalloway* where this sentence appears at the beginning of the book as an opening line (Woolf, 1925, p. 3). The sentence is repeated several times throughout *The Hours* and thus functions as a connective device between the individual chapters.

The next chapter begins with the sentence mentioned in the previous paragraph, as Laura Brown is reading *Mrs. Dalloway*. Story moves to Los Angeles, 1949. Laura Brown goes downstairs and says hello to her husband Dan, who has a birthday, and her son Richie (Cunningham, 2006, p. 37-44). She is a good example of a woman who has one real life that she lives and another one, which she dreams. Thus, by means of her thoughts she gets from her imaginary world to the real one: 'In another world, she might have spent her whole life reading. But this is the new world ... there's not much room for idleness' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 39). Another world for her means the world of the book she is reading because there she can identify with its characters and clear her mind from her worries.

After a while, Dan leaves for work and she stays alone with the child, thinking about the cake, which she intends to make for Dan (Cunningham, 2006, p. 46-48). The cake becomes a symbol of this chapter because it is the thing that connects the whole family, i.e. mother and son making the cake, and father expecting them to prepare something for him. However, she does not consider the cake as something nice but as a necessity, which only keeps her from reading the book: 'She will not go upstairs, and return to her book. She will remain. She will do all that's required, and more' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 48).

The attention now turns to Mrs. Dalloway. Clarissa walks from the flower shop to the Richard's apartment. From her thoughts, reader learns that once, when they were young, they were lovers over the summer and that after a small fuss Richard left her and went off to Europe with Louis. When she gets to his apartment, he is sitting in a chair (Cunningham, 2006, p. 49-58). The chair in Cunningham's presentation is the symbol of this chapter, as it represents the body of Richard, who is gradually dying of mortal disease. On one hand, Clarissa considers this chair 'ostentatiously broken and worthless', or something that 'smells fetid and deeply damp, unclean' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 59). On the other hand, however, Richard perceives his chair as if it belongs only to him, as something domestic, which he refuses to get rid of.

In Richard's apartment, Clarissa reminds Richard the party she gives for him in honour of the prize that he is to get for his poetry. However, he regards the party as unnecessary, as he argues that he gets the prize only for having AIDS and being courageous about it, not really for his literary work (Cunningham, 2006, p. 61-63). Relationship between Clarissa and Richard is interesting in a way she tries to support him. She encourages him to be brave concerning both his illness and his lowered self-confidence as if she feels that he wants to kill himself due to his poor life (Cunningham, 2006, p. 49-68). Similar relationship can one find in *Mrs. Dalloway* where Septimus is insane since he suffered shell-shock in a war. His woman Rezia takes care of him as well as Clarissa takes care of Richard but, on the contrary, Rezia wants to have a baby with Septimus (Showalter, 1992, p. 32-33).

Next chapter takes us to Virginia, who goes to the printing room, where Leonard corrects mistakes of some writers, together with Ralph, his assistant. The relation between Ralph and Leonard is not always fair as Leonard scolds Ralph from time to time even if he has not the truth. Still, Virginia fully supports her husband even if she knows that he is not

always right (Cunningham, 2006, p. 69-74). Such an approach of Virginia is not exceptional when one considers that they are a married couple so that they are supposed to support each other. This fact contrasts with Ralph's overestimated sympathy of Virginia to him as he 'grins at her with relief', she, however, 'has an urge to slap him' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 74).

In the next chapter we can see Laura making the cake with Richie (Cunningham, 2006, p. 75-79) The production of the cake is described in detail as if Cunningham wanted to depict the cooperation between the mother and the son. Laura wants to make the cake at her best and associates her feelings about it with the ones of artists or architects who must face with 'canvas, with stone, with oil or wet cement' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 76). Although Laura loves her son and husband, she implies that she is not sure if she is satisfied in the family, deciding finally to remain devoted and keep her second child (Cunningham, 2006, p. 79). From this moment on, one can feel her slow but certain taste to leave her family.

Next few pages are devoted to Virginia again. She is thinking about the story and the characters Clarissa Dalloway from *Mrs. Dalloway*, for which she uses her own life. She goes into the kitchen to check Nelly, her servant. The servants have never liked Virginia, not only for her inordinate demands, but also for the way she behaved, and Virginia knew that (Cunningham, 2006, p. 81-87). This inability of Virginia to treat servants is reflected in Clarissa Dalloway by the opposite way as Virginia thinks about her: 'She will give Clarissa Dalloway great skill with servants'... 'Her servants will love her' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 87).

Following chapter deals with the relation of Clarissa Vaughan and her lesbian girlfriend Sally, as Sally has lunch with a film star Oliver St. Ives. However, Oliver does not invite Clarissa for lunch as well, which is the incentive for Clarissa to feel trivial (Cunningham, 2006, p. 89-98). She seems to be struggling with her mind as she regrets that Oliver did not invite her for lunch on one hand, and on the other hand, she is persuading herself that it 'isn't failure' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 94). Her feelings move to her former lover Richard, who is dying, so that he 'will not accompany her, as planned, into old age', she is thinking (Cunningham, 2006, p.91). By means of these senses, Clarissa expresses her loneliness, as there is nobody close to her to rely on.

In this section, Kitty tells Laura that she needs to stay in a hospital for some time because she cannot get pregnant. This message shocks Laura so that she wants to soothe her and they kiss, watched by Richie (Cunningham, 2006, p. 99-110). This moment of kiss is described in a way as if both women had some secret lesbian desires, which they have not expressed yet. By way of this example, Cunningham shows the contrast of misfortune represented by Kitty on one hand, and happiness of being pregnant represented by Laura on the other hand. However, as we further learn, for Laura it is not the real happiness but hidden tragedy.

Next chapter begins with Virginia Woolf being visited by her sister Vanessa and her children. They find a bird in the garden and want to bury it (Cunningham, 2006, p. 113-121). This moment of burial Cunningham describes as 'the funeral party', as all the people attended behave festally and consider the bird as someone who is their relative (Cunningham, 2006, p. 118). However, for Virginia it means something more than a dead bird. She would like to be on its place and have no worries with her writing and illness, which seems as if she already planned her future suicide here, on this place (Cunningham, 2006, p. 121).

The similar thing as to Virginia happens to Clarissa Dalloway in the next chapter, who is visited unexpectedly by Louis, her friend and former lover of Richard. She invites him for the party and they together remember times when they were young and lived in Wellfleet (Cunningham, 2006, p. 123-138). During their conversation, Clarissa implies that she wants 'her ashes scattered there', subsequently adds that she changed her mind (Cunningham, 2006, p. 131). This attitude of Clarissa demonstrates her morbid feelings, even if she is only middle-aged, and her desire to go back in time when she was young and satisfied with her life, having Richard close by. To have her ashes scattered on the place where she was once happy indicates that she wants to be connected with those times and place forever.

The main character of the next section is Laura who leaves her son with Mrs. Latch because she wants to be alone as she feels 'emptied, exhausted by the child, the cake, the kiss' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 142). By being 'emptied', she demonstrates how she feels in the family, which only distracts her from reading and from proving her own identity. She is thinking about the kiss that she gave Kitty, as if there was something on Kitty, which attracts her, and at the same time about the way, she loves her husband. Her love for the

husband is, at least for now, stronger so that she finally decides not to kill herself because of her family and to stay alive (Cunningham, 2006, p. 141-152). However, in the film version of 'The Hours', suicide of Laura is shown by means of her thoughts in a way that Laura is lying on the bed and the hotel room is gradually filling up with water (2002, 67 min).

The desire for death Virginia develops in the next chapter where she thinks about the suicide of Clarissa Dalloway and then she changes her mind that somebody else will die (Cunningham, 2006, p. 154). Real Woolf initially intended to let Clarissa kill herself as well, as she noted down in her diary that 'Mrs. Dalloway was originally to kill herself, or perhaps merely to die at the end of the party' (qtd. in Woolf, 1992 p. 36). Thus, she lets her insane counterpart die instead, as ...argues, 'it is Septimus who kills himself, and who serves as Clarissa's double' (qtd. in Woolf, 1992, p. 36).

This section tells us about Julia, the daughter of Clarissa, who intends to go shopping with Mary Krull, who is desperately in love with Julia (Cunningham, 2006, p. 159-162). The interesting thing is how Cunningham shows the sexual relations in this chapter. On one hand, there is Clarissa who has a lesbian relationship with Sally and on the other hand, there is Mary who platonically loves Julia who refuses her: 'Julia does not love her, not like that, and never will' (2006, p. 162).

The story turns back to Virginia who considers her life in Richmond boring with repetitious things ahead of her so that she wants to leave to London by train but is persuaded by Leonard to come back (Cunningham, 2006, p. 164-172). London means 'freedom, kisses, possibilities of art and sly dark glitter of madness' for her (Cunningham, 2006, p. 172). According to these circumstances, one can feel that Virginia was not satisfied with her boring life in Richmond and suffered from hearing the voices and headache there, compared it to a devil: 'The devil is a headache; the devil is a voice inside a wall ... the devil sucks all the beauty from the world' ... (Cunningham, 2006, p. 167).

Story turns to Sally who has an appointment with Oliver St. Ives and their friend Walter Hardy. They have a talk about the thriller with a gay character in a leading role that Oliver intends to shoot so as he wants Walter, who is gay, to write the screenplay for it (Cunningham, 2006, p. 173-179). If we compare this passage in the book with the same one in its film version, there is no conversation at all of those people over the thriller (2002). This chapter ends as Sally returns home with flowers that she bought for Clarissa, as a

symbol of her love to her. Even if the flowers cannot replace the words of love, in this case it is enough, as they represent their long-time relationship: 'they have managed, somehow, over the course of eighteen years, to continue loving each other. It is enough' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 185).

The next chapter is an example of the relationship between the mother and the son represented by Laura and Richie. When Laura drives back to Mrs. Latch's house to pick up Richie, she is thinking about being Virginia herself and about her own life, trying to imagine and understand what Virginia did: 'She is herself and not herself ... she is Virginia Woolf ... and she [Laura] is this other thing known as herself, a mother, a driver' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 187). The exteriorization of Virginia by Laura can be explained when one considers that she was a passionate reader of *Mrs. Dalloway* and was thinking about killing herself but, unlike Virginia, she has never carried it out. She realised the fact of death on her way back to Mrs. Latch's house: 'It comes to her here, in Mrs. Latch's driveway-she has been thinking longingly of death' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 188). Moreover, Cunningham masterly depicts here the family tie between the mother and the son as Laura thinks that 'he appears, for the first time, to be suffering from an emotion she can't read'. On the contrary, he knows her mother very well: 'He will always know when something is wrong. He will always know precisely when and how much she has failed' (2006, p. 192-193). This fact, to a certain extent, foreshadows that Richie knew that his mother had intended to kill herself.

This chapter retells the story of Clarissa as she watches the suicide of Richard in his apartment. Richard is similar to Virginia in a way that he can hear voices as well (Cunningham, 2006, p. 198-200). This fact shows an inner connectedness within the individual chapters of the book represented by similar qualities of the characters, in this case hearing voices by Richard and Virginia. Such interconnectedness is confirmed by the repetition of the same phrases within the text: 'I don't think two people could have been happier than we have been', argued both Richard and Virginia before they committed suicide (Cunningham, 2006, p. 7, 200).

Even if Browns seem to be all right as a family, they are not. In this chapter, Dan blows out the candles on the cake that he was given, and leaves spit on it, which makes Laura angry: 'He is coarse, gross, stupid', she thinks about him (Cunningham, 2006, p. 205). Although, this is a usual thing, she regards it as pretence to think about her life. She

is bored with her life in the family as she feels 'trapped here forever, posing as a wife' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 205).

In one of the last chapters, Virginia is thinking about Clarissa Dalloway again and realizes that Clarissa will not die, she will love a woman and they will give each other a kiss. This idea of kiss is very similar to the one that she gave to her sister Vanessa when she visited her with the children (Cunningham, 2006, p. 114, 209-211).

At the end, Laura Brown hesitates to go to bed as she feels like a ghost which is present physically but its brain is somewhere else (Cunningham, 2006, p. 215). Apparently, she seems to be dissembling that she can live this life further and share a bed with her husband. Cunningham uses a nice phrase at the end: 'From far away, she can hear a dog barking' (2006, p. 215). One can feel that the dog in this presentation means something, which attracts Laura to come closer and escape from her current life.

Laura Brown really realized the escape as we learn in the very last chapter that she had fled to Canada and worked there as a librarian. Yet, being over eighty now, she came back to talk to Clarissa about Richard and his sudden suicide (Cunningham, 2006, p. 218-226). Laura was first described as a beloved mother who takes care of Richard, thinking about killing herself, and then as an old woman who left her family. However, Cunningham shows the difference between them, as Laura lost everything, i.e. her husband, daughter and Richard as well, Clarissa has 'another hour before her' (2006, p. 226). Cunningham perfectly connects here the different life stories of two women who both experienced Richard when he was young and now when he has abandoned them.

## **4.2 Analysis of Major Characters**

This chapter deals with an analysis of the major characters that appeared in the book and were significantly important for the plot. They are analysed in a way that compares their both common and different qualities, thoughts, relationships or life stories with regard to the characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Basically, there are three major characters that occur throughout the whole book – Virginia Woolf, Laura Brown and Clarissa Vaughan. According to Vognar, all of them struggle with their own demon, which lies in illness, connection to family or a party, which



gives rise to the fact that they cope with their problem differently (2003). Despite all the differences they have, they are connected, however, in many ways.

#### 4.2.1 Connections among the Characters

A writer, a reader and a character - these are the most significant connective features in the book. The first of them, Virginia Woolf writes *Mrs. Dalloway* in early 1920's, the second one, Laura Brown is the avid reader of the same book in 1949, and finally there is Clarissa Vaughan, who is nicknamed *Mrs. Dalloway* by her lover Richard, which means the relation to the character in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Each of the three women, however, impersonates someone else and is unique in its essence. As Johnson argues, each has to deal with her complicated life by her own and compares them to artists. Moreover, he justifies Cunningham's penetration into the matters, which lie in 'marriage, lesbianism, suicide and death, literature and fame, mothers and daughters, guilt and failure' (2006). These things connect all women who use their own stream of consciousness and inner monologues to introduce their feelings and thoughts about other characters of the book.

In the viewpoint of Vognar, the most important links are fragmentations and connections that make the basis of *Mrs. Dalloway* and interfere in *The Hours* as well. He argues that stream of consciousness is prominent with individual characters but they are integrated even without coming across each other, e.g. in *Mrs. Dalloway* there is a blurry advertisement made by a plane in the sky which results in different interpretations of people who are watching it. In *The Hours*, even if the characters are separated by different time and place, they are always united by the symbols starting with cracked eggs to flowers (2003).

Generally, the major characters are united by the suicide, which they have to face personally or within the presence of their close relatives. All of them also give a party, which is more or less successful, and which differs in its extent. One can object to the previous thought that in the Woolf's story, nobody is actually giving a party. However, if one examines it in a broader detail, he/she will find out that Virginia takes the arrival of her sister with children very seriously and wanted her to get the best delicacies possible: 'I'd

prefer to give her something better than yesterday's scraps for tea', Virginia says to Nelly (Cunningham, 2006, p. 86).

Besides two above-mentioned things, the characters are also marked by their homosexuality or desire for the kiss from their relatives or friends. All of this corresponds to the shift in time among the chapters and gradually holds forth on the family life of the characters where fortunate moments interlace with the sad ones. More intense analysis is made in the next chapters where such motives and themes are discussed in more detail. However, for the understanding of those motives, it is necessary to explain the qualities of the major characters.

#### **4.2.2 Virginia Woolf**

The character of Virginia Woolf is based on the real life of Virginia Woolf, respected writer, who lived at the beginning of the twentieth century (Bell, 1972). Cunningham justifies his choice of this character on the fact that 'she was a genius and a visionary, because she was a rock star, because she was the first writer to split the atom'... (Michael Cunningham after Hours, 2003). It is obvious that for him, she was someone who he loved and respected so much that he included her life in *The Hours*.

Virginia Woolf in *The Hours* is a writer who lives with her husband Leonard at the suburb of London and suffers from mental illness. Illness influences her life and her writing itself and results in perpetual inner monologues that mark her stream of consciousness. During these inner monologues, she describes what she thinks about the people who surround her and simply shows how she perceives them. Her sensibility to feel details not only with persons but also with the environment, which surrounds her, makes her writing extremely conducted. She also considers her writing as one of the possibilities how to escape headache that haunts her and how to realize her various feelings and energy into something perspective.

Cunningham depicts her struggle with mental illness, which leads to her suicide, at the beginning of the book in the prologue (2006, p. 3-8). In the course of the story, he develops it in more detail so that the apprehension of her death arises at any moment. This expectation of her death is what makes the reader feels excited about it, as he/she does not know when it comes. For instance, in the chapter where the dead bird is buried, she thinks

that 'she would like to lie down on it herself', which signals that something bad is going to happen (2006, p. 119).

### **4.2.3 Clarissa Vaughan**

The character of Clarissa Vaughan is based on Clarissa Dalloway from *Mrs. Dalloway*, which is distinguished by their common taste for parties and their sensibility for details, the same as with Virginia Woolf. Clarissa in *The Hours* is a lesbian, who has a daughter Julia, and lives with her girlfriend Sally in the present-day New York. Her perceptiveness to things that happen around her makes her think if it is enough for her to have such relationship. According to Hughes, Cunningham adopts a minor theme of passion of Clarissa Dalloway for Sally Saton in *Mrs. Dalloway* and expands it in the form of relationship between Clarissa and Sally in *The Hours* (2004, p. 350).

Clarissa sometimes questions about the relationship with Sally and tries to find out how it would be if she took the chance and lived with Richard, with whom they were once lovers: 'Still, there is this sense of missed opportunity. Maybe there is nothing, ever, that can equal the recollection of having been young together', she constantly reminds herself (Cunningham, 2006, p. 97). Relationship of Clarissa and Richard can be compared to the one between Septimus and Rezia in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Both women take care of their male counterparts with the greatest effort but both have to accept the fact of their suicide.

### **4.2.4 Laura Brown**

Laura Brown is a young woman, avid reader of *Mrs. Dalloway*, who lives with her husband Dan and her son Richie in 1949 Los Angeles. She thinks that she should be happy because she resides a nice house, has the husband and the son, who love her, and is pregnant with the second child. However, there is something on her life, which makes her unhappy.

Unlike Virginia Woolf, who was writing the book to escape headache, Laura is steadily reading to escape her family life. Books mean a virtual world for her, where she can find the piece. Inspired by the motive of suicide in *Mrs. Dalloway* and by Virginia Woolf herself, she finds out that killing herself can be an easy way of escape. However,

thinking of her family, she cannot do that, comparing such act to an evil, which 'would punch a hole in the atmosphere' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 152). Even if she does not kill herself, she chooses another way of escape – compromise between two extremes – leaving the family for Canada.

Hughes claims that there is no exact counterpart of Laura Brown in *Mrs. Dalloway* except for Septimus and Clarissa Dalloway, who are readers as well, and except for Rezia, who is also married to a soldier. Laura admires the ability of Woolf to create a literature like that despite her own difficulties, and she herself wants, through the instrumentality of literature, to 'create a world, as she is, on another ontological level, by Woolf's' (2004, p. 354).

### **4.3 Themes in the Book**

There are so many themes, motives and symbols in the book that to depict and describe them would exceed the extent of this work. That is why, in this section, only the most significant themes that are substantial for the understanding of the book are dealt with to stress the interconnection within the individual chapters and the characters.

#### **4.3.1 Theme of Time**

As the title of the book itself (*The Hours*) suggests, it is evident that the story is based on the perspective of time. All three novellas in the book are set in a different time frame and intertwine each other in the form of stream of consciousness of the individual characters.

As Hughes claims, in *The Hours* the chronological time unfolds gradually from the sequence of hour after hour. Such points in time are connected in the book with 'literary inspiration, death, and a kiss' (2004, p. 351). The moments of literary inspiration and the kiss Cunningham depicts in association with Virginia Woolf, who fluctuates between the moment of presence and the future expressed by thoughts about the character of Clarissa Dalloway. Similarly, Clarissa Vaughan gets over the death of Richard by claiming that 'here she is, herself, Clarissa, not Mrs. Dalloway anymore; there is no one to call her that', and continues, 'here she is, with another hour before her' (2006, p. 210-211, 226). Upon

the example of Clarissa, Cunningham shows the insecure line between the hour when someone is alive and the hour when the same person is dead.

In *The Hours*, Cunningham further develops this thought in the fact that whatever happens to us, time will accompany us everywhere: 'We live our lives, do whatever we do, and then we sleep', he continues, 'most of us, the vast majority, are slowly devoured by some disease or, if we're very fortunate, by time itself' (2006, p. 225). In other words, nobody can escape his/her fate, which is already predetermined, and he/she even does not know what to expect in the future: 'these hours will inevitably be followed by others, far darker and more difficult' (2006, p. 225). Despite we can expect darker days ahead of us, we have to enjoy every day of hour life because the hours will still be here.

In the introduction to *The Hours*, Ulmanova has drawn attention to the fact that all of us have to conform to an unstoppable flow of time associated with its momentary deficiency or, conversely, with its overflow. In her view, the only way to beat the time is art, which can transfer us to a completely different period and create an illusion of youth. Such transfer makes us forget about the fact that with every second passed, we are a bit closer to death (2002, p. 187-188). These arguments perfectly fit to Laura Brown, who found a piece in reading, as she 'has left her own world and entered the realm of the book' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 150).

#### **4.3.2 Theme of Death**

Theme of death, specifically suicide, intersects in all three stories of *The Hours*. In two of them, Virginia Woolf's and Clarissa Vaughan's story, it is attended by insanity and despair, but in Laura Brown's story, it is mainly the feelings of embittered family life that prevail.

Hughes points out that death encourages associations of other people to life. As an example, she mentions Clarissa who begins to think about the effect of mortality after Richard's death. Clarissa is surrounded by the fragments of her unsuccessful party, and realizes that one day everyone will follow Richard to the realm of dead (2004, p. 355-356). Cunningham compares these feelings of mortality to the food from Clarissa's party, which seems as if the people will steadily vanish from the world and things surrounded will over live them. '... the food – that most perishable of entities – will remain here after she and

the others have disappeared; after all of them, even Julia, have died', Clarissa thinks (2006, p. 224).

In the viewpoint of Hughes, literature symbolizes 'an offering', which we as readers experience in the soul of the dead writer Virginia and her reader Laura Brown who raises another writer, who decides to kill himself, Richard Brown. Even the literature is not immortal if we compare it to Richard's poetry about which Clarissa thinks that there are only a few works that may survive, the rest will die (2004, p. 354-355). Moreover, it is noteworthy that Clarissa talks about herself and about Richard's mother Laura in a way that they - as the characters - will disappear together with the Richard's books: 'Clarissa, the figure in a novel, will vanish, as will Laura Brown, the lost mother...' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 225). These thoughts of Clarissa illustrate the contrast between Clarissa, still alive in 'the reality', and literature where she does not need to survive.

Despite Clarissa's feeling of mortality, there is, however, opposite remark. As Hughes claims, in *Mrs. Dalloway* there are soldiers who do not live through war, e.g. Evans and Septimus eventually, who are in contrast with Dan from *The Hours*, who survives it. For the world, as well as for Laura Brown, this means at least a hope or, more precisely, power that death can be beaten and overcome (2006, p. 354-355).

### **4.3.3 Theme of Family**

Theme of family reflects one of the most delicate things represented in the book. It occurs throughout the whole book, where the family is shown in both positive and negative light. However, positive moments prevail, as they are connected to family gatherings, parties or the celebration of birthday, meanwhile negative factors depict mainly the feelings of separation and death within the family or close relatives. For better lucidity, such moments are featured individually on the particular examples within stories.

In Virginia Woolf's story, Vanessa's children are the main point of worrying. For Virginia, they represent happiness on one hand and, on the other hand, they symbolize misfortune, as Virginia will never have her own children (Cunningham, 2006, p. 116). Thus, Vanessa's children are 'true accomplishment' for Virginia, something, which is so vivid that it will over live experiments in narrative or even china plates made by grandmothers. Comparing Vanessa's children to 'a pool of water into which she might or

might not dive', Virginia allows herself to observe the children from a closer distance, and understand their lives and purity in the same way as the pure water in the pool makes it easy for one to see under its surface (Cunningham, 2006, p. 118).

Perhaps, family ties are depicted most distinctively in Laura Brown's story. Such moments as making the cake together or leaving the son by his mother represent the feelings of idealization of the family and despair at the same time (Cunningham, 2006, p. 75-79, 141-142). As Hughes points out, Laura's role was to establish a comfort for her children and her husband who returned from the war. Such recreation of comfort and life after devastating events that the war brought, is a central theme (2004, p. 355). Laura's effort to remake the world after the war is substantial for her son Richie who knows that without the presence of his mother 'there is no world at all' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 192; qtd. in Hughes, 2004, p. 355). His attitude proves later, when Richard, left by his mother, kills himself (Cunningham, 2006, p. 200-202). In an article by Wood, he compares Laura's anxiety to a 'legacy' that she gives to her child and which he will always remember (1998). This idea may justify Richard's succumbing to death, with which Laura herself dived, because she passed it on her son as a 'unfortunate legacy'.

Similar view has Ulmanova, who argues that Laura Brown struggles in 1950's USA with the destiny of so-called 'ideal woman', whose only task is to maintain the comfort of home. However, she understands very soon that this is not what she had always wanted and begins to feel restricted by such perfect family, which radically limits her personal spirit. Furthermore, she is affected by the opposite requirements of marital and maternal love and her desire for freedom, and seeks an alternative world, which she temporarily finds in literature (2002, p. 186).

Similarly as Laura Brown, Clarissa Vaughan also suffers from the fact of being only a house maker in comparison to successful Sally. She takes care of her daughter Julia, with whom they are seeking and finally they perhaps find their way to each other (2006, p. 186, translated). The relationship of the mother and the daughter is quite peculiar because Julia was raised up without a father in a 'lesbian family' where Julia despises Clarissa for 'depriving her of father', even if Clarissa tried to raise her 'honourably' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 157). According to Tang, Clarissa is jealous of Julia because of her vitality and youthfulness, which is in contradiction with Clarissa's fear of losing her. Their

relationship is comparable to the one in *Mrs. Dalloway* where Clarissa Dalloway nurtures her young daughter Elizabeth and is fearful that she can lose her as well (2002, p. 34).

#### **4.3.4 Homosexuality in the Book**

Homosexuality is one of the themes that frequently occur throughout the book. The reason may be simple, Cunningham himself is a homosexual writer and that is why, he reflects this fact in his works. His characters are mainly gays or lesbians, in *The Hours* he concentrated prevalingly on the lesbians - the main characters.

In the viewpoint of Tang, Cunningham uses gay characters because only in literature they can free their voices, without facing any obstacles that heterosexual society expresses, specifically, it considers homosexuality as perverse or as 'unnatural morbidity' (2002, p. 29). In *The Hours*, some characters suffer from the feeling that the society is 'against' them and thus they have to hide their homosexual behaviour. Virginia Woolf is afraid of being spotted by her servant Nelly so that she kisses Vanessa behind Nelly's back and describes it as 'the most forbidden and delicious of pleasures' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 154). Thus, Cunningham does not give a possibility to Virginia to speak out her same-sex-love with Vanessa and makes her live under the guise of heterosexual marriage. Similarly, Laura Brown kisses Kitty being watched by her son Richie (Cunningham, 2006, p. 110). Even if she is married to her husband Ray, she has never experienced such pleasure as with Kitty. This fact indicates her secret sexual desire and her pretending to live a normal heterosexual life, having children and husband, even though she is the lesbian.

When Leonard after a long talk finally allows Virginia to come back to London, one can feel that she had won. She masterfully suppressed her signs of insanity and mental illness and reached her goal – return to London. Ivey compares this to an illustration of homosexual community because homosexuals who can hide their sexual orientation are more likely to be productive members of heterosexual society than those, who openly confess it (2005, p. 4). On the other hand, Richard in the story of *Mrs. Dalloway* openly admits being gay and having AIDS (Cunningham, 2006, p. 63). Society does not torture him for his confession; on the contrary, he is to get a prize for his poetry as a respected artist. This contrasts with his opinion that 'I got a prize for having AIDS and ... it had nothing to do with my work' (Cunningham, 2006, p. 63), which indicates his repulsion to a



public ceremony, where everyone will learn about his illness caused by homosexuality. As Ivey points out, homosexuals infected with AIDS look very strikingly and illness itself forces them to reveal their sins, which results in their social isolation (2005, p. 4).

In Clarissa Vaughan's story, Clarissa lives openly with her girlfriend Sally. They have a fortunate relationship which they confirm by their generosity in kisses. Even if they continue loving each other, Sally, however, fails in expressing her love to Clarissa, giving her flowers only (Cunningham, 2006, p. 185). This situation implies her inability to express the feelings to her lover. A study by Tang indicates that it is caused by the incapacity to communicate and compares it to *Mrs. Dalloway* where Richard was not able to express his feelings to Clarissa Dalloway (2002, p. 34).

There are some more examples of homosexuality in *The Hours*. Louis who confesses to Clarissa that he fell in love with his student Hunter (Cunningham, 2006, p. 133), Sally has lunch with Oliver St. Ives, gay movie star, who intends to shoot a thriller with the gay as the main character, and wants Walter Hardy, another gay character, to write a screenplay for it (Cunningham, p. 175-176, 180). Finally, there is Marry Krull, lesbian activist who loves and admires Julia (Cunningham, 2006, 161-162). They have one thing in common, they all appear in Mrs. Dalloway's story. This indicates Cunningham's effort to depict themes like homosexual love, lesbian marriage and AIDS in the concept of the modern world at the end of the twentieth century, which is perhaps the most comprehensible for the contemporary reader. Tang has expressed a similar view. She points out that in the story of Mrs. Dalloway, Cunningham reflects the contemporary period of his own life but he also restores the story line of *Mrs. Dalloway* and adds his own imaginations and ideas (2002, p. 27).

To sum up, the theme of homosexuality develops within all three stories with regard to their different period and public acceptance of it by the society then. Thus, in Virginia Woolf's story, Virginia has to hide her homosexual behaviour under the mask of heterosexual relationship with her husband and cannot speak out against it. Similarly, in Laura Brown's story, the only choice for Laura to free herself is to leave her family because at that time it was not acceptable to change the family for the same-sex lover. However, in Mrs. Dalloway's story, Clarissa Vaughan openly lives with her lover Sally, which marks liberal views about the homosexuality in that period.

Besides above-mentioned things, homosexuality in *The Hours* is connected to the certain moments and issues. In the first two novellas, the moment of kiss and heterosexual marriage are significant as they are the signs of the hidden same-sex love, excitement or despair. In the third novella, Cunningham holds forth mainly on the issue of AIDS as a mortal illness very frequent with homosexuals, which changes the life completely and leads to death. Generally speaking, Cunningham shows the change of homosexuality from the beginning of the twentieth century to the modern age and compares it on the particular characters.

#### **4.4 Comparison with Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway***

In an interview in 2003, Cunningham answered the question why he had chosen Virginia Woolf and her *Mrs. Dalloway*. He stated that '... she was a genius and a visionary ... she was the first writer to split the atom, because I'm in love with her' (Peregrin, 2003). It is obvious that he considered her exceptional writer and therefore adopted and rewrote her *Mrs. Dalloway* into the modern version - *The Hours*.

However, *The Hours* is not merely the modern retelling of *Mrs. Dalloway*; Cunningham used his own ideas, story lines and characters. According to Lombardi, many stories are rearranged and reorganized but Cunningham delineated them as masterfully as almost nobody before him did. Still, Cunningham's work includes the themes of insanity and suicide, similarly to *Mrs. Dalloway*, but in *The Hours* Cunningham allows the reader to 'travel in time' and experience the facts in the modern age with a touch from the past (Lombardi, 2008). Such facts are perhaps the most prominent in Clarissa Vaughan's story, where Clarissa lives in contemporary New York, which is very easy for the reader to imagine and blend in.

Hughes confirms the previous thought as he claims that Cunningham simply does not copy the structure of *Mrs. Dalloway* and moves it to the twentieth century New York. He takes a minor theme in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa's hidden love for Sally Seton, and expands it in *The Hours* in the form of long-time lesbian relationship of Clarissa Vaughan and Sally (2004, p. 350). While Clarissa in *Mrs. Dalloway* feels only erotic excitement when she remembers Sally (Showalter, 1992, p. 34), her New York's counterpart experiences true love with Sally (Cunningham, 2006, p. 185).

From the above-mentioned example, it is obvious that Cunningham takes names of characters in *Mrs. Dalloway* and uses them in *The Hours* (see table 1.) Such characters are put to a different space and time, which makes them experience their life diversely with different dilemmas ahead of them. For instance, Richard is Clarissa's husband in *Mrs. Dalloway* but in *The Hours*, he is only her friend and former lover. By putting Virginia Woolf into his novel as a character, Cunningham shows his appreciation and admiration to her. Furthermore, in the viewpoint of Tang, Cunningham opens a discussion between English and American interpretation of his and Woolf's text and even himself and Woolf because he appears in the novel not only as a narrator but also as a critic and interpreter of Woolf (2002, p. 3).

If we are to summarize what Cunningham did with the Woolf's novel, we have to say that he pre-eminently salutes Woolf either by using the title *The Hours*, which was her working title for *Mrs. Dalloway* (Ulmanova, 2002, p. 188), or by putting her as the character into the story that deals with her life. Then, he uses the same plot-structure of one day, depicting preparation of a party, using stream of consciousness of the characters to go back and forth in time. However, he changes and reconstruct the plot by separating one story line into three novellas where he deals with the topic of war, as in Laura Brown's story, and with AIDS in Mrs. Dalloway's story. Furthermore, he borrows the names of characters from *Mrs. Dalloway* and assigns them similar roles and qualities. What Cunningham managed in *The Hours* is that he did not write merely the sequel of *Mrs. Dalloway* but he tried to merge with the spirit of Virginia Woolf adding his own ideas and issues.

## **5. 'THE HOURS' - FILM**

Cunningham's novel *The Hours* was adapted for the screen in 2002 by Stephen Daldry (Mathews, 2003). It is closely based on its book version. Therefore, in this chapter the analysis of the plot and its cast is made with stress put on its difference with the Cunningham's novel. For better clarity, opinions of the film critics and Cunningham's overall evaluation are shown when reviewing cast.

## 5.1 Film vs. Book

Plot of the film is almost identical as in the book. Most of the scenes copy the same ones from the book, with greater or lesser precision. However, it is almost impossible to catch every small detail because the book can describe everything more elaborately. Some of the scenes are taken out since the film cannot be so long to cover everything and it also lacks the possibility to explain things so minutely as the book. Thus, the core of the book lies in details and stream of consciousness of individual characters, whereas the core of the film lies in editing.

Similar approach expresses Vognar who argues that the story of the novel is at the first sight rather simple but if one examines it in broader detail, he/she will find out that the details are the most important as they take us to the minds of different characters and show how they perceive their surroundings. In the novel, Cunningham gives each woman a different chapter and then he alternates from one to another. By contrast, in the film, the connective device lies in editing which enables to flash from one woman to the other one, similarly to the book, and even to capture the same situations (2003). For instance, in the prologue at the beginning of the film we can see Virginia stepping into the water, then there is a quick cut to her, writing the letter for Leonard, and finally to Leonard reading it (2002, 3 min). However, these three moments are depicted in sequence in the book (Cunningham, 2006, p. 3-7).

Opposite opinion expresses Mathews who argues that despite great editing and perfect performances of the actors, editing is a part of the problem. Sometimes it too often reminds us that what we are watching is only a heavily composed 'puzzle' that cannot fully replace Cunningham's novel. Therefore, because of heavy condensation of the film, the novel will always arise more interest in the people's empathetic system (2003). Similarly, Appelbaum claims that the audience is not familiar enough with the minds of the characters and their lives so that quite many questions are left open and arouse ambiguities (2003). For instance, when Richard is sitting on the windowsill before his suicide, he says to Clarissa if she remembers 'a morning on the beach ... [when] you [Clarissa] were eighteen and maybe I was nineteen' (2002, 93 min). Such dialogues are much more developed in the book, which confirms the idea that condensation, even if it is the natural feature of the film, is probably the most evident imperfection of this film adaptation

because it raises ambiguities and cannot reveal all secrets and particularities of Cunningham's novel.

Despite the effort of filmmakers to cover all important story lines and things from the book, some parts in the book are not included in the film. It is, for instance, the part when Sally has lunch with Oliver St. Ives (Cunningham, 2006, p. 173-184). In the film, however, there is only a brief statement by Sally that she goes off (2002, 35 min). Similarly, when Clarissa is at the flower shop, she hears the sound from the movie people filming outside (Cunningham, 2006, p. 26-27), which is even not included in the film. Generally speaking, majority of the scenes in the film are almost the same as in the book, with only details changed or taken out.

The same as the book, the film also connects two books together - *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Hours*. It, however, uses the magic of editing again to manage it. In the passage where Virginia writes the first sentence of *Mrs. Dalloway* - 'Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself' - we can see Laura reading the same sentence aloud, followed by Clarissa, who decides to buy the flowers herself (2002, 11 min). There are several of such transitions in the film, which proves the effort of filmmakers to make the scenes as comprehensive as possible to link these two books.

With a great precision, the film connects symbols and themes together and shows them in the association with all three women. For instance, symbol of the hours is represented by the transition of the ticking alarm clock, which wakes up Laura and then Clarissa and striking of the clock does the same with Virginia as well (2002, 6 min). Furthermore, the flowers serve as a connective device between the story lines. First, there is Clarissa moving the flowers to a different place, then director cuts to Dan, putting the flowers on the table and finally there is Nelly arranging them (2002, 8 min). Even the theme of death is captured as we can see Virginia who tries to think up who will die in her book and then there is a cut to Laura, lying on the bed, thinking about killing herself (2002, 77 min). Such themes like death and depression arouse emotions with people who are watching it. Therefore, we can see many characters crying, expressing their grief or happiness on the other hand. All of this is one of the possibilities to substitute at least partially Cunningham's sense for details in his novel.

## 5.2 Cast and Critics

Actors playing in the film are prevalingly the top stars of the film industry. Thus, we can see Nicole Kidman (as Virginia Woolf), Julianne Moore (as Laura Brown) and Meryl Streep (as Clarissa Vaughan) playing the major characters (Mathews, 2003). Basically, their performance is praised by the critics and that is why, there is no wonder that Nicole Kidman received the Oscar in the best actress category and two more actors were nominated for it (Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 2007).

Film critics identically allege that Kidman performed excellently. In the viewpoint of Mathews, Kidman lost and transformed herself into the role of Woolf so brilliantly that one can feel the difficulties that finally weakened Virginia (2003). Her transformation into the role of Virginia proves Wolf who argues that Kidman was willing to take an artificial nose in order to be more realistic. Furthermore, she was so courageous that she even did not want to let any stunt double her in the drowning scene in the river (2002). With that nose and make-up, Kidman was almost unrecognizable and looked like real Virginia Woolf. For the reasons mentioned above, Virginia Woolf's story is the most emphatic of all because not only it is worked out the most but also it is the most authentic story, based on the life of real Virginia Woolf. Mathews approves this fact as he claims that it is the best-developed story in comparison with other two that are only 'literary extensions' (2003).

Unlike the praise of Kidman's performance, the other two major actors received contradictory evaluation. In the viewpoint of Mathews, the Laura Brown's story brings ambiguities because of both Julian Moore's inexplicit performance to express the unsolvable pressures that were feeling the women of 1950s and the film inability to indicate it (2003). On the contrary, Daniele argues that if the performance of Julian Moore was put on palette, it would bear comparison with Impressionist art of Picasso or Monet, because of Moore's sense for expressing feelings and emotions (2005). Laura Brown's story stands in the film as an intermediary between the other two stories and despite the emotive performances of Moore, there are still things that could be done more clearly for the viewer. For instance, when Laura goes to the hotel to kill herself (2002, 62-63 min), nothing in the film explains clearly why she wanted to do that, mainly because of Moore's performance that does not imply obviously that she was unsatisfied in the family.

Similarly, the Clarissa Vaughan's story is sometimes unclear in its contemplations. In a critical article by Mathews, he asserts that the connections to Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* are weak because the only thing that reminds them is Richard, who nicknames Clarissa 'Mrs. Dalloway' (2003). Moreover, Ellen suggests that the ending of the film is a bit unnatural and even slow as two stories merge with each other (2003). She refers to the passage where the old Laura Brown comes to visit Clarissa Vaughan after the Richard's death and not until the end of the film, we learn that young Richie in the Laura Brown's story is actually the old Richard in Mrs. Dalloway's story, who just died and whose mother had left him (2002, 111 – 114 min). Concerning the performance of Meryl Streep, she is mostly subjected to praise. In the viewpoint of Ellen, Streep is 'restrained and magnificent' (2003). Daniele points out that Streep was so persuasive that through her voice the viewer can be familiarized with distress and depression that she herself suffered. Moreover, by means of her performance, the viewers have no chance to escape the story and have to involve themselves, even after the end of the film (2005). The most impressive scene is the one when Clarissa almost sustains a nervous breakdown when she watches Richard falling out the window (2002, 94 min). Such impression of human tragedy leaves a great impression with people who are watching it and, thus, makes them identify with Clarissa and her bitter life.

Overall, the rating of the actors is largely positive so that actors are mainly praised for their breathtaking performances that arouse emotions in the viewers. Lastly, who else could be more suitable for evaluation of the film and performances of the characters than Cunningham himself. He writes:

And so I find myself in an enviable if slightly embarrassing position as one of the only living American novelists happy about his experience with Hollywood. These actors are not who I imagined when I wrote the book, but I feel as if they are reincarnations of people I've known intimately. It's as if people dear to me had died, and I find myself meeting them afterward, in other bodies, and simply knowing, from their gestures and their eyes, from some ineluctable familiarity, that these are they, returned. (qtd. in Daniele, 2005)

Such statement of Cunningham is convincing evidence that the filmmakers fulfilled the secret expectations about the film – both his excitement as the viewer and also as the

writer, who can meet the characters that died in his novel and that he knew intimately, once again in other bodies in the film.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Comparison of the book and the film is very difficult issue because both arts depict their ideas differently. Such comparison was the aim of this paper as it tried to contrast both arts on the specific example of Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* (1998) and its film version, directed by Stephen Daldry (2002). Main task was to prove or disprove the thesis, which presumed that the main plot structure of the film is very similar to the one in the book. To solve this matter, analysis of the book and the film plot, characters and themes was made as well as other features that were necessary for the understanding and appropriate analysis.

Concerning the plot, the differences between the book and the film are only minor. Some scenes in the film are deleted (e.g. lunch of Sally and Oliver St. Ives, described in detail in the book) and some of them are redundant in comparison with the book. In most cases, the main plot structure is retained. Even if the story shows one day of life of three women so as it seems as there is not much space for any alterations, they are, however, distinct in the way the film depicts the plot. While the structure of the plot in the book is divided into chapters that deal with the story of each woman separately and do not interfere with the others, the film uses the magic of editing to skip from one story to another and even to cut from one woman to the other one. For that reason, we can see all the women getting up or doing similar things successively. Furthermore, the camera plays an important role in the alternation between the stories as it zooms in or out throughout the scene and thus shows the setting of each story without any further comments from the narrator. To sketch in the scene and explain the setting, brief caption of the place and the year is put at the beginning of each story. Such short description of the setting is similar to the book but, on the contrary, the book uses the narrator to introduce various situations and to depict their setting. Moreover, the book is mostly more detailed than the film in the description of characters, their minds, life-stories, and things that surround them, and therefore, its magic lies in details, yet the film relies mostly on the condensation of important scenes and its editing.



The process of condensation is very difficult for the filmmakers, as they have to face two opposite extremes. First, they must adapt as many things from the book as possible in order the story of the film was not ambiguous. Second, they have to follow certain time limits for the film because it cannot be endless, whereas the author of the book is not restricted in expressing his/her ideas. In *The Hours*, such process is even more complicated if one considers how tangled the book is and how many details it involves. Besides, the novel contains many jumps in time, going to the past and back, using stream-of-consciousness style and interior monologue. These transitions in time by means of flow of the ideas in the minds of the characters are very frequent and break the usual linear plot. Since the film cannot fluctuate in time so often not to break its structure, it uses various connective devices to link the characters, their stories and ideas, namely, symbols as flowers, water, book *Mrs. Dalloway* and so on. Furthermore, the film takes advantage of the dialogues between the characters to explain at least partially some of the things that happened in the past. Despite great effort of the filmmakers to involve many thoughts of the characters and their life stories from the past that occurred in the book, they failed to represent some scenes, which can arouse ambiguities with the viewers, and therefore this becomes one of the most evident imperfections of the film.

Both the book and the film masterfully link its characters by means of the themes and symbols, however, they achieve it differently. In the novel, most of these things are restricted to one chapter with one woman and then repeated after some time in another one with other two women. For instance, symbol of flowers is represented with Virginia, Laura and Clarissa, but in different chapters. On the other hand, film depicts flowers by means of quick cuts to all three women, immediately one after another, which creates perfect link. Besides that, music is very important in the film version of *The Hours*, as it usually takes only certain time to cover some situation and to connect the symbol within the characters, and then it stops. Together with perfect performances of the actors and swift camera, it embroiders the story and fills in the gap that appeared due to the condensation of the film.

If we are to compare the characters in the novel and the film, we have to keep in mind that in the book they are often elaborately portrayed, some of them by the interior monologues of other characters. Even if appearance of the actors in the film does not correspond completely to their description in the book, their perfect performance fully substitutes it. Interior monologues in the book are often replaced by moments where the

actors pretend to be thinking over something and thus imitate apt gesture. Moreover, when they cry or are annoyed, the camera zooms in their face and shows the details, which awakens viewer's emotions. Therefore, the film uses mainly performances of the actors and the book detailed interior monologue to depict the qualities and behaviour of its characters.

As the book *The Hours* is based on Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, it contains many similar characters and situations, such as giving the party or the occurrence of famous people. Connections to *Mrs. Dalloway* are distinct by many links in the book, beginning from the similar passages of texts to the excerpts of *Mrs. Dalloway* itself. In the film, these parts appear in the form of reading aloud by the actors or in the quick cut-ins to each of them.

To sum up, thesis set before writing the paper was proved because the plot of the film is very similar to the one in the book. Filmmakers adopted the novel for the screen very precisely, paying attention to many details. Despite perfect editing, camera, music and performances of the actors, the film version of *The Hours* has its imperfections but they are only minor if we evaluate the film as the whole. Together with Michael Cunningham, they reached perhaps the greatest success, i.e. to revive the life of Virginia Woolf and her *Mrs. Dalloway*.

## 7. RESUMÉ

Modernismus v průběhu let přinesl změny, které znamenaly kulturní i lidský rozvoj. Většina autorů se shoduje, že modernismus trval od roku 1890, kdy reagoval na nutnost přinést do společnosti nové hodnoty a myšlenky, do roku 1930, tedy období před druhou světovou válkou. Jeho spletitý historický vývoj pak přispěl k tomu, že modernismus je velmi těžké definovat tak, aby jeho definice obsáhla všechny oblasti, kterých se týkal. Modernismus tedy můžeme chápat buď v rovině obecné, kdy se má za to, že je to směr, který přinesl změny téměř ve všech oblastech lidského života, a nebo v rovině literární, kde vyvolal změny v literatuře. Obvykle bývá modernismus spojován s rozvojem modernosti, která se projevila nejvíce na přelomu devatenáctého a dvacátého století. Přinesla sebou rozvoj technologie, průmyslu, lidské společnosti a nových filozofických myšlenek. Tyto myšlenky jsou často dávány do souvislostí i s první světovou válkou na začátku dvacátého století, protože znamenaly potřebu lidí komentovat nové skutečnosti. Vývoj techniky sebou přinesl nové vynálezy jako např. automobil, letadlo, telefon apod., které předznamenaly novou éru lidské společnosti a zapříčinily vznik toho, co je dnes známo jako modernismus.

Modernismus se tak projevil nejen ve zrychleném životě, cestování a komunikací lidí, ale postihl i všechny formy umění, jako literaturu, hudbu či výtvarné umění. V literatuře modernismus naboural hegemonii realismu, tedy směru, který zobrazoval život a skutečnosti realisticky. Modernismus sebou přinesl nové, alternativní metody, které zobrazovaly stejné skutečnosti jiným způsobem. Průkopníkem v tomto směru byl Henry James, jehož romány se vyznačovaly komplexností a dvojznačností a byly tak inspirací pro mnoho autorů, například pro Virginii Woolfovou. Takovéto změny byly zřetelné jak v poezii, tak především v próze, která byla často experimentální, s častými posuny v čase, juxtapozicemi a většinou neměla chronologický děj. Místo chronologického děje se často užívali skoky do minulosti prostřednictvím podvědomí postav, a to i bez předchozího upozornění. Takovéto skoky byly dosaženy pomocí vnitřního monologu postav a především pak proudu vědomí. Tento proud byl charakteristický zejména pro Virginii Woolf nebo Jamese Joyce, kteří ho využívali ve svých dílech. V jejich podání se projevoval zejména stejným postavením všech časů, tj. minulosti, přítomnosti i budoucnosti v mysli postavy, která tyto časy přeskakovala pomocí svých myšlenek. Tyto myšlenky, ať už reálné či nereálné, pak volně proudily jejich myslí a způsobovali tak rozklad klasické lineární

struktury děje, která byla nahrazena strukturou nesourodou, která byla později inspirací i pro jiné autory, například Michaela Cunninghama.

I přes různé projevy modernismu na umění, musíme vycházet z toho, že literatura a film jsou dvě různé složky, které mají mnoho věcí stejných, ale i rozličných. I přes jejich odlišnost jsou mnohá literární díla ztvárněna na filmové plátno, protože přes televizní obrazovku mohou oslovit početnější televizní publikum a zároveň tak i přilákat pozornost na jejich knižní předlohu. Samotný proces adaptace je velmi složitý. Záleží na mnoha faktorech, které představují jak délka samotného filmu, tak i například nutnost dodržet strukturu knižní předlohy.

Pokud se podíváme na konkrétní případ románu *Hodiny* (1998) od Michaela Cunninghama a její filmové verze (2002), režírované Stephenem Daldrym, na první pohled má film stejnou strukturu jako knižní předloha. Při hlubším zkoumání však zjistíme, že tomu tak úplně není, protože kouzlo této adaptace tkví v detailech. Tyto detaily se plně projevují při zachycení motivů, symbolů a dalších maličností, kterých se v knize vyskytuje velké množství. Pro srovnání těchto věcí je nejprve nutné něco si říci o tom, jak kniha vlastně vznikla a co jsou její ústřední prvky.

Román *Hodiny* vychází z knihy *Paní Dallowayová* (1925) od Virginie Woolfové. Cunningham jí byl inspirován natolik, že od ní převzal nejen základní strukturu knihy, ale věnoval jí i jednu dějovou linii, kde Woolfová vystupuje jako hlavní postava. *Hodiny* však nejsou jen pouhým převyprávěním *Paní Dallowayové* do moderní podoby, nýbrž Cunningham použil i své vlastní nápady, a tak jsou mnohé příběhy reorganizovány a přeměněny od základů. Největší změnou je pravděpodobně to, že zatímco *Paní Dallowayová* má pouze jednu dějovou strukturu, *Hodiny* mají hned tři. Navíc v některých příbězích se Cunningham zabývá jinými tématy, např. nemoc AIDS a její důsledky na lidskou mentalitu, téma války atd. Tyto odlišnosti nejsou však takového rázu, aby zanechali ve čtenáři dojem, že se jedná o úplně jinou knihu. Spojitosti jsou očividné na první pohled, v obou knihách je stejná dějová struktura jednoho dne, která zachycuje přípravu ženy na večírek, nebo proud vědomí, pomocí kterého se pohybujeme v ději ze současnosti do minulosti a zpět. Cunningham tedy nenapsal jen pouhé pokračování *Paní Dallowayové*, ale snažil se splynout s duchem Virginie Woolfové, prolnout její dílo do moderní podoby a přidat svoje myšlenky.

*Hodiny* tedy zachycují osudy tří žen během jednoho dne a jejich přípravu na večírek. Jejich životní osudy se vzájemně prolínají, a tak mají mnoho věcí společných, ale zároveň každá žena je ve své podstatě jiná. Každé hrdince Cunningham vyčlenil jednu kapitolu, každá má však jiný časový rámeček, a tak můžeme vidět Virginii Woolfovou jako spisovatelku v poválečné Anglii roku 1923 a v den její smrti v roce 1941, dále pak vášnivou čtenářku Lauru Brown, která se snaží vést klidný rodinný život se svým manželem a synem na předměstí Los Angeles roku 1949, a konečně také Clarissu Dalloway v prostředí moderního New Yorku na konci dvacátého století, kde udržuje lesbický vztah se svou přítelkyní a zároveň se stará o svého dřívějšího milence. Děj knihy není chronologický, tj. příběh se neodehrává od začátku do konce, ale jsou zde četné posuny v čase ve formě vzpomínek hlavních postav, v rámci vnitřních monologů. Všechny tři příběhy hrdinek nejsou odvyprávěny souvisle v kuse až do konce, ale vzájemně se střídají, takže zde vzniká prostor pro vzájemné porovnání.

V první řadě je nutné si uvědomit, že i když jsou hrdinky od sebe vzdáleny i několik desítek let v čase, mají podobné životní osudy, které pojí stejné události, symboly nebo věci. Především to je jejich příprava na večírek, s kterým se každá žena vypořádá s menší či větší precizností a kolem které se většinou celý příběh točí. Dále to je zejména problém smrti, kterému čelí ať už každá ze samotných hrdinek sama a nebo někdo z jejího bezprostředního okolí. Neodmyslitelnou věcí je u všech tří žen také čas, který, ať už chtějí nebo ne, odbíjí jejich život hodinu po hodině, a tak si všechny stále více uvědomují, jestli život, který vedou, je právě ten, který si vždycky přály mít. U všech tří příběhů také hraje významnou roli literatura, spojená především s knihou *Paní Dallowayová*, která je v každém příběhu pojata jinak - Virginie Woolfová je zobrazena jako spisovatelka, která i přes své četné bolesti hlavy píše tento román, Laura Brown, jako nenasycená čtenářka tuto knihu čte, a Clarissa Vaughan v ní vystupuje ať už kvůli podobným vlastnostem jako měla Clarissa Dalloway v *Paní Dallowayové*, a nebo kvůli tomu, že jí tak její bývalý milenec Richard přezdívá. Mezi významná pojítka patří také homosexualita všech hrdinek. Rozdíl je však v tom, jak to která žena dává najevo. A tak například Virginie a Laura, ač přitahovány osobami stejného pohlaví, musí dělat, že žijí ve šťastném manželství a milují své manžely. Nejliberálnější je v tomto ohledu Clarissa, která otevřeně přiznává svoji náklonnost k Sally, se kterou žije už několik let. V jejím případě je to pravděpodobně způsobené tím, že společnost na konci dvacátého století je mnohem liberálnější než dřív.

S tímto ohledem souvisí i jejich vztah jako matek ke svým dětem, který není vždy ideální, a který souvisí i s pocitem viny za jejich ne vždy dobrou výchovu, což si často přičítají jako svoje osobní selhání. Z tohoto pohledu se vymyká Virginie, která děti neměla a ani jí to příliš nelákalo, kvůli její nechuti k sexu.

A právě sexualita je v *Hodinách* vyjádřena u mnoha postav. Jedná se zejména o různé projevy homosexuality, které jsou konfrontovány s pocity heterosexuálních lidí. K tomu přispívá i fakt, že Cunningham sám otevřeně přiznává, že je gay. V *Hodinách* pak využívá tyto postavy s homosexuální orientací, protože v literatuře mohou svobodně vyjádřit svoje pocity a názory, bez toho, aniž by musely čelit příkořím, které před ně heterosexuální společnost klade. I přes to však musí některé postavy svou homosexualitu skrývat, protože si myslí, že společnost je proti nim a nepochopila by jejich chování, namátkou např. Virginie, která musí svou náklonnost ke své sestře vyjádřit pouze za zády své služebné. V tomto případě je homosexualita a touha po stejném pohlaví spojena s momentem polibku, na který pak hlavní hrdinky ještě dlouho vzpomínají. V dalším případě je spojena s nemocí AIDS, jako projev homosexuálního sexu. Obecně řečeno, Cunningham v *Hodinách* zachytil homosexualitu, jak byla společností vnímána a jak se vyvíjela v myslích postav od první poloviny dvacátého století, až do jeho konce.

A právě mysl hrdinek při tom hrála důležitou roli. Cunningham, podobně jako Woolfová, využívá proud vědomí a vnitřní monolog, aby nastínil, co si jednotlivé postavy myslí a jak vnímají ostatní ve svém okolí. Při tom používá mnoho skoků v čase do minulosti a zpět do děje, a narušuje tak jeho chronologii. Tyto přechody v čase slouží k tomu, že se z nich postupně dozvídáme co postavy dělaly v dětství nebo jaký románek tehdy prožily. Navíc tak Cunningham odbíhá od prostého popisu postav od vypravěče, ale snaží se je zachytit pomocí myšlenek jiných lidí, což umožňuje i jejich vzájemnou konfrontaci.

Přes všechny uvedené věci je tedy zřejmé, že filmaři při adaptaci Cunninghamova románu neměli snadnou úlohu, protože museli věnovat pozornost mnoha detailům. Při tomto procesu však využili perfektní střih, kameru i zvuk, kterými nahradili to, co Cunningham ve své knize s dokonalou precizností rozvádí na mnoha stránkách. Pokud k tomu přičteme velmi dobré výkony herců, které často v divácích vyvolají emoce nejrůznějšího druhu, od smutku až po radost, můžeme říci, že filmová verze románu *Hodiny* je zdařilou adaptací, která si i přes své nedostatky najde mnoho svých příznivců.

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## 9. APPENDICES

Table 1

	Mrs. Dalloway	The Hours
	■ Virginia Woolf	■ Michael Cunningham
	■ Clarissa Dalloway	■ Clarissa Vaughan
	■ Daughter: Elizabeth	■ Daughter: Julia
	■ Sally Seton	■ Sally
	■ Richard (Dalloway)	■ Kitty
	■ Septimus →	■ Richard
	■ Sb. of greatness (in a royal carriage goes by)	■ Meryl Streep (in the book and the movie)
	■ Writer: Virginia Woolf	■ Reader: Laura Brown
		■ Writer: Virginia Woolf

Source:

[http://www.eng.fju.edu.tw/iacd\\_2004S/modern\\_postmodern/files/The%20Hours.ppt](http://www.eng.fju.edu.tw/iacd_2004S/modern_postmodern/files/The%20Hours.ppt)