



# Shutter Island: the adaptation of a suspenseful story

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*Shutter Island: the adaptation of a suspenseful story*



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## Introduction:

Adapting a suspenseful novel is a challenge. Indeed, the novel form allows the readers to have a very precise idea of what happens in the story. The novel can describe everything precisely while, on the contrary, a film has to focus on some elements and leave others aside. This is a major difficulty for the adaptation process because in order to convey the same feelings as a precise and detailed novel, an adaptor has to make the right choices in order to rightly transcript the feelings of suspense and potentially fear on screen.

Published in 2003, Dennis Lehane's novel *Shutter Island* is a story of mystery and suspense. In 2010, Martin Scorsese released a film adaptation of this novel. This work of adaptation illustrates perfectly this challenge of adapting suspense and fear. The famous filmmaker felt moved by Lehane's work and by the constantly changing story of *Shutter Island*. He had his own vision of the novel and realized it on screen. For instance, during the casting process, Scorsese was looking for a lean woman to play Andrew's wife, but after checking in the novel, he saw that it was the way he imagined her, but that Lehane had actually never described her this way. Furthermore, Scorsese adapted the story by giving his own point of view and precisising the ending that Lehane left to the imagination.

Before going further into details and analysis, I must explain the plot so the readers who have not seen the film nor read the book can understand my point. Throughout the story, the readers and spectators dive into the mind of the main character: Edward/Teddy Daniels (Leonardo DiCaprio). He is a US marshal from Boston, sent to Shutter Island, an island on which a psychiatric hospital for the criminally insane is built. What seems to be the main plot of the story is Teddy's mission: finding Rachel Solando (Emily Mortimer), a missing patient from the hospital. Accompanied by Chuck Aule (Mark Ruffalo), his partner on the case, he explores the island, interviews patients and interrogates the medical staff. A subplot quickly reveals itself: Teddy has actually been interested in the island for years, because he is looking for Andrew Laeddis, his wife's killer. Everything is mixed up and Teddy is convinced that he was drawn on the island, because he was asking too many questions about experiments conducted on the patients.

Teddy is a man traumatized by his military past, mainly by his participation in the Liberation of Dachau at the end of World War II and by the loss of his wife. Haunted by: the images of the camp, the horrors he did and saw there, his wife and a little girl; Teddy is prone



to many hallucinations and flashbacks throughout the story. The reader comes to realize that Teddy is one of the patients of the island, his real name being Andrew Laeddis. He lives in Ashecliffe because he cannot face what he has done: killing his wife after finding out that she had drowned their three children. In fact, Andrew has created an alternate reality in which he does not have children and in which his wife was killed by another man so that he does not have to admit what he did and to accept his grief. It turns out that the whole Rachel Solando case has been a role play staged for him to understand that the world and story he had created were impossible and that he is, in reality, a patient.

The plot resides, then, on the ability of the writer to both show and hide that Andrew is actually a patient. The aim is to create suspense all along the story by mixing the plots and misleading the reader into believing that what Andrew thinks is true. The novel form allows Dennis Lehane to create complex characters, long discussions, a detailed setting and to frame the story through a specific point of view — that of Teddy/Andrew.

Seven years later, the story was adapted by Martin Scorsese into a film. Just like Lehane with his book, “Scorsese frames the film entirely from the fictional Teddy’s point of view, he places the viewers of this film in Laeddis’ subject position”<sup>1</sup> (Mulhall, 245). The question that we can ask ourselves is how Scorsese has adapted the particular feelings that are most important in the novel: fear, anguish, stress, curiosity and suspense. Because, unlike a novel, a film cannot last for too long, it has to last between 90 and 150 minutes for the viewers to keep their full attention on it. Furthermore, there are many difficulties in adaptation that Scorsese had to go through such as choosing what to add and what to remove from the original story, choosing the faces that could best represent the characters, choosing the music and the setting of the film etc. Furthermore, the story rests on uncertainties, to which the viewers and readers are supposed to find interpretations. For instance, the end of the story is very enigmatic. The novel leaves an open end: the reader does not know whether Andrew is conscious of who he actually is or if he is not. In the film, the ending is clearer: he has become conscious again, but chooses to be lobotomized. Lots of people have decided anyway that Andrew was really Teddy and was tricked into believing this whole patient story. Others think that the experiment of the hospital’s director Cawley (Ben Kingsley) has not worked and that Andrew thinks that he is still Teddy. All of this gives a huge importance to the audience. Then, we can ask ourselves the following questions: How does the film *Shutter Island* adapt

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Mulhall, “Martin Scorsese’s Screening Room: Theatricality, Psychoanalysis, and Modernity in *Shutter Island*”, *Scorsese and Religion* (Brill Academic Publishers, 2019)

the novel's misleading of the spectator and to what effect? And how does the reception of both the film and the novel receptions impact the sense of the story?

Firstly, it will be essential to take a look at adaptation theory and the history of thrillers and how the line between cinematographic genres can be really thin, especially between horror and thrillers. It is also important to focus on the process of adaptation itself and how an adaptation is created. Then, we will focus on narration, especially on the importance of the misleading of the viewer and reader, the unreliability of the main character and how it affects the audience's experience of the story. Finally, we will study the importance of the audience and how it participates in the elaboration of the sense of the story and the success of the work.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> I will also use the name "Andrew" as the name of the main character, because it is his real name, even though he is more often called "Teddy", because this is his imaginary name.

# I. Adapting the Psychological Thriller, transcribing the essential Suspense of the Genre

## A. The History of Psychological Thrillers

### a. The Thin Line between Horror and Thrillers

From the beginning, horror films and thrillers have been very close genres, interacting with one another. The twelfth edition of the Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines the thriller as: “a novel, play or film with an exciting plot, typically involving crime or espionage” (1502). Furthermore, this same dictionary provides a definition of horror that is close to the feelings a thriller is supposed to create: “intense fear, shock, or disgust” (687). When taking a closer look at these definitions, we can see a common point: strong feelings. Both genres use tools to produce deep feelings of fear, excitement, anguish and suspense. The difference between horror and thriller resides firstly in the story type: horror usually uses haunted houses, fantastic creatures or spirits, while thrillers use more down-to-earth tools such as mental illnesses, crimes etc. But, since the two genres are very close, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between them.

*Shutter Island* (Scorsese, 2010) is a good example of the blurred boundaries between horror and thriller. Indeed, the plot rests on an inquiry that stages two marshals trying to solve the case of a missing patient, while also trying to uncover the truth about state conspiracies. While the film’s primary goal is to create suspense for the viewer, it also plays with the thin line between horror and psychological thriller, drawing equally on spectators’ feelings of fear and disgust.

The interplay with the thin line between thrillers and horror can easily be illustrated. One of the most obvious examples of this interconnection can be found in the works of the author Richard Burton Matheson (1926-2013). From the fifties, Matheson had written many short stories, such as *Dress of White Silk*, *Nightmare at 20,000 feet*, *Born of Man and Woman*, etc. His short stories completely exemplify the fact that horror and thriller are two really close genres that are often difficult to discern from one another. Indeed, his short stories are often considered to belong to horror. For example, *Nightmare at 20,000 feet* tells the story of Wilson, a man flying for a business trip, who has an immeasurable fear of planes. The whole plot rests on the fact that Wilson sees a man, a “black form crawling down the wing”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Matheson and Victor LaValle, *The Best of Richard Matheson* (Penguin Books, 2017)

(Matheson, 205), and no one else sees it. The reader does not know if the monster on the wing is real or not. Indeed, Wilson is in a state of extreme stress; in addition to that, he is taking medication which can lead the reader to think that Wilson may be hallucinating the thing on the plane. But Matheson leaves enough room for suspense for the reader to imagine that the mysterious man on the wing is real. The story can be considered as a psychological thriller in the sense that suspense is the key of the short story, which is based on a mystery to solve: is Wilson hallucinating or is the monster real? The reader is completely taken by Wilson's anguish and wants to know the truth.

Another short story by Matheson, *Born of Man and Woman*, seems to be a journal of a child who is abused by his parents, who lock him in the basement and hit him. But, as it is a journal, the short story does not talk precisely about the narrator's physical characteristics, leading the readers to wonder why the parents behave like this and hide the child. But actually, in the end, the reader discovers that the narrator is some sort of monster which creates, along with the violence, the horror and the suspense of the story. Both short stories play on the anguish, fear and suspense that they provoke in the reader.

The parallel with *Shutter Island* is easy to do because, just like Wilson, Andrew's state of mind is very unclear. He sees things that seem impossible, whether it is in his dreams or in reality. Both characters take medications which could lead to hallucinations, both are in the same state of intense stress, but they could both be sane and all of their sights and actions could be real. The two stories are then very similar and illustrate perfectly the blurring of the line between horror and psychological thrillers. In the same sense, *Shutter Island* and *Born of Man and Woman* are also very alike because both are presented from the main character's point of view (through the journal in the short story and through Andrew's point of view in the novel) and have the same kind of ending in which the narrator is revealed to be the monster himself.

In his writing, Stephen King often erases the line between horror, fantasy and psychological thrillers. *Misery*, published in 1987 and adapted into a film in 1990 by Rob Reiner, especially shows this idea of a blurred line. This story can easily be compared to *Shutter Island* because the main characters in both works suffer from psychological illnesses, which provide feelings of fear and suspense and blur the definition of the genres of both films. In King's novel, Paul Sheldon is an author who writes a series of books telling the story of Misery, his main female character. One day, he has a car accident and is rescued by Annie

Wilkes, a former nurse and Sheldon's "Number One Fan", who takes him to her home to heal him. Quickly, he understands that she has a mental disorder and has killed her father and dozens of her patients. After reading the draft of his last book, Annie gets crazily angry because Paul has decided to kill Misery. She locks him up and mutilates him many times, because she wants him to finish his book and make Misery come back to life. Stephen King mixes in his book the main characteristics of horror: violence, imprisonment, threats and death, and the characteristics of psychological thrillers: suspense, psychological illness, murder, and pressure, which confuse the viewer and the reader.

Finally, the last film that needs to be mentioned would be Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980). Adapted from Stephen King's 1977 novel, Kubrick's masterpiece is considered to be a horror film but it also corresponds perfectly to the definition of a psychological thriller. The main character of this story is close to *Shutter Island*'s main character. Both men suffer from psychological disorders and hurt people unconsciously, their illnesses being at the center of the stories' mysteries and plots. Indeed, *The Shining* shows the story of a man: Jack Torrance, who accepts a job as off-season caretaker in a hotel for the winter season, accompanied by his wife and son. As the film goes on, Jack falls deeper and deeper into madness, as if an old spirit of the haunted hotel was possessing him, getting under his skin and making him chase and try to hurt his wife and his child. Kubrick manages to create a very suspenseful film, where the viewers are completely lost between what they see, hear and think, not knowing what exactly is going on and what will happen to the family. Between the hallucinations (for instance, a pair of twins are seen a few times in the movie while no one is supposed to be in the hotel), typically stressful objects and places (the lonely hotel lost in the snowy mountains, the maze, the loneliness of the character etc.) and the psychologically affected characters (Jack slowly falling into madness, Wendy becoming completely paranoid and terrified and Danny seeing things that do not exist presently), Kubrick displays a disturbing and suspenseful adaptation of Stephen King's novel, that has marked the cinematic universe for generations. But the film also clearly rests on suspense: will Jack kill his wife and child? The viewer follows the characters, fears for them, hopes for them until the end where horror and thriller melt into fear, anguish and repulsion towards Jack, who has slowly become the monster of his own story. Just like Jack, Andrew falls deeper and deeper into madness all along his story. He has hallucinations, he sees things that do not exist and the symptoms of his condition can be seen more and more throughout the

story. Both men are trapped in a place (the hotel and the island) and both create feelings of anguish and fear in the viewer.

## b. The psychological Thriller in Literature and Cinema

According to the compact edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (Volume 2, Oxford University Press, 1989, p.3305), the word thriller dates back to 1889. Despite this late definition, the genre was already seen a very long time ago. Homer's *Odysseus* can be considered as the first of the genre, since it was narrating the story of a man (Ulysses) who tries to come back to his home and faces a lot of enemies and dangers on his way back. Of course, it has nothing to do with more recent thrillers, in terms of suspense and processes to create it. It would be interesting to study the history of psychological thrillers by looking at many different books and films, but it would be impossible to evoke them all so we will name some of the most important psychological thrillers, since *Shutter Island* is categorized in this subpart of the genre.

For instance, we will take a look at *Psycho*, which can easily be linked to *Shutter Island*, because of the suspense that links both plots. Even though the characters are not alike, both stories reside on the psychological illnesses of the main characters: Andrew and Norman. The aim of the following explanations and commentaries on some films is to show how psychological illnesses and exploration of the mind are central into psychological thrillers, which links them to *Shutter Island*.

The psychological thriller became more and more famous in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to directors such as Alfred Hitchcock. His film *Psycho* (1960), talks about Marion Crane, a girl who stops in a motel, on her journey to her lover's house. During the night, she gets killed by the owner of the motel, Norman Bates, who is actually mentally ill. *Psycho* is a perfect example to illustrate psychological thrillers. Indeed, the story of the film is based on the suspense of what will happen to Marion Crane and why Norman killed her. The music and lights are all directed towards the objective of scaring the viewer and convey the suspense. Hitchcock makes this story a pillar of the psychological thriller genre. This story type is very often borrowed by the next directors. The scene of the shower, for instance, has afterwards been used, modified, referred to in so many films that it has become an image that almost everyone knows in the cinematic universe. This film is a cinematographic masterpiece where

Hitchcock displays a plot with a dramatic ending. If Norman Bates appears to be a man working for his psychologically unstable mother, whose shadow is seen during the murder of Marion Crane, and whose voice is heard repeatedly, the truth is that Norman has actually a split personality. Two entities live in his body: his and his mother's. This psychological aspect and the final ending of the film when the viewer discovers Norman's illness make it one of the first and one of the best psychological thrillers of all time.

During the following decades, many psychological thrillers have been released, such as *Duel* (1971), *The Shining* (1980) or *Misery* (1990). Until then, only a few directors made thrillers. It is during the nineties and the two first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that the psychological thriller reaches a high period of success in cinema. During the nineties, many thrillers display psychologically disturbed characters. For example, *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) represents all the horror of the psychological thriller. By showing a serial killer's psychology and the way he thinks and acts, the film provides the viewer with a terrifying image of the human being, who is capable of the worst: mutilating, killing and eating people. Very famous serial killer figures are represented: Hannibal Lecter (a former psychiatrist who killed and ate many people, a fictional character borrowed from the book *Red Dragon* (1981) by Thomas Harris); Ted Bundy (1946-1989) and Ed Gein (1906-1984), two American serial killers, reputed to be monstrous and inhuman. The judge Edward Cowart, who sentenced Ted Bundy said about his acts that they were: "extremely wicked, shockingly evil and vile", a sentence that became the title of a film on the murderer's life in 2019. The last two serial killers mentioned were the inspiration of the killer Buffalo Bill in *The Silence of the Lambs*. This film won the five major Oscars in 1992: Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor and Actress and Best Adapted Screenplay, which shows the increasing impact and importance of the psychological thriller in the cinematographic world and in general culture.

Furthermore, the seventies brought a new sound system that improved the feelings of fear and suspense that thrillers were supposed to provide. Indeed, the Dolby system, which mainly reduces background noises, is adapted for cinema and allows films to have a greater quality and provide moments of silence or focus on some words or music, which of course helps to create suspense.

The beginning of the twenty-first century brought more and more special effects, which allowed new kinds of cinematographic processes to create suspense and scare the viewer. The difference with the past decades was that special effects were more and more

accomplished and the context had changed. The Cold War and the interest for the rest of the universe marked the nineties, while what impacted the beginning of the twenty first century was the attack on the Twin Towers. The climate of the United States was already really tense as people first realized that they were not invincible and could be attacked. Directors used this climate of tension to go further into the mind of the killer by trying to comprehend what is going on inside their head and how stressful and scary it can be.

For instance, psychological thrillers such as *Red Dragon* (2002), *Mindhunters* (2004), *The Da Vinci Code* (2006), or *Zodiac* (2007) aimed to do this. In the same field, psychological illnesses were more and more mentioned. In the year 2016, M. Night Shyamalan released the film *Split*, which exposes the story of Kevin Walder Krum, a man who was abused by his mother as a child. As a defense mechanism, his brain created twenty-three other personalities, to protect him. Kevin, possessed by all these “other selves”, kidnaps three girls and the plot of the film is about their attempt to understand Kevin and to escape him. Shyamalan shows a multi-faced man, psychologically unstable, and tortured between twenty-four very distinct personalities that all want to take “the light”, as they call it; “the light” being their way to say that they control Kevin’s body. This film perfectly illustrates the growing attention to psychological disorders on screen, even though it has been criticized as a film that reinforces the belief that people with mental illnesses are all dangerous.

Also, psychological thrillers start to meddle with other genres like comedy and horror, which creates a new kind of psychological thrillers. For example, *Get Out*, produced by Jordan Peele, mixes the characteristics of those three genres. Described by its director as “a social thriller” and as “a comedy”, *Get Out* shows the story of Chris, a black American who meets his white girlfriend’s family, who seems to welcome him. But, the strange behaviors of the other black people in the house (Georgina and Walter) scare Chris, with reason. He finally ends up understanding the trap he has got in. The Armitage family is actually performing surgeries on black people. They do this so the members of their family and their friends can possess the black people’s bodies. Chris was then facing a whole group, representing a racist society. Comedy can also be seen through the film, as, for example, when Chris meets Logan (another possessed black man) and instead of bumping his fist as a symbol of brotherhood, Logan shakes Chris’ fist which provokes, if not a laugh, a smile on the viewer’s face. This new kind of film is the perfect illustration of the fact that psychological thrillers evolve and that the line becomes rather thin between the genres of the films, by creating new subgenres.



### c. The importance of the Context

“An adaptation, like the work it adapts, is always framed in a context—a time and a place, a society and a culture; it does not exist in a vacuum.”<sup>4</sup> (Hutcheon, 142).

Firstly, Dennis Lehane's life matters in his writing of *Shutter Island*. The story takes place on a small island, near Boston. This city is the place where Dennis Lehane was born and in which he grew up. It is the place where almost every single one of his novels takes place. To him, this city represents his childhood, his difficult path to the adult world. Indeed, he grew up in the seventies, a period of desegregation, when black and white, rich and poor started to be put together in schools. This period created massive disagreements in the city and many children suffered from their parents' difficulties (alcoholism, violence etc.). Dennis Lehane claims in his interview with Julien Bisson, published in 2015 in *L'express*, that he was lucky to have thoughtful parents who helped him with his homework and supported him, when many of his friends were abandoned by their parents or neglected by them. He was deeply impacted by this part of his life and has always felt a connection to this city, that he transmits in his novels.

Lehane also talked about the importance of the context of writing and said in the same interview as precedingly mentioned: “Je crois qu'un livre ne parle jamais de l'époque dans laquelle il est situé, mais toujours de celle durant laquelle il a été écrit. Si vous faites du bon boulot, tout ce que vous écrirez pourra servir de métaphore du temps présent, car en fin de compte tout est universel, et rien ne change”. With this statement, Lehane shows how important it is to consider the context in which a story is written to understand it better. Teddy Daniels' adventure happens in 1954, a few years after his participation in World War II, in which he found the concentration camps and thinks he killed dozens of Nazis guards. According to Lehane himself, the book does not talk about the period when the story is displayed, it talks about the period in which it is written, meaning that *Shutter Island* does not talk about the fifties, but the beginning of the twenty first century.

In the review *Séquences*, an article is dedicated to *Shutter Island*. Written by Sylvain Lavallée, the article talks about the context of the film and the traumas of the century:

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<sup>4</sup> Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (Routledge, 2006)

La mise en scène s'aligne ainsi sur la subjectivité du personnage principal, et celui-ci ayant vécu des événements historiques majeurs, il est tentant d'y lire une allégorie politique sur une certaine paranoïa américaine. Le climat de la guerre froide est prégnant, avec ces souvenirs troublants de la libération des camps nazis qui hantent encore le présent, ces nombreuses références à la bombe atomique et à la chasse aux communistes<sup>5</sup> (Lavallée, 46).

To Lavallée, the Cold War is also quite present in the story and transmits the kind of paranoia that seized the United States during this war and after it ended with all the references to the atomic bomb for instance. One of the patients is indeed completely scared by bombs. In the film he says: "We hear things here, about the outside world. About atolls, about H-bomb tests. [...] Other bombs explode, right? But not the hydrogen bomb. It implodes, creating an explosion to the thousandth, the millionth degree!"<sup>6</sup> (01:08:38). These words truly show how omnipresent the fear of atomic bombs was during the Cold War and how it lasted over the years until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Both the novel and the film emphasize the psychological effects of the war and of trauma on men. The story itself rests on the complexity of psychology and the defense mechanisms that the brain is capable to create to protect a human. The nineteen nineties were a period when so many things were discovered in the field of biology and psychology. Indeed, this decade follows many experiments on psychology such as Stanley Milgram's on authority in 1963. This demonstration consists in making people believe that they were trying new learning methods. It was made in the following way: one actor plays the "experimenter" and another the "student" and the randomly chosen person plays the "teacher", thinking that they were all randomly chosen and got their role through a draw. The teacher had to read words to the student and this last had to remember and repeat them. At each mistake, the experimenter ordered the teacher to send an electric shock to the student. This experience showed that most people went so far that they "killed" the student, on the command of the experimenter. This proved that most people were ready to hurt and kill people if some authority gave them the order. Other experiments on authority, psychology and group effect were directed after that and showed a growing interest in the psychological reactions of men. At the same time, many experiments were conducted on the brain, especially with the development of the Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI). In this climate of interest for psychology and

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<sup>5</sup> Sylvain Lavallée, "Shutter Island : les artifices de la rédemption / Shutter Island — États-Unis 2010, 138 minutes", *Séquences : la revue de cinéma*, n° 266 (2010), p. 46-47

<sup>6</sup> Martin Scorsese, et al. *Shutter Island* (Paramount, 2010)

composition of the brain, in a city full of political complexities and disagreements, *Shutter Island* completely transcribes this atmosphere of the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Boston.

## B. Adaptation, a theorized and complicated process

### a. Adaptation Theory

Linda Hutcheon is a specialist in literary critics and theory, she wrote a lot on adaptation, her work being a reference in the field. She is particularly useful to our study because her work on adaptation is very complete. As Linda Hutcheon points out, adaptation from one text to another is simultaneously a process and a product (Hutcheon, 15). She focuses on how an adaptation is created and what processes come into play.

Firstly, she values adaptations a lot and writes that adaptations have much importance, as shows this quote: “An adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative—a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing”<sup>7</sup> (Hutcheon, 9). She gives much importance to adaptations as she thinks that they are works of art in themselves and not only through the work they are adapted from. In our case, it means that the film is in itself a work of art that does not only complete the original book. Even though it is the same original story, which Linda Hutcheon calls “the common denominator” *Ibid* (10) of adaptations, the film has its own functioning, its own features, its own music and sense of suspense. Linda Hutcheon believes that every adaptation has its own importance and brings something to the story.

The difference might then be in the print of the author. The book is of course marked by Dennis Lehane’s personality, background, opinions and creativity, and the film is marked by Scorsese’s eye, ear, view and directing. Both are, on one part, alike, because they share the same story, the same “common denominator” *Ibid* (10), but they also work without each other. They each have their own frame and are shaped by a different man. Linda Hutcheon writes about this subject that adaptation is a process that makes a new work with a new print out of an original work. She states: “Like classical imitation, adaptation also is not slavish copying; it is a process of making the adapted material one’s own” *Ibid* (20). Adaptation can then be seen as an appropriation of a work; Scorsese is appropriating Lehane’s work and story

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<sup>7</sup> Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (Routledge, 2006)

through his own perspective and creates a new form for the story to be told. Linda Hutcheon also states that every director brings his own interpretation to his adaptation. A perfect example for that would be the end of the story. Indeed, Lehane purposely stays vague on Andrew's actual state of mind in the end of his book. We have no idea whether he truly stayed stuck in his defense mechanism or whether he came out of it. On the other hand, Scorsese gives his own opinion on Andrew's mental state by adding this famous last sentence: "This place makes me wonder, which would be worse, to live as a monster or to die as a good man?" (02:09:12). This last sentence, even though it is mysterious, gives a pretty clear idea of what Andrew thinks. By asking this question, he makes the viewer believe that he came out of his defense mechanism and hallucinations, but chooses to be lobotomized to avoid seeing himself as a monster. This last sentence is nowhere to be found in the original book. With it, Scorsese marks the story with a new look, a new ending that shows his impact on the story. This difference in the ending perfectly illustrates Linda Hutcheon's idea that adaptation is a process that allows an original story to change its form, details and even sense, by letting another author print his mark on the story.

In the same sense, Robert Stam, a professor at New York university, wrote a lot on film theory and on adaptation and he states that adaptations are works on an original source and that the adaptation necessarily is a transformation. He explains that an adaptation is a complex process of changes that are chosen by the director: "source-novel hypotexts are transformed by a complex series of operations: selection, amplification, concretization, actualization, critique, extrapolation, popularization, reaccentuation, transculturalization"<sup>8</sup> (Stam, 45). To him, the passage from a written text to a film inevitably induces choices, whether it is to "amplify, ignore, subvert or transform" *Ibid* (Stam, 46) elements of the story. Just like Hutcheon, he thinks that an adaptation should not be judged according to its fidelity to the original work. As they both give much importance to the fact that the original source and the adapted work are different works, it induces that fidelity should not be the principal feature in determining whether an adaptation is good or bad. Stam introduces the idea that an adaptation should be judged on how it answers to the original source. Indeed, what matters is how the adaptation deals with the critics of the original work, how it rewrites some parts and interprets others and how all of these changes are put together. What matters in adaptation

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo. *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation* (Blackwell Publishing, 2005)

would not be how faithful an adaptation is to its primary form, but how the new point of view changes this first form to create something new and sometimes very different.

Thomas Leitch, a film scholar, also introduces the idea of a sort of mark or print that authors have. Indeed, many filmmakers are clearly recognizable when taking a look at their work.

The careers of three unquestioned auteurs whose body of work consisted almost entirely of adaptations – Alfred Hitchcock, Stanley Kubrick, and Walt Disney – suggest that the auteur status of filmmakers depends at least as much on their temperament and working habits, their triumphs in conflicts with other aspiring authors, and their success at turning themselves into brand names as on their artistic aspirations or any textual features of their films<sup>9</sup> (Leitch, 237).

In more recent cinema, many filmmakers can also be recognized through their work. For instance, Tim Burton clearly has his own style between gothic and humor, mixed with a dose of fantastic and visual style that make the viewer immediately recognize him. Others such as Quentin Tarantino or M. Night Shyamalan have again very particular styles. The first one is well-known for the extreme violence of his films, while the second one is famous for his dramatic films with unexpected plot twists. The point is that, more than just giving an interpretation to the source an adapter wants to work on, a lot of filmmakers put their imprint on their adaptation which inevitably changes the original story or at least how it is represented and what feelings it conveys.

#### b. The Typical Setting: a tortured man in an isolated place

*Shutter island* begins with an extract of Doctor Sheehan's journal, in which he describes the island, forty years after the main story. Sheehan describes it as an isolated island, with pines and trees that no longer bear fruits. The island is then immediately perceived as a hostile environment. Furthermore, Andrew, when he arrives on the island by boat, has much difficulty seeing it, since it was surrounded by a thick blizzard that slowly fades with the arrival of the boat. It means that, more than a hostile place, it is an island very difficult to see and to apprehend. In addition, the story takes place in a psychological hospital, in which very dangerous patients are held, because of the many crimes they have committed.

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Leitch. *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From "Gone with the Wind" to "The Passion of the Christ."* (The John Hopkins University Press, 2007)

In ward C, prisoners, patients, are locked up and sometimes tied up to their beds. This scenery creates an atmosphere of danger, anguish and doubt. Plus, the film itself was filmed in a Massachusetts' abandoned psychiatric hospital, which emphasizes the realistic aspect of the story, but also presses on the mystery of the island and on the feeling of discomfort of the viewer.

Furthermore, one of the things that strike the most in *Shutter Island* is the play on oppositions, that sets the atmosphere and scenery of the story. Both the film and the book show two main oppositions: light against darkness and fire against water.

The opposition between light and darkness illustrates Andrew's tortured mind and the atmosphere of the story. The general setting is dark: the lights, the music, the characters, the tone and the very subject of the story. But, in the darkness, some sudden flashes of light allow Andrew to catch a glimpse of the truth. In fact, the lightning overcomes Andrew and makes him think back to his past, to his wife, to Dachau. When he is in Cawley's office right after seeing Rachel Solando (who is actually a nurse playing the fake patient), violent flashes of lightning completely blind Andrew and throw him back to his memories of Dachau, when he faces the Nazis commander, almost dead, and kills him. Then, the violent flashes of light in the darkness are actually flashes that try to bring Andrew back to reality, after he gets too close to the truth. For example, when he gets his migraine in the office and the storm rages outside, it is because he talks with Rachel, who tells him her story, which is actually his wife's story. This succession of the next medium shots is indeed showing how lights play with the darkness of the story and the darkness in Andrew's mind (illustrations 1 to 3). On the first shot, Andrew is in a dark setting and has difficulties keeping his eyes open, the next shot shows a statue bathed in light, a light so strong that it is even difficult to see. The last of the three shots shows Andrew again, blinded. These extremely short medium shots that follow each other completely illustrate the succession of Andrew's changes of mindsets during the film: from doubts to seeing the truth and going back to doubts again, blinded by the truth he actually already knows.



Illustration 1, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:55:45



Illustration 2, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:55:46



Illustration 3, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:55:47

The other main opposition that appears in the film and in the book is the opposition between water and fire. Indeed, the film begins with Andrew, vomiting in the boat because of seasickness and talking to himself to feel reassured about the water around him: “Pull yourself together Teddy. Pull yourself together. It’s just water” (00:01:11). The book begins with seasickness too, but with Andrew’s younger self, sick on a boat with his father. The fisherman was surprised that his son was sick because of the sea, but it was not the reason: “It was all that water” (Lehane, 23). From the beginning, both artworks clearly show the uneasiness of Andrew with water. Later, water will be linked with Andrew’s state of mind on a few occasions. For example, in the film, when he wakes up from his dream in the hospital dorm, he is completely wet. Also, there is this sentence that Andrew hears and repeats: “Why you all wet, baby?”. Water being the key to understanding what really happened to his wife and discovering what she really did. In opposition to that, Andrew bypasses these murders by a made-up lie that his wife, Dolores (Michelle Williams), was burned alive, while the apartment was set on fire. Andrew also lights matches when he faces George Noyce (Jackie Earle Haley) in his cell. This is a clear metaphor of fire as a way for Andrew to uncover the truth since George Noyce holds this truth. But fire is not enough to access the truth, only crossing water will make Andrew find the truth. Indeed, if he thinks that fire is clear and lights things up, it is water that links Andrew’s mind and reality. It is the key in his children’s death (dead by drowning), he always sees his wife wet and sinking and he has to swim to the lighthouse to uncover the truth. These oppositions, combined with the setting, set the atmosphere of the novel and the film: between truth and lies, dreams and reality, isolation and entrapment.

### C. Adapting the Narrative Voice to create Suspense

#### a. Scorsese’s Talent to create Suspense

In his article “Now a Major Soundtrack!—Madness, Music, and Ideology in *Shutter Island*”, Jorgen Bruhn explains the importance of music in a film, especially in an adaptation, because he considers music to be a form of adaptation in itself: “And the soundtrack of the film is indeed a stimulating and problematic aspect of the film, part of which may be considered in itself as an adaptation” (Bruhn, 324). He explains very carefully the differences between diegetic, meta-diegetic and non diegetic music, which are really important to the film. Indeed, diegetic music would be the music that we see on the screen, non diegetic music would be the music that we hear but don’t see on screen, and meta-diegetic music would be



the music that we associate with memories or fantasies of the characters. He uses the example of a man playing violin to illustrate his claims:

To exemplify: if we see a man playing the violin and hear the sound of the violin, the music is diegetic. If we hear violin music without suspecting that the source of the violin is part of the narrated story, then we call it nondiegetic music. If we hear the sound of violin but we recognize this to be part of a person's memory or fantasy, then we would call the music metadiegetic (Gorbman, *Unheard Medlodies* 22–23) (Bruhn, 325).

Indeed, in *Shutter Island* music blurs the line between reality, imagination and memories.

A brief sequence analysis will illustrate this point. In the scene of the discussion that Andrew has with Chuck, Nahering and Cawley in the office (00:21:00), they remark that the music playing is “quartet for piano and string in A minor” and then move onto another discussion while the music continues to play. This links two scenes and focuses our attention on the importance of music in the film. The scene goes from a medium shot of Andrew and his interlocutors to a few shots of his memories of the liberation of Dachau, when he entered the SS office. The attention of the viewer is drawn to a turntable in the office of the dying commander of the camp, by putting four shots, closer and closer to the turntable, forcing the viewer to take notice of it (illustrations 4 to 7).



Illustration 4, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:23:03



Illustration 5, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:23:04



Illustration 6, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:23:04



Illustration 7, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:23:05

Why is music then blurring and confusing? Opposingly to what Jorgen Bruhn said, in *Shutter Island*, music blurs the line between the diegetic and the meta-diegetic, between

imagination/hallucination and reality. The same music is used for the two universes and it leads the viewer to think that the memory is true, because the same music as the one used in the present plays in the background. At the same time, the images on screen call this parallel into question.

But the fact that it begins just a few moments before the memory and the fact that attention is drawn to the turntable are hints for the viewer to understand that something is going on with the music, and that maybe it is not as clear as it seems to be.

Seemingly, sounds play the same disturbing role as unreliable images. In the cemetery scene, Chuck and Andrew are sheltered in a mausoleum and Andrew talks about his war memories (00:45:05). A fog horn is heard in the background of their voices and once again links reality and unreality. The sound of horns accompanies a memory of the Liberation of Dachau, especially of the discovery of the frozen corpses of hundreds of Jews on the floor. The turntable appears again, warning the audience once more to pay attention to the music. Music is then a tool both to fool viewers and to warn them.

In the same sense, Martin Scorsese also uses camera work to deceive the viewer. He cleverly gives the viewer clues about Andrew's state of mind. Two scenes show this. During patient interrogations, Andrew and Chuck talk to a female patient about Rachel Solando. This patient, played by Bridget Kearns, asks Chuck for a glass of water, which is actually a distraction for her to be alone with Andrew and tell him to run away. When Chuck comes back, three shots scroll (illustrations 8 to 10). The first one shows Chuck handing the glass full of water to the patient in a medium close-up. In the second shot, the patient raises her hand to her face, as if she was going to drink, but there is no glass in her hand. In the third shot, a close-up, the patient puts back the empty glass on the table. Scorsese could not have missed this; it is obviously an intentional shot. It perfectly shows Andrew's unreliability, because the film follows his point of view, his thoughts and his memories, meaning that this missing glass is a determining factor in seeing that Andrew's point of view is not trustworthy.



Illustration 8, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:37:21



Illustration 9, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:37:26



Illustration 10, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:37:28

A second scene adds to this idea: Andrew finding the SS commander. When he comes into the office, hundreds of pieces of paper are flying in the air, while there does not seem to be much wind. Pieces of paper fall continually, as if people were throwing them from the roof for long minutes, which is impossible and unrealistic (illustration 11).



Illustration 11, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:23:49

After that, there is the execution of the Nazis in Dachau. This is not a realistic scene either. When the Americans start shooting the guards, the camera moves from behind the guards from the left to the right, while all the Americans start shooting together. But even though they shoot at the same time, the guards fall with the movement of the camera, which shows that something is wrong.

Then, Scorsese adapts Andrew's memories and point of view by showing implicitly to the viewer that Andrew might not be as trustworthy as the viewer thinks, while the novel insists more on the blurred line between memories, dreams and present. The focus is then not the same: Lehane wants to confuse and mislead the readers, while Scorsese focuses on Andrew's unreliability and how to give clues to the viewers so they can understand it or at least question Andrew's point of view.

#### b. Traveling in the story straight into Andrew's Eyes and Thoughts

The difficulty of adapting a novel into a film resides in the fact that the form is changing and then many elements have to be adapted in order to convey the feelings that the adaptor wants to convey. Adapting an omniscient point of view is really difficult because the

filmmaker cannot put a camera and a microphone into a character's head; he has to find other ways. He can for instance use cameras by focusing on a character, by writing a scenario in which the character talks to himself or by adding scenes of the character's past or imagination, etc. The challenge is for Scorsese to adapt Lehane's focus on Andrew's mind and point of view in order to make the viewers take Andrew's side and surprise them with the ending.

In the book, the reader completely follows Andrew's stream of consciousness. Indeed, even though the novel is not a first-person narrative, the point of view on the story is omniscient, meaning that even if Andrew is not telling the story himself, the reader has full access to his thoughts, memories and hallucinations, without having any other character's point of view. Furthermore, there is no clear distinction between what is real and what is imagined by Andrew. The readers understand that, since Dolores is dead, she cannot appear in the story. But they do not understand that, more than having flashes of memories, Andrew's memories completely meld with his reality: "Dolores had been dead for three years, but she came to life at night in his dreams (...). This was a cruel trick of the mind." (Lehane, 36) Actually, Andrew thinks that his mind is throwing memories of Dolores at him, but the real "trick" is that he does not admit how she really died, how he killed her, and how she directs his life through his hallucinations. Her interactions with him almost look like a real conversation with a woman who is well and truly alive: "He was wide awake at three in the morning. Wide awake and hearing her voice" (Lehane, 229). The insistence on "wide awake" shows that even in states of supposed consciousness, Andrew hallucinates. The meddling of his thoughts becomes clear: Dolores, the kids, the old apartment, all of that is carving a path in his mind and in his vision, without warning the reader that Andrew's mind has a real "trick": confusing him with his past, his present and his dreams.

In the film, the same kind of narrative technique is intensified. In his book: *Literature and Film*, Robert Stam states that: "Each and every filmic track and procedure – camera angle, focal length, music, performance, *mise-en-scène*, and costume – can convey a point of view"<sup>10</sup> (Stam, 39). Each of Scorsese's choices illustrates this point. The camera is not positioned as if the audience was in Andrew's position, but it constantly follows his footsteps and thoughts, by flashing memories, dreams and hallucinations. Just like in the book, the cuts

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo. *Literature and Film: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation* (Blackwell Publishing, 2005)



do not make us as viewers understand that the scene is not real, only the context and the fact that we know about Andrew's past make us think that the vision is not real. For example, during the storm, Andrew wakes up in the dorm and sees Dolores coming in and talking to him. By preceding the scene of their discussion by a scene of awakening, the viewer almost thinks that Dolores is really here and that she is not just a memory (illustrations 12 and 13). His memories from Dachau also blend into his reality, much more than in the adapted text. Even though the text talks about Andrew's participation in the war, it is the film that focuses on his trauma. Scenes have been added to the book's story. In the film, there are many flashbacks of Dachau, of how Andrew found all the bodies dead, how he found the SS commander almost dead and let him suffer, and how he and the other American guards executed all the Nazis present at that moment. The audience experiences these flashbacks and hallucinations almost like any other scene of the film: the audience sees and hears his imagination and is then put straight into his head and point of view, as if all of this was real.



Illustration 12, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 1:02:28



Illustration 13, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 1:03:23

In her article: “Trust and Truth in *Shutter Island*”, Suzanne Cataldi Laba explains that this sort of betrayal of the narrative pact between the author and the viewer is not so much a betrayal as a new sort of pact: “Despite its seemingly unreliable narration and as discussed above, the cognitive demands placed on its audience do not violate the trust between filmmaker and audience so much as create a different sort of pact between them”<sup>11</sup> (Cataldi Laba, 358). This implies that even if Scorsese misleads the audience by putting them into Andrew’s head and then seeing only what Andrew sees, Scorsese does not betray the viewer; he instead creates a different path in order to change viewers’ perspective.

Furthermore, Patrizia Lombardo, in her article “Étonnement et souvenir chez Scorsese”, explains that Scorsese is not trying to show the viewers what makes Andrew insane, at least not during the first viewing. On the contrary, he aims to link us with Andrew and make us share Andrew’s view in order to understand him and the way he sees things. Patrizia Lombardo writes: “Scorsese ne vise pas à construire un discours sur la folie de son personnage principal dans *Shutter Island* ; il veut entrer dans sa perception qui le lie aux choses, et peu importe qu’elles viennent du cauchemar vécu ou inventé”<sup>12</sup> (Lombardo, 1078). What matters is not how to see that Andrew is crazy but how to understand his point of view and thoughts without judging what is actually real or not, simply by adopting his point of view and accepting that what we see is real for him and shapes his vision of his life.

### c. The choices of Production

The difficulty for the setting also resides in the fact that the film is developed in four days, which means that not many costumes can be elaborated and used. The costumes are then mostly the typical marshal attire, composed of a proper suit, a shirt, a tie and a holster, containing the weapon for Andrew and Chuck. Then there are the doctors’ costumes which are mainly hospital clothes: white blouses for the medical staff and suits for the doctors and the director. Then the patients and the people in Andrew’s memories have freer costumes. Firstly, the Nazis wear their typical military attire, which is green. Then, there is Andrew’s wife, who wears a yellow dress with flowers on it. Finally, the people in the concentration’s camps, Andrew’s children and the patients wear pretty similar clothes: dark and gray tones,

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<sup>11</sup> Suzanne Cataldi Laba, “Trust and Truth in *Shutter Island*“, *Film-Philosophy*, vol. 23, n° 3 (octobre 2019), p. 351-71.

<sup>12</sup>Patrizia Lombardo, “Étonnement et souvenir chez Scorsese“, *Critique*, vol. 763, n° 12 (2010), p. 1066 79.



which insists on the fact that Andrew's mind is blurred and he confuses the people he remembers.

Choosing actors to play the characters of the story is probably one of the most difficult steps to creating a film. Indeed, most of the emotions that the director wants to convey to the viewers pass through the actors. If the actors are bad or do not correspond to their characters, the film loses a lot of credibility and efficiency. Choosing famous actors also plays a role in the atmosphere of the film.

For instance, the second main character, Chuck, is played by Mark Ruffalo. Two years after the successful thriller *Zodiac*, Mark Ruffalo comes back in *Shutter Island*, as an inspector, in reference to his role in the first film, in which he follows the tracks of the serial killer that names himself Zodiac and gives coded letters as clues of who he is. If Scorsese hesitated between Mark Ruffalo and Robert Downey Jr, he ended up choosing the first one, even though they were both coming from the same film. Mark Ruffalo even revealed an anecdote about how he got the role and said that he sent Scorsese a letter to explain how much he had been dreaming of working with him.

In the secondary roles, we find again very well-known actors such as John Carroll Lynch, as the deputy Mc Pherson. The actor, who played in *Zodiac* too, plays the role of the deputy that comes back often throughout the story, knowing everything that is going on and making quick allusions that add to the mystery of the island. Another actor who played a serial killer in another film and played in *Shutter Island* is Ted Levine, more famously known for his role as the killer in *The Silence of the Lambs*. Finally, Max von Sydow was very admired by Martin Scorsese. Indeed, Scorsese did an interview with AlloCiné in which he talked about his production choices. He said: "Max Von Sydow est un géant du cinéma (...) Sa maîtrise est tout simplement fascinante. Il avait l'intelligence et l'assurance qui convenaient à ce personnage d'ex-Nazi"<sup>13</sup>.

This whole past of the actors into serial killers films brings a certain atmosphere to the film, since most of the actors know how dark a serial killer and a thriller are, and how to convey this feeling of anguish and fear. It also has its importance in the audience's mind, because the viewers link the actors to the roles they previously saw them in.

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<sup>13</sup> *Les secrets de tournage du film Shutter Island*. Directed by AlloCiné

Historically, Leonardo Di Caprio and Martin Scorsese were very close before filming *Shutter Island*. Indeed, they had already filmed *Gangs of New York* in 2002, *The Aviator* in 2004 and *The Departed* in 2006. They both describe their relationship as a trustful one. They worked together on their understanding of the scripts and how to make them real on camera. That is one of the reasons why the producers immediately offered the role to DiCaprio, right after Scorsese accepted to be the director. The other reason was that they immediately saw the actor in Andrew's role and thought he would be perfect for it. Di Caprio tried his best to correspond and adopt Andrew's behavior and thoughts. He read Dennis Lehane's book several times and did research on U.S. marshal training.

Scorsese chose then his casting according to his friendships but also according to the actors' past and reputation in order to have a film with an even darker and bigger shadow.

## II. Providing a psychologically tortured Character, how to expose the main character's Vulnerability

### A. The Duality of the characters

#### a. The Man against the Defense Mechanism

“You possess outstanding defense mechanisms”<sup>14</sup> (Lehane, 96). This is a sentence that Naehring (Max Von Sydow) pronounces to Andrew. Even though during the first reading it seems an innocent statement about Andrew's behavior, it actually is a lot more profound and important.

The twelfth edition of the Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines a defense mechanism with these words: “a mental process initiated, typically unconsciously, to avoid experiencing conflict or anxiety” (375). This means that a defense mechanism is an unconscious process thanks to which the self defends against an aggression, an anguish. This completely applies to Andrew's state of mind. Indeed, his brain and body react to his trauma of the liberation of Dachau, to his trauma of the murder of his children by his wife and of the murder of his wife by himself. These traumas led Andrew to create Teddy. This first duality in the characters is essential to the story. Teddy (Edward Daniels) is a creation of Andrew's mind. He is the person that Andrew would be if he had not killed his wife. Teddy is a US marshal, fighting for good against the evil system, he is traumatized by his military past, by World War II and the Liberation of Dachau but he lost his wife in a fire and never had children. Andrew, the real character, was a US marshal but became an Ashecliff patient after discovering that his wife had killed their children and after he killed her himself by rage, pain and grief.

Teddy is then a complete product of Andrew's imagination. It is his way to keep moving forward, to keep living a good man's life. But the two men constantly and dangerously face each other. Teddy completely refuses to see Andrew, as if both men were separate identities that don't recognize each other's existence. When Teddy faces George Noyce, he asks him who hurt him on the face, to which Noyce responds: “You did this”*Ibid* (Lehane, 268). Andrew unconsciously misunderstands this sentence and puts it on the fact that he could not get Noyce out of this place, while the truth is that he actually hurt him. Noyce also talks about Andrew Laeddis (the killer in Andrew's mind). He tries to get into

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<sup>14</sup> Dennis Lehane, *Shutter Island* (Bantam Books, 2009)

Teddy's head the fact that he is actually Andrew by saying: "You can't kill Laeddis and expose the truth at the same time. You have to make a choice. You understand that don't you?" *Ibid* (273). The fact is that he is this man but will not recognize it, he would do anything not to be Laeddis, not to be the killer of his wife. But he has no choice but to face the man he really is, firstly because of the people around him who know the truth and give him advice as George Noyce, but also because of himself and his flashbacks. In the book and in the film, he constantly faces his true self and his real environment. For instance, in the novel, when he visits Rachel's cell in the beginning of the novel, he feels immediately trapped: "Cawley closed the door behind them and Teddy felt the immediate sense of imprisonment in his spine" *Ibid* (64-65). He unconsciously recognizes the feeling of being in a cell, as he has been for two years. His hallucinations also force him to reconnect with Andrew, even though he does not understand them. The little girl he keeps seeing, in memories and in hallucinations seem to haunt him, without him to know why or who she is. In the film, he sees her lying on dead bodies in the camp of Dachau, but also covered in blood in front of Rachel Solando or next to a burning car. He always sees her in a deadly situation, which is his brain's way to show him the truth: this girl is his beloved daughter and she is dead. This whole double identity of Andrew versus Teddy is the center of the story and it is shown in many implicit ways.

Le drame de la philosophie de l'histoire, la tragédie inhérente à beaucoup d'événements historiques réside dans la nature double de l'être humain, angélique et diabolique à la fois et, parfois, dans l'impossibilité de savoir qui est la victime et qui le bourreau (Lombardo, 1068)<sup>15</sup>.

In her article: "Étonnement et souvenir chez Scorsese", Patrizia Lombardo talks about double personalities and how it affects *Shutter Island*, Andrew in particular. She introduces the fact that we get lost searching for who the main character is: Teddy or Andrew? This shows that this duality is the center of *Shutter Island*'s story.

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<sup>15</sup> Patrizia Lombardo, "Étonnement et souvenir chez Scorsese", *Critique*, vol. 763, n° 12 (2010), p. 1066-79.

## b. The Hero against the Monster

The other side of Andrew's disorder resides in the fact that it is not only Teddy against Andrew as in the man against his defense mechanism, it is also present Andrew against past Andrew, the hero against the monster.

Throughout the story, Andrew sees himself as a good man, fighting for a good cause. Indeed, he expresses many times his will to stop experiments in the lighthouse, to save Rachel Solando and Chuck. He has constructed this image of himself as a savior, as a leader that takes care of Chuck and protects the patients.

He faces his past of man of violence. He has flashbacks of the liberation of Dachau, in which he behaves almost inhumanly. Indeed, the film shows him walking into the SS office, in which he finds a commander, lying on the ground, a gun right next to his hand and his face covered in blood. The guard had attempted suicide, but failed. Instead of showing mercy towards him - because the commander was a human being suffering on the ground - Andrew moves the gun away from the guard's hand, leaving him to die slowly, with much pain. He also shows violence when he kills SS guards with other Americans, in front of a fence. In fact, the Nazis are disarmed and raise their hands in the air as a sign of demand for mercy, but the Americans shoot them all at once. In Andrew's opinion, he was a violent man that had committed many atrocities at war. Those atrocities would be reasons for him to be traumatized, to have headaches, flashbacks and hallucinations. The violent Andrew of the war and the so-called calm and experienced marshal clash very strongly especially through the flashbacks.

The last sentence of the film also goes in that direction. Andrew says in the end: "This place makes me wonder, which would be worse, to live as a monster or to die as a good man?". Andrew himself establishes this opposition. By asking Chuck this question, he completely confirms the idea of a double identity, a double conscience and a confrontation between good and evil. Andrew perfectly knows that if he does not come out of his state of denial of the truth, he will be lobotomized and will not be himself anymore. But, he decides, fully conscious of the consequences, to make the psychiatrist believe that he still believes that he is Teddy, while he actually became Andrew again. He knows that he has a double-sided personality and sees them as the dark side (Andrew, the killer) against the good side (Teddy,

the good marshal). Andrew chooses to die as a “good man” and acknowledges this fight between two people inside him.

### c. The Complexity of the Double Identities

This play on duality also resides in the other characters. Indeed, if Andrew has a disorder that mixes paranoia, denial and a split personality (as we will later focus on), the other characters participate in this impression of a film with two different and opposite stories.

The best example for that is Doctor Lester Sheehan, alias Chuck. In reality, Chuck Aule is his fake identity, that responds to Teddy Daniels. The prologue of the book is an extract of Lester Sheehan’s journal, it tells about the journey of the doctor, who was on a boat close to Shutter Island, remembering his story with Andrew Laeddis. He mentions the idea of “twin terrors” to talk about Andrew/Teddy and Dolores/Rachel: “I thought of Teddy and his poor dead wife, Dolores Chanal, and those twin terrors, Rachel Solando and Andrew Laeddis, the havoc they wreaked on us all”<sup>16</sup> (Lehane, 17). This already announces the complexity of the double identities of the characters by stating the idea that four different characters exist, but also, by using the adjective “twin”, showing that it is more complicated than that and those people could be kind of evil twins to each other.

Right after the prologue, the reader is directly sent into Andrew’s mind and travels into the memories of his childhood. Andrew describes his present story: a man, vomiting on a boat because of sea-sickness. He meets Chuck who immediately opens to him and gives him details about his life: his girlfriend, a scar he has etc. These details lead the reader to trust Chuck, since he does not know that Lester Sheehan and Chuck are the same person. Furthermore, Chuck always has a kind behavior towards Andrew. He helps and supports him through everything, which leads the reader to feel sympathy for Chuck. But, very soon, the other side of him can be seen. When the guards ask both men to hand them their guns, Chuck dives “awkwardly” *Ibid* (60) his gun. In the film, during the interview of the patients, Maggie gives a nervous glance to Chuck when Andrew evokes Doctor Sheehan’s name. Another quote from the book that is important even though we don’t understand it at the first reading is this next one: “Chuck turned out to be the real player” (104). The context of this sentence is a

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<sup>16</sup> Dennis Lehane, *Shutter Island* (Bantam Books, 2009)

poker game, but the double meaning of it cannot be ignored. In the end, when the reader understands that Chuck is actually Lester Sheehan, a true feeling of betrayal can be felt, through our own emotions, but also through Andrew's hurt and disbelieving eyes.

Rachel Solando's identity is also very problematic for Andrew. First a patient who escaped, then a famous psychiatrist and finally an hallucination who embodies Andrew's wife Dolores and daughter Rachel, Rachel Solando really shows how identity is more of a question than a fact in *Shutter Island*.

## B. An Unreliable Narrator leading the story

### a. The never-ending Doubts of an Ill Man

What misleads the readers and spectators the most is the fact that they are put into Andrew's head when Andrew is actually not trustworthy. This adoption of Andrew's point of view creates the mystery of the story, since we only have his opinion and thoughts and since he is psychologically ill. Even though many people disagree on his actual illness (some critics talk about split personality, some talk about paranoia, others say that he is schizophrenic). It is very difficult to establish a clear diagnosis. In the novel, his patient's intake info says: "Patient is highly intelligent and highly delusional. Known proclivity for violence. Extremely agitated. Shows no remorse for his crime because his denial is such that no crime ever took place. Patient has erected a series of highly developed and highly fantastical narratives which preclude, at this time, his facing the truth of his actions." (Lehane, 366). This leads us to believe that Andrew has a disorder that mixes paranoia, denial and personality disorders. But, even in the book, his mental illness seems to be questionable.

Firstly, despite what seems to be a clear diagnostic, a few clues lead the reader to believe that Andrew could be a schizophrenic. Indeed, when he talks about the fake Rachel Solando, the patient whose condition is a parallel to Andrew's, Cawley says: "now we're getting in the true horrible beauty of the full-blown schizophrenic's paranoid structure. If you believe [...] that you are the sole holder of the truth, then everyone else must be lying." (Lehane, 69). Andrew actually has symptoms of schizophrenia. He is completely obsessed with the number thirteen. In the novel, Cawley explains that schizophrenics have a sort of

obsession with this number. He states: “thirteen is often a significant number to schizophrenics” (Lehane, 121-122). He explains it like this: “Most schizophrenics live in a state of fear. It’s the common bonding element in the disease. So most schizophrenics are also deeply superstitious. Thirteen plays into that” (Lehane, 122). Andrew finds his own logic in everything, every mystery, and he finds more and more connections with this number. First, he adds numbers of the code found in Rachel Solando’s cell in order to find thirteen as a result. He feels an immediate connection to her code: “Teddy thought it was speaking to him, becoming clearer. It was the first two numbers, he was certain - the ‘47’ and the ‘80’ - he could feel something about them scratching at his brain, like the melody of a song he was trying to remember” (Lehane, 70). Second, he sees it in different situations that seem to be nothing in the eyes of the others. When he explores the cemetery with Chuck, Andrew sees piles of stones that he claims to be equidistant from each other. And, of course, there are thirteen piles of rocks, to which Chuck answers with doubts: “You think *she* left this. You really do” (Lehane, 164) as if it was completely crazy for him to think that way.

But critics have different and opposite opinions about this. Sophie Cervello, Sophie Arfeuillère and Aude Caria, in their article published in the review: *L’information psychiatrique*, talk about how schizophrenia is represented on screen. They compare films such as *Shutter Island*, *Spider*, *The Shining*, etc. and search how they chose to represent schizophrenia. If *Shutter Island*, at least in the book, shows Andrew as a schizophrenic, the article says that it shows a very bad image of these persons, because the film is only 30% faithful to the reality of the disease. The writers talk about a “surreprésentation des situations de violence”<sup>17</sup> (Cervello, et al., 513), meaning that violence is overrepresented in cases of mental illness, especially with schizophrenia. Indeed, it is true in *Shutter Island*, Andrew has a violent behavior; he is often called on his conduct by the warden and by Naehring. An example of his violence would be the interview of Peter Breene, a patient, during which Andrew almost hits him: “Teddy leaked across the table at Peter Breene, and he wanted to punch him in the face so hard that doctors would never find all the bones in his nose” (Lehane, 134). Furthermore, a conversation between Naehring, Andrew and Chuck in the book can be remarked to illustrate this idea of violence. Naehring tells Andrew: “Men of violence fascinate me”, to which Chuck answers: “Hell of an assumption to make, Doc.” And

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<sup>17</sup> Sophie Cervello, et al. “Schizophrénie au cinéma : représentations et actions de déstigmatisation. Résultats d’une enquête nationale auprès des internes en psychiatrie et des psychiatres français“. *L’information psychiatrique*, vol. 93, n° 6 (2017), p. 507-16.



Nachring answers: “there’s no assumption, no assumption” (Lehane, 97). The doctor is then convinced that Andrew is a violent man, as he showed much violence over the time he spent in Ashecliffe. The warden also explains his point of view on violence to Andrew and tells him that he is a very violent man to provoke him.

More than saying that schizophrenia is misrepresented or represented negatively in the film, the article precedingly mentioned also states that schizophrenia is often confused with split personality and films such as *Shutter Island* participate in this confusion: “L’idée répandue que la schizophrénie correspondrait à un dédoublement de personnalité se trouve généralement renforcée par ces films” (Cervello, et al., 514). The idea that illnesses get confused needs to be taken into account when you look at *Shutter Island*. The writers also say that it is an illness that is more and more often represented because it is appealing for the filmmakers. The article states:

Le DSM-5 définit le trouble dissociatif de l’identité comme « la présence de deux ou plusieurs identités ou « états de personnalité » distincts qui prennent tour à tour le contrôle du comportement du sujet, s’accompagnant d’une incapacité à évoquer des souvenirs personnels ». On comprend aisément l’attrait dramatique d’un tel trouble, qui permet souvent un scénario à suspens avec une montée en puissance de l’intensité dramatique jusqu’au *twist* final de la révélation (Cervello, et al., 514).

Then, Andrew’s disorder seems to correspond more to the idea of a split personality, because of the other self he created: Teddy Daniels. He also created anagrams of his name and his wife’s to create new characters and replace the pain of the true ones: Andrew Laeddis becomes then Eddward Daniels, Dolores Chanal (his wife) becomes Rachel Solando, the disappeared patient. He would then have a split personality and be a paranoid man, more than a schizophrenic.

#### b. A Narrator dealing with Dreams and Flashbacks that meddle with Reality

As mentioned before, Andrew’s flashbacks and hallucinations are omnipresent in both works, to the point that the viewers or readers do not really know whether they are assisting a real or an imaginary scene. In the beginning, there is a pretty clear difference between what the protagonist imagines and what is real. But as time passes, it becomes more and more

difficult to know what is real and what is not. A comparison of two scenes that stage flashbacks will show us how hard the distinction becomes.

#### Scene 1: The dream of Dolores and the apartment (illustrations 14 to 18)

As will show the next captions, the scene is a clear hallucination. Indeed, the first shot is a close up of Andrew's face while he closes his eyes and falls asleep. The next shot is a medium shot that shows an apartment. Instead of starting the hallucination at that moment, Scorsese decides to add another shot of the real Andrew, asleep in his bed, and a close up of the same turntable that was shown in the hallucination of the SS office. This element emphasizes the idea that the following scene is not real, by bringing the viewer back to the last hallucination of three minutes before. Then, the hallucination really begins with Dolores's image. Another thing to remark is the change of color. While the scenes with Andrew's face are light with white and skin color, the hallucinations have very vivid colors, especially the apartment with this almost electric green on the walls and the yellow flowery dress of Dolores in the middle of the screen. Finally, music is also a hint of the hallucination. Indeed, before the dream, there was no music, only the sound of the rain and the storm in the dorm. When Andrew starts to fall asleep in the first shot, a sort of vibrating sound can be heard and becomes louder and louder. When the apartment appears on screen, the weird sound is overpassed by music and disappears when Dolores starts to talk, while the music stays in the background of their talk.



Illustration 14, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:27:28



Illustration 15, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:27:31



Illustration 16, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:27:34



Illustration 17, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:27:35



Illustration 18, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 00:27:41

#### Scene 2: The hallucination of Dolores beside the car (illustrations 19 to 22)

This second analysis shows how flashbacks and hallucinations become more and more difficult to discern from reality throughout the story. In this extract, shown through the next captions, reality and hallucination meld and are hard to dissociate. During the scene, there is no music, only a background deep sound or a few noises that Andrew makes. There is no clear change of sound nor music between the moments where we see Dolores and where she disappears. Furthermore, there is no change of colors, on the contrary to the first studied scene, which provides a feeling of a complete intrusion in the real world. Dolores appears and disappears without a change of background, she does not disturb her environment. The only things that make us understand that she is not real are the fact that she is dead and that she disappears and reappears from one shot to the other.



Illustration 19, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 01:40:46





Illustration 20, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 01:40:54



Illustration 21, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 01:41:08



Illustration 22, extracted from *Shutter Island*, 1:41:10

## C. The Island as a Metaphor of Andrew's Mind

### a. The Island, Storm and the Lighthouse

The climate and the environment of the story can be considered as metaphors of Andrew's mind. Indeed, the whole plot happens during a very violent storm that represents Andrew's state of mind. If the story had happened on a few sunny days, the atmosphere of anguish and suspense would not have been the same and would probably have much less effect on the viewer and the reader. The raging storm is an image of Andrew's anger, pain and stress. As mentioned before, water is very important in the novel and in the film. It links reality and hallucinations and it is also the barrier to the truth.

If we take the island as a metaphor of Andrew's mind, the lighthouse becomes the most important feature of this metaphor. Indeed, the lighthouse becomes the part of Andrew's mind that knows the truth, the secluded part of his brain, almost impossible to reach. Throughout the story, Andrew keeps mentioning the lighthouse as the key to discover the mystery of the island's asylum. When he hallucinates the fake Rachel Solando, who he is persuaded to actually be a doctor, he has a conversation with her in which she validates his fear of the lighthouse, by telling him that brain surgery is done there on patients. But, since she only is a shadow of Andrew's mind, it is only him persuading himself that he is right about the lighthouse.

In their article: "L'île de la folie (*Shutter Island*, Martin Scorsese, 2010)", Florence Dumora and Françoise Heitz display water as: "une barrière épouvantablement périlleuse, qu'il bravera dans ses fantasmes"<sup>18</sup> (Dumora, Heitz, 147). They insist on the importance of water to the story and they also emphasize the role of the lighthouse. Indeed, they put it as the object of the truth that Andrew tries so hard to get to. But, they also explain that, more than the holder of the truth, the lighthouse is a dangerous place. In a general definition, the lighthouse is described by them this way: "Le phare est aussi la lumière (de la raison et de l'intellection) à laquelle on aspire mais dont on ne peut s'approcher sans risquer de s'écraser au roc qui la porte haut : autrement dit une lumière inaccessible. Désir, idéal, voilà à quoi elle peut être associée" (Dumora, Heitz, 154). In other words, even though the lighthouse is meant to lighten its environment and guide the shipmen, it is also extremely dangerous because it is

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<sup>18</sup> Florence Dumora and Françoise Heitz, "L'île de la folie ('Shutter Island', Martin Scorsese, 2010)." *Savoirs en Prisme*, no. 1 (2012), p. 145.

built on rocks and when getting too close to the light, the risk is to crash against the rocks. Furthermore, they describe the lighthouse as a place of absolute terror, in which Andrew places his hopes to find the truth and fear to learn it too. They also write: “le champ fantasmatique se referme sur le mental du personnage pour se concentrer sur un autre objet, le phare, lieu de l’effroi absolu : il n’éclaire pas, il aveugle (cruelle ironie)” (Dumora, Heitz, 153). The lighthouse is then very important for the truth to be learned because it holds a terrible truth that is very difficult to reach and learn.

This is a perfect image of Andrew’s mind. If he gets too close to the part of his head that knows the truth and hides it from him, he will suffer. The island and the storm represent the chaos in his head, the cold emotions he feels and the pain he suffers. But, the most important image is the lighthouse. It is separated from the rest of the island by water, the barrier that Andrew has such difficulty to cross. It is only at the end of the story, both in the film and in the book, that he finally reaches the lighthouse, since everything had led him to that moment. Everyone on the island led Andrew to the lighthouse, the object of all his worries and that is supposed to hold all the truth about the experiments on the patients. In parallel, just like the path to the lighthouse, everyone tries to lead Andrew to his conscience. They try to make him understand who he truly is and what he truly did. Both paths are intertwined and merge into one: the path to the truth, the truth being Andrew’s real self, materialized by the lighthouse.

#### b. The Entrapment of the characters

The story of *Shutter Island* is displayed mainly in an asylum, a psychiatric hospital: Ashecliffe. This building, divided in blocks, represents the entrapment of Andrew and the other characters. Indeed, this place looks like a prison. The film clearly represents this aspect by showing many times characters that are shackled or locked in cells. The warden and the guards also convey this impression of being in a prison. Andrew calls the patients: “prisoners” in the beginning of the film, to which Cawley reacts and corrects him by saying they are patients. Furthermore, the fact that the story happens on an island adds to the feeling of entrapment, because the only way out of the island is by the ferry, which is controlled. But, let us focus on the asylum itself, that is the main entrapment of the story.

In her article: “The Receptacle for All That Is Monstrous and Vile: The Island Asylum in Scorsese’s *Shutter Island*” from the review: *ETropic*, Jessica Balanzategui talks about “asylum horror film” (Balanzategui, 153) and explains it like this:

Shutter Island is a metonymic example of a subgenre of horror films which I call the “asylum horror film”, horror films which centralise monstrous asylums as a source of dread and fear. The asylums in these films, as in *Shutter Island*, often reflect the myths and symbolism surrounding madness deconstructed by Foucault in *Madness and Civilisation*. The figure of the asylum is central to Foucault’s work, a fortress of confinement which he argues came to represent “the receptacle for all the most monstrous and vile things to be found in society (192) (Balanzategui, 153).

Indeed, the patients of the asylum are presented as very dangerous and violent people. They all are murderers who need to be watched continuously. They represent every bad pulsion of the society, everything that society refuses to integrate and to admit as human beings. This way, the patients are represented as things that society has decided to be separated from. This is shown through Deputy warden McPherson’s explanation on what Ashecliffe. In the beginning of the film he says: “It’s the only facility of its kind in the U.S., even the world. We take only the most dangerous, damaged patients, ones no other hospital can manage” (00:08:27). He also says: “It’s a hospital for people our society normally considers beyond treatment” (00:08:39). In the same way, Cawley’s explanations of the “war” in the psychological world show how the patients are disintegrated from society. In the film he says: “Do you know the state of the mental health field these days, gentlemen? (...) War. The old school believes in surgical intervention. Psychosurgery. Procedures like the transorbital lobotomy. Some say the patients become reasonable, docile. Others say they become zombies” (00:30:55). He shows that these patients are considered as threats only and not as human beings. Then there is the “new school” which favors psychopharmacology, which uses drugs to calm patients down “tames” them according to Cawley. He states that patients should be understood and treated with respect, as human beings.

All of these aspects show how the asylum is considered to be, at least in *Shutter Island*, as a place in which patients are almost like animals that need to be “tame[d]”, as if the asylum was no place for men. Jessica Balanzategui also writes about the hospital: “Ashecliffe Asylum is presented as an uncanny and dangerous alternative dimension, cordoned off from the world of the rational and the normal represented by the mainland” (Balanzategui, 154). According to her, Ashecliffe is almost another dimension in which people evolve, excluded from society, as monsters that people fear so much.



### III. Film reception, the Challenge of making the Audience want to Watch and Read Again

#### A. Reception

##### a. Initial Reception of *Shutter Island*, Dennis Lehane, 2003

Far less known than the film, *Shutter Island* was nonetheless a rather successful novel. Its reception was divided between the people who thought it was a great, well-constructed novel and the people who thought it was not convincing enough.

It was a surprise when it became known that Martin Scorsese was going to adapt *Shutter Island* to the screen, and the reception of the film, like the novel, was divided: one critic considered that the film was a ‘catastrophe’ while another typical voice considered it a masterpiece comparable to Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining* (see Sotinel 94)<sup>19</sup> (Bruhn, 324).

According to Bruhn, reception was indeed divided about Lehane’s *Shutter Island*. What bothered some people was that the story was not convincing enough. However, many critics had positive opinions on the novel. In the article: “CRITIC’S NOTEBOOK; Murder, They Wrote, And Wrote”, Janet Maslin states: “Suffice it to say that this is a deft, suspenseful thriller that unfolds with increasing urgency until it delivers a visceral shock in its final moments. When it comes to keeping readers exactly where he wants them, Mr. Lehane offers a bravura demonstration of how it’s done”. The meliorative adjectives that she uses, such as: “deft”, and the positive presentation of the mechanism of the story and of Lehane’s talent allow the readers to have a quite favorable image of the novel.

In another article from the *New York Times*, named: “Cue the Director’s Adrenaline”, the writer Terrence Rafferty also gives a meliorative overview of the novel. He writes: “based on an exceptionally tricky 2003 mystery novel by Dennis Lehane, “Shutter Island” wears its something-elseness proudly, even defiantly”. Once again, the use of positive adverbs such as “exceptionally” show the rather good opinion of the writer on the novel. The critics are then divided but the novel received mostly favorable reviews.

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<sup>19</sup> Jørgen Bruhn. “Now a Major Soundtrack!—Madness, Music, and Ideology in *Shutter Island*“. *Adaptation*, vol. 6, n° 3 (december 2013), p. 320-37.

## b. Theatrical Release Strategies and Audience Reception, Scorsese's *Shutter Island*, 2010

Adapting a novel also means making all the choices around the film, in order for it to succeed. Indeed, without communication or advertising, a film has less impact and people know less about it, which means that they do not wait for it nor talk about it and the film has much less audience during the release. Then, a marketing campaign is very important for the film to be a success.

Released four months before the film in theaters, *Shutter Island*'s trailer lasts two minutes and twenty-two seconds. It is composed of many short shots, which gives a feeling of rapidity to the trailer. In the beginning, a series of one-second shots show extracts of the beginning of the film, of the boat's dock, and the arrival in the asylum. The shots are separated by a black screen during the cut, which deepens the dark, jarring atmosphere of the trailer. Furthermore, the sequence displays many violent sights: for instance we can see Rachel Solando with blood on her face and a ward C patient writing on the walls with his blood. Music and sounds play a role in this preview of the film. Indeed, there is not much music: the audience mostly hears screams and deep sounds of horns. Some words are pronounced too, extracted from the film, increasing feelings of fear. They aim to convey the stress and anguish that the viewer will feel when watching the film. For instance, the last words heard in the trailer are Naehring's questions: "Wouldn't you agree? When you see a monster, you stop it", which adds some mystery to the trailer. Finally, the title is also mysterious: "Shutter Island" is written in white with some black stains as if it were dirty or drawn. The title is only announced at the end of the trailer, which could be a way to implicitly show the viewer that the truth is revealed in the end or simply that the end matters a lot. The viewers clearly see, feel and hear that suspense, mystery and danger are at the heart of the story, which sets their expectations. However, the protagonist, Andrew, is never shown as potentially untrustworthy to the viewers. They are ready to follow him and trust him, which already prepares them to fall into the traps of the film.

The film's marketing campaign is also partly based on the fact that Martin Scorsese is the director of this film. Indeed, in the trailer he is announced before the title of the film. Martin Scorsese's reputation is already very strong. After his years of collaboration with Robert de Niro, with whom he produced *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Goodfellas* (1990), *Cape Fear* (1991) or *Casino* (1995) to name a few; here Scorsese deepens his new partnership with Leonardo

DiCaprio. Both have strong reputations and allow the film to have fans even before the release.

The aim of a film poster (illustration 23) is to show to the viewers what to expect of a film. It is also supposed to make them want to see the film. *Shutter Island*'s poster is really dark: there is a picture of Leonardo DiCaprio on it. He is the only character represented, which immediately gives him the role of the main character that viewers will look for as the pillar of the story. It only shows a part of his face, which represents the mystery of the story, and a zone of shadow around him. Furthermore, we can see a lit match in front of DiCaprio's face, in order for him to see before him. Below the match and the face, we can see the island of the film, very darkly represented in black. Leonardo DiCaprio's name is also written in white, right above the title in brown colors: *Shutter Island*. The most striking detail of this poster, even though it seems to be the smallest one, is the sentence: "Someone is missing". If it seems clear that the "someone" is Rachel Solando in the beginning, the question becomes more and more: who is missing? Rachel Solando? Dolores Chanal? The children? Teddy Daniels? Andrew Laeddis? It definitely sets the ambiguity of the story and the mystery around Andrew.



Illustration 23, *Shutter Island* (Martin Scorsese) poster

The thing that really impacted Scorsese's *Shutter Island* publicity is the date of release. Originally announced to be out in theaters in October 2009, the date was delayed for February 2010. Paramount Pictures decided to play on the fact that in 2010, the Olympics took place in Vancouver (Canada), which meant that many people came to North America for the event. During the Olympics, many spots of *Shutter Island* were displayed. In his article: "An Olympic Victory for 'Shutter Island'", Bill Carter wrote about the importance that the event gave to the release of the film.

Those people surely saw a lot of scenes from "*Shutter Island*." The film was a frequent presence during the first week of the Olympics. Mr. Siskind said Paramount's strategy had been to build interest each night with a lot of ads, some of them billboards announcements at the start of an hour of coverage that tell the viewer that "this portion of the Winter Olympics is brought to you by ..." and also what he called a "sneak peek." That was a 60-second ad that served as a kind of minitrailer for the movie.<sup>20</sup> (Carter)

This clearly shows how *Shutter Island* gained importance and visibility thanks to the Olympics. In this same article, some numbers are mentioned that mathematically show the gains of the film: "according to figures cited by Alan Wurtzel, the president of research for NBC, recall of the film was 17 percent better among Olympics viewers and intent to view the film was 50 percent higher" (Carter).

All of these elements that belong to the marketing strategy allowed *Shutter Island* to have a really great start in theaters. Indeed, according to the same article lastly mentioned, *Shutter Island* was for Leonardo DiCaprio "the best opening-week box-office gross of his career, with a \$41 million take. (Yes, that includes "Titanic," which started somewhat modestly with a \$27 million first weekend. [...])" (Carter). Not only for him, it was also the best box-office opening for Martin Scorsese - the article dating back to 2010 things may have changed since.

But, despite this apparent success, many critics have disagreed on *Shutter Island*. Some have considered it was not credible enough. For instance, A.O. Scott was a New York Times film critic until early 2023, he wrote an article on Scorsese's *Shutter Island* and gave his quite negative vision of the film. He explains: "as the final revelations approach, the stakes diminish precipitously, and the sense that the whole movie has been a strained and pointless contrivance starts to take hold"<sup>21</sup> (Scott). He also states:

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<sup>20</sup> Bill Carter, "An Olympic Victory for 'Shutter Island.'", *The New York Times* (26 February 2010)

<sup>21</sup> A. O. Scott "All at Sea, Surrounded by Red Herrings", *The New York Times*, (18 February 2010)

[...] the uncertainty, seems to come from the filmmaker himself, who seems to have been unable to locate what it is in this movie he cares about, beyond any particular, local formal concern. He has, in the past, used characters whose grasp of reality was shaky or who stubbornly lived in realities of their own making as vehicles for psychological exploration and even social criticism. But both Teddy's mind and the world of *Shutter Island* are closed, airless systems, illuminated with flashes of virtuosity but with no particular heat, conviction or purpose. (Scott)

In conclusion, critics were divided on Martin Scorsese's *Shutter Island* because some were not convinced by the plot and the *mise-en-scène*, but most people liked the film. It was indeed a huge success and lots of people came to the theater to see it, a big part of them coming thanks to the Olympics marketing campaign.

## B. Rewatching and Rereading

### a. The Knowing against the Unknowing Audience

One of the most important features of adaptation is reception. This process depends on the audience, which can know the original work before seeing the adaptation or not. The audience can then be called the knowing audience or the unknowing audience. These two types of audiences have a major impact on the reception of the adaptation.

Linda Hutcheon states that the knowing audience is very different from the unknowing audience. Indeed, the knowing audience inevitably has an "horizon of expectation"<sup>22</sup> (Hutcheon, 121), because they know the original work and compare its adaptation to it, even if an adaptation can be very different from the original story. Linda Hutcheon explains that the audience finds comfort and pleasure in seeing an adaptation because of the mix between repetition and novelty: "perhaps the real comfort lies in the simple act of almost but not quite repeating, in the revisiting of a theme with variations" (Hutcheon, 115). The liking of the adaptation depends then mostly on the expectations of the audience who have aspects of the original work they know that they want to find in the adaptation, even though some changes are made. The knowing audience always has an opinion about the original work which creates the shape of what they expect. Linda Hutcheon adds: "Knowing audiences have expectations – and demands" *Ibid* (122). They also have opinions on the type of adaptation created. For

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<sup>22</sup> Linda Hutcheon. *A Theory of Adaptation* (Routledge, 2006)

instance, lots of people do not like novelization, meaning the adaptation of a novel into a film, because they expect such adaptations to only be commercial, made for profits.

If we take the example of *Shutter Island*, we can see two types of knowing audiences. Indeed, there is the knowing audience that Linda Hutcheon talks about, the one who has already read the book and sees the film for the first time. But, there is also this other knowing audience, the one that has seen the film or read the book once and repeats this experience. They are not very different because in both cases they know the story and know what to expect and they both know what clues they are looking for. The difference is the change of medium for the first type of knowing audience, which creates new sorts of clues to look for and new types of communication to pay attention to.

Going through the story once and discovering that Andrew is crazy is a very different experience than going through it a second time and looking for the clues missed during the first time. The audience will pay much more attention to the side looks, to the double meaning sentences and to Andrew's behavior. The audience tries then to find explanations to the end they previously saw or read, while during the first experience of the story, they wanted to know the truth. Only the knowing audience knows that Andrew is crazy from the beginning and only them search for these exact clues. The unknowing audience, on the contrary, experiences the story as it is presented: the resolution of Rachel Solando's case, not Andrew Laeddis's case. The knowing audience uses what they know in order to find the clues that lead to the truth, while the unknowing audience only imagines the truth from the few things they know. Linda Hutcheon writes:

If we do not know that what we are experiencing actually *is* an adaptation or if we are not familiar with the particular work it adapts, we simply experience the adaptation as we would any other work. To experience it *as an adaptation*, however, as we have seen, we need to recognize it as such and to know its adapted text, thus allowing the latter to oscillate in our memories with what we are experiencing. In the process we inevitably fill in any gaps in the adaptation with information from the adapted text (Hutcheon, 120-121). *Ibid*

We can also take a look in the other direction. Indeed, if the knowing audience mostly is the audience who read the book before seeing the film, the opposite can also be true and the knowing audience can be the one who saw the adaptation before the original work. The audience is often disturbed by the images and sounds that they experienced while seeing the adaptation. Linda Hutcheon also talks about this and thinks that: "our imaginations are permanently colonized by the visual and aural world of the films" (Hutcheon, 122). This is

true because once the audience has seen the movie, it is almost impossible to read the book and not imagine Leonardo DiCaprio as Andrew or Mark Ruffalo as Chuck. The actor becomes its character, his voice becomes the character's voice and an involuntary association is made by the audience between actor and character. Also, the opinion on the original work often changes when the adaptation is known because we compare, even unknowingly, what we imagined and what we saw, what is new and the same, what is best and what is worse.

Finally, if the experience of the story is very different depending on the fact that the audience knows the story or not, an adaptation has to have a meaning for everyone. Linda Hutcheon states: "for an adaptation to be successful in its own right, it must be so for both knowing and unknowing audiences" (Hutcheon, 121). And indeed, the story has to have a sense for everyone. If the film *Shutter Island* only had sense if the audience knew Andrew was crazy, then it would be useless to watch it without having read the book or without someone to have told us the end. Seemingly, if watching the film did not show the knowing audience some new things, as clues they could not have spotted before, then there would be much less use for the adaptation. It is only with this greatly constructed double meaning that *Shutter Island* is a really good book and adaptation.

Allen Redmon, in his paper "After Everything I've Seen: Rewatching Shutter Island as a Knowing Audience", highlights the fact that the film aims to speak to different kinds of audience (knowing and unknowing) and that makes it a film that always invites the audience to participate in the construction of the film:

Shutter Island seems exceptionally crafted to engage audiences after its reveal. The film refuses exact answers; its big reveal initiates as many conversations as it settles. Most importantly, the film seems as interested in demonstrating what it means to watch a movie as it is in surprising its audiences (Redmon, 256).

He also makes a very interesting point about spoiling the end of *Shutter Island*, meaning that some people become part of the knowing audience without having seen neither the book nor the film, which can create a feeling of disappointment. To Redmon, spoilers are sometimes not so bad and some people are even more interested to see the film when they know how it ends. He tells about Leavitt and Christenfeld experiments on the effects of spoilers. They compared the opinions of people about three short-stories they showed them, two were spoiled, one was not, and people actually preferred the spoiled plots because they could more easily construct the story and see clues they had to see in order to understand the plot twist.

In the end of his paper, he concludes that spoiling *Shutter Island* does not mean that the film loses its interest, on the contrary: knowing the end brings something new to the understanding of the film, adopting a new point of view allows new expectations, different attentions on different details that completely change the interpretation of the film:

To watch a film is to re-watch it, to re-write it, to re-construct it, and these efforts become most meaningful when spectators keep earlier experiences in mind. One comes to understand pivotal plot points more fully with every encounter. The work performed by the spectator retuning to a film begins to look like the work the knowing audience performs when confronted with a cinematic adaptation. The adaptive work of the knowing audience, regardless of how this knowing is realized, never ends. Nor can it be ruined or spoiled by anything it has seen (Redmon, 266).

#### b. Chuck and Doctor Sheehan: a Key to the Discovering of the Role Play

The most striking element in the rewatching of *Shutter Island* would probably be the character of Doctor Sheehan/Chuck Aule. Indeed, he is the key to the story's mystery. During the first viewing of the film or reading of the novel, the character is perceived as Andrew's nice and involved partner. Chuck inspires confidence in the viewer, even though he has some strange behaviors. The viewer or reader even has some doubts about Chuck after Andrew sees George Noyce who warns him against everyone around him. A sort of doubt hovers but is quickly erased by his disappearance that Andrew interprets as a trap from the director of Ashecliffe, who would have locked Chuck away. In the end, the viewer or reader feels betrayed by the reveal of who Chuck actually is: Doctor Lester Sheehan. Still, the character inspires sympathy again, through his honest face in the film, his kind words and the fact that he clearly seems to care about Andrew.

On the second or third viewing of the film, the opinion of the spectator slightly changes. Instead of feeling trust towards Chuck/Lester, he is wary of every detail that the character involuntarily reveals. For instance, what only seemed strange but was quickly forgotten during the first reading of the story is the awkward behavior of the character when he has to hand in his gun. What seemed at first suspect is now obvious: Chuck awkwardly hands his gun because he is not used to having one, like a marshal would. There are also moments where the spectator can see or picture that Chuck tries to help Andrew to gain his conscience



back. For instance, it becomes clear that when they are both on the cliff, Chuck insists a lot on giving Andrew the paper in order for him to read it. If during the first reading or viewing, the spectators feel suspicious towards Chuck at that moment, during the second one, they feel like what he is doing is right, since they know he is trying to show Andrew who the actual sixty-seventh patient is.

Another clue for that would be the conversation that the two men have in the very beginning of the novel. Indeed, Chuck and Andrew have a very interesting conversation on names. Andrew asks Chuck his first and last name and says that he would have believed him to be a Charles but not an Aule to which Chuck answers: "We don't choose our names" (Lehane, 56). Once again, Chuck tries to ring bells into Andrew's mind to make him understand what is going on, because even though Andrew created an alter-ego that he called Edward or Teddy, it is not him, it is not his real name.

Furthermore, some cinematographic clues can be noticed during the second viewing on Chuck's actual identity. During the interview of the nurses, Andrew asks if there was a doctor present at the group therapy before Rachel Solando escaped. The nurse he is talking to keeps giving sideways looks to Chuck, who is actually Doctor Sheehan. Seemingly, during the interview of Bridget Kearns, Andrew asks questions about doctor Sheehan, and the patient seems really nervous about these questions. She gives side glances to Sheehan again and she also makes a little joke about his good looks, to which he chuckles, which is a detail the viewer notices for the first time as being something of importance.

In the book, there are the same kind of clues but they are maybe more implicit. For instance, during the poker game to which both Andrew and Chuck participate with their roommates, the narrator writes: "Chuck turned out to be the real player" (Lehane, 104). If this seems innocent during the first reading, the second reading gives this sentence a more ambiguous meaning. Indeed, if the "real player" of this huge role-play would be named, it would definitely be Chuck. He is the one who wears a mask all along the story, who checks on Andrew by inventing a whole new identity in order to keep on watching him without raising suspicions.

### c. The Sense of the Rewatching or Rereading

This film is actually a sophisticated role-play in which everyone plays his part. During the first viewing or reading, the audience does not quite understand all the wheels of the film. Indeed, the plot initially appears to be an investigation on the disappearance of the patient Rachel Solando. The spectator searches for any clue to find the answers to the questions: where is Rachel Solando? How did she escape? And why? Andrew's research and findings only lead the spectator to keep believing that this is the actual plot of the story. Everything that Andrew discovers, such as the 'actual' Rachel Solando in the cave, the fact that Chuck disappears, the fear that patients have of the lighthouse, the process that Andrew follows to uncover the truth (interviewing people, looking for physical clues, trying to understand codes, exploring the island, asking questions that people do not want to answer etc.), everything is staged for the spectator to believe the first layer of what he assists. During this first experience of the story, the audience is inevitably put and stays into Teddy's mind. The audience believes that what they first perceive to be the truth.

On the contrary, during the second (or more) viewing or reading, the audience searches for clues that confirm that Andrew actually is a patient of Ashecliffe. The plot changes completely as soon as the final twist happens in the first experience of the story: when the audience discovers the truth about Andrew's condition, it inevitably changes the point of view for the next experiences. The questions go from: where is Rachel Solando? How did she escape? And why? To: is Andrew really a patient? Is he really crazy? Which clues can I find to prove this? The viewing or reading becomes then about searching for clues about Andrew and Chuck, not about Rachel Solando.

So many details appear to the audience during the next experiences of the story. For instance, in the film, when Andrew has climbed down the cliff to help what he thinks to be Chuck, he suddenly faces hundreds of rats and gets into a cave in which he hallucinates Rachel Solando. This actually is impossible. Furthermore, many words have a second meaning during the rewatching or rereading. Many discussions have more than just one layer of clear meaning.

In the book, for instance, Andrew finds George Noyce in his cell. During the first reading, the reader thinks that Noyce validates Andrew's theories of conspiracies against him. He tells

Andrew that he is a liar and he has abandoned him and he increases Ashecliffe's dangerous aura of power and violence.

In the film, Andrew gets in the car with the warden once the storm is over and he is looking for Chuck. During this ride to Ashecliffe, the warden speaks to Andrew about men of violence and about violence in general and he tells Andrew that he is a man of violence, to which Andrew answers he is not and that the warden does not know him to say so. But the warden pronounces these words with a knowing smile: "Oh, I know you. We've known each other for centuries" (01:34:19). During the first viewing, the audience considers this exchange as strange but does not pay too much attention to it because it does not answer the original questions about Rachel Solando. The times after though, the viewer understands better: the warden actually knows Andrew, he has known him for the years he was in Ashecliffe and the warden knows really well what Andrew is capable of.

Finally, the audience also understands how Rachel Solando is a mirror of Andrew and his late wife. Most of the things that Cawley explains about her are true about Andrew and Dolores. For instance, he says that Rachel has drowned her three children in a lake because of some illness, just like Dolores. He also presents Rachel's condition: "she's created an elaborate fictional structure and she gives us all parts to play in that fiction" (00:12:37). This is exactly what Andrew does: he created a whole other reality for Teddy to never feel the grief of his children's and wife's deaths.

Many factors can then be seen during this second consideration of the story and the whole plot changes. The main focus leaves Rachel Solando and goes on to Andrew.

### C. Convergence Culture in *Shutter Island*

#### a. Bringing the Audience to Participate in the Elaboration of the Sense of the Story

The story is made for the audience to participate in the elaboration of its sense. Indeed, the audience is invited to get into the story through Andrew's eyes, as shown earlier. Furthermore, the audience has to pick a side, since the story is constructed on the opposition of two camps (during the first viewing or reading at least): Andrew and Chuck against the administrators and wardens. During the next experience of the story, the opposite camps become: the "old

school [who] believes in surgical intervention” (00:31:01), “the new school” (00:31:15) that believes in drug treatments and the director’s camp who believes in a talking therapy. In all of these camps, the audience has to find hers. Firstly, the audience picks Andrew’s side, because they are put into his head, plus he seems like a good man which encourages the audience to feel connected with him. Then, it becomes more of a conviction choice, but the audience is still placed in a position in which the “nice guys” are the talking therapists and the “bad guys” are the ones who practice lobotomy and give drugs.

By choosing to put the audience into Andrew’s shoes, it forces the readers and viewers to take his side. Indeed, both the film and the book are meant to convey Andrew’s strong feelings: fear, anguish and anger. These feelings are explicitly shown and passed to the audience. We can only feel empathy and compassion towards Andrew. He is presented as the good man of the story, the hero that we should support and, by doing so, the viewer and reader are almost forced to take his side. Furthermore, these feelings show that Andrew is human, which creates a sort of identification between the character and the audience. On the contrary, the other characters are colder and more robotic. Cawley, for instance, does not show any emotion until the end of the film. He has a very distant behavior when he talks about Rachel Solando or when he tells Andrew that he has no partner. Naehring is even further from a normal emotional human being than Cawley. In the film especially, Naehring inspires anger or hatred. His German accent creates a feeling of mistrust and even fear because of Andrew’s flashbacks of World War II. He also demonstrates a sort of disdain towards Andrew, as if he was so much above him, which creates anger into the viewer, who is on Andrew’s side. The warden is also a rather hateful character. He keeps talking about violence and having the same kind of look on Andrew as Naehring; plus, he is a military man which gives him an authoritarian and commending behavior. The side characters also participate in this feeling of Andrew being the only sensitive human being (except Chuck who also inspires trust and friendly attention, but who is on Andrew’s side) because of their laughs and side looks when it comes to answering Andrew’s questions.

The audience also plays an important role in the elaboration of the sense of the story. Many people do not agree on the end for instance. Even in the film, people tend to have different interpretations of the precedingly mentioned last sentence. Even though it gives an end that tends to clearly go on the side of Andrew’s return to sanity, it is not said in exact words that he is fully conscious of what happened and what he did. Indeed, there is still a part of mystery in his actual state of mind in the end, even more so in the book. The novel

provides, as mentioned earlier, an uncertain ending for Andrew. The reader does not know whether he still thinks he is Teddy or if he has admitted that he is Andrew. The novel tends more to go on the side of Andrew being still stuck in his defense mechanism, because the character of Dr Sheehan is called by the name Chuck (by Andrew and by the narrator) and there is no clear clue that could counter this idea. Then, the viewers and readers make their own conclusions and the story does not necessarily have the same sense for the whole audience.

#### b. An Enigmatic Ending leaving room for Imagination and Interpretation

The last sentence of the film is particularly enigmatic: “Which would be worse, to live as a monster or to die as a good man?” (02:09:12) People have often disagreed on the end of the film but it is rather clear. A few moments sooner, Andrew had called Sheehan “Chuck” as if he still felt like he was Teddy. It seems then like Andrew had not gone out of his disorder. However, the last sentence of the film completely changes the ending. Indeed, Andrew has finally understood who he truly is: a man who killed his wife, who did not protect his children from her illness, who killed human beings at war. He sees himself as a bad man, a monster. But there is this other side of him: Teddy, the good man, the marshal who came to Ashecliffe to help the trapped patients. The question that Andrew asks is not whether it is better to live as a monster or die as a good man, it is whether he prefers to accept everything he did and heal slowly and probably painfully or deny everything once again and be lobotomized, which would make him forget his pain. Another clue would be the weather and the other patients. Everything seems to finally be at peace: the patients quietly garden and the sun is shining. The storm is over and the light has won.

However, as precedingly mentioned, this last sentence does not exist in the book. Indeed, it ends with words that are pronounced in the film. Andrew asks Sheehan if he thinks that the wardens are going to get them, to which Sheehan answers: “We’re too smart for that”. Andrew replies: “We are, aren’t we?” (Lehane, 414) This answer could have a double meaning and saying that he is too smart to be caught would be a way for Andrew to make Sheehan and the reader understand that actually he has gotten his senses back. Furthermore, just like in the film, the sun is shining and the hurricane is gone, which could also go into this

direction. There is also a sentence that catches our attention in the book: “His vision was clear as it had been when he was a child and his head as well” (Lehane, 411-412), which could mean that Andrew has taken his spirits back. But there is nothing as clear as the last sentence of the film to confirm this idea.

### c. *Shutter Island*, a Video Game and a Graphic Novel

If the film is certainly the best-known adaptation of Lehane’s novel, *Shutter Island* is also a video game and a graphic novel.

Christian De Metter adapted the story into a graphic novel in 2008. It stays faithful to the original story and, because it was published before the film came out, the characters do not look like the film’s actors. The most frequent tones are black, gray and an old yellow, but sometimes the readers can observe shades of red, pink, blue or green during the flashbacks. This can be really intriguing because usually the main story would be in colors and the flashbacks in gray colors. Scorsese actually did the same choice by adding more colors to Andrew’s hallucinations and flashbacks than to reality. It allows the story to have a darker setting.

The fact that this adaptation is a graphic novel allows new features to precise the story. Indeed, images allow the readers to see the story from a new perspective, or to illustrate with more details what they had imagined. On the other hand, the format of this adaptation forces the story to be shortened by erasing some details, showing less flashbacks and hallucinations or changing some dialogs. For instance, in the book, Chuck and Andrew have a conversation about names, as precedingly mentioned, in which Chuck tells him: “We don’t choose our names” (Lehane, 56). In the graphic novel, he pronounces the same words but unlike on the boat in the book, it happens in Cawley’s office and he talks to the director instead of Andrew. There are then a few differences and some details are removed, but the story stays the same.

Furthermore, the ending is a lot similar to Lehane’s novel because it does not have a definitive sentence like the film. But there is a detail that might make the reader think that Andrew has regained his conscience: the very last two pictures seem to insist on the intelligence of the two men. Christian De Metter seems to give much importance to the fact that Andrew says they are too smart to get caught. Indeed, the penultimate image shows

Andrew and Chuck sitting on the stairs of Ashecliffe, talking, and Chuck tells Andrew that they are too smart for the wardens and the very last image shows the island and there is one speak bubble that says that indeed, they are. It emphasizes the fact that Andrew is smart and maybe smart enough to pretend to not be healed so he gets lobotomized and forgets the horrors of his past.

In addition, a video game based on *Shutter Island* exists: *Shutter Island, the Adventure Game*, and was launched in 2010, right after the release of the film. In this game, the player is once again in Andrew's head and has to discover the mysteries of Ashecliffe. The aim is mostly to find objects hidden into backgrounds that look a lot like the film's setting. In the following pictures (illustrations 24 and 25) we can recognize Rachel Solando's cell and Cawley's office. Furthermore, the characters of the game are taken from the film itself, as shown in illustration 26.



Illustration 24, extracted from *Shutter Island, the Adventure Game*



Illustration 25, extracted from *Shutter Island, the Adventure Game*



Illustration 26, extracted from *Shutter Island, the Adventure Game*

The game is composed of seven levels and twenty environments. In addition to these treasure hunts, there are also mini-games that make the player interact with the characters from the film or solve codes, etc. Along the game, the players discover that the goal is not only to find the clues and the missing patient, but also to escape the island. The game is faithful to the original plot and tries to follow it all along, some lines of the game are also directly taken from the novel or the film's text.



## Conclusion:

“This is a game. A handsomely mounted stage play. All this [...] is for you” – George Noyce (Lehane, 270).

Let us go back to our initial questions: How does the film *Shutter Island* adapt the novel's misleading of the spectator and to what effect? And how does the reception of both the film and the novel impact the sense of the story?

*Shutter Island* reveals itself to hide more than it shows, to ask more than it answers, to leave to the imagination more than to give final answers. Everything is constructed around this stage play, around Andrew's condition. Both Lehane and Scorsese aim to mislead their audiences in order to create this new sense of the second reading or viewing. Scorsese's challenge is to recreate the same kind of suspense, fear and mystery that Lehane has elaborated so well. Misleading the spectators is probably the most important aspect of the story; the aim is to take them into one direction and decide what first appears to them, when the truth is very different. This allows the writer and the director to more efficiently create the feelings they want to convey. Lehane more than Scorsese has decided to leave room for imagination, for the reader to choose whether Andrew has succeeded or not. Depending on their knowledge of the source text and/or the adapted text, audiences have different experiences of the novel and the film.. Each spectator makes choices and decides what they want to believe in and how they interpret things, which is the very strength of this adaptation: it has a different meaning at each viewing.

Adapting a psychological thriller is then very difficult. Conveying feelings in a long novel seems easier in some way because it allows the writer to be as precise as he wants. When a filmmaker adapts this kind of novel, so many choices have to be made in order to make a good film. Actors, location, costumes, angles of cameras, tone of music, sounds, editing, etc., everything has a major impact on the success of the film. The aim of a psychological thriller is to create fear and suspense in the audience, if they do not feel these feelings, the film has not fulfilled his role. Adapting a psychological thriller means to create something new, whether it is a new form, setting, time period, etc. But it also has to respond to the “horizon of expectation” (Hutcheon, 121) of the audience. Because it is an adaptation, the audience will expect the plot to at least look like the adapted text and to find some characters that they are familiar with. The audience is very important in the reception of an

adaptation, especially because of their expectations, the aim being to please the knowing and unknowing audience. By creating a new experience at each viewing of the film, Scorsese has successfully adapted Leane's complex novel.

It would otherwise be interesting to take a look at other works of Leane such as *Mystic River* (2001) for instance, which has also been adapted into a film by Clint Eastwood (2003) and is a detective film in which suspense is really important to the story too. We could then observe what choices of production, of casting, of music, of lights, of additions or omissions that Clint Eastwood made in order to create such a good film.

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