Shutter Island. Dir. Martin Scorsese. Perf. Leonardo DiCaprio, Ben Kingsley. Paramount Pictures/ Phoenix Pictures/ Sikelia Productions, 2010. Film.

It is 1954 and, on a remote island far off the coast of Boston, lurks an old hospital for the criminally insane. US Marshal Teddy Daniels (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his partner are investigating the mysterious disappearance of a patient, a woman who has retreated into the delusion of a time before she methodically drowned her own three children. As their ferry emerges from thick fog to reveal the forbidding Shutter Island, enveloped in the dark clouds of an incipient storm, the two marshals speculate on their destination. "If the folks out here were just hearing voices and chasing butterflies," muses Daniels's partner, "they wouldn't need us."

When the marshals are met at the dock by heavily armed police officers, two minutes into the film, the air is already thick with menace and claustrophobia, madness and violence. And through the killer's disappearance, her horrible crime becomes agonizingly personal for Daniels, whose own troubling past, during World War Two and back home in Boston, begins to haunt him through the course of the mystifying investigation. We come to find that Daniels seeks a danger on Shutter Island that lies both outside and inside his own psyche. "Pull yourself together, Teddy," Daniels tells himself in the film's first line. The rest of Shutter Island will spool out from that desire.

Martin Scorsese evokes the history of thrillers through the decades in this homage to horror. *Shutter Island* is a canvas for Scorsese's love of cinema, a tribute to the *noir* films he grew up watching. It is a vigorous and assured mix of film genres, a blend of gumshoe plots and Cold War conspiracies, historical dramas with low-budget zombie flicks, war films and psychological thrillers. It is an island populated by dying Nazis and Viennese psychoanalysts, psychotic killers and drowning children, ghouls and detectives and bloody nightmares. Alfred Hitchcock seems to stand on a rocky cliff at the far side of the island overlooking a lighthouse that stands like a monument to suspense. Scorsese even appropriates the trope of the US marshal of cowboy movies, but instead of the wide-open lands of the Wild West, these lawmen are looking for the truth in a land that becomes increasingly and unbearably close.

Everything about the film is claustrophobic, with scenes set in jail cells and hospital rooms, a crypt and a cave and a dark old fort. Storm

clouds and fog ride close overhead and howling winds hurl branches like weapons. The cinematography emphasizes that entrapment with close-ups of locks and deadbolts, long shots of patients raking leaves in leg shackles. Around the head of Teddy Daniels, thick clouds swirl as though roiled by his dark thoughts.

As Teddy Daniels, Leonardo DiCaprio also displays a masterful range of emotion and characterization. The working-class Boston cop had been a soldier, whose wartime terrors followed him back home and into the circle of his own family. On Shutter Island, he comes to confront his war experience in the person of a German psychiatrist played by the eminent Max von Sydow. DiCaprio and Sydow, G.I. and Nazi, detective and psychiatrist, square off over control of the investigation in a scene that crashes fear into will as it elides past trauma and present enigma.

Daniels is haunted by an ever-present past. And the present itself sits like yet-another layer of mystery over Shutter Island. Less than a decade after the end of World War Two, Shutter Island sits square in the middle of the Cold War, and Scorsese uses the anti-communism of the period as yet-another element of paranoia within the already-claustrophobic story. Throughout the film come hints of wider terrors — a lunatic petrified of hydrogen bombs; an ax-murderer who fears any freedom that would expose her to the awful voices and visions of a new technology called television.

Scorsese's pleasure in his own filmmaking brims in the motif of the music of Gustav Mahler, employed as part of the story — and in the dense and eerie soundscape he created with longtime collaborator Robbie Robertson through the haunting music of composers Gyorgy Ligeti, Ingram Marshall, Max Richter, and Giancinto Scelsi. And in this most distinguished soundtrack, the film's theme, adapted from a symphony by Krzystof Penderecki, sets a magnificent tone of brooding intensity.

DiCaprio's Daniels tells his partner that, during the war, "We saw what human beings are capable of doing to each other." Among other horrors, he fears such capabilities are still being tested on Shutter Island. In 1954, all kinds of horrors were confined, quarantined, and cut off at the rocky shore of a rock-bound island off the New England coast. Scorsese's film is a menacing suggestion that those horrors, both inside and out, were not contained on Shutter Island.

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