Translating the Twist: How complex narratives are impacted in the process of text-to-film adaptation

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Abstract

The concept of the puzzle film has received much attention in film studies scholarship over the last decade or so, with focus placed largely on a collection of films emerging in Hollywood during the 1990s, and which display certain complexities within their narration and/or overall structure. Films such as *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, 2000), *The Sixth Sense* (M. Night Shyamalan, 1999), and *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999), have all earned their puzzle film status due to their 'twist' endings, complicated exposition which often leaves audiences with unanswered questions, and rich narratives which reward repeat viewings. Whilst there exist a number of contrasting approaches to unlocking the puzzle in such films, many scholars begin with the same foundations in place, acknowledging a tendency for filmmakers to *consciously reject* classical storytelling techniques, and adopting a binary approach which sees the complexities within such films as operating across two core levels: narrative and narration (Buckland, 2009). It is the latter half of this binary with which I shall be chiefly concerned.

Although there has been substantial research into complex cases of narration, beginning with the Russian Formalists in approximately 1910 and elaborated upon by such scholars as David Bordwell, Wayne Booth, Seymour Chatman and Thomas Elsaesser, the concept of complex narratives in adaptation and the analysis of adaptation's impact on such texts has scope for further discussion. This thesis seeks to explore how complex texts are impacted in the process of text-to-film adaptation. In order to achieve this, I will apply principles of literary stylistics in my analysis of three core texts – two which see their twist adapted on screen (despite their written narratives utilising contrasting methods of narration), and one for which a substantial twist is fabricated in the process of adaptation. Conducting an extended comparative analysis, my aim will be to explore and better understand; a) how narrative twists function; b) how a text may become more or less complicated in the process of text-to-film adaptation; and c) how the written version and the cinematic version of a text can each provide an entirely different experience for their audience.

Contents

Introduction

In examining the formal structural and narratological elements of three "complex" source texts, in comparison with their cinematic adaptations, the aim of this thesis is to uncover how a text may become more or less complicated in the process of text-to-film adaptation. In both literature and film, we are faced with complex characters, complex plots, complex themes, complexity in narration and, occasionally, complexity in narrative structure, all of which have been long present in fictional works and all of which have been addressed extensively by scholars; we've witnessed a resurgence of these terms in academic circles in recent years following the rise of the puzzle film in the 1990s. The concept of the puzzle film has received much attention in film studies scholarship particularly over the last decade or so, with focus placed largely on a collection of films emerging in Hollywood around the turn of the millennium and displaying certain complexities within their narration and/or overall structure, along with aesthetic and thematic qualities that were considered to be experimental at the time. Films such as *Memento* (Christopher Nolan, 2000), *The Sixth Sense* (M. Night Shyamalan, 1999), and *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999) have all earned their puzzle film status, labelled as such due to their complicated exposition which often leaves audiences with unanswered questions, their 'twist' endings, and rich narratives which reward repeat viewings.

Whilst there exist a number of contrasting theories and approaches to unlocking the puzzle in such films, many scholars begin within the same foundations in place, acknowledging a tendency for filmmakers to *consciously reject* classical storytelling techniques in their creation of the puzzle film. This understanding has led many prominent film scholars to adopt a binary understanding of narrative, one which sees the complexities within such films as operating across two core levels: narrative and narration (Buckland, 2009, p. 6). Warren Buckland argues that the puzzle film is one that 'emphasizes the complex *telling* (plot, narration) of a simple or complex *story'*, with a plot which can be defined as 'not just complex, but complicated and perplexing; the events are not simply interwoven but *entangled*' (Buckland, 2009, pp. 4-6). Within this study, it is the first half of this binary with which I shall be chiefly concerned – that of complex *storytelling* and narration. Although there has been substantial research into complex cases of narration already undertaken, beginning with the Russian Formalists in

approximately 1910 and elaborated upon by such scholars as Gerard Genette, David Bordwell, Wayne Booth, Seymour Chatman and Thomas Elsaesser, to name a few, the concept of complex narratives and instances of complex narration being *adapted* from written text into film has been left largely unaddressed in the realms of both literary and film studies research. It is this particular area - the grey space that a text occupies upon its translation across mediums - that frames my analysis of the core texts I have selected for this study. In order to address this gap in theory, I will conduct an extended comparative analysis of three written texts which find their counterparts on screen. Each of the texts that I have selected successfully execute a substantial narrative twist, with two carrying said twist from the written text onto the screen, despite using contrasting modes of narration, and one which sees a twist created in the process of adaptation where it did not originally exist. By focusing on the types of narration used, the scopes and limitations each of them offer, and in analysing how narratorial styles and textual structures are mirrored, manipulated or otherwise, in the move to the audiovisual medium, I intend to gain a better understanding of the role adaptation plays and the impact it has upon texts that are already considered to be complex.

As highlighted by Kamilla Elliott, the study of adaptation is one full of gaps, 'heresies' and *not-quite*s, as critics struggle to negotiate across the 'unbridgeable word and image divide' that separates the black-and-white world of the written word from the vocalised, animated world of the cinema, where moving images bring narratives to life, whilst also speaking to the 'indissoluble form and content union.' (Elliott, 2003, p. 4). In an effort to bridge the gaps in adaptation theory, Elliott is an advocate of the need for adaptation scholarship to address the absence of debate centering around particular examples of illustration in novels (e.g. instances where visual representation interrupts the printed written word, or is paired alongside it, as in a comic strip) and of the literary in cinema (e.g. the use of written and verbal words in film) (see Elliott, 2020). Whilst I acknowledge that this is an area of the field that may not, until this point, have received sufficient attention, I recognise I am not presently in the position to expand on this aspect of the adaptation debate further. I refer to it here, however, as it would appear to relate to a certain aspect of my own work, specifically the adaptation of written words into film dialogue and narrative. In the examples explored throughout this thesis, my prevailing

argument is that we can come to gain a better understanding of how structurally and narratively complex texts are adapted from written text into film on a *macro* level, when we consider the *micro* elements of the text's construction on the page (the structure of the written narrative, the syntax and semantics of its sentences), and the effects that can be produced when creators hold fast to their own interpretation in order to present the narrative in a new medium, as a result producing what are essentially new texts that offer an entirely different experience for their audiences.

Whilst the field of adaptation studies may have always been plagued with concepts of 'infidelity,' 'betrayal,' and 'violation,' as critics have weighed the adapted text's success in relation to how 'faithful' it is to its origin, I argue, and it is an argument for which Robert Stam, amongst others, is also a proponent, that in moving away from the fidelity principle we can gain significant insight into the theory and function of adaptation. Stam has argued that the rhetoric surrounding adaptation studies 'has often deployed an elegiac discourse of loss, lamenting what has been "lost" in the transition from novel to film, while ignoring what has been "gained".' (Stam, 2005, p. 3). It is my aim throughout this thesis to focus on what has been gained in these particular examples of adaptation that I draw upon; gained for and by the text itself, and in terms of the understanding and new interpretations we can gain as an audience of narrative by considering theories, contexts and analyses as relevant to adapted texts.

Within the introduction to a collection of essays on the topic of adaptation studies, Stam presents an argument for comparative narratology and its role in bridging the gap between the written word and the audiovisual image by focusing on that element that texts in both realms share – narrative. For Stam, a comparative narratological approach to adaptation is undertaken with several key questions in mind, namely; 'What events from the novel's story have been eliminated, added or changed in the adaptation, and, more importantly, why?' (Stam, 2005, p. 34). According to Stam, this approach also examines 'the ways in which adaptations add, eliminate, or condense characters,' and all questions are guided by that key question of *why:* 'what principle guides the process of selection or "triage" when one is adapting a novel? What is the "drift" of these changes and alterations?" (Stam, 2005, p. 34). Like Stam, my approach to adaptation is one that is guided by a focus on narratological principles, but it is less with a question of *why* certain stylistic choices have been made by the creator of the adapted text,

whether that be in film from novel or vice versa, and more a consideration of the *results* of those choices upon the narrative/text, both structurally and stylistically, and how they impact our experience of it.

'Film, we are reminded, is a form of writing that borrows from other forms of writing,' so Stam argues on the first page of his introduction to *Literature and Film* (2005), and it is with this that another key concept in the field of adaptation studies is suggested: that film is a discipline '"bathed by" and "suspended in" language' (Stam, 2005, p. 20). In highlighting the fact that films come from language (in the form of source novel, script or verbal synopsis) and eventually end in language (discussed verbally by audience members wishing to share their experience and interpretations, reviewed by journalists, examined and analysed by film studies scholars), Stam draws upon the cyclical nature of film's relationship with language to emphasise the ongoing dialogue between the two mediums of written word and audiovisual presentation. This dialogue is something I would like to return to shortly, but for now I would like to reinforce the argument Stam is making here, and it's an argument that has already been touched upon in Elliott's examination of the role of the written word in film, that the specific nuances of written language with relation to a film adaptation's source material cannot be ignored. In fact, it is my view that by paying particularly close attention to linguistic and structural elements of written texts, we can gain a better understanding of how narrative is adapted across mediums, and its impact moulded in light of its new form.

With this being said, film itself also retains some formal elements of representation that themselves cannot and should not go unaddressed. Within the existing binary understanding of filmic storytelling - narrative and narration - there exists further sublevels within this latter level. For Stam, this too exists as a binary structure, as he remarks on film's capacity to 'complicate literary narration by practising two parallel and intersecting forms of narration': the verbal narration of voiceover and the speech of characters, and a category of narration that can simply be labelled non-verbal, where he combines together all of those elements that enable the film to 'show the world and its appearances apart from voiceover and character narration.' (Stam, 2005, p. 35, emphasis added). Within this non-verbal category, there of course exists a multitude of formal and structural elements that are key to consider in the examination of filmic narration, elements such as lighting, sound, editing and mise-en-

scène which are all here merely alluded to as Stam demonstrates his chief point that the storytelling ability in film goes beyond the single-track representation of the written text to encompass a dual-track ambition; films 'both tell stories (narration) and stage them (monstration).' (2005, p. 35). Whilst the jury is very much still out on film's ability to narrate (cognitive film theorists such as David Bordwell and Edward Branigan strip this capacity from film in favour of approaches which focus on the *story building* activity that takes place in the mind of the viewer, dubbing the filmic narrator an 'anthropomorphic fiction'), the argument here set forth by Stam, and indeed finding support in the works of Seymour Chatman, Robert Burgoyne and Andre Gaudreault, amongst others, is that the concept of the filmic (or cinematic) narrator is a fundamental necessity in the study of cinema. Within this view, '[t]he film as "narrator" is not a person (the director) or character in the fiction but, rather, the abstract instance or superordinate agency that regulates the spectator's knowledge. [It is the] filmic equivalent of Wayne Booth's "implied author"', i.e. the agent residing within the text that guides any reading of it. In Stam's understanding of the term, the cinematic narrator comes to be defined as the 'primary narrational or discursive activity flowing from the medium of cinema itself'; it is 'that which narrates the entire film,' to use David Alan Black's phrasing (Black, 1986), and it involves all of the codes of the cinema (Stam, et. al, 1992, p. 103). For Seymour Chatman, the cinematic narrator provides an answer for many of the questions surrounding the unreliable narrator in film. Similarly, as argued by Robert Burgoyne, '[t]he issue of the cinematic narrator is especially significant in the reading of films which involve narratorial unreliability, ambiguity and irony,' (1990, p. 4) and as such the concept of the cinematic narrator recurs throughout the analysis in all chapters of this thesis.

Amongst adaptation's various challenges, Stam notes, comes the challenge in adapting a narrative relayed by a source, either within the world of the story itself (*diegesis*) or external to it, that we are correct to question or doubt; that is a narrative with an unreliable narrator. According to Stam, it is due to the various narrative 'tracks' involved in filmic storytelling (soundtrack, voiceover track, image track, etc.) that this challenge is raised, as the creator must 'somehow reproduce the hermeneutic mechanisms of textual ambiguity and readerly decipherment found in novels, but on a distinct, cinematic register' if their hope of producing a similar effect with the adaptation is to be fruitful (Stam,

2005, p. 38). There are two key questions I would like to raise here, which will be addressed throughout the coming chapters of this thesis; how is this textual ambiguity transferred and created in the realms of the cinema, and what is the *impact* on the audience's experience with the adapted text if such textual ambiguity is indeed equivalent to, or to some degree more or less than, that which is exhibited in the source material? In the same paragraph, Stam raises key questions surrounding the execution of an unreliable narrator in the cinema:

> In a novel, the narrator controls the *only* track available – the verbal track. In a film, the narrator can partially control the verbal track - through voiceover or character dialogue - but that control is subject to innumerable constraints.
>
> (2005, p. 38)

This same concern with how we can come to define an unreliable narrator in the cinema has not been left unaddressed in film studies scholarship, with numerous scholars pinning the status of unreliability down to not only an *intention* to deceive on the part of the narrator, but also the *ability* to. For Volker Ferenz, it comes down to a matter of agency; does the narrator maintain complete agency over the way her/his narrative is presented, with control over not just the soundtrack (through the use of voiceover, for example), but the image track, too? In line with this thinking, I argue that it becomes necessary, if not essential to our understanding of the scope of the unreliable narrator, to readdress the terms of narrative unreliability and expand them with an updated vocabulary. In examining the narrative and narration of Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* (1997, later adapted by David Fincher in 1999) in comparison with that of Dennis Lehane's *Shutter Island* (2003, adapted into film by Martin Scorcese in 2010), I adopt the term *pseudo-diegetic,* favoured by Ferenz using Gerard Genette's understanding of the *diegesis* of the narrative world (here referring to the '*here* and the *now'* of the story (Genette, 1980, p. 227)). The pseudo-diegetic narrator is one which narrates her/his own story with agency which spans diegetic and extradiegetic levels, providing the ability for said narrator to not only share their story in their own words, but also to *illustrate* their story as they see fit, with creative power over the image and soundtrack, and the structure of the telling, too. The concept of the pseudo-diegetic narrator will be explored further in chapter 2.

Within his consideration of the status of adaptation studies scholarship and its overreliance on fidelity discourse, Stam highlights the formal elements that are exclusive both to film and to literature as a means of presenting his argument for the impossibility of true textual fidelity in adaptation between mediums, instead putting forward a case for paratextual interpretations/readings of adapted texts. Stam claims that to measure adaptation's success against how "loyal" it is to its source material forces us to rely on essentialist arguments with respect to both literature and film media. Firstly, he claims, this approach indicates the existence of an "essence" or "core" of a novel, contained beneath the 'surface details of style', that can be extracted, transferred and incorporated in the move to the new medium; something which he and I both believe does not exist.

> [A] single novelistic text comprises a series of verbal signals that can trigger a plethora of possible readings. An open structure, constantly reworked and reinterpreted by a boundless context, the text feeds on and is fed into an infinitely permutation intertext, seen through ever-shifting grids of interpretation.
>
> (2005, p. 15).

Similarly positioned against the fidelity approach in adaptation studies, I find my views aligned with Stam's. Adaptation is best understood, explored and theorised when we consider the move from text to film, or vice versa, not as a one-way transaction but rather as an ongoing and interactive dialogue between the two media; one which places texts amongst a nebulous or web of source material and influences, with each text maintaining its own power to subsequently influence new media of various forms. Whether we read the book and watch the film afterwards, or watch the film and return to the book from which it was adapted, our understanding and interpretation of, and ultimately our attitudes towards, the text will be impacted, which is to say that our relationship as readers and viewers of adapted texts is constantly evolving the more we are exposed to it, or the various versions of it. This power is extended beyond explicit adaptations (for example texts that share a title, or films that have 'Based on a novel by' or 'Inspired by the true story of' inscribed across their marketing) to encompass all medias relating to said texts (film posters, book covers, interviews with the author/director, prefaces, afterwords, special release DVDs, director's cuts, etc.), as the texts that surround a source text all exist in this interconnected, ever-expanding nebulous, informing opinion and guiding readings and re-readings of texts for existing and new audiences, endlessly. This metatextual approach, according to

Stam (2005, p. 30), also evokes the case of "unmarked adaptations", such as Amy Heckerling's *Clueless* (1995) as an unstated adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815), further expanding the web of creative and narrative influence in the realms of textual adaptation. Within this discussion, Stam remarks on the language used in adaptation theory to quantify the products and processes used in the move between mediums: 'rewriting', 'translation', 'recreation', 'metamorphosis', 'transfiguration', 'transmodalisation', 'incarnation', and 'reaccentuation' amongst them. The key thing to point out here is that the reference terms used within the field of adaptation studies tend to adopt one of two core veins: either they are "trans", highlighting the changes brought about in the process of adaptation, or they are "re", which, as Stam argues, 'emphasise[s] the recombinant function of adaptation.' (2005, p. 25). All of this serves to reinforce the narrative of continual exchange between mediums, in the realms of text-to-film adaptation, film-to-game adaptation, stage-to-film adaptation, franchising, and in the wider circles of literary and creative influence.

In adopting this approach, the chief consideration to be made is that regarding the concept of origins/the original. Stam remarks that '[t]he Derridean critique of origins is literally true in relation to adaptation. The "original" always turns out to be partially "copied" from something earlier.' (2005, p. 27). Just as *The Odyssey* draws influence from 'anonymous oral formulaic stories (...) *Robinson Crusoe* goes back to travel journalism, and so on ad infinitum.' (Stam, 2005, p. 8). And it is when we consider this ongoing, ever-expanding web of intertextual reference, influence, reincarnation and transformation, with texts seemingly 'generating other texts in an endless process of recycling', that the sense of a clear point of origin essentially becomes lost (Stam, 2005, p. 31). This attitude towards the idea of origin is a theme I intend to explore further in the subsequent chapters of this thesis, as it finds itself embodied within all three of the core texts I have selected for analysis. In *Fight Club*, the concept of origin is explored and made complicated in terms of identity and ideologies, mirrored in the way Tyler's words (Jack's words? Who is the real source of thought in the case of split personality?), carrying heavy implications of his political ideologies, are repeated by a whole cast of characters, each of whom have in turn shed their own identity to become anonymous members of his underground activist group.

Language and ideologies are reappropriated so frequently and by so many different characters that, eventually, it becomes difficult to distinguish which source such ideologies can be attributed to.

Likewise in *Shutter Island*, the second text I intend to address, this idea of a loss of origin is tied closely to the concept of identity and comes in the form of a shedding of the original, carried out as a trauma response in order to create an identity which is more favourable, freed from the burdens of the past and thus easier to live with. Within this text, the concept of origin is further thrown into question when we consider the degree of ambiguity left at the novel's close - whilst in the film we are led to believe our protagonist Teddy (Leonardo DiCaprio) is in fact Andrew Laeddis, a man who murdered his wife after she'd killed their three children, in the novel there exists the possibility for him to have been pulled in as a pawn to act as part of a grand conspiracy being played out on the island and manipulated into adopting an "original" identity which in fact is not his own. Denis Villenueve's *Arrival* (2016), adapted from Ted Chiang's short story, 'Story of Your Life' (2002), explores the concept of origins in terms of causality, again raising questions surrounding the origins of thought. Presenting us with a protagonist, Louise (Amy Adams), who develops a simultaneous mode of awareness, the narrative structure of the text, which allows for effects to precede cause, offers the perfect illustration of the ongoing dialogue that exists between adapted texts and their source material(s); with past and present in constant conversation with one another, and our understanding (and Louise's understanding) constantly developing and evolving as a result of those cross-temporal interactions. If effect can precede cause, what is the source/origin of the motivational action?

Intertextuality, for Stam, plays a key role in reformulating the way we should come to understand adaptation as a concept as we move away from foregrounding fidelity. He remarks not just of adaptations, remakes and sequels, but of texts generally - existing as part of this interconnected nebulous of creative influence and exchange - that all are technically "derivative" of something else, in some way or another. Thus, it is with the study and theorisation of adaptation that we can potentially gain deeper insight into the function and theorisation of film generally. In a similar vein, paratextuality is cited as an approach that offers equally fertile ground for the theorisation of adaptation. 'Paratextuality', when considered in terms of literary works, refers to the relationship between the

source text and its paratext, that is the preface, afterword, dedication, illustrations and the book cover - 'all the accessory messages and commentaries which come to surround the text and which at times become virtually indistinguishable from it', inevitably shaping our understanding of the text itself (Stam, 2005, p. 28). Such an approach finds links with the study of multimodal discourse, of which Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen are proponents, within the field of semiology and stylistics. With a similar intention of bridging the gap between linguistics and the principles of visual design, Kress and van Leeuwen suggest a 'grammar' for the study of texts which combine elements of both - language and visual imagery - focusing on the syntax of such compositions to examine the way these elements are combined to create a 'meaningful whole' (1996, p. 1). They argue that in conducting an analysis of the syntax of visual texts, we can gain a better understanding of how 'depicted elements - people, places and things - combine in visual 'statements' of greater or lesser complexity and extension.' In the study of text-to-film adaptation, which attempts to further understand the relationship between printed words and their translation on the screen, an approach to paratextuality which considers multimodal discourse can provide us with greater insight into how source texts interact with, and are in some ways formed by, the paratexts that surround them, many of which are visual – film posters and book covers being two prime examples. For example, in his discussion of *The Sixth Sense* (Shyamalan, 1999), Daniel Barratt highlights a linguistic element used in the film's cover design when it was released on DVD – the tagline, "A Real 'Must See Twice' Film". We are familiar with the widely accepted idea that puzzle films, in particular, reward multiple viewings, as suggested by David Bordwell amongst others, but this line is interesting here as it indicates a prior knowledge of audience reaction (that viewers will want to try and figure out how they have been fooled by the narrative). Without having seen the film, potential audiences may make several different assumptions about the meaning of this tagline. Are they to expect a rich narrative and spectacular visuals that provide aesthetic pleasure on any number of viewings? For those in the know, the fact that this line features on the DVD cover, and not in other areas of the film's marketing (like a release poster, for example) demonstrates an existing dialogue between filmmaker/marketer and audience based on shared knowledge and humour; messaging along the lines of '*We tricked you, and we know you're going to want to watch the film again to figure out how it was done, so here it is on DVD so you can watch it as many times as you like.*'

Addressing some of the paratexts surrounding one of the core texts I have selected for study in this thesis - *Fight Club* - will perhaps shed further light on how a paratextual approach can help us to understand how texts relate to those that surround them in the intertextual nebula of adaptation, but also how those relationships create meaning and contribute towards the continual development of audience understanding. *Fight Club* was marketed predominantly as an action/comedy film featuring spectacular explosions, impressive stunts and, obviously, fighting. In the trailer (and the various different teaser trailers accessible in the 'Special Features' of the DVD release), comedic relief is supplied by Brad Pitt's character, Tyler, and the camaraderie between him and Edward Norton's character, Jack. A particular topic of conversation - "If you could fight anyone, who would you fight?" - recurs in a number of different versions of the trailer. In one, Edward Norton, toothbrush in hand, simply says, "I'd fight Ghandi," to which Brad Pitt replies, thoroughly impressed, "Good answer." The same focus is used in one of the more comedic trailers, where Edward Norton's absurd target is "Shatner. I'd fight William Shatner." Interposed with moments of comedy are moments that are "action-packed", fast-paced and loud, as well as moments depicting the complicated love interest, Marla. Interestingly, a particular teaser trailer shown in the 'Special Features', entitled *Girl's Club Revised*, sees *Fight Club* framed as a generic romantic comedy in which two characters face a number of challenges and have to overcome adversities in order to be together. In his own afterword, Palahniuk notes:

> One reviewer called the book science fiction. Another called it a satire on the Iron John men's movement. Another called it a satire of corporate white-collar culture. Some called it horror. No one called it a romance.

> (2006, p. 216).

And yet the romantic elements are there – enough to produce a trailer from anyway. What is missing from the paratexts of *Fight Club* - the various trailers, release posters, even the cover of the book - is an indication of the complexities the text offers. Like the trailers, the film posters seek to give nothing away about what lies beneath the comedic one-liners, action-packed stunts and fist fights. Featuring simply a close-up of a pink bar of soap stamped with the title 'FIGHT CLUB', framed by a plain black background, the words 'WASH YOUR FEMININE SIDE RIGHT OFF', '99.4% / 100% PURE HUMAN FAT', or 'GENTLY REMOVES TRACE GUNPOWDER FROM YOUR FINGERS', are the

only indication audiences are provided with in regard to the satirical elements and commentary on masculinity the film presents, as well as the film's genre and style generally. When we return to consider such elements of the film's marketing with knowledge of the narrative, whether that knowledge has come from having seen the film, read the book, or even a friend's recommendation, we return with a greater understanding of the contexts surrounding the text itself, and thus such taglines will either adjust our perspective of the film (if we've seen it), impact our expectations (if we haven't), or further reinforce the summations made upon first exposure.

Within his essay, Stam lists a number of key challenges and sources of hostility to cinematic studies and the study of adaptation – one of them being a subliminal form of class prejudice:

> The cinema, perhaps unconsciously, is seen as degraded by the company it keeps – the great unwashed popular mass audience, with its lower-class origins in "vulgar" spectacles like sideshows and carnivals. Through a class-based dichotomy, literature plays indirect, and begrudging, homage to film's popularity, while film pays homage to literature's prestige. Adaptations, in this view, are the inevitably "dumbed down" versions of their source novels…
>
> (2005, p. 7).

But is it possible for this not to be the case? Can a film adaptation in fact present a degree of complexity, in terms of narrative, structure, aesthetics or otherwise, that equals or exceeds that which is present in its source text? It is the viewpoint criticised in Stam's statement - that adapted texts are *inevitably* "dumbed down" in the move into the cinematic medium - which functions as the catalyst for much of the discussion and analysis here outlined. Within this study, I seek to explore how complex texts are impacted in the process of text-to-film adaptation. In order to achieve this, I adopt a narratological approach to the study of adaptation, applying principles of literary stylistics in my analysis of three core texts – two of which see their twist adapted on screen (despite their written narratives utilising contrasting methods of narration), and one for which a substantial twist is fabricated in the process of adaptation. It was Stam who highlighted that what is needed in the dialogue of adaptation studies is 'a thoroughgoing comparative stylistics of the two media.' (Stam, 2005, p. 41). In conducting an extended comparative analysis which focuses on the formal elements used in both mediums to convey the narrative and present the story, I hope to be able to contribute towards the discussion of comparative stylistics in adaptation, with my chief aims being to explore and better understand; a) how narrative

twists function; b) how a text may become more or less complicated in the process of text-to-film adaptation; and c) how the written version and the cinematic version of a text can each have a contrasting impact, providing an entirely different experience for their audience. My discussion begins with a consideration and examination of the narrative techniques at work in *Fight Club*.

Chapter 1 – Translating the Twist: Homodiegetic narration and *Fight Club*

Working with a binary understanding of the formulations of narrative structure in examining the narrative tools at work in the written versions of *Fight Club* (Chuck Palahniuk, 1997) and *Shutter Island* (Dennis Lehane, 2003), within the first two chapters of this thesis I intend to carry out a stylistic analysis of some of the key moments in both texts, placing a particular focus on their openings and endings, in order to identify the narrative agents which contribute to the execution of a substantial narrative twist in both cases; a twist which is present in the written versions of both texts and subsequently carried across into the audiovisual medium during the process of adaptation. As both texts make use of a contrasting expository technique, with *Fight Club* featuring a homodiegetic character-narrator and *Shutter Island* narrated by a heterodiegetic narrator (focalised through our main character), I propose that completing a detailed comparative analysis of both written texts, along with their filmic adaptations, will be valuable in helping us to further examine and understand the scopes of narrative unreliability in complex texts[1], and thus the methods via which a twist is orchestrated, and the conclusions which can subsequently be drawn, inside and outside the process of adaptation.

The argument that I seek to put forth and demonstrate with my analysis is that in complex texts such as the two I call upon within chapter 1 and chapter 2 - texts which feature a significant twist, a certain degree of ambiguity, and arguably unreliable narrators/narrative agents - it is the process of adaptation, with all of the additional storytelling elements brought about by the move into the cinematic medium, which further complicates the narrative and how we can come to understand it as an audience. In order to achieve the aims outlined above, my methodology will largely draw upon core principles of literary stylistic analysis. Christiana Gregoriou argues that 'in offering linguistic operable principles to the study of literature, stylistics (...) possesses a *kind* of objectivity that literary criticism seems to lack' (Gregoriou, 2009, p. 3, emphasis in original). Equating stylistics with a form of literary linguistics, Gregoriou argues for its ability to equip readers with the tools required to identify certain linguistic

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[1] Here, I adopt Warren Buckland's definition of *complex* as applied to the concept of the puzzle film, extending beyond Aristotle's term *peplegmenos* to refer to a more intricate type of plot – one in which 'the arrangement of events is not just complex, but complicated and perplexing' (2009, p. 3). This, combined with a narratorial style which allows for some element of deception and results in audiences ultimately being misled, is the type of textual complexity I refer to.

elements that contribute to the function of a text, draw them out, define them, and examine their effects with a specified vocabulary. I would argue that stylistics, with its roots in linguistics and its literary sensibilities, offers a workable methodology when it comes to addressing elements of narration, becoming particularly effective when applied to texts with complex narration or complex narrative structures. Hence, I will begin by applying core stylistic principles of analysis to the written version of both of my key studies. Continuing with the methodology offered by stylistic analysis, I will then apply these interpretations to the film adaptation, exploring the broader structures, including those storytelling elements that are introduced with the move to the screen, to better understand how the complexities within these texts are navigated and impacted in the process of adaptation.

The binary approach to narrative analysis is one which has been widely adopted by scholars of both literary and cinematic schools, informing key insights within the structuralist methodology which surfaced in the 1980s and several key approaches to narrative that have been set forth since. In the realms of Hollywood cinema, Erland Lavik adopts this same approach in his analysis of perhaps one of the most famous twist movies ever made – *The Sixth Sense* (Shyamalan, 1999). Raising questions of *how* we have come to be misled by the end of the film, Lavik revisits certain key scenes, usually those featuring Malcolm (Bruce Willis) seemingly in communication with another character, to highlight the significance of cinematic elements such as timing and camera placement/movement in creating what appear to be *normal* social encounters. It is worth noting here that with this focus, Lavik makes an indirect reference to the work of the cinematic narrator, a storytelling agent that it becomes necessary to consider in cases where we are presented with complicated or ambiguous narration on the screen; an agent which, according to Seymour Chatman, is 'the composite of a large and complex variety of communicating devices', including diegetic and non-diegetic sound, cinematography, mise-en-scène, lighting and editing (1990, pp. 134-135). Without directly pinning down the role that the cinematic narrator has to play in this particular example, whilst Lavik's analysis shares some insight into how the twist functions in *The Sixth Sense,* comparing its impact with that of *Fight Club,* what appears to be missing from the analysis largely is any reference to agency. Lavik cites that the twist in *The Sixth Sense* has a binary element, and is the result of the deceptions played out across two narrative levels, but the

question as to exactly what part the agents operating on those two levels have to play is never raised. I would suggest that it is not enough merely to acknowledge this dual element of narrative (i.e. that of the *fabula* and the *syuzhet*) and refer to this binary structure in an attempt to examine the construction of the twist and explain its full impact. We might posit, as Lavik does, that *The Sixth Sense* employs a 'double syuzhet scheme' in order to facilitate two versions of the fabula (one in which Malcolm has survived his encounter with the gunman which opens the film, which we are encouraged to adopt and believe throughout; and one in which Malcolm has not survived, which we are only prompted to contemplate upon the reveal of the twist) (Lavik, 2006, p. 56). However, we must, in turn, review the components that operate within this binary structure itself - a particularly key endeavour when considering text-to-film adaptations - and this need to go further has been highlighted by a number of film studies scholars. Just as Warren Buckland argues that '[i]n the end, the complexity of puzzle films operates on two levels: narrative and narration,' (2009, p. 9), Richard Neupert's theorisation can be used to elaborate on this model:

> The sort of narrative model needed to account for complex narration and its endings must adequately contain what other critics have termed "theme", "form", "story", and "style". Semiology is quite capable of making these functions clearer and more defined and it also allows us to isolate the activity of the spectator in relation to the production of a "telling" and a "told" in the narrative. Neither process can exist or operate independently of the other, since "what is told" needs the narrating process to exist. Thus a narrative consists of two processes just as a sign is composed of the independent signifier and signified.
>
> (1996, p. 15).

Hence, in order to understand what we have been "told", we first need to examine the "telling". One of the core elements which not only provides rich ground for furthering our understanding of narrative deception, but which also binds the separate versions (written and cinematic) of the text, is the category of narration, and it is with this focus that I intend to begin my discussion.

Firmly established as a twist film within the puzzle film genre, and adapted from a novel written by Chuck Palahniuk by the same title, *Fight Club* (dir. David Fincher, 1999) tells the story of Jack (Edward Norton), an insurance man/modern-day consumer, who finds himself freed from his mundane life (defined by IKEA dining sets and the designer suits in his wardrobe) when he meets eccentric character, Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt) – Jack's opposite. Squatting in a dilapidated house on the outskirts

of town, absent of such luxuries as running water, functional electrics, or any other comforts of modern life, Tyler lives with bare essentials in an outright admonishment of consumerist culture. What we do not realise until the end of the film (and the novel) is that Tyler has in fact been *invented* by Jack – he is a hallucinatory presence in Jack's world, a fabrication created by Jack as the result of his multiple personality disorder. Seeing the film framed within the contexts of the cultural zeitgeist, the literature surrounding *Fight Club* (both film and novel) has been encouraged by the text's overt political discourse, and anti-consumerist/anti-tech messages (and the freedom such messages encouraged in light of the Y2K panic that swept through society at the turn of the millennia).

Many scholars and critics alike have also elaborated on the film's underlying theme of a "masculinity in crisis", which is visualised in the protagonist - with his survival not dictated by his ability to feed himself, but instead by his proximity to the latest IKEA catalogue and a working phone - and demonstrated in his relationship with Bob (who, due to taking steroids as a competitive bodybuilder and then falling ill with testicular cancer, now has 'bitch tits'). According to such scholars, the crux of this crisis is noted in the protagonist's idolisation of and fantasised relationship with Tyler Durden; with a psychoanalytic approach in mind, Tyler - hunter-gatherer, bare-knuckle-fighting, back-to-origins Tyler - is depicted as the saviour of a gender which is losing its identity in the wake of a largely consumer-driven, capitalist culture. Instead of having Bob's 'bitch tits' to cry into, our protagonist is given a confident, muscular alternative who he can drink beer with and challenge to a no-holds-barred fight to reassert his sense of masculinity and reclaim an apparent sense of self. In her essay 'A Copy of a Copy of a Copy: Framing the Double in *Fight Club*', Elizabeth Kinder comments on such hyper-masculine elements of Tyler's character, as well as the homoerotic aspects of its presentation, while elaborating on the role of Marla as his 'trigger' – her 'blatant female presence in an all-male space' when she attends the support group for testicular cancer, cigarette in hand, is seen as the catalyst for Jack's split personality. In his book *Multiple Identities & False Memories*, Nicholas P. Spanos writes of real-life accounts of personality disorders: 'From a psychoanalytic perspective, cases of multiple personalities were accounted for in several ways, [one of them being] as complex sets of repressed ideas that alternately became conscious' (1997: p. 227). If we accept this approach, it provides an interesting

context for the framing of Jack's created personality of Tyler Durden and his moment of entry. In the novel, Tyler's introduction to the story is explained by Jack:

> How I met Tyler was I went to a nude beach. This was the very end of summer, and I was asleep. Tyler was naked and sweating, gritty with sand, his hair wet and stringy, hanging in his face. Tyler had been around a long time before we met.
>
> (Palahniuk, 1997, p. 32).

Not only does this example support Spanos' statement that personality disorders often exist as the result of a repressed, subconscious idea breaking through into the conscious (which here happens to Jack while he is *un*conscious), but it also supports Kinder's argument on the cause of Tyler's appearance, as his ultra-masculine image sees him positioned as Jack's saviour – 'Deliver me, Tyler, from being perfect and complete.' (Palahniuk, 1997, p. 46). Having unconsciously acknowledged his love interest in Marla Singer, and slowly losing his grip on what 'defines [him] as a person', Jack creates an attractive, hyper-masculine profile through whom he can act upon his urges and engage in a non-committal sexual relationship, whilst also finding a means of escape from the mundane, materialistic lifestyle that has become his cause for living (as Tyler comments, "The things you own end up owning you").

Strung along by his own hallucination, insomnia-ridden and steadily becoming further detached from his previous life, as the narrative progresses, Jack finds himself working alongside Tyler at the helm of an extremist political group, seeking to set the nation's financial records to zero with a plan to set off a round of explosions in the city's financial district. It is with this complicating action, as Jack and Tyler stand atop the Parker-Morris Building with their homemade bombs counting down in the parking garage beneath them, Tyler having shoved the barrel of a gun into Jack's mouth, that the narrative opens. Launching us straight into the story as it opens *in media res*, both the novel and the film versions of *Fight Club* are told with the creation of several narrative levels which signal a complication in the narration's temporal structures, with movements between the apparent present and the recollected past further complicated with the introduction on several occasions of narrative frames featuring fantasised or imagined worlds from the point of view of the narrator. Whilst I address the function of each in a discussion of the text's complexity and how it is contributed towards by the actions carried out across multiple frames and temporalities, it will be the two core narrative frames - that of

the diegetic "present", which both texts open with, and the main narrative flashback frame in which the bulk of the story unfolds - which hold my attention.

Considering how the narration operates within the written text, a full stylistic analysis might allow readers some insight into the 'mind style' narration provided by our protagonist, revealing him to be a more complex character than we may initially realise. According to Ineke Bockting: 'Mind style is concerned with the construction and expression in language of the conceptualisation of reality in a particular mind' (1994, p. 159), making it a chief aspect to consider in texts such as this where we are deliberately misled by the narration, which is seemingly generated by and from the mind of one deviant character. In the novel, it is made immediately apparent that we are dealing with a case of homodiegetic narration; that is the narrative agent who is sharing this story with us is a part of the story itself. In the film, this manifests as a character-narrator who provides access into his own psyche with the use of voiceover, teamed with an image track which appears to be guided by his dialogue, thus securing our alignment with him – there are no questions raised as to whose story we are being told. When it comes to the written text, the same can be said, however the complex nature of the narration may be hinted towards slightly earlier, as our attention is regularly drawn to some anomalies within the opening chapter as Jack's use of pronouns becomes less restrictive, and he regularly slips out of the first-person to narrate in the second-person. These movements within his narration, the switch to the second-person and the sudden introduction of the imperative sentence mood, also trigger a movement from the diegetic *present* or *active* world of the text into another text-world; one in which we are provided with instructions for the preparation of various chemical weapons: 'Mix the nitro with sawdust, and you have a nice plastic explosive.' (Palahniuk, 1997, p. 12). The regular use of the second-person pronoun 'you' in such instances and the appearance of instructive utterances might strike readers as odd. This prolonged complication between text-worlds - that of the present, and that of the *hypothetical* or *instructional*, which provides information from an assumed past that Jack regularly calls upon - creates a somewhat complicating effect within the narration, as the second-person pronoun is never clarified to be associated with any particular entity. As readers, we might speculate that the narrator makes use of the pronoun with the hypothetical or generic sense that one might use it to refer to any single person or

particular audience. The 'you' could also be interpreted as a direct address to the reader; or the sentences in which it is used could be intending to indicate an instance of Tyler's words, originally appearing to Jack in the form of instruction/suggestion in his own mind, now being used by the narrator himself, (e.g. 'I know this because Tyler knows this.' (Palahniuk, 1997, p. 12)). The regular switching between the use of first- and second-person pronouns, along with the shift in sentence moods that is brought about in Jack's instructional utterances, presumably bearing information learned from experience (and hence drawn from some unknown past), introduces other speculative text-worlds whilst embodying the theme of complex identities that resides within the narrative, allowing us to explore it further with a second exposure to the text. Another element of the written narrative that becomes key to consider upon a second reading is the way in which the dialogue within the opening chapter (and, indeed, subsequent chapters) is formatted and presented on the page. For example, the dialogue that is exchanged between Jack and Tyler in the opening chapter is depicted with the use of a combination of free direct speech (for Jack's words, absent of punctuation and/or reporting clauses) and direct speech (for Tyler's words). This is not only an example of 'mind style' narration, seeking to further align us with our protagonist as his dialogue is assumed to be unfiltered, presented to us as instantaneous thought that is spoken as soon as it enters his mind, but this technique also firmly establishes Tyler as a physical character within the story world – with his dialogue always depicted in the conventional typography of direct speech, we assume anyone capable of holding a conversation (and a gun in someone's mouth) to be a living, breathing character within the diegesis. Thus, it is fair to assume upon a second reading of the text that the narration and dialogue is stylised in such a way as to deliberately mislead readers from the offset.

It is likewise with the opening few chapters of the written text that the extent of complexity in the narrative's structure is indicated towards, and it is with a parallel reading of the temporal levels set up in these opening sections within the source text and the film adaptation that we can gain valuable insight into the narrational methods via which we are misled as readers/viewers in both cases. As has already been discussed, the story (in both versions) opens *in media res*, with Tyler and Jack counting down to the explosion they've rigged – Jack seemingly none the wiser about Tyler's true identity, and us as an audience not at all primed to consider the idea that Jack and Tyler might possibly be the same

person. In the book, Jack narrates to us mostly in the first-person (aside from the anomalous moments discussed above where he temporarily shifts into second-person address), setting himself up as our homodiegetic narrator; in the film, this narratorial style is mirrored in the voiceover narration provided by Jack. From this opening narrative frame - the one we shall label the diegetic present as it appears (on first exposure to the text) to be the temporal space from which our narrator is telling his story - we're then encouraged to discover the events which have led to this moment via a prolonged flashback frame, which, triggered by Jack himself, dominates the body of the narrative and holds our attention for the majority of its duration in both the written text and the film, sharing with us how Jack met Marla, how Jack met Tyler, how Tyler met Marla, and everything that happened afterwards. I would like to take the time here to concentrate on the various temporalities which are conjured as a result of our protagonist's narration in the opening pages of the written text, considering also the questions that are encouraged with regards to the knowledge held at any one point, and thus the agency behind the narrative twist which occurs later. Whilst the film quickly establishes a sense of the *present* with the aid of our narrator's dialogue - "People are always asking me if I know about Tyler Durden" - in the book, the diegetic present is slightly more difficult to fully pin down. Within the opening paragraph, the narration reads: 'People are always asking, *did* I know about Tyler Durden.' (Palahniuk, 1997, p. 11, emphasis added). Whilst there are only subtle differences between the opening lines of the two versions of this text, they are worth examining in more detail. Within the book, we're given the impression that our narrator shares his story with us from the *present* in one sense, yet it is a present which is post-Tyler - 'are' hints at our narrator's here and now, whilst the past-tense of 'did', framed within free indirect speech, brings assumptions that the notoriety enjoyed by Tyler *now* is generated from the contexts provided in retrospect. This is particularly interesting when we consider how both versions of this text close. In the film, our main flashback frame eventually catches up to the opening frame of the diegetic present, and we view the concluding moments of the film's climax with entirely new knowledge of who Tyler is, before achieving narrative closure when the equilibrium is restored, Tyler is "destroyed", and Jack and Marla are together, hand in hand watching the buildings around them crumble as Tyler's plan comes to fruition. In the book, the ending is not quite so closed – we do revisit our opening frame, and Jack does confront Tyler and manage to eliminate him, but it doesn't end there. In the final chapter,

Jack narrates to us from what we can assume to be a psychiatric hospital, with supposed 'space monkeys' continuing his work while he's out of action. When we consider this ending, the retroactivity provided in the opening lines of the novel begin to make sense, enabling us to conclude that our sense of the *present* has been false all along; Jack hasn't been sharing his story from his position on top of the Parker-Morris building, bearing no knowledge about who Tyler is as Tyler holds a gun in his mouth – he has, in fact, been narrating his story from his hospital bed, having already pulled the trigger himself to "kill off" his alternate personality. Hence, Jack has known all along the truth about who Tyler is, and the narrative frames have been set up in such a way to allow us to be deliberately misled, leading readers and viewers to label Jack as an unreliable narrator.

As has already been outlined, it is once we approach the text a second time, with the knowledge gained from the "big reveal" when the cloak is lifted at the end, that we can begin to search for clues to the question of *how* it is that we have been so drastically misled, and *which* narrative agent(s) could/should be held responsible. When we return to the written version of *Fight Club* with this knowledge, it is clear that the groundwork is being laid throughout to support the idea of Jack and Tyler being somehow linked in a way we are not supposed to expect. An example occurs fairly early on in the text, on page 25, when the narrator remarks: 'Because of his nature, Tyler could only work night jobs. [...] I could only work day jobs.' This becomes a key passage to return to when, at a later point - the precise point which can be identified as our narrator's moment of recognition, in fact - Jack is led to conclude that he and Tyler 'both use the same body, but at different times.' Thus, even if as an audience we were to question the logistics of *how* Jack and Tyler could possibly be the same person, an explanation has already been provided for us, at a point very early in the narrative. Equally, at the same point (page 28), there is a brief slip in focalisation and the free direct thought of Jack, which accounts for much of the narration throughout the text, seamlessly switches to encompass the free direct thought of Tyler. It occurs in a passage which combines Jack's commentary on his insomnia ('You wake up at SeaTac', 'You wake up at Krissy Field', 'You wake up at Meigs Field') with reflections on the role of a film projectionist, which we know are supposedly being made in reference to Tyler, as this role is one of a few part-time jobs he holds. The passage describes how a movie reel changeover works, and it does

so with the use of second-person narration. At this stage, the switch to the second-person can almost pass by unnoticed; the information being relayed to us is generalised, and is all information that Jack *could* know about, given the fact that he knows Tyler. The moment at which the use of the second-person becomes noteworthy occurs when we can distinguish a clear movement from the perspective of Jack to the perspective of Tyler, and information is shared which only Tyler could know:

> At home, you'll sometimes wake up in your dark bed with the terror you've fallen asleep in the booth and missed a changeover. The audience will be cursing you. The audience, their movie dream ruined, and the manager will be calling the union.
>
> (1997, p. 28).

This experience is obviously being narrated from the perspective of Tyler, who actually acts in the role of a movie projectionist and for whom it makes sense to have had these dreams; it's far too specified for us to reasonably assume that the narration within this extract is a continuation of Jack's perspective. This hypothesis is confirmed when, in the paragraph that follows, the same experience is shared, but with the focalisation reverted back to Jack, who returns to framing Tyler in the third-person:

> Sometimes, Tyler wakes up in the dark, buzzing with the terror that he's missed a reel change or the movie has broken or the movie has slipped just enough in the projector that the sprockets are punching a line of holes through the sound track.
>
> (1997, p. 29).

And it is over the course of these few pages that we move regularly between various narrative modes: the free direct thought of Jack, the free direct thought of Tyler, and the narrator's representation of thought as he reflects upon Tyler's experiences. With these switches in perspectives and modes of narration occurring as seamlessly and frequently as they do within this short passage, the distinction between personal memories and experiences is blurred and the implication is made that the perspectives of both characters are somehow intrinsically linked. When we return to the text upon a second reading, this particular passage acts to solidify our new understanding of Jack's relationship with Tyler (i.e. that they are the same person) and our attention is drawn to these sudden and frequent shifts as they serve to highlight how Tyler's experiences and Jack's commentaries are being generated by the same mind. The boundary between Jack and Tyler's perspectives is further blurred on page 50, when Jack remarks: 'Tyler gets under the one light in the middle of the black concrete basement and he can see that light

flickering back out of the dark in a hundred pairs of eyes.' Here, there is a distinct shift mid-sentence; the first clause is provided from Jack's perspective, as he observes and describes Tyler in the third-person, and the second retains that third-person view, but provides insight from Tyler's optical perspective, thus is clearly focalised through him. The fact that this shift occurs not mid-chapter or mid-paragraph, but rather mid-sentence, indicates that the complication between these two characters' perspectives is something which affects the narration incrementally throughout the text. This results in some rich material for speech and thought presentation analysis during the pages where the twist is being revealed to us and realised by our narrator. On page 168, Jack's narration reads: 'So, now that I know about Tyler, will he just disappear?' – a remark which is presented as the free direct thought of our narrator. The complication occurs in the line that immediately follows, as Tyler responds to Jack's thought with direct speech: '"No," says Tyler.' With this, the link between the internalised narrative of our narrator, and that of Tyler, is firmly made concrete. This pattern continues and the apparent ability to read Jack's thoughts is later extended beyond Tyler to Marla. As Jack's mind begins to further unravel after the realisation about his condition has been made, due to the complicated speech and thought presentation in the text, it is no longer made clear which elements should be considered internalised narration and which should be read as projected/externalised narration. For example, on page 182, we read the line 'I'm not putting these pills up my ass,' as a thought generated by Jack. This is responded to with a speech act, this time not from Tyler, but from Marla: "Then only take two." Whilst the narration would suggest otherwise (given the lack of speech marks for Jack's remarks), what we are led to assume in the later stages is that these apparent *thoughts* of Jack's *must* be being spoken aloud in order for Marla to be able to verbally respond to them, thus solidifying our conclusion that the mode of narration used is manipulated and presented to us in such a way to ensure we are deliberately misled; the instances where Marla responds to Jack's thoughts contribute not towards the execution of the twist, as the twist has already occurred at this point, but rather towards the judgements we make on the narrator himself, namely that he is unreliable.

When we come to consider the moment of the twist itself and how we can come to understand it on a repeat reading/viewing, it is possible to conclude that the experience is made slightly different

for audiences of the written text and audiences of the film, and it is due to the invocation of the cinematic narrator in the move to the audiovisual medium that the situation is cleared up for us as viewers, as well as for our narrator, much more quickly than it is for us as readers of the written text. For example, the realisation that all may not be as it seems begins to occur on page 158, when Jack pays a visit to a bar, and the bartender calls him "Mr. Durden", reminding him of his visit to the same bar the previous week. Once again, the narration seeks to play tricks with us and is inconsistent; at some points, reporting clauses are included ('Yeah, I say, it's a test. Has he ever met Tyler Durden?'); but at other points, our narrator's internalised narrative, presented as free direct thought, is responded to verbally by the bartender, leading us to assume that these thoughts are actually being spoken aloud, despite the lack of speech marks and reporting clauses. It is during this conversation that the link between Jack and Tyler is made explicit – the bartender addresses Jack as "Mr Durden" repeatedly, although at this point, it's more of a tease, and due to our prolonged alignment with Jack, we're likely to assume that it's a case of mistaken identity, rather than to entertain the idea that he and Tyler could be the same person. The moment at which the truth about Jack and Tyler is actually realised occurs slightly later, after Jack has dismissed the words of the bartender, and dismissed a conversation with Marla in which she has revealed to him that his name is 'Tyler Butt-Wipe-for-Brains Durden,' to which he repeatedly responds (once more in free direct thought which is answered by Marla's direct speech), 'I've got to get some sleep,' 'I've got to find Tyler.' (Palahniuk, 1997, p. 160). It is only when Jack confronts Tyler directly, on page 164, that the twist is fully realised both for us as readers and for our narrator;

> "There isn't a me and a you, anymore," Tyler says, and he pinches the end of my nose. "I think you've figured that out."
>
> We both use the same body, but at different times.
>
> (1997, p. 164).

With the patterns in speech and thought presentation already having been established, the fact that this final line is presented as free direct thought allows us to assume that it has come from Jack (up until now, Tyler's speech has always been punctuated). We are therefore then able to recognise this moment as Jack's true moment of realisation; the moment at which he finally accepts the reality of what he is being told. It is interesting to note here that it is Tyler who delivers the words that force Jack to accept

his reality, and it is Tyler who then provides further context and explanation as to how it can possibly be that these two personalities exist within a shared body and mind. Within the film, the initial blow may come from Tyler, but there is an additional narrative agent who is then primed to adopt the role of clearing things up for us – the cinematic narrator.

In *Fight Club*, the key element contributing to the twist is that it is not made explicitly clear that Jack and Tyler are two separate identities sharing a body. We have already explored some of the techniques at work in the written narrative which serve to highlight how this may be the case. When it comes to the film, with scenes in which Tyler is the dominant personality, we are not provided with any indication or visual representation of the switchover that must have occurred within Jack's psyche in order to bring Tyler to the forefront. In fact, when Tyler is dominant, the shot often frames Jack somewhere in the background as the observer of his own split personality's actions. So, not only is Tyler presented as a real, living person in the conventional sense of perception, he is also presented as occupying an entirely separate body, with his own personality and control over his own faculties, for the majority of the film. This is later explained by Tyler himself when he says to Jack, "Sometimes you're still you. Other times, you imagine yourself watching me." At this point, we realise that what we have been shown of events throughout the film has actually been projected through the focalisation of Jack. Whilst the shots depicting Tyler do not arise explicitly from Jack's perspective, settling on a theory of focalisation may explain how it is possible for both characters to appear on-screen at the same time. Whilst the cinematic narrator is one element of the narration to be held accountable for the deception at play, it is also the element that *exposes* that deception and brings clarity to the narrative after the reveal of the twist. When Jack suspects that Tyler is a figment of his imagination, and Tyler verbally encourages him to consider this fact, Jack closes his eyes, and we are shown flashbacks into previous scenes of the film. Only in these flashbacks, the focalisation through the narrator is dropped, and we no longer see Tyler present in the frames. Instead, the flashbacks now show Jack having a physical fight with himself in the car park of a bar (on the same night that Jack and Tyler supposedly came up with the idea of Fight Club); Jack scarring his own hand with lye; Jack stood in the centre of a darkened room, under the only light, addressing the members of Fight Club, and of Project Mayhem. These

flashbacks function on two levels: for Jack, they are a visualisation of his returning memories, played out as they would have *actually* happened in the diegesis of the film; for the viewer, they contribute to the realisation of the narrative twist, and serve the function of encouraging a narrative frame repair, or in this case, a frame 'replacement'.

Robert Burgoyne argues that the '‘truth of a text’ and the reliability of characters purporting to speak that truth can be measured only against the authentic facts of the fictional universe, which are *a priori* constructed by the anonymous or impersonal narrator.' (1990, p. 10). In terms of *Fight Club*, this theory is actualised with Jack's recollected flashbacks – the anonymous narrator steps in to rectify the audience's viewing position, in alignment with what Jack now knows, when the twist is revealed and we are shown the reality of the situation. However, having already acknowledged the role played by the cinematic (or impersonal) narrator in *deceiving* the audience, this argument makes it almost impossible to differentiate between the discourse of the cinematic narrator and Burgoyne's 'authentic' discourse without them each having reference to one another. Emily Anderson elaborates on Burgoyne's argument, providing a much-needed distinction: 'We might more reasonably conclude (...) not that everything the cinematic narrator presents is true, but that everything it presents has a *truth value* - that it is either true or false.' (2010, p. 86, emphasis added). At this point, it becomes relevant to mention another technique at work in the film and functioning as part of its cinematic narration. As we've already discussed, in the closing section of the film (post-twist) Jack has come to realise and accept the fact that he is living with a multiple personality disorder and that Tyler is, in fact, not "real" in the sense of a living, breathing, existing human being. However, even with such knowledge, he can still *see* Tyler, and still believes Tyler is a physical presence in front of him, so much so that he is fearful when "Tyler" holds a gun to him. Jack goes to "Ground Zero", the Parker-Morris Building, in an attempt to put a stop to "Tyler's" plans, and it is while Jack is attempting to disarm the bomb that has been rigged that Tyler appears, and they fight. At this point, shots that are focalised through Jack's perspective (i.e. not framed directly from his point-of-view, but with a perspective which still sees Tyler as *alive*) are interposed with shots of the same scene, only filmed by a surveillance camera, and therefore with the narrator's focalisation abandoned. In the footage taken and screened by the surveillance

camera, Jack is in a physical fight with no one but himself. In the shots where the focalisation returns, we see Tyler drag Jack out from under a van by his ankles; the security camera depicts this same action, only he is dragged across the floor by an unseen entity. At this point, it is reasonable to conclude that part of the cinematic narration is seeking to show us the truth - what Burgoyne might classify as 'authentic' discourse - whilst the other part remains loyal to its prior role of displaying a *version* of the reality occurring within the narrative through the *focalised perspective* of Jack.

Within *Fight Club,* both elements of narration - the cinematic narrator and the character-narrator - work simultaneously to conceal the truth. The audience has no leverage or superiority in knowledge over Jack himself and, upon first viewing at least, it appears as though we are just as deceived as he is. Post-twist, the cinematic narrator distances itself from Jack by dropping the focalisation and adopting a more objective standpoint (although it is important to remember here that it still is not *entirely* objective). In the book, there is less room for this step back that suddenly becomes necessary; it is a homodiegetic character-narrator who is delivering this story to us, therefore, still tethered to his viewpoint and experiencing the story through his words, it becomes difficult to gain the degree of objectivity required to answer any questions we may have about the text-world. However, the narration seeks to combat this; firstly, as Tyler is the one to break the illusion for Jack, Tyler is also the one to clear up any complications for us, explaining the logistics of *how it works* with the two characters sharing a body, and *why* it became necessary in the first place. Later, there is one line with which the narrator seeks to provide clarity for his readers by retracting to the highest position of objectivity; 'To God, this looks like one man alone, holding a gun in his own mouth…' (Palahniuk, 1997, p. 203). As it is the cinematic narrator who adopts this position for us in the film adaptation, the link is here made between its role and that of an all-seeing, all-knowing God, which, as we will later explore, is problematic.

In outlining his list of motifs that are common to the mind-game film, Thomas Elsaesser makes the argument for one of them being:

Not only is the hero unable to distinguish between different worlds: he or she is often *not even aware* that there might be parallel universes, and neither is the audience – until a moment in

the film when it turns out that the narrative and plot have been based on a mistaken cognitive or perceptual premise (*Fight Club, The Sixth Sense, A Beautiful Mind*).

(2009, pp. 17-18, emphasis added).

Whilst earlier analysis has already revealed that this statement cannot be applied to the narrator of *Fight Club,* who, we come to realise with a review of the temporal levels that are set up within the text, narrates his story to us *with full awareness* of his condition and of who Tyler actually is, the concept here hinted towards about what is known at any given point opens ground for further discussion. Within the same paper, Elsaesser notes that the capacity and appeal for films within the puzzle film genre is in their capability to address 'not just the usual (genre) issues of adolescent identity-crisis, sexuality, gender, the oedipal family, and the dysfunctional community, but also epistemological problems (...) and ontological doubts (about other worlds, other minds)' (2009, p. 15). Upon returning to *Fight Club* for a second reading/viewing, it can be seen that such epistemological problems are explored within the narration, with ontological doubts being raised not only about other worlds and other minds, but also about what is real and what is simulation, and how we can know. The concepts of reality and simulation are balanced precariously throughout the written text, with the fight club itself framed as bridging the gap between the two:

> Fight club is not football on television. You aren't watching a bunch of men you don't know halfway around the world beating on each other live by satellite with a two-minute delay, commercials pitching beer every ten minutes, and a pause now for station identification. After you've been to fight club, watching football on television is watching pornography when you could be having great sex.
>
> (1997, p. 50).

Thematically, this dichotomy is extended throughout the text in the narrator's suffering with insomnia, which leaves him not only struggling to identify what's real and what's a dream, but also struggling to properly secure a sense of identity in himself: 'If I could wake up in a different place, at a different time, could I wake up as a different person?' (Palahniuk, 1997, p. 33). As a result, the fight club is the solution that frees Jack from the simulation, and Tyler is the body through which this escape is achieved. Only it appears to come at a cost for our narrator. With the creation of Tyler, what begins as an apparent answer to Jack's loss of identity, encouraging him to reclaim his sense of masculinity by reverting, ultimately, back to an idea of the *original*, ends up being a *concept* existing beyond one character and

embodying themes of adaptation, origins and identity which reside within the narrative and are referenced in the author's afterword. In the afterword, Palahniuk shares the story of his encounter with a man who is a fan of *Fight Club* the film, but isn't aware of its origins as a written text. After meticulously listing all the other "adaptations" that the film release seemed to encourage - 4-H clubs in Virginia running their own fight clubs, restaurant reviews titled "Bite Club", Gucci employing the "Fight Club look" in their runway shows, and young men legally changing their name to Tyler Durden, to name a few - Palahniuk goes on to emphasise the fact that the *origin* is something which is difficult to properly identify, sharing that, amongst the fan mail he received from readers and cinemagoers around the world:

> [P]eople wrote letters, a little angry, saying how they'd invented the whole idea of fight clubs. In military boot camps. Or in Depression-era labor camps. They'd get drunk and ask one another: "Hit me. As hard as you can…"
>
> There have always been fight clubs, they say. There will always be fight clubs.
>
> (2006, p. 217).

Anecdotes such as these can contribute to our understanding of *adaptation,* a theme which, in the same light as it is presented in the extract above, is played out within the narrative of *Fight Club* itself. When we consider this information gained from the paratext (i.e. afterword) of the text, we are presented with an embodiment/real-world example supporting Stam's argument that '[t]he "original" always turns out to be copied from something earlier: (…) *Don Quixote* goes back to chivalric romances, *Robinson Crusoe* goes back to travel journalism, and so on ad infinitum' (2005, p. 8). And this sentiment is expressed not just in reference to the narrative text itself, but it also finds itself embodied as a theme *within* the text. Both the novel and the film highlight the transferable nature of Tyler's attitudes – at first adopted by our narrator, and later by the space monkeys of Project Mayhem, who see his words eternalised with near-formulaic repetition: "You are not a beautiful and unique snowflake. You are the same decaying organic matter as everyone else, and we are all part of the same compost pile." (Palahniuk, 1997, p. 134). The narrator remarks, 'In every new fight club, someone I've never met is standing under the one light in the centre of the darkness, surrounded by men, and reading Tyler's words.' Just as Stam's understanding of the expanding nebulous of intertextual reference, influence and adaptation depicts a loss of the sense of the "original", so too does the narrative that plays out in *Fight*

Club. Whilst our narrator seeks to regain a sense of origin with the creation of Tyler - whether that be in response to *man's* loss of origins, or his own identity becoming lost in the material objects he surrounds himself with - it is also the case that Tyler's own origins begin to disappear as elements of his speech and behaviour are appropriated by the members of Fight Club and Project Mayhem, and Jack himself. This is a concept which is set up and indicated towards within the written text shortly before the big reveal:

> This is what Tyler wants me to do. These are Tyler's words coming out of my mouth. I am Tyler's mouth. I am Tyler's hands. Everybody in Project Mayhem is part of Tyler Durden, and vice versa.
>
> (1997, p. 155).

And it is the 'vice versa' element which remains to be key here. In support of the notion of Tyler Durden *as adaptation,* it is lines like this within the written text that exhibit the embodiment of key ideas relating to adaptation theory; that adaptation retains an ongoing and open dialogue between source texts, with source feeding adaptation, and the contexts developed by adaptation continually feeding the source. Similarly, this is a concept which is addressed in the cinematic version of *Fight Club;* in Jack's repeated line of "Tyler's words coming out of my mouth", and in the depiction of the initiation of each of the space monkeys, who wear identical black uniforms, shave their heads and receive a lye burn on their hand to match Jack's. Thus, whilst Tyler can initially be read as the means through which Jack receives his *back-to-origins* deliverance, by the end of the narrative, in both its cinematic and its written form, what Tyler actually grows to represent is a complete loss of the concept of origin altogether, existing without roots, absent of an original source, and beyond character – as our handy bartender remarks, "It's part of the legend. You're turning into a fucking legend, man." (Palahniuk, 1997, p. 159). Adaptation resides within the text as a theme and contributes towards the execution of the twist, with the concepts of simulation and origins being invoked to sustain it. At what is arguably the climactic moment within the written text, Jack appears to have lost any element of control over his own mentality:

> Oh, this is bullshit. This is a dream. Tyler is a projection. He's a dissociative personality disorder. A psychogenic fugue state. Tyler Durden is my hallucination.
>
> "Fuck that shit," Tyler says. "Maybe you're my schizophrenic hallucination."
>
> I was here first.

(1997, p. 168).

Here, the combination of free direct thought on the part of our narrator, being responded to with the direct speech of Tyler, as we have become accustomed to by now, sees the themes of simulation ('This is a dream. Tyler is a projection.'), adaptation (in Tyler's response), and a loss of origins ('I was here first.') fully embodied, as Jack's crisis of identity reaches its peak. And it is with this that *Fight Club* can be read as an adaptation in multiple ways, both as a text-to-film adaptation with roots in several real-world sources and as a film which has triggered other adaptations beyond the realms of narrative and entertainment. But even beyond this, *Fight Club* as a text embodies the theme of adaptation on every level; with Tyler existing as an adaptation in terms of his behaviour being adopted by other characters to see him become *legend*; and Jack becoming an adaptation, firstly with his loss of origin and identity, then reaffirmed with his appropriation of Tyler's language into his own speech.

I would like to highlight here the fact that, whilst there exists a certain level of complexity in terms of the plot that plays out within *Fight Club*, its puzzle film status is secured chiefly due to the complex *narration* via which the story is presented, which mirrors closely that of the written text. Without the complicated and deceptive narration within both versions of the text, the message of *Fight Club* then becomes one which focuses more closely on the political/anti-consumerist subtext, with the only surprise in the plot perhaps being the fact that a seemingly normal man wants to start an underground club where people punch each other, with seemingly normal attendees voluntarily getting bloodied up in an effort to "stick it to the man". I point this out here to illustrate once more my main focus within this thesis, which is complexity played out on the part of *narration* over that which exists on the level of *narrative*. With this in mind, I would now like to turn my attention to another adapted Hollywood text that successfully executes a substantial narrative twist for its viewers, supported by a complex plot and achieving this twist via a contrasting method of narration: *Shutter Island.*

Chapter 2 – Translating the Twist: Heterodiegetic narration and *Shutter Island*

The text I would like to hold up in comparison to *Fight Club* is a text which addresses similar themes, whose questions surrounding the concept of identity similarly allow for a substantial narrative twist to be executed, however via a different narratorial channel (heterodiegetic narration), and with varying results across its written and cinematic versions. *Shutter Island* (dir. Martin Scorsese, 2010) tells of the experiences of US Marshal Teddy Daniels (Leonardo DiCaprio), who has been called on a mission to attend the remote Shutter Island, the home of an institution for the criminally insane, in search of a missing patient named Rachel Solando. The twist that occurs in *Shutter Island* is similarly fuelled by an instance of narrative deception which misleads the audience into believing in the existence of an additional character; one who, in fact, has also been created by our main character as a result of his personality disorder. At the film's climactic end, we come to learn at the same time as our main character that Teddy Daniels is in fact a persona created by him in an attempt to escape the guilt he feels over the murder of his wife. Informing 'Teddy' that he has been allowed to play out a delusion in which he is a Marshal in search of a missing patient, Dr Cawley (Ben Kingsley) breaks this illusion and reminds him of his true identity – he is Andrew Laeddis, the man he has been searching for, who murdered his wife after she had drowned their three children in the lake by their house. This is the conclusion we are led to draw from Martin Scorsese's adaptation, however the novel allows for a conspiracy to still exist at its close.

Shutter Island provides interesting grounds for discussion when compared with *Fight Club*, as both texts manage to execute a substantial narrative twist (the content of which is similar in nature), but they do so with the use of contrasting methods of narration. In the written version of *Shutter Island*, we are presented with a heterodiegetic narrator who exists outside of the story world and narrates in the third-person. However, a short prologue seeks to complicate our initial impression of who might be narrating this text. Providing an entry that has supposedly been taken from the journals of Dr Lester Sheehan, written several years after the events depicted in the story, in which he suggests he would like to 'write these things down' not to alter the text, but to 'preserve' it, the prologue leads us to make the assumption that the story which follows has also been taken from the journals of the doctor, in which

case the narration would be categorised as homodiegetic. It is only upon closer inspection of the text, when we realise that we have privileged access into Teddy's inner world, that we come to realise there must be a shift in the mode of narration with the commencement of the main narrative, and upon returning to the text, it becomes clear that the focalisation we adopt is implemented gradually in the opening pages. For example, the main narrative commences with a memory from Teddy's past, narrated to us by our narrator, who could, at this point, still be Sheehan; the memory is reported as though written in a history book, with very little inclination as to Teddy's direct thoughts and emotions. Within this opening section, our narrator describes a boating trip Teddy had taken with his father to visit Shutter Island - 'He'd taken Teddy out to the island when Teddy was still a small boy, too young to be much help on the boat. All he'd been able to do was untangle the lines and tie off the hooks.' (Lehane, 2003, p. 21). As opposed to the active phrasing that we might expect in such relaying of memories (i.e. 'he cut', 'he took', 'they left'), we're further distanced from the action with the inclusion of the past participle – 'he'd cut', 'he'd taken', 'they'd left'), which not only frames this introductory narrative firmly as a memory, but also widens the gap between our narrator - presently lacking an identity - and our subject, Teddy.

In the paragraph that follows, the perspective shifts to become more closely aligned with Teddy, and the narration begins to report sensory elements as experienced directly by Teddy; 'Teddy saw small, pastel-coloured shacks lining the beach of one [island], a crumbling limestone estate on another.' (Lehane, 2003, p. 22). With this shift, we're encouraged to further question the degree to which our narrator seeks to align her/his readers with Teddy, and the extent of her/his knowledge of/familiarity with the main character at any one moment. It is also worth noting that from this point forward, despite the fact that we remain in the introductory section with the same memory being relayed, the past participle suddenly disappears from the narration, and we're brought into the text-world with active reporting; what might have once been 'Teddy had liked the sound of that,' now becomes, 'Teddy liked the sound of that.' (Lehane, 2003, p. 22). It is only a few lines after this noticeable shift that the narration's focalisation through Teddy is fully secured, and we begin to experience emotions, thoughts and fears directly from the mind of Teddy. The first indication of this movement towards a focalised

narrative appears on page 23, where we learn through a line that can be categorised within the scope of speech and thought presentation analysis as narrator's representation of thought, that Teddy was 'unable to tell his father that it wasn't motion that had turned his stomach'. The narration continues, deepening our alignment with Teddy's perspective by moving to free indirect thought: 'It was all that water. Stretched out around them like it was all that was left of the world.' With this, we are introduced to Teddy's fear of water - a recurring theme throughout the narrative - for the first time, with the reasoning behind it seeming to come directly from the mind of Teddy, despite the fact that the mode of narration remains as heterodiegetic.

From this initial memory, the narrative proper then opens, with Teddy, now an adult, travelling back to Shutter Island by boat, along with his partner, Chuck. Whilst the first paragraph of this section is largely descriptive, we soon realise that the focalisation remains, and we're presented with descriptions of the sights and smells as experienced by Teddy on the trip. By the third paragraph, the narration is presented with a combination of speech and thought presentation styles that seek to further align us with our protagonist; 'He could just imagine Chuck telling his wife back home,' would be categorised as the narrator's representation of a thought act, whilst we're given access more directly to Teddy's thoughts and opinions with regular inclusions of free indirect thought, combined with a brief move to the use of second-person pronouns – 'You told yourself it was okay - because that's what you had to do to cross a body of water - but it wasn't.' (Lehane, 2003, p. 26). Given our knowledge of Teddy's fear of water, as has been established earlier in the text's introductory chapter, we can read these lines as Teddy's direct thoughts filtered through and presented in the words of our narrator, whoever that may be. With regular regression back into Teddy's memories also in these early pages - where we are led to assume something tragic has happened to his wife, Delores - our insight into Teddy's psychological perspective deepens with the use of free direct thought, as he tortures himself with memories of her and longs '[j]ust to smell her. To imagine her.' (Lehane, 2003, p. 27). It is balanced in this precarious position, forced to rely upon that which is being reported by our heterodiegetic narrator (therefore, apparently, *truth*) and the additional detail and insight into Teddy's psyche that we gain via the focalised narration, that we remain throughout our encounter with this text,

never fully settling into either perspective, and therefore never gaining full clarity over what actually happens by the text's close.

In the film adaptation, this complicated narratorial technique seems to be mirrored. Just as the novel provides us with access to Teddy's thoughts, opinions, memories, and emotions through both the dialogue and the narration itself - a privilege we aren't given for any of the other characters - in the film, images are presented to us without being narrated directly by our main character, but which place an emphasis on his own perspectives. This comes in the form of flashbacks, the visualisation of his memories and dreams, and occasional eyeline matches and point-of-view shots, which are easy to miss on the first viewing. It is also made apparent quite early in the film that the sound may also be focalised through Teddy. Not only does a particular song that's playing within the diegesis appear to trigger a flashback for him, which is then visualised on screen for us, but the non-diegetic soundtrack itself also appears to be composed in such a way as to reflect Teddy's emotions. An example is provided in an early scene which depicts Teddy's arrival on the island with Chuck. Whilst they both engage in a fairly informal conversation with a man who is guarding the gates, the soundtrack feels entirely out of place as it plays out a highly dramatic piece of music, building tension and suspense where, seemingly, there is none. This is an indication that multiple cinematic codes are being used to reflect the narration's alignment with our main character, and this becomes a key point to bear in mind when we consider the moment of the twist, and the conclusions we are led to draw at the narrative's close. I would like to note here that, with a twist successfully orchestrated in both versions of *Shutter Island* and *Fight Club*, it is the resolution provided in the written versions of these texts where their differences are most apparent and the impact of the type of narration used (*homodiegetic* vs. *heterodiegetic*) is fully realised.

It may be argued that it is due to our alignment with Teddy, encouraged by the narration that appears to be focalised through his perspective, that the ending of the written text is left to be more ambiguous than that of its cinematic counterpart, providing lingering support for the possibility of a grand conspiracy being played out on the island. Throughout the text, we're encouraged to buy into the conspiracy that Teddy has secretly come to investigate; whilst his ruse to the doctors is that he's on Shutter Island to help them find the missing patient, Rachel Solando, who apparently escaped from her

room in the dead of night, barefoot in the height of a storm and surrounded by orderlies without being seen, we learn that what Teddy is actually interested in is finding Andrew Laeddis – the man who, he claims, burned his apartment building down, killing his wife. The second element of the conspiracy is based around the lighthouse that lays abandoned on the shore of the island, which Teddy expects is being used as a facility for experimental and barbaric psychological testing and treatment. Throughout the text, and indeed even from the earliest stages, Teddy has some significant obstacles laid in his path by the doctors and officials on the island; firstly, in relation to the missing person's case (he's not permitted to read Rachel's file), and secondly, when he begins to ask questions about what the lighthouse is "really" used for, and it is the evasive behaviour of the doctors and orderlies, and the access we're given to Teddy's perspective (albeit within heterodiegetic narration) that makes the initial set-up of the conspiracy seem plausible. By the time we reach page 175, where Teddy is explaining to Chuck the motivation behind his interest in Shutter Island, and in particular its patient Andrew Laeddis, this idea of a grand conspiracy is already well established, and we have no reason to suspect untruths in Teddy's story of how he made sure he was the Marshal called to solve the missing person's case. At this point, our investment into Teddy's version of the truth is only elevated by his verbal narrative and the dialogue of his partner, Chuck:

> 'Teddy, Jesus.' Chuck lowered his voice, placed the flats of his palms on the slab, took a long breath. 'Let's say they are doing some bad shit here. What if they've been onto you since before you ever stepped foot on this island? What if *they* brought *you* here?'

> (2003, pp. 176-177).

It is upon reflection, once we have come to the end of the text - whether that be in novel or cinematic format - that exchanges such as this between Chuck and Teddy become of particular interest, as the conclusion encouraged by both versions of the text is that Teddy is actually Andrew, and Chuck is actually Dr Sheehan, the man who has supposedly been treating Teddy for two years as a patient with a paranoid delusion; the same man who apparently sought to record the tale in his diary as a means of "preserving" the truth, as we learn in the prologue. Questions are then raised as to the genuine motivations of Dr Sheehan – if we are to believe in the conclusion that Teddy is actually Andrew, allowed to play out an extended fantasy as part of a psychological experiment to test whether it will pull him out of his delusion, why does Dr Sheehan as "Chuck" perpetuate the conspiracy, becoming not

only an ear for Teddy to vent to, but an active participant in the construction and reinforcement of Teddy's version of events? Not only this, but why, if Sheehan knows Teddy's "true" identity, does he, even in his own diary, refer to him as Teddy and not as Andrew – a key question to consider when we remember the fact that his chief motivation in recording these events is to 'preserve the text'? Whilst cinematic storytelling elements help us to settle more securely on which version of events is true - which I will return to momentarily - the novel not only successfully sets up the conspiracy but actively *sustains* it through encounters such as this, to the extent that by the end, and even upon a second reading, audiences are still no closer to settling on either version of the truth. Even after the moment of the big reveal, where Dr Cawley shares with Teddy the tragic events that brought him to Shutter Island, he is still referred to as 'Teddy' in the narration – whilst both Dr Sheehan and Dr Cawley insist from this point forward on calling him Andrew, he still appears as Teddy in reporting clauses and within the body of the narration. This leads readers towards a number of questions, which ultimately impact the closure provided by the written text. Is our main character still referred to as Teddy because the focalisation remains in place, and our fallible filter still believes he is Teddy at this point, or is it a clue left behind by the narrator/implied author to indicate that the doctors can't be trusted?

As previously mentioned, the cinema combines multiple storytelling elements in order to present its narratives, and it is to these that we can turn for answers as to how the film version of *Shutter Island* provides a greater sense of closure than does its source text. At the point at which Dr Cawley confronts Teddy about his past and his true identity, the cinematic narrator's authority over the presentation of the narrative is invoked, and we're presented with a series of flashbacks. Unlike in *Fight Club*, where the cinematic narrator temporarily breaks its alignment with the protagonist in order to present an objective truth (with footage from a security camera), in the case of *Shutter Island*, it is not previous scenes from the diegetic present that are reframed for us; rather, it is Teddy's own memories that we revisit, this time shedding the lens of our fallible filter. The memory, accompanied by Dr Cawley's retelling of the events in voiceover, depicts Teddy returning home to find his wife sat out on the porch with three figures floating in the lake by the house, which we soon discover are the figures of his drowned children. What we can come to conclude from this presentation of his memories is that the

cinematic narrator retains its alignment with Teddy, only this time, as he has made the realisation of his own truth, we are shown a different version of his memories; he has accepted the truth about his past, and the cinematic narrator reinforces that truth upon the spectator.

Another distinctly cinematic element that aids viewers in gaining clarity over the events of the film, and which should be considered here, is acting. When it comes to the revelation in the film, we're more inclined to believe Dr Cawley's version of events because we can see for ourselves that he appears to be genuine; we're invested in the delivery of his words and we're more naturally inclined to believe he is, painfully and almost unwillingly, lifting the veil and revealing the truth to Teddy, and to us. This moment is countered within the written text, as this encounter is recorded in such a way as to encourage us to believe he is lying: 'Cawley's face, the man's eyes brimming now with that false compassion, that imitation of decency.' (2003, p. 370). It is reports such as this, along with the fact that the heterodiegetic narrator never refers to Teddy as Andrew, that results in the written text being left open, with a great sense of ambiguity regarding Teddy's true identity and the real events taking place on Shutter Island.

Wherever there is a case of an audience being deceived by a narrative, the tendency has always been to look to the narrator as a direct source of that deception. As has been indicated in earlier analysis, it is not solely the narrator to whom we should look for answers to our questions of how we were misled; there are a number of other narrative agents which contribute to the impact of twisted and or/complex narratives that must be addressed in equal scope, particularly in cases of text-to-film adaptation. The concept of the unreliable narrator is one which has long been debated across the practices of both literary and cinematic studies, and as such finds itself with several definitions, each with varying scopes and terms for application. In an earlier formulation, the unreliable narrator, according to Wayne Booth, is best exemplified when there is a marked distance in intention between the narrator and the extradiegetic narrative agent that has come to be labelled as the implied author – 'the agency within the narrative fiction itself which guides any reading of it,' as Seymour Chatman has put it (1990, p.74). In his *Rhetoric of Fiction*, Booth claims, 'I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks of or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not.' (1961, pp. 158-159). Chatman, equally, argues that we cannot consider narrative

unreliability without first accepting the concept of the implied author, positing that unreliability on the part of a narrator is made clear when the narrative work itself is in conflict with the narrator's presentation, arousing suspicion in the audience over her/his sincerity, or even her/his ability to tell the "true version" of events. Linking the two narrative agents - the narrator and the implied author - in a similar correlation as that proposed by Booth, Chatman remarks that an unreliable narrator can only exist when she/he is 'at virtual odds with the implied author; otherwise his unreliability could not emerge.' (1978, p. 149). For some, however, a narrator's degree of (un)reliability cannot reasonably be dependent upon this apparent correlation (or lack thereof) between the narrative work, the implied author, and the narrator as, according to scholars such as Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, the norms of the implied author have been found to be 'notoriously difficult to arrive at', leaving this approach at the risk of being governed by assumption and overgeneralisation, and producing context-dependent examples and subjective insights which cannot be applied to multiple texts. Thus, it is clear that the concept of the unreliable narrator, and the methods via which the conclusion of narrative unreliability are arrived at, require further attention.

One scholar who has sought to further refine the scope of narrative unreliability, framing his analysis within the context of the contemporary Hollywood film, is Volker Ferenz. Ferenz seeks to delineate between fallible cases of narration and narrators who are truly unreliable, arguing that it is only first-person narrators who exhibit the capacity to "take over" their narratives that truly 'fulfil the precondition for unreliable narration' (2005, p. 133). Presenting a case for the 'pseudo-diegetic' narrator (a term originating in the work of Gerard Genette), Ferenz argues that it is only the pseudo-diegetic narrator (defined as a character who, blurring the distinction between diegetic levels and occupying several simultaneously, possesses the ability to both reflect upon and, seemingly, *create* their world) who can be truly unreliable. Aligning the label of unreliability with notions of *awareness* on the part of our character-narrator, Ferenz claims that it is only a pseudo-diegetic narrator who can traverse the boundaries between intra- and extra-diegesis, exhibiting an additional degree of agency over the *presentation* of the story world, thereby enabling us to hold this specific entity responsible for her/his unreliability. This responsibility, according to Ferenz, 'is expressed by a particular film not only in

aligning the viewer to a particular character but also by creating the strong feeling that it has been *generated* by that character' (2005, p. 136, emphasis added).

There are several ways in which this can be achieved, but chiefly, the goal of films which present us with a pseudo-diegetic narrator is to see that character-narrator so inscribed in the film as to give the impression that she/he is not only the source of the images we see and the sounds we hear, but also the orchestrating power which controls additional cinematic codes, including mise-en-scène, framing, editing, etc. Such films, according to Ferenz, 'create the sense of character-narration so strongly that the viewer accepts the pseudo-diegetic narrator as if s/he were not only a creation but, first and foremost, a creator.' (2005, p. 151). Thus, if we are to accept this reasoning, in instances which feature such a narrator and in which we are also misled, the "blame", as it were, should solely be placed upon this singular narrative agent. However, I would argue that there are certain exceptions to this rule, namely that, in most cases, a twist is realised and the true nature of events clarified for the audience when the pseudo-diegetic narrator and the cinematic narrator are no longer working towards the same cause (i.e. to deliberately deceive the audience). In such cases, it is the cinematic narrator that breaks free and shows the audience the situation as it really exists. The assumption that is subsequently made by audiences is that the cinematic narrator has been colluding with the pseudo-diegetic narrator all along; the true version of events could have been shown to us on screen at any point, so why are they only being shown to us at the end?

It is on this basis that Ferenz's argument, which proposes fundamental objectivity in certain types and across certain agents of narration, that key questions are raised. Whilst Ferenz follows Burgoyne's argument that the entity of the cinematic narrator is a logical necessity when it comes to understanding the formulations of film, he regularly hints towards the concept of complete objectivity on the part of the cinematic narrator, highlighting the fact that, in instances where we are misled, it is the cinematic narrator who straightens things out for us and clarifies what is to be categorised as truth, and what should be regarded as a falsity. Whilst this conclusion may indeed be drawn in cases where the pseudo-diegetic narrator adopts creative control over the presentation of events, thereby manipulating the work of the cinematic narrator - as we are presented with in *Fight Club* - and whilst

there may not be a need to look to the cinematic narrator for explanation of how we have been misled when the agent is primed to present a fallible representation of the story world due to strong character filtration, I would argue, particularly in instances where an ending is left to be ambiguous, that it is misguided to assume that we will always be able to rely on the narration provided by the cinematic narrator to show us the "truth" of the diegetic world. With this in mind, I would like to consider the fallible filtration at work in *Shutter Island,* and the impact it has on our overall understanding of how we are misled by the text.

When it comes to texts which do not provide us with a personalised narrator to whom we can refer as the source of the deception within the narrative, what terms might we be able to apply? Seymour Chatman has argued that, in such instances, "unreliability" cannot reliably be applied as, even if we are presented with a version of events that might be closely associated with a certain character's (flawed) perspective, that character (i.e. our "filter"), without being a narrator in/of the text, bears no ability to misrepresent diegetic reality 'because she is not attempting to represent it; rather, she is *living it.*' (Chatman, 1990, p. 150, emphasis in original). Chatman expands:

> Within her own mind she may be fooling herself; but as a character she has no direct access to the discourse, to the transmission of the story, and therefore cannot be accused of unreliable narration.
>
> (1990, p. 150).

Harkening back to the concept we have already established as the pseudo-diegetic narrator - who *does* bear such abilities and have access to levels inside and outside of the diegesis - we begin to see where the particulars for Ferenz's theory were initially outlined. Chatman argues for the term "fallible" to replace the label of "unreliable" for any 'inaccurate, misled, or self-serving' perceptions that are presented to us via a filter character, 'for it attributes less culpability to the character than does "unreliable".' (Chatman, 1990, p. 150). And it is here where we become a little unstuck with identifying the nature of the deception in the film version of *Shutter Island*, in which case the fallbile filter is put to work. Whilst Teddy Daniels does not narrate his story, the images that we see (and, arguably, the soundtrack, too) are focalised through the main character, and the film plays out in such a way to encourage audience association with him from the offset – as I have previously mentioned, visual and

audio triggers within the diegesis regularly take us to a point in Teddy's past as he briefly relives a memory, or see a dream of his played out on screen for us. But it is not our alignment with Teddy which plays the largest role in the execution of the twist in this case; rather, it is the fact that the film's narration appears to shift subjectivities seemingly at will, thus raising questions surrounding what we can believe to be true, and what we should pass off as being false, and our conclusions are not helped along by the conspiracy being built by Teddy (and aided by the cinematic narrator) throughout the narrative. Just as the book is presented via a heterodiegetic narrator who tells the story in the third-person, the film is without a voice to a similar extent. With there being no case of explicit personal or internal narration, we might anticipate a higher degree of authority and authenticity on the part of the cinematic narrator (or the heterodiegetic narrator in literary texts). With no character to question the reliability of, and no voice to search for clues in voiceover dialogue, what reason are we given to suspect that all is not as it seems? The fact that the cinematic narrator can essentially choose when to be focalised through Teddy and when to show us an objective truth plays a key part in the execution of the twist.

It is also worth noting here that the shift in subjectivity on the part of the cinematic narrator, and the movement between focalised and "objective" (perhaps "distanced" would be a better term to use here) narration, is not always signposted or made clear, to the extent that many first-time viewers of the film will struggle to pick up on the more subtle instances of this shift. Whilst Teddy's dreams, nightmares and memories are stylistically signalled as being such, functioning not only to further align us with Teddy, but also to provide some context around his obsession with the island and solving this case, other instances of character focalisation can easily pass by unnoticed. One example which is picked up on a second viewing occurs at an early point in the story, when Teddy and Chuck are conducting interviews with patients in the hope that someone will have valuable information for them which they can use in the case. At one point, a female patient they are interviewing moves to take a drink from a glass of water sitting on the table. We see her reach for it and pick it up, before the camera switches back to focus on Teddy and Chuck as another question is asked of her. When the camera moves back to see her deliver her answer, she is taking a sip of water but the glass has disappeared from her hand, from the table, from the shot entirely – she's sipping on thin air. On a first viewing, we might

assume that this is an editing blunder, a blip in continuity. However, when we return to watch the film again, we can conclude that this is not the case. Whereas with "objective"/unfocalised/unfiltered cinematic narration, the scene might spend more time focusing on Teddy, perhaps moving to a close-up shot of his reaction when he notices the water, sweat dripping from his brow as his fear is triggered, by making the glass physically disappear from the shot altogether, our cinematic narrator here shows us what Teddy is *choosing* to see, not what he *actually* sees, yet it does so without explicitly marking the shot as one which is focalised through Teddy's perception. Handled differently, we might be presented with a point-of-view shot which hones in on the glass - the cause of his discomfort - but what we're actually presented with is a shot which could, in fact, be assigned to either Teddy or Chuck's optical perspective, as they're both occupying the same position, sat opposite the woman, and she's framed in the same way that she has been throughout the interview.

It is also worth noting here that the same scene exists in the written text, but '[t]hey watched Bridget drain half the glass' (Lehane, 2003, p. 143). It is clear in this example that the cinematic narrator is playing an active role in altering our perception of the diegetic world, and is doing so without making it clear to viewers that any alterations are being made. As has already been outlined, we mustn't look to our fallible filter as the source of this deliberate deception because, as Chatman argues, '[he] is not attempting to represent it; rather, [he] is *living it.'* (1990, p. 150). With this we can therefore conclude that the cinematic narrator cannot consistently be considered as entirely objective, nor can it always be our source for objective clarity; some degree of unreliability exists on the part of this narrative agent.

The film which deliberately deceives us as an audience, but lets the cinematic narrator off the hook in terms of being responsible for the deception at play, is *Fight Club.* Ferenz claims that it is only in the case of the pseudo-diegetic narrator - that is in instances where we have a character-narrator who exhibits the capacity to 'take over' the narrative and thus 'appears to be in the driving seat' of the narration - that we are provided with a personalised and 'clearly identifiable fictional scapegoat' whom we can blame for any contradictions within the narrative text (Ferenz, 2005, p. 135). When it comes to making a case for the pseudo-diegetic narrator, *Fight Club* provides us with several examples to draw upon. With reference to such types of narration in film, David Alan Black outlines in his application of

the term that there is a tendency for pseudo-diegetic narrators to set up, and operate across, multiple narrative frames which become embedded within the core narrative level, and, as has previously been touched upon, this is certainly the case with *Fight Club;* in both the written and the cinematic version of the text, the diegetic present gives way to a main flashback frame which holds the bulk of the story content, before both temporal frames finally catch up with one another as the narrative comes to a close. Thus it begins in the film; the credit sequence rolls out at the opening, the camera tracking dynamically through the digitally-configured synapses in Jack's brain and coming to a stop once we've travelled through the barrel of the gun that's being held in Jack's mouth, landing on a close-up of his face. This is the moment our narrator begins speaking in voiceover, and within a very short space of time we learn to associate the voice we're hearing with the beaten-up character we're seeing on screen. As a result, it is established very early on that we are dealing with a homodiegetic character-narrator – we've travelled visually through his mind to find ourselves in his world, and we will now hear him share his own story. Not only is the telling of the story very clearly attributed to the character we see on screen, but the *presentation* is likewise closely associated with him from the offset. When he imagines the vans full of explosives that are parked several floors beneath him, the image track, as though encouraged by his words, moves away from our main character in order to display for us the collection of homemade explosives that lie in wait in the basement parking lot. Because we're given such a strong sense of the identity of our principal storyteller very clearly from the beginning (we know that this story is being told to us by Jack *and* that it is a story about him), we know then to assign the subsequent flashback frame to our narrator. When remarking on how he came to find himself in this situation, his words trigger the flashback – initially to one of his visits to Remaining Men Together, the testicular cancer support group, and then, with his interjection ("No, wait. Back up. Let me start earlier"), to another narrative frame representing an earlier point in time, which then catches up to the initial flashback at the introduction of Marla.

Jack's apparent power over the presentation and the construction of the film is later made even more evident. Seeking to share with us further details about Tyler's character, he uses the second-person pronoun to appeal to the audience directly ("Let me tell you about Tyler Durden"), causing the image

track to pause with the utterance of this line, at which point we are presented with a still image of Tyler as he actively breaks the fourth wall and looks directly into the camera. When the visuals "un-pause" and Jack shares with us the fact that Tyler works as a projectionist at his local cinema, we come to realise that the lines which separate the diegetic levels are well and truly blurred for Jack. Standing to the fore of the frame and addressing the audience in a weatherman-like fashion, he is forced to speak loudly over the sound of the machinery (within the diegesis), while we see Tyler at work with his film projections in the rear of the shot. The diegetic boundaries are further complicated when Jack decides to talk to us about how a film projector works, and Tyler demonstrates. Whilst conducting this "demonstration", Jack discusses visual "markers" that projectionists have to look for in order to anticipate changing a reel and Tyler points one out to the audience. Only, he doesn't point it out on the reel *he* is working on in the diegetic world of the film. Instead, the marker appears on the frame that *we* see, as a physical part of the film that is being projected to us (extradiegesis), as though the projectionist in our cinema theatre needs to be reminded that the first reel of *Fight Club* is about to run out. "In the industry, we call them cigarette burns," Tyler remarks. Another example is provided later – cut to a scene depicting Tyler working his other job as a waiter at an expensive restaurant, and Jack is listing all of the dishes Tyler has sabotaged in his time as a waiter as a means of revenge against the upper classes. Jack looks directly into the camera, narrates, "And as for the soup…", before Tyler interjects, "Go ahead, tell 'em," with full awareness of his audience. The narration here allows Jack to expose the constructedness of the film by referring explicitly to it (another example is in Tyler's line, "Ah, flashback humour," when the flashback frame has caught up to the primary narrative frame at the end of the film).

For Gregory Currie, and likewise for Ferenz, the defining element of a narrator's unreliability is not just in their *ability* to present an inaccurate version of events; they must also possess an *intention* to deceive their audience (which, additionally, suggests they must be aware of the presence of an audience to whom they can narrate and misrepresent). Not only does Jack possess the ability to present his own story in his own words (which is evidenced with the use of voiceover), but it is also made explicit that he bears knowledge over; a) the existence of an audience for his story; b) his own ability

to affect the *presentation* in terms of visuals and sound; and c) his ability to actively participate in the *constructional* aspects of formulating this narrative too (which is shown in his control over the ordering of the narrative frames - "No, wait. Back up." - and his direct address to the audience). It was Robert Burgoyne (1990, p. 7) who, in his consideration of the roles played by *heterodiegetic* voiceover narrators (i.e. those who narrate without being a character within the story they're telling), made the distinction between 'world-creating utterances' and 'world-reflecting utterances'. When reviewing the *homodiegetic* voiceover within *Fight Club,* it becomes possible to identify our character-narrator as one who has the power to provide both. No longer distinguished as the "utterer" from the "inventor", he is simultaneously the created and the creator as the visual narration also seems to be constructed at his whim, and he appears to be overtly aware of the fact, thus constituting his status as a pseudo-diegetic narrator - and an unreliable one at that - who can be considered the narrative agent responsible for deceiving the audience in this text. With the same level of agency applied to our narrator in the written version of *Fight Club* upon a review of the narrative framework and structures imposed upon the text and seemingly also dictated by Jack, the same conclusion can subsequently be drawn.

Ferenz supports Chatman's argument that fallible filtration offers a contrasting experience to unreliable narration as the two methods manifest and rely upon a 'different sort of irony':

> Whereas in fallible filtration the irony is always stable, in unreliable narration it is not, simply because in that case we have no other perspective than that of the unreliable narrator, and hence no firm basis for subverting the surface meaning of what s/he says. Consequently, the degree of closure is far greater in fallible filtration than in unreliable narration, and the element of surprise that is so crucial to unreliable narration is completely lost.
>
> (Ferenz, 2005, p. 148).

This statement regarding narrative closure is true in some regards; as we have seen with the consideration of the film version of *Shutter Island*, whose narrative is presented to us via a fallible filter, the ambiguity is lost thanks to clarification provided by the cinematic narrator regarding the "true" version of events. But that's not to say that this is the case with the written text; in fact, quite the opposite is true, as we're left to question whether we should invest in the idea of Teddy being a different person, or the conspiracy that still resides as a possibility at the text's close. With regards to Ferenz's statement that the 'element of surprise that is so crucial to unreliable narration is completely lost' in the case of

fallible filtration, once again *Shutter Island* serves to prove that this is simply not the case, as we're delivered a substantial twist towards the end of the text that encourages us to rethink the understanding of the story and the narrative world that we have built up until this point, and it is precisely the "surprising ending" of *Shutter Island* that has led the film to attract so much attention from critics, students and cinemagoers. With this in mind, it therefore becomes necessary to delineate Ferenz's understanding of the narrative twist a little further; whilst its execution is closely linked with the method of narration used in any given text, it cannot be thought of exclusively in relation to unreliability, as Ferenz seems to indicate here. Whilst we may not turn to our filter character to place blame for our deception in such texts - after all, Teddy cannot misrepresent the story world and events because he is *living* in that world and *enacting* those events, without knowledge of an audience to share his story with - nonetheless it is important to note that *surprise* and *twists* are not only possible, but common within narratives that present a fallible filter (one need only look to Alfred Hitchcock's frequently referenced *Stage Fright* for a classic example of the fallible filter at work in delivering a *surprise* effect).

Chapter 3 – Creating a Twist: 'Story of Your Life' and *Arrival*

The case studies discussed in the previous two chapters share a number of commonalities; a key one being that the substantial narrative twist presented in the written version of both texts (and triggering a frame replacement for their audiences) is successfully carried across and incorporated into the cinematic version in the process of adaptation, despite the fact that both texts utilise a contrasting method of narration. With the aim to further address and examine the concept of the narrative twist in complex texts and puzzle films, within this chapter I would like to turn my attention to a text which delivers a different experience for its readers and its cinematic audience, namely because the narrative twist that provides much of the impact for film viewers is something that is not present within the 'original' written text, but manifested as a result of its move from page to screen. Returning to address the *micro* elements of narration as a means of understanding how adapted texts operate and are impacted on a *macro* level, I would now like to consider how such elements contribute to, and function as part of, a nonlinear narrative structure when it is presented as both a written text and a cinematic one. To return to the familiar topic of the puzzle plot, according to Buckland, the puzzle plot is 'intricate in the sense that the arrangement of events is not just complex, but complicated and perplexing; the events are not simply interwoven, but *entangled*.' (2009, p.3). For the purpose of this chapter, Buckland's summation here provides an appropriate starting point for the consideration of the structures and complexities at play in Denis Villeneuve's science-fiction blockbuster, *Arrival* (2016), which I intend to discuss in comparison to its source text - Ted Chiang's short story, 'Story of Your Life' (1998) - before moving on to examine the effects produced within the process of adaptation.

'Story of Your Life' opens with a direct address from our first-person character-narrator, Louise Banks, a linguist, in the moment she is being faced with the question from her partner of whether or not she would like to conceive a child. The opening "scene" appears to depict the narrative present – i.e. the temporal frame our narrator occupies whilst narrating her story. Marked with the use of present-tense verbs, this frame opens: 'Your father is about to ask me the question. This is the most important moment in our lives, and I want to pay attention, note every detail.' (Chiang, 1998, p. 111), and it is this moment that bookends the narrative, via different methods of presentation, in both versions of the

text. Whilst the narrative present seems simple to identify within the written text, the distinctions between temporalities, even within the first two sentences, are not as clear as we may initially interpret them to be. As readers we can mark regular tense shifts occurring between, and even within, sentences in the opening pages, providing an indication of the complex temporal structures the text presents, whilst also indicating towards Louise's ability to think freed from the linear constraints of time and cognitively access various points in time simultaneously.

With respect to written narratives, in an attempt to formulate a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which fictional narratives operate, especially those which subvert readers' expectations in some way, Monika Fludernik suggests a consideration of the relationship between the two elements of narrative structure (i.e. the *story* level and the *discourse* level), arguing that an exploration of how they communicate and correspond to one another can help to uncover how the 'concept of *chronology* [appears] within narrative typologies' (2003, p. 118). Whereas the *story* level of a narrative is largely understood as being the chronological version of events as they happened, the *discourse* level refers to the methods via which the story is *told*, and can therefore involve 'several reshufflings' between different narrative frames and temporalities in order to produce '*anachronies'* (Genette, 1980, p. 35) - or flashbacks and flashforwards. As Fludernik suggests:

> The study of these two temporal orders enshrined in story and discourse inevitably leads to the analysis of chronological distortions on the *surface level* of the narrative text, and therefore comes to connect the study of temporal levels with the surface-structure analysis of *tense* in narrative.
>
> (2003, p. 118, emphasis added).

When applying this theoretical framework to the opening lines of 'Story of Your Life', a consideration of the tenses used within the narration can provide a great deal of insight into the complexities we might come to expect of this particular narrative. For example, although the third-person singular present-tense verb ('is') is used several times within these opening lines and firmly places Louise within the moment of the present action, the context which surround the use of this verb indicate some degree of prior knowledge on the part of our narrator – her partner, the 'father', has not yet come to ask her the question, but she already knows what that question will be, and that it will lead to a life-defining moment which she will want to remember 'every detail' of. Not only is it suggested in these opening lines that

Louise already knows what to expect of *this* moment in the narrative *present*, but her reference to the 'father' figure also indicates that she has prior knowledge of events that are to occur in the *future* – she knows that this moment will be the moment she makes the choice to try and conceive a child and that, following this, she will birth a child whom she can narrate this moment to. Thus, the key thematic elements of the narrative, particularly with relation to the exploration of our understanding of time, are hinted at within the first two sentences of the written text, and the way in which this subtle indication is translated across mediums is one of the key sources to consider when attempting to understand why the experiences offered by both versions of this text differ so greatly – a point which I will later return to.

The first concrete indication of there being a second temporal level behind this initial level of narration occurs in the second paragraph, on the first page of the written text: 'Right now, your dad and I have been married for about two years, living on Ellis Avenue; when we move out you'll still be too young to remember the house…' (Chiang, 1998, p. 111). Again, the adverbial of time ('now') provides us with a context for our narrator (i.e. at the point she is narrating from, she lives on Ellis Avenue and has been married for two years). However, we also know that the man she is married to will become the father of her child, and again, her knowledge of future events is displayed in the phrasing of 'when we move, you'll still be too young…' - 'when' and the contraction here used of 'will' displaying no degree of uncertainty. But the key phrase which encourages us to begin to question our first impressions of the text is featured within the third paragraph, and triggers a marked move into a separate temporal frame: 'I remember the scenario of your origin you'll suggest when you're twelve.' Here, the phrasing initially seems odd, and this effect is chiefly caused by the irregular use of multiple tenses within the sentence, creating a sense of temporal ambiguity. The verb 'remember' is used in its present tense, and commonly connotes a mental shift to a point in the past in order to access a memory; only Louise isn't accessing a memory from her past, rather she's 'remembering' a moment which is yet to occur at some point in her future (when her daughter is twelve years old). Within this simple sentence, we are met with ideas which span past, present and future, providing readers with an apt introduction, perhaps a forewarning, to the complexities that lie ahead. After we have returned from this secondary frame into

the introductory frame of the diegetic present, we are then prompted, on the second page, to revisit events which happened 'just a few years ago', and which will come to form the primary narrative thread within which the main narrative action will occur, acting as the driving force for the overall story – the alien arrival.

This extended flashback frame housing the story of the alien arrival, which ultimately conveys how Louise ended up with her ability to view time outside the laws of cause and effect, is punctuated with regular returns to the frame of the diegetic present, within which Louise continues to share 'memories' with her daughter. When several extra-terrestrial spacecrafts land on Earth, Louise is commissioned by the government to work alongside theoretical physicist Gary Donnelly (renamed Ian in the film) to act as an interpreter, provided with a mission to learn the alien language so that the humans may come to know more about them, including the science behind their technology and their reasons for visiting Earth. Labelling the aliens 'heptapods' due to the fact that they each have seven limbs, and nicknaming them 'Flapper' and 'Raspberry', Louise is able to identify their two forms of expression – 'Heptapod A' (referring to what is "spoken"), and Heptapod B (referring to what is "written"). After a number of recorded encounters, Louise is able to determine that; a) the heptapods' means of communication bear no resemblance to any known human language, and b) that their writing is *semasiographic,* in the sense that it 'conveys meaning without reference to speech (...) [with its own system of rules for constructing sentences, like a visual syntax that's unrelated to the syntax for their spoken language' (Chiang, 1998, p. 131), making communication with them initially impossible. It is as Louise gradually begins to build an understanding of the grammar and structures in place within Heptapod B, realising that they operate on the basis of a nonlinear construction as a result of the aliens' simultaneous consciousness, she also develops a new understanding of the formulations of time; the language offers the key to unlocking a new way of looking at the world which is freed from the constraints of linear construction. As a result, Louise develops a simultaneous mode of awareness which she gains a grasp of increasingly as the narrative progresses, and this is demonstrated in the increasingly frequent and fluid shifts between diegetic past, present, and 'memories' of the future. It is this revelation regarding Louise's new ability to effectively see into the future and retain open dialogue between future

and present events that forms the twist in the film; a twist that, due to the complex temporalities introduced within the opening pages (as aforementioned), is entirely absent from the written text.

As the plotline within this main narrative thread (the diegetic past, depicting the alien arrival) develops, and Louise gains an increasing understanding of the languages of Heptapod A and Heptapod B, the shifts into other temporal frames within her future, usually depicting a 'memory' of her daughter Hannah (and more often than not separated and marked out by a physical gap between paragraphs and the repeated phrasing, 'I remember [when you are],' or 'I remember [when you will be]'), occur more frequently, demonstrating her growing command over her new-found ability. But it is not the frequency of these frame shifts with which I am primarily concerned; it's the fluidity with which they are executed which eventually becomes remarkable, and the section to note begins at page 153 (Chiang, 1993). We begin in the main narrative frame, and Louise is working with Gary in a discussion with a representative from the State Department, named Hossner. Within the dialogue, Gary notes: 'You mean it's a non-zero-sum game?'. This particular phrase triggers a frame shift for Louise, only this time, it is not fronted with her usual phrasing ('I remember'), but with her repeating Gary's words to her daughter at some point in the future, in response to a question we have seen her daughter ask on page 150. This in itself is not particularly remarkable, however when we once more return to the main narrative frame, the dialogue which follows becomes of note:

> 'Louise?'
> 'Hmm? Sorry, I was distracted. What did you say?'
> (Chiang, 1998, p. 153).

The dialogue here indicates that Louise has been distracted *by a memory of the future,* and it is at this point that the separate temporal levels of past, present, and future start to become less distinct; the movements between these temporalities becoming more fluid, as the shift is not always clearly triggered or marked within the text. For example, up until this point, the shifts to other temporalities have been highlighted not only with the repeated use of the phrase 'I remember', but also graphically within the text with a double-spaced line between the paragraphs belonging to the main narrative frame and those belonging to other temporal frames. However, on page 158, we shift between the diegetic past (main

narrative frame) to the diegetic future, and back, with no clear markers to separate these temporalities.

In this example, Louise and Gary are at the market shopping for food:

> My gaze **wandered** over the shelves - pepper mills, garlic presses, salad tongs - and stopped on a wooden salad bowl.
>
> **When you are three you'll** pull a dishtowel off the kitchen counter and bring that salad bowl down on top of you. **I'll** make a grab for it but I'll miss. (...)
>
> I **reached** out and **took** the bowl from the shelf. The motion **didn't** feel like something I was **forced** to do. Instead, it **seemed** as urgent as my **rushing** to catch the bowl **when it falls** on you: an instinct that I **felt** right in following.
>
> 'I could use a salad bowl like this.'
>
> (Chiang, 1998, p. 158, emphasis added).

Here, the shift into a frame within Louise's future seems to be triggered by the image of a recognisable object - the wooden salad bowl - with temporal levels becoming increasingly complicated towards the latter part of the extract as past, present and future are activated in the same sentence. After we've seen the contents of this frame (i.e. what Louise *knows* will happen), we return to the diegetic past in which the main narrative frame sits, and Louise describes the motivation for her movement to pick up and purchase the bowl at this point in time as *instinct*. This pre-empts an idea which is outlined later in the text, when Louise deduces that one can still have free will whilst having the ability to see what lies ahead in the future; a conclusion she draws as a result of her work with Heptapod B:

> 'The heptapods are neither free nor bound as we understand those concepts; they don't act according to their will, nor are they helpless automatons. What distinguishes the heptapods' mode of awareness is not just that their actions coincide with history's events; it is also that their motives coincide with history's purposes. They act to create the future, *to enact chronology.'*
>
> (Chiang, 1998, pp. 162-163, emphasis added).

With this, the entire thought experiment that the text is committed to exploring receives a conclusion, and in the creation of Heptapod B, Chiang presents the idea that having knowledge of future events does not eradicate one's free will; rather there is a mutual and continual dialogue between *action* and *reaction*, whereby, outside of a linear construction of time, one is not forced to be entirely reliant on the other.

Unlike the written text, which makes explicit the fact that temporality, chronology, and our own experiences with narrative structure are all being experimented with from the offset, the film is structured in such a way as to keep this hidden from its audience – that is until the moment of revelation which occurs towards the end of the film and serves to deliver a substantial narrative twist. It is upon a second viewing that we can determine the chief "culprit" in the deception can be found in the opening scenes, where we are first introduced into the story world. It has already been highlighted that both the short story and the film commence from the same moment - the moment Louise is faced with the question of whether or not she would like to conceive a child. Only in the film version, the context of this moment is absent – instead, similar questions surrounding time, memory and causality are introduced within Louise's voiceover as she narrates over the opening shot: 'I used to think this was the beginning of your story. Memory is a strange thing. It doesn't work like I thought it did. We're so bound by time, by its order.' The lingering shot breaks into an image of Louise holding her newborn baby, and we're then presented with a sequence depicting Hannah's development and, within a few frames, her death as an adolescent.

The questions we might have begun to ask with Louise's opening line now seem to gain some answers – the direct address ('I used to think this was the beginning of **your** story') is assigned to her daughter, and our narrator is placed at some point in the *future*, when she has seen her daughter grow and pass away and had time to reflect upon the moment which she can consider to be the 'beginning of [her] story.' When we're shown the moment of Hannah's passing, Louise continues in voiceover: 'And this was the end.' The apparent flashback sequence then ends on an image of Louise, shot from behind, walking through a seemingly endless hospital corridor following the death of her daughter, before the main narrative frame opens, tracking the movements of Louise through the college where she works (the same frame we know to depict the diegetic present in the written version of the text). The tense used in Louise's voiceover now shifts from past to present ('But now I'm not so sure I believe in beginnings and endings'), marking a distinct shift not only in location, but in time as well – we now assume the events taking place are occurring days, weeks, months, maybe even years *after* Hannah's death. And this conclusion that we're encouraged to make regarding Hannah seems to be accurate for

the majority of the film, as Louise appears to be plagued with *memories* of Hannah, which occur more and more frequently, throughout her work with the heptapods. It is in a final visit to the spacecraft, which Louise attends alone, she uses her new understanding of the alien language to translate one of their responses to her questions about their purpose on Earth. 'We help humanity. In three thousand years, we need humanity['s] help,' is the explanation offered. When questioned about the aliens' ability to see the future, their response seems to trigger another flashback of Hannah for Louise. But it is in this moment our entire understanding of the narrative thus far is completely erased, as Louise comments: 'I don't understand – who is this child?'. The second fork of the twist comes with the alien's response: 'Louise sees future.' The 'weapon' that she has been provided with - the language of the heptapods which corresponds with the simultaneity of their worldview - allows Louise the ability to view all moments in time simultaneously. It is with this that we come to understand that the apparent flashback sequences depicting Hannah, in combination with the structure of the main narrative frame, which is set up to present the story following Hannah's death, have been structured in such a way as to deliberately mislead us. The scenes showing Hannah have not been Louise's memories from the past, despite the fact that, stylistically, this is what they're presented as, with their saturated colours; rather they are recollections of events from some point in the *future*. This twist triggers a frame replacement for us as film viewers, and the two key lines of temporality (from the opening sequence and this main narrative frame) are linked in a way that we were not led to anticipate, with their relationship shifting from past-future to future-past. It is this that makes the twist possible, and it is a twist that is made entirely *impossible* in the written text due to the tense shifts operating in the opening few paragraphs (as previously examined).

With consideration of Jorge Luis Borges' *The Garden of Forking Paths*, David Bordwell, in his 2002 essay titled 'Film Futures', coined the term 'forking-path narratives' in order to outline a cohesive theory of the narrative techniques used in complex films such as *Blind Chance* (1987), *Sliding Doors* (1998), and *Run Lola Run* (1998), whereby the protagonist is provided with a number of opportunities to reach an end goal, acting out a new path with each opportunity to create a variation of parallel possible futures. The failure to fulfil a deadline and achieve the narrative goal within the

duration of a particular frame (or 'story') effectively triggers a reset, and the protagonist usually finds themselves back at the point within the narrative from which the path originally forked, providing them with another opportunity to fulfil their goal successfully via alternate means and methods. Bordwell argues that the path such a film ends on, the path depicting the protagonist's final attempt, is usually favoured above those that have preceded it in the interest of securing narrative closure for the protagonist. Bordwell notes that in many films which adopt a forking-path narrative structure, the protagonist appears to learn from prior attempts and thus is able to bring forth any learned knowledge to the subsequent path, which is then used to inform their decision on which actions to take and which to avoid. Such an approach provides an explanation for Lola's ability (in *Run Lola Run*) to knowingly avoid certain obstacles with each hit of the reset button and, like the lines of action depicted, exist in parallel to any previous versions, paths or worlds. Adopting a similar approach in her essay titled 'Temporality, Reproduction and the Not-Yet in Denis Villeneuve's *Arrival*,' Anne Carruthers' understanding of the film identifies the elements of past, present and future as separate locations or narrative worlds, positing that '[t[he different timelines (...) [run] in parallel' (2018, p. 332). However, *Arrival* does not present a parallel formation of narrative frames; rather, the frames all occur along the same chronological timeline. Louise's life is still unfolding from beginning to end – she does not *physically* time travel between these different moments or destinations within her timeline. Instead, it is her perception which is no longer bound by the programmed chronology and sense of causality that exists within our understanding of how time operates, and the *presentation* of those frames is what breaks chronology in this particular example. In the same vein, it would be a misinterpretation of the text to suggest that several *versions* of Louise exist (i.e. future-Louise, present- or past-Louise). Due to the complexities of temporality explored, and Louise's ability to view time simultaneously (which, upon reflection, we come to understand is an ability she holds from the very beginning, when we are first introduced to the story world), it is reasonable to deduce that there is only one version of Louise, and that is our character-narrator; a Louise who, narrating free from any constraints of time, causality or pressures of the present, is *simultaneously*; a) academic researcher working to decipher the written and spoken codes of the heptapods; b) linguist who has perfected the theories and formulations of Heptapod A and Heptapod B; c) not-yet-mother, mother, and mother of a deceased child; d) single woman, wife,

and divorcee. At this point, it becomes apparent that the core element which contributes to the production of an entirely different experience for readers of the text and viewers of the film is that in the written text, the simultaneity behind Louise's role is made immediately apparent, whereas in the film, the absence of this context encourages an incorrect reading of the opening scene and allows for a narrative twist to be built towards as a result.

The simultaneity presented by the narrative invokes a paradox, which is introduced via the increasing frequency of tense shifts in the written text and mirrored by the increasing frequency of slips into alternate frames in the film, producing a similar effect in both versions. Full understanding of the experiment being played out here comes for the audience when witnessing the ability for information to be passed between separate temporalities. With separate points in time effortlessly accessed, this acts as further confirmation of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis[2] that the text explicitly references and uses as a basis to reformulate temporal structures and expose a new potential for storytelling, offering up the basis for the thought experiment that the text seeks to explore; an exploration of the concept of free will versus determinism. A breakdown in the narrative logic of causality, explored and enacted by the main narrative frame in both the written text and the film, sees open communication between separate temporal levels become possible. A complete understanding of the formulations of the alien language affords Louise the ability to retrieve information from a point at which that information has been learned in the future, and apply that knowledge to complete an action within frames of the diegetic past (in the written text), or diegetic present (in the film), *before* (logically or chronologically) she could have learned it. The exploration of the nature of time on a macro level, and the presentation of that formulation, prevents chronology from becoming a vital narrative component. Situated outside the accepted laws of cause and effect, Louise is allowed to occupy all roles at any given point within the narrative because, as is made immediately apparent within the written text, and as we come to understand upon a second viewing of the film, she possesses an understanding of time as a concept freed from any linear formulation from the very beginning. Whilst the cinematic version of 'Story of

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[2] The Sapir-Wharf hypothesis is 'the theory that language influences thought to the extent that people who speak different languages perceive the world differently' (Skerrett 2010, p. 331).

Your Life' (*Arrival*) may succeed in providing audiences with an entirely different experience than that offered by the written text, it's important to note that the complex temporalities presented and the fluid and frequent shifts between past, present and future are mirrored in the adaptation. With effects preceding causes, similarly to the scene with the wooden salad bowl in the written text, the moment in which temporalities truly begin to blur in the film comes when Louise, in the frame of the diegetic present, needs to make a phone call to a Chinese General in order to save the world, in effect. Running through the secure site which has been set up at the landing location of one of the alien ships, she accesses a 'memory' from a point within her future, after the world has already been saved, in which she is speaking with the General she needs to call. In this future conversation, she is congratulated for her achievements, and the General thanks her for making the call to him. Within the present frame, she steals a mobile phone, and the fast-paced action sequence follows her with a series of tracking shots as she tries to escape the guards that are in pursuit. Once she has passed a security door and locked it, she once again is visited with a 'memory' of the future in which the General provides her with his phone number, which she then uses to make the call in the present that will eventually lead to the world being saved. In basic terms, Louise accesses information from her future in order to carry out an action within her present which she knows will lead to the moment in her future in which she learned the information needed to enact it; a temporal paradox.

Villeneuve's film is not one that has remained unaddressed by academics in various disciplines. Several scholars have approached the film from the theoretical basis of cognition, leading to a shift in focus and highlighting some core aspects of the text that otherwise may not be brought to light with alternative theoretical readings and analyses. Both Anne Carruthers and Hannah Chapelle Wojciehowski raise the motif of Louise's daughter, Hannah, as a key contribution to developing an understanding of the text's experimental chronology. In a feminist reading which finds its analysis closely linked with cognitive attitudes, Carruthers argues for the theme of pregnant embodiment with the exploration of a 'not-yet' child and 'not-yet' mother, highlighting the importance of an audience's belief that both child and mother have already existed as such (and that Louise has now lost her child) at the beginning of the text, in order to fully appreciate the emotional responses triggered by the text

(Carruthers, 2018). Carruthers claims that such an understanding is crucial, as it underpins the overarching theme of determinism. In a similar vein, incorporating Elsaesser's notes on the mind-game film, Wojciehowski argues that the prevalence of the recurring motif of a dead child (which we are aware of from the very beginning) 'almost certainly has to do with its utility as a mnemonic tool that helps the viewer sort through extraordinary complex information and retain the relevant pieces of the puzzle in memory for later assembly.' (2018, p. 57)[3]. Approaching the film from a basis of cognitive analysis, Wojciehowski later goes on to argue that the film poses similar difficulties, in terms of audience cognition and understanding, to Christopher Nolan's *Memento*, in that 'Louise Banks the protagonist of *Arrival*, also struggles with memory problems, which place an incredibly large cognitive burden on viewers' memory capacity as the film progresses.' (2018, p. 59). I would argue that this is a flawed interpretation in the sense that an issue with memory on the part of Louise is not offered as a key character element; it is not that Louise lacks a capacity for memory, rather, paradoxically, Louise struggles to come to terms with her newfound access to memories of the future. Whilst existing literature which sees scholars adopt a cognitive approach to this particular text has outlined some aspects of the narrative which may have otherwise been left unaddressed, unfortunately this approach can often be based around largely subjective interpretations, lacking development and failing to provide a comprehensive understanding of how audiences are led to interpret the complex aspects of narrative to produce an understanding of the wider text as a whole. That being said, certain elements of cognitive theory are difficult to discount, and can occasionally be beneficial when it comes to making attempts to understand how certain complex narratives operate.

In his essay on "twist blindness", Daniel Barrett explores the relevance and roles of 'priming' and 'schema' in helping viewers of complex puzzle films to build an understanding of a narrative based upon the ways in which they have been introduced into the world of the film and the characters within it. Barrett argues:

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[3] Wojciehowski here calls upon an element/motif of the mind-game film as outlined by Thomas Elsaesser (in Buckland 2009, p. 18): 'A character is persuaded by his – of more often, her – family, friends, or the community that she is deluded about the existence or disappearance, usually of a child – a self-delusion brought upon by trauma, excessive grief, or other emotional disturbance.'

> Our first impression of a person or situation "primes" us to label that person or situation using a certain type of schema which biases the way in which we interpret, and attend to, subsequent information.
>
> (2009, p. 56).

Considerations of such terms from the realms of cognitive theory can in this case help to reveal how the experience differs for audiences of both texts. In the film, we are primed into the narrative to interpret Louise as being the character of 'grieving mother' due to the presentation of the opening sequence depicting Hannah's life and death, which, due to our familiarity with cinematic convention, we are encouraged to read as a flashback sequence. Every recurrence of Hannah that appears in the main narrative frame which follows is therefore immediately interpreted as being a lapse into Louise's memory of the past, and as these "memories" begin to saturate the main narrative frame, we learn to interpret these images as recollections triggered by aspects within her diegesis. In contrast, the written text not only highlights a different temporal frame as the narrative present (or the moment from which we are being narrated to), but it also makes explicit the fact that; a) Hannah is not a part of Louise's past, but instead should be anticipated as a part of Louise's *future*; and b) that Louise has some prior knowledge of this fact. A close reading of the text reveals that this information is offered in the first few pages of the written story, completely negating the possibility of such a twist to occur for the reader.

The strange deixis of the written text is more immediately understood due to the non-standard shifts in tense usage which appear from the very beginning ('I remember one day during the summer when you're sixteen.' (Chiang, 1998, p. 123)), which is invoked as a means of experimenting with narrative exposition and to throw the reader's formulations of the narrative frames presented into question. Fludernik remarks (of Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, which is offered as the primary example in her work): 'The question, then, is what such a text signifies on a theoretical level', arguing that on one hand, complex texts (such as *Arrival* or 'Story of Your Life') are created purely as a form of entertainment which plays on reader expectations and intentionally deviates from them, whilst on the other hand 'they expand the potential of narrative tense, rescuing it from its mimetic groundings and allowing it to institute the use of tense as free play.' Such a text could therefore be treated as 'a narrative that helps to foreground the arbitrariness of tense marking, particularly in the literary narrative', whilst helping to underline the fact that 'linguistic analysis may be able to specify [...] in what way reader

expectations are being flouted.' (Fludernik, 2003, pp. 131-132). Fludernik's work not only successfully demonstrates the validity of linguistic analysis in the desire to understand more fully how complex narratives operate, but it also succeeds in raising further questions about the different ways such narratives are able to subvert readers' expectations by exhibiting the elements that can come to be considered with the exploration of both the *story* and the *discourse* levels of narrative. What we're provided with in *Arrival* is not merely a plot twist in the traditional sense of the term; its deception operates across both the story level and the discourse level, with a complex plot, embodying complex themes and addressing complex philosophical concepts, and narration that can be said to be equally complex in both versions – trusting that readers will be able to navigate the complicated shifts in tense that appear, sometimes without warning, in the written text, and presenting a structure in the film that allows for audiences to be deceived from the offset.

Conclusion

Whilst scholarship in the field of adaptation studies has flourished in recent years, the lack that remains has been highlighted by several critics; for Kamilla Elliott, adaptation theory's chief failure is in bridging the word/image divide and addressing the interplay of illustration in books and words in films, whilst for Seymour Chatman, it is the formal elements of both mediums, and their capacity to *present* or *misrepresent*, that requires further attention. As has been highlighted in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the language of adaptation theory is largely populated with this idea of something still being missing; we haven't settled on a solid methodology for the study of adapted texts quite yet. With this thesis, it has been my aim to highlight another area of narrative and film theory that has been lacking attention, and to add narrative complexity and twists into the mix. This lack is one that has been indicated towards by a number of scholars, particularly scholars of film theory; in the coda to *Narrative and Narration: Analysing Cinematic Storytelling,* released in 2021, Warren Buckland highlights the need for adaptation scholarship to address the puzzle film, and puzzle film theory to address the concept and impacts of adaptation, listing the process of adaptation amongst the topics not explored in his book but nonetheless 'relevant and significant to theorizing cinematic storytelling.' (2021, p. 119). As an area of narrative largely absent from adaptation scholarship, an examination of the complex text versus the adapted puzzle film offers ample scope for discussion and has the potential to further our understanding of adaptation, and its impacts, more generally.

Within the opening chapter of this thesis, I indicated my support for Robert Stam's argument that, in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the impacts of adaptation, rather than focus on what is changed or lost during the process, we instead should focus our efforts on examining what has been gained; gained by the text itself in terms of narrative, aesthetics, impact and presentation, and gained by audiences of the text in terms of contexts and understanding. I also adopted Stam's paratextual methodology to expand the scope of the narrative text to incorporate those textual elements that surround it and contribute to the creation of meaning – afterwords, prologues, book covers, special features in DVDs, movie posters, trailers, merchandise, director's cuts, etc. With text, paratext and adaptation all existing within this ever-expanding web of intertextual reference, our understanding of

any given narrative text is impacted or further developed with each exposure to a text within the nebulous. In light of this discussion, it is possible to conclude that to rewatch a film that has deliberately deceived us as its audience in search for clues as to how it was done is one thing; it's quite another to return to a text following exposure to its adapted counterpart, with fresh perspectives on character, narrative, plot and structure, and new ideas about the creative influences and contexts surrounding the text's creator. And it is when we return to the written text having seen the film, or rewatch the film after reading the text, that new light is shed on the narrative, its world and the way we are encouraged to interact with it. The texts explored within this thesis provide examples in support of this, as texts which, despite the methods/modes of narration being shared between written and cinematic versions, each provide very different experiences for their readers and audiences, largely due to the invocation of the cinematic narrator, which with its ability to present the story world visually, as well as temporally (editing, pacing) and in audio (soundtrack, voiceover), equips cinematic creators with the capacity to further manipulate structures and misrepresent the diegetic world in order to deliberately deceive an audience. In this regard, it can be said that, in contrast to the elitist attitude previously criticised by Stam that cinema be understood as the inevitably "dumbed down", intellectually insignificant version of its literary cousin, there exists the potential for a narrative text to be made *more* complicated in the move to the cinematic medium due to this ability for the narrative to be presented (and manipulated) across multiple codes, rather than the solely verbal code of the written word.

With so much to potentially be gained in adopting this view of adapted texts, particularly adapted texts that are somehow complicated or complex, it becomes easy to support Stam's claim that adaptation theory's core challenge is in the lack of a workable comparative stylistics – one which acknowledges the interaction between text, adaptation and paratext, weighing their impacts in equal measure whilst also giving merit to each form's strengths, limitations and ability to *tell* a story as relevant to the specific formal elements at the disposal of each individual medium. By focusing on that element that is common to all texts of fiction - *narration* - throughout these chapters it has been my aim to highlight the value of adopting a narratological approach in the attempt to lay groundwork for a comparative stylistics in adaptation studies. Whist regard must be given to elements of plot, character and *story* in the creation

of complex texts, the argument I have presented here supports the conclusion that complexity resides largely on the level of *discourse* – after all, whenever we are deceived by a text, it is the *telling* we refer back to for clues as to how we have been misled, not merely what has been told. And it has been through the examination of the micro elements at work within the level of narration, with reference to person/character, tenses and temporality, and the knowledge held by character/audience at any given point, that interpretations of the text as it operates on a macro level are made possible.

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