

Maxime

An original
Carlie_macbe idea
for a movie

The story

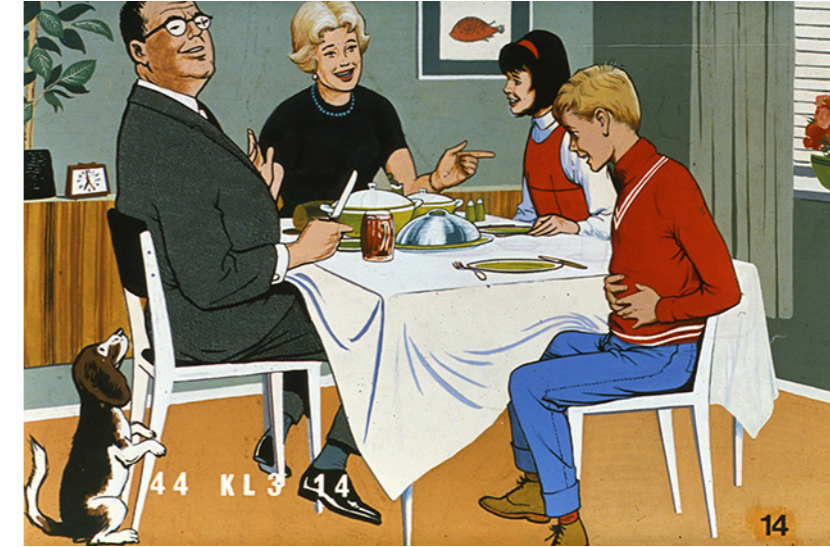
Maxime is a 8-years old boy living a beautiful life in a rosy world. He has every reason to be happy.

Yet...

The story is about the path of Maxime, a cursed character who goes from a superficially happy childhood to a series of inexplicable dramatic events, as his relatives disappear one after the other without him understanding what is happening or being able to find them.

In a supernatural atmosphere where reality is altered. We become aware that Maxime's fate is to become a serial killer.

From rosy childhood (illustration taken from school method to learn German)...



... to becoming a serial killer (Ted Levine as Buffalo Bill in *The Silence of the Lambs*).



The shallow backdrop

The first part of the film is a long sequence which depicts a perfect suburban family life. Maxime is 7 years old and is happy with his parents and his dog. The sky is blue, everybody cares for and loves each other.

Yet the sky is superficially blue, the sun superficially yellow and the family too happy to be true. We sense that this is not real. We feel like in a 1980's sitcoms, somewhat outdated.

It would be boring if we don't feel that something is going to happen...

Sweet suburbs



Happy families (*Eight Is Enough*)



Happy kid (*Silver Spoons*)



Unease

One day, Maxime's father brings him to the local Luna Park. Everything seems quiet and merry until Maxime spots a black man staring at him. Time freezes. The black man shows a keen interest in him... Until he disappears and Maxime can go for a ride on a buffer car with his father.

Another day at night, Maxime is woken up by his parents having a strong argument downstairs. He goes see and we are horrified with him to see how utterly violent the parents (whose anger expressions are supernaturally horrific) prove. The contrast is huge and traumatizing.

Another day in the morning, Maxime is mute while her mum is making breakfast. We see Maxime looking at a butcher knife and then at his dog...



(excerpt from *The Watchmen*)



Montage: © Dirk Dalichau + Paul Robeson
(Associated Press)



© Joey Helms

The breakup

Maxime is 22 years old. He has a lover and together they go to a spa.

Have you ever been in a thermal bath? There is that moment when you can't see anything in the boiling steam of the water. That's when the lover evaporates.

They have been together for three years but nobody at the spa has seen her. They say he has come by himself. Maxime is alone.

The black man is there in the spa, holding a book (see page 14) and looking at Maxime.

Maxime sees him.

He thinks he is going crazy.



The Genres

The main plot of *Maxime* is about seeing the main, eponymous character trying to get by in an unstable universe where nothing can be taken for granted. His life can change drastically at any moment and his mental equilibrium lies in the fact that he has to repress the true person that he is.

Maxime mingles various genres: psychology, detective stories, the serial killer and the supernatural.

After the first scenes set in the quiet and mundane suburbs, we understand that we are in a world where reality is not what it seems to be.

It is a film with enigmas, mysteries, twists and turns until the final revelation/explanation.

The atmosphere must be one of a progressive anxiety as we see the stakes and the violent potentialities of the story until the unpredictable end.



Leonardo
Di Caprio
and Ted Levine
in *Shutter
Island*(2003)



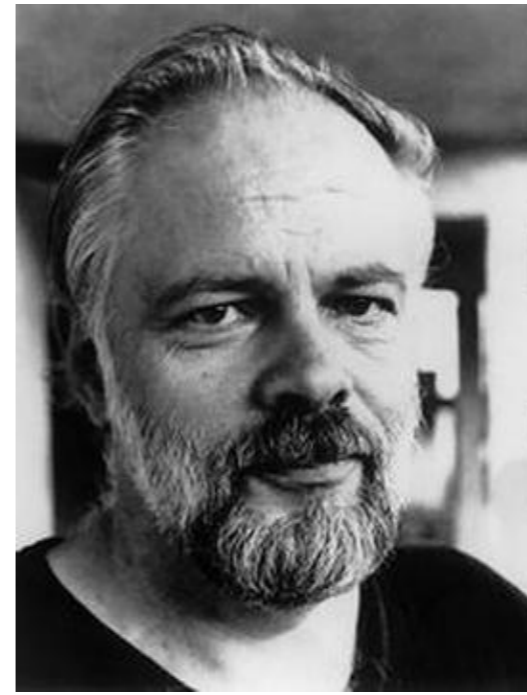
Cultural references 1: what is real?

In a supernatural atmosphere where reality is altered. We become aware that Maxime is the object of a scientific experiment about the issue of imprisonment: he is a serial killer put under artificial life and connected to a software. Scientists try to recreate his whole existence without the violence.

The overall theme of the film becomes then clear: what is reality?

The cultural references are the works of Philip K. Dick (1), *The Ninth Configuration*, 1980 (2), *Jacob's Ladder*, 1990 (3), *The Matrix*, 1999 (4) and *Shutter Island*, 2003 (page 11).

The theme may not be new (what is?, nobody ever invents anything, we are all dwarfs of giants' elbows), however the treatment is quite original in its deeper meaning, as it is shown on page 14.



1



2



3



4

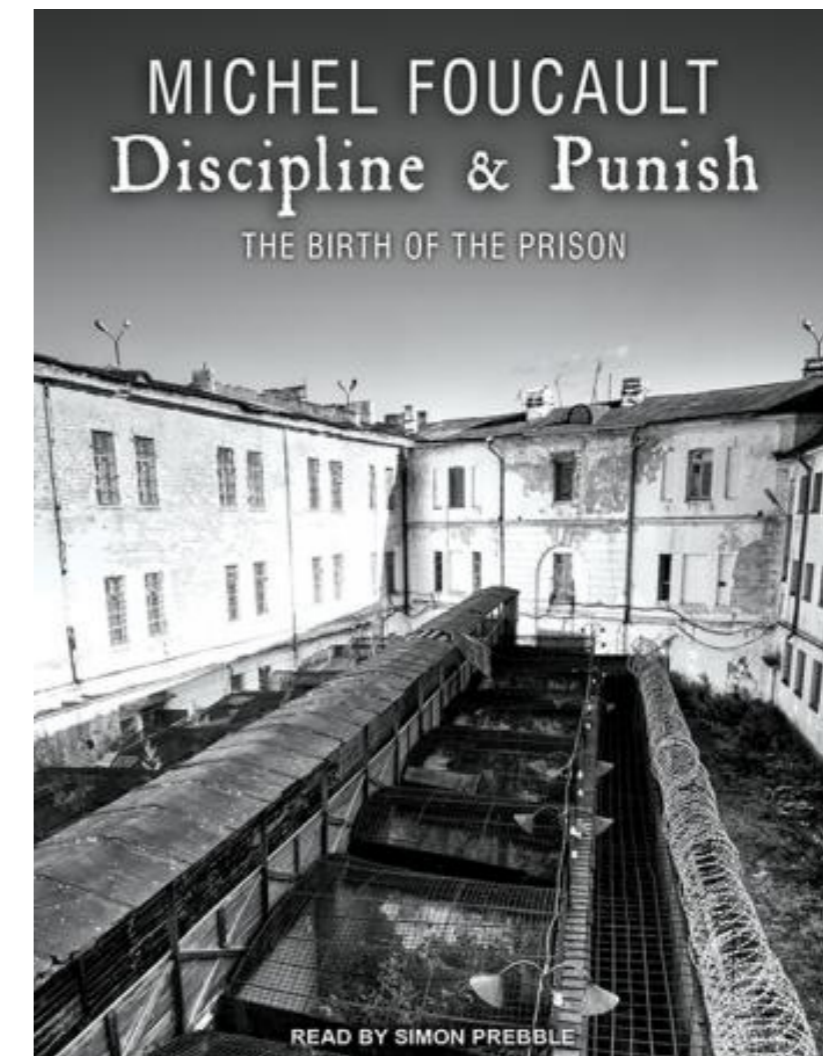
Cultural references 2: Michel Foucault

The book that the black man reads at the spa is Michel Foucault's classic philosophical and historic book *Discipline and Punish*.

The core of Foucault's thought is that the body is not an object that is outside of history and culture. On the contrary, culture and society influence and shape the body.

One consequence is that if society is sick, it forms sick bodies.

Foucault shows how power and the body are tied together, for example by the disciplinary power primarily focusing on individual bodies and their behavior. Foucault argues that power, by manipulating bodies/behavior, also manipulates people's minds. Therefore, unlike what is commonly said, *the soul is the prison of the body* – and not the opposite.



What is real?

The whole film takes place in convicts-turned-guinea pigs' minds. They are put to sleep and connected to a software to relive their life without the crimes that sent them to prison.

The black, somewhat eerie man, that appears once in a while throughout the film, is one of the doctors in charge of the experiment.

When all is revealed, we see him and col-

leagues talking about Maxime's case and the failure of the experiment (he killed again in the software). Yet, following Foucault, his ethical drive is humane as he believes there is hope even in mad killers' mind.

We see him leaving the prison. Outside is, for the first time, the real world: a close future and the prison, Prora, the monumental concrete seaside resort built by the Nazis from 1936 to 1939 for the leisure organization *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy).



For further information or access to the script:

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A Carlie_mache idea for a movie