

Shutter island essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



Leonardo DiCaprio plays a character named Teddy, a disturbed inmate imprisoned on Shutter Island. Through the course of the movie it becomes clear that Teddy suffers severely from hallucinations, paranoia, and extreme memory loss. In his own mind he believes he is visiting Shutter Island as a detective assigned to find a missing patient and is disturbed by the “insane” people on the island - when really, he is the most watched, and in fact, the missing patient. Throughout the film, flashbacks show his traumatic past of his wife drowning their children in a lake which then leads Teddy to breakdown and murder her. These events drove him completely insane, and made him an extremely dangerous, violent person.

Teddy suffers from anterograde amnesia, which refers to loss of memory for events after an incident. Patients with this condition have severely impaired ability to recall information occurring during and after a morbid or extreme event. There is no expected recovery and patients are left with a permanent and debilitating condition. This movie portrays his severe memory condition very clearly after the sickening incident with his children in which Teddy lost all memory of himself, his past life, and now lives his life pretending to be someone he is not. The story suggests that by creating a complex fantasy world that there may be a sliver of hope in having him return to the real world, but ultimately that fails and he is destined to be lobotomized (apparently common at the time of the story in the 1950s)

The cognitive understanding I gained by watching Shutter Island was how traumatic events can lead to complete mental breakdown, extreme actions and prevent a person from being able to connect to reality. My emotional understanding was similar, in that I now may have more empathy and

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perspective for those who experience extreme and appalling situations such as war veterans, victims of domestic violence or natural disasters.