

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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***Shutter Island* (2010)**

Martin Scorsese (1942—)

OVERVIEW

Auteur Martin Scorsese's body of work explores gritty, extreme violence and different criminal worlds with distinct cinematography and complexly layered narratives. Many of his films focus on forms of criminality across different time periods in crime dramas such as *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Goodfellas* (1990), *Gangs of New York* (2002), and *The Departed* (2006), even illustrating crime in corrupt corporations with *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013). In addition to crime drama, Scorsese has explored other genres such as an adaptation of *The Age of Innocence* (1993), a biopic on Howard Hughes in *The Aviator* (2004), and the children's film *Hugo* (2011). His work has been largely celebrated with awards including the American Film Institute (AFI) Life Achievement Award, Emmys for his work on the HBO series *Boardwalk Empire* (2010-2014) and numerous golden globes for his films including the Cecil B. DeMille Award. In 2007, Scorsese was listed as *Time's* top 100 most influential people in the world.

Film Adapted by Laeta Kalogridis from Denis Lehane's 2003 novel of the same name, *Shutter Island* explores the traumatic effects of war alongside the psychological criminalization of insanity. Set in 1954 and told as a neo-noir detective story, the film pays homage to film noir themes from Alfred Hitchcock. Scorsese focuses on carceral approaches to psychological treatments of the criminally insane. Structurally, the narrative is told as a detective story with the main characters attempting to find a missing patient on the island. By emphasizing paranoia through painful references to medical histories of the 20th century, such as lobotomies and electro-shock therapies, the film leads the audience through Teddy's perspective of Shutter Island and experiments with expectations of reality as he uncovers different evidence.

Background Denis Lehane sold the rights to his novel to Phoenix Pictures in 2003, which partnered with Paramount and Columbia Pictures to produce the film. They then hired Laeta Kalogridis to develop the film for over a year. Scorsese was immediately interested in the film and looked to cast Leonardo DiCaprio after completing three previous films with the actor. Production began in 2008, with filming taking place across different locations in Massachusetts. The scenes of Ashecliffe were shot at the Medfield State Hospital in Medfield, MA, and scenes of the concentration camp in Dachau in Taunton, MA. The film received mixed reviews from critics, and while it did not rank as highly as some of Scorsese's predecessors, critics praised the film for its artistic complexities and layered narrative. Despite the lack of film awards for *Shutter Island*, it remains the second highest box-office grossing of all of Scorsese's films.

CHARACTERS

Edward "Teddy" Daniels—a U.S. Marshall later revealed to be Andrew Laeddis

Chuck Aule—Teddy's partner, later revealed to be Dr. Lester Sheehan

Dr. John Cawley—senior psychiatrist at Ashecliffe

Rachel Solando—missing person at Ashecliffe

SYNOPSIS

The film follows U.S. Marshall Edward "Teddy" Daniels/Andrew Laeddis (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his partner Chuck Aule/Dr. Lester Sheehan (Mark Ruffalo) on the search for a missing patient named Rachel Solando (Emily Mortimer/ Patricia Clarkson) at Ashecliffe asylum on Shutter Island. Teddy and Chuck arrive on the island where a senior doctor at the hospital, Dr. John Cawley (Ben Kingsley), leads them through the case.

Teddy eventually suspects that physicians at Ashecliffe are experimenting on their patients, which triggers his traumatic memories during the liberation of Dachau during the Holocaust. As Teddy explores the case, he has dreams and delusions of seeing his deceased wife Dolores (Michelle Williams). As the search for Rachel continues, Teddy confesses to Chuck that he is also in search of Dolores's killer Andrew Laeddis, who he thinks is a patient at the asylum.

Once the hospital staff locates Rachel, a heavy storm hits the island, knocking out the power to Ashecliffe. Teddy and Chuck take the opportunity to search for more information on Andrew Laeddis. Teddy becomes suspicious of Chuck, gets separated from him, and meets another woman claiming to be the real Rachel Solando. She convinces Teddy that Ashecliffe physicians experiment on patients and are lobotomized in a lighthouse on the island.

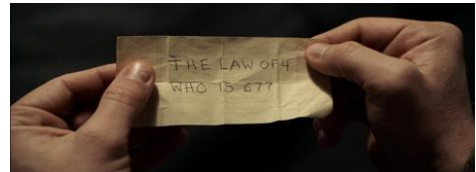
After Teddy reaches the lighthouse, he finds the entire building empty until he reaches the top floor and encounters Dr. Cawley, who explains that the mystery was an experiment. Chuck enters and reveals himself as Dr. Sheehan, and they reveal that Teddy's real name is Andrew Laeddis, a patient at Ashecliffe, who shot and killed his wife two years after she drowned their three children. In the end, Andrew appears to recognize who he is and recalls killing his wife, Dolores, but slips back into speaking like Chuck before being led away for a lobotomy.

SCENES

Coming in on a ferry, the film opens with Teddy looking into a mirror after getting sick in the bathroom with his newly assigned partner, Chuck, who he meets for the first time on this trip. They discuss going to Shutter Island and finding a missing patient named Rachel Solando. Arriving on Shutter Island, Teddy and Chuck are picked up by a security guard at Ashecliffe and driven to meet with Dr. John Cawley, who is a head psychiatrist at Ashecliffe. Cawley explains that they have been asked to come to find a missing patient named Rachel Solando.



Dr. Cawley takes Teddy and Chuck to Rachel's room where Teddy finds a small piece of paper hidden behind her bed that reads, "The Law of 4. Who is 67?" During a search of the island coast, they discuss that there is no way off of Shutter Island with the exception of the ferry they rode in on at the beginning of the film.



Teddy and Chuck interview staff about the last time each of them saw Rachel and any clues about where she may have escaped to on the island. During interviews with staff, Dr. Cawley explains that her psychiatrist Dr. Andrew Sheehan is on vacation and not currently on the island.



Dr. Cawley invites Teddy and Chuck to his house for cigars and brandy that night to further discuss the case where they meet Dr. Naehring with whom they discuss the treatment of psychological disorders. During their discussion, Teddy has a flashback to the liberation of Dachau. Teddy demands files on Rachel Solando but Dr. Naehring refuses so Teddy says that the investigation is over and they will head back the next morning.

After Teddy and Chuck go their beds, Teddy has a dream of Dolores telling him that Rachel is still on the island and that he cannot leave until he finds her. Then after holding her in his dreams, she tells him that Andrew Laeddis is also on the island. Teddy wakes up to the water dripping from the ceiling due to the intense storm.

Insisting on interviewing patients, Teddy finds Dr. Cawley the next morning and explains that they need to stay on the island and find Rachel by talking to the patients. When Teddy asks about what treatments Rachel was undergoing while in the asylum, Dr. Cawley explains the difference between the schools of psychological treatment between lobotomizing patients and pharmaceutical treatment. After completing the interviews with patients, Teddy explains to Chuck that he also took Rachel Solando's case because he believes Andrew Laeddis, who killed his wife Dolores by burning down their apartment building and is on the island.



During the storm, Teddy and Chuck take shelter inside of a crypt in a cemetery, where Teddy recounts his memories of the liberation of Dachau at the end of World War II and discovering the horrific violence of the Holocaust including the Allied soldier lining up the Axis soldiers and murdering them. Teddy explains that after this experience, he is no longer interested in killing Laeddis, but as he tracked Laeddis, he finds details about patient experimentation at Ashecliffe.



Rachel is found, and Dr. Cawley informs Teddy that she has been returned to her room. When Teddy, Chuck, and Dr. Cawley speak with her, Teddy asks her about where she's been for the past 24 hours. She explains a memory of going through a day of dropping her children off at school, having lunch, and returning home. She then hugs him as she thinks he is someone else before she pushes him away aggressively and then starts asking him who he is, which deeply affects Teddy. The hospital staff restrains Rachel as Teddy leaves her room with Chuck and Dr. Cawley.



Teddy has a dream about his wife Dolores that night and she tells him that Andrew Laeddis is still alive on Shutter Island and to find and kill him. He is woken because of a tropical storm that does substantial damage to Ashecliffe. When Teddy and Chuck go out into the main courtyard of Ashecliffe, they learn the power is out at the entire institution and patients are roaming the grounds. Teddy and Chuck decide to take advantage of the power outage and explore Ward C as that is where they keep the highest risk patients at the institution.



In Ward C, while Chuck and Teddy are searching, Teddy encounters a patient who jumps him, but Teddy attacks him before a guard comes and takes the patient away with Chuck. Wandering by himself, Teddy meets patient George Noyce who recognizes him and explains that he is "a rat in a cage" and part of an experiment at the institution and he tells Teddy not to trust anyone on the island, including Chuck. Getting emotionally upset, George continues to say that he fears the doctors at Ashecliffe will take him to be lobotomized in the lighthouse and blames Teddy. After seeing Dolores in George's cell, Noyce begs him to "let her go."



Teddy and Chuck meet back up on the cliffs at the edge of the island, and Teddy asks Chuck what happened to him. Teddy explains that they need to get to the lighthouse, but Chuck is hesitant about going so Teddy tells him he is going down alone. He climbs down the rocks to find an accessible way to get to the lighthouse, but when he climbs back up, he cannot find Chuck. He looks down over the cliff and believes he sees Chuck's dead body



at the base of rocks. Climbing down the rocks, Teddy cannot find Chuck's body but sees a flickering light from a cave in the cliffs so he climbs back up to it.

Climbing up to a cave, Teddy meets a woman who claims to be Rachel Solando. She tells him that she was a psychiatrist at Ashecliffe who asked about shipments of different psychotropic drugs and experimental surgeries. She explains that she eventually found out about doctor's lobotomies on patients as well as forms of mind control experimentation. After finding out, the psychiatrists institutionalized her, which leads Rachel to insist to Teddy that the doctors at Ashecliffe are also experimenting on him. She continues to explain that the doctors believe she drowned and elaborates that moves around the island so they do not find her, but is ultimately trapped since the ferry is the only way off Shutter Island, and the hospital controls it.



Teddy heads back to Ashecliffe when he encounters the warden he saw earlier driving who gives him a ride back and gives a speech on validating violence before saying that he and Teddy are "as violent as they come." Once he arrives back at Ashecliffe, he reenounters Dr. Cawley, who asks him when he will be leaving and provides details on how someone subdued a patient in Ward C and had a long conversation with a patient named George Noyce, who he states is a paranoid schizophrenic. Teddy changes the subject and asks Dr. Cawley if he has seen Chuck, but Dr. Cawley explains that he never had a partner with him on the island.



Running into Dr. Naehring as Teddy is attempting to make his way back to the lighthouse to look for Chuck, Dr. Naehring tries to sedate him, but Teddy instead takes the syringe and administers it to Dr. Naehring. Teddy becomes convinced that Chuck was taken to the lighthouse, and he attempts to sneak back to the lighthouse by causing a distraction, so he sets a cloth on fire in the gas tank of a car to cause an explosion. Right before the car explodes, he has a vision of a child (whom he saw earlier in his vision of Dachau) walk toward Dolores and hold hands.



As he gets close to the lighthouse, he encounters a guard outside of the lighthouse and quickly takes his rifle and knocks him unconscious. Teddy enters the lighthouse only to find every room and floor empty except the top floor where he encounters Dr. Cawley in a mostly empty room while seated at a desk.



Finding Dr. Cawley in the lighthouse, Teddy accuses him of experimenting on him and patients at Ashecliffe. He then details how he found the *real* Rachel Solando hiding on the island. In response, Dr. Cawley explains that Teddy's real name is Andrew Laeddis and that he has been a patient at Ashecliffe for two years. He further details how Rachel Solando never existed, but is a manifestation of his repressed traumatic memories. Dr. Cawley shows Teddy a white board that details how "Edward Daniels" and "Rachel Solando" are anagrams of his and his late wife's names (Andrew Laeddis and Dolores Chanal). Dr. Cawley further explains that Andrew Laeddis has been the mysterious patient 67 and that the entire setup was "the most 'radical, cutting-edge role play ever attempted in psychology'" to prevent the board of overseers at Ashecliffe from having Andrew lobotomized since he is their most dangerous patient. Chuck then enters the room, and Dr. Cawley reveals him to be Dr. Andrew Sheehan. Dr. Sheehan further recounts how Teddy/Andrew was institutionalized at Ashecliffe after murdering his wife Dolores, who suffered from manic depression and murdered their three children. Dr. Cawley shows him photos of his children's bodies, which activates his memories of finding Dolores after she drowned their three children in a lake beside their house.



In a flashback, Andrew remembers returning home from work to his lake house to find Dolores sitting outside as the drowned bodies of his three children float in the lake. After he discovers and takes their bodies out of the lake, he and Dolores embrace before he shoots and kills her. After Andrew comes back to consciousness with Drs. Cawley and Sheehan in the lighthouse, he passes out upon realizing what happened in his past.



Andrew wakes to the nurse who played Rachel Solando earlier in the film along with Drs. Cawley and Sheehan, who ask him why he is there. Andrew explains that he is Andrew Laeddis. He recognizes that he created a separate identity because of his guilt over killing Dolores and not getting her help when she warned him of her mental illness. He continues to reaffirm that he remembers that he is Andrew Laeddis and admits to murdering Dolores.



Andrew sits on the stoop and he sees Dr. Cawley chatting with Dr. Naehring in the distance before Dr. Sheehan sits down and asks him how he is doing. Andrew asks, "What's our next move?" before saying, "we got to get off this rock, Chuck." Dr. Sheehan looks at Dr. Cawley in the distance who approves the lobotomy to Dr. Naehring. As Andrew walks away with Dr. Naehring and the staff to his lobotomy, he gives a knowing look to Dr. Sheehan, who calls to "Teddy," but Andrew only looks at Dr. Cawley before agreeably going to be lobotomized.



CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Edward "Teddy" Daniels is a U.S. Marshall assigned to a missing persons case on Shutter Island, who ends up being a character orchestrated as psychological treatment for patient **Andrew Laeddis**. Andrew disassociates after killing his wife Dolores, and he splits Andrew Laeddis as the man he blames for Dolores's murder and Teddy Daniels as the person solving the case of his wife's murder.

Paranoid—Teddy/Andrew is in a constant state of paranoia, experiencing post-traumatic stress and medication withdrawal, resulting in frequent migraines and tremors. As he believes he is in search of a patient named Rachel Solando, he flashes back to traumatic memories of his time as a soldier in World War II, recounting fragmented memories of encountering the concentration camp victims at the end of the Holocaust. Teddy's encounters with staff, doctors, and patients at the asylum highlight the disorientation and consistent paranoia, particularly when he and Chuck explore Ward C before he speaks to patient George Noyce. During this scene, Teddy/Andrew becomes more aggressive, physically assaulting one of the patients. As we learn throughout the film, Teddy/Andrew has a history of violent behavior at Ashecliffe due—in large part—to his paranoid delusions.

Grieving—Teddy/Andrew is in a constant state of grieving over the loss of his three children and the murder of his wife. Many of his dreams and flashbacks showcase traumatic experiences that have resulted in his ongoing processing of grief. His memories of experiences in World War II are blurred with those of his children and wife, as when he sees his daughter lying in a pile of corpses when he first enters the concentration camp at Dachau.

Chuck Aule is introduced as Teddy's partner Chuck, who is assigned to the missing person case of Rachel Solando. He is Teddy's closest confidant throughout the film and whom Teddy trusts up to a point in their search for Rachel. Teddy eventually begins to suspect Chuck's loyalty. Once Dr. Cawley reveals the experiment at the end of the film, Chuck is revealed as **Dr. Lester Sheehan**, Andrew Laeddis's psychiatrist at Ashecliffe.

Inquisitive—Chuck/Dr. Sheehan asks Teddy/Andrew many personal questions about his relationship to the missing persons case and his personal life and history. When they are alone and discussing details of

the case, Chuck/Dr. Sheehan directly asks Teddy/Andrew about his motivations for taking the Rachel Solando case, he directly asks him why he is really there, to which Teddy/Andrew says that he took the case to find Andrew Laeddis. When Chuck is revealed to be Dr. Sheehan, his inquisitive characteristics are fitting for his role as Teddy/Andrew's psychiatrist at the asylum.

Supportive—Chuck/Dr. Sheehan is incredibly supportive and affirming of Teddy/Andrew's motives and suspicions of Shutter Island. When Teddy/Andrew is trapped with Chuck/Dr. Sheehan in the crypt during the storm, Teddy/Andrew shares his experience in World War II during the liberation of Dachau and the memories of discovering piles of victims' bodies in the concentration camp while Chuck/Dr. Sheehan listens to his retelling with focused attention. Whenever Teddy/Andrew has a suspicion or idea, Chuck/Dr. Sheehan supports his move and follows his direction even as the reveal is that Dr. Sheehan is an actor in the experimental treatment for Teddy/Andrew.

Dr. John Cawley is a senior physician at Ashecliffe Hospital as well as Teddy/Andrew and Chuck/Dr. Sheehan's main connection and guide to Rachel Solando's missing persons case. His character is mysterious by suggestions that he is concealing a different motive, provoking Teddy's suspicions and paranoia that Ashecliffe mistreats its patients. Despite Teddy/Andrew's suspicions, Dr. Cawley's character is highly supportive of Teddy/Andrew. Even when Dr. Cawley reveals that the mystery has been a constructed experimental treatment for Andrew, Dr. Cawley expresses concern by trying to have Andrew accept his past in order to prevent him from undergoing a lobotomy.

Suspicious—Dr. Cawley constantly makes himself suspicious to Teddy/Andrew as he begins to believe that Ashecliffe is experimenting on their patients. While Dr. Cawley approaches his interactions with Teddy/Andrew gracefully and provides them with information about the missing persons case, he also refuses to provide certain files and details related to the patients at the asylum. Dr. Cawley, in particular, becomes incredibly suspicious when Teddy/Andrew returns to Ashecliffe after the storm and asks Dr. Cawley if he has seen his partner Chuck, to which Dr. Cawley responds that he came to the island alone and never had a partner.

Compassionate—While Dr. Cawley is performing an experimental treatment on Teddy/Andrew through the elaborate role play that he has staged, he explains his methods in contrast to mid-twentieth-century psychiatric treatment methods such as lobotomies. Elaborating on this early in the film when he is explaining ethics of patient treatment for the criminally insane, Dr. Cawley argues that he is treating his patients as people, highlighting his compassion toward patients by trying to aid patients' cure without relying on pharmaceuticals and surgical lobotomies as treatment. In the lighthouse scene when Teddy/Andrew discusses and realizes that the entire case was a performance, Dr. Cawley does express compassion toward Andrew as he remembers his domestic trauma that he has buried and refused to confront by mentally creating Teddy as a persona. Elaborating that Andrew is their most violent patient, Dr. Cawley explains that if his experimental treatment does not result in a breakthrough for Andrew, then he will be lobotomized.

Rachel Solando is the primary focus of the plot through the missing persons case and is shown to be two separate characters—one, a patient who went missing; and two, a former doctor at Ashecliffe. Teddy and Chuck are brought to Shutter Island to locate the missing person Rachel Solando, who is found while they are there; but Teddy encounters another character, who introduces herself as Rachel. She claims to have been a doctor at Ashecliffe before she discovered that they were experimenting on patients and performing lobotomies on them in the lighthouse. When the doctors discovered she knew, they institutionalized her before she escaped Ashecliffe to hide on Shutter Island. The depiction of two Rachels has Teddy/Andrew ask himself questions about the ethics of Ashecliffe as an institution as well as different forms of psychological treatments on its patients. Near the end of the film, Dr. Cawley reveals that Rachel Solando never existed, but her name is an anagram of Dolores Chanal that Andrew created in his paranoid delusion.

Defensive—While they are two separate characters, the nurse impersonating Rachel and the woman that Teddy/Andrew meets in the cave are both highly defensive characters. For example, when Teddy/Andrew meets the first Rachel Solando in person (who viewers later learn is a nurse in disguise), she first talks to

him calmly and hugs him before pushing him away and accusing him of deceiving her. When Teddy/Andrew discovers the second Rachel hiding in a cave on the edge of Shutter Island, she is armed with a knife behind her back when he walks into the cave. While it is never clear if the second Rachel is a figment of Teddy/Andrew's delusions, the film's writing characterizes her as highly suspicious and defensive toward Teddy/Andrew's presence, which further highlights how Teddy/Andrew's character is also highly defensive.

Conflicted-Both Rachels showcase numerous levels of internal conflict as the first Rachel who appears in the film depicts a character who has internalized the trauma of murdering her own children. When Teddy/Andrew is questioning her about where she was during the time she went missing, she begins by describing the asylum as if it were a neighborhood and her day was a routine day with her children. As she continues to describe this, she begins to berate Teddy/Andrew and yell at him. Additionally, when he encounters the second Rachel, the film makes it unclear for Teddy/Andrew and the viewer to decide whether Rachel Solando is real. Furthermore, the depictions of both Rachels showcase a level of internal conflict for both Teddy/Andrew as a character and the audience about whether or not to believe that Ashecliffe is unethically experimenting on its patients.

THEMES

PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology: Examining the ethics of medical treatments of psychiatric patients, *Shutter Island* follows Teddy, who we learn at the end of the film is a patient at Ashecliffe named Andrew Laeddis. Showcasing different histories of medical experimentation on patients, the film illustrates psychosis and specifically paranoid schizophrenia and delusional psychosis by following the perspective of Teddy's character.

While the audience is initially led to believe he is visiting the institution for the first time and Andrew Laeddis is a serial killer who murdered his wife, we later learn that Teddy is actually Andrew Laeddis who is part of an elaborate psychological experiment. During interviews and conversations with patients, these scenes frequently portray paranoid schizophrenia such as when one patient explains hearing voices in her head after murdering her husband with an axe. Additionally, they interview one patient who cut his father's nurse in the face with a piece of glass because he describes her as "want[ing] to be naked" and wanting to "laugh at his thing." While the specific diagnoses are not offered for each patient in the film, there is a running theme of paranoid schizophrenia throughout each character.

Trauma: *Shutter Island* explores the trauma in its effect on former soldiers of war, particularly World War II and the Holocaust, as well as domestic trauma and loss. It showcases the effects of trauma via Teddy/Andrew's memories throughout the film. Additionally, as the film is set in a mental institution, it explores the institutionalization of psychiatric treatments by also paralleling them with memories of the horrors of medical and psychological experimentation during the Holocaust.

The film makes numerous inferences that Dr. Naehring's character is akin to the Nazi doctors such as during the first scene where Teddy/Andrew meets him during his visit to Dr. Cawley's house after his first day searching for Rachel. Additionally, Teddy/Andrew has frequent flashbacks when he discovers the bodies of victims at the concentration camp during the liberation of Dachau at the end of World War II. The film draws particular attention to this theme through its discussion of psychological treatment of trauma and particularly when Dr. Naehring provides the Greek etymology of the word (τραῦμα), which translates in English as "wound." By drawing such connections, the film centers on an experiment to treat Andrew Laeddis's mental illness and highlights its roots in trauma.

Paranoia: The film heavily relies on paranoia in different characters, and it also plays on developing paranoia of the audience. As Teddy/Andrew is attempting to solve a missing persons case, he frequently encounters situations that induce paranoia around the intentions of Ashecliffe doctors where he consistently questions about the experimental methods used at the asylum and begins to wonder if he himself is involved in an experiment.

In one scene a patient who Teddy is interviewing writes him a secret note that says, "run." The viewer follows and trusts Teddy's perspective, but at the end of the film, is left with questions of paranoia since the entire film has been a constructed psychological experiment for Teddy/Andrew, who has been a patient at Ashecliffe the entire time. This is further complicated when Dr. Cawley reveals to Teddy that he is actually Andrew Laeddis. At the end of the film, right before Andrew is being taken away for a lobotomy, he has a conversation with Dr. Sheehan on the steps before supposedly slipping back into his role as Teddy by referring to Dr. Sheehan as "Chuck," again; however, his final looks suggest that he is aware of who he is and that the lobotomy is about to take place, further instilling a sense of paranoia even during the resolution of the film.

CRIME

Violence: Depicting violence throughout the film in Teddy/Andrew's flashbacks to both World War II and the murder of his wife Dolores, the writing of the film and visual representations draw attention to themes of violence. Also questioning violence, the film illustrates Teddy/Andrew's activated responses of recalling violent memories during his interactions with characters at Ashecliffe. As an example, when the warden (Joseph Sikora) talks with Teddy/Andrew while driving him back to Ashecliffe, the officer gives an unsettling speech about the violence of the storm as "God's gift" and further saying that "God loves violence." In this speech, he describes Teddy/Andrew and himself as "violent as they come." Teddy/Andrew ardently denies the warden's claims, and he responds by saying that the warden does not know anything about him. Their conversation reflects the movie's ongoing themes of traumatic effects of violence on the psyche. Another example is when Teddy/Andrew meets Dr. Naehring during his visit with Chuck/Dr. Sheehan to Dr. Cawley's house. Dr. Naehring tells them his "specialty [is] men of violence." When Chuck/Dr. Sheehan responds with, "that's a hell of an assumption to make," Dr. Naehring says, by saying that he does not mean that they are violent men, but that it is different to be "men of violence." The film's dialogue engages actively with themes of violence as does it parallel this with visualized memories of Teddy/Andrew's past.

Illustrating Teddy/Andrew's memories of being a U.S. soldier in World War II during the Holocaust, his character presents viewers with the psychological effects of trauma and violence. Teddy/Andrew's character has frequent flashbacks to violent memories such as the Nazi officer who attempted to commit suicide during the liberation of Dachau, but failed and "took him an hour to die" as Teddy/Andrew recounts to Chuck/Dr. Sheehan when they are sheltered in a crypt during the storm that hits the island. In this same recount, Teddy/Andrew remembers how the Allied soldiers lined the Axis soldiers and gunned them down at Dachau. While the film focuses on violence as a theme, it far from validates it and instead presents its traumatic effects through both dialogue and Teddy/Andrew's flashbacks. Additionally, Dr. Cawley describes Teddy/Andrew as the most violent patient at Ashecliffe once he reveals that the entire mystery of Rachel Solando was all an experimental treatment for him.

Death: As Teddy/Andrew frequently experience through flashbacks, his past is rife with loss and grief whether it be the death of his children or over his memories of brutally executing German soldiers during the liberation of Dachau. His character becomes traumatized by death in his life, and the narrative that Andrew creates around Teddy provides a shelter from grappling with the death and loss of his family.

As the film depicts through ghosts and memories, death frequently makes a haunting appearance as Teddy/Andrew frequently sees images of Dolores and his daughter, Rachel, who also appears as a victim in his memories of Dachau. In one scene, when he is flashing back to entering the gates of Dachau and seeing piles of fallen corpses, he sees the body of his daughter among them. Additionally, in a later scene once Teddy/Andrew is convinced that he is being experimented on along with other patients at Ashecliffe and attempts to create a distraction by blowing up a car so he can make his way to the lighthouse, he has a vision of his daughter walking toward Dolores right before the car explodes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) How does the film engage with audience expectations? How does the theme of paranoia function in relation to characters and viewers in the film?
- 2) How does the film depict psychosis?
- 3) How does the formal structure of the film influence our understanding of psychosis?
- 4) How do you interpret the scene where Teddy/Andrew encounters a second Rachel Solando hiding in the cave? What does this moment, in particular, do for complicating your interpretation of the film?
- 5) Does the end of the film validate what Dr. Cawley explains to Andrew or does it raise further questions about how to interpret psychological treatments?