

Capstone Project by Svetlana Avchyan

LOVE, RELATIONSHIP, AND THEIR REPRESENTATION IN “ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND”



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Spring 2021

OUTLINE

- *Introduction*
- *Literature Review*
- *Research Questions*
- *Methodology*
- *Research Analysis*
- *Conclusion*



INTRODUCTION

- *Love and relationships in most of the Hollywood romantic films are portrayed unrealistically.*
- *Those films show an external problem rather than internal.*
- *Real life relationships have not been normalised in films.*
- *This results in divorces and breakups, expectations vs reality.*
- *Film is one of the powerful mediums of communication. Thus, it is very important to have the right and realistic message.*
- *This study analyzes "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" as it mainly represents love in its chaotic, natural, realistic way.*
- *The film was released in 2004, it is Romance/sci-fi, with hints of comedy. The main characters are played by Jim Carrey(Joel) and Kate Winslet(Clementine).*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review consists of theoretical studies concerning psychology of relationships, filmmaking, and film/media studies.

FILM STUDIES AND PSYCHOLOGY

Segrin and **Nabi** in their study "**Does Television Viewing Cultivate Unrealistic Expectations About Marriage**" talk about the negative effects that unrealistic portrayal of love and relationships have on couples, causing expectations that result in disappointments during marriages. In the study "**The Effects of Romantic Comedies on Women and Female Adolescents**" **Green** talks about how perfect love sells, and how it creates false perspectives of relationships in the minds of girls and women.

FILMMAKING

Androutsopoulos, J. in his study "**Language and society in the cinematic discourse**" states that linguistics is essential to examine the relationships between characters; it creates their personalities and differences. Cinematic discourse shapes the film's characters, their heterogeneity, differences, and varieties. In the study "**Art Cinema and New Hollywood,**" **Stewart** argues that cinematic techniques guide the viewer's attention to films' specific details. Two of these tools are editing and framing.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

QUESTION# 1

How love and relationship are represented in "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind?"

QUESTION#2

What tools are used to achieve this representation, e.g., editing, semiotics, filmmaking, visual?

QUESTION#2

Why is this type of ideology essential to portray in films?

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research

Film Analysis

- *Narrative*
- *Plot/ Plot Differences*
- *Character Analysis/ Their Discourse*
- *Posters vs Actual Scene*
- *Camera*
- *Editing*
- *Happy Ending*
- *Comparison with "Titanic", "The Notebook," "Pretty Woman."*

RESEARCH ANALISYS

Plot

The film's plot is around two people; Clementine and Joel, who meet and grab each other's attention instantly. However in the very beginning of their relationship, we find out that Clementine erased all her memories about Joel. In confusion and heartbreak Joel goes the same procedure to erase his memories too.



NARRATIVE

The film is in the form of flashbacks, which chronologies are reordered in the film. We only see their relationship with the help of Joel's memories, while they are being erased. However those memories are shown to us from the end to the start, such as in the beginning of the film, we see the memories from the end of their relationship which is full of miscommunication, unmatch. And towards the end we see the start of their relationship, so that we can sympathise with them, root for them and want them to see together in the end, and also to realize that relationships are not always black and white, too perfect or too bad, they can have elements of both, and we can still try to root for that.

End



Start

PLOT DIFFERENCES

The plot of these three movies are different in a way that , In "Titanic" and "The Notebook" the couples are exposed to external issues only, such as they are different by their status, their parents are against of their relationships, both of the females are engaged to a high status man. In case of "Titanic" the boat sinks and Jack dies, and in case of "The Notebook" they overcome the challenges of parents disapproval but in the end of their lives, Allie gets Alzheimer, and forgets their love, and they die together in the same bed. However in "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" the couple is not exposed to external issues, rather than internal, they are experiencing what real life couples do at some point of their lives, such as difference in traits, miscommunication and misunderstanding.



CHARACTER ANALYSIS



Joel- shy, likes comfort and stability, doesn't say what he thinks

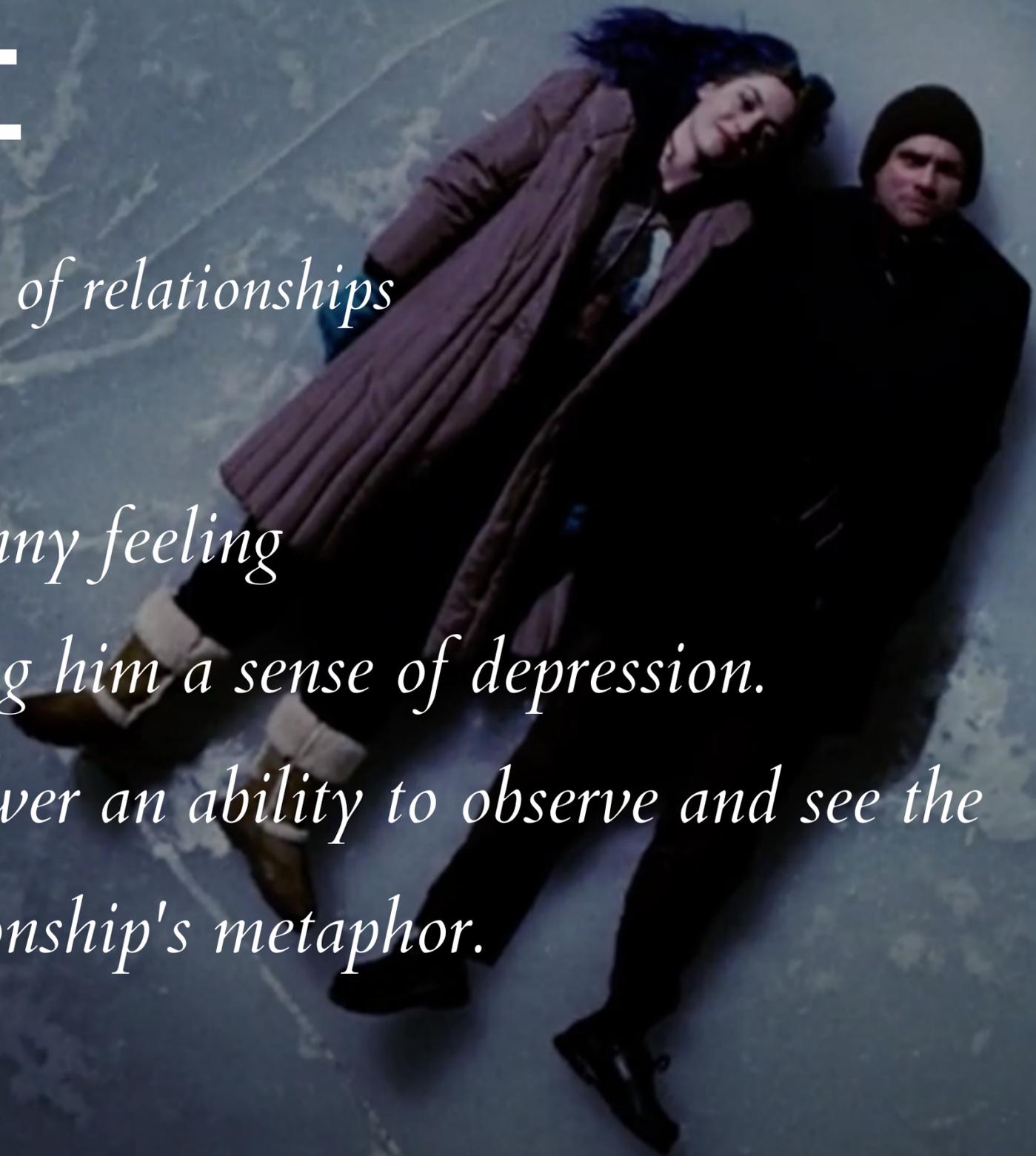


Clementine- Outgoing, loves change, gets bored easily, hates stability

Very different from the conventional characters such as Jack, Rose, Allie and Noah from "Titanic" and "The Notebook." Where male characters are risk-takers, outgoing, confident, and females are trapped in the inability to have freedom.

LAKE SCENE

- *Ice crack represents the fragility of relationships*
- *Color pallet is melancholic*
- *Canted angle gives an uncanny feeling*
- *Joel's clothes are black, giving him a sense of depression.*
- *Bird's eye shot gives the viewer an ability to observe and see the bigger picture of their relationship's metaphor.*



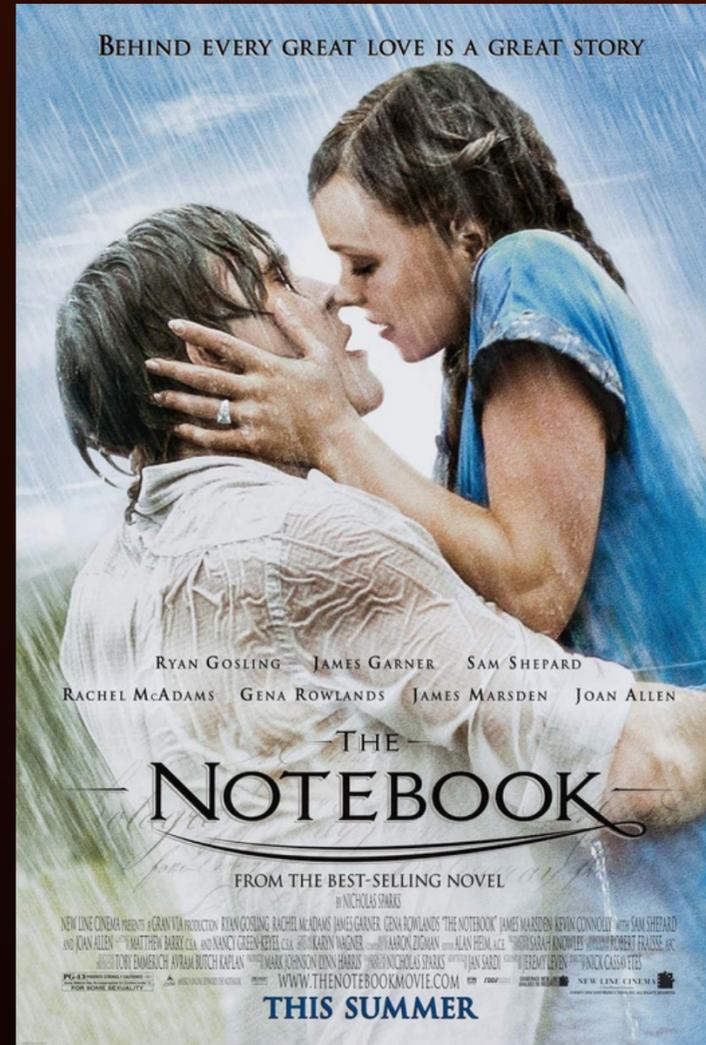
POSTER

- *More colorful*
- *Less canted*
- *Cheerful*
- *Gives an expectation of light comedic romance*
- *The difference of the actual scene and poster may result in a positive shock in the mind of the viewer.*



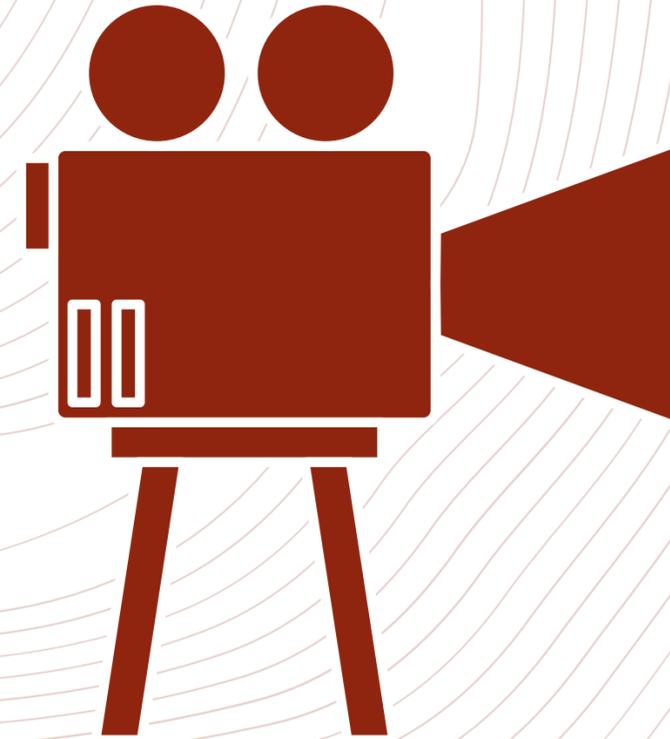
POSTER DIFFERENCES

"The Notebook" and "Titanic" posters are very intimate, they show us romantic couples, passionately in love. Even if in Titanic, Kate is turned with her back and has a sad emotion on her face, Jack is hugging her, touching his jaw to her neck. In the poster of "The Notebook" the couple is about to kiss under the rain, the iconic moment of the film which has become one of the best screen kisses. In the poster of "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" we don't quite understand, are they lovers or friends, we don't know what will happen to them in the film, are they going to be passionately in love, or not being together at all.



CAMERA

Documentary effect, emphasising the concept of realness and authenticity of the film



CAMERA SHAKE

Gives the viewer a feeling of presence, documentary and a virtual effect, since it also moves with the characters' movements.

ZOOM INS INSTEAD OF CLOSEUPS

Most of the closeups are replaced by zoom-ins, which again gives a sense of documentary where the cameraman would not actually get physically close to the people in the frame, rather than capture their emotions and actions with the help of zooms.

SHOTS BEHIND SOMETHING

The shots behind car seats or book shelves give us a sense that we are there, observing the characters, getting to know something hidden and secret. It gives the viewer a feeling that we hear conversations that we should not hear and we see what we should not see. It awakens in us a cinematic voyeurism, spying on others' personal moments while knowing that he/she does not know we are there, which replaces the camera with a two-way mirror.

MEMORIES AND EDITING

The viewer easily keeps track of memory and reality. This is done with the help of following techniques.

CREATIVE GEOGRAPHY

Creative geography is used in order to jump from one memory to another, and be able to both differentiate and connect them to each other. Such as in one memory Joel is sitting on a chair, and the other memory starts with him sitting on the sofa, as if he travelled through his memories in a matter of seconds and didn't manage to change his pose yet.

SOUND BRIDGES

Sound bridges help us to connect the scenes, understand that the scene with Clementine and Joel is a memory, and in reality, Joel lies in his bed, surrounded by the doctors. This gives us a chance to go through different memories with a linear scheme rather than chaotic, and that line is achieved by sound bridges, since the conversation of the doctors stay, but the scenes change from a memory to reality (blurry-clear).

CONTINUITY

EDITING/MATCH-ON-ACTION

Match-on-action, helps us to see the erasure of Clementine from the memories, with the help of matching the action of two shots, in which Joel is firstly moving with Clementine and then without her. Match-on-action also is used in order to juxtapose two realities, for instance where we see Joel as an adult and a child doing the same action (touching rain)

HAPPY END/OPEN ENDING

“Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind” ends with Joel and Clementine finding out each other's recordings from the hospital where they confess the reasons they wanted to erase their memories.

Such as Clementine's impulsiveness and Joel's boringness, but they say okay to those traits, and try to accept them. It is an open ending because the viewer have seen it all

we've seen their ups and downs, that is why we hope for them to be okay, even though knowing that they will still have challenges. In "The Notebook," "Titanic" or "Pretty Woman" we see

closure of their stories, we know what happens to them in the end. Especially in "Pretty Woman"

Edward rescues Vivian from her past and they live happily ever after as if in a Disney princess

cartoon. The ending of Eternal Sunshine shows us that life has no guarantees, which we can see

with the exampe of their relationship.

CONCLUSION

- *It is essential to have films that show life as it is*
- *Comparisons are made to have more robust arguments*
- *The analysed sections such as plot, camera movement, character choice, etc. have a sense of realism to them, emphasising the concept and meaning of the film.*
- *As Martin Scorsese says "The most personal is the most creative," and only in that personal can we find truth and beauty.*

THANK YOU