

TMP: Episode 1

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Hello, everybody, and welcome to the movie plaza, the podcast where I Alysha plaza watch analyze and re rank INDB's top 100 movies. Watch list Today for episode one, let's talk about number 100, eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind. 5s Hello again, and thank you for listening to episode one of my podcast. We're going to have a great time working through this list of movies, so if you're someone who enjoys film analysis, critique and discussion, or maybe just someone who's looking for a new way to watch or talk about movies, then you're in the right place. So for this week's episode, we'll start by going over some basic information before jumping into a breakdown of events. During this portion, I'll summarize all of the movie events. Basically just a plot so you have an idea of what happened. Spoilers will be included, obviously. So if you haven't seen the movie but don't want it spoiled, I encourage you to go watch and then come back. I watched it about a week or two before this was released, so I'm not sure if it'll still be on the same platform, but I watched it on Amazon Prime video. If you're interested and it's not there, definitely check around your other streaming services. 1s Anyways, after that we'll get into some analysis. This week we'll be looking into color theory as well as exploring the themes of innocence and guilt as it relates to the title. Following that is our Plaza Pops ranking portion, where I give the film a one to ten score based on the plot, characters, cinematography and watchability 1s entertainment value. Then we'll close out with a few words and a preview of next week's movie. So, without further ado, 2000 and four's. Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind was directed by Michelle Gondry. It is a beautifully sad love story exploring the toxic relationship between Joel, played by Jim Carrey, and Clementine, played by Kate Winslet. The story is told primarily through the mind of Joel, who decided to undergo a procedure to erase Clementine from his memories after finding out she underwent the same procedure. The film clocks in at an hour and 48 minutes and has a few other familiar faces, such as Mark Ruffalo, who I love, Kirsten Dunce and Elijah Wood. This particular film is one I've seen before, and both times I watched it, I cried toward the end. So overall I really, really enjoyed it and we'll just get right into the breakdown of the Sense. 1s Okay. Boom. So the opening scene shows Joel waking up and leaving for his commute to work. We hear his thoughts as he makes the impulsive decision to not go to work, but instead hop on a train to Montauk. He would not normally do this, and he's openly criticizing himself in his mind. Joel arrives on the beach, and through his thoughts, we get the impression he might be boring or just kind of down on himself, when suddenly, we see Clementine. She's wearing a bright orange coat and has blue hair, and despite being unable to bring himself to talk to her, Joel is immediately infatuated. And we get love at first sight vibes, if you know what I mean. Thankfully, she's taking the same train back as him and just so happens to be outgoing, spontaneous, and a bit unpredictable. So everything Joel is not. They get along great and have a beautiful night together. Surely they're meant to be. And it's good to notice that this night is completely spurred on by her. She wants to talk to him. She wants him to go home with her. It's all these things. They get along great. But when Joel takes Clementine home in the morning to grab her toothbrush and things, things go a little bit wrong. While he's sitting in the car waiting for her, a man approaches the car, confused. The opening credits begin to play, and suddenly we see Joel driving away in his car, bawling. Like, I'm telling you, he's not just crying. He's really letting it go. We find out that Joel and Clementine have been in a relationship, but the last time he saw her, she acted as if she didn't even recognize him. So the time that it is now is not the same as it was before the opening credits. There's been some sort of time jump. He talks to some mutual friends of theirs, and it's clear that he's really devastated and confused about her behavior. To put him out of his misery, one of his friends revealed a card to him that reads, 1s dear Mr. And Mrs. Egan, clementine Krisinski has had Joel bearish erased from her memory. Please never mention their relationship to her again. Thank

you. Now, I don't know about you, but if I got that card or saw it, I would go crazy, and so did Joel. He doesn't take well to this. I mean, he's also clearly still in love with her. So he takes that card, and he rushes to the office addressed on it. There we meet a few important people. Mary, the secretary. Stan, one of the technicians that does the memory wipe procedure. Patrick, another technician, who's much newer and kind of careless. ^{2s} He's also the confused guy from the opening credits. And finally, Dr. Howard, who's the expert on it all. Joel talks of Dr. Howard and leaves him with information that the procedure Clementine underwent was permanent. Joel goes home, but it doesn't take him long to decide to undergo the same procedure, the second impulsive decision he's made so far. So he rushes back into the office and gets booted to the front of the line. Despite the lengthy waiting list, I think Dr. Howard just kind of felt bad for him because he should have never seen the card. He's instructed to collect everything from the relationship and return to the office. Basically, anything that she gave him that they bought together that reminds him of her, he has to bring it all in. Now, the procedure is a bit complicated, so I'm going to simplify it the best I can. Try to stay with me here. Basically, when he brings all that stuff in, then he gets hooked up to this machine that creates a memory map of their relationship by having him look at their things and think of their time together. So as he's holding these items and looking at them, he's thinking of Clementine, which is firing certain neurons in his brain. The machine is finding those neurons and basically creating a map with them. They're later going to go into his house while he's under sedation and using this map and a different machine, they're going to find those memories in the brain and race them. So that happens. Fast forward, and Joel is now under sedation in his bed, and Stan and Patrick, the technicians, are assigned to do the memory wiping newsflash. They're about to do a really terrible job. The film overlaps between Joel and his mind and the outside world, because although he can't move, he can still hear them talking in his sedated state. This means that at the same time that we are learning about his beautiful but complicated relationship with Clementine, we are also learning. And Joel is also learning about the truth about Patrick as he talks to Stan. Now, Patrick is the careless one from the credits. Come to find out when Clementine went in for her procedure just a few days before Joel, Patrick developed this big, creepy crush on her and has been impersonating him using items that he stole from Joel. So even though Clementine doesn't remember Joel, obviously, somehow she fell in love with him. So using these items and the memories that Joel outlined, he's basically trying to win her over in the same way. ^{1s} That's obviously really confusing for her, because her brain is like, what is going on? But he doesn't care, and she's actually having a breakdown. She calls him, and she's like, Yo, you need to come here. And so he leaves work with Stan to go attend to her. Now, Stan was not about to stay in there with Joel under sedation all by himself, so he calls up Mary, who he has a crush on, and she comes over to keep him company. Meanwhile, Joel, in his mind, is really starting to freak out. Not only is he realizing what Patrick did, but he's remembering Clementine and the relationship, and he's regretting the procedure. There's this one scene where he's alone in his mind. He looks so small, and he's calling out to the people on the outside that he wants to stop the procedure. But we know that his body is under sedation. He can't move. They don't know what he's saying, and they can't hear him. So he tries to wake up to no avail, and ultimately decides to try to hide the memory of Clementine so she can't be erased. He's going to hide her in other parts of his mind, but leaving the mind map is not good. Dan and Mary are too busy smoking grass and playing tongue hockey to notice this, though. So Joel is able to hide her in his repressed memories, which takes him off the map completely. ^{2s} That does get Stan's attention, who calls Dr. Howard out of fear that he's going to fry Joel's brain. And Dr. Howard leaves bed with his wife to go help. He's able to locate Joel in his mind and continues to erase Clementine despite his wishes. Dan realizes in this process that he's basically useless. So he decides to go leave. And while he's at his car, he kind of takes a moment to look back in through the window. Good thing he did, because all of a sudden, Mary came on to Dr. Howard. Why she would want that old man is beyond me. But guess who also arrived and is also seeing all of this go down? That's right. Dr. Howard's wife. They get into a discussion, and Mary insists she doesn't want him. She's just a stupid girl. That's when his wife

reveals that this isn't the first time leading us to the discovery that Mary had her mind wiped. Now, I think the exact phrasing his wife used was somewhere like you already had him, which is pretty harsh. But I was like I was so shocked when that happened. Anyway, Mary talks to Dr. Howard about that, and he insists that it was her choice to have her memory wiped. But she leaves, goes back to the office and finds her files on her procedure. And it's giving coercion. It basically seems like Dr. Howard forced her to get the procedure. When she finds this out, she's like, absolutely not. I'm going to reveal this place. And she decides to send the audio files to everybody that got the procedure done on why they decided to forget the person they choose to forget. Okay, do you got it? Let's put a pin in that and come back to it. So, back in his mind, Joel has realized that he's going to forget Clementine, even though he still loves her and there's nothing he can do. He says to her, It's going to be gone soon. What do we do? And she says, enjoy it. We see him relive when they first met, and before she's completely gone, she leaves him with the fleeting thought to meet her in Montauk. Cut to Joel waking up and then leaving for work. On his way to work, he gets the impulsive decision to hop on a train to Montauk. That's right. It's the opening scene. So fast forward. Fast forward. Joel is sitting outside her house when Patrick walks up, wanting to know why he's there. I mean, like he shouldn't know her, right? Well, Clementine comes out. She sees Patrick. She don't want him no more. She gets in the car to drive her with Joel, but she happened to grab her mail while she was inside. And what's in her mail but the audio file? ^{1s} She plays it in the car. And the sound of her insulting Joel and basically saying why she wants to forget him starts playing through the car speaker. Clearly, that's super hurtful and confusing. He thinks that she's playing some big joke on him. So they split apart, and Joel goes home, where he finds his tape and starts listening to it. While he's doing that, Clementine shows up at his house, and they try to make sense of it all. I mean, they still want to be together, but she insists that she'll be insufferable. I mean, they already broke up before, and Joel simply says so. I mean, just like that, he's made the decision that, despite it all, he still wants to try. They're both aware of their faults now and have new hope. They choose love. Fade to white. The end. Okay, so that was a lot. But honestly, there's so much more I could say. Rather than summarize more of the events for you, though, let's switch gears to analysis of the recurring symbols and themes throughout the film. ^{3s} If you want to get into film analysis, one of the first things I look at is color because it's often one of the more obvious forms of symbolism. In *Eternal Sunshine*, the overwhelming presence of the color blue cannot be ignored. There are times when the screen has such a blue hue it reminds me of a scene from *Twilight*, the first one, if you know what I'm talking about. But there's also blue things everywhere, from Clement Hines hair at times to clothes worn by various characters. Blue is often associated with either a feeling of sadness, melancholy or calm and stillness, which can be attributed to Joel in many ways. We also see the color orange on occasion, such as Clementine's jacket or her tangerine hair, which always stands out because blue and orange are on opposite end of the color spectrum. This goes to show how Jewel and Clementine are so different because orange is really attributed to her blue. To him. They're opposite, but somehow they still work together. ^{2s} And I'm sure there's more to look at regarding those colors. So if you're interested in film color theory, that's a great place to start. Another interesting color element that we see is Clementine's hair, which stands as a good marker for time. Her hair is green in scenes from where they first met, red in memory scenes of their relationship, and blue in scenes from their second meeting onwards. She does change her hair a lot because her character is supposed to be kind of non committal, so that's not a weird thing. ^{1s} It also makes sense that her hair is red in the memory scenes because there we really start seeing the toxicity and less appealing nature of their relationship, and red is more closely associated with hostility, anger, danger, things like that. Moving on, I'd like to explore the themes of innocence and guilt or shame, including how it relates to the film's title. So in the moment following Stan's departure, when Mary and Dr. Howard are alone together, like when he goes to his car, there's actually a few minutes there and they have enough time to have a conversation. ^{2s} So while she's there, she's talking about how she read this poem that reminds her of the work they do. It's an excerpt from Alexander Pope's poem

I hope I pronounced this right. Eloisa or eloisa to abalard. It goes as follows how happy is the blameless festivals lot? The world forgetting by the world forgot. Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind. Each prayer accepted and each wish resigned. Now, although the excerpt is nearly a direct reflection of Marion Dr. Howard, it can also be applied to Joel or Clementine or basically anyone who undergoes a procedure. Let's go line by line, like your favorite English teacher, and see what this means. A vestal is a person, typically a woman, who abstains from sexual nature or intention within the context of the film. Let's combine sex and romance or relationships. Making how happy is a blameless festival's lot equivalent to how happy could someone be without the turmoil of romance, sex, relationships? I mean, obviously they're complicated, and if you could just not have it be complicated, you'd be happy. Then it says, the world forgetting by a world forgot. That's further playing into the idea of being blameless, like how happy could you be if the things you did didn't matter? 2s Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind. So in the mind of someone who is without blame or fully innocent, they would always be happy. So those two lines are really closely tied together. And a great example maybe not a great example, but an example of this is if I was walking down the street and I just walked up and punched someone in the face, 1s obviously I should feel guilty about it, or there would be consequences to me doing that, to me hurting this person. But if I lived in a world where I did not have to take responsibility, where I could just punch him in the face and walk away, feel no shilt, no shit, feel no shame or guilt or anything, then I would always be happy. And then each prayer accepted and each wish resigned means that to accept this state and be always happy, you would also have to reject further desires. But that'd be okay, because your world would be perfect. In a world where you can erase your memories, you can rid yourself of the blame of your actions within your relationships. You can theoretically live happily in your innocence, even if you were in a mutually toxic relationship or sleeping with your boss like Mary. 1s But we know eternal sunshine is unattainable. We know this because one of the conditions is to resign your desires and accept the happiness you've been given. But that's just not really in her nature, is it? Suffering is embedded deeply in the human condition, and we do it to ourselves. To want to desire, to love is inevitably to suffer, because each of us is deeply flawed and none of us are blameless. But this film tells us that it is worth it, that although we may not be innocent and love is suffering and sunshine is not eternal, when the sun does shine on you, it is glorious, and it's enough. Or at least that's my interpretation. Within Joel's repressed memories, there are more examples of the innocence theme at play. This includes when Joel is pressured into hitting a dead bird with a hammer by his young peers. He's like four or five at this time, and they hover over him and berate him, causing him to feel inadequate and shameful, which leads to him giving in and hitting the bird further, taking away from his innocence. Shame recurs a lot as we come to learn that Clementine often berated Joel and made him feel little in an attempt to hide Clementine in his shameful memories. This part is weird, but he recalls a moment as a teenager when his mom caught him masturbating. 1s Yeah, that was really weird. But nevertheless, there's a lot to explore regarding the themes of innocence, shame and guilt. 3s Okay, so that sound means it's time to move on to the Plaza Pop segment of the show, where I rate the movie from one to ten based on the plot, characters, cinematography and just overall entertainment value watch ability. Each category will get a one to ten rating and then the average of those will equal the final Plaza Pop score. Pops is short for Popcorn, by the way. So first category is the plot. We already went over all the main points and if I conveyed it well, then I hope you'll agree that there was a very interesting plotline. The idea of being able to erase someone from your memory is unfamiliar but widely accepted. I'm sure most people have someone in their life they wouldn't mind forgetting. The plot kept things interesting with its twists and turns and remained easy to follow despite the disjointed movie structure. However, we don't get much more on Patrick after Clementine leaves him, and that felt a little unresolved to me. The moment when the wife revealed that Mary had been with Dr. Howard also felt like it could have had a bit more to it. But both are such minor things that I would still give the plot an overall nine out of ten. 1s Moving on to characters both Joel and Clementine are beautiful contrasts of one another and present the portrait of

two different, completely unique and beautifully flawed people. In the beginning, Clementine was definitely giving Manic Pixie Dream Girl which, if you don't know, is a trope coined by film critic Nathan Rabin where, in his own words, he describes the characters as, quote, existing solely in the fevered imaginations of sensitive writer directors to teach broodingly, soulful young men to embrace life and its infinite mysteries and adventures. End quote. ^{1s} So basically, it's just overly quirky woman characters who, like, literally will change some dude's life despite having no real substance on her own, eternal Sunshine straight up rejects this trope with Clementine through her line of dialogue. I'm not a concept. I want you to just keep that in your head. Too many guys think I'm a concept or I complete them, I'm going to make them alive, but I'm just a fucked up girl who's looking for my own peace of mind. She didn't have to say that, though, for the point to come across, because we get a pretty good view of her as a three dimensional character. On the other hand, Mary is far less unique and borders on a manic, pixie dream girl. At times, she always seems a bit silly and aloof. She dances around in her underwear and says silly things, but I'd say she's not quite extreme enough to fit the trope anyways. Jim Carrey as Joel is just perfect casting. Although we see him in more comedic roles, he's able to balance that light heartedness with the darker emotions attributed to Joel's character, which makes him really relatable. As for the others, they were really good characters. ^{1s} Another thing I always find interesting to look at in terms of characters, though, is whether or not the film passes the Bechtel test and whether or not I care. For those that don't know, the Bechtel test is a measure of female representation in a film, and in order to pass, it must meet three criteria. Number one, have at least two named woman characters. Number two, those two named woman characters must talk to each other. And number three, the thing they talk about cannot be a man. It seems simple enough, but many films, including this one, do not pass. However, I don't even care. The cast of characters is small and mostly men. Additionally, there aren't really named side characters. For example, Clementine talks to Joel's mom in his mind about something that's not a man. I think they talk about, like, salad or something, but Joel's mom doesn't have a name, and Joel's mom doesn't count. But because of this and the fact that when the men talk, it's mostly about women anyway, I mean, it's a romance movie. I really don't think it matters that it bailed. So I'll add up my total score in this category. Two and eight out of ten takes us to the cinematography, which really just makes the movie. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the film has a blue hue to it that gives it an entirely cohesive look. This is broken down with a wide variety of shots, from beautiful close ups that make the characters appear if they're glowing, to wider, top down shots, like when Clementine and Joel are laying on the ice together. Many times the camera isn't completely still, but rather moving slightly, which makes it feel like you're really there looking at it, which adds to the intimacy of the whole movie. My personal favorite shots would have to be when Joel is under the sheets with Clementine, and at first things are happy and calm, and it's basked in this heavenly warm light, but suddenly she's gone. It's dark, and the camera is super unsteady as he struggles to crawl through the sheets and chase the evasive circle of light. I'm sure you could attribute the light to his happiness or comfort, or even to Clementine and how he can't really reach it, and there was just a lot there to look at that I really enjoyed. Honestly. No real complaints on the cinematography overall, and it speaks for itself, so you just have to watch it. I would give it a nine out of ten. ^{2s} Finally, entertainment value and overall watchability the film was very engaging, and I didn't feel as if it began to drag as I was watching it. There are some films where I just kind of get bored. I mean, I do watch so many that I'll break it down in half and I'll watch the first half on one day and the second half on another day. But I didn't have to do that with this. It's also an R rated movie, but it is fairly tame. The only time that I was like, I think this might make people really uncomfortable is maybe for the masturbation scene. And then there's also the scene where Clementine shows her panties to Joel under the table because she's trying to get him to remember the memory. I don't know, it's a little bit weird, but nothing that really bothered me. I can see how some people could be uncomfortable. Still. Super entertaining movie. So I would give it a very high still, 8.5 out of ten ^{1s} average those scores out. And Eternal Sunshine of the spotless Mind gets a total score of. ^{3s} It's 8.6

plaza Pots. Normally, I would then take this time to add it to our new Top 100 list, but seeing as it is our first episode, that does make it our new number one. Is All right, that's everything I had for you today. So I just want to take a moment to thank you again for joining me for the first episode of the Movie Plaza. If you liked what you heard about Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind and would like to watch it, then at the time that this episode was released, it's available on Amazon Prime Video, but be sure to check your other streaming services. I would recommend watching it alone or with someone you know well because of its more intimate themes. Also, if you liked what you heard and would like to hear more, be sure to tune in next Sunday at noon for episode two on north by Northwest. You can find me on all major streaming platforms. You can also find me@themoviplazapodcast.com or the Movie Plaza on Instagram. Again, that's themoviplazapodcast.com. Or the movie plaza on Instagram. Bye.