

## ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN “ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND” FILM BY USING CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES APPROACH

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berjudul “ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN “ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND” FILM BY USING CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES APPROACH” yang dilakukan dengan analisis pendekatan kualitatif sinematografi. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis dan menggambarkan pengaruh penggunaan teknik sinematik terhadap karakter utama dalam sebuah film. Dalam menganalisis penelitian ini, teori yang digunakan yaitu Maria Pramaggiore & Tom Wallis. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pencahayaan, suara, dan pembingkai mempengaruhi sebuah objek, yang merupakan karakter utama. Disamping itu, teknik sinematik diperlukan dalam pembuatan film untuk membuat perbedaan dalam gambar visual untuk memikat penonton.

**Kata kunci:** *Sinematografi, Teknik Sinematik, Karakter.*

### ABSTRACT

This study entitled “ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN “ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND” FILM BY USING CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES APPROACH” conducted in qualitative approach analysis of cinematography. The goal of this study is to analyze and describe the affect of using cinematic techniques toward the main character in the film. In analyzing this study, the theory of Maria Pramaggiore & Tom Wallis is used. The result of this study shows that lighting, sound, and framing are effecting an object, which is the main character. Besides, cinematic techniques are needed in a filmmaking to make a difference in a visual image to attract the audience.

**Keywords:** *Cinematography, Cinematic Technique, Character.*

### INTRODUCTION

Literature in its broadest sense, is a form of writing that uses imaginative and creative thinking. Literary work is the result of imagination and creative thinking of an author. On the other hand, literary work is a personal feeling, experience, and expression of the perceived writer and describe it using the language. According to Klarer, “Literature is referred to as the entirety of written expression, with the restriction that not every written document can be categorized as literature in the more exact sense of the word” (1999:1). On the other hand, A good literary work arranged by

two elements, those are intrinsic elements and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements are elements that arrange a literary work from inside. It includes a characters, point of view, plot, theme, etc. Whereas the extrinsic elements are elements that arranged a literary work from outside, like background of the author, criticism, tools, background of literary work.

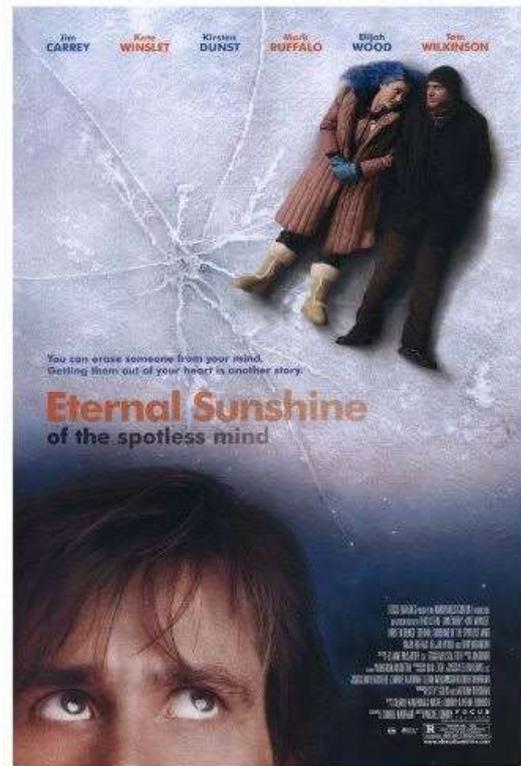
Film is one of literary works, in the form of drama. It is ultimately an expression of the society, it reflects the norms and ideas, of the time, and creation which is created. Film also gives illusion of the real life happen, sometimes the story tells about the past or the future of the world. The most popular literary



works in this era is adopted into film forms. In the film, an expression, message or ideas in literary work can be delivered quickly and easily, since it is supported by audio and visual elements.

The term of film is a story or event recorded by a camera as a set of moving images and show in a cinema or on television. According to Metz C., "Because of the simple fact that any "shooting" of film automatically implies a choice of angle" (1991:195). Film has more interesting aspects for some people who can enjoy the art in other form. In a film, there are pictures and audio, both were able to tell a lot in a short time. There are also narration and elements like another literary work drama, both of them could be called as fiction. Furthermore, film has more some interesting elements to be analyzed such as cinematography because the element related to be discussed in the film. Extrinsic approach can be used in analyzing a literary works such as a narrative, production elements, and cinematography. One of the any aspects in a film making is cinematography. According to Bordwell & Thompson, "Cinematography is a general term for all the manipulations of the film strip by the camera in the shooting phase and by the laboratory in the developing phase" (2008:422).

Bordwell & Staiger (2005:491) argues that motion pictures may be called an art existing by grace of mechanics, but it is the art and not the mechanics of it that is sold to the public. Studios all need good cameras, for instance, but the only use of a camera is to photograph a scene. Derren (1946) in MacDonald (2006:114) argues that "the camera can record a single frame a greater richness of reality than the human eye would ever be aware of in a glance". It will give an effects to the character in the story. According to Fabe M., argues "By moving the camera closer to a character at crucial moments of emotional significance in the narrative, Griffith made it possible for spectators to better observe and hence to relate empathetically to the expressions on the character's face, thereby increasing their emotional involvement in the story." (2004:4).



Picture 1. Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind film.

## METHOD

The approach that is used in this study is descriptive qualitative. According to Creswell and Clark (2007):

"Qualitative data may be collected by observing participants or sites of research, gathering documents from a private such as diary, or public source, or collecting audiovisual materials such as video types or artifacts."

It's a research procedure which achieve a description data such as written and behaviour from the subject itself. The data from literature study are gained to find the appropriate description of the object following the categories of descriptive approach. By using descriptive qualitative method the writer tries to describe cinematic techniques in "Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind" movie.

The main source of this study is extrinsic element where cinematography is used in "Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind" film. Film was released in 2004, written by Charlie Khaufman and directed by Michael Gondry. Genre of this film is American Romantic Science Fiction. It focuses on analysis of cinematic techniques which affect the main character of the "Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind film". It going to analyze with Maria

Pramaggiore & Tom Wallis's theory.

There are two types of data that are used in this study namely primary data source and secondary data source. The primary data source is the object of the study which is film making with extrinsic approach. Nevertheless, the secondary data are collected from other articles, journal and websites that related to the topic that is discussed in this study.



Picture 4. Yellow Fever.



Picture 5. Green Revolution.



Picture 2. Blue Ruin.



Picture 3. Red Menace.



## RESULT

This result analyzes cinematic techniques in film of "Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind" that relates to the topic with the statement of problems mentioned in chapter one. Firstly, it is about cinematic techniques that can be portrayed in "Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind" film. Secondly, it is about the affect of cinematic techniques to the main character in "Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind" film. The writer attempt to reveals and describes by selecting item based on film itself.

The data finding consists of data description to answer research question on how the cinematography can be identified in "Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind" film. The film begins with the viewer residing in the same confused epistemic position as the protagonist Joel (Jim Carrey), and only gradually unfolds to reveal that both Joel and his ex-girlfriend Clementine (Kate Winslet) have chosen to undergo a memory erasure process offered by a dodgy outfit called Lacuna, Inc. The procedure allows those mourning the death of a romance the chance to wipe out all trace of the prior relationship, including all memories of a former lover. Despite having purchased the "spotless mind" offered by Lacuna, both Joel and Clementine fail to find much sunshine as a result. What they do, surprisingly, is a way to nonetheless reunite, and upon eventually learning the true nature of their troubled past together.

The first scene of the film, entitled "Valentine's Day," immediately establishes a dark, trapped, lonely and melancholy mood and draws us into the world of main character Joel Barish. This is the first scene in the movie as well as the first time the audience meets this prominent character. The scene is technically divided into several parts, but the very beginning establishes the mood most successfully. The cinematic techniques portray some effects on the main character's life, such as: Loneliness mood, feeling anxiety, criminal thought and main character's partner hair color.

The first shots of *Eternal Sunshine* are highly significant in terms of both narrative structure and stylistic implications. The film begins by fading-in from black to a deep focus close up of an unshaven Joel, awakening the morning after erasing the memory. The sound of a car door closing rouses him, and it is later discovered that this noise comes from the memory technicians

departing after the operation. A variety of shot lengths are used in this opening sequence to communicate information about Joel's facial expressions, body language, and surroundings.

Ultimately, the act of waking coupled with the natural morning sunlight creates an atmosphere of a new beginning, although it is one tinged with a sense of loss. The use of hand held cameras simultaneously evokes the illusion of realistic footage, and viewers are invited to question why Joel awakens this way, establishing a narrative concerning past events.

The lighting used in this scene accentuates these feelings of listlessness and gloominess. Natural lighting is assumed in this scene, as the only source of light in the room is coming from the window. Shadows remain prominent, although they're soft and blend with the gray, dull light that is coming in through Joel's window. This brightness is neither the extremes of low key lighting nor high-key lighting, but rather somewhere in between. This soft and dreary lighting helps to further push the mood of depression and loneliness by reflecting Joel's mood as he starts his day. Joel's waking expression is rather vacant, conveying the emptiness of his now "spotless" mind. The shot is well-lighted from the right, and upon opening, his dark hazel eyes are drawn to this light source as he utters a sigh. The next medium shot is an eye-line match that frames Joel's window, using an upward tilted perspective from his bed. The morning sunlight shines through, providing the only lighting for the scene and signifying a new beginning. The exclusive use of natural lighting additionally suggests an existence devoid of memories, as the atmospheric lighting techniques that accompany memory throughout the film are absent. A straight cut introduces the next medium close up of Joel sitting up in bed, tracked by the camera. He sighs, rubs his forehead and begins to remove the bedspreads, which provides a match-on-action transition into the next shot a long shot of Joel moving towards the end of his bed. The decor of the space is very plain and uninspired, heightening the atmosphere of emptiness. It has commences outside as a medium long shot of Joel, now shaven and dressed in dull winter clothing. Sunlight momentarily shines directly into the lens before the camera tracks him to his car, revealing a large dint on its side. Confused



and irritated, Joel thuds his briefcase upon the car as ambient background noises of children playing blends with the music.

Although no dialogue is spoken in these shots, the sparse instrumentation and minimalist structure of the background music serves to heighten the mood of an existence that is somehow lacking essence. Then, the opening shots begin to define Joel's character, whilst providing cues to evoke an atmosphere of a somewhat empty new beginning. There is an air of heartbreak about him, especially as he runs away from the train that would take him to work and squeezes onto a different train to Montauk. The Montauk scenes shows the flat and emotionless of Joel's mind.

Dr. Mierzwiak commands Joel to go home and collect everything he owns that has some association with Clementine. These items will help the Lacuna technicians create a map of his brain, which they will subsequently use to erase the presence of Clementine in his mind later that night while he sleeps. The items look like used low key lighting to describe a dramatic moment while he wants to take all items in his past memories.

One of the most prominent of these scenes is "Honeymoon on Ice", a sweet and peaceful moment that occurs on the frozen Charles River with Clementine and Joel. This shooting style is kept even as they lie on the ice. If watched carefully, it can be seen that the camera moves the slightest bit. This scene starts out with no music, just ambient noises. This lack of having a score heightens the mood of wonder, apprehension, and the alleged purity of their intimate moment alone in nature. As the scene progresses, romantic music begins to play, heightening the visual connection that Joel and Clementine are experiencing. The cinematic techniques portray some effects on the main character's life, such as: loneliness mood, feeling anxiety, criminal thought.

After Joel drinks a sedative for comfort him to start the procedure, the close up shot was used to create an individual object more detail (Picture 6). It makes Joel is so panic to getting operation. Low key lighting was used to show the ambient in his room. The process of conducting Dr. Mierzwiak's procedure is just as intimate as the procedure itself. Patrick and Stan come into Joel's home, his private space, while he is in a state of deep, chemically-enhanced slumber, for the purpose of extracting deeply personal memories from his mind. Over the course of the film, the Lacuna, Inc employees wreak

complete chaos in Joel's apartment. The scene where Joel finds out Clementine has had her memory erased embodies the inherent problem with Dr. Mierzwiak's procedure. Joel is telling his friends, Rob and Carrie, that he went to see Clementine but she pretended that he did not exist. He is clearly suffering, and reading her actions as deliberate cruelty. What he does not know is that Rob and Carrie have received a card from Lacuna, Inc telling them that Clementine has had Joel erased from her memory and requesting them not to contact her.

Outside of Joel's mind, Mary Svevo tells Stan that she sees Dr. Mierzwiak's procedure as a way to restore emotional purity and innocence, but Joel and Clementine's example reveals that the procedure is much more problematic and imprecise. Because of the film's opening, the viewer already knows that Joel and Clementine are going to meet again, even after their relationship has been erased. Unfortunately, these artificially pain-free versions of Joel and Clementine have been deprived the benefit of learning from their past mistakes, and are instead destined to repeat them.

Cut back to the Lacuna Inc, where the receptionist, Mary Svevo, tries to hold Joel back from barging into Dr. Mierzwiak's office. He wants the procedure immediately and Dr. Mierzwiak lets him in. The dolly zoom in camera movement used while Joel attempt to following a receptionist to meet Dr. Mierzwiak. At this scene, the camera clearly felt shaking as a human walking and following Joel to meet Dr. Mierzwiak.

Dr. Mierzwiak speaks his instructions in voice-over while Joel throws all the offending items into a plastic trash bag. To take this scene (Picture 9), the camera angle in position eye level angle during Joel staying between two person. The next day, Joel returns to the Lacuna office. Dr. Mierzwiak records Joel describing his and Clementine's relationship (Picture 10). The film intercuts between Dr. Mierzwiak's examination of Joel with visual representations of his memories. One by one, Stan places Joel's objects in front of him and monitors his mental reaction to each item.

High angle is used while Joel asleep in bed wearing a strange-looking helmet while Stan wipes his memories. Although he is asleep, Joel's mind is active. He hears Stan speaking to "Patrick," and immediately recognizes the name, but can't place it. Suddenly, Joel starts to become uncomfortable with the procedure, and his thoughts become more and more frantic. Clementine barges into the apartment, and



Joel whispers, "This is the last time I saw you," signaling that he is re-living this memory as Stan is erasing it. Clementine, drunk, falls onto a chair and reveals that she wrecked his car. Joel angrily accuses her of being a "wino" and cheating on him. She storms out of the apartment and he runs after her, but the memory is now gone (Picture 12).

Both picture (picture 13 & 14) is dramatic moments while Joel do not want loss his memories with Clementine. A light to make character looks like more natural to show that this scenes is in joel's past memories. The dollies on the camera movement was using to give powerful visual like following Joel.

Back in Joel's apartment, Stan and Patrick talks about girls. Stan has invited Mary Svevo to stop by, and Patrick says he has a new girlfriend but the situation is "weird". The filmmaker took their conversation with focusing camera on Stan with medium close up and blurring Stan to show the viewer which Patrick is speaking seriously. Back in Joel's mind, he drives after Clementine as she storms away from him. The scenery starts falling down, signaling that the memory is being erased. Joel shouts after Clementine, "I'm erasing you... you did it to me first!" Joel can hear Patrick speaking to Stan, telling him that his new girl is Clementine, and he fell in love with her while he and Stan were erasing her memory. In his mind, Joel is alone on the street after Clementine has walked away.

Patrick pulls a sheet of paper out of his backpack, it's a love letter that Clementine wrote to Joel with an illustration of two potato dolls "Lying on the Charles River." He hides the letter before Clementine can see it, and pulls a gift out of his backpack with high angle shot. It has the red wrapped box that Joel bought for Clementine before he knowing that she erased him.

Patrick comes to Clementine's house and finds her completely distraught. The close up shot when focusing on Clementine is clearly to show the detail of her expression. She keeps saying that "Nothing makes any sense," and he comforts her. Clementine decides, that they have to go to Boston and see the frozen Charles. Clementine pulls a necklace out of the box and she genuinely loves it. She's impressed that Patrick knows her taste. Blue color on her hair mark that she is on the new beginning. It means that she was erasing her memories about Joel.

Meanwhile, on the Charles River,

Clementine and Joel hold hands. He tells her he has never felt this happy before. The filmmaker create this scene so dramatic. It was using high angle with dark vignette and suddenly, the memory is gone and they are lying on the concrete while commuters stream by them.

Within his memory, Joel pulls Clementine to her feet and insists that they have to stop this. They race through his memories, desperate to find one that has not been mapped. It just using a light for make low key lightning. Joel even goes to his memory of Dr. Mierzwiak, but he cannot do anything. He remembers seeing Patrick at the Lacuna offices and makes the connection - Patrick has stolen Joel's things and is using them to seduce Clementine.

One by one the human or things is erased with Stan while Joel attempts to go with Clementine. The wide lens with high angle camera placement show them when they were running from the erasing memory. The editor give a visual effect to delete an entire human commuter which closer with them.

**CHILLHOOD MOMENT**, This scene illustrates mood which Joel has transplanted both he and Clementine back into a memory in which he is a four year old. It gives a hint of humor which are all found in the scene "Baby joel". This scene is different from the others as it is not based in the real world, but in Joel's memory. Wide angle shot used to take all of the children with a bit low angle shot for a take this scene (Picture 21). Then, while Joel and Clementine let them and go to Joel's house it using high angle to show both are going to home (picture 22).

The both scenes (picture 23 and 24) has a same camera angle to take both scene. It used wide angle to create a whole view on the outside house. The characteristic on the first take is Joel seems a four years old which playing with Clementine on the outside house with a beautiful view on each items. But, the childhood moment suddenly changes become older. The house has not a white paint and the view is too tragic because it was become a normally on his age.

**MAIN CHARACTER** The color of Clementine's hair acts as a symbolic indicator of the state of her relationship with Joel and it has a meaning on each scenes that the color changed, such as blue called blue ruin, yellow called yellow fever, red called red manace, and the last color is green called green revolution.

The conversation that Joel and Clementine have on the train back from



Montauk takes on a different meaning once the viewer knows the history between them (even though Joel and Clementine themselves do not know this information). This scene, naturally repeats the dynamic of their past relationship using eye level on the camera angle. Clementine is the instigator, often getting closer to Joel than he is comfortable with. He is too withdrawn to embrace her outward personality and continually squashes her efforts to connect. Despite having erased one another, they quickly fall back into their old pattern. In this scenes, Clementine has a blue color for the hair and it called blue ruin. It has meaning like her most intense moment of identity loss and when her mental is seriously ruins. This unavoidable affects Joel's life as well.

**YELLOW** This scene (Picture 26) described while the Clementine talk to Joel about her sadness relationship. The filmmakers used a natural light to create as if they are staying in the restaurant. Clementine and Joel are sitting on the sofa, eating Chinese food from individual take-out cartons (Picture 27). In this scene, a sadness relationship is too felt again. The color hair which Clementine used is yellow color or called yellow fever. It has a meaning that Clementine always look like a sadness woman in her relationship while Joel never give a great conversation and it feels like too messy. The affects of Clementine's style makes Joel seem as more nervous while he attempt to talking with Clementine.

While they were staying in the forest, Joel attempt to wake up himself to conscious him in other to get out from his dreams. Then, clementine asking on the above him. The shot of this scene using low angle shot to give as if Clem staying on the above joel. Tilting mode on camera movement show the both person closer the tree as well. Clementine using blue sleeveless t-shirt and red color for the hair. Red color called red manace which the red color appears to symbolize a climax of romantic passion, and indeed many of Joel's best memories are from this color stage.

This scenes was using medium close up to take a moment while Joel meet Clem on the stair like a first time. The costumes of Clementine is using orange sweater her called herself agent orange and using a green color for the hair. The green color itself has a meaning such as a

colour associated with new life, and it suitably marks the beginning of the relationship.

## CONCLUSION

After conducting the analysis about main character that affected by cinematic technique, the writer able to conclude that *Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind* film shows the camera placement can affect the object and change a characteristic. Based on the theory of Pramaggiore M. & Wallis T., in film a critical introduction as cinematography involves both of the spatial characteristics of the frame and the temporal, or time-dependent, character of the film medium. The theory explains that a cinematic techniques create changes in the main character's visual object. It attempts to make difference perspective to attract audience in watching a film.

The ending of "*Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind*" is purposely vague. The changes in the main character's visual object shows inconclusive endings in an effort to reject the traditional narrative plot-line, feeling that it forced an audience to accept a certain point of view. Although slightly ambiguous, seems to be a rather tragic prediction of Joel and Clementine's future. The final shots observe the couple walking away together along the snowy Montauk beach, suggesting the possibly of a happy ending.

The result of this study shows that the cinematic techniques will create the visual object be more dramatic. As the film that most using low key for the lighting to give the effects of a past event.



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