Abstract
The screenplays of Charlie Kaufman explore possibilities of transcendence within the limits of a wholly natural world. From Being John Malkovich through Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, his characters struggle to transform their lives or to get beyond the limits of their circumstances. Most of these quests end in paradox, but some, especially in Kaufman's most recent films, point in more promising directions. In this paper, I interpret Eternal Sunshine as offering something very much like Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence as a way to transform the conditions of life from within.

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol9/iss1/3

It raises the question of whether human experience is little more than the aggregate of a person's memories, or if experience constructs and defines a person whether they remember it or not. It offers a concept that makes every human stop to think for a second -- if we had the technology to delete a memory from our brain, would we? Would erasing a terrible experience make us happier, or would it change who we are? The power of love and experience is what creates the individual, and the film suggests that simply having a spotless mind does not bring eternal sunshine. Memories and feelings are not entwined, and dispatching one doesn't rid the person of the other. Lacuna's process is scientifically-administered denial, not a real solution. Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind is a 2004 film about a couple who undergo a procedure to erase each other from their memories when their relationship turns sour, but it is only through the process of loss that they discover what they had to begin with. Directed by Michel Gondry. Written by Charlie Kaufman and Michel Gondry. You can erase someone from your mind. Getting them out of your heart is another story. (taglines): Sand is overrated. It's just tiny little rocks. From Being John Malkovich through Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, his characters struggle to transform their lives or to get beyond the limits of their circumstances. Most of these quests end in paradox, but some, especially in Kaufman's most recent films, point in more promising directions. In this paper, I interpret Eternal Sunshine as offering something very much like Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence as a way to transform the conditions of life from within.