

February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Media and Social Change

Professor Bakken

### *Eternal Sunshine Review*

Ariana Grande has had a very versatile and successful career. The 3-time grammy award winning artist has 7 albums, all of them taking on very different themes and tones. Her most recent one, *Eternal Sunshine*, released in 2024, might be one of her most raw works yet. This album picks up from her 2020 record, *Positions*, where Grande detailed her then relationship and how in love she was. *Eternal Sunshine* deals with letting go of what you thought was right, and how heartbreak can sometimes be the thing that will heal you the most. I have to say that this is the Ariana Grande album that really won me over and made me really feel the emotions she tried to convey with this project.

In 2025, Grande released the deluxe version of *Eternal Sunshine*, which was titled, *Eternal Sunshine: Brighter Days Ahead*. The deluxe tracks included only supported her emotional journey even more and made the audience empathize with what Grande had been through. Rob Sheffield from RollingStone states that this deluxe “offers five new songs continuing the Eternal Sunshine narrative, still haunted by the same memories.” A great example of this concept is with two of her songs, “We Can’t be Friends”, (which is arguably her most popular song from this album) and “Twilight Zone”. We Can’t Be Friends is all about ending a relationship because of feeling misunderstood to that person. Twilight Zone is a

beautiful continuation of it, giving more context to the relationship that Grande was telling us about in *We Can't Be Friends* and how it ended up ruining her in the end.

One of the many things that Ariana Grande is praised for is her talent for production. Her later albums, *Thank U, Next*, *Positions*, and *Eternal Sunshine* feature r&b/'trap beat' style tracks. The way that she can get into a studio and produce a song that not only sounds good sonically but also vocally, is something you don't see a lot in the music industry these days. Steven J. Horowitz from *Variety* says *Eternal Sunshine* "feels like a capstone on a conflicting chapter in her life, an opportunity to say things that were left unsaid and address how challenging — and restorative — it can be to face what you've endured." While most albums usually stay with one genre (pop, rap, country), Grande built a 19-track album with each track being a perfect blend of r&b and pop, along with some synth-pop tracks. These carefully curated songs have similar beats but are distinct enough to not feel like you are listening to the same thing over and over again. The most magical part of this album is how each track's production feels exactly what each song is about thematically. For example, the closing track on the deluxe, "Hampstead", has a more acoustic and somber sound as this may be one of Grande's most devastating songs, while "Supernatural" is a song about a positive 'surrender to love' and it is one of her more upbeat tracks.

Along with her producing skills, Grande is most known for her angelic and (often) high vocals in all her songs. Something that she leans into more with this album over her others is the layering of vocals on every track. *Eternal Sunshine* is a very diverse album in terms of vocals and production. Grande isn't afraid to explore her lower register, which is rarely heard in her other albums. This makes the more devastating tracks on the album that much more devastating. With *Eternal Sunshine*, it feels like we can comprehend Grande's true feelings and what she has

been going through. This is the first time that she is letting her fans have a glimpse into what popstars like her may feel. “Yes, And?” is a great example of this. In 2023, about a year before the album release, Grande faced a smear campaign against her about her personal life. Whether she was in the right or wrong is something that can be debated. “Yes, And?” is a comeback track, with Grande basically telling her haters that what happens in her personal life is none of their business. It also details what it felt like dealing with that while in a time in her life that she felt like she was doing well mentally.

Along with the deluxe version of *Eternal Sunshine*, Grande also released a 26-minute short film that pays tribute to her album, and it is also a continuation of the music video for “We Can’t Be Friends”, which was released in 2024. This short film is a great companion to *Eternal Sunshine*, bringing the complex and real emotions that are prominently featured in the original album to life. *Eternal Sunshine* isn’t a happy album, but that is exactly what makes this album stand out from her others. She ends “where she began”, and this album truly is the aftermath of a beautiful thing ending abruptly (Sheffield, RollingStone). A standout example is in her ending track, “Hampstead” when she sings about how she’d “rather be seen and alive than dying by your point of view”. This is a clear callback to her song from “*Positions*” titled “POV”, which is about Grande loving someone so much and eagerly wanting to see herself from their point of view. The implication of this is heartbreaking, implying that “Hampstead” is about the dazzling relationship that Grande wrote about in “*Positions*” coming to a tragic end.

Grande has expressed how she is in a much better spot mentally, focusing on her acting career now as she has just starred in the musical blockbuster “*Wicked*” along with its sequel, “*Wicked: For Good*”. She will also tour for *Eternal Sunshine* this upcoming summer, hinting that this might be her farewell to fans in terms of touring. *Eternal Sunshine* is an album that takes

a few listens to truly understand. Grande did a beautiful job with this album, laying her heartbreak out for the world to see. She has stated how filming both Wicked films as well as making this album healed her, and she will never regret making such a vulnerable piece of art.

*Works Cited*

Sheffield, Rob. "Review: Ariana Grande Reaches Even Deeper on "Eternal Sunshine Deluxe: Brighter Days Ahead."” *Rolling Stone*, 28 Mar. 2025, [www.rollingstone.com/music/music-album-reviews/ariana-grande-eternal-sunshine-deluxe-brighter-days-ahead-review-1235305448/](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-album-reviews/ariana-grande-eternal-sunshine-deluxe-brighter-days-ahead-review-1235305448/).

Horowitz, Steven J. "Ariana Grande Confronts Love on "Eternal Sunshine Deluxe": Album Review.” *Variety*, 28 Mar. 2025, <https://variety.com/2025/music/album-reviews/ariana-grande-eternal-sunshine-deluxe-album-review-1236350678/>