### Week Nine Agenda

- Discuss Annie Hall
- Collect Homework
- Assign Final Writing Prompt
- Clips from other 1970s films
  - *A Clockwork Orange*
  - *Taxi Driver*
  - *Godfather I & II*
- Two 10 minute breaks (at ~5:30 & ~6:30)

### Woody Allen’s Career: Stages & Development

#### Through the Years

**1965 through 1985**

- Early “Funnier” Comedies (65-75)
  - *What’s New, Pussycat?*
  - *What’s Up, Tiger Lily?*
  - *Take the Money & Run*
  - *Bananas*
  - *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sex But … Afraid to Ask*
  - *Sleeper*
  - *Love and Death*

- Increasing Seriousness (1977-85)
  - *Annie Hall*
  - *Interiors*
  - *Manhattan*
  - *Stardust Memories*
  - *Midsummer Night’s Sex Comedy*
  - *Zelig*
  - *Purple Rose of Cairo*

#### 1986 through 1998

- Intellectual Deepening (1980s)
  - *Hannah & Her Sisters*
  - *Radio Days*
  - *September*
  - *Another Woman*
  - *New York Stories*
  - *Crimes and Misdemeanors*

- Mid-1990s Decline
  - *Shadows and Fog*
  - *Husbands and Wives*
  - *Manhattan Murder Mystery*
  - *Mighty Aphrodite*
  - *Deconstructing Harry*

- *Sleeper*
- *Love and Death*

#### 1999-present

- *Sweet and Lowdown*
- *Small Time Crooks*
- *Hollywood Ending*
- *Anything Else (2003)*
- *Melinda and Melinda (2004)*
- *Match Point (2005)*
- *Scoop (2006)*
- *Cassandra’s Dream (2007)*
- *Vicky Cristina Barcelona (2008)*
- *Whatever Works (09)*
- *You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger (2010)*
- *Midnight in Paris (2011)*
From New York to Europe

"In the United States things have changed a lot, and it’s hard to make good small films now.

“The avaricious studios couldn’t care less about good films – if they get a good film they’re twice as happy but money-making films are their goal. They only want these $100 million pictures that make $500 million.” -- Allen in 2004

Anniversary Hall

“A Nervous Comedy”

Allen on Annie Hall

“I had the courage to abandon … just clowning around and the safety of complete broad comedy. I said to myself, ‘I think I will try and make some deeper film and not be as funny in the same way. And maybe there will be other values that will emerge, that will be interesting or nourishing for the audience.’ And it worked out very very well.”


Backgrounds & Contexts

- Original Title = Anhedonia
- Inability to feel pleasure
- Studio couldn’t figure out how to promote the film and also define the title
- Re-cut as romantic comedy
- Title changed 3 weeks before premiere
- Earlier murder mystery plot didn’t work and was cut

Autobiographical Bits

- Diane Keaton’s real name is Diane Hall
- Her nickname was “Annie”
- She and Allen dated prior to making the film
- During a flashback scene, a teacher writes Dec. 1 on the blackboard.
  - Allen’s birthday … he also would have been 7 at the time of that scene, like the character

Reputation

- Academy Awards, 1977
  - Best Picture (beating Star Wars)
  - Best Actress, Lead
  - Best Director
  - Best Screenplay
  - Nominated, Best Actor, Lead
- American Film Institute
  - #35 on 100 Best Movies
  - #4 on 100 Best Comedies
Fun Trivia

- Sneezing into the pretend-cocaine was accidental but too funny to cut.
- House under the rollercoaster was the Kensington Hotel in Coney Island, NY. Both were demolished in 2000. A joking alternate title was “Rollercoaster Named Desire.”

Trivia, continued

- Famous young actors in the film include:
  - Jeff Goldblum
  - Christopher Walken
  - Sigourney Weaver
  - Shelley Duvall
  - Carol Kane

Famous People, continued

- Famous cultural figures include:
  - Truman Capote (uncredited)
    - “there’s the winner of the Truman Capote look-alike contest”
  - Marshall McLuhan
    - “You know nothing of my work! … How you got to teach a course in anything is totally amazing!”
  - Paul Simon
  - Dick Cavett

Did You Like it?

Your Reactions …

Themes & Meaning

What are the major themes of *Annie Hall*?

Thematic Oppositions

- **“Heart”**
  - Laughter
  - Genuine-ness
  - Physicality/BODY
  - Life
  - Love & Lust
  - Consciousness
  - New York?

- **“Head”**
  - Serious-ness
  - Pretention, Affectation
  - Intellectualism/Mind
  - Death
  - Resistance
  - Altered consciousness
  - Los Angeles?
Life and Death

- Why is this film – a comedy, a “nervous comedy” – so fascinated with death?
- How does death – the fear of it, the lurking presence of it – affect the characters?
- What, if anything, is suggested as an antidote to death?

Two Brilliant Riffs on Death

Opening Monologue

![Image](www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrxlfvI17oY)

Night-chat with Duane

![Image](www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSRm_X3B1PU)

Death, continued

- “There’s an old joke – two elderly women are at a Catskill mountain resort, and one of ’em says, ‘Boy, the food at this place is really terrible.’ The other one says, ‘Yeah, I know; and such small portions.’ Well, that’s essentially how I feel about life – full of loneliness and misery and suffering and unhappiness – and it’s all over much too quickly.”

Love and Sex

- How does love function for the characters?
- Is it redemptive? Does it free one from the self? Or does it function differently – a confusion or scattering of the self?
- Does sex operate differently from love in the film? How so?
- Like Kane, do any of these characters do “everything for love”?

Love and Sex, continued

- “The the other important joke, for me, is one that’s usually attributed to Groucho Marx,… and it goes like this … ‘I would never want to belong to any club that would have someone like me for a member.’

That’s the key joke of my adult life, in terms of my relationships with women.”
Love and Sex, continued

- Alvy’s analyst: How often do you sleep together?
  - Annie’s analyst: Do you have sex often?

  Alvy (lamenting): Hardly ever, maybe three times a week.
  Annie (complaining): Constantly, I’d say three times a week.

Love & Sex, continued

- Both as always in permanent crisis
- “Hold on” mentality/message
- Renounce Perfectionism

- Perhaps “muddling along” is really all you can do – but it’s not a failure; it’s the norm
- Subtitled balcony scene & “Love fades” scene

Theme of Performance

- Why are so many characters involved with performing?
  - Alvy is a stand up comedian
  - Best friend is in TV
  - Annie becomes a musician
  - Paul Simon’s character
- What relationship exists between performing and identity?

Theme of Performance

- Different roles/faces ...
  - “Prepare a face to meet the faces that you’ll meet” (T.S. Eliot, “Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”)
  - “Success in life is being able to merge your private with your public self (Aldous Huxley)
- What is your “true” self?
- Acting naturally vs. faking it

Alvy Singer

- Did you like Woody Allen’s character?
- What defines him?
- Is he a sympathetic narrator? What makes him so?
- Would you view him differently if the film’s point of view was not his?
- Is he an Everyman character? Why/why not?
Alvy as Everyman?

- Chief characteristics:
  - Bumbling dweeb
  - Sympathetic loser
  - Egotistical & hostile yet also self-effacing
  - Quintessential American type: loveable underdog
- Crucial that the point of view be his
  - Not a traditional leading man – because hopelessly flawed – but very realistic

Annie Hall

- Did you like Diane Keaton's character?
- What defines her?
- Is she sympathetic?
- What makes her so?
- What characteristics does she share with Alvy?
- Is she an Every(wo)man character? Why/why not?

Annie Hall as Every(wo)man

- Similar Characteristics
  - Also sympathetic loser
  - Awkward yet natural
  - Self-effacing yet self-aware
  - Seemingly lost but constantly searching
  - Quintessential American type: loveable underdog
- Crucial that the point of view not be hers
  - Her loveable quirkiness requires mystery & distance

Everyman/Every(wo)man ...

- “It would be a book accounting for the decline in the status and virtue of literary protagonists.
  First gods, then demigods, then kings, then great warriors, great lovers, then burghers and merchants and vicars and doctors and lawyers. Then social realism: you. Then irony: me. Then maniacs and murderers, tramps, mobs, rabble, flotsam, vermin.”

... continued

- "And what would account for it?"
  “The history of astronomy. The history of astronomy is the history of increasing humiliation. First the geocentric universe, then the heliocentric universe. Then the eccentric universe – the one we’re living in. Every century we get smaller. Kant figured it all out, sitting in his armchair. What’s the phrase? The principle of terrestrial mediocrity.”

Family

- Everyone’s family is dysfunctional
  - “They f… you up, your mom and dad” (Philip Larkin)
  - House under the roller coaster
  - Father’s job with bumper cars
  - Annie’s brother (C. Walken)
  - Siblings always seem poised to take each other down
  - Easter dinner scene
What's the big deal with New York?

- Metonymic of modern world
  - Noise, confusion, uncertainty
  - Teeming metropolis thwarts confidence
  - Vibrant street life plays into comic scenes

- "Don’t you see the rest of the country looks upon New York like we’re left-wing, communist, Jewish, homosexual pornographers? I think of us that way sometimes and I live here.”

New York, New York, continued

- New York eludes categorization & understanding — like the self and also like relationships
- Allen's utopia and dystopia wrapped into one

“Being Lost Together”

- Whether in New York or in relationships, we're all lost — or trying to find our way
  - That's okay, though, if universally shared
  - All you can do is play your “role” to the best of your ability — hold on, and hope someone will share your confusion with you

Ending

- Film ends twice
  - Alvy writes a play that features Annie returning to him
  - Annie and Alvy meet up in New York, reminisce, then go their separate ways
- “We need the eggs”
  - Comedy triumphs over nervousness
Ending, continued

- “The major theme of the film is that there are severe limitations in life (death and loss are the two most prevalent), but that art forms (such as the printed word, films, and plays) have the power to reshape reality and provide some measure of control, thereby compensating for life’s limitations.”
  -- Tim Dirks, filmsite.org

Genre and Mode

- Is it possible to label a film as realistic with so many disjunctive, fantasy elements?
  - Love fades scene
  - Subtitles/balcony scene
  - Malcolm McLuhan scene
  - Wicked Queen animation scene
  - Split screens (dual therapists & Easter dinner scenes)
  - Youth flashbacks, esp. “latency period” scene

Realism, continued

- Perhaps, though, that quirky disregard for traditional realism actually makes the film seem more realistic
  - How “realistic” are our lives?
  - How linear and/or continuous are our thoughts – or our romantic relationships?
- Is “realism” really something we should strive for?

Effect on Fashion

- Annie Hall look
  - Frumpy yet chic
  - Disheveled yet distinct
  - Mannish, layered blazers & vests
  - Poofy trousers
  - No wardrobe – D. Keaton used her own clothes (yet the costumer worked with Ralph Lauren)
  - Briefly became a fashion craze

Form & Meaning

- Annie Hall’s Visual Style

Realism/continuity editing vs. Fantasy/disjunctive editing

Annie Hall Realistic?

Is Annie Hall Realistic?

Reelism/continuity editing vs. Fantasy/disjunctive editing
Long Takes

- Allen “famously likes to shoot most scenes in master shots with all of the actors onscreen all of the time, instead of cutting on every line of dialogue.”

- In 2002, David Bordwell pointed out that Allen’s average shot length (ASL) was 14.5 seconds for Annie Hall. Other 1977 films he timed had an ASL range between 4-7 seconds.
  -- Roger Ebert, May 2002

Other Elements

- Dialogue-heavy, a true “talkie”
  - “Polite meaningless words” (Yeats)
- Unobtrusive camera work, costuming, sets, and locations
- Uneventful plot & special effects
- Form/meaning Symbiosis
  - In a film about relationships, the relationships comprise the film

Characteristic Elements

- Quirky yet realistic
  - Despite disjunctive moments (animation, subtitles, etc), film still seems continuous, realistic
  - Can navigate between realism and fantasy without alienating viewers
- Time-capsule filmmaking
  - References to current events & figures & films and books
  - Reinforces the film’s realism

… continued

- Bumbling, Sympathetic “Loser” as “Hero”
- Love entanglements that deepen but do not redeem
- Need to navigate social/moral/cultural realms from which you feel displaced or ostracized
- New York mentality, and Jewish-ness
- Seriousness, or existentialism, to the comedy
- Despite humor, film is exceptionally literate (film literacy & cultural literacy)

“Fevered Realism”

Other Classics of the 1970s
Top Films of the ‘70s

The Godfather - (1972, Francis Ford Coppola) (Marlon Brando, Al Pacino)
One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest - (1975, Milos Forman) (Jack Nicholson, Louise Fletcher)
Apocalypse Now - (1979, Francis Ford Coppola) (Martin Sheen, Robert Duvall)

A Clockwork Orange - (1971, Stanley Kubrick) (Malcolm McDowell, Patrick Magee)
Star Wars - (1977, George Lucas) (Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford)
Jaws - (1975, Steven Spielberg) (Roy Scheider, Richard Dreyfuss)
Taxi Driver - (1976, Martin Scorsese) (Robert DeNiro, Jodie Foster)
The Deer Hunter - (1978, Michael Cimino) (Robert DeNiro, Christopher Walken)
Annie Hall - (1977, Woody Allen) (Woody Allen, Diane Keaton)

Alex & his Droogs

- “A bit of the old ultra-violence”
- Stylized, rather than graphic, violence
- Futuristic Orwellian dystopia
- Novel by Anthony Burgess

Travis Bickle & Iris

- “You talkin’ to me?”: Everyman (?) as enforcer.
- Raises questions about heroism & viewer sympathy
- Non-stylized violence
- Gritty, street-level realism
Gangster Epics
- Quintessential films about gangsters and the American immigrant experience
- Family vs. society
- Family as society
- Redemption, damnation, Catholicism
- Vito vs. Michael Corleone
- “It’s strictly business”
- “An offer he couldn’t refuse”

Famous Scenes
- Tom Hagan goes to Hollywood (II. 29:10-33:45)
- “It’s Strictly Business” (II. 1:11:00-1:15:00)
- Don’t ask me about my business (II. 2:45:50-2:52:30)
- You can never lose your family (II.B. 0:00-2:50 & 4:35-6:25)
- Hail Mary Full of Grace (II.B. 1:01:00-1:05:10)

Final Assignment (!)
- Discuss how one of your favorite films would work if added to the syllabus for this class.
- In your 250-350 words, make sure to discuss:
  - How your film would relate – specifically! – with other films on the syllabus
  - How it would continue the class “dialogue” between form and meaning
  - What new material it would offer that is currently missing