

Annie Hall

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After watching Woody Allen's 1977 Academy Award winner, *Annie Hall*, I would consider this film to be both a tragedy and a comedy, according to Deborah Knight's treatment of the two genres. The film itself can be seen as a tragedy at its core, unfolding the story of Alvy Singer's relationship with Annie Hall. It moves through the stages of their relationship from its charming beginning to its bittersweet ending, and every argument, make-up, and breakup in between. It does not apply standard comedic elements, as there is no happy ending. Rather, the final few scenes feature Annie and Alvy meeting after their official breakup, where they share a tender yet melancholic moment before parting ways. Additionally, this movie puts the characters' flaws on full display and demonstrates how they lead to the downfall of Annie and Alvy's relationship. These flaws start out as charming and endearing, however they eventually become annoying and difficult to take seriously over time, just as this often plays out in real relationships. Finally, the story is told through Alvy's pessimistic, albeit more realistic, perspective. He pokes fun at the tragic elements of the story to make them more easier to process, which is also how he deals with life in general. He finds that relationships are more than likely not going to last forever, although their endings do not take away from their value or make them any less meaningful. This is a central theme to the film and the majority of the movie is filtered through this lens. However, this film is also considered a comedy. It embellishes the story with comedic elements which is a reflection of the protagonist, Alvy Singer, as he is a comedian. In a sense, *Annie Hall* can be viewed as a series of comedy sketches strung together in narrative form. This fusion of genres makes the film warm and wonderfully quirky, yet elicits the viewer's empathy and emotional ties.

Each scene pieces together their relationship, however it is told in a non-linear format. This not only makes the film more interesting to watch and keeps the viewer engaged, but also mirrors how we ourselves may look back at our own past relationships - choppy, out of chronological order, and not necessarily realistically but rather how we subconsciously choose to remember it. This film is shot very naturalistically, allowing the viewer to feel like they are in the room with the characters, a fly on the wall for every date, argument, and step in their relationship. Also, Allen experiments with a variety of interesting film techniques, such as animation, subtitles, split-screen, breaking the fourth wall, and more. I believe that these elements make this movie so unique and able to stand the test of time. This film style also leans away from traditional comedies at the time it was released, adding depth and making it stand out above the rest.

Alvy and Annie could both be considered outsiders to the average viewer, with their idiosyncrasies and nuanced behaviors. However they fit in perfectly within the context of their own worlds. For instance, Alvy lives in New York City and adores it, defending it above all else. He sees it as a world of busy intellectuals thriving off nervous energy just like himself, making him feel right at home, even comfortable enough to approach random strangers on the street to inquire about their love lives. This adds a layer of comedy to the film, as the characters' antics may seem sometimes strange and off-kilter but are also loveable and make up who they are.

This film evokes feelings of both pity and fear in the viewer, but in the context of their personal relationships. Alvy frequently fears throughout the movie that he will lose Annie, that he will end up alone, that he will never find a successful relationship, etc. Similarly, Annie's insecurities also translate into fear, as she often worries that she isn't smart enough, is too dependent, and further. These are questions that many people often worry about themselves in their own relationships, which allow for more connection to the characters and the storyline.

There is definitely ethical value to *Annie Hall*, as it is a great depiction of life itself. Nearly everyone experiences the emotions displayed throughout the film, making it universally understood. Each character is trying to do what they think is the right thing for themselves and the right thing for others. The conflict is introduced and then perpetuated throughout the film when these attempts to "do the right thing" do not line up with those around them. That is a central reason why some relationships work and some don't. Some people may seem like a perfect fit at one point in time, but as people change and time passes, they gain new perspectives and outgrow each other. But despite the hardship, heartbreak, and irrationality that may come with relationships, the gifts and lessons learned make them worth it.