

## HER

Presentation from Wikipedia by Peter Anderson

**HER** is a 2013 American [science fiction romantic comedy-drama](#) film written, directed, and produced by [Spike Jonze](#). The film's musical score was composed by [Arcade Fire](#), with the cinematography provided by [Hoyte van Hoytema](#). It marks Jonze's solo screenwriting debut. The film follows Theodore Twombly ([Joaquin Phoenix](#)), a man who develops a relationship with Samantha ([Scarlett Johansson](#)), an intelligent computer operating system personified through a female voice. The film also stars [Amy Adams](#), [Rooney Mara](#), and [Olivia Wilde](#).

Jonze conceived the idea in the early 2000s after reading an article about [Cleverbot](#), a web application that uses an artificial intelligence algorithm to have conversations with humans. After making *I'm Here* (2010), a short film sharing similar themes, Jonze returned to the idea. He wrote the first draft of the script in five months. The film was originally believed to be a satire written by [Charlie Kaufman](#) with Jonze serving as director. Both the plot and Kaufman's involvement were later shown to be inaccurate. [Principal photography](#) took place in [Los Angeles, California](#) and [Shanghai, China](#) in the second quarter of 2012. In post-production, [Samantha Morton](#)—who originally voiced Samantha—was replaced with Johansson. New scenes were filmed in August 2013 following the recast.

The film premiered at the 2013 [New York Film Festival](#) on October 12, 2013. [Warner Bros. Pictures](#) initially provided a limited release for *Her* at six theaters on December 18. It was later given a wide release at over 1,700 theaters in the United States and Canada on January 10, 2014. *Her* received widespread critical acclaim upon its release, and grossed a worldwide total of over \$47 million on a production budget of \$23 million. The film received numerous awards and nominations, primarily for Jonze's screenplay.

### Plot

In 2025, Theodore Twombly ([Joaquin Phoenix](#)) is a lonely, [introverted](#) man who works for a [Los Angeles](#) business that has professional writers compose heartfelt, intimate letters for people who are unwilling or unable to write letters of a personal nature themselves. Unhappy because of his impending divorce from childhood sweetheart Catherine ([Rooney Mara](#)), Theodore purchases a talking [operating system](#) with [artificial intelligence](#), designed to adapt and evolve. He decides he wants the OS to have a female voice, and she ([Scarlett Johansson](#)) names herself "Samantha". Theodore is fascinated by her ability to learn and grow psychologically. They bond over their discussions about love and life, such as when Theodore explains that he is avoiding signing his divorce papers because of his reluctance to let go of Catherine. Samantha proves to be constantly available, always curious and interested, supportive and undemanding. Will this ever happen? What do you think? Technology is invading, pervading, has invaded, pervaded, penetrated our lives ever more. What will happen in the next decade, the next two decades? How old will I be for example in 2050. I'll be 94. Will I still be around? A next-door neighbour died yesterday at the age of 94. She was born in 1920 – she experienced fascism, Nazism, communism, parliamentary democracy, Italy's boom in the 50s and 60s as a manufacturing country, Red Brigade terrorism, telex, fax, mobile phones, internet, emails, smart phones ... What will I experience before I die? What will YOU experience before YOU die?

### Development

Jonze took five months to write the first draft of the script, his solo screenwriting debut.<sup>[3]</sup> One of the first actors he envisioned for the film was [Joaquin Phoenix](#).<sup>[4]</sup> In March 2011, it was announced that producer [Megan Ellison](#)'s [Annapurna Pictures](#) was acquiring an untitled satire by screenwriter [Charlie Kaufman](#) and director [Spike Jonze](#).<sup>[5]</sup> Originally described as a story of "how world leaders gather to figure out all the seismic events that will take place in the worlds," the film's plot details as well as Kaufman's attachment were later put into question as casting announcements began to be made.<sup>[6]</sup> In the latter half

of 2011, [Joaquin Phoenix](#) signed on to the project with [Warner Bros. Pictures](#) picking up distribution rights, while [Sony Pictures Classics](#) owning worldwide rights (except UK, Italy, Poland and France) and Panorama Media holding international sales.<sup>[7]</sup> [Carey Mulligan](#) entered negotiations to star in the film.<sup>[8]</sup> After initially being cast, she later dropped out due to scheduling difficulties.<sup>[9]</sup> In April 2012, [Rooney Mara](#) signed on to replace Mulligan in the role.<sup>[10]</sup>

The idea of the film initially came to Jonze in the early 2000s when he read an article online about Cleverbot that explained instant messaging with artificial intelligence. "For the first, maybe, 20 seconds of it, it had this real buzz," said Jonze. "I'd say 'Hey, hello,' and it would say 'Hey, how are you?', and it was like whoa [...] this is trippy. After 20 seconds, it quickly fell apart and you realized how it actually works, and it wasn't that impressive. But it was still, for 20 seconds, really exciting. The more people that talked to it, the smarter it got."<sup>[11]</sup> After sitting on the idea for a while, Jonze renewed interest in the project after directing the short film [I'm Here](#) (2010), which shares similar themes.<sup>[12]</sup> Inspiration also came from Kaufman's writing approach for [Synecdoche, New York](#) (2008). Jonze explained, "[Kaufman] said he wanted to try to write everything he was thinking about in that moment – all the ideas and feelings at that time – and put it into the script. I was very inspired by that, and tried to do that in [*Her*]. And a lot of the feelings you have about relationships or about technology are often contradictory."<sup>[11]</sup>

## Filming

[Principal photography](#) on *Her* took place during the summer of 2012.<sup>[13]</sup> It was mainly filmed in [Los Angeles](#) with two weeks in [Shanghai](#).<sup>[14]</sup> During production of the film, actress [Samantha Morton](#) performed the role of Samantha by acting on set "in a four-by-four carpeted soundproof booth made of black painted plywood and soft, noise-muffling fabric". At Jonze's suggestion, she and Joaquin Phoenix avoided seeing each other on set during filming.<sup>[15]</sup> With her blessing, Morton was later replaced by [Scarlett Johansson](#).<sup>[16]</sup> Jonze met Johansson in the spring of 2013 and worked with her for four months.<sup>[4][14]</sup> Following the recast, new scenes were shot in August 2013, which were either "newly imagined" or "new scenes that I had wanted to shoot originally but didn't".<sup>[14]</sup>

## Release



From left to right: [Joaquin Phoenix](#), [Spike Jonze](#), [Amy Adams](#), [Rooney Mara](#), and [Olivia Wilde](#) at the premiere of *Her* at the 2013 [New York Film Festival](#)

*Her* was chosen as the closing film of the 51st [New York Film Festival](#), and had its world premiere on October 12, 2013.<sup>[21]</sup> It was also in competition during the 8th edition of Rome International Film Festival. The film was set to have a limited release in North America on November 20, 2013 through [Warner Bros.](#)<sup>[22]</sup> It was later pushed back to a limited December 18, 2013 release with a January 10, 2014 wide release in order to accommodate an awards campaign.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Critical response

*Her* received widespread critical acclaim. The film was praised for its direction, screenplay, production design, score, Joaquin Phoenix's performance and Scarlett Johansson's vocal portrayal of Samantha.

[Review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes](#) gives the film a score of 94% based on reviews from 225 critics, with an average score of 8.5/10. The site's consensus states: "Sweet, soulful, and smart, Spike Jonze's *Her* uses its just-barely-sci-fi scenario to impart wryly funny wisdom about the state of modern human relationships."<sup>[24]</sup> On [Metacritic](#), which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 based on reviews from mainstream critics, the film has a score of 90 based on 46 reviews, indicating "universal acclaim".<sup>[25]</sup> Conversely, audiences surveyed by [CinemaScore](#) gave *Her* a "poor" B- grade.<sup>[26]</sup>

[Rolling Stone's Peter Travers](#) awarded the film three and a half stars out of four and particularly praised Johansson's performance, stating that she "speaks Samantha in tones sweet, sexy, caring, manipulative and scary" and that her "vocal tour de force is award-worthy". He also went on to call Jonze "a visionary".<sup>[27]</sup> [Richard Corliss](#) of [TIME](#) applauded Joaquin Phoenix's performance, comparing his role to [Sandra Bullock's](#) in [Gravity](#) and [Robert Redford's](#) in [All Is Lost](#), "Phoenix must communicate his movie's meaning and feelings virtually on his own. That he does, with subtle grace and depth. [...] Phoenix shows us what it's like when a mourning heart comes alive — because he loves Her." Corliss cited [HAL 9000](#) and [S1m0ne](#) as cinematic predecessors to *Her* and praised Scarlett Johansson, calling her performance "seductive and winning".<sup>[28]</sup> [Todd McCarthy](#) of [The Hollywood Reporter](#) called the film "a probing, inquisitive work of a very high order" although he expressed disappointment that the ending is more conventional than the rest of the film. McCarthy examined the premise of the story and suggested that this virtual relationship was better than Ryan Gosling's relationship with an inflatable doll in [Lars and the Real Girl](#). McCarthy compares the tender and vulnerable performance of Joaquin Phoenix to his fearsome performance in [The Master](#). He also praised Jonze's writing for its insights into what people want out of love and relationships, and the acting performances that "[make] it all feel spontaneous and urgent".<sup>[29]</sup>

### Accolades (onori, riconoscimenti)

Main article: [List of accolades received by Her \(film\)](#)

*Her* has earned various awards and nominations with particular praise for Jonze's screenplay. At the [86th Academy Awards](#), the film was nominated in five categories, including [Best Picture](#), with Jonze winning for [Best Original Screenplay](#).<sup>[32][33]</sup> At [71st Golden Globe Awards](#), the film garnered three nominations, going on to win [Best Screenplay](#) for Jonze.<sup>[34][35]</sup> Jonze was also awarded the Best Original Screenplay Award from the [Writers' Guild of America](#).<sup>[36]</sup> *Her* also won [Best Film](#) and [Best Director](#) for Jonze at the [National Board of Review Awards](#),<sup>[37]</sup> and the [American Film Institute](#) included the film in its list of the top ten films of 2013.<sup>[38]</sup>

### Parallels with other stories

Pygmalion – the inspiration to most stories involving the love of a nonhuman being.

**Pygmalion** (/pɪɡəˈmaɪliən/; Greek: Πυγμαλίων, *gen.*: Πυγμαλίωνος) is a [legendary](#) figure of [Cyprus](#). Though *Pygmalion* is the Greek version of the [Phoenician](#) royal name *Pumayyaton*,<sup>[2]</sup> he is most familiar from [Ovid's narrative poem Metamorphoses](#), in which Pygmalion was a sculptor who fell in love with a statue he had carved.

In Ovid's narrative, Pygmalion was a Cypriot sculptor who carved a woman out of ivory and named her [Galatea](#). According to Ovid, after seeing the [Propoetides](#) prostituting themselves (more accurately, they were reduced to prostitution by [Aphrodite](#) after they denied Aphrodite's divinity), he was "A Raging Homosexual",<sup>[3]</sup> but his statue was so fair and realistic that he fell in love with it.

In time, Aphrodite's festival day came, and Pygmalion made offerings at the altar of Aphrodite. There—too scared to admit his desire—he quietly wished for a bride who would be "the living likeness of my ivory girl". When he returned home, he kissed his ivory statue, and found that its lips felt warm. He kissed it again, touched its breasts with his hand, and found that the ivory had lost its hardness. Aphrodite had granted Pygmalion's wish.

Pygmalion married the ivory sculpture changed to a woman under Aphrodite's blessing. In Ovid's narrative, they had a son, [Paphos](#), from whom the city's name is derived. One translation reads as follows:

A lovely boy was born;

Paphos his name, who grown to manhood, wall'd

The city Paphos, from the founder call'd.<sup>[4]</sup>

In some versions, they also had a daughter, [Metharme](#).<sup>[5]</sup>

Ovid's mention of Paphos suggests that he was drawing on a more circumstantial account<sup>[6]</sup> than the source for a passing mention of Pygmalion in Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Bibliothèque*, a Hellenic mythography of the 2nd-century AD.<sup>[7]</sup> Perhaps he drew on the lost narrative by [Philostephanus](#) that was paraphrased by [Clement of Alexandria](#).<sup>[8]</sup> *Pygmalion* is the Greek version of the Phoenician royal name *Pumayyaton*, and figures in legend of Paphos in Cyprus.

### Re-interpretations of Pygmalion

The basic Pygmalion story has been widely transmitted and re-presented in the arts through the centuries. At an unknown date, later authors give as the name of the statue that of the sea-[nymph Galatea](#) or Galathea. [Goethe](#) calls her Elise, based upon the variants in the story of [Dido/Elissa](#).

A variant of this theme can also be seen in the story of [Pinocchio](#), in which a wooden puppet is transformed into a "real boy", though in this case the puppet possesses sentience prior to its transformation; it is the puppet and not its creator, the woodcarver [Mister Geppetto](#), who beseeches the divine powers for the miracle.

In the final scene of [William Shakespeare's A Winter's Tale](#), a statue of Queen Hermione which comes to life is revealed as Hermione herself, so bringing the play to a conclusion of reconciliations.

In [George Bernard Shaw's](#) 1912 play *Pygmalion*, a modern variant of the myth with a subtle hint of feminism, the underclass flower-girl Eliza Doolittle is metaphorically "brought to life" by a phonetics professor, Henry Higgins, who teaches her to refine her accent and conversation and otherwise conduct herself with upper-class manners in social situations.

How do you pronounce Jonze? Like Jones ...

Go to this website <http://www.pronouncenames.com/pronounce> which has the pronunciation of names and was started by an Indian woman who moved to California from Mumbai (ex-Bombay) and mispronounced San Jose not pronouncing the Spanish initial 'h' sound. It doesn't have IPA but it helps you to pronounce by telling you how to pronounce the individual sounds. Clever!