

False Authenticity in the Films of Woody Allen

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Woody Allen is an auteur who is deeply concerned with the visual presentation of his cityscapes. However, each city that Allen films is presented in such a glamorous light that the depiction of the cities is falsely authentic. That is, Allen's cityscapes are actually unrealistic recreations based on his nostalgia or stilted view of the city's culture. Allen's treatment of each city is similar to each other in that he strives to create a cinematic postcard for the viewer. However, differing themes and characteristics emerge to define Allen's optimistic visual approach. Allen's hometown of Manhattan is a place where artists, intellectuals, and writers can thrive. Paris denotes a sense of nostalgia and questions the power behind it. Allen's London is primarily concerned with class and the social imperative. Finally, Barcelona is a haven for physicality, bravado, and sex but also uncertainty for American travelers. Despite being in these picturesque and dynamic locations, happiness is rarely achieved for Allen's characters. So, regardless of Allen's dreamy and romanticized visual treatment of cityscapes and culture, Allen is a director who operates in a continuous state of contradiction because of the emotional unrest his characters suffer.

False Authenticity in the Films of Woody Allen

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Chapter 1: Romanticized Cityscapes

In *Hollywood Ending* (2002, Woody Allen), Woody Allen plays a disgruntled and highly neurotic director who struggles to find acceptance and commercial success in mainstream American cinema. As a result, Allen's character, Val, is so desperate for a job that he agrees to work for his ex-wife and her current fiancé, who is a film producer. The film that Val directs turns out to be an American disaster, but surprisingly, the French believe it to be one of the greatest movies in the history of cinema. Val finds recognition and esteem in another country just as Allen has found creative rejuvenation while filming abroad in recent years.

Of course, Allen is and always will be defined as a Manhattan-based auteur. He is one of the rare American auteurs given complete creative control of his films. Among other artistic responsibilities, Allen always selects the cities for his films and has filmed thirty-five of them in Manhattan. For Allen, the locations in his films are as important as their content because the cityscapes both complement and complicate its characters. More specifically, a character like Isaac (Woody Allen) from *Manhattan* (1979) adores New York but fears that its inhabitants are destroying the moral fabric of the city he loves. Isaac is psychologically conflicted because he loves Manhattan but not its residents. Surely Allen has experienced that same paradox as a long time resident of Manhattan because this dilemma is so often reflected in the protagonists of his films. When Allen plays a character in his films, he normally dislikes non-New Yorkers. For example, Isaac instantly despises Mary (Diane Keaton) when they first meet because in the words of Isaac, "She is a 'pseudo intellectual' from Philadelphia."

In other words, Mary is a "fake" intellectual because she is an outsider to Manhattan. She is not capable of holding intellectual conversations, and she is incapable of faking intellectual fluency simply because she is not from New York. Allen suggests that only native

New Yorkers are privileged enough to intellectually embrace Manhattan's urban culture. Mary is presented as a cultural elitist, and her negativity seems to thrive in Manhattan which makes Isaac dislike her all the more. As a director, Allen creates a seedy world of visual and thematic incongruity by juxtaposing picturesque settings with morally corrupt societies where characters commit murder and engage in repeated acts of infidelity.

Aside from basic structural devices, the auteur theory, when applied to Allen especially, offers a distinct opportunity to analyze the significance of location in all of his films. Allen admits that location is of the utmost importance: "Cities move me. That's why I don't think I could make a film in a place that would appear boring to me, or unromantic. If I'm making a film in Venice, or Paris, I can really do a good job and make the atmosphere part of the story – that's very important to me" (qtd in. Foundas). For Allen, location is a vital living component that is central to his films. Five of his films use a city's name as part of the title, and two other films reference Broadway in the title.

Allen ordinarily strives to recreate romanticized cityscapes regardless of the genre, tone, or content of his Manhattan-based films. In both his dramas and comedies, Manhattan is almost always visually stunning. An important aspect of Allen's signature Manhattan feel is that his New York characters usually identify as intellectuals. Typically, Allen's intellectuals are writers or artists who enjoy philosophical conversations about morality and life. His New Yorkers characteristically watch foreign films, drink expensive wine, and listen to jazz music courtesy of Cole Porter, Gershwin, and other similar musicians. Allen views all of these activities as intellectual traits because they presumably reflect his own preferences. Therefore, three common motifs of Allen's vision of Manhattan are jazz music, intellectual white Americans, and a concern with presenting the city's landscape in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

After analyzing Allen's oeuvre through the lens of an auteur study, it is apparent that Allen's films share several defining characteristics regardless of the location. Allen's work can be usefully studied through this lens since he is heavily involved with all aspects of his films' production. He assumes authorial responsibility by writing his own scripts, directing, shooting, editing, and choosing the soundtrack from his personalized music collection. In addition, Allen selects his cast, and he is responsible for the marketing and distribution of his films. Allen is granted complete artistic control because of his past success and reliable production rate of one film every year since 1977. He usually works with the same production team members such as long time casting director, Juliet Taylor, and cinematographer, Gordon Willis, so there is an established familiarity with his staff and crew. As a result, his team is well aware of how to operate within Allen's creative vision.

Allen has the distinct advantage of being an insider to New York City life, but at the same time, he views Manhattan through the eyes of a nostalgic outsider. For many years, Allen has been referred to as a New York director, but to be more specific and accurate, Allen is a Manhattan director. Richard Blake notes a similar definition of Allen's hometown: "Woody Allen remains a native of Flatbush; he is not a New York filmmaker, but a Brooklyn filmmaker. He studies Manhattan with the eye of a long-term visiting anthropologist from a distant land" (102). Allen's origins are indeed in a working middle class neighborhood known as Flatbush, Brooklyn. He spent a majority of his childhood practicing magic tricks and playing clarinet in his bedroom, but he also often played ball games with neighborhood friends. Allen's Brooklyn was overwhelmingly Jewish and contained a population with very little diversity. The only real opportunity to interact with different ethnic groups required a commute into Manhattan. When he was growing up, Allen visited Manhattan with his father, and he was routinely amazed at the

grandness of the city (Blake 104 – 108). Consequentially, Allen creates a Manhattan that never really existed, one filled with white intellectuals. Allen’s vision is no doubt a byproduct of glorified visits to Manhattan’s theatres and restaurants as a youngster, and as an adult, he has strived to recreate that utopian vision of the city in his films. His Manhattan consists of classic movie theatres, smoky jazz clubs, and art museums.

In an interview with the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, Allen remarked “Every time [I direct a film] has been like making declarations of love for certain places and projecting onto the screen my feelings for the places which have counted most in my life.” Given the content of his films, one could argue that Allen’s filming style and his goal of declaring love for locations that are significant to him are contradictory. In *Manhattan* for instance, Allen creates a beautiful landscape of the city utilizing black and white photography and filming in idiosyncratic locations such as piano bars and art galleries. However, he also generates a contradiction by including characters who commit adultery and who are perpetually unhappy. Allen’s artistry is in a continuous state of incongruity and flux due to morally corrupt characters who live in scenic locations such as chic and spacious apartments in the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

Over the years, Allen has developed a number of unique stylistic approaches to his filmmaking. His Manhattan scenes are lit with a deep grey overtone that may normally be viewed as depressing, but Allen makes it feel comforting and romantic. In addition, Allen often employs an independent camera that functions as a pair of eyes for the viewer to explore new settings or to create a subjective point of view. In doing so, Allen places an immediate visual importance on his films’ scenes because many scenes do not begin with action or dialogue as is the classical Hollywood tradition. Instead, Allen’s scenes frequently start with an exploration of setting. In addition, Allen ordinarily attempts to include camera movements and angles to

complement and enhance a film's overall mood. For instance, *Husbands and Wives* (1992) was shot with a handheld camera to accurately depict the tension and nervousness of various relationships within the film. Allen generally utilizes long takes so the viewer may feel at ease and enjoy the cityscape as a complementary backdrop. Also, Allen's protagonists are often plagued with nervous personalities and thoughts. Romantic relationships repeatedly crumble due to infidelity or the painful realization that a couple is simply incompatible. Tension fills Allen's films due to his characters' various desires and insecurities.

Allen's treatment of each city is similar to each other in that he strives to create a cinematic postcard for the viewer. However, differing themes and characteristics emerge to define Allen's optimistic visual approach. Allen's hometown of Manhattan is a place where artists, intellectuals, and writers can thrive. Paris denotes a sense of nostalgia and questions the power behind it. Allen's London is primarily concerned with class and the social imperative. Finally, Barcelona is a haven for physicality, bravado, and sex but also uncertainty for American travelers. Despite being in these picturesque and dynamic locations, happiness is rarely achieved for Allen's characters. So, despite Allen's dreamy and romanticized visual treatment of cityscapes and culture, Allen is a director who operates in a continuous state of contradiction because of the emotional unrest his characters suffer.

Chapter 2: New York: Allen's Nostalgic and Nonexistent Hometown

Woody Allen has strong ties to Manhattan as evidenced by his regular attendance at Yankees and Knicks games. Allen played his clarinet every Monday night at Michael's Pub (located in downtown Manhattan) for twenty five years until it closed, and he presently plays at the Café Carlyle. Not that he's interested in Hollywood's glitz and glam anyway, but he even once missed the Oscars so he could play with his beloved Wild Man Blue's jazz band. On occasion, Allen will also sneak away to catch a classic foreign film at the Thalia (Blake 104 – 111).¹ It is certainly no surprise that Allen proudly admits to being a true New Yorker, and his films are ultimately romanticized visualizations of how he views Manhattan.

Allen creates a vision of Manhattan that is vastly different from the vision created by other popular New York auteurs. Spike Lee, for example, often focuses on racial tensions and poverty in the Brooklyn settings of his films. *Do the Right Thing* (Spike Lee, 1989) deals with those specific issues inside the confines of a Brooklyn neighborhood during an uncomfortably hot summer. Salim Muwakkil suggests that Lee's "depiction of life on a block in Brooklyn is empathetic and lovingly rendered. However, he's not concerned with the glaze of romanticism" (121). Indeed, Lee's depiction of Brooklyn, while gritty and dangerous, may be a more accurate portrayal of New York life than Allen's dreamy view. Of course, realism is not Allen's goal for his representation of New York, but a romanticized cityscape certainly is. In terms of ethnicity and generational differences, Lee's Brooklyn is also much more diversified than Allen's Manhattan. Paula Massood writes, "... in Lee's careful orchestration of this multiplicity of voices, there also resides an acknowledgement that the neighborhood lacks a unity

¹ The Thalia is an art house movie theatre located on Broadway in New York that specializes in showing classic and foreign films.

of vision” (140). This lack of unity leads to repeated and seemingly unavoidable conflicts in Lee’s world, but in Allen, such a problem simply does not occur.

Martin Scorsese’s vision of Manhattan is also strikingly different from Allen’s because he views New York City as a haven for crime and violence. In *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976), urban alienation and monotony forces Travis Bickle (Robert De Niro) to resort to a life driven by violence. The climactic scene of the film depicts Bickle rescuing a prostitute amidst a bloody and graphic gun fight with gangsters. Scorsese himself admits that Allen’s view of New York is more peaceful and nostalgic: “...Woody Allen has a much healthier feel about the city! He’s an intellectual... New York characters! New York intellectuals, just wonderful... My New York is very different” (qtd. in Blake 27 – 28). As a director, Scorsese focuses on the more violent aspects of New York life. He further reflects on the differences of artistic vision between him and Allen: “...my sense is that you have to be aware, and you have to be cautious. In the Woody Allen world, that’s completely overlooked – and they’re fine” (28). In other words, Allen’s characters are really never in danger due to living in Manhattan. Whereas a Scorsese character may experience fear in Central Park, an Allen character will experience romantic love. Specifically, in *Bullets Over Broadway* (1994) Central Park serves as a quiet and serene location surrounded by enormous green trees and an array of colorful flowers where couples regularly exchange flirty conversations.

Similar to Scorsese and Lee, Allen has handled serious issues in his films as well, but he selectively ignores and hardly ever depicts a great deal of violence. In *Bullets Over Broadway*, all mobster shootings on a deserted fishing pier occur off camera. Allen is almost hesitant to taint his Manhattan with too much bloodshed. Also, in *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989), an adulterous husband resorts to murder to conceal an affair from his wife. Scorsese or Lee might

have shown the actual murder taking place onscreen, but Allen elected to only portray the aftermath of the murder when Judah Rosenthal (Martin Landau) secretly roams around his mistress's apartment to hide any evidence that might connect her to him. One chilling moment occurs when his dead mistress, Dolores Paley (Anjelica Houston), is shown lying on her back with her eyes open. Droplets of blood spatter the carpet around her, but even Allen's murder of an innocent woman is not overtly grotesque. In fact, violence is secondary in Allen's *Manhattan* and the discovery of an affair is actually much more dreadful. Judah continues living his life, albeit one that is heavily strained due to guilt and paranoia, in his plush Manhattan apartment. He attends parties at his leisure and remains a successful, wealthy ophthalmologist. There is a clear contradiction when attempting to characterize Allen's vision of Manhattan that is continually corrupted by characters similar to Judah. By not depicting violence, Allen protects the beauty and wonder of Manhattan even if the city's inhabitants are murderers.

To understand Allen's vision of Manhattan, it is useful to explore what Allen elects to ignore or omit from his films. For instance, in *Manhattan*, there is virtually no crime, and there are no homeless people. There is no drug use, unless it is for comedic purposes such as Alvy Singer (Woody Allen) sneezing when attempting to snort cocaine and inadvertently blowing the expensive white powder all over a room. Another aspect of city living that Allen ignores is impoverished or working class people. Further, Allen never films in sections of New York normally associated with ethnic minorities such as Chinatown, Hell's Kitchen, Little Italy, and the Spanish Harlem. In *Manhattan*, small children don't die or get kidnapped. As a matter of fact, small children very rarely exist, so there are essentially zero parental responsibilities. No one ever grows old or becomes severely sick. *Manhattan*ites never ride the subway and very rarely do they have to compete for a taxi cab. Uneducated or poor

people have no place in an Allen film. Richard Blake asserts, “This is not New York; this is a fantasy fashioned by someone on a tourist visa from Flatbush” (110). For Allen, Manhattan provides a stimulating environment where artists and intellectuals thrive, but the city also shelters impostors. Those readily able to accept Manhattan’s culture ascertain a high level of emotional maturity and understanding, and those who can’t (or won’t) will ultimately be insecure, uncomfortable, and unhappy.

Allen incorporates a number of visual signifiers to romanticize Manhattan. For example, he presents exceptionally clean city streets and sidewalks that are peaceful and quiet. Allen often employs a long shot and a long take to fully capture these tranquil sidewalk strolls where his characters discuss personal insecurities or relationship difficulties. In Allen’s films, such private complications are ordinarily self-inflicted or self-created and not a result of living in the city.

Hollywood Ending displays a typical Manhattan Allen sidewalk scene with Val and his younger girlfriend, Lori (Debra Messing) sharing the following exchange about Val’s ex-wife:

Val: For God sakes, this is a woman I was married to for ten years. We made love. I’d hold her head over the toilet bowl when she threw up.

Lori: From making love with you?

A contradiction occurs here because the scene is framed on a quiet tree-lined street in an affluent Manhattan suburb. Allen’s camera is positioned on the opposite side of the street and calmly pans to capture not only the characters, but also, their surroundings. The moment is intended to be humorous, yet it is also distressing for Val who is recalling a turbulent and stressful marriage with his ex.

Allen’s unbridled adoration for Manhattan is perhaps best paraphrased in his own words:

I have an affectionate view of Manhattan; I’ve only seen it as an extremely

exciting, wonderful, romantic place, ever since I was taken here as a child. It's sort of automatic with me; any time I make a picture in Manhattan, that's the way I see the city. If Martin Scorsese makes a picture of the city, it gets filtered through a different view, but any time I do it, it comes out this way.

(qtd.in Klein 121)

Allen cleverly utilizes Manhattan and as a backdrop wherein his characters explore their identities in landscapes of moral corruption.

Manhattan is by far Allen's most iconic tribute to the city of Manhattan because he devotes a large quantity of time to glamorizing the city's urban landscape. The film represents Allen's utopian vision of New York City culture. Allen's Manhattanites are sophisticated individuals who regularly attend art shows, watch foreign classic films, and enjoy engaging in philosophical discussions about such topics as morality and love.

In the film's opening, Allen abandons his trademark white lettering on black opening credits to feature various shots of Manhattan accompanied by memorable and glorious sounds from Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Allen's decision to rely on Gershwin's orchestrations performed by the New York Philharmonic adds another level of grandeur to *Manhattan*. Music critic, Alex Ross describes the multifaceted instrumentation present:

The score famously begins with a languid trill on the clarinet, which turns into an equally languid upward scale, which then becomes a super-elegant and not at all raucous glissando... The tune dances down the same staircase that the opening scale shimmied up, ending on the F with which the piece began – a typical Gershwin symmetry. (Ross 168)

The magnificence of *Rhapsody in Blue* and the episodic score are representative of Manhattan's diversity, splendor, and grandness. The fireworks over Manhattan's skyline at the end of the film's opening montage coincide with the rhythmic pattern of the brass and percussion instruments in the ending of *Rhapsody*. In fact, the fireworks seem to explode in the night sky as if they were synchronized with the horns and suggest a celebratory feeling for visually touring various landmarks around the city.

During the film's opening sequence, Isaac provides voice over narration while attempting to begin a novel that describes his uninhibited love for and connection to New York. Isaac's first words of his novel, and consequently the first words of the film, are, "He adored New York City. He idolized it all out of proportion. No, make that he romanticized it all out of proportion." For Alvy, his adoration and idolization simply equates to a fascination, loyalty, and love for the city. Alvy and Allen's romanticizing of Manhattan is upping the level of enthusiasm and love to an even greater level. For both Alvy and Allen, romanticizing Manhattan means ignoring any deficiencies the city may have and always thinking of the city in a glamorous light. It is initially difficult to discern whether the opening lines are Woody Allen speaking or a character created by Allen. Is the opening monologue Allen's self-proclamation that Manhattan is the greatest city in the world or Isaac's? Eventually, the audience is able to separate Allen from the leading protagonist he is playing in Isaac. Allen and Isaac are both writers and entertainers, and they both share neurotic characteristics, although Allen is much more of a recluse in his personal life than Isaac. The audience can safely assume that Isaac's strong feelings of Manhattan's cityscape and culture are reciprocated in Allen's personal life. Allen is given a voice through Isaac's character and the power to visually manipulate Manhattan's environment as the director.

In the opening montage, shots of snow covered streets, unique diners, bustling Manhattan crowds, and ferries appear onscreen. Isaac mentions five different rewrites, yet all versions of his opening monologue praise New York City in some fashion. In fact, by having Isaac repeat different reasons for loving New York, Allen is providing a number of justifications for loving the city such as “[New York has] street smart guys who know all the angles.” Isaac also acknowledges difficulties in Manhattan: “How hard it was to live in a society desensitized by drugs, loud music, television, crimes, garbage... Too angry. I don’t want to be angry.” He quickly abandons this negative reality and refocuses on the personal connection that he has with Manhattan. Isaac’s voice over narration ends with, “New York was his town, and it always would be.” Again, the indication is that Manhattan is Allen’s town. That is, Allen is loyal to the city that loves him and to which he feels an allegiance.

Isaac is a profitable writer for a television show, *Human Beings Wow!*, but he is unhappy with the shallowness of his job and is not creatively fulfilled working only in television. Isaac often dines at Elaine’s (as does Allen) and is a member of an exclusive club where he regularly plays racquetball with close friends. On the surface, he lives a comfortable and fulfilling life in Manhattan. However, Isaac aspires to be a more serious writer and hopes to eventually become a novelist. His ex-wife, Jill (Meryl Streep) is threatening to publish a book describing intimate moments from their turbulent marriage. Isaac’s personal issues reach their pinnacle when he fluctuates between two strikingly different women.

Isaac’s romantic relationships with Mary (Diane Keaton) and Tracy (Mariel Hemingway) provide distinctive moments of contrasting visualization in *Manhattan*. Tracy is an innocent and intelligent seventeen-year-old whom Isaac truly loves, though he is embarrassed by her age. When Isaac concedes to doing activities suggested by Tracy, she elects a horse and carriage ride

through Central Park at night. Her immature choice (in Isaac's view) is reminiscent of a young girl's fantasy to ride in a horse and carriage with her handsome Prince Charming by her side. Regardless, Central Park epitomizes the perfect location for a gathering of lovers engaged in romantic walks or carriage rides. The real star of the Central Park scene, though, is Manhattan's skyline. Allen devotes nearly thirty seconds of screen time to showing treetops and illuminated edifices in Manhattan. Initially, only the tranquil prance of hooves and Isaac and Tracy's conversation can be heard. The camera is angled upward to further enhance the magnificence of the setting.

Scenes involving Tracy are always brilliantly lit providing further evidence of a powerful visual connection between Tracy and Manhattan's compelling beauty. Although publicly Isaac is embarrassed by Tracy's age (seventeen), in private, they share many happy moments together. For the most part, Allen and cinematographer, Gordon Willis, positioned Isaac and Tracy together in the middle of frames to evoke a sense of togetherness. Isaac and Tracy often happily eat food with each other to suggest satisfaction and fullness. They share Chinese food together in bed, eat a pizza full of exotic toppings, and even spend time together at an ice cream parlor where Tracy orders a milkshake, perhaps another symbol of her immaturity and sweetness. Interestingly, these foods are childish choices for the most part and suggest that Isaac truly enjoys feeling young with Tracy.

On the other hand, Mary is the antithesis of Tracy's good natured character. She is a "pseudo intellectual" (a favorite and reoccurring insult of Allen's protagonists), demanding, unpredictable, and untrustworthy. In Isaac's view, her personality destroys the essence of New York because she is a close minded outsider. Even Mary's dog's name is Waffles, suggesting that she has a vacillating personality. Yet, Isaac's judgment is clouded, and he ultimately breaks

up with Tracy and falls for Mary despite the fact that when he first meets her, she is involved in an extramarital affair with Yale (Michael Murphy), who is Isaac's closest friend. Isaac dates Mary because he believes she is more mature than Tracy, simply because Mary is the older of the two.

One afternoon, Mary, after being rejected by Yale, invites Isaac for a leisurely walk through Central Park remarking that "It's such a beautiful Sunday." However, both are immediately seen running through rain, wind, and lightning while they attempt to cover their heads with newspapers. They eventually stumble into a planetarium to escape the weather. Mary begins the conversation by worrying about her physical appearance showing again that she is superficial. They continue their conversation about Mary's rocky former marriage while walking across a fake, dark, lunar terrain. During their conversation, a tourist breaks the fourth wall and appears to photograph the audience. In this case, the intentional breaking of the fourth wall adds another element of distance to the scene. The theme of artificiality continues as Isaac and Mary attempt to forge an emotional bond in an artificial extraterrestrial setting. Manhattan is filmed as dark and artificial when Isaac and Mary are together for romance or intellectual discourse.

Later, Isaac and Mary take a romantic stroll through Manhattan in the late hours of the night and eventually end up on a bench facing the Queensboro Bridge in what has become one of Allen's most iconic scenes. Both Isaac and Mary face the bridge with their backs to the audience so that the moment is actually more impersonal than emotional. To the immediate left of the frame is a parking sign that reads "Tow Away Zone." The sign is another visual symbol that suggests their relationship will only be temporary. Surprisingly, the city itself is more romantic and enchanting than Isaac's time spent with Mary. Both Isaac and Mary are enveloped by

Manhattan's beauty, but neither of them acknowledges this fact. Instead, they hastily begin a relationship that will only be transitory at best.

The contradiction in *Manhattan* is further solidified when analyzing Allen's use of a widescreen frame as a visual counterpart to the characters' disjointed dialogue. Allen uses the widescreen technique not only to show the visual beauty of Manhattan, but also to portray broken romantic relationships because characters are often positioned on opposite ends of a frame. When Yale and his wife converse at home, they are very rarely shown in the same room. Underneath Manhattan's beauty and the sophisticated activities of its inhabitants, there is an overwhelming sense of unhappiness and uneasiness. Allen's Manhattan is an atmosphere of swirling tension because of contradictory visual and verbal elements. The tension most often manifests itself in the form of infidelity.

Allen treats unfaithfulness in *Manhattan* as a casual occurrence and the expected result of any and every relationship. The subject is never broached in a serious manner. Furthermore, the outcome of infidelity in most of Allen's Manhattan-based films is a relaxed, almost comical approach to what is usually an emotionally devastating blow to a marriage. Yale casually mentions to Isaac, without displaying much consternation over his actions, that he is having an affair. Isaac is surprised, but he is relatively unmoved by Yale's revelation as they both continue to meander along a peaceful Manhattan sidewalk. Allen captures the scene utilizing a familiar long take and long shot. Mary eventually grows tired of Yale's antics and begins a relationship with Isaac. As a result, Isaac breaks up with Tracy at an ice cream parlor while the two share a milkshake.

Whereas Yale, Mary, and Isaac are numb to the heartaches of infidelity, Tracy appears to take relationships and their endings quite seriously. She openly cries when she learns that Isaac

wants to end their relationship. However, her reasoning for continuing their relationship is noteworthy: “We have laughs together. I care about you. Your concerns are my concerns. We have great sex.” Allen utilizes two cuts in the scene; both are prompted by Tracy’s mentioning of love. After each cut, the camera is positioned closer to Tracy until finally, in a close up, a single tear is visible falling down Tracy’s cheek. Allen wants the audience to sympathize with her feelings by transforming the scene from impersonal to heartfelt, unlike breakups between the older characters. Perhaps Allen is suggesting that the business of affairs and promiscuity is more suited to mature adults, even though Tracy ultimately proves to be the most mature and stable person in the group.

While lying on a couch in the comfort of his living room and free from the distractions of Manhattan’s aesthetic magnificence, Isaac comes to the painful realization that despite Tracy’s age, he misses her terribly and made a tragic mistake by becoming involved with Mary. He sprints with surprising alacrity across the city he adores and stops Tracy in the lobby of her apartment just before she leaves for a London study abroad program (which he originally encouraged her to attend.) Isaac desperately attempts to persuade her to stay, but he realizes that she must leave both Manhattan and him behind while she studies abroad in London. In the film’s final image, Isaac’s countenance is a mixture of contentment and sorrow in the lovely and now lonely confines of Manhattan.

Annie Hall (1977), widely regarded as Allen’s first serious and most successful film, showcases Manhattan by comparing it to other major American cities, most notably Los Angeles. *Annie Hall* is very much a *roman a clef* film with several moments indicative of autobiographical elements from Allen’s life. For both Alvy and Allen, Manhattan is the only place where authentic and genuine relationships may develop. Alvy, similar to Allen at the

beginning of his entertainment career, lives a comfortable life in Manhattan as a stand-up comedian and writer. His apartment is located in the peaceful Upper East Side, and he belongs to a health club where he routinely plays a game of tennis or squash with his close friends. A picturesque scene between Annie (Diane Keaton) and Alvy occurs when the couple is at the peak of their relationship, and they share a romantic kiss on FDR Drive at dusk with Manhattan's horizon prominently displayed in the background.

Allen explores romantic possibilities in Manhattan which is a striking contrast to his portrayal of Los Angeles's narcissistic culture and city. Douglas Brode quotes Allen just after the film's initial release: "In *Annie Hall* I was careful to shoot on gray, overcast days so it would look moody and romantic. In Los Angeles, we shot in hot light because that is what strikes me about L.A., that bright sunlight" (173). For Allen, gray is more comforting and relaxing than irritating sun and heat. Allen introduces an immediate contrast to Manhattan with a bright sunny day in Los Angeles on a street overcrowded with palm trees while "We Wish you a Merry Christmas" plays in the background. [The Do-Re-Mi Children's Chorus recording of] "A Christmas Medley" is heard on Rob's (Tony Roberts) car radio to emphasize that in Los Angeles, Christmas is celebrated in the blazing sun. This rendition of Christmas music is not at all celebratory; in fact, the depressing instrumentals and vocals sound spooky. Allen creates an obvious contradiction between the weather and the music's meaning to portray how uncomfortable Alvy, a Jewish American, (Woody Allen) is in Los Angeles during the Christmas season. The Christmas season in New York is most often associated with snow, or at the very least, cold weather, both of which are painfully absent for Alvy even though he doesn't celebrate the actual holiday. Back in Los Angeles, the sun sporadically glares off the windshield and

creates a visual metaphor by distorting Alvy's face so that he is almost unrecognizable for the audience. After all, he is uncomfortable and not himself in Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, Annie comments on the cleanliness of the city to which Alvy responds: "It's because they don't throw their garbage away. They make it into television shows." While Annie continually photographs mansions in Beverly Hills, showing that she already has an attraction to the city, Alvy comments that Santa will have sunstroke. Afterwards, a brief montage of shots highlights Los Angeles's negativity. The first shot is of the sun reflecting in a large building and glaring in a way that forces one to squint. The montage ends with a shot of a local downtown theatre advertising "House of Exorcism" and "Messiah of Evil" displayed in red lettering on a billboard. The message is that Los Angeles's entertainment, just like its culture, is evil and wicked.

Alvy is appalled at the artificiality of Los Angeles's entertainment as well when he realizes that his former best friend, Rob (Tony Roberts), dubs laughter onto television shows in a studio. Of course, Alvy is accustomed to live audiences because he primarily works as a standup comedian and believes that it is a more genuine experience to work for real reactions rather than canned laughter. Alvy becomes physically sick in Rob's studio and is forced to cancel an event he was scheduled to emcee. He is only able to resume eating a plate of chicken after he hears a replacement was found for him. Alvy is further disgusted by Rob's emergence into a hedonistic and immoral lifestyle. At a local party in Los Angeles, actors and agents discuss turning ideas into concepts and when to arrange for the best meetings. The conversations are both snobbish and artificial because the characters feign interest in each other. Colors, in both costuming and lighting, are much brighter and discomfiting. On the flight back to Manhattan, Alvy and Annie

mutually agree to end their relationship. She is prepared to begin a new life in Los Angeles as a singer while he is resigned and committed to staying in his hometown of Manhattan.

Alvy's second visit to Los Angeles is more disastrous than the first. He rents a car even though he is inexperienced and a terrible driver. At a health food restaurant, Alvy grimaces and orders the alfalfa sprouts with a plate full of mashed yeast. These types of healthy foods are far removed from the comfort foods of pizza and Chinese food that he eats in other Manhattan-based films. Alvy has difficulty recognizing a much more confident and independent version of Annie because she is a different person after living in Los Angeles for a couple of months. Annie claims that "New York is a dying city." She says that Alvy is like New York because he is an island, and Annie cannot see herself being with someone who is as introverted as Alvy. After Annie rejects Alvy's proposal for marriage, he storms away, gets into his car, and proceeds to hit trashcans and three different cars while attempting to back away. Alvy's driving struggles is a commentary on how New York residents are not accustomed to the Los Angeles car culture because New Yorkers typically walk, take a taxi, or ride on the subway for transportation purposes. Alvy ultimately receives a ticket for insubordination and is promptly sent to jail. Rob bails him out but not without mentioning that Alvy disturbed a possible threesome with sixteen-year-old twins. Before driving away, Rob covers his head with a white hooded visor which prompts Alvy to ask, "Max, are we driving through plutonium?" According to Rob, the outfit protects him from the sun's alpha rays. Allen implies that not only are the sun's rays discomforting, but there may also be serious health complications from prolonged exposure. Again, Allen offers a negative critique of Los Angeles's lifestyle and culture through Alvy's miserable visits to the city.

All of Alvy's travels outside Manhattan end disastrously, including his visit to Annie's family in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin during Easter, another Christian holiday completely alien to Alvy. Annie's Grammy Hall uncomfortably stares at Alvy for the duration of the family meal while he gingerly smiles and attempts to be pleasant. She is offended by his Jewish heritage, and for a moment, Alvy imagines himself in a broad-brimmed black hat with a full beard, reminiscent of a Hasidic Jew. This is how Alvy believes Grammy Hall views him because of his Jewish identity. According to Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, "Paranoia about anti-Semitism is a common Jewish malady" (87). Alvy is paranoid at the dinner table and feeling a great deal of uneasiness, but not just due to Grammy Hall. Later, Annie's brother, Duane (Christopher Walken) privately admits to Alvy that he has a fantasy of driving his car into oncoming traffic. Duane is responsible for driving Alvy and Annie to the airport in a rainstorm at night, and he dangerously speeds through red lights at intersections while Alvy cringes in the front seat. During his short visit with the Hall family, Alvy is threatened by racism and psychopaths. These types of threats are not evident for Alvy, or Allen for that matter, in Manhattan. For Alvy, Chippewa Falls is a dull and dangerous city. Annie is oblivious to Alvy's anxieties because she is focused on her own family. When he finally returns home by the film's end, Alvy accepts the idea that he and Annie can still be friends and reflects on the good times they once shared together in Manhattan. Alvy remarks, "I realized what a terrific person she was and how much fun it was just knowing her."

Allen's other Manhattan-based films, while they may not be as commercially or as critically successful as *Manhattan* and *Annie Hall*, are still useful for investigation to understand Allen's romanticizing techniques. *Manhattan Murder Mystery* (1993) is no exception and begins with an equally artistic choice to show Allen's adoration for Manhattan. In his familiar opening

credit sequence, a Cole Porter tune performed by Bobby Short entitled “I Happen to Like New York” is triumphantly performed. The lyrics describe enjoying New York for everything that it is and everything that it is not as one of the lines suggests: “I like the sounds, sight, and even the stink of it.” A familiar pattern emerges with Allen’s careful attention to lyrics and song titles because Allen’s selections are coordinated with the content or tone of his scenes. In *Manhattan Murder Mystery*, the credits are followed by a slow, panning, aerial shot of Manhattan’s skyline at night when it is wonderfully lit by a multitude of colors. New York’s variegated skyline produces an effect of excitement, wonder, and appreciation for the vastness and energy of the city.

The following scene introduces Larry Lipton (Woody Allen) and his wife, Carol Lipton (Diane Keaton) watching a New York Rangers hockey game. The professional hockey game is an exciting moment for Larry, but Carol despises being there, so Allen creates an immediate tension between the couple. Later, Larry and Carol are engaged in a heated argument. Their physical movement around a beautiful water fountain symbolizes their embattled conversation, but what’s particularly compelling is that an independent camera actually loses sight of the couple when they walk on the other side of the fountain. Their conversation is still audible, but only the fountain is visible. With this scene, Allen creates another contradiction by centering on the flowing, peaceful water in the fountain in an attempt to ignore the married couple’s dispute of whether they should investigate the possible murder of their neighbor any further.

Hannah and Her Sisters (1986) begins and ends in a quaint suburban New York home crowded with Hannah’s (Mia Farrow) family. On the surface, Hannah’s home is elegant and spacious, and it is a perfect location for a happy family gathering. The beginning portrays Lee (Barbara Hershey) gracefully moving through a joyful and talkative crowd of friends and family

during Thanksgiving while Eliot (Michael Caine) confesses his forbidden love for her through a voice over narration. Eliot's secret attraction to his sister-in-law creates another moment of contradiction. Later, April (Carrie Fisher) competes with one of Hannah's sisters, Holly (Dianne Wiest), for the romantic affections of a handsome architect that they've both just met named David (Sam Waterson in an uncredited role). David invites both women to tour New York's most unforgettable buildings. The architectural tour allows Allen to showcase a few of his favorite buildings in Manhattan, but they are noticeably different from the buildings in earlier films. In *Hannah*, the buildings are grey, brown, chipped, and some apartment complexes are covered with green ivy. The structures have deteriorated over time and function as a symbol for the subsequent decline of Manhattan's culture and people.

In spite of Manhattan's cultural deterioration, Allen's character, Mickey, still finds a great deal of comfort and stability in the city. Mickey is a hypochondriac who fears he may have an inoperable and life-threatening brain tumor. He gives himself a pep talk after initially hearing the bad news, and he tells himself that nothing will happen to him as long as he is in "his town." Upon hearing the good news that he in fact does not have a tumor, Mickey leaps for joy on a Manhattan sidewalk. Allen's films, whether he would freely admit it or not, have always included autobiographical elements, and there is no question that Manhattan offers stability and comfort to Allen's own life in much the same fashion it did for Mickey in *Hannah*.

A staple of Allen's Manhattan-based films is the use of jazz music from the 40's and 50's. *Hannah* incorporates a variety of classically popular jazz performers and songs, so it is in many ways, the quintessential Allen soundtrack. The instrumental version of "You Made Me Love You" performed by Harry James and his Orchestra plays in the opening credits and serves as a thematic link to romantic relationships. For instance, the song plays when Eliot (Michael

Caine) and Lee (Barbara Hershey) are at the height of their forbidden affair and dance together in a hotel room. The song is romantic, the hotel room is cozy, but the actual moment is morally wrong.

Whereas previous Allen films intentionally set up New York as a visual and cultural phenomenon that was unmatched by any other city, *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996) simultaneously romanticizes three different cities: Manhattan, Venice, and Paris. Visually appealing shots of Manhattan are showcased during different seasons. Allen displays multicolored trees in Central Park during the fall, snow covered streets full of bustling New Yorkers in the winter, beautiful flowers and radiant sunlight in the spring, and an overall clean city of rich and well to do people. In fact, the film's narrator, DJ (Natasha Lyonne), is undecided about which season shows Manhattan in its most glorious state, because DJ, like Allen, enjoys every season in Manhattan. DJ's family lives a privileged life in an upscale and spacious Manhattan apartment complete with a live-in maid. Any conflicts that DJ or her family may encounter are brought about by their own neurotic tendencies concerning love and life. Everyone in the film is involved with love to some degree, and as a result, they spontaneously burst into song and dance to display their own satisfactions and desires in a lively and colorful atmosphere. The spontaneity of songs dealing with love complements Allen's love for Manhattan's landscape.

Although Allen normally romanticizes Manhattan and works almost exclusively in that section of New York, in *Radio Days* (1987), Allen temporarily leaves present-day Manhattan to recreate a nostalgic and dreamy view of Brooklyn. Allen's Brooklyn is romanticized, but it is not glamorous because houses are small with chipped paint, and the people who live in those houses are poor. Allen himself doesn't make an appearance, but his voice serves as the story's

narrator. Instead, Joe (Seth Green) plays Allen as a child. Little Joe's immediate and extended family are crammed into one aging home. There is a disheveled beauty in Allen's Brooklyn that is best paraphrased in Joe's opening narration: "Forgive me if I tend to romanticize the past. Rockaway [a suburb in Brooklyn] wasn't always as stormy and windswept as this, but I remember it that way because that was at its most beautiful." Despite the close confines of Joe's family, there is a sense of community and belonging that is not really present for Allen's Manhattanites. Joe's family offers advice to each other, play cards together, and of course, they listen to the radio for entertainment and news. In Allen's Manhattan, there is a desperate sense to be successful. Sally (Mia Farrow) struggles alone in the entertainment industry. She has no family support like little Joe's family in Brooklyn. Joe's father works as a taxi cab driver and constantly implores his wife to agree on get rich quick schemes so that they can move to Manhattan. He believes they belong in a place like Manhattan because that's where rich and famous people live. Truly though, living in Brooklyn is the ideal situation for Joe's family because even though they are crowded, they are together to share in each other's joys and sorrows.

The narrative structure of *Radio Days* prefers to avoid Brooklyn for extended periods of time as well. Various radio programs that adult Joe imagines appear as vignettes occurring in Manhattan. He remembers how different Manhattan was from his hometown in a way that is strikingly similar to Allen's own experiences. Joe describes visiting Radio City Music Hall for the first time: "It was like entering heaven. I'd never seen anything so beautiful in my life." Indeed, elegant chandeliers hang from the ceilings and vibrant red carpeting lines a staircase leading to the theatre balcony. However, Manhattan is a hotbed for adultery and random acts of violence. Sally's life is threatened by the gangster, Rocco (Danny Aiello) in a Manhattan

nightclub. Rocco is determined to kill her, so he abducts her and takes her back to Brooklyn where he is from. They share the following exchange:

Rocco: It's nothin' personal. It's just bad luck you were a witness.

Sally: My whole life, I had bad luck.

Rocco: Me too.

Sally: Where are you from?

Rocco: Brooklyn.

Sally: Yeah? Me too.

Eventually, Rocco decides to just let Sally go because they are both from Brooklyn. Again, the city offers a shared sense of community and belonging even between two strangers who felt much differently back in Manhattan.

Allen explicitly compares both Manhattan and Brooklyn on New Year's Eve of 1944 at the film's end. Little Joe's family celebrates their time together in the warm confines of their overcrowded home. They embrace in a family hug while sharing laughter and sipping champagne from small glasses. Allen utilizes parallel editing to portray a crowded group of party-goers who are widely dispersed on a cold and snowy rooftop in downtown Manhattan. The Masked Avenger (Wallace Shawn) a popular radio personality, questions the future with other radio celebrities: "I wonder if future generations will ever hear about us. It's not likely. After enough time, everything passes. I don't care how big we are, or how important in their lives." *Radio Days* ends with this gloomy outlook on the passage of time which matches Allen's nostalgic sentimentality. The film represents one of the rare instances where Allen has commented on the importance and necessity of family and community.

Chapter 3: London: Class and Society

One must wonder why Allen, a Manhattan devotee and American auteur, decided to work primarily outside of the United States in recent years. In fact, he has only filmed in his beloved Manhattan once in the past eight years. Part of the answer to his Manhattan departure is certainly related to financial concerns. Allen has lamented that it has been increasingly difficult to shoot films in New York due to outrageous production costs (Pond). What's more interesting though is that Allen, in the twilight stages of his career, seems to *prefer* filming outside of Manhattan and consequently, the United States.

Allen's vision and subsequent glorification of city culture transforms when he turns to new locations such as London, Paris, and Barcelona. Without a doubt, he continues to romanticize the cities by filming picturesque settings and allowing upper class characters, especially in London, to mostly enjoy lives of leisure. However, by bringing his distinct American perspective to these different locations, new themes emerge such as a concentrated focus on class, more ethnically diverse characters, and a sense of literal displacement for American characters living in these foreign locations. As in his Manhattan-based films, Allen creates tension by showcasing aesthetically pleasing environments – shots of nature, clean cities, art, and romantic walks at dusk – but then fills those atmospheres with infidelity, unhappiness, and uncertainty. In particular, American outsiders struggle to grasp their new surroundings.

Since 2005, Allen has directed four films in London with *Match Point* (2005) being the first of those films shot entirely outside of the United States. When discussing his newfound attraction to this city, Allen remarked, "London is a very enjoyable place to shoot, because it's temperate, the crews are very good, the acting pool is remarkable, [and] the skies are sufficiently grey so the photography looks pretty" (qtd.in Bell 18). Allen's London is indeed bathed in the

same romantic and moody grey as Manhattan, yet *Match Point* is suddenly much more concerned with society and class than in any previous New York films. Allen commented on the emergence of those themes:

I made the switch to England where the social imperative gets magnified... I wrote [*Cassandra's Dream*] and set it in England but I could have easily made it about two brothers living in Brooklyn, Queens, or Manhattan and an uncle with a proposition and with the same tragic events that occur, though status does get magnified in the more socially conscious, class conscious society of London.

Indeed, Allen's London characters are often concerned with elitist values and such a shift in perspective is new territory for Allen. Allen moves from being concerned with just the individual to focusing on societal problems such as class and assimilation. Jon Lawrence reflects on the British class systems: "The British, we are often told, are a people uniquely obsessed by class" (1). For the most part, the British are a class-driven system due to traditional "distinctions of perceived social differences" (Lawrence 1). Allen recognizes a similar imperative for his London-based characters. In London, Allen's characters prefer material possessions much more than intellectual prosperity. They desire success, money, and power, but in Manhattan, as long as Allen's characters have enough money to live a comfortable and creative life, they care very little for power. Allen's Manhattan protagonists are more worried about their romantic entanglements and defending their city's culture which presumably mirrors Allen's own adoration for his hometown and need to protect it.

With Allen's Manhattan-based films, he primarily focused on the city's urban landscape, but in London, Allen devotes more time to outdoor scenes at affluent country houses. Many shooting locations that Allen selects around London are globally recognized and associated with

upper class neighborhoods and activities such as the Royal Opera House, the Royal Court Theatre, Parliament View Apartments, the Tate Modern Art Gallery, and Notting Hill. Allen's reliance on such iconic sites suggests that he does not have the same pulse for London as he does for Manhattan. Allen is so familiar with the streets of Manhattan that he is easily able to find idiosyncratic and unique locales all over the city, but he doesn't know London nearly as well.

Match Point is immediately and noticeably different from previous Allen films.

Regarding the soundtrack, Allen stated, "The story is operatic; it deals with the kinds of things that opera is so often about: love and lust, passion and jealousy, betrayal and tragedy... and, of course, the confluence of fate and luck". *Match Point's* opening credits feature an aria from Gaetano Donizetti's opera, *L'Elisir d'amore*, titled "Una furtiva lagrima" that is performed by Enrico Caruso. The film opens with Allen's traditional black and white credits, but its atmosphere feels immediately different due to the ominous overtone of Donizetti's work. *Match Point's* soundtrack encapsulates the tragedy, passion, and gravity found within the film. The opening song is painfully beautiful and sounds as if it is being played on an old record player. The gentle scratchiness of the aria mixes with Caruso's powerful, bravado voice to produce a subtle contrast. The same track is played intermittently during the film to represent Chris's (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) guilt, indecisiveness, and angst. In fact, the audience connects this aria to Chris's despondent feelings because it is heard when Chris seeks Nola (Scarlett Johansson) at the Tate Modern Art Gallery and when is lying in bed contemplating her murder. The aria is synchronized with the final frame of the film to portray Chris's uneasiness and fear of his future.

There is tension between Chris's desire to climb the social ladder and his assimilation into an upper class family and society. Chris, originally from Ireland, decides to settle in London where he is hired as a low paid tennis instructor and eventually teaches Tom Hewitt (Matthew

Goode) how to play. Chris has given up his goal of playing professional tennis due to a hectic touring schedule. This excuse for discontinuing his tennis career suggests that Chris desires a stationary and grounded life. However, Chris is uncomfortable living a life grounded in traditional moral values in his marriage with Chloe (Emily Mortimer). He is pampered by her family because they take him to the opera, provide him with a high paying executive-level job, bring him on numerous vacations, and give him and Chloe an expensive flat in downtown London. Chris seems to both enjoy and resent this treatment.

The film's early shots aid in establishing Chris's isolation and loneliness. In the film's opening scene, Chris walks on the opposite side of a tennis fence, which suggests he is already trapped by electing to settle in London. He is also literally separated from the club's upper class clientele. Later, he eats dinner by himself at a tiny table in his small flat. Nearly every aspect of his life is diminutive yet manageable. He sits on a pullout couch that doubles as his bed and reads *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevsky before switching to the Cambridge Companion to the novel. These behaviors imply that Chris is searching for meaning and order in his life. In addition, Chris is trying to up his cultural capital by reading more classics, so he can better communicate with his upper class clientele and friends. He is unsettled, and Allen creates a further contradiction by placing Chris in the picturesque city of London and surrounding him in a lavish lifestyle courtesy of the Hewitt family.

Chris struggles not only with his various desires and indecisiveness, but he also struggles with conformity. Allen visually represents Chris's assimilation into upper class society, and the Hewitt family business, with Chris's attire. In all respects, Chris is a social climber, and he badly wants to be accepted by the Hewitt family. In the moments that require Chris to conform to upper class standards, he is almost always wearing a tie with his shirt buttoned to the top of his

neck. For example, he wears a tie when he attends business school, a proposition into which he was coerced Chloe's father. When he works as an executive at his father-in-law's business, Chris wears a suit with a tie. As a recently hired business executive, he remarks on the phone with a client, "You'll have it if I have to work all night." Afterwards, Chris hangs up, loosens the tie around his neck, and says to his secretary, "Do you ever feel claustrophobic in here?" He is mentally suffocating because he is married to Chloe (her family is the reason he has the job at all) but desires Nola (Scarlett Johansson). Furthermore, he wears a tie when he visits the opera with tickets that were undoubtedly bought by the Hewitt family. Chris is in a tie at his wedding after he gives up being with Nola and hastily marries Chloe because she and her family offer a financially stable life.

Chris's personality dramatically changes when he is with Nola. He is attracted to Nola the first moment they meet at a Hewitt family party and openly flirts with her. When he makes love to her the first time, they are in a field of tall grass in drenching rain. Both of their clothes are completely soaked before they shed them to be with each other. Chris cares nothing for uniformity or upper class assimilation when he is with Nola who is an American and outsider to London, because he is so intoxicated by her beauty, charm, and sex appeal. However, Chris's life will begin to spiral out of control, and he will be forced to resort to premeditated murders to find some degree of normalcy once again. Eventually, Nola will meet her untimely death at the hands of her former, secret lover.

Allen has never dramatized, romanticized, and intently focused on an affair to the degree he does with Chris and Nola. Sexual scenes between Chris and Nola involve uncomfortable weather outside, but inside the privacy of Nola's flat, the two lovers are always locked in intense and erotic love making. For instance, the camera displays a shot of snow falling outside

(suggesting cold and discomfort) followed by a slow pan to Chris rubbing Nola's exposed back with massage oil. Another scene shows rain outside and then pans to Chris and Nola kissing passionately and ripping each other's clothes off on her bed. They share a sex life that is much more passionate than the sex life of Chris and Chloe. Chris and Nola's sexual encounters are explicitly staged, and as a result, it feels much more wicked and sinister than any previous Allen film involving adultery. Allen hardly ever shows love making scenes in his Manhattan films.

On the other hand, Chris and Chloe are only shown together sexually in one scene, and they are both under the covers on the pullout sofa in his small flat. The lighting is dim and dark compared to Nola's open and bright bedroom of pink and white. Chris's sex with Chloe is always planned and scientific with the sole purpose being to make her pregnant. She sits at their breakfast table with a thermometer in her mouth and tells Chris that it's her time of the month, and the doctor told her it was best to "do it" in the morning. Ironically, Chris and Nola's affair leads to an untimed, unplanned, and inconvenient pregnancy. Allen goes to great lengths to show the entire gamut of their affair from Chris's aggressive pursuit of Nola to the raging arguments they have later when Nola attempts to persuade Chris to leave his wife. Nola's pregnancy forces the luster of the affair to suddenly wear off. In Allen's London, the consequences of infidelity are magnified greatly compared to any of his previous New York films. London, both the city and countryside, are visually appealing, but Allen creates a distinct contrast because of the turmoil that his characters experience.

Allen's next London-based film, *Scoop* (2006) is a light hearted comedy despite the fact that its two protagonists act as makeshift detectives to solve a serial killer mystery. Allen resurrects the bumbling neurotic found in so many of his films, this time in the form of Sid Waterman, who is a high strung magician. His quirky and bubbly counterpart is Sondra Pransky

(Scarlett Johansson), a journalism student visiting London for the summer. Their façade and subsequent investigation of the tarot card killer mixes humor with elements of suspense. The American duo doesn't blend in very well with London's upper class society at parties, creating the impression that they have difficulty assimilating because they are outsiders and both a bit neurotic.

With *Scoop*, Allen inverts his established musical philosophy of using classical symphony pieces for tragedy. Instead, Allen turns to music from the Romantic Period and opts to use *Swan Lake* as the primary score for a film that is much more comic than tragic. Allen elects to use one of the quicker and lighter sections of *Swan Lake* in "The Dance of the Little Swans" to complement the lightness of the film. In fact, the instrumentation is intended to mimic the sounds of swans. *Scoop's* soundtrack is essentially elegant and complements Allen's upper class view of London's cityscape. Also, the music is upbeat which matches Sondra's bubbly personality; the music is also a contrast to the central plotline of a murder mystery. The song combines two contrasting melodies. The first melody is short and choppy, but the second melody offers a free-flowing sound of string instruments. On the whole, "The Dance of the Little Swans" is light, playful, and whimsical. The song is mysterious sounding as well because it is a minor key (usually associated with sorrow) played in an upbeat tempo. Allen's soundtrack choices complement the overall tone of *Scoop* which is both comedic and mysterious.

Similar to *Match Point*, London appears again as a city of leisure, pleasure, and luxury. In *Scoop*, London is a place where people attend magic shows, go to swanky parties, drink excellent wine and champagne, and travel to elegant country houses for a weekend getaway. The health club where Sondra "meets" Peter (Hugh Jackman) is breathtaking in its size and elegance. Huge, ornate columns surround a swimming pool where visitors prance around in

white robes before taking a swim. Peter's countryside estate, complete with a private lake, is expansive, yet charming and peaceful. Allen makes a continuous effort to highlight activities and locations in London that suggest prosperity.

Allen reexamines ambition and success with his next London-based film, *Cassandra's Dream* (2007). He highlights the uneasiness that two brothers in England face due to financial difficulties. Again, in his London tragedies, Allen's primary focus is on class. Ian (Ewan McGregor) desperately needs more money so that he may invest in hotels in California because he longs for an upper class lifestyle. Terry (Colin Farrell) suffers financially because he is an incessant gambler. At the beginning of the film, Ian and Terry purchase a used sailboat and decide to name it *Cassandra's Dream*. The boat is a symbol for leisure, luxury, and wealth. Allen relies on several long shots coupled with long takes to fully capture the magnificence of the sea and their enjoyment of the moment. In Greek mythology, Cassandra was a beautiful prophet who predicted the fall of Troy and the death of Agamemnon. Thus, the boat's moniker is an allusion that foreshadows Ian and Terry's eventual downfall because their aspirations will bring about their deaths. They both take their girlfriends for rides on *Cassandra's Dream* and enjoy drinking and laughing together.

However, their leisurely lifestyles change when both brothers must turn to their shady Uncle Howard (Tom Wilkinson) for a loan. Allen captures this moment by having the scene take place underneath an enormous tree with large hanging branches during a rainstorm. Green leaves occasionally obstruct the audience's view of the trio as the camera slowly pans in a circular motion, and Uncle Howard asks his nephews to murder Mr. Burns (Philip Davis) for him. The camera's 360 degree movement symbolizes the thought process for Ian and Terry because they are both caught off guard, and their minds are metaphorically spinning. The tone of

the film changes because of this scene and is suddenly much more suspenseful. Again, a contradiction occurs because of Howard's sinister proposition inside the beauty of a London courtyard.

Ian is also motivated by his girlfriend, Angela (Hayley Atwell) who is a sultry theatre actress. Angela uses her sex appeal to advance her career and is willing to sleep around without ever experiencing much guilt. Allen's male protagonists are often blinded by the beauty of their female lovers, and Ian is no exception as he instantly pursues Angela with reckless abandon. Ian simply ignores the fact that Angela is involved with someone else at the beginning of their relationship, and he forgives her almost instantly when he realizes she has been with another man in her flat all night. Ian, who has worked in his father's restaurant for a majority of his adult life and made very little money in return, is ready to live a luxurious lifestyle as a hotel manager with Angela in America. He feels he needs to appear as a member of the upper class in order to impress and keep Angela because she is attracted to money, celebrity, and power. Therefore, Ian convinces Terry that they must murder Mr. Burns.

The murder of Mr. Burns occurs after a rushed, yet scenic tour of various locations around London. While Ian and Terry may be amateurs, they are successful at committing the murder without being caught. However, neither brother is aware of or prepared for the emotional toll that such a horrendous act will take on them emotionally. Terry can't sleep, drinks often, and constantly smokes cigarettes. On a beautiful day at sea, Ian intends to permanently silence his brother by killing him with an overdose of pills. However, after a brief physical struggle, Terry accidentally kills Ian onboard Cassandra's Dream in the film's climactic scene. In his view, Terry's only option is to commit suicide because he doesn't know how to escape his own unrelenting guilt. Allen views the city of London as a vessel for recreational and

leisure activities such as boat rides, fishing, picnics, and visits to the local theatre. However, Allen's London is also marred by morally corrupt individuals in a class driven society. When climbing the social ladder is difficult, unattainable, or unmanageable, misery and violence occurs. By contrast, misery most often happens in Allen's Manhattan due to broken romances or creative failures.

Allen continues to explore class and relationships in *You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger* (2010). Roy (Josh Brolin) is a struggling American writer who is in a dead end marriage with his wife, Sally (Naomi Watts). Sally is always shown in dark colors such as black or grey. Allen suggests through a flashback that at one point, Roy and Sally shared a colorful and exciting romance. In the flashback, the couple lay on a multicolored blanket with a large water fountain and lake in the background. They are surrounded by green trees and grass, and they share multiple kisses while Roy recites a poem by William Carlos Williams entitled "The Red Wheelbarrow." The more delicate and beautiful aspects of nature, such as flowers, trees, or flowing water, is associated with love and passion. However, in the current state of their relationship, Roy and Sally share very little passion and romance.

Roy finds color, quite literally, with his neighbor, Dia (Freida Pinto) in a nearby flat. She is always decked out in different shades of red symbolizing her bright, sensual, and passionate personality. Patti Bellantoni comments on the importance of red in film: "Bright red is like visual caffeine. It can activate your libido, or make you aggressive, anxious, or compulsive... Red is power" (1). Roy is intoxicated by her charm and beauty and pursues her relentlessly. Dia is an example of the more ethnically diverse characters Allen utilizes in films outside of the United States, which proves that Allen is more open to different casting choices. Roy, still unhappily married to Sally, hastily decides to woo Dia on a rainy, dreary day; however, this is

the perfect romantic set up for a pair of Allen characters. They cuddle together under an umbrella and later share an intimate conversation over lunch. Allen's camera is especially drawn to Dia's beauty as he uses several close-up shots of her smiling face during the lunch scene. A brief montage shows that Dia is falling for Roy's initial advancements. They are shown eating together happily, walking around a colorful and bright flower nursery, and sitting by a lake on a sunny day.

Allen focuses on class systems again in *Stranger* with multiple scenarios. Sally is dependent on her mother, Helena (Gemma Jones) for a loan, so she may start her own art gallery. However, Helena refuses due to her psychic's guidance, and Sally is left scrambling to find order in her life. Alfie (Anthony Hopkins) essentially purchases his wife, Charmaine (Lucy Punch), a former prostitute. After they are married, she buys herself extravagant and expensive gifts with his money. They move into a spacious and fully furnished flat with white furniture and white walls. White is ordinarily a color associated with purity and calls to mind the color of snow and cleanliness, but the color serves as a contradictory symbol for Alfie and Charmaine whose lifestyles are both impure. Charmaine predictably cheats on Alfie who struggles to find peace and security in a marriage to a younger woman. The uncertainties that many characters experience in *Stranger* due to financial or relationship woes contrasts with London's brilliant backdrop.

Allen's Manhattan departure has reenergized his career and given him an opportunity to explore class systems and displacement in other cultures. Critics and scholars have noticed many benefits from the geographical switch for Allen. Annette Insdorf mentions that the change is "providing a wonderful way for Woody Allen to recharge his cinematic batteries. The very geography of the world is inspiring Woody Allen in this phase of his career, much like New

York City did for the first twenty – five, thirty years.” Indeed, Allen draws a considerable amount of inspiration from the landscapes in which he operates. Film critic, F.X. Feeney, comments on Allen’s transition: “...but the truth is, he’s still the same filmmaker. He was a metropolitan filmmaker. Now, he’s a cosmopolitan filmmaker. He’s still Woody Allen, but he’s just changed ‘politans [*sic*].” Certainly, much of Allen’s signature filming techniques are integrated seamlessly into his films’ new locations. However, Allen’s thematic focus shifts when he leaves Manhattan for London.

His Manhattan films contain characters that are intellectuals, playwrights, or artists. Allen’s New York characters are concerned with their career and with love. They are obsessed with their own individual insecurities and problems. However, in London, Allen is much more focused on class and ethnically diverse characters. The few American characters in his London films experience displacement as a result of living on foreign soil, and they often have difficulty being accepted in London’s society.

Still, Allen’s contradictory filming style exists in both Manhattan and London. In Manhattan, Allen romanticizes the city as a nostalgic outsider who continually attempts to recreate childhood memories of an enchanting place. Allen’s sense of contradiction, while it varies thematically and contextually, is present in both Barcelona and Paris as well. Regardless of the location, Allen continually strives to produce his vision of glamorized city landscapes and cultures. However, due to common plot devices such as infidelity, neurosis, and moral relativism, Allen creates thematic and visual contradictions.

Chapter 4: Barcelona and Paris: Stereotypes and Cinematic Nostalgia

Vicky Cristina Barcelona (2008) is Allen's love-letter to Barcelona and also marks the only time Allen has filmed in a predominantly Spanish speaking country. Allen exploits this fact to create a series of misunderstood and comical conversations between both Spanish and English speaking characters. This language barrier is just one example of how Allen illustrates that some Americans are never fully comfortable in a city like Barcelona, no matter how beautiful it may be. Regardless, Allen presents a colorful and dreamy view of the city through the stilted lens of an American outsider. Barcelona represents a range of emotions such as uncertainty and sheer bravado. Allen's Barcelona residents engage in activities such as painting, photography, and leisurely bike rides. While these activities are not unique to Spanish culture, Allen's Spaniard characters do exhibit stereotypical traits. For example, they speak quickly, act irrational and emotional, listen to Spanish guitar music constantly, and seem to be overly reliant on their physicality (flirtations, seductions, sexual encounters, etc...) to gain a personal advantage that usually involves a sexual conquest of some sort. Stereotyping Spaniards is one way Allen creates false authenticity in Barcelona.

Ultimately, Allen creates a Barcelona that does not truly exist. A familiar romanticizing and unrealistic cityscape pattern is also found in Allen's treatment of Manhattan, Paris, and London. With *Vicky Cristina* though, false authenticity derives from the experiences of two differing American women, Vicky (Rebecca Hall) and Cristina (Scarlett Johansson). This false authenticity in Barcelona is an Allen-rendered world that he wants the viewers to believe actually exists. Through Vicky and Cristina's various experiences and explorations, the audience is exposed to Allen's dreamy vision of Barcelona. Allen admits that although he has visited Barcelona several times, he does not have a vast knowledge of the city like he does in Manhattan

(Frosty). As a matter of fact, the art director and members of the crew assisted Allen in selecting shooting locations around Barcelona (Frosty). Thus, Allen loses some of the artistic control that he has always possessed in Manhattan-based films where he is already aware of idiosyncratic shooting locations.

One of the ways Allen captures the essence of Barcelona is through the film's musical score. Never before has Allen infused a film with a score that appears to be as culture-driven and culture-conscious as the various Spanish guitar tunes dispersed through *Vicky Cristina*. In other words, the musical choices are reflective of Barcelona's heritage because the music sounds like something an outsider would expect to hear in Barcelona. Again, there is a notion that Allen's knowledge of Barcelona is limited, so he is forced to rely on preconceived American ideals about the city. The film's primary theme song, again appearing in the opening and closing credits², is "Barcelona" by Giulia y Los Tellarini. The song's tempo is upbeat, and the lyrics repeat the word Barcelona continuously to act as a declaration of love for the city. Thus, "Barcelona" immediately romanticizes the city and acts as an anthem used frequently within the film.

Vicky Cristina is one of the most radiant and brightly colored films that Allen has ever directed. Following Allen's traditional black background with white lettering credits, a colorful mosaic near the Barcelona airport is shown to immediately thrust the viewer into a city that is different from anything Allen has filmed before. Colors in costuming, lighting, and scenery are important in Allen's Barcelona because they are abundant and signify an invigorating energy that is present in the rampant sexual activity of Barcelona's inhabitants. Vicky and Cristina are surrounded by breathtaking views of a Barcelona mountain range situated above the city's

² This is a reoccurring trademark of Allen's.

unique Gaudi architecture. A later country hillside scene is pleasantly bathed in rich sunlight with lush green grass and trees blowing in the wind. Underneath Barcelona's radiance, there is considerable turmoil, so as in his other films, a contradiction emerges between aesthetic beauty and character motivation. Allen's Barcelona is full of seduction and hot sex without the same sort of drastic repercussions present in *Match Point*. In Allen's Barcelona, it seems that everyone is freely having sex or at least thinking about it. Even Juan Antonio's (Javier Bardem) elderly father tells his son how sexy his former daughter-in-law is and how he had erotic sexual dreams about her.

Similar to other Allen locations, Barcelona's inhabitants are not mired in everyday responsibilities such as work, school, or parenting. Juan Antonio paints for his own creative satisfaction, and he doesn't appear to actually need money to survive. Vicky dives into Catalina studies as a way to escape her American life and American fiancé, Doug (Chris Messina), but not because she necessarily needs to further her education. Instead, drama and complications are self-created and self-inflicted. For example, Vicky and Juan Antonio's one night stand could have been avoided, but due to his insistent flirtations, Vicky allows herself to be seduced. She is drawn to Juan Antonio's artistic views of life and is thrilled to later meet his talented father who writes beautiful poetry in Spanish.

Juan Antonio further woos Vicky while they both sit silently in a gazebo with other couples and listen to Emilio de Benito's "Granada" being performed by a live guitarist. Vicky loses herself in the romance of the song and the enchantment of the evening. "Granada" is played by only one instrument – the Spanish guitar – which adds a level of intimacy. There is also a subtle indication that the impending romance between Vicky and Juan Antonio will be one-sided. Even though Vicky is engaged to Doug, a stereotypical American businessman who's

more concerned with purchasing an expensive home and buying the latest techno gadgets, Vicky is actually falling in love with Juan Antonio.

Essentially, Doug is the polar opposite of Juan Antonio. One could imagine that Juan Antonio would be content to live without any modern technology and just simply paint all day. Unfortunately for Vicky, her feelings are not reciprocated because Juan Antonio seems much more interested in sex. In this way, Juan Antonio appears as the clichéd Latin lover. Charles Berg maintains that the traditional Latin lover is “the possessor of a primal sexuality that makes him capable of making a sensuous but dangerous brand of love” (76). Clearly, the love making that Vicky experiences with Juan Antonio is both passionate and in a sense dangerous for her future emotions.

Vicky does not consider the aftermath of a desperate and fervent night of love making under the stars in Oviedo. Vicky’s unsettled feelings in Barcelona most closely match Allen’s onscreen persona of the neurotic character who is a bit scatterbrained and searching for life’s answers to morality and love. She is fascinated by both Barcelona and Oviedo, but she is also tormented by the cities because of her intense, unbridled feelings for Juan Antonio. A similar pattern emerges in Allen’s earlier Manhattan-based films with protagonists such as Alvy and Isaac who adore Manhattan but are conflicted because of some of its inhabitants. In Vicky’s mind, Oviedo will forever be linked to her romance with Juan Antonio. Vicky is subsequently plagued by guilt but also deeply desires a lasting romance with Juan Antonio, or at the very least, perhaps another sexual romp. She is clearly aggravated when Cristina moves in with Juan Antonio and is increasingly dissatisfied with Doug.

Juan Antonio and Cristina’s romance flourishes back in Barcelona. Allen’s Barcelona is infused with sexual energy and intensity as depicted by Juan Antonio almost immediately

seeking Cristina after returning home. “La Ley del Retiro” performed by Giulia y Los Tellarini, accompanies their first moment in bed together. The vocal accompaniment, a rarity for Allen musical choices, is sultry and intense. An up tempo mixture of an accordion, electric guitar, percussion, and Wurlitzer adds sexiness to the song. The lyrics of the song translate into “The Removal Act” which parallels the onscreen action of Juan Antonio and Cristina removing articles of clothing. Allen films the scene using an extreme close up to capture the sexual chemistry between both lovers as they passionately kiss each other’s lips and neck. This technique is strikingly different compared to Vicky and Juan Antonio’s first experience in Oviedo which is filmed in slow motion with multiple and slow fade transitions. Even Doug, painted as the oblivious American, notes an increase in Vicky’s sexual appetite in Barcelona: “You were just so into it,” he says to Vicky as they lay in bed together after sex. The audience can surmise that her newfound sexual energy is a result of her experience with Juan Antonio.

Another stereotypical Spaniard is Juan Antonio’s ex-wife, Maria Elena (Penelope Cruz). Berg describes the stereotypical Spanish harlot as being “a secondary character, lusty, and hot tempered” (70). Maria Elena dresses provocatively, acts even more so, and has a fiery, passionate personality. She is a flamboyant painter, constantly smokes cigarettes, and she has attempted suicide on more than one occasion. Her love for Juan Antonio is too intense and too passionate to survive. She believes, perhaps foolishly, that their love will last forever: “It [relationship with Juan Antonio] doesn’t work, and that’s why it’s romantic.” Love in Barcelona takes a different form here with Maria Elena’s beliefs that unsatisfied love is somehow more satisfying, perhaps because it cannot ever reach a plateau. They cannot coexist with each other without a calming influence of some sort.

Cristina, who is adventurous and unfamiliar with Barcelona culture, assumes the unofficial role of mediator between the two. Initially though, Cristina is uncomfortable with the nontraditional arrangement of Juan Antonio essentially sharing two lovers simultaneously and with both women approving. Again, this type of relationship is only seen in Allen's Barcelona. In other Allen cities, romances are not shared willingly between more than two people. Cristina is intimidated by Maria Elena's artistic skills and sultriness. Despite living in the beauty of Barcelona and experiencing its unique culture on a daily basis, Cristina is unhappy. Cristina eventually comes to the odd realization that she only knows what she doesn't want. For Cristina and presumably part of Allen, Barcelona is unsatisfying because it leaves too many unanswered questions. Perhaps Barcelona is partially unsettling for Allen because its culture is very different from Manhattan.

Meanwhile, Vicky suffers a similar mental struggle because she longs for Juan Antonio but hastily marries Doug. In fact, when Doug first arrives in Barcelona, he walks excitedly across the airport to hug Vicky, who has not taken a step. Her reluctance to greet Doug shows that her mind and heart are captivated by only Juan Antonio. Vicky is trapped in Barcelona because she must finish her Catalina studies. Vicky's studies represent a meta-commentary on Allen's own attempt to understand an authentic Barcelona which he doesn't truly comprehend because he is an outsider. Thus, Allen randomly selects activities that may be linked to Barcelona's heritage and lifestyles. At a dinner with Doug's friends from America, Vicky sits as far away at the table from him as possible. Doug's friends discuss expensive technological devices while Vicky stares off and remembers the Spanish guitar music from her romantic night in Oviedo with Juan Antonio. A hasty attempt to rekindle their relationship ends in disaster in Barcelona when Maria Elena returns and accidentally shoots Vicky.

Both Vicky and Cristina leave Barcelona more confused about love and life than when they first arrived. In a manner that is similar to Allen's treatment of other cities, Barcelona is a place where happiness can be achieved, but it is only transitory. Barcelona and Oviedo both appear visually stunning, but Allen contradicts this beauty with the heartache and disappointments of failed romantic relationships. For Allen, a barometer of happiness is a successful romance, yet in many of his films, romantic propositions and relationships fail just as they do in Barcelona. Although Allen may occasionally enjoy vacationing in Barcelona, it doesn't appear that he or his American characters can find sustained happiness there.

Still, Allen enjoys the opportunity to film abroad:

When I was really working in Europe itself—that is, in Spain, because London's not technically Europe—I thought, "My God, I'm living out this dream." This film has got a real European flavor to it; it feels like one of those films in the early '60s, when I was watching Godard and Truffaut and the Italian filmmakers. And I thought, "Now maybe I'll make a film in Paris, or make another film in London, or go back to Spain, or Venice, or Rome." (qtd in. Foundas)

Here Allen admits to recreating a representation of a city, rather than attempting to present a real place. In this sense, Allen's work represents a version of the simulacrum (a term coined by Jean Baudrillard) which is according to Scott Durham, "prevalent in contemporary analyses of mass culture, conceives of the simulacrum as the copy of a copy, which produces an effect of identity without being grounded in the original" (7). Allen is aware that his portrayal of Paris's cityscape is only an imitation of classical Hollywood depiction of Paris. Regardless, his surprising emergence as a cosmopolitan director enables him to fulfill professional goals that were previously unattainable. In other words, Allen has the opportunity to make films that resemble

the works of foreign directors he once idealized such as Ingmar Bergman and Federico Fellini. Allen is apparently fond of his past, and the moments as a child where he truly fell in love with cinema.

Allen's feelings of nostalgia are reflected in *Midnight in Paris* (2011), along with his distinct American view of the city. Allen's visions of Paris and Manhattan share numerous correlations. Both cities are filled with intellectuals, creative artists, and of course, strained romantic relationships. In addition, Allen primarily utilizes traditional, New Orleans style jazz music for each city. Allen's Paris and Manhattan share a familiar romantic grey. Again, this grey is calming, relaxing, romantic and not at all depressing as one might traditionally associate with darker colors.

Allen visually presents both cities in picturesque fashion, but he hints that Paris's past was more glamorous. In his hometown of Manhattan, Allen hardly paints a picture of glamour dependent on a specific time period. Rather, Allen's Manhattan is nearly always glamorous, regardless of the decade. With *Midnight* Allen asserts that present day Paris is a perfect vacation spot (as it is in Allen's own life) but one will always fantasize and be curious about the majesty of Paris's Golden Age, also known as the Belle Époque. This period in Paris's time was defined for its technological, artistic, and financial achievements. Allen reconstructs the Golden Age as being a time when artists, writers, and musicians thrived which infatuates Gil – and Allen himself – all the more.

A visit to present-day Paris will be the eventual downfall for Gil (Owen Wilson) and Inez's (Rachel McAdams) engagement. Gil relishes Paris's artistic culture unlike his superficial fiancée, Inez, who is only interested in shopping at the most expensive stores, eating at lavish restaurants, and attending wine tasting parties with upper class Parisians. Inez is a snooty

American and prefers to think of Paris as only a brief, albeit luxurious, vacation. Conversely, Gil envisions living in Paris in a modest home where he can sit in the attic and write or take romantic walks in the rain. He is enchanted by Paris during the day and even more so during his nocturnal adventures when he is able to fulfill unreal fantasies. Gil derives enjoyment from Paris's simple pleasures such as learning about unique pieces of Paris architecture or art whereas his fiancé only wants to purchase the unique and very expensive furniture to showcase in her home back in America. While both Inez and Gil's ideals of Paris are slanted, each view is in fact inauthentic, which is reflective of Allen's desire to reproduce glamorous cityscapes.

Another noticeable difference between Allen's representation of Paris and Manhattan is the concentrated focus on nostalgia. Paris conjures up intense feelings of nostalgia for Gil, and one could assume, Allen himself. Allen first visited Paris in 1964 when his first screenplay, *What's New Pussycat?* was being filmed. Allen reflects on Paris's mystique in an interview with Scott Foundas:

Like everybody else, I grew up getting my impression of Paris from American movies... So before I ever went to Paris, I was in love with the city, because Hollywood was in love with the city, and whenever you saw Paris it was the city of romance, music, wine, beautiful hotels, *Gigi*. Then I went there, and the city lived up to its hype. (qtd. in Foundas)

Allen's mediated vision of the city is courtesy of romanticized nostalgia from foreign film directors and his real-life vacations to Paris as an adult.

In Paris, Allen uses time travel as the film's narrative structure. Gil is fixated on the idea that Paris was truly in its golden age during the 1920s, and for him, no other time can compare. Gil is given the unthinkable and unrealistic opportunity to experience the 1920s where he meets

literary giants like Ernest Hemingway, Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Gertrude Stein. Later, Gil chats with legendary artists such as Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali. He also encounters famed entertainers Cole Porter and Josephine Barker. These talented artists and writers are presented as caricatures of Allen's personal, comedic vision. For example, Dali (Adrien Brody) is an eccentric speaker with quirky mannerisms who believes Gil could be from the future. Gil cannot even believe that he is able to time travel, but the notion is plausible for Dali when he cites that he is, after all, a surrealist. Hemingway (Corey Stoll) recounts, nearly verbatim and through intense monologues with a stone cold expression, tales of wartime struggle. They share an exchange where Hemingway offers Gil advice on topics such as life, love, and death:

Hemingway: Have you ever made love to a truly great woman?

Gil: Actually, my fiancée is pretty sexy.

Hemingway: And when you make love to her you feel true and beautiful passion, and you, for at least that moment, lose your fear of death?

Gil: No, that doesn't happen.

This conversation, and Hemingway's character for that matter, engages in philosophical discussions to such an intense degree, that he actually appears more artificial than genuine. Allen's satirical caricature is another sign of false authenticity in foreign locations. Despite the obvious idiosyncrasies of the various celebrities, Gil is in awe. All of the artists are as sensational to Gil as 1920's Paris itself. Gil's nostalgia for this era is clouded to the degree that he loses interest in present day Paris causing a more defined riff between him and Inez. The artists do not represent any real form of authenticity, but they are flawless in their creative abilities.

Allen's modern day Paris is immaculate with clean city streets and lush greenery, but 1920's Paris is even more immaculate. Allen captures this timeframe with a warm, nearly golden tint. The costumes are elaborate, parties are numerous, and famous musicians perform some of their most well-known songs in front of live and energetic audiences. Even the cigarette smoke of 1920's Paris appears iridescent as it spirals and dances in the air. The romance is much more intense and real, at least for Gil. He meets Adrianna (Marion Cotillard) and is immediately enthralled by her beauty. They share romantic evening walks and talk openly together. Even though their relationship is spatially impossible, Gil pursues Adrianna. Again, the idea of unfulfilled romantic propositions seems to be the most exciting type of romance for Allen.

Allen carefully constructs the film's opening, romanticized montage which is nearly identical in structure to the opening montage found in *Manhattan*. Visually, the viewer is presented with Paris's waterways, green trees, city life, unique architecture, and even the Eiffel Tower. The montage's locations are a combination of idiosyncratic places like a crowded outdoor café and iconic Paris structures such as the Eiffel Tower. Regardless, the settings are visually appealing. The sequential montage begins with shots of Paris during the day, shots of Paris in the rain, and ends with shots of Paris at night. Allen devotes over three minutes of screen time for this montage which is accompanied by the entirety of Sidney Bechet's "Si Tu Vois Ma Mere." By doing so, Allen places an equal amount of importance on the openings of both *Manhattan* and *Midnight*. "Si Tu Vois Ma Mere" utilizes a great deal of musematic repetition³ from Bechet's tranquil trumpet. Musematic repetition is simple repetition at the most basic level within a song, and a similar repetition is paralleled in Gil's adventures as he

³ On the other hand, discursive repetition is much more complex and is considered more episodic.

continually returns to the enchantment of Paris's nostalgic nights. Therefore, Allen is dependent on musical cues to convey Gil's excitement for Paris life.

Allen creates a self-absorbed narrative structure by focusing so intently on Gil's nostalgia. The film's plot centers on Gil's reactions to and explorations of Paris. Owen Wilson is the substitute for the protagonist that Allen would have played if he were younger. Thus, Allen is recreating not only a Paris that Gil longs for, but a Paris that Allen himself would presumably like to visit. But isn't nostalgia, as Allen repeatedly asserts in *Midnight*, simply a form of denial? Even though Gil is engaged and a commercially successful screenwriter, he denies his present and longs for something else entirely. The power of nostalgia greatly influences Allen's recreation of iconic cityscapes. With New York, Allen depends on his personal childhood experiences, but in foreign locations, especially Paris, Allen relies on what Hollywood told him to believe about the city.

In an Allen film, happiness can be measured according to the success of the protagonists' romantic relationships. When he was younger, Allen himself mostly played the primary love interests in his films alongside leading ladies such as Diane Keaton and Mia Farrow. As he aged and opted to not play this familiar role, he created characters that operated as unofficial Woody Allen surrogates. Thus, it is clear that romance is an extremely important part of life for Allen's characters and Allen himself, which may be surprising considering the high volume of infidelity in his films and his much ballyhooed romantic problems with Mia Farrow in his personal life.

Allen's signature Manhattan-based films, *Annie Hall* and *Manhattan*, end badly for both Alvy and Isaac's individual romantic relationships. Alvy is depressed that he and Annie will only be friends, and Isaac is unsure of his future with Tracy because she is leaving for London. Vicky and Cristina leave Barcelona unhappier and more confused about love than before they

arrived in *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*. *Match Point*, Allen's most intense and dramatic London-based film, is extremely pessimistic about love because of Chris's angst and indecisiveness. For Allen, Paris is the one exception, and the one city where romance can truly flourish and possibly last. In *Midnight in Paris*, Gil unexpectedly meets Gabrielle, a girl whom he has shared innocent flirtations with earlier in the film, after finally breaking free of his overbearing fiancé. Gil and Gabrielle walk off together on a romantic Paris night, and it is implied their friendship may soon blossom. Also, in *Everyone Says I Love You*, Joe and Steffi share an impromptu and magical dance on the streets of Paris where Steffi is literally flying through the air. In Manhattan, Joe and Steffi's marriage could not last, but in Paris, they rekindle their love for one another. Such optimistic endings is a rarity for an Allen film, but in Paris Allen finds a type of happiness that he had not previously acknowledged.

Chapter 5: Woody's Ever-changing World

In *Fish Tank*, (Andrea Arnold, 2009) London is portrayed as a harsh ghetto full of overcrowded, dirty flats, poverty, depression, and despair. Young children freely use nasty profanity, drink alcohol, and smoke cigarettes whenever they choose. Teenage girls have sex with older, married men, and mothers are more concerned with partying than giving parental guidance. This London is completely different than Allen's version, but is it more authentic? When an American thinks of London, perhaps royalty and class come to mind. However, Arnold is a resident of London, so perhaps her slanted version is more realistic. Allen evidently cares little for accurately depicting a city's landscape and culture. He selectively ignores any details that may hinder a city's exquisiteness and when filming abroad is often forced to rely on stereotypical notions to define his characters. In doing so, Allen creates romanticized cityscapes overflowing with false authenticity in locations such as London, Paris, and Barcelona.

Back in his hometown of Manhattan, Allen strives to create a city that resembles his star-gazed, nostalgic, romanticized memories as a youngster. He was a kid from Flatbush, Brooklyn who only visited Manhattan on occasion, but those visits were enough to leave a lasting impression. Allen's Manhattan includes intellectual white Americans who engage in various creative pursuits such as writing and viewing foreign classic films. Other signifiers in Allen's Manhattan are New Orleans style jazz music from the 40's and 50's, and a concern for showcasing the city's structures in a glamorous light. As a filmmaker, Allen has the opportunity to continuously recreate his impeccable vision of Manhattan. It is curious then that Allen has seemed to grow restless or even uninterested with filming in Manhattan because he has primarily avoided filming there in the past ten years.

In Allen's London-based films, society and class are magnified. He recognizes the importance of class in London because he identifies preexisting traditional ideas that have existed in British culture for centuries. Allen's London characters strive to increase their social and cultural capital, but when they fail to do so, they are unhappy and become desperate. His stilted view of London is artificial in that he only focuses on the upper class subculture and those trying to break into that upper class realm. Allen's refusal to acknowledge other types of people and problems along with his reliance on stereotypical ideas is evident in other cities as well.

In Allen's recreated version of Barcelona, the two leading Spaniards, Juan Antonio and Maria Elena, are stereotypically sexual and tempestuous. Allen's Barcelona characters drink wine for brunch, paint abstract pictures, and constantly listen to Spanish guitar music. But most notably, they have a great deal of sex. Their romances are passionate and often dangerous; consider Maria Elena's repeated attempts to commit suicide because her romances were failing. In short, Allen's Barcelona is the vision of a vacationing outsider. Still, there are other cities where Allen's vision is shaped for different reasons.

Paris represents Allen's distinct view of nostalgia and a thriving art scene. His views of the city were formed by the many classic foreign films he watched as a youngster that portrayed Paris in a glamorous fashion. Allen highlights the Golden Age in Paris and believes that the city is a place where artists go for inspiration. It is also a place where ordinary people like Gil can go for a reawakening of their values and to possibly find true love. For Allen, modern day Paris is wonderful, but Paris of the 1920's is impeccable. Famous artists, writers, and musicians are seemingly at every turn which makes the city all the more magical. Allen fashions a Paris that is impossible to visit, but then again, none of Allen's recreated cities have actually ever existed.

Viewing Allen's films through the lens of an auteur study reveals that Allen is a narcissistic director who is fascinated by his own notions of cityscapes and culture. His films' locations are romanticized because that's how *he* views the cities and that is *his* ultimate goal as a filmmaker. The romanticized cityscapes are falsely authentic, yet they are extremely important to Allen. One can assume that Allen actually spends very little time in researching a city's culture because he so often relies on stereotypical thinking, his own experiences, or classic foreign films to guide his creative process. Allen enjoys foreign locations but never allows himself to become engulfed by them. Instead, he fits his personalized view of the cities over the actual cities themselves. Allen's Manhattan is romanticized because he has pride in it, so he couldn't consider portraying his hometown in any other way.

Generally, Allen's characters are able to live luxurious or intellectual lives because they are surrounded by near perfect cityscapes. They do not struggle with issues of poverty, and they normally do not have to worry about important matters related to daily living. Instead, Allen's characters are intellectuals and artists with upper class concerns. Their problems and dramas are self-imposed and not a direct result of their location. Infidelity is a common problematic theme in Allen's worlds. In the most extreme of circumstances found in *Crimes and Misdemeanors* and *Match Point*, infidelity leads to murder. Again though, these problems are self-inflicted and unrelated to the wondrous cityscapes that Allen so diligently created. Such narcissistic and self-generated conflicts define the false authenticity of Allen's cityscapes and cultural backdrops.

Each city where Allen films represents something unique for him. Allen's shooting locations and landscapes will nearly always be presented in a romanticized light, but his characters will most assuredly experience some form of stress, denial, unhappiness, or uncertainty. Thus, Allen is an embattled auteur who is in a constant state of contradiction and

flux. He strives for beauty, yet his characters rarely achieve the kind of perfection that they are surrounded by. In the twilight stage of his career, Allen continues to avoid Manhattan and explore new locations. *To Rome with Love* (2012) follows four vignettes and is filmed in Rome, Lazio, and other parts of Italy. In 2013, Allen is planning to return to San Francisco for the first time since 1972's *Play it Again, Sam*. There will most assuredly be a shot of the Golden Gate Bridge, and presumably, stereotypical San Francisco subgroups such as homosexuals, hippies, and Asians will occupy the screen. Perhaps one day Allen will elect to return to his hometown of Manhattan, but until then, it will be intriguing to see which themes, traits, and characters emerge from these new locations.

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