CELEBRITY AND AUTHORIAL INTEGRITY

IN THE FILMS OF WOODY ALLEN

BY

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A Thesis
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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Celebrity and Authorial Integrity in the Films of Woody Allen

BY

Faye McIntyre

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation examines the nature of Woody Allen's authority, which I regard not as a matter of his exercising his artistic control nor of his expressing a personal vision in his work, but as a consequence of an evolving contract between the author and his audience. To begin assessing this contract I compare Allen's self-presentation in his earliest films to that of other comic artists who have worked within the same generic conventions of the "comedian comedies." Though the narratives of these films have the similar principle objective of displaying the comic performer's personality, each of the comedians in them can be seen to exhibit a distinct awareness of the pleasures and obligations of visibility and, accordingly, of a unique sense of his contract with the viewer. I find that Allen, like Jerry Lewis, is willing to expose a weak and vulnerable persona to the audience, though his manner of doing so, like Bob Hope's, suggests an authoritative style of self-consciousness commensurate with the prevailing criteria for aspirants to visible fame.

Looking at films Allen made prior to 1981, in particular Annie Hall, Manhattan and Stardust Memories, I continue to emphasize what Leo Braudy might call Allen's "culturally approved authorship" and the importance of the spectator's agency in the formulation of the bonds of his authority. While I evoke Christopher Lasch's ideas on the narcissistic culture of the time as a context for these works, I counter his negative reading of the narcissistic artist's "performative" relation to his audience, which Lasch sees as evidence of the author's unwillingness to fully reveal himself in his address to his audience. Moving away from Lasch's sense of the artist's unchanging obligation to be sincere, I concentrate on Allen's adversarial stance, on his acute awareness of, and

contention with, his audience, and on the interdependence between author and viewer which this stance ultimately implies.

In my discussion of Zelig, Broadway Danny Rose and Crimes and Misdemeanors, I attempt to show how Allen's self-presentation betrays the guilt and inauthenticity inherent in visible celebrity, which I connect to the alienated self-consciousness Barthes claims for the subject of photography. I explore the artist's contradictory desire to be a visible presence and also to escape the determining identification with his admired public image which remains a thrall to his audience. When Allen invests in the portrait of himself as an innocent victim of the culture of celebrity in these films he faces a paradox in his self-presentation. That is, his moral authority, which rests on his seeming ability to transcend spiritual alienation, is inseparable from his renown as a celebrated performer.

Finally I look at the films Allen made during and after the personal scandal of 1992 in order to gauge Allen's efforts to rebuild his relationship to his audience and to deconstruct the persona which no longer seems to be representative of his mediated identity.

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Introduction:

Celebrity and Authorial Integrity in the Films of Woody Allen

My study of Woody Allen's films emerges from contemporary critical assumptions about creative authority and self-expression. Generally speaking, theory has moved away from the idea of the author articulating a personal vision in the work in order to accommodate a sense of the multitude of significant material forces intersecting in the text, and also, in the wake of psychoanalysis and semiotics, to acknowledge the impossibility of coherency in either author or viewer/subject.[1] More recently, however, Dudley Andrew and Timothy Corrigan have argued for the spectator's continued dependency on the figure of the author, an idea which seems to me to be justified by the almost unanimous critical references to Allen's personality as a determining force in his films.[2] Of prime interest to me in Corrigan's work is the idea of how authorial integrity is compromised in the age of mediated personalities because the pleasure of recognizing an auteur in a work has become a commodifiable pleasure. Not only has the auteur's creative independence become questionable, then, but the spectator must be seen as playing a significant part in determining the nature and status of authority. Following up on these implications, I examine what I see as the changing aspects of Allen's "culturally approved authorship"[3] (Braudy 543). I therefore emphasize the agency of the spectator in the construction of authority in Allen's films, this shift in emphasis initially suggested to me by Roland Barthes' qualified declaration of the author's "death." Speaking of the lingering desire to name the author as the source of our pleasure in being addressed by a text, Barthes also identifies the interdependency of the author and reader/viewer in that address: "I need his figure . . . as he needs mine."[4]

In examining Allen's unique self-reflexive relationship with his audience, my argument acknowledges and then departs from criticism which has quite consistently emphasized the sympathetic identification of the spectator with Allen's openly vulnerable "little man" characters who are credited with giving voice to the pain and alienation commonly felt in the modern world. Dividing Allen's films into three chronological groupings, I begin by looking at the Allen personae of his five earliest films, from 1969 up to 1977, within the context of the "comedian comedies," comparing them to the comic personae of two of his predecessors in this tradition, Bob Hope and Jerry Lewis. Each of these comedians develops a self-conscious masochistic contract with the viewer which involves the actor's transforming of an abject or "wounded interiority" into an outer display, a performance which vacillates between masochistic self-exposure and egotistical self-exhibition.[5] These films, which often involve the hero in various kinds of imposture, implicitly explore the pleasures and terrors of being visible to others, and the problem, made more acutely apparent in the mediated modern world, of how to achieve the right kind of exposure (Braudy 584-598).

In chapter two I look at Annie Hall (1977), Manhattan (1979) and Stardust Memories (1980), considering Allen's performance and directorial style in the larger context of the 1970's culture of narcissism, so-named by Christopher Lasch, who sees this era as giving rise to the "American conversational style" of the pseudo-confession, described by him as a "voyage into the interior that discloses nothing."[6] Lasch feels that Allen's articulate comedies of self-disclosure are symptomatic of the modern self's performative relation to its audience, which is characterized by rhetorical pleas for sympathy emptied of any inner

emotional depth, and indicative of the narcissistic personality's need for an audience's attention in order to "shore up his faltering sense of self." In contradistinction to Lasch, who argues for the author's unchanging obligation to his audience to be "sincere," I suggest an evolving intersubjective bond of authority between Allen and his audience which is centered on a mutual commitment to his persona.

The third chapter deals with Allen's comic pose as a "loser" in Zelig (1983), Broadway Danny Rose (1984), and Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989). In these films Allen presents himself as a victim within the context of the culture of modern celebrity. The contradiction at the heart of Allen's loser pose, that is, that his psychological pain and spiritual alienation is transcended by being performed, has led Allan Bloom, for one, to suggest that Allen's comedy is evidence of the shallowness of modern life, and that it makes us "feel comfortable with nihilism."[7] I suggest rather that Allen's self-presentations imply the inauthentic self-consciousness of visible celebrity and that in these films Allen looks for ways of revealing himself in his art that will not leave him vulnerable to the audience's determinations.

In the final chapter I look at the contention between Allen and his audience following the personal scandal in which he and Mia Farrow were involved in 1992. Media incursions into his private life and allegations of sexual transgressions have since undermined the likelihood of Allen's presenting himself, with any believability, as the innocent loser. These circumstances as well as advancing age also make it impossible for him to validate the sexual ethos that once underlay his authorial attitude. That is, the idea that a powerful sexy man existed behind the weak persona is no longer a supportable

fantasy. In films made since the scandal, particularly Husbands and Wives, Mighty Aphrodite, and Deconstructing Harry Allen makes efforts to rebuild a relationship with his viewers, presenting himself as a victim of incomprehensible sexual desire. I suggest finally that his endeavors to maintain this posture in the case of Mighty Aphrodite and Deconstructing Harry create moral ambiguities in his self-presentation.

Chapter One: Comic Impostures

> How is one justified and made whole in a world without an afterlife, when fame wears the shifting guise of opinion, and everything in time seems meant only to be superseded by what is latest "new" or "first"-the incessant update? God or posterity no longer suffice. Both must be supplemented by a self validated in recognition but wise to the ways of both inviting and evading performance .
>
> ---- Leo Braudy, The Frenzy of Renown

Like Bob Hope and Jerry Lewis, Woody Allen brings to his films a highly recognizable "extra-fictional" personality from another performance medium, in his case the nightclub. Allen's earliest comedies are partly attempts to transfer the "essence" of the live performance to the film with its absent audience, a strategy which has resulted in the particular kinds of self-reflexive gestures common to the American tradition of "comedian comedies." [8] Before looking more closely at Allen's first five films I would like to consider the films of Hope and Lewis, his admired comic predecessors in this tradition.[9] Examining the way their films direct attention back to themselves and to the personae of the comedians will provide a context for thinking about how Allen's self-consciousness comes to be seen as a mark of his integrity and authority. For, the authority that is variously attributed to the performers reflects the prevailing sense of the kind of self-consciousness required of aspirants to visible fame in the mediated modern world.

Discussions of the comedian comedies of the post World War II period have tended to

center on the nature and importance of the self-reflexive disruptions in the otherwise conventional narratives in which they are incorporated, and on whether or not these disruptions have a political purpose and value.[10] However, the "attitude of self-reference," which distinguishes the comedian comedies from the "classical" Hollywood film, (or those films which, it is assumed, conversely attempt to mask their discursive origins), should not be thought of as producing alienation in a modernist sense (Seidman 40).[11] Contrary to the effect of these transgressive gestures in other kinds of films, in the comedian comedies the reminders of the film's artificiality and of the artist's off-screen life do not simply spoil the "illusion of narrative self-containment," or expose an otherwise obscured authorial presence.[12] Stemming in large part from the vaudevillian traditions of live interaction between audience and performer, these gestures, such as the direct address to the audience, are primarily a means of displaying the eccentric personality of the comic actor and of extending the grounds of an intimacy with the audience that was partly pre-established in the comedian's prefilmic career (Seidman 40). I would like to look at how such gestures strengthen the various contracts between the comedian and the audience, contracts which are unique to each artist's authority as it is constructed in and through the narratives.

One result of the attempt to elicit admiration for the specialized performance skills of the actor by providing discrete opportunities in which to display them in the narrative is the consolidation of the comedian's appeal as a self-conscious being unfettered by the conventions of fictional realism and, by implication, the conventions of social behaviour.[13] The personae of both Hope and Lewis are typical comic outsiders or misfits,

whose ambiguous or infantile sexuality regularly fails to find "adult" expression in the social realm (Seidman 79-141). Often the narratives merely imply the resolution of the comedian's identity confusion in a romantic pairing- the achievement of a "mature" sexuality ostensibly signaling his heroic status (Krutnik, "Clown-Prints" 55). Ultimately, however, the romance is of secondary importance since the comedian's true commitment is not to the woman but to the audience. The comedian's "deviance," that is, his failure to be fully committed to the conventional pairing required of narrative, which leaves him both tentatively "inside" the narrative world and "outside" it in intermittent communion with the viewer, is, as Krutnik suggests, "precisely the mark of [his] talent, his special status in the film-he is playing the misfit, playing with generic expectations, or at the extreme, playing for the sake of play itself" (Krutnik, "Clown-Prints" 53).[14]

Typically Hope's films, especially the road movies with Bing Crosby, but also the solo films such as The Paleface and Monsieur Beaucaire (in which he plays his own child in the final moments), celebrate the predominance of the asocial or pre-social (rather than anti-social like the Marx brothers) child-deviant, in an affirmation of play over reality, the game "played with the rules of the dramatic, the fictional and language" (Krutnik, "Clown-Prints" 56). Babington and Evans, in talking about the "perpetual motion of wise-cracking" that drives Hope's films, note that the comedian's verbal play is habitually "innocent," play for its own sake, without tendentious meaning (97). It often seems that the comedian's comments are made for his own amusement, addressed to no one else, with the possible exception of Crosby, in the world of the film. The assessment of Hope's self-satisfied smile made by Babington and Evans accordingly suggests the redundancy of any

external audience for his performance, the assurance of being watched approvingly and without needing to alter one's demeanor to suit the expectations of others, or without surrendering oneself in deference to the determining judgments of the other's gaze: "the typically mirthless grin, thrifty substitute for the giving of the self to laughter, seems vetted by some interior accounting system limiting exterior investment" (115).[15]

Hope's figure interestingly embodies a combination of regressive infantile impulses and linguistic virtuosity in a narcissistic fantasy of self-sufficiency as a sufficient self-regard.[16] Though discussions of Hope's narcissism typically stress the "addict's need for applause," and "the appetite for adulation," paradoxically, much of the appeal of his performance seems based on the implied superfluity of this adulation (Babington and Evans 115; Lahr 62). (Road to Singapore shows Hope has not yet learned to overplay his narcissism so that the audience can attribute some brand of independent self-consciousness to him). While the comedian's glances toward the audience may solicit approval for his not taking things too seriously, as Krutnik suggests they do at the end of The Paleface, they seem never to be motivated by a deferential sense of self-doubt (Krutnik, "Clown-Prints" 59). One of the few occasions when he suspects that his glorified self-estimation may not be shared by the audience occurs at the end of Casanova's Big Night when he fears he may be unable to interest the viewers in his own alternative ending to the film, in which this time he is not beheaded for impersonating the aristocratic Casanova. Ordinarily, his comic delivery suggests an unwavering faith in the mirrors which are ubiquitous and obsessively consulted in his films (Babington and Evans 113). Making his entrance in Son of Paleface he announces himself, "it's only me," then

reconsiders, "only me, that must be the understatement of the year!" If, as Leo Braudy suggests, it is the nature of modern fame to idealize the "selfless lack of interest in an audience," Hope presents a comic inversion of this ideal posture, exhibiting an "exemplary self-centeredness," an "obliviousness to the effect of being watched," especially to any possibly deleterious effects of an audience's scrutiny.[17] Hope, with his trademark "ease" in front of an audience presents a commodified version of authenticity that offers the "assurance that self-integrity and self-approval are possible somewhere" (Braudy 541).[18]

The irony of Hope's deluded sense of being impervious to, or beyond determination by the gaze of others is structurally dispelled in a formulaic strategy of masking and unmasking in his solo films. As Babington and Evans have noted, there inevitably comes the expected moment of peripeteia in these films at which point Hope is exposed to others as an impostor (100). At this point Hope confronts the disparity between his self-gratifying and so far unchallenged conception of himself and a heroic masculine role that his own romantic ambitions have demanded he try to fill.[19] In Casanova's Big Night Hope is Pippo Poppolino "a humble tailor's apprentice," who has disguised himself in the clothing he has made for his master's client, the legendary lover Casanova. Eventually, he is asked to remove his mask by the woman whom he is bent on deceiving with his borrowed identity: "Oh, no," he replies (disguising his superficiality as sexual coyness), "I couldn't do that-I've got nothing on underneath it." Prior to the moment of his unmasking Hope often gives in to his narcissistic delusions and assumes a mythical heroic reputation that perfectly corresponds to his overblown sense of self-esteem. In The Paleface, he believes the legend of his own prowess as a gunfighter even though, unbeknownst to him,

it has been his wife, Calamity Jane (Jane Russell), who has done all the shooting that has earned him the reputation. In Son of Paleface Hope makes his way west to collect his inheritance from his recently deceased father only to find that the inheritance (both the money and his reputation as a fearless frontiersman) is a lie- his father's "chest" is empty. After being "unmasked" (disabused of his wrongly assumed heroic identity) and being forced to turn from the mirror of his own self-image and face the threat of dismemberment that exposure always brings (the threat of castration realized in one ending of Casanova's Big Night), Hope is typically obliged by social pressure, and a certain amount of self-interest, to resume the phony identity. It is in this taking up the mask again, ostensibly for the sake of representing a beleaguered community which includes his beloved, that the film redefines the terms of his heroism. As well as in the three above mentioned films, in My Favorite Brunette, Monsieur Beaucaire, Fancy Pants, and The Lemondrop Kid, Hope's society comes to depend on the continued success of his imposture and he in turn depends on his cohorts to corroborate his fictional identity. In a number of his films the myth of a heroic individual that initially sustains the narcissism of the hero is replaced by a conspiratorial agreement between hero and society that he will be their phony representative and take the collective risk of exposure. In Paleface and Son of Paleface, Hope undermines the myth of the self-made man and champions it also by his own example. One can be self-made without being heroic or exemplary if one is a talented impersonator. Hope's comedies work toward a validation of the talent for impersonation (which is eventually cleared of its self-deceptive aspect), so as to resolve the question of "whether creative and socially useful individualism can be separated from mere personal

aggrandizement" (Braudy 591).

One of the reasons that impersonation became a popular form of vaudeville entertainment in the early 20th century, according to Leo Braudy, was that performers gifted in this art were able to fulfill one of the emerging requirements of modern fame; they were seen to be unusually capable of "managing the gap between self and role" (Braudy 568). In Hope's films, and even more so in Lewis's, the talent for impersonation is intricately related to the talent for self-presentation (that is, for being able to present oneself as a type or character with "ironic premeditation") and on this paradox depends the relationship with the viewer (Braudy 551). When called upon to do so, the misfit hero can disguise himself in the costume of a sophisticated or aristocratic man and successfully infiltrate a social world from which he would otherwise be excluded, as Hope does in Casänova's Big Night and Monsieur Beaucaire, and as Lewis does in Cinderfella and The Nutty Professor. An unlikely fit for the role by virtue of his lowly social position, personality, or physical ability, the hero is in an ironic relationship to his disguise and plays out his part in a state of enforced and intensified self-consciousness of his soon-to-be-discovered "inadequacy." Paradoxically, this dramatized state of insecurity is also a show of extraordinary virtuosity, the hero displaying not simply the ability to trick authority figures by donning a costume and obscuring his identity, but more specifically the capacity to fulfill society's demands for conformity while also advertising his authentic protean ability to be otherwise.[20] In this way the impersonator

> . . . invite[s] the audience as a coconspirator into the exploration of a relationship extremely close to that which exist[s] between one's own inner

> nature and the self-made 'character' one ought to show to get ahead in the world" (Braudy 551).

In Hope's impersonation "the self-conscious enhance[s] the natural and [brings] it to perfection" (551 Braudy).

There are in Hope's performances moments when he is standing apart from his own persona acting as both eiron and alazon, exposed and exposer, as Babington and Evans suggest, especially when he is proposing the impossible sexual naiveté of this character (102).[21] However, Hope's irony is merely another aspect of his narcissistic self-presentation.[22] He joins his audience at times in winking at as his persona's openly admitted cowardice, greed and sybaritic excesses. Hope's gestures towards the moral weaknesses of his foppish alter-ego, who often stands in ironic proximity to historically older European or American versions of masculinity, may reflect something of the American cultural insecurity of the era. Yet, because it is done with such confidence, it simultaneously stands as an unapologetic defense of a gauche and "complacent cultural imperialism" that has even co-opted the past (Babington and Evans 99).[23]

Hope's relationship to his alter-ego (which according to Mel Shavelson, longtime writer for the comic, was a virtual imprint of Hope's own personality), seems underwritten by the comedian's unshakable faith in the identity and the fame that his representative status as America's first corporate comedian ("Bob-Pepsodent-Hope") gives him (Lahr 63; 72). Manifest in Hope's movies is the smooth interchange between corporate America, comedic personality and generic narrative. This is to be seen, for example, in Hope's acting style, which is unlike that of the hero who, Lionel Trilling says, consciously enacts

his sense of destiny (Trilling 85). Hope's self-consciousness is of a narrative destiny presided over by cinematic corporations, as is apparent in the opening musical number of Road to Morocco, in which Hope and Crosby sing about the fate of their characters in the film we are about to see: "We haven't any fear, Paramount will protect us/'Cause we're signed for five more years." We could also consider Hope's words, which according to John Lahr were spoken sometime in the 1950's: "Between television, my daytime and nighttime radio shows, pictures, and personal appearances, I'm also working on a plan where, when you close your eyes, I appear on the inside of your eyelids" (Lahr 63). Hope's persona, unlike that of Lewis's or Allen's, is driven by an unqualified desire for visibility (Braudy 549).

Throughout Hope's career, his persona tends to remain unchanged, retaining throughout his characteristic "verbal resilience," which is ever capable of "seal[ing] off [any] threat to the ego," and which is consistent with his seemingly unflinching confidence in mediated fame as a guarantor of identity. [24] Lewis, as is suggested by the "hollowness of his performing characters" in The Bellboy and The Nutty Professor, is more wary than Hope is of fame's assurances and of the possible compromises and threats to integrity that a visible celebrity brings (Shaviro 114).[25] As Frank Krutnik notices, in the years following his breakup with Dean Martin when he consolidates his power at Paramount Studios and begins the phase of his career as the self-styled "total film-maker," Lewis's persona begins to fragment and metamorphose into a number of distinct media personalities, both in front of and behind the camera. Lewis often plays multiple roles, sometimes up to seven characters in one film, as in The Family Jewels. In addition to the

numerous avatars of "The Idiot" in the films, there is Lewis the producer, the writer, the Las Vegas showman, the tireless charity spokesperson, and the Hollywood film director.[26] In the comedian's manic shape-shifting in front of the camera, and his refusal to observe the boundaries of character in his hyperbolic acting style, can be seen the active struggle to assert his creative presence in contradistinction to the agency of the Hollywood narrative, both within individual films and, because Lewis's films are often "engaged in a process of rewriting [their] subject's history" as a performer, within the larger narrative of the Hollywood success story.[27]

Lewis's efforts at self-representation reflect his contention not only with Hollywood star producing agencies, but also with his audience, and with the medium whose inherent powers of reproduction he celebrates but also feels impelled to challenge and disrupt (Krutnik, "Deformation"18). His solo films consistently thematize his endeavors to distinguish himself from within a position of prominence and privilege. In many of his films, including those directed by others, Lewis is pulled or emerges from the obscurity of ordinary life into public service, often as an entertainer. His coming to public attention is usually unexpected by him, an act of fortuitous or magical cause requiring neither intention nor volition on his part. The remainder of the narrative, as in The Patsy, The Ladies Man, The Nutty Professor, The Geisha Boy, and Cinderfella (the latter two directed by Frank Tashlin), depicts Lewis's hero, suddenly the innocent center of attraction, trying to find some measure of personal control over the overwhelming (and sometimes victimizing) attention he has unwittingly elicited from the watching world.

Lewis's alter-ego, unlike Hope's, can never imagine himself capable of being his own

audience; rather he acts out the agonies of a subjectivity "threatened by overly fluid possibilities of identification and recognition."[28] Recognition does not bring the assurances of stability: as Steven Shaviro expresses it, Lewis's persona "exhibits his own subjectivity as an empty, reactive form, and founds his comedy on a strangely ecstatic self-abdication before the opinions and demands of others" (124). While Hope's confidence in his self-sufficient regard seemingly makes his audience redundant, Lewis's persona remains wholly susceptible to and masochistically dependent upon his audience. Each film presents The Idiot's eventual triumph over the potentially humiliating power of the gaze of authority figures in his world, usually by depicting his eventual transformation into "Jerry Lewis" the star director (Shaviro 114). Lewis's character is a feint both undermined and supported by his appeal to the reality of his Hollywood status at the time.[29] Because the comic remains dependent on the mediated regard of the mass audience outside the diegetic realm, Shaviro concludes that "the dazzling metafictional leaps and ubiquitous alienation effects in so many of his films" serve "to trap actor and audience alike in an escalating, never-ending spiral of inauthenticity" (112; 114).[30]

Lewis's impersonation of an indefensible ego may "keep the audience aware of the puppet master behind the scenes," perhaps ensuring that the versatile individual is not submerged in the role. Yet this pretense has dissatisfied many critics, including Gerald Mast and Andrew Sarris (Braudy 546)[31]. Their estimations of his comedy turn on the lack of harmony they perceive in the distance Lewis keeps between himself and his persona by means of his self-reflexive mannerisms and special effects. The self-conscious "burlesquing" of his character's psychic pain seems a betrayal of comic innocence both in

his created character and in his verbal rhetoric promoting the idea of naturalness and sincerity in performance. [32] For Sarris it is a matter of Lewis's over-protectiveness, his lavishing "so much apparent affection" on his character, while for Mast it is a problem of the comic having no real commitment to his character at all (Sarris 243; Mast 299). In Mast's opinion, Lewis's self-reflexivity is the means by which the director escapes a belittling identification with his alter-ego.

In his essay on Lewis, Shaviro collapses the distance between the director who orchestrates these self-reflexive effects and the Lewisian comic persona, attributing a passive, unconsciously anarchic agency to Lewis's comic figure. Shaviro sees Lewis as a radically disintegrated self who has failed to achieve the "adaptive adult narcissism" required by capitalist society.[33] The readings of Shaviro as well as of Scott Bukatman focus on the body of the comic performer, its spasms and contortions, and on Lewis's characteristic disarticulated syntax. Shaviro sees the Idiot/Lewis's body as the register of a besieged interiority, a site of unconscious resistance to and expression of the determining inscriptions of the social (38). The differing critical emphases on the nature of Lewis's authority (which mirror the general shift in contemporary thinking about authority) move away from the underlying idea of the personality of the director as a force or an organizing consciousness behind the camera toward the idea of the persona on the screen as symptomatic of the social pressures bearing on identity. What may have slipped from view in thinking of the persona as an image of subjectivity rather than an intended presentation of the self, are the obvious efforts the director feels compelled to make in order to achieve centrality and authority for himself in his own films. These efforts are all

the more remarkable in Lewis's case given the uninhibited power he assumed in making his self-directed films during his seventeen years at Paramount. Looking at Lewis's work as such can tell us something of the "competition within the text" for authority and of his response to the restrictions that the medium itself seems to impose (Andrew 79).[34]

Lewis's conformist desires ensure that the eccentric style of his comedies is emptied of any transgressive expressiveness, as Shaviro and Rapf suggest. His self-referentiality does not involve exposing the two dimensionality of the film world to the viewer in order to apprize them of his aesthetic or ideological convictions (Shaviro 114). Rather, Lewis consistently depicts his hero discovering depth and animation in two dimensional images in the films (e.g. a framed butterfly collection flies away and returns at his signal; the "lipstick" on a portrait of Miss Wellonmellon smears when he dusts the painting, etc.) However, this discovery is a reflection of the hero's capacity to animate with his presence. As such these gestures never refer beyond the self-enclosed circuit of meaning circumscribed by the "intertextual and textual presence of Jerry Lewis" (Krutnik 18). Yet Lewis is also not content simply to host a celebration of the pleasures of Hollywood artifice. His narratives depict his struggle to attain centrality within a visual "language whose net inevitably surrounds and constricts the expressive impulse."[35] In the disclaimer that prefaces The Bellboy, for example, a studio spokesman, "Jack Emulsion" explains to the audience that the film they are about to see has not been made in the pattern of a familiar Hollywood genre. Lewis makes a claim for his authorship in terms of his knowledge of the language of conventional film stories, and his consequent choice to approve the unconventional aspects of the language within which he works. Though it

aims at discouraging any viewer displeasure caused by its deviation from tradition in order to establish a context for its own appreciation, the prologue also suggests that Lewis is aware that laughter can be a conditioned response and that in the commercial and conventional networks of Hollywood, comic intentions easily lose their way, obscuring all connection to the source they might ideally reveal as their final meaning. The consciousness of his need to demonstrate the purity of his own investment in the cinematic language typically leads to Lewis's subjective overdetermination of his presence in his own films (Krutnik, "Deformation" 22).

Lewis's world is one in which intention can never be directly translated into coherent expression or action, as Shaviro implies when he says that all of the destructively radiating effects of "The Idiot's" spasmodic gestures exceed and belie his conformist intentions (111).[36] As director, Lewis seems neither to trust the assurances of laughter nor of sympathetic identification in placing himself in front of the camera. Eliciting laughter seems almost beside the point at times. Jean-Pierre Coursodon has remarked, in fact, that Lewis might just as well eliminate all gags from his work, since he has deformed so radically the comic rhythm in his attenuated and anti-climactic gag sequences, which produce an effect completely unlike Hope's "efficient laughter" (Shaviro 120; Lahr 74). Indeed the "sheer surrealist weirdness" of these gags is contradicted by "their uncomfortable psychological heaviness" (Shaviro 111). What Shaviro calls the "contagion of embarrassment" that spreads from performer to viewer during Lewis's protracted routines prevents any traditional narcissistic pleasures of identification for the viewer (Bukatman 203; Shaviro 122).[37] However, after detaching the psychological

presentation of personality from the flow of narrative and moving toward the static spectacle of abasement Lewis eventually makes a belated rhetorical attempt to restore depth or sincerity to the character's "dumbness."[38]

Following his break up with Dean Martin, Lewis reconfigures his persona's "innocence," presenting it in the self-directed features so that rather than conveying a child-like sincerity and naiveté that serves to cover an otherwise inexpressible homosexual desire, as it had in the Martin and Lewis act, it becomes evidence of an authentic, inalienable creativity, resistant to commercial enfranchisement.[39] Even while in interviews and in such films as The Patsy and The Errand Boy he credits the audience with being able to tell a "natural" talent from a manufactured one, in his films he repeatedly exorcises a marked distrust of the audience's ability (within the film's narrative and outside it) to divine the value and moral significance of his character's "innocence." The seriousness with which this innocence is finally revered in the film's rhetoric stems from an attitude that is nowhere in evidence in the television specials or the Martin and Lewis films. This fact points to the new symbolic importance of this quality to Lewis's own design and to his wish to have it signify his artistic integrity, the realizing of which cannot be securely trusted to the effects of his comic burlesque.

In The Ladies Man, Lewis reveals an ambition intent on more than simply flaunting his star identity as a means of declaring his independence from his nerdy alter-ego. Rather, the film shows Lewis imagining and countering the threat to his expression of integrity in the cinematic medium. In this regard, the hero's resistance to the narrative's demands for an ultimately unambiguous heterosexual romantic pairing, a resistance common to many

other heroes of comedian comedies, is in Lewis's hands a fantasy of isolating and defending his own integral creative presence, as this is represented by his hero.[40]

The protagonist of The Ladies Man, Herbert H. Heebert (Lewis), has vowed to avoid all women and has come to Hollywood to find work in order to forget his having been rejected by his faithless fiancé. However, very quickly the story of his rejection turns into a story in which he is seemingly the desired object of a sexual conspiracy. When he answers an advertizement for a bachelor to work at a huge mansion and is hired that evening, he wakes up the next morning to find that he has been the unwitting dupe of a feminine scheme to keep him in an all female boarding house owned by former opera star Miss Wellonmellon (Helen Traubel). The mansion, a replica of the Hollywood Studio Club, is an opulent doll house, which as the camera pulls back and the music reaches a congratulatory crescendo, is fully revealed to the viewer as a wondrous set with an open fourth wall.[41] Its openness and accessibility, a facet of its artificiality celebrated by Lewis, is linked in the camera's introductory sweep of the rooms to the promise of the sexual availability of its female occupants both visually and narratively.[42] The camera's unimpeded access to adjoined rooms and to the complete view of all the rooms at once allows us to see the morning rituals of the young aspiring actresses who board with Miss Wellonmellon as a syncopated flow of performances for the camera. The women, who are seemingly entranced by their own self-consciousness, are revealed as part of the same architectural spectacle, serving to eroticize the set's circuitry of spaces, but in and of themselves are of no consequence.[43] The visual access to this space which Lewis provides the spectator attests to his own power and status as director, insofar as this space is also

associated with the architectural icon of Hollywood success. Moreover, the demonstrated power of his camera to penetrate this matriarchal world is then transferred to his alter-ego Herbert, who may freely enter the women's rooms by virtue of his privileges as an avowedly celibate house-boy.

The artificial environment glamorized by the presence of females multiplied in endless exotic variety and attesting to the director's prowess is also the context from within which Lewis distinguishes his persona, and as such it acquires the morally negative dimension of superficiality. Throughout one long sequence Herbert delivers mail to all the rooms in the mansion and is greeted at each door by women whose pent-up sexual energy is given garbled, impeded or emotionally erratic expression. Herbert is obliged to be a kind of surrogate or practice audience for these sexual theatrics. One woman seems entirely oblivious to him, calling him a "beautiful blonde specimen." The women's aggressively indiscriminate sexuality is thereby linked to the insincerity of their rehearsed expressions of desire. Conversely, Herbert's sexual timidity becomes by comparison a mark of the authenticity of his longing to perform and his innocent desire to be recognized, a desire which Lewis wants us to believe is in Herbert's case an "innocent" desire, rather than one that is oriented only toward self-gratification. Therefore Herbert's performances in the film have an altruistic character. They include an appearance in a televised homage to the maternal figure Miss Wellonmellon and his performances for the benefit of his shy protégé, Fay.

In order to invest his persona's regressive betrayal of Eros with the authority of a unique creative integrity, Lewis has to contend with both a masculine and a feminine

threat. Unlike the Lewis solo films that were directed by others, especially those by Frank Tashlin, in which the goal is the Oedipal one of consolidating a masculine sexual identity, in the self-directed films efforts are made instead to reform the patriarchal institution in which the hero finds himself by clearing away all challenges to the child-like ethos Lewis's persona embodies. Writing on The Patsy, Frank Krutnik has shown how Lewis's reformation from the "inside" of these institutions (Hollywood included), though ostensibly in the name of kinder more familial values, is part of Lewis's effort to secure an unchallengeable position of power for himself.[44]

In The Ladies Man, Lewis imagines that in coming to the mansion, he also comes to occupy the place left absent by the deceased Mr. Wellonmellon (he is given Mr. Wellonmellon's room), an absence around which this large showbusiness family of women has coalesced. The only other men who gain entrance to Miss Wellonmellon's house come to collect their dates but are subsequently waylaid by Herbert. Buddy Lester plays a mobster type preoccupied with his appearance (his name "Gainsborough" suggests his cultural pretensions) and George Raft, star of gangster films, plays himself. In each case Lewis's excessive deference to these men has the effect of unraveling or deflating the image of masculinity they hope to have projected. Lester's appearance is destroyed by Herbert's ministrations, and Raft's tough guy image is compromised by Lewis's dancing with him.

Lewis understands that the eroticized spell of the cinematic image itself is something that must be mastered and possessed if he is to achieve the creative command he desires. To that extent it is the feminine rather than the masculine presence that is the more

formidable challenge to his authority in his films. In a number of ways Lewis undermines or interrupts the erotic pull of the female image. In the opening sequence, as I have suggested, the vision of sexual plenitude that enhances his presentation of the artificial world he has created is a testament to the director's rather than the women's power. The titles of two of the Tashlin films, Cinderfella and Geisha Boy (and one scene in particular from Cinderfella in which Lewis, rather than the princess, makes the conventional descent down the grand stairway at the ball), also suggest the appropriation of erotic power that occurs in his gender reversal. A further example of this impetus is found in the morning assembly sequence in The Ladies Man in which Lewis's camera follows a pair of women's legs down the circular staircase in the mansion and waits while the woman straightens the seam of her stocking. The conventional erotic charge of this image is comically re-routed when the matronly Katie (Kathleen Freeman) stops to adjust her tights, her actions accompanied by music of the trombone or tuba.

Many of the self-reflexive moments in his films involve Lewis thrusting himself into a "seamless media spectacle" (Shaviro 118). In The Ladies Man similar moments find Lewis interposing himself in mediated images of the mother: he plays his own mother in the first scene and appears later as her in a photograph; he dusts a life-sized portrait of Miss Wellonmellon and smears the red color of her lips in doing so; he insinuates himself into the televised broadcast from Miss Wellonmellon's home, blocking her from the camera's view and showing up distractingly in the background while she is being interviewed; later in the same interview he disconnects her microphone while she is on camera. Lewis's narcissism as it is presented in this film seems based on a fantasy of

penetrating the self-reflective image (and here the mother is the ground of the self-reflective image) and not being swallowed up by nothingness. [45]

The final challenge to Herbert's control of the spectacle comes when he meets the Devouring Woman, "Miss Cartilage." In this scene Herbert enters one of two rooms not initially known to be in the camera's constituency, each of which proves to be home to a creature of disturbing appetite. The other is the den of the mysterious pet of Miss Wellonmellon's, called "Baby." In attending to Baby, Herbert finds himself enthralled by and subservient to the voracity of the animal, who is variously identified as a lion and a puppy and whose outsized studded collar subtly picks up and domesticates the suggestion of sado-masochistic sexuality in Miss Cartilage's appearance. In the employ of Katie the cook and Miss Wellonmellon, he finds himself subjected to a disciplining of his appetite (he is forced to eat porridge in a high chair in the most embarrassingly forced of scenes). Because they preside over the young women in their house, these matrons also threaten to unleash the erotic appetite that would disturb his tenuous centrality/celibacy in this world. However, when Herbert enters the space from which he is forbidden by the mother, the tortuous sexual demands ostensibly threatening the terms of his primacy in this feminine world are manifest in a choreographed spectacle, which unfolds in a space that has seemingly opened up in response to his presence, and which paradoxically gives erotic visual appeal to his betrayal of Eros. In this dance number Lewis annexes the transformative power of the camera to his character's interiority: after their "dance," when he is safely outside Miss Cartilage's room again, Herbert exclaims, "What imagination can do for you!"[46]

It is in these sequestered moments of fantasy in Lewis's films, which are usually dialogue- free and which often involve dance or mime set to music, that he counters the camera's invasion of psychological and social space, an invasion that is parodied in the coming of the television crew to Miss Wellonmellon's home to film a segment of "Up Your Street." When all has been externalized in his burlesquing of psychological pain Lewis must still insist on an interiority that is both out of reach of the camera and yet perfectly expressable in his chosen medium.[47]

Lewis's unstable faith in the audience and the industry of fame results in the kind of schizophrenia characterized in The Nutty Professor. Like the professor, Lewis is by turns manic exhibitionist and insecure yet dogmatic pedagogue, instructing his audience on how best to interpret and appreciate him. He seems to have to repeatedly convince himself and his audience of his inherent right to the spotlight. By comparison, Woody Allen, who began making films during the new era of American cinema that was to exclude Lewis, seems even more ambivalent about his relationship to his audience, about whom he claims to know nothing, and from whom he is inclined to assert his independence.[48] He is paradoxically famous for his efforts to avoid attracting attention to himself in public places and also for asserting that he follows only his own muse and works without regard for the standards of movie audiences.[49] His seeming disinterest in public acceptance may be a reflection of Allen's own temperament and born either of his avowed "misanthropic view" of people or of the stand-up comic's awareness of the "potential animosity" of his audience.[50] Or it may be that there is something of "the old Groucho Marx joke" about not wanting to "belong to any club that would have someone like [him] for a member."

However, it is Allen's notoriously reticent attitude toward his audience that in large part has contributed to his appeal as a celebrated artistic personality.

Unlike his fellow celebrity comedians, Hope and Lewis, Allen first achieves showbusiness recognition as a writer for other comedians, for television, and eventually for films and the stage as well as for The New Yorker magazine. From early in his career, therefore, his public persona (which underwrites his filmic persona) has been that of an author and intellectual, much of whose real work is done behind the scenes, away from the public eye.[51] Allen's dedication to the unglamorous and private act of writing is dignified by commentators as a mark of his stoic resistance to the shallow temptations of visible fame. The extent to which his dismissive remarks about his own celebrity are emphasized in interviews and criticism generally indicates approval of Allen's skepticism about the enduring value of fame. Often quoted are his quips, "I don't want to gain immortality in my works. I want to gain it by not dying," and "today I'm famous. Tomorrow, what will I be, a black hole?" (Braudy 487).[52] More importantly, however, this critical emphasis reflects the public's need to celebrate the purity of Allen's urge for recognition.

In addition to emphasizing the author's indifference to the public's regard for him, commentators frequently allude to his shyness and sobriety on the film set, his perfectionism, and his self-declared "Prussian discipline," with which he writes in private (McCann 132). All of these predilections become notable as signs of the integrity of the artist's devotion to "the work" itself. Allen is credited with a "self-sufficiency deeply indebted to professional craft," a creative impulse unadulterated by the desire for personal glory, and an artist whose creative work is freed of performance (Braudy 548).[53] Allen is

reported to be "deeply suspicious of the media and the cult of celebrity" and contemptuous of modern stardom, which he sees as "a sign of the trivialization of every cultural figure and event" (McCann 141). In a world in which fame is no longer based on accomplishment, but merely on "just getting and holding attention," Allen's "refusal to be visible" seems like a laudable abdication of the dubious power that visibility confers on the celebrity.[54] Rather, the director seems to offer his art as his only "disinterested goal" in presenting himself in public (Braudy 460).

His desire for creative anonymity is honored, for example, by Robert Benayoun who reports that Allen envies J. D. Salinger for being able to write without bothering to publish what he writes (Benayoun 75). Similarly Frank Rich says that Allen told him that he had an "admiration for Howard Hughes" for "living out a certain reclusive quality that [he] liked."[55] For many critics, at various stages in his career Allen has seemed successful in taking up the challenge of the artist living in the age of mediated celebrity, manifesting a visible authority without "superficial egotism" (Braudy 442).[56] What is consistently pointed out by interviewers and critics is that Allen is "never 'on' when he isn't working"; in real life he is always "serious."[57] His "ostentatious solitude," notorious shyness and silence create "an aura of personal withdrawal" around Allen which, as Braudy maintains, is "part of the new equipment of the public man" (Braudy 460).[58] Regardless of whether or not his reserve is "genuine," as his friends insist, it has become a defining quality of his public persona (McCann 131):

> Allen's very anonymity as a public figure has been made into a new source of fascination by the gossip columnists and image-makers. He has been pushed

into the category of the 'reclusive American author alongside J. D. Salinger and Pynchon, his shyness being interpreted by many journalists as a kind of 'trademark' (McCann 131).

Allen's celebrity status does not anchor or "ground" his filmic characters in quite the same way that Lewis's and Hope's do theirs. As their renown allows them to inhabit a character tentatively, they invite the audience to share the open secret of their imposture, and to identify with them as celebrities as much as with their comic losers. The relationship between Allen's life as an author off-screen and his on-screen persona is more complex due to a certain "autobiographical coyness" on Allen's part (McCann 2). Exploiting the distance between his private self and his persona, in a manner unlike comedians before him, Allen often seems to tease the viewer with "an ambiguously intimate" glimpse of the private reality of the celebrated life (Babington and Evans 159). For example, he reworks his own romantic experiences in Annie Hall and films scenes from Hannah and Her Sisters in Mia Farrow's apartment, allowing Farrow's adopted children to play Hannah's children, without bothering to explain why they are oriental (McCann 137). In this way audiences" can feel that they have been admitted to the inner sanctum of Woody Allen's glamorized reality through his cinéma verité" (McCann 138). However, though he implies intimacy and closeness, as Allen and his friends and commentators have suggested, the "Woody" persona is also a mask behind which the private man may hide.[59] Foster Hirsch's analysis of this mask implies such a conflicted relationship with his audience. Hirsch discerns someone who invites identification with his sorrow but who also appears to repel or restrict the gaze of the onlooker:

> Woody's face like that of the great silent comics, issues a fixed statement to the world. Like Keaton, he uses the stubborn, immobile set of his features as a defense against misfortune. 'Keep away!' the deadpan mask announces. But Woody is less successful than Keaton at draining his face of observable feeling -there's a constant struggle going on, among his irregular features, between the attemptedly cool, blank impregnable pose and the perceivable underlying panic.... What a challenging face it is to read, this open book that insists on its secrecy and its privacy. Welcoming and resisting, inviting us in and pushing us out, Woody engages in an ongoing tug-of-war with his audience. Both funny and sad, both open and closed, Woody's face is a maze of conflicting signals. A barrier against the world, this great stone mask yet contains a reservoir of feeling. And on this stone tablet are engraved the anxieties and insecurities of modern urban man (Hirsch 2-3).

As an iconic figure of the modern comic artist Woody Allen has suggested a creative integrity that rests on the ability to determine what will and will not be yielded up to the world's gaze.[60] Likewise, the story of Allen's career, as it has been constructed by the critics and the media is a story of how the artist has gradually found a visual language for self-expression without also surrendering personal integrity to the superficiality of the mediated world.[61] This appeals to the desire to honour an "unpublished greatness" (Braudy 443).

> It is almost impossible to think of any one of Allen's performances in isolation from the others, so that one has less impression of invention and impersonation

than an idea of a contemporary who has grown older with oneself and has changed in appearance and character only on his own terms. Like a public figure, he has passed into a popular contemporary mythology. However, although Allen has become a universal archetype, he possesses the personality to sustain and develop his image (McCann 140).

The author's presence has, broadly speaking, a doubled appeal in his earliest self-directed films, Take the Money and Run (1969), Bananas (1971), Everything You Wanted to Know about Sex* (*but were afraid to ask) (1972), Sleeper (1973), and Love and Death (1975), an appeal which can be seen to continue the themes found in his public celebrity. As the "little man" persona Allen seems to reveal his emotional vulnerability to the camera, and as the mind of the parodist behind the camera he exhibits an objective command of generic form and visual style.[62] In both capacities he has seemed to demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to "the threat posed to coherent identity" by the "bewildering culture of mass media" (Pogel 33).

It seems to me that one could begin a discussion of Allen's persona by looking at the final segment of his film Everything You Wanted to Know about Sex* (*but were afraid to ask).[63] In this episode Allen plays one of the characters who represent the inner bodily and mental functions of a man named Sidney, who nervously anticipates having sex with his dinner date. In the internal pre-coital drama imagined by Allen, a full-scale team effort at sexual conquest, apparently orchestrated by the technicians operating in Sidney's brain, is paralleled by Allen's character's timid reluctance regarding the impending event. The complex and seemingly covert effort made by the technicians to maintain Sidney's facade

of masculine virility during the perfunctory event makes Allen's character's expressions of anxiety by contrast seem like the lone voice of honesty. Allen plays one of a squadron of spermatozoa depicted as quasi-militaristic parachutists waiting in a chamber like that of an airplane hold from which they will be expelled. With mock heroic intensity Allen implies that theirs may be a suicide mission. Their battle slogan: "To fertilize an egg or die trying!"[64] Allen is singled out from the anonymous mass of his fellow sperm (at one point seen playing a world weary version of "Red River Valley" on a harmonica), by his apparent dread of what is to become of them "out there."

This image of Allen suggests for me the qualities of vulnerability, honesty and emotional authenticity which audiences find in his little man persona in the early films, a persona which Babington and Evans call "the confused prototype of the new 'feminised' man."[65] The little man's worries express the anxiety occasioned by the new sexual freedom of the sixties and seventies (to which Dr. Reuben's book attempts a response), which brings with it new challenges for the masculine ego, not the least of which is the sexually demanding woman. In this image, his open avowal of sexual insecurity is also absurdly connected to Allen's characteristic pose of existential fear.[66]

Critics of his first efforts who see Allen as continuing the tradition of the silent comics, and therefore see him as the little man wounded and beset by the impersonal dehumanizing forces in the modern world, are less likely to emphasize the defensiveness of his self-deprecatory humor or to assess its appeal.[67] In Everything You Wanted to Know the community of male technicians and operators in the control center of Sidney's brain reflect this attitudinal component of the authorial pose. In the absence of the little

man from the screen they become the fictional point to which we address our need for authority as they are seemingly in charge of the unfolding sexual comedy. The fact that these characters are plotting and monitoring Sidney's progress gives the sexual act the feel of a locker room conspiracy, during which the viewer joins with the characters in "looking out" at the woman as though through binoculars. (Figuratively speaking the women that the Woody persona pursues in the other segments of this film seem to be seen in the same way.) This is partly a mockery of the secret maneuvering of the male mind, which is trying to hide all physical evidence of insecurity from the woman. More emphatically, however, it is a fraternal celebration, the sexual triumph a triumph of self-defense on the part of the besieged male ego.

In the other films of this period the persona's self-defensive strategy is perhaps less immediately evident. First, it mimics the standard comic pose that Allen has admired in Hope's films, that of the unlucky womanizer and coward. Secondly, and more importantly, unlike Hope's audience Allen's audience is prepared to accept his pose as a reasonably ethical response to an absurd world. In truth, with the exception of Fielding Mellish in Bananas and his court jester in the first segment of Everything You Wanted to Know, Allen's heroes do not exactly live up to their self-deprecating reputations as sexual misfits and cowards.[68] They never wait long for sexual companionship even though they are frequently exposed as having fallen short of a masculine ideal, as has Boris in Love and Death: "so I grew to full manhood. Well 5'6, which is not technically full manhood in Russia, but you can still own land." Boris also quite plainly admits his inadequacy as a warrior: "I slept with a light on in my room till I was 30." Yet his confessions of

cowardice also come with a built-in criticism of the masculine fervor for war. When his brother Ivan tries to entice Boris to fight with them against Napoleon he hisses knowingly, "medals Boris. We get medals," to which Boris replies "Take it easy Ivan; you gotta cut down on your raw meat." Somewhat later, Boris inspires the violently jealous Count Anton Lebedekov to "lead a new life" by refusing to shoot the Count in a duel. Unlike Hope, Allen never impersonates a heroic type. Boris's cowardice, though its style and manner may be borrowed from Hope, has nothing of Hope's fraudulence about it, because Allen's audience of the time is quite willing to perceive it as an admirable passivism:

> In the forties and fifties, when Bob Hope played coward heroes the cowardice didn't have any political or sexual resonance, but in the late sixties and the seventies, when Woody Allen displayed his panic he seemed to incarnate the whole anti-macho mood of the time (Kael, "The Frog" 188).

Allen frequently sets himself in opposition to an image of masculinity from mainstream culture and Hollywood films that has little hold left on the public imagination. As Molly Haskell points out, Allen achieved popularity when the "WASP establishment [had] been demoted, in movie mythology, with the ethnic occupying center-stage."[69] Nevertheless in his first films Allen works assiduously at showing up the anachronism or failure of an older masculine stereotype and asserts himself as an alternative to the Hollywood ideal of manhood.[70] Early in Play it Again Sam (1972), the film based on Allen's play, Allan's (Allen) wife Nancy (Susan Anspach) leaves him evidently in search of a more dynamic partner and active lifestyle. The source of his ex-wife's marital dissatisfaction, Allan tells his friends Dick (Tony Roberts) and Linda (Diane Keaton), is

"insufficient laughter." This phrase is ostensibly meant to designate all the deficiencies and weaknesses she perceives in his character. Of course the wit generally displayed by Allan in the film is its own defense against this criticism and the sexual inadequacy it implies. Allen measures his intellectual and verbal gifts against his brawnier rivals in romance who are typically men of action like the biker whom Allan imagines his ex-wife to prefer, or the revolutionary leader Erno in Sleeper, who is Miles Munroe's (Allen) competition for Luna (Diane Keaton). Levying the condemnation of modern civilization against these more conventional men, he vengefully refers to them as "Nazis."

The aggression in Allen's wit hints at a closeted potency which is never actualized in the world of politics or the public sphere in his films (Kael, "Survivor" 243). It is in this regard that Allan is defined in contradistinction to the Bogart of Casablanca who is his idealized imaginary mentor in Play it Again Sam. Bogart's eventual commitment to the larger world of international politics and warfare makes him the exact opposite of Allan, whose withdrawal into the private world of the self defines him as a romantic hero in the narcissistic seventies.[71] The personal qualities which enable Allan to foster an intimacy of shared neuroses with Linda and attract her away from Dick (who is a modern version of the Bogart figure, devoted primarily to the masculine world of duty and work), are in keeping with what he does for a living, which is watch and write about movies. Linda is especially charmed by the kind of attention Allan claims to have devoted to his ex-wife; he says he used to "lie awake at night and watch her sleep." The film proposes that Allan's unique gifts as a lover are inextricably bound up with his susceptibility to romantic Hollywood imagery, but we are also asked to believe that what distinguishes him from the

two women in his life, who both worry about their attractiveness, is that he is able to achieve self-validation by outgrowing his dependency on the unattainable fantasy of manhood which Bogart represents. When he stops pretending to be Bogart and behaves "naturally," the film suggests, he is able to have the kind of romantic success Bogart himself has.[72]

Because nostalgia for the cinematic fantasy attaches itself to Allan, and because his imaginary mentor salutes him at the end of the film, ("Here's looking at you, kid"), it is not clear finally whether Allan has escaped out of a fantasy or into one. In the closing scene Linda and Allan part at the airport. While she, like Bergman before her, prepares to leave her lover to rejoin her husband, Allan quotes the final lines of Casablanca to her, then adds "I've waited all my life to say that."[73] While it seems as though Allan represents an alternative to the Hollywood images which both charm and belittle with their "illusion of perfectibility,"[74] as the film also honors his potential to be recognized on his own terms, to be able to make his "natural" self into a distinct personal style, it ultimately perpetuates the notion of a "democratic stardom" available to all (Braudy 546; Lahr 223).[75]

In Allen's persona what looks like the closeted potential for self-determination and authenticity is very difficult to distinguish from a skeptical withdrawal from the world, a somewhat less glamorous "[plea] for the self" than was Bogart's pre-war isolationism.[76] Apart from the need to counter a vague threat to their masculine identities, Allen's heroes feel little inclination to realize their "irritable energy of dissent" in any moral action (McCann 154). In comparison with the silent comics, the heroes of Allen's films are positioned against the detrimental forces in their society in a much less committed way.[77]

The protagonists of Bananas and Sleeper are only tentatively engaged by the political and moral tensions inherent in the narrative circumstances.[78] In Bananas, Fielding Mellish joins political rallies and eventually accepts the presidency of San Marcos, the banana republic he helped liberate from a dictatorship, all apparently in an effort to impress his politically conscious girlfriend, Nancy (Louise Lasser). Even so, the revolution he helps bring about is shown to be futile, as the rebel leader proves to be as corrupt as the dictator he deposed and, following Mellish's return to America, we hear no more of San Marco's political situation. In Sleeper Miles Munroe involuntarily becomes an "alien" rebel when he is awakened from a cryogenically frozen state to find himself in an America of the future under a totalitarian dictatorship. Soon after Miles succeeds at the immediate goal of overthrowing the government he declares that "political solutions don't work" and says he does not believe that the revolution will make any difference. To say that Allen's heroes are uncommitted to their world is not the same thing as saying that Hope does not "take things seriously" in his. Neither comic is bound by the 'reality' of the fiction; but Hope is an agent of change in his films, whereas Allen insists that his actions can have no significant consequences. In John Lahr's words, the "myths of hope" reflected in the antics of Allen's comic predecessors have been replaced by "a myth of defeat. A sense of elegant dread has replaced hilarious excess" (Lahr 89-90).

In these films and in Love and Death the heroes' reluctant attempts to "redesign history" inevitably prove fruitless.[79] However, the inefficacy of the hero's actions in Love and Death is more explicitly an expression of philosophical resignation on Allen's part. After his failed attempt to assassinate Napoleon, Boris is told by an angel of God that he is

to be pardoned by the Emperor. This prophecy proves to be a cosmic deception, as Boris is indeed executed. The target of Allen's humorous complaint shifts in this film from the hero's romantic rivals and the inane modern lifestyles he parodies in Sleeper to that of the indifferent, even malicious universe. [80]

At the end of both Bananas and Sleeper Allen narrows his focus to the realm of the personal and romantic where there seems to be some possibility of solace for the hero (Wernblad 35-50). Fielding and Miles both seem to hold out hope for romantic love in the face of an objectifying and cynical world.[81] In Bananas we are left with the question of Nancy and Fielding's future together after we watch a live broadcast of their wedding night with Howard Cosell's play by play analysis of the consummation. Fielding is the sentimental favorite in this "bout" because he seems to have the added pressure of performing for the media and the live audience and then being compared to her past lovers. Sleeper ends with Miles declaring his love for Luna in defiance of her scientific evidence proving that love does not last. Until Love and Death this withdrawal into the personal realm seems to hold some slight hope of meaning or consolation for Allen's protagonists that the political and public realms do not.[82] Ultimately, though, in Love and Death even romantic love seems to offer little consolation in the face of death. When Sonia speaks to Boris's ghost after his execution, she tells him, "you were my one great love." Boris replies sarcastically, "Oh, thank you very much. Now if you'll excuse me I'm dead."

In Sleeper Allen's self-conscious disengagement and skepticism suggests a mind that has transcended its own time. Allen's futuristic vision of the twenty second century is a

parodic reflection of the narcissistic culture of the seventies, a culture which has lost its historical consciousness. As a result of this, and partly because of a technological network that has "taken on the aspect of fatum," its citizens live with the overwhelming sense that "at some point [they] stopped making history and allowed it to remake [them]."[83] In the face of a sense of imminent catastrophe the narcissistic self develops various survivalist strategies of retreat and self-nurturing. After a sleep of two hundred years, Miles Munroe awakens into such a world, a post-apocalyptic America that has no collective memory of history and art and politics. The citizens of the future, who have had their brains electronically "simplified" and have been made impotent by their reliance on government issued "Orgasmatron" machines, are imagined by Allen as an emasculated society, content for the most part to live under a tyranny of organized pleasures.[84] As an alien with no traceable identity Miles can be enlisted on behalf of the underground movement by doctors not yet programmed by the state. He subsequently distinguishes himself as a cultural hero by stealing the deceased leader's nose and destroying it before scientists working for the government can clone it. In performing this absurdly symbolic act Miles ostensibly restores the conditions necessary for intellectual and sexual vitality in this society.

At the same time that Allen parodies the narcissist's survivalist mentality, the parodic stance that he takes in this and in the other early films is not a means of "subverting" but merely a means "of surviving, of getting even" (Wernblad 54).[85] From the beginning of his filmmaking career, Allen's art has been an art of concept and attitude, an art of

> parodies. . .social attitudes and psychological stereotypes, of television and

> film genres, styles and conventions. . . The real material of [his early films] is the comic style that Allen conceives for depicting and commenting on each event in the 'plot' (Mast 200).

The elaborate mimicry and parody of style and genre that typifies Allen's earliest self-directed films is no doubt Allen's way of discharging his debt to his precursors.[86] However, this "compulsion to parody" (which is more like a self-justifying mimicry because it is often without an ideological or aesthetic point) is also, as John Lahr recognizes, "skepticism acted out."[87] Lahr's defining of Allen's comic attitude as "elegant dread" suggests that Allen's imposture, his mimicry of film style and genre, as well as of literary and philosophical language in his written works, becomes fashionable when identified as a sign of modern alienation (Lahr 47). Michael Wood's assessment of Allen's "passive hopeless innocence," finds accord with John Lahr's reference to Allen's comedy as a " myth of defeat," "the shrug substituted for the pratfall" (Wood 38; Lahr 47). Allen's films reflect the cultural lassitude of the 1970's and the national skepticism that John Lahr sees at the root of the culture of celebrity: "every society has its particular kind of cultural neurosis; and fame is America's cultural defense" ("Notes on Fame" 228).

Chapter Two: The "Disobedient Dependence" of Comic Authority: Annie Hall, Manhattan and Stardust Memories

"A comedian doesn't define his character, audiences do by what they accept."

—Eric Lax, Woody Allen

The comedy films Woody Allen made during the late 1970's up to 1980, Annie Hall (1977), Manhattan (1979) and Stardust Memories (1980) have been seen as reflecting the decade of American culture which for Christopher Lasch and others is defined by a pervasive narcissism.[88] I would like to reconsider them in this context not so much because Allen articulates the anxieties of the seventies or personifies the "hermetic self-regard" of this generation [89] or because his films show the "labor of self-defense" typical of the narcissist's discourse, although all of these ideas no doubt apply to his works (Lasch 61). Of more immediate interest to me is the complex "adversary intention" of Allen's authority which both asserts the self in opposition to contemporary culture, and yet is also dependent upon that culture and the audience informed by it for validation of his authority.[90]

Lasch describes the modern changes in personality structure that have evolved in correspondence with alterations in social and familial patterns of interaction. The "invasion of private life by the forces of organized domination," and the mediation of all aspects of experience by electronic images are two of the many interrelated causes Lasch gives for the recent predominance of the narcissistic personality with its inability to distinguish between self and world (69; 88-89; 97). In emphasizing the narcissist's

confusion of boundaries Lasch distinguishes the clinical definition of narcissism from the popular sense of the term; narcissism is to be understood not as self-love but as a defense against the rage and guilt caused by failed object relations (75). Of significance to my thinking about Woody Allen's authorship is Lasch's sense of how these psychological conditions extend into the literary realm and determine a shift in contractual relations between author and reader or by extension between author and viewer. Lasch maintains that whereas in the past the author assumed the responsibility of trying to convince the reader of his ideas, now because the author needs the audience's attention "to shore up his faltering sense of self" he merely asks that the reader admire his/her performance. Lasch includes Allen among the writers of the 1970's who parody the confessional style of the past and in doing so intimate a journey inward and a personal revelation to come. Finally, however, in a self-defensive maneuver (which hopefully is indistinguishable from an entertaining display of personal insight) the narcissistic author deliberately evades the exposure of the self that intimacy requires and that the convention of confession promises (Lasch 48-61).

The new performative relationship to the audience which Lasch delineates is one in which the writer no longer undertakes the effort to explore the correspondence between the workings of his inner life and that of the larger world (54). On the contrary, Lasch feels that such a correspondence in the modern era is very tenuous. Instead, in an age in which the camera has provided the "means of ceaseless self-scrutiny" and in which selfhood is increasingly "dependent on the consumption of images of the self" the narcissist trades on his ability to manage "personal impressions" (Lasch 91;98). Like the narcissist Lasch

describes, Allen shows awareness of the need to demonstrate control over various possible external perspectives on the self, quickly shifting the terms and the content of his "confessions." The opening monologue of Annie Hall, for example, shows how mindful Allen is of the role-playing that comprises the contemporary nature of identity, which is to be constructed out of fragmented cultural choices (Lasch 91;166):

> . . . Tsch, you know, lately the strangest things have been going through my mind, 'cause I turned forty, tsch, and I guess I'm going through a life crisis or something, I don't know. I, uh . . . and I'm not worried about aging. I'm not one of those characters, you know. Although I'm balding slightly on top, that's about the worst you can say about me. I, uh, I think I'm gonna get better as I get older, you know? I think I'm gonna be the -the balding virile type, you know, as opposed to say the, uh, distinguished gray, for instance, you know? 'Less I'm neither o' those two. Unless I'm one of those guys with saliva dribbling out of his mouth who wanders into a cafeteria with a shopping bag screaming about socialism. (Sighing) Annie and I broke up and I- I still can't get my mind around that. You know, I-I keep sifting the pieces o' the relationship through my mind and --examining my life and tryin' to figure out where did the screw-up come, you know, and a year ago we were . . . tsch, in love. You know, and-and-and . . . And it's funny, I'm not- I'm not a morose type. I'm not a depressive character. I-I-I, uh, (Laughing) you know, I was a reasonably happy kid, I guess. I was brought up in Brooklyn during World War II.[91]

In this monologue the mock anxiety about being subject to social categorization combines openly with a certain shared pride in the self-consciousness necessary to escape such possible definitions of his "type" and also to be certain of the acceptable limits of eccentricity. In Lasch's work there is a tacit moral criticism of the narcissistic author; performing for the audience/reader is a deception, an abuse of the longstanding responsibility of authority, and a betrayal of the reader's expectations for an intimate revelation. Yet in Allen's performance style we also see that the opposition Lasch sets up between intimacy and performance might be too strict to describe the authorial bond Allen forms with his audience. The nature of the intimacy that Allen establishes with his audience here and in this very popular film as a whole[92] (though it may seem odd to suggest this of what is essentially a filmed "stand-up" routine), is characterized by the kind of mutual "faith" that is found in the closest friendships, which often seems to depend on the fluctuating distance friends allow one another to maintain in relation to their own conceptions of themselves as characters. In Allen's awareness of the distance from himself necessary for "play" in this "confessional" address there is a fine line between what might seem to be an evasive superficial performance and an openly shared conception of himself as a character.[93] It may be that there is an element of performance or play at the heart of what we mean by intimacy. Certainly, though, the experience of "fun" and "laughs" authenticates the romantic intimacy of Allen's characters.

Perhaps it is not entirely fair to apply Lasch's ideas about the pseudo-confessional writing of the 70's to Allen's semi-autobiographical film monologue, since the experience of "character" or "persona" is not pertinent to the first person narration he discusses. In

fact Lasch notes that the convention of the unreliable narrator, which used to allow the author ironically to juxtapose his own "more accurate view" of the world, has for the most part been abandoned in modern literature (53). He maintains that the author now speaks in his own voice, but only to warn the reader about the fictional nature of what is being said, thus undermining the reader's ability to suspend disbelief. As well, to the extent that the author rationalizes and parodies the inner life, he contributes to the erosion of its significance. As Lasch sees it the contemporary author has abdicated the authorial responsibility to convince the reader by means of the reasonableness and sincerity of his personal insights. He therefore implies that the artist's authority is defined by an unchanging obligation to his audience. However, following Richard Sennett, I would like to suggest contrarily that the bond of authority is "shaped by history and culture as well as by psychological predisposition" and furthermore that "what people want from authority is as important as what the authority has to offer" (Sennett 25).

Our commitment to Allen's performance, should we choose to make it, is the realization of a "personal investment in his persona" and is based to some degree on our recognition and acceptance of his authority to speak for us: Graham McCann quotes Richard Schickel as saying that "Woody Allen c'est moi".[94] Schickel continues, "listening to his public monologues has always given me and mine the peculiar sensation that our own interior monologues have been tapped and are being broadcast" (McCann 50). Audiences may recognize something of the "character" of their inner life in Allen's address, but paradoxically, Allen's neurotic character is also in part "a product of the audience."[95] According to Eric Lax, Allen told the New York World-Telegram & Sun in

November 1963 that "[his] character was assigned to [him] by [his] audience" (173):

> They laughed more at certain things. Naturally, I used more of those things. And the critics helped assign me a character, too. They would write about me and describe me as a certain type. So I put more material in the act that would fit that type (Lax 173).

A precarious mutual commitment to his character, on the part of the audience and the author, defines the intersubjective bond of authority in Allen's performance, as much as does a belief in the sincerity of his personal revelations or the rightness of his ideas. This relationship is similar to, but distinct from, the "synchronized reaction" of author and reader to the literary character which is described by John Bayley as "that form of shared superiority or patronage which author and reader mutually enjoy."[96] Enjoyment of this patronage of character, in Bayley's estimation, involves the "calculable comfort. . . of getting people placed" by their "interrelation with the society" in which they move (227). This pleasure enables us "not only to triumph over society but to be "totally 'in' with it" (227). Vivian Gornick has described her identification with the comic outsider, a tradition of comedy with which she links Allen, as an identification based on recognizing "the deep inner reference that makes for wholeness" within a marginalized culture:

> So rich, powerful, and coherent was the internal life from which this humor sprang that to this day -and against my will- Milton Berle and Henny Youngman force from me painful laughter. The gags are dreadful, the foils an embarrassment, but the wholeness out of which these comics were working- that world, that gestalt, that complex reference inside them- is so

> compelling, so legitimate, so recognizable that I am forced to submit to its terms. After all, this is what made them artists: they were men of comic genius who had internalized perfectly the emotional terms of the world in which they were creating.[97]

Watching Allen perform, Gornick and her friends recognized that "he was -in a word - us." His humor to them was "all the anguish and laughter of people growing up smart and anxious, huddled on the edge of a world we could see but not touch" (10). Gornick concludes that Allen's comedy "meshed so perfectly with the deepest undercurrents of feeling in the national life that it made outsiders of us all" (10).[98]

The mutuality of relation between author and viewer in Allen's characterization which enables us to centralize ourselves in respect to the "outside" of the social world of the film is not a stable relation, however. Over the course of Allen's next films, Manhattan and Stardust Memories, he begins to feel constrained by, and wishes to extricate himself from, his commitment to his comic persona and to the audience who endorses it. The quality of Allen's character's "detached self-awareness" evolves, and as a result the viewer is progressively excluded from a shared perspective on the character. As Pauline Kael phrases it, "a wall [has come] down between him and us" (Shapiro 61).[99] I would like to explore the varying degrees of separation between Allen's character and his audience in the films of this period which eventually inhibit any "collusive intimacy" between author and audience and enable Allen to try to defend an exclusive self-regarding point of view (Bayley 234).

In Annie Hall Alvy Singer's ability to project the capacity for a free-floating

"transcendental self-awareness" that is evidenced in the opening monologue has what might otherwise be thought of as a negative aspect that goes uncriticized in the film, his habitual categorizing of others.[100] On the contrary, this habit has a kind of seductive appeal, both to the audience and to Alvy's first wife, Allison (Carol Kane), who finds him to be "kinda cute" even after he has "reduced [her] to a cultural stereotype," and then later to Annie (Diane Keaton) ("what'd you do, grow up in a Norman Rockwell painting?"), with whom Alvy classifies passersby in Central Park and makes this activity into an afternoon's amusement: "There's-there's Mr. When-in-the-Pink, Mr. Miami Beach, there, you know? He's the latest. Just came back from the gin-rummy [finals] last night. . . where he placed third" (46). In this way Allen manifests the authority of his own unassailable self-consciously marginalized perspective within a society of multiple lifestyle choices. Though the film eventually presents Alvy's New Yorker isolationist mentality as neurotic, it does nothing to contradict the idea that his defining others as types is anything other than an admirable kind of cultural, if not moral, vigilance. These episodes establish one of the essential qualities of Allen's authority which is later jeopardized by the exposure of the scandal involving Mia Farrow in 1992. Jonathan Romney quotes Adam Gopnik:[101]

> What has really been put into doubt by Woody Allen's tribulations is his judgment, and with it, his place as an arbiter of manners-his ability to tell cool from uncool, and make that distinction stick. . . If you were susceptible, the discriminations were so inspiring that the resulting confusion between life and art wasn't just between Allen's life and his art.

It was between your life and his art (7).

If we appreciate Alvy's disdain for the typical as a sign of his cultural discernment we may also share in the problem of an embattled self and its admittedly flawed and egotistical but essentially judicious struggle against forces of modern culture threatening to make any act of self-assertion inconsequential. These forces are symbolically concentrated in Los Angeles where Annie and Alvy go to visit record producer Tony Lacey (Paul Simon). While at a party in Lacey's home Annie and Alvy discuss the lifestyle of Lacey and his girlfriend:

Annie: It's wonderful. I mean, do you know they just [eat and] watch movies all day.

Alvy: Yeah, and gradually you get old and die. You know it's important to make a little effort once in a while (92).

Alvy's resistance to Los Angeles is a resistance to an "expedient culture" that in Lasch's terms has lost all "transitional character."[102] That is, it is a world of mass-produced entertainments which elide the "intermediate realm" separating self and other and thereby threaten the reality of the self.

> . . . the commodity world stands as something completely separate from the self; yet it simultaneously takes on the appearance of a mirror of the self, a dazzling array of images in which we can see anything we wish to see (Lasch Minimal Self 195).

Accordingly, Alvy becomes weak and nauseous when he finds out that the relationship between a performer and an audience can be artificially reproduced, as it is, by his friend

Rob (Tony Roberts). Alvy watches as Rob uses a laugh track to simulate a live audience's response to the taped performance of his sitcom.

Annie Hall's endorsement of Los Angeles effectively tempers the effect of Alvy's cynicism regarding the West Coast in Annie Hall. However, Allen has said that although Alvy's obsessive fears and neurosis "come to be seen as neurotic" because that is "the reasonable point of view," he himself does not hold that particular point of view (McCann 159). Over the course of the next two films (excluding Interiors, which followed Annie Hall, and in which he did not appear), Allen moves progressively to guarantee and to protect his character's perspective from comic irony.

Allen has spoken of his longing to make the transition from comic to dramatic works as a desire to achieve a rite of passage that would allow him to "sit at the table with the grownups, rather than at the children's table" (Hirsch 88). In accordance with this, William Paul contends that Allen's comedies betray his consciousness of the genre's disreputable cultural status. In comparison to the "Animal Comedies" that started to appear at this time, and which celebrated a "downward mobility" Paul says, "Woody Allen's art is yuppie comedy aiming to efface his lower class origins in stand-up comedy" (Paul 92). Allen himself has said that "here is something second rate about comedy. It's like eating ice cream all the time; after a while you need to take in something more solid" (McCann 160). Behind the rigid distinction between comedy and drama that Allen insists on, and his denigration of the comic form, lies not only authorial insecurity but, considering his own comic talents, a kind of self-abjection that is directed toward not only the effacement of his origins as a comedian but the effacement also of "Woody Allen"

(Hirsch 196).

Paul's comparison of the divergent aims of Allen's movies to those of the Animal Comedies could be extended to include a comparison of Allen's persona with that of Bill Murray, who starred in a number of Animal Comedies during the late seventies and eighties.[103] In their films both comedians project an image of someone who is unconcerned with his status within the hierarchy of social power, and yet each covertly establishes his social dominance. However, the aims and means of their achieving social power are quite different. With reference to Lasch's ideas Paul suggests that Murray embodies the contradiction at the heart of the culture of narcissism. The post-war period of increasing material wealth, explains Paul, produces an expansive self "so totally indulged [that it] lets loose the function of the ego as the guardian watchdog of instinctual life" and in "becoming the primary site of satisfaction, the ego begins to evaporate." "In other words," he concludes "'I' becomes divorced from 'me' so that personality in the 'me Decade' loses any sense of a centered self" (167). Murray, according to Paul,

> is "a 'me' person driven by the demands of an infinitely expanding self that tries to gain control over every circumstance. At the same time, the incessantly mocking tone by which he gains control points to an inner emptiness or inability to convey belief and a sense of commitment. Murray's connection to others is defined in narcissistic terms: the adulation they can grant provides a way of defining self (171).

Paul contends that in his comic delivery Murray's tendency to "deride feelings at the same time [that he] invokes them" points to his "absolute need to gain control over

everything including his own vulnerability" (157). His mocking rhetoric, which often begins ironically and ends without a trace of irony, deflects attention away from a nihilism that must not be looked at directly. In an age of image-making, the trick for Murray is to invoke belief in an image of strength and sincerity in the hope that this will in turn evoke belief in the self (164;170). Therefore, Murray's aggressive anarchic impulses never work towards restructuring the existing social order, but eventually propel him to the top of that order which he ultimately depends on to validate his disintegrated sense of self (Paul 161).

A scene from Annie Hall will illustrate Allen's difference from Murray. This occurs after Annie and Alvy have temporarily separated and he is escorting his date (Shelley Duvall), a reporter from Rolling Stone, to a concert hall where the Maharishi is to make an appearance:

> Female reporter: I think there are more people here to see the Maharishi than there were to see the Dylan concert. I covered the Dylan concert . . . which gave me chills. Especially when he sang "She takes just like a woman And she makes love just like a woman Yes, she does And she aches just like a woman But she breaks just like a little girl." (They move toward the aisles as a guard holds up his hands to stop them) Up to that I guess the most charismatic event I covered was Mick's Birthday when the Stones played Madison Square Garden.
>
> Alvy: (Laughing) Man, that's great. That's just great.
>
> Reporter: You catch Dylan?
>
> Alvy: (Coughing) Me? No, no. I-I couldn't make it that ni- My-my raccoon

had hepatitis.

Reporter: You have a raccoon?

Alvy: (Gesturing) Tsch, a few.

Reporter: The only word for this is trans-plendid. It's transplendid.

Alvy: I can think of another word.

Reporter: He's God! I mean, this man is God! He's got millions of followers who would crawl all the way across the world just to touch the hem of his garment.

Alvy: Really? It must be a tremendous hem.

Reporter: I'm a Rosicrucian myself.

Alvy: Are you?

Reporter: Yeah.

Alvy: I can't get with any religion that advertises in Popular Mechanics. Look--(The Maharishi, a small, chunky man, walks out of the men's room, huge bodyguards flanking him while policemen hold back the crowds)-there's God coming outta the men's room.

Reporter: It's unbelievably trans-plendid! I was at the Stone's concert in Altamount when they killed that guy, remember?

Alvy: Yeah, were yuh? I was- I was at an Alice Cooper thing where six people were rushed to the hospital with bad vibes (65-66).

The first remarkable thing about this conversation is the context in which it takes place. The staid Alvy Singer is completely out of place at a public gathering where there

is a potential for mass frenzy, and obviously mismatched with this woman from Rolling Stone, a magazine more likely to be aligned with the values of the Animal Comedies of Bill Murray, whom it later profiled (Paul 159).[104] There is aggression here, and sexual aggression, as in Murray's comedy, but its ends are apparently different. While Bill Murray's aggression fuels his rise to the top of the existing social hierarchy, Allen's aggression works rather more subtly, supporting his attitude of cynical resistance to the modern trends and values expressed in popular culture, from an oppositional and, it is implied, idealistic position. Jonathan Romney suggests that, unlike Murray's persona, whose authority is built on an illusory strength disguising a profound spiritual and psychological emptiness, the authority of Allen's little man persona rests on a modern image of strength:

> His films especially the New York comedies of manners Annie Hall (1977) and Manhattan (1979) provided a lifestyle template for a generation of would-be sophisticates. What was at stake was not only a set of supposedly unassailable high-culture values - most famously, the list of favorite things at the end of Manhattan but also a comic attitude that made defensive hostility into a form of heroism. Watching the Allen anti-hero, you could believe that his anxiety, ineptitude and pusillanimity were simply the flipside of a skeptical stoicism in the face of the glitzier shallower aspects of the world.[105]

The difference between the type of authority Allen demonstrates in this scene and that which Lasch implicitly sees as properly owed the reader or viewer, is that Allen's is not

based on a belief in the sincerity of what he says, but rather on his ability to "interpret the conditions of power" in contemporary society, and to keep himself free from the distractions and enthralling displays of power represented in the changeable phenomena of popular culture (Sennett 20; 126):

> Of authority it may be said that in the most general way that it is an attempt to interpret the conditions of power, to give the conditions of control and influence a meaning by defining an image of strength. The quest is for a strength that is solid, guaranteed, stable (Sennett 19).[106]

The humor in this concert hall sequence proves its own point. Alvy can make absurd comments about a raccoon with hepatitis and be taken seriously by this enthusiastic aficionado of popular lifestyles and entertainment. The jokes in this scene like those in the film as a whole generally work to elevate Alvy's cultural and moral sensibility from that of the masses. Although the target of his derisive humor here is apparently a society devoted to a variety of pseudo-religious fads, and this woman insofar as she represents this society, he is not above sleeping with her later (though his post-coital response suggests that the effort was hardly worth it.) While the relationship between sexual aggression and power in Murray's movies is fairly straightforward,[107] the aggression in Allen's sexuality is mitigated by the cultural and moral status he gives his aggression, which is always intended to be in "reference to a higher standard" (Sennett 17).[108] In a New Yorker essay written in 1993, Adam Gopnik concludes that in Annie Hall and Manhattan Allen "defined a new world, where cultural aspiration met sexual appetite- where, for a brief and happy time, sexual appetite seemed to be part of cultural aspiration."[109] Alvy's refusal to

commit himself to the transitory values of a "centerless" culture and the women who promote it is an expression of his existential commitment to a stable world of value that has passed out of existence and as such his appeal is often in the form of "a reproach to a declining standard of modernist rectitude" (Gopnik 86).[110] It might be said of Allen during this period of his career that he temporarily satisfied "our search for consolation in authority that time never really permits" (Sennett 20).

In Annie Hall Alvy's anxiety about death is very generally connected to his awareness of universal entropy and the moral chaos that the Nazi regime represented in human history and ostensibly therefore to an extensive concern with the human condition as a whole. However, our point of connection with Allen is based on the understanding that Alvy has also a rather large personal investment in his philosophical position. No matter how honorable his concern for mankind is, and how valid his fears are, as his jealous relationship with Annie clearly shows us, his adherence to this moral point of view is in some way bound up with a will to intellectual dominance and control. The "passive-aggressive tyranny" and "intellectual pride" of the persona, "the underside of his character's immense likeability, are held up as matters for analysis and regret" (Hirsch 87).[111] In Annie Hall author and viewer know a mutually "shared superiority or patronage" of Allen's character, which is difficult finally to distinguish from Alvy's own retrospective analysis and the self-transcendence he seems to have achieved by it (Bayley 226). However, in Manhattan as in Stardust Memories, though Allen's character's "sexual preeminence also coincides with an artistic and intellectual superiority" this coincidence is less likely to be held out openly for the viewer's amusement or criticism (Shapiro 56).

In Manhattan (1979) Allen's character Isaac Davis, a writer of television situation comedies, is less of a caricatured malcontent than Alvy Singer is and he is also more closely implicated in the moral problems he himself identifies in his social and cultural milieu. He is, as Nancy Pogel phrases it, "a more seriously disturbed reflection" of his sophisticated culture (119).[112] Perhaps because Isaac is less obviously positioned "outside" of his society, which is comprised of a select group of Manhattanites, and because Allen's moral focus has been narrowed considerably to a concern with their romantic contretemps, Pauline Kael was prompted to complain that the film provides a very slight narrative pretext for the concern about the "decay of contemporary society" that Isaac voices at the start of the film.[113] However, Kael's statement suggests how important it is that Allen's persona present himself in opposition to contemporary moral and cultural standards and the loss of individual integrity which they reflect.[114] The fact that he does not seem to have clearly defined it also suggests that it is a more diffuse and less articulatable sense of loss to which he is opposed.

Over the opening images of Manhattan Isaac recites alternative beginnings for his new novel. Several variations of the opening lines of Chapter One, which try to describe the protagonist's passion for olden day New York, are rejected in terms of how the author's voice would appeal to the reader-- "too preachy" or "too angry," for example. In Isaac's voice-over Allen gives us an author's "struggle for composure" (Lasch 42). In the final version, the focus of the lines shifts so that what began as a description of the protagonist's romanticized feelings for New York becomes a portrait of the protagonist himself, as he is identified through and

with the city's masculine "character": 'Chapter One. He was . . . as tough and romantic as the city he loved. Behind his black-rimmed glasses was the coiled sexual power of a jungle cat.' I love this. 'New York was his town. And it always would be.'[115]

The identification with New York in which Isaac imaginatively revels extends, because of the recognizable physical description of his fictional protagonist, to Isaac and to Allen himself. The prose exploits the familiar comic tension in Allen's persona between his iconic bookishness and his self-declared sexual prowess. The monologue as a whole goes beyond the identification of Allen's character with the city that is made in Annie Hall, which is limited to an uncomplicated geographical metaphor. In that film Annie makes a conclusive judgment of Alvy when she likens him to the island of Manhattan in order to emphasize his isolation from the world, his resistance to outside influences.[116] The connection to New York Allen makes in Manhattan, though, is as Hirsch says "self-congratulatory," a celebration of Allen's having "penetrated this inner world of the big city" (100). It also binds the powerful romantic aura of the city (or a select portion of it that has been romanticized in film and theater)[117] to his own comic presence and represents Allen's reinvestment in the persona that was absent from his previous film, Interiors.

At the time of Manhattan, which begins with Isaac's authorial muscle flexing, there is just enough seeming incongruity remaining between the sexual boast and the physical caricature evoked as the subject of it to suggest the comedy of self-deluded masculinity. In the opening restaurant scene a certain pressure is necessarily applied by Allen to

reanimate the comic potential in this disparity between a stereotypical romantic masculine image and his persona. After Annie Hall, the characteristic sexual inadequacy, which has always had a tenuous rhetorical feel to it (except perhaps in Take the Money and Run, Play it Again, Sam and Bananas), is no longer viable because Allen's reputation as a "successful" lover off-screen is simply too well known. However, at the restaurant, we see a self-consciously heightened variant of the familiar pose which refocuses the dissipating meaning of sexual failure and extends its narrative implications.[118] During the dinner conversation with married friends, Emily (Ann Byrne) and Yale (Michael Murphy), Isaac lights a cigarette because, though he does not smoke, he says he thinks he looks "so incredibly handsome with a cigarette-- that [he] can't not hold one" (182). The incredulity shown by Isaac's seventeen year old girlfriend Tracy (Mariel Hemingway) seems to be a very complex allusion to the masculine ethos that supported Hemingway's grandfather's literary aesthetic, as does Isaac's earlier stand on the importance of "courage." In itself this image of Woody under the influence of artificial stimulants is very unusual. Only once does Allen cast himself as a character who drinks habitually: as Harry in Deconstructing Harry. For the most part, Allen's heroes have prided themselves on their moral immunity to these sorts of temptations of a degenerate culture, as so many threats to a vigilant self-consciousness. However, we suppose that the awkward burst of egotism in this first scene (which is supposed to be justified by the references Emily and Yale make about his drunkenness) is over-compensation for his anxiety about his ex-wife's book.. Jill's (Meryl Streep) forthcoming memoir of their marriage and breakup threatens him with public sexual humiliation. Allen retrenches his persona's "pretense to [sexual] adequacy"[119] by

suggesting that his masculine "weaknesses," which have always been openly exploited by him and the source of his films' humour in the past, are now in danger of being exposed by someone else.

Contriving to "hide the unhidden," Allen thereby re-draws the narrative boundaries of public and private in relation to his persona, presenting Isaac as the victim of an impending betrayal, not only by his ex-wife, but also, it is implied, by the cheap standards of a public that thrives on gossip, "the new pornography," as Yale calls it. In this first scene Allen introduces the threat to Isaac's integrity and masculinity as the threat of exposure that accompanies the erosion of the boundaries between his public and his private life.[120] In addition to the sense of vulnerability occasioned by the dissolving "sphere of intimacy," then, there is also an apprehension about the loss of privacy and self-determination that occurs when one "commands" the attention of the public. As such, the risk of exposure subtly informs Isaac's other experiences in Manhattan as well, including his relationship to the underage Tracy ("as long as the cops don't burst in, I think we're gonna break a couple of records"). In his angry speech to Yale, after he learns that Yale has betrayed their friendship by seeing his lover Mary, he advocates the need to strive for a sense of personal integrity to be endorsed by a future audience: "someday we're gonna - we're gonna be like him! [Isaac pointing to a skeleton in the classroom where they are speaking.]. . . . I'll be hanging in a classroom one day. And -and I wanna make sure when I . . . thin out that I'm w-w-w-well thought of!" (265). Yacowar has suggested that "Allen's fear of the cold analytical touch of teachers who hang him in classrooms" can be heard in Isaac's anxiety about the world's posthumous scrutiny of his life (Yacowar 198).

Comic moments in both Annie Hall and Manhattan also reveal Allen's sensitivity to the changing parameters of public and private discourse (Paul 92).[121] In Annie Hall Alvy's conversations with Annie, for example, often seem to entail disturbing transgressions of the boundaries between public and intimate space. Alvy suffers embarrassment several times, first when Annie refers, rather loudly, to "getting [her] period" while they are standing in the lineup at the Bleeker Street Theater, and then again at another theater where they are waiting to see Ophuls' The Sorrow and the Pity. In the second queue, while Annie and Alvy discuss their "sexual problem," Alvy feels himself to be subjected to the overbearing opinions of an academic trying to impress his date with his comments on Fellini and Marshall McLuhan. Allen also avails himself of the peculiar comic possibilities of psychoanalytic language as a language that spans both private and public spheres, since it is a language of love whose subject matter may be deeply personal, yet it is also an objective scientific and public discourse. Two scenes in Manhattan involve embarrassing sexual confessions made in the formal public atmosphere of museums. While at an Equal Rights Amendment gala at the Museum of Modern Art Isaac hears one of the guests remark, "I finally had an orgasm, but my doctor said it was the wrong kind." Later as Isaac and Mary (Diane Keaton), who are in the early stages of their relationship, peruse the art in the Whitney Museum, Isaac has to remind Mary to be quieter after she unabashedly tells him, and anyone within hearing range, "My problem is I'm both attracted and repelled by the male organ." In all these incidents the woman is the agent of transgression who brings the sexual into the public realm and/or the formal world of art. This is also another way for Allen to sexualize the formal atmosphere of high art

and to link sexual desire to cultural aspiration.

The humour occasioned by the merging of public and private spheres points to a more diffuse and deeper rooted anxiety exhibited by Allen's characters regarding the potential loss of control over what might be called narrative boundaries in intimate relationships. A certain ambivalence is therefore evident in Alvy's behaviour during those episodes in Annie Hall in which Annie and Alvy view remembered scenes from each other's lives that occurred prior to their acquaintance. Annie Hall gives expression to the fantasy of being able to share one's past life with an audience of one's beloved, watching it from the same objectively bemused vantage point in the present as if it were a movie peopled with familiar character types. In taking Annie back to his boyhood home in Brooklyn, Alvy creates for Annie a modern (and peculiarly filmic) version of intimacy in which they watch scenes from his childhood together. This possibility for intimacy which "involves an aspiration for a narrative about something shared, a story about both oneself and others that will turn out in a particular way," a "view of life that unfolds intact within the intimate sphere"[122] is not unlike what Alvy seems to offer the viewer, particularly at the start of the film: "My father ran the bumper-car concession. There-there he is and there I am" (p. 6).[123] However, Alvy's memories are viewed from a distance that seems to provide him with needed assurance that even as he is sharing them with Annie he has escaped their inner hold on him, and that they are therefore unlikely to impinge in any painful or meaningful way upon his present life with Annie. It must also be remembered that Alvy "directs" and "narrates" the scenes of his life which he watches with Annie and with us and that in reviewing those scenes and the ones of Annie's life which he revisits

with her, it is he who insists on defining the dominant perspective of the shared narrative. Alvy reinterprets a scene of Annie and her previous lover Jerry (to Alvy's advantage) and afterwards she adjusts her own point of view to reflect his:

Alvy: Look at you, you're such a clown.

Annie: I look pretty.

Alvy: Well, yeah, you always look pretty, but that guy with you . . .

Jerry: Acting is like an exploration of the soul. I- it's very religious. Uh, like, uh, a kind of liberating consciousness. It's like a visual poem.

Alvy: (Laughing) Is he kidding with that crap?

Younger Annie: (Laughing) Oh, right. Right, yeah, I think I know exactly what you mean, when you say "religious."

Alvy: (Incredulous, to Annie) You do?

Annie: (Still watching) Oh, come on-I mean, I was still younger.

Alvy: Hey, that was last year.

Jerry: It's like when I think of dying. You know how I would like to die?

Younger Annie: No, how?

Jerry: I'd like to get torn apart by wild animals.

Alvy's voice: Heavy! Eaten by some squirrels.

Annie's voice: Hey, listen -I mean, he was a terrific actor, and look at him, he's neat-looking and he was emotional . . .Y-hey, I don't think you like emotion too much. Jerry stops rubbing the younger Annie's arm and slides down to the floor as she raises her foot toward his chest.

Jerry: Touch my heart . . .with your foot.

Alvy's voice: I- I may throw up!

CUT BACK TO:

EXTERIOR. BEACH-DUSK.

. . . .

Annie: He was creepy.

Alvy: Yeah, I-I think you're pretty lucky I came along (25-26).

Isaac's relationship with Mary Wilke in Manhattan eventually results similarly in her being "disarmed" of her point of view by him. That is, he challenges not only her intellectual opinions but also her understanding of her own sexual history. During their visit to the Whitney Museum where Mary asks his opinion of a sculpture, Isaac repeats the phrases that Mary had used at their first meeting to describe an exhibit of photographs which Isaac had found admirable and she had disliked. In reusing the language with which she had intimidated him earlier, Isaac implies the emptiness of her original opinions and reasserts his own self-conscious authority: "Its kind of got a marvelous negative capability" he repeats mockingly (242). Similarly Isaac re-construes Mary's sexual history, which is overshadowed by her ex-husband, Jeremiah, whom Mary always speaks of as an awesome and dominating sexual and intellectual presence in her life. When Jeremiah (Wallace Shawn) is finally seen he seems to Alvy a decidedly less imposing figure than he had been led to believe, and he deflates the image Mary has of her ex-husband by calling him a "little homunculus" (254). In Manhattan Isaac is threatened with the loss of the authority to interpret and to circumscribe the value and significance of

his own private life when his ex-wife Jill publishes her account of their life together. Since, as Umberto Eco suggests, this critical self-consciousness is an inherent aspect of Allen's character, Isaac/Allen defends himself against an attack on the authority inherent in his character.[124] In general, Allen's comedy betrays the fears of someone who, as suggested earlier, aspires to a "transcendental self-attention." In Manhattan this aspiration is pitted against the danger to Isaac's sense of identity represented by Jill's authorship, which is in turn thematically paralleled to the matter of his compromised paternal authority (Lasch 31). Isaac's role as father is challenged by the domestic situation of his ex-wife, their son Willie, and her lover Connie:

> Isaac [coming to collect Willie on his visiting day]: So how's Willie?
>
> Jill: Willie's fine. He's beginning to show some real talent in drawing.
>
> Isaac: Yeah, where-where does he get that? 'Cause you don't draw and I don't draw.
>
> Connie: I draw.
>
> Isaac: Yup, but there's no way you could be the actual father.

The loss of difference with which Jill's lesbianism challenges Isaac, and which threatens to render his masculine creative authority unnecessary, is coincident with her power to dislocate his sense of identity and to subject him to "the pressure to see [himself] with the eyes of strangers . . . as another commodity offered up for consumption on the open market" (Lasch, Minimal 30).

In her book Jill characterizes Isaac as, among other things, "narcissistic" and maintains that her partner Connie is a more "masterful" lover and that by comparison her sexual life

with Isaac was "an empty charade." The fear implied here is similar to that in Play it Again Sam, in Annie Hall's drug use during sex and in Manhattan in Mary's "overacting" in bed. Female sexuality presents the possibility of theatrics and inauthenticity at the heart of sexual love, so potentially undermining the "authenticity" of the male's performance. But more significantly, Jill's choice of words suggests a more worrisome threat posed by her authority. Isaac's personal history will lose its reality when it enters the realm of mass consumption -- a movie deal is in the works, she warns him (Lasch 96).

In Manhattan "the reality of the external world, the world of human associations and collective memories" is fading before the "tyranny of inner compulsions and anxieties" (Lasch 193). The scenes of Isaac and Mary's visit to the Hayden Planetarium, in which they are filmed in front of a photograph of Saturn, suggest an "artificial cosmos," a world abstracted and reduced to a variety of backdrops for their nervous conversations. Where there is no belief in a world that exists beyond the self the "need for illusions is more intense" (Lasch 193). The "inescapable facts of separation and death become bearable only because the reassuring world of man-made objects and human culture restores the sense of primary connection on a new basis" (Lasch 193).

As characters, both Mary and Jill bear the weight of Allen's sense of the degeneracy of modern culture and of the realm of human creation that mediates between subjective and objective worlds.[125] Isaac is therefore not only disturbed by Jill's mass market autobiography but he also expresses his disappointment at Mary's stooping to contribute to the "moronic" "contemporary American phenomenon" of novelizations rather than writing her own fiction (254).[126] The challenge these women present to Isaac cuts across the

interrelated realms of the sexual and the artistic. In pitting Isaac against it, Allen tests the meaning and value of the adversarial authority of the artist that still inheres in the celebrated neurotic outsider status of his persona.[127]

Jill's complaints about Isaac reiterate Mary's denigration of Isaac's (and Allen's) idol, Ingmar Bergman. Finally they are not overly damaging to Isaac, first because they are read aloud in front of Isaac's supportive friends (what are they hearing that they hadn't already known?), second, because they link him and his "idiosyncrasies and quirks" to the revered Swedish filmmaker, and third, because they reveal that Isaac had sex together with Jill and another woman, the implication of his sexual prowess offsetting any previous challenge to his masculinity. As Jill's criticisms of Isaac echo Mary's of Bergman, they refer doubly inside and outside the film. The implied charge against Allen's artistic aspirations is therefore partly contradicted by the implication of Isaac's sexual charm, which has been sufficiently potent to inhibit temporarily his wife's lesbianism, to allow him to take Yale's place with Mary, and especially to win Tracy's devotion.

If Mary and Jill come to be associated with a degraded culture that weakens the distinction between subjective and objective worlds, threatening the boundaries of an integral subjectivity, Tracy apparently embodies the symbolic possibility of a restorative connection to the fading external world of memory. While he and Mary are frequently seen in a landscape that reveals signs of instability and decay, his meetings with Tracy occur in locations seemingly untouched by time: an old fashioned pizza parlor or soda fountain, a hansom cab ride in Central Park.[128] Tracy incarnates the desired nexus between Isaac's real and his imaginatively restored milieu.[129] It is fitting therefore that she

is included in the list of artworks and artists that constitute the bridge between life and death in Isaac's opinion, "God's answer to Job."

In Manhattan, as Graham McCann suggests, Allen looks longingly back at "the two lost cultures, those of the gracefully glorious city and the gracefully glamorous cinema" (McCann 20). In the final moments of the film Isaac is a solitary artist figure, and he is solitary by virtue of choice. Yet if he is an outsider the ending affirms that he is also at the very heart of a self-created milieu. The return too late to Tracy, the long run to her apartment, the view of her framed by the glass doors, as though she were already consigned to a mythical cinematic past, the luxury of her chauffeur, her long Veronica Lake hair, her gesture of brushing it, all these must be recognized as evocations of a desire that cannot be easily extricated from a desire elicited by the cinema itself. With some slight modifications [shown below in brackets], what Jonathan Romney says about Allen's Shadows and Fog (1991) could be said of Manhattan as well. That is, it seems to be "immensely revelatory about Allen's chronic outsider complex":

> The film explicitly sets him apart from the rest of contemporary cinema, art-house and mainstream, and allows him to claim a mythical black and white past as his own private ghetto [haven]. In Kleinman's [Isaac's] isolation, Allen's fantasy of an ideal cinema is represented as. . .an absolute apartness (9).

It was immediately apparent to critics of Stardust Memories (1980) that Allen had recalculated the distance between the artist and the public world and that this distance no longer evoked a romantic nostalgia but was characterized by a certain animosity toward

his audience. Recognizing Allen's efforts to "leave [his] audience" and escape entrapment in his comic persona critics in turn were almost unanimously repelled. [130] The film, according to Hirsch, is the artist's "declaration of independence" from 'Woody Allen'" (196).[131] Like his character Sandy Bates, who is also a filmmaker, Allen seems to suppose that if he is to be true to his dark artistic vision he must not continue to make the comedy films that have previously endeared him to his public and earned him his celebrity. The terms of his artistic autonomy seem to depend on his setting "up a new relationship with his audience," one in which he will be recognized as "someone both 'other' and better-more serious, . . than a zany surrealist comedian" (Hirsch 196). Struggling to disentangle his own aspirations for recognition from the fortuitous likelihood of his appeal, Allen attempts to destroy the comic mask by which he is known to his audience, precipitating what Richard Sennett has called a "crisis of authority" (Sennett 132). Allen's defiant gesture seems like an expression of will against chance, or perhaps against the aleatory law of comedy itself.[132]

The difficulty that Allen faces in trying to give dramatic moral significance to his alter-ego's aesthetic and romantic crises in Stardust Memories seems to stem from the fact that the posture of despair familiar from earlier films now seems obviously intended, or rather seems to have lost the innocence of its comic intention. Sandy Bates is a male Cassandra warning of the impending horror that no one else seems to see approaching: "Hey did anybody read on the front page of the Times that matter is decaying? Am I the only one that saw that?" (286). There is an innocence in Allen's bluntly expressed fascination with death and universal dissolution that sometimes survives and transcends

the distracted itinerary of non-tendentious, or what Lasch calls the "pointless" humour in his earlier slapstick films and writing (Culture 50). (Although in getting children to voice the tough existential questions, as he sometimes does, he often runs the risk of seeming to congratulate himself on his precocious self-awareness.) Perhaps it survives mostly in retrospect simply by virtue of his continued loyalty to the subject over the course of so many films. However, there are certain moments in his earlier works, for example, in the closing monologue of Love and Death, in which a genuine anxiety about human mortality is perceptible behind the jokes.[133] Nevertheless, in Stardust Memories, the impression of a sincere philosophical interest in the human condition has worn off: "the moralist has restated his imponderable questions about man's destiny so often that [in this film] even he sounds tired of them; he tosses them off unemotionally-it's his ascetic reflex."[134] We can no longer believe in the connection between his despair over the fate of mankind and the purity of his artistic intent, which now seems tainted with the desire for self-aggrandizement. Allen anticipates this criticism as he does many others in this film: "What's he got to be miserable about?" a studio executive says of Sandy. "Doesn't he know he's got the greatest gift of all, the gift of laughter?" (283).

As a character Sandy Bates so closely approximates Woody Allen's public image as an artist that he has virtually no distinguishing features of his own, and therefore "no credibility as a character" (Hirsch 197).[135] As Hirsch phrases it, "the distance between Woody and Sandy is invisible to the naked eye, and so we're seeing what looks uncomfortably like Woody Allen acting out his anxieties on the subject of being Woody Allen" (197). As a consequence "the film's focus is not only intensely personal, it is

intensely insular" (Hirsch 197). We find it difficult to assess the extent of Allen's self-irony as there is no clear mediating point of view on Sandy Bates (Hirsch 204; Simon 417-19; Pogel 136).[136] Though the film takes place almost entirely within Sandy's mind in shifting interrelated levels of his consciousness, it also "keeps us at a distance, offering us few opportunities to see reflections of ourselves" in him (Hirsch 197-98). Allen avoids any collusion with his audience on the nature of Sandy's behaviour and therefore the audience is excluded from "the charmed circle of characterization" which Bayley describes (230). As a consequence we begin to see Allen as unforthcoming if not "shifty and evasive" (Hirsch 204).

When we are not able to identify with Sandy we may alternately see ourselves mirrored in the many fans who come to honor him at the retrospective of his films being held at the Stardust Hotel. This possibility has occasioned the ire of a number of critics since Sandy's public is invariably comprised of "grotesque, fawning" people (Hirsch 197-98). The camera seems to express little moral obligation to the fans who turn to it (Sandy and we are often placed in the position of the camera) in supplication or judgment. Rather than offering these characters to the viewer "in a spirit of complete intimacy," the camera turns "the supporting characters into specimens to be laughed at . . . [a]. . . collection of misfits toward whom he [Allen] is declaring his separateness rather than his sense of community" (Bayley 233; Hirsch 201).[137]

We might compare this critical perception of the hostility in Allen's relation to his surrogate audience with the Marx brothers' hostility toward each other and the other characters in their films as well as towards their audience. Mark Winokur argues that the

hostile comedy of the Marx brothers is born of the attempt to locate "the existence of a more genuine other under the disguise of the dowager, gangster, or art connoisseur": [138]

> the Brothers' treatment of . . . authorities contains two related dynamics; the displaced desire to find someone who is more like oneself, a landsman, and a merciless satirizing of the other as social other. This satire is an infantile sadism that has at its root a desire to punish its object for not avowing identity with oneself as well as a desire to correct a condescending social ease by recreating it as dis-ease (131).

Conversely, Allen's hostility is not motivated by the desire to uncover a kinship either with the other characters in Stardust Memories or with the audience, but rather to repudiate such an avowed identity. The characters who comprise Allen's surrogate audience are not portraits infused "in the Wildean sense with the character and spirit of their artist."[139] Rather, in relation to him they have "the status of visions, dreams, nightmares, dependents."[140] His creatures occupy a region of shadows emanating from him but projected away from him, disavowed rather than separate and to be identified with, not "patronized and possessed" in the way Bayley meant but projections disowned (Bayley 228). Jacqueline Rose provides a definition of projection as the "incapacity . . . to recognize your relation to something which seems to assail you from outside. The subject expels what he or she cannot bear to acknowledge as his or her own reality itself. . ."(14 Rose). In Pauline Kael's description of Allen's "supporting characters" she hints at how his projective identification seems to have a selective ethnic logic to it and furthermore how Allen has seemed to use the authority of the European filmmaker Fellini

(in what is clearly homage to 81/2), to validate his hostility.[141]

> Woody Allen has often been cruel to himself in physical terms-making himself look smaller, scrawnier, ugly. Now he's doing it to his fans. People who, viewed differently, might look striking or mysterious have their features distorted by the camera lens and by Felliniesque makeup; they become fat-lipped freaks wearing outsize thick goggles. (They could serve as illustrations for the old saw that Jews are like other people, only more so.) People whose attitudes, viewed differently, might seem friendly or, at worst, over-enthusiastic and excited are turned into morons (Kael 185).

Projective identification, which Rose explains is one form of projection described by Melanie Klein, is "the model or prototype of later aggressivity, a mechanism which aims to protect the ego" (Rose 14). In order "to constitute ourselves, we must . . . throw out, reject our nonselves," the "extimate objects" which though they are "rejected, projected out" are the "never fully lost objects of self-identity" (Copjec 128; Berlant 286). Trying to assert his freedom to establish his own authoritative integrity Allen abjects the "too short, fat, squint-eyed or long-nosed Stardust guests, burdening and perhaps contaminating him with their failures" (Jacobs 151). In a sense, though his surrogate audience members figure as so many doubles who continually recall him to his past, their projected presence might be seen as essential to his autonomy. Copjec's writing on the vampiric double that appears during the Enlightenment describes this relation by which the subject is freed from attachment to the world by his attachment to the double.

> Rather than another principle, the Enlightenment double was conceived as nothing, nothing but the negation of the subject's attachment to the world. This double, then, guaranteed the autonomy of the subject, its freedom from a pathetic existence in which it could be manipulated by other things, persons or traditions. But once this double was thus detached, once it was set loose in the world, it was inevitable that the subject would occasionally "run in to it," approach it a little too closely. Whenever this happens, anxiety signals us to take our distance once again" (Copjec 136).

Sandy's mistrust of his audience is accompanied by an ineluctable sense of indebtedness to them. [142] His worries about being dispossessed of his film by his producers, who want to re-edit it themselves to ensure that it will appeal to the taste of the general public, do not fully account for the feeling of dreadful obligation and dependency that seems to surround his relationship to his public. All those who besiege Sandy, soliciting from him some kind of commitment, an autograph, a memento for a charity auction, sex, psychological counseling, career advice, etc., are made to appear fundamentally unwholesome. As Kael remarks very interestingly, he "seems to feel that they want him to heal them" (Kael 185). At the center of his aesthetic and romantic crises is the notion that his art, the childish art of illusion which comes naturally to him, is inadequate to the task of "healing" that is required in both these areas of his life.

A suspicion of the excessive neediness of the other underlies Sandy's romantic relationships with Isobel and Dorrie as well. In particular, the prospect of engagement to Isobel is perceived in the same light as the demands made of him by his public.[143] Isobel's

children, who make a scene in an ice cream parlor by calling Sandy "fool" and "imbecile" seem to combine the annoying attention of his fans, who prefer his early funny films, with the commitments of a settled domesticity that Isobel and he are contemplating (346). Unlike the members of his public, though, Isobel and Dorrie, both maternal figures, reflect idealized aspects of the Other as seen through his cultural aspirations.[144]

Allen aesthetically elevates the significance of the neuroses that formerly had provided the points of comic contact between his audience and his persona by transferring these symptoms of "weakness" or cultural susceptibility to Sandy's lover, Dorrie (Charlotte Rampling).[145] The "collision of schizophrenic fact and . . . romantic illusion" in Dorrie is a means of "romanticizing . . . art as pathology" (Jacobs 152; Rose 23). Because her mental illness is rooted in Dorrie's family history of madness it is perceived as a facet of her rarefied upper middle class life, and has something of the erotic taboo about it as well (her mother's being in a sanitarium provides opportunities for Dorrie and her father to flirt). Consequently, the suicide of her mother seems to have a kind of exotic appeal to Sandy:

> It's funny because in my family nobody ever committed suicide, nobody. . . this was just not a middle-class alternative, you know. I - My mother was too busy running the boiled chicken through the deflavorizing machine to think about shooting herself or anything (308).

In Rampling's Dorrie Allen may cherish and be a champion of the artistic sensibility which her neurotic symptoms, her anxiety, nervousness and lack of confidence, have come to symbolize in his persona without in any way "debasing" them by exhibiting them

himself as a comic performer.

Allen's characters, whether idealized or denigrated, are products of the desire to be recognized as an authority. They are also therefore implicit appeals for recognition by an authority. The question of "who is accountable to whom" is made very complicated by this film (Rose 13). One of the general assumptions about the auteur is that he or she will not be inhibited or influenced by the demands of his or her audience but will remain faithful to a self-discovered aesthetic. Allen himself seems to hold this assumption.

> The best film I ever did . . . was Stardust Memories. It was my least popular film. That may automatically mean it was my best film. It was the closest that I came to achieving what I set out to achieve (McCann 208).

It is clear from Allen's formulation (commercial failure = artistic success) that he imagines setting his own criteria of artistic excellence, without considering the desires of his audience or the economic pressures of the industry. Yet when he appeared to act on this commonly held notion about authority and to break the "terms of this secret treaty by publishing it" as he seemed to do in Stardust Memories viewers felt some form of rejection. [146] It was also a commonly held feeling that the film "constitute(d) a direct communication between author and spectator/critic" and that what it communicated most clearly was that viewers no longer had the right means of apprehending the film or its central character (Sennett 153; Stam 157). [147] Nancy Pogel concluded that "audiences of Allen's film are called upon to establish distance between themselves and Sandy, and to question their roles vis-a`-vis charismatic public figures and media-produced heroes" (Pogel 138). Similarly, Hirsch's reading leads him to understand that the "public

disavowal of his [Allen's] popularity, [in Stardust Memories] warns us that we can't expect to go on liking him in the same old way" (198). The viewer feels that whatever ready response he or she has brought to the film is being rejected by Allen as inadequate or inappropriate. Paradoxically, though Allen insists on his own authoritative criteria many of his viewers felt that he put tremendous effort into anticipating and subverting any critical opposition to his work:

> He anticipates almost anything that you might say about Stardust Memories and ridicules you for it. Finally you feel you are being told that you have no right to any reaction to Woody Allen's movies. He is not just the victim here, he's the torturer (Kael, "The Frog" 187).

The passionate nature of the response to being excluded from the pleasures of identifying with an authoritative agency in Stardust Memories suggests more than simply the lack of a sense of irony on the part of the critics. [148] Robert Stam has noted the personal emotional charge of some of the criticism and its vengeful logic. Critics who feel, as Foster Hirsch does, that the movie "insults us," who feel betrayed and despised by the author, retaliate in kind (Hirsch 197; Stam 158). Stam cites in particular David Denby's article, "Woody's Poison-Pen Letter":

> If you have ever admired a film of Woody Allen's, you are a creep. And if you've admired all of them, you are a sycophantic little bug, a person without class, self- respect, manners or style.. . . As for me- a critic- I'm all of these things and worse. We're all creeps, all of us who admire Woody Allen.

Stam perceives the following statement as Denby's "massive retaliation" for "what he takes as an attack on himself": "Stardust Memories is a poisonously bad movie-incoherent, madly self-important, often boring- and the strongest emotion in it is disgust for other people."[149]

Stam suggests that in the "very violence of the language employed against Allen's film- 'vicious,' 'mean-spirited,' 'vain'"- we can find evidence that "we are dealing with what Christian Metz calls 'bad object' criticism" (Stam 158). Stam describes this as the "critical tendency to project libidinal or destructive feelings onto certain privileged objects. . . to confuse the actual film, with its complex weaving of multiple codes, with the film such as it has pleased or displeased" (158). Allen himself has been perplexed by the emotional investment in his authority by viewers: "They're just films. Yet they treat me like a genius at times, at other times like a criminal. Because I've produced 'bad art'" (McCann 169).

Allen openly acknowledges that his sense of "an ambivalent love/hate relationship between an audience and a celebrity" informed Stardust Memories (Jacobs 147).[150] What I am suggesting is that the mutual hostility that has come to the surface in the meeting between author and the viewer of this film is the result of a mutual need for authority that has not been resolved, even when the viewer and the author believe that each has backed out of the contract, that each has rejected his now burdensome obligation to the other. The "theme of derivativeness" that is found in reviews of Stardust Memories and the charges that Allen was "pretending" to be an artist imply that viewers have perceived something illegitimate in Allen's authority. [151] Yet, the detectable outrage on either side suggests that there has been only an "illusory disengagement," from authority, and that

even though both the viewer and the author may feel that they have been released from this bond, it obviously remains (Sennett 125-164).

Chapter Three: Honourable Mention:

Celebrity and Integrity in Zelig, Broadway Danny Rose and Crimes and Misdemeanors

My splendors are Menagerie-

But their Completeless Show

Will entertain the Centuries

When I, am long ago,

When I, am long ago,

An Island in dishonored Grass-

Whom none but Beetles-know.

---Emily Dickinson[152]

In the group of films that includes Zelig (1983), Broadway Danny Rose (1984), and Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989), Allen modifies his comic pose as defiant social critic and existential sufferer and depicts himself as a "loser" and a victim within the context of the culture of modern celebrity. Each film could stand as a skeptical indictment of fame, its emptiness and injustices, the ephemeral nature of the immortality it extends to the performer, and the fickleness of the public's love.[153] Complicating such a thesis, however, is the idea that in Allen's earlier comedies, his psychological pain and spiritual alienation are transcended by being performed. His persona accordingly represents an image of modern "grace," to use Harold Brodkey's term, which has always been inseparable from the fact of his renown and success as a performer.[154]

Though it could be said that Allen's angst-ridden postures appeal to and reflect the modern shallowness which Saul Bellow and Allan Bloom describe as "nihilism without the abyss," there appears to be more at issue in Allen's films than his making us "feel comfortable with nihilism."[155] Nor is it simply that the director's celebrity status belies the satirical intent of these films, since any satire in them is weak and strangely unfocussed at any rate.[156] Rather, these three films are haunted by the guilt and inauthenticity of visible celebrity. Typically, in his earlier films Allen has played his celebrity status off against his schlemiel persona and so augmented his authority as the outsider who interrogates the bourgeois culture from which he is alienated.[157] In these three films Allen also tries to define the moral authenticity of the marginalized position.[158] They also show Allen's evident "fascination with the drama of winners and losers" and bring out the problem of Allen presenting himself as a victim, which he had not previously been in his films.[159] Allen plays the loser here without his characteristic hostile wit and self-consciousness (Kael, "Vulgarians" 120). Broadway Danny Rose in particular is among those films which Lloyd Rose says have "an acrid edge to them" because of the serious and often self-pitying light in which Allen's character is portrayed (94). Zelig and Broadway Danny Rose have been seen as artistic "experiments" in which Allen is "no longer relying on the familiar Woody character to provide the jokes as a safety net for his films" (Blake 99).[160] This may be another way of Allen's eluding the customary expectations of his audience, of being "in his movies and leav[ing] himself out of them at the same time" and so of asserting his right to be auteur of something other than his persona (Rose 95; Schickel 94).

Zelig is a mock documentary set in the years 1928 and following, about the fictional Leonard Zelig (Allen), a man once famous, now apparently effaced from public memory. The film, as Graham McCann suggests, is the record "of a disappearing hero" (McCann 145).[161] Ironically, Zelig first achieves public notice because while in a trance-like state he is able to transform himself physically into anyone he is with, thus achieving a protective anonymity. Allen, too, demonstrates a genius for disappearing that calls attention to itself. Inserting himself into archival footage of the 1920's and 1930's and into new images expertly faked to look as though they are of that era, Allen both recedes into the historical past and also stands out as an impish, albeit morose, anachronistic presence. The other people in the photographs and film footage are consigned to history; but because Allen appears and disappears there only by audacious design, he seems to mock the mortifying powers of the camera and to contest what McCann calls the "fatal trajectories" of the captured moment (McCann 182).[162] Paradoxically, although Allen seems to use this film to eulogize himself and dismiss the relative importance of his art ("it is of course ironic to see how quickly he has faded from memory," says Saul Bellow of Zelig) he has also created what looks like an archival record of his historical significance, complete with testimony and certification from well-known intellectuals such as Bellow, Susan Sontag, Irving Howe, Professor John Morton Blum, and Dr. Bruno Bettelheim. Especially in Zelig, but throughout his work, as Jonathan Romney has noted, "there is an urge to vanish that is itself no less exhibitionist; there's always the need to elicit the gasp that greets the conjurer's disappearing act" (Romney 9).[163]

To make a spectacular performance of one's disappearance is not only an affront to the

corrosive powers of time and the waning memory of posterity. It is also a conceivable means of both asserting and defending oneself against the distortions stimulated by the other, an experience to which the visible celebrity is exaggeratedly subject[164] Zelig's predicament is accordingly illuminated by considering the ironies surrounding the capacity of the image to "preserve and enhance the presence of identity" (Lasch Culture 100). The involuntary nature of his impostures, which are essentially visual, metaphorically suggests the alienated self-consciousness that photography has engendered and that the conditions of mediated visible celebrity have exacerbated. Although the camera may offer immortality to its subject (Zelig at times even seems dependent on the camera for his identity),[165] because it makes available the "ability to stand outside the self," it also contributes to the sense of consciousness being separate from bodily identity. Roland Barthes has written about the uncanny experience of being the subject of a photograph:

> For the photograph is the advent of myself as other: a cunning dissociation of consciousness from identity. Even odder: it was before Photography that men had the most to say about the vision of the double. . . . In front of the lens. . . I invariably suffer from the sensation of inauthenticity, sometimes of imposture. ... I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro-version of death (of parenthesis): I am truly becoming a specter. . . . What society makes of my photograph, what it reads there I do not know . . . ; but when I discover myself in the product of this operation, what I see is that I have become Total-Image, which is to say Death in person (12-13).[166]

As a media celebrity, Zelig is like Woody Allen according to Jonathan Romney, "a simulacrum of himself . . . in the terms of the Jewish myth [he is] his own Golem, a construct brought to life . . . and become bigger than the real, effectively eclipsing it" (Romney 7). Dwarfed by his own mutating and proliferating public image, and without "continuous physical presence," Zelig has no more than a tenuous relationship to his identity as it is manifest in the "endless exhibitions" of his metamorphic abilities which are promoted by his half-sister Ruth (Braudy 344):

> NARRATOR'S VOICE-OVER Though the shows and parties keep Zelig's sister and her lover rich and amused, Zelig's own existence is a non-existence. Devoid of personality, his human qualities long since lost in the shuffle of life, he sits alone quietly staring into space, a cipher, a non-person, a performing freak. He who wanted only to fit in-to belong, to go unseen by his enemies and be loved-neither fits in nor belongs, is supervised by enemies, and remains uncared for (56).

The problem for the artist which Allen introduces with Zelig's condition is that the reflection of the self which the audience validates, even idolizes, is felt to have been emptied of the self's presence.[167] Allen evokes sympathy for Zelig because his public visibility is a kind of living death and his obligatory performances do not seem to reveal or exhaust that part of him which, ironically, is withering for lack of the right kind of attention (Braudy 582; Nichols 104). Showing Zelig's celebrated identity to be "submerged in and defined by interpretive communities outside [himself]," Allen emphasizes Zelig's vulnerability to "the public eye [which] . . . can steal the self away by

imposing its own meaning" (C. Morris 176; Braudy 472).[168] As Braudy suggests, the celebrity's desire to be validated by being seen is therefore paradoxically accompanied by the desire to disappear and to reassert a "more private definition of character" than the one represented by the bodily image that is known and in a sense possessed by, or obligated to, his audience (Braudy 579).[169]

The sentiment with which Allen depicts Zelig's passive enthrallment to his audience is inflected variously and at times seems to partake of what Richard Poirier calls the "glamour of having been dispossessed of a personality."[170] There is a certain existential cachet attached to Zelig's performances during which he is bound to perpetuate, Sisyphean-like, a succession of burdensome roles.[171] It might seem pertinent at this point to entertain Allan Bloom's comment to the effect that Allen's comedy tends to make us "comfortable with nihilism" (146). Although Allen finds nothing of the tragic grandeur that Camus finds in the self-consciousness of purposeless repetitive effort he does frequently claim distinction for himself as "the self-conscious role-player, never quite at home in his role, interesting because he is trying so hard to be like the others, who are ridiculous because they are unaware of their emptiness." [172] Zelig is a unique Allen creation insofar as he is both aware of his emptiness and is also unconsciously compelled to impersonate others, yet there is also an apparent idealizing of the artist's estrangement. Whatever sense of himself he might sequester from the public's eye is a measure of his integrity and authenticity, of the possibility for original self-definition.

Although Allen is primarily inclined to valorize and sentimentalize the plight of the successful artist who maintains an empty existence in the shadow of his own celebrated

image, he also betrays a certain uneasiness regarding the artist's duplicitous being and often implies a compulsion to justify it. Accordingly, Zelig's passivity and lack of volition ostensibly exempt him from any responsibility for his impostures. His admired and exploitable talent is presented as a freakish condition, a power "that seems to inhabit [him] rather than to be in [his] control" (Braudy 580). Because he appears to be a victim of his "gift" for mimicry and because his transformations are apparently self-denying rather than self-expressive, Zelig is made to seem innocent of any willful intent to pander to or to deceive his audience with his impersonations.

It is in this context that Zelig might also be viewed as a veiled self-justification of Allen's "penchant for parody," his talent for disappearing inside the works and styles of other artists, especially in his earlier writings and films.[173] Zelig comically addresses the question of inauthenticity that Allen at some level acknowledges in his own parodic methods, which have often involved his reproduction of style, technique or generic form without emotional or intellectual engagement with the subject matter of the original (Lahr 94).[174] When Dr. Fletcher (Mia Farrow) first sees Zelig after he is brought into Manhattan Hospital, she mistakes him for the psychiatrist he is pretending to be:

> It's not that he was making any sense at all. It was just a conglomeration of psychological double-talk that he had apparently heard, or perhaps was familiar with through reading. . . . And the funny thing was that his delivery was quite fluid and might have been really quite convincing to someone who did not know any better.[175]

Allen's oblique self-reflexiveness is never really confessional and the "White Room"

psychoanalytic sessions, during which Dr. Fletcher tries to uncover the underlying causes for Leonard's compulsive impersonations, are mostly occasions for the comic's stand-up persona to emerge from the photographic stillness of the past in which he seems caught: "I've got to get back to town. I- I have an interesting case treating, treating two sets of Siamese twins with split personalities. I'm getting paid by eight people"(68). Any overt acknowledgment of guilt or inauthenticity enters the realm of performance where it has always been successful as such. It therefore brings only the obligation to reproduce more of the same kind of performance that the audience expects.[176] Allen imagines a rather easy, yet paradoxical, way out of this impasse in Zelig when he resorts to self-mythologizing. Over the course of Zelig's initial "cure" for his habitual mimicry he begins to manifest aspects of the familiar opinionated Allen persona and thereby to achieve an integral identity independent of his audience. [177]

Although the earlier part of the film presents the artist as being "innocently" obligated to the media and to his public, his identity proliferating uncontrollably in a vast commercialized network, later suggestions of the artist's culpability begin to surface. [178] Subsequent to his engagement to Dr. Fletcher, Zelig is sued by numerous people who claim that he has defrauded them in one or another of his poses, and by several women whom he has apparently married while under the influence of different personalities. Eventually the love story of Zelig and Dr. Fletcher takes emotional precedence over concerns related to the charges of fraudulence and the sexual scandal, and, upon their escape from Nazi Germany, Zelig is very quickly absolved of all guilt for having misrepresented himself. Finally, though, it is precisely the question of the impostor's

guilty intention that Zelig's unconscious behaviour makes doubtful.

The relationship of the celebrated performer to his public may result in an "unintended intimacy" but it also inherently involves a certain degree of manipulation and deception on the part of the performer (Schickel 1-22). Norman Mailer, who has perhaps analyzed his own fame and its psychological and emotional consequences more rigorously than most celebrities, describes his changing sense of self-consciousness upon being thrust into the public eye as a young author made newly famous by the publication of his successful first novel. At that time he finds himself becoming aware of a threatening proximity to his public. In a "psychic landscape of assassins and victims" he perceives himself, and his art as well, as being engaged in a war of emotions with his audience:

I had been moved from the audience to the stage- I was on the instant, a man- I could arouse more emotion in others than they could arouse in me; if I had once been a cool observer because some part of me knew that I had more emotion than most and so must protect myself with a cold eye, now I had to guard against arousing the emotions of others, particularly since I had a strong conscience, and a strong desire to do just that-exhaust the emotions of others.[179]

Entertaining an audience, moving them to tears or laughter, necessarily implicates the successful performer in some form of willful emotional pretense. Bob Hope, for example, seemed conscious of this when he admitted to feelings of culpability at the time when he began to be well-known. John Lahr reports that

> to Hope, who referred to comedy as a 'scam,' laughter was another way of getting away with something. When he first began making good money on

> Rudy Vallee's Fleishman Yeast Hour in 1930, Hope recalled, "I used to get the money and run around the corner and count it. . . . Like I was stealing it. And with my act I think mostly of theft (Lahr, "C. E. O." 68).

Allen has revealed similar feelings regarding his work and the acclaim that it has earned him. In an interview with Leonard Probst, Allen is quoted as saying that when a film of his is well received he "always think[s] that [he] got away with another one." When asked subsequently by Probst, "do you feel you're a fraud?", Allen replies carefully, "that may be a heavy word. It's conceivable that more people have more regard for my work than I feel it deserves."[180]

Richard Schickel, speculating on the power of the celebrity, offers another observation about the source of guilt for the famous personality:

> the power is an unearned increment, and effortlessly earned power is not as efficacious or as satisfying to use in America, as power that is effortfully gathered. It is suspect and it makes its bearer feel vaguely guilty (Schickel 94-95).[181]

Having been bestowed with seemingly gratuitous power the celebrity is released from ordinary social restrictions limiting behaviour, self-expression and aspiration. Norman Mailer's experience again might serve as an example. William Schrader has suggested that the opportunity of transcending these limitations brought Mailer an "anguished freedom" which Schrader characterizes as an existential dread. He quotes Mailer:

> I was free, or at least whatever was still ready to change in my character had escaped from the social obligations which suffocate others. I could

> seek to become what I chose to be, and if I failed- there was the ice-pick of fear! I would have nothing to excuse failure . . . . I was much too free (Schrader 85).

Zelig's uninhibited powers of transformation are merely superficial it seems, and do not allow a fuller articulation of the self, but they do metaphorically represent a freedom from encumbrances analogous to that Mailer imagined for the celebrity (see note 26). For as he implies, the identity of the celebrity is formed outside of bonds of familial connections, of blood and social kinship, legal or otherwise (though not of distribution and production networks). Accordingly, Dr. Fletcher has to fight for legal custody of Leonard in order to treat him. The celebrity's freedom to transform is limited to the private realm; his persona remains in fief to the public. Allen's comedy rests on the paradox that though this existential "freedom" is inherent to the alienated self-consciousness of visible celebrity, and might be dignified by that name, it is also virtually indistinguishable from social license and prestige. Allen presents himself as being indentured to the audience that celebrates his fictional identity and elevates his sense of alienation from this identity to the level of an agonizing existential freedom. Yet in reality, partly because his celebrity exempts him from social restrictions, he must find himself moving further and further away from any resemblance to the portrait of comic innocence which the public admires. Though his freedom may serve to make the celebrity immanently "forgivable" for social transgressions, as Allen implies when Zelig's polygamy is brought to light, it may also be tainted by a sense of illegitimacy and guilt (Brodkey 77).

The unexpected resurfacing of embarrassing forgotten versions of himself from the

past leaves Zelig responsible, but not responsible, for his actions, "guilty but not guilty" of a prodigious unlawful sexuality.[182] In Allen's Purple Rose of Cairo (1985) there are similar hints of a dubious burden of guilt arising from the relationship between the artist and his creation. This film also features a situation in which the performer's alter-ego (Tom Baxter), in this case a character he has created or "fleshed out" in a film, escapes the control of the actor who plays him (Gil Shepherd-both Shepherd and Baxter are played by Jeff Daniels) by walking off the screen and attempting to take up the wondrous challenges of an unscripted life. Informed that his creation has declared himself to be autonomous, the actor immediately fears for his own reputation, suspecting that Baxter's new sense of freedom might lead to transgressive behaviour, such as perhaps the ravaging of women, for which he (Shepherd) will also be liable.

Leo Braudy directs our attention to an historical link between the guilt of an unimpeded ambition and a hyperbolic sexual posturing, a thematic pairing which is useful when thinking of Gil Shepherd's (needless, as it turns out) worries about his alter-ego running amok, as well as of Zelig's nightmarish legal predicament and of the secondary characters in Allen's other films:

> But we should also note how often in the history of the nineteenth century's preoccupation with public fame it is mockingly associated with an ostentatious male sexual swaggering: an aggressive visibility that breaks away from a more retiring nature to sally forth into the world, often in search of what turns out to be self-destruction. Such stories, like the stories of doubles who are released only to attack the "normal" self, can easily be

> read as fantasies of uncontrollable ambition, the desire for fame in the present with the full understanding of its fragility and insubstantiality, the search for recognition and visibility with the fearful awareness of its emptiness (Braudy 466).[183]

In his earlier works Allen repeatedly pairs himself with, and differentiates himself from, a character (often played by Tony Roberts) whose hedonism and licentiousness signal his capitulation to the guilty pleasures of commercial success, and coincidentally his abandonment of moral and aesthetic principles.[184] Nick Apollo Forte's Lou Canova in Broadway Danny Rose and Alan Alda's Lester in Crimes and Misdemeanors are variations of this hyper-libidinous inauthentic artist figure. As alter-egos for Allen's heroes they enable him to define by contrast his morally circumspect position as an artist unwilling to betray personal commitments and artistic ideals in exchange for commercial profit and notoriety and power. (However, he is also in a symbiotic relationship with them.) The generalized but strict opposition between commerce and artistry that is represented in the doubled characters of these films is part of what is necessary to Allen's comic "presentation of guiltlessness," his attempt to keep "in active existence something childlike. . .ie. innocent, victimizable- and ultimately victimized" (Brodkey 72).

Jerry Lewis has also endeavored to keep alive something child-like and victimizable in his public persona. However, his career provides an example of how full blown exhibitionist desires can be presented self-righteously as being in the service of a vulnerable, unwitting, and ingenuous comic spirit. For his profile of the comedian in The New Yorker, James Kaplan followed Lewis to the University of Texas where the comedian

was to appear for free at an event organized by Victims Outreach. Backstage before he is to go on Lewis is informed that only fifty people have showed up to hear him speak. He is outraged:

> 'This is humiliating!' he shouted. 'I can't take Jerry Lewis out in front of fifty people, for free! What would that do to his psyche? I have to protect and defend Jerry Lewis! He's nine years old, and I have to live with him.'[185]

Lewis's tantrum is momentary; he does eventually face his relatively small audience and the intimation of public indifference which he fears will be damaging to his alter-ego. However, his outburst suggests the need for a qualitative response to Mailer's enthusiasm for the unconstrained self-creative will. Lewis, in his latter years, has become fixated upon an image from his past, "arrested narcissistically at a moment when he has struck a . . . posture which was an excuse to escape from the present . . . into an abstraction that enabled him to be what he willed to be" (Sypher 32). As a performer he seems unmindful of the risk involved in continuing to promote an identity with his youthful and innocent creation (which was never all that naive to begin with, at least in his acts with Martin, in which sexual innuendo suggested experience beyond the reach of the boyish persona). His hysterical fatherly solicitude is expressed on behalf of an idealized confusion of his comic persona and a pre-adolescent self-image which he has long since ceased to be able to embody with the necessary self-irony. In each attempt made by the aging entertainer to endow his self-portrait with the enduring (to his mind) comic values of innocence and spontaneity, he not only gives up the preemptive power of self-parody, he also never fails

to remind the audience of his imposture, and of the mounting pressure put on him, and them, to repress awareness of what the portrait obviously excludes, especially any evidence of the hardened ego and increasingly decrepit body of the veteran comic.[186]

The opposite risk to the comedian who presents himself as an innocent is that the audience may be unwilling to look beyond the comic portrait to the artist and, as in Poe's story, the likeness will begin to drain the model of its life (see note #19). In Man on the Moon, Milos Forman's recent fictional biography of Andy Kaufman (played by Jim Carrey), the comic's fans are reluctant to accept him as anyone else but his sweetly simple, generically foreign character "Latka," and Kaufman is at pains to "outlive" this identity if he is to continue to provoke a spontaneous or genuine reaction from his audience. Kaufman's career, like Zelig's, evokes the question of how the artist's desire for recognition could go unfulfilled in the "successful" performance. The scene of Kaufman's funeral, in which a video image of the comic as Latka singing "It's a Beautiful World" is projected behind the open casket containing his corpse, makes it clear that the comic image of the child/man lives at the expense, not only of the abject body, but also of whatever it is that animates the comedian and drives him to perform.

In order to retain the power to surprise and manipulate his audience, Kaufman disguises himself as Tony Clifton, and through Clifton looses on his audience all the offensive energy that is held in check by Latka's endearing politeness and insecurity. Kaufman's performance strategy suggests a desperately hostile element to self-parody and disguise. The obnoxious Clifton, a grotesque parody of a Vegas lounge entertainer, walks out among members of his audience and appears to deliberately humiliate one of them.

However, unbeknownst to them, the person he harasses is actually a friend and the humiliation a planned part of the act. Kaufman's disguise, therefore, does more than alter the comic's identity in a way that is entertaining in and of itself. More crucially, it allows the comic to keep the audience ignorant of where he "is" within the parameters of the act and so prevents them from being able to "place" him determinately. As conceited and rude as he is, Clifton expresses a self-defensive belligerence toward his public which ensures the comic of the purity of his desire to perform, and perhaps frees him from the self-hate that Richard Schickel says is endemic to all performers for caring what the audience thinks (Schickel 88-111).[187]

Allen, the "middle-class ironist," does not have the "primitive. . . hostility'" that Kaufman is able to muster in his attempts to contradict his audience's demands for conformity and to usurp its power to determine the performance, though this is the nature of the struggle he imagines in Zelig (Lahr 92). Instead, he sentimentalizes the artist's effort to escape the emptiness of the role-player and the alienated self-consciousness of celebrity. The film proposes simply that atonement can be achieved by finding a suitable audience, that a change in the audience's regard will recall the performer to himself. Zelig is initially "cured" of his habitual impostures and is released from his obligation to his audience when the loving regard of Dr. Fletcher replaces the impersonal eye of his public. The innocent charm of the candid still photographs documenting his "recovery" period at Dr. Fletcher's country home, and the "home movie" footage of their wedding which ends the film is almost sufficient to counteract the "anti-nostalgic" tone of the rest of the film (Perlmutter 213). Their charm is also enhanced by their seeming to project back into time

an idealized consummation of the unorthodox relationship of New York's most famous unmarried couple at the time (Carroll 214;220). These images of Allen and Farrow also make the distance and isolation of "fame, money and self-consciousness" seem rather like the inevitable work of time (Lahr 97-98).

The final privileged romantic interpretation of Zelig's recovery is given to F. Scott Fitzgerald, who proposes that "in the end, it was, after all, not the approbation of many but the love of one woman that changed his life" (129). Despite this conclusion, however, Zelig is not actually free of his dependency on his audience until he accomplishes a final act of mimicry on a grand scale. For, following his initial cure by Dr. Fletcher, Zelig is found to be still susceptible to the public's opinion and becomes emotionally unstable when he is vilified in the media over his inadvertent polygamy. It is only after he obtains a presidential pardon for his transgressions that his personality changes actually stop. Ironically, he makes reparation for his duplicity and earns his pardon by mimicking Dr. Fletcher's identity as a pilot and parodying Lindbergh's heroic trans-Atlantic flight.

Ultimately Zelig suggests that the artist needs approval of his performance and yet he also needs some way of asserting that it is just a show and that he is not essentially represented in it.[188] This seems to be the reason why the charm of the images of recovery and union must vie with the haunting sense of Zelig's absence throughout the film.[189] The artist is not to be discovered where the audience is looking just then, but elsewhere, not at the center of the images, but on the margins, or just outside the frame.

In the artist's attempt to transcend the alienated self-consciousness of visible celebrity there is, as can be seen in Zelig, an evident tension between the need to make his absence

in his art noticeable (in order to indicate a self-possessed presence apart from his creation) and the lure of security which his presence in the fiction offers him.[190] Allen's films have often been versions of the family romance, a way for him to join a fantasy community of celebrities and personal heroes within his own fictional creations, no doubt a way of legitimizing and cohering his own life story.[191] Somewhat paradoxically, in his films and in his written pieces, such as "The Kugelmass Episode," fiction and reality are strictly boundaried realms and humour evolves from the absurdity of a literal intercourse between the two worlds. Much of the sentiment Allen generates for his characters derives from his assertion that fictions are all we have to compensate us for the knowledge of an inhumanly harsh reality. Often his persona's characteristic "air of passive hopeless innocence" is presented as a man sitting in front of the movie screen longing impossibly to be let into the illusory world of glamour, prestige and perfection, which is how we see him in Play it Again Sam and Crimes and Misdemeanors, for example.[192] In posing as the innocent dreamer, dreaming of crossing the barrier of the screen into the fictional world, Allen idealizes the temptation he faces as a celebrated artist.

In Broadway Danny Rose and again in Crimes and Misdemeanors Allen depicts himself as someone hopelessly striving to be noticed, someone struggling to move from the outskirts of his life to center stage. Allen again establishes his authority in marginalizing himself, the narrative of betrayal allowing him to assert that he has been left on the threshold of visibility and fame because of his unguarded innocence and moral integrity. In Zelig the performer's tendency to disappear is imagined to be a means of self-protective camouflage, a literal response to the psychological pressures of visibility. In

these two films, by comparison, the hero's figurative invisibility, his failure to be widely noticed, is a consequence of injustice. In both films he is betrayed by an acquaintance just as he is about to emerge from obscurity and achieve success and notoriety through his association with this person. The betrayal is a fateful event that leaves him bereft, impotent and apparently doomed to anonymity. Broadway Danny Rose implies that Danny Rose (Allen) will leave only an indistinct impression on posterity because, unlike his acquaintances, he is incapable of the shrewd and ruthless egotism necessary to promote his own interests in the world of showbusiness. Both Danny Rose and Allen's character Clifford Stern in Crimes and Misdemeanors are figures in whom Allen makes an investment in a fantasy of innocence and selflessness, yet it is sometimes an awkward and tentative investment in each case. This tentativeness might be considered first in the context of moments in these and other works by him in which we can see Allen being mindful, even suspicious, of the temptations of emotional safety and moral impunity that a fictional existence promises.

The Purple Rose of Cairo (1985) is the story of Cecilia (Mia Farrow) whose dreams of escaping her dreary and brutal existence in depression era New Jersey are nurtured by movie images of lives lived in a rarefied milieu of sophistication, exoticism and incredible wealth. In addition to Allen's usual scenario of the dreamer aspiring to life on the screen, however, the film also entertains the reverse fantasy, that of the fictional character who, moved by Cecilia's devotion to the movie in which he appears, decides to leave the screen and join her in the real world. The character from the movie within the movie, The Purple Rose of Cairo, who introduces himself as "Tom Baxter, explorer, adventurer," looks

forward to taking real risks, romantic and otherwise, with unplotted consequences. Although Allen depicts the boredom suffered by the fictional inhabitants of The Purple Rose of Cairo with affectionate irony as a luxury of the very rich, there is also a sense, which is perhaps unique in Allen's work, that the filmic world, where "everything is so perfectly preserved," as one character remarks, is sterile and deathly and that the real world holds wondrous attractions for which it may be worth risking a fictional immortality.

It is consequently regrettable, then, when Tom is rejected by Cecilia in favor of Gil, the actor who plays him in the film, and reluctantly returns to the screen. For it seems unlikely that when his selflessness, naive wonder and romantic idealism are once again determined by the conventions of a movie plot that they will have the kind of transformative effect on spectators that we have seen them have, for example, on Cecilia and on the prostitutes whom he meets. This is a rare occasion in Allen's films when naiveté does not look like cultural ignorance, but like the expression of simple and profound desires that have, through the spirit-numbing course of life (as have the prostitutes' reawakened longing for romantic love and children) come to seem "unrealistic." It also seems to be a unique suggestion by Allen that the hopeless awe for the movie world, which has to sustain Cecilia after she is abandoned, is a poor substitute for Tom's passionate curiosity about the mysteries of love and life. Lamentable, too, is the fact that in sending Tom back to the screen and leaving Cecilia behind, Gil relinquishes the nascent possibilities for emotional intimacy and spontaneous creativity that were revealed in his confessions to Cecilia ("Look my real name, it's not Gil Shepherd. It's uh,

Herman Bardebedian") and in their lively duet of "Alabamy Bound."

Gil's surreptitious departure for Hollywood, where he will pursue his acting ambitions after consigning, perhaps condemning, the best portion of himself to a fictional existence, is also, then, a kind of existential truancy from life. To briefly anticipate my argument, in Crimes and Misdemeanors this fateful separation of actor and public image loses all of the regretful poignancy which in Purple Rose of Cairo is associated with the diminishment of a life lived vicariously, and takes on a darker, more insidious cast. The emphasis now is not on what potentialities may go unrealized in presenting the world with a fictional surrogate, but on what an innocent public persona may disguise. When Judah Rosenthal (Martin Landau) apparently escapes any legal or divine repercussions for having engineered the murder of his mistress he finds it possible to return guilt-free to his "protected world of wealth and privilege" and his public image as an esteemed ophthalmologist and philanthropist. Just as Judah is able to avoid public exposure because of his wealth and social prestige, Lester (Alan Alda), Clifford's brother-in-law, has power enough to edit from his filmed biography any evidence caught by Cliff's camera of the lecherous power-hungry ego that he indulges off-screen. Allen suggests that Judah's honorable character, like Lester's, is as much a fiction as Tom Baxter is, except that the fictional existence in their case is not a trap but a refuge for the impostor. That Tom's innocence, as Allen sees it, must ever remain in the world of fiction suggests his pessimism about the possibility of ever healing the narcissistic wound. What complications then are faced by Allen in presenting himself as a comic innocent if he believes that such an innocence is merely a fiction, if not a fraud?

The narrative framing device that Allen establishes in Broadway Danny Rose features a montage of scenes from the Carnegie Deli in New York where a number of stand-up comics have gathered to commiserate with one another about the disheartening changes in the comedy business, particularly about the dwindling number of venues in the city where they can work, and about the unpredictability of audiences. Gradually their reminiscences become focused on Danny Rose (Allen), an unsuccessful night club comic who has turned, predictably they say, to a career in theatrical management. He is remembered by his showbusiness peers for his heroically misplaced faith in the second rate acts he handles and celebrated as a legendary failure on the margins of their unstable and disintegrating milieu: "he's the best," Sandy Baron says of Danny. The comic's anecdotal tributes establish the film's tone and attitude toward the ingenuous Danny and the variously handicapped artists he represents and help define the relative scope of his celebrity. Like Zelig, Danny is famous for being a "nobody" (Kael Feb. 6, 118).

However, Allen distinguishes Danny's anonymity from Zelig's by placing it within an ironic context of scale and as he does so he also subtly re-contextualizes the comics' governing, sentimental, albeit slightly derisive, view of Danny's failed career. The comics joke about Danny's lack of discrimination in choosing his clients and present him as someone naively unaware of the hierarchical standards of talent in showbusiness, incapable of prejudice against those who will obviously never find a place anywhere near the top of this hierarchy. (Danny, however, does draw the bottom line at representing Barney Dunn, the stuttering ventriloquist.) In Allen's work, as Mark Schechner says, "irony lends cover to an overwhelming sentimentality;" this is true of the tone of Sandy

Baron's framing story.[193] Danny's unself-consciousness and indiscriminate taste is imagined as a kindly egalitarian inclusivity, an unconditional paternal generosity toward his artists. Yet, in the course of the film Allen also evinces an acute and knowing sense of the sliding scale of personal prestige in the world of entertainment. The diminished status and prospects of the comics, all of whom play themselves in the film,[194] ironically seems to have earned them the right to patronize the fictional Danny Rose as they do. Also featured is Milton Berle, whom Danny calls "an immortal," but who nevertheless is reduced to a non-speaking cameo part in Allen's film (Baxter 321). Milton Berle and Sammy Davis Jr. share parade floats in the Macy's Day Thanksgiving parade with equally (?) well-known figures, with cartoon characters, with Big Bird and Santa Claus. This leveling and erosion of celebrity status serves to undercut the ironic celebration of Danny's naive integrity with a pressing awareness of the possible diminishment and attrition of fame and of the almost shameful levels of notoriety.

The "cartoon casting" (as he calls it) that Allen has done for this film blurs the distinction between his usual witty style-conscious stereotyping and a certain pathetic showbusiness reality (Bjorkman 143-148). In fact, Danny's clients are all authentic club acts, according to John Baxter (321-322). Allen's ambiguous attitude toward these performers and their acts seems to emerge from an uninhibitable drive to distinguish himself from them coupled with a need to propose that his alter-ego Danny is innocent of any such discriminatory feelings.[195] An innocence like Danny's may be a "cherished and elusive virtue" for Allen, but to the extent that he associates such naiveté with the substratum of the entertainment world and his Jewish middle-class origins it also has a

certain taint (Schechner 47).[196] There is in Broadway Danny Rose an unmistakable preoccupation with the difference between the genuine artist, whose work withstands the test of time, and the second-string club performer or the imitator, such as Lou, or Danny himself, (who "stole [jokes] from everyone"), whose artistic stature seems fated to decline. Perhaps the best illustration of this idea is found in Will Jordan's impersonations of James Mason and Picasso which we hear were once a "brilliant" feature on the Ed Sullivan Show, but are now merely little parlor tricks with which to amuse his cronies at the Deli.

A number of commentators have noticed the peculiar difficulty of situating Danny Rose's story in any exact time frame (Shickel 297; Kael 119).[197] Despite its feeling of "timelessness," however, the film also creates a palpable sense of time's passing, such that the energy that Danny urgently expends on behalf of his clients, including his most promising, the "over-the-hill" "Italian singer," Lou Canova, seems hopelessly misspent in a climate of belatedness. Few of Danny's acts or of the club patrons for whom they perform appear to be younger than middle-aged. Danny's milieu is the dying world of vaudeville with its tawdry leftover glamour and Allen shows it to be inhabited by those for whom "the boat has sailed." Danny Rose is obviously drawn from a type familiar to Allen from the early stages of his career in stand-up comedy, perhaps exemplified by his first manager, Harvey Meltzer (Carroll 229; Baxter 48;320). Allen's mannered performance is midway between tribute and caricature and to the extent that it is either or both it can also be seen as Allen's way of escaping or transcending (in a way that Danny cannot) his smalltime origins in the business. When Lou's girlfriend Tina (Mia Farrow) asks him why

all of his successful clients leave him Danny concludes "people like to forget their beginnings."[198] With Danny Rose, Allen allows himself to measure the distance between the origins of his identity as a comic performer and his current celebrity status, while conversely pretending to close the gap between his own renowned eccentric identity as a "loser" and that of the characters in this world whose impairment, like the one-armed juggler's, is also the selling feature of their act.

Allen's play The Floating Light Bulb (1982) covers territory similar to that of Broadway Danny Rose and gets at some of the larger implications of Allen's self-presentation as a failed artist.[199] It is pervaded by the artist's dread of having his inherent inadequacy as a performer revealed and by the threat of an irreversible debasement. Jerry Wexler is a version of Danny Rose, a theatrical manager looking for that once in a lifetime million dollar act that will save him from an obscure existence on the fringes of showbusiness. Enid Pollack invites Jerry to her home to see the magic routines of her son, Paul, on whom she has pinned her few remaining hopes for the future. Paul's speech impediment, though, is an obviously fatal stigma signifying what Jerry confirms, that the amateur illusionist will never become a star performer and will therefore never fulfill his mother's dreams of escaping the shabby life which her unfaithful husband Max has made for her. In the final moment of the play Enid waves Paul's magic cane at the errant Max, as if to make him disappear, but ironically a bouquet of flowers springs from the end of it. The play indicates the Oedipal nature of the illusionist's impotency as the son fails to repair and transform the world to which the father has more or less abandoned them. The implications for the artist of this nihilistic paradigm, in which anonymity is presented only

in terms of showbusiness obscurity, are suggested in Paul's paradoxical options as an "impaired" performer. In the absence of a divine audience to heal the impairment he has the option never to finish practicing, never to give a public performance. Paul is able to overcome his impediment and perform brilliantly when he is alone, or with no audience other than his family. The other option, which is suggested by his mother, but which Paul is too self-conscious to be able to do, is to make his stutter part of the act, as she says so many vaudevillians have done before him (42-43). It is not clear to what extent this self-reflexiveness represents a burdensome irony for Allen. As I hope to show, this ambiguity remains at the heart of Allen's attempts to present a more serious moral dimension to his comic authority.

If the performer's wound is never to be transcended except by being performed then, as in Zelig, the guilt of the charlatan may attend the successful act. Significantly, in Broadway Danny Rose the artist's inherent inadequacy reveals itself when his illusions work only too well, as in the case of the hypnotist Danny handles who puts his subject to sleep, permanently. Danny himself, we are told, had to give up performing as a comic because in the Catskills he was literally killing his audience ("two people got heart attacks" Howard Storm tells the other comics). When Milton Berle agrees to audition Lou for his opening act and for a television special, the story seems meant to shape itself around the possibility that Danny, though a failed performer himself, may finally be rewarded for having faithfully represented other artists, no matter how talentless. Instead what quickly unfolds is an impostor's guilty fantasy of retribution. Danny is coerced into a deception (the fantasy as in Zelig is that the imposture is unintentional) when the

married Lou asks him to be his sexual stand-in, his "beard," who will bring Lou's mistress, Tina, to the crucial audition at the Waldorf. The danger that Danny subsequently faces is caused by the fact that, again, his pretense has been too convincing and he is mistaken for the "real" artist/lover.

In the second of two scenes from Broadway Danny Rose that quietly parody two scenes from De Sica's The Bicycle Thieves, Danny, trying to steer the reluctant Tina to the Waldorf, follows her to a party given at the estate of the mobster Rispoli family, with whom she has mysterious unresolved ties. There, like De Sica's hero Ricci, he finds himself in a "foreign" neighborhood, but initially he is able to ingratiate himself with the guests here by virtue of his talents as a "smooth talker." However, Danny's hackneyed nightclub patter ("How old are you darling?") fails to mollify his audience when he is turned upon and denounced by Johnny Rispoli, the "sensitive" Mafia poet who assumes that Danny is Tina's lover and has stolen her affections. Caught in the "innocent" pretense of being Tina's lover, Danny faces the threat of getting his "legs chopped off" by Johnny's brothers and the possibility that he will join the ranks of the castrated/amputee artists whom he represents.

In this film Allen confronts not only his own past in relation to his celebrity but also Mia Farrow's, especially the specter of her famous ex-husband, Frank Sinatra, the Italian singer whose place in Farrow's life he has assumed. If Zelig's style owes something to Allen's "submerged rivalry with [Warren] Beatty, who appropriated Allen's girlfriend, Diane Keaton" and cast her in his film Reds, which uses the same mixture of live interviews and love story,[200] Broadway Danny Rose evinces a similar Oedipal anxiety.

While in his apartment with Tina to pick up some belongings before going to a hotel to hide from the Rispoli brothers, Tina spots some photos on Danny's apartment walls. When she asks him about the people in them he replies, "that's Frank. That's Frank and Tony Bennett and me." Tina has difficulty identifying Danny in the photo with Sinatra so Danny points out the "little blur. . .like a finger print" in the background of the photo. Another photograph "includes" Danny except that he is just outside the boundary of the frame so he can not actually be seen. With ironic humility Allen places himself on the edge of posterity and Sinatra at the center.

However, because the narrative of Broadway Danny Rose works around an uneasy faith in the laudability of Danny's anonymity, much of the story's energy is devoted to the question of his romantic suitability for the beautiful Tina with her powerful threatening connections. The turning point of the story begins in the remote warehouse where the Rispoli brothers have taken Tina and Danny apparently to kill them in order to avenge Johnny's cuckolding. There Danny's life is temporarily spared when Tina confirms his defensive assertion that he is only the beard: "would I waste my time with a guy like this?" she asks. Allen builds up tension based on the Rispolis' assumption that he is her lover (and he is in real life) and then dispels it just as easily with this one pointed rhetorical question as the gangsters are instantly convinced of the improbability of a sexual relationship between the two.

If there is genuine insecurity here it is perhaps most obvious in Allen's unwillingness to let the image of the sexual loser stand. Instead he insists on countering it with probably the most direct sub-textual allusions to Allen's and Farrow's off-screen sexual alliance.

The scene in which Danny and Tina are shown to have been tied together by the Rispolis', so that Danny lies on top of Tina, and the two of them left on a desktop in the warehouse, is the closest thing to a sex scene in the film. Their struggle to wriggle free of their bondage is perhaps one of the more erotic moments in Allen's films as a whole, precisely because of the sub-textual reality of their relationship. Danny convinces Tina that they can escape if she joins him in a maneuver he once saw an illusionist perform and, taking control of the situation, he directs Tina while she is under him, telling her to "move" and "wriggle" and "thrust" (270). Allen and Farrow eventually break character completely in these moments:

Tina: I'm wriggling.

Danny: (Overlapping Tina) That's good. That's good wriggling. Tina pants.

Danny: Yes

Tina: (Panting) I don't want to . . .overwriggle.

Danny: (Overlapping Tina) No . . . .no, but it's nice wriggling. They move together, caught up in the now sensuous wriggling, as the film moves back to Tina's face. Her sunglasses fall off; her eyes are closed.

This sexual "trick" releases the past's hold on Tina and saves Danny from the axe, the threat of violence against them quickly turning comic thereafter (Blake 113).

At this point especially Allen seems to pull away from a full commitment to Danny as the innocent victim in thrall to Farrow's "Mafia widow," and momentarily enjoys the irony of his performance as such. The remainder of the film, however, is devoid of comic self-irony as Allen shifts the emphasis away from his sexual identity and tries to consolidate

his moral authority in the image of Danny's pitiable vulnerability. Broadway Danny Rose as a whole suggests a fantasy (which is strangely nostalgic) of escaping ironic self-consciousness. In the penultimate scene, Danny is surprised by Tina's unexpected arrival to see him presiding over his annual Thanksgiving dinner for his clients, a motley assembly one is tempted to see as Allen's conscious or unconscious parody of Farrow's own large family. As Danny is caught in an act of paternal beneficence, his naked humility seems like a chastisement to Tina.

As in Zelig Allen's being discovered in an innocent posture seems to demand that Farrow's character undergo a conversion of sorts.[201] There is an almost punishing pressure on Tina to bear the guilt for having judged Danny by showbusiness standards, which are vaguely aligned in the film with the ethics of the Mafia. Tina bears a seemingly disproportionate amount of the blame for Lou's having left Danny for a bigger agent. In fact, Lou disappears from the narrative soon after his defection and his part in betraying his "manager, friend, father confessor" seems almost negligible. Apparently Allen is proposing guilt rather than sexual attraction as the basis of the bond between Tina and Danny, and this may suggest sexual insecurity again. However, while Danny's innocence has a fateful transformative effect on Tina, effectively spoiling any romantic opportunities in her life, with the exception of the one previously mentioned scene in the warehouse, Danny seems virtually unaffected by her attractiveness. His sexual impassivity makes their eventual union seem the result of his having graciously extended himself, and therefore subtly intimates a moral smugness on Allen's part. What Allen risks with Danny Rose in his attempt to express an unguarded innocence is what Pauline Kael suspects he

risks with Clifford Stern in Crimes and Misdemeanors: a "false nakedness--a giving in to the safety of weakness."[202]

The title Crimes and Misdemeanors invites the viewer to see the dilemmas it depicts in its paralleled narratives as being situated along a moral continuum. The story of Clifford Stern (Allen) concerns his failing efforts to gain recognition for the documentary films he makes on worthy subjects such as leukemia and toxic waste, and his romantic pursuit of Halley Reed (Mia Farrow), a producer with Public Television, who promises to secure him an audience for his work at long last. Clifford's story is apparently a less tragic reflection of the story of Judah Rosenthal (Martin Landau), a wealthy and renowned ophthalmologist, whose mistress Dolores (Angelica Huston) threatens to reveal their affair and destroy the honorable reputation upon which his worldly privileges depend. Both men have their "worst fears realized," Clifford when Halley seemingly abandons their idealistic concerns and succumbs to the charms of Clifford's wealthy brother-in-law, Lester (Alan Alda), a television producer, and Judah when he realizes that he will not been found out and punished for having had Dolores murdered.

The narrative structure of the film seems meant to give serious moral resonance to Allen's comic pose of impotency by paralleling Cliff's failure to find an audience for his documentary work to Judah's deciding that God has apparently not seen him murder. The situation seems to initially suggest a rather simple and pessimistic moral view: because there is no justice in a society that values success above all, and no divine audience to compensate for the lack of worldly recognition, Clifford's virtue goes unobserved and unlauded. In Crimes and Misdemeanors even more than in Broadway Danny Rose, Allen

seems to want his character to bear the emotional weight of "the anonymity which dehumanizes our existence" (Sypher 162). The solemnity in Allen's self-presentation in this film has led critics such as Jonathan Rosenbaum to assert that Allen's character serves as a witness for "the audience's self-satisfied despair," a statement which recalls Harold Bloom's comment about the general effect of Allen's comedy being to make us feel comfortable with nihilism.[203] However, Allen's attitude toward Cliff is not merely solemn. It also seems to be morally confused.[204] This may be the result of the filmmaker's seeming efforts to override the significance of the pretense in his pose of impotency which has always guaranteed his authority.

Allen inhabits his anonymous "de-centered" position in Crimes and Misdemeanors very awkwardly.[205] There is an ambiguity first of all, which is latent in Broadway Danny Rose as well, in his suggesting that his marginalized anonymous position relative to the world of the successful and the celebrated, which Lester dominates, is a morally respectable one, an idealistic one, perhaps held by the "existentially authentic individual," and yet also suggesting that he has been unfairly relegated and confined to an invisible life because of society's commercialized values (Downing 75).[206] Allen seems unable to regulate his attitude toward Cliff's marginalization; does it indicate his self-possessed idealism or a pitiable disenfranchisement? It is difficult, for example, to see Cliff's "dropping out" of life to make documentary films as an indication of his stalwart idealism. Though Allen obviously wants to validate Cliff's "fantasies about changing the world" with his films, an ambition at which his wife Wendy (Joanna Gleason) sneers,[207] he also allows it to be supposed that Wendy's accusations that he harbors jealousy of Lester's

success are partly true. (He admits as much to Halley later). This seems to indicate Cliff's unconscious dissatisfaction with the "honourable mention" which he is accorded for his own socially conscious films. There is accordingly a slight bitterness in Cliff's mien, which seems not entirely a disinterested response to the injustices of the world, but rather a matter of personal dissatisfaction.[208] Cliff's jealousy of Lester which is manifest throughout the film gives a slight taint to his moral authority.[209]

Clifford is another Allen hero depicted as the innocent dreamer in front of the movie screen whose real emotional dedication is to the glamorous worlds of old Hollywood films, with their "evening gowns and tuxedos." The impressions made by his afternoon movie dates with his niece Jenny (Jenny Nichols) contribute to a sense of Cliff's innocence and charm (and as Peter Minowitz suggests we are reminded of other likable Woody Allen characters as a result). But we also see something more regressive and peevish than we have seen in the Allen persona before. When he watches an afternoon movie with Halley on their lunch break from filming a biography of Lester for Public Television, Cliff dismisses her suggestion that they should get back to work, saying that he is "tired of shooting Lester" and that watching movies in the daytime is wonderful because its "like playing hooky." Allen leaves open room in these moments for seeing that Clifford's career problems may "owe something to his immaturity" rather than the failure of the world to notice his moral virtue (Minowitz 83).

The ambiguous image of the innocent in front of the movie screen in Crimes and Misdemeanors is complimented here by the figure of the anonymous documentarian behind the camera. Allen presents a self-reflexive reversion of the power relationship

between himself as a celebrated filmmaker and his impotent persona, suggesting that the person behind the camera is the one who is ineffectual and powerless yet morally perspicacious compared to his famous subject, Lester. Referring to Lester, Cliff says he "loves him like a brother, David Greenglass," but in fact it is Cliff who tries to bear witness against his brother-in-law in his biographical film. Allen may be intent on having us believe that Clifford's attempts to show the world the behind-the-scenes truth about Lester's promiscuity and ego mania, like Delores' similar attempts to reveal Judah's secrets, have left him victimized.[210] However, Cliff has used his camera and talents as a filmmaker to humiliate his famous brother-in-law and it is difficult not to perceive Cliff, especially on the occasion of his screening of the film for Lester, as a juvenile vindictive prankster.[211]

As Richard Allen has suggested, during the scene in which Cliff screens his biography of Lester for him, Allen gives us no tenable point of view of Cliff's revengeful attempt to ridicule Lester (intercutting images of Mussolini and Francis the Talking Mule) beyond that of Allen laughing at his own childishness:

> Allen attempts to undercut the moral smugness of his comic character through self-reflexivity. The trouble is that Allen's intellectual nebbish is just too smart, he gets his laughs too easily. When he guffaws at Alda, especially in the screening room scene of the subverted documentary, we guffaw with him. Now Allen undoubtedly wants to highlight the fact that Cliff is also laughing at his own joke, a moment of supreme vanity. But Allen's self-reflexivity just doesn't work here; it is unreasonable for Allen to expect the audience to distance themselves from his

character, when he gives us such forceful reasons to identify with him... [the comedy] blurs the moral issues at stake (Allen 45-46).

Later Cliff will complain to Halley about being fired by Lester and will ask her, with apparent seriousness, "What was the guy so upset about? You'd think no one was ever compared to Mussolini before."

The apparent confusion in Allen's attempt to present a serious moral dimension to his comic authority seems to stem from a difficulty in presenting Cliff's moral position as being compromised without also suggesting that he is morally compromised. This problem may be looked at in terms of the way Allen has presented himself in the past. In previous films his marginalized perspective has always been one of self-assured, self-validating moral judgments. In this film, however, he is proposing that Cliff's moral convictions, which are shown to be in accord with those of his other biographical subject, the philosophy professor Louis Levy, and seem to be, roughly speaking, a kind of existential humanism, ultimately carry no real moral weight. In his conversation with Judah at the end of the film, Cliff declares his moral position in response to Judah's fictionalized story of how he escaped detection and punishment for the murder of Dolores. In the absence of a God, the murderer should take responsibility for his crime and turn himself in, Cliff says. Judah's dismissal of this suggestion as an ending worthy of "fiction" rather than "reality" apparently implies that Allen has no "tragic confidence in ideals we erect unaided" and seems to suggest that while he is a moral authority Cliff is also a moral victim in a nihilistic world in which famous successful people like Judah and Lester predominate no matter what their moral failings.

Allen seems to suggest that Cliff's moral position relative to Judah's is defenseless and that Cliff is a victim of a morally unjust world. However, the simple moral logic that Allen insists upon in Cliff's story, that seems necessary to Allen's presentation of innocence, is not finally adequate to the experience of the film. First of all, the film seems to want to propose that because there is no moral structure to the universe the superficial, such as Lester, can achieve fame and love and happiness while those of "great depth", such as Cliff, are given no recognition. Yet, we come to see that this dichotomized way of appreciating the characters, especially Lester and Halley, is too limiting. While Cliff may have convinced himself that he is trying to penetrate the world of appearances and reveal the moral truth of Lester's personality, we may not take Cliff's perspective of events and people for granted (Downing 79). Depths of character in Lester and in others that go unnoticed by Cliff seem to make themselves apparent to the viewer. There are many indications that Clifford has over-stated Lester's moral shortcomings. Significantly Cliff's biography of his brother-in-law makes Lester seem more harshly authoritarian and coldly lecherous than he appears to be in the rest of the film. As many viewers have pointed out, Lester proves himself a cultivated man, familiar with literature and able to quote Emily Dickinson at length. Though he has obviously misused his power as a producer to seduce women who work for him, he seems drawn to Halley because of her quick wit and informed opinion. Moreover, the image of his beatific face at his brother Ben's daughter's wedding implies that he is capable of finer responses to life than he seems to be in Cliff's film. It is also possible that Lester has greater wisdom than Cliff will allow him. In one of Lester's recorded messages to himself which are generally meant to remind him of possible

future television projects, but in this case is meant as a jibe at Cliff, Lester suggests a scenario in which "a poor loser agrees to do the story of a great man's life and in the process comes to learn deep values." Lester's insight, as self-satisfied as it is, is to recognize the moral smugness of the loser posture that Allen is intent on in the film.[212]

Alan Alda's Lester is again one of the inauthentic artist figures in relation to whom Allen typically defines his moral integrity and innocence. In Lester's relationship with Cliff, though, there is a more necessary and personal antagonism than is seen in previous pairings in his films. P. Adams Sitney describes it as Allen being "locked in a wrestling match with Lester, on whom he depends for his negative energy" (64). Significantly, Alda is also a more clearly parodic figure of Allen's own celebrity identity. As Sitney also notices, Alda more than Cliff represents the filmmaker's "position in the world" (61):

> He is rich; universities offer him honorary degrees; there are courses taught about existential motifs in [his] situation comedies; and after affairs with glamorous women, he ends up with the heroine played by Mia Farrow. Like Allen, he is obsessed with the categories of comedy and tragedy. He even pontificates about the humor of Oedipus's situation, just before Allen himself began filming his comic episode Oedipus Wrecks for the omnibus film New York Stories.

In Broadway Danny Rose Allen contemplates the difference between his current celebrity standing and his "humble" origins in the entertainment business. By contrast in Crimes and Misdemeanors he seems to weigh the difference between his impotent schlemiel character and the "reality" of his status and power as a renowned filmmaker.

Allen pits his little man persona against this monstrously successful "authority" on comedy to whom he has an uncertain obligation. What will be his part in representing him or exposing him to the public? How can he expose him without being self-destructive? Alan Alda's Lester, though, is impervious to exposure, because he can usurp Cliff's biography of him and re-edit it to his advantage. Secondly, though Alda is satirized, "cheaply satirized" in Pauline Kael's words, he is also able to "steal the picture" with his likable narcissistic performance (Kael 202).

Despite the noticeable ambiguity in Lester's characterization, ultimately Allen insists on Cliff's moral interpretation of him; that is, that Lester has unfairly garnered the world's attention and praise, and that his superficiality has not prevented him from receiving its honors and of winning Halley's affection. He also insists Halley's choosing Lester is a betrayal of Cliff, even though she has never demonstrated any romantic interest in Cliff. As well the "instant liking" Cliff claims to feel for her cannot be untangled from his pleasure in getting Halley to recognize the value of his work and of his interest in the philosophy professor, Louis Levy, whom he proposes as a better subject for a biography than Lester. Halley's clout with the company producing the Creative Minds series which is profiling Lester may get him "the biggest audience" he's ever had. However, even if Cliff has no right to have expected Halley to return his affection and no justifiable way of thinking of her engagement to Lester as a betrayal of him and coincidentally of his ideals, this is nevertheless the point of view that is offered us at the end of the film with the enduring close-ups of Cliff's sad face at the wedding when he sees Halley at Lester's side.

In Judah Rosenthal's story Allen provides a more intricately psychological

examination of the nihilistic proposition that he makes in the film. Judah's discovery of his omnipotence is the realization of a power not only to murder with impunity, but to present himself in public as he will and to be impervious to the threat of exposure, as Lester is also. As much as his story is about getting away with murder it is also about a man who in transgressing has severed all emotional and spiritual connection to his paternal heritage and yet has succeeded in protecting his image as benevolent patriarch and all the pleasures and privileges that go with it. We are not allowed to know what difference Judah's hidden secret will make to his relationships. Allen suggests no psychic consequences for not revealing his crime to those who love him and for living amongst them as a fraud (Minowitz 81). It appears that Judah and his wife have restored their marriage although we also cannot guess how sustaining the pleasures of married life will be for Judah given what we have seen so far of its banality. Harold Brodkey has noted that Allen is not interested in the "slow death of the soul, in what becomes of the soul in the course of becoming part of the mechanism of success or of half-success. He does not deal in the growth of corruption as the loss of the self" (Brodkey 77).

Crimes and Misdemeanors dramatizes Judah's emotional suffering after he has had Dolores murdered in order to save his "public image of moral integrity" (Allen 44). His criminal behaviour, which is hidden from his family and friends beneath the veneer of his honorable reputation and success, cuts him off not only from them, but also from his past and what to him is merely a vestigial religious feeling inherited from his father.[213] Allen presents Judah's decision to have Delores murdered as being the start of a spiritual journey of sorts toward a terrible existential freedom.[214] There even seems to be a slight sense of

dignity in Judah's self-detachment as he tells of the murder in the third person to Cliff. However, his suffering brings him only to the point where a supreme sense of self-irony substitutes for despair or the desire for atonement. As well, though Judah's act results in his passing beyond "the far side of crime," and the accepted "order of things," he does not pass beyond the apparent order of things (Sypher 160; 162). He is a "potentially tragic character" as Richard Allen says, but he never reaches those proportions because he is content to keep the appearance of respectability (Allen 44).[215]

Because of their social profile and wealth Lester and Judah have been paired by critics and are paralleled by the film itself.[216] Both men have the power and prestige to allow them to avoid disclosure of their "sins" in public and to be able to present themselves as they wish. Allen also imagines the reflexive possibility of these celebrated men being able to hide in their own fictional constructions, Lester in his biography and Judah in his public persona, seemingly as an argument for nihilism. When Judah discovers Cliff to be "off alone like [he]" is at the wedding, Cliff tells him that he was "planning the perfect murder." Judah then confesses to the murder he did in fact authorize, offering the confession in the guise of a hypothetical movie plot, and so hiding his murderous actions in a screenplay in which he is in effect a fictional character.[217] In depicting Judah's situation Allen ironizes the possibility of an "ethics through an act of self-creation" (Downing 86).[218]

Judah's story seems to be Allen's strongest "endorsement of a stagnant nihilism."[219] Yet, how absolutely is his moral world divided between a "reality" in which murder is an acceptable expedient and the human presence vanishes unnoticed by a divine audience,

and a superficial life of middle-class pleasures and privileges which insulates one from the painful acknowledgment of such a reality?[220] Again as in the "misdemeanors" side of the film narrative, in Cliff's story, there is a forced quality to this nihilistic proposition that is apparent, for example, in the relationship between Judah and his brother Jack, who arranges for the murder of Dolores. This can be perceived, for example, in the scene in Judah's summerhouse in which Jack suggests "getting rid of [Dolores]." It is unclear to what extent the brothers' mutual resentment, which is rooted in, or has become focused around, the economic disparity of their lifestyles, accounts for the dichotomization of their moral argument.[221] Richard Allen has also noticed that Judah's conversations with Rabbi Ben (Sam Waterston) move "too quickly and schematically" from the mundane to the cosmic, "from a small infidelity to the meaning of existence" (Allen 45).

A similar moral schematizing can be seen in Allen's characterization.[222] This is noticeable in Judah's character especially, as for example when he tells his brother Jack that when he returned to the scene of the crime and saw Dolores' corpse that "there was nothing behind her eyes if you looked. All you saw was a black void." What Judah's language expresses is obviously "the emptiness of traditional religious rhetoric" rather than his experience of seeing Dolores' dead body (550).

Allen's efforts to keep the weighted abstractions operative in his characterization and his moral schematizing are repeatedly undermined. First, as Richard Allen avers, to accept Allen's view of the "real" world "undermines the dramatic and comedic premise of the film which presupposes the very structure of morality that the film so thoroughly assaults" (Allen 44). There are more specific examples of instances when the nihilistic

position is undermined, seemingly without Allen's intending it to be. In the scene in which Judah returns to his childhood home and imagines that he has come upon a family seder, he hears his aunt May arguing that "might makes right," alluding to the Holocaust to back up her point. Allen here seems to use the Holocaust as historical pretext and proof of the narrative rightness of the outcome of Judah's story. However, Aunt May's argument, especially given the tone in her voice as she asserts it, assumes that the Nazis were in fact wrong (Roche 561). Further, when Judah announces his nihilistic stand in his conversation with Cliff at the wedding, he also talks of the need to "rationalize" and "deny" in order to go on living, and so suggests that his conscience is not as easily quelled as he insists it is.

All of these circumstances undermine the surface abstraction of Allen's argument. There are also other indications that Judah's position is weaker than it seems, such as "the hints Allen provides of [his] loneliness and superficiality" (Minowitz 80). Moreover, several of the other moral positions the film offers, such as Rabbi Ben's and Judah's father Sol's, while they may be ironized (Ben's blindness may suggest his inability to see reality clearly and Sol says that he will choose God over truth if necessary), are not totally disallowed. Nothing contradicts Sol's claim that he will have a better life than all of those who doubt (Minowitz 80). And though Ben may not be able to see, as Peter Winowitz observes, he can at "least <u>be</u> seen by all: a luxury Judah will never enjoy" (Minowitz 80). Finally, the forlorn betrayed figure of Cliff at the wedding festivities is an emblem of the need for more than what is available to Judah.

Chapter Four: The Disguises of Fiction

Husbands and Wives, Mighty Aphrodite, and Deconstructing Harry

Although the fame of the modern performer may be a fame for escaping social constraints by creating a self, exhibited in a body, that is unique, a great part of the attraction for the fan may be likened to the lure of Houdini: Maybe this time he won't escape

---Leo Braudy, The Frenzy of Renown

"You expect the world to adjust to the distortion you've become":

---Psychoanalyst addressing Woody Allen as Harry Block in Allen's Deconstructing Harry.

The scandal in which Woody Allen and Mia Farrow were *embroiled* in 1992 precipitated a critical situation which proved just how much the experience of Allen's films had been dependent upon the perception of the artist's presence outside his works.[223] When the media made public Allen's affair with Farrow's twenty-one year old adopted daughter Soon-Yi Previn, an apparently gross lapse in moral judgment on his part, there no longer seemed any easy way for audiences to identify the private man with his admired fictional persona, or with the renowned artist, who for many had been the arbiter of modern values and mores. Though once he might have been assured of his status as auteur solely on the basis of his reputation as an independent filmmaker, his prodigious

output, and the integrity of his "artistic personality,"[224] because of this newly perceived disjunction between the name of the artist and the values and ideas that that name had served to cohere in his films, it now seemed necessary to reevaluate his films and reconsider the aesthetic criteria by which he might still be accorded this status.[225]

The suspicion of Allen's authority and the search for another form of coherence within his works which it occasioned took on a negative aspect as well. The scandal caught audiences in the act of projecting their collective fantasies of authority onto Allen's persona and then having to find some way of extricating themselves from their guilty identification with him.[226] When the familiar "Woody" persona began to seem distorted and out of focus, outraged and disappointed critics scoured his earlier films for "signs that the eternal good guy Woody was a fool or a villain all along."[227] It now seemed possible to find previously overlooked evidence of "his patronizing treatment of female characters or. . .[of] the angry and bilious man that sometimes coexisted with his comic, schlemiel persona."[228]

Since the media reported the scandal Allen has had to deconstruct a fictional persona that has been contaminated by his private life (as this has been represented by the media).[229] Prior to the scandal his authority rested in some kind of withholding, an implied private relationship to his persona.[230] Now his determined self-regard comes up against a competing media construction and like Zelig he is in a struggle with the other for his identity.[231] The corrosive effects not only of the media but of age on his self-presentation have, among other things, invalidated the sexual ethos that had defined his authoritative attitude. Whatever value there had been in Allen's mock confessional sexual

candor was instantly degraded by the news of his affair with Soon-Yi, as was his stand on the necessity of integrity in relationships, especially his speech next to the skeleton in Manhattan. Although some audience members as far back as the eighties have been ready to see the comedian as a gnomish dirty old man,[232] to many the illusion that a powerful sexy man existed behind the weak persona had been a reassuring fantasy before the scandal.[233] However, as I suggest in my discussion of Deconstructing Harry, Allen's iconography of sexual power has been different than other American stars, who seem "uncompromised by sexual problems, disappointments, hang-ups," and as such his sexual persona can be and has been touched by publicity and age (Brodkey 102). The loss of his boyish sexuality as well as the damage done by media reports of his alleged sexual transgressions have both worked to contradict the fiction of his innocence.

In his films since 1992 Allen maneuvers out from under a mask that seems ill-fitting now. All of the films made after then, with the possible exception of Everyone Says I Love You (1997) show him pushing beyond the expectations of his audience, in terms of the narrow emotional range and the comic sexual decorum of his earlier films. The language of the later films is often cruder, the emotional pitch is heightened and the comedy frequently arises from scenes of acute embarrassment. In a change from of his earlier films, beginning with Husbands and Wives Allen presents himself, in a configuration romanticized to varying degrees, as being powerless in the grip of an incomprehensible sexual desire. In the following I will look at the necessary efforts Allen makes to maintain this posture and, in the case of Mighty Aphrodite and Deconstructing Harry, at the moral ambiguities that sometimes result from these endeavours.

Husbands and Wives is an exploration of marriage with a moral framework similar to Ingmar Bergman's Scenes from a Marriage.[234] Like Bergman, Allen is concerned with the fragility of marital bonds and with patterns of dependency and neurosis in relationships. Both filmmakers' works include interviews with married couples during which unspoken grievances and buried resentments about their marriages involuntarily surface in their testimonies. In Bergman's film the unrest in the marriage of his couple, Marianne and Johan, is due in part to their mutual need for security and to their having lied to themselves and each other about their unhappiness throughout the years in an effort to conform to social and familial expectations. Marianne eventually realizes that the price of the "outward security" for which they strive is "the acceptance of a continuous destruction of the personality" (126). For Bergman the institutions of family and marriage can warp the personality of the individual who expends emotional energy trying to maintain social appearances rather than confronting the truth of her struggle with the essential loneliness of human life. Husbands and Wives is an extended interview with two couples, Professor Gabriel Roth (Allen) and his wife Judy (Mia Farrow) and their friends Jack (Sydney Pollack) and Sally (Judy Davis). Allen does not specifically link his couples' marital problems to their having avoided the question of their own meaninglessness. Except for a brief mention of Albert Einstein, there is no sense of a cosmic dimension to their struggles. However, Allen does see them involved, like Marianne and Johan, in transparent makeshift efforts to defend the facade of their marital security against all their inwardly mounting arguments against the relationship. At the film's end each of the interviewees except Gabe is locked into a face-saving promotion of marital harmony.

Only Gabe, it seems, remains uncompromised, living alone as an artist after his marriage dissolves and braving the loneliness and fear and guilt that the others have clearly avoided or repressed in their decision to stay together.

Though the circumstances of the documentary-like interviews are never specified, the way in which they are conducted suggests a series of counselling or psychoanalytic sessions. However, the faceless interviewer (Jeffrey Kurland) seems not to have any diagnostic function, but merely mediates the various narratives and multi-angled character analyses. Though he queries and probes and points out the ironies and paradoxes of individual accounts, he draws no conclusions and offers no advice. He is an organizing consciousness only, who apparently knows no more nor less than the viewer does. Though the characters themselves are highly self-conscious and the narrator succeeds in bringing much of their private life to the surface, by the end of the film we are no closer to understanding the mystery of their unhappiness.[235] Harold Brodkey believes this shows Allen's generosity toward the characters. Brodkey's impression is that Allen has not imposed himself as author out of respect for the integrity of his characters and the complexity of their marital difficulties (85). Maurice Yacowar thinks contrarily that Allen unfairly withdraws himself, abdicating responsibility for his authoritative point of view by pretending to be the "manipulated subject of the analyst/interviewer/camera when in fact he is the presiding creator," a subject moreover whose behaviour, given the film's moral framework, appears to be singular and exemplary (Yacowar 104).

These two contrary ways of perceiving Allen's apparent authorial reticence suggest the challenge of estimating Allen's presence and control in his own films after the scandal. In

Husbands and Wives, which was conceived and filmed during the time of Allen's surreptitious affair with Soon-Yi and Farrow's discovery of the liaison, meanings are partly circumscribed by events external to the film.[236] Because of these circumstances Allen's unwillingness to show his hand, to assert a moral position on his character's behaviour can seem to be evasive. If he claims to know no more than Gabe does about Gabe's succumbing to the charms of his twenty year old student, Rain (Juliette Lewis), and appears to present Gabe's defense that he is merely a vulnerable romantic as sufficient unto itself ("my heart does not know from logic"), then in some way Allen seems to have claimed justification by proxy for his own questionable romantic choices. It is indeed very difficult not to imagine Allen's narrative maneuvers as being self-defensive attempts to control and contain in some way all available perspectives on his own persona, especially knowing that he knew the sordid accounts of his private affairs would be made public just prior to the film's release.[237] It has often been assumed, too, that Allen has used his authority unfairly to depict Farrow's character Judy in a disadvantageous manner. To consider Husbands and Wives as merely a means of self-justification for Allen, however, one would have to ignore not only the complex emotional experience it delivers, but also the ways in which his recognizable efforts to organize and delimit the audience's perspectives of Gabe and the other characters, especially Farrow's, recognizable despite his apparent deference to the narrator, often yield contradictory results.

In Husbands and Wives Allen subjects his character Gabe to a rigorous scrutiny in matters related to sexuality and romance, and in so doing suggests a transcendent self-conscious perspective. Gabe is criticized by various characters for sexual attitudes and

behaviours that have also been staple characteristics of Allen's persona. In one scene we see Gabe and Rain on a walk in a park, discussing literature and revealing their personal aspirations as writers. During the conversation Gabe shares with Rain his dream of living and writing in Paris and teasingly flaunts his romantic memories of being kissed on a rainy Parisian afternoon. This image of Allen as a romantic exile is one of his preferred ways of presenting himself and he will offer it again in Everyone Says I Love You.[238] In Husbands and Wives, however, we also get an assessment of what this posture might look like from the point of view of a wife of ten years. During a late night argument Judy exposes Gabe's "soulful" yearning to live in Europe as an habitual "flirting technique."

Judy's charge against Gabe is at the center of the challenge Allen has to face in Husbands and Wives because it raises the question of the integrity of his romantic self-presentation. Is his a self-serving self-consciousness, perfectly aware of the proven seductive appeal of the image of the soulful artist, and of how protected such a pose is, even from cynicism, because it may accommodate cynicism, or is it a genuine expression of longing for an existence clarified by passion? It is important that Allen face this challenge since he wants to distinguish Gabe from all the other characters in the film who decide not to have "unreal expectations about life." It is also important to contend with the issue of his intention that Judy's remark raises. For behind her charge that his romantic artist pose is merely a deftly-handled "flirting technique," by means of which he may present himself to his best advantage, is the unspoken implication that in his artist's role Allen also may have compromised Farrow.

One of the ways we can imagine Allen opposing this charge is by his suggesting that

his romantic posture is not an easily held one. Allen ponders the possibility of passionate romance surviving in the late 20th century. He shows Gabe in a beleaguered position, too sophisticated to believe in sustainable passion, but nevertheless hopefully devoted to the idea of it. Hence the contrast between Gabe's glorified memories of spontaneous sex with the "one great love of [his] life," the insatiable Harriet Harmon, and his bedroom scene with Judy in which sex is seen to involve contraceptive contraptions, the emotional subterfuge and mistrust related to the fear of conceiving or not conceiving children, the insecurity about aging and the lessening of one's appeal to one's partner, the boredom of long familiarity, and the necessity of having to "get into it in some way." Allen is acute about the emotional entanglements of sexual relationships, and about the subversive uses of sex to keep marital doubts at bay and to "express every emotion except love." If romantic passion is to live on it has to prevail over all these things plus the extreme self-conscious detachment that psychoanalysis encourages. Enticed by Rain at her twenty-first birthday party to give her a birthday kiss, Gabe seems to prove himself an uncompromised romantic. After weighing the argument against succumbing ("why do I hear $50,000 dollars worth of psychotherapy dialing 911?") he succumbs, but only to the moment and the kiss, before taking his leave of her. Even though, as he has implied to the interviewer, that from his position of authority over Rain as her teacher and artistic mentor, it would be "a cinch," finally he does not misuse his influence and take advantage of her. His choosing to remain chaste confirms his commitment to an ideal of passion and romance.

The sharpest attack on Gabe's authority and on his deeply held assumptions about the relationship between his romantic nature and his identity as an artist comes from Rain

herself, whom he allows to read his latest novel. Her initial observations on his work are offered in a coffee shop where she tells Gabe, with barely suppressed condescension, that the book was "just a delight" and that she likes how he "take[s] all that suffering and . . . make[s] it so funny" with "all these little lost souls running around." Her compliment shows the changed temper of Allen's self-consciousness, since in indulging it he seems also to permit the reflexive possibility it suggests of belittling or even dismissing the serious moral dimension of Gabe's and also his own work: "all these little lost souls running around."[239] Allen appears to grant a substantial authority to Rain who apparently sees beyond Gabe's writerly comic pose to a glib intellectualism, distinguishing his book's "brilliance" and "vitality" and "wit" from any hard-won emotional depth or significant intellectual contribution on the nature of love that it might have had.

A later scene in which Gabe and Rain are riding in a taxicab shows the erotic interplay of power between Gabe as author and Rain as reader/muse figure. Gabe becomes increasingly infatuated with Rain as he listens to her more mordant criticisms of his novel. In her most trenchant remarks she claims to have subconsciously left his manuscript in a cab because she was threatened by Gabe's views of women in the novel, which she says are "shallow" and "retrograde." She also deconstructs the autobiographical sexual fantasy at the heart of Gabe's novel which centers on the "highly libidinous" Harriet, a fantasy which Gabe had earlier recalled for the interviewer with a certain self-satisfaction. Gabe obviously considers his passion for the neurotic Harriet to have determined his romantic history, dooming him to a pattern of self-destructive choices in love, a pattern which he also feels to be a fateful reflection of his artistic sensibility and which he is therefore

content to romanticize. Rain's objection to his novelistic treatment of his love for this self-destructive "Kamikaze woman" exposes the idealization of neurosis in the beloved in Gabe's life and work and reflexively in the figure of the waif in Allen's films.[240] "Isn't it beneath you as a mature thinker to allow your lead character to waste so much of his emotional energy obsessing about this woman, who you fantasize as being powerfully sexual and inspired when in fact she was pitifully sick?" His propensity to idealize this woman, Rain implies, is mistaken or immature and it has kept him moored to an outdated conception of himself. Allen seems to have achieved an objective critical distance on this figure from his earlier films, a figure in relation to whom he has always defined the reach of his self-transcendent artistic ambitions. Paradoxically, Gabe is seduced by Rain's reading of his novel because she has the self-consciousness necessary to escape the threat which his idealized fantasy construction of women seems to pose to her.

In effect the fantasy still has its hold on Allen, as Rain herself is also, of course, a romanticized version of this troubled waif figure. Allen's perspective on Rain may be perceptibly ironic, and so distinguishable from Gabe's, insofar as the performance of Juliette Lewis seems affected and irksome at times.[241] There are also indications (and since he gives her up he may be cognizant of them), that, should he continue with the affair, he would no doubt end up much like her other older lovers, "importuning her on the sidewalk" (Baxter 394). However, the sublimated erotics of Gabe's intellectual relationship with Rain are undoubtedly to be held in higher esteem than the "regressive infatuation" Jack feels for the aerobics instructor Sam (Lysette Anthony) (Romney 45). Rain is clearly a superior choice for a romantic partner than the astrology-obsessed

Sam.[242] When Jack and Gabe debate Sam's merits in a grocery store Gabe is openly disparaging of Sam calling her a "cocktail waitress," Allen's generic term for someone of unworthy ambitions who lacks self-consciousness and intelligence. Though there are also signs that Jack feels she is intellectually unsuitable for him, Jack's defense of Sam as "educated," "warm" and "nice" appears to leave open the chance that Gabe is being narrow-minded and snobbish, as does his justified challenge to Gabe's stereotypical judgments: "You don't know what goes on between two people." Later, however, an argument that Jack and Sam have as they leave a party at his friends' house, seems to make their incompatibility an incontestable fact.

The scene, which is an unusually violent one for an Allen film,[243] shows Sam struggling and screaming for help as Jack drags her from the party in front of his watching friends. Jack, having heard moments before from some of the guests that his estranged wife Sally has been dating someone else, has suddenly re-appraised Sam in light of the sexual jealousy he now feels and is anxious to remove her as quickly as possible from the party and from his life. Perhaps Allen imagines Sam's ensuing tantrum in front of Jack's "intellectual" friends as behaviour which manifestly defines her as the illogical and unworthy choice that Gabe has always contended she was. This seems to be what Jack concludes from the experience: "I must have been out of my mind." But also available is the sense that Jack's conduct toward her has been unconscionably rude and that Sam's infantile protest is the only means she has of retaliating against Jack's (and Allen's) suddenly fixed, biased and degrading opinion of her. Her hysteria is a conscious effort to destroy Jack's sense of superiority to her in front of the friends he had wished to impress:

"I want to embarrass you." One can only imagine what sort of fascination there might have been for Allen in watching a woman struggling vainly to escape the humiliatingly compromised role to which he has confined her.

Judging by the unusually pointed manner in which he assigns motivation to Judy, paradoxically, it would seem as though Allen is defending himself against any notion that from his protected vantage point as artist/creator he has determined Mia Farrow. That is, he seems to propose that she has latent strategic designs of her own. The opening sequence with its lurching, seesawing camera movements suggests a reluctance to choose a single point of focus on the emotional confusion that ensues when longtime friends Jack and Sally arrive at Gabe and Judy's apartment and announce their intention to separate.[244] By the end of the scene, however, Judy is isolated from the group by her angry response to the news, which seems surprisingly excessive and therefore unconscious and private. Later Sally will guess that Judy reacted that way because she was unable to face her own concealed desire to leave her marriage to Gabe, an accusation which Judy will deny but which the film will bear out. Although all the characters behave in ways that are mysterious and confusing to themselves, throughout the film Allen will single out Judy by imputing to her not merely puzzling desires related to her present marital circumstances but an unconsciously manipulative personality, pseudo-scientifically defined as "passive-aggressive" by her ex-husband (Benno Schmidt).

Though Mia Farrow's "wan" and "flu-ish" appearance and her listless performance in the film must owe something to the events unfolding at the time of the film's shooting, it is still possible to say that her character is held definitely outside the filmic limits of Allen's

sense of humor.[245] Farrow exists in a gray, hollowed out place in the film, completely out of reach of the redemptive comic irony with which we are allowed to regard Judy Davis, Sydney Pollack and Allen himself. Judy is not forgivably confused or comically self-deluded as the others seem to be. Rather, her behaviour, is frequently embarrassing to watch, partly because you suspect that Farrow has consciously or unconsciously agreed to portray herself as Allen sees her, or as she imagines Allen sees her, and therefore, paradoxically, she seems to expose herself with every gesture.[246] With every seemingly surreptitious move her character makes away from Allen/Gabe in the film she is in reality merely fulfilling her lover's predetermined sense of her. It is perhaps no coincidence that Judy is imagined to be doomed to live as the pale shadow of some other woman, whether it is her first husband's mother, or Gabe's sexual ideal Harriet Harmon, or Michael's memories of Sally.

Though Allen's efforts seem to be aimed at isolating and confining our point of view of Judy as someone whose "giving" nature disguises a single-minded will to gain her object, there are instances in the film when we see that she might be perceived otherwise, when her caring nature does not prove ironic, and when her desires do not seem selfish. Most of these instances involve her attempts to win recognition for her own point of view.

Judy, like Gabe, uses her art as a means of seduction, as a way of covertly presenting herself to the beloved in the hopes of inspiring romantic desire in him. Like Gabe she has also offered her writing to someone else as a way of escaping her spouse's perception of her, his predictable interpretation and criticism. There is a vague difference in the way that Judy presents her poetry to her co-worker Michael (Liam Neeson) in that Michael

evidently is unaware of her romantic interest in him, and therefore Judy appears to be subtly misrepresenting herself. There is, however, something touching about her shy acceptance of Michael's compliments on her poetry, and there is a nostalgic sweetness, too, in her obvious longing to be in Sally's place, to be "romanced" and "courted" the way Sally will be by Michael. When she had earlier introduced Sally to Michael in her office, her excitement was charming because it was obviously not evoked on her friend's behalf, but aroused by the chance to indulge her admiration for him. Even if we notice her seemingly compulsive mothering behaviour toward Michael, it is still impossible not to read Judy's yearning looks at him back into her own marriage and see there a desire unmet by Gabe. For a brief instant we are allowed to sympathize with Judy's wish to be perceived in a more "supportive" and "generous" way than she expects to be by her husband.

Allen's compassionate regard for Judy's attempt to maneuver out from under Gabe's critical eye wavers. At times he seems to see her as vulnerable in her fear of showing her poetry even to her own husband. As well he allows that her reading of Gabe's autobiographical novel is "generous" and "supportive" despite the obvious dissatisfaction with her that she recognizes in it, and despite his unwillingness to sanction her critical point of view on it. Then again perhaps she is stubbornly self-protective and unwilling to risk the discovery that her talent is mediocre, unlike Gabe who willingly submits himself to Rain's harsh assessment of his work. Finally Allen seems to taint emergent sentiments of pity for her creative efforts to be recognized, evincing a subtle disdain for the apparently elegiac poetry which Judy shows to him, and which finds an accord with

Michael's "nineteenth century" sensibility. As well, he is surely joking at their expense when he has them gushing about the cemetery in Martha's Vineyard where they both claim to want to be buried. Gabe's and Rain's work by contrast is hip and cynical, and seemingly a more "honest" more self-conscious expression of desire in a world where, as Rain says, Time magazine estimates, "you lose your sexual attraction for your partner in four years."

Everything that Allen cannot indulge in Judy he finds expression for in Sally. Judy and Sally share a number of similar circumstances and characteristics. They are both women "of a certain age" who are facing the reality of their husband's loss of sexual interest in them, and though they are also dissatisfied with their marriages and dreaming of abandoning them, they are apparently too fearful of openly initiating a move to gain their freedom. However, the difference in the way Allen treats these women suggests that which he is prepared to redeem with his comedy in Sally's case and that which he is not in Judy's. All of the anxieties, the fears of aging, of being alone and of being replaced in her husband's affections by a younger woman, all of the self-doubts that Judy's too frequent drinking suggests, and that she gives voice to in the bedroom scene with Gabe near the start of the film in a way which can seem dependent, self-pitying and at times coercive, all are given a grand histrionic display in Sally's character.

Sally is presented as a type of woman, "cerebral" and "cold" and "difficult" in the words of her husband. Her rebuffs of Michael's too hasty sexual advances ("metabolically it's not my rhythm"), her enraged profanity-strewn telephone calls to Jack while her dinner date waits nervously in the next room, her jealousy of Jack's co-worker Gail ("she's me but

she's younger"), her hyper-critical assessment of everything from the alfredo sauce to Michael's driving on their first date, her bizarre reverie on foxes and hedgehogs during sex with Michael, all of these ways of defining her cerebral personality, of showing her to be caught in ridiculous, distracted, partly conscious behaviours are redeemed by comic irony. As well, her manner of pretending to herself that she "loves being single," and then in the same scene, confessing despairingly that she is "one of those people who needs to be married," suggests that when her marriage ends she is trapped openly and hysterically in a false role which she has imagined herself playing.

Sally is Allen's first hysterical woman, a figure who enters his repertoire in Husbands and Wives. In Deconstructing Harry and Celebrity Allen uses a similar formula to diffuse and comically reroute the vituperative fury of the woman who, in each case, has discovered that her husband has deceived her with a younger woman. Common to all these scenes is a comical incongruity between what seems like the woman's sophisticated self-possessed demeanor and the unbounded aggression and profanity which she eventually unleashes upon her husband. There is also a meek innocent man who shares in the audience's embarrassment at having to overhear her tirade. In two of the films he becomes the target of the woman's displaced anger, rather than the husband who is absent from the scene, but nevertheless, insofar as he is the focus and cause of her anger, remains the controlling presence in it.

The first scene occurs in Husbands and Wives when Sally comes to the apartment of her colleague Paul, with whom she has a dinner date. It is immediately apparent that she is agitated and preoccupied as Paul's attempts to share his enthusiasm about seeing Don

Giovanni with her inevitably fail. Sally repeatedly asks to use Paul's phone and, within earshot of him, calls Jack to viciously harangue him about living with another woman, having realized that this new arrangement must have been in process before she agreed to a separation. In this scene Sally manifests all of the latent hostility and festering rage that surfaces in a marriage when the contractual terms of the bond appear to have suddenly shifted unbeknownst to one of the partners. The discovery that Jack had been having an affair while they were still together undermines the terms by which Sally could accept their separation with dignity; that is, that separation would be a fair and equal opportunity for both of them to do as they please sexually, to "experiment" with other sexual partners while presumably remaining central to each other's lives. In Sally's anger Allen finds an empathetic expression of the humiliation of the woman who discovers that she has imperfectly understood the terms of her freedom from her husband. As such he comically approaches the question of the contract (the terms of freedom) between director/husband and actor/wife.

Mighty Aphrodite (1996) opens in an ancient Sicilian amphitheater where a drab and tattered-looking Greek chorus bewail the fate of mankind. Because of "the malice or ineptitude of the Gods," they say, man, like Oedipus, has been left "dazed and incomplete," a "lost victim of bewildered desire." The conceit of the chorus which, in between dramatic posturings, periodically breaks into song and dance routines, marks a return to the comic mixture of "high" and "low" cultures that characterized Allen's earliest written work (Gopnik 89). The archaic syntax of the chorus member's speeches frequently slips into the colloquial rhythms of a Jewish middle class skepticism: Oedipus's father

King Laius intones, "I with joy did have a son so fair, so clear-headed and brave that I a thousand pleasures did derive from his presence. So what happens? One day he kills me, and don't you think, he runs off and marries my wife." Jocasta, Oedipus' mother adds, "I'd hate to tell you what they'd call my son in Harlem." Allen's efforts here, however, the shifting tone and style of the mock heroic, no longer evoke the same persona who once mediated the "yearning for the high tradition. . .[and] the dailiness of Manhattan life" (Gopnik 89). Allen still negotiates these disparate aspects of urban life, as he did in his earlier romantic comedies such as Annie Hall and Manhattan, and still negotiates them on the sexual plane (Gopnik 90). In Mighty Aphrodite he continues to be concerned with the difference between "what highbrow culture demands" and the "instinctive necessities of sex," but he is no longer able to suggest an uncomplicated way of combining sexual appetite and cultural aspiration (Gopnik 90).[247] This may be because the previous conditions under which his lechery had been acceptable as a comic subject have changed (Gopnik 90).[248] That is, it was acceptable especially when it was directed toward the figure of the sensitive and artist child/woman, "the waif," for then sex could be promoted as a kind of highbrow activity in itself (Gopnik 90). In a way the larger encompassing story of Allen's artistic growth and success protected this fantasy, which was dispelled after the scandal broke and he was "recast as the protagonist in a cartoon story of hubris and temptation" (Gopnik 86). Allen is no longer able to present himself as a "luckless predator-victim," someone who, because he is a victim, is therefore "innocent" of being a seducer (Brodkey 70). In his films now Allen faces the likelihood of being perceived as predatory, sexually exploitative, and power hungry. Mighty Aphrodite is Allen's effort to

counter this configuration of his persona with images of himself as a devoted father and husband. Yet, as well, the film's comic foundation rests on the question of his sexual intentions within a familial context.[249] With the "light" classical references in Mighty Aphrodite, particularly to the story of Oedipus, Allen provides a dignifying literary context from within which he might suggest the "notion that sexual transgression is amusing in itself."[250]

The contemporary story concerning the marital difficulties of Lenny Weinrib (Allen) and his wife Amanda (Helena Bonham Carter) is facetiously contextualized by the chorus among the stories about families destroyed by illicit passions in the tragedies of Medea, Achilles, and Oedipus. The ancient narrative themes of parricide, infanticide and incest which are evoked in the kvetching tones of the chorus find an echo in the after dinner conversation between the Weinribs and their friends Bud and Ellie. In response to Amanda's suggestion that she and Lenny should adopt a child, Bud says that he would be afraid that he would get "a bad seed." Lenny jokingly concurs with Bud, reminding Amanda of the tabloid horror stories of murderous children. However, except for being a part of Lenny's spurious argument against adoption, these dark themes are never explored in relation to the Weinribs' subsequent adoption of their son Max, who turns out to be a dream child, bright, gifted, perfectly tempered it seems. No dark forbidden desires surface as a consequence of Max's coming into their lives. In fact, like many of the children in Allen's films, Max himself is a presence that "barely registers."[251] Rather, the chorus's tales of unlawful desire later serve as a broadly suggestive reference point for Lenny's developing fixation on Max's biological mother, Linda Ash (Mira Sorvino), whom he

discovers to be a prostitute and porn film actress. In his pursuit of Linda, Lenny is apparently to be seen as another "lost victim of bewildered desire."

Allen has been perplexed by love before and curious and depressed about why "love fades," but prior to Husbands and Wives he did not declare himself a confused victim of his own sexual desire. This is different than his saying (hypothetically) "my lechery is an indication of my liberal imagination and refined aesthetic sensibility, an endearing show of my desire to resist assimilation into the goyish world of my beloved, a sign both of my contempt for this world and my ironic self-consciousness about wanting to belong to it."[252] Lenny Weinrib does exhibit a residue of this characteristic aggression in love which pairs "sexual triumph" and "cultural conquest," but in a very diffused and comically muted way in his marriage (Girgus 126). Allen plays Lenny as someone, not emasculated certainly, but sweetly humbled in the face of his wife's career ambitions, which are specifically focussed around her desire to have her own art gallery. When Max asks his father, "Who's the boss between you and mommy?" Lenny answers, "I'm the boss. Mommy's only the decision-maker." There is a certain obvious pride in Amanda (and in Helena Bonham Carter on the part of Allen too it seems)[253] and in their privileged lifestyle. Lenny practices a rather good-natured deference to her and her elitist cultural aspirations and heritage (her mother is played by British actress Claire Bloom), which is pointedly distinguished from his own Jewish background. His sensitivity to their differences is exhibited in two scenes in which they discuss names. The first occurs when they are searching for a name for their new son. All of Amanda's suggestions Lenny likes but he thinks that many of them sound inappropriate when paired with "Weinrib": "that's

the curse of the Weinrib name, nothing goes with it." The second scene involves the naming of Amanda's new art gallery which she says will be "The Amanda Sloane Gallery." Lenny replies in a way that shows him to be negotiating the cross currents of gender and cultural power with a certain grace. He remarks, "not the Amanda Weinrib Gallery 'cause there's a euphony problem." This mixture of his pride in her and the slight resentment found in his ironic perspective of her elitist ambition combines differently than it has before to create the new sense of an endearingly modest relinquishment of traditional paternal power.

The nature of the aggression in relation to cultural differences is less trenchant here than in other Allen films as is typified by Lenny's tepid complaint about having to "have dinner yet again with the world's dullest couple" (Amanda's prospective patrons), and by his apparent disdain for the currying of favor that his wife's social ambition makes necessary. In fact the dynamics of Lenny's and Amanda's relationship is by and large strangely devoid of emotional friction. The camera has so little curiosity about Helena Bonham Carter as Lenny's waif-like spouse Amanda, about her inner life, that she is almost without defining personal qualities. She is an image of what the waif would be if her neurotic energies were actually channeled into the lifestyle and aspirations that she represents for Allen. Bonham Carter has much less rapport with Allen on the screen than his previous female partners have had, so there is little sense of their marriage being an interaction of personalities. The marital problems of the Weinribs seem almost symbolic compared to those of the couples in Husbands and Wives, since they are mostly about superficial changes in lifestyle rather than disturbing emotional differences or conflicting

independent wills. There is in general a static quality about Lenny and Amanda's domestic life, but oddly, it seems static and superficial beyond Allen's wanting to declare himself dissatisfied with it, to suggest his outsider's restlessness and boredom. This idea is noticeable in their dinner conversation in which they argue for and against having a baby. Amanda wants to adopt a child because she "just can't afford to give up a year just now" and Lenny does not want to adopt "because its pride of ownership." There is no active sense in these seemingly superficial arguments that their lifestyle and their feelings about it are being ironized.[254]

The character of Linda apparently offers the possibility for both Allen and Lenny to break out of a cloistered Upper East Side mentality.[255] However, that Allen is able to propose comedy arising out of the surprising discovery that the mother of his gifted child is a vulgar prostitute, betrays his prejudice about the upper middle-class lifestyle even as he seems prepared to try and escape its perceptual limits by allowing a character such as Linda a primary place in his filmic world. However, in his relationship with Linda, the de-vitalized comic tension between sexual desire and cultural aspiration in Lenny's marriage to Amanda is comically renewed and re-worked. In Linda we have a blatant comic misalignment of sexual appetite and cultural aspiration, Allen asking us to believe that her desire to be a Broadway star has been innocently misdirected into a career as a porn film actress and prostitute. This conceit makes it possible for Allen once again to assert his authority in the relationship in terms of his cultural discernment. The typical ambiguity in Allen's persona is reversed here, though, so that his cultural authority is no longer signaled by sexual aggression but rather by sexual timidity, as Allen briefly reverts back to his

likable schlemiel persona and the image of himself as a sexual fumbler. At their first meeting, when Linda proudly displays for him the latest additions to her collection of kitschy phallic knickknacks, it is difficult to distinguish the source of Lenny's nervousness, to tell whether it derives from a guilty sexual excitement or from his offended cultural sensibilities. The tension suggested in this ambiguity inheres in Lenny's relationship to Linda, so that his patronizing of her, his efforts to help her make a more respectable career choice is always attended by the possibility of his patronizing her as a prostitute.

As Lenny's motivation in patronizing Linda is the overt concern of the chorus, he often defends himself against their assumptions in this regard. The film makes it very clear that Lenny's fascination with Linda is piqued by his vague dissatisfaction with his marriage. Though he protests that he is merely anticipating his son's curiosity about his birth mother and acting on Max's behalf as he tracks Linda down, the leader of the chorus (F. Murray Abraham) does not let him accept such a transparently self-deluding excuse: "You're going to rent a hotel room with a hooker and not sleep with her?" Lenny's failed attempt to disguise his sexual interest in Linda is the joke and this is as close as the film comes to an analysis of neurosis or obsession.[256] Almost immediately upon raising the question of Lenny's sexual obsession, Allen drops it and shifts the focus to his reasons for wanting to help Linda change her lifestyle. The chorus claims that he is guilty of "hubris," of "playing God" and wanting to control her. In dismissing the question of Lenny's sexual motivation, Allen works against the idea of himself as a sexual exploiter of this young woman, yet there is a covert tangle of paternal and sexual feeling in his relationship with

the girlishly affectionate prostitute that after all gives some weight to the chorus's concerns.

Lenny's extra-marital curiosity about Linda takes on a kindly paternal aspect as Lenny proposes the joys of family and a middle class life to Linda (presumably she could never aspire to his lifestyle). In a strange take on Hitchcock's Vertigo Allen has Lenny transforming Linda into his idea of an acceptable middle class mother for his son. Displaying a fatherly indulgence of her bad taste, he takes on the role of her advisor and protector. The comedy in their relationship arises out of the "pact of misunderstanding" between Lenny and Linda about Lenny's "real" reasons for coming to see her, even though these are left questionable.[257] Allen graciously seems to indulge Linda's initial misperception of him as just another one of her "johns," while concealing the fact that he is raising her son. His own sexual desire he courteously sublimates in his efforts to rescue her from the person who is really exploiting and controlling her -her pimp Ricky.

Allen chooses to sentimentalize the chasteness of Lenny's relationship to Linda, though what motivates the chastity is precisely the question. Does it spring from a sense of loyalty to his wife, moral distaste, or snobbery? The sexual consummation is also sentimentalized, despite Lenny's reveling in Linda's vulgarity throughout the film. There is a strong sense that this pairing should remain a platonic one if Lenny is to fulfill the original terms under which he would be Linda's confidant and protector. Allen, however, insists on their romantic emotional connection as a "couple of losers," which is what Lenny calls himself and Linda after Amanda leaves him, and Kevin, (Michael Rapaport), the man with whom Lenny has arranged a match for Linda, leaves her. Sex with Linda is

consolatory in several ways. First Allen seems to give in to a fantasy of keeping sex "all in the family." It's as if the child of Lenny's that Linda conceives during their night of lovemaking is recompense for his having her son Max, and the fact that he is the father in a sense of both of her children conversely seems to legitimize the sexual encounter between them. As well, Lenny comforts Linda after Kevin, having found out about her infamous past, hits her and breaks their engagement. Lenny's compassionate response to Linda shows him to be a "broad-minded guy," unlike Kevin, whose ignorance is part and parcel with his moral conservatism. Finally, then, for Lenny sex with Linda is in some measure a gesture of acceptance, of consanguinity, and as such it looks as though it is also a redemption of her stupidity and vulgarity, the ultimate gesture of paternal hubris.[258]

When we first see Allen's character Harry Block in Deconstructing Harry he is being threatened with death by his hysterical ex-lover and sister-in-law, Lucy (Judy Davis), who bursts into his apartment and accuses him of exposing her to her husband and her sister in a fictional account of their affair which they have all recognized in Harry's latest novel. Allen no doubt shares Harry's experience of audiences scouring his work for fictional correlations to his private life and being incensed by the audacity of his flimsy disguises. Perhaps he anticipates such a critical response to Deconstructing Harry, which, despite his protestations to the contrary, many viewers did feel was his most revealing work to date.[259] As well, Allen's private world, like Harry's, has been invaded and the isolation in which he has always sought to secure himself jeopardized.[260] Like Zelig he has found that he can only go so far in saying and doing what he will without worrying about being liked and accepted before the "suppressed details of his chameleon life emerge" and the public

rises up calling for retribution (Gopnik 91). While it may seem that the only way out for Harry, as for Zelig, is to retreat into the safety of his old well-liked neurotic self, Allen knows that he can never really comfortably inhabit his innocent character again. Deconstructing Harry, with its defiant confessional aspect seems like an experiment on Allen's part to see on what self-defined terms he may secure himself in comic poses that would seem no longer tenable for him, while moving as far away as he can from the established moral boundaries of his persona, without severing his connection to his audience entirely (Gopnik 91).[261]

Allen's opening scenes introduce a concern with the self-protective uses of fiction. In the scene previously mentioned, Harry, like a male Scheherezade, stays his death at Lucy's hands by entertaining her with the autobiographical story he is writing about a young man, Harvey Stern, who has a guilty tryst with a prostitute. Through Harry's alter-ego, Harvey, as played by Toby McGuire, Allen is able successfully to revive the comedy of lechery. Harvey, who has borrowed the apartment and identity of his gravely ill friend, Mendel Burnbaum, for his tryst, is escorted away by Death in his friend's stead when Burnbaum dies. Lechery is cute and forgivable as McGuire depicts it, as he is young, inexperienced, confused and guilty, but Allen of course has to contend with the fact that it is far less endearing behaviour in a man of sixty-two years.[262] Allen's sexual persona is unlike that of other male stars whom Harold Brodkey has described, like Bogart for example, who have projected a sexuality beyond the confusions and compromises of sex itself, and who therefore have been protected to varying degrees from the ravages of the media and of age.[263] Throughout their careers they continued to promise an "availability" to their

audience, while paradoxically seeming to be beyond sex (Brodkey 104). Allen's persona was never that of someone who was beyond sex, or beyond subjugation by sex, though if we think back to his date with Shelley Duvall in Annie Hall we see that he has been very coolly promiscuous, almost to the point of being disdainful of the act and his partner, ironically lecherous in a prideful way. Mostly, however, he has relied on a boyishly precocious sexuality. Age and the media incursions into his private life now make it impossible to present his sexuality in such a guise.

Though at one time he may have used his sexuality, as I suggested earlier in relation to Mighty Aphrodite, to signal his contradictory desires in relation to the 'dominant' culture, as a show of his social discernment, in Deconstructing Harry Allen's sexuality is mostly exhibited as a socially irredeemable fact. Allen returns stubbornly and unrepentantly to the comedy of lechery in this film in order to reclaim it, knowing full well that the media scandal has made his sexual behaviour unfunny, and that the boyish attributes upon which it had depended for its comic effect can only be appealed to with self-conscious irony now. For example, Harry defends his pursuit of his much younger former lover Fay (Elizabeth Shue) by saying, "because of my immaturity I have a boyish quality that works." The irony of this comment derives from the fact that he obviously does not believe this anymore either.

Yet Allen is also inclined to make an aggressive defense of this pose of immaturity. In a scene with his psychoanalyst Harry confesses to an excessive preoccupation with sex, which he implies he feels is unseemly in a man his age, but his confession (like others he will make in this film) has a way of turning into a self-justifying accusation of others:

"Does the president of the United States want to fuck every woman he. ... OK. Bad example." In Deconstructing Harry Allen does not want to give up the possibility of presenting his licentiousness as a matter of his "immaturity" and that in turn as a manifestation of the artist's emotional isolation. Having sex with prostitutes, he suggests, is simply an expediency of his reclusive writer's lifestyle, made necessary by his failure or unwillingness to connect emotionally with others. When he confesses to his psychiatrist that he "still can't get [his] love life in order" and that he "still loves whores" he talks (half-facetiously) about paying for sex as though it provided a release from the burden of intellect and of social contact; "you pay them and they come over to the house and you don't have to discuss Proust or films." But the joke still leaves him with the problem of how to make an emotionally isolated sexuality sexy in a man of his age.

This problem would account for the tensions in Harry's relationship with his lover Fay whom he tries to instruct as he has tried for years to instruct his audience, "not to love him" (Gopnik 91). Harry is unconvincingly presented as someone who is surprised by love, won back to the experience of romantic desire from a hardened, damaged life. However, his coarse description of how unprepared he was for his feelings of love for Fay fails to persuade her to leave his friend Larry (Billy Crystal) and return to Harry, and I suspect fails also to convince the audience of his profound romantic feeling: "I thought you were another jerk fan, that I would fuck you and move on to the next fan, but it didn't happen that way." This might explain the seemingly contradictory impulses behind the scenes of the earlier stages of their love affair. In the scenes in which Harry and Fay are shown either in a romantic embrace or enjoying a warm domestic moment Harry is also

insisting that he is unlovable and unable to love. Allen obviously has an investment in the image of Harry which he presents here. Its idealized counterpart is found in one of Harry's short stories which Fay tells him is "beautiful:" that is the image of the little boy who "would never learn to love." Somehow Allen hopes to hold on to this romanticized idea of his seductive remoteness in the image of the little boy who can't love, while also flaunting the reverse aspect of it, the aging, neurotic, whoremongering artist.

Because Harry is a writer, and, he says, can only function in his art and not in life, he eventually has to relinquish Fay, "his one true love," to Larry. Larry, as his name suggests, is the obverse image of Harry, a man who has won her because he puts his "art into [his] life." Allen prefers to imagine the exchange of love and life for art that Harry makes as a sacrifice,[264] and gives a philosophical distinction to Harry's withdrawal from life into world of his imagination. As he tells Cookie (Hazel Goodman), the prostitute whom he hires, "a great writer named Sophocles said that it would be better not to be born."

Allen first presented himself as neurotically isolated from the world in Annie Hall, but never has his isolation seemed so self-destructive, rather than principled and "healthy," and never was the question of whether or not his cynical reticence was a matter of immaturity or philosophical integrity more confusing (Librach 172).[265] In Deconstructing Harry it is not possible, as it was in Annie Hall, to distinguish the voice of the author, the philosophical position he seriously held, from its comically neurotic expression in the persona (Librach 172). Neurotic immaturity and the emotional isolation and the sexual promiscuity it ostensibly explains are seemingly justified from Harry's extreme philosophical position, which he attributes to Sophocles: "it is better not to be born."

We've earlier heard that Harry did "fight not to be born," that his mother died giving birth to him, and that his grieving father subsequently tormented him throughout his life for being the cause of his wife's death.

This almost hyperbolically self-pitying image of the artist as a frightened child with the instinctual wisdom of Sophocles, being persecuted for the crime of being born has to be a defensive compensatory configuration, but it also competes with a perspective supplied by Ken (Richard Benjamin), one of Harry's fictional alter-egos. Ken corrects Harry's memory of his third ex-wife's personality and charges Harry with choosing Jane (Amy Irving) precisely because her cold nature would doom the relationship to failure. Harry, Ken says, wanted to sabotage the marriage so that he "would never have to give up chronic dissatisfaction and sport fucking and grow up." These two perspectives on Harry's "immaturity," one of them ostensibly chastening, are held in tandem in the narrative, neither ironizing the other, for both are subsumed in the solipsistic world of Harry's imagination.[266]

Similarly, the extremity of this position in which the retreat into the world of art is figured as the defensive posture of the victim, is balanced but again not cancelled out by the perspective that such a withdrawal can also be self-serving and contemptuous. We find out in a number of vignettes featuring Harry's relatives who have become characters in his worlds that Harry not only charms and seduces with his fiction, but that he also uses it as an outlet for his vengeful feelings toward his intimate acquaintances. As author, though, he is protected from the agonies of self-exposure by being able to spin his confessions into "inspired comic flights" which win him praise and recognition from the

media.

In a scene in which Harry remembers an emotionally violent confrontation with his ex-wife Joan (Kirstey Alley) Allen shows his awareness of his own contemptuous displacements in fiction. Joan, a psychoanalyst, explodes with rage when she finds out Harry has been having an affair with her patient, and so violating a "sacred trust." Allen lets us imagine this scene to be a recreation of a scene with Farrow or an amalgamation of many. The accusation of the secret affair, the close relationship of wife to lover, the dwindling sex life after the birth of an only child were all details reported during the early days of the Allen/Farrow scandal. The scene has a central place in the film, then, because it seems to be a chance for Allen to finally defend himself against the charges of the one crime that his audience cares about. All the other sins of which Harry is accused, or to which he confesses in the film, are really minor analogues to this one crime of betrayal. However, the scene itself is an escape into art, a chance for Allen to imagine it and represent it simply as an ill-conceived opportunity for a stand-up comedy performance. Harry's response to Joan's emotional suffering takes on the style of a comic routine in which he uses the hysterical woman as a "straight man":

Joan: Was she the only one or were there others?

Harry: No, Amy Pollack was the only one. May God strike me dead if I'm lying.

Joan: You're an atheist Harry.

Harry: Hey, we're alone in the universe. Are you going blame that on me?

Allen and Harry know that his comic performance (his "tap dancing" as Joan calls it), his pose as the victim-seducer ("Hey, I'm just as much a victim as you are"), is a cruel

affront to Joan's suffering; that is the point of the joke. By this means, though, Allen further displaces the cruelty of the betrayal itself. When Harry is confronted by another one of his characters, Helen (Demi Moore) who tells him that Joan hates him. Harry asks, "Why should she hate me, because I was unfaithful to her?" "No," says Helen, "because when she caught you, you weren't a man. You turned into this....tap dancing liar." Allen displaces the crime in his fictional presentation of it, so it seems as though Harry is to be blamed for taking the wrong attitude toward her accusations.

Although in Deconstructing Harry Allen does seem to be pitting his comic pose as victim-seducer against the "real life" consequences of his behaviour and finding it to be inadequate and inappropriate, it has to be noted that in this particular situation he also takes the opportunity to turn the comedy against the wife, so that by the end of the sequence in which Joan is alternately screaming obscenities at Harry in one room and attempting to listen to her patient, Mr. Farber, in another room, finally it is her uncontrollable rage bursting out in Mr. Farber's presence that gets the laugh. And it is Mr. Farber, not Harry, who is absent from the scene, who is overcome by her outburst and starts to weep. Allen seems to remove himself to the position of the watcher of this scene rather than a guilty participant.

Ostensibly there appears to be room in the narrative to question whether or not the artist's withdrawal into the world of the imagination is a necessary sacrifice, a forgivable neurotic predisposition, a cowardly rejection and betrayal of intimate relationships, or a deliberate estrangement from the world of suffering. During the road trip Harry takes to the honoring ceremony for him at Adair, his former university, he has the opportunity to

see the personal devastation his behaviour has occasioned, courtesy of his own fictional characters, who allow him to look at scenes of what has transpired with lovers and family members during his absence. Again, though, the anger and grief that his behaviour has caused, as in the case of Lucy's discovery that Harry has left not only his wife, her sister Jane, but also her, are depicted comically at the expense of the woman he has hurt, Lucy. It is at his sister Doris's (Caroline Aaron) that his pose as the alienated artist is challenged most extensively as his nihilism is weighed against the effect it has on familial relations, particularly the estrangement it has caused from his religiously devout sister. His sister's husband, whom Harry derisively calls a "zealot," further challenges Harry with the idea that his comedy is a denial of the horrors of the world, perhaps has even contributed to the suffering, since his stories contain anti-Semitic stereotypes. The evocation of the Holocaust is meant to be an affront to his pose as the alienated artist suffering in response to the horrors of the world, but again comedy is Allen's best defense, and the story to which his sister objects, in which he fictionalizes his father as a murderous cannibal, is the longest and perhaps funniest vignette in the film.

At times, as I have suggested earlier, Allen seems to want us to feel sympathy for Harry because he, like Tom Baxter in The Purple Rose of Cairo, cannot enter the real world. Although, as the sessions with Harry's psychologist suggest, Harry sees an imaginative continuum between his fiction and his reality, he can only turn his neurotic behaviour into "an interesting character" and his story into a fiction to move himself forward in his life.[267] Deconstructing Harry begins with one of Harry's "characters" (Lucy) coming back to kill him as the author, but it ends with the author's characters

teaching him about his life and honoring him at an imagined ceremony.[268] Perhaps, as Harold Brodkey suggests, all American films are solipsistic expressions of unchallenged will, yet Allen's film is solipsistic with a vengeance (Brodkey 105-118). He defends his right to be so against all moral arguments he may have raised previously, and not just in a passive way. Finally, his comedy is defiant: better to rule in Hell than to serve in Heaven is the philosophy that seems to reconcile Harry and Allen to their reputations.

In Deconstructing Harry Allen pushes against the limits of the comic, both in terms of what has been defined by his own previous work and in relation to what has been expected or acceptable in his persona. In one of Harry's stories, what begins as a romantic quest of sorts, a descent into a Boschian hell to retrieve Fay from the clutches of the devil (Billy Crystal), turns into a boasting contest between him and Satan concerning how many "handicapped" lovers each has had. In this scene Allen seems to hide behind Billy Crystal's stature as a renowned Jewish comic when Larry asks Harry if he has "ever fucked a blind girl." Allen dares us to laugh. His psychoanalyst's comment, quoted at the start of this chapter, which significantly does not seem to refer to any incident from the story, indicates that Allen is aware of the onus placed on the viewer to alter her perspective of him.[269] If we laugh then we enter into some kind of kinship with Allen, which commits us to an involuntary exoneration of him.[270]

Finally, a similar kind of moral confusion as is found in Mighty Aphrodite is to be noticed in Deconstructing Harry, a confusion which seems to arise because of the film's similar self-defensive aims. In this film Allen continues to insist on presenting his "spiritual bankruptcy" as an admirable condition, resulting from a sensitivity to the world

of suffering. Spiritual bankruptcy, however, looks much less admirable when it is presented in terms of a boast about having sex with someone in a wheelchair.

Conclusion

Throughout my thesis I have argued for the importance of the spectator's presence in the creation of comic authority. In Chapter One I examined the various kinds of self-conscious contracts that comedians Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis and Woody Allen established with their audiences within the genre of comedian comedies. Each performer reveals a different kind of awareness of being looked at by the viewer and Hope and Allen demonstrate the self-consciousness required of aspirants to modern fame. Bob Hope's films emerged in an era of America's expanding commercial confidence and his personal style of self-presentation is a reflection of this national sense of security. He displays a winning assurance of being watched approvingly without betraying any sense of deference to the watcher. His naive pleasure in being visible to others and his paradoxical lack of interest in his audience, what I have called his self-sufficient self-regard, imply his complete confidence in the identity his visible fame gives him.

In this regard Hope's performances differ completely from those of Jerry Lewis. For Lewis is unsure of his famous identity and ever conscious of the threats to his integrity that visibility brings. Lewis' films replay his struggle for control and centrality within his films and his contention with his audience with whom he has an uncertain and repeatedly tested contract. Accordingly, his narratives are obsessively focused on a character who faces a severe victimizing scrutiny and who must find a way of acknowledging and controlling this attention.

In contrast with the other two comedians mentioned in this chapter, Woody Allen has a much more ambivalent response to his audience that, as I suggested in Chapter

Two, continues throughout his career. He is inclined to disparage his audience at times and is much more cynical about his fame than Hope and Lewis are. He is admired and celebrated accordingly as a personality who has not surrendered his integrity to the media. In his earliest films, his persona exhibits a sensitivity to the threat posed by mass media culture, although, again paradoxically, in presenting himself as an alternative to images of Hollywood stardom he contributes to the fantasy of a democratic stardom. I argued, finally, in another paradoxical formulation, that his admired self-determination and skeptical withdrawal from the world are emblematic of the cultural skepticism that John Lahr believes underlies the American culture of celebrity.

In Chapter Two I looked at the qualities and attributes of Allen's persona, most notably defined in Annie Hall, which have served to guarantee his authority, particularly his capacity for a transcendental self-awareness, his unassailable marginal perspective, and his admired cultural and moral discernment. Using William Paul's analysis of comedian Bill Murray's persona, I outlined Allen's distinct strategies for establishing cultural dominance and social power in his films. Allen's cultural aggression, unlike Murray's, supports an attitude of cynical resistance to modern trends and popular culture. His authority is accordingly based upon his ability to interpret the conditions of social power and to elevate his sensibility as such from the masses. His relationship to his audience is adversarial insofar as he asserts himself in opposition to the audience's culture and yet he is dependent upon the audience informed by that culture for validation of his authority.

I am thereafter concerned with the mutual investment author and audience make in the authority of the comedian's persona, an investment which I see as the basis of their

contract. Subsequently I looked at Allen's efforts to withdraw from this contract in films which he made after Annie Hall. Following this film, Allen attempts to protect his character's perspective from comic irony and, as he does so, he increasingly excludes his audience from a shared perspective on his persona. In Stardust Memories Allen overtly repudiates an identification with his audience, whom he parodies in the film, and tries to disentangle himself from his obligation to them by refusing them a mediating point of view on his character. For Allen is resolved to disentangle his artistic aspirations and autonomy from any relation with his comic persona. I suggested that the unanimously passionate and hostile nature of the critical response to this film, a result of the viewers' sense of rejection, as well as Allen's equally hostile attack on his audience, indicates an unresolved bond of authority.

In Chapter Three I examined three films which Allen made during the 1980's, Zelig, Broadway Danny Rose and Crimes and Misdemeanors. Of these films, which are all concerned with the culture of celebrity and showbusiness, Zelig is specifically concerned with visible celebrity and the alienated self-consciousness which it engenders. I argued that it might be read as a reflection of Allen's conflicted relationship with his audience and his mediated identity. The film suggests the contradictory desire of the celebrated personality to be validated by being seen but also to withdraw from sight into a private definition of the self that is not indebted to his audience. Allen sentimentalizes the plight of the artist who exists in the shadow of his celebrated image, but he is also uneasy about the duplicitous nature of this identity and the sense of fraudulence it induces. For though the celebrity experiences a sense of alienation from his famous "innocent" identity, which

Allen elevates to the level of an existential freedom, he also experiences this freedom as social license and therefore finds himself in reality moving further from any resemblance to his innocent comic portrait. As a result the freedom of the celebrity is tainted by existential guilt. Finally, I looked at how the need to keep something innocent alive in the comic portrait is contradicted by the artist's need to escape the audience's demands for conformity to the role.

In Broadway Danny Rose Allen makes an investment in a fantasy of comic innocence and unself-consciousness in the character of Danny Rose. However, in this film Allen betrays a sense of uneasiness about Danny's innocence, since it bears the taint of Allen's own Jewish middle-class origins. In the film Allen evinces an acute sense of the sliding scale of showbusiness prestige and in the character of Danny, Allen revisits and distances himself from his "lowly" origins in the comedy business.

Crimes and Misdemeanors also betrays Allen's self-consciousness of the specter of his celebrity status. A primary thematic concern of this film is the attempt to expose the "real" nature of the celebrated person, a theme contextualized within a larger debate on the possibility of spiritual atonement.

In Chapter Four I examined Allen's efforts to reconstruct his relationship with his audience following the scandal of his affair with Mia Farrow's daughter Soon-Yi Previn in 1992. I suggested that Allen is now in a struggle with the media and his audience to regain control over his mediated identity and to deconstruct the comic persona that has been contaminated by his private life. In a discussion of Husbands and Wives, I looked at the necessity of estimating his presence and protective control over the perspective of his

own character and that of other characters, in particular that of Mia Farrow, given that media reports of the scandal were to be published just prior to the film's release. I found that Allen makes efforts to secure the integrity of his romantic self-presentation. I also found that while Farrow's character is kept out of reach of the redemptive power of Allen's comic irony, she is also briefly accorded a compassionate sympathy for her efforts to escape her husband's perception of her.

In Mighty Aphrodite and in Deconstructing Harry Allen's continuing efforts to present himself as a romantic in the grip of an uncontrollable desire end in moral ambiguity. Because Allen now faces the likelihood of being perceived as an incestuous sexual predator, he seems to counter this configuration with an image of himself as a devoted father. I suggested, however, that in Mighty Aphrodite the over-intended image of Allen as a loving father is made ambiguous when his character searches out and then patronizes his adopted son's mother, who is a prostitute, since the implication is that in the sexual act he has redeemed her from vulgarity and stupidity. Looking at Deconstructing Harry I proposed that the media incursions into his private life and the fact of his advancing age have had corrosive effects on Allen's self-presentation. However, despite the loss of his boyish sexuality Allen brazenly revives the comedy of lechery. Ultimately he asks the audience to accept contradictory and morally ambiguous self-presentations. He promotes both the romanticized idea of his seductive remoteness in the image of the little boy who cannot love and the reverse image of the whoremongering artist. I concluded that Allen consistently displays a self-conscious awareness of his audience and alternately caters to and resists their demands for conformity.

Notes

1. John Caughie, "Introduction," Theories of Authorship, ed. John Caughie (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986) 9-16.

2. Timothy Corrigan, "Auteurs and the New Hollywood," The New American Cinema (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998) 38-64. Dudley Andrew, "The Unauthorized Author Today," Film Theory Goes to the Movies. ed. Jim Collins, Hilary Radner, Ava Preacher Collins (New York; London: Routledge, 1993) 77-86.

3. Leo Braudy, The Frenzy of Renown (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) 543.

4. Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," Theories of Authorship, ed. John Caughie (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986) 208-214.

5 . Steven Shaviro, The Cinematic Body (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) 113.

6. Christopher Lasch, The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978) 54.

7. Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987) 140.

8. See Steve Seidman, Comedian Comedy: A Tradition in Hollywood Film (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1981).

See also Henry Jenkins' and Kristine Brunovska Karnick's chapter, "Introduction: Acting Funny" in the anthology they co-edited, Classical Hollywood Comedy (New York; London: Routledge, 1995) 149-167.

9. Allen's admiration for Bob Hope has been often mentioned; his estimation of Lewis is qualified in an interview with Stig Björkman in which he says that he asked Lewis to direct his first two films because he thought Lewis a "hilariously talented man," though he found Lewis's films too infantile for his particular taste: Woody Allen on Woody Allen: In Conversation With Stig Björkman (London; Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995). See especially pages16, 18, 45, and 121.

10. Joanna Rapf's essay on Lewis is an attempt to align Lewis's self-reflexive films with a surrealist aesthetic. She stops short of making this connection because of Lewis's sentimentality, to her mind a sign of his ultimate conformity to social convention: "Comic Theory from a Feminist Perspective: A Look at Jerry Lewis," Journal of Popular Culture Summer (1993): 191-203.

Bruce Babington and Peter William Evans see the Hope persona as the creation of writers and directors and credit Hope with an unintentional subversiveness in terms of gender issues: Affairs to Remember (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989) 95-179.

Frank Krutnik maintains that the films of Martin and Lewis create opposing images of masculinity which make questions of gender problematic: "The Handsome Man and His Monkey: The Comic Bondage of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis," Journal of Popular Culture and Television Spring 1995: 16-25.
In another article Krutnik discusses the structuring conflict between the "'bracketed' moments, towards the exhibitionist, and hence discursive, rather than the voyeuristic and historical." This conflict Krutnik feels is unrelated to the comedian comedies which seem to him to be "an alternative fictional mode" the effectiveness of which often results from "a play with the conventional fictional operations of the 'straight' genres": "The Clown-Prints of Comedy" Screen 25 (1984): 50-59; 50.

11. Frank Krutnik suggests similarly that in disabusing the viewer of the narrative's illusory hold, the films do not produce alienation but rather create a "play between engagement and distance" in which pleasure is linked to the re-setting of the boundaries of transgression ("Clown-Prints" 59).

In another article Krutnik has shown that rather than being opposed traditions the classical films and the comedian comedy films have an interrelated and mutually informing history: "A Spanner in the Works?: Genre, Narrative and the Hollywood Comedian" in Jenkins' and Karnick's Classical Hollywood Comedy (17-39).

12. Krutnik: "the disruptiveness is familiarised by the location of the comedian within a problematic of identity, a fictional structuring which supercedes the ostensible, conventional narrative" ("Clown-Prints" 59). Compare Thomas Leitch on how identification with the comedian's personality is connected to the narrative's comic rhythm: "Laughing at Length: Notes on the Structure of Film Comedy" in Studies in American Humor (1985-86): 161-172.

13. See Babington's and Evans' Chapter Three entitled, "Joking Apart," 95-179. Nancy Pogel also discusses the comedian comedy tradition in relation to Allen's films and suggests that they indulge the viewer's "anticultural desires and the need for censorship of such desires": Woody Allen (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987) 4-8; 4.

14. See Babington and Evans on the difference between the comedian comedy comedian being inside and outside of character and the performance of character in other kinds of comedy (101).

John Lahr's comment is apropos: "the fact that Hope almost never seemed to get the girl didn't spoil the happy ending for the audience; Hope always had himself," Lahr says in his article "The C.E.O. of Comedy" in The New Yorker, December 1998: 62-79; 74.

See also Babington and Evans: "his persona is ruled by an addict's need for applause, and to that end all is sacrificed, even the fantasy of romantic union with an idealized woman. The audience expects as much, anticipates in a sub-genre committed to transgression of the normal audience/character relationships the relegation of expectations of wholeness, order, or romance to the necessities of the comic persona. In any case how could any woman match the devotion lavished on the persona by Hope's own limitless idolatry? How could anyone rival his own extravagant self-wooing?" (112-113; 114).

15. John Lahr suggests that Hope's apprenticeship in vaudeville taught him a kind of emotional self-defense, characterized by "a show of interest which belies self-involvement": ("The C.E.O. of Comedy" 68).

16. Bruce Babington and Peter William Evans on Hope: " The unswervable fixity of self-regard, the healthy glow, an infantile eagerness for praise, the surface aggression are in contrast to, say, the spiritualizing tendencies to other-worldliness in the looks of Chaplin and, above all, Keaton. There is in Hope not an ounce of conscious or altruistic rebellion. Every lineament of the visible persona, from the slightly receding, impeccably combed and brilliantined hair, to the squarely-fed chin, the slight chubbiness of body, the candid egotism in the glance avidly searching for confirmation and applause, speaks of a socialised, ideologised being within a culture of unflagging materialism. Hope is, firstly, a narcissist; secondly he is also a representative of ideologised capitalist man, but the point is that it is precisely this ideology of capitalism that encourages to excess the ineptly competitive, child-like Hope characteristics.... Moreover, as the gangster is the hyperbole of capitalist industry, so this narcissist, paradoxically both asocial and socialised, is the reductio ad absurdum of capitalist self-centeredness, the two-way mirror of our own irreconcilable contradictions" (Babington and Evans 115).

15. Leo Braudy 556; 541.

In John Lahr's opinion Bob Hope, with his self-confessed "hatred of anonymity," personifies "the brash deliriums" of the century. "His obsession with output, aggrandizement and fame belongs to the modern era. . . ." (62).

18. Hope, John Lahr suggests, "was always watching himself go by: detachment added to his glamour on stage and to his solitude off it" (68). "Hope did have one piece of luck: he came into his prime just as the talking pictures and radio were demanding the posture of ease-the illusion of authenticity which was Hope's biggest performing asset. Daniel Boorstin writes in "The Americans" about the emergence of mass media, 'Naturalness itself was becoming a rare commodity which individual citizens were willing to pay for, while being (or at least seeming) natural became a special political talent'" (Lahr 72).

19. Babington and Evans mean the whole narrative moves toward the unveiling. In

contrast to their reading I would like to stress the increasing involvement of the community in Hope's imposture (100).

20. Lionel Trilling explores the liberation afforded by impersonation: Sincerity and Authenticity (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972) 32.

21. See William Paul on the different ways in which Hope and Jack Benny combine the eiron-alazon figures in their character. Ernst Lubitsch's American Comedy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), especially Chapter Eight "Playing for Keeps: To Be or Not to Be" (225-257; 235).

22. "[T]he ironist is he who 'puts his imaginare at the distance that it pretends to take with regard to the language of others'" (says Candace Lang quoting Roland Barthes from S/Z),'" the imaginary is both the subject's illusion of possessing an autonomous ego and its pride at having stepped outside (of language, hence of itself, of intersubjectivity, and of intertextuality)- in effect of having mastered the discourse of the Other": Candace D. Lang. Irony/Humor: Critical Paradigms (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988) 179.

23. Babington and Evans suggest that Hope has a ". . . limited self-conscious insight into the fop's disruptive radicalism" (114).

24. Frank Krutnik, "The Deformation of the Comic," in Film Quarterly Fall 1994: 12- 26; 17.

25. Dana Polan quoted in James Neibaur and Ted Okuda The Jerry Lewis Films: An Analytical Filmography of the Innovative Comic (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland and Company, Inc., 1995) 168: "Buddy Love, a Dean Martin-type figure, simultaneously encapsulates the hidden desires and dreams of the klutzy, chaos-causing Professor Kelp and reveals a horrific dimension to those dreams-in the desperate machismo that drives Love on, making him a nightclub hit but simultaneously alienating him from his fans on a personal level. Love's nightclub banter only inadequately conceals a self-doubt and anxiety that, for the film, is self-reflexively not only a comment on the Martin-Lewis team, but also on the whole psychology and fate of the American popular performer."

Polan also notes that Lewis is read by French critics as having provided a skewed representation of the American success story: "the person who has made it but does not feel satisfied in that position": Polan, "Being and Nuttiness: Jerry Lewis and the French," Journal of Popular Film and Television, Spring 1984: 42-46; 46.

26. Krutnik, "Jerry Lewis: The Deformation of the Comic" 12-26.

See also Scott Bukatman's "Paralysis in Motion: Jerry Lewis's Life as a Man" in

Comedy/Cinema/Theory, ed. Andrew Horton (Berkeley; Los Angeles; Oxford: University of California Press, 1991) 188-206; 200.

27. Krutnik, "The Deformation of the Comic" 18-19.

My reading of Lewis's films is indebted to, and to a substantial degree, in accordance with that of Frank Krutnik; I also see Lewis rebelling against what Krutnik calls the standards of "tasteful self-effacement" expected in comedy in order to "assert and validate his own differentiated space within the Hollywood system and to flaunt his new enunciative power" (Krutnik 18; 19; 22).

28. Steven Shaviro's chapter on Lewis is in his The Cinematic Body 107-127; 122.

29. Bukatman reckons that Lewis's character is revealed as a "diegetic convenience" (201).

30. " from where in this morass of self-referentiality can a fixed "reality" emerge? The answer, clearly, is that no reality does emerge. Identity stands revealed as a construction, frequently willful but often not, rather than an already existing condition to be inhabited. The multiplicity of identities in the world of Jerry Lewis belies the existence of identity as anything other than a necessary but unworkable fiction. On another level, of course, the constant slippage of identity serves mostly to reinscribe Jerry Lewis, filmmaker, Jerry Lewis, auteur, at the center of all this tumult....Far from stabilizing this dispersed subjectivity, however, the fact of authorship only displaces the problem of identity even further: he is not who he is (or is he?)" (Bukatman 201).

31. See Sarris's essay on Lewis in The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929-1968 (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1968) 239-244. Mast's commentary on Lewis is found in his The Comic Mind: Comedy and the Movies (Indianapolis; New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1973) 298-301.

32. I am assuming that what Krutnik calls "burlesque" is what David Denby calls the "obviousness" of Lewis's comedy, which Denby sees as meant to become part of the comedy; see Denby's review of "In the Eye of the Beholder" in The New Yorker 15 Mar. 1999: 96-99. Early reviewers of The Errand Boy (1961) and The Patsy (1964) according to Krutnik, attacked Lewis for his "betrayal of comic innocence," a criticism which Krutnik feels fails to take into account that Lewis's "idiocy" is "burlesqued" rather than "presented directly or innocently" ("Deformation" 15).

33. Shaviro says that "Lewis returns himself, and his viewers, to a pre-Oedipal world characterized by a startling mobility and instability of affect" and that "identification and doubling take the form of a fluid, insidious contagion, rather than that of a normalizing or stabilizing fixation." Shaviro continues, "he [Lewis] suggests that 'growing up' is not a

process of giving up Imaginary phantasies of omnipotence and accepting the lack imposed by castration; on the contrary, it involves assuming the hollowness and rigidity, but thereby also appropriating the power, of a stable and stereotypical ego. This is the commodified form of the self. . . . In thus deriving overt pleasure from the most shameful, inauthentic, and usually unacknowledged aspects of an economy of production and circulation, Lewis wards off or indefinitely postpones the achievement of an adaptive, adult narcissism" (123-124).

34. Bukatman also believes that "the career of Jerry Lewis is. . . doubly marked by a continuing struggle for control: control over the production of the comedic discourse and the complementary comic struggles enacted by that Jerry character. . . " (192). Frank Krutnik echoes these sentiments: "the concept of control is crucial to this discourse" ("The Deformation of the Comic" 19).

35. Dudley Andrew, "The Unauthorized Auteur Today" 83.

36. "Lewis's comedy mobilizes all the affects of masochism, but his comic persona never possess the will to twist and pervert the law that characterizes the true masochist. Lewis is only an unconscious anarchist. He is not seeking to singularize himself, not trying to legitimate his own deviant pleasures; his only wish is to coincide with what others define as "normal." Lewis is an anarchist not in spite of, but because of, his hyperconformism. . . . In a movement that is very different from that of carnivalesque transgression, order collapses as a result of being fulfilled to excess" (Shaviro 110).

The prologue of The Ladies Man encapsulates such a world.

37. "An image of motor incapacity, sexual ambiguity, and unfixed identity; surely these are the precise phenomena that must be denied by the ego craving reinforcement. And so the spectators are placed in the radical position of searching into the mirror's depths, only to find reflected back the incoherent and fragmented, multiplied yet elusive image of Jerry Lewis" (Bukatman 203).

38. Shaviro:" Lewis's experiences of abjection and humiliation are physical postures, elicited in a discontinuous series of comic situations and bizarre gags and stunts, before they are psychological conditions (as expressed and developed by means of narrative)" (118).

39. Krutnik, "The Handsome Man and His Monkey" 22.

40. Krutnik writes of Lewis's "insistent reformation of difference" (Krutnik, "Deformation" 21).

41. James L. Neibur and Ted Okuda discuss the set design for The Ladies Man in their

book, 154.

42. See Neibaur and Okuda , 154. Bryan Bruce describes the Mellon home as "a thinly disguised bordello," "Pee Wee Herman: The Homosexual Subtext," Cineaction! 9 Summer (1987): 3-7; 6.

43. A scene from Which Way to the Front? in which a group of women is air-lifted in a large net on to a boat at Lewis's command suggests the way in which the female presence is often presented en masse in his films, and yet, with the exception of Stella Stevens in The Nutty Professor, there is in general little attention granted to individual female characters.

Bukatman argues that "this multiplicity [of females] fails to fully disguise the sense that there is literally no place for these women in a universe that operates only as a projection of a hysterical male psyche that repudiates their very existence" (197). In Lewis's temporary appropriation of the hysterical position of the woman in film after film, women are themselves marginalized, absented, or fetishistically multiplied" (196).

44. Krutnik has shown how Lewis "kills off the fictional obligations that constrain him, to create himself as totalizing presence" as director of The Patsy ("The Deformation of the Comic" 21).

45. See Julia Kristeva's reading of the Narcissus myth in her Tales of Love, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987) 103-121.

46. In The Nutty Professor, what is not seen in the meek college professor until his transformation into Buddy Love is his potential to usurp the authoritative gaze of the camera (in Buddy's walk to the "purple pit") as well as to assume the sexualized power of the object of the camera's gaze upon his arrival at the club.

47. Frank Krutnik maintains that "for Lewis, film is expressly a vehicle for magic- it makes possible a reformulation of the world, of the self, and of the traditional relations that exist between the two" and that "the controlling presence of 'Jerry Lewis' is inscribed as its fundamental premise" ("Deformation" 21; 22).

The magical space of transformation which "opens up" in response to his entering Miss Cartilage's forbidden room is a manifestation of his inherently authentic gifts as performer. Whereas Hope is subjected to the whims of the special effects department in his films, often to his disadvantage, Lewis, when he is apart from other characters, reveals an inherent, magical ability to overcome the limitations of space and time, as when he sets up chairs, or conducts the invisible orchestra in the auditorium in The Bellboy for example.

48. Leonard Probst, "Woody Allen: I'm not Subverting, I'm Complaining," in Off Camera

(New York: Stein and Day, 1975) 247-264; 254. Allen tells Probst, "I have a special audience. I don't know who they are."

In an interview with Anthony DeCurtis for Rolling Stone Allen remarks that "the healthiest focus is not to think of the audience, not to think of the critics and just do what you want to do and put it out there and pray that they like it" (48): (16 Sept. 1993: 45-50; 78; 82)

49. Allen discusses his relationship with his audience in an interview with Anthony DeCurtis in Rolling Stone in which he says that he never reads reviews good or bad: 16 September, 1993; See Graham McCann's introduction to Woody Allen: New Yorker (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990) 1-6; and pages129-175: "[Allen] makes movies, he says, to please himself and a few close friends-in direct contravention of the Hollywood principle of eking out the tried and tested- and exercises a quietly authoritative control over virtually every aspect of the movie-making process" (McCann 2).

Asked by William E. Geist what he thought about people who wanted him to "just be funny" Allen responded "Well, it has never really meant a thing to me what anyone said. I'm just sort of going the route I've chosen to go. If people like it, they like it, and if they don't, they don't. Crowd pleasing just never interested me": Rolling Stone, 9 April 1987: 39-42; 51; 84; 87-88; 87.

Nancy Pogel's comments reflect a similar idea of the artist: "In a highly competitive medium Allen manages not only to be a good businessman, but to retain his integrity, to take risks, and to grow artistically." "He never violates his own intentions in order to put something in a film that audiences like but he doesn't" (Pogel 20-21).

50. Leonard Probst, "Woody Allen: I'm Not Subverting, I'm Complaining" 247-265; 260.

Maurice Yacowar, Loser Take All: The Comic Art of Woody Allen (New York: Frederick Unger Publishing Co., 1979) 213.

51. See Tony Roberts's estimation of Allen's character in "Woody Allen: The Neurotic Philosopher" in Close-Ups, ed. Danny Peary (New York: Workman Publishing, 1978) 50-54; Graham McCann, describes Allen's reserve in public (130-131).

52. See Robert Benayoun, The Films of Woody Allen, trans. Alexander Walker (New York: Harmony Books, 1985) 10.

53. "From the beginning of his career he has been obsessively hard-working, yet he has never been driven by anything other than personal interest in his craft. To make Allen conscious of some external, 'commercial' standard of quality was thus to undermine his sense of pride and purpose in his work" (McCann 24). McCann subsequently reports that Allen is "careful to protect his work from the more exploitative aspects of the publicity process" (McCann 141).

Richard Schickel concludes that Allen seems "to conceive of himself as a man

whose job is anonymously to observe his chosen landscape, not to turn it into a stage for a celebrity drama": Schickel on Film: Encounters-Critical and Personal-with Movie Immortals (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1989) 281.

54. See John Lahr's essay "Notes on Fame" in Automatic Vaudeville: Essays on Star Turns, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984) 219; 221.

55. Frank Rich, "Woody Allen Wipes the Smile Off His Face," Esquire May 1977: 72-76; 148-9; 149.

56. Ralph Rosenblum, Allen's editor on films up to and including Annie Hall describes the director's work methods: Rosenblum and Robert Karen, When the Shooting Stops . . .the cutting begins (New York: The Viking Press, 1979) 255-290. Rosenblum says of the director in apparent admiration that he always avoids any pose of authoritarianism during the making of his films (265).

Richard Schickel writes about Allen's popularity in Europe, which he says enables the director to resist any artistic compromises that might otherwise be necessary given the (implied) mercenary values of the American movie industry. He also implies that Allen is glad of the geographical distance between himself and his European fans since this makes it easier to concentrate on his more serious artistic aspirations:

It respects and rewards him, it seems, for his total artistic personality, not merely his on-screen one, and since, as he has told me, his foreign receipts have grown to the point where they assure him of his artistic independence, he may feel it best to avoid the temptations his home market presents. In any case, for a man of his temperament the presence of an ocean between himself and his most enthusiastic supporters must be comforting. At that distance there is no danger of their intruding on his privacy or turning his head (Schickel on Film 285).

57. "The real Woody Allen doesn't smile because he's serious-as serious a person as you might ever meet. Not self-serious, not pompous, not humorless-all traits that Allen abhors-but serious. Serious in the sense that he's never 'on' when he isn't working. Serious in the sense that he tries hard to shield himself from all the social and business dealings that come with a highly successful show-business career. Serious in the sense that he tries to live the ascetic life of an artist rather than the public life of an entertainer": Frank Rich, "Woody Allen Wipes the Smile Off His Face" (72)

See also McCann, who compares Allen's reluctance to perform for the camera when he is not working to other comedians' need to do so: "One thinks of Chaplin's frantic antics whenever any kind of camera was pointed in his direction, or Jerry Lewis' spasms of self-conscious 'zaniness' at awards ceremonies and television chat shows. Mel Brooks, who comes from a similar background to Allen, is perhaps the most obvious example of the extrovert comic...He is never one in a crowd, rather he is always alone in front of an audience" (130).

58. "In a world in which the visual display of self was becoming more and more important to the public man, the impression of inner mystery became a prime way to escape the implication that . . . one depended entirely on material power" (Braudy 460).

Another interpretation of the way that Allen uses the effects of silence is provided by Ralph Rosenblum. He has observed that Allen's most effective method of dealing with people was silence: "with colleagues, silence is his primary tool both for protection and control, and it works an unsettling devastation whether in a room full of smooth executives at United Artists or a group of garrulous production people on the set. . . [D]espite his power, Woody has a fade-into-the-woodwork manner that becomes more and more incongruous the more famous he becomes" (145).

59. McCann believes that Allen has "constructed a screen 'Woody,' an artfully constructed character that obscures as much, if not more, that it clarifies about its real life counterpart" (39). According to McCann acting "satisfied some deep protectiveness in [Allen's] nature. A wish, perhaps, to insulate [himself] against the hurts [he has] suffered. Through [his] screen characters, [he has] grown a skin over [his] own skin" (McCann 246).

Allen's friend Tony Roberts says that "by cloaking himself behind his screen character (an invention of neurotic complexities often compared to Chaplin's little fellow with the cane) or, better still, as the author-director of a carefully controlled progression of images paraded before an audience without his actual presence even required, [Allen] is able to perform his real magic" ("Woody Allen: The Neurotic Philosopher" in Close-ups, ed. Danny Peary (New York: Workman Publishing, 1978) 50-54; 52.

60. Interviewing Allen Vivian Gonick found him to be "in analyzed command of a personality that is direct, extremely sweet, and altogether kindly": "Face it Woody Allen, You're Not a Schlep Anymore," The Village Voice 5 Jan. 1976: 9-11; 9.

Jonathan Rosenblum describes the man he worked with for 10 years as "very private, very reserved, excruciatingly-at times, maddeningly-controlled" (262). "Often," says Rosenblum, "he knows where the interviewer from The New Yorker, Newsweek, or The New York Times is heading before the interviewer himself knows; and, thus, he is in almost as much control of his public persona as he is of his film persona" (264). Rosenblum later elaborates on their relationship, "[i]n the ten years we've worked together, including the occasional times we've socialized, we've never shared a heartfelt concern, an uninhibited laugh, an open display of despair or anger" (264).

61. See Robert Benayoun's overview of Allen's career (115-135).

62. Nancy Pogel provides an overview of the American tradition literary tradition of "dementia-praecox or little-man humor" as it is exemplified in the writing of James Thurber, Robert Benchley, and S. J. Perelman. Woody Allen (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987) 1-17.

63. Allen's screenplay is based on the book of the same title by Dr. David Reuben.

64. Nancy Pogel refers to Penelope Gilliatt's comment that Dr. Reuben's book, makes frequent use of technological and space-age metaphors for the sexual act (59).

65. See Babington and Evans, "Woody Allen: the analysis of comedy, the comedy of analysis," 152-178.

See Graham McCann who refers to Dee Burton's book on the figure of Woody Allen that occurs in the dreams of her psychiatric patients called I Dream of Woody: "These dreamers are typically drawn to Allen's honesty about his feelings and anxieties, his willingness to be different, and his perseverance and determination."(142). McCann himself asserts that "the unflinching integrity of his heroes leads them to break the chain of complicity and rebel against the falseness and hypocrisy of contemporary society" (149). As well he asserts that "more so than many recent movie-makers, and certainly more so than most movie comedians, Allen has always had a strong commitment to some conception of authenticity" (65).

66. McCann maintains that Allen's "gift is the ability to identify with the sexual failure, the loner, even a spermatozoon. He shows men in the post-Freudian, industrialized modern society, finding the very nature of love newly problematic in the light of feminism and higher education" (82).

See Babington and Evans on the elevated significance of sexuality in Allen's works which they suggest is a test of identity and unself-conscious authenticity (156-164).

67. See Annette Wernblad, Brooklyn is Not Expanding: Woody Allen's Comic Universe (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992) 36.

Diane Jacobs compares Allen and Chaplin as outsiders:

Both are little men at odds with a large, cold world, but where Chaplin's enemy is the world at large, Allen's is specifically urban America. And while Chaplin's alienation is a conflict between one man and society, Allen is, in addition, self-conflicted" (. . .but we need the eggs: The Magic of Woody Allen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982) 58-59.

See Pogel: "One of Woody Allen's major concerns is the individual's search for authenticity in the face of dehumanizing modern manners, ideologies, and technologies. Allen's film [Bananas] deals with contemporary living that fosters depersonalization, uniformity, alienation, and loneliness" (Pogel 39).

68. In an interview with Leonard Probst Allen describes himself as a "standard comic. . . I do one-line jokes like Hope or Henny Youngman, the same kind of jokes every American comedian has always done-womanizing, girl chasing, braggart, frightened. . . We're all out of the same mold" (254-255).

69. "Fresh Frozen Woody Allen" in Film 73/74: An Anthology by the National Society of Film Critics, ed. Jay Cocks and David Denby (Indianapolis; New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1974) 246-249; 249.

70. "Woody Allen, who used to play a walking inferiority complex, made the whole country more aware of the feelings of those who knew they could never match the images of Wasp perfection that saturated their lives" (Pauline Kael, "The Prince Who Became a Frog / the Frog who Became a Prince," The New Yorker 27 Oct. 1980: 184-190; 188).

Kael also writes: "It's the comedy of sexual inadequacy; what makes it hip rather than masochistic and awful is that he thinks women want the media macho ideal, and we in the audience are cued to suspect, as he secretly does, that that's the real inadequacy (social even more than sexual)": Pauline Kael, "Survivor," Film 73/74: An Anthology by the National Society of Film Critics, ed. Jay Cocks and David Denby (New York; Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1974) 242-246; 243.

71. Christopher Lasch, The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984); especially 130-157. See also Jim Hougan on the turn inward of the self bent on survival in the narcissistic culture of the sixties and seventies: Decadence: Radical Nostalgia, Narcissism and Decline in the Seventies (New York: William and Morrow, 1975); especially 109-157. Annette Wernblad also notes this tendency in Allen's heroes (36; 54).

72. Joan Mellen feels that an unquestioned double standard exists in Play it Again Sam: "This double standard is ingrained in Alan [sic], and he never questions it, for to do so would conflict with the film's acceptance of the Bogart mystique and its formula that if one is simply oneself, the ways of Bogart will become accessible, allowing success with women-beautiful ones only, of course": Big Bad Wolves: Masculinity in The American Film (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977) 336-339; 337.

73. John Lahr proposes that "in his plays and movies, Allen has been doing the same thing: living in his favorite fictions" ("Woody Allen" Automatic Vaudeville 89-96; 94).

74. "Notes on Fame" in John Lahr's Automatic Vaudeville (217-233; 222).

75. For Nancy Pogel the "promise" of cinema itself is connected with Allen's appeal: "The little man permits us to identify with the source of our own desire for fulfillment, precisely because he is so bereft of satisfaction for his own desire, because he appears to be so physically and linguistically inexperienced and inept, so small of stature and so needy. His emptiness and alienation remind us of our own, while his helplessness mediates between our needs and the promise inherent in his being on the screen-our

longing for childhood unity lost to adulthood and sophistication, our trust in the satisfaction of desire that wish-fulfillment patterns of transparent cinema have told us can be attained" (10)

76. Michael Wood, America in the Movies (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc. 1975) 36.

77. Molly Haskell reckons that by the time Allen comes to prominence "little of the decorum and ritual of an elitist society remains for the comedian to sabotage" (Haskell 249).

78. Douglas Brode writing on Sleeper notes that "Woody's assaults on the negative-utopia he encounters have a . . .lackadaisical quality": Woody Allen: His Films and Career (Secaucus, New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1985) 141.

79. Foster Hirsch, Love, Sex, Death and the Meaning of Life :Woody Allen (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981) 75.

80. The silent comics, Haskell says, had a symbiotic relationship with their enemies, and their "instinct for investing the opponent with strength" would "give rise to [the comedians'] feats of grace and ingenuity. . " (249). By comparison, Allen's adversary remains more overwhelmingly abstract. Wernblad refers to Eric Lax's biography of Allen in which he quotes Allen "paraphrasing Tolstoy" by saying "any man over thirty-five with whom death is not a major consideration is a fool. The enemy is God and nature and the universe -that's what's killing us" (Wernblad 55).

81. Foster Hirsch sums up the comic hero's attitude less romantically: "Woody, as always, doesn't want to save the world, he only wants to find some safe, private place in it for himself (Hirsch 72).

82. McCann compares Allen to the Marx brothers: "The Marx Brothers are nihilists, Allen is a sceptic who longs to be an optimist" and "Groucho will never give himself to any single person; Allen is in constant pursuit of intimacy" (McCann 71).

83. Christopher Lasch, The Minimal Self 60-94. See also Jim Hougan 109-157; 123.

84. Allen imagines assimilation as emasculation: The alien Miles gets caught first by the state police and then later by a group of rebels and both times he is found in or around the Orgasmatron. Each time he is captured he subsequently "regresses" to a female identity as a stage in his assimilation first into the state's totalitarian society and then into the company of rebels.

85. Contextualizing his hero in the tradition of the shlemiel [sic] Wernblad asserts that

"the comedy of the shlemiel is not a revolutionary comedy, but rather one that is used as a means of surviving, of "getting even" (she refers here to the title of Allen's first collection of writings) (Wernblad 54).

86. Foster Hirsch believes these sequences are obligatory homages to the silent comedians rather than expressions of his own comic gifts which are essentially verbal rather than physical (Hirsch 6).

87. John Lahr's comments are from his essay "Woody Allen" in his Automatic Vaudeville: Essays in Star Turns, 89-99. Excerpts from this work are reprinted in Contemporary Literary Criticism 52 (1989):.47-49; 48.

88. See Christopher Lasch's, The Culture of Narcissism and his The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times. Also pertinent is Tom Wolfe's "The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening" in Mauve Gloves and Madmen, Clutter and Vine (Toronto; New York; London: Bantam Books, 1977) 111-151. Barbara Shapiro's essay on Allen's works was very valuable to me because of the parallel she draws between the paradoxical idealization and degradation in Allen's treatment of both his female characters and his fictionalized audience in Stardust Memories: "Woody Allen's Search for Self," Journal of Popular Culture 19. 4 (Spring 1986):.47-62.

89. Joan Didion, "Letter from Manhattan," New York Review of Books 26 (16 August 1979): 17-19. See also Pauline Kael's review of Broadway Danny Rose, "Vulgarians and Ascetics" in The New Yorker 6 Feb. 1984: 118-120: "Woody Allen is the spirit of the seventies incarnate" says Kael (118).

90. Richard Sennett. Authority (New York: Random House, Inc., 1981).49. Sennett quotes Lionel Trilling from his Beyond Culture:
Any historian of the literature of the modern age will take virtually for granted the adversary intention, the actually subversive intention, that characterizes modern writing-he will perceive its clear purpose of detaching the reader from the habits of thought and feeling that the larger culture imposes, of giving him a ground and a vantage point from which to judge and condemn, and perhaps revise, the culture that has produced him (49).

Sennett continues:
A culture the writer needs to reject, a culture worth rejecting--but a culture the writer needs. It is the point of departure, the anchor, everything is asserted in reaction to it. This produces dependence. . . . . The echoes of this paradox are what we hear in everyday life in the experiences of disobedient dependence, idealized substitution, and fantasies of disappearance. Rejection and need become inseparable (49).

91. All quotations from Allen films mentioned in this chapter are from the published screenplay, Four Films of Woody Allen: Annie Hall, Interiors, Manhattan, Stardust Memories (New York: Random House, 1982) 4.

92. Robert Benayoun records that Annie Hall drew in 25 million dollars upon its release in the summer of 1977. It also garnered Oscar nominations for best screenplay, best director, best actress for Diane Keaton and best actor for Allen (71).

93. Barbara Shapiro's, "Woody Allen's Search for Self" (47-62). Shapiro discusses the earlier Allen films in which "humor lifts the films above the narcissism" by inviting "a public identification and sharing of one's personal experience of oneself" (61).

Christopher Lasch in The Minimal Self discusses the concept of "play" as the interchange "between 'inner psychic reality' and the external world as perceived by two persons in common, that is to say over the whole cultural field" (194).

See also Maurice Yacowar's analysis of the relation between Allen and his stand-up audiences: "Allen recalls that when he began as a stand-up comedian he thought he could win laughter just by reciting funny material. But his audience preferred 'intimacy with the person. They want to like the persona and find the person funny as a human being'" (Loser Take All 9).

94. Jonathan Romney, "Shelter from the Storm," Sight and Sound 14.1 (Feb. 1994): 7-9; 7. Schickel is quoted in Graham McCann's Woody Allen: New Yorker (45).

95. Eric Lax, Woody Allen: a Biography (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991) 173.

96. John Bayley, "Character and Consciousness," New Literary History 5.2 (Winter 1974): 225-235; 226.

97. Gornick 10.

98. I believe Pauline Kael means something very close to Gornick's idea when she refers to "being on insiders terms with Woody" in her article "Vulgarians and Ascetics"(118).

99. See Barbara Shapiro's account of the change in the author's self-regard over the course of these films which she describes as changing from "self-ridiculing" to "self-degrading" (61).

Kael's comment is found in her article on Broadway Danny Rose ("Vulgarians and Ascetics"): "Moviegoers felt themselves on insiders' terms with the neurotic Woody Allen hero, who reflected their defenses, their feelings of insignificance, their embarrassing aspirations. But the culture has changed: Woody Allen no longer tells us what we think of ourselves" (118). I find myself in disagreement with her regarding Broadway Danny Rose. However, I feel that her sentiments suggest in general terms the loosening of the bond between Allen and his audience that makes itself apparent in Stardust Memories.

98. Pauline Kael, "The Frog Who Became a Prince / The Prince Who Became a Frog," The New Yorker 27 Oct. 1980: 184-190. Kael does talk about Alvy Singer as a "killjoy...always judging everyone" (190).

101. Jonathan Romney, "Shelter from the Storm" 7-9. Sennett names the qualities of an authority as "assurance, superior judgment and the ability to impose discipline" (17).

102. Christopher Lasch, The Minimal Self, 195. Allen is quoted in McCann as saying that "until we find a resolution for out errors, we're going to have an expedient culture" (33).

103. In "Vulgarians and Ascetics," Pauline Kael has suggested that during the eighties Allen lost touch with his audience's sensibility and although no one had replaced him in the national consciousness, many were able to form an identification with other comedians including Bill Murray (118).

104. Rolling Stone did subsequently publish interviews with Allen as well, including the one conducted by William E. Geist, 9 April, 1987.

105. Jonathan Romney, "Shelter from the Storm" 7.

106. Summing up the entire body of Allen's works Richard Schickel attributes to his authority these values of constancy and timelessness: "They are all, in fact, aspects of a commitment that is ultimately and consciously resistant to trends, fads, shifts in critical fashion, that stakes everything on creating an edifice large enough and sturdy enough to resist time's passage and to submit itself to posterity's judgment" (Schickel on Film 301).

107. See for example the scene in Harold Ramis' Stripes in which Murray, a private in the army, seduces a female MP in the kitchen of a house owned by a general, which she is supposed to be guarding. After first disarming the MP of her hand gun, Murray indulges himself in a strange ritual of foreplay involving several kitchen utensils. In a mock threatening manner he uses the utensils to excite her into what seems like a state of submission in which she admits to being in love with him. Murray therefore establishes his ascendancy in sexual terms over any feminine presence which might traditionally preside in this domestic space and over the absent authority of the general who owns the home, as well as over the authority of the MP who is his military superior.

108. Sennett draws out the implications of his ideas: "To speak of authority as a process of interpreting power is to raise the issue of how much the sentiments of authority lie in the eye of the beholder" (20). Joan Didion's "Letter to Manhattan" in The New York Review of Books makes very clear that Allen's appeal to a "higher standard" is not granted authority by all of his viewers . However, perhaps Babington and Evans are closer to

describing the contradictory set of values known by Allen's audiences at a time when American cinema is drifting "away from the ideas of a universal audience to one of several large minority audiences": "This fragmentation is related to the ideological splintering of American society in the 60's and 70's, the increasing pessimism, powerlessness, and alienation from traditional native optimism and idealism-prominently featured in the cheerfully materialist assumptions and incorrigible individualism of both Hope and West-of the liberal intelligentsia, though an alienation muted into ambivalence by the freedom and material rewards enjoyed by that class and the perceived failure of a Marxist critique against the generative mythologies and spectacular productiveness of that society" (Babington and Evans 155). Babington and Evans look upon the character of Pearl in Allen's Interiors as complicating the issue:
"In the long run, for all her loudness, creative sentimentality and disregard of form, Pearl is an ambivalent character, someone whose limited intelligence will ultimately exhaust the tolerance of her staunchest devotees, but any life failing to embrace some of the interests and passions that motivate her runs the risk, in the film's view, of being doomed to the inner emptiness created by values too much in thrall to elitism" (167).

109. Adam Gopnik, "The Outsider," The New Yorker 25 Oct. 1993: 86-93; 90.

110. Pogel quotes Allen in an interview with Richard Schickel in which he says "There's no center to the culture. . . We have this opulent relatively well-educated culture, and yet we see a great city like New York deteriorate. We see people lose themselves in drugs because they don't deal with their sense of spiritual emptiness" (119).

111. Hirsch implies that in Annie Hall we seem to see Allen admitting to a personal rather than a socially defined inadequacy, which he had always been able to display as a strength by undermining the social standard itself as he does in his earlier films, such as Love and Death. Pauline Kael provides a contrary reading of Alvy Singer's self-understanding: "he seemed bewildered that Annie wearied of [his] obsessions and preferred to move on" in "The Frog Who Became a Prince/ The Prince Who Became a Frog" 190.

112. Pogel has noted how the "qualities of innocence and anxiety . . . move toward disjunction in Manhattan,... and innocence in its purest expression is found in a female character (119).

Christopher Knight thinks that Isaac is a problematical character because he judges others by "intimated ethical and transcendental law" yet he himself "does not always shine his best when measured in this way": (Christopher Knight, "Woody Allen's Manhattan and the Ethicity of Narrative" Film Criticism Fall 1988: 63-72; 68). See also Foster Hirsch on the injudicious behaviour of Isaac (98).

113. Pauline Kael,"The Frog Who Became a Prince/ The Prince Who Became a Frog" 190. Christopher Knight suggests conversely that there is a certain privileging of Isaac's voice

but it is not "of a particularly coercive color. It does not, that is, require a silencing of all the other voices, but rather assumes this otherness as being a necessary part of what any one voice is about" (64). The ethics of Manhattan, Knight says, are not reducible to Isaac's remarks about "decaying values" (65).

114. Maurice Yacowar isolates the film's main theme as "the need for personal integrity" (198).

115. All subsequent quotations from Manhattan are from Four Films of Woody Allen: Annie Hall, Interiors, Manhattan, Stardust Memories (New York: Random House, 1982) 182. Graham McCann calls Woody Allen a "lyricist of place" (42).

116.See Graham McCann's chapter on Allen's cinematic rendering of New York and the effect of the city on the artist (9-43).

117. John Baxter describes the select geography of Allen's New York in his Woody Allen: A Biography (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1998) 21.

118. Maurice Yacowar suggests that in Manhattan "Allen is still drawing his fictional character out of the limbo between his own experience and his public image," Loser Takes All, 205. Yacowar notes how the many echoes in Manhattan from Annie Hall "establish an experience that we seem to have shared with the artist" (206).

119. Maurice Yacowar calls this staple part of Allen's stand-up persona his "pretense to adequacy," Loser Takes All (22).

120. The phrase is suggested by the title of Robert Kroetsch's essay "Unhiding the Hidden" in his The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New (Toronto; New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 58-64.

McCann quotes a passage from Theodor Adorno's Minima Moralia on the disappearing sphere of intimacy that is occasioned by divorce: "It is as if the sphere of intimacy, the unwatchful trust of shared life, is transformed into a malignant poison as soon as the relationship in which it flourished is broken off. Intimacy between people is forbearance, tolerance, refuge for idiosyncrasies. If dragged into the open, it reveals the moment of weakness in it, and in a divorce such outward exposure is inevitable. It seizes the inventory of trust. Things which were once signs of loving care, images of reconciliation, breaking loose as independent values, show their evil, cold, pernicious side" (232-233).

121. Unlike this same concern in the Animal Comedies it is not simply a matter of introducing a graphic explicitness to the films.

122."Intimacy involves an aspiration for a narrative about something shared, a story": Lauren Berlant, Critical Inquiry 24 (Winter 1998): 281-288; 281.

123. McCann quotes Allen as saying that he feared the modern generation would never know the completely enveloping experience of the movies that he knew in his childhood (20).

Allen often recreates the sphere of intimacy in the movie-watching experience- where the world of the past or the fictionalized past may be experienced in a way that may be seen as either nurturing (Isaac and Tracy eat in bed watching television and Clifford Stern and Halley in Crimes and Misdemeanors share food and watch movies twice in this film) or escapist (Clifford says it is like "playing hooky").

124. See Umberto Eco. Travels in Hyperreality. trans. William Weaver (San Diego; New York; London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986): "Even when a single character speaks of himself and upon himself, he is split into judge and judged. I am thinking of the humor of Woody Allen, where the threshold between the 'voices' is hard to distinguish, but, so to speak, makes itself heard" (277).

125. Lasch describes the demise of the 'transitional' realm of the created object: "the world of commodities takes the form of a dream world, a prefabricated environment that appeals directly to our inner fantasies but seldom reassures us that we ourselves had a hand in its creation" (Lasch, The Minimal Self 195-96). My reading of Mary and Jill was suggested to me by Jacqueline Rose's work on Sylvia Plath in which she maintains that Plath was identified "with the inversion and degeneracy of cultural value" but also came to bear the "weight of reparation for the same collapse of the moral and cultural world" : The Haunting of Sylvia Plath (London: Virago Press Limited, 1991) 23.

126. Jacqueline Rose 23. Rose, writing on the critical figuration of Sylvia Plath discusses the concept of Jewishness as it enters into analysis of Plath's work in a way that speaks to Allen's ideological dilemma in representing himself in Manhattan, a dilemma which he chooses to play out along gendered rather than ethnic lines. Speaking of A. Alvarez's work on Plath Rose notes "Jewishness as a concept in his writing is no less caught up in the selection and privileging of distinct classes and cultural forms. Judaism, he writes, is the only religious tone present in the modern arts: 'a force working perennially on the side of sanity.' Jewishness is 'worldliness': 'a precondition of survival'. But 'worldliness' is also a negative value, associated with cinema, which is 'corporate', 'technological', 'commercial' ('since the less we believe in minority culture the more we believe in audience ratings and box office returns as a criterion of excellence'), 'disposable', and 'cynical', and cinema is 'that exclusively twentieth-century and dominantly Jewish art form'. In relation to the argument about cultural value, Jewishness is therefore cause or symptom (a dangerous and cynical materiality) and cure (only its

worldliness will survive)" (241).

127. In Manhattan there is a recognizable artistic defensiveness previously unnoticed in Allen's work. Similarly, Maurice Yacowar finds in Allen's comic prose of this period, in particular in his "Fabrizio's: Criticism and Response" a "rebuttal to the critics of his first noncomic film, Interiors": (Loser Take All 82).

128. Nancy Pogel suggests that Tracy is linked through still photography to "a simpler, more innocent world. . . to cinema's roots, to stable images and to captured memories" (Pogel 123).

129. Graham McCann calls Allen an "interpreter of New York" (42).

130.See Foster Hirsch 196.

Diane Jacobs opposes the majority opinion on this issue and maintains that Stardust Memories was misunderstood because audiences mistakenly conflated Allen with his character Sandy Bates and accorded the latter's misanthropy to the former. See her . . .but we need the eggs: The Magic of Woody Allen .

Robert Stam also reproves the critics for "lacking all sense of irony" about the film and making "all the mistaken interpretive moves anticipated by the film itself": Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1985) 157.

Allen's situation reflects an apprehension of the power relations inherent in the terms of modern celebrity. Leo Braudy marks the changes in the relationship between the aristocratic figure and the public figure of the new American democracy. These changes saw the power of visibility being shared equally by the public and the celebrity: "Fame had ceased to be the possession of particular individuals or classes and had become instead a potential attribute of every human being that needed only to be brought out in the open for all to applaud its presence. The audience was no longer the servant of the visually powerful, but becoming at least their equal partner in the creation of such fame" (461). What became evident during this period, according to Braudy, were "the dangers for the public man of being trapped in his image" (461).

131. See John Baxter's biography, Woody Allen: A Biography, wherein Allen is quoted as saying, " One critic said my audience left me . . . but the truth is, I left my audience. The backlash really started when I did Stardust Memories. People were outraged. I still think that's one of the best films I've made. I was just trying to make what I wanted, not what people wanted me to make" (290).

132. Babington and Evans propose that Allen's understanding of comedy "undermines the notion of comedy as a unified, inevitable, unchanging force" (154).

133. Allen is quoted by McCann as being disappointed that audiences did not "connect with the seriousness of [Love and Death] because of the [comic] tone" (76).

134. Pauline Kael,"The Frog Who Turned into a Frog/ The Prince Who Turned into a Frog" 190.

135. John Simon and Pauline Kael offer similar evaluations of Sandy Bates' status as a character. See Simon's "Sandy Stardust" in his Reverse Angle: A Decade of American Films (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1982) 417-419.

Kael remarks that "Woody Allen calls himself Sandy Bates this time, but there's only the merest wisp of a pretext that he is playing a character; his is the most undisguised of his dodgy mock-autobiographical fantasies." She continues, "You see right through to the man who has lost the desire to play a character: he has become the man on the couch" ("The Frog" 184; 189).

Foster Hirsch's opinion is that Sandy Bates is "less a character than a collection of attitudes and declarative statements" (Hirsch 204).

136. Pauline Kael says that . . "Woody Allen doesn't show the ability to step back from himself (as he did when he was making comedies); even the notion of doing this particular film in black and white is tied up with his not being able to step back. He sees himself only from the inside, and he asks us to suffer for the pain he feels about his success." ("The Frog" 185).

However, one clear instance of an ironic stance toward Sandy is to be found in the scene in which he is arguing with the police who want him to come down to the station and answer some questions regarding the gun they have found in his car. Sandy tells them that they can make an exception in his case because he "is a celebrity." There is an abrupt cut to a scene of Sandy in jail with his chauffeur who was arrested earlier for mail fraud.

137. Woody Allen, says Pauline Kael, has somehow combined the "hostility of the standup comic towards his night-club audience" with that of the movie director toward the public that idolizes him" [which she says does not have the same logic behind it] and given it "a special form" ("The Frog" 185).

Maurice Yacowar outlines the relationship between the stand-up comic and his audience:

The performer stands alone and without a prop before a crowd of strangers. By his wit he attempts to forge a sense of community with them. By his brain and humor he tries to gain their acceptance, the laughter that denotes approval. Without the protective cover of a dramatic role . . .the stand-up comic must expose his own personality to an audience of strangers. Despite his strangeness and alienation, he must persuade them that he is one of them. He therefore stresses the foibles and failures common to humanity. He is motivated partly by a desire to reflect the humanity that he shares with this audience and partly by an eagerness to defuse their suspicion, fear, and potential animosity toward him.

So he stands alone in front of a silent and alien audience, spinning out his line of self-deprecating patter or charming cheek. . . . The stand-up comedian is the eternal Outsider . . . . He has no home or community except what he can establish with each house he faces. Two shows nightly, each performance is the drama of modern alienation (Loser 213).

138. Mark Winokur, American Laughter: Immigrants, Ethnicity, and 1930's Hollywood Film Comedy (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996) 130.

139.Maria DiBattista. First Love: The Affections of Modern Fiction (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991) 51.

140. Natalie Sarraute is quoted in Lasch's The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times (154).

141. To Kael what is apparent in all Allen's films "is that for him Jewishness means his own kind of schlumpiness, awardness, hesitancy" ("The Frog" 189).

142. Pauline Kael has observed that it seems as though Woody Allen thought that "we [the audience members] were forcing him to embody the Jewish joke, the loser, the deprived outsider forever" ("The Frog" 189).

143. Barbara Shapiro suggests evidence of pathological narcissism in the similar patterns of degradation and idealization in the depiction of Allen's female characters and his audience in Stardust Memories (47-62).

144. A certain confusion surrounds their status as characters and their attraction to Allen. According to Hirsch the women in Sandy's life "remain mysteries to him and to us" (Hirsch 205). Kael says the women do not "have enough independent existence for us to be sure what they're supposed to represent, and what attracts them to him- if not his films and his fame-isn't made apparent" ("The Frog" 186).

Dorrie appears in one of Sandy's fantasies as a munificent mother figure bringing him gifts as a child. Conversely his mother (Joan Neuman) appears in his fantasies as one of the audience members who admires his magic tricks. His mother and audience are conflated in memories of childhood in which he metaphorically and literally escapes from the film and his mother by magically flying out of the frame (Pogel 139).

145. John Baxter reports Allen as saying that Rampling appealed to him as someone who "reeks of neurosis" (280). Baxter suggests that Dorrie was modeled on his second wife, Louise Lasser (284; 394).

146. Though he has been formerly lionized for his artistic disinterestedness, when Allen actually brings forward as a theme of his work the disavowal of his popularity as he does

in Stardust Memories, it is regarded as "puny" if not offensive (Hirsch 199).

147. "Woody hasn't found a suitable dramatic frame in which to dramatize the themes that continue to bedevil him, and the result is that his ideas are simply stated outright, in a way that is too naked and direct to be artistically valid" (Hirsch 196).

148. Babington and Evans reflect on the "subversion of the usually separate roles of unself-conscious comic performer and detached critic-observer that characterises his comedy, [which] seems to have as one of its effects, desirable from the point of view of the joke-maker (constantly in need of keeping one up on the audience), an undermining by preemption of the critic's procedures. The terms Allen uses, "that verbal/visual confection of anxiety and arrogance, hedonism and guilt, self-abasement and complacency, confidence and hesitation, are so much the mirror-image of his critics that they see in him too absolutely and seductively the reflection of their own exposed and redeemed selves for any sort of detachment to take place. By comparison Hope and West, by virtue of their historical distance, extreme stylisation and marvellous shallowness, repel such identification. Whereas very few watchers could ever have actually wanted to be the Mae West character, as distinct from possessing certain of her effects and powers, clearly many have taken Woody Allen as their role model of humane scepticism and anxious reconciliation to the contents and discontents of civilisation" (155).

149. David Denby is quoted by Robert Stam (158). Denby's article is to be found in New York 13 Oct. 1980.

150.Pauline Kael interprets Allen's hostility as an aspect of his artist aspiration: "He's trying to stake out his claim to be an artist like Fellini or Bergman-to be accepted in the serious, gentile artist's club. And he sees his public as Jews trying to shove him back down in the Jewish clowns' club. Great artist's admirers are supposed to keep their distance. His admirers feel they know him and can approach him; they feel he belongs to them- and he sees them as his murderers" ("The Frog" 185).

151."That Woody Allen should try to become a 'pure' artist by commenting on his audience seems a sign that he's playing genius" ("The Frog" 187).

152. Dickinson's poem is quoted in Leo Braudy's The Frenzy of Reknown: Fame and Its History (491).

153. Ruth Perlmutter sees Zelig as a parody of the cult of celebrity: "Woody Allen's Zelig: An American Jewish Parody" in Comedy/ Cinema/ Theory, ed. Andrew Horton (Berkeley; Los Angeles; Oxford: University of California Press, 1991) 206-222; 207. See also Richard A. Blake, Profane and Sacred (Lanham, Md.; London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.,

1995). Blake maintains that Allen uses Zelig "to unmask the artificial nature of celebrity" (100).

154. See Harold Brodkey's essay on Woody Allen in his Sea Battles on Dry Land (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999): "Allen offers as his final merit his powers of representing grace-happiness, blessing-in this world" (78).

155. See the review of Saul Bellow's Ravelstein in The Globe and Mail 29 April, 2000, Section D, 17.

156. Pauline Kael suggests that "the story's satirical underpinnings are never brought right up top, and there's something like cowardice-although it maybe just nice-guyism- in the way that Allen shies off whenever there's a chance for something sharp" ("Vulgarians and Ascetics" 119).

157. Ruth Perlmutter says that Allen "is forever playing with the tension between star status and his own self-berating position as the typical schlemiel-that is, the bumbling inferior Jew who both aspires to and mocks the class conscious world of Gentile gentrification" (207).

158. Allan Bloom summarizes Allen's work with reference to Zelig: "Woody Allen's comedy is nothing but a set of variations on the theme of the man who does not have a real 'self' or 'identity,' and feels superior to the inauthentically self-satisfied people because he is conscious of his situation and at the same time inferior to them because they are 'adjusted.'" Bloom questions whether the position of the outsider is that of 'alienation' or of 'health' (144; 145).

159. Mary P. Nichols, Reconstructing Woody: Art, Love, and Life in the Films of Woody Allen (Lanham; Boulder; New York; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998) 152.

In Automatic Vaudeville, John Lahr looks at Allen's persona in historical context, and says that his "posture as a victim is a radical reversal of the traditional clown role of activator who gets even for any injustice" (91). I would suggest by contrast that though Allen has played the schlemiel on many occasions, the little man is not typically a victim, but rather surmounts his difficulties and survives, often "gets even," by virtue of his hostile wit and intellectual superiority (see the first chapter of Nancy Pogel's Woody Allen).

Richard Allen has suggested that Allen, unlike Chaplin, usually undercuts "the moral smugness of his comic character through self-reflexivity": "Crimes and Misdemeanors" Cineaste 17 (1990); 44-46; 45.

Lloyd Rose believes that, especially in Broadway Danny Rose "Allen isn't

convincing as a victim. He seems self-pitying because it's clear he's smart enough to handle the situations he's letting get the best of him." : "Humor and Nothingness" The Atlantic May 1985: 94-96; 94.

For a discussion of the artist as a "self-styled . . . victim" see Leo Braudy 581.

160. Kael thinks of this change in Allen's appeal to the audience as being the result of Allen's loss of "perfect pitch." In Broadway Danny Rose, says Kael, Allen has lost the ability to reflect the audience's insecurities and has joined "the rest of the comedy specialists. . . trying to make us laugh" ("Vulgarians" 118).

161. Pauline Kael says the film is "about a man who is on the verge of disappearing and finally he does" ("Anybody Home" The New Yorker 8 Aug. 1983: 83-88; 84).

162. Whereas I am reminded of Allen's manipulations of the film documents and his self-assertions, McCann solely emphasizes Zelig's passivity in relation to the camera, proposing that in Zelig we see a "helpless flesh-and-blood person imprisoned within the dynamic imperatives of film" (109). McCann further notes that in contrast to his presence in the movie footage, in the still images "Zelig stares out at us, his face registering a hunted look, as though he senses that now, at this moment, we have pinned down a part of his fugitive self" (McCann 182).

163. See also Lloyd Rose on Zelig which he sees as a successful attempt to integrate Allen's "melancholy into a comedy without making the melancholy self-pitying or the comedy sour. At last he can be there and not be there on the screen simultaneously" (96). Rose sees Allen's paradoxical presence and absence not as a response to his celebrity identity per se but as an attempt to integrate his natural instincts for comedy, which his audience has always wanted him to indulge, with his desire to create something more serious and, to his mind, substantial.

Johnathan Romney refers to the concomitance of Allen's need as a performer to remain visible and his awareness of the "perils of exposure" ("Shelter from the Storm" 9). I will be looking at Allen's urge to disappear as an aesthetic strategy shaped by the conditions of visible celebrity, that is, as a problem of self-representation.

164. Richard Feldstein makes a Lacanian reading of Zelig in his essay "The Dissolution of the Self in Zelig." Feldstein sees Zelig in terms of Lacan's mirror stage in which the subject misrecognizes the coherency of the self in the other. My emphasis is on Zelig's relationship to his own image as other and on the splitting off and proliferation of his image in the media.

Graham McCann views Zelig as an "other-directed" personality, "the self dissolved into the role-player" (144).

165. Zelig, Kael says, is "always looking into a camera, looking for himself" ("Anybody Home" 86).

McCann suggests that Zelig evidences "the transition undergone by the movie camera from an ornament to a central component of consciousness" (183).

166.Lloyd Rose makes an observation about Zelig that echoes Barthes sense of the subject of photography. Zelig, Rose says, is "as near as you can get to being dead while still alive" (96).

Graham McCann's comments on the film retrospective which Sandy Bates attends in Stardust Memories are pertinent here also. Sandy, McCann says "is being subjected to a 'retrospective,' a weekend of his old movies, his past selves, analysed by a group of eager fans and critics. His daydream towards the end acknowledges the fact that, for these people, his 'immortal' image has already outlived his finite self. Death is one long retrospective; it means little more than a 'season' of one's old movies, filling the space one's body vacated" (208).

167. In a profile of Allen for The New Yorker John Lahr remarks accordingly that "Allen's dilemma . . .is that his strength is also his limitation: he's the spellbinder trapped by the success of his magic into a performance of someone he is not": "The Imperfectionist," The New Yorker 9 Dec. 1996: 68-83; 77.

Braudy describes the inescapable paradox in the dynamics of public exposure which is faced by the visible celebrity: "Even for someone in the 'business,' the body projected on screen was somehow divorced from an actual body and personality, just as the visible fame might seem like an alien imposition rather than a fuller realization. Once that body had been accepted and even praised, there came another level of dissatisfaction: My body is not me; accept now the 'real me.' But of course that 'real me' also had to be displayed before it could be noticed, and so in its turn followed the body into the discard pile, corrupted because it had to be visible rather than innately appreciated" (Braudy 580).

168. See Richard Schickel's comments on the differences between a celebrity and a fictional character in his work, Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1985); especially 272-285.

Responding to Pauline Kael's charge that "there aren't any characters" in the film, "not even Zelig," Allen declared that "the movie does not deal with characters so much as the reactions which society makes to the stimulus which Zelig represents" ("Anybody Home," 84; McCann 145).

169. Leo Braudy describes the performer's indebtedness to his audience:
"For performers so drawn to the terrifying edge of what it means to be visible, appreciation is vital, but none is ever enough. Any saving step between offstage and onstage has long since been obliterated, and their faces and their bodies are permanently in fief to their audiences. In the nineteenth century Poe expressed the paradox through his

story of the artist who creates the ultimate portrait of his wife without realizing that he is a vampire of the eye who is killing her in the process: "'And he would not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sate beside him'" (Braudy 581).

170. Richard Poirier, The Performing Self (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) 8.

171. The image of Sisyphus was suggested to me by Professor George Toles.

172. Allan Bloom 145.

173. John Lahr points out that as a performer Zelig embodies the talents of the parodist (Automatic Vaudeville 94).

174. Mark Siegal, "Ozymandias Melancholia: The Nature of Parody in Woody Allen's Stardust Memories," Film Literature Quarterly 13.2 (1985): 77-84; 77.

175. Three Films of Woody Allen (New York: Vintage Books, 1987) 18-19. All further quotations of diaiogue from the films, Zelig and Broadway Danny Rose will be from this volume. See Michael Wood's assessment of Allen's humour in Contemporary Literary Criticism 52 (1989): 37-38. Woody Allen's comedy, says Wood, depends "on our sensing the sort of reference that is being made rather than our knowing anything much about the actual source" (37).

176. John Lahr's argument that "Allen's success at exploiting his wound makes it impossible for him to heal it" is interesting in light of Christopher Lasch's understanding that narcissism (which he finds evidence of in Allen's work), is not alleviated by the talking cure: "The entire complex, played out in a setting of alienation rather than direct control, loses the classical form of symptom -and the classical therapeutic opportunity of simply restoring an impulse to consciousness" (Lahr Automatic Vaudeville 99; Lasch , The Culture of Narcissism 90).

177. Bloom complains that Allen does not tell us anything about the "inner-directed man" that he posits, but depicts him merely as "empty" (146).

178. Leonard Zelig's narrative of a self defining its individual boundaries is coincident with the narrative of his becoming a media celebrity. His celebrated career therefore suggests the guilt which Jacqueline Rose describes as belonging to the inner life, guilt which resides where the body finds itself constituted" in symbolic representation, and which is not "available for diagnosis-cum judgement" (Rose 38). Perhaps this is why in Allen's films his characters' moral guilt is strongly insinuated but this fact never reflects negatively on them nor has it any direct narrative consequences. Richard Blake reaffirms

this idea when he notices that "Allen's script manages to distance Leonard Zelig from the evil he generates" (Blake 107).

See also the essay by Lizzie Francke who believes that any guilt associated with the actions of Allen's hero Kleinman in Shadows and Fog is narratively displaced: "Kleinman's innocence, however, is in itself an illusion. It transpires that he is indeed culpable of a most heinous misdemeanor-he was discovered in flagrante delicto with his fiancee's sister on their wedding day. The guilt for this emotional killing finds itself displaced onto the more phantasmagorical level of the murders. . ." Sight and Sound 1993: 56-57; 57.

179. George Alfred Schrader, "Norman Mailer and the Despair of Defiance," Norman Mailer : A Collection of Essays, ed. Leo Braudy (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972): 82-95; 83.

180. Leonard Probst 247-265; 247- 248.

181. Babington and Evans believe there is evidence of Allen's guilt in the conversation between Sandy Bates and Jerry Abraham in Stardust Memories. Allen, they say, dramatizes "both the crassness of the culture in which the artist/comedian finds himself and his own guilt as star commodity in the commodity-conscious society" (Babington and Evans 154).

182.Wylie Sypher, Loss of the Self in Modern Literature and Art (New York: Vintage Books, 1962) 161.

183. Maurice Yacowar suggests accordingly that overall Allen views sexuality as a monstrous destructive urge (Loser Take All 215).

184. Annette Wernblad notices that Allen always has a self-indulgent sidekick who has sold out. Brooklyn is Not Expanding: Woody Allen's Comic Universe (Rutherford, N. J.: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1992).

Ruth Perlmutter also considers the nature of guilt in Zelig; however, her argument differs from mine insofar as she sees Zelig's transformations themselves as stemming from sexual anxiety related to the "ethnic guilt of assimilation": "Allen is also voicing an autobiographical litany of culpability in succumbing to American culture" (219).

185. "The Laughing Game," The New Yorker 7 Feb. 2000: 52-63; 63.

In a vignette originally intended for Annie Hall Allen comically imagines the artist's assertion of difference from his creation as a self-protective measure. Ralph Rosenblum describes the scene as it was before it was subsequently excised from the film: "We are in Nazi headquarters. Two officers are speaking in German. The subtitles: 'We caught two from the resistance. We tortured the Frenchman, Sartre, but he refuses to talk.

Here's the American.' He produces Woody, who steadfastly declines to implicate his associates. The Nazi's put a gun to his head and threaten to execute him on the spot. Suddenly Woody pulls a hand puppet from his pocket: 'Because of my moral convictions,' says the intrepid resistance fighter, 'I cannot name names. But he;-the puppet-'can,' and he proceeds to provide the information they want ventriloquially." (Rosenbaum, After the Shooting Stops 278).

186. I am indebted to Dr. Judith Owens for her suggestion about the preemptive nature of self-parody.

187. The same kind of adversarial energy drove Mailer according to John W. Aldridge: "For it was only by persuading the public to hate him that he could give up the idea of trying to persuade the public to love him. And he needed to be hated in order to start loving himself once again and resume the lone, aggressively outlaw role that he sensed was his natural one" ("The Energy of New Success," Norman Mailer: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Leo Braudy (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972) 109-120;116).

188. Leo Braudy describes the paradox of visible celebrity. In order for some aspect of the "real" self to be noticed, it has "to be displayed and therefore it too becomes "corrupted because it [has] to be visible rather than innately appreciated" (Braudy 580).

189. Richard Blake's comment is apropos :"Not even the motion picture camera can grasp the reality of Leonard Zelig . . .and the audience watching the film is similarly frustrated" (Blake 109).

190. Harold Brodkey senses "the self-congratulatory nature of [Allen's] feeling of safety inside the events of his movies. . ." (Sea Battles 78).

191. Woody Allen, says Kent Jones, "makes films about . . .the people he wants to have known, and among whom he wants to have grown up": Film Comment May-June 1998: 6-9; 6. Speaking specifically of Zelig John Lahr emphasizes Allen's "cinematic conjuring trick that allows him to put himself among the fantasy figures of his past and present." He also proposes that Allen's parodic appropriation of other works of art in his own films is similarly a way of "living in his favorite fictions" (Automatic Vaudeville 94).

192. Michael Wood's description of Allen's demeanor is found in his overview of Allen's works in Contemporary Literary Criticism 52 (1989) 38.

See also John Lahr's profile of the filmmaker which ends with a remark by Diane Keaton who describes a treasured personal image of Allen similar to the one which he presents of himself in his films: "If I were to close my eyes and imagine Woody. . .something I would keep with me is just the image of him watching Cries and Whispers. . .

Him being swept away. I've seen it on his face. I've seen it. It's moved me. It makes me love him": ("The Imperfectionist," The New Yorker 9 Dec. 1996: 68-83; 93).

There are also those who are unconvinced by what seems to be Allen's idealization of his character's movie-inspired awe. In his discussion of Purple Rose of Cairo, Lloyd Rose says that Allen "didn't stay down in the audience looking wistfully at the screen-he went up there. He did something about his dreams. By any standard he's a winner. What's he doing turning out a movie about settling for what little life allows you?" ("Humor and Nothingness" 94). Harold Brodkey expresses a similar doubt: "How innocent is any celebrity who presents himself or herself as a dreamer?" (Sea Battles 76).

193.Mark Schechner, "Woody Allen: The Failure of the Therapeutic," From Hester Street to Hollywood: The Jewish American Stage and Screen, ed. Sarah Blacher Cohen (Indiana University Press, 1983) 231-44. Schechner's essay is excerpted in volume 52 (1989) of Contemporary Literary Criticism (45-47;47).

194. The comics are Corbett Monica, Will Jordon, Jackie Gayle, Howard Storm, Morty Gunty, Sandy Baron, who narrates most of the film, and Jack Rollins, one of Allen's managers.

195. There seems to be, for example, a tempered antipathy for the audiences who believe in Lou's charm and it can be felt in the shots of the "widows," as John Baxter calls them, who attend his shows (Baxter 321).

196. See Pearl K. Bell "Woody Allen, Cultural Phenomenon: The 'Schlemiel' as Intellectual," in Encounter 71.1 (June 1998): 72-5 excerpted in Contemporary Literary Criticism52 (1989): 49-50. Bell writes of Allen's inability to come to terms with the "Jewish world that made him. . . . He can't quell the clawing anxiety-for all his worldly success, and the interminable years of psychoanalysis-that he has been irrevocably tainted by that petty-bourgeois world" (50).

197. Kael writes in her review for The New Yorker 6 Feb.1984 that "Allen may have wanted to give it a strangeness (as if it weren't happening now). . . " ("Vulgarians and Ascetics" 119). Richard Schickel calls Broadway Danny Rose a "memory piece" that is "oddly timeless" (294;297). The film is in Schickel's words, "Woody's evocation of the first glamorous world he was permitted to know intimately. . ." and it "is of a different quality from his evocations of the world he was permitted only to imagine" since "his attitudes toward it are more ambivalent. . . " (Schickel on Film 298).

198. Richard Schickel concludes that the film as a whole "is a tribute to the New York of his [Allen's] professional beginnings" (Schickel on Film 297).

199. Allen, Woody, The Floating Light Bulb (New York: Random House, 1982).

200. Ruth Perlmutter, "Woody Allen's Zelig, and American Jewish Parody" 211.

201. Douglas Brode maintains that "Broadway Danny Rose. could be subtitled "The Education of Tina," since it is about her growing consciousness: the way she becomes worthy of Danny" (Brode 241).

202. Pauline Kael's review of Crimes and Misdemeanors appears in her volume Movie Love: Complete Reviews 1988-1991 (New York: Plume, 1991) 199-204; 202.

203. Jonathan Rosenbaum, Movies as Politics (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1997) 82. See also Peter Minowitz's counter argument which notes all of the "flaws" in Cliff's character which Allen makes obvious: "Controversies: Nihilism from Machiavelli to Woody Allen," Literature Film Quarterly. 19. 2 (1991): 77-88; 83.

204. Kent Jones remarks on the moral confusion in Allens's regard for Clifford: "Into the Woods" Film Comment May-June 1998: 4-6; 4.

205. Crystal Downing, "Woody Allen's Blindness and Insight: The Palimpsests of Crimes and Misdemeanors," Religion and the Arts 1:2 (Spring 1997): 73-92; 78.

206. In my reading of Cliff's character I find room for moral suspicion where Pauline Kael does not :"The documentarian is the man with impossible ideals, the total loser; it's the villains who win. Woody Allen is tweaking his own high-mindedness" (Kael 202).

207. P. Adams Sitney suggests that Wendy is "perhaps one of the most repulsive souls" in Allen's more recent work, "Cinematic Election and Theological Vanity," Raritan: A Quarterly Review 11.2 (1991): 48-65; 63.

208. Cliff's documentary subjects are so foreign to Allen's trendy filmic territory that Cliff's concern with them seems almost sanctimonious.

209. Richard Allen maintains that Allen's moral superiority comes close to looking like self-righteousness, yet it is not clear that Allen knows this: "Crimes and Misdemeanors," Cineaste 17 (1990): 44-46; 44).

210. Peter Minowitz 83.

211. "Allen gives Cliff sarcasm without courage, intelligence without self-knowledge": John Baxter quotes David Denby's review of Crimes and Misdemeanors (368).

212. "Allen clearly intends us to question whether Cliff has, finally, any more wisdom or integrity than Lester. . .even though it is doubtful whether this intention is fully realized" (Richard Allen 44).

213. Pauline Kael notices the significance of the Doctor's suffering compared to that of his murdered mistress: "so the doctor's final acceptance of his crime against her has no horror. The film's emphasis is confusing: the spectator has more anxiety about the doctor's possibly revealing his crime to the authorities than about what he does to her [Dolores]." (Movie Love 203).

214. In an interview with Stig Björkman Allen agrees with Björkman that Judah is a kind of existential hero (212).

215. "Even as Judah abandons the essence of his fathers' moral code, he remains within his child-like reception of it: he still dwells on appearances" : Mark W. Roche, "Justice and the Withdrawal of God in Woody Allen's Crimes and Misdemeanors," The Journal of Value Inquiry 29 (Dec. 1995): 547-563; 555.

216. In the "confession" scene at the end Judah, speaking of the hero of his hypothetical murder story refers to him as a man "who had everything." A quick cut shows us Lester inside at the wedding celebration they are all attending while we can still hear Judah's voice over describing his wealthy murderer.

217. See Crystal Downing on the way "narrative discourse has superseded law; the process of signification has replaced the significance of a serious crime" in Crimes and Misdemeanors (83).

218. Crystal Downing maintains that in Crimes and Misdemeanors Allen shows "the problem of an ethic without a transcendent base" and implies that the "existential hope" that "each person would take responsibility for his own actions" is "exposed as an artificial construction" insofar as Judah identifies this possibility as a fictional happy ending (85).

Minowitz avers that "this quasi-confession is all that remains, in Crimes and Misdemeanors, of truths that underlie . . . the Decalogue and the Golden Rule" (87).

219. Roche 559.

220. Harold Brodkey speaks of Allen as a "relativist" and an "absolutist" (85).

221. Jack's comment to Judah suggests their conflict:
"Jack: You know you're not aware of what goes on in this world. I mean you sit up here with your four acres and your country club and your rich friends and out there in the real world its a whole different story. I've met a lot of characters from when I had the restaurant, from 7th Avenue, from Atlantic City and I'm not so high class that I can avoid

looking at realities. I can't afford to be aloof- You come to me with a helluva problem and then you get high handed on me."

222. Richard Allen maintains that in Crimes and Misdemeanors "human motivation appears psychologically schematized to the point of abstraction" (45).

The film according to Rosenbaum "postulate[s] a contemporary moral crisis in the way that we live and think, but without investing the victim(s) of this crisis-the murdered mistress (Angelica Huston). . .with the roundness and humanity that would make [her]. . . something more than [an] abstraction(s) (82).

While I would agree with Rosenbaum on the careless depiction of Dolores, something Pauline Kael comments on as well, I think that Allen's using the Schubert quartet during the scene in which Delores is stalked by the hired killer is a way for him to dignify her life and to elicit sadness about her death. (Kael, Movie Love199-204.)

223. "[W]as there ever another filmmaker whose personality was so integral to every single discussion of his work?" (Kent Jones, "Into the Woods" Film Comment 34.1 (May/June 1998: 4-6; 6).

224. Richard Schickel has provided perhaps the most enthusiastic estimation of this perceived constancy in Allen's career prior to the scandal, though he is certainly not the only one to interpret Allen's life and career in this manner. The title of the section in Schickel's book devoted to Allen which he calls "United Artist" and the title of the chapter itself, "The Coherent Life" reflect his assumptions, which seem to have been commonly held, about the integral unity of Allen's life and work. Schickel writes, ". . .there was something heartening in the immutability Woody demonstrated over the years.. . . " (280). He continues:

". . . his manner was always the same: sober; thoughtful; earnestly intent on what others had to say. He is a very composed man, as far away in manner from his nervously stammering, desperately articulate screen character as it is possible to get. . . . . . .

In his habitual attire- a plaid sport shirt, corduroy or chino slacks, sneakers, perhaps a large, disguising hat, and a fatigue jacket or windbreaker if you happened to encounter in the street-going about his habitual rounds, seeing his handful of very close friends of very long standing, eating in the few restaurants where he feels comfortable, he is the picture of stability. And of course, it is well known that he has been involved since the start of his career with the same firm of manager-producers, has made his films for distribution by the same team, following them from one company to another when their fortunes shifted. It is true that he has been lengthily involved with several women; but several over a lengthening lifetime is no longer a sign of instability, and now at last he and Mia Farrow. . . have had a son. To put the matter simply, he dresses, eats, works, lives in a manner enigmatic to show folks and striven for by writers who know that the key to productivity is a well-regulated life. Another way of saying that is that he seems to

conceive of himself as a man whose job is anonymously to observe landscape, not to turn it into a stage for a celebrity drama" (Schickel on Film 280-281).

David Thomson tries to determine those qualities of Allen's films which, considered independently of his private behaviour, might justify his celebrated reputation as an artist, "Shoot the Actor," Film Comment 34.2 (Mar./Apr. 1998): 12-19. See also Kent Jones' contradictory reply to Thomson in the following issue: "Into the Woods," 4-6.

225. Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in Language Counter-Memory Practice, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon,Ithaca (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977) 118.

226. Harold Brodkey has suggested that "[Allen's] audience [had] identified with him too directly and [was] now carried into guilt" (Brodkey 76). See also Beth Wishnick's article in which she looks at the psychoanalytic phenomenon of transference at work in the criticism of Husbands and Wives: "The Obscure Object of Analysis," Perspectives on Woody Allen, ed. Renee R. Curry (New York: G. K. Hall and Co., 1996): 57-71.

227. Gopnik says that "seeing Woody's films now, one is struck by the cold breeze of misanthropy that blows through them" ("The Outsider" 91).

228. Jonathan Romney, "Husbands and Wives," Sight and Sound 2.7 (1992): 44-5; 44.

The journal Cineaste devotes its volume 23. 3 (1998) to a retrospective of Allen's films on the occasion of the release of Deconstructing Harry: "Deconstructing Woody: A Critical Symposium on Woody Allen's Deconstructing Harry." This volume includes essays by Marcia Pally, Leonard Quart, Pat Dowell, Michael Kerbel and Elayne Rapping. The editors, Dan Georgakas, Roy Grundmann, Cynthia Lucia, Richard Poston, and Leonard Quart suggest that critics have overlooked "the more nuanced or comically veiled" expressions of sexism and misanthropic tendencies in Allen's earlier films.

229. Maurice Yacowar, "Reconstructing Woody," Queens Quarterly 105/1 (Spring 1998): 95-104. Yacowar refers to a joke in Deconstructing Harry in which an actor in one of Harry's short stories finds that he has physically gone "out of focus." He suggests that this "conceit also embodies the limbo between actor and role, between being and performing. For the actor carries into his real life a difficulty incurred in his screen performance. He 'catches' the blur of the lens through which he is conveyed to the viewer. The medium infects the performer. That gag is a reversal of Allen's personal contamination of his screen persona" (102).

230. Ronald S. Librach, "A Portrait of the Artist as Neurotic: Studies in Interior Distancing in the Films of Woody Allen," Missouri Review 9.2 (1986): 165-184. Rpt. in Perspectives on Woody Allen, ed. Renee R. Curry (New York: G. K. Hall and Co., 1996).

Though he has always manipulated the distance between his fictional roles and his life off-screen, his efforts now in this regard leave the audience with a different task according to Maurice Yacowar. Yacowar points out that whereas in the past viewers may have wondered which of the "fumbling failings" were shared by Allen himself, now that it seems obvious that he is guilty of more morally reprehensible behaviour, it is a "question of calibrating how dangerously self-indulgent the artist and deceptive the man may be": Maurice Yacowar, "Deconstructing Woody" 96.

231. Beth Wishnick sees that his battle to "reappropriate his story from the media" (Wishnick 62).

232.See Joan Didion's review of Manhattan, "Letter from Manhattan" in The New York Review of Books 16 August 1979. Vivian Gornik expresses similar sentiments regarding Allen's comedy of lechery in "Face it Woody Allen, You're Not a Sclep Anymore."

233. Now the wistful longings for the Playboy lifestyle that underlay his earliest films look dated and, in light of the scandal, retrograde and sexist (Gopnik, "The Outsider" 92).

234. Ingmar Bergman, Scenes from a Marriage, trans. Alan Blair (New York: Bantam, 1977).

235. In his essay "The Kaelification of Movie Reviewing," Harold Brodkey remarks that "each scene is about knowing and discovering. And about exploring. Nothing is granted to mystery or to unknowing except why these people are unhappy: This is Chekhovian and generous" (Sea Battles 85).

Jonathan Romney asserts that "Husbands and Wives is . . . acute about the way that these characters act out their dramas almost consciously, perhaps as stories to tell future therapists": Sight and Sound 2 .7 (1992).

236. This was the first film by Allen, Jonathan Romney notes, in which "the ironies are not strictly internal" :Sight and Sound 2 .7 (1992): 44.

237. I am indebted to Professor George Toles for this line of reasoning.

238. David Thomson, reviewing Everyone Says I Love You, argues that "he [Allen] thinks of himself as a romantic," "Sweet Unison," Sight and Sound 7.4 (1997): 20.

239. Earlier in the film Rain's mother (Blythe Danner) had confessed herself a fan of Gabe's writing and told him that she and her husband "wished [he'd] still write those funny short stories." Her mother's comment, unlike Rain's, seems almost a parody of those instances found in Allen's earlier films such as Manhattan or Stardust Memories in which, typically, Allen co-opts a character's intended compliment or criticism by implying

the naiveté of the fan's point of view and his own higher artistic aspirations for himself.

240. Jonathan Romney calls Harriet Harmon a "paradigm of all Allen's manifestly excessive fantasy women" ("Husbands and Wives" 45).

241. See John Baxter's similar assessment of Lewis's acting (395).

242. "For all its insightfulness, the film reveals Allen's fatal flaw- a terrible snobbery, directed here with unwarranted cruelty at the astrology-obsessed Sam.. . . she is made out to be a manifestly unworthy object of his attentions, as opposed to simply inadequate, as Rain is for Gabe. . . If only she were as naturally talented and -the ultimate saving grace for Allen- as neurotic as the clearly superior Rain": Jonathan Romney, "Husbands and Wives" 45.

243. John Baxter quotes Lysette Anthony as saying that the film crew members were caught by surprise at Allen's decision to increase the level of emotional and physical violence during the shooting of the scene (396).

244. I owe this observation to Professor George Toles.

Kent Jones suggests that during his Gordon Willis period, Allen's cinema always "played in the mind as a succession of "homely," semi-elegant camera placements to which the actors (and the director himself) seemed to be only partially privy" (5). He further remarks that Allen's camera has always been an .". . .emotionally withholding camera" and that ". . .Allen always approaches his actors in the same polite, sidelong fashion" (6).

245. John Baxter quotes from the review of the film in Entertainment Weekly (400).

246. Stuart Klawans believes the film to have a "double agenda of displacement and revenge," "Husbands and Wives," Perspectives on Woody Allen, ed. Renee R. Curry (New York: G.K. Hall and Co., 1996) 52-54; 53. Interestingly, Kent Jones's description of Allen's presence in his films has some echoes of the diagnosis which Judy's ex-husband makes of her character and so suggests again the idea of projection or displacement: "his [Allen's] is an aggressively inert presence that organizes the world around itself rather than gets up to meet it. Thus Allen's terrifying knack for getting actors of all shapes and levels of inspiration and experience to move and talk like himself" (Jones 5).

Klawans says of Farrow's performance that she "dutifully [embodied] her writer-director-former boyfriend's notion of an emotional black hole" (53).

247. Gopnik analyses the cultural conditions in which Allen's comic observations were able to evoke a recognizable world, and the changes in these conditions. Gopnik surmises that Allen "could no longer make jokes by comparing mundane reality to serious

aspiration, since serious aspirations were passe and the particular mundane Upper West Side reality that he knew was fading." At the same time, Gopnik writes, the growth of feminism removed "even mildly predatory desire as an acceptable subject for humor" : "The Outsider" 92.

248. Harold Brodkey has written on the image of the waif in Allen's films, which he says has been "acceptable pornography until now" (71;76).

249. Maurice Yacowar reads Allen's Deconstructing Harry similarily as an attempt by Allen to convince his viewers that he is "a loving and well-meaning father": "Reconstructing Woody" 96.

250.Gopnik maintains that "the notion that sexual transgression is amusing in itself is no longer acceptable among educated people" (93).

251. Anthony Lane, "Scarlet Woman," The New Yorker 3 Oct. 1995: 112-114.

252. See Sam B. Girgus on the "questions of ethnic identity and cultural antagonism" in the "ambivalence toward women and love" in the works of Philip Roth and Woody Allen. "Philip Roth and Woody Allen: Freud and the Humor of the Repressed" in Semites and Stereotypes: Characteristics of Jewish Humor, ed. Avner Ziv and Anat Zajdman (Westport Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1993) 121-131; 127.

253. Michael Blakemore's diary notes on his experience directing Woody Allen's play, Central Park West, were published as "Death Defying Director" in The New Yorker on June 3, 1996, pp. 48-61. Blakemore recalls that Allen came to a production with Soon-Yi and Helena Bonham Carter and announced that "'she [Bonham Carter] plays my wife,' rather the way a small boy who knows what he wants might announce the proud ownership of a new train set" (55).

254. The sense of stasis in the Weinrib's domestic life is what Anthony Lane seems to have been implying when he mentions the predominance of the color brown in the first half of the film.

255. Various critics, including Anthony Lane, have commented on the desirability of such a move for Allen. Lane feels that Allen has achieved just that by introducing the character of Linda to his filmic world ("Scarlet Woman").

256. Anthony Lane observes that "the film can slide toward neurosis, then turn on a dime and skate off in the opposite direction" ("Scarlet Woman").

Similarly Jonathan Romney conceives of Mighty Aphrodite as one of the

"throwaway farces" which Allen made following the scandal, which barely hints at "the subcurrents of moral horror and darkness that were apparent in Manhattan Murder Mystery (1993) and Bullets Over Broadway (1995)": Sight and Sound 7.4 (April 1997): 40-41.

However, just as an aside, it is very odd to see a character of Allen's approaching a prostitute with flowers and trying desperately to convince her that he is "not one of those psychopaths that kills prostitutes."

257. Anthony Lane, "Scarlet Woman."

258. Here I disagree with Anthony Lane's assertion that "Sorvino's performance defies Woody Allen's intellectual snobbery, his habit of making fun of stupid people" ("Scarlet Woman").

259. See Maurice Yacowar ("Reconstructing Woody" 96); John Baxter (434).

260. Stuart Klawans finds a parallel between the media invading Allen's life and the motif of housebreaking in Husbands and Wives.

261. My argument diverges from that of Maurice Yacowar who suggests that in Deconstructing Harry Allen is involved extensively in self-justifying manoeuvers which he affects by engaging the audience with his familiar persona ("Reconstructing Woody" 99).

See also John Baxter who responds to the unlikableness of Harry Block and suggests that his role is "not to offer a sympathetic character with which to identify, but rather to lead us into the realms of nightmare" (434).

262. Mark Schechner "Woody Allen: The Failure of the Theraputic" in From Hester Street to Hollywood: The Jewish-American Stage and Screen, ed. Sarah Blacher Cohen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983) 231-44, exerpted in Contemporary Literary Criticism 52 (1989): 45-47: "Perpetual adolescence is Allen's great secret and his weapon. His film persona is nothing without it. He is the eternal kid" (47).

263. Brodkey notes that "no big star is a snob on-screen, but the audience is snobbish, and capricious, which is to say it is capable of punishing the loss of attaction, the loss of a sexual future in the star," and that ". . .movies demand of stars a certain suppleness and availability. You can reorganize the sexual elements, but you have to be young. Responsiveness can't be faked" (100; 104).

264. In so doing Allen suggests, "the kinship between writing and death" posited by Foucault (116-117):

This conception of a spoken or written narrative as a protection against death has

been transformed by our culture. Writing is now linked to sacrifice and to the sacrifice of life itself; it is a voluntary obliteration of the self that does not require representation in books because it takes place in the everyday existence of the writer.

265. John Lahr maintains that "Allen and his comic surrogates relish [despair], savor it, wrap themselves in it, because the lacerations rationalize their sensational selfishness. Inevitably, they must find no meaning. They have given up everything that imparts meaning, unwilling to commit themselves to relationships, to children, to life outside their immediate work, to a community larger than their own charmed circle. Isolated by work, fame, money, and self-consciousness, Allen's comic spokesmen see people more as a threat than as a promise of salvation . . . . His showy vulnerability hides the pride of his despair" (49). "His art films dramatize his separation from life and make this alienation seem like maturity. Allen is an entrepreneur of his alienation; his success at exploiting his wound makes it impossible for him to heal it." : originally in Automatic Vaudeville, excerpted in Contemporary Literary Criticism 52 (1989): 34-50; 49.

266. Again my argument differs from Yacowar's as his suggests that the total effect of the film is an appeal to "boyishness" (104).

267. Although Allen in Crimes and Misdemeanors "avoids the easy solution of finding satisfaction in art . . . Allen isn't willing to translate Harry's involvement with art into even a tentative step toward functioning in the real world" (Michael Kerbel, "The Redemptive Power of Art," Cineaste 23.3 (1998): 36-37; 37.

268. Yacowar asks why "it is not a descent into madness, this solipsism?" and concludes that it is because "Allen's affable persona makes for a more positive reading, in which we suspend judgment" ("Deconstructing Woody" 104).

269. "But Allen also uses "deconstruction" to deny any objective fixity in his fiction, to repose his meaning in his readers' dispositions" ("Deconstructing Woody" 99).

270. Elayne Rapping's response, like Maurice Yacowar's, is split between an admiration for the filmmaker and a disgust for Allen's character: "In Deconstructing Harry Allen re-entrenches himself in the confessional mode. . . . [He] manages to cop to, and then capitalize on, his near sociopathic ability to hurt and betray friends and lovers alike, to absorb the rage and scorn of all concerned, and come up smiling and unscathed. The cold-blooded cynicism of the film was despicable on a human level, certainly. As a cinematic tour de force, however, it was difficult not to admire and enjoy it" ("A Feminist Love/Hate Relationship with Woody," Cineaste 23. 3 (1998): 37-38.

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