

# 'Hannah' brings Allen's distortions to the screen

Things look different through Woody Allen's eyes. New York becomes a glorified renaissance-era city, and families, even those in the most advanced stages of self-hatred, become the most precious thing in life. Jews become caricatures worse than any members of the Palestine Liberation Organization could dream up.

But the worst perversion of all is his treatment of women. Since he reduces all of them to twitching, hyperactive, fawning Diane Keatons, Allen should not make movies about women.

His latest film, "Hannah and Her Sisters," raises an interesting question about the responsibility of an artist. It is a well-documented fact that most of

**Garret Weyr**

**Cinema**

the revenue from Allen's films comes from Chicago, Los Angeles and New York. Although the New York Times Magazine recently labeled Allen a "cinematic genius," one has to wonder if a true genius would so narrowly limit his audience by never straying from the familiar terrain of the New York streets.

The suffering in this movie is all self-induced angst. Hannah (Mia Farrow), as the eldest of three sisters, is the

mainstay of her family. A successful actress with four children and a lovely Upper West Side apartment, she is the ultimate paragon of womanhood. Every time the camera focuses on her, one expects a halo to appear. Allen has brought out Farrow's Madonna (the mother of God, not the rock star) traits at the expense of all her off-beat quirks.

Hannah's sister Holly (played by the enormously talented Diane Weist) continually borrows money from her sister but feels belittled by her. She goes from acting to catering to writing, trying to find herself everywhere. She won't, however, find herself any place but in this movie, since women like her don't really exist. She marries Hannah's ex-

husband (Allen, doing his usual and by now very dull anguished Jew routine), who picks her up in Tower Records.

The other sister Lee (Barbara Hershey) is a beautiful, insecure ingenue searching for a mentor. Recovering from a seven-year affair with a painter (Max Von Sydow) who is her father's age, she has an affair with Hannah's husband (Michael Caine). Fat, ugly, old, and dull, Caine is the movie's worst problem. What is either woman doing with him?

Hershey's performance is thrown off somewhat by poor directing. Her facial expressions are odd and inappropriate, she pulls at her long frizzy hair, and her hands behave as if she were wired

on cocaine.

There are several problems with the script, and the Caine-Hershey affair is one. Why would a woman breaking away from a suffocating man move to another pompous, pretentious intellectual? Also it is mentioned that Lee is a recovered alcoholic, but then the substance is thrown away as if the real story died in the editing room. The sisters' mother is an alcoholic. Is there supposed to be some special bond between Lee and her mother? It is hard to tell, because the mother never ceases gushing about Hannah.

Hannah, as played by Farrow, is another problem. Too fragile and ethereal to be believed and speaking in

a high nervous voice, Farrow has no business carrying a movie. It would be interesting to see what would happen if Allen started dating an already-established actress, like Susan Sarandon or Glenn Close, instead of a Keaton or Farrow who came into her own under his guidance. If he were ever confronted with a real woman and not a fantasy, it is impossible to predict how he would function.

His portrait of New York is sweet but laughable. God forbid Harlem or Hell's Kitchen or the Bowery should creep into his vision. Beyond the upper west side, there is no city except for some lovely buildings. A lot of ink has been spilt saying that "Hannah" is the movie Allen has been working toward since "Manhattan." That movie has to be every mayor's nightmare; after seeing so many self-involved, fast talking, neurotic New Yorkers, why would anyone in his right mind actually pay a dime to go there?

A similar argument could be applied to "Hannah," why would anyone in his right mind want to go near a movie about paranoid, career-fitting, backstabbing, insecure, manner-ridden Woody Allen women who don't seem to exist outside of that man's personal anguish? Save the \$4.50. Get dinner or see "Out of Africa" again.

## Registration drive continues in Union

A voter registration drive will be held in the Student Union near the International Center at the following times: Wednesday, March 19, 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Thursday, March 20, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Writing from page 1

felt so differently about the amount of useful commentary on papers.

"I imagine students are looking for certain kinds of help and faculty are giving other kinds of help," he said. "Some students simply don't look at their papers. In part, we faculty aren't communicating effectively with students about the process of writing."

One of the problems with writing at the University is that students get less of it in their last years in school than in their freshman year, Houston said.

"Instead of developing their ability to critique, to analyze and to think, they're doing less and less of that," he said.

Houston said the committee based its recommendations on information gathered from: phone surveys of students, randomly selected term papers, questionnaires to the faculty, programs at other schools and non-course programs such as the Writing Center.

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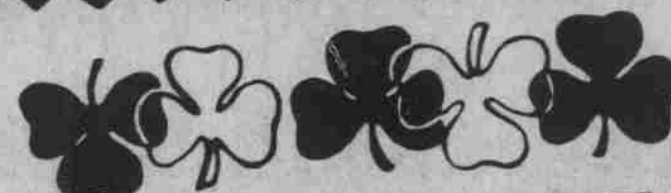
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