
A Role Of Stereotypes In Annie Hall

Woody Allen's movie, *Annie Hall*, depicted the psychoanalytic narration of the failed relationship between Alvy Singer and the titular Annie Hall. In doing so it explored the depths of stereotypes, particularly Jewish, and how they fostered and hindered their romance. The transformations, or lack thereof, served to illustrate the relative truth of the stereotypes.

Annie Hall is first and foremost a movie about love. Specifically that, while love is a ludicrous folly, it is ultimately essential. In the opening scene of the movie, Alvy made the joke, "I would never want to belong to any club that would have someone like me for a member." Immediately he established both his neurotic behavior, and his Freudian understanding of it. Furthermore, it provides a transition into focus of the story, his relationship with Annie. Throughout the film Alvy actualized the joke: with his previous wives, his Jewish and New Yorker identity, and Annie's previous relationships. Alvy realized the paradigm he had fallen victim by the end of the film, but was unable to control himself and achieve a "healthy" relationship. Thus he ultimately concluded that no such "healthy" relationship was feasible; that love was folly.

Location is especially significant in the movie as it relates to individual's identity. While Alvy consistently identified with New York City throughout the film, Annie's identification with Los Angeles occurred once she had developed her sense of self. At a sidewalk cafe in Los Angeles, Annie remarked, "I mean you're like New York City. You're just this person. You're like this island unto yourself." Alvy had just flown out to Los Angeles in a desperate attempt to win Annie back by proposing to her. In comparing Alvy to New York, she encapsulated his isolatory pessimism in geographic simile. Previously New York had been associated with greatness, with qualities other cities lacked for; he called Los Angeles superficial. However, Annie's transformation has led her to think in contrast to Alvy—she greatly enjoyed L.A. Their diametrically opposed personalities became evidence that they had no future.

Alvy's identity as an artist founds his view that one's reality becomes ideal through the altering nature of art. Alvy's creative mind, both as character and narrator, provide him the opportunity to describe and alter his perception—and ultimately the viewer's as well—of reality. After Alvy brought in Marshall McLuhan who utterly rejected a know-it-all standing behind him in line at the movies, he claimed, "Boy, if life were only like this..." Alvy explicitly acknowledged the fictional nature of the reality as presented to the audience. This does not always occur, e.g. when he appears as a Hasid at the Hall dinner table. Although these depictions are fictional, they are incredibly real. Who among us can claim they have never imagined what life could have been with just a few alterations to reality. These moments, as well as his retrospective analysis all fall entirely in line with the established psychoanalytic trend of the film. Alvy's life: what it was and

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

GET HELP

is, what it might and should have been, provide a detailed perspective on his identity.

The movie depicted Jewishness as unique blend of the erotic and neurotic. The depiction of Alvy's Jewishness is a complicated amalgamation of how he viewed himself, how he thought others viewed himself, and how this appears to the audience. David Biale observed that, "The dominant discourse that continues to be drawn to eroticizing the Other rather than the Self... erotic liberation remains the unfinished business of contemporary Jewish culture." From a very basic and generalized Freudian perspective, the erotic and neurotic are deeply entwined at the most fundamental subconscious levels. The Diaspora Jew's neurosis is founded in identifying in contrast to gentiles, the Other. Therefore the Jewish eroticism is bound to the conflict.

The movie depicted a wide gamut of Jewish stereotypes including the Jewish American Princess, the overbearing mother, the passive father, and most notably the schlemiel. However, this schlemiel is hardly typical or stock, as Allen explored the depths of individualism and uniqueness obtainable by a stereotype. Professor Richard Freadman commented that, "In Annie Hall there is sufficient psychological complexity ascribed to the main characters to permit an engagement with the problem of stereotyping that is profound as well as funny, that sees relational stereotyping as at once positive..., amusing..., and pathetically negative..." Stereotypes are frequently used in the movie, varying with purpose from sardonic to sober. The variance illustrates how stereotypes are both true and false on a variety of levels, that often surpass the superficial elements upon which they are premised. Allen broke the typical convention of the schlemiel, by illuminating the pleasant aspects of Alvy's shortcomings. In fact, his shortcomings are his main attractions.

Annie Hall's depiction of Alvy presents a skewed perspective of the urban intellectual Jewish male, whose existence is itself skewed. His quirks are uniquely Allen's, but the psychoanalytic relationship of the erotic and neurotic in Alvy is spot on. In fact the movie's tragic depiction of Alvy is sobering for those who find similarity between themselves and him; how realistic is his reality?

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

GET HELP