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The Films of Woody Allen

Second Edition

The Films of Woody Allen is the first full-length work to examine the director as a serious filmmaker and artist. Sam Girgus argues that Allen has consistently been on the cutting edge of contemporary critical and cultural consciousness, challenging our notions of authorship, narrative, perspective, character, theme, ideology, gender, and sexuality. This revised and updated edition includes two new chapters that examine Allen's work since 1992. Girgus argues that the scandal surrounding Allen's personal life in the early 1990s has altered his image in ways that reposition moral consciousness in his work. The union between Allen's public and private selves that created a special aura about him remains intact despite the director's concerted effort to separate his private life from his screen image. Allen now assumes a postmodern moral relativism and sensual realism that differ profoundly from the moral sensibility of his earlier work.

Sam B. Girgus is professor of English at Vanderbilt University. A recipient of a Rockefeller Fellowship and other scholarly teaching awards, he is the author of *Hollywood Renaissance: The Cinema of Democracy in the Era of Ford, Capra, and Kazan*; *Desire and the Political Unconscious*; *The New Covenant: Jewish Writers and the American Idea*; and most recently, *America on Film: Modernism, Documentary, and a Changing America*.

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Vanderbilt University



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PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
 Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

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First published 2002

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface Sabon 10/13 pt. *System* L^AT_EX 2_ε [TB]

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Girgus, Sam B., 1941–

The films of Woody Allen / Sam B. Girgus. – 2nd ed.

p. cm. – (Cambridge film classics)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-81091-4 – ISBN 0-521-00929-4 (pbk.)

1. Allen, Woody – Criticism and interpretation. I. Title. II. Series.

PN1998.3.A45 G57 2002
 791.43'092 – dc21 2002025617

ISBN 0 521 81091 4 hardback

ISBN 0 521 00929 4 paperback

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To Scottie

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Acknowledgments

In the original edition of this book and in two subsequent books, I attempted to name each of the dozens of students, colleagues, and friends who helped and influenced me in so many ways as I worked to develop my teaching and writing about film and culture studies. For this new edition, I would like to thank those most directly involved in assisting me with this particular project. Gayle Rogers, Tommy Anderson, and Jerome Christensen read the new chapters and offered important suggestions and ideas that helped me considerably. Chad Gervich, a former student who is now a successful producer and writer, shared his ideas with me about film comedy and also provided me with material concerning Woody Allen that has been included in this edition. Marc Popkin and Ashley Hedgecock also helped by editing and organizing film material related to this project. Katy Scrogin provided editorial assistance for this edition. As someone I consider to be a truly unique and original scholar and thinker, Robert Mack's interest in the subject of this book as well as the field of film was a special source of encouragement to me. The depth of his scholarship, the brilliance of his wit, and the sensitivity of his critical intelligence made his help and friendship invaluable. Also, this new edition would not exist if Beatrice Rehl of Cambridge University Press had not suggested it to me. Her continued encouragement and support are amazing gifts. With words that are truly inadequate for the appreciation I feel, I can only thank her once again for everything. I also thank Ray Carney again for enabling me to write on Woody Allen for his film series, thereby influencing me more than he ever realized to change the focus of my teaching and writing. At Vanderbilt, Jerome Christensen, Dean Richard McCarty, and Chancellor Gordon Gee continue to make the development of film and culture studies an important part of their program of institutional change. Among all the students for whom they work, there

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are many in my own classes who continue to repeat the experience of my first semester at Vanderbilt by being the best and most inspiring people I have ever taught.

Also, it is a special pleasure to repeat the dedication of this book to Scottie. In retrospect – after rereading the original text with an eye toward the new edition – I can see how right she was ten years ago about what had been the first chapter. The rest of what she has been right about would take another book. Of primary significance on such a list, I would like to acknowledge again our children and grandchildren. Since the first edition, to our three daughters, Katya, Meighan, and Jennifer, we now include Jeff, Ali, and Erik and, of course, Arielle Gianni, Zachary Isaac (Ziggy), and Mia Victoria. Individually and collectively, these grandchildren are a fascinating and funny group. It is interesting to me to consider that as they grow up, they never will know about Woody Allen and his work without also being aware of and connecting him to the controversy and family scandal that erupted around him in the early 1990s. The two new chapters in this edition are partly about that situation.