

Equally important are the avenues of further study that McDannell suggests in the book's conclusion: excess in ritual and decoration as faith expression in the United States; the use of food in maintaining solidarity and celebrating economic and spiritual abundance; an exploration of the material cultures of American Jews, Buddhists, Muslims and Native Americans. McDannell's book is an excellent resource for scholars of religion interested in material Christianity, for sociologists and anthropologists exploring the wider field of material culture and religious practice and for specialists in women's studies concerned with the gendering of religious practices in the United States.

KATHLEEN S. NASH

Woody Allen: Sacred and Profane

By Richard A. Blake, S.J.
Scarecrow Press. 235p \$45

As Richard A. Blake, S.J., concedes in his thorough, often acute scan of Woody Allen's cinematic career, writing now about the film maker's theological perspective is problematical at best. Though not convicted of being a child-molester, Allen has emerged from press wars over his affair with Mia Farrow's adopted daughter more than a bit tarnished. But, as Blake rightly decides, although "the films carry the freight of autobiographical references, still they stand on their own merits apart from the life of the artist."

This is especially refreshing coming from a Jesuit scholar whose two previous studies (*The Lutheran Milieu of Ingmar Bergman's Films* and *Screening America: Reflections on Five Classic Films*) have adamantly pursued religious subtexts. In both his preface and sweeping introduction to *Woody Allen: Sacred and Profane* (the subtitle alludes to Mircea Eliade's distinction between the "two modes of being in the world"), Blake is careful to stress that his mission or thesis, "a religious dialogue with Woody Allen's films," is meant to enlarge, not restrict our ultimate appreciation of the latter's content.

Blake, in fact, is well aware that most "films are resolutely secularist enterprises." He is equally cognizant of his subject's self-proclaimed agnosticism and cautions that Jewishness forms "no part of my artistic consciousness." But Blake theorizes that the philosophic and theological

concerns of Judaism are actually treated by Allen "with extreme seriousness," comic or otherwise. He cites "Annie Hall" (1977) and "Hannah and Her Sisters" (1986) for their references to the Holocaust and concern over a Jewish anxiety-ridden outsider status, which supposedly trigger fundamental theological questions about the Deity and free will.

Certainly Allen's history as a screenwriter has seen him return again and again to wrestle with the ethical plight of how to live a decent life in a vicious universe without meaning or human scale, subject always to the existential Angst Freud posited as intrinsic to the human condition. Blake experiences little difficulty in limning the obsessive Ahab hunt for a godhead amid the sexual and relational confusion of modern times that surges beneath so many Allen films.

Blake's approach throughout is chronological, which imposes a necessarily rigid thematic grid when he also groups the films by type, moving from Cartoons through Romances and Experiments to Interludes and Moral Fables (covering all of Allen's recent efforts before "Bullets Over Broadway" [1994]). The classification system is crudely persuasive, however, except for the Interludes cop-out, as is the focus on Allen's nerdy, neurotic screen persona, his wisecracking quest for genuine love and philosophic validation under the harpoon prod of inescapable oblivion.

In concert with other critics, Blake sees a basic, permanent shift occurring in "Annie Hall," where the protagonist, Alvy Singer, is more closely identified with his author, and for "good or ill, autobiography will remain inextricably tied into the subsequent films." He also argues that the Allen hero of "Sleeper" (1973), the last of the Cartoon films, evinces signs of positive spiritual growth, despite his denial of any belief in science, politics or God, because he has raised the possibility of putting one's faith in life and love. More important, his actions—opposing the Dictator and risking his life for his beloved—undercut his cynical humor.

From here, Blake finds it an easy glide into the covert sermon being delivered by the Romances, which he concedes overtly locate salvation in art itself, even in "Interiors" (1978), where tragedy rules the Bergman-feathered roost. The message, admittedly fragmented, is simple and uplifting enough for a television evangelist to embrace: Self-sacrifice defines the essence of love.



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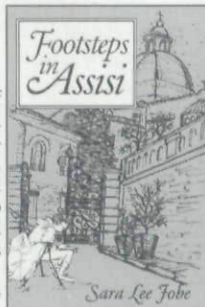
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According to Blake, the sacrifice is evident not only in "Sleeper" and "Annie Hall," but in "Manhattan" (1979) and "Broadway Danny Rose" (1994) as well.

Blake is correct in probing the significant contradictions between comic denials and plot progression. He conducts a brilliant autopsy on "Zelig," one of the Experiments, as the start of "a systematic exploration of art...as a means of reshaping the world into a more congenial arena of human activity." It steers Blake away from the pathological dynamic that drives Allen's cinematic imagination and has conversely (and perversely) prevented him from achieving the kind of artistic depth he desires.

EDWARD BUTSCHER

Jerusalem: An Archaeological Biography

By Hershel Shanks
Random House. 256p \$45

Jerusalem: The Endless Crusade

By Andrew Sinclair
Crown Books. 295p \$24

Since its conquest by David and the construction of the First Temple by Solomon, Jerusalem has been the holy city of Judaism, the place where Jesus spent the final weeks of his ministry, where he was crucified, buried and rose from the dead. Jerusalem has a special importance for Christians. For Moslems, Jerusalem is the terminus of the prophet Mohammed's Night Journey, from which he ascended to Seventh Heaven. Thus, Jerusalem, central to the three great biblical faiths, is never far from the consciousness, thoughts and prayers of Jews, Christians and Moslems and is often the object of their political and territorial aspirations.

Recognition of Jerusalem's place in these religions has been heightened by the peace talks between Arabs and Israelis, which must ultimately decide the political status of the city. In the United States, conflicting claims for Jerusalem have been further heightened by recent discussions in Congress concerning the possible move there of the U.S. Embassy to Israel, currently located in Tel Aviv. Especially in the Jewish community, interest in Jerusalem's history promises to continue to grow throughout the current year, with 1996 designated as a year of commemoration of the 3,000th anniversary of King David's conquest of the city. Jerusalem and recent politi-

cal events are bringing that city and its enigmatic history into the center of contemporary conscience.

Two recent books address the questions of how we are to grasp Jerusalem's significance within the three biblical religions and how we are to understand the extent to which the "City of Peace" has been the object of fighting for over 3,000 years. Hershel Shanks' *Jerusalem: An Archaeological Biography* uses archeological evidence to uncover the cultural and spiritual life of the city, with special attention to events and locales of interest to Jews, Christians and Moslems. In *Jerusalem: The Endless Crusade*, Andrew Sinclair depicts the history of political turmoil caused by Jewish, Christian and Islamic aspirations to control the city. He asks how the religious conceptions of Jerusalem that emerge within these religions have led to an "endless crusade" for sovereignty over it. Both books offer important insights into the earthly Jerusalem, insights that emerge ultimately from the authors' depiction of how this city has inspired images of a heavenly one, one so significant in theology and spirituality.

While Shanks begins with the city's founding about 3,500 B.C.E., his main focus is the period from David's conquest, about 1,000 B.C.E., to the second Jewish revolt against Rome in 133-35 C.E. Little is known of the period before David, and Shanks covers Byzantine, Moslem and Crusader Jerusalem only briefly—1,200 years in 20 pages. The body of the book, however, offers a penetrating glimpse of the culture, everyday life and political turmoil of the several ages described in detail: images of fertility figurines from the First Temple period, the heel of a crucified first-century Jewish rebel (the nail still in it) and reconstructions of the art and architecture of Jerusalem's homes and buildings, ranging from the Jerusalem Temple to the Holy Sepulcher.

The reader benefits from Shanks' presentation of the range of scholarly views on the many debated aspects of Jerusalem's history. Shanks makes no explicit judgment on the question of whether or not David's future general Joab might have captured Jerusalem by climbing up the water conduit, now known as Warren's Shaft (see 2 Sam. 5:8 and 1 Chron. 11:6). Still, Shanks maintains that Scripture and other ancient writings contain an accurate historical core and that the scholar's job is to sift out what is true and to use it in conjunction with the material evidence uncovered by archeology.

In keeping with this approach, Shanks emphasizes interpretations of archeological remains that associate them with the evidence provided in biblical or other texts. An interesting example is the question debated by scholars whether a tomb (referred to as T1) in the area of the original City of David is, in fact, the tomb of King David. "The case has not been made beyond a reasonable doubt that T1 is the tomb of King David, or even that it is a royal tomb of the House of David," Shanks writes. "But it does remain a reasonable—and tantalizing—possibility. And no one has come up with another satisfactory explanation for these unusual installations, located right where the Bible says the early Kings of Israel were buried. If they are not tombs, what are they?"

Since there is no firm justification for making a connection to King David, Shanks' word "tantalizing" is hardly probative. But he seems to find such connections too tantalizing to be denied and so, while presenting all sides of the question, his own judgment generally is to confirm such associations.

Yet Shanks is careful to evaluate the evidence on both sides of each question and to instruct the reader regarding any disputed reconstruction. His book, therefore, is a good entry point for readers interested in seeing just how much light archeology has shed on the city's history.

Andrew Sinclair's *Jerusalem: The Eternal Crusade* presents a narrative history of the city from the time of David to the present, illustrating how the conflicting claims upon Jerusalem that arose out of Jewish, Christian and Moslem history and theology led to a continual struggle for control over a city that, more than any place on earth, came to represent not a physical locality, but "a concept and a faith and a state of mind." Where Shanks preserves the uncertainties and constantly makes clear the extent to which the writing of Jerusalem's history is an exercise in historical judgment, Sinclair pushes ahead, year by year, conquest by conquest, without stopping to question the foundations of the historical judgments that lie at the heart of his presentation. His abbreviated review of the literature used in each chapter, found at the end of the book, does not sufficiently help matters. These faults aside, the book is readable and engaging, a concise picture of the 3,000-year history of the city to which the three biblical faiths have turned for their image of a city of God on earth.

ALAN J. AVERY-PECK

