

Glorification of The Roaring Twenties in Woody Allen's Midnight in Paris (2011): a Biographical Criticism

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the glorification of the Roaring Twenties in Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris* through a biographical criticism approach. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using biographical criticism to analyse the glorification of the Roaring Twenties in Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris* (2011). The data consist of dialogues, visual scenes, and audio elements taken from the film, supported by secondary sources such as scholarly articles and director interviews. The analysis is conducted through hermeneutic interpretation to examine how narrative, visual, and sound elements reflect Allen's personal worldview and artistic longing. The findings reveal that *Midnight in Paris* (2011) strongly glorifies the Roaring Twenties through nostalgic figures, events, products, characterisation, style, and setting. The film represents the 1920s as a cultural and artistic golden age, portraying writers and artists as idealised cultural icons while emphasising creativity, elegance, and emotional fulfilment. This romanticised depiction contrasts sharply with the cynical, materialistic modern world, illustrating how nostalgia functions as an emotional response to contemporary dissatisfaction and shapes viewers' perceptions of the past.

Keywords: Biographical Criticism, Nostalgia, Roaring Twenties, *Midnight in Paris*, Woody Allen

Introduction

Film is a unique form of communication that transcends mere words. While it contains dialogue like a drama, it also weaves complex and subtle rhythms like music (Permadi, 2018). Through captivating images, metaphors, and symbols, it can evoke emotions like poetry. Film brings stories to life with moving images, reminiscent of pantomime, where every movement carries a specific rhythm, similar to dance (Tetik & Türkeli, 2023). Furthermore, film has the uncanny ability to play with time and space, stretching or compressing moments, moving freely forward or backwards, all within a vast creative landscape (Sarah & Nurholis, 2022). Film is also be a form of entertainment, a work of art rich in meaning, and a tool for creative expression (Leitch, 2018). In addition, film can also be a learning tool due to the numerous adaptations drawn from real life (Surla, 2023).

Moreover, cinema has the capacity to shape audience perception of reality by constructing emotional connections to places, people, and historical periods. Through cinematic techniques such as lighting, music, setting, and symbolism, films can romanticise particular eras or environments, encouraging viewers to form nostalgic attachments (Johnson, 2009). This ability to construct meaning positions film not merely as visual entertainment, but as a narrative space where imagination, memory, and ideology intersect. Consequently, film plays a significant role in shaping how individuals understand the past and interpret the present, making it a valuable subject for cultural and critical analysis (Dabbagh, 2023).

Glorification generally refers to the act of exaggerating or emphasising the excellence, beauty, or value of something to highlight its positive or idealised aspects. According to Cambridge Dictionary (2023) glorification is defined as the act of describing or representing something in a way that makes it seem more admirable, important, or attractive than it actually is. Similarly, Oxford Dictionary (2022) (2022) defines glorification as the action of praising, honouring, or representing something as exceptionally good or admirable, often by overlooking its negative aspects. In cultural and media studies, glorification is also understood as a form of representation that selectively frames reality in a way that romanticises certain historical periods, places, or lifestyles, creating an idealised narrative that may differ from historical realities (Storey, 2018).

This concept of glorification is evident in the visual presentation of Paris in the 1920s, characterised by warm, yellowish lighting (sepia tones), jazz music accompanying the nighttime atmosphere, and the artistic and free lifestyle of its characters. The 1920s in Western society and culture, as well as in music and fashion, is known as the Roaring Twenties or Roaring '20s in both Europe and the United States. It was a time of significant cultural prominence and economic prosperity. The era following World War I, known as the "Roaring Twenties," was marked by economic success and affluence, a surge of scientific and technological advancements (such as radio, television, sound film, automobiles, and airplanes), and a reexamination of social, gender, and racial boundaries (Roberts-Reilley J & Gershman. E, 2023). Several avant-garde movements, including constructivism, surrealism, and poetism, along with new approaches to studying social, cultural, and artistic phenomena, such as semiotics, structuralism, Marxism, and phenomenology, are examples of the increased artistic creativity and innovation during this period (Šlaisová & Revermann, 2023).

In Woody Allen's film *Midnight in Paris*, the main character, Gil, is a writer who wants to be successful, and he travels back in time from today to Paris in the 1920s. As Mukherjee (2015) notes, Gil's secret journeys happen late at night in Paris, which he considers incredibly beautiful when it rains, and he feels there is no city like Paris. He discusses the idea of living in Paris with his fiancée, but she strongly disagrees. Gil often associates Paris with writers, artists, and the rainy atmosphere. In his mind, Paris is intertwined with romantic notions of perfection and a longing for the past. He quotes Ernest Hemingway, who stated that Paris is a "movable feast," adding that the experience of living in the city will always accompany him wherever he goes.

Woody Allen created *Midnight in Paris* not only as a romantic fantasy, but also as a reflection on the modern human tendency to get caught up in nostalgia. In an interview in

IndieWire (<https://www.indiewire.com/news/general/woody-allen-talks-breaking-out-with-cannes-hit-midnight-in-paris-hey-did-you-see-gertrude-stein-237280/>), Allen explained that the idea for the film arose from his imagination of a person who in the middle of the night is suddenly transported back in time and meets great figures from the Roaring Twenties. He stated that Paris, for him, is a dream city rich in cultural myth, and he wanted to explore how the past is often shaped by personal fantasies, not reality. Through the character of Gil, Allen satirizes the tendency of people today to idealize the past as an escape from disappointments with the present. The film's opening montage of Paris, without dialogue, serves as an emotional overture, illustrating the main character's love and admiration for the city and the era he considers his "golden age."

Few movies explore the same themes and feelings as *Midnight in Paris*, whether through their portrayal of city life, their thoughts on art and dreams, or their sense of longing for a specific time. Before *Midnight in Paris* (2011), the fusion of nostalgia, longing, and reflections on time was already evident in several films from the late 2000s to the early 2010s. One notable example is *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (2008), which tells the story of a man who ages backwards, experiencing life through different eras with a sense of quiet wonder. The film is rich with memories, old photographs, vintage architecture, and deep reflections on the nature of living a life that feels out of sync with time. This creates a bittersweet atmosphere where the past becomes a realm of warmth, beauty, and regret. Similar themes are explored in *Hugo* (2011), a love letter to the early years of cinema. The narrative follows a young boy residing in a Paris train station who uncovers a mysterious automaton linked to filmmaker Georges Méliès. With its soft lighting and whimsical mechanical wonders, *Hugo* transforms the past into a space of artistic magic. Like *Midnight in Paris*, it celebrates the creative spirits of earlier times, depicting history not as a distant memory but as a vibrant world filled with inspiration and emotional richness. Another film that resonates with these sentiments is *The Great Gatsby* (2013), which revives the opulence of the 1920s through extravagant parties, jazz music, and a striking visual style. The story revolves around Jay Gatsby's quest to reclaim his idealised past, emphasising the seductive yet ultimately unreachable nature of nostalgia. This portrayal mirrors *Midnight in Paris*, in which the past is imagined as a golden age of romance and excitement, even as it conceals contradictions beneath its glamorous surface. *La La Land* (2016) further explores themes of memory and aspiration through the lens of two artists striving to carve out their futures in Los Angeles. The film employs classic Hollywood aesthetics, vintage jazz, and dreamy musical sequences to evoke the allure of the past while keeping the characters grounded in the challenges of the modern world. Much like Gil in *Midnight in Paris*, the protagonists are dreamers navigating the tension between their idealistic visions and the realities of everyday life. Their struggle to balance longing and reality parallels the emotional journey at the core of Woody Allen's film. A similar theme emerges in *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (2013). This film follows a man who frequently slips into vivid daydreams as he seeks adventure beyond his routine existence. As Walter embarks on journeys through stunning landscapes and faces his fears, his fantasies gradually blend with his actual experiences. This interplay of imagination as an escape from dissatisfaction reflects Gil's nightly journeys into the enchanting world of 1920s Paris. Both films illustrate how imagination can serve as both a refuge and a catalyst for personal growth. Together, these films show a tradition in cinema that sees places and times as important parts of emotions, nostalgia, and the search for meaning, showing how the wish for an ideal world continues to inspire filmmakers and viewers.

While many scholars have examined *Midnight in Paris* through various lenses, such as nostalgia, psychological escapism, or cinematic technique, there remains a gap in exploring how the film's glorification of the Roaring Twenties reflects Allen's personal worldview. Known for weaving autobiographical elements into his work, Allen often creates protagonists who mirror his own temperament, occupation, or philosophical views. This study aims to analyze *Midnight in Paris* through the lens of biographical criticism, seeking to understand how Allen's ideals, memories, and artistic anxieties shape the film's romanticized vision of the past. By doing this, the research not only enhances our understanding of the film but also contributes to broader discussions on how artists navigate collective cultural longing through their personal creative expressions.

Examining *Midnight in Paris* through a biographical critical framework is particularly relevant given the film's cultural power and its engagement with themes of nostalgia and historical idealisation. As one of Woody Allen's most acclaimed late-career works, winning the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay in 2012, the film has shaped contemporary perspectives on the 1920s. Furthermore, the ongoing interest in nostalgia as a social phenomenon makes the film a compelling case study. *Midnight in Paris* combines cinematic elements such as *mise-en-scène*, music, and narrative with Allen's biography, creating a powerful mythos of the past. With a wealth of analytical material such as visual motifs, historical figures, and director interviews, the film allows for a systematic biographical reading, connecting Allen's personal longings to a larger collective yearning. By addressing the question of how the glorification of the Roaring Twenties reflected Allen's worldview, this study aims to enrich film studies and cultural criticism by revealing how the filmmaker transformed personal experience into a broader historical imagination.

Based on these studies, it can be concluded that studies on *Midnight in Paris* generally focus on nostalgia as the subjective experience of the main character Eubanks (2015), the fantastical structure of time travel Afra and Setijowati (2024), and nostalgia in the context of culture and identity in general (Chark, 2021). Although these studies make important contributions to understanding the narrative and emotional aspects of the film, there has been no study that specifically links the glorification of the Roaring Twenties to Woody Allen's life experiences and worldview through a biographical-critical approach. In other words, the film is still positioned primarily as a narrative text or a nostalgic phenomenon, rather than as a personal expression by the director.

Therefore, this study offers a novel approach by applying biographical criticism to analyse how the glorification of the Roaring Twenties in *Midnight in Paris* reflects Woody Allen's worldview, artistic anxieties, and personal experiences. This study not only highlights nostalgia as a story theme but also places it as a subjective manifestation of the creator in constructing the past as an imaginary space to respond to dissatisfaction with modern life. With this approach, this study expands film studies by integrating cinematic analysis, cultural nostalgia, and the director's biographical background.

This research is significant because it helps deepen the understanding of how films construct glorified images of the past, how these representations are shaped by the filmmaker's personal experiences, and why such idealisations resonate with audiences. It contributes to the

fields of film studies, literary criticism, and cultural studies by providing a structured analysis of the interplay between nostalgia, artistic narrative, and collective cultural longing.

Method

The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach. Qualitative research is used to interpret meanings, symbols, and representations found in the film. In literary studies, the formal object refers to the analytical perspective used in the research, while the material object refers to the literary work being studied. In this study, the formal object is biographical criticism, and the material object is the film *Midnight in Paris* (2011).

Biographical criticism is applied based on Johnson's view that literary works are closely related to the author's personality, experiences, and moral values, which influence the ideas expressed in the work. Therefore, the film is analysed in relation to Woody Allen's personal background and artistic perspective.

The object of this research is *Midnight in Paris* (2011), written and directed by Woody Allen and released by Sony Pictures Classics. Set and filmed in Paris, the film presents a nostalgic representation of the Roaring Twenties through its narrative, visual style, and artistic atmosphere.

The data in this research consist of textual, visual, and audio elements taken from the film. Textual data includes dialogues and narration; visual data consists of screenshots showing settings, costumes, and lighting; and audio data includes background music and sound effects that support the nostalgic atmosphere. The primary data source is the film *Midnight in Paris*, while secondary data sources include books, academic journals, interviews, and historical references related to the Roaring Twenties. The data are collected through note-taking and image capturing. Note-taking is used to record important dialogues and narrative elements, while image capture is used to document visual scenes from the 1920s.

The data are analysed using hermeneutic interpretation based on Wilhelm Dilthey's perspective, which views artworks as expressions of the creator's life experiences. The analysis examines scenes, dialogues, characters, and settings to interpret themes of nostalgia and the idealisation of the past in relation to Woody Allen's artistic vision.

Results and Discussion

Result

This chapter presents the findings of the study by identifying the indicators of glorification, analyzing how glorification is depicted, and explaining the reasons for the portrayal of glorification in the film *Midnight in Paris*.

Indicators of Glorification

Nostalgic Figures

Nostalgic figures serve as key indicators of the glorification of the Roaring Twenties in *Midnight in Paris*. The film portrays 1920s writers, artists, and intellectuals as idealised cultural icons, emphasising their creativity and charisma while minimising historical complexities. By presenting these figures as sources of inspiration for the protagonist, the film constructs the era

as a golden age of art and intellect, reflecting a nostalgic longing for a past perceived as more meaningful and artistically rich.



Picture 1. Scene 00:13:58 - 00:14:07

In this dialogue, Gil's playful response contrasts with Paul's intellectual remark, highlighting the characters' different attitudes. Paul's reference to "the Bard" reflects a cynical, detached perspective, reinforcing the film's critique of modern intellectualism, in contrast to Gil's more spontaneous, romantic outlook.

Inez : I don't think I've ever seen your cheeks so red.

Gil : Pheromones, it's your pheromones.

Paul : Ah yes - sex and alcohol - It fuels the desire but kills the performance - according to the Bard.



Picture 2. Scene 00:30:56 - 00:30:56

This dialogue reflects Gil's romantic view of Paris, where walking in the rain is seen as beautiful. It reinforces the nostalgic and idealised image of the city, contributing to the glorification of the past through atmosphere and emotion.

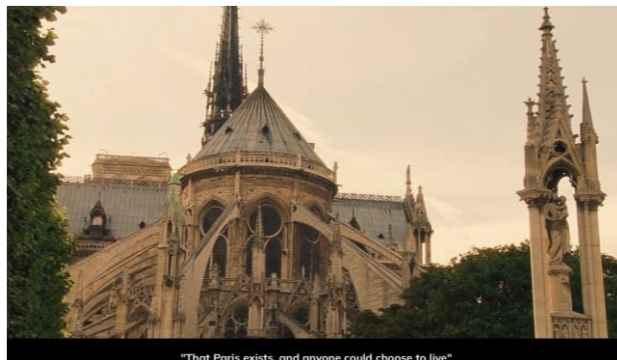
Gil : Oh, It'll be nice walking in the rain!. Its beautiful



Picture 3. Scene 00:51:26 - 00:51:26

This dialogue emphasises Gil's exaggerated admiration for Paris by describing it as "the hottest spot in the universe." His statement reflects an idealised and hyperbolic view of the city, reinforcing the glorification of Paris as a uniquely special and meaningful place associated with nostalgia.

Gil: I mean, for all we know, Paris is the hottest spot in the universe



Picture 4. Scene 01:04:24 - 01:04:24

This line shows Gil's admiration for Paris as a place of freedom and choice, reinforcing the romanticised and nostalgic image of the city.

Gil: That Paris exists, and anyone could choose to live



Picture 5. Scene 01:29:57 - 00:29:30

This dialogue supports the romanticised image of Paris by presenting rain as something that enhances the city's beauty. Gabrielle's statement reinforces the nostalgic atmosphere and the glorification of Paris as timeless and emotionally meaningful.

Gabrielle: Actually, Paris is the most beautiful in the rain

Nostalgic Event

Nostalgic events in *Midnight in Paris* romanticise the Roaring Twenties as a joyful and emotionally fulfilling era through parties, artistic encounters, and social gatherings. These moments allow the protagonist to escape the present and reinforce the glorification of the 1920s as a cultural and emotional golden age



Picture 6. Scene 00:17:50 - 00:17:50

The dance performed at the party resembles the can-can, a traditional French dance characterised by energetic movements and lifted skirts. This performance enhances the festive atmosphere and reinforces the nostalgic portrayal of Paris as a lively, joyful cultural space, thereby contributing to the glorification of the past.



Picture 7. Scene 00:05:28 - 00:05:28

This scene shows Gil having dinner with Inez and her parents, representing the present time. The formal atmosphere and practical conversation contrast with the warmth and excitement of the nostalgic past. This event highlights the film's tendency to depict the present as ordinary and emotionally distant, thereby strengthening the glorification of the past.



Picture 8. Scene 00:50:10 - 00:50:10

This scene shows Gil and Adriana walking together through Paris at night, surrounded by an old-fashioned atmosphere. The quiet streets and romantic setting evoke the charm of Paris in the past, reinforcing the city's timeless, emotionally meaningful image.

Nostalgic Product

Nostalgic products in *Midnight in Paris* refer to physical objects and material elements that symbolise the Roaring Twenties and evoke a sense of longing for the past. These products include vintage vehicles, classic fashion, cafés, manuscripts, and musical instruments that are closely associated with the cultural life of 1920s Paris. By repeatedly displaying these objects, the film reinforces an idealised image of the past as elegant, artistic, and meaningful. The presence of nostalgic products supports the glorification of the era by visually contrasting the charm of the past with the modern world, making the Roaring Twenties appear more authentic and culturally rich.

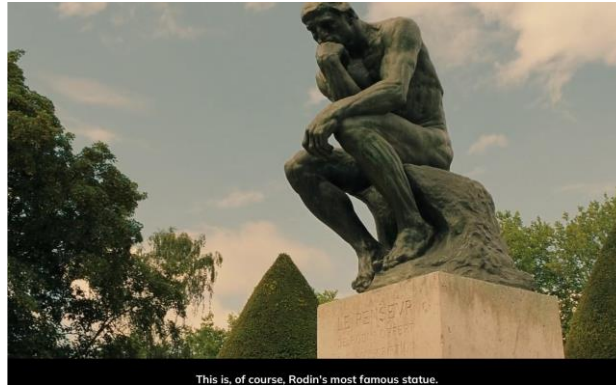


Picture 9. Scene 00:09:00 - 00:09:14

Gil explains that Louis moved his court here around 1682, when it was mostly swamp land. The name "Versailles" originally meant "land where weeds have been pulled." The palace represents French classical architecture at its peak, crafted by Louis Le Vau, Mansart, and Charles LeBrun a timeless symbol of elegance and history.

Gil : I believe Louis moved his court here in about 1682 - originally this was all swamp land - in fact, if I'm not mistaken, in old French the word Versailles means something like "terrain

where the weeds have been pulled". The main structure is French classical style at its height - the work, I believe of Louis Le Vau, I think Mansart and Charles LeBrun I believe.



Picture 10. Scene 00:12:00 - 00:12:25

At the museum, the guide presents Rodin's most famous statue, placed by his tomb as his headstone and epitaph. Paul shows his knowledge, noting Rodin died in Meudon. He reflects on The Thinker, highlighting its power in how it expresses intense thought through every limb and muscle, capturing a timeless artistic force.

Guide: This is, of course, Rodin's most famous statue. A cast of this work was placed next to his tomb. Rodin wished for it to serve as his headstone and epitaph.

Paul: That would be in Meudon. He died of the flu, if I'm not mistaken - I believe.

Guide: Exactly correct. You know your art history, Monsieur. The design -

Paul: The Thinker is so powerful because he thinks not just with his brain - he thinks with every limb and muscle - you feel the concentration.



Picture 11. Scene 00:35:53 - 00:35:55

Stein comments to Pablo that the portrait doesn't truly capture Adriana; it has universality but lacks objectivity, highlighting the tension between idealised memory and reality.

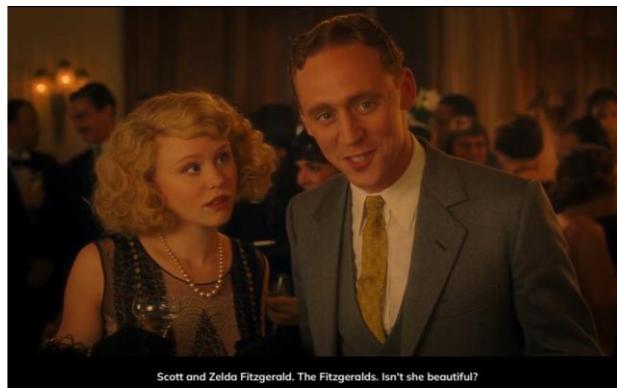
Stein: I was just telling Pablo that this portrait doesn't capture Adriana. It has universality but no objectivity.

Depiction of Glorification

This section discusses how the glorification of the Roaring Twenties is depicted in the film *Midnight in Paris* through characters, language style, and visual elements.

Through Character

The glorification of the Roaring Twenties in *Midnight in Paris* is depicted through the characterisation of artists, writers, and intellectual figures, who are presented as idealised and inspiring individuals.



Picture 12. Scene 00:20:21 - 00:20:44

This scene introduces F. Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda Fitzgerald as iconic figures of the Roaring Twenties. Scott's confident manner and affectionate introduction of Zelda emphasise charm, elegance, and admiration, presenting the couple as symbols of glamour and artistic life. By highlighting their identity and beauty, the film idealises them as nostalgic figures, reinforcing the glorification of 1920s artists as charismatic and culturally significant.

- Scott : Scott Fitzgerald, and who are you old sport?
- Gil : I'm Gil Pen - oh you two have the same names as
- Scott : As what?
- Gil : Scott Fitzgerald and -
- Scott : Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald. The Fitzgeralds. Isn't she beautiful?



Picture 13. Scene 00:24:08 - 00:24:13

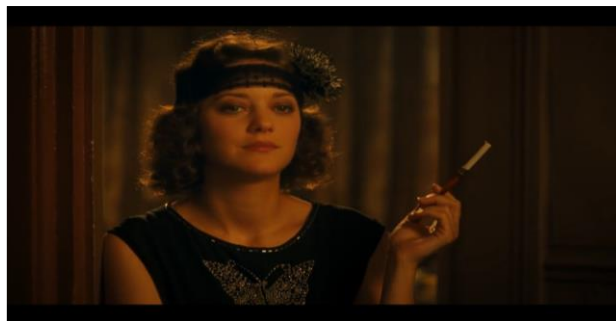
This scene introduces Ernest Hemingway as a prominent literary figure of the Roaring Twenties. His brief and direct self-introduction emphasises confidence and authority, while Gil's surprised reaction highlights Hemingway's iconic status. This portrayal reinforces the glorification of 1920s writers as influential and larger-than-life cultural figures.

Scott : Greetings and salutations. You'll forgive me - I've been mixing grain and grappa ... This is Gil - Gil? Yes, Gil.

Gil : Gil Pender

Hemingway : Hemingway

Gil : Hemingway? Hey, is this some kind of a-



Picture 14. Scene 00:36:25 - 00:36:25

This scene portrays Gertrude Stein as an authoritative literary figure who evaluates Gil's writing. Her act of reading and commenting on the manuscript emphasises her intellectual influence and role as a mentor. Adriana's admiration further reinforces Stein's position as a respected cultural icon, contributing to the glorification of 1920s writers as wise and influential figures.

Stein : (thumbing first page, she reads) "Out of the Past was the name of the store and its products consisted of memories. What was prosaic and even vulgar to one generation had been transmuted by the mere passing of years to a status at once magical and also camp.

Adriana : I love it. I'm already - hooked? Hooked.



Picture 15. Scene 00:37:13 - 00:37:13

This dialogue depicts Gertrude Stein as an authoritative and insightful literary figure through her careful reading of Gil's manuscript. Her words emphasise reflection on memory and the transformation of the past, reinforcing her role as an intellectual guide. This portrayal contributes to the glorification of 1920s writers as thoughtful and culturally influential figures.

Stein : (thumbing first page, she reads) "Out of the Past was the name of the store, and its products consisted of memories. What was prosaic and even vulgar to one generation had been transmuted by the mere passing of years to a status at once magical and also camp.



Picture 16. Scene 00:35:53 - 00:35:55

This scene highlights Pablo Picasso as a renowned artist of the Roaring Twenties through Gertrude Stein's discussion of his portrait. The serious artistic critique emphasises Picasso's status within an intellectual circle, portraying him as a respected and influential figure. This depiction reinforces the glorification of 1920s artists as creative authorities within the cultural world.

Stein : I was just telling Pablo that this portrait doesn't capture Adriana. It has universality but no objectivity.

(Script on Scene 00:35:53 - 00:35:55)



Picture 17. Scene 00:55:38 - 00:55:38

This dialogue portrays Salvador Dalí as an eccentric and expressive artist, emphasising his dramatic personality and artistic identity. His exaggerated self-introduction and spontaneous behaviour reinforce the image of 1920s artists as unconventional and creatively free. This depiction contributes to the glorification of nostalgic figures by presenting artists of the era as bold, unique, and intellectually vibrant.

Dali : We met earlier tonight. At the party

Gil : Yes - I remember -

Dali : Dali - si? Dali! Dali! Une bouteille de vin rouge I waiter scurries for one.



Picture 18. Scene 01:19:55 - 01:19:55

This scene introduces Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec as a respected and admired artist of the past. Adriana's admiration and nervous excitement emphasise his elevated status within the artistic community, while the respectful interaction portrays him as a significant cultural figure. This depiction reinforces the glorification of nostalgic artists as influential and deeply revered in the Roaring Twenties.

Adriana : Isn't this something? Look! Look, I She points out Lautrec sketching. Pablo worships him. I have to say hello. Come with me, I'm nervous.

Gil : We shouldn't bother him.

Adriana : But we know he's a lonely man ... he longs for company. They go over. She speaks to Lautrec.

Adriana : We're both great admirers of your work. Nous sommes tous les deux de grands admirateurs de votre travail.

Lautrec : Merci madame.



Picture 19. Scene 01:12:55 - 01:13:15

This dialogue portrays Luis Buñuel as a respected filmmaker within the artistic circle of the Roaring Twenties. Gil's eagerness to share a creative idea and Hemingway's serious response emphasise the intellectual atmosphere surrounding Buñuel. This interaction reinforces the glorification of 1920s artists as imaginative and influential figures engaged in meaningful artistic discussions.

Gill : Oh, Mr. Buñuel, I had a nice idea for a movie for you.

Gil : Yes?

Hemingway : A group of people is at a formal dinner party, and after dinner, when they try to leave the room, they can't.

Through Setting

The glorification of the Roaring Twenties in *Midnight in Paris* is also depicted through the setting, which emphasises the romantic, nostalgic atmosphere of Paris in the past.



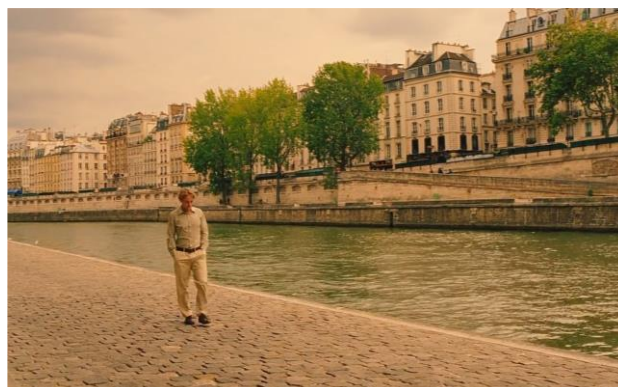
Picture 20. Scene 00:22:45 - 00:22:45

This scene depicts a female dancer surrounded by male guests at a party, creating a lively, festive atmosphere. The crowded setting and energetic interactions highlight the vibrancy of the past, reinforcing the Roaring Twenties' glorification as socially dynamic and entertaining.



Picture 21. Scene 01:02:00-01:02:00

This scene shows Gil in a street bookshop, emphasising a literary and nostalgic atmosphere. The outdoor setting filled with books reflects intellectual life and artistic culture, reinforcing the romanticised image of Paris as a city of creativity and inspiration.



Picture 22. Scene 01:02:42-01:02:42

This scene shows Gil walking along the Seine River, which strongly represents the classic image of Paris. The riverside setting creates a calm and romantic atmosphere, reinforcing the nostalgic portrayal of Paris as timeless, artistic, and deeply connected to cultural history.



Picture 23. Scene 00:30:38-00:30:38

This scene shows Gil, Inez, and Inez's mother in a furniture shop filled with sculptures. The artistic interior and classical objects create a strong Parisian atmosphere, highlighting the city's close connection to art and culture. This setting reinforces the nostalgic image of Paris as elegant and artistically rich.

Through Events

Several events in the film emphasise the glorification of the past. Every time Gil gets into his vintage car in the middle of the night, he is transported back to the 1920s and attends a glamorous party with famous artists.



Pictutre. 24 Scene 00:17:38-17:50

The repeated appearance of a vintage car in the middle of the night, transporting Gil to 1920s Paris, presents the past as a natural and desirable space, rather than a source of danger or disruption. The recurrence of these events without consequence suggests that returning to the past is an accessible and risk-free experience.



Picture. 25 Scene 00:36:59-00:00:37:05

Submitting his manuscript to Gertrude Stein, following Hemingway's advice, was a recognition of the past as a foundation for artistic value. The validation of his work by such a respected literary figure positioned the Roaring Twenties as an era in which art was approached with seriousness and intellectual attention, in contrast to modern emphases.



Picture.26 Scene 00:50:32-00:50:35

Gil develops a deep emotional bond with Adriana, which plays a crucial role in creating the film's nostalgic tone. Their intimate conversations in the past emphasised emotional openness and mutual understanding, making their relationship feel more authentic than Gil's present-day counterpart.



Picture.27 Scene 00:29:31- 00:29:33

In contrast, Gil's present-day experience is marked by conflict, dissatisfaction, and emotional distance. His strained relationship with Inez highlights the dominance of materialistic and pragmatic values that limit genuine emotional connection.

Through Style

The glorification of the Roaring Twenties in *Midnight in Paris* is depicted through fashion, which reflects the elegance and artistic identity of the era.

Fashion

Fashion is used as a visual element to depict the glorification of the Roaring Twenties by emphasizing elegance, artistic identity, and the distinctive style of the era.



Picture 28. Scene 00:05:18 - 00:05:18

In contrast, fashion in the modern era is depicted through more practical, contemporary styles typical of the 2010s. The simpler and more functional clothing reflects a modern lifestyle, highlighting the difference between present-day fashion and the expressive elegance of the past.



Picture 29. Scene 00:17:11 - 00:17:11

The fashion worn by the guests at the party reflects a casual yet elegant style typical of the Roaring Twenties. The loose dresses, flowing skirts, and simple suits emphasize comfort and freedom of movement, creating a relaxed but artistic atmosphere. This casual appearance contrasts with modern formal fashion and reinforces the glorification of the past by portraying the 1920s as a period of effortless style and creative expression.



Picture 30. Scene 00:17:50 - 00:17:50

The can-can dancers wear voluminous skirts that emphasize movement and energy. Their bold and expressive fashion reinforces the glorification of the past as lively, joyful, and full of artistic freedom

Discussion

This study examines how the Roaring Twenties are glorified in Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris*. It identifies the indicators, portrayal, and reasons behind this glorification. The findings show that this glorification comes from nostalgic figures, events, products, settings, character development, and style. Historical figures like Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, and F. Scott Fitzgerald are shown as idealised cultural icons. This portrayal strengthens the idea of the 1920s as a golden age of creativity and intellectual brilliance. Also, events like jazz parties, artistic gatherings, and romantic nighttime scenes present the era as emotionally fulfilling and visually captivating. Through these elements, the film depicts the Roaring Twenties as more meaningful,

inspiring, and culturally rich than today. It explains how this glorification is indicated and visually constructed within the story.

From a biographical-critical perspective, the glorification of the Roaring Twenties in *Midnight in Paris* reflects Woody Allen's personal views, artistic nostalgia, and interest in European cultural history. Following Samuel Johnson's idea that literary and artistic works reflect their creator's life and values, the film shows Allen's admiration for Paris, jazz culture, and modernist writers. Allen's themes of memory, romantic longing, and dissatisfaction with modern life are represented in Gil Pender. His idealisation of the past reflects Allen's own nostalgic tendencies. Thus, the film does not just glorify the Roaring Twenties as a historical period; it turns it into a symbolic space that represents Allen's artistic identity, personal fantasies, and thoughts on humanity's desire to romanticise the past.

Compared with previous study, this study contributes to the academic discourse by shifting the focus from nostalgia as merely a psychological or narrative element to the concept of glorification as a culturally constructed idea motivated by personal biography. Previous work by Dabbagh et al. (2023) focused on the psycholinguistic dimensions of nostalgia, while Surla (2023) distinguished between personal and historical nostalgia but did not examine why the Roaring Twenties is regarded as a golden age. Mukherjee (2015) examined the film's postmodern narrative structure, and Permadi (2018) looked at politeness strategies in dialogue, but neither made the connection between the film's nostalgic idealisation and Woody Allen's personal history and artistic vision. This research addresses that gap by showing that the glorification of the Roaring Twenties serves not just as a cinematic stylistic choice but also reflects Allen's biographical influences and his views on art, memory, and time.

Conclusion

This study concludes that *Midnight in Paris* (2011) strongly glorifies the Roaring Twenties through various nostalgic elements. The film presents the 1920s as a cultural and artistic golden age that appears more meaningful and emotionally fulfilling than the present. This glorification is reflected in nostalgic figures, events, and products that emphasise creativity, elegance, and artistic authenticity. Writers, artists, and intellectuals from the era are idealised as inspiring cultural icons rather than complex historical individuals. As a result, the past is constructed as an attractive escape shaped by emotional longing.

Furthermore, the depiction of glorification is reinforced through character, style, and setting. Characters from the past are portrayed as passionate and intellectually rich, while modern characters appear more cynical and materialistic. The use of refined grammar and expressive fashion highlights the artistic identity of the Roaring Twenties, while romantic settings such as cafés, riversides, and night streets enhance the nostalgic atmosphere. These contrasts strengthen the film's romanticised representation of the past. Overall, *Midnight in Paris* illustrates how nostalgia influences human perception by idealising earlier times as a response to dissatisfaction with the present.

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