

**Acceptance speech by Woody Allen for the Doctor Honoris Causa
degree he received from the Universitat Pompeu Fabra**

Barcelona, 14 June, 2007

Thank you very much. Thank you. First, I have to tell you this is an unusual moment in my life, because, as Dr. Monegal pointed out before, I have never graduated from anything. When all my friends in high school were deciding what they wanted to do in life — they made many decisions to become doctors and lawyers and very substantial things —, the only interest I had in my life at the time, really, was movies. So, I enrolled at New York University as a Motion-picture Production major. That was one of the first courses that was given in that particular major at New York University. And the work involved was to go to the movies. This was required of you. The teacher would send you to the movies all the time and you had to come back and write about it and talk about it. And I saw many, many movies and I was very dedicated. And yet, in the end, I failed my subject. I did not get a passing grade, and the teachers at New York University called me in and said: “We’re sorry but you have failed your subject”. I also incidentally took two years of Spanish language in high school and can’t speak a word of it now, not a single word.

So I failed my major at school, I failed film making, and then through a series of accidents got into the film business. I really was a writer and directed my films because I didn’t like the way other people ruined them. I thought they took my scenarios and would make a bad film of it. So, I became a director. I became an actor for the same reason, because I didn’t like the way people were saying my words. So I did that. And the most important years for me, when I was most, most avidly learning about film and really getting into film and loving it, and talking with my friends about it, not in an academic atmosphere, but in a real, professional atmosphere, the most significant films for all of us at the time in my group in New York City were the European films. We liked some of the American films, but the films of Truffaut, Fellini, Bergman, Buñuel and De Sica, these were the films that for us were the great, great inspiration. And many of us longed really, myself included, to not just be a film maker, but to be a European film maker. This was really the fantasy, to be a film maker and make those films that we saw coming out of Europe. Of course in the United States you can’t make those films because you would starve; you would never get a big enough audience for them. But this is what I wanted to do.

And, over the years, again through a series of happy accidents, in the last few years I wound up making films outside of the United States. I made three of them in London, which has been a very, very wonderful experience for me. And now I've come to Barcelona to really fulfill a dream, and that is to make a movie here. And I feel like a European film maker and this is a great, great thrill for me. My wife and I use any excuse we can to come to Barcelona. It's something that we love to do. And then when I was offered the opportunity to come here and make a film, this was a great, great pleasure for me, a great, great experience.

So we got here a few days ago and now we are embarking on what I expect to be one of the most exciting film experiences of my life. The film will be in English although some of it will be in Spanish. And I'm making the film with Javier Bardem and with Penelope Cruz and with an all-Spanish crew, the cameraman, and so on. Everyone is Spanish. And so I'm really getting a great feeling of being a European film maker. And they proposed to me while I was here to come and accept this wonderful honor. So not only am I now a European film maker, but I am a product of university. This is a dream come true. So thank you very much for making this happen. I'm very, very honored.