

Actors and acting



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Actors and Acting In the world of film making, the story telling is done through the actions of the actors. These are the people who embody the characters in the story being told. Their job is to deliver the definite feel and characterization of their celluloid counterparts. Just like the stories being told, there are also various categories that these actors fall into, depending on the role being portrayed. The 5 definitions of actors are impersonators, interpreters, personality, wild card and characters. These are the actor types that I will be discussing in the following pages. To get started, I first want to discuss the Impersonator. Our text clearly defines this type of actor as "suggesting that the actor has simply copied the manner, dialect, and behavior of a character, instead of creating the character." Examples of effective character acting provided as an example include the portrayal of Phillip Seymour Hoffman of Capote, an impersonation job which, due to its effectivity, won the actor an Oscar, and Helen Mirren as Queen Elizabeth in The Queen. As an impersonator, they were required to be as similar as possible to the real life person they were portraying. For Hoffman, it was the trademark lisp, for Mirren, it was her uncanny resemblance to the actual Queen. Aside from these two people, another effective impersonator who comes to my mind is Frank Langella in Nixon. His similarity in looks and his ability to copy the actual speech pattern of Pres. Richard Nixon helped the audience immerse in a total viewing experience. He was not just acting as the president, there were actually times when you would believe that he was the president because of the way he conducted himself while in character. Interpreters and commentators on the other hand are actors who portray iconic literary characters in retellings of their stories. Take for example, Sir Laurence Olivier and his interpretation of Richard III. The role as he portrayed

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it and the overall acting in the film has set the standard for all other interpretations of the film in modern times and none can ever hold a candle to his version. The 1961 Olivia Hussey version of Romeo and Juliet is the most memorable interpretation of this Shakespearan story as far as I can tell. Hussey and the other actors remained true to the original telling and did not need to change or update the story for their viewers at the time.

Something which the Leonardo di Caprio version of the film felt it had to do and in essence, destroyed what made the film great. When it comes to Personality actors, are those who are so effective in a certain type of role that they portray that they often end up playing variations of it in film after film. This is what happened to Clint Eastwood in his Dirty Harry Films and Keanu Reeves in his Bill and Ted Adventure series. Once an actor personifies the role he is playing, he becomes a typecasted personality actor. Other examples of Personality actors are Jennifer Aniston, who seems to be stuck playing girl next door characters in her films, and Sarah Jessica Parker whose Carrie Bradshaw character in the Sex and the City series and films appears to be hired to portray only that type of character ever since. With personality actors such as the two other examples I mentioned, the audience no longer knows the characters name but sees the role being played as the actor himself, in person. That is the mark of an effective Personality actor. Stars on the other hand are the likes of Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt. Reese Witherspoon, Anne Hathaway, Hugh Jackman, George Clooney, are other names that pop up when a star is mentioned. These are the people whose box office draw is such that people have taken a keen interest in their lives and that the mere mention of their attachment to a project can generate such buzz that people want to see the movie even before the film is shot.

That is what defines a star, they are people who effectively hold the interest of the viewers over time and their career progressions. They usually start out as young Hollywood actors who make their way to the top of the industry by earning their acting stars portraying various interesting roles. A fantastic example of a Character Actor and Wildcard is Meryl Streep, who can also be defined as a star. This is the kind of actor who can adjust to any role given to him or her for portrayal. Meryl can be a singing diva in Mamma Mia one minute and a deadly serious nun in Doubt the next. Two highly different roles played by one ultra competent actor who knows her craft like the back of her hand. Another character actor who comes to mind is Jim Carrey who can make your stomach hurt while you watch him as Ace Ventura or The Mask and then bring you to tears as you watch The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind or The Truman Show.