10 Acting

- The Importance of Acting
  - “Who is in it?”
  - It is the star that draws the crowds
  - Directors and critics feel the actor’s role should be a subordinate one – it should be one of many elements adding to the aesthetic whole of the film
Chapter 10

- The **Goal** of the Actor
  - Make us completely believe in the reality of the character – sincerity, truthfulness, naturalness

- Becoming the Character
  - *Inside approach*: feelings affect your behavior – *immerse yourself* in all facets of the character
  - *Outside approach*: you do the behavior and it seeps inside – actions and looks before reasons / motives
Differences Between **Film Acting and Stage Acting**

- **Proximity** – stage must make sure all can see / hear while film already has the best seat (stage = dominance/ film = thinking)
- **Body language** – film actors must use more non-verbal communication than film actors.
  - **Reaction shot** – dramatic impact through a close-up of the character most affected by the action or dialogue
  - **Gestures & subtle movements** convey important meanings
  - **Action acting** = physical exertion / skills rather than feelings
  - **Dramatic action** = intense dialogue / emotional / psychological depths
Types of Actors

- **Impersonators** – leave their personality and assume the character’s traits / become submerged
- **Interpreters / Commentators** = smaller range of roles & their characters more closely resemble them – they use their own qualities with slight altercations
- **Personality Actors** = talent is to be themselves (they have an idiosyncrasy with mass appeal)

- **The Star System** – belief that the average movie-goer is more interested in personalities than great stories or film art – the stars presence = $$
Casting

- **Casting Problems** – place actors in the right roles so the performance is convincing
- Contract issues / actors back out etc.
- The Typecasting Trap = narrow range of identical roles
10 Acting

- **Supporting Players** – make the stars shine brighter and help create memorable film moments.
- **Special Casting Challenges** = following a character over many years.
- **Extras and Small Parts** – must fit scene – react properly.
Actors as **Creative Contributors** = collaborators & give input into the creative process / determining the nature of the characters.

**Subjective Responses to Actors** = each of us has his or her personal response to an actor & these opinions vary quite a bit.
Questions for Analyzing Acting

- Which actors did you feel were correctly cast in their parts? Which actors were not cast wisely? Why?
- How well were the physical characteristics, facial features, and voice qualities of the actors suited to the characters they were attempting to portray?
Questions for Analyzing Acting

- If a performance was unconvincing, was it unconvincing because the actor was miscast, or did he or she simply deliver an incompetent performance?
  - If faulty casting seems to be the problem, what actor would you choose for the part if you were directing the film?
  - If the actor proved incompetent in the part, what were the primary reasons for his or her failure?
Questions for
Analyzing Acting

What kind of acting is required of the actors in the starring roles—action acting or dramatic acting? Are the actors well suited to the type of acting demanded by the roles they play? If not, why not? Where are their weaknesses or limitations most evident? If they are well suited, in what scenes is their special type of acting skill most apparent?

Drawing on your knowledge of their past performances, classify the actors in the major roles as impersonators, interpreters, or personalities.
Questions for Analyzing Acting

Consider the following questions with respect to each of the starring actors:

- Does the actor seem to depend more on the charm of his or her own personality, or does he or she attempt to become the character?
- Is the actor consistently believable in the portrayal of the character, or does he or she occasionally fall out of character?
- If the actor seems unnatural in the part, is it because he or she tends to be overdramatic or wooden and mechanical? Is this unnaturalness more apparent in the way the actor delivers the lines or in the actor’s physical actions?
Questions for Analyzing Acting

- In what specific scenes is the acting especially effective or ineffective?
- In which scenes are the actors’ facial expressions used in reaction shots? What reaction shots are particularly effective?
- How strong is the cast of supporting actors, and what does each contribute of the film? How does each help bring out different aspects of the star’s personality? Do the supporting players create memorable moments or steal the show in spots?
Questions for Analyzing Acting

- What contributions do the small parts and extras make to the film? Are the faces and bodies well chosen to fit our preconceived notions of what they should look like? Are their “working tasks,” if any, performed with confidence and naturalness?