

A HARD ACT TO FOLLOW

AND THE ACADEMY AWARD GOES TO ... THE DOGS.

While the 95th Academy Awards, presented on 12 March this year, were less newsworthy than the 94th, they were reliably woke. Afterwards, it was reported just how much discussion there had been among the film industry's elite about which actors and actresses most deserved an Oscar, the fundamental criterion being not the quality of performances but the length of time since a particular ethnic cohort had been so honoured.

And it is only going to get worse.

In 2020, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences decreed that only films meeting new diversity criteria would be eligible for the coveted Best Picture Oscar, with the new rules taking effect in 2024. The Academy stated the criteria are "designed to encourage equitable representation on and off screen in order to better reflect the diversity of the movie-going audience".

A film will have to meet two of four diversity standards to be eligible for a best-picture nomination.

Standard A requires at least one actor in a significant role, or failing that, 30 per cent of the cast, to come from underrepresented groups including women, LGBTQIA+ people, a designated racial or ethnic group, or people with a disability.

Standard B requires productions to have a designated number of executives and crew members from the underrepresented groups.

Standards C and D require a film's marketing, publicity, and distribution teams to have a designated number of senior executives from underrepresented groups, and to offer training or work opportunities to people from these groups.

As only two of the four standards need to be met, a production company will be able to skirt around the first if making, for argument's sake, a film about able-bodied Cistercian monks in 1950s Vermont.

The issue might soon be redundant, however, as the acting profession itself is now under a darkening cloud. The concept of 'appropriation' threatens its very future.

Appropriation allegedly occurs when an actor depicts someone from a cultural group other than their own.

As Bill Maher pointed out, when that darling of the left Sean Penn played gay activist Harvey Milk he was praised for his courage and received the Best Actor Oscar, but now it would be appropriation.

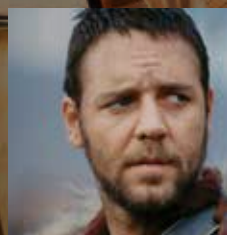
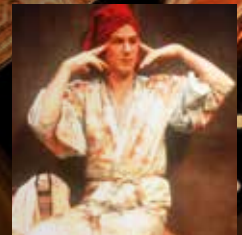


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These actors should feel deeply ashamed for winning Best Performance by an Actor:

- 1948 Laurence Olivier, *Hamlet* (not Danish)
- 1956 Yul Brynner, *The King and I* (not Thai)
- 1959 Charlton Heston, *Ben Hur* (not Jewish)
- 1968 Cliff Robertson, *Charly* (not intellectually disabled)
- 1972 Marlon Brando, *The Godfather* (not Italian American)
- 1975 Jack Nicholson, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (not mentally ill)
- 1982 Ben Kingsley, *Gandhi* (not Indian)
- 1984 F. Murray Abraham, *Amadeus* (not Italian)
- 1985 William Hurt, *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (not Argentine)
- 1988 Dustin Hoffman, *Rain Man* (not autistic)
- 1989 Daniel Day-Lewis, *My Left Foot* (not living with cerebral palsy)
- 1990 Jeremy Irons, *Reversal of Fortune* (see 1948)
- 1993 Tom Hanks, *Philadelphia* (not gay)
- 1994 Tom Hanks, *Forrest Gump* (see 1988)
- 1996 Geoffrey Rush, *Shine* (see 1975)
- 2000 Russell Crowe, *Gladiator* (not Hispano-Roman)
- 2002 Adrien Brody, *The Pianist* (not Polish)
- 2006 Forest Whitaker, *The Last King of Scotland* (not Ugandan, nor Scottish for that matter)
- 2007 Daniel Day Lewis, *There will be Blood* (not American)
- 2008 Sean Penn, *Harvey Milk* (see 1993)
- 2012 Daniel Day Lewis, *Lincoln* (see 2007)
- 2014 Eddie Redmayne, *The Theory of Everything* (not a genius with Motor Neurone Disease)
- 2018 Rami Malek, *Bohemian Rhapsody* (not British)
- 2020 Anthony Hopkins, *The Father* (not living with dementia)
- 2023 Brendan Fraser, *The Whale* (not obese)

The problem of who most deserves the Best Acting Oscar will surely soon be halved when the Academy does away with distinguishing between actors and actresses, as gender is a social construct. Or just shut down the Academy, as all acting is by definition an act of appropriation.



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