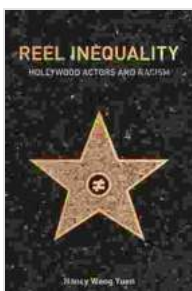


# Reel Inequality: Hollywood Actors and the Complicated History of Racism

In the early days of Hollywood, actors of color were largely relegated to stereotypical roles. Native Americans were often portrayed as savage warriors, while African Americans were cast as servants, criminals, or buffoons. These stereotypes were not only offensive, but they also perpetuated harmful myths and reinforced racist attitudes.

In addition to being typecast, actors of color were also often excluded from major roles altogether. The few who did manage to break through typically found themselves playing supporting characters or villains.

In the mid-20th century, Hollywood began to produce more films that were set outside the United States. In order to appeal to international audiences, studios often cast white actors in roles that were originally written for non-white characters. This practice, known as whitewashing, has been a persistent problem in Hollywood ever since.



## Reel Inequality: Hollywood Actors and Racism

by Nancy Wang Yuen

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 1801 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
X-Ray for textbooks : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 225 pages



Some of the most famous examples of whitewashing include:

- **The Lone Ranger (2013):** Native American actor Johnny Depp was cast in the title role, despite the fact that the character is clearly identified as an Indigenous man in the original source material.
- **Exodus: Gods and Kings (2014):** Egyptian-born actor Joel Edgerton was cast as Moses, a figure who is traditionally depicted as a Middle Eastern man.
- **The Ghost in the Shell (2017):** Japanese actress Scarlett Johansson was cast in the lead role, despite the fact that the character is originally from Japan.

Whitewashing not only erases non-white actors from the screen, but it also perpetuates harmful stereotypes and reinforces the idea that people of color are not worthy of playing lead roles.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement to increase representation of actors of color in Hollywood. This movement has been led by actors, activists, and filmmakers who are demanding more diverse casting practices and more opportunities for non-white actors.

Some of the most notable victories for the representation movement include:

- **The casting of Chadwick Boseman as the lead role in Black Panther (2018):** This was the first time that a black actor had played a

superhero in a major Hollywood film.

- **The inclusion of more diverse characters in Marvel and DC superhero films**
- **The rise of streaming platforms such as Netflix, Hulu, and Disney+** which have been more open to producing films and television shows that feature actors of color

While there has been some progress in recent years, the struggle for representation is far from over. Actors of color still face significant barriers to success, and they are still often underrepresented in Hollywood films and television shows.

One of the most visible indicators of the lack of representation in Hollywood is the Academy Awards, also known as the Oscars. The Oscars are the most prestigious awards in the film industry, and they are often seen as a barometer of success. However, the Oscars have a long history of overlooking actors of color.

In the 94 years of the Oscars, only 15 actors of color have won the Academy Award for Best Actor or Best Actress. Of those 15 winners, only 6 have been black actors.

The lack of representation at the Oscars is a reflection of the larger problem of racism in Hollywood. It shows that, despite the progress that has been made, there is still a long way to go before actors of color are treated equally.

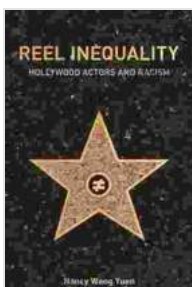
The future of representation in Hollywood is uncertain. However, there is reason to be optimistic. The growing movement for diversity and inclusion

is putting pressure on Hollywood studios to change their practices. And, as more and more audiences demand to see films and television shows that reflect the real world, studios are beginning to realize that diversity is good for business.

It is important to remember that the struggle for representation is not just about getting more actors of color on screen. It is about creating a more just and equitable society. By demanding more diverse casting practices and more opportunities for non-white actors, we can help to create a better future for everyone.

Racism has been a pervasive problem in Hollywood since the beginning of the film industry. Actors of color have faced countless barriers to success, including stereotypes, whitewashing, and a lack of representation. However, the struggle for representation is far from over. In recent years, there has been a growing movement to increase diversity and inclusion in Hollywood. This movement has led to some progress, but there is still much work to be done.

By demanding more diverse casting practices and more opportunities for non-white actors, we can help to create a more just and equitable society. We can create a world where everyone has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their race or ethnicity.



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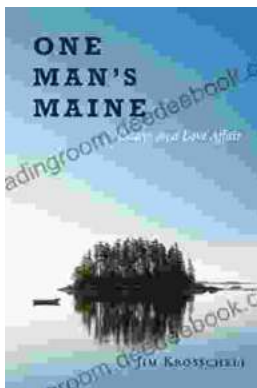
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