

Is Nicolas Cage good or bad?: Why Nicolas Cage is the best actor ever

BY RICHARD ONG

Editor-in-Chief

Nicolas Kim Coppola, known by his stage name as Nicolas Cage, is one of the most complex actors of our time. Every performer is something: Robert Downey Jr. is good, Jim Belushi is bad, Johnny Depp is the bad form of good and Reese Witherspoon is the good kind of bad. But what is Nicolas Cage?

Having appeared in 78 films over his 33 year actor career, Cage has been nominated for two Academy Awards, winning one, but has also appeared in films such as *Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance* and *The Wickerman*, which were universally derided.

How can a man with such a deep array of talent give performances so ridiculous yet also enthralling? "There is a misperception, if you will, in critical response or even in Hollywood, that I can only do exaggerated characters. Or what they would call over-the-top performances," said Cage, but that is simply not true.

While Nicolas Cage in *Windtalkers* and *Vampire's Kiss* might be overacting

memorably or even comically, Cage in *Joe* or *The Rock* plays a calm, cool and collected hero.

Leaping from Disney movies such as *G-Force* to big budget action films like *Face/Off* and *Con Air*, he lies in no single genre. He is not an action star or a horror star or a science-fiction star but a movie star.

With a hairline more receded than the Amazon rainforest and a visage which looks like someone stretched out Steve Buscemi's face, Cage certainly looks as strange as he acts.

And his off camera persona of ludicrous expenses and million dollar paychecks certainly contribute to the idea of him

being a deranged lunatic.

I have a different hypothesis: I believe Nicolas Cage is the greatest actor in the history of cinema.

Most actors perform consistently from film to film but Cage changes tune and

branded him as mad reveal the true genius of his acting. By acting so differently in every film, he ridiculous film itself.

By pushing the envelope of what is believable in a film, by making it so extreme, the film will become something

reality, Cage removes his films from reality as well.

While he is a brilliant actor, his films are many times terrible. For examples, see *Season of the Witch*, *Stolen*, and *Gone in 60 Seconds*.

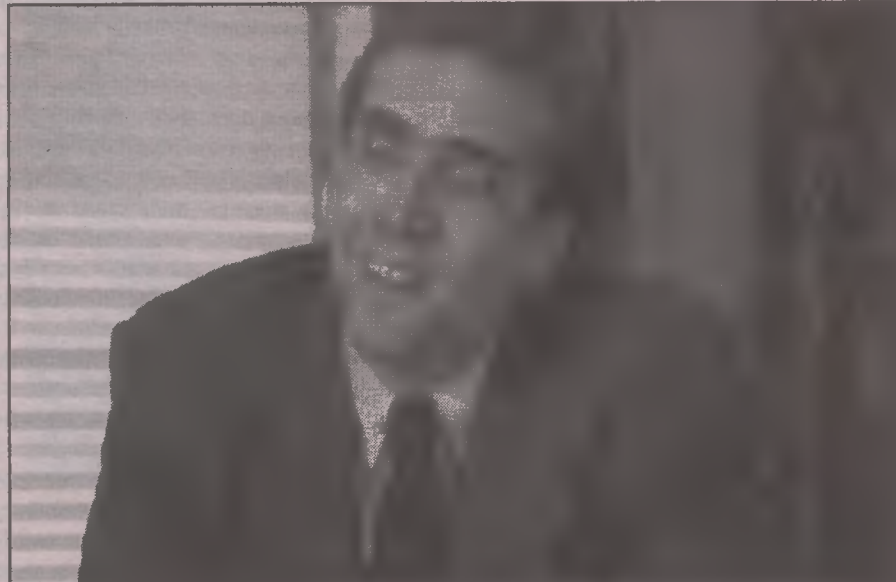
Cage is simply terrible at choosing which roles to play. How else would he appear in a movie entitled *Drive Angry* or *Bangkok Dangerous*?

Whether or not he does bad movies for money or for kicks, he has only made critic's analysis of his work more complicated.

In fact, in most of the terrible Nicolas Cage films which I have seen (a large number, to be sure), it is not his acting bringing the movie down but horrendous screenplays more at home in a kindergarten class than in a major motion picture.

It is not his fault for the movies being bad, although he should have better sense than to have appeared in some of the works in his filmography.

Overall, Nicolas Cage is a fantastic actor, in the same realm as James Stewart and Humphrey Bogart. However, a Nicolas Cage movie is not necessarily a good movie.



Nicolas Cage dramatically acts in *Vampire's Kiss*. Cage's distinctive facial features have turned him into a fantastic internet meme, where his face is superimposed over others, however his most distinctive meme is the famous "you

Photo courtesy of Today.com

tempo between scenes, let alone between films.

His wildly varying performances which have

entirely separate from reality, or any other film for that matter.

By being so detached from

Is celebrity raunch culture feminism?

CHERYL WANG

Staff Writer

A look back at 2014's most popular celebrities confirmed the world-wide craze for the country star turned pop star Taylor Swift. In *Forbes'* yearly ranking of the top-earning women in music, Taylor Swift came in second with an income of \$64 million dollars. Her heightened fame naturally led to much gossip.

One of the most recent hot topics regarding this pop diva is her staple fashion piece, the crop top. In her December/January cover story with *Lucky Magazine*, Taylor reveals that she doesn't like showing her belly button. She states that, "when you start showing your belly button then you're really committing to the midriff thing. I only partially commit to the midriff thing—you're only seeing lower rib cage."

While this may only be meant as a light-hearted statement regarding some gossip, it nonetheless brought the issue surrounding celebrities' choice of clothing, or rather lack of, into the spotlight again.

"Raunch" culture as described by Ariel Levy in her book *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of the Raunch Culture*, is the overt sexualization of women. In a

popular culture where songs and wardrobe choices are infused with sexual innuendos, it is only natural to question how the hyper-sexualization of celebrities today is justified.

Miley Cyrus has become arguably one of the most controversial singers of 2014. After the release of her music video "Wrecking Ball", the reason for her seemingly unnecessary lack of clothing and sexual dance moves such as twerking were brought to the top of media's attention.

In response to people's shock and curiosity, Cyrus told BCC Radio 1 that she is one of the "biggest feminists in the world".

She believes that women should be confident in showing their bodies. As a result, Cyrus tells *Cosmopolitan UK* that she is "really empowering to women" when she strips down to a thong suit for photo shoots or wave a giant foam finger between her legs.

However, the question now becomes is the explicit flaunting and overexposure of her body in sexually suggestive ways a mark of feminism or an endorsement of the idea that a woman's worth comes from gaining sex appeal in the eyes of men?

When questioned about the cover art and music video for

her new song "Anaconda", which features images so explicit that it has a parental advisory sticker over the song, rap queen Nikki Minaj likewise responds that bravely and boldly embracing their bodies only shows that women are in control of their lives, what feminism advocates. However, the reason behind her confidence indicates the opposite.

"Anaconda" revolves almost entirely around how a woman feels confident because the size of her "butt" attracts men.

Because of her body, men has told her that they "like [her] sex appeal" and they "don't want none unless you got buns", as lines of the lyrics indicate.

Men's admiration for a woman's body seems to be the theme of the song. To further the theme of "Anaconda", Minaj has performed donning nothing but a thong bikini.

Both her lyrics and her performance convey the idea that a woman's worth comes from having sex appeal and being admired by men rather than being independent.

The increasing hyper-sexualization of female celebrities in the end should not be justified for being pro-feminism.

Rather, popular fashion choices, dance moves, and song lyrics illustrate much more of the raunch culture, which has become not only the symbol of the rough and radical, but also the gateway

to popularity for many singers, artists, and television icons.

Literally, having that sex appeal has become the source of worth for many female artists. The downloading of her song "Wrecking Ball" rose 124% after Miley Cyrus's outlandish VMA performance, raising her income in 2013 by 28.5 million dollars compared to her pre-transformation income in 2010.

Maybe the rise in fame by revolting against traditional values is the real reason behind the hyper-sexualization of celebrities.

The Stentorian

The North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics
1219 Broad Street, Durham, NC 27705

stentorian123@gmail.com

Editors-in-Chief: Sierra Dunne, Betty Liu, Richard Ong

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