

THE ACTOR

All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. William Shakespeare

It is better to be making the news than taking it; To be an actor than a critic. Winston Churchill

This whole creation is essentially subjective, and the dream is the theatre where the dreamer is at once scene, actor, prompter, stage manager, author, audience and critic. Carl Jung

I am an entrepreneur in the overall world of entertainment. However the part of that world that has always interested and fascinated me the most has been the theatre in all its aspects. By this, I mean the stage, cinema, television, radio, and any other occasion or site where a drama, comedy, musical, or any combination of these, are being performed. Perhaps my enthrallment was persistently caused by the great performers who managed to transport me into a world with which, for the most part, I was not familiar. Of course I must also include authors, producers, directors, etc. without whom nothing would have come about. However, it was the actors that captured my rapt attention. After all, their performances transformed the unbelievable, into the believable.

My enthusiasm for the thespians of the theatre was and is limited to those relatively few who truly rank as the greatest ever. I decided to see if they had something more in common than their fabulous talent. This required a great deal of research into their private lives and took quite a bit of time. I know that my undertaking was frequently not appreciated and obliged me to tread very carefully. I suspected that this endeavour could go on indefinitely but I certainly could not.

My findings, as incomplete as they were, also indicated my own biases. Unexpectedly they turned out to be not very surprising. A cross section of these artists showed traits rather similar to those found in the general public. Many were very shy and timid personages, able to dispense with their personal character and become whatever the role they were playing demanded. Others were arrogant, making all sorts of demands in a supercilious manner that caused all sorts of resentment by just about anyone they came in contact with both on and off the stage. Some were the exact opposite. They were generous with their knowledge and skill, proffering all sorts of assistance to fledging underlings. They got along with all the stagehands and technical experts necessary to create the production. Still others, as great as they were, when not acting became as indistinctive as any pedestrian walking down a crowded street.

However, there was one player who made all the others look like rank amateurs. I know nothing about this performer's personal life including her/his sex, age, place of birth, nationality, religion if any, marital status and real name. A stage name used was M. Thespos. She/he was the most mysterious theatrical star ever. No fingerprint or DNA file was ever able to provide a clue about her/him. What I did realize was that this thespian could perform just about anything. Every single Shakespearian role was not only within this person's grasp but after attending a performance the audience left absolutely convinced that the character portrayed was not

fictional but real. This was equally true about all roles in any play ever written and in any language. It didn't matter whether the opus had any worth. Somehow this thespian brought the fictional being to life, absolutely convincingly.

I and others spent many years attending as many of her/his performances that we could and countless hours trying to identify our enigmatic friend, to no avail. We hired private detectives, again without success. We waited at the stage door after a performance hoping to be able to follow her/him home. This did not succeed simply because she/he was masked as either a member of the cast or stage crew. We gave up.

A turning point day then occurred. Much to my dismay, there appeared an announcement in all the major media that M.Thespos had given her/his final performance and was retiring to a simple and quiet life in a unknown locale. That was the last ever heard about the most famous thespian of all time.

Over the next few years there were incidents and occurrences when I was sure that she/he had reappeared. There was this commercial salesman whose sales in just about anything far surpassed any of her/his competitors. There was this musician whose performances were outstanding, unlike any others. There was this politician whose oratory won elections by unbelievable margins. There was this Nobel Prize winning scientist whose findings revolutionized a myriad of areas. There may have been others. I was never able to contact any of them.

Finally, I come to the crux of the matter. I was having a coffee in my favourite café when I felt a tap on my shoulder. I looked up at a non-descript individual. He asked if he could join me to provide information that might clear up many of my questions. I agreed. He sat down and then continued.

"I am the individual that you knew as M. Thespos but who does not exist anymore. I am here because I really appreciated your public comments about my performances and your futile but worthwhile attempts to find me and all about me. I am something that you could not have imagined. I am the embodiment of humanity and have been around since humans came into existence. Every single attribute, trait, deed, ability, folly, act of brutality, generosity and benevolence as well as history, is incorporated into the essence of my being, that is of the totality of humanity. You are a fragment of what I am. You can be viewed as a fractal. I am not a superman. I share your superstitions as well as your knowledge. I am equally ignorant as you are about all the quintessential questions that plague us and probably will continue to do so. I do not know how I came to be but here I am. Let me elaborate. I am a truth teller and a liar. I am a miser and charitable. I am wise and foolish. I am knowledgeable and ignorant. I am timid and boastful. I am brutal and gentle. I am a dreamer and a realist. I am a believer and an atheist or agnostic. I am a communist and a fascist. In other words, while I am the ultimate actor emulating humanity, each and all of you are also actors.

Jack Basuk, Feb. 20, 2011