

# John Barrymore And The Acting Tradition Onscreen

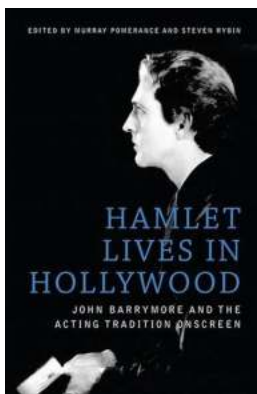


In the annals of acting history, few names shine as brightly as John Barrymore. With his suave charm, incredible talent, and impeccable stage presence, he became an icon of the silver screen during Hollywood's golden era. In this article,

we delve into the life and legacy of John Barrymore, his contributions to the acting tradition onscreen, and the lasting impact he had on the industry.

## The Early Life of John Barrymore

John Barrymore, born John Sidney Blyth, on February 15, 1882, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was destined for greatness from the start. Coming from a renowned theatrical family, he was the youngest sibling of the famous Barrymore acting dynasty, which included his siblings, Lionel and Ethel Barrymore.



## Hamlet Lives in Hollywood: John Barrymore and the Acting Tradition Onscreen

by Steven Englund (1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 3131 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 280 pages



Barrymore's early life was steeped in theater. His parents, Maurice and Georgiana Barrymore, were both successful stage actors, and he grew up surrounded by the world of acting. Barrymore honed his skills on the stage before making his foray into the world of silent films.

## Rise to Stardom in Silent Films

John Barrymore's cinematic journey began in the silent film era, where he quickly established himself as a gifted actor. His expressive face, dynamic presence, and

ability to convey emotions without uttering a word set him apart from his peers.

Barrymore's breakthrough role came in 1920 with "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," based on Robert Louis Stevenson's novel. His portrayal of the tormented Dr. Jekyll and his alter ego, Mr. Hyde, garnered critical acclaim and solidified his status as a force to be reckoned with in Hollywood.

## **Transition to Talkies and The Great Profile**

As the film industry transitioned to talkies in the late 1920s, many silent film stars struggled to adapt. However, John Barrymore effortlessly made the leap. His rich voice and impeccable timing brought a new dimension to his performances, captivating audiences worldwide.

One of Barrymore's most memorable roles during this period was in the 1933 film "Counsellor-at-Law," where he portrayed the charismatic lawyer George Simon. His nuanced performance and ability to command the screen earned him the moniker "The Great Profile," a title that would follow him throughout his career.

## **Barrymore's Influence on Acting Technique**

John Barrymore's contributions to the acting tradition onscreen were not limited to his remarkable performances. He also left a lasting impact on the craft itself, influencing generations of actors with his unique approach to character portrayal.

One of Barrymore's notable techniques was his use of physicality to express emotions. He believed that body language was just as essential as dialogue in conveying a character's thoughts and feelings. This emphasis on physical expression influenced actors such as Marlon Brando and James Dean, who would go on to revolutionize acting in their own right.

## **Legacy and Beyond**

John Barrymore's presence onscreen was unmatched, and his legacy continues to resonate in Hollywood and beyond. His influence can be seen in the performances of actors who followed in his footsteps, inspiring generations of artists to push the boundaries of their craft.

Despite his success, Barrymore faced personal struggles, including battles with alcoholism and strained relationships. However, his talent and artistry persevered, leaving an indelible mark on cinema history.

Today, John Barrymore is remembered as one of the greatest actors of his time, a true embodiment of the acting tradition onscreen. His captivating presence and dedication to his craft serve as a reminder of the power of performance and its ability to transcend time and connect with audiences across generations.

John Barrymore's impact on the acting tradition onscreen cannot be overstated. From his early days in the theater to his iconic performances in silent films and talkies, he captured the hearts of audiences worldwide. His unique approach to character portrayal and his ability to convey emotions through physicality set him apart as a true innovator in the art of acting.

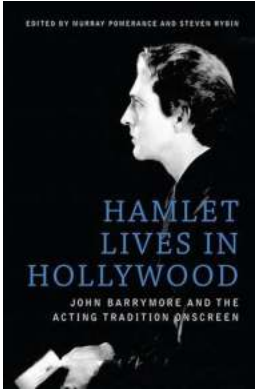
As we reflect on the legacy of John Barrymore, we not only celebrate his incredible talent but also recognize the profound influence he had on the industry as a whole. His contributions continue to shape the way actors approach their craft, ensuring that his name will always be synonymous with excellence in acting.

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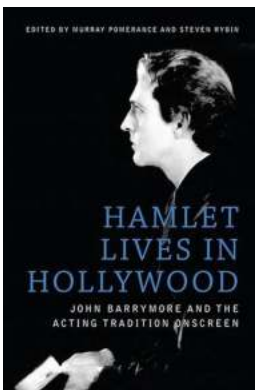
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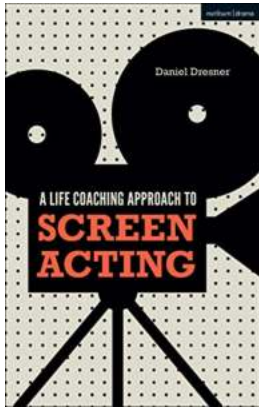


John Barrymore's influence on screen and stage in the early twentieth century is incalculable. His performances in the theatre defined Shakespeare for a generation, and his transition to cinema brought his theatrical performativity to both silent and sound screens. This book, a collection of fifteen original essays on the film performances and stardom of John Barrymore, redresses this lack of scholarship on Barrymore by offering a range of varied perspectives on the actor's work. Looking at his performances and influence from the perspectives of gender studies, psychoanalysis, queer studies and performance analysis, *Hamlet Lives in Hollywood* represents a major attempt by contemporary scholars to come to terms with the ongoing vitality of John Barrymore's work in our present day.



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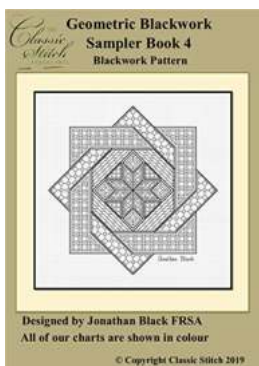
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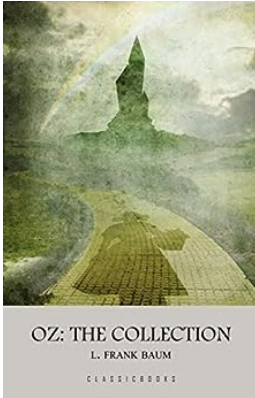
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