

A Portrait of the Artist underneath the Mask: A Study of Satyajit Ray's *Nayak*

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Abstract

Carlyle sees the poet, or perhaps the artist, as possessing all those qualities which he embodies through his writing - he can be a potential politician, thinker, legislator and philosopher. This idea of the hero changes towards the turn of the early 20th century following Nietzsche's description of the overman – someone ready to embrace strength and intensity, leaving behind the shell of meekness and guilt. Much time has passed, and the society has apparently reached a stage, where entertainment-driven mass culture manifests across the globe. Sports personalities, film actors, social media influencers gain immense fan following and are literally worshipped across the world. The poet-hero seems to have made way for the celebrity-hero. In this paper, the focus shall be limited to the domain of the actor-hero, who happens to be a major part of this celebrity culture. The paper will seek to deconstruct the apparently impenetrable portrait of the 'star'. An attempt will be made to explore what attributes construct this heroic persona. To conclude, this paper attempts to examine the nature of celebrity culture and strives to arrive at a definition of the contemporary 'hero'.

Keywords : Hero, Celebrity, Mask, *Urbemensch*, Human Condition.