

***Portrayal of Men in Ray's Films, Mirror to Present Heroes in Bollywood:
Comparative Analysis With Reference to 'Mahanagar' and 'Nayak'***

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Abstract

Indian Hindi cinema particularly, Bollywood over the past 70 years has transgressed through various themes and influenced the audience at large. During the 60s and 70s Bollywood thoroughly stereotyped men and projected toxic masculinity. Highly contrasting to this is Satyajit Ray's films and his portrayal of men who were gentle, supportive and masculine all at the same time. Even though Satyajit Ray was a regional filmmaker his contribution towards cinema transcends all linguistic and regional boundaries. This paper tries to analyze how Ray refuted these stereotypes and misogynistic images attached to men through his films and became a window to the present day Bollywood heroes. Theories like, Social Learning Theory and Cultivation Theory will be used to understand how this aggressive male image projected by Bollywood has further led to violence and crime in real life. The research will be conducted in an exploratory manner through frame-by-frame analysis of two purposively selected films from Ray's body of work - Nayak (1966) and Mahanagar (1963). Nayak (1966) has been narrated from the male protagonist's point of view and Mahanagar (1963) from the female protagonists' point of view, wherein neither of the lead's over-shadowed the other, each enjoyed their own democratic space. Several news articles and research papers were used to analyze the recent trends of Bollywood movies of this generation. The results of this study, also provide a better insight to film critics and researchers about Ray's men who equally stood-out like the women leads.

Keywords: Masculinity, Bollywood, Stereotype, Satyajit Ray, Angry Young Man

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INTRODUCTION

'Bollywood' is a portmanteau derived from Bombay and Hollywood, the center of the American film industry, which started to flourish during the 1970s by overtaking the United State's credit of largest film producers in the world (Goswami, M.P., 2020; Rajghatta, C., 2008). When it started off, it represented the male as an angry young hero, the 'macho-man' portrayed by actors Dharmendra Deol, Amitabh Bachan and others. Soon, succeeded by actors like Sharukh Khan, Salman Khan, Hrithik Roshan, et al., who focussed more on having certain physical attributes like chiseled body to fit the 'hero' image (Raj & Goswami, 2020). A study by Bhattacharjee P. and Tripathi P. show that, Bollywood's projection of 'toxic masculinity' shows evidence even through Hindi proverbs like, "*jiski chaati pe baal nahi, uski baat pe aitbaar nahi* (roughly translated as a man with no hair on his chest cannot be trusted)". Bollywood thoroughly stereotyped men creating certain preconceived notions of masculinity, from having certain physical attributes to fighting-off villains, being the savior and behaving in a certain manner - who is robust, rowdy and less emotional. As Bollywood keeps evolving and changing with time, the portrayal of men has also changed. With films like, *Mere Brother Ki Dulhan* (2011), *Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na* (2008), *Hindi Medium* (2017), *Tumhari Sulu* (2017), *Tanu weds Manu* (2011) being produced the male protagonist here isn't an angry- young man rather a supportive one. Men or the 'hero's here, are portrayed as one doing the household chores and even expressing their emotional side, parallely showing their masculinity in other manner (Raj & Goswami, 2020).

This change in Bollywood's portrayal of masculinity has occurred roughly post-2000 era. Parallel to '60s and '70s era when Bollywood produced films like *Sholay* (1975), *ShenShah* (1988) and others, Ray projected a very different portrayal of male characters. His characters were endearing and real. Be it 'Arindam' from *Nayak* or, 'Nikhilesh' from *Ghare Baire*. Even as the turbulent period hurled the protagonists neither of them behaved aggressively, but rather in a matured manner. They played an important part in the flow of the narrative. Portrayal of men in Ray's films never meant reducing the importance of the female protagonists to mere background characters. A fine balance was what the cinematic genius always imbibed. His films had a sense of realism attached to them, which was absent during that time. They did have their own share of struggles, but their determination to live positioned them as real human beings, one which haunts the audience every time you watch them on-screen. (Ghosh, 2021) Neither of Ray's films is aggressively women-centric or spew hatred against men, "instead, in a very subtle manner his work proves that to portray women's perspectives one need not undermine the contributions of men." (Samsal, 2016) His films illustrated men and women as complementary to one another and not as opposite or equal forces (Samsal, 2016).

This paper tries to analyze how the portrayal of men in the 1960s by Ray contrasted greatly from the toxic masculinity projected by the Bollywood films. Through an exploratory manner this paper shows how men through Ray's lenses are a mirror of the 21st century Bollywood male.

Research Problem

The objectives of the study help us to investigate the following problem:

- To understand the portrayal of the men in Ray's films - a mirror to the progressive 21st CE men in Bollywood

- To analyze how Ray broke the stereotypes attached to men by Bollywood in the 1960s

Aims of the Study

The study aims to understand how the supportive male protagonist/ 'heros' which Bollywood try to project in the 21st century, had already been portrayed by Satyajit Ray through his films parallel to the time when Bollywood projected 'toxic masculinity' (especially in the pre 2000s era). It highlights how Ray, the cinematic genius, portrayed the everyday-man through his stories, void of machoism and aggressive behavior. The stereotypical notion of 'men' that Bollywood created of an angry-young man, was something which Ray never acquainted to. It is this that he tried to shrug off.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The audience in India at large has been mostly influenced by the Bollywood films, and that undoubtedly impacted their whole outlook towards life (Raj & Goswami, 2020). After being heavily criticized for their portrayal of 'toxic masculinity' Bollywood now tries to evolve the representation of male through their films, which one can say is a very slow process. Satyajit Ray, the cinematic genius as he was, represented the male protagonist, much ahead of it's time - someone who was supportive, emotional and trying to reform their own stereotypes and shortsightedness. A study on 'Motion Pictures and Real-Life Violence' by Wilber Schramm (1968), suggests that the Bollywood films produced during that time, had a very negative impact upon the viewers so deep that they started to imitate what they have seen on-screen. "There is evidence that violence in motion pictures can contribute to violence, delinquency, and crime in real life" (Schramm, 1968). This can be linked to the **Social Learning Theory** which suggests that audiences learn and cultivate in them the social behavior they have been exposed to, which might be positive or negative depending on the media content they are viewing. Thus, making it conclusive that as a society the equal representation of men and women have to be induced by law and not something that is practiced naturally.

The patriarchal society which had created a domination of men over women, was further fuelled by Bollywood. Movie themes then stereotyped 'male' to be an angry-young man and very aggressive in its approach. This was cultivated in such a manner, that men were made to believe these aggressive portrayals to be real. **Cultivation Theory**, devised by George Gerbner helps to understand how "continuous exposure to media content can cultivate a belief that the social reality aligns with reality portrayed in the media" (Raj & Goswami, 2020).

Thus, the theories discussed above are clearly conclusive of the fact that the Bollywood macho-men had a greater influence on people during that time as they selectively exposed themselves to such content among the plathero of others that existed. The **Spiral of Silence Theory** clearly applies here as the Bolly macho-men were the dominant voice during that time hence influenced more parallel to which conversely existed the male protagonists through Ray's lens which were talked less of. It's only *now* that Bollywood is trying to uphold a male protagonist, who has emotions, which has already been spoken of by Ray during that time.

Thus the **Research Questions** that will help to constitute the basis for analysis are:

RQ1: How did Ray portray the male protagonists - a window to the 21st CE men in Bollywood?

RQ2: How did Satyajit Ray's films break the stereotypes attached to men during the era of 'toxic masculinity'?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In an article, "Bollywood's Toxic Masculinity: The Problematic Portrayal of Men and Women in Hindi Cinema" by Saurabh Samraat highlights, that the patriarchy which was the central theme of Bollywood during the '60s and '70s portrayed the 'heroes' as 'Angry Young Man'. They glorified men as tough and aggressive, whose role was to save the female protagonist and fight off villains. The female protagonist was portrayed as the 'Damsel in Distress' or her role was reduced to an obedient wife who would do as the husband said. The women hardly had their own choice and the men always dominated them, never supported them or tried to even understand them. "This kind of portrayal transforms into peer pressure compelling men and women to fit in this stereotypical mold presented by films, which further affects people's mental health" (Samraat, 2021).

Writaja Samsal, a researcher in an article titled as 'Portrayal of Women in Satyajit Ray's Films: Not the usual brand of Feminism' writes that, Ray's films on the other hand, were inherently simple, but only through careful analysis one can see that it has a lot of subplots and a deeper message attached to it. Reasons why, in spite of being a regional filmmaker his films appeal transcended geographical and linguistic boundaries. The artistic genius had an inherent ability to create a link between the local and global. Even in the patriarchal society of the 1960s and 1970s, Ray tried to advocate for a separate existence of women at a time when society was unable to fathom their social independence. But, through various narratives he even made it clear that "true feminism upholds women's rights not at the expense of that of men" (Samsal, 2016). The men and women in Ray's films complemented each other, rather than being shown as equal or opposite. Ray believed 'human beings' (men or women) can never be black or white, he always believed that there existed some "gray areas of confusion and misperception enunciating behavior" (Samsal, 2016). This was something he never feared to show through his films. For instance, his male protagonists, 'Subrata' in *Mahanagar* supported his wife initially when she wanted to do a job to support the family but not whole-heartedly, it's only towards the end that 'Subrata' restores his unconditional support.

In an article published by Naina Bhargava and Kura Sunaina, titled 'Deconstructing Men and Masculinity through the Lens of Ray' discusses how, Ray in '*Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road)*', a story based on Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay's Bengali novel with the same name, showed the differential treatment towards the superior male child, Apu in contrast to the female child, Durga. Through scenes where Apu was being educated by his father Harihar, he contrasted that with Durga, who was meant to perform rituals and pray for a good husband. Ray very subtly "speculated this peculiar gendered stigma attached to the identity and its association with domestic work in India" (Bhargava and Sunaina, 2020). There wasn't any dialogues exchanged, but the scenes themselves stand independent which clearly portray people's mentality about the 'gendered roles'. Ray captures closely how Apu notices his mother and the society in general, behaved differently with the girl child, Durga. The sequence has been stitched in a manner that it will raise a question to the viewers, *then*

and even *now*. Today, after years of trying to transform society, there are films in Bollywood who are trying to subvert the 'gendered roles'.

According to the author and the first asexual student leader of India, Meghna Mehra (2019), the macho yong man era (1960 - 1990) in Bollywood, created a false reality in the minds of the audience that to be a 'man' one needs to be angry, tough and less emotional. They shouldn't feel pain and be aggressive in their approach. People soon started imitating the Bollywood heroes and believed that to be a man one has to have some superpowers to fight off-villains and jump from tall storeyed buildings to prove their love. This had a lasting impact on the audience. The actors portrayed an angry macho image enacted by Amitabh Bachchan and Dharmendra, whom people started to idolize. Movies like, *Sholay* (1975), *ShahenShah* (1988), etc. stereotyped men and through narratives defined what masculinity meant during that period (Mehra, 2019). Thus, people believed that to be a man one has to be robust, rowdy and physically fit (Raj & Goswami, 2020).

The influence of Bollywood in the minds of the Indian audience that the imitation of reel-life heroes in real life resulted in creation of a false reality among people. Ray through his movie, 'Nayak (1966)' tried to convey that "men" can be someone behind the stardom, reducing him to an ordinary man who has insecurities and fears. In the book, 'Satyajit Ray's Heros and Heroines' Amitava Nag writes that the critics failed to fathom the depth of 'Arindam's character in the movie *Nayak* (1966). They tried to equate Arindam's charisma to the stereotypical standards of Bollywood heroes, "who are necessarily more masculine" (Nag, 2019, p.147). The author even quotes Andrew Robinson, "He (Uttam Kuman) lacks elan and seems insufficiently masculine for a matinee idol" (Nag, 2019, p. 146). At the core of the film, Ray criticizes the unrealistic portrayal of 'heroes' through few dialogues. Men can be emotionally vulnerable, have insecurities and be masculine all at the same time.

In an interview with *Filmfare*, Madhabi Mukherjee, "remembers Satyajit Ray on his 100th birthday anniversary", says that "Bengali Cinema was far more evolved than Hindi cinema back in those days (1960s - 1970s) and Satyajit Ray was a big reason for that." Madhabi Mukherjee is known for her role of 'Aditi' in *Mahanagar*. Amitava Nag, in his book 'Satyajit Ray's Heros and Heroines' highlights that Ray was very passive in his manner of criticizing the State or the social and human condition, which he believed was largely man-made. It was never directly hard hitting, rather, subtle and firm but not aloof (Nag, 2019, p. 50 - 52). Satyajit Ray crafted 'Subrata's character with universality. His constant dilemma between his male-ego as the sole bread earner and dire financial crisis especially after losing his job hits him hard. "Eventually ending up admiring his wife's courage and values makes the entire journey of his character extremely relatable and felt." (Sarkar, 2019) Madhabi Mukherjee very rightfully comments that one has failed to grasp the versatility and depth of Bengali cinema.

In an article, "(Re)Making the Man: Masculinity in Hindi Cinema of the 2010s" by Shilpashree Mishra, she highlights that portraying masculinity in India has changed a little over the years. And when one talks about this, the torch-bearer is undoubtedly Ayushman Khurrana with his films choices. "His movies have given voice to many Indian men who struggle every day with these issues but have been conditioned by society to not speak up about it as it would cast aspersions on their mardaangi (masculinity)" (Mishra, 2020).

However not all has changed, Anna MM Veticad in an article named "The changing face of 'mardaangi' in Bollywood" writes that, "of the present reigning kings, Salman Khan and

Akshay Kumar are the ones most faithfully adhering to the '*mardaangi*' formula, with their heroines rarely rising above being a pretty." There are still films like, Tiger Zinda Hai (2017) who in spite of having strong, career- driven women are reduced to mere secondary actors in the background.

RESEARCH METHOD

The methods/techniques used for conducting the research operations are actually understood as the research methods (Kothari, 2004). In other words, research methods are more general that help to generate techniques for studying the research problem.

This study is being done with the objective to portray how a liberal, progressive male protagonist which Bollywood try to project now (in the 21st century) has already been shown by Ray through his films at a time when Bollywood projected 'toxic masculinity'. To fulfill the objective of the study, the study will be conducted among films produced by Ray during the 60's.

Sample design

The entire population of Ray's works could not be represented due to constraints in time and resource, hence a subset of the population is selected which represents the whole population.

For analyzing the 'male protagonist' portrayed in Ray's film which were highly contrasting to the toxic masculinity produced in Bollywood during that time two films have been chosen - Nayak (1966) and Mahanagar (1963). These films have been chosen because Nayak (1966) has been narrated from the male protagonist's point of view and Mahanagar (1963) from the female protagonists' point of view. What is interesting to note here is that even as Nayak(1966) has been told from the male protagonist's point of view, the role of Aditi, the female protagonist in Nayak (1966) is not weak or a mere background pillar. It has a strong and independent contribution to the narrative, similarly Subrata's character (as the male counterpart), in Mahanagar (1963) breathes independently. Neither of the lead's overshadowed the other, irrespective of whether it was told from a male-point of view or a female-point of view. Each enjoyed a democratic space of its own.

Procedure

Prior to answering the research questions, two themes were identified for choosing the two films: first, the male protagonists portrayed in Ray's films were not rowdy and robust, on the contrary, they had a very emotional and humane side to it; second, in Ray's films that dealt with social prejudices/stereotypes, the male protagonist was never shown as a negative character, but gave each character their own storyline and showed how one can evolve as a person, rather than being aggressive. Hence, with careful analysis the two films that have been chosen are - Nayak (1966) and Mahanagar (1963). After the themes had been identified and films chosen, a content analysis was performed to fulfill the objective. Content analysis can be broadly considered as a method where the content of the message itself forms the base for analysis, logical reasoning and help to draw conclusions. (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1976). Thus, it is a method which involves careful observation of the content and in the form of an in-depth analysis.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

“Historians often caution about not seeing the past from the prism of today” (Kumar, 2020). Satyajit Ray’s portrayal of male protagonists during the time of angry-macho heroes, is one such area that is least delved into and has a clear reflection of the ‘commercial Indian’ heroes that are portrayed in Bollywood films today (21st century).

Ray as a director has made many films, including documentaries, feature and short films. While most of his films were adaptations, there are three feature films that are original screenplay written by Ray himself (Chattopadhyay, 2018). One of them being ‘*Nayak (The Hero)*’ - a film which takes us through the life of a popular movie star but delving deep into the insecurities and shadows that lie behind the cloud of stardom. Ray’s magic of narrative - adding layers to the characters portrayed on-screen, beautifully intertwines the different stories from the point of view of ordinary-male (their struggles and insecurities) devoid of macho-ism that run in the motion picture parallelly. The real slice to Arindam Mukherjee’s, the popular matinee star (played by Uttam Kumar), fragile side is however discovered by Aditi, who is the editor of a women’s magazine ‘Adhunikā’. Ray very subtly shuns the ‘commercial Indian’ hero through Aditi as someone who “abhors the glitz and glamor of meaningless commercial cinema and harbors nothing but mute disdain” for such superstars (Chattopadhyay, 2018). On one such occasion Aditi says, “Hero-s shouldn’t be God-like.” She says that there is a lack of realism in such ‘hero-s’, who are champions from playing tennis to swimming, can dance well and even sing as well as have an excellent academic career. She finds them nothing, but unbelievable. On further conversation with Arindam, the journalist gets the scoop for her story - his series of nightmares about losing his stardom. Arindam opens up about his worst fears and believes that he might sink in the pool of quick-success. He even mentions that, “*Amader khoob beshi kotha bolteh nei*” which means, ‘It’s not good for us to talk much’. Even though he speaks for himself as a professional actor, this holds true for ordinary men. They were made to feel that if they let their partners know about their insecurities, emotions and nightmares they might not look towards them in the same manner. Ray wanted to break this stereo-type so deep rooted, that not only the ‘hero-s’ but men in general, did not express themselves the way they should. They did live in a world of shadows putting up an emotionless appeal to the harsh adversities of life. As the story unfolds taking the viewers through Arindam’s vulnerabilities in the form of flashbacks and dream sequences, Ray highlights that it is not only Arindam Mukherjee, the superstar who fears ‘failure’, in his case primarily, failing miserably at the box office, but also the other male characters attached to it. Pritish Sarkar fears failing to keep up with his wife’s expectations and even setting up his business ‘Spectrum Advertising Agency’. On the other side, even the aged Statesman columnist Aghore Chatterjee fears that the society, in general “is failing miserably to have a moral fibre” (Dwyer, 2021). Fears and insecurities surround every human but, even today it takes a lot upon a man to talk about their emotions openly.

To kick off the shell that Bollywood, has created for years, for instance the dialogue of *Maard (Man, 1985)*, “*Mard ko dard nahi hota*” (translated as, men don’t feel pain) takes a lot upon them - that includes being bullied and trolled heavily (be it an actor on-screen or, a man in day-to-day life). However, times are changing and Ray’s unabashed portrayal of men’s emotions finds its mirror in present day Bollywood heroes who express emotions other than anger and joy. Like, ‘Iqbal Syed’ portrayed by Vicky Kaushal in *Raazi (2018)* is an example of the evolving men on-screen. He expresses his nervousness post-marriage later, affection towards his wife, and is shown heartbroken towards the end. He expressed himself and yet masculine all at the same time. Even in the Tanu Weds Manu series, ‘Manu’ portrayed by R.

Madhavan expresses himself calmly without being aggressive and toxic. “He treats rejection gracefully and acknowledges the consent of the lead in both movies” (Mehra, 2019).

The masculine image of being considered as the sole bread earner of the family that patriarchy created, increased the dominance of male in the public as well as private spheres. This stereotype did not only reduce women to a mere second-class citizen without having a voice of their own but, also overburdening the male with responsibilities and hovering them with insecurities (of whether they would be able to live up to their family’s expectations). In 1950s, when the Indian New Wave began, Ray envisaged on a journey of making the women in the patriarchy “socially independent in spite of being in a traditional family” (Sanyal, 2021, p. 75) but interestingly, he never compromised on giving an equally democratic space to his male protagonist. Allowing them to express their upheavals and emotional conflict. “The artistic genius Satyajit Ray, who in his ability to create a link within a nuanced society, deconstructed the images of heroes by representing men and masculinities as not monolithic, but diverse and plural, where his protagonists were considered as the demoralized defender of socio-political vortexes and seen as a real ordinary person” (Bhargava and Sunaina, 2020). Shot in the backdrop of a patriarchal society, *Mahanagar (The Big City)* by Satyajit Ray is adapted from the Bengali short story *Abotaranika (The Prologue)* by Narendranath Mitra. It talks about the ‘altered power equations’ in a lower-middle-class family wherein the daughter-in-law (Arati Mazumdar, played by Madhabi Mukherjee) decides to take up the job of a salesgirl in order, to support her family (Vetticad, 2020). As opposed to the film discussed above, *Mahanagar* is narrated from the point of view of the female protagonist, Arati. In spite, of that the character of Subrata (Arati’s husband, played by Anil Chatterjee) stands out. The film introduces Arati as the perfect middle class homemaker - a loving wife to her husband, a dutiful mother and sister-in-law; even caring daughter-in-law to her husband’s parents, Priyagopal and Sarojini (Chattopadhyay, 2017). Poverty-stricken as the Mazumdar’s were Subrata was unable to make the ends meet with his job at the ‘Jagat Dhatri Bank’ and private tuitions. Unable to see Subrata being overburdened with responsibilities, Arati takes a firm stand that she would want to do a job to help the family. At first, even though Subrata resented, later he was the one who took the initiative of finding the job and enthusiastically supported her throughout the application process. When Arati got selected, Subrata found it difficult to break the news to his parents, especially to his father who had to run a joint family as well, but he supported his wife’s social independence, and summed the entire situation saying “*Se jug aar e jug ek noy Baba, dinkal bodlehe!*” which translates to, ‘Times are changing father, and one must adjust according to it’ (Mahanagar, 1963). When Arati faced hurdles at the home front, Subrata kept supporting her, and during initial days even encouraged her to push the shackles and step into the world beyond the four walls. However, as the story progresses we see that Subrata in the ‘face of domestic dissension’ withdraws his support as he feels threatened and requests Arati to quit the job (Chattopadhyay, 2017). But, before Arati could quit her job, reality strikes hard at Subrata’s jealousy towards his wife’s better performance at work that he had to lose his full-time job. Left with no other option, Subrata allows Arati to keep her job. After losing his job and Arati getting a raise at work at the same time, fills Subrata with insecurities - on one such occasion he even distances himself from his wife. But, as the story goes through a roller coaster ride of emotions and insecurities, Subrata restores his unconditional support towards his wife when she revolts against her boss’s unjust behavior towards her Anglo-Indian colleague, Edith.

SUBRATA: “Tumi jah korecho ami tah korteh partam nah! Amar sahosh e kulotona.”
(*I do not have the courage to what you did, Arati*)

Even as Arati worries about the future as the couple remains unemployed, a very important conversation takes place between the two.

SUBRATA: “Bhoyer ki ache ami toh royechi tomar pashe.” (*Why are you scared? I am always there with you*)

ARATI: “Tumi acho?” (*Are you?*)

SUBRATA: “Thakbona?” (*Why won't I?*)

ARATI: “Etoh boro sohor etoh gulo chakri. Dujoner modhe ekjon o ki pabona chakri?” (*Such a big city, so many job opportunities...but will either of us get a job?*)

SUBRATA: “Amar bishwas dujonei pabo!” (*I believe both of us will get ...*)

Ray ends the story by depicting how Subrata fights his stereotypical notion of women's performance, rather than being an aggressive male who, unable to bear his wife's success, calls off the marriage, as depicted in Hrishikesh Mukherjee's *Abhimaan* (Pride, 1973). Subrata, on the other-hand, is an every-man's story. Stereotypical notions exist, humans have vices, but it's important how they fight them. Bollywood today, tries to portray the male protagonist similar to 'Subrata' who supports their wives - in the best of times and the worst as well. What is most endearing about this film is that, even though it is a woman-centric film the characters don't overlap allowing each to empower themselves. A striking similarity with Ray's *Mahanagar*(1963) can be found in the Bollywood movie, *Tumhari Sulu* (2017) featuring Vidya Balan as 'Sulu' and Manav Kaul as 'Ashok'. Initially, the couple is supportive of each other and Ashok helps Sulu find a job. But soon grows jealous of her wife's success. Resentment sets in deeper as Asok's career rots and problems creep in. But, soon they reconcile and Asok lends his unconditional support in 'Sulu'. Important to note that like 'Subrata' even 'Asok' was supportive then grew jealous, but only to evolve and emerge as a supportive spouse.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the two films - *Mahanagar* (1963) and *Nayak* (1966), it is evident that the radical and tough male portrayal of the 1960s in Bollywood film industry, is contrasted highly against the men portrayed by Satyajit Ray who has a factor of universality attached to it. Ray's portrayal of men was something overlooked by the Indian audience highly influenced by the Bollywood films but holds great relevance today. The way he portrayed his women and men characters complementing each other, one can easily see how he envisaged a liberal and progressive society where each gender coexist not over-power the other. Indeed, it is a mirror to the 21st century portrayal of male protagonists in Bollywood who are seen breaking social stereotypes and gendered norms. Innumerable articles, books and research papers analyzing Ray's films lay the foundation of the strong female characters that have been portrayed, but through this study it is evident that not only the female protagonists but even in women-centric films the male protagonists of Ray are strong and independent. They struggle, they fall but ultimately evolve through the narrative. The filmmaker par excellence, voices not only the desires and thoughts of women but also, of men in a hauntingly real fashion. Ray's films didn't scream their messages but told them subtly crafted with perfection that people refer back to even today.

To conclude, the study fulfills its objective of understanding the portrayal of men and how Ray through his films broke the 'stereotypes' that existed during that time. The study however suffers some limitations due to constraints of time and resources. It referred to only two films, there other films by Ray produced during that time, which can be taken into

consideration and studied further. All in all, one must understand that this patriarchy and stereotyping doesn't only affect women but also men at large. The transformation of the society is slow considering, Bollywood keeps making films like 'Kabir Singh (2019)' and Sooryavanshi. However this does not undermine the number of gender-progressive films made which tries to remedy the damage Bollywood has caused to both individuals in particular and society at large.

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