

Qn: Based on your reading of the lesson “ Project Tiger”, Prepare a write up on the topic, “the reverence and respect the animal actors of Hollywood enjoyed from their co actors and directors.”

The memoir Project Tiger by the legendary film maker Satyajit Ray opens up those untouched aspects of film making especially using animals. He was really awestruck at the unbeatable Hollywood film crew in casting trained animals par excellence in their films. In this memoir, Ray goes eloquent about the respect and reverence the animal actors enjoyed in Hollywood. Compared to Hollywood, our Indian film industry was just taking baby steps by then.

Satyajit Ray jots down few of those wonderful moments where he was blessed to witness those exclusive shoots with strange and unbelievable stories. It was a time when super star animal actor Rin tin tin and Lassie ruled the roost. They were just miracles in front of the camera and they did anything and every thing with utmost perfection. It is said that behind every trained animal actor, there is the deft hand of a dedicated trainer. The trainer develops an emotional bond with the animal and hence they could make them perform anything effortlessly. And as for their remuneration, well, there are no hushed negotiations done under blankets. These animal actors were highly paid, sometimes far more than human actors. Their owners could really make a fortune with one single film. When we come to the respect they earned, it was nothing less of a celebrity star. Something so huge and appalling. These animal actors were really paid good attention and even their mood swings were taken care of, while at the shoot. If they aren't really in a sportive mood, they aren't pestered or dragged into. Instead human actors act for them while they watch it in leisure. Ray talks about the stand-ins. He remembers one such strange incident while he was at Disney studio years back to watch a shoot. The hero of the film was a huge dog. It was customary there, for the actors to be present when the cameraman makes the lights ready. Because these actors have to show the cameraman how they will walk, or where they will stand in a particular shot. In the case of celebrity super stars who shuttle from one location to another with a thickly

packed schedule, this is done by stand-ins. And the stars themselves arrive very late only when the lights are ready. But back there in Disney studio Ray could spot a few actors moving about in the set and the protagonist, the same large dog was lying quiet in a corner. At the repeated shouts of the camera man, every one gets ready except the dog. It sat as if stubborn. What amazed Ray, to his wits end was a dwarf followed by another man carrying a hairy dog skin. To his perfect amazement, the dwarf went down on all the fours on a chalk mark just like an animal and the dogskin was draped over him and he crawled from one mark to another. Ray writes that he just could not believe that human actors were being paid to be the dog's stand-in. Such was the space earmarked for each of those wonderful animal actors who go on amusing the audience. Ray's memoir was remarkably informative and educational as well. It really helps to widen the perspectives of film making.

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