

Heroes and celebrities

Back in the twentieth century there was a British punk rock song that repeated over and over again the claim that there were "no more heroes anymore". Calmer critics and social commentators have agreed that the age of the hero is over. In the past people had heroes. They were the most prominent figures in the public consciousness -(1).....- proud, noble leaders and bold pioneers.

The myth of the hero, though, could not survive when public life came to be dominated by the mass media. The mass media killed off the heroes and replaced them with celebrities. To become a celebrity what matters is not so much the greatness of what you have done but the exposure you are given in the media.

The mass media is not solely responsible for the death of the hero. A democratic culture also undermines the idea that certain individuals carry a divine spark and are therefore in a category superior to that of the rest of us.(2).....

The critical gaze of the psychologist and sociologist have also entered public consciousness, adding to the forces tearing down the statues of the past.....(3)....., an obsession with his mother or being spurned by a lover; and his great ambition is said to stem from an early inability to simply hang out with the boys and have a good time. The achievements remain but the man himself emerges from the analysis without a shred of nobility.

Having killed the hero we have replaced him with a distinctively modern public figure: the celebrity. As one commentator put it:.....(4)..... Any exposure in the media helps to increase someone's status as a celebrity. Celebrities offer exclusive stories to increase their exposure, the media promote them to increase their ratings, and we collude by paying so much attention to the glossy features, the exclusive interviews, and the various scandals and intrigues. They have no reason to object to invasions of their private lives because this just keeps their names on everyone's lips, which is all that really matters.

To become a celebrity it is more important to have a good press agent than it is to be a big achiever,.....(5)..... It is in these fields that being a household name is the key to clinching the next big contract and the next lucrative advertising deal. With cleverly crafted media events in which managers collaborate with magazine editors and programme directors it is possible to give these figures a level of exposure which is out of all proportion to their actual achievements.

For many people, the heroes of the past were an inspiration, they broadened our horizons by giving us an example of a course of action that could be considered noble. Celebrities, on the other hand, with the string of stories about their hardships and their lucky breaks, their affairs and their break-ups, prove to be nothing out of the ordinary. Reading about their lives does not inspire us or fill us with purpose. If it isn't just an idle diversion - a way of killing time - it may well help us to resign ourselves to our own sense of purposelessness. It may be fun, but perhaps something that helped to raise the tone of public life has been lost.

- A. No one deserves to be worshipped and there is a revulsion at the idea of bending the knee and kissing the hand of another individual.
- B. people who had achieved great things, people who had done great deeds
- C. the celebrity has become famous through reality TV shows, they are vain and willing to exploit other people.
- D. The drives of a great individual are seen to have their roots in an unhappy youth
- E. which is one of the reasons why figures from the worlds of light entertainment and sports are some of the most successful celebrities
- F. the celebrity is a person who is known for being well-known

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