

Satyajit ray's first original screenplay

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The film was first conceived to take place in a large mansion, but Ray later decided to film it in the famous hill town, using the many shades of light and mist to reflect the tension in the drama. An amused Ray noted that while his script allowed shooting to be possible under any lighting conditions, a commercial film contingent present at the same time in Darjeeling failed to shoot a single shot as they only wanted to do so in sunshine.. " fact remains that Ray shot this film with masterfully chosen available light conditions(read: no reflectors, you morons! to depict the subtle interplay of light and shade to blend in with progress of the storyline! (as an aside ray recounts the sad story of a Bollywood film crew who arrived in Darjeeling at the same time as ray's team, and were still waiting for the elusive sun to arrive so they could begin shooting by the time ray had his whole film in the can and packed up to go home!) the climactic scene of the kanchenjunga suddenly making a brilliant appearance at the penultimate hour never fails to bring out goosebumps! efinitely recommended. The single most noteworthy feature about this movie is the equivalence of real time (total time of the day being depicted in movie) and movie time (total screening time). At least among the Indian movie makers, Ray is the first one who had done such experiment and of course, he succeeded comprehensively. It depicts a real time event of 100 minutes on screen. So, in order to understand 'the drama' it's recommended to understand his language to the extent possible.

It comprise snapshots of various human characteristics like pride, simplicity, carnal desires, thoughtlessness, romance, heroism and above all triumph of human spirits over conventional, social idiosyncrasy. All this happens in the

hill station of Darjeeling, in the lap of nature with the picturesque eastern Himalayas in the backdrop. It is mentionable that the background of all the above characters, their thought process and behavioral traits have been brilliantly presented through series of well conceived dialogues. Yes, only dialogues. No third person narratives. No visual manifestation in terms of flash back, dream sequences etc.

In fact, the master storyteller has been able to generate such an evocative dialogue sequences that at the end of the film, the audience acquire full capacity to judge each and every character in the light of respective rationale. It is also noteworthy that Ray's characters never surpass the humane status quo. They reflect relevant cognitive behavior and contextual influences. Be it " Siddhartha" in Pratiksha or " Arindam" in Nayak, one can never expect Ray's protagonists molded in typical ubermanesque image in stark contrast to the so-called Heroes of Hollywood and Bollywood.

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This refined gentleman also depicts a prosaic approach towards conjugality and life in general. Towards the end he displays an extremely liberal and tolerant attitude, which is commendable in the realms of dominating,

patriarchal association. Any write-up on Kanchenjunga would remain unfinished if it doesn't mention the incorporation of 'nature' that accentuated the varied moods of the film -- An overcast evening to suggest unfavorable circumstances, mist to render underlying tension and sunshine to portray agreeable settlement.

Finally the mighty Kanchengha with all its splendor depict celebration of hope and aspiration. However, Ray has managed to remain an aloof and neutral presenter throughout the process of the film, which adds to the aesthetics of this cinematic masterpiece. This Ray film is fraught with imagery, symbolism, metaphors and weaves in a few independent stories together to culminate into an understanding of the human psyche.

Coming to Kanchenjunga (the name belongs to the world's third tallest mountain peak which is said to be elusive to human eye as it's perennially clouded due to fog), the film follows a group of tourists on vacation in Darjeeling, a hill station - the first thing that comes to your mind is just how fraught the film is with metaphors- linking the human mind and attitudes to nature's marvels- thereby the dense fog which prevents our protagonist (played mesmerisingly by Chabi Biswas) from seeing Kanchenjunga clearly is symbolic of his myopic opinions and it is lifted in the last scene where after stripping himself away from all his erstwhile prejudices, he is able to view Kanchejunga for the first time. But, in the end, Kanchenjunga remains a film about human emotions which also talks about the socio- economic divide and dwells into the complex inflexible minds of some of us. The appropriate use of the natural lighting & weather conditions (may be the best in Ray's career).