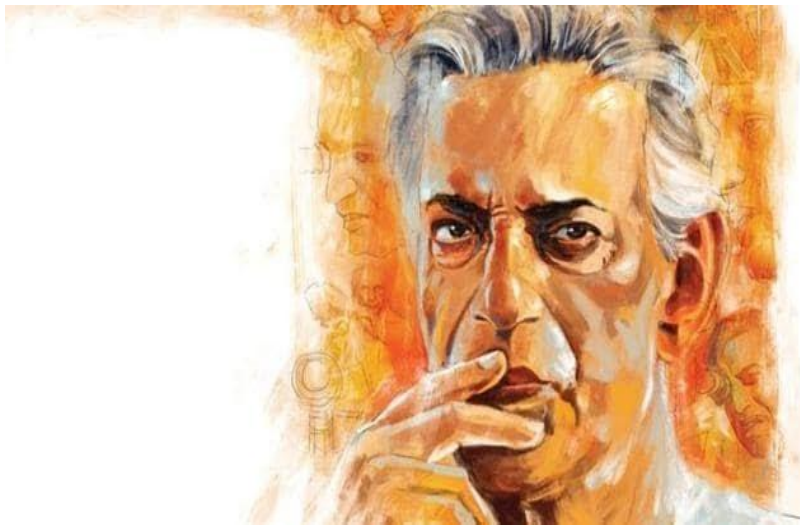


HT SCHOOL

Satyajit Ray: A Master of World Cinema

Film director, writer and illustrator, he won world recognition for Indian cinema with the 1955 film Pather Panchali (The Song of the Road) and its sequels Aparajito (1956, The Unvanquished) and Apur Sansar (1959, The World of Apu), together referred to as the Apu Trilogy.



Among the dozen or so great masters of world cinema, Satyajit Ray is known for his humanistic approach to cinema. His films were made in Bengali and yet are of universal interest.(Illustration: Mohit Suneja)

Born in Kolkata on May 2, 1921, Ray was an only child of Sukumar Ray, writer and illustrator of Bengali nonsense verse and Suprabha Ray. Satyajit, who was not yet three when his father died in 1923, was raised by his mother. He studied at a government school and later on at Presidency College, Kolkata. He joined Kala Bhavan, the art school at Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan where he was exposed to Indian and other Eastern art and learnt to appreciate both eastern and western cultures.

INTO THE WORLD

He worked for DJ Keymer, a British-owned advertising agency, now Ogilvy & Mather, and soon became its art director. He also worked for a publishing house Signet Press as a commercial illustrator. When

Ray decided to make his debut film Pather Panchali, he was unable to raise money from skeptical producers who distrusted a first-time director with such unconventional ideas, Britannica.com quoted W Andrew Robinson as saying. Shooting began only in late 1952, when Ray used his own resources and the rest came from the W Bengal government's roadways department.

At India's 3rd National Film Awards in 1955, it was named the Best Feature Film and Best Bengali Feature Film. The next year, it competed for the Palme d'Or at Cannes, where it won Best Human Document and an OCIC Award – Special Mention. The Apu trilogy as a whole was included in critic Roger Ebert's list of '100 Great Movies' in 2001 and in Time's All-Time 100 best movies list in 2005

Ray married cousin Bijoya Das in 1949 and they had a son, Sandip, who is also a film director.

DIVERSE INTERESTS

Ray was also a composer, writer and graphic designer. He revived the children's magazine Sandesh (which his grandfather had started in 1913) and edited it until his death in 1992. Ray was fascinated by typography, both Bengali and English, and produced many innovative advertising campaigns. His designs of typefaces Ray Roman and Ray Bizarre won international awards in 1971.

Creator of detective Feluda, his assistant Topse, Jatayu and the sci-fi character Prof Shanku, Ray achieved huge popularity as a children's author. His short stories and novellas for children are some of the best-sellers of the Bengali publishing industry.

UNIQUE FEATURES

Ray, among the dozen or so great masters of world cinema, is known for a humanistic approach to cinema. His films were made in Bengali and yet are of universal interest. In 1978, the organising committee of

the Berlin Film Festival ranked him as one of the three all-time best directors.

The musical fantasy *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* was his most successful film commercially. He came up with a sequel titled *Hirak Rajar Deshe*, which, experts said, targeted the Emergency imposed by late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

He was awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1985 and the French Legion d'Honneur award in 1987. He received the Padma Bhushan in 1965 and the nation's highest civilian honour, Bharat Ratna, in 1992, shortly before his death. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences conferred on him an honorary Oscar in 1992 for Lifetime Achievement.

Interesting Facts:

1.Ray was awarded an honorary doctorate by Oxford University, making him only the second film personality to receive the honour after Charlie Chaplin. He also won an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement in the sixties.

2.Ray visited Japan and met filmmaker Akira Kurosawa. It was a stimulating meeting that offered the great filmmakers the chance to acquaint themselves better with aspects such as each other's outlook on cinema.

3.Ray designed logos for Sahitya Academy, Rupa Publications and other organisations. He designed the original cover for Jawaharlal Nehru's *Discovery of India* and embedded his typographic style into art.

4.A unique talent which Ray possessed was his excellent ability to whistle. After hearing a symphony a couple of times, he could whistle the entire composition easily. He also recreated the sounds of nature, like bird calls, by whistling.

5.Ray's first passion was music, particularly Western classical. He mostly listened only to Western classical music and not Hindustani classical or even Rabindra Sangeet, though he knew these genres very well.

(SOURCES: SATYAJITRAY.ORG, BRITANNICA.COM, WIKIPEDIA)

Reference:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/ht-school/satyajit-ray-a-master-of-world-cinema/story-VSlOiolEjPZrdWFeFMq5eI.html>