

Document Citation

Title	A major film by a major artist
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Contemporary Films/McGraw-Hill</i>
Date	
Type	distributor materials
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Aranyer din ratri (Days and nights in the forest), Ray, Satyajit, 1970

"A MAJOR FILM BY A MAJOR ARTIST"

"IT adds years to your life,' the young men from Calcutta in Satyajit Ray's 'Days and Nights in the Forest' say of the country quiet, and it's easy to believe. Ray's images are so emotionally saturated that they become suspended in time and, in some cases, fixed forever. Satyajit Ray's films can give rise to a more complex feeling of happiness in me than the work of any other director. I think it must be because our involvement with his characters is so direct that we are caught up in a blend of the fully accessible and the inexplicable, the redolent, the mysterious. We accept the resolutions he effects not merely as resolutions of the stories but as truths of human experience. Yet it isn't only a matter of thinking, Yes, this is the way it is. What we assent to is only a component of the pattern of associations in his films; to tell the stories does not begin to suggest what the films call to mind or why they're so moving. There is always a residue of feeling that isn't resolved. Two young men sprawled on a porch after a hot journey, a drunken group doing the Twist in the dark on a country road, Sharmila Tagore's face lit by a cigarette lighter, her undulating walk in a sari—the images are suffused with feeling and become overwhelmingly, sometimes unbearably beautiful. The emotions that are imminent may never develop, but we're left with the sense of a limitless yet perhaps harmonious natural drama that the characters are part of. There are always larger, deeper associations impending; we recognize the presence of the mythic in the ordinary. And it's the mythic we're left with after the ordinary has been (temporarily) resolved.

On the surface, it is a lyrical romantic comedy about four educated young men from Calcutta driving together for a few days in the country, their interrelations, and what happens to them in the forest, which is both actual and metaphorical.

• • •

No artist has done more than Satyajit Ray to make us reevaluate the commonplace. And only one or two other film artists of his generation—he's just past fifty—can make a masterpiece that is so lucid and so inexhaustibly rich. At one point, the four young blades and the two women sit in a circle on picnic blankets and play a memory game that might be called Let Us Now Praise Famous Men; it's a pity that James Agee didn't live to see the films of Satyajit Ray, which fulfill Agee's dreams."

—PAULINE KAEI

THE NEW YORKER
MARCH 17, 1973



For rental information about DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE FOREST (1970) and other Satyajit Ray films: TAGORE (1960); CHARULATA—THE LONELY WIFE (1964); NAYAK—THE HERO (1966) and a free descriptive catalog featuring over 250 classic foreign and American films, write to:

Contemporary/McGraw-Hill Films

1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10020