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Ray Hits With 'The Adversary'

By Anita Earle

Satyajit Ray's "The Adversary," shown Thursday at the Film Festival, is a very illuminating example of Ray's ability to create not just a characterization, but a person, by weaving the atmosphere of a life and pitting a particular human against all of its varying colors.

The setting is present-day Calcutta and the person a 25-year-old medical student (Dhritiman Chatterjee) who is forced to drop out of school when his father dies and leaves the family with insufficient funds. His days are spent in constant and fruitless job interviews with impetuous reactionaries. "Did you lose interest in studying medicine? Why are you applying for a job as a botanist?"

"I also have a degree in botany." "Do you like flowers?" "Not unqualifiedly; I like some more than others."

EVENT

When they ask him what he considers the most important event of the past decade, he thinks and re-



D. CHATTERJEE
Caught

plies "The Vietnam war." "Not the moon shot?"

He answers that the moon shot was predictable, but that no one had anticipated the extraordinary courage and staying power of the Vietnamese. "Are you a Communist?" "I don't think one has to be a Communist

to admire the Vietnamese people." "You haven't answered the question." And so it goes.

Chatterjee finds himself caught in what he feels is a deteriorating moral fabric in his milieu, and at the same time up against perilous financial straits which seem to require compromise at every turn.

His sister is apparently having an obligatory affair with her boss; if he can find a job, his sister can resign. He constantly thinks of his sister in terms of their childhood together, and cares very much for her. He is a civilized person who feels—not at all in a smug or stuffy way—the responsibility of his own actions and inactions: the moral man in an immoral situation.

HUMOR

He also has a sense of humor, which shows in a won-

derfully funny scene in which a girl's aunt tries to swallow an aspirin, and again in a conversation with his revolutionary young brother.

His humor vanishes, though, when his pressures finally become too great, and he lashes out with violence at the way job applicants are treated—forced to stand for hours in unbearable heat until one of them faints.

(The goon faction of the Festival audience naturally cheered when he chose a violent solution to his difficult circumstance.)

The rhythm of the dialogue, the delicacy and subtlety of Ray's photography and the attention to poetic detail are all memorable.

This is one Festival film that clearly deserves a long commercial run.