

**6th Chidananda Dasgupta Memorial Competition 2025: Certificate of Merit**

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**Sen and Sensibility: An Analytical Study**



Communism or existentialism - which is more important? Various questions arise. There is a conflict, a dare to ask questions. Sometimes, confusion and doubt arise, leading to mental clashes within one's personal mind. The clash between the inner and outer mind. These have been told in respect of the film '*Chalchittro Ekhon*' directed by AnjanDutt.

'*Chalchittro Ekhon*' is not totally a biopic of the legendary director Mrinal Sen. When a human being transforms in to a legend, some myths grow. Mrinal Sen is a legend but not a star-director. So, comparatively, he is more down-to-earth than other directors. For this, myth is not synonymous with Mrinal Sen. Anjan portrays that personality from real life to reel life.

The original film '*Chalchittro*' (Dir: Mrinal Sen) was released in 1981. There are huge differences between the Calcutta of the 80s and today's Kolkata. The characteristics of Kolkata have vastly changed. The transition from joint family to nuclear family has occurred. In Anjan's film, '*Chalchittro Ekhon*', more importance is given to two generations, Kunal Sen (acted by Anjan Dutt) and Ranjan (acted by Sayan).

This movie is a reflection of a two-generation ideological viewpoint. In the time of bloodshed, this film is not only a period piece but also a kaleidoscope of two generations in the city. Two separated ideologies have been indicated. Besides this, the character of Kunal

Sen says: 'I love Calcutta, I hate Calcutta'. Kunal Sen is the embodiment of Mrinal Sen, but he is not a replica or carbon copy of him. This film should not be treated in the light of 1981. Ranjan has a theatre group, and he is a group leader. Director Kunal Sen sees his theatre acting and gives him a chance to act in his film. From here, a dual relationship builds up between them.

There are differences between both generations. Kunal Sen believes in collective work, whereas Ranjan believes in existentialism. The total scenario is happening in Kolkata. Primarily, Director Sen's Calcutta is full of middle-class and lower-class life. Class struggle is prominent there. Anjan has seen this Calcutta. He also observes today's Kolkata. Modern Kolkata is not only based on flat culture or shopping malls. There is a hidden, another Kolkata, which exists parallelly. That is present now also and never wipes out.

In this context, a relevant poetry of Shankha Ghosh is significant: 'That was the Kolkata we have seen in our young age... I was alive and attracted everyone... And more so, we knew that a new society would form... And in front of our eyes, the absolute change would take place through revolution... Judgement would be done by lower-class people... But it was not in the recent future...' The '*BabuMoshai*' (Babu of Kolkata, i.e. upper class) making his property more and more...'

The Babumoshai of Calcutta is true in past time and present. Within this Kolkata, College Street bookstalls exist then and now. Narrow lanes, suffocation is located in the mind of rickshaw pullers, book sellers, etc. It is significant of their class struggle. Included with new vehicles named Uber, Rapido, and many more.

Mrinal Sen is a left-wing communist. But he does not mix with prototype communists all the time. A free-thinking and open air is always transmitted in his mind. As

a result of this transmission, he searched for "My World" ('Aamar Bhuban') among people of other cultures. Anjan-Mrinal's relationship aspect is captured in "*Chalchitra Ekhon*". One believes in existentialism, and the other is a leftist. But no one ever overlaps. Kunal Sen (Actually Mrinal Sen) is a creative person and wants to sow the seeds of his creativity in Ranjan. This ideology has both infiltrated their lives unknowingly. A kind of magic; it is happening subconsciously. At the beginning of the film, Anjan says, 'A timeless tale of Mrinal Sen and AnjanDutt'. So, Anjan Dutt and Mrinal Sen are not just a product of 1981's film '*Chalchitro*'. An endless journey from 1981 to 2025 or beyond. Even if the landscape of Kolkata changes, the character of the two classes will also change. But they will not disappear.

Akira Kurosawa paid tribute to Van Gogh in an episode of his '*Dreams*' from his own perspective. It was never a Van Gogh biopic. Anjan also pays tribute to his mentor in a unique way. Spontaneous in the style of French Nouvelle Vague or French New Wave Cinema. Continuing the treatment of the moving image through a handheld camera. Jump cuts and match cuts distinguish real life and reel life inside the cinema.

Ranjan asks Kunal Sen, 'Do you know how many thousands of people have been killed by the Khmer Rouge, Cambodian Communist Party; they following Mao Zedong's ideology? How many people did your Joseph Stalin send to the gulag to make them gay and homosexual?' This dialogue puts Communism in the face of question. Mrinal Sen gave importance to all ideologies. The embrace of Ranjan and Kunal Sen is the embrace of two opposite ideologies. Two opposite ideologies meet at a certain point. And that point is friendship.

In fact, '*Chalchitra Ekhon*' is now basically a tribute to Anjan's mentor. This tribute is more cerebral than emotional. Now let's come to the psychological explanation of

Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism. They prioritize individual freedom over the collective or group. A state of meaninglessness and extreme freedom is influenced by anxiety and fear. Ranjan's character in the film '*Chalchitra Ekhon*' shows this characteristic. Ranjan's heart is worried about his career; the crisis of uncertainty is clear.

Anjan's personal life is a reflection on Ranjan's character. In fact, director Anjan himself has portrayed himself through the film. Actor Sayan in Ranjan's role has used Anjan's mannerism, like shrugging his shoulders. His acting is not method acting. Substituting reality, Sayan is the director's actor. Anjan Dutt portrays Mrinal Sen's personality. Mrinal Sen never speaks loudly in his personal life and career. In this film, director Anjan did not mimic Mrinal Sen for the appropriate dramatization of the character. He has shown the special acting of some possible life sketches. Anjan has shown the attachment and detachment with the character very beautifully. His acting belongs to natural acting. Bidipta Chakraborty, Shuvashish Mukherjee, Sekhar Das, Rupankar, Suprobhat have fulfilled the demands of supporting characters. Music is another asset of this film. The songs are contemporary. The songs are another character of the film. The songs have gone beyond the Indian melody, rhythm, and scale. Therefore, judging by the standards of rhythm will not be a proper assessment.

'Here's nothing going on/Here's everything going on/Here's how colorful...' There is no pathos at all in this tune. But if you look for the reading between the scene, you'll find Mrinal and Anjan's inner vision. 'A long time of pain like yours is accumulated / The result of holding back a long time of pain / The bottom of my tongue is dry like you / Tears like yours. Who are you? You are the daily life of our people, the pain, sorrow, sweat, the struggle of life, and the joy and

sorrow of very personal relationships'. As if the moods of Anjan and Mrinal's mind are captured in the songs.

Now coming to the editing. The speed of the film has been intentionally made faster, and thus the rhythm of the editing has been increased. There are some excellent jump cuts to capture the mood of the new wave film. Anjan and Mrinal have some similarities in their way of filming. That similarity is not intentional. Both are fans of European films.

Now let's come to the makeup of the film. Many prosthetic makeup is used in Bengali movies. Anjan did not make Mrinal Sen's face exactly with the help of prosthetic makeup. Because not the face, Mrinal Sen's thinking is the main way of this film. Geeta Sen here is Mita. Mita's (Bidipta Chakraborty) face is not like Geeta Sen. That method is adopted here as well. And every character's makeup is formed in that way.

The firmness of a filmmaker's personality, affection, love for his younger is evident in Anjan's performance. It can be said that there are two forms of a man. The first is to become the director. The second step is the human Mrinal Sen. Who always celebrated life. Anjan has passed two more steps beyond his own being. Personal Mrinal Sen and Director Mrinal Sen.

One of Anjan's own songs is notable: 'No matter how old you are; Seventy or sixteen/Will you be my friend?' Original song by Bob Dylan.

The inspiration of Anjan's song is from that song. He composed this song many years ago. After all these years; this song is relevant again. Mrinal and Anjan's relationship crossed the barrier of time and created an exceptional precedent in this film. It is possible to establish artistic relations through friendship regardless of caste, religion, ideology. Anjan Dutt's telefilms and other films are very humane. Direct politics or

political films do not dominate there. A relationship can be found in his films. By watching '*Byomkesh*', one realizes that it is a relationship story beyond the thriller genre. Anjan's '*Dutt V/S Dutt*' is an autobiographical fiction. '*Ranjana Aami Aar Ashbona*'--- slightly autobiographical but essentially a story of a musician's transformation.

There can always be a transition in the film's thematic thinking. It is not desirable to be there. Aristotle said about acting in the book '*Poetics*' --- '*Imitation of an action*'. Based on this quotation, it can be said that this action is not just organ movement; also an inner psychological method is there. In Stanislavsky's words --- Psychotechnics. In this case, emotional memory is very important. Emotional memory is essential in the life of any human being. Anjan uses emotional memory again and again. When the subject is Mrinal Sen; more youthful

nostalgia has worked in this case. Anjan has maintained the right balance of emotions with his film language. When the flow of art emerges from direct life and its full application is appropriate, there is no hypocrisy in that work. Let's say a little change of context; Jean Luc Godard's '*Passion*' or '*Passio*' film. While directing the film, Godard faced various financial problems. He made this reality a part of the film. Anjan didn't do that, he kept many parts of the film as collaborators in memory. A director actually makes many films throughout his life. Many parts of his life come out in his various films. In fact he sees his life from various perspectives. His various films are the product of various events. Godard's famous quote --- '*Cinema is the most beautiful fraud in the world*'. Anjan's film looks like ---- Cinema is the honest craft, capturing 24 frames per second.

Cited from: --- '*Imitation of an action*' (*Poetics*- Aristotle)

'Cinema is the most beautiful fraud in the world' ([www.brainquote.com](http://www.brainquote.com))

#### Acknowledgement:

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