

**Rituporno's *First Person*
An Inward Journey**

Barnali Sikder, M.A., B.Ed.



Rituporno (1963-2013)

Courtesy: www.currentbooks.com

Thinking Differently

Rituporno Ghosh was a creative genius. As a filmmaker his contribution is known to all but as a writer he is exposed to the world through the publication of *First Person*. *First Person* vol-1 and vol-2 edited by Nila Bandyopadhyay, and published by Deys Publishing is a compilation of Rituporno Ghosh's column called **First Person** in *Sangbad Protidin: Robbar*. With the publication of *First Person* in 2013, posthumously Rituporno Ghosh is revealed as a person who could think differently.

Visualizing Life and Experience with Cinematic Understanding

Written in Bengali these two volumes are subdivided into twelve chapters, namely. *Elomelo Deshkal*, *Bishmito Anbeshan*, *Mone Elo*, *Antor Mahal*, *Charitgatha*, *Eligi*, *Chayachobi*,

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Kotha O Kobita, Pothik, Utshob, Prosongo Robbar, bichitrita.. In every chapter we get to know a new shade of Ghosh. He has tried to visualize life and its every experience with a cinematic understanding. Ghosh's acute observation and his strong vibrant voice is the soul of *First Person*. Here he is in the charge of telling out his pain, his truth, his anxieties, his art, and his never ending thrust of moving ahead. In a nut shell, *First Person* is the mirror of Ghosh's existence.

A Revolutionary Fighting Against Every Obstacle

We can call him revolutionary when we read him writing about issues like Nandigram, M F Hussain's painting of Saraswati, Suchitra Sen's seclusion, and even about his own single status. Beyond this revolutionary nature readers can easily catch a normal- sensitive person who tries to fight against every obstacle of his life. For this reason Ghosh can indulge himself in wrapping out the bright and colorful picture of Kolkata through the window of a hospital room – which he compares with the process of “back projection” (185) a technique used in old cinemas.



Rituporno

Courtesy: www.ndtv.com

Film is His Passion and Life – Hope and Lament

Film is his passion, his poetry, and his life. His interest in film developed watching Satyajit Ray, and his inspiration of giving life to moving pictures came from his reading of Rabindranath Tagore. *First Person* is full of references of Tagore's presence in Ghosh's life. His

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journey towards success accompanies hope and lament – as can be seen and read in the lives of Tagore and Satyajit Ray.

Aesthetic Language – Cinematizing Reality

Rituporno's style and language in this book is brilliantly aesthetic. His observation and view come together in his reflective expressions. It is his capacity of cinematizing reality which is evident enough in every page of *First Person*. It appears as if his narrative is ornamented with audio visual effect just like a cinema. The acquired quality of a director -- drives its readers towards visualizing the truth which is seen through the focal lens of a camera. These cinematic expressions come alive in Bengali. Keeping Tagore and Satyajit Ray at the back of his mind he has knitted a web of realistic experiences which directly connect with the readers.

Bold to Discuss Issues

Rituporno Ghosh is incomplete without cinema. From the first page of this book till the end of it, his love, passion and aspiration for cinema can be clearly pointed out. In his writing he has thoroughly acclaimed the works of many of his contemporaries and even of those who have contributed a lot in making the world of cinema magical. We can feel the presence of Rinadi or Aparna Sen, Prosenjit and many others in his life as an inevitable part. When he cannot avoid writing about Prity Zinta's comment on Borkha, how can he forget about M F Hussain and his tragic journey? It was his brave and repulsive nature which forced him to write about those issues which we generally avoid discussing. He is vocal when he writes about *Elomelo Deshkal*. In the same way his strong voice can be heard in a different tone in the last chapter *Bichitrita*.

Glimpse of a Pending Script

The second part of *First Person* begins with the chapter *Chayachobi*, which means cinema. In the chapter *Chayachobi* Ghosh presents the reader the delight of getting the first glimpse of his pending script of a film which was supposed to be produced by Ishkon. Ishkon suspended its decision of producing the film claiming that the script is written from the point of view of an artist not from the point of view of a devotee. The first ten pages of the script are deliberately presented here as Ghosh aims at sharing his creation with the expected audiences who may be his readers also. Justifying the title of this chapter along with the ten pages of a film

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script, here he focuses on his journey as a film maker. From our discussion on the first chapter of the second part of *First Person* if we glide directly to the last chapter of it we the readers get a variation in his chosen topic of discussion. He ends up with a small discussion on a particular place ‘Chandimandap’ which glitters in colour during the time of Durgapuja, Basantipuja, Jagadhatri puja, but after puja this place serves as a restroom for passengers, judgment place for the villagers, a platform of discussion for political party leaders and so on. Here Ghosh has questioned the existence of this kind of *pandals* in modern times, calling these *pandals* as a holy place of democracy.

A Wide Spectrum of Rituporno’s Vision

First Person is a great read. Rituporno Ghosh has presented a wide spectrum of his cinematic vision through his words in *First Person*. The strong poetic quality of his narrative gives justification to his subjective account. Nila Bondopadhaya’s arrangement and editing is exceptionally good which helps the reader to dig out new layers of the narrative in every page they turn.

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