man. The growth of this man is deeply influenced by the death of the female figures in his life -- his sister, his mother, and finally his wife. If we compare Ray's depiction of Apu's trajectory towards modernity, and Bibhutibhushan Banerjee's resolution of the Apu character in relation to the female characters in the novel, perhaps the nationalistic ambiguity in Ray's representation of women will become apparent.

Banerjee's notion of modernity was vested in English education, scientific knowledge and in being able to relate the personal to the universal. Ray's Apu displays similar qualities, only, his freedom as an individual is far more liberating than Banerjee's narrative. Banerjee's narrative runs on the fuel of nostalgia which drives the story back to *Nischindipur*, whereas Ray's Apu seems to have little problem letting go of attachments, other than Aparna. Ray's Apu also surrenders to nature in the face of the tragedy, but emerges again as a responsible father carrying Kajol on his shoulders, and the viewers are left to ponder where this couple will end up.

If Ray had made the decision to take the father and son back to *Nischindipur* it would have given the film a whole new closure, coming back to the starting point again almost like repeating a ritual, but Ray is far too modernist for it. Ray's modernist interpretation of the closure of the trilogy emphasizes the notion of human freedom, mobility, and progress -- however, the women still fall behind.

A sharp contrast between Apu and Durga is created in Ray's *Pather Panchali*. Apu's instrumental waking up scene (*Pather Panchali*) is initiated by Durga. She gets him ready for school, and he is on his way to progress. Durga is the child closer to animals and Indir, whereas Apu is closer to the more important members of the family, Harihar and Sarbajaya. The death of an old widow from the narrative of modernity was witnessed by young Durga, a girl who is also a burden to the national progress. Durga's story is not one of freedom and glory, however, it is not questioned why, but answered by Apu's success. Apu makes the journey, that is why Durga does not.

When the children go to watch the train it is Apu's perspective that is emphasized, not Durga's. In Ray's narrative Durga is linked to the natural and Apu to the modern. Apu, sitting down with his parents and his sister at night, strains his ears for the train's sound. When the train finally comes and he runs the overwhelming affect of speed is marvelous! Apu is related to the material, the velocity, the possibility of moving out of Harihar's failed masculinity and Indir, Durga, and Sarbajaya's inherently inadequate femininity.

Durga dies right after wholeheartedly accepting the monsoon water, her final destiny of death comes after her surrender to nature, she almost dissolves into it. Apu, on the contrary, survives the rain, he also lives through his surrender to nature (reference to *Apur Sansar)*. Durga's beating is observed by him, he knows her darkest secrets, and before leaving the village he throws the stolen necklace into the pond. The moss slowly closes up, thus closing the story of Durga the unwanted female child, as Apu sits on a bullock cart to ride on a train to Benaras.

**Durga's beating is observed by him, he knows her darkest secrets, and before leaving the village he throws the stolen necklace into the pond. The moss slowly closes up, thus closing the story of Durga the unwanted female child, as Apu sits on a bullock cart to ride on a train to Benaras.**

In *Apur Sansar,* Aparna is also equated with nature by Ray. Apu is taken out of the urban backdrop to a strikingly different backdrop of an East Bengal village for his unplanned wedding. He takes on the role of saving the bride from the original lunatic match, and we see him on his wedding night speaking to himself, speaking to his wife, moving through the scene, as Ray's mise en scene places Aparna on the far right corner of the screen calmly bowing her head. In Ray's narrative Aparna is a burden for the superstitious rural village, a woman whose death will be instrumental in diverting Apu to nature, thus pushing the narrative to a final resolution.

Ray's natural antithesis to Western materialistic modernity depends on the death of the women in his films. Women, who represent nature, push Apu to his ultimate triumph of modernity. Ray creates a contrast between Aparna and Apu, which is again absent in the book. Aparna is bothered by the train noise, whereas it is almost a part of Apu's life. Aparna kills cockroaches and breaks coals for the breakfast fire while Apu obliviously plays his flute. When Apu attempts to get another job to afford a maid, Aparna is surprisingly calm, and says: "quit the tuition you have now, and my poor husband will come home to spend the evening with me." This romantic and self-sacrificing speech is not indigenous to Banerjee's book, but planted by Ray.

When Aparna goes to the village her letter arrives in Calcutta. As Apu reads the letter Aparna's calm and sweet voice brings back the quaintness and melody of the rural natural village. Her voice is punctuated by urban interruptions, but when Apu starts reading it again the sense of bliss is re-established. When she dies Apu has to surrender to nature and give up his novel. Nature does not consume Apu as it did Aparna and Durga, but gives him back to life with the strength to carry on, and take responsibility of his son. In Ray's narrative Apu's surrender to nature is the natural antithesis to Western material modernity.

Apu's mother Sarbajaya is not fully equated with nature because she is the material source for his higher education. It is with the money she earned as a maid in Benaras that Apu is able to go to school in *Manshapota,* and later go to Calcutta. His concern for his mother in the film is negligible, whereas in the book his concerns and his longing for her are emphasized. In the book Apu feels special pride in sending his mother ten taka by money order, whereas in the