

Artificial Eye



Satyajit Ray
The Apu Trilogy

'Ray's magic, the simple poetry of his images and their emotional impact will always stay with me' Martin Scorsese



Apu Trilogy and the Novel

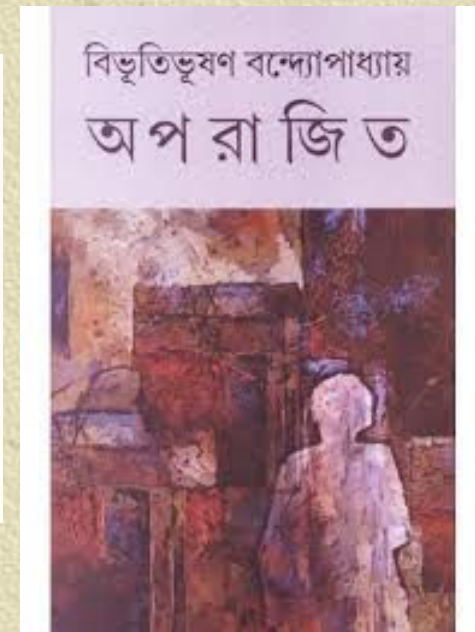
Prologue

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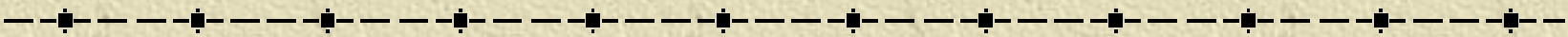
The authorand the book...



✱ **Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay** (12 September 1894 – 1 November 1950) was an Indian Bengali author and one of the leading writers of modern Bengali literature. His best known work is the autobiographical novel *Pather Panchali* (*The Song of the Road*), which was later adapted (along with *Aparajito*, the sequel) into The Apu Trilogy of films directed by Satyajit Ray. **He's considered to be one of the unlucky few who were close to win a Nobel prize for literature**, but couldn't because of his lack of resources to translate his work in English.



Critical reception of the book.... A cult classic in Indian Literature.



Bibhutibhushan wrote 16 novels, and over two hundred short stories; his style as a Bengali novelist has been compared to Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay.

- ✦ *Pather Panchali* is considered Bibhutibhushan's masterpiece and is included in the ICSE syllabus for students choosing to study Bengali. Author Humayun Azad opined that the novel form of *Pather Panchali* is superior to its cinematic rendition. Azad's view is not necessarily a commonly held one in the West, though, as the *Apu Trilogy* is considered among the finest films in the history of cinema - the unavailability of a complete English translation of the novel means that English-speaking audiences have difficulty engaging with the debate (the available translation by T. W. Clark and Tarapada Mukherji is a truncated version). **However, in the Bengali-speaking world, the stature of the novel is not contested.**
- ✦ Amit Chaudhuri has translated a few excerpts from the novel for inclusion in the anthology, *The Picador Book of Modern Indian Literature*. In his introduction to these excerpts, Chaudhuri writes: "Unique for its tenderness and poetry ... *Pather Panchali* rejects both nineteenth-century realism and social realism (the social milieu described in it would have logically lent itself to the latter) for an inquiry into perception and memory
- ✦ Martin Seymour-Smith, in his *Guide to Modern World Literature* (1973), describes Bibhutibhushan (he uses the form Banerji) as "perhaps the best of all modern Indian novelists", going on to write that "**probably nothing in twentieth-century Indian literature, in prose or poetry, comes to the level of *Pather Panchali***".

Apu Trilogy The films.



The Apu Trilogy comprises three Bengali films directed by Satyajit Ray: *Pather Panchali* (1955), *Aparajito* (1956) and *Apur Sansar* (*The World of Apu*) (1959). They are based on two Bengali novels written by Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay: *Pather Panchali* (1929) and *Aparajito* (1932). The original music for the films was composed by Ravi Shankar.

- ✦ The trilogy is a milestone in Indian cinema and remains one of the most acclaimed works in the Parallel Cinema movement. The three films went on to win many national and international awards, including three National Film Awards and seven awards from the Cannes, Berlin and Venice Film Festivals. They are today frequently listed among the greatest films of all time and are often cited as the greatest movies in the history of Indian cinema.
- ✦ Produced on a shoestring budget (*Pather Panchali* had a budget of roughly ₹ 150,000 (\$45,300 – equivalent to \$400,200 in 2015)) using an amateur cast and crew, it grossed \$536,364 in 1955, worldwide.



masters on the trilogy....

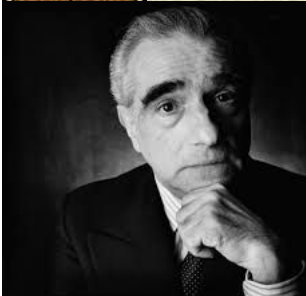


✦ "I can never forget the excitement in my mind after seeing it (Pather Panchali). It is the kind of cinema that flows with the serenity and nobility of a big river."

- Akira Kurosawa



✦ "I was in high school and I happened to see 'Pather Panchali' on television. Dubbed in English. With commercials. "It didn't matter. It didn't matter. The image of the Indian culture we had had before, and I'm talking I was 14 years old or 15 years old, were usually through colonialist eyes. And when Satyajit Ray did his films you suddenly not understood the culture because the culture was so complex but you became attached to the culture through the people, and it didn't matter what they were speaking, what they were wearing, what their customs were. Their customs were very, very interesting and surprising, and you suddenly began to realize there are other cultures in the world. Ray's magic, the simple poetry of his images and their emotional impact, will always stay with me"

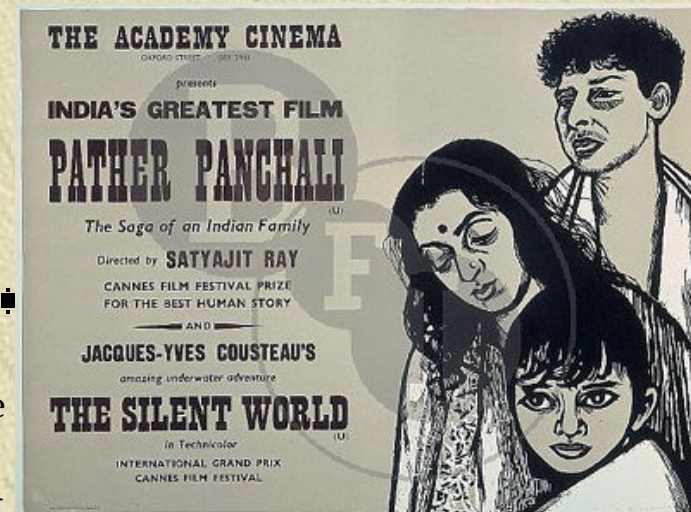


- Martin Scorsese



Trilogy plots.....

The three films comprise a "coming of age" narrative in the vein of a bildungsroman; they describe the childhood, education and early maturity of a young Bengali named Apu (Apurba Kumar Roy) in the early part of the 20th century.



- * *Pather Panchali* (Bengali, "Song of the Little Road")
Apu's early experiences in rural Bengal as the son of a poor but high caste family are presented. Apu's father Harihar, a Brahmin, has difficulty in supporting his family. After the death of Apu's sister, Durga, the family moves to the holy city of Benares.
- * *Aparajito* (Bengali, "The Unvanquished")
The family's finances are still precarious. After his father dies there, Apu and his mother Sarbajaya come back to a village in Bengal. Despite unrelenting poverty, Apu manages to get formal schooling and turns out to be a brilliant student. The growing Apu comes into conflict with his mother. Later, when his mother dies too, he has to learn to live alone.
- * *Apur Sansar* (Bengali, "The World of Apu")
Attempting to become a writer, Apu accidentally finds himself pressured to marry a girl whose mother rejected her mentally ill bridegroom on the day of their wedding. Their blossoming marriage ends in her death in childbirth, after which the despairing Apu abandons his child, but eventually returns to accept his responsibilities.

Critical reception

"A
MAJOR
WORK
OF
ART!
STUNNINGLY
BEAUTIFUL"
—Time

"A TRULY GREAT, ORIGINAL PICTURE FROM INDIA!"

At long intervals over the years there have been a few, totally unexpected, unforgettable films that attempt and achieve a reality strikingly different from contemporary efforts. Such a picture is 'PATHER PANCHALI'... A film to be treasured, seen again!"

N. Y. Post

"★★★★ HITS YOU RIGHT IN THE HEART... penetrating drama... interspersed with gentle humor... the acting is impeccable."

N. Y. Daily News

"UNUSUAL... REMARKABLY SENSITIVE... as poetic as the wind ruffling the lily pads. There is beauty and earthiness. The music is magnificent. An experience you will not soon forget."

N. Y. Herald Tribune

Winner of 5 Grand Prizes at World Film Festivals



"Pather Panchali"

"A MASTERPIECE"
—Vogue

"RHAPSODIC"
World Telegram

"INSPIRED"
—Daily Mirror

"A UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE"

... 'Pather Panchali' is a picture of India of a sort we have not yet had—not even in Jean Renoir's 'The River' nor in Robert Flaherty's 'Elephant Boy.'

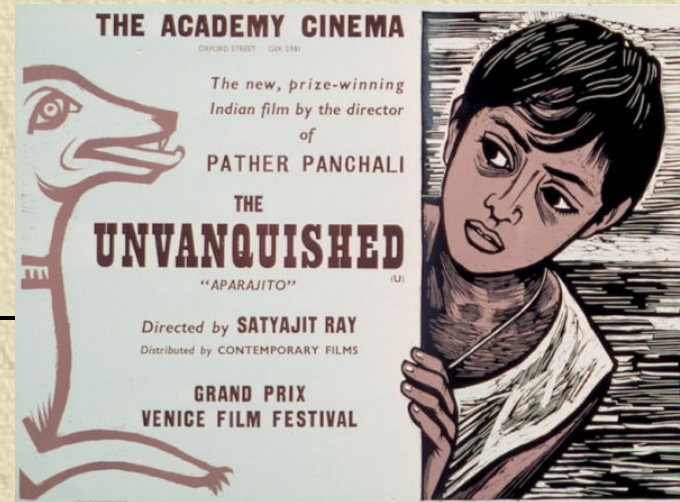
—Bosley Crowther, N. Y. Times

"A national epic." —Saturday Review

Directed by Satyajit Ray Music by Ravi Shankar
Presented by Edward Harrison

This trilogy is considered by critics around the globe to rank among the greatest achievements of Indian film, and it is established as one of the most historically important cinematic debuts. Pather Panchali won at least thirteen international prizes (including Best Human Document at the 1956 Cannes Film Festival), followed by eleven international prizes for Aparajito (including the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival) and numerous other awards for Apur Sansar (including the Sutherland Trophy at the London Film Festival).

awards and nominations...



National awards

President's Medals

Winner - 1955 - President's Gold & Silver Medals (New Delhi) - *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road)

Winner - 1959 - President's Gold Medal (New Delhi) - *Apur Sansar* (The World of Apu)

National Film Awards

Winner - 1956 - **Best Film** - *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road)

Winner - 1956 - **Best Feature Film in Bengali** - *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road)

Winner - 1960 - **Best Film** - *Apur Sansar* (The World of Apu)

International film festivals

Cannes Film Festival

Winner - 1956 - Best Human Document - *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road)

Winner - 1956 - **OCIC Award** (Special Mention) - *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road)

Nominated - 1956 - **Golden Palm for Best Film** - *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road)

Venice Film Festival

Winner - 1957 - **Golden Lion of St. Mark for Best Film** - *Aparajito* (The Unvanquished)

Winner - 1957 - Cinema Nuovo Award - *Aparajito* (The Unvanquished)

Winner - 1957 - Critics Award - *Aparajito* (The Unvanquished)

Berlin International Film Festival

Winner - 1957 - **Selznick Golden Laurel for Best Film** - *Pather Panchali* (Song of the Little Road)

Winner - 1960 - **Selznick Golden Laurel for Best Film** - *Aparajito* (The Unvanquished)

More recognitions across the globe.....the legacy of the trilogy...

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- ✦ British Film Institute Awards, London Film Festival
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1957 - FIPRESCI Award - Aparajito (*The Unvanquished*)
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1960 - Sutherland Trophy for Best Original And Imaginative Film - Apur Sansar (*The World of Apu*)
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1980 - Wington Award - Apu Trilogy (for each film)^[64]
 - ✦ Edinburgh International Film Festival
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1956 - Diploma of Merit - Pather Panchali (*Song of the Little Road*)
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1960 - Diploma of Merit - Apur Sansar (*The World of Apu*)
 - ✦ San Francisco International Film Festival
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1957 - Golden Gate for Best Picture - Pather Panchali (*Song of the Little Road*)
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1957 - Golden Gate for Best Director - Pather Panchali (*Song of the Little Road*) - Satyajit Ray
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1958 - Golden Gate for Best Picture - Aparajito (*The Unvanquished*)
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1958 - Golden Gate for Best Director - Aparajito (*The Unvanquished*) - Satyajit Ray
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1958 - International Critics' Award - Aparajito (*The Unvanquished*)
 - ✦ Vancouver International Film Festival
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1958 - Best Film - Pather Panchali (*Song of the Little Road*)
 - ✦ New York Film Festival
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1959 - Best Foreign Film - Pather Panchali (*Song of the Little Road*)
 - ✦ Stratford Film Festival
 - ✦ **Winner** - 1958 - Critics' Award for Best Film - Pather Panchali (*Song of the Little Road*)

✦ **Other international awards**

✦ **National Board of Review Awards** (United States)

✦ **Winner - 1958 - Best Foreign Film - Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road)**

✦ **Winner - 1960 - Best Foreign Film - Apur Sansar (The World of Apu)^[63]**

✦ **Kinema Junpo Awards** (Tokyo)

✦ **Winner - 1967 - Best Foreign Film - Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road) ^[65]**

✦ **Bodil Awards** (Denmark) ^[66]

✦ **Winner - 1967 - Best Non-European Film - Aparajito (The Unvanquished)**

✦ **Winner - 1969 - Best Non-European Film - Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road)**

✦ **British Academy Film Awards** (United Kingdom)

✦ **Nominated - 1958 - BAFTA Award for Best Film - Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road)**

✦ **Nominated - 1959 - BAFTA Award for Best Film - Aparajito (The Unvanquished)**

✦ **Nominated - 1959 - BAFTA Award for Best Foreign Actress - Aparajito (The Unvanquished) - Karuna Banerjee**

✦ **Nominated - 1962 - BAFTA Award for Best Film - Apur Sansar (The World of Apu)**

✦ **Other awards**

✦ **Winner - 1956 Golden Carbao (Manila) - Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road)**

✦ **Winner - 1956 Vatican Award (Rome) - Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road)**

✦ **Winner - 1958-1959 Golden Laurel for Best Foreign Film (United States) - Aparajito (The Unvanquished)**