

Round and round the rugged
rock, rugged lovers run the race

+ PASSION +
+ PARADE +



Billing
and
wooing . . .

In bed
and bored

and a lot
of cuddling
too !

**In any formula set-up, there's nothing better than a few digressions
on Young Love. Thus the director said 'Let there be romance, and
there was a love scene**

...and the love scene-drome

SOFT music. A setting sun. Birds chirping, flying home-wards. And a boy and a girl in some woodland.

Nice scene? Wait. It isn't complete yet. There's also the strategically-placed vegetation. The trees are spaced out at intervals that facilitate a long chase. The bushes are designed to hide an amorous look.

And then the boy breaks into a song. Rapturous and sweet-sounding. There's appropriately romantic background noise. The girl reciprocates. The boy chases the girl. The girl giggles, evades his grasp, begins the chase around the trees and bushes. The boy follows, spouting poetry at every leap.

Five minutes of peek-a-boo later, the duet runs out of words. The song ends, and the boy succeeds in catching the girl. They go into a really close close-up.

The director shouts "Cut!" That ends the love scene.

Hindi films and love scenes are inseparable. Oh yes, the violence is there, the twists in the story, the father who has run away from his family, the son bent on becoming a latter-day Dick Whittington. But give me Hindi films without love

scenes, and I'll count them on my finger tips.

It's time someone tried to examine the phenomenon of love scenes in Hindi films. It all began long ago, when most of today's young people weren't even born, when silent movies ran in a couple of theatres. Imagine the crucial moment when glance meets glance, when sparks fly, when hearts thud in unison, and the boy and the girl fall head over heels for each other. I wonder how they conveyed it on the screen. Perhaps the subtitle read: "O-o-o-o meri rani! O-o-o-o mere raja!" with appropriate music, and the audience gasped in ecstasy.

In any commercial formula set-up, there's nothing better than a few digressions on Young Love. Thus the director said Let there be Romance, and there was a Love Scene. The number of films that turned out successful because of the

masterful love scenes they presented must be legion. For a romance-starved young people, Love scenes were veritable manna.

Things have changed since the Silence Era. People are more educated, increasingly questioning. Old methods are

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discarded like heroine's costumes. The director of the modern Hindi film has to explain the falling-in-love event with a plausible motive. This makes the story-writer's job difficult. He has to try and cook up a different situation in every new story, but all of them have to end with a boy falling in love with a girl. But the story writer is brilliant. That's why we get so many variations in Love Scenes. But long ago, the entire gamut was exhausted. And so the Salims and the Javeds have burst on the Hindi film firmament, with yet newer ways of falling in love.

In the unvarnished tales of love, the boy and the girl meet. Don't ask me how. The film would never end if they didn't. Perhaps it's in a crowded bus, or in zoo, or in a queue for cinema tickets. But they meet. The boy immediately flips for the girl. Sometimes as particularly bold writer has the girl flipping for the boy. International Women's Year, you know. After the flip comes the first overture. Normally the boy finds out (he's got an army of informers bigger than the one Sherlock Holmes had) where the girl is staying, who her father is, how much she's worth and where she's studying.

The girl invariably lives in a posh bungalow. The boy is poor, struggling to eke out a living. The girl's father is either a big executive or a police officer. The boy therefore joins the firm as a clerk or enlists as a constable. Either way, he soon worms his way into the Saab's confidence. The Saab thinks he is a very nice young man. The nice young man is invited for lunch at the Saab's place. There he meets the girl of his dreams. All this happens in ten minutes on the screen. The rest of the film, you see, will be devoted to how he woos her.

This is where the story writer comes into his element. Sometimes the boy rescues the girl from a mad bull, or he saves her father. Anyway, the girl is grateful for whatever he's done. Begins the process of realisation that she's falling in love with that nice young man.

Suddenly you wonder where the poor young man got such a flashy outfit. Perhaps he's hired it from a costumer's. He invites the girl out to a park. If he invited her out for a movie, it would be difficult to picture the great moment when the girl falls completely in love with him.



Acrobatics,
gymnastics
and ballet too!

Such difficult scenes are left to directors from the West to picture, like in *Summer of 42*.

Once they are in the park, the young man proceeds to discourse on the beauty of nature. Soon, the girl, who has been shy all along, begins to smile. The smile activates the young man's vocal chords, an invisible band strikes up and the young man bursts into song. And what a song! And, wonder of wonders, the girl, who has been a rather dumpy little collegian so far, suddenly finds she can sing too, and thus a duet is born.

It hardly matters whether the young man and the girl are capable of composing a song at a moment's notice, but they suddenly begin to warble in voices that strangely resemble Kishore Kumar's or Lata Mangeshkar's. Either way, the audience sits back and waits for what it knows will follow, namely, the main love scene.

Over the years, the main love

scene has gone through many stages of development. There was a time when the scene had the boy and the girl coyly exchanging glances, with low-key music; the boy and the girl beginning to run towards each other, with slightly louder music; and finally, the boy and the girl meeting in the middle of some field, with the music reaching a crescendo, and the boy sweeping the girl off her feet. Climax!

Nowadays the directors and the stars are getting to be bolder and bolder. This is the age of the sizzling love scenes, with very suggestive gestures, more suggestive looks, most suggestive dialogue, and finally, the intimate clinch, wrestler style. If there's a bed on which the lovey-dovey wrestlers can collapse, all the better. But the crux of the situation lies in the fact that at the crucial moment, when the boy's face is close to the girl's, when she's in his arms, when the breathing is ap-

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propriately heavy, the camera chooses to swing away in *pavitra phashion* and zooms in on a ceiling fan, or the window. And if the love scene is shot outdoors, on a pair of birds or a suggestive close-ups of two buds. The moment has come and passed, and the lovelorn young men in the audience are left licking their chops.

With the advent of the sensitive films, the off-beat films, the story writer has had to incorporate off-beat love scenes in his script. So we have the non-conformist love scene — there are no songs, no countryside scenes, no buds. There is sheer realism — the boy and the girl sitting across a table in a sleazy restaurant, (remember the boy is poor) and sipping cups of tea. The camera zeroes on a fly Kamikaze style, which buzzes around and finally drops into the girl's cup. The boy interrupts his dissertation on

Marx, Freud or Plato and ostentatiously orders another cup of tea for the girl. That is how the intellectual love scene takes place — the girl appreciates this gesture so much she falls in love with the guy. All for an extra 25 paise!

Of course, there are infinite variations in the love scene. I am only giving you a few examples. Think of how nice it would be to fall in love on a foreign locale — somewhere in Europe!

Which is all very well for the younger sections of the audience. But when in real life, the young man after getting the girl of his dreams to accompany him to a park, or a zoo, or sleazy joint he discovers that, he can't break into songs nor is there hidden orchestra; with Kishore Kumar to sing for him. What is important there is no fly to fall in the girl's tea cup.

Chaitanya Kalbag

REVIEW

Dharam Karam

PREMNATH in a bid to save his little son from the smuggler king, sits in an auditorium with beads of sweat running down his fleshy face. The moment that's over and the great showman Ashok (Raj Kapoor) announces cheerfully that he's a father, you know what 'Shankar Dada' Premnath is going to do.

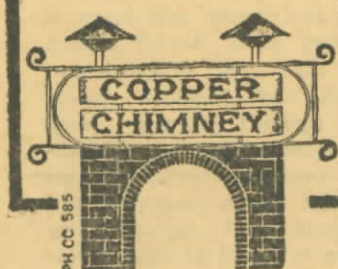
And you're right. The babies are switched. And they grow up to prove that blood is thicker than water and environment has nothing to do with the son of a gonda (Narendranath) growing up to be like his dad while Ashok Saab's podgy offspring (Randhir) sings away to glory, some of R. D. Burman's loud compositions which bear no R. K. stamp on them.

For that matter, the rest of the film too has no resemblance to ones that have generally come out of the R. K. camp. Try as you might, the film doesn't entertain at all. Too long, too loud. Performances go unnoticed—except for saving grace Raj Kapoor.

—NB

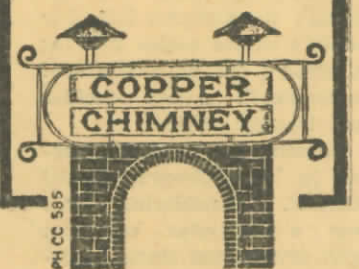


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