

CINEMATICS SEMANTICS

MAGIC MOMENTS

-ten best ever Bimal Royish scenes

More art with less matter!

Cinema may be ranked as top composite art form because it recreates on silver screen virtual life and for the viewers lots of vicarious pleasure, not infrequently drawing them with their heart, mind and soul in into its charms' seducing vortices. It is comprehensive art form anyway involving a myriad technology, material as well as spiritual, naturally geared to depicting intensity of life, confusions of living, inadequacies of society, diversity as complexity of characters, but also guide to the way forward- the story, the telling, the trial, the tribulation, comedy and the tragedy all 'ganging up' into building argument, development, 'epitasis', crescendos, and the denouements. The camera works up the beauty froths of the visual; the musician creates the emotion intense feel as from song and the wrenches of *tugs at heart surges* depicting background music or just as well director conjured golden silence deepening the overall impact on viewer who oftentimes identifies self with characters triggering many a catharsis. Of course, motion within frames, the life blood of cinema, has been steadily embellishing the proceedings- the hand gesture, the finger stab, the muscle twitch, the eye wonders, the mudras spewing out flames of the nine *Rasaas*. That is like high charge, the steely tension in the occurrence, hence cinema art's very spice capable of holding the viewer as spell bound as lost in the 1001 Arabian Nights like engrossing mazes, all by itself. It is this particular point of cinema which on occasion leads to creation of celluloid magical moments. I shall here treat of ten such high points culled from Indian commercial cinema.

The first one I pick is from Raj Kapoor's Aawara; the child birth on a side street as the mother is thrown out of the home. It is rough patch all of it, literal as the metaphorical, dark, cold and wet, flooding with rain, the pouring rain itself deepening the pathos, the winds at howling mingling with the mother's labor screams, moreover heightened by a chorus playing in background which waxes eloquent on life's ironies. Just then the baby's first cry is heard heralding Aawara birth, lending to story line its turning point, the punch, the startling start.

My second pick is from Bimal Roy's Sujata. The outcaste girl has just realized her feeling within herself that swell, the surge of the first flush of love. Just as that happens, the camera catches a large frond in 'swirl dance'. That says it all making the viewer actually see and feel the glow of first love!

Next, the protagonist is still dazed by his new idyllic milieu, the mystique of it, the mystery no less ringing around as the handling's central theme as he opens window, curious, keen to regard the recurring haunting Madhumati melody. There it is, the melody in full flow's resonance as the scene takes viewer over entire moving mountain panorama swayed by echoes of enchantingly playing Salil Chaudhary flutes. This movie teems with magic moment scenes of the exuberant variety anyway.

Celluloid magic scales its peak heights when Bimal Roy has charge of action. It happens in Do Bigha Zameen on a number of occasions, as at the celebration of first rain falling over 'parched' emaciated farmers, not only their parched lands dying of thirst. How they break into dance! How the poet captures their little hearts' winsome excitements, their souls' little joys in measured 'rainy' words! How the musician lends his own charm and finally how the hero tricks his unwilling spouse out into flooding compound to make her partake of the one off experience of the first monsoon outburst! Rhythms are astir, miens are ecstatic, the earth itself in fulfillment's raptures, the cloud all of one big guest showering kindness on waiting expectant living beings, from humans on to birds and flowers, winds and the howls, leaves and the grasses! It is all of it a pure celluloid rhapsody!

In good competition is the scene from Bandini as the movie is winding up. Coincidence brings the two terribly troubled protagonists together at a junction. There they sit waiting in silence, unaware of each other's presence across a thin partition. Well! It does come to rendezvous, and how! One's helpless matched by the other's tearing torment to be or not to be! Past their catharsis, resigned to fate, rather empty of feel and thought, they stare into void in complete silence. Ah! What soul pricking prelude to precipitate denouement! Suddenly, out of nowhere spring up strings, beginning to pluck at already surcharged heart strings, a telling case of composer exulting, in his creativity's elements- or is it the tenth heaven- exuding sheer genius. The sigh rushes out, the song takes its flight, the mendicant gesturing its Bols dwelling on queerest runs of life and therein too showing that silver lining which is our savior when we are in dumps, almost demolished by despair. The song plays its part in the drama splendidly, once again letting the poet touch summits of his fine art, as then torment ends, mists of doubt clear and the Ganga pure lady, determined and resolved, finds her place there where it really belongs, in the destined mate's arms. Lo! The slanting world is set straight, the large steamer smoke column trailing on, telling unmistakably in its own thick sooty tongue, even as distant horizon conjures up, love does beget love. All it takes is devotion to truthfulness at testing times.

There is the absolute picture of pathos in Parkh, the heroine not knowing any further, what now, and how, standing haplessly by the window staring into life's void as she turns, of some resolves, lights an earthen lamp- an Indian icon really- walks towards deity even as the background score lays bare the intensity of her 'trauma'. The song itself is perhaps the finest ever poetry, at once fluid, divine, capped by finest ever rendering with minimal choral voices for accompaniment. If there is subtlest cinema magic, this is it! The poet yet again rises to the occasion superbly.

The hero comes up with Dhol as, above, rumbling monsoon clouds gather and begin to thunder. As soon it begins to rain and the toys selling girl couples on to two urchins, the three doing a rain dance song. It is a heavy downpour such as is the way among Western Ghats. So too are our players in the song sequence, all of one song and dance's heavy downpour! For once cinema takes on imagination's wings a la V. Shantaram.

In this superlative instance, an unemployed starving poet, whiling his time in a public park, begins to regard a Bharamrah play around flowers and suck nectars. Just then it

lands on grass and as soon tramples it a boot of a passer by crushing it, ending nature's mirth's innocent playful game. It is highly moving metaphor for tragedy of life as run in deficient societies. All joy, all zest for living evanesces the moment it comes within touching distance of society made heartless humans. What contrasts of lights and shades of life! Virtue and insouciance hand in hand, moreover telling of an entire complex story in one magical moment of cinema art. A wholesome metaphor! *Gagar Mein Sagar!* That is Guru Dutt in *Pyasa*, a genius mind at its very best!

The desperate harangued hero, not at all a thief, at long last finds solace, a safe haven in a little sweet girl's innocent talk as he breaks into quarters saving himself from the ire of organized pursuers out to kill him. He turns to her reciprocating her angelic compassion, in gratitude as it were, even as the orchestral crescendos in background are beginning to break into a song *Jaaaaago!* Just then, as *Mohan Pyare* comes on, the hero's looks brighten into a strange blissful hue as he begins to stare beyond, into the profound divine void. Those flitting moments, those such transfixed looks! Unimaginably good playing by an actor. Sheer celluloid magic moment!

An absolute charm, feast for the eye, music to ear, potion for the soul, is many a scene from *Teesri Kasam*. The cart man full of fear and apprehension in middle of jungle is down on knees praying, seeking protection, and warding off of any evil. The evocation of the situation makes out classy cinema. Or then that rustic play of singing children in pastoral environs as the cart man takes the heroin around. The merry making children mistake them for a couple, sing and dance and follow them around as is common in Indian villages. As the scene ends, and is about to fade, comes running on a semi naked tiny tot rushing to join the fun party in the distance. That is just lovely, incredible imagination, born of, I would say, divine muse!

In conclusion though I must speak of the scene behind the scenes. It is a scene of one off surrealism in human spirit. The Hindi poet Shailendra embodies it in a measure that verges on the amazing, as on our own wonderment at his art's super excellence. Seven times out of ten sits this Shailendra spirit behind magic moments described above. Therefore, I would like to end this essay by saluting the genius of Shailendra. His is indeed a chosen divine soul! At such moments you are, as it were, face to face with what the poet himself has described as *Pyar Ka Sagar* for whose one drop we such thirst. Poetry it is, then, of all the art forms, and coupled with divine music that lifts all

veils from any and every pall of mystery swaying between us mortals and that Lord
Divine!

No wonder song is so inherent to human soul!

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