

Narrating Fantasy in the Novel *Pratimayum Rajakumariyum* (The Statue and the Princes)

Sreedevi P.

Novelists sometimes have a strong persuasive intention on their readers and may use all the available resources of language to produce a powerful, emotional effect. Each writer takes the help of the medium of language to take his readers to a world which is familiar to him. Experience is the one which is not defined or varied, which at the same time can be a dream or reality, internal or external or social. A writer always leads a life which is far different from the one that live, if one goes into details.

According to Freud: The artist is one who is urged on by instinctive needs which are too clamorous: he longs to attain honour, power, riches, fame, and love of women, but he lacks the means of achieving these gratifications. So like any other, with an unsatisfied longing, he turns away from reality and transfer all his interests and his entire libido on to the creation of his wishes in the life of fantasy. (Freud, 314-315)

Padmarajan used the technique of this fantasy to narrate his novel *Pratimayum Rajakumariyum*. He also used the third-person objective perspective and tells a story without detailing any characters' thoughts, opinions, but instead gives an objective point of view. This point of view can be described as "the lens of a camera" that can only record the observable actions, but cannot visualize the thoughts going through the minds of the characters. The third-person objective is preferred in most pieces that are deliberately trying to take a neutral or unbiased view, as in newspaper articles. It is also called the third-person dramatic, because the narrator (like the audience of a drama) is neutral toward the plot — merely a commentating onlooker. Usually, his narrative is linear, with episodes. But in "Dimensions" he surprises us by charting a different path. Deliberately, he turns the story into a reflection on the art of writing a story itself, and wonders.

The living statue is one of the wonders at Fun Fort, the tourist place. In the Fun Fort there is a contest in which the winner would get free entry ticket worth thousand rupees to "Paradise on Island", if he would stimulate any response in the statue. 'The Paradise on Island' can be called the next best attraction at the Fun Fort and it was a dream of Chuppan(the so called statue at the Fun Fort) to be there once. The princess Arundhati took this as a challenge.

She tried different ways to tempt the statue, but the statue fairly moved. Though Chuppan, the statue, wanted to move and accept his failure in front of the beautiful princess, his loyalty towards the owner made him act the other way. But this win over the beautiful princess put him down. The next day he even got punished by his boss (Dheerulal) for being late for the work. But Vairam(another member in Fun Fort) saved Chuppan from the punishments. By disguising himself as Govind Narayanan, Chuppan roamed around in the city with Vairam displaying their skills. Though people were watching their performance with amusement Govind's mind was searching for the beautiful princess amidst the mob.

The princess who came to hear about the disappearance of Chuppan too did search for him. Between the activities of city, the princess spotted him. On the same night they met each other and left the city. Though they were busy among the amusements of the world the princess realized the dream of Govind to visit the 'The Paradise on Island'. As the princess thought Chuppan was being lulled up with the thought of the island in his mind, she took him there. They met Dheerulal over there; the princess was ready to hand over Chuppan, to him on some conditions. To get Chuppan Dheerulal organized a dinner on the seventeenth floor of the guest house. There Chuppan stabbed Deerulal to death and leaped down from there. He stood up pushing the weeping princess aside who thought that Chuppan had passed away. He took three steps and stood like a statue, and still stands over there as a statue. This is the subject matter of the story. While entering, the novel reminds those words which describe the imaginary power of a writer as his greatest asset. The novel begins with the narration of the fun fort:

"This is an arid land; deep beneath the skies where a road stretches over it like a ribbon evading the entire disturbance, carrying the Fun Fort at its one end and the outer world on the other end."

The owner of Fun Fort is a Marvadi. The novel itself describes him as:

"The owner of the fun fort was one Marvadi, to be exact, just one Marvadi...Dheerulal Associates, Which means the Dheerulal family. The real owner is the present Dheerulal". (*Pratimayum Rajakumariyum*, 11).

The Fun Fort of Dheerulal is said to be the narrative place in the novel, wherein he sells a lot of jokes. He drew in the leisure time and money of the people by providing entertainment for them. The English word 'leisure' appears to be derived from the Latin "licere" means 'to be permitted' or 'to be free'. Thus the word leisure is associated with a complexity of meaning in our language. Generally it is defined in terms 'time left over after work'. (Anithakumari, 182)

The main attraction of leisure is to be free from responsibilities. Modern life is slipping to a tight schedule of time, where nobody finds time to do things they wish. All are in a rat race. Due to this busy life human relations become scattered and have no values. This miserable and painful human life is celebrated here. Here means the places which sell leisure and happiness which are creations of the upper society. The visitors might have had a lot to laugh over there, But the employees didn't had much. The novel itself describes it like this:

"The 1500 employees of the fort did not really enjoy the fun in the part. Even though we may feel that there is something to laugh at...For them, as far as they were concerned this was not just fun, but a serious act." (*Pratimayum Rajakumariyum*, 12)

Padmarajan emphasizes that even at times they felt bored. Bouvman presents life as an entertainment. But a poor homeless, Jobless person cannot consider life as merry making. His ideas are proved here. (Anithakumari, 184)

'In this new world, the entertainment is based on desires of gathering. But they fail to realize that they are inhumanly cheated by someone'. To take rest is part of entertainment. In this consumer world we can see how the free time of the people is also commercialized everywhere. In order to commercialize the free time of contemporary society, visually entertaining theme parks are constructed. It is in this kind of entertaining environment where this novel takes place. Padmarajan makes use of fantasy to create such an environment. What we get from this industry is the fantasy world created by them.

Here the author has worked out the theme of the novel *Prathimayum Rajakumariyum* from the fast evolving city culture, which is an integral part of globalization. In his earlier works the writer used to portray the life in the suburban villages. Later the scenes of fast moving city culture started to show up in his works, which naturally came with the exposure to the same.

The huss and buss of city life creates a disgustful life in the cities, Padmarajan recognized that all these were the necessities of a modern man. Even then no one was ready to step aside from the mechanical and confined life. Even villagers were not avoiding their journey into cities.

Radhalakshmi Padmarajan has this to say:

"Once they had been to a place known as Golden Beach in Chennai, where a person was standing like a statue to attract people coming over there. It was from that person, Padmarajan got inspired to write the novel *Prathimayum Rajakumariyum*." (Anithakumari, 183)

The background of the story is not a fantasy. Its a reality. But he narrated this novel to present the realities of modern world through unreal realms. He uses the technique of magical realism. Magic realism is a form which is widely used in Legendry literary works like Mahabharatha, Ramayana, Puranas and folktales in India. Padmarajan's works usually had a colour of his village and system. The typical Kerala Village is an undefined abode of myths and legends where riddles of vices and virtues exist. In which events are described realistically, but in a magical haze of strange local customs and beliefs.

The writer had a leap into the fantasy world in the novel. In the Fun Fort the statue was a reality. In this Context we should remember that a novelist is a person who looks upon his experiences through his Kaleidoscope. Here lies the importance of imagination. Reality and imagination merges together in a fantastic world created by the writer beyond place and time giving birth to a fantastic novel. Let us look how reality and imagination blends together in the novel *Prathimayum Rajakumariyum*.

In certain literary works there are human beings with super human qualities which are described as fantasy. This is different from the extra ordinary nature of the human beings found in myths and folktales. This comes under the category of characters that dwell in our surroundings either in the form of evil or divine. The same narrative fantasy is presented through Chuppan in *Prathimayum Rajakumariyum*.

"The fun fort was certainly a paradise for tourists. Every season was crowded with tourists. Birds, animals, plants groups of girls singing folk songs, shopping complex- all are present here. The murmuring statue of a gate keeper, a red turban on his head, a red crescent on his forehead, thick curled moustache red scapular resting on his shoulder. Silver bangles and diamond necklace- - with red silk around his waist. All these together make it a proud divine figure."

Here is a statue with all its masculine features in this story, the secret of this statue is unknown to others for its first year in Fun Fort. It is a tactic of Dheerulal.

"More than anyone else it is the owner himself to know the true degree of fineness of the main gate. That is a reason why he had played a trick to with hold every visitor who had come to this fort. He had a strong urge that even if the umpteen enjoyments remain in the mind, the memories of these amusements must last forever. And again come back to the fort. His calculations did not go wrong."

After a year he broke out the secret about the statue with great furore. The Statue once again attracted the attention of all the visitors who had been there for the last one year, as they came to know that it was not a statue that was standing over there, but a human being(Chuppan).

Chuppan lives in the fun fort and stands over there as a statue during the whole day, but disappears in the night to somewhere which is known to none. His deeds are super human. Thirst, hunger, weariness, aversion, love, sex which conquers ordinary man, does not seize Chuppan. With his supernatural mental ability he suppresses all his emotions. Even this suppression was mechanical. Therefore he discards this artificial world of the statue and celebrates aloud. When he reaches his own earth, there is the sight of Vairam following the statue; it is infact not the real face of the statue. Freedom to move was celebrated like a festival and the statue became restless. The speed and strength acquired by the motionless statue was amazing.

The freedom to move creates the fantasy. This novel is narrated through the eyes of Princess, Dheerulal, and Vairam. The statue is placed in the novel as Chuppan/ Statue/ Govind. For Dheerulal, the statue is mere Chuppan, for Vairam he is Govind Narayanan and for the princess he is the centre of her love.

The rich beautiful lady, Arundhathi's aim was to free the entity of the human in the statue. Even though she spends the money, beauty, pride, femininity, etc. for this, the mechanical mind of the statue maintained self control. But the temptations towards 'The Paradise on Island' tempted Chuppan inside the statue. For these Dheerulal is punished and imprisoned Chuppan, later he was rescued by Vairam. Arundhathi hears of Govindan, who performs amazing acts in cities. She doesn't feel any keen interest. But once unexpectedly she sees and recognizes him.

When the others fancy desires her, her fancy desires him, as her centre of love; she became aware of his libido in the state of the statue that stood in the wide spread sand bank. She was able to recognize the movements of the statue. She fell in love with him. Due to her love towards Govind she felt all his deeds are supernatural. The imaginary world of the love of the princess is mentioned by the statue in a brief conversation within the preface of this novel.

“The unconscious is the discourse of the other”. What this means, essentially is that human passion is itself structured by the desire of other.” (92)

Reading between the lines of ‘*Pratimayum Rajakumariyum*’, it is clear that the writer creates his other in this novel is to satisfy the needs of the other within him. In the study of *Pratimayum Rajakumariyum* done by Shaju.V.V, he creates an imaginary character called Mr. S, who did the interview with the Statue and the princess, who often tries to establish the desire of the unknown realms.

K.P Appan observes that “Where can such a story happen? And will not happen anywhere. Here what we find in that fiction becomes the alter ego of real life. But this is not a dream. This is a science of dream or a review of dream.

By placing a Philosophical doubt in the centre of the subject the novel is describing the theme. That’s why Padmarajan writes like, as if he is trying to unlock the doors of an unknown world. This is the most valuable experience that the novel gives.”

The Statue opens his mind in front of Mr. S. during the interview, ‘you and the princess should not blame me for the values of male hegemony that you absorbed. I am not interested in putting on the dress of the hero. When some men touch the things under their authority, I don’t interpret love as an authority. My subjectivity is not the problem here; the problem is your idea on it. There are many examples in history which shows the idolization of people who led an extra ordinary life. Let me say something simple. My stand facing the sea is also my rejection of your world.’

Princess’ response to Mr.S, ‘I am happy that you didn’t present me as noble house wife, but I am also a woman who wishes subordination. I can’t agree with the ideology you describe an ordinary woman.’

With this the Princess concludes the conversation with Mr. S like this, “I would rather expose myself to one, if someone whom I trust than you would pass through the story.”

Shaju V.V, through his studies, point out the concept of the patriarchal society towards about the hero and the heroine. Throughout his studies he tries to portray the mental status of both the statue and the Princess and that of the readers. When the writer tries to create fantasy in the novel through its character blend with in artificial situations, the critic over here creates fantasy within fantasy, by examining the statue and the Princes created by the novelist. If examined closely we can spot the realism in the fantasy. The critic through his face to face encounter with the character breaks down the confined feelings that have been made by Patriarchy.

“Human desire, says Lacan, is expressed in language. Yet desire for Lacan is not pre-given; and it certainly does not just magically fit with language for its own particular ends.”(19)

Likewise at times human desires come out through language. His wishes to be or not to be are expressed through this medium. On many occasions this way of seeing is practiced by the society.

Padmarajan has maintained a misogynist approach throughout the novel. Here the statue becomes a slave to her, and shows his back to the world. He can accurately objectify woman. This Ability conquered all his other abilities and rendered them unnatural. The days she spent with Govindhan made her realize that there is nothing beyond his ability and he could make all her dreams come true. Many of his superhuman talents were displayed during the days he spent with the princess.

To fulfill his dream, to be at ‘The Paradise on island’, the princess brought him there. In his stories of sea voyage, at that moment he fought with Dheerulal at the sky castle building of that island. All these create the ultimate beauty of fantasy. The novelist presents Govind who stood like *Narasimha* incarnated in front of Dheerulal as a fantastic and callous figure. Govind woke up with a wild roar that he only made in the forest. She felt as if his sound was echoing all over the island and as his body was inflating up to burst in an attempt to grow to the skies..... He raised Dheerulal to the sky and slammed him on to the earth. Dheerulal’s head got scattered by the demolishing power of that whip. At that time Govind behaves like a Robot who lacks the control over its senses, like a revengeful wild animal. Then he tries to kill the princess like Dheerulal and he prepares to throw the princess down from the seventeenth floor. But when he saw her face in the light coming from outside, his mind urges for love, and gives her freedom. Before that moment of violence fades from the mind of the reader, he creates another fantasy. With a painful mourning Govind jumps down from the sixteenth floor. When the princess heard his mourning from eternity she fainted.

When the reader gets back to reality the narrator opens the door of fantasy again. Then what we get to see in the novel is the scene in which she comes down and hugs the body of Govind. To her surprise Govind turns his head towards her. When it became dusk she felt that peace had started enveloping him. Slowly parting his legs he stood up while she was pretending to be asleep. She noticed his gaze going beyond the horizon. He took three steps forward and stood motionless. In this way the riddle of fantasy goes on with the novel. Then the novelist takes him up from there and places him as a statue beyond the horizon.

He never moved at all from there as Arundhati’s tears, cries, and appeal for forgiveness went in vain. According to K.P. Appan the role of the modern novelist is to create virtual characters that stand against reality into free imagination.

“The statue continues to stay there for a long time. It begins to rust, in the attack of the violent sea and persistent blow of salty wind. At the point where his eyes fixed, at the periphery of the promontory, mermaids would now and then raise their head above water to see him.”

This can be observed in Padmarajan’s works. Padmarajan’s imagination is not experimental. It is a journey from reality to universal truth. Though imagination instead of clearing his doubts, he paves the way to enjoy autonomously.

From the beginning to the conclusion the real and the unreal are blended with the help of imagination. This helps the readers to rise from reality into an imaginary world. The writer discovers social truths around us. Certain truths are unfolded, that few lost are neutralized with the help of fantasy. Instead of being contented with the ordinary talents a writer using his imagination travels beyond universal truth.

Padmarajan occupies a unique place in Malayalam fictions. In terms of the theme and the narrative technique this novel has done justice to his genius. Reality and fantasy co-exist in the form of the fairy tale. Padmarajan has carefully presented modern man's materialistic approach. Modern man's desires do not rest completely in the natural balance of the universe. He discovers a void for himself and creates an artificial world of his own. In late 1960's, during the initial stage of Modernism, Padmarajan started writing novels. In 1990 through his work *Pratimayum Rajakumariyum* he became the creator of the electronic age in Malayalam fiction and paved way for part modern means of communication.

Bibliography

- [1] Anithakumari, T. Padmarajan: Sahithyam, Cinema, Jeevitham. Cochin: Pranatha Books, 20007.
- [2] Chullikkad, Balachandran. Balachandran Chullikkadinte kavithakal. Kottayam: D.C. books 2000.
- [3] Freud, Sigmund. Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis. London: Hogarth Press, 1965.
- [4] P.J, Pious and pradeep Pangad. Priyapetta Padmarajan. Pulikotin Publication, 1993.
- [5] Padmarajan, P. Pratimayum Rajakumariyum. Kottayam: D. C. books, 1991.
- [6] Padmarajante Thirakathakal. 4th edition. Kottayam: D.C Books, 1984.
- [7] Itha Ividevare, Trissur: Current Books, 1997.
- [8] Nakshatrangale Kaval, 4th edition. Trissur: Current Books, 1998.
- [9] Padmarajante Kathakal. Kottayam: D.C. Books, 1998.
- [10] Radhalakshmi, Padmarajan. Padmarajan Ende Gandharvan. Kozhikode: Matrubhumi Books, 2007.
- [11] Sameeran, J.S. Padmarajan Gandharvano? Aparano? A journey through Padmarajan. Kayamkulam: Sree publications, 2001.