

My Realization of the Story.

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In the duration of this workshop I have come across several fascinating aspects of Mr. Phalke. Earlier I knew him only by a single line “The Father of Indian Cinema”, but now I know him as a person. We had the options of either choosing a story from the script that Mr. Kamal Swaroop had provided us or writing one of our own and then making a visual representation of the same. I chose the story of “1895 – Alchemy, Godhra” as when I was listening to the story I had a clear visual of the same. This appealed very much to me and I happily took up the project. I was thinking on a psychedelic representation of the same when I was handed over the second of the script with the mouse and the darkroom. This put me in a fix as my earlier version was not compatible with the new half and the problem in the earlier half was that there was no link from the first frame to the next. The second half complicated matters further. So I had to think of an entirely new model.

I was blank for several days just watching “ Prabhat ” movies in the day and Hercule Poirot’s cases in the night. Agatha Christie has always been one of my favourite authors and her creation Hercule Poirot is the epitome of logical thinking. So I became Poirot and started searching for a logical clue to visualize the entire story. It came in two forms, in the morning when Harshvardhan Kadam was showcasing his project he gave the concept that “ Asuras “ were not demons but people with a violent intent and the second was Mrs. Phalke’s statement that Mr. Phalke’s camera had brought plague to the city. In the script old Panditji turns into a lion which was a thorn in my thought and visualization and so with Harsh’s thought I saw that Panditji did not turn into a lion but he was so very angry that he became as ferocious as a lion. So I could take care of the first half. The story also depicts him as a greedy person as he has spent a considerable time trying to convert metal into gold and also wants a large amount of gold coins for decaying books that he himself does not take care of.

The author has depicted in the story a place where Mr. Phalke was making a comfortable living. In Godhra he had the support of the British and took photographs of the local kings. He was living in a “Lanka” a comfort zone where he had everything that he needed. During the plague Mr. Phalke hides a mouse who provides gold to him and co incidentally this mouse lives in a darkroom used for photography. Later in the story when the mob comes in Mr. Phalke hides the mouse in a box but the crowd beats open the box and the mouse can see it from inside. This got me thinking, how could the mouse see thru a box? How could a mouse turn something into gold? And then the truth hit me that it was not a mouse but the camera roll which if looked from apart does bear resemblance to a mouse. This meant that the mouse who gave gold was infact the photograph which changed to something of value when alchemy (developing) was performed on it. It was the most major breakthrough in my visualization.

When I had trouble with the end Mrs. Phalke came to my rescue, I already knew that in those days photography was associated with magic but not to what level. So if Mrs. Phalke can issue a statement attributing the plague to the camera others would do the exaggeration of the same. This provided me with the logic for the second half. The author had envisioned a golden mouse in the camera which I could too provide in my comic book. The misconception of the plague and the camera was also incorporated very properly in my book. By taking care of these small instances I was able to make a comic book which has a thread which links the earlier frame to the next one. I think that I was able to do justice to the story and have incorporated its essence in the graphic format

The story was very abstract in nature. To visualize both the halves of the script in the same format would have been very difficult for me and hence I abstracted the story to reality. I know how upset I get when anybody messes with my things and I have done the same with the original story. My apologies to the author for the same.

Regards,

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