NARRATIVE DEVICES IN PAñCATANTRA

Introduction

The present study, *Narrative devices in Pañcatantra*, deals with the Western concept narratology, and its application in India’s most famous didactic story *Pañcatantra*. Though narratology is a critical tool of narration in the West for the last two decades, in India, such study is still in infancy. But *Pañcatantra* is a collection of didactic stories with full scope of application, with narrative devices.

Narratology denotes a recent concern with narrative in general. It deals especially with the identification of structural elements and their diverse modes of combination, with recurrent narrative devices and with the analysis of the kinds of discourse by which a narrative is told.

*Pañcatantra* is the most popular collection of didactic fables and stories for the ordinary man, which is second only to Bible in circulation. *Pañcatantra* is so called because it is divided into five *tantras* or tactics such as *mitrabhedha, mitralābha, kakolūkīya, labdhapraṇāśa* and *aparīkṣitakāraka*. Viṣṇuśarman, the author, extracted the essence of all the celebrated works in some collective stories for the children but at the same time composed the most valuable compendium on policies. The direct intention of the author is to preach the irresponsible young princess of the ruler Amaraśakti. Thus *Pañcatantra* is essentially a didactic storybook, which
serves a number of functions like fiction, political science and ethical text in nature.

_Pañcatantra_ deals with the traditional story telling device in the most befitting manner. The floating wisdom of _Pañcatantra_’s style is simple clear and interesting. The narrator avoids long compounds and difficult constructions. The use of the frame story, the practice of emboxing stories, mixture of prose and verse, where verses are adopted to underline the moral, the introduction of sub tales, the element of soft satire, and above all the lively presentation of animal characters are the important narrative devices in _Pañcatantra_. Using these narrative devices, the narrator explains the social and political satire of all time.

The main aim of this thesis is to give a clear and comprehensive account of the narrative devices in _Pañcatantra_. For this purpose the thesis is divided in to five chapters. They are: 1) An Introduction to Narratology, 2) Origin and Reconstruction of _Pañcatantra_, 3) _Pañcatantra_: An Allegorical Method of Narration, 4) External and Internal Narrative Devices in _Pañcatantra_, and 5) The social and Political aspects of Narrative devices in _Pañcatantra_.

**Chapter I :- An Introduction to Narratology.**

Narrative theory ('narratology') is an area of research that is experiencing rapid development. Narrative theory discusses central
questions concerning human communication; it also investigates the conditions for, and form and content of, such communication.

Narratology is a theory of narrative. It examines what all narratives, and only narratives, have in common as well as what enables them to differ from one another qua narratives, and it aims to describe the narrative specific system of rules presiding over narrative production and processing. The term "narratology" is a translation of the French term 'narratology' introduced by Tzvetan Todorov in 'Grammaire du Decameron' and the theory historically falls into the tradition of Russian Formalism and French Structuralism. Narratology exemplifies the structuralist tendency to consider texts (in the broad sense of signifying matter) as rule governed ways in which human beings fashion their universe. It also exemplifies the structuralist ambition to isolate the necessary and optional components of textual types and to characterize the modes of their articulation. As such, it constitutes a subset of semiotics, the study of the factors operative in signifying systems and practices.

Chapter -II : Origin and Reconstruction of Pañcatantra.

This chapter provides a detailed note on the origin and reconstruction of Pañcatantra. The Pañcatantra, a word which means five books, is a collection of wise and witty stories. Most of the characters in it are animals, which think, talk and behave like human beings.
The date and the authorship of this work are no doubt uncertain but it is generally assigned to the third century BC. Hertal, who has done a monumental work on *Pañcatantra*, is in favour of assigning the first composition of the *Pañcatantra* to the second century BC. According to Winternitz it is one of the oldest works of Indian ornate poetry. He thinks that the date of writing of the *Pañcatantra* can be approximately between 300 and 400 AD, but he agrees that the age of the primary constituent of the *Pañcatantra* has to be placed earlier than that. The authorship and the original name which the first text of the (so-called) *Pañcatantra* bore is also uncertain. Viṣṇuśarman, the proposed author of the text in the existent work itself, appears to be as much a fictitious name as king Amaraśakti of the city of Mahilāropya in South India for whose spoiled sons the author is said to have composed these series of moral tales.

In India, the work has been even more popular. It has been translated into modern languages and re-translated into Sanskrit. It has been transformed into verse and re-transformed into prose, expanded and contracted. Not only that, most of these stories passed current as folk-tales and were gathered again in the modern collections of oral tales. It would not be an exaggeration to remark that such great popularity has not been enjoyed by any other secular book of the world.
The *Pañcatantra* developed, existed and survived in a number of recessions, and some of them are not available. These versions have been classified into the following five heads:

1. The *Tantrākhāyika*: It is preserved in two recessions, the older and the younger.

2. The text translated into Pahlavi in the sixth century: Both the original and the translation have been unfortunately lost. The translations from the Pahlavi translation into Syriac and Arabic languages do throw some light on the original and its first translation.

3. The Kāshmiri version as preserved in the recess of the *Bṛhatkathā* in Kshemendra’s version (*Bṛhatkathāmañjari*) recounts the *Pañcatantra* tales briefly without interruptions, while Somadeva (*Kathāsaritsāgara*) has added a fool’s story at the end of each book. The form in which these versions of the *Bṛhatkathā* preserve the *Pañcatantra* appears to be at a great disagreement with the original in its objective and treatment, as it has been transformed into light literature. These versions of the *Pañcatantra* do not have an independent value.

4. The south Indian *Pañcatantra*: It is an abridged selection ‘for the instruction of the boys who have learnt little’, based on a north western abridgement made after the seventh century (according to Hertal): The text preserved is close to the *Tantrākhāyika*, hence it is quite valuable as it can be used for the reproduction of the original text. A large number of recensions were produced on the basis of this
abridgement, many of which are still extant, contributing thus towards the circulation and popularity of this work.

5. A Nepalese selection of the stanzas very close to the South Indian Pañcatantra goes back to the north-western text. Hertal has made comparative studies of all available recessions of the text falling in the above five groups. The source of the Tantrākhyāyika and of the two Jaina versions is common. The source of the Southern Pañcatantra the Nepalese version, and the Hitopadeśa is also common.

Of all these versions the Tantrākhyāyika is the oldest. Hertal has rightly traced all extant versions to a common source and from the correspondence among them, he draws the conclusion that the Tantrākhyāyika provides the best picture of the original work and it can be said to stand next to the original Pañcatantra.

Chapter III:- Pañcatantra: An Allegorical Method of Narration.

In this chapter Pañcatantra’s allegorical method of narration is analyzed. The use of the frame story, the practice of emboxing stories, the emphasis on moral values, the introduction of sub tales, the element of soft satire, and above all the lively presentation of animal characters are important features of the allegorisation attempted in Pañcatantra. The monkey, the jackal, the crow, the crab, the crane, the hare, the owl, the camel, etc; provide models for characterization even in modern realistic fiction. Only the names of humans are to be substituted in place of the animals. “The variety of characters, the diversity of opinions expressed by them and the constant
interaction of narrative and discourse made the *Pañcatantra* a densely layered text.

By using birds and beasts as characters the tales are conceived as universal possibilities. Like the animation movies of our time, these characters become animated at the touch of the author’s imagination. Like live puppets, they answer to the motivations provided by the author.

**Chapter IV:- External and Internal Narrative Devices in *Pañcatantra***

This chapter deals with the external and internal narrative devices in *Pañcatantra*. The External narrative devices in *Pañcatantra* may be summarised in six groups. They are:- (1) The structure of the work with a frame story or several frame stories, one for each tantra- in a sense every tale and sub tale is framed and emboxing tales with in it, has a precedent. (2) The stories are written in prose with an admixture of illustrative aphoristic verse. (3) Stanzas introductory to the coming story, and recapitulatory stanzas, summing up its moral which in most cases, are identical with each other. (4) The title of each tale is given by means of a śloka which gives the moral of the story and also narrates the chief characters. (5) A grater effect is produced by interlocking and mixing the tales of human beings and animals, in which the different species are brought into contact with each other. (6) One of the most interesting features of *Pañcatantra* is that it does not move in the narrow circle of fables only.

Similarly the internal narrative devices in *Pañcatantra* may be summarised in six categories. They are:- (1) The naming of divisions and
characters are the important internal narrative device in *Pañcatantra*. Each
title gives a clear awareness of the contents and also the names of
characters indicate their characteristics. (2) All the stories are begun through
the repetition method. It makes a connection between past, present and
future. (3) The language is simple, clear and very interesting. Language and
the representing subject are closely related at the end of the text. (4)
Proverbs, adages and moral lessons are presented in graceful verses. In it
the proverbs are originated through the deep connection between person
and society. It is an equation from their observed knowledge. (5) The different
ideas of śāstras are included in *Pañcatantra*, especially used in
Dharmaśāstra, Arthaśātra etc. (6) The location of each tantra is in the native
place of the princes, that is Mahilāropya. It helped to make an intimacy
feeling of their surrounds.

**Chapter -V The social and Political aspects of Narrative devices in**

*Pañcatantra.*

This chapter discusses the social and political aspects of narrative
devices in *Pañcatantra*. Human nature and political maneuvers are shown
realistically and human actions and behaviours are amusingly pointed out
through the interposition of animal characters.

The stories are the chain of events. Events represents society at
many levels. These events are made on the basis of the suitable situations.
The stories represent society at many levels. Especially it emphasises in the
field of Indian rural life, social inequalities, social consciousness moral
awareness and the like. By bringing the humans and the animals together the *Pañcatantra* gives new dimensions to the interpretation of the life and the world.

In the Indian tradition *Pañcatantra* is a *nītiśāstra*, a treatise on political science and human conduct or nīti. It illustrates for the benefit of princes who may succeed to a throne, the ancient Indian principles of Rajanīti (Political science) through the interwoven stories of colourful animal tales.

The *Pañcatantra* is a book by and for men especially men of the court. The major players in court and in politics are kings and ministers. There is a court in the forest, with a king and a hierarchy of office and the duties- the four circles or mañdalas. 'it is said', speaks the narrator, 'in any city or capital, or any sort of community of people, there can be only one occupant of the lion’s post.' The lion’s post is the seat of sovereignty surrounded by the other three circles or orders of hierarchy in a state. The three orders could be ministers, courtiers or retainers, and attendants or menials or they could stand for court, city and country. The passage cited clearly draws an analogy between the human community and the natural community in the forest. The court of Piṅgalaka, king of the forest, is like any other royal court. It is a paramount state with 'ministers and others who were in his (the king’s) secret counsels'; a royal retinue, assembly, door keeper or chamber lane and attendants. The 'state' in the forests also has its share of power, politics and the motivations lying behind the play of power politics: envy, greed, ambition, jockeying for royal favour and high position.
The *Pañcatantra* like all other Indian texts on Government or the duties of a king, presents itself as intended for the instruction of king at least of future kings (prelude). But the text, is not about kings but about ministers. Kings are depicted as by and large weak, timid and stupid; what they would do without the strong guiding hand of a wise and experienced minister is anybody's guess. Every king we encounter the Lion Piṅgalaka, Madonmatta, Madotkata, the crow Meghavarṇa and the owl Arimardhana the frog Jālapāda, every one of them cuts a story figure and is depicted as helpless and totally under the control his ministers. And the worst cut of all in this macho world, kings are compared to women and even to constitute in their capriciousness and irrationality and could it be that, despite the author's protestation to the country the audience of the *Pañcatantra*.

**Conclusion**

The study on *Pañcatantra* with narrative devices provides a clear picture of the social and political domain it has created in the society. And this study traces out the structural narrative devices common to the Western critics in *Pañcatantra*, is thus a good example to explain and illustrate the Western narrative devices.
The stories of it are connected with the nature and the whole animating world. It truly represents the popular culture, which is far different from the so-called classic culture in its form and content. A study on *Pañcatantra*, thus using the modern tools of language studies with a cultural approach may be relevant.

It is also known as *pañcopakhyāna*.

**Chapter -1:- An Introduction to Narratology.**

In the introductory chapter, the relevance of the topic and the structure of the traditional and modern Indian narrative, especially in storytelling are discussed.

Narratology denotes a recent concern with narrative in general. It deals especially with the identification of structural elements and their diverse modes of combination, with recurrent narrative devices and with the analysis of the kinds of discourse by which a narrative gets told.
Narratives, for one reason or another, have recently become a topic of considerable interests in contemporary literary and cultural studies. Narratives provide a powerful way of teaching people lessons and transmitting ideas.

Sanskrit literature has been one of the most abundant sources of narratives and Indians are generally considered as be the world's greatest story tellers. ' A narrative is a story whether it is in prose or verse involving events and characters and what the character say and do'. In modern literary criticism narratology denotes a recent concern with story telling in general. Its aim is to identify the structural elements in a story and their varied modes of combination and the narrative devices employed by the poets. It is also analyses the type of discourse by which a story gets told.

Modern narratologist does not apply the conventional method of analyzing the narrative. They use the analytical method and concepts explored by Russian formalists and French structuralists. The basic idea is that any narrative has a formal construction. The main story of a of literary work is not a 'mere sequence of events in time. The narrator fashions the incidents into a narrative plot/story. In short it tries to analyze narrative in terms of grammar that governs the art of story telling.

In a sense narrative is inherent in human beings in an interactive society. Some modern linguists argue that predication of nominal constitute the essence of narration in its macro form. The smallest narrative thus can be found in ordinary concerations.
These tales, first written in Sanskrit, are very ancient and do not know when exactly they were written, but scholars tell us that they were already known by the Indian people 5000 years ago. According to Aarthur W. Ryder, "These stories have been current among the Indian populace for at least five thousand years probably longer". Foreign travelers, who visited India in those days must have made these false popular in their own lands. For we can see how much they have influenced Aesop, the Greek Story-teller and La Fontaine the French Poet'.

Like all ancient stories, they have undergone many changes down the years because of a long, long time they were not written down but related (told) to the Indian people-young and old who crowded round the story tellers, as they went from one village or town to the other relating these stories. So we can say that some of the Pañcatantra stories closely connected with folk culture.

These tales were first written in Sanskrit by some scholars in 200 BC. after they had been related by storytellers for about 3,000 years. It is interesting to know that one of the first books ever to be printed in Germany was a German translation of the Pañcatantra tales.

Pañcatantra is perhaps the allegorical narrative or parable par excellence in world literature. Like the Purāṇa, it is outside time or history, and is universal in its significance. The characters, human or animal or inanimate, are not tied down to any geographical location or historical period. The Itihāsa has roots
in national history, but the allegorical narrative is different from the *Itihāsa* in this respect. These cautionary tales must speak to readers of all ages. They are not fictionalized versions of something that actually happened, but of what might happen any time.

1 In some of the title stanzas even the names of the characters are given.

2 The birds, animals and different kinds of human beings are the characters; ie Sūcīmukhi, Laghupatanaka, Citragīva etc. this technique is seen everywhere in *Pañcatantra*. 