Chapter X.

Conclusion.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the argument of what has been said in the preceding chapters and to note in brief the main points arising out of the discussion.

1. Although the fable is one of the important forms of literature, it is a pity that very few scholars have paid attention to the intensive study of this form. This study attempts a study of the animal fable as an art form and thus tries to fill this gap. Since the genre is of very primitive origin, a study of this kind throws light of the fiction making faculty of man. It has also been demonstrated that the available animal fables of the Panchatantra and Aesop's Fables are civilised forms of the residual memory of a far more primitive fruit gathering stage in the development of man. This element is still present in the modern competitive economy; hence allegorical forms of the animal fable are still popular in colour comics. Therefore, it has been adduced that the animal fable suggests:
(a) a traditionally structured hierarchy of animal legend analogous to the status structure in a vivilised society

(b) a worldly wisdom which is strongly suggestive of group adjustments and

(c) a socially expedient 'lesson' or 'moral' to be drawn out.

This study, thus, gives the origin, meaning and importance and descent of, the fable and an attempt has been made to prove that it is really an important branch of literature. This attempt is, perhaps, the first of its kind.

It has been noted that the tales were told among the primitive people of mankind, illustrating the maxim 'Literature begins with the telling of a tale.' Various forms similar to that of the fable such as the tale, the parable, the allegory, the satire, the fairy-tale, the myth, the jataka and the proverb have been noted and distinguished.

The description of the fable as given by Boccaccio, Dr. Samuel Johnson, Professor K.O. Mueller, Crabbe, Bussey, Robert Scholes and K Robert Kellogg
Professor Untermeyer, Stith Thompson, David Richter, and F.R. Leavis have been noted and analysed. The salient features of a good fable have also been noted which are as follows:

1. the narration itself
2. the deduction of the moral
3. a careful maintenance of the fictitious characters introduced into it.

Brevity is an important characteristic of a good fable; the other features depend on it and arise from it. The story is the most important element in a fable. Because of its brevity, it cannot be told in length. It must, therefore, hit the nail on the head. And because of its brevity, characterisation must be done in bold and terse words, and, therefore, cannot go into the development or changes in the characters. The characters are mostly animals, birds and inanimate creatures; they talk and behave as if they were human beings.

It follows that a fable cannot go into the details of the plot, incidents and characters. The incidents should be narrated in swift words, thus carrying onward the action of the fiction.
Each and every fable is followed by a moral lesson, which is in keeping with the tone or tenor of each story. This lesson is entirely in tune with the story.

The anti-didactic principle of art promoted by Oscar Wilde (Art is a-moral) is not relevant to this kind of didacticism. This is not anti-life. It teaches the art of life rather than a system of ethics. It is the empiricism of the present kind in whose favour didacticism has been criticised by some modern writers. It cannot do violence to the aesthetic pattern underlying art.

On the other hand, the maxim containing the moral of the fable, which occurs at the conclusion of each story serves the aesthetic purpose of rounding off and no other. The witty maxims found at the end of Walt Disney comics serve the same purpose.

In most fable, the Aristotelian principles are represented in miniature. They all have a beginning, a middle and an end. They also comply with the three Unities. And Aristotle refers to Aesop's fable in his books. Therefore, it is very likely that Aristotle had in his mind the fables of Aesop while writing his the Poetics and Rhetoric.
A detailed note as to why animal characters have been introduced has also been written. It has already been seen that animals and birds have been introduced in the fables. There is one advantage in making use of the animals and birds as characters. In all stories, the reader identifies with some characters and enjoys or suffers with them. Such identification always raises and disturbs human feelings and passions and, therefore, clouds the intellect. It is, therefore, more difficult to teach a moral precept to the intellect as it is disturbed by passions. But when the fabulist makes use of animals and birds as his characters, there is some identification on the part of the hearer or reader of the fables, but it is much less intense. Therefore, the intellect is much clearer and the moral lesson so intellectualised that it sinks deep into the conscious mind of the reader and sinks lower into the unconscious mind. That is the secret of the fabulists.

The stock character is often transgressed, altered and reduced to represent some special quality. It is individualised and plays a peculiar role for a particular situation. The Crocod
clever enough to deceive the Monkey but gives himself away by talking boastfully. The Monkey invents a characteristic to its species - it leaves its heart on the top of the tree. And the foolish Crocodile takes him back to the banks of the river and lets him jump up to his tree. The Crocodile is fooled. It is totally a human drama of bourgeois existence.

It is here that the beauty of the animal tale lies. It makes the animal tale a genre, human drama. The jungle life becomes exterior, the situation is human. It transcends the stock allegorical attributes of the respective animals. It is a genre that the animal fable is still alive in the colour comics of Walt Disney and Hannah Barbara.

This is the first step toward releasing the animal fable from its fixed meanings and taking it to the level of a literary form. Though freed, still we cannot compare the animal fable with modern fiction with its complex human characters, such as the ones created by George Eliot or Henry James. That kind of complexity is outside the scope of animal fable.
The importance of the educative value of the animal fable has been discussed with the views of Aristotle, Isidore, the Bishop of Seville, Martin Luther, Quintilian, Locke and Sir Philip Sidney.

The differences between the drama and the fable, the novel and the fable is brought out. A fable contains all the elements of a novel, but, not, of course, in such a broad canvas. It can, therefore, be termed as a "Pocket-mini-Theatre."

Reasons have been given as to why the fable should be regarded as a form of literature. It claims a work of art because:

1) the fabulists attempt to exhibit life in the fables;
2) the fabulists give external shape to their vision of life with the purpose of giving pleasure to the reader.

As the fable satisfies both the above elements, it can be regarded as a form of literature. Sir Philip Sidney observes:"I say the Philosopher teacheth, but teacheth obscurely, so as only the learned can
understand him; that is to say he teacheth them that are already taught; but the Poet is the food for the tenderest stomachs, the Poet is indeed the right popular Philosopher, whereof Aesop's tales give good proofs; whose pretty allegories stealing under the formall tales of Beasts make many more beastly than beasts, begin to beare the sound of vertue from these dumb speakers."

The form is not dead. It has helped the contemporary cartoonist, the comic-strip writer, and the politican has thrived on it. The satirist has used it to bring home a point in worldly wisdom. And therefore, it cannot be dismissed as a dead form. The Aesopian tradition is still continued in the colour comics of Walt Disney and Hannah Barbera. And now in the twentieth century, we have James Thurber's Fables for our Times.

In other words, within its limitations, the fable answers all the descriptions of fiction art along with its special characteristics.

This attempt to raise the fable to the status of an art and a form of literature is perhaps the first of its kind.
2) The biographies of Aesop and Vishnusharma have been reconstructed from them meagre information available. It is curious to note that both of them had a royal court to serve. Aesop converted a need into an art form; Vishnusharma had only young and wild princes to serve. Aesop was a slave and Vishnusharma, a Brahmin and, therefore, could never be made a slave. This causes some differences in their philosophical attitudes.

Both Vishnusharma and Aesop had access to a number of well told stories, which in their attempt to crystallise into still briefer and more effective pearls might have shaped into more concise art forms. The credit of authorship can go to the fabulists in that they the raw material of the oral tradition a form with a distinct beginning, a middle and an end. They can also get credit for the moral content in the wisdom. Much of the moral content will inhere in the fable itself, though the witty, sarcastic expression of this moral content should belong to the literary artists.

3) The descent of the Panchatantra and the Fables of Aesop has been given in the third chapter.
India has a rich collection of well-told stories which are found in the epics like the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Here an attempt has been made to give notes on the works deriving from Gunadhya's Britahkatha.

Similarly the descent of the Fables of Aesop is given.

It has been noted that the fables which are found in Aesop, were in circulation much earlier. A number of well known figures such as Aristophanes, Euripides, Demosthenes, Aristotle and Horace quote the fables of Aesop which are found in Aesop.

Demetrius Phalerum compiled about 300 B.C. a collection of the fables of Aesop. But it is not available now. Phaedrus, a slave, turned some of these fables into Latin iambics during the beginning of the Christian era. The first Greek version was brought by Babrius, which in turn was compiled into Latin verse by Avianus.

Now there are a number of versions of the fables of Aesop, which are all descended from the Greek version.
4) It has been noted in the fourth chapter as to how the Panchatantra reached various peoples and nations.

Burzoe, the physician, was the first to take the work to Persia and later it was translated into Pehlavi, which in turn was translated into Arabic under the title *A Khalilah wa Dimnah*. A Greek version was prepared at the end of the eleventh century by one Simeon Seth. It is the oldest descendant of the Panchatantra and was later translated into Russian, Slavonic and other European languages.

The Arabic version was translated into old Spanish and Old Hebrew, which in turn was later translated into Latin by John of Capua, under the title *Liber Kalile et Dimnas*. It was translated into German and Italian one by Doni. This version was translated into English by Sir Thomas North as the *Morall Philosophie of Doni*.

5) A reading of the Panchatantra and the Fables of Aesop will reveal that there are similar stories in both the works.
Here in this chapter it has been discussed as to how the fables of the *Panchatantra* migrated to the West; it has been conclusively shown that the Westerners borrowed Indian fables.

The Indians and Greeks had contacts with each other even before the invasion of India by Alexander the Great. The Greeks did not make any difference between India and Ethiopia.

Some fables and tales have been carved on the Buddhist stupas of Bharhut, near Allahabad. Twenty-eight of these have been identified with the fables of Aesop.

The opinions and views of scholars who have written in favour of Indian origin of fables have been noted. They are Theodore Benfey, Gastewr, Max-Muller, Emmanuel Cosquin, Rhys Davids, Ernest Rhys, L.D.Barnett, Norman Brown, Lin-Yu-Tang, M.G. Rawlinson, P.N.Kawtheskar, Joseph Gaer, Sir William Jones, Weber, Keller, La Fontaine, and A.S. P.Ayyar.

The discussion is closed with a quote from Dr. Winternitz: "It is not, therefore, too much to say that India is indebted to India for fables."
6) The *Panchatantra* is studied in detail noting its special features.

The origin of the book is in South India - Mahilaropya. The king of it is Amarashakti, and he has three sons, who are averse to the study of any kind. He then seeks the advice of his pandits and is advised to appoint a pandit Vishnusharma. This pandit undertakes to teach them in the art of running a kingdom and in general how to gain success in life. The limit of time is only six months. He teaches them through the fables in five books or sections.

The construction of a fable in the *Panchatantra* is simple indeed. First at the beginning of the story, a mnemonic verse is quoted, which sums up the general maxim and an instance in illustration of the maxim told in the first line of the verse. Then the fable is told in prose and at the end the verse is quoted once again.

Sometimes mnemonic verses have been embedded in the middle of the stories to justify the statements made by the characters. They are mainly taken from
the well known works such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Some are of the view that these verses are an impedence hindrance in the narration of the story. But it is not so. Indeed, it is these verses which make the real character of the Panchatantra.

The main feature of the Panchatantra is that a number of stories are woven into the other, thus forming a boxed structure. This line of narration was borrowed from the Indians by the neighbouring people and the best examples are the Arabian Nights and the Pickwick Papers by Charles Dickens.

A clear distinction is made between the words, Yugti, Niti and Tantra, which are used with a wide spectrum of meaning in India. Quite often all of their meanings co-exist. The lesson or moral of the Panchatantra story has nothing to do with an ethical imperative. The tales glorify the clever animal. The secular moral - Be Wise, Outwit your enemies - cannot be described as an ethical imperative.
The Panchatantra is thus a work that instructs in niti, in the art of running a kingdom and in general how to gain success in life.

"The Panchatantra," says Arthur W. Ryder, "is a niti sastra; or a textbook of Niti. The word niti means roughly 'the right conduct of life.'"²

"Niti means," says Daniel H. Ingalls, "worldly wisdom, sometimes the art of getting along in the world. While worldly wisdom sometimes wears the clothing of the cynic, its purpose is neither to disparage the world nor to flatter it but to see it as it is."³

Therefore, this kind of didacticism does not make offence to art. But on the other hand, it stimulates art. It accepts the clash of interests in phenomenal world and refuses to be cramped by ethical or abstract imperatives. This is certainly true of the Panchatantra.

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This anti-didactic principle (Art is a-moral) promoted by Oscar Wilde is not relevant to this kind of didacticism. This is not anti life. It teaches the art of life rather a system of ethics. "Morality should be an inherent part of the action," says Leon T. Dickinson, "rather than a preaching that we can label 'the moral' of the story....when the moral content is an integral part of a well told story, as is true of the world's fiction, we value it highly as an enrichment of the story."4

Animals and birds have been introduced as characters in the Panchatantra. They are all shown to have their instinctive behaviour; the lion is majestic, the ass patient and hard-working, and the horse proud. And they are all given their meaningful names: the Lion is Madotkata, the Merchant in the first book is Jeernađhana. The characterisation is so dramatic and vivid that we forget for a moment that they are animals and birds in human garb.

The style of the Panchatantra is simple. Verse is used for summing up of the general maxim and the illustration. Prose is used for the narration of the story. The plot of the fable is as well-knit as that of the fable of the Lion and the Hare, where the Hare kills the Lion by making the Lion jump into a well.

It has been shown that the Panchatantra is based on the Karma theory, for we come across a number of verses and stories in defence of the Karma theory. E.g. The story of the Hunter and the Pigeons.

7) The Fables of Aesop have also been studied and analysed. The construction of an Aesopian fable gives importance to:

i) the narration itself

ii) the deduction of the moral and

iii) the careful maintenance of the characteristics with which his fables are endowed with.

Brevity is an important characteristic of an Aesopian fable. All the other elements of the
fable are dependent on this feature. The narration should be confined to one and only one incident.

Because of the brevity, the fable cannot go into the details of characterisation. That is outside the scope of the fable. The characters are usually endowed with the speech and reason of human beings. They behave as if they were human beings. The ass is patient and hard working, the hare timid, the horse proud and the lion majestic. But there are some fables in which there is no good choice of good characters in that they behave against their instinctive behaviour. This is accounted for in the descent of the Aesopic fable.

The style of the Aesopian fable is also governed by the brevity of the form. Because of its brevity, the fable cannot go into the details of the incidents and characters. The facts, must, therefore, be narrated without much ado. Thus, the fable is told in the minimum words possible.

The Aristotelian principles are represented in miniature in the the fables of Aesop. They all have a beginning, a middle and an end.
They are also governed by the three Unities - of Time, Place and Action. It has been noted that Aristotle refers to the fables again and again in his Poetics and the Rhetoric. It can, therefore, be conjectured that Aristotle had in his mind the fables of Aesop while writing his the Poetics and the Rhetoric.

The Aesopian fable is divided into
1) Aesopic
2) Lybystic and
3) Aetiological.

A thing which appears again and again is that of the weak and the insignificant getting the better of the strong and confident. We are also warned against the dictators, tyrants and false-friends.

8) The Panchatantra and the Fables of Aesop are compared and contrasted.

a) Both the works deal with the art of getting along in the world.

b) The construction of the fable in both the works is simple. In Aesop, the fables are independent of each other. But in the Panchatantra, they are all connected with each other by the boxed pattern. This type of boxing is never found in Aesop.
c) In both the works, animals, birds, inanimate objects, gods and angels are introduced as characters. In Aesop they are known by their common names just as they are known by their species. But in the Panchatantra they are all given their meaningful names. Thus the Lion is called Madotkata, the merchant Jeernadhana. In both the works, the characters are endowed with the speech and reason of human beings. They behave as if they were human beings.

d) The style of both the works is simple and direct. In Aesop, only prose is used for the narration of the fables. In the Panchatantra, the fable begins with a verse, which contains a general maxim and an illustration in example of the maxim quoted in the verse. The verse is mnemonic in character. Then the story is told in prose. And there are intermingling verses in between the fables to justify the statements made by the characters. These verses have been taken from the epics like the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The argument, thus, becomes logical. Another feature of the Panchatantra
are all woven one into the other. This is never found in Aesop.

e) There are a number of references to gods and faiths in the *Panchatantra*. Among them is the story of Dvasharma, which throws light on the Shaivism. It is a story which explains the doctrines of Shaivism. But in Aesop, we do come across some gods and angels, but they just come and go. There is no theory or explanation of any doctrines in the fables of Aesop.

f) The *Panchatantra* is mainly based on the Karma theory. There are a number of verses which illustrate the influence and the role of the luck or fate. Thus, it is pervaded by the Karma theory. The best example giving details of the Karma theory is the story of the Hunter and the Pigeons. But in Aesop, we do not find any such theory. We are warned against the tyrants and dictators.

g) The moral content in the *Panchatantra* and the fables of Aesop does not make any offence to art. It rather supports and stimulates art. It accepts the clash of interests in the phenomenal world and refuses
to be cramped by ethical or abstract imperatives. This is certainly true of the Panohatreta. This kind of teaching is not anti-life. It teaches the art of life rather than a system of ethics. "Morality should be an inherent part of the action," says Leon T. Dickinson, "rather than a preachment that we can label 'the moral' of the story....when then the moral content is an integral part of a well told story, as is true of the world's fiction, we value it highly as an enrichment of the story."^5