

**(A Minor Research Project was sanctioned by the UGC to Dr. Mukul Joshi, Associate professor and Head, Department of English, AISC. from 2012-2014. The following is an executive summary of the report)**

## **A Critical Study of Rudyard Kipling's Animal Tales**

Rudyard Kipling's Animal Tales such as *Jungle Books* are a blessed province of fancy and imagination where the readers can flee and be at peace. Rudyard Kipling wrote the stories with extraordinary power of imagination and flashes of unforgettable description virtuosity. The *Jungle Books* consist of a strange world where animals talk. They are admirable because the animals are the same as Kipling's mankind. Mowgli and his wolves are delightful to read about, for grown-ups as well as the children.

An interesting thing about Kipling's *Jungle Books* is that Kipling never commented on the *Jungle Books*. He never called them children's tales as he called his collection *Puck of the Pook's Hill*. On his other books, he commented quite freely. This has given a sense of ambiguity to this work of Kipling's. In these books, we are always haunted by a sense of further meaning. The readers feel that there is symbolism or allegory involved in the two *Jungle Books*. Nobody resented the books because the stories are fundamentally interesting. The presence of Mowgli in the *Jungle Books* added the human link which was needed to bring readers into sympathy. The animals talk credibly and it is natural because they talk as Kipling makes them talk.

The *Jungle Books* could be considered as books in the line of *Aesop's Fables*, *Jataka* and *Panchatantra Tales* which Kipling knew very well. The only thing that is different in *Aesop's Fables* is that they have no human presence in them. *Panchatantra Tales* is a collection of Indian Animal Fables exhibiting animal stereotypes. It illustrates the central Hindu principles of *Niti*

for the benefit of three Hindu princes The concept of law appears in the form of fable in the *Jungle Books*. It consists of rules of conduct like keeping the promises, loyalty to friends, bravery, generosity and respect for the elders. It exemplifies a code of honour based on hard facts, with tooth and claw for its practical sanctions and necessity of courage, endurance, observation, good faith, dexterity, physical and mental fitness.

The grip of these stories is extraordinary. Kipling found the fable a congenial form at all stages of his writing life. The fun of this fable lies in inventive and appropriate details. In the *Jungle Books* Kipling used the form of fable to express the importance of law. The animal fable is a very old and recurrent literary type. This form has been found strong to convey sardonic humor and hinted horror of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. But there is human presence in *Animal Farm*. This type of form has a long tradition and there is reference in Kipling's *Something of Myself* of his having read two books in his childhoods, which were, in the form of fable.

The present research work brings out the importance of Kipling's *Animal Tales* as tales for children. This research work outlines the importance of these stories as tales for adults also and places them in the long tradition of animal Tales.

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