Damayanti is the pivotal core of the story of Nala. Each character defines himself or herself in relation to her. Everyone contributes to her rich radiant halo one-way or the other. Even the gods Indra and the rest covet her. Kali out of sheer jealousy lusts for her. The ferocity of his evil nature is at the root of the calamities that befall Nala. The Woodsman in a lower key mirrors the same lust for Damayanti, but, without the fierce destructiveness of Kali. Puśkara’s and Rtuparna’s attitude to the heroine is more or less of the same order, lust surely, but in a subdued key. To counter these negative characters benevolent rays are sprayed on Damayanti by Narada the Sage, the Swan and the snake-king Karkotaka. The Swan particularly has unmistakable divine connotations with his links with Brahma the Creator, and according to some interpretations, with Lord Shiva and His Spouse. Hence, the Swan is not to be looked on as a mere messenger who just does a good turn to the king Nala for his compassion and concern. It is not without significance that the poet makes him a Golden Swan, very different from, and superior to, other swans. The import of his second coming at the end of the play, on the Fourth Day cannot be missed. He is employed as a structural device as well as a
symbolic character. This significance should be taken into account in stage-representations as some scholar-actors used to do. It is doubly significant that the Swan comes after Sage Narada had intimated king Nala of Damayanti. He assures Nala that he is the rightful person to claim the hand of Damayanti, even when the gods themselves are his rivals. Narada, it should be noted, is the son of Lord Brahma.

As for Karkotaka, the snake king functions like a redeemer. His boon on Nala comes in disguise as a bane. He bites Nala turning him into Bahuka, wholly disfiguring him and bathing him in blue venom. We know that Karkotaka himself had committed a sin and was cursed by a Sage. He was to be saved only by king Nala. This motif of the twists and turns of boon and bane and resulting bliss is woven into the under pattern of the play. And all these come into sharp focus only in relation to the central character Damayanti. And hence the need to explore the emotional, intellectual, spiritual paradigm projected into the play in the character of Damayanti. In fact, this paradigm has further overtones such as social, political and psychological which invite patient examination.
I

Right from the beginning, Damayanti is everywhere the centre of attraction. This attraction is manifested on an emotional plane either as love or pangs of separation or joy in re-union.

At the very opening of the story, we find Narada introducing Damayanti to king Nala as a priceless gem. She has not yet appeared on the scene and by report we know of Damayanti’s nature and status in the story. The Sage assures the king that he need not fear the gods, even though they too want to marry her, because they are not entitled to possess her. They get their due in the form of sacrificial rites. The king alone is rightfully entitled to possess this gem among beautiful damsels.

In the Kingdom of Kundina there is
the lovely Damayanti,
a Jewel among beauties, desired even by the devas
Jewels belong to you, only the sacrificial rites are the due of the devas. (NC 3)

Narada draws the story to the mundane world and dispels the other-worldliness. Only a king from the world of men should marry this princess even though she is invested with divine beauty.
Nala says:

The daughter of the king of Kundina
has no damsel in this earth to match
her, it seems,
so have I heard, even earlier.
There is none in heaven, nor in
other worlds, for sure,
according to the words of Narada.
From several, I heard of her virtues
unique, and distinct from other
women.
Day by day, my passion for her increases
I reckon it’s not improper, by the
Sage’s words.
What means will induce the moon-radiant one
to bear love for me in her heart?
For the lotus-like love of a woman for a man
Kandarpa should sow the seed, it seems.
Hearing of the beauty of that moon-
radiant one
I am wilting; my agility is gone.
The honour of acquaintance to that
dark-haired damsel
or refuge in the forest-these are the
only courses for me now. (NC 4-5)
His love for Damayanti becomes very intense. Hearing the words of Narada he is deep in thought. His devouring desire to possess Damayanti is expressed in various ways and emotions covering the whole gamut of sringara. He recreates the beauty of Damayanti in his mind and enjoys it. In his overwhelming passion for Damayanti, he continues to ponder over her charms. He dwells at length on her physical beauty with anguish. The performance text gives the details as follows:

What means can I resort to, so that I can win the hand of the daughter of King Bhima, who surpasses even the celestial damsels, in her beauty and charm. The curls that flutter on her forehead like the bees thronging on the petals of flowers. Her long hair which excels the darkness of bees, cascades down, covering her back; her eye brows move like waves in the sea. When will I be fortunate to have a glance from her, expressing her love for me? Will I ever get a chance to see her gentle, loving smile in those unkissed lips? Her breasts swelling each moment due to her youth—oh god I cannot bear the heat of passion! (NC 6)

In his hallucination he goes on brooding on her beautiful and delicate body. The sandal paste applied to his body only burns him. The sound of Veena played by the musician seems unbearable to him. Nala who is uninterested in all worldly affairs at last moves on to the garden.
He becomes increasingly restless. Every visible and familiar object inflicts shooting pain on him. The soft breeze laden with the fragrance of flowers comes to him as blazing fire, the playing swan’s gait disturbs him. He muses that Damayanti has greater grace in her gait. The song of the cuckoo sounds like a spear that thrusts into the ears compared to the delightful voice of Damayanti, the darkness of the plumes of the dancing peacocks is nothing compared to the long hair of the world renowned beauty. He even pleads to the god of love to dart at least one arrow towards Damayanti and give him some respite. This uninterestedness due to the frustration of brooding on Damayanti further penetrates his mind and the ponds and streams in the garden appear to him like tents put up for Kamadeva’s battle. His anguish, pain and fear are caused by his desire for Damayanti. Often, here gifted actors act out the love-in-separation of two birds [wife and husband] so as to anticipate coming events.

The Swan who happens to be the envoy for love between Nala and Damayanti consoles Nala that his mission is to attach him to Damayanti. The Swan is reciprocating the King’s kindness in freeing without doing any harm. Here again, Nala is eager and enthusiastic to hear of the charm and beauty of Damayanti. When he hears of King Bhima’s daughter named Damayanti from the Swan, he says he has been meditating on this name for a long time. He had for a long time been in love with Damayanti
and the name Damayanti appears very sweet and he requests the Swan to repeat it several times. The Swan’s mission is to make Damayanti in love with Nala, even as he is neck-deep in love with her.

In the interpolation of the frustration due to the thoughts on Damayanti, Nala says that in those days he was smitten by pangs of love. He can’t bear the lovely sights in the garden, he can’t take a morsel of food in his hand to eat when he thinks of Damayanti. When reclining on the soft flower strewn bed, he could not get sleep. He even stretches out his hands as though to embrace the beautiful body of Damayanti. He requests the Swan to make her mind favourable towards him, by talking to her gently and coaxing her. Nala is cringingly craving to the Swan to be his friend and help him out.

In Scene V of the same day of the play Swan tells Nala:

   Noble king, your desire
   has almost been fulfilled by me
   Sinking in the ocean of agony of love,
   you need not languish and wither;
   your heart need not break now. (NC 27)

The Swan returns from Damayanti and consoles Nala who is troubled by hopes and despair, panic, anxiety, tremour and joy. The Swan not only tested Damayanti’s love for Nala but reinforced the same and so he tells
Nala that he need not be sunk further in the agony of love. In his eagerness and enthusiasm to get the full details and confirmation of her love, the Swan reaffirms that he made Damayanti repeat several times that her desires are centered only on Nala. He came back only after clearing all his doubts and strengthening the bond more firmly.

Again in Scene VII of the same day Sage Narada also tells god Indra of the deep-rooted love of Damayanti to 'someone' but here it is evident that Narada knows the person, and it is none other than Nala. But Indra is eager to know who among the mortals has the chance of gaining the lady who is exquisitely beautiful. Indra tries to regain peace of mind, thinking that whosoever gets Damayanti will be lucky. Indra's words are not spoken in idle self-consolation. It underpins Damayanti's virtue.

When Indra and other gods meet Nala in Scene VIII, Day One of the play, to make him an envoy to Damayanti bearing their message of love and desire towards her, he is grief sticken as he is already in love with Damayanti. Sorrowfully, though, he craves to get a sight of this idol of beauty whom he had placed in the temple of his heart and worshipped in his imagination. This fires his love and his eyes burn at the prospect of seeing the beautiful Damayanti at least as a messenger.

"Though the Prince's chamber in Kundina is safely guarded, he enters invisible to others due to the power of invisibility [thiraskarani]."
His eyes revel at the sight of Damayanti, and he stands transfixed enjoying her beauty from head to toe. Nala, spell bound by her all pervading beauty suddenly becomes conscious of the fact that he has come as an emissary of gods” (NC 42). In spite of the very sensuous feelings evoked in him as he sees the much-heard and much-loved damsel in full splendour for the first time, he is filled with some sort of admiration towards Damayanti as she is found adamant in her love and her words such as she has told him all this but not to anyone else since he has similarities with her beloved. When he persuaded her with the heavenly bliss with which she can transcend all temporal grief, and also feelings of love anger, avarice, desire, pride, jealousy if she chooses one among the gods, she expresses her hesitation for a further talk as she has chosen firmly the King of Naishada in mind. Here again what Damayanti bears in mind becomes suggestive and Nala has to satiate himself with the same.

At last the gods who are also longing for Damayanti had to bestow effective boons to Nala in his gaining of Damayanti. Even god Yama says that he came to make Damayanti Nala’s wife. God Agni says that the Bhaimi whom he coveted chose Nala instead but he has no malice and he is pleased. The gods who are found jubilant in Damayanti marrying Nala bestow boons on him. Indira gives the boon that when Nala performs sacrificial rites [Yagas] he will come and directly accept the sacrificial
share and not indirectly through the medium of Agni. He also gives the boon that Nala will have union with Lord Siva.

Agni: He will be at Nala’s service in matters of cooking. The dishes that he would cook would be as tasting as ambrosia.

Yama: Even during moments of crisis Nala’s mind will be clear from evil thoughts. Nala will always be adept in battle and in the use of weapons.

Varuna: Nala’s touch would make all flowers as fresh as the flower of Kalpaka tree. Even in a desert water will be plenty for him. Now enjoy marital bliss with lovely Damayanti.

(NC 63)

Interestingly, all the boons are bestowed on Nala as he has won Damayanti crossing a lot of impediments.

The second day of the play starts with Nala’s attempt to evoke erotic passion in Damayanti. This part is a depiction of pure love-in-union. (Sambhoga Sringara). Here Nala is all praise for the “fresh youth bloomed in full splendour” (NC 67) in Damayanti. His request not to “while away the time in vein” (NC 67) is accompanied by mixed feelings of love, reticence and even gloom as Nala is anxious of her response to his call for erotic engagements. He had to overcome many hindrances to win her but now he sees one enemy. that is, her shyness. All the persuasions of Nala
are in a pleading manner as though her assent will only be his relief. Having heard this kind soft lovely and diverting words of Nala, Damayanti discards the "dark veil of shyness" (NC 70) in her response by describing the beautiful and touching visuals of the garden as proclaiming the fame of Kamadeva in her ecstasy of romantic love. She feels the garden enchanting with all the seasons. But, in order to evoke this passion Nala has to do a lot including the heart felt history of his anxiety of love and obstacles that came over from mortals and even gods. Further, he gives details of his experiences of the pathetic plight before marriage. He was weary and dropping and each day seemed like an age.

My beloved, with a lovely form
now listen to my pitiable condition
before our wedding
Hearing constantly about your virtues from several
though brave, I became weary and
dropping, due to the pangs of love.
My darling, I brooded on this body
surging with waves of beauty
Each day seemed like an age, and I
had to conceal my desire. (NC 72)

Nala depicts the difficulties he had undergone on hearing continually about Damayanti from many people elaborately. In the
interpolation Nala tells Damayanti of his sufferings under the spell of love. He feels relieved and happy by having her now. Usually a depiction from the Kutiyattam proclaiming the qualities and beauty of Damayanti is enacted. It helps to elevate her image in Nala’s eyes.

Here the hero looks at the heroine from head to foot, with the feeling of erotic [sringara] wonder and elation and it gives great scope for the elaboration of sentiment which is the hallmark of Kathakali.

Nala’s over-indulgence [perhaps] in love prompts Puṣkara to challenge him for the game of dice, moreover he is instigated by Kali in the Day Two of the play.

It is improper for valiant men like you
to remain in solitude in the company
of a woman
Will anyone act like a coward
when he is beckoned to war
Do warriors pay obeisance forever
at the feet of women in constant worship of Kama. (NC 87)

In this pada Puṣkara lashes out at Nala pointing out that it is improper for the king to continue to be always in the company of Damayanti, paying scant attention to his duties.
In his lamentation in the forest in Scene VI, Day Two of the play, Nala admits of the possibility of his excessive indulgence in love, saying he may have committed lapses in his worship of Siva. In his weariness, he compares Damayanti to a jasmine creeper nursed with hot water and himself to an uprooted tree. With this, Nala is slightly moving to the possibility of a separation, as with him who is dimmed in spirit, Damayanti is not going to be safe anymore. As he fears that both creeper and tree are on the verge of destruction he wishes for the welfare of Damayanti. In the next pada he further laments the difference between his previous royal status and present condition and along with self depreciation, helplessness and perplexity he expresses his incapability to support Damayanti. He even goes on to say that Damayanti has to protect herself and him. And amidst his deep grief, doubt, mental imbalance and repentance he describes to her the way to Kundina through the forest, with the thought that it would be good if Damayanti could find the way without his help. Nala also has the feeling that Damayanti should somehow escape from the misfortune and he is all longing for the same.

In Scene I, Day Three of the play, Nala who decides to take refuge in the forest after leaving Damayanti alone in the forest calls upon the Mighty Rulers of the world, who had given him special boons at the time of marriage, and appeal to them for mercy:
Mighty Rulers of the world,
which are the fruits of your blessings,
once tender and sweet,
that have now become rotten and blemished?
When I am faced with this great sorrow,
It's not proper for you to be indifferent
I've worshipped you day after day
and you also seemed to benevolent towards me
My heart burns now, being defeated by my younger brother;
Who will ever again sing your praise anymore?
I was led to believe that it's proper to play dice, but
even my subjects started hating me.
Abandoning my spouse, I sit here in this forest
brooding on the rotation of the wheel of fate.
Day after day I, the king of Naisadha bow to you,
please do not let that virtuous Damayanti suffer;
Let me not lose my mind due to excess of grief,
let not others mock me as a coward. (NC 135)

Apparently, these lamentations reflect the hapless state of mind of Nala, and these have connotative overtones within the thematic development of the play. The lamentation starts with a reflection of his hurt and he complains against the gods – Mighty Rulers of the world – who had blessed him with many boons. He reproaches them for the impropriety on their part
of spurning him now when he faces great sorrows. He was engaged in praying everyday without fail; and the gods were benevolent to him also. But now he is struck down with misfortune. Defeated by his younger brother, he is wandering with a burning heart. With great dejection, he says that if this is the consequence of their blessings no one will try to seek their help anymore. From this complaining mood Nala slowly changes finding explanation for his misfortunes in life in his enthusiasm for the game of dice. The hatred of his subjects and the separation from his beloved are due to the tricks played on him by a cruel fate. As he thinks over it more deeply, his ill feelings towards the gods subside and he appeals to the gods to lead him to the right path and give relief from agony. Paying obeisance to them he implores them not to cause any grief to the virtuous Damayanti and not to make his mind unsteady with excessive grief. He also prays not to let others condemn him as a coward.

Under this apparent view of lamentation or repentance there is the unity of Damayanti factor as the gods have given the boons at the time of the wedlock and all the developments of misfortune happen consequent to this and in a review of all these developments again the boons and other factors connected with it come to the surface. As a whole, these developments can be measured on the base factor of Damayanti and her
marriage to Nala. Had it not taken place all these would not have happened. The signifying elements are given one by one in the *pada*.

1. Mighty Rulers of the world

   which are the fruits of your blessings.

   Here the blessings are counted as fruitful in the beginning. On Days Three and Four of the play we can again see the effect of these blessings.

In the next stanza it is given that

2. I have worshipped you day after day

   and you also seemed to be benevolent towards me.

   Again, Nala pleads that he had not deviated under any circumstance from the practice of worshipping gods and he thanks them for the benevolence showered on him in turn. It has been pre-justified on Day One of the play as when Kali tries for a course by which he can cast a spell on Nala. In this attempt, he climbs on a *tanni tree* and finds out whether Nala commits any immoral act, negligence to the religious rites or any such lapse. After a few days [it is stated in the *Mahabharata* that Kali had to wait twelve years for such a moment] one day at dusk, when Nala was going to perform the twilight obeisance rituals, he had not washed the sole of the feet and seeing this Kali takes it as an excuse to possess him. That
much care has been taken by Nala in worshipping gods. In this way Nala tries to justify his own indulgence in dice as

3. I was led to believe that it is proper to play dice

Connecting all these, Nala

4. implores the gods day after day.

Against these four-fold ponderings as the boons, worship, godly game of dice [such a reference is given by both Nala and Puškara on Day Two of the play] and the imploring, a four fold consecutive developments are also mentioned. They are

1. That has now become rotten and blemished.
2. My heart burns now being defeated by my younger brother.
3. But even my subjects started hating me
   abandoning my spouse, I sit alone in this forest.
4. Please do not let that virtuous Damayanti suffer.

To these developments responses are also found. They are:

1. When I am faced with great sorrow.
   It is not proper for you to be indifferent.
2. Who will ever again sing your praise anywhere.
3. Brooding on the rotation of the wheel of fate.
4. Let me not lose my mind due to excess of grief.
   Let not others mock me as a coward.
The element of fate has been ascertained earlier as there are a few references in the text itself to that effect. On Day One of the play Nala tells Damayanti that nobody can go against one’s fate, whether good or bad. There is no other option for man. On Day Two, in Scene V there the question is raised, “can anyone change the course of destiny?” (NC 94). In the pada given above also has this perspective, as even the rulers of the world [gods] cannot undo their bad luck. Further, in the episode of Karkotaka, the snake-king tells Nala that even the gods are subject to the will of fate, not to speak of a mere mortal like Nala. Sudha Gopalakrishnan brings in the traditional Indian view in this regard:

In keeping with the classical Indian tradition Nalacaritam adopts the teleological view that the destiny of each person is controlled by his good and bad actions not only in this life, but in the lives gone by. Worldly events do not occur by accident; there is the eternal principle of fate [karma] to which the human being is subjected. One is nevertheless capable of rising above fate by dedicating oneself to one’s own duties and also to spiritual pursuits. Grief and misfortune are the results of negligence to duty. In the case of Nala, waste of vital energy in marital pleasures and in love dalliances with Damayanti at the cost of his royal and religious duties are seen as leading to his sufferings. (Gopalakrishnan xxv)
Thus the significant element becomes love, desire and marriage of Nala to Damayanti which is also included in the acts of fate. This can be read along with the utterings of Karkotaka. He says that Nala, no one else can save him from the fire. Here, Karkotaka addresses Nala as “husband of Bhaimi” (NC 140) and tells him that he knows all about Nala. Karkotaka also reasserts that nobody can overcome the tricks of fate, however, great he may be. Hence, it can be understood that Karkotaka though in his pain due to burning in the fire, is trying to emphasize the link between Nala and Damayanti with the will of fate.

In the episode of Karkotaka, whom Nala saves from forest fire, fate acts in another way as this incident happens to be a turn in both the lives of Nala and Karkotaka. Here again Nala asks:

Please tell me something now
when will I ever be united with that
forlorn one?
(when will I) go back home and live
like before. (NC 146 )

The anguish of Nala at separation from Damayanti and the distress of Damayanti who is separated from him are revealed in this context. Nala is eager to know his future, and in particular about Damayanti. The inexpressible emotion conveyed through this statement is his attachment to
Damayanti or his empty future without her. Damayanti repeats and supports the same stance on Day Two of the play.

The heart-rending lament of Bahuka addressing Damayanti in Scene IV, Day Three of the play is another instance of his concern for Damayanti. Here also Damayanti is shown as a stronger character. Nala pacifies himself that Damayanti possesses purity of character, devotion to Vishnu, fidelity to him, her husband and untainted in virtue. Hence she can save herself without anybody else's support, with that firm conviction he abandons her. That the moral strength of Damayanti will save her from any danger is stated in the pada after a series of lamentations on the pathetic condition of Damayanti after he has left her alone in the forest.

The lamentation begins with his agony and doubt about what happened to Damayanti in the wild forest. The performance text tells that:

In the conscious and subconscious levels of Nala’s mind, the recurrent modes [sanchari bhava] of dejection, doubt, stupor, helplessness, melancholy, thought, anxiety, remembrance, detachments etc., shoot up, highten and subside every moment. Each word is full of the feeling of repentance and intense pain at the thought of the mistakes he had committed. In this moment of anguish each word is full of the feeling that he and he alone is responsible for the misery of his innocent devoted wife. (NC 160)
In the pada the words of repentance have the resemblance to the same in the penance scenes in the forest. Actually, the image of the forest as penance again recurs in this pada. The following anguish on the suppressed state of Damayanti in the forest is in the pada.

1. What did you do in distress?
2. Are you being protected by the wolves?
3. What do you have there when you are hungry?
4. I cannot bear think of you virtuous one
   With the voice of cuckoo – and those
terrible forests filled with howling jackals.
5. Aren’t the deer and elephant your disciples?
6. They’ll pay homage to you under the shades of trees.  
   (NC 159)

Amidst this anguish, there are the wishes of his love-lorn mind; they are:

1. when will I ever see your face, glowing like the moon
2. when will I embrace your body, coveted by Indra himself
3. who in your languor fell asleep,
   lovely one blue-eyed, with the gait of a proud elephant
   (NC 159)

Even though his heart is heavy under the stress of severe grief, eventually it abates and there are some respites:
1. If lord Siva is favourable towards me
2. I’ve no fear of having committed sin
3. Do you think that I have abandoned you thoughtlessly
4. For aren’t you pure and untainted in your virtue.
5. Aren’t you a devotee of Vishnu, aren’t you devoted to me also.
6. And solicitous of my welfare – let all these qualities protect you. (NC 159)

Here again the pada is of three-fold plane of meaning. On one plane it is the anxiety and fear on the pathetic condition of Damayanti, the other is of his remembrance and grief of separation and the third being the relief from the grief born out of self-condemnation. The connective to all these three planes is Damayanti and his attachment to her, she becomes the centre of attraction as his longing and expectancy are fully immersed in her. His anxiety and desire to see and embrace Damayanti is illustrated with his own reflection of her even in remembrance as the moon-radiant, face glowing like moon, coveted by Indra, her trust in him evident from falling asleep in the forest, virtuous one with voice of cuckoo, lovely one blue-eyed, with gait of proud elephant and his wishes of her comfort as even in the forest there are animals like deer and elephant who would share her sorrow, her untainted virtue, devotion to Vishnu, devotion to her husband.
Hence, it is evident that Nala thinks that through a penance involving terrible experiences, on the strength of her morality she will be saved and hence he can again attain a Damayanti full of splendour and modesty. It will be a Damayanti of purity without even an iota of malignancy. The state of mind of Nala in this direction is also evident in Scene VII, Day Four of the play. Inspite of her attempts to convince him of her fidelity and honesty fearing that Damayanti might have erred from the path of chastity, Nala refuses to listen to her. “He feels that he also might become defiled if he accepts her. Ever since he heard about her second marriage he has a lurking suspicion about her fidelity” (NC 227) and he is worried about that. But the timely divine aerial voice assured him that Damayanti is undefiled and virtuous and to discard his doubt, for the rumour about her second marriage was merely a strategy to bring him there. Convinced by this, Nala engages in the re-union. Intentionally, Nala was trying to get a Damayanti fully committed to him, that much possessive is Nala in the case of Damayanti.

The intense passion for Damayanti can be seen in the mixed feeling of dejection, fatigue, doubt, frenzy when Bahuka hears about the second marriage of her from Sudeva, a Brahmin whom Damayanti sent, to inform of the same to Rūtuparna. In addition to the shocking news of marriage, Rūtuparna’s spirited declaration that she is in love with him makes Nala heart- breaking. While Rūtuparna who is eager to win Damayanti even in
her second marriage, he orders Bahuka to drive the chariot to Kundina without delay. The occasion of the lamentation is this.

The lamentation starts with a doubt emanating from dejection as he doesn’t know the real reason behind all these pretences. Then he admits that he has committed a few mistakes unwittingly in his distress when he and Damayanti were living together deeply attached to each other. He assumes that she is going to take revenge on him and thereby push him into eternal sorrow. In the interpolation of this part, the mistakes he committed are presented repeatedly, as the game of dice, the escape into forest, tearing of her cloth, discarding her in the forest etc.

In the next catch, Bahuka says he can’t even believe the news of her remarriage. He again admits that he has done countless wrongs to her and that may have caused her intense grief. At the height of that grief she might have uttered something against him. When this is carried through different people they might have interpreted it in a different manner. He further asserts that he knows her very well and has complete trust in her. She can never stray into evil path. He is also convincing himself that who else has understood her better than him.

In the last part of the lamentation he with feelings of grief, agony, expectation but desperation but controlling his emotion tells Rtuparna that
he is ready for the journey and he will take him to the “city of your desire” (NC 182) before sun-set.

An analysis of these stanzas reveals that Nala is willing to believe that the news of re-marriage is not factual, yet he is acutely conscious of the wrongs he had committed to her and fears how Damayanti would think about them. While the message of remarriage is true for the time being, he drags in certain situations and developments in order to dismiss that belief. All these deliberations become clearer in the last utterance of Bahuka. He uses the words “city of your desire, here I am accompanied by Varnseya ready to drive” (NC 182) clearly indicating his haste too. He tries to wriggle out of the situation by pursuing various comforting lines of thought.

His thoughts can be tabulated as follows:

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Comforting lines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“In severe agony she might have said something”</td>
<td>“From ear to ear the same has reached wicked people”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Even if other kings have reached there by this rumor, with the intention of marrying her,”</td>
<td>“I am sure that she will not agree”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have done countless wrongs to her, and if she said anything because of her overwhelming agony, I fully deserve it, sinner I am.”</td>
<td>“Inwardly she might have been better but she can never stray into an evil path.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(NC 181-82)
These thoughts are raised as he is fully immersed in her love. So he has to set aside any probability, which leads to a determination of second marriage of Damayanti.

From these opposing lines of thoughts he draws some conclusions in order to dismiss the probability of remarriage.

They are:

1. It is doubtful whether she would throw me into everlasting sorrow as revenge

2. I know her very well (who else knows her better)

3. Nala’s admiration for Damayanti is revived by Ṛtuparna’s description of her virtues.

In the first two assumptions he asserts her bond of love and concern for him and in the third, through Ṛtuparna, he hails the virtues of Damayanti. And it is further developed into the haste of seeing Damayanti.

Then starting with a doubt regarding the decision of Damayanti, expressing a series of reasons including hailing of her virtues and expressing of self condemnation to set aside such a possibility, Nala is re-asserting his indebtedness to Damayanti.
II

Naḷacaritam as a text for Kathakali stands unrivalled, as noted earlier, because apart from its literary excellence it is also the most dramatic not only in the range of emotions but also in the variety of characters represented on the stage. In variety, it spans from gods to demons, from birds to trees, from passion to dedication etc. Every character it represents has very great contribution to lead the play to its resolution. The Swan, Kali, Woodsman, Rtuparna, Karkotaka, Sage Narada and all other small and big characters play their roles in this aspect. An analysis of these characters reveals the fact that almost all the characters are apparently contributing to the re-defining of Damayanti. The approaches of each character are varied as varied according to each one’s temperament; some are deeply in love, some gets engrossed in affection, some get frenzied, jealous and crazy, some try to rescue—whatever it be all are adding to the texture of the central theme. The Swan in the text is typical as it acts as an envoy between Nala and Damayanti. In this varied array of characters the Swan comes first. The Swan is presented not merely as an envoy but as one sharing the enthusiasm, anxiety sensuousness of the lovers. The Swan is introduced first in Scene III, Day One of the play. It is as caught in the hands of Nala who is burning with passion for Damayanti. To reciprocate the kindness of the King, Swan agrees to act as an envoy to Damayanti with the message of love.
The Swan Says:

The King of Vidarbha, The mighty Bhima, (who is) pestilent fire to wrathful enemies,
has a comely daughter, unsurpassed in the world
If she becomes your beloved, she would be worthy match for you
To unite her with you, I am competent.
Kindly grant me permission for this, charming, beautiful and virtuous. (NC 13)

Nala listens to the description “charming and beautiful” with great eagerness and enthusiasm when he hears the name of Damayanti, he says he has been meditating on the name for a long time. He also says that he had for a long time in love with Damayanti. The name of Damayanti appears very sweet, and he requests the Swan to repeat it several times for him. The performance text gives that when the Swan says “she’ll be in love with you Nala is overcome with joy and embraces him tightly with the feeling that he has never had a closer friend” (NC 14).

In his over enthusiasm, Nala elaborates his state of mind and life to the Swan. He urges the Swan of a remedy to relieve his heaviness of mind and act as an envoy of love. The Swan consoles Nala by reasserting the fact that it is undeniable that Damayanti is created for Nala. It is deemed by fate. He promises to fulfil Nala’s desire. The Swan is determined to join Damayanti with Nala in love. He takes it as his mission.
While the Swan is the image of refuge to Nala, it appears brightening the emotional feelings of Damayanti. In scene IV, Day One of the play, the maid describes the Swan to Damayanti, who is in a desperate mood.

Look, is it a flash of lighting blazing down to the earth?
or the moon's sphere approaching terrestrial ground?
Is it a golden swan flying towards us?

Is n't like a stream of ambrosia to the eyes? (NC 18)

The unusual sight gives Damayanti immense pleasure. This sight has a remarkable place in the story as other objects in the garden serve to intensify her pangs of love. Since the Swan's ultimate aim is to unite Damayanti with Nala, his very coming gives relief to her. It defines the Swan's attitudes to her. After winning her confidence, he tries to establish a rapport with her by touching the innermost passion of Damayanti to secure a husband of her desire. After Damayanti reveals her love to Nala, the Swan describes the same in a highly flowery and fascinating language:

Good lady, your union is the union of
gold and diamond.

Visnu is suited to Rema, Sasanka to Nisa

Hara to Uma, and Nala to you. (NC 24)
It may be seen in Day Two that Damayanti discarding her shyness is described as moon to night. The approach of the Swan is to evoke the virtues in Damayanti and incline her mind towards Nala. He tells that good persons should be united to those worthy of them. It is proper that Damayanti possessing the qualities of beauty, grace and goodness should be united with Nala. In the interpolation of the encounter between the Swan and Damayanti, she wishes to see the portrait of King Nala and then the Swan draws a portrait of Nala with his nails on a lotus-leaf, Damayanti accepts and hugs it with extreme passion to the satisfaction of the Swan. In the next scene while describing each and every detail of his visit to Damayanti, the Swan tells Nala that he had to draw a portrait of Nala on a lotus-leaf at her request and she pressed it to her heart and the brightness of her face at that time is beyond description. Here again the Swan convinces Nala that he has not only tested her will, but also reinforced her love for Nala. The Swan, with the satisfaction of his mission fulfilled, consoles Nala further that he need not be sunk in the ocean of agony of love. It is also relevant to note that M.H. Sastri has defined the Swan in \textit{Nalacaritam} as the “paradigm of the virtuous dual impression of romantic and love oriented family life” (Sastri 134).

The Swan which disappears after its mission promises to see Nala later and reappears in the play in Scene XII, Day Four. There Nala is in a
dilemma whether to kill Puṣkara who had done wrongs to him and to Damayanti. Nala waits for the arrival of Damayanti to pronounce a proper punishment as Puṣkara uttered so many uncouth words about Damayanti in his earlier victory over Nala. The Swan makes the suggestion and conveys the order of the great Brahma to spare Puṣkara. The advice of the Swan can be read along with the Nala’s waiting for the arrival and decision of Damayanti. The swan’s specific concern is with Damayanti and this clarifies his attitude to her. In the same scene after setting Puṣkara free, even while praising King Nala, the Swan notes the absence of Damayanti. He in his modesty says that it “by my basic nature, characteristic of a bird makes me tell you something there is one thing missing, to make my joy complete [This kind of frivolity is characteristic of our race]. I feel it is definitely a defect, that your beloved wife, along with children are not present here now” (NC 250). His delight in the family felicity of Nala Damayanti and children prove M.H. Sastri’s dual paradigm theory.

III

Among the characters in Najacaritam who take part in the play to lead to its resolution Karkotaka, the divine serpent, has a pivotal role to play. While the swan’s mission was to unite Damayanti with Nala that of the Karkotaka is to re-unite Damayanti with Nala after their separation. It is in Scene II, Day Three of the play, the episode of the Karkotaka begins.
He in the forest fire, body half-burnt, wails calling Nala for rescue, who is wandering in the forest aimlessly. In his wail, Karkotaka addresses Nala as "husband of Bhaimi" and tells him that he knows all about Nala’s life. While Nala attempts to save Karkotaka from the fire, he gets bitten by the serpent and Nala is deformed. But Karkotaka reveals the fact that he has bitten Nala as a favour because he rescued the serpent from the curse and with the power of his poison, Kali who dwells inside Nala will burn and he will leave Nala’s body soon. It is important that Nala comes to know for the first time that whatever happens to him is due to the evil power of Kali.

Later in Scene XI, we can see that having been scorched and withered in the terrible fire of Damayanti’s curse and immersed in the river of Karkotaka’s poison Kali was burning. Karkotaka also gives him a cloth to wear to retain his original form when it becomes necessary. From Karkotaka, Nala knows about his future and Nala finds his way out for his refuge and re-union with Damayanti.

He advises Nala to meet Rtuparna, the King of Saketa and to teach him Aswahradaya (horse riding) and to learn Aksahradaya (dice play) and thereby realise his desire. Later Nala attains his original form to prove his identity before Damayanti by wearing the divine cloth as Damayanti had a little suspicion about the identity of Bahuka as Nala, even though he tries to convince her so. Since all the misfortunes are connected directly or
indirectly with the love and marriage, all the solutions to get rid of these grieves are in a way connected to the same. To Nala, to get rid of misfortune is to re-unite with Damayanti and the intervention of Karkotaka evidently plays exactly the same role.

IV

Apart from the Swan and Karkotaka there are a series of characters who either promote Damayanti’s love or express concern in the situations she faces. Among them the leading one is King Bhima, the father of Damayanti. King Bhima has only four appearances in this play but every time they are imparting not only his individuality but are also contributive to the charisma of Damayanti. It is in the Scene XII, Day One King Bhima is first introduced as receiving Goddess Saraswati, who as per the order of Lord Vishnu arrives at the palace of Kundina to describe to Damayanti in detail of each and every one of the suitors present in the scene of marriage [Swayamvara]. Till the moment just before the arrival of Goddess Saraswati, King Bhima was in great tension and confusion as

the palace of Kundina is filled with reverberation of the voices of Devas, Asuras, Pannagas, and others who loudly proclaimed that Damayanti belonged to them. Bhima is filled with fear and apprehension due to the arrival of these suitors of Damayanti, belonging to different creeds and
places, ready to go to any extent, just to posses her. The atmosphere is charged with their threats. In this disturbed situation, Bhima requests Lord Visnu to conduct the ceremony peacefully. He grants the wish and appoints Saraswati, the goddess of Learning. (NC 57)

It seemed that King Bhima found relieved as Damayanti gets Goddess Saraswati herself as a friend to help her in the selection.

The second appearance of King Bhima is in the last scene of Day Two of the play, where Damayanti returns to her palace from Cedi palace. She tells Bhima that it is better for her to die rather than lead a life in the sorrow of separation and to that King Bhima consoles her that he is in search of Nala and very soon she will be united with her husband. He also comforts Damayanti that all the calamities will surely pass and happiness is around. Here, King Bhima is consoling Damayanti. His third appearance in the scene III, Day Four of the play, where he has to receive Rtuparna who then comes only to know that the news about Damayanti’s marriage was a hoax.

The last appearance of the King Bhima is in Scene VIII, Day Four. There King Bhima is cheered in the re-union of Nala and Damayanti and with great joy and affection he feels that his life has become meaningful. He expresses further that:
I used to feel that even this existence is meaningless. Now, since I got the opportunity to see your lotus like face, I am lucky. To me, she is just like what you [Nala] are to King Virasena your father. She is my life. I am seeing both of you together due to the blessing of God. One has to experience so much of suffering till the time of death. Even in my sleep I was afraid that something might happen to you. My mind is not strong enough to suffer sorrows. Just as she is a jewel among women you are the greatest among men. You have great self-respect and courage. Now may both of you live for a long time on this earth, without ever having to suffer the sorrow of separation. You should not [thinking of earlier actions] feel any grudge towards each other. Both of you are treasures bestowed on me by destiny.” (NC 229-230)

Evidently he dwells on Damayanti and to him ‘she is all’ and no more she should suffer the grief of separation is his wish. After indicating clearly his affection and concern towards Damayanti he pacifies Nala by drawing on philosophical outlook such as with spiritual emancipation, everything will come to an end and Nala was drawn on to bad action because he was under the spell of illusion [maya]. Justifying the mistakes of Nala on philosophical ground he is actually justifying and weighing up the womanliness of Damayanti with accent on her unsurpassable beauty, courage and dignity. In a way, King Bhima had tried to share the sorrows of Damayanti on earlier occasions and now he is praising the virtues bestowed on her by all the world.
Like King Bhima, her mother is also greatly concerned with Damayanti and her fate. In scene VI, Day Four of the play, Damayanti after convincing herself that Bahuka, the charioteer staying in Saketa is her own husband in disguise, thinks of a means to bring him over from there. It is in this discussion that her mother comforts Damayanti that she need not languish or weep anymore as if the person identified by the Brahmin is Nala, he should be brought to her by informing the same to her father. Here, the mother is found greatly worried in the anxiety and embarrassment of Damayanti. She is a little over anxious like any other mother and so is eager to take up the strategy of Damayanti, just for the sake of Damayanti alone.

If the mother of Damayanti is this much concerned about her, the Queen of Cedi where Damayanti arrives after her torments in the forest wonders at first to see such a heavenly beauty half-clad in shabby cloth, but gradually she realizes the fact and agrees to give her refuge. She also approves of all the conditions Damayanti puts forward in anxiety to preserve her chastity, nobility and dignity. Granting all the wishes of Damayanti the queen assures to treat her like her own daughter Sunanda. Here also the queen is hailing the primacy of Damayanti without knowing that she is her own sister’s daughter. Listening to Damayanti’s story of intense grief the queen admits her self-respect and consoles her in her misfortunes.
V

Sudeva, Parvata and Parnada are three other characters who play decisive roles of Brahmin-envoys or messengers. Among the three, Parvata appears first in Scene VI, Day One of the play. It is on his way towards Heaven (Swarga) that Parvada meets Narada. The importance of the scene attached to the character of Damayanti is that while Parvada wonders as there is no war on the earth as all the Kings are moon-struck with Damayanti. This is more detailed and confirmed in the next scene as Narada envisages the possibility of a war by Kings who compete with each other to gain Damayanti. This becomes more evident in the scene of marriage where King Bhima had to request Lord Vishnu with obeisance to conduct the ceremony peacefully as the scene reverberates with war cries. And all these threats are about gaining the hand of Damayanti.

Sudeva plays a decisive role in the development of plot centered on Damayanti. Sudeva finds out Damayanti after separation and goes along with her attempt to bring over Nala to her. While separation and re-union are the two key points in the play, to search and find out Damayanti in her misfortunes is his first task, and the risk of bringing home Nala, the second. In both these instances Sudeva has to use his intellect and practical wisdom.

In the first instance, Sudeva comforts Damayanti and expresses the hope that she would be united again with Nala soon and for the same her father is
actively engaged. After his first mission of tracing Damayanti, he tries to console her when she was going to the details of her hardships and bitter experiences. The very first line of this Pada shows his adept qualities in carrying out his mission and with feelings of wonder, joy and satisfaction he finds the day as a good one for having recognised Damayanti.

Next we find Sudeva in two consecutive Scenes of VII and VIII of Day Four of the play. In the first, Sudeva accepts the strategy of Damayanti and also gives details of his earlier search for her and his present strategy of announcing the wedding. His sharp intellect and the fact that he is completely dependable as he is entrusted with the task are clearly stated in his words:

None knows whether a messenger
was sent or not
people assemble from far and wide;
this is no jest-
with huge retinue and to the
accompaniment of drums and trumpets,
dignitaries with their sword-bearing footmen and henchmen have arrived; the wedding is fixed for tomorrow- I'll tell him thus. (NC 175)
These expressions of his shrewdness and felicity of words prove his indebtedness to Damayanti. Actually when the play moves on, this response and action of Sudeva is found promoting the case of Damayanti. The following statements from his pada show it clearly:

1. I'll fulfil your wish, Damayanti
2. Which had already been half-accomplished by me
3. While you are in agony, we are heedless
4. Even if I walk day and night, I've no pain in my legs
5. I'll think of all the sufferings you've endured
6. Enough of your tears, for soon I'll unite you with your husband
7. How much did we tramp and trot once until we found you.

(NC 173)

In the next part, Sudeva's capacity to attract, tempt and create turbulence in the mind of the hearer is emphasized. It also reveals his great sagacity and persuasive power. Before Rtuparna, Sudeva goes straight into the matter with a few attractive addresses and without waiting for any other introduction. His pada reflects happiness, enthusiasm, shrewdness and diplomacy. The performance text tells us that Sudeva says, you are “a lucky man who has never experienced misfortune” (NC 178). Here Sudeva
says with a hint of doubt, “I am not sure, still since it is a piece of diverting news, let me tell you. After all, for you I do not have to pause for the appropriate time. The whole earth is full of commotion. Is it possible that you are not aware of this? There are reverberations of musical and rhythmical instruments like Conch and Maddala..... don’t you want to know the reason for all this? Let me tell you what I know listen!” (NC 178) Sudeva’s enthusiasm goes one step further. The performance text gives details of this scene:

The beautiful Damayanti, who has been discarded by the insane Nala [here Rtuparna listens, more attentively. Bahuka gets a minor shock, and his face reveals panic, gloom, reflection and doubt. Though his feelings are quite controlled, Varsneya sees them], out of her vengeance for him, [Bahuka is anxious] has decided to accept another person as her husband, so that she can freely indulge in the sports of love’. Bahuka is in panic at this point, still, he should have some doubt, whether it could happen at all. Varsneya is all slightly worried at Bahuka’s change of expression. Rtuparna is very happy on hearing this, and as though having decided something, listens with more attention and curiosity.

Sudeva continues: The moment the news came out, the kings of all the lands surrounding the four seas have started thronging enthusiastically to Kundina, thinking, ‘I am a suitable man for Damayanti’, ‘no, I am more suitable.’ First it
was heard that the *svayamvara* was fixed for today, but now it seems that it is postponed for tomorrow, because a certain person has not arrived so far. ....Bahuka is very upset. When Sudeva says that the *svayamvara* has been postponed for tomorrow, assuming that it is for his own sake, Rtparna becomes impatient to get to Kundina immediately. (NC 178)

Thus, he fulfils his mission for Damayanti. It is necessary to analyse his part. Then we note Sudeva’s shrewdness in attracting Rtparna by touching on his burning passion for Damayanti. The details of marriage, panic among the kings to attend the same, a make-belief of the rare possibility of Rtparna to win Damayanti all these are centered on the image of Damayanti and his great concern for her.

The case of Parnada in relation to Damayanti is also significant as he is the person who traces the identity of Nala in Bahuka. It is Bahuka who replies to the question of identity and thus Parnada considers himself lucky as his act paves the way for her re-union with Nala. Parnada reports to Damayanti that Bahuka gave a reply to the question (code message) in this manner ‘Ladies with good breeding have self-made restraints like character, morality and devotion to the husband are virtuous and they will be protected in any situation’. (NC 168)

Interestingly, this reply of Bahuka calls our attention to the reply of Bahuka to Kesini in Day Four: ‘Ladies of good breeding should not get angry. All the rulers of the world know that Nala has not deliberately done
anything wrong. Devoted wives would be blessed with all the temporal and spiritual pleasures” (NC 213).

VI

The merchant leader considers it a great privilege to be acquainted with an eminent lady like Damayanti and to offer some help to her in securing a refuge in the Court of King Cedi.

For the re-union in the play, Kesini also provides immense help as she acts according to the direction of Damayanti in searching for the identity of Bahuka. Kesini adopts a strategy of provoking Bahuka by referring to Nala and watching his actions unnoticed. Damayanti considers this as the only way to put an end to her suffering and reminds Kesini as the occasion for her to show affection. Kesini presents all the evidences for a conclusion that Bahuka is Nala and she does not take the credit for the same and attributes it to Damayanti’s virtues. This shows Kesini’s devotion to Damayanti and her unselfishness.

VII

Damayanti is defined as a New Woman or ideal one in the light of the emotional responses and assertions of Nala, Narada, Sudeva, the Swan and the like in the previous parts. The approaches of Kali, Woodsman, Rtuparna and Indra and other gods were different. While Kali is jealous of the marriage, Indra and other gods are first in love with Damayanti and
then appear blessing the marriage. The woodsman becomes crazy by the bewitching beauty of Damayanti and Rtuparna is infatuated and is in a haste to possess her. Among them, as already stated, Kali and the woodsman are highly dramatic characters contrary to the typical characters of the other traditional Kathakali texts. Kali, in his appearance and action, may be defined as a state of mind, or, a bhava.

Kali is first introduced in the play in Scene II, Day Two. He is on his way to Heaven [Swarga]. Kali enters the stage alone and observes:

“I have heard that there is a beautiful damsel on earth, the daughter of Bhima, who can excel the celestial maidens [apsaras] of heaven in her beauty. What is the way to secure her [thinking] yes, there is a way. Let me go to earth, gathering my army comprising the soldiers of Desire [Kama] Anger [krodha] Avarice [lobha] Arrogance [mada] and strife [matsarya]” (NC 76).

In his attempt he also invites Dwapara his friend. In the next scene they meet Indra and the other gods and they ponder on it. Kali again presents the case of Damayanti. Knowing the aim of Kali, the gods tell the truth, about the marriage and their participation, blessing Nala as the apt bridegroom, etc. When he learns that Damayanti married the noble and heroic Nala, Kali is at first surprised and shocked. He can’t bear the shame
on the gods, as all of them are gaping like dolls, when with a resolute, unwavering mind Damayanti chose a “worm of a man” (NC 78). He gets furious and swears to take revenge immediately. His anger mounts to such an extent that he decides to separate them and to take away Nala’s kingdom. Here we can see the conspiracy of Kali and Dwapara while they are on their way to crush Nala. Dwapara reminds Kali of the boons of the gods given to Nala. Because of the boons he is unconquerable. Kali again shows malignant contempt: “these idiots [gods] have also bestowed favours on him” (NC 81). Basically, Kali is the evil spirit and in this text he is invested with great dramatic import. To give vent to his hatred, Kali tries to possess the mind of Nala and to instigate him to engage in false doings and mistakes.

When we consider the structure of the plot, it can be readily seen that the revenge motif of Kali is the moving force in the whole story. Kali who was also a suitor for Damayanti gives the reason for his vengeance in marriage. In his encounter with Indra, Indra tries to dissuade him from his attempt. “It is dangerous for you to bear rancour for Nala. You are evil minded, while Nala is virtuous. If you try to harm him, you will have to suffer several misfortunes” (NC 79).

Kali, not convinced by this advice, grows impatient, and tells Indra, “great Deva, this is preposterous. How can we be deprived of the most
precious gem in the world, and let it fall into the hands of an insect of a man” (NC 79). And Indra replies:

Kali you are wrong. The noble men belonging to a particular region have the right to possess precious jewels from their own respective areas. For example, all valuables in Heaven belong to my right. Nala, the truthful, virtuous, valiant emperor is the rightful possessor of this beauty who belongs to the earth. It is better for you not to interfere in their life. (NC 79)

But Kali overpowered with jealousy and anger decides not to rest until he destroys everything Nala and Damayanti have.

The human element that Kali drags into the situation is justified by himself even at the end where he is on the point of killed by Nala. In Scene XI, Day Three of the play near the Thanni tree, Kali who is burning in the fire of Damayanti’s curse and is tormented by the poisonous fumes of Karkotaka’s bite, sees the mighty Nala [Bahuka] approaching like a thunder bolt with his drawn sword. Kali flees in panic, but Nala stops him in rage, asking:

Where do you slink away now, after having deceived me?
I am eager to know this.
Foul-faced, immoral scoundrel,
Imbecile! I’ve found you at last.
You (who are) deformed from head
to foot, fostering hatred
towards virtuous people! Rascal, I
deem you
as a mere worm; and this is not merely
an abuse.
Killing you would be a cause for uni-
versal celebration.
I am indeed lucky; criminal, clown,
you are the victim of slaughter today.
Eunuch, scoundrel, rascal, twerp,
where can you flee, now? You have an
invitation to dinner with Yama; in
your mind
burning and scorching, now it’s futile
to nurture hopes of escape. (NC 190)

Though Kali is scared out of his wits he musters courage somehow,
and dares to argue that the reason for all the troubles is not Kali, but Nala
himself. According to the performance text, he says that:

I made you suffer because you married the most beautiful
Damayanti; I could not brook this disrespect you showed to the
devas. Your own bad action is responsible for your failure in the
game of dice, wandering in the forest, discarding your wife, your becoming deformed. Now you are trying to cover up your own indiscretions. ‘What can I tell you then’. (NC 192)

Bahuka’s anger is doubled on seeing that Kali instead of asking for forgiveness, is trying to accuse him of indiscretion.

Kali can’t bear the action of Damayanti, a beauty whom even the gods wish to marry. She takes Nala, a mere human being, as her husband. Though all his actions revolve around this base factor, his own enthusiasm for her can also be taken up for analysis. His jealousy goes to such an extent that he is willing to wait for twelve years to find an excuse to possess Nala. All the developments in the play are understandably the outcome of the outrageous actions of Kali. Puṣkara’s courage to call Nala for a dice game, Nala’s over indulgence, failure in the game, their escape to forest, misfortunes and sufferings in the forest, separation, all these developments can be traced to the original reason of jealousy of Kali. And his jealousy is caused by the unparalleled beauty of Damayanti.

VIII

While Kali is moved by jealousy towards Nala in his gaining Damayanti, Puṣkara is just a tool in the hands of Kali. Incidentally, Puṣkara was also languishing in shame and humiliation because he is without of any royal insignia, but his brother Nala is the proud king with unlimited powers and
wealth. Basically, Puṣkara is a coward without any courage and he has no history of any previous victory. As the play progresses, we see Puṣkara acting on the instigation of Kali. A close analysis of his first pronouncement in his encounter with Kali and Dwapara reveals that he is suffering from his discomfiture. In his statements, he draws on certain parallels which are the great attractions of Nala compared to him. It can be tabulated as follows:

Table 5

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “Though unfamiliar to me”</td>
<td>“Seeing you nearby there is a sudden stirring in my heart”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. “The people in the land go and see Nala and he grants their wishes”</td>
<td>“None comes to see me from afar”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. “I have no land or city and other royal insignia, a vast army that represses formidable foes”.</td>
<td>“My only virtue is that I am born in this royal family”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. “But why do I recount all these to you”?</td>
<td>“(all these to you) in vain” This means all these do not matter to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. “Nala has his life”</td>
<td>“I have mine”</td>
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(NC 83)

Actually in the above comparison Puṣkara is stating his thoughts. He is full of jealousy and impatience at Nala’s fortunes. Moreover, it is the feeling of discomfiture and guilt that prompt him to open his heart to two strangers. Kali assesses the situation as favourable on the ground that
Puṣkara feels happy when he sees them, it is easy to persuade him that if he takes his advice he will not be a underestimated anymore and it is a pity that he is born to a royal family, but he has not had a taste of its privileges. Under the spell of Kali, Puṣkara calls Nala for the game of dice using foul words. He says that Nala is fully immersed in Damayanti and that he is paying obeisance at the feet of her; if at all Puṣkara wins, of all the advantages he is particular about Damayanti. This is revealed in his victory in the game of dice. He asserts that Damayanti also would become his along with the kingdom. In a way, to Puṣkara wealth, kingdom and Damayanti are identifiable with each other and being in power he can do what he likes to do with them. In order to arrive at the most precious wealth Damayanti, he gives a series of wealth, that had been once under Nala:

1. You conquered the earth from childbed
2. You won the subjects over by good governance
3. You acquired riches on your own merit
4. You redressed the grievances
5. You spread your fame far and wide
6. All the kings surrendered to you
7. All of them served at your command
8. You prided yourself as the all-powerful emperor.

(NC 95)
After listing these he asks:

What’s the need now to elaborate now?

All the silks and jewels you’re adorned
with
are mine: you cannot take the lovely
Damayanti with you;
just like the country, she will also
become mine. (NC 95)

Instead of elaborating he encapsulates all the wealth, properties and power in Damayanti. We can read the passage earlier connected to “jewels are for the king”[Narada, Day One] and Valiant emperor is the rightful possessor of this beauty. [Indra, Day Two: Interpolation] along with this and come to the conclusion that Damayanti is a burning fire in the mind of Puṣkara also. This conclusion is more evident in his pronouncement in Scene XI, Day Four of the play, where Nala calls Puṣkara for a game of dice in retaliation after re-union, he again gives a list of his powers and wealth and goes to the extent of saying that now Nala will have to bestow the beautiful Damayanti to him:

Now what other wealth remains with
you tell me,
except your wife, with a body as deli-
cate as a flower?
Have you gone out of your senses?
What wealth do you have with you
tell me – clothes, ornaments,
your tongue, arms
or this army which belongs to Bhima?
Did you come here to give me a chance
to embrace the honey-tongued Damayanti?
Nala, now I understand the truth.

(NC 240-241)

To Puṣkara Damayanti is an extension of power and wealth. Power and kingdom are Puṣkara's mad passion and it is clear from the blabberings after his victory over Nala in the game of dice. Intoxicated with power he says that the kingdom will be for him for ever and all the good fortunes morally belong to him. He thinks that his achievements are by righteous means. He believes that conquering his brother's kingdom by playing a game of dice is not contrary to moral and ethical principles. His words of extreme anger show that all the wealth of Nala except Damayanti is in his custody and now Damayanti, has to be surrendered to him. He claims for Damayanti earlier that after he got the kingdom and now repeats it at the zenith of his glory. Whatever be the context, he is passionately aspiring for Damayanti's hand.
IX

Among the aspirants of Damayanti, if Puṣkara is crazy, the case of Ṛtuparna is worse as he is eager to win her even in her second marriage. On hearing the news of her marriage he cheers up and his joy mounts up as Sudeva conveys the information that the marriage proposed for that day is postponed to the next day for a certain person. He assumes that it is for his own sake, and Ṛtuparna becomes impatient to reach Kundina.

In his impatience and eagerness he dwells on the virtues and peculiar gifts of Damayanti. Ṛtuparna tells Bahuka of his plans, and also about Damayanti’s untainted love, devotion and kindness for him. He says with extreme gratification, “I am really privileged” (NC 180). She sent this Brahmin because she saw that I was absent; the swayamvara also was postponed because of me. Not only does she possess an abundant wealth of beauty, but also she is an adept in the science of love [Kama sastra].

In the performance text this is given as, “when he says this, with embarrassment and a hint of mockery, Bahuka looks at Ṛtuparna. As for Ṛtuparna himself, he is overjoyed; but Bahuka’s mind goes back to his recent dialogue with Parnada and also the message of Sudeva” (NC 180).

Ṛtuparna says further that, “though I had deep love for Damayanti even during her first marriage, I could not secure her then because Nala
was luckier than me. But this time, it is not so; I’ll surely possess her. Without any doubt [discarding your gloom] please drive my chariot efficiently. By sunrise tomorrow, that lovely lady will be united with me”.

(NC 180)

With that much infatuation for Damayanti, Rtuparna arrives at Kundina, but to his dismay he finds that no arrangements for the marriage are made and he comes to know that the news about the marriage was a hoax. Anyway, Rtuparna manages to receive the hospitality of King Bhima. “The next morning Rtuparna not aware of what happened on the previous day, sees the city replete with beautiful decorations. He may have thought that perhaps all these are part of the preparation for the marriage” (NC 233). This shows how naive Rtuparna is in his passion. The celebrations are to mark the auspicious arrival of Nala, and Rtuparna is astonished to see these developments.

X

The Woodsman is another significant character who decisively pushes the play to its resolution. Again, his presence in the forest which stands for penance is to be noted. In his attempt at seducing Damayanti he becomes eloquent of the pleasures of the forest. He is in the forest, and of the forest he has so many things to tell. He reveals all these secrets of the forest in order to tempt Damayanti into accepting him. His justification is
that, in the dense forest she is alone and he is her only refuge. In his
enthusiasm he sees the opportunity given to him to see her in the forest is
enough evidence to prove that god is kind to him. He thinks that he has the
right to demand and gain Damayanti, as he is the person who saved her
from the mouth of a snake.

In the dense forest the Woodsman first notices the female voice as a
wail and he goes in search of the voice. When the voice becomes clear
and he identifies it as a female voice, his curiosity mounts. He goes further
and finds her, he is all wonder that her form is so splendid and she is
beautiful as beauty itself. At the first sight itself he wonders who even may
kiss her lips. By killing the snake he saves her and she says she has
nothing to offer in return. She wishes that he may leave her alone. But his
problem begins there.

Lady, how can I go away thus,
There are so many dreams here
listen to all of them.(NC 114)

Further he tries to tempt Damayanti by dwelling on her beauty. It reveals
his lust rather than love. His seducing words can be given in the following
sequence:
1. He is suffering from the pain of love
2. Why are you acting like this
3. In you great virtues throng and thrive
4. Her beauty blooms in full splendour
5. Her beauty spreads fragrance
6. If this fragrance goes unappreciated it will be of no use
7. Kamadeva, the deity of love is trying to conquer him
8. Her body need not be tanned any more by wandering here and there
9. If she is doubting how can be indulged sexual pleasures
10. His eyes and heart are fixed on her
11. He has a house of safety
12. She doesn’t know the pleasures of forest
13. Their union is due to the grace of god
14. Whether she is not grateful
15. Try to make up your mind. (NC 115)

The Woodsman is declaring his love openly as he is untouched by the sophistications of civilization. He is wild and outspoken. When he notices that even after his pressing requests, she doesn’t change her mind he changes his attitude. He then tries to tempt her with material pleasures and comfort. He says that the pleasures of the forest can be enjoyed in his company. Impatient and under the impact of sexual passion he goes out of the limit and then Damayanti curses him invoking the boons from the gods. Those who
try to violate her chastity shall be burnt to ashes was the boon, and by her curse the Woodsman is burnt. The strength of her chastity is again tested on Day Four, when Bahuka is suspicious of her actions.

The Woodsman is burnt due to his lust, but the lust is solely for Damayanti, her beauty and virtue. The intervention of the Woodsman is effective in the course of the play as through the curse Damayanti is proved pure and it dramatises her womanliness. In this way the Woodsman’s lust provides the scope to define Damayanti as an ideal one. It can be noticed that even in her wail in the forest, she thinks of her husband and his love. Here she seems somewhat moved by Nala’s actions which made her suffer.

Here it may also be noted that the poet on the contrary to the epic narrative makes the Woodsman a refined fellow in his own way. In the original he saves Damayanti from the snake and attempts to embrace her and is promptly killed by her curse. L. S. Rajagopalan justifying the position of Damayanti states that the Woodsman is attracted by the sweetness of the sound, the beauty of the person and makes tentative overtures to her to rest on his body while freeing her from the snake and even hints that no one could be expected to come to her help in the forest. But the author makes him scrupulously eschew force. Damayanti with feminine insights reads the signs, thanks him hurriedly, says that being saved from death is too great a gift to be requited and requests him to leave her alone. It is only when he
begins to plead his cause and persists, that Damayanti thinks of the boon
given by Indra that any one who attempts to besmirch her chastity would be
burned out. Notice that here there is no question of a curse. The feelings of
Damayanti are only pity for the infatuated, erring fool and sorrow at her own
predicament that she should become the unwitting cause of the demise of a
benefactor (Rajagopalan 30-39).

XI

Unlike the above mentioned characters the gods like Indra, Varuna,
Yama, and Agni are at first in love with Damayanti, but when the marriage
is over they bless Nala and Damayanti and bestow various boons upon
them for their welfare, safety, comfort and long life. It is Narada who
speaks first of the virtue and exquisite beauty of the damsel named
Damayanti who excels even the celestial beauties in Indra. Narada points
out that there are signs of an impending war on earth on the issue of
gaining the hand of Damayanti. Hearing the news of her marriage all the
kings have set out to Kundina decked up in all their finery, with the hope of
marrying her. They are determined to possess her.

God Indra out of his curiosity asks about the lucky person who will
win her. But Narada who encouraged Nala to gain Damayanti doesn’t
reveal the name. Instead, he refers to the deep-rooted love between her and
another unknown person. It is interesting to note that Narada tries to tempt
Indra also to be a suitor of Damayanti.

According to Indra:

Day and Night are not long enough
to hear about the lovely Damayanti
We wish to tie the nuptial knot (on her)
you should help us in this matter. (NC 38)

Having heard of the beauty of Damayanti all these gods are curious and
impatient to win her love. They hope that Nala can be employed as an
envoy of their love-mission to achieve their aim and they bestow the magic
spell of identity confinement (thiraskarani) on Nala. Though Nala
hallucinates over the splendid beauty of Damayanti he tells her the details
of the agony of love of these Gods.

Is it proper to enquire about another’s name and race
when Indra is in agony?
Listen to what the divine lord
has to tell you through me.
The heavenly lord has spurned the
celestial nymphs
Madana’s wrath will be appeased
only if
he becomes your servant,
it seems
The fire God also having heard of your virtues is burning in the fire of love; Just as the fuel burns in him, Swaha does not enchant him any more. Yama, smitten by the shaft of love is on the brink of death As for Varuna, the pangs of love are more fierce than the fire of badava. (NC 44)

But Damayanti rejects their plea questioning the propriety of their feelings for her. When Nala reports his helplessness to the gods since she is adamant in her love for him, they are convinced that “Nala is truthful to them in spite of his passion for Damayanti which is still smoldering in him”(NC 50). Though they come to know that Damayanti will not choose anyone but Nala, they will not give up without a last attempt. This is reflected in Indra’s words, “you can go and try to win her over. All the five of us are equal in our love for Damayanti and therefore worthy of possessing her. [From this it is clear that all of them will appear on the scene of Swayamvara in the same guise]. Indra also warns him that if she chooses anybody else other than the four of them, there will be many dangers on her path” (NC 51-52).
Despite their warning Damayanti weds Nala and at the Swayamvara though they are in disguise as Nala they have to reveal their respective divine symbols to help her in marrying Nala. Moreover, they bestow boons on the couple. Indra says he has no rancour or disappointment for not being able to wed Damayanti, Agni says that though Damayanti whom he craved to possess chose Nala, he is not cross with them, Varuna says that he came there to make Damayanti Nala’s wife and thus his wish was fulfilled, and Varuna blesses Nala to enjoy marital bliss with the lovely Damayanti. Setting aside the delicacy of their own discomfiture on this occasion, they wish all prosperity to Nala and Damayanti. The fact still remains that Damayanti is the pivot of the plot.

The role of goddess Saraswati is also relevant as she is appointed by Lord Vishnu to help Damayanti in choosing the man of her heart. After completing her mission of assisting Damayanti in the proceedings of Swayamvara she blesses them with learning and wisdom. These boons will go to even those who remember Nala and Damayanti.

XII

But the case of Raksas and Asuras is different. They become violent in their attempt at gaining the hand of Damayanti. On the report that the damsel has no equal even among celestial nymphs, the Asuras are getting ready to win her. They wonder whether it is not strange that Gods
themselves are fascinated by this mere mortal. They come to the conclusion that:

The great Lekshmi
dropped dead and took birth on the earth.
She must have been disgusted with
Vishnu who is always asleep—
after all, the discerning lady will not
favour an indifferent fellow forever. (NC 53)

They are eager to abduct her by any means such as killing the kings, deceiving the devas or strangling the serpents. Thus they quarrel with the kinnaras, devas and pannagas who have assembled for the marriage. They argue that Brahma has ordained them to have the first place on every great occasion because once they had proclaimed that they were not satisfied with amorous pleasures. Then the creator pronounced that he would create the spirit of love on earth. They now assert that the spirit of love is this beautiful damsel. All others can perhaps watch the damsel and her marriage but no one else can set his heart on her. The fact that the Raksas and Asuras are claiming Damayanti with arrogance and explicit eroticism must be noted. The focus is Damayanti as she functions as the structural pivot.
This study of the attitudes of other characters to Damayanti helps to see her in a new light, as she seems to evince traces of the concept of the New Woman.

According to Viva Gardner, the New Woman was first named, possibly by the radical novelist Sara Grand in the *North American Review* in May 1894. Thereafter the New Woman concept was dissected in the pages of PUNCH and the Yellow Book. It became a genre and was much discussed in ladies’ magazines. She appeared on the stage in the plays of Sydney Grundy, George Bernad Shaw, Sir Arther Wing Pinero, Hewang Arther Jones, Harley Granville Bakar and others.

The New Woman was seen typically as young, middle class and single on principle she eschewed the fripperies of fashion in favour of more masculine dress and severe coiffure. She had probably been educated to a standard unknown to the previous generations of women and she was certainly a devotee of Ibsen and given to reading advanced books. She was financially independent of father or husband, often through earning her own living in one of the careers opened up for women at that time, like journalism and teaching etc.
She affected emancipated habits, like smoking, riding a bicycle, using bold language and taking the omnibus or train unescorted. She belonged to all female clubs or societies where like-minded individuals met and ideas and sexes mixed freely. She sought freedom from and equality with men. In the process she was prepared to overturn all conventions and all accepted notions of femininity.

While the New Woman was essentially a fiction, the creation of a largely unsympathetic press, in many ways this New Woman did exist in the 1890s and 1900s. She is a composite product of the accelerating woman’s movement, a fore runner of the –equally frequently caricatured – suffragette (Gardner 69 ff).

In Viva Gardner’s description of the New Woman she is a resolute woman, bold in thinking and action and even in being a suffragette in sex. It is possible to look upon her as accelerating woman’s advancement. The New Woman is single in principle. These concepts have a degree of relevance for other times and other characters. She seeks freedom of opinion and is bold in acquiring knowledge and in employing it overtly for reasonable situations and causes. The origin of Damayanti can be traced back to the *Mahabharata* as it is given in Chapter II of this thesis. Two centuries ago Damayanti was looked upon as a paradigm of all possible virtues of Indian womanhood inherited from the past. But today the
historical context has totally changed and hence our perspective too. We know the contemporary woman is able to make her own choices and is willing to face its consequences. Now we could see Damayanti as a character struggling to liberate herself from the shackles of convention, social norms and cultural paradigm. An analysis of her emotions, actions, courage, commonsense and like qualities reveals that she has most of the characteristics of a dominating figure struggling for a new individuality.

To elucidate this aspect of Damayanti there are plenty of instances in the whole of Four Days’ play. In the Day One of the play the Swan diplomatically taking up the role of a confidante compels her to reveal her heart, but she replies with the utmost modesty, keeping up all her dignity:

\begin{quote}
What can I tell you
Are the hidden thoughts in the hearts
Of well-bred, chaste maids to be disclosed .(NC 23)
\end{quote}

Though she has reached the people of romantic love, preserving her womanly modesty and yet keeping up the freedom for love, she is hesitant to reveal the same. Even when she reveals her love for Nala, she requests the Swan of an ‘appropriate’ time to tell him of the fact. Her concern regarding appropriateness is evident on the Day Four of the play, where she adopts a strategy with the help of Sudeva in conveying the news of her second marriage to King Rüpārṇa “considering the appropriate time and in
graceful words” (NC 172). Again, when the Swan demands the constancy of her love she sticks to the freedom of choice, and, asks him whether she had ever set her heart on another. Hence, she expresses her right to choose and the privilege to stick to the chosen stand. We can compare this context with Nala’s request to Indra and other gods with the age-old premise that woman is by nature vain and fickle. It is on the belief that Nala asks Indra to try again.

The Swan reports to Nala that he has not only tested her love, but reinforced her love for him, highlighting the relevance of her love. Nala is exalted in the chance even to have a sight of Damayanti by taking the role of an envoy of the gods to her.

As an envoy of the Gods Nala persuades Damayanti to accept one among them as husband, but Damayanti questions the propriety of their feelings for her. She questions the seemingly wanton ways of the gods. She also suggests that this improper behaviour of gods spring from wanton lust. She is indifferent to the pleasures of heaven and so she is not moved by the threats. Instead, she is bold enough to ask whether there are not many women of chastity on this earth and she never thinks that the gods would attempt to resort to mean tricks. If the gods themselves act against the norms of morality, what the common man on earth is to do – is the
question she raises. She emerges as a suffragette in love, even setting aside the God’s request.

Typically, Damayanti is principled both in love and in life. In the marriage which is Swayamvara Damayanti has the option for selecting her husband. But when in disguise the four gods appear she is confused and apprehensive. Being resolute in love for Nala, she appeals to the gods to save her from perplexion as she has never shown any disrespect to any of the gods. She also questions the degree of mercy of the gods regarding sins of omission and commission. The gods have to reveal their godly symbols to save Damayanti from confusion.

Of her principles in life, the conditions she raises to Queen of Cedi in order to stay in the palace are best examples. She says that she can never eat left over food, she can’t talk to other men. If somebody tries to molest her he should be killed. She wants an assurance in these aspects because she thinks that in the palace there may be all sorts of people and her chastity could be threatened. The conditions she puts forward are not her limits but her freedom attained by the moral strength and courage.

Before separation in the forest, the distressed Nala describes to Damayanti the way to Kundina with the hope that this would save her from misfortunes. But Damayanti replies that:
People well-versed in science and scriptures say that woman is man's better half. Listen, my lord (for a man) even in times of stress strain and ailments, an understanding woman is a charming antidote. (NC 102)

Here a devoted wife is giving a dole of advice to the husband, who is frustrated totally. This may appear contrary to the conventional concept of Indian womanhood. She is ready, rather obliged to share the joys and sorrows of the husband, hence the term *sahadharmini*. She is determined that amidst all dangers she would never leave her husband. Her resolute will is evidenced here. Through her words, "an understanding woman" she proclaims herself as both fully understanding wife and a woman of high understandings thereby asserting the quality of a New Woman. Again, even when she is worldly, she reveals her innocence as a woman when she calls out Nala, thinking that he is hiding or playing in the dense forest. But Nala has already left her in the darkness. She can't bear the fact that Nala would leave her alone. This deceptively simple passage is rich in meaning.

The Woodsman is burnt to ashes when he makes attempts on her chastity. This is due to the power of Damayanti's curse, highlighting her superb quality and spiritual power.
In the Day Three of the play Parnada as an envoy goes in search of Nala, with a code of message for identifying him. He tells Damayanti of a person named Bahuka in the court of Rtuparna. Then Damayanti lashes out at Nala for his offences done to her. This shows Damayanti is made of sterner stuff.

Parnada: (continues with the same enthusiasm as before) After having gone to many places and finally reaching the court of Rtuparna. I conveyed your message. When I was about to go back, the king's chief charioteer followed me. (Here Damayanti is more attentive) For 'a brave man named Bahuka', Damayanti asks, 'is his name Bahuka?' 'He replied in such words that will put an end to all your sorrows'.

Damayanti: (Listens attentively, but also with a tinge of anger and surprise) 'How did he feel like tearing off my cloth and going away? (With great anxiety) What did he say after hearing this?'

Parnada: (Repeating Bahuka's word) 'Ladies with good breeding have self-made restraints like character, morality and devotion to the husband.' (In her message, Damayanti had implied that she had not pledged to the principle of having only a single husband, she had clearly stated that this is what I am going to do.)

Damayanti: (with anger and irritation towards Nala) 'When I find out that unprincipled rogue who tried to tear off my cloth and leave me alone, I will reward you suitably. (NC 168)
The very same Damayanti is seen in the Day Four of the play. After a series of pleas her innocence of the strategy of the second marriage, Nala rejects her on suspicions of the news of her second marriage, Damayanti finally gathers courage, stands up for herself and faces Nala evenly:

My Lord, unable to seek you out, frightened as I was
how does it matter, it I have adopted such a course (of action)
My mother is my witness; if you still consider me guilty
I have no regrets, on the contrary, I am happy indeed
Desirous of seeing this human incarnation of Kama,
in my eagerness
I have committed this mistake except for this,
there is no deception here. (NC 226)

Damayanti is bold enough to say that even after all this if Nala thinks she has done something wrong, she is not unhappy, in fact, she is happy that driven by a strong desire to see him she committed this ‘mistake’. She goes further and informs him that even her father King Bhima does not know about it. Nala ought to know that marriage of a renounced princess will not be held without the father’s knowledge.

Earlier when Nala confronts Damayanti in anger and attempts to raise more charges against her using bitter and harsh words, she with the admirable self restrained of a noble lady gives apt rejoinders to his
accusations. She says that she has always been in love with Nala and that intensity of love has given courage to adopt him as husband in the royal assembly, over coming all the obstacles and Indra’s interference. The strategy of announcing ‘second marriage’ that she adopts now is very much in the same vein as what she did earlier to get him as her partner in life. Remembering the past painful days she even goes to the extent of asking where he was and who was there to protect her in those unaccompanied and helpless days. The same question she raises in her monologue on suspicions and on conviction that Bahuka is Nala. Her doubt of his form and attire is again womanly, as she has to doubly convince herself that the person is Nala. Nala has to wear the divine cloth given by Karkotaka to reveal his identity. In the soliloquy, she is in utter dilemma. She can’t discard the handsome, ill fated and valiant Nala even if he is disguised as Bahuka, but her anxiety tempts her to think whether her husband is angry with her. If not, how could he leave her alone in the forest. Again her abandonment by her husband pains her acutely. It is interesting to notice that after abandonment, the pang of separation haunts her. In this context she tries to justify herself. After all, her intention was to unite with him. Here Damayanti is found tortured under the impact of several intense contradictory feelings. She emerges as embodying all these contradictory and complex emotions and yet, still maintains and preserving her basic resoluteness of temper.