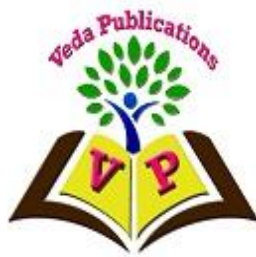


**RENDERING OF LOVE, FATE, BEAUTY AND FAITH IN ANAND NEELAKANDAN'S
NALA DAMAYANTI: AN ETERNAL TALE FROM THE MAHABHARATA.**

A.Mahara Devi

(Assistant Professor, Department of English, E.M.G.Yadava Women's College, Madurai.)<https://doi.org/10.54513/IJREP.2023.9402>**Abstract**

Article Info:

Article Received: 05-10-2023

Accepted on: 17-11-2023


Published online: 23-11-2023

The recent research paper expounds the rendering of love, fate, beauty and life in the novel, *Nala Damayanti*. Anand Neelakantan is back with a striking new novel from the epic characters of Nala and Damayanti from Mahabharata. It is a fact that the story has persisted comparatively indefinite for the current generation, and this book is an effort to convey it to the younger generations of today. Nala Damayanti story is expressed from the outlook of Nala and how destiny arbitrated in his life. From an overemotional story of despair, it develops a stirring tale of a woman of substance. Neelakantan relates this timeless love story through Damayanti and the golden swan Hemanga's viewpoints. The eternal love is beautifully explored in this novel. *Nala Damayanti* is not only a love story with a joyful conclusion but it is also a stimulating leader to life. It is the tale of how humans can subjugate even gods if they have confidence and hope in themselves. A considerate tone is frequently used to express such tales in literature from the standpoint of a female and her close confidante and messenger of love, Hemanga, the golden swan. The author purely indicates that, the world can be protected even by a woman and a little swan and their sense of wit, and it can be ended without violence and wars.

Keywords: *Eternal love, Faith, Circumstances, Jealousy, Beauty and life.**Author(s) retain the copyright of this article*

Copyright © 2023 VEDA Publications

Author(s) agree that this article remains permanently open access under the terms of the Creative Commons

Attribution License 4.0 International License 

Anand Neelakandan is a renowned Indian author, journalist, screenwriter and public orator. He is acknowledged for his mythological novels and he has authored ten books in English. He always implements the elegance of telling stories related to the perception of the antagonists and about subsidiary characters in his works. His important work, *Asura: Tale of the Vanquished* was published in the year 2012. It was entirely constructed on the Indian Epic Ramayana and it communicated from the viewpoint of Ravana. His books have been rendered into many languages like, Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam, English, Kannada, Bengali, Gujarati. This story first appeared in audio format in 2022, and it was later written as a book by the author. The novel, *Nala Damayanti* published in the year 2023 and it is a colorful, highly enjoyable and an intense treat for colorful Indian mythology readers. The epic *Mahabharata* as the stage, these mythological novel discussions of the pliability and resolve of a dubious hero and fetches forth the predicament of the human race. The classical story 'Mahabharata' and it structures Damayanti as the protagonist who overcome misfortune and finally reunified with her darling Nala, irrespective of what Kali, the god of misfortune, has in stock for them. Anand Neelakantan is back with a striking new novel from the epic characters of Nala and Damayanti from Mahabharata.

Anand Neelakantan dumping the conventional narration and he is the Kerala-born novelist, playwright and motivational speaker who is acknowledged for lettering the novels that directed to the runaway success *Bahubali* films. It voices the tale from the standpoint of Damayanti, who is a redeemer and not a damsel in suffering. The love story of Nala and Damayanti is one of the first love stories known to man in the earlier times. Not only in ancient Indian literature, but also in further classical languages also rejoices this tale over poetry, plays, paintings and other art forms. It is true that the story has persisted comparatively indefinite for the current generation, and this book is an effort to convey it for the youngsters of today.

Nala Damayanti story is communicated from the outlook of Nala and how destiny arbitrated in his life. But a diverse story appears when the stare swings from Nala to Damayanti. This turn into a tale of grit, determination and triumph of love over all probabilities. From an overemotional story of despair, it converts a stirring anecdote of a woman of substance. In the beginning of the novel, Brahma, the originator of the universe, contemplates it was a blunder to create humans and he resolves to remove them. However,

Hemanga, a golden swan, asks Brahma to permit him to demonstrate that true love is indeed between human beings. Then Brahma explains to Hemanga, the reason for his decision to destroy humans through the following words:

Watch those fools, Brahma cried, pointing to a group of people dancing in front of a temple. Hemanga bent forward to look closely. The dancing people had pierced their skins with needle. Some had a mini trident impaled through their cheeks. Others were rolling on the ground, chanting mantras and praising god... A medicant was standing upside down, chanting something. Another stood on one leg near him, mumbling gibberish and, as the scene expanded, Hemanga could see thousands of such people in acrobatic positions (ND, 4).

Then Hemanga prepared himself to go to earth to prove the true love. The sage sends Hemanga to Vidarbha kingdom. Being the troublemaker that he is, Narada gives Hemanga an unbearable task to complete. He asks Hemanga to unite the king of Nishadas, Nala, with the princess of Vidarbha, Damayanti. Somehow, Hemanga thrives in emerging love between them. But when Kali, who is surrounded on Earth and he cannot be set free until humans die. But the God, Kali tries his best to make Hemanga's plan fail on uniting Nala and Damayanti. The reason is that if Damayanti gives up the decision of having Nala, then Hemanga won't be able to show that there's true love on Earth. Then, Brahma would expunge humankind which would set Kali free. The story of *Nala Damayanti* is usually told from the Nala's point of view. But in this retelling, Neelakantan relates this timeless love story through Damayanti and the golden swan Hemanga's viewpoints. In the earth, Hemanga first came to know about the superiority among human beings through the sage and he replied to him that,

That is so stupid! How could humans be superior or inferior to each other, he wanted to ask. How could one set of people be shunned by another set for no reason other than some rules that humans themselves made? Was Brahma right? (ND, 8).

The sage only talks about Nala and Damayanti to Hemanga. He says that, Nala is the King of Nishadas. The Nishadas are tribal people in the Vindhya mountains, but Nala has altered everything. Nala only built their first city and fetch agriculture to his tribe. He even erected granaries and bring prodigious sculptors from all parts of the world. Cooking is a

wonderful art, and Nala was familiar in that art. At first, he was celebrated through his cooking only. Damayanti was a princess of Vidarbha Kingdom. She was such a beauty and elegance that even the gods could not stop from appreciative her. She fell in love with Nala merely from hearing of his good qualities and activities from a golden swan. When it came time for her to choose her husband during her swayamvara, gods, princess and kings came to pursue her hand. The Gods, Indra, Agni and Yama were on their way for presence when they meet Nala. They instruct Nala to be their messenger and to inform Damayanti that she must pick one of them as husbands. During the Swayamvara, the three gods disguise themselves as Nala and ask her to choose one among them. But finally, she identifies Nala and put the garland on him. Damayanti felt very happy and very excited to lead her life along with Nala. After marriage they lead a joyful life in Nishada Kingdom. But Pushkara, brother of Nala always had crooked mind and get jealous on Nala and his country. Even after their marriage also he had jealousy on Nala, because he married a beautiful wife. And he comments that,

I am a sinner. I am evil.... Why should my brother have it all? I am his twin; younger by only a few minutes. Yet he has the kingship, fame and power. And now he has her. He has her! Damayanti's beautiful face is haunting me in my dreams (ND, 84).

The highest of all sentiments is love. The utmost of all *rasa* is Sringara. Because in it, every other sentiment is delimited. The eternal love is beautifully explored in this novel. The two lovers love each other truly and they never try to give up each other. But in some extent, that true love determines to separate each other to test their eternal love. At one instance Nala supposed to lose his country in the dice game. He lost everything and when he demanded by Dvapara to stake his own wife Damayanti, he immediately shook his head and confess to Damayanti,

My fate is my own. I didn't marry you only to give you away to a gambler. You are free to go, marry anyone you wish, marry one of the gods who had come to your swayamvara or marry any noble king. I am a low-caste Nishada with nothing to call as my own. Leave me to my fate. (ND, 99).

From this it is understood that, how much Nala loves Damayanti. Only for the well-being of Damayanti he did everything. Even he consoles himself to separate from her. And he agrees

that Damayanti can marry someone from the well background. From the beginning itself, Nala feels inferior to marry Damayanti, because he belongs to a low caste. *Nala Damayanti* is not only a love story with a joyful conclusion but it is also a stimulating controller to life. It is the anecdote of how humans can subjugate even gods if they have confidence and hope in themselves.

Many poets have written about Nala Damayanti story beautifully and poetically. In many stories, females have often been represented as feeble and frivolous people who dreadfully wait for the hero to release the heroine from their fate and the rogue. Henceforth, a thoughtful attitude is frequently utilized to express such stories in literature from the standpoint of a female and her close amigo and messenger of love, Hemanga, the golden swan. In this narrative process, the author highlighted his heroes, Damayanti and Hemanga, to be determined and with a terrific sense of absurdity and non-unfortunate characters, sinking in mourning and longing for the hero to save them. The author purely indicates that, the world can be protected even by a woman and a little swan and their sense of comedy, and it can be ended without violence and wars. During their separation also, they think about each other, and Damayanti along with group soldiers went to the forest to bring back Nala. She tried her level best to search Nala. But Nala intentionally hide himself from her.

Again, the Swayamvara is arranged for Damayanti, and she again choose Nala, who is in the form of dwarf. So, it is proved that appearance and beauty does not matter in front of a true love. Finally, they hold their hands each other. Along with Damayanti, Nala went to the Nishada Kingdom, and then he plays the dice game once again. He wins back everything and lead a happy life with Damayanti. Hemanga plays a major role in the life of Nala and Damayanti. Then Hemanga back to his world and meet Brahma and tells that he proves the eternal love in earth among humans. At the end of the novel, Brahma confesses that,

Maybe for some poets, Nala could be the hero. For some, poets, Nala could be the hero. For some, it would be Damayanti, and some may even prefer Rituparna. But for me, the eternal messenger of love is the hero of this tale (ND, 216).

REFERENCE

Neelakandan, Anand. *Nala Damayanti: An Eternal Tale from the Mahabharata*. Haryana: Penguin Random House India. 2023.