This thesis is an attempt to derive the emotional paradigm in *Nālacakiram*. The English text of *Nālacakiram* that is used is the authentic translation by the renowned scholar and trained Kathakali dancer Dr. Sudha Gopalakrishnan, published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. This text also carries with it a performance manual based on Kalamandalam Krishnan Nair’s stage version. This performance manual is also taken up for analysis as a Kathakali “text is never more than a third of the totality of the work in its full scale realisation on the stage” (Paniker, *Nālacakiram: A Re-Reading* viii) and it is necessary to enquire into the semiotics of the performance in particular.

Semiotics is the study of signs and can best be defined as a branch of study focussing upon the production of meaning in society. Semiotics, which offers a certain kind of analytical precision, has an elaborate system to describe how signs make sense and produce meanings. “As such, it is equally concerned with processes of signification and with those of communication, the means whereby meanings are both generated and exchanged” (Elam 1). Mieke Bal and Normen Bryson have this to say about signs: “human culture is made up of signs, each of which stands for
something other than itself and the people inhabiting culture busy themselves making sense of those signs” (Bal and Bryson 174). Then anything like words, images, behaviour or human situations in which meaning is relayed by a corresponding outward manifestation can fall within its perspective as “the core of semiotic theory is the definition of the factors involved in this permanent process of sign making and interpreting, and the development of conceptual tools that help to grasp that process as it goes on in various arenas of cultural activity” (Encyclopaedia of Semiotics 263).

Human beings can be considered as promiscuous producers of signs. Anthropologists like Claude Levi-Strauss argue that “any aspect of human activity carries the potential for serving as or becoming a sign; we only have to activate it in accordance with something like semiosis” (Levi-Strauss 48). Here we can also consider the assumption of Umberto Eco that a sign is “anything that can be taken as significantly substituting something else” (Eco 7). In this way, semiotics commonly adopts structuralist methods in its approach.

Though the concept of the sign, that is anything that stands for something else in the production of meaning, is drawn from semiotics, it can be traced back to structuralism, which attained prominence by the 1960s. This concept is characterised by its attention to structures such as systems, relations, and forms that make meaning possible in any cultural
activity. Basically, “structuralism is an analytical as well as theoretical enterprise, dedicated to the systematic elaboration of the rules and constraints that work, like the rules of language to make the generation of meaning possible in the first place” (Hartley 217).

This concept, that the world is made up of relationships rather than things, constitutes the first principle of that way of thinking which can properly be called structuralist. At its simplest, it claims that the nature of every element in any given situation has no significance by itself, and in fact is determined by its relationship to all the other elements involved in that situation. In short, the full significance of any entity or experience cannot be perceived unless and until it is integrated into the structure of which it forms a part. (Hawkes 18).

“Structuralism, as the term suggests, is concerned with structures and more particularly with examining the general laws by which they work” (Eagleton 96) and was distinguished by the use of Saussurean linguistics and its terminology. Literary structuralism flourished in the 1960s as an attempt to apply to literature the methods and insights of Ferdinand de Saussure. In his Course in General Linguistics he viewed language as a system of signs, which was to be studied “synchronically”, that is to say, studied as a complete system at a given point in time, rather than “diachronically”, in its historical development. Each sign was to be seen as being made up of a signifier [a sound image, or its graphic
equivalent] and a signified [the concept]. The relation between signifier and signified is an arbitrary one. The relation between the whole sign to its referent is therefore also arbitrary. Each sign in the system has meaning only by virtue of its difference from the others. Saussure says that “in the linguistic system there are only differences” (Saussure 115). In this connection we can also consider the arguments of Terry Eagleton that “meaning is not mysteriously immanent in a sign but is functional, the result of its difference from other signs” (Eagleton 9).

Saussure called the objective structure of signs *langue* and this was extended to embrace other kinds of signs than purely linguistic ones; on the other hand, he defined *parole* as actual speaking and as a continual implementation of the underlying system constituted in the *langue*. Again, since the sign works in relation to other signs, it is further distinguished into two kinds, the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic. While *paradigm* is a set of signs that are interchangeable and it gains meaning from a contrast with all other possible signs, *syntagm* is a chain of signs which are combined or organised in a meaningful order from a paradigmatic set of choices and it gains meaning from the signs combined in order to form it. The point that Saussure made is that there is no necessary relationship between a particular signifier and its signified. He argued that whatever stability attaches to a particular relationship between a signifier and
signified does not depend on an inherent connection between them; instead, it depends upon the difference between that particular sign and many others. “Structuralism in general is an attempt to apply the linguistic theory to objects and activities other than language itself” (Eagleton 97). Structuralism, as Fredrich Jameson has rightly put it, is an attempt “to rethink everything through once again in terms of linguistics” (Jameson 7).

Saussure’s linguistic views influenced the Russian Formalists, although Formalism is not itself exactly a structuralism. Formalism is actually a pejorative label attributed to a group of like-minded scholars of Russia who were concerned with objective facts and preferred to call themselves “specifiers” engaged in theoretical examinations and shared that interest in common. It was in the years of the October Revolution of 1917 that it developed into an identifiable critical movement with organisational bases in the Moscow Linguistic Circle [1915] and the Society for Study of Poetic Language [1916]. The prominent member of the group, Roman Jakobson, later migrated to Prague and eventually became the doyen of Czech Structuralism.

The essential thrust of the formalists’ argument is that the operation of the text cannot be confined to the analysis of either the langue/parole or the synchronic/diachronic dimensions discussed in Saussurean linguistics.
The Formalists were able to place at the centre of their inquiries the concept of the variable functions fulfilled by particular texts as determined by the different and changing ‘literary systems’ in which they were set. They approached a given text in the same way that Saussure approached a unit of language. Just as the function and meaning of the latter is determined not by its origin but by its relationship to other such units of meaning with the system of relationships comprised by langue so the function and meaning of a text derives from its relationships to other texts within a given literary system. (Bennett 74)

Formalists who were fundamentally concerned with literary structure argued that art was autonomous: a permanent, self determining, continuous human activity which warranted nothing less than an examination in its own terms. As Lemon and Reis say “art was always free of life and the forms of art are explainable by the laws of art only” (Lemon and Reis 12). Literature emphasizes itself as a medium over and above the message it contains and this leads to the notion of complete dominance of form. “Literature seen thus is intrinsically literary: a self sufficient entity, not a window through which other entities can be perceived. Content is a function of literary form, not something separable from it, perceptible beyond it or through it” (Hawkes 67). Indeed a work only seems to have content: in reality “it speaks only of its own coming into being, of its own construction” (Jameson 89). This argument not only agrees with
Saussure's view of language as a self-contained, self-justifying structure but "it views literary texts structurally and suspends attention to the referent to examine the sign itself" (Eagleton 97). Further,

it is this notion of literature as a kind of langue, an autonomous, internally coherent, self limiting, self regulating, self justifying structure, which centrally animates formalist criticism and links it clearly with 'structural' developments in linguistics and anthropology. The individual work of art stands as a sort of parole in relation to its parent langue, a relationship in which each illuminates and is illuminated by the other. In short, conventionality, the operation of tacit unquestioned structural rules, emerges as the animating principle of literary art. (Hawkes 72)

The Prague Linguistic Circle, founded in 1926, was a group of theoreticians of Czech Structuralism including Roman Jakobson, Jan Mukarovsky and Felix Vodicka. In a kind of transition from Formalism to modern structuralism, they "elaborated the ideas of the Formalists, but systematised them more firmly within the framework of Saussurean Linguistics" (Eagleton 99). Formalism, a much discussed area in the critical canon, actually considered all literary forms "as, equally and necessarily, a signification of reality" (Jakobson, On Realism in Art 66). For the Formalists it would have been inconceivable to regard any set of literary forms as being realistic in the sense that they somehow corresponded to reality itself. They argued, "literature should be regarded
as a practice, which through a variety of formal devices enacts a transformation of received categories of thought and expression” (Bennett 24). Then literature should be regarded as a semiotically organized signification of reality and its “literariness” had the further function of specifying the actual object of inquiry itself. Even Trotsky accepted the formalists’ thesis that artistic creation effects “a deflection, a changing and a transformation of reality, in accordance with the peculiar laws of art” (Trotsky 175).

The Prague school that developed under the influence of Saussurean linguistics made its principle of semiotization of objects. Poems were to be viewed as functional structures in which signifiers and signifieds are governed by a single complex set of relations. These signs must be studied in their own right, not as reflections of an external reality: “Saussure’s stress on the arbitrary relation between sign and referent, word and thing, helped to detach the text from its surroundings and make of it an autonomous object [...]. More than the Formalists, however, the Czech Structuralists insisted on the structural unity of the work” (Eagleton 180).

Roman Jakobson who was to provide the major link between Formalism and modern structuralism was a seminal influence on Formalism, Czech Structuralism and much of modern linguistic theory. He elaborated the notions of emotive and conative aspects of communicative
language. He also differentiated between the metaphorical and metonymic aspects of signs. According to him, in metaphor one sign is substituted for another and in metonymy one sign is associated with another. Notions on Equivalances and Parallelisms in literature are also contributions of Jakobson.

A major theoretical outcome of the work of the Prague school was the merger of structuralism with semiotics; for practical purposes, structuralism and semiotics, at least since the age when Parisian structuralism was in the ascendency, have come to be synonymous terms. Semiotics is the systematic study of signs and it deals with specific systems, which can ordinarily be considered as signs. How meanings change and get changed in use are to be explored in its terms. A meaning is always attributed to a sign as a sign is always a thing plus a meaning and the point that Saussure made with the distinction between signifier and signified, and which semiotic analysis depends upon, is that there is no necessary relationship between a particular signifier and its signified. Therefore a particular relationship between a signifier and signified does not depend on an inherent connection between them, instead, it depends upon the difference between a particular sign and many others. There are some debates about how useful Saussure’s legacy is to semiotics beyond this fundamental understanding of the structure of signs, since a theory of
semiotics based on linguistics will fall short of offering a complete account of visual signification.

Gillian Rose argues that “the distinction between signifier and signified is crucial to semiotics, because it means that the relation between meanings [signifieds] and signifiers is not inherent, but rather is conventional and can therefore be problematized” (Rose 72). Hence for the analysis of performing arts where visual signification is prominent a semiotic analysis that draws upon the analysis of its American founder Charles Sanders Peirce is to be preferred. Peirce classifies the signs into iconic, indexical and symbolic, differentiated by the way in which the relation between the signifier and signified is understood. In iconic signs, the signifier represents the signified by apparently having a likeness to it. The sign somehow resembles what it stands for. The similarity between the sign and objects is described by Peirce: “an icon is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses. Anything whatever, be it quality, existent individual or law, is an icon of anything, in so far as it is like that thing and is used as a sign of it” (Peirce 247).

As there is an inherent relationship between the signified and the signifier, the indexical sign is one in which the sign is somehow associated with what it is a sign of. What is inherent is often culturally specific. Here
the signs are causally connected with their objects, often physically or through contiguity as Peirce had put it: “an index is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that object” (Peirce 248). Symbolic signs have a conventionalised, but clearly arbitrary, relation between the signifier and the signified, as Saussure defined it. Then a symbolic sign is linked to its referent; as Peirce says: “a symbol is a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas” (Peirce 249). Peirce has further distinguished three classes of icons: the image, the diagram and the metaphor.

In Semiotics there are other ways of describing signs. But most of these classifications depend upon how symbolic they are. Denotation and Connotation refer to such a distinction in which the denotative is describing something, that signs stand for, and connotative something in which signs carry a range of higher-level meanings, that is of other signs associated with it. Roland Barthes suggests that “signs which work at the denotative level are fairly easy to decode” (Barthes 79). But Umberto Eco seems to be suggesting that “the aesthetic message operates as a continuing multi-order system of signification which moves from level to level, its denotations becoming connotations” (Eco 273). Semiotics also uses many other classifications like the paradigmatic – which is a whole class of signs which may stand in for one another - and the syntagmatic – where signs are
coupled together with each other in a chain: “between codes, the rule
governed structures which produce meanings and the messages transmitted by
them. It speaks of ‘metalanguages’ where one sign denotes another sign
system, polysemic signs which have more than one meaning” (Eagleton 101).
A further classification, between the metonymic and the synecdochal, is
worth noting here. Synecdochic replacement of part for whole is essential
in theatrical performance. Among these paradigms the emotional paradigm
in particular needs an explanation as the attempt in this thesis is to derive
the emotional paradigm in Naḻacaritam.

Emotional Paradigm is a concept employed in semiotics. The word
paradigm evolved out of paradigma [Latin] literally refers to a pattern of
inflections of nouns and verbs. It is typical of it to become such a system of
inflections. Hence serving as a pattern or simply speaking, example, it has
the quality of associative relations between linguistic elements that may
occupy the same structural pattern and can be substituted for one another
depending on the context. Thus paradigm presents something in absentia.
Paradigm is discussed widely in semiotics since it provides ample scope
for analysing the text and context against a variety of perspectives. On the
whole, in semiotics, paradigm is a range of meaningful units from which a
message may be composed. “It is the notional set of signs from which a
particular sign is chosen to be included in a syntagmatic combination”
(Edgar and Sedgwick 171). Again, according to them, “a syntagmatic combination is a chain of signs which are combined or organised in a meaningful order from a paradigmatic set of choices” (24).

Paradigmatic selection involves a set of choices. But unlike syntagm, a paradigm is a set of signs that are interchangeable within a given context, because each unit in it must have something in common. Then within a paradigm, units become meaningful in so far as they are distinguishable from each other and are potentially interchangeable. It is so that Fiske comments: “all units in a paradigm must have something in common and/or they must share characteristics that determine their membership of that paradigm” (Fiske 57). But paradigm, in the general sense, “is a pattern or model in which some quality or relation is illustrated in its present form but in the terminology of structuralism a set of linguistic or other units that can be substituted for each other in the same position within a structure or sequence” (The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms 159).

The Encyclopaedia of Semiotics details the evolution of the meaning of the term paradigm during the twentieth century as follows:

During twentieth century the meaning of this word has evolved in two directions, becoming epistemologically active in two different contexts.

(i) In European structural linguistics derived from Ferdinand de Saussure, it has the broad sense of “a class of linguistic
elements” that can be associated because of certain similarities. Saussure speaks of associative relations between linguistic elements that may occupy the same structural position and can be substituted for one another depending on the context. This is a clear generalisation of the traditional grammatical sense, but this sense has been transformed considerably by its complementary association with the notion of syntagm. From the opposition set by Saussure between relating what is *in absentia* [paradigm] and what is *in presentia* [Syntagm], a general model of language has developed and has been extended by analogy to other domains of human activities in as much as they imply choices made among classes of elements and functional combinations of the chosen elements. These complementary notions are usually represented in a diagrammatic form as two axes of selection and combination intersecting at right angles.

(ii) The second context in which paradigm is epistemologically alive is the domain of inquiry formed by the philosophy, history and sociology of sciences. Here, the word was introduced and used abundantly in Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (1962), the provocative theses of which triggered a fundamental controversy over the nature of scientific theories. Although Kuhn’s use of *Paradigm* was rooted in the current sense of “typical pattern” or “model”, it received privileged treatment in his work and became the focus of an intense definitional debate. *(Encyclopaedia of Semiotics 461)*
The two axes conceived by Jakobson may be represented as follows:

![Diagram 1](image)

As a formalist, in his attempt to give an account of the poetic function of language, Jakobson postulates two general linguistic notions: the notion of polarities and the notion of equivalence. Jakobson sees "metaphor and metonymy as the characteristic modes of binarily opposed polarities which between them underpin the two-fold process of selection and combination by which linguistic signs are formed" (Jakobson, *Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics* 350-77). Metaphor, to apply de Saussure's concepts, is generally associative in character and exploits language's vertical relations, where metonymy is generally syntagmatic in character, and exploits language's 'horizontal' relations. Then to construct a message, a combination of both horizontal and vertical movements becomes necessary. This becomes more specified when Jakobson states that "the given utterance [message] is a *combination* of constituent parts [sentences, words, phonemes etc.] *selected* from the repository of all possible constituent parts [the code]" (Jakobson, *Fundamentals of*
They have been further generalised as the twin concepts of system and process.

It was in 1962 that Thomas Kuhn published his thesis, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Thomas Kuhn in this book argues “that the production of knowledge within the natural sciences takes place within paradigms and that these paradigms change” (Kuhn 9). Then paradigms are working theories or ‘world views’ which, within the domains of various scientific fields, facilitate the activity of study and research. For Kuhn, a paradigm may be considered as a conceptual achievement which lays down the guiding principles within a particular scientific discipline for the future interrogation and investigation of phenomena. It is then a working model which allows the scientist to engage in the activity of actual scientific practice. The achievement which marks the birth of a paradigm has two central features: “(i) it attracts an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity and (ii) the model is itself not complete but sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to solve” (Kuhn 10).

A paradigm is thus a general theory which has succeeded in its struggle against other competing theories, but which has nevertheless not exhausted all the possible facts with which it has to deal. Once a paradigm is established, both the field it covers and its practitioners are more firmly
defined and future problems in need of investigation clearly stipulated. Thomas Kuhn describes the situations that lead to the loss of paradigm due to the crisis or failure of existing rules and need for the replacement of the same by a new one as a new set of rules evolve out of the changed situation. "Failure of existing rules is a prelude to a search for new ones. This crisis leads to a breakdown of the theory, which nevertheless continues to operate until a new, more adequate one arrives to explain anomalous phenomena. The replacement of one paradigm by another in the wake of such crises constitutes a shift in the scientific community's conception of legitimate problems and standards" (Kuhn 108). According to Kuhn, a change of paradigm involves a substantiative attraction with regard to the issues which are held to be of importance within a discipline. "A new paradigm gains acceptance because it is more able to account for anomalous phenomena and importantly, because it gains a significant number of adherents. The new paradigm evolved thus perhaps earns a new name: not literary but cultural studies" (Easthope 95). As Edger and Sedgwick say these changes are to be considered as socially evolved.

Hence such changes are not to be understood as marking out a moment of progress in the history of a particular discipline which is to be understood in purely objective terms. Rather, these changes are to be taken as manifestations of a sociological nature. In this sense, science itself is rendered a cultural practice whose subject-matter and guiding problems
are determined by forces which exists within the community of scientific interpreters themselves, rather than according to any objective standard of reference to an external world set apart from problems of interpretation. (268)

It is important that a paradigm shift occurs when the scientist comes to feel that the old ways of seeing and validating it are no longer adequate. At this juncture in study new methodological imperatives, modes of analysis and terminological innovations in articulations become necessary. Thus the paradigm shift is a complex and multilayered process which transforms both structures of thought and perception. Michel Foucault's celebrated works like History of Sexuality, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, Madness and Civilization et al are brilliant accounts of paradigm shifts in the medical sciences, jurisprudence and social thought.

Emotional Paradigm as a semiological category can be essentially seen as an attempt to apply these insights to ontology. Thus it becomes a key concept in studying the "structures of feeling" (Williams, Problems in Materialism and Culture 23), from a historical perspective. Any attempt to construct a social history of emotion will have to come to terms with the ontological dimension and the complex way in which it is implicated in social process. Thus the social history of emotion requires to be grounded firmly in what Lukacs calls the "ontology of social being" (Lukacs, The Ontology of Social Being 17).
John Berger’s celebrated dictum that “ways of seeing are ultimately determined by ways of being” (Berger 17) is highly significant in this context. When a paradigm shift occurs in the realm of emotion, it has a profound impact upon literature and art. Themes, conventions, ways of fabulation all undergo drastic change. New forms emerge which articulate the new ways of seeing. Conventional notions of interpersonal relationships and modes of communication alter in radical ways.

The emergence of Naḷacakritam from relative obscurity to the pre-eminence it has come to enjoy in the twentieth century can indeed be regarded as a marker indicating a paradigm shift in the context of Kerala. The shift that occurred was social at one level. There was the national consciousness of masses with the advancing freedom struggle all over India. This consciousness influenced the individuals to open up their awareness to a wider area of rationality. Every individual has become a microcosm of motivated rationality. Alongside in Kerala, social reform movements – what historians call the Renaissance – were active. Altogether, these developments contributed to a new conception of the individual with an awareness of his social rights. Actually, the emergence of a certain interiority within the parameters of socio-political awareness was occurring.
The reflections of this interiority are more lucid in Nalacaritam. In one sense the quest in Nalacaritam is as much located in an interior landscape as it is in a geographical space. Topographical features of Nalacaritam are depicted as reflections of the interiority of characters. For instance, the “external” forest is symbolic of an “internal” journey. King Nala enters the forest losing all the royal insignia and other worldly trappings. His metaphysical angst starts in the forest for the first time. And it is in Nalacaritam for the first time that a character in Kathakali is found ruminating on existential questions and metaphysical enigmas. There are three monologues of Nala which significantly ponder over metaphysical questions: one is the opening scene of Day Three of the play where Nala laments calling upon the “Mighty Rulers of the World” (NC 137). Here he compares his past glory to his present hardships. He even blames the gods for his misfortunes. But gradually his complaining mood subsides, and in a philosophical mood of brooding, he compares the forest with the city. At the end, he realizes that his afflictions are ended and this acts as some sort of a penance. In a sense, the forest itself stands for penance and purgation.

As Bahuka, in the palace of Rtuparna, Nala laments in agony and wonders about the state of Damayanti whom he has discarded in the forest. Here there is an attempt at self-condemnation also. The most significant monologue of Nala is again in Day Three of the play when the
announcement of the second marriage of Damayanti reaches him. Here in
the monologue the conflict attains its height as he is trying not to believe
the announcement. As different from the mere narratological elements and
features of other Kathakali plays Naḷacaritam depicts characters with
individuality which are more evident in Nala, Damayanti, Sudeva and
Woodsman etc and they are therefore more than mere types.

Naḷacaritam raises highly problematic existential questions about
identity. Bahuka’s evolution depicts at various points complex questions
involved in the notion of identity. These problems begin with the very
transformation of Nala to Bahuka. In Scene V, Day Four of the play where
Bahuka answers Kesini’s questions regarding the whereabouts of King
Nala, he wonders who knows whether Nala is alive in some part of the
world and whether there is anyone who has found him out. He further
doubts: “what is the point in brooding over Nala” (NC 212). The passage
makes the identity of Nala itself problematic. In the next scene Damayanti
also raises the same question to Bahuka: “have you seen anywhere that
noble and exalted one who is like you in many ways” (NC 219). The
question of identity also arises in Day One where Nala enters Damayanti’s
chamber depersonalised by the thiraskarani in the role of a divine envoy.
The vexed question of identity - “who am I” - as raised by the play, two
centuries ago, acquires a new significance in the context of the notions of
individual self which emerged in Kerala society with the advent of colonial modernity. The question, "is Nala a mere form, an appearance or is he an essence which is untouched by appearances" is raised by Damayanti in Scene VI Day Four of the play:

He is the king of Naisadha himself,
sthere is no doubt; I am certain.
What does it matter to me now, if he is in disguise?
When I think of his words, I am convinced that he is Nala himself,
but when I see his form and attire, I am not so sure.
This is a mortal suspense; in this whirlpool of peril,
am I steering in the right direction?
Who will guide me to the truth—my mother? Does it befit my honour
to be united to him?
Will it sully my immaculate chastity—
I am not able to decide.
I'll go and meet my mother now, after paying obeisance to the Mother of the three worlds;
God's blessing alone is sufficient to ensure good luck everywhere.

In this terrible dilemma, my best guide is Nala himself, renowned and immortal for his noble deeds, [who is] being shackled by the cord of misfortune, And committed to the cause of destruction of vile enemies. (who) cannot be rejected, though he is in disguise at present. Is my husband angry with me? Or else, why does he behave in this manner? In the deep and terrible forest, who was there to attend on me? Whatever that may be, I have the right to pay homage to him.

(nc 217-218)

These cogitations inculcate to the resolve that she cannot abandon Nala even though he "appears to be incognito". Again, in the very next scene when Damayanti goes to see Bahuka ostensibly to enquire about the whereabouts of
Nala, the ironical implications of the dichotomy between the appearance and the essence is once again highlighted. The transformation of Bahuka into his original form provides a fitting finale to the appearance/essence dichotomy:

Judging by his demeanour, words and action, he is the King of Naisadha himself;
But where is his body, the seat of magnificent radiance?
While Damayanti was lost in such thoughts, the king, wearing
The cloth given by the serpent king
And assuming his own form, with a rising temper said bitter
Words to his wife. (NC 222)

Paradigms are varied in nature. When the insights of literary semiotics are employed, Equivalence and Parallelism acquire significance. As Roman Jakobson argues, “by the use of complex inter relationships, by emphasizing resemblances and by promoting through repetition equivalences or parallelisms of sound, stress, image, rhyme, poetry patterns and ‘thickens’ language, foregrounding its formal qualities, and consequently ‘backgrounding’ its capacity for sequential, discursive and referential meaning” (quoted in Hawkes 81). Then for equivalence, selective and combinative modes become necessary for its promotion.
Parallelism provides the means to emphasize and suggest relation by using repetitive patterns of mirrored sentences or paraphrases. Its aim is often to balance one literary element with others of equal significance. In somewhat related terms, an entire aesthetics is built around a variation of parallelism with the symbolic movement in the arts.

This aesthetic holds that the inner nature of humanity can be expressed most effectively by repetitive patterns, including parallel lines, that symbolize the order – which some see as mystical – that underlines nature. The types that emerged are *Synonymic* [using words or images or sounds in subtle repetitive patterns], antithetical [choosing one thing against another presented in a parallel manner], are *Synthetic* [Synthesizing a selection from the parallelism of presentation]. [...]. From a semiotic perspective, parallelism is of extreme interest in view of the difficulties encountered in defining the sign [standing in parallel to what it designates], sign typologies [resulting from the type of representation], and sign processes. [...]. The basic known semiotic theories imply that human beings operate in parallel upon various simultaneous signs and that semioses are parallel and distributed processes. (*Encyclopaedia of Semiotics* 465)

Hence any objects or feelings presented in art or literature that are equivalent or parallel can be paradigmatic. Emotional paradigm is that paradigm which is equivalent to emotion; which can be taken as significantly substituting emotion. Structurally a paradigm which serves
the emotive function of something becomes an emotional paradigm. Then in the case of emotive function more than the context and the object, the subjective feeling attains dominance. But a paradigm will always be objectified. Then emotional paradigm serves the subjective feeling of or response to objectified sentiments, or contexts. In that sense, representations also become relevant, as paradigmatic analysis is useful in the examination of it. Since from a varied range of emotions a particular emotion is attributed to, a specific paradigm, representation with suggestive function becomes operational. Words, images, colour, characters and even settings chosen from a potential set will be highly significant.

In the depiction of characters in performing arts or theatre, for instance, selection of certain features that are assigned to certain characters and actions may have implications for how the play is appreciated and what final meaning is attributed to those who are represented within its framework. Considering the paradigmatic selection in a text it may reveal particular discursive strategies and ideologies at work. Just as language does not merely mirror the world of experience but constructs it, the image or metaphor of emotion is constructed rather than reflected. But sometimes, reflections and representations may construct paradigms in an emotive structure of a performing art especially in an objective visual art form like Kathakali. Moreover a paradigm of emotion can be traced by semiosis
especially in an aesthetic construction, which according to Edward T. Hall “is neither causal nor merely functional but represents a semiotically loaded choice subject to powerful rules which generate a range of connotative cultural units” (Hall 1).

In an art form like Kathakali, *Kinesics*, the language of communication through the motion of body, is the most dynamic aspect of theatrical discourse. The founding discovery of kinesics is that “each culture selects from an immense stock of potential material a strictly limited number of pertinent units of movements” (Elam 70). In the words of Daniel N. Stern, *this aspect of kinesics is more specified: ‘conversely to language where words are ‘only symbolic event’ and are viewed primarily as signifying units, complex kinemorphs have a primarily physiological and practical function [although the semiotic status of movements does become primary in the context of performance]’* (Stern 117).

Kinesics and complex *kinemorphs* are not merely symbols but have a primarily physiological and practical function; and kinesic paradigms are to be analysed through the overall syntactic patterns of a stretch of kinesic behaviour. The indices of gestural “intention include what can be named *attitudinal* markers, indicative not of the act intended but of the attitude adopted. Further, the expressive or emotive function is seen when the gestural language is used to indicate the mood or attitude of the character”
(Elam 76). For instance, the attitude of various characters like Nala, the Woodsman, Ratuparna, the Swan, Kali, etc. towards Damayanti in Nālācaritam can be considered. Emotional features like love, possessiveness, frenzy, craze, jealousy are depicted in these attitudes. On the whole, these attitudes redefine Damayanti and, in turn, serve to define themselves as well. To a great extent, the function of gesture becomes indexical to a recognizable state and thus expressive, as this theatrical form is rich in stable kinesic subcodes.

Because Nālācaritam the Kathakali text used for analysis is both a literary text and the basis of the dramatic performance the interface between the different codes of literature and theatre are crucial to the understanding of the text. When Kathakali is brought to the stage, the literary text [Aattakkatha] is only a base in the construction of performance. Every aspect of Kathakali performance is shaped by a variety of modes and styles of performative and/or narrative elaboration. In this elaboration and interpolation in performance, out of the five hundred Kathakali plays written, “only a few still hold the stage with recognizable persistence” (Paniker, Kathakali: The Art of Non-Worldly 21) and among them Nālācaritam, with its high degree of both literary and theatrical potential, stands unique.
Even as love and marriage were redefined with the awakening of the Kerala society in the twentieth century *Nalacaritam*, which is a highly dramatic love story also began to attract critical attention. Joseph Mundasserry, in a critical essay, has called *Nalacaritam*, the *Sakuntalam of Kerala*. Apart from its specific treatment of love, it is built up on the human condition as Nala and Damayanti are human beings and Kali who is a highly dramatic characterization of jealousy is moved by this human love and union. Even Damayanti asks why the gods trouble her and her love for a human being. In its dramatic form, the *Nalacaritam* Attakkatha deviates from the original version of the story in the *Mahabharata*, and it occasionally draws on *Naishadhiyacarita* as well. The *second chapter* of this thesis is an analysis of the text in this direction.

Theatre has emerged as a potential area of semiotic investigation in recent times, though it is important to note that the Prague School had initiated certain approaches to theatrical signs and sign functions. In theatre semiotics it draws mainly on the analysis of Peirce’s classification as “Peirce’s richer typology of signs enables us to consider how different modes of signification work while Saussure’s model can only tell us how systems of arbitrary signs operate” (Iversen 85). On stage the symbolic, iconic and indexical significations are co-present.
Iconism is very much associated with performance as representation at large is done there, for icons are directly analogous to the denoted objects. Keir Elam in his descriptions of signs in the theatre analyses their iconic, indexical and symbolic features. In Peircean terms, semiosis involves “a co-operation of three subjects such as a sign, its object and its interpretant [the interpretant being roughly, the idea which the sign produces], so that anything which permits the spectator to form an image or lifeness of the represented object can be said to have fulfilled an iconic function” (Peirce 484). Since the very characterization of Damayanti, the heroine in the play, is an actualised representation of emotion, some of the imagery like ocean, river, fire, flower, bird, moon, bee and forests, are contributive to the thematic aspects of emotion. Among them ocean and forest are iconic in the sense that ocean is a powerful image of emotion in the text and forest stands for penance. In the first day of the play the anxiety of Nala is how to get Damayanti ‘the jewel’ and as the play proceeds Nala is sinking in the ocean of agony of love. The attempt of Kali to win Damayanti is metaphorically conceived by Indra as the “attempt to build a dam after water has ebbed away” (NC 77). The depth of the agony of Damayanti on her separation from Nala is described as “torrents of grief” (NC 126). The ocean is presented differently according to its context. On some occasions it is “tides of burning embers” (NC 219) and we hear of “fiery waves and currents” (NC 220).
The image of ocean either dissolves in the fire image or co-exists with other vitriolic metaphors.

Likewise, 'forest as penance' is a metaphor that unfolds with the development of the plot. In the Day Two of the play, immediately after Nala is defeated by Puśkara, he is eager to drive Nala to the forest. Nala who discards his wealth and throne discards Damayanti also in the forest. In the forest, again, Nala acquires some sort of philosophical insight and considers "home to be forest and forest, home" (NC 137). He comes to know of his past, present and future from Karkotaka and finds a means for his resurgence. On the other hand, Damayanti who passes through misfortune due to the vicissitudes of fate also finds her refuge in the forest. The Woodsman is burnt on account of his overwhelming lust. Karkotaka is also saved by Nala in the forest from his misfortunes due to an old curse. In the play, forest as an icon operates as a force that resurrects, purifies and reprieves.

Though the indexical function appears secondary to the iconic, there are instances where what predominates on stage is a 'pointing to' rather than an imagistic mode of signification. Gesture in performance often has the effect of indicating the objects [directly represented or not] to which the speaker is referring and thus of placing him in apparent contact with his physical environment, with his interlocutors or with the action reported, commanded, etc. The importance of the indexical sign in pointing
out where the spectator should direct attention is emphasized by Patrice Paris: "The theatre, which must constantly attract the receiver’s attention, will thus have recourse to the index" (Paris16). Peirce’s exemplary ‘symbol’ has similarity to Saussure’s concept of the sign. It must be emphasized, however, that theatrical performance as a whole is symbolic, since it is only through convention that the spectator takes stage events as standing for something other than themselves. While flowers, fire and birds in the text are both indexical and symbolic according to their context, moon, bee, cloud and mountain seem to be only symbolic. An analysis of these integral parts of the structure imparts strength to the argument, that the whole text is an emotive structure. The Third Chapter attempts to locate these aspects within its structure.

Since theatrical semiotics comprises the semiosis of performance, performance text and the theatrical communication, as a whole it can be called the semiotization of objects. It is in this context that Petr Bogatyrev, a theatre semiotist, advances the thesis that stage radically transforms all objects and bodies defined within it, bestowing upon them an overriding signifying power which they lack in their normal social function. He states that “on the stage things that play the part of theatrical signs acquire special features, qualities and attributes that they do not have in real life” (Bogatyrev 35). Objects in the theatrical representation acquire a symbolic
significance: “as in real life the utilitarian function of an object is more important than its signification, on a theatrical set the signification is all important” (Brusak 62). Brusak also suggests that in performance a symbol is able to transfer the object’s own signs to itself. Similarly, the structuralist notions of transformability and connotative range of the stage sign are re-affirmed in the semiotization of the object. As Tadeusz Kowzan rightly puts it: “Everything is a sign in a theatrical presentation” (Kowzan 57). If an object can stand successfully in place of its objectified intention, then as a sign it performs a semiotic function. This significance of the sign in theatre has been put succinctly by Jiri Veltrusky in his assertion that “all that is on the stage is a sign” (Veltrusky 84).

Since the meaning ultimately is bestowed with the audience, theatrical performance cannot be considered as a single sign but as a network of semiotic units. Hence performance as a whole becomes a network of meanings. There performance becomes a text. This text is a semiotic expression of the actual text, because theatrical signs [Signifiers] are transferred signs of material things which are already transferred into signs in the dramatic texts. Bogatyrev states it thus: “each is a sign of a sign and not the sign of a material thing” (Bogatyrev 33). Then culturally determined units of meanings become important. This cultural signification is doubtlessly connotative, as in a theatrical performance a potentially
unlimited range of cultural units are generated. Then the expressive function and emotional connotations take place in theatrical communication through a transcodification where the transformation of the sign occurs. Moreover, a network of codified sign system is activated. As Elaine Aston and George Savona put it, “theatre establishes its network of codified sign system by virtue of the cultural codes which include behaviour, speech, dress, make up etc. in society at large” (Aston and Savona 110). The analysis of the performance text of Naḷacaritam forms the Fourth Chapter. Here the relevance of applying the emotional paradigm to Naḷacaritam is also discussed. The explicit kinesic conventions prevalent in the text allow a sustained and autonomous gestural discourse of considerable syntactic and semantic richness. Like signification of objects, kinesic codes acquire their full potentiality in performance and become culture specific to a certain extent. Then, like the concept of culture itself, Kathakali becomes a system of cultural performance.

If we consider the performance of Naḷacaritam as a mode of cultural praxis it can be ascertained that knowledge, discourse and meanings are repositioned through performance. Then cultural performances are sites of cultural action, which either implicitly assume or explicitly assert one or more discourses or meanings. The cultural
paradigm is implicit in this aesthetic experience and according to this paradigm emotional appraisal becomes operational.

As performance and assimilation by the observer are intertwined matters in approaches to sign system in performance, it can be derived more specifically from Kowzan's observation of the spectator's motivated act of inference in making the link between the signifiers and signified: "The spectacle transforms natural signs into artificial ones [a flash of lightning], so it can artificialize signs. Even if they are only reflexes in life, they become voluntary signs in the theatre. Even if they have no communicative function in life, they necessarily acquire it on stage" (Kowzan 60).

In this approach the analysis is mostly aimed at bringing out the complex relation between the text and the performance text. The linguistic sign system of the dramatic text and the sign system of the performance text and their interface have to be explored more. Roland Barthes has also suggested the privilege of semiotic investigation of theatre which is "a real informational polyphony" and "a density of signs" (Barthes, Elements of Semiology 262). He further suggests that "the nature of the theatrical sign, whether analogical, symbolic or conventional, the denotation and connotation of the message - all these fundamental problems of semiology are present in the theatre" (262). Then theatre becomes eminently analysable and understandable and eminently readable. According to Mark
Fortier, “the sensual and experiential thickness of theatre becomes for semiotics a density of signs, denser and more complex than many sign systems, but a sign system nonetheless” (Fortier 22).

The inexhaustible range of emotion that Nalacaritam the play produces in performance is significant in a semiotic interpretation of the text. To derive elements of emotional aspects within the structure, most of them being expressive and manifest, it is to be considered that the density of signs woven into the highly stylised mode of presentation focuses on the sustained emotional labyrinth.

In the exploration of meaning in theatre semiotic theory is to be employed. Marvin Carslon in his thesis on theatre semiotics argues that this involves the consideration of three elements: “the semiotic contributions of the audience to the meaning of a theatrical performance - in Peirce’s terms, how the audience receives and interprets signs; the semiotics of the entire theatre experience - the appearance of the auditorium, the displays in the lobby, the information in the program, and countless other parts of the event as a whole; and the iconic relationship of theatre to the life it represents” (Carlson 27). Carlson’s interpretation opens semiotic analysis of the theatre on to relations with other theoretical approaches: his concern with the audience on to reception theory, his concern with the total theatrical experience on to materialist analysis, his interest in life
on to phenomenology. Thus, for Carslon, these complications make "performance potentially one of the richest and most rewarding areas in the arts for exploring the interplay of society and culture" (28).

In the case of Naḷacaritam, its spectators are primarily interested in the elaboration of situations of dramatic intensity rather than in the unfolding of the story. Its performance unfolds meaning. As Ayyappa Paniker has rightly put it, for the imaginative spectators who are highly knowledgeable about the ways of Kathakali, the expression in Naḷacaritam “may appear to be a means of leading them to an exploration of the subtextual levels of meaning” (Paniker, Unnayi Varier’s Naḷacaritam: A Re-Reading xiii). Instead of remaining focussed on the written text of Naḷacaritam, these spectators tend to look at the realization of the play on the stage. While at the phenomenological level human situations are depicted, the contribution of the audience to the process is the primary concern for the reception theory. Meanings derived from the performance identify with the human conditions of society at large.

In performance, a literary text and its performance text operate as different code systems and an understanding of this is necessary to explore further the performance. Keir Elam summarizes the characteristics of the performative text as one which is characterized by its semiotic thickness or density, by its heterogeneity and by the spatial and temporal discontinuity of
its levels. It is at the same time a highly ambiguous text, “being at every point semantically ‘over-determined’ and relatively non-redundant” (Elam 46). By the same token the text is intensely self-focusing, a ‘display text’ as Mary Louise Pratty puts it, “being not a mere sum of ‘information about’ or ‘intelligence given’ but an event aesthetically ostended as a formal and material structure” (Pratty 79). Theatrical performance will engage a vast range of correlation of codes. In effect, virtually all codes operative in society are potential factors in theatre. Kinesic, scenic or linguistic codes will be specific to particular systems while theatrical, dramatic and more general cultural codes will apply to theatrical discourse at large. Then the performance text is dependent for its encoding and decoding on a set of codes more or less common to the sources, performers and audience.

Since a code is a set of conventionalised ways of creating meaning specific to particular contexts or people, theatrical codes operate as subcodes in performance and are generally produced by the process, which Umberto Eco terms “overcoding, where conventional rules are applied” (Eco 133). But in undercoding, barely recognised, new rules emerge. Eventually “every performance of interest will involve a complex dialectic of code observing, code making and code breaking” (Elam 55). In brief, the semiotic enquiry is intended to see how “meaning is created and communicated through systems of encodable and decodable signs; and this
has involved both the development of new ways of interrogating the text and the generation of a methodology or language with which to tackle the complexity of the theatrical sign system" (Aston and Savona 91).

Creation of meaning through the sign system provided by the performance text is more specifically outlined by Sudipto Chatterjee in his analysis of the metonymic function of the *mise-en-scenic* superstructure against the theatre of Bengal Renaissance: “*Mise-en-scene* consists of a complex group of operations, each of which transcribes a message written in a given sign system and turns it into a message capable of being inscribed on human bodies and transmitted by those to other bodies: a kind of Somatography” (Chatterjee 102).

The coding and transference taking place in the theatrical communication is analysed by Lyotard in his study of transmission of texts: “A given sign system can also be called in a more limited sense, the written or more accurately, the codified text that is merely suggestive of a possible transcription or transference into a more palpably physicalized text through somatographic transmission” (Lyotard 25).

As a whole, semiotics has emphasized the constructedness of human meaning as it redefines meaning as the product of certain shared systems of signification. This aspect is emphasized more in the analysis of Yury Lotman: “Each sign thus participates in several different ‘paradigmatic
patterns' or systems simultaneously and this complexity is greatly compounded by the syntagmatic chains of association and the lateral rather than vertical structures in which signs are placed" (quoted in Eagleton 102). Truly, signs in the performance texts are activated in this pattern.

In order to derive the paradigmatic patterns of the text the *Fifth Chapter* attempts a detailed examination of Damayanti, accenting her depiction as a representative of the new womanhood, albeit, an ideal one. This lends to a redefinition of Damayanti based on the attitudes adopted by various characters to her. Apart from the psychological depth and complexity as well as the structural design of *Nalacaritam*, it has a full scale dramatization of human life, love, separation and reunion. The story of Nala revolves around the operation of faith in human life and the transcendence of misfortune through spiritual faith and striving. In brief, it is the love story of king Nala and princess Damayanti, and their marriage against heavy odds. The evil spirit, Kali, driven to jealousy, possesses the body of Nala, instigating him to play a game of dice with his younger brother Puškara. Defeated and dispossessed of his kingdom and wealth, Nala is driven away into the forest, where, losing his right senses under the evil effect of Kali, Nala also discards his devoted wife. Karkotaka, the divine serpent whom Nala saves from a forest fire, prompts him to serve under king Rūtaparna (Gopalakrishnan xxiv).
There he lives in disguise as Bahuka, and, as the story proceeds, Nala takes revenge on Kali, and is reunited with his wife and wins back his kingdom.

In this text, king Nala is introduced as a personification of every virtue, but he suffers many misfortunes. The crisis precipitated by Kali reveals the central motif of the play, namely, the delusion due to the power of evil. The serpent, Karkotaka, is a divine intervention saving king Nala. The Woodsman is burnt by the strength of the chastity of Damayanti. The Swan is an envoy for communication of the love between Nala and Damayanti and sage Narada is the catalyst kindling the love that lies dormant in Nala. Puṣkara, who defeats Nala and becomes the king, the Merchant leader, Ṛtuparna, Kesini, Sudeva, all have “a definite role to play in leading the play to its resolution” (Gopalakrishnan xxvi).

Even though the play seems to be linear in the development of plot, sequences of incidents, at every turn, focus on Damayanti’s delineation. Her beauty, chastity, knowledge, political wisdom, courage, strategy everything is hailed according to its context. The hub of attention is Damayanti and, to a great extent the whole play hinges on Damayanti.

How Damayanti is viewed by each of the other characters is central to any analysis of the representation of Damayanti as emotion in Nalacaritam. Gods, Demons, Kings, Woodsman and people on heaven
and earth are all thinking of Damayanti. In this, Nala is overpowered with the love for Damayanti. While this is interpolated, in performance, every image, incident, vision, is sorted to be paralleled or identified with Dayamanti. The Swan comes with a mission to unite Damayanti with Nala. While Kali is all jealous at the marriage, gods like Indra and the like are all hopeful of winning Damayanti. Puṣkara is also longing for the lovely Damayanti as the kingdom he conquered from Nala. The divine serpent Karkotaka blesses Nala that all his wishes will be fulfilled soon, his long cherished dream here is the reunion with Damayanti. King Ṛtuparna shows an unbecoming haste to possess Damayanti. Again, the Swan, in the last part of the play, expresses his grief at the absence of Damayanti. Narada also conveys the blessing of Brahma and prompts king Bhima, father of Damayanti, to send her and the children to Nala.

Apart from providing a summary of arguments the Conclusion attempts to justify the use of western theories in analysing a classical Indian text. It also tries to shed light on the necessity of evolving a methodology which attempts at an integration of the insights provided by theory both western and Indian.

The emotional aspects of Nalacaritam are primarily communicated through signs. While most of the other significant Kathakali plays concentrate on the grammar of Kathakali with typical characters and episodic
structure, **Naḷacaritam** is full of dramatic delineations. The whole text and structure are emotive, and an analysis of both the literary text and the performance text and the interface between these different codes leads us to the conclusion that **Naḷacaritam** [Nala’s Story] is actually a Damayantīcaritam [Damayanti’s Story].