

ELISA GANSER

Theatre and Its Other

Abhinavagupta on Dance and Dramatic Acting



BRILL

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Theatre and Its Other

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Ai miei genitori



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Preface

To anyone who resolves to explore the adjacent fields of Indian drama and dance, a wide range of choices opens up, including the starting point, the way to proceed, its milestones, and its prospective destinations. Viewed from a distance, this study involved much criss-crossing around a central core—Abhinavagupta's discourse on the nature and aesthetics of dance—which was fixed at the very beginning and remained a constant throughout. Yet it has taken some time to design the strategies to approach such an utterly immaterial object in the most meaningful and methodologically sound way. I first came across Abhinavagupta's *Abhinavabhāratī* during my MA studies, as I read Raniero Gnoli's 1956 pioneering work *The Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta* and Lyne Bansat-Boudon's 1992 *Poétique du théâtre indien*. Ever since these first encounters, Abhinavagupta's commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, composed in Kashmir at the turn of the first millennium, has struck me as the perfect union of my two passions: philology and dance. At the time, my interest alighted on the ninth chapter, on *hastābhinaya* (acting with hand gestures), an element that still constitutes one of the major features of forms of Indian performance today, which moreover brings together practices as different as theatre, yoga, ritual, iconography, and story-telling. In particular, I became interested in the process of bringing a Sanskrit play alive on stage, and in the theory of performance that found expression in the scientific discourse of *śāstra*.

This focus on the performative aspect of theatre led me to investigate those elements, such as acting, dancing, singing, and playing, that fall outside a play's text, and therefore, in principle, outside the analysis of the poetic process centred on language, such as that developed in the parallel tradition of *Alaṅkāraśāstra*. For my PhD, I embarked on the study of the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, on dance. As a non-verbal code of abstract movement, it seemed to me that dance posed a great challenge to the theoretical analysis of an object, theatre, based on a poetic text and its essence, *rasa*, itself conceived in linguistic terms by the philosopher Abhinavagupta. Although theatre and dance share the same media, the actor/dancer's body, they also mark its antipodes: to borrow the modern categories coined in Fischer-Lichte 2008, the use of the body in theatre is mainly semiotic, while in dance, it is mainly phenomenological—whence the title of this book, *Theatre and its Other*, echoing Antonin Artaud's quest for theatre's *double*, an object freed from the fetters of the text and the dictates of the playwright. But is dance really theatre's 'other'? As Abhinavagupta shows in his examination of the nature of dance and

dramatic acting, this is not an easy question to answer, especially if one takes into account those twilight zones where the boundaries between these two categories become fuzzy—when, for instance, dance begins to narrate stories in combination with a poetic text that is sung, or when dancing is used within a dramatic performance and is subsumed under its communicative ends.

This book is the result of a complete revision, both in form and in content, of a doctoral dissertation defended in Rome in November 2010: in form, as the work originally contained a much longer portion of the *Abhinavabhāratī*'s chapter on dance, which was edited and translated on the basis of a limited number of manuscript sources; and in content, as much of the material presented in the annotated translation had to be rearranged in both the introduction and the rest of the study in order to suit the new format. Alterations to the original structure were made necessary by both practical and theoretical needs. Reducing the scope of the text to be critically edited allowed me to take all of the available manuscript evidence into account and thus deepen my understanding of its textual history through the incorporation and perusal of manuscript materials that had not previously been subject to critical study. This resulted in a new introduction to the critical edition, containing a reconstruction of the textual transmission of the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī*. The textual portion selected for translation, though shorter, forms a coherent unity in itself, as it contains the complete argument concerning the question of whether dance should be considered different or non-different from theatre with regard to its nature and purpose. An introduction to the text and its commentary, and a study in two chapters focusing on dance practice and aesthetics in medieval India, provide a framework for contextualizing the emergence of the debate about the nature of dance and dramatic acting.

It is my duty and pleasure to acknowledge a number of people and institutions that have contributed in various ways to the completion of this book. To begin with, my PhD supervisor and Sanskrit teacher, Raffaele Torella, for the trust, support, and freedom he has extended to me ever since I started working on the difficult text of the *Abhinavabhāratī* for my MA thesis. Without his guidance in the *mare magnum* of Sanskrit and life, I would never have developed the courage, endurance, and passion necessary to engage with the intricacies of Indian dance and its textual sources. I am further grateful to all of those who have spent time reading parts of the text with me thereafter, sharing valuable suggestions for the interpretation of some difficult passages and sharpening my overall understanding of it: Saroj Deshpande and Manju Deshpande, with whom I started reading the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī* in Pune; Vincenzo Vergiani, with whom I continued reading it in Cambridge; Herman Tieken, who read and discussed parts of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* with me in Leiden; and

Peter Bisschop, who assisted me in the reading sessions organized at Leiden University, and who provided invaluable help in solving many thorny issues of textual criticism. In 2012, I had the pleasure to read the portion edited and translated in this book with H.V. Nagaraj Rao in Mysore; his oceanic knowledge of Sanskrit grammar and literature, combined with the kindest generosity in sharing and transmitting it, has had a great impact on my grasp of the text. These readings at various levels were also an occasion for feedback and thought-provoking questions from peers and students. Other colleagues and friends I would like to thank for their generosity in discussing specific issues addressed in the following pages are Sylvain Brocquet, Jonathan Duquette, Melinda Fodor, Elisa Freschi, Laura Gianvittorio-Ungar, Dominic Goodall, Virginie Johan, Eivind Kahrs, Naresh Keerthi, Andrew Ollett, R.P. Poddar, N. Ramanathan, Julie Rocton, Anna Tosato and Christophe Vielle.

I would like to express my intellectual debt to Lyne Bansat-Boudon, who pioneered studies on the *Abhinavabhāratī* focusing on the 'spectacular dimension' of Sanskrit theatre. Her work inspired me to undertake a serious study of the primary sources of the medieval period. Since 2013, I have regularly taken part—as a guest *sahṛdaya*—in the full-scale enactments of Sanskrit plays in Kerala's performance tradition of Kutiyattam, organized by David Shulman and Heike Oberlin with performers from the Nepathya ensemble. These occasions have been most fruitful for discussing many of the issues contained in this book, as well as for getting an idea of how a Sanskrit play might look on the living stage. My teachers in Indian dance and Western acting, too numerous to mention, have given me yet another entry point into the arts of performance by generously sharing their artistic knowledge and by answering my questions in many unexpected ways.

My father Roberto transmitted his love for odd and old books to me, and my mother Margherita gave me my first memory of dance. My deepest gratitude goes to my family for their constant encouragement and support. Last but not least, my most heartfelt thanks go to Daniele Cuneo and Hugo David, who have helped me in innumerable ways, among which discussing, reading, and proofreading the manuscript in different phases of the work. For making my English more elegant and readable, I thank Kristen De Joseph and Robert Leach, as well as Larisa Baumann for a bibliography check. Finally, I would like to express a special word of thanks to Angelika Malinar, with whom I have the pleasure to collaborate in the department of Indian Studies of the University of Zurich since 2014. Apart from the many discussions and brainstorming intellectual exchanges that have left traces in this book, she most strongly urged me—in the sense of the causative as described by Kashmirian non-dualist Śaivas—to put an end to this book. To many other colleagues and friends whom I have not mentioned specifically, I also express my gratitude.

The following institutions have aided me in this project: the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute of Pune, in the person of Saroja Bhate; the Pondicherry Centre of the École française d'Extrême-Orient, especially its director, Dominic Goodall; and the J. Gonda Foundation for granting me two fellowships, by means of which I was first able to finish my thesis in the pleasant and stimulating environment of the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden, and to start reworking the thesis into a book. I moreover thank the Oriental Research Institute and Manuscripts Library, Trivandrum; the Sarasvati Bhavan Library, Benares; the Government Oriental Manuscript Library and Adyar Library, Madras; and the National Archives, Delhi, whose manuscripts I consulted for the critical edition. Sheldon Pollock and Andrew Ollett kindly provided me with a copy of the electronic text of the whole *Abhinavabhāratī*, now accessible on SARIT.

Lastly, I can only look back with deep affection and nostalgia on some of the impassioned—though in a way still somewhat unripe—discussions I had with Sara Rella about the possible applications of the *rasa* theory to other kinds of art, in particular to Western contemporary art, in the years when I was starting to engage with Abhinavagupta's aesthetics of dance in Rome. Her premature death at the beginning of August 2018, during the later stages of this book, was cause of deep grief, which, if transferred into this writing, I hope the sensitive reader will be able to taste as a pleasurable *rasa*. Let her be remembered at the end of this preface.

Zurich, December 2020

Introduction

A Forgotten Chapter in the History of Indian Aesthetics

While a larger history of medieval Indian theatre, comprehensively accounting for its different literary, theoretical, and performative strands, still needs to be written, the ambition of the present study is to explore the emergence of an original debate on the nature of dance and dramatic acting in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, Abhinavagupta's eleventh-century commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. We have nowadays gotten used to thinking and talking about traditional forms of performance in India as 'dance theatre', and to differentiating them in terms of styles, such as Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Kathakali, Kutiyattam, etc. To distinguish them further, these styles are sometimes linked with geographical labels, such as the 'dance of Tamil Nadu', 'dance of Orissa', 'Kerala dance drama', 'Kerala Sanskrit theatre', etc. This situation reflects artistic developments that can be observed in living traditions of performance today, and can be sometimes traced in premodern texts. It is rare, in India, to attend a theatrical performance that is devoid of on-stage musical accompaniment, or abstract forms of dance movement that are not combined with narrative gestures. The common denominator of such a variegated performance landscape is the combination of hand gestures, facial mimicry, and body movements, aimed at enacting a text that is either recited by the performer or rendered by a vocalist on stage, rhythmically marked by live instrumental music and enhanced with exuberant costumes. To describe these forms of spectacle, the Sanskrit language comes to our aid by adding, to the two terms consecrated for theatre and dance—*nāṭya* and *nṛtta*—a third term, *nṛtya*, that covers the grey area between the two.

Common and familiar as it is, this state of affairs is not reflected in the seminal treatise on theatre, the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, composed around the beginning of the Common Era and attributed to the sage Bharata. As its title indicates, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is a treatise, or a work of specialist knowledge (*śāstra*), dealing with theatre (*nāṭya*), a composite object that accommodates within itself other artistic disciplines, most notably dance and music, to suit its own expressive ends. Despite its claims to comprehensiveness, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* does not deal with forms other than Sanskrit theatre, such as the genres of narrative dance known from later texts, nor does it allot a separate term to dance that does not consist of sheer abstract movement set to rhythm, but that uses gestures and facial expressions to mimetically render the lyrics of a song. While Bharata refers to the sole categories of theatre (*nāṭya*) and dance (*nṛtta*), authors from

the tenth century onwards began incorporating new labels, such as *nṛtya*, *geyarūpaka*, *uparūpaka*, etc., to speak about new forms of performance.

At the beginning of the eleventh century, up in the flourishing valley of Kashmir, the Śaiva philosopher Abhinavagupta commented, possibly for the last time, on the entirety of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. His commentary is known as the *Abhinavabhāratī*, ‘Abhinava[gupta]’s Commentary on Bharata’s [*Nāṭyaśāstra*]’ or ‘The New Dramatic Art’. This exegetical work is best known for its very sophisticated aesthetic theory, centred on the *rasa* or the flavour of the poetic text and its awakening in the spectator through the staging of the play. Abhinavagupta’s ‘theory of *rasa*’, as it is known, was much acclaimed by later authors up to modern times, and became a standard in Indian aesthetics.¹ Despite an almost single-minded focus on the cognitive and linguistic aspects of *rasa* in modern scholarship on Indian aesthetics, the attention paid to the performative dimension of theatre in the *Abhinavabhāratī* is to no lesser extent worthy of consideration, and, as argued in this book, ought to be investigated as an integral part of Abhinavagupta’s aesthetics.

This general neglect of the performative aspects of drama can partly be explained by the highly technical character of the many chapters of the *Abhinavabhāratī* dealing with the staging process, coupled with the corrupt state of the text in the available editions and manuscripts. The techniques to which these chapters refer are moreover intrinsically inaccessible to us today, given the ephemeral nature of the performing arts. Besides these external reasons, there are reasons internal to the tradition too. The *Abhinavabhāratī*, in fact, is the last extant commentary on the totality of Bharata’s work, but is at the same time the last Sanskrit work to deal with theatre in such a large variety of aspects as are included in the scope of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. These not only treat topics as diverse as stagecraft, acting techniques, and non-verbal codes of communication—such as mimicry, dance, and music—but also architecture and ritual. Later treatises on dramatics tend to reduce their scope to a discussion of dramaturgy proper, focusing on the classification of dramatic genres and on aspects of play composition and aesthetics.² Parallel to this new orientation in dramatics, or *Nāṭyaśāstra*, treatises on the adjacent branch of poetics, or *Alaṃkāraśāstra*, started to devote subsections to the discussion of dramatic

1 Abhinavagupta’s *rasa* theory would remain valid in its basic tenets and for many of his epigones until the time of Viśvanātha (14th c.) or even later. As Pollock (2016: 315) explains, even Jagannātha’s (17th c.) ‘view of *rasa* is basically that of Abhinavagupta, but now inflected by Vedanta epistemology’.

2 This format was inaugurated with Dhanañjaya’s *Daśarūpaka* (10th c.). Another case is Śārada-tānaya’s (1175–1250) *Bhāvaprakāśana*, on which see most recently Cox 2016: 56–90.

genres and plot construction, treating drama as a particular instance of poetic composition (*kāvya*), and to consecrate a central place to the theory of *rasa*.³

At the other end of the spectrum, in the process of compartmentalizing the theory of drama, ancillary arts such as dance and music were no longer considered part and parcel of dramaturgy. Their techniques, however, continued to be described along similar lines in treatises specifically devoted to the individual art forms and, starting from the thirteenth century, also in combination as a single spectacular object called *saṃgīta*, an inclusive term for dance and instrumental and vocal music.⁴ Some of these texts bear traces of familiarity with the *Abhinavabhāratī* chapters devoted to dance and music, and explicitly recognize Abhinavagupta as an authority in these matters. The discussion on aesthetics in these technical treatises is sometimes reduced to a simple restatement of Bharata's *rasasūtra* and the enumeration of the names of the *rasas* and the aesthetic factors. The uniqueness of the *Abhinavabhāratī* in the history of Sanskrit dramatics appears clearly when set against the backdrop of this varied textual corpus. In this work, the most abstract speculations are always backed by examples culled from the living traditions of performance, and the technical instruction are, in turn, subsumed under the framework of a mostly coherent and comprehensive theory of art, whose guiding principle is *rasa*. Among the topics that best illustrate such a close integration of theory and practice in the *Abhinavabhāratī* is an elaborate discussion of dance and its boundaries, touching on the development of new performance practices and genres, as well as upon aesthetics.

Defining dance in the eleventh century was no anodyne affair. On the one hand, dance continues to be considered an ancillary art of theatre, and as such it has to contribute to its overall purpose, namely arousing in the spectator one of the eight (or nine) aesthetic flavours—*rasas*—conveyed conjointly by the poetic text and its stage presentation. On the other hand, dance is now an independent art endowed with its own genres, in which a solo performer typic-

3 Even though Abhinavagupta's discussion of *rasa* became very influential in the field of poetics, it was Ānandavardhana who first combined poetic and dramatic theory, in his *Dhvanyāloka*. Before him, Vāmana had already started to use examples from both poetry and drama to explain his poetic principles. A critical outline of the development of Alamkāraśāstra can be found in McCrea 2008.

4 Treatises dealing exclusively with music are known to have been composed in the second part of the first millennium. Available examples are the *Dattilam* of Dattila (ca. 8th c.) (Te Nijenhuis 1970; Lath 1978, 1988) and the *Bṛhaddeśī* of Mataṅga (ca. 8th c.) (Sharma 1992). Treatises devoted to dance alone appear somewhat later, the *Nṛttaratnāvalī* of Jāyaseṇapati (13th c.) probably being the first example. The first known text in the new discipline and textual category of Saṃgītaśāstra is the thirteenth-century *Saṃgītaratnākara* of Śārngadeva.

ally performs abstract dance interspersed with the enactment of the contents of a poetic text embedded in a song, to the accompaniment of melodic and instrumental music. In both realisations, dance is so bound up with theatre, or with theatre's most peculiar feature, acting—*abhinaya* in Sanskrit—that it becomes difficult to set the two objects apart without their conceptual and semantic distinctiveness collapsing altogether. To put the question in a nutshell, echoing Abhinavagupta, are dance and theatre fundamentally different from one another or do they share the same nature, and if so, what would their defining characteristic and purpose be? A close analysis of the central portion of Abhinavagupta's commentary on the dance chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the fourth, reveals an unprecedented debate in which various opponents put forth arguments for and against the identity of theatre and dance, based on their individual mimetic purport and aesthetic impact. To establish whether dance can still be said to have an identity separate from theatre, and yet be performed in strict adherence, as it were, to the characters and emotional contents embedded in a text, requires a thorough examination of what makes theatre what it is, and what makes dance its 'other', the premise being that if an authoritative text such as the *Nāṭyaśāstra* uses two different words, *nāṭya* and *nṛtta*, then two different objects must equally exist.

If Bharata's main interest is to define Sanskrit theatre—and dance finds a place in his treatise as an element used in this complex multimedial art, on par with songs and musical instrumentation—Abhinavagupta, almost a millennium later, has to deal with a spectacular object that has grown to include new subgenres and forms, difficult to classify as either forms of theatre or dance. Abhinavagupta, in fact, has first-hand knowledge of the new genres of performance that feature a solo performer and variously combine abstract movements with singing, instrumental music, and acting, but purposefully opts to classify them as forms of dance (*nṛtta*), refraining from introducing the third category of *nṛtya*, as was already standard practice in Dhanañjaya's *Daśarūpaka* (10th c.). In order to do so, Abhinavagupta follows a dual strategy: on the one hand, he expands the category of dance so as to include, alongside abstract dance, aspects of mimetic or narrative dance used both within and without a dramatic performance; on the other hand, he proceeds to requalify the defining characteristic of theatre, i.e. dramatic acting (*abhinaya*), as a mimetic process that aims at producing, for the spectator, a quasi-direct visualisation of the contents of the dramatic text. In it, an actor in a costume indicative of his role delivers a speech with the appropriate tones and language, mimetic gestures and subtle expressions that convey his emotions. Narrative dance and other forms of storytelling do not meet all the characteristics of dramatic acting so defined, and consequently cannot count as theatrical forms, since they do not provide

the spectator with a vivid and lifelike cognition similar to a direct perception, which only can trigger an aesthetic experience. Following this logic, the new genres can only aspire to the status of 'dance' (*nṛtta*), as the process of dramatic mimesis is not complete in them.

As to forms of dance that participate in the staging of a Sanskrit play, be they abstract or mimetic, the discussion revolves around how to meaningfully integrate non-strictly linguistic elements within an aesthetic theory largely grounded in language and its operation—which can very well function without a spectacular dimension, as in the case of recited poetry. This matter does not exclusively interest dance and music, but it also concerns the various registers of acting that are the very hallmark of theatre. The latter include the voice (the text recited, but also non-discursive elements such as the different expressive pitches), the bodily language of gestures, the display of emotions through external symptoms such as tears, tremor, and the like, as well as the costume, which helps to identify the enacted role. This is what falls under the name of *abhinaya*, or dramatic acting, an art that the actor has to master if he wants to present a play on stage in a most effective way. More than an independent art—as *abhinaya* will never earn a place on the lists of the different arts of India—acting is the very activity of making theatre, of communicating things dramatically, a process that also includes aspects of dance and music. Concurrently, the use of acting—especially its bodily register (*āṅgikābhinaya*), which include gestures, facial expressions, and body movements—participates to some extent in the independent art of dance, especially in its mimetic or narrative aspect which, in present times, is the very hallmark of 'classical' Indian dance.

The commentary on the beginning of the section dealing with acting in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, i.e. the eighth chapter, devoted to bodily acting through facial expressions and the minor limbs, is missing in all extant manuscripts of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, and possibly permanently irretrievable. Concurrently, later treatises on dance, such as the *Samgītaratnākara* or the *Nṛttaratnāvalī* (both 13th c.), rely heavily on the *Abhinavabhāratī* for the description of dance techniques and describe the new genres of dance theatre using the category of *nṛtya*. Their authors, however, chose not to reproduce most of Abhinavagupta's theoretical reflections on the nature and function of dance and dramatic acting within the aesthetic process typically theorized for theatre. Under these circumstances, the passage from the fourth chapter that is critically edited and translated in this book becomes particularly relevant in view of its partial recovery of Abhinavagupta's insights about *abhinaya*, in that it asserts the individuality of drama as enacted literature and distinguishes it from other non-representational forms, for instance poetry, storytelling, epic recitation, and

singing. I have therefore resolved to focus on this very discussion in the fourth chapter of Abhinavagupta's commentary, which has been almost totally omitted from scientific discourse on dance of the medieval period, and which has received little attention in modern studies on Indian aesthetics.⁵ The presentation of Abhinavagupta's full argument on the nature of dance—intended in turn as an independent art adopting some of the features peculiar to theatre, as an activity connected to theatre but pursuing independent aims, or as an ancillary art subsumed under theatre's larger aesthetic scheme—vis-à-vis theatre and dramatic acting is intended as the present work's original contribution to the existing scholarship on Indian drama, dance, and aesthetics, but also on literature more generally and on the construction of scientific discourse about the arts.

In the present work, the main arguments of this debate are analysed on the basis of an extended textual passage, namely *Abhinavabhāratī ad Nāṭyaśāstra* 4.261cd–269ab. Part 1 of the book opens with an overview of the textual history of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the *Abhinavabhāratī*, with a focus on the structure of the fourth chapter on dance and its reception in the twentieth century. This is followed by a study in two chapters that aims at contextualising the passage critically edited and translated in Part 2. First, the development of dance practices in the period separating the text from its commentary is addressed, with an eye towards Abhinavagupta's exegetical strategies to account for novelty in art without transgressing the boundaries of traditional lore. Secondly, the aesthetics of dance, entailing a reflection on the mimetic process and the different roles of non-verbal communication media—such as dance and music—and dramatic acting is analysed within the larger framework of Abhinavagupta's *rasa* theory. Part 2 of the book contains the critical edition and translation of *Abhinavabhāratī ad Nāṭyaśāstra* 4.261cd–269ab. The Sanskrit text has been critically edited through a complete perusal of all the available manuscript sources, printed editions, and external testimonia. It is hoped that the recension of the manuscripts of the *Abhinavabhāratī* presented in the 'Introduction to the edition' will provide an overview on the still available textual witnesses, on their mutual relations and on transmission, prompting further studies on other sections of this labyrinthine text. The notes to the translation attempt to clarify Abhinavagupta's exegetical choices according to three sometimes irreconcilable motivations: formal adherence to Bharata's text, an interpretation of performance and its elements conforming to his *rasa* aesthetics, and the

5 An exception is the studies of Bansat-Boudon, who devotes important sections in her works to the discussion of dance and aesthetics in the *Abhinavabhāratī*. See Bansat-Boudon 1992: 399–415, 2004: 177–218.

adequation of theoretical data in line with the stage practice current in the tenth century.

Recovering Dance through Texts: A Note on Method

As a performance art of the most immaterial character, dance has left no tangible evidence of itself. While in the present day, an overwhelming variety of ‘classical’⁶ dance forms, originating in different regions of India and endowed with their own textual bases, suggests the existence of a long-standing tradition of performing arts, for recovering the history of dance in the classical and medieval periods we can resort only to the sheer testimony of the texts, accompanied by a vast array of visual materials of difficult interpretation, including a plethora of sculptural and pictorial representations of dance and musical scenes.⁷ The impossibility of direct access to such practices, common to all performance traditions belonging to the past (be it theatre, music, or dance) as well as to most other cultural practices, is typically balanced in India by a large corpus of textualized knowledge falling under the broad category of *śāstra*. Despite the richness of this textual corpus, encompassing branches of knowledge for which other cultures possess no written record, its interpretation and translation poses a number of methodological challenges that now have to be dealt with.⁸

The name *ṅṛttaśāstra* (‘Science of Dance’) is seldom attested as an independent branch of knowledge,⁹ but treatises dealing partly or exclusively with the topic of dance were composed over a long time span, starting around the first

6 By ‘classical’ I intend here those forms of dance which, at the beginning of the twentieth century, came to be considered as ‘essentially’ sacred, and as having a special and continuous relationship with a high cultural past’ (Chatterjee, quoted in Peterson & Soneji 2008: 6). The question of the classicization of the arts (ibid.: 1–40) will be dealt with briefly, and solely in connection with the instrumental and political uses of Sanskrit texts on dance, in § 1.2.

7 For a survey of sculptural representations of dancers and dance scenes in India, see Vatsyayan 1977: 262–332. These pages offer a variety of visual depictions from different periods and regions, however their analysis focuses mainly on the identification of various poses and gestures in accordance with the descriptions of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, while no attempt is made to deal with their narrative, ritual, or social significance.

8 Beside *śāstras* for different art forms, i.e. theatre (*nāṭya-śāstra*), music (*saṃgīta-*° including vocal and instrumental music and dancing), architecture (*vastu-*°), and sculpture (*śilpa-*°), there also exist *śāstras* on elephant training (*gaja-*°), thievery (*caura* °), etc. For an extended catalogue of attested *śāstras*, see Pollock 1989a: 25.

9 The term *ṅṛttaśāstra* is attested in the long section on the arts (*citrāsūtra*) of the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*, a text which has been dated to the seventh or eighth century and assigned

centuries of the Common Era with the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and stretching across more than 1,500 years.¹⁰ Around thirty texts in Sanskrit are now available in print, and more titles are attested in manuscript form.¹¹ Such a large amount of sources dealing with the topic of dance is an indicator of the cultural importance that this art form assumed in classical and medieval India.¹² This textual corpus has been a privileged ground of enquiry for scholars attempting to reconstruct a history of Indian dance.¹³

While English translations of the major texts on dance are available today,¹⁴ no complete translation of the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī* into any European language has been attempted so far.¹⁵ This is partly due to the corrupt nature of the text of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, which needs to be reconstructed at every step with the help of the available manuscripts and parallel sources. This type of material limitation makes any attempt at producing a viable translation painfully slow and often conjectural. But it is also the technical nature of this chapter that has prevented scholars from approaching the chapter on dance as a whole.¹⁶ Thus, internal limitations go hand in hand with external

to Kashmir (Inden 2000). It occurs in 3.2.4–5, and then with reference to the whole section devoted to this art form (chs. 3.20–34). On the recognition of *nr̥tta* as a topic of specialist knowledge in Sanskrit literature, see Ganser 2011: 146–147.

- 10 The tradition might be even earlier, if one considers Pāṇini's evidence of lost *Naṭasūtras* in the fourth-fifth century BC. Moreover, taking into account the vernacular tradition, especially rich in Tamil and Telugu, technical literature on dance can be seen to extend even into the twentieth century.
- 11 The most complete and up-to-date survey of available texts on dance and their contents is Bose 2007. For a catalogue of manuscripts on the performing arts in Sanskrit, see Gupta 2016.
- 12 According to Vatsyayan 1977, references to dance and dancers are found as early as the Ṛg-Veda, although no codification is attested at this early stage. On dance as a motif in selected Vedic sources, see Bansat-Boudon 2004: 207–209.
- 13 See especially Bose 2007, and § 1.2 below for a note of caution.
- 14 On the editions and translations of dance literature, see again Bose 2007.
- 15 Two translations of the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī* into Hindi are available in the editions by Madhusudan Shastri (= E₂) and Parasathan Dvivedi (= E₄). Both scholars, however, translate Abhinavagupta almost literally, leaving many of the textual problems unsolved in the translation, and fail to substantiate their sometimes apparently free interpretations of specific points. Fragments of the chapter on dance have found translation in various works. See Varma 1957, Bansat-Boudon 1992 and 2004, and Ramanathan 1999. Anna Tosato has been working on the chapter on dance in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and on its commentary from an art-historical perspective, hence with concerns very different from those of the present author. In her work, she attempts to find new strategies for interpreting sculptural evidence containing dance depictions in the light of the Sanskrit treatises, preliminary results of which can be found in Tosato 2017.
- 16 Among the available studies dealing with aspects of the chapter on dance in the *Abhi-*

ones, to which must be added the previously mentioned lack of material evidence for interpreting the instructions on dance. In this connection, it is also worth raising the question of whether it makes sense at all to translate the technical portions and for whom. To the scholar, unacquainted with the technical vocabulary and possibly also with today's living practices of Indian dance, the technical portions of the *Abhinavabhāratī* appear quite obscure and inaccessible, while to the dancer, who draws his/her practical knowledge from the direct instruction of a teacher, the technical details contained in a text of the eleventh century end up looking more like the vestiges of a defunct past.

Another limit to presenting the translation of a technical treatise on dance to a scholarly public is posed by the prescriptive trappings of such texts. They present us, in fact, with fairly accurate descriptions of dance and its techniques, with classifications and categorizations of movements, procedures of performance, and hints to the aesthetic principles underlying the practices. Yet they do not provide any picture of the social, religious, or political contexts in which dance was performed. The study of the technical texts has to be therefore supplemented with the descriptions of dance performances embedded in other kinds of texts as well as their visual depictions.¹⁷ Conversely, the technical texts have been used to corroborate the descriptions found in other literary genres, especially in view of the correspondences in the technical vocabulary.¹⁸ Glossaries of technical terms replete with references to the existing literature have also proven useful to the study of this corpus of technical literature.¹⁹ In the exceptional case of geographically and historically situated texts, attempts have

navabhāratī, Bansat-Boudon (1992: 399–415, 2004: 177–218) has mainly dealt with the more speculative portion on the aesthetics of dance, here translated for the first time in full. Padma Subrahmanyam (2006) has analysed some of the concepts related to dance analysis. V. Raghavan (1965 = NR) prepared a useful concordance between the *Abhinavabhāratī* and the *Nṛttaratnāvalī*, although the passages borrowed by Jāyasenāpati mainly concern the parts on body movement, and nothing of the discussion on aesthetics is retained.

17 Such a broad study of the context of the performing arts in classical and medieval literature is beyond the scope of the present work, but is currently being carried out in a separate study.

18 This is the case, for instance, of Kālidāsa's description of the competition between the theatre masters Gaṇadāsa and Haradatta and their pupils in *Mālavikāgnimitra* (acts 1 and 2), whose technical terminology has been analyzed in Bansat-Boudon 1992: 271 ff. in the light of Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Another striking example is the description of the representation of the first act of Harṣa's *Ratnāvalī* in Dāmodaragupta's *Kuṭṭanīmata*, a Kashmirian text of the eighth century. For a translation, see Dezső & Goodall 2012.

19 See Bose 1995.

been made to link them to historically attested kingdoms and kingly patrons and to contemporaneous evidence such as that found in the sculptural material.²⁰

One of the advantages of working with the *Abhinavabhāratī* is that the text and its author are well established both historically and geographically. Moreover, Abhinavagupta provides a lot of details about the context of performance in his time, proving to be an exceptionally attentive spectator of Sanskrit drama and dance performances. To be sure, the cultural context to which the *Abhinavabhāratī* belongs is very different from that in which the *Nāṭyaśāstra* was composed. Being the object of several commentaries between the date of its composition and the eleventh century, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* has not been exempt from multiple interpretations and contextual shifts, our almost exclusive access to which is, at present, the *Abhinavabhāratī*.

In trying to pin down contextual shifts in the texts, one of the major challenges is the fact that *śāstras* are neither mirrors of reality, nor blueprints for practice. The texts are part of a literary tradition and deal with conceptual representations and ideals of practice. This is not to say that *śāstras* are purely theoretical texts divorced from the outer world. They are indeed the carrier of practical as well as theoretical lore, but while they exhibit a tendency towards comprehensiveness and universality, they do not aim at providing a precise depiction of present-day reality. As Katz has put it with regard to treatises on music:

When we attempt to form an idea of the real nature of music in ancient and classical India we cannot reasonably confine ourselves to the *śāstric* texts alone. The distinction between the history of music and that of Sanskrit musical treatises has not always been adequately drawn. [...] Even when we can be fairly certain that the treatises are giving us an exact understanding of some characteristics of musical practice, we should remain aware that there are aspects of the art which are not mentioned because they are of little interest to the *śāstric* writers.

KATZ 1983: 60

The same distinction can be posited between the history of dance and the history of Sanskrit treatises on dance. Attempts to test the dictates of the texts against the actual practices were pursued in those domains where such com-

20 See Raghavan's Introduction to Jāyasenāpati's *Nṛttaratnāvalī* and Kunhan Raja 1945 on Śārṅgadeva's *Samgītaratnākara*.

parison is possible, showing various dynamics at play.²¹ In the domain of dramatic production, for instance, scholars started quite early to compare the rules of composition laid down in Bharata's text and the available specimens of Sanskrit plays. As early as 1890, Sylvain Lévi noticed that Sanskrit dramatists exhibit a considerable reliance on śāstric rules in composing their works.²² This concordance can partly be explained by the intrinsic normative power exercised by the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which is presented as a 'Fifth Veda', issued by a divine being, but also, perhaps more crucially, by the dramatists' belonging to the same literate and literary milieu that was involved in the production of *śāstras*.²³

Although the existence of an important corpus of dramatic texts invites comparison between the technical treatises and the plays, the problem of interpreting śāstric textual production vis-à-vis artistic practices in India can by no means be reduced to testing the prescriptions embedded in the technical treatises against the material data, i.e. the plays produced by dramatists. It is indeed quite predictable and unsurprising that playwrights should be acquainted with the theoretical treatises in Sanskrit, but what about other kinds of artists, such as actors, dancers, and musicians? Did they play any active role in the making of *śāstras*? Or were they just following the rules laid down by others? Were they literate at all or did they rely on a parallel *śāstra* made of oral and practical instructions drawing their authority from a master? As Katz has argued, in order to contextualize artistic practices on the basis of the textual records, it is essential to take into account the social and cultural gap that existed between theoreticians and practitioners. With regard to theatre, it is reasonable to assume that no watertight division existed between the domain of the theory and that of practice, but rather a kind of cross-fertilization of the two.²⁴ Nevertheless, it is a fact that the very mode in which the practical

21 The most comprehensive collection of studies in the domain of the different arts is still Dallapiccola 1989.

22 'L'étude de la technique appelle, comme une contre-épreuve indispensable, l'examen des oeuvres. La théorie et la pratique s'opposent d'ordinaire comme deux termes inconciliables: les lois absolues des théoriciens, établies sur des spéculations et des raisonnements abstraits, ne s'accordent guère avec les nécessités contingentes, les combinaisons les plus savantes s'écroulent lorsqu'il s'agit de les réaliser. Le théâtre indien présente le spectacle, unique peut être, d'une théorie acceptée sans contestation et mise en oeuvre avec un respect servile pendant une durée de quinze siècles' (Lévi 1963: 153).

23 For the case of *Alaṃkāraśāstra*, with its different claims to authority, and attitudes towards innovation, see Bronner 2002 and McCrea 2011. A recent work, Bronner et al. 2014, builds a history of *kāvya* by drawing on the innovations and turning points detected in the works of poets.

24 Expert figures are invoked throughout the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as recipients of the text or, in the

instructions are presented in the theoretical texts tends to conceal historical development altogether.²⁵

This raises a related question about the functions that authors of *śāstras* assigned to their works, and how they evaluated the relationship between theory (*śāstra*) and practice (*prayoga*). In his broad study of the idea of *śāstra* and rule-bound activity, Pollock (1985) argued that some of the earliest forms of *śāstra*, the *vedāṅgas* ('Ancillaries of the Veda'), were initially endowed with a descriptive character. Soon enough, the *śāstra* came to be conceptualized as ahistorical knowledge that always pre-exists practical applications and that is given once and for all (sometimes by a deity) to a worthy recipient entrusted to hand it down faithfully. This self-declared transcendence, often joined with a professed link to the Veda, earned the *śāstra* its axiomatic authority.²⁶ Although the *Nāṭyaśāstra* falls under those disciplines that display an openly conservative attitude, this does not mean that its rules became an absolutely binding force in artistic practice, something immobilizing creativity itself. Nor did the authors of *Nāṭyaśāstra*, like those of other *śāstras*, necessarily conceive of the theory as something static. On the contrary, writers in different knowledge systems have always strived to devise strategies for allowing change and innovation to take place without stepping out of the tradition, be it a long-standing or a newly invented one. This attitude provides for what Halbfass (1991: 4) describes as a 'dynamic sense of tradition' against a 'static and archival one'. By exercising a critical attitude towards the texts, a lot can be deduced about attitudes towards tradition. At the outset of his book on semantic analysis—itsself a powerful exegetical tool for creating 'new' meaning out of 'old' words—Eivind Kahrs stated:

Abhinavabhārati, as promoters of certain teachings and interpretations. The role of the theatre master or of especially gifted actors in enriching the text of the plays for its stage rendering has been emphasized by Bansat-Boudon, both on the basis of Abhinavagupta's commentary, and on the existence of enlarged 'stage' versions of famous plays circulating in manuscript form. See Bansat-Boudon 1989–1990 and 1992: 341–387 on the complex acting protocol in six phases (*sāmānyābhinaya*), by which the performer becomes an exegete of the text, and Bansat-Boudon 1992 205–215 on the addition of *dhruvā* songs and *ibid.*: 281–340 on that of *lāsyaṅgas*. On the stage versions of Kālidāsa's *Abhijñānaśākuntala* and the fourth act of the *Vikramorvaśīya*, see Bansat-Boudon 1994a and 1998b.

25 On the ideal dimension of *śāstra*, see Pollock 1985, 1989a and 1989b.

26 Pollock (1985: 502) notes that the word *śāstra*, consisting of the Sanskrit root *śās*, 'to teach' plus the secondary suffix *-tra*, originally has the double meaning of 'rule', or 'book of rules', and 'revelation', thus coinciding with the Veda.

Traditional societies exploit flexibility while pretending permanence. This is because belief systems are not legitimated once and for all and therefore require means to cope with conflict and change without facing the challenge of admitting that these have taken place.

KAHRS 1998: 1

Within Indian textual culture, not only texts aimed at reproducing and propagating belief systems, but also texts dealing with artistic traditions have a tendency to conceal change, or to confine it within the reassuring boundaries of tradition. These boundaries are at times displaced in order to include or exclude features issuing from the practical reality. It is by looking at these shifts, that it is possible to detect patterns of change. In matters of meaning-negotiation, commentaries are indeed of special interest, as they necessarily deal with the diachronic dimension of the *śāstra* and its uninterrupted authority in the face of the evolving practices. Being one of the few commentaries we have on an ancient *śāstra* on the arts, the *Abhinavabhāratī* is therefore a very precious document.

The introduction of novelty takes various forms in the *Abhinavabhāratī*: it can happen through a shift in the meaning of already proposed taxonomies; through the interpretation of particles in Bharata's verses as suggestive of further senses; or, with regard to categories that have become obsolete and incomprehensible even to a connoisseur like Abhinavagupta, through the instillation of new and unexpected senses. Needless to say, these kinds of exegetical procedures pose a number of challenges for the translator, whose task is to keep the different temporal layers of interpretation separate, while explaining the complexity of the ongoing debates in their historical context. In dealing with the chapter on dance and its technical instructions, I have attempted to look at the ways in which the framework of traditional lore is twisted and bent, enlarged, and shrunk under the pen of Abhinavagupta so as to introduce major shifts, both in theory and in practice, within that very same framework—provided, in the case at hand, by Bharata's text, now rendered flexible by the act of commenting.

Nāṭyaśāstra and *Abhinavabhāratī*: Trends and Open Questions

In this chapter, I briefly introduce the sources for this study, emphasizing three temporal and contextual layers I have attempted to keep distinct: that of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, that of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, and that of the modern reception of the *Nāṭyaśāstra-Abhinavabhāratī* complex. This third layer will be dealt with first, since it is the context that is temporally closer to us: all the different editions at our disposal, which have contributed to shaping ideas and prejudices about these two texts, were produced within a time span of about a hundred years, a period that is worth addressing. The history of the printed editions will be furthermore set against the specific background of research on Indian dance, with a focus on interpretations of the verbal descriptions of dance movements in the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* vis-à-vis their visual depictions in temple sculpture.

The date of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the identity of its author are still shrouded in mystery, and so too are the practices recorded in it. Taking into account the structure of the text as it has been handed down to us, with its various layers alternating narrative and pedagogical content, allows us to address the question of whether its composition was unitary, as well as the multiple issues pointed out by previous scholars in this connection, including the problematic position of the fourth chapter and its presentation of dance movements. A closer look at the place of dance within Bharata's text and its narrative, in turn, helps in better situating Abhinavagupta's discussion of the nature of dance and dramatic acting, which is the main topic of this book, as firmly grounded in Bharata's text.

Finally, the paucity of historical evidence on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*—and, consequently, its intrinsically problematic value for a study of the performing arts in ancient India—is contrasted with the wealth of details about Sanskrit drama and dance in Kashmir at the turn of the first and the second millennia, as drawn from the *Abhinavabhāratī*. Not only does Abhinavagupta's commentary record artistic practices and theories current at his time but, through the incorporation of older debates and intertextual reference to other works, it allows us to cast a glance on their history as well.

1.1 Editorial History and Textual Reception

The first-ever edition of the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, although incomplete, was published in 1865 by Fitz-Edward Hall as an appendix to his edition of Dhanañjaya's *Daśarūpaka*. After the fortuitous discovery of a complete manuscript of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, just one day after completing his preface to the *Daśarūpaka*, Hall decided in fact to edit, along with it, four chapters of Bharata's text.¹ These chapters dealt essentially with the literary aspects of playwriting, namely the dramatic genres (*daśarūpakalakṣaṇa*) (ch. 18), plot divisions (*aṅgavikalpa*) (ch. 19), manner divisions (*vṛttivikalpa*) (ch. 20) and dramatic characters (*prakṛtyadhya*) (ch. 34).² This marked the beginning of philological studies on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which had been preceded, by almost a century, by the European 'discovery' of Sanskrit drama through the acclaimed translation of the *Abhijñānaśakuntala* by William Jones in 1789,³ followed by the translation of five Sanskrit plays by H.H. Wilson in 1827.⁴

The second part of the nineteenth century saw the publication of many Sanskrit plays in translation, as well as the first attempts to edit the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which led to the partial editions of the French scholars Paul Regnaud⁵ and Joanny Grosset,⁶ along with the important study on Indian theatre

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- 1 In the footnotes to his edition, Hall quotes fragments of the *Nś* from an incomplete manuscript containing chapters 1 to 7, as well as passages from the commentaries on the Sanskrit plays. In his preface, he expresses the idea that the *Daśarūpaka* had long been a 'favourite authority, among Hindus, for everything connected with the theatre' (Hall 1865: 1), and rectifies it in a postscript dated 1862, after the discovery of a complete copy of the 'Institute of Mimetics', i.e. the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (ibid.: 37).
 - 2 The numbering of the chapters corresponds to Hall's manuscript, and the task of editing them was assigned to E.B. Cowell (Hall 1865: 37). According to Heymann (1874: 89) and Grosset (1898: iii), Hall intended to edit the full text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, but abandoned the project. Apparently, Heymann also considered editing the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*; however, he realized that the few manuscript copies in his possession contained too many lacunae and mistakes (Rocher 1981).
 - 3 In introductions to theatre studies, 1789 is generally cited as the year Indian theatre was discovered in Europe through Jones' translation of Kālidāsa's play, first prepared in Latin and translated into English for publication in 1789. For the history of the reception of the *Śakuntalā*, see Figueira 1991 and Thapar 2011.
 - 4 Wilson (1827) noticed that Indian commentators on Sanskrit plays constantly quoted Bharata's 'Sūtras', or aphorisms. However, he did not really believe in the existence of a text in a complete form written by Bharata. For a recent assessment of his work, see Zastoupil 2018.
 - 5 Regnaud published chapter 17 (*vāgabhinaya*) in 1880, chapters 15 to 16 (*vācikābhinaye chandovīdhāna* and *chandovīciti*) in 1880, and chapters 6 to 7 (*rasādhyāya* and *bhāvavyaṅjaka*) in 1884.
 - 6 In 1888, Grosset published the text and translation of chapter 28 on music and, in 1898, an edition of chapters 1 to 14.

of Sylvain Lévi in 1890.⁷ In 1894, four years later, the first complete edition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* was published in India, in the Kāvyaṃālā series, on the basis of two manuscripts.⁸ At the end of the nineteenth century, the idea that commentaries on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* existed, but that these were irretrievably lost, was common among scholars and was accompanied by a widespread sense of regret over the lack of exegetical tools with which to understand Bharata's text.⁹

A new wave of studies on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* was inaugurated in the 1920s,¹⁰ which saw the publication of new works on Indian theatre, mainly concerned with its literary and aesthetic aspects.¹¹ In 1925, S.K. De published the first fragments of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, namely the whole commentary on the *rasasūtra* from the sixth chapter.¹² The second complete edition of Bharata's treatise followed shortly in Benares in 1929, in the Kashi Sanskrit Series,¹³ and in 1943 a third one was published in Bombay, again in the Kāvyaṃālā series.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Manavalli Ramakrishna Kavi was working on the edition of the long-awaited commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Abhinavagupta's *Abhinavabhāratī*, which came out in four volumes published in the Gaekwad's Oriental Series (GOS) between 1926 and 1964. This huge work also comprised the text of the

7 On S. Lévi's work on Indian theatre, see Bansat-Boudon 2007.

8 Initially welcomed with enthusiasm, this edition by Pandit Śivadatta and Kāśināth Paṇḍurang Parab was soon recognized as 'hasty' and 'uncritical' (Rocher 1981: 116).

9 As early as 1890, Lévi mentioned the loss of Abhinavagupta's commentary, of which he however possessed some fragments (Lévi 1963: 16), possibly corresponding to MS. SL. 55A, a manuscript now at Collège de France in Paris. See Part 2, § 4.2.2, n. 41 and 42.

10 In the meantime, two important discoveries took place, which were to influence the history of Indian theatre: the first one, in 1910, concerned thirteen new plays attributed to Bhāsa and retrieved in Trivandrum by T. Ganapati Sastri; the second, in 1911, consisted in the discovery of the fragments of Buddhist dramas in Turfan, among which was the *Śariputraṅkaraṇa* of Aśvaghōṣa. On these discoveries and their impact on studies of Indian theatre, see Renou 1963: xviii.

11 See, e.g., Konow 1920 and Keith 1924. More titles can be found in Renou 1963: x, n. 3. Another major concern of early scholars was the question of the origin of Indian drama, on which see Bronkhorst 2003.

12 S.K. De (1925) used two incomplete manuscripts of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, on which see Part 2, § 4.2.1.1, n. 27.

13 Far from being critical, this edition by Batuk Nāth Śarmā and Baladeva Upādhyāya was based on two manuscripts other than those used in the Kāvyaṃālā edition, and also having a different chapter numbering. According to Ghosh, this text represents the longer recension of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. On the existence of two recensions of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, see Part 2, § 4.2.1.1.

14 This improved edition of the Kāvyaṃālā of 1894, prepared by Kedarnatha Sahityabhusana, also acknowledges the edition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* by Grosset and the one of the *Abhinavabhāratī* by Kavi.

Nāṭyaśāstra, edited on the basis of forty manuscripts, as claimed by its editor.¹⁵ Following the principle according to which a text cannot be edited unless its meaning is understood (Ghosh 1967: xxiv), Manomohan Ghosh prepared a full translation of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which was published in two volumes in 1951 (chapters 1–27) and 1961 (chapters 28–36), along with a complete edition, whose two volumes came out in 1956 and 1967.

The publication of the first volume of the *Abhinavabhāratī* by Kavi in the mid-1920s revived scholarly interest in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and inaugurated a new period of studies focused on poetics and aesthetics.¹⁶ At the same time, Kavi's publication of the reproductions of the bas-reliefs with depictions of the 108 *karaṇas*, the basic dance movements described in the fourth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and sculpted on the gates of the temple of Chidambaram, launched a new avenue of research which engaged, beside philologists, also art historians and archaeologists, as well as theatre and dance performers.¹⁷ In the wake of this renewed interest in dance, in 1936, Naidu et al. published a translation of the fourth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, together with the reproductions of the engravings of the *karaṇas*, an introduction on Indian dance, and an appendix with a glossary of dance terminology.¹⁸

Three more editions of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* with the *Abhinavabhāratī* commentary saw the light of day in the last three decades of 1900. Between 1971 and 1981, Madhusudan Shastri published an incomplete edition, along with a Sanskrit and a Hindi commentary; between 1981 and 1984, R.S. Nagar prepared a complete edition of the text; and between 1992 and 1996 Parasanatha Divedi published a partial one together with a Hindi translation and commentary.¹⁹ A reprint of the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* with the *Abhinavabhāratī*, along with the translation by Ghosh, was carried out in recent times by Pushpendra Kumar,²⁰ and a new English translation (the best so far) was attempted

15 On this edition and its limitations, see Part 2, § 4.2.1.1.

16 Such studies prompted a series of improvements on the edited text of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, through the reconstruction of problematic passages with the help of parallel sources and quotations from other texts, as for instance Raghavan 1940 for the *śāntarasa-prakaraṇa*, Gnoli 1968 for the commentary on the *rasasūtra*, and Kulkarni 2003a.

17 The entanglements between editorial efforts, the revival of dance, and nationalist agendas in the same period are dealt with in §1.2. See also Ganser 2018.

18 This is *Tāṇḍava Lakṣaṇam or The Fundamentals of Ancient Hindu Dancing* (Naidu et al. 1980).

19 On these editions, see Part 2, § 4.2.1.2–4.

20 This edition has the advantage of including the text and the English translation of the *Nṣ* by Ghosh, along with the text of the *ABh*, but philologically it has little value. The editor does not say which text of the *Abhinavabhāratī* he is reproducing, though one can infer that it is the one given by Nagar. Moreover, the work is scattered with printing inaccuracies.

by N.P. Unni and published in four volumes in 1998, with a voluminous introduction and notes based on the *Abhinavabhāratī*.²¹ The first volume of the long-awaited new critical edition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (chapters 1–14) was released in 2015 by K.D. Tripathi. It incorporates previously unpublished manuscripts from Jaipur and Nepal, the latter of which are probably the oldest available manuscripts, as they bear colophons replete with dates and details about the scribe.

The existing translations of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* are useful tools for reference when one wishes to get an overview of the various topics dealt with in its thirty-six or thirty-seven chapters.²² Yet these translations do not help in making the text intelligible when it comes to the technical passages or to the technical terminology, which is left untranslated in most cases. The lack of exegetical tools to understand the *Nāṭyaśāstra* was deeply regretted by those who first attempted to edit the text. Once the text of the *Abhinavabhāratī* became available, it was soon recognized that—besides the numerous infelicities of Kavi's edition—Abhinavagupta's commentary could not be of much help in making Bharata's text more transparent (Rocher 1981: 126, n. 44). As Ghosh stated in the introduction to the second volume of his translation, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* must very early on have become a text incomprehensible to most, and certainly some of its portions were not intelligible even to an attentive reader and connoisseur such as Abhinavagupta:

The very complex dramatic-cum-musical art described in the present work appears to have become obsolete more than one thousand years ago. The text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* was handed down not because professional actors needed it, but because it was considered a Veda, the *Nāṭyaveda*, and as such worthy of being saved from extinction. Hence the work was

21 This translation underwent a second revised edition in 2014. As the author states in the introductory volume, he followed the Sanskrit text adopted by K.P. Narayana Pisharoti for the Malayalam translation of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which made use of one independent palm-leaf manuscript (most probably from Kerala), apart from three editions (Unni 2014: 14). Two more translations are worth mentioning for the sake of comprehensiveness, although they do not make any critical use of the manuscripts and in many cases provide only a paraphrase or a summary of the contents of Bharata's text. The first is a translation by an unspecified Board of Scholars, published in Delhi in 1989; the second is the one by A. Rangacharya of 1996. On other translations in various Indian regional languages, see Unni 2014: 13.

22 The numerous differences in the verse numbering and chapter divisions, added to the breadth of textual materials, make any attempt at simultaneously using the various editions and translations unnecessarily slow.

somehow preserved. But in the absence of a living tradition, it does not yield a full view of the complex art.

GHOSH 1961: v

Louis Renou, on the contrary, was not much troubled by the fact that even the commentary of Abhinavagupta could not cast light on the difficult passages concerning artistic practice, as he understood the *Abhinavabhāratī* to be of special interest for the history of ideas, rather than for understanding theatrical practice (Renou 1963: xxix). By downplaying the value of Abhinavagupta's commentary to the history of theatrical practice, however, one of its most important functions for the modern reader is missed. Thanks to the *Abhinavabhāratī*, in fact, one is able to trace some of the important developments that the performative traditions underwent in the classical and medieval period, and at the same time to follow the intellectual debates that went along with those changes. This twofold focus on theory and practice should no doubt encompass the period ranging from the composition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* to that of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, but also the much understudied period of Indian pre-modern history in which these texts were copied, transmitted, quoted, rewritten, epitomized, etc.—all textual practices that guaranteed their preservation to the present day.

1.2 Archiving Performance: Texts and Images

The editorial enterprise leading to the edition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, with its history of almost 150 years, was marked by an initial concern with the literary texts of the plays, combined with an interest in the textual form of the 'Treatise on Theatre'.²³ As mentioned above, it was with the publication of the first edition of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, which included reproductions of the images of the dance movements of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (the *karaṇas*) carved into the gates of the Naṭarāja temple in Chidambaram, that this text received the attention of a new and larger public. For the first time, a direct link was being traced between Bharata's text, the sculpted images of dancers and musicians populating the temples of India, and the living traditions of dance. The efforts of those who undertook to edit and translate the Sanskrit texts on dramatic theory and the

23 As Vatsyayan (1989) has pointed out, Indian editors first directed their attention to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* owing to its similarity to other known normative texts, for instance the *Mānavadharmasāstra*. The most blatant case is that of P.V. Kane, who in 1923 published a very influential *History of Sanskrit Poetics*.

performing arts were greeted with enthusiasm by supporters and promoters of the so-called 'revival' of Indian dance and music, a reform movement that started in the 1930s.²⁴ As the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is part of this entangled history, it might prove fruitful to set its reception in this wider context.

Even prior to the publication of the dance bas-reliefs accompanying the text of the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī* in the GOS edition of 1926, the English translation of a short Sanskrit treatise on dance and histrionics had been circulating in India, Europe, and the United States. This is *The Mirror of Gesture*, a translation of Nandikeśvara's *Abhinayadarpaṇa*²⁵ that was released as early as 1917 by Harvard University Press, a collaborative enterprise between Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya.²⁶ Coomaraswamy had been particularly concerned with establishing the significance and function of his text for a Western readership, including actors and dancers, but never hinted at its possible adoption by an Indian reader or performer. His translation was in fact the direct outcome of a long-standing confrontation with a certain Western critique of Indian art, and of an endeavour to tame cross-cultural encounters with Indian art by setting an ideal standard for the original and authentic in the form of what was textually based.²⁷

At the same time as the demand for accessing Indian art treatises increased among 'Western' artists and critics fascinated by the 'East', Indian theorists had

24 For a comprehensive bibliography on the subject, see the very informative introduction in Peterson & Soneji 2008. On the recovery of Sanskrit texts on dance in this period, see Ganser 2018.

25 The date of composition of the *Abhinayadarpaṇa* is highly uncertain. Hypotheses range from the fifth to the thirteenth centuries CE, but it might be even later. A group of passages from this text found, with slight changes, at the beginning of the seventh chapter of the *Samgītaratnākara* has raised doubt about the relative dating of these two texts. Following Alain Daniélou, Ghosh (1957: 31) and Bose (2007) maintained the priority of the *Abhinayadarpaṇa* on the basis of the identification of its author Nandikeśvara with writers quoted in earlier texts, while Kunjunni Raja has cast doubt on the direction of the borrowing in his preface to the translation of the dance chapter of the *Samgītaratnākara* (Kunjunni Raja & Burnier 1976: vi–vii), a position I also share (see Ganser 2018: 91, n. 3 and Ganser 2021).

26 See Coomaraswamy & Gopala Kristnayya 1936. The *Abhinayadarpaṇa* was translated anew by Manomohan Ghosh in 1934, together with a critical edition of the Sanskrit text. This treatise became very popular among dance practitioners, and it is still used by contemporary artists, especially, but not exclusively, in the training of Bharatanatyam. For a discussion on the use of the *Abhinayadarpaṇa* in dance practice, see Ganser 2011, and on the entangled history of *The Mirror of Gesture*, see Ganser 2018.

27 As I demonstrate in Ganser 2018: 104–113, this matches the concerns of the English dramatist and theatre critic E. Gordon Craig, who was the instigator of and main interlocutor in Coomaraswamy's translation of the *Abhinayadarpaṇa*.

to cope with a more pressing criticism of dance and the performing arts coming from within India. This criticism took the name of the 'Anti-Nautch Movement'; it was launched at the end of the nineteenth century by English missionaries and Indian social reformers, and embraced at the beginning of the twentieth century by the new elites close to colonial power.²⁸ Its aim was to eradicate dance from both temples and public venues. The critique revolved especially around the sexuality of the ritual dancers and the dedication of minor girls to the temples.²⁹ This led not only to the stigmatization of dance and the social groups traditionally associated with it, but also to concrete provisions and legislative acts against them, which profoundly transformed the social landscape of the performing arts.³⁰

One of its major consequences was the displacement of the dance tradition from the custody of its hereditary exponents to a new middle class of Brahmin performers. The latter took up the task of reviving (or better, reforming) the older practices, which involved the spatial relocation of dance from the temple premises to the theatre stage, and called for major revisions to the dance repertoire.³¹ This prompted the necessity to recover Sanskrit texts on dance and music, through which imaginative links with the past could be forged, together with authoritative claims of pedigree. Against this background, the two texts that assumed foremost importance were the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the *Abhinayadarpaṇa*. Through the act of voluntary oblivion of its geographical and historical origin, South Indian dance was renamed with the Sanskrit name 'Bharatanatyam', recalling Bharata's text, and its technique was re-codified with the help of the *Abhinayadarpaṇa*, assisted by the practical instruction of the hereditary dance teachers who were called to participate in the revival.³² Within the larger effort of the 'Sanskritization' or 'textualization'

28 The term 'nautch' is the Anglicized form of the Hindi word *nāc*, and was used especially in nineteenth-century accounts to denote dancing in general. See, e.g., A. Srinivasan 1985.

29 The criticisms lodged towards dance and music did not concern only the performing arts, but also Indian culture and civilization at large, and elicited manifold responses at different levels. See, e.g., Ali 1999.

30 The Anti-Nautch Movement culminated in a law, passed in 1947, which aimed at abolishing the dedication of the *devadāsīs*. On the decline of traditional performers coming from a Devadāsī lineage, and on their gradual disappearance from the contemporary dance scene, see, for instance, Gaston 1996. The most comprehensive study on the Devadāsī system and its history is still Kersenboom 1987.

31 Nowadays, scholars prefer to speak of 'reform' instead of 'revival' and of 'reformed' practices, as these also involved a shift in the social status of the performers, which went together with the effacement of any reference to erotic themes in the repertoire.

32 The most blatant case of the use of Sanskrit texts as authoritative predecessors in the construction of a new tradition of Indian dance is that of Rukmini Devi, a Brahmin woman

of dance,³³ the work of editors of Sanskrit texts and of scholars working on the history of dance, such as V. Raghavan, were fundamental to providing the newly reinvented dance traditions with a theoretical background and a continuity with the classical past, expressed in the Sanskrit texts and illustrated in the refined dance sculptures.

The texts pleaded for the antiquity of the dance, and the sculptures provided continuity with the temple tradition, temporally relocated to a mythical ancient past.³⁴ Prior to the publication of the images of the *karaṇas* in the GOS edition of 1926, the same illustrations had been published by the Government Epigraphical Department in the Madras Report of 1914, in a somewhat partial and reshuffled order, which was reproduced by Kavi and successively by Naidu et al. Only in the second, revised GOS edition of 1956 did K.S. Ramaswami Sastri restore the order of the complete set of 108 *karaṇas* represented in the bas-reliefs of the eastern *gopura* of the Chidambaram temple, matching them with the corresponding Sanskrit verses from the *Nāṭyaśāstra* inscribed below the figures in Grantha script.³⁵

Apart from pointing out these discrepancies in matching the text with the images, Ramaswami Sastri explains that Kavi used the verses of Śārṅgadeva's *Samgītaratnākara* for reconstructing the missing commentary on some of the *karaṇas*, of which the *Samgītaratnākara* offered a versified rendering. Śārṅgadeva's verses on the *karaṇas* were also added by Ramaswami Sastri to an appendix of the volume, 'in order to facilitate those who are interested in the study of Karaṇa literature, which is as essential for a study of Bharata-Nāṭya as alphabets and words are for study of a language' (Ramaswami Sastri 1956: 33). These remarks on the prospective use of the descriptions of the *karaṇas* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* are revealing with regard to attitudes and biases towards Sanskrit texts on dance in this period. They also provide information about the expected readership of such publications. Similarly, the attitude of Naidu is best illustrated by his translation of the title of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as 'The Science

from Madras, married to a member of the Theosophical Society. Rukmini Devi learned the art of dance from Devadāsī masters and started to perform publicly on the modern stage in the mid-'30s. On Rukmini Devi, see Meduri 2009.

33 By the process of Sanskritization in relation to the performing arts, scholars are generally referring to the 'approximation to the norms of the elite paradigm, especially by invoking the authority of Sanskrit texts' (Peterson & Soneji 2008: 13). On the Sanskritization and textualization of Indian dance, see Ganser 2021.

34 A good introduction to dance traditions and sculpture is Guzman 2001.

35 On the question of the images of the *karaṇas*, and for a map of their positions in the niches of the four portals of the temple of Naṭarāja, see the preface to the second edition of the *Abhinavabhāratī* in Ramaswami Sastri 1956: 33–50.

of Dancing' (Naidu et al. 1980: 1). Naidu speaks of the 'evil days' and the 'oblivion of the art of dancing' due to its 'misbehaving exponents', while at the same time spotting signs of hope in what he dubs a 'general artistic renaissance' taking place in India, within which he situates the 'revival of classical dance' (ibid.: 16).

A new wave of scholarship on the *karaṇas* was inaugurated by Kapila Vatsyayan and Padma Subrahmanyam in the 1960s, at a time when the social movements that had accompanied the revival of dance largely lost their vitality.³⁶ In her two books devoted to 'Indian classical dance', Kapila Vatsyayan (1974 and 1977) uses the Sanskrit treatises to single out some key concepts that, in her eyes, represent the essence of what could be regarded as 'classical', a label that becomes opposed to the 'folk'. The canons of classicality established on the basis of these treatises were tested against existing forms of dance, such as Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Kathak, and so forth, which accordingly came to be recognized as 'classical'. The subject of the *karaṇa* sculptures in Chidambaram and their link with the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is dealt with at length in Vatsyayan 1977: 106–154, and was later supplemented by a study of the *karaṇas* sculpted on the outer walls of the temple of Sarangapani in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, in Vatsyayan 1982. The *karaṇas*, she suggests, have to be evaluated in terms of cadences of movement and not as static poses, as previous scholars had done: 'Obviously the plastic can capture only a single moment in a continuous flow of movements and only suggests through the arrested image the moment before or after' (Vatsyayan 1974: 5). The recognition of the primacy of kinetic movement in dance sculptures could, according to the author, provide a new and more effective methodology for the identification of the sculptural and textual evidence.

A similar claim of methodological innovation in the study of *karaṇas* was made by Padma Subrahmanyam, a dance performer and scholar whose research focused on the study of the *karaṇas* in texts and sculptures, as well as in the practical reconstruction of what she deemed as the dance described by Bharata in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Subrahmanyam 2003).³⁷ Subrahmanyam's methodology consists in comparing the textual descriptions and the sculptural depictions by considering the latter as snapshots in a given string of movements, and therefore liable to differences of representation based on the respective portions of the movement captured. The same method had been

36 For an account of the different agendas and methods in Vatsyayan's and Subrahmanyam's interpretations of the *karaṇas*, see Lopez y Royo 2004.

37 For a brief account of Subrahmanyam's career as a scholar and artist, see Iyer 1996, especially n. 2 and 7.

adopted by Alessandra Iyer to prove that the depictions of dance in the temple of Prambanan in Central Java were also illustrations of the *karaṇas* of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. She further suggested that a dance tradition issuing from Bharata's text must have existed in Central Java by the early ninth century (Iyer 1996, 1998a, 1998b), an approach that was criticized in reviews of the book, as it was felt that the Prambanan sculptures were not well enough preserved to corroborate their identification with the textual descriptions of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Moreover, the claim that a living tradition had to be posited as the model for the *karaṇa* depictions was seen as particularly problematic, since sacred imagery does not necessarily imply empirical inspiration, but only a transfer of technique or knowledge of iconography (Hughes-Freeland 1998: 78).

The greatest merit of the 'new' formulation of the kinetic dimension of the *karaṇas* is, in my opinion, precisely the fact that we do not necessarily need to postulate a living dance tradition—based on the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* but interpreted regionally—to explain the differences between the various poses in the dance sculptures accompanied by Bharata's verses. It is possible that the sculptors had simply read and interpreted the definitions of the *karaṇas* differently. In her avowed effort to 'revive a lost dance technique' (Subrahmanyam 2003: iii), allegedly still practised in ancient and medieval India (if not also in Indonesia), Padma Subrahmanyam took it for granted that the *Nāṭyaśāstra* had been used as a practical manual. She therefore proceeded to compare Bharata's way of dealing with body movement with the training employed by contemporary dance masters, finally bringing her point home: contemporary forms of dance are based on a Sanskrit text different from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, namely the *Abhinayadarpaṇa*, while her own reconstructed practice, closely based on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, displays a greater degree of authenticity (Subrahmanyam 2003: iii).

More realistically, Bose put the question of the relationship between modern and ancient practices in the following terms:

Since the rebirth of informed interest in dancing in early twentieth century, its antiquity has been acknowledged but precisely what the art was in antiquity remains unclear.

BOSE 2007: 1

Bose's proposed methodology for tackling dance history consisted in analyzing the technical terminology of dance throughout all the published Sanskrit texts on the subject, and acknowledged the necessity of determining a chronology for this textual corpus in order to detect the changes and developments that the artistic tradition underwent. Her claim is that 'following these changes

through treatises is essential to a historical investigation because not only do theoretical discussions in the texts reflect dancing as it was but the practice of dancing in turn seems to have followed the precepts laid down in the texts' (Bose 2001: 45). According to such a principle that texts reflect and inform the practice, Bose concludes about the *Abhinayadarpaṇa*:

Judging by the author's concern with performance, it seems quite likely that this text was meant as a practical guide to be used by a dancer to learn the technique of dancing. This is indeed how the text is used today in at least one classical style of Indian dancing, namely, Bharatanatyam, although practitioners of this style claim that it is named after Bharata. [...] They are the true followers, they claim, of the technique that Bharata recorded. But on analysing the technique in which they actually train we find that it does not derive from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, but from the *Abhinayadarpaṇa*.

ibid.

While it is undeniable that the *Abhinayadarpaṇa* informs dance practices today in several ways, it is not certain whether this and other texts on dance were initially conceived as pedagogical tools for the dancers to learn the technique.

The fact that Nandikeśvara's text was the first treatise on dance to receive a translation into a European language might partly justify its great success and its successive adoption by generations of dancers across the world. Yet recent studies in dance history have also shown that translations in Indian languages and vernacular adaptations of this text had started to circulate in the regions corresponding to modern Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh already in the nineteenth century, under the influence of the court of Thanjavur.³⁸ Such a wide and diversified regional textual production was to be obscured, to some extent, by the immense success of the *Abhinayadarpaṇa* and its wider dissemination through English translation, as well as by the great status assigned to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata. Yet the existence of many earlier translations and vernacular adaptations of the *Abhinayadarpaṇa* suggests that this text was indeed an important source for more than one reason, and that for performers it was considered a more useful and handy manual than the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, despite the latter's status as a seminal *śāstra*.

38 On the multilingualism of textual production on dance at the court of Thanjavur in the Maratha period, see Krishnan 2008, Peterson 2011, Soneji 2012: 27–69, and Ganser 2021.

The image we have today with respect to the written production on Indian dance and its regional transmission is still very partial, and the dynamics of the interaction between texts and practice poorly understood. The first studies on dance were mainly concerned with the recovery of the textual tradition linked with the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in order to provide authoritativeness to the performing arts that were undergoing complex processes of reform and relocation, as well as to create links with the past and the idea of a continuous tradition. As a result, a certain tendency to relate the texts to the living traditions in a one-to-one relationship has prevailed, and still proves to be an irresistible paradigm even in otherwise very valuable studies.³⁹

1.3 The *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the Place of Dance

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* is the oldest and most complete extant work on dramatic art in India. Its encyclopaedic character makes it a seminal text not only in dramaturgy and poetics, but also in an array of allied subjects and ancillary arts, including music and dance. Despite its fortune as a foundational text—testified by an almost unchallenged authority imposed on it by all later writers on related topics and by the enormous amount of scholarship devoted to it—there is little consensus, within and without the tradition, about its composition, authorship, and date. The main scholarly positions on these three connected issues will be presented below, and discussed in the light of the narrative structure of the treatise and the position of the chapter on dance within its narrative.

1.3.1 *Composition, Authorship, and Date*

As we know it in its extant form, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* presents itself as a text in thirty-six or thirty-seven chapters (or thirty-five in the recently edited Nepalese manuscripts, on which see Tripathi 2015) of various lengths, arranged within a narrative frame and composed mainly in verse, with occasional prose passages.⁴⁰ Traditionally ascribed to the mythical author Bharata, who is credited

39 The present overview of the major approaches to textual and visual evidence on dance is obviously not meant to be exhaustive. Among studies on dance, see also Sivaramamurti 1974 and Gaston 1990, and on the tradition of performing the *karaṇas*, see Légeret-Manochaya 2017. Beside studies dealing with the textual past, a number of valuable contributions based on the living, observable practices are gaining momentum in scholarship on dance by incorporating methods from the social sciences.

40 A number of general introductions on the text and contents of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* are available. See, for instance, Ghosh 1951 and 1967, as well as Vatsyayan 1996. For a detailed bibliography on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, see Cahill 2004, *sub voce*.

with the introduction of dramatic art among humans, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* ('Treatise on Theatre') belongs to the genre of the scientific treatise, the *śāstra*, and is devoted to the topic of *nāṭya*, as its title suggests.⁴¹ The semantic spectrum of the term *nāṭya* is broader than its English equivalents 'drama' or 'play', since it encompasses both the play in its literary form and the spectacular object, carried out through a codified acting protocol accompanied by music, songs, and dance, and preceded by a preliminary rite performed on stage. It could be best translated with the word 'theatre', provided we have in mind a sense close to the one assigned to this term by Schechner.⁴²

The breadth and variety of the topics dealt with in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* has led many scholars to consider the present text as resulting from a process of incorporation of disparate materials over a long period. The existence of *Naṭasūtras* ('Aphorisms for the Actors') attributed to Śilālin and Kṛśāśva by Pāṇini (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* IV 3.110–111) points to a previous tradition of scientific writing on theatre, possibly also including dance, which might have been partly incorporated into Bharata's text. Furthermore, the mixed style of the text has been adduced as evidence of its multilayered nature. To a majority of verses in *anuṣṭubh* metre, a few verses in *āryā* or *upajāti* are added, as well as a few but sometimes extensive prose passages in the sixth and seventh chapters. Certain *ślokas* and *āryās* are indicated in the text as *ānuvaṃśya* ('traditional'), and other verses are given as quotations without specifying their sources.⁴³ What is more, in chapter 6 it is suggested that the text contains a structure of *sūtras* (aphorisms), *bhāṣya* (prose commentary), *kārikās* (versified aphorisms), and *niruktas* (traditional etymologies). This challenging puzzle has made way for a variety of scholarly accounts and hypotheses about the composition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.⁴⁴

41 See my remarks in the Introduction above on *śāstra* as a textual genre.

42 Schechner (1973: 8) assigns to 'drama' the meaning of written text or score, to 'script' that of the basic code of the event, and to 'theatre' the concrete event as enacted by a group of performers. The last term is the broadest, and encompasses the first two. To these three an even more encompassing word is added, that of 'performance', which describes the whole constellation of events taking place between audience and performers. Thus drama is the domain of the author, script of the teacher, theatre of the performers and performance of the audience. Although the *Nāṭyaśāstra* also includes the dimension of the audience, hence of performance, the audience is not the primary recipient of the text and its teachings, which are mainly aimed at the first three categories. Moreover, the term 'performance' is not unambiguous, since Schechner assigns it equally to non-dramatic spectacles.

43 According to Abhinavagupta, some of the *āryās* were not composed by Bharata himself, but taken from other authors. The *ānuvaṃśyaślokas*, in their turn, are considered to be verses handed down traditionally, hence also incorporated from pre-existing sources.

44 For a long but non-decisive argument on the composition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, see Sriniva-

The question of the unitary nature of the text opens up the closely connected issue of its authorship and date. Within the indigenous tradition, some comparatively late Sanskrit works make a distinction between two different figures, Bharata and Ādibharata or Vṛddhabharata, and two different epitomes of the treatise, a longer work in twelve thousand verses and an abridgement of it in six thousand verses. The latter would be nothing but the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as we know it today.⁴⁵ The distinction of more than one author of the text usually goes hand in hand with the belief in a distinct authorship for the versified and prose portions of the treatise. Moreover, the dialogical scene at the opening of the treatise, where Bharata is referred to in the third person, has raised doubts about authorship even within the tradition. According to its major commentator Abhinavagupta, however, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is a unitary text in thirty-six chapters and six thousand verses composed by an exceptional individual called Bharata.⁴⁶ In modern studies, the idea that the *Nāṭyaśāstra* could be ascribed to a single author found a strong supporter in Vatsyayan, who stressed its unity of structure and purpose, and its furthering of a 'single integrated vision' (Vatsyayan 1996: 6). But even when looked at as a single work with an authorial (or editorial) intention, there is no doubt that the text incorporates older materials and that it was subject to additions and interpolations. Moreover, the great

san 1980. Srinivasan does not subscribe to the accepted view of a composition consisting of subsequent historical accretions, but claims that the text was heterogeneous from its origin, and that its various parts were put together despite their mutual incoherence. However, his conclusions are based on the analysis of partial portions of the texts, namely the sixth and seventh chapters. Looking at the complex prose-verse structure in the sixth chapter, S.K. De (1960: 24–31) argues for a stratification of the text and assigns the different styles to different stages of the work (*kārikā*, prose, *sūtra-bhāṣya*, and again *kārikā*). For a study of the terms *sūtra*, *bhāṣya*, and *kārikā* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, see Varma 1958, and for an updated look at the question, see Radicchi 2001.

45 This opinion is expressed, for instance, in the twelfth-century *Bhāvaprakāśana* of Śāradātanaya. For the mention of Ādibharata and Vṛddhabharata in different texts and for a summary of arguments for a split authority for the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, see Unni 2014: 16–21. As noticed by Olivelle, among others, in his introduction to *the Mānavadharmasāstra*, 'the motif of a large treatise composed *in illo tempore* and subsequently abridged for the use of humans is a recurrent one in Indian literature' (Olivelle 2005: 19, n. 24). Instances of similar narratives of textual origin and history are found in the *Mahābhārata*, in the *Kāmasūtra*, and in various texts on Āyurveda.

46 The arguments about the unitary nature of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, presented in the form of objections and answers to the question of the authorship of the five questions at the beginning of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, are presented in ABh ad Nś 1.6, vol. 1, pp. 8–9, with the concluding words that 'the true essence [of theatre] is established by the treatise in form of a great sentence of six thousand verses' (*mahāvākyātmanā ṣaṣṣahasrūrūpeṇa [...] śāstreṇa tattvaṃ nirmīyate*).

disparity in the number of verses and their arrangement into chapters as we find them in the extant manuscript copies pleads for a complex and non-linear transmission, which must have altered the original composition to a greater or lesser extent. All these factors must be borne in mind in assessing the date of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.⁴⁷

As is the case with most ancient Indian texts, the date of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is uncertain. In considering the matter of dating, Kuiper (1979) concludes that most scholars agree on the first or second century CE as the period when the older parts were redacted; M. Ghosh, however, assigns the text to 500 BCE.⁴⁸ Lévi (1902) assigns it to the third century CE, since according to him the occurrence of certain words and titles would place the text in the Scythian Kṣatrapa period. Sircar (1974: 22–23), on the contrary, considers it a work of the Gupta age not much earlier than the fifth century, based on the comparison of some of the toponyms and other names in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* with inscriptional evidence. On the whole, scholarly opinions on dating tend to reiterate the view that the text was composed through successive incorporations. It is generally accepted that, in a relative chronology, the testimony of Kālidāsa (4th–5th c.?) should be considered decisive for the upper limit of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in the structure we are familiar with today, since the celebrated Gupta poet and dramatist mentions the name of the work and its author in two of his plays, the *Mālavikāgnimitra* and the *Vikramorvaśīya*.⁴⁹ But there is little agreement about its priority or pos-

47 As Lidova (1994: 2) puts it, ‘we can’t limit the dating problem to the question when the extant version emerged. Its multilevel text and the dates based on cultural historical information, provided by the treatise are separated by more than a millennium, from the 5th century BC. to the 7th AD’. The fact that the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* underwent much redactional activity is reflected in Abhinavagupta’s commentary, in which other commentators are referred to with respect to additional verses, alternative readings, and divergent ordering of the verses. According to Pollock (2016: 47), the text was clearly re-edited, and partly rewritten in Kashmir around the eighth or ninth century CE, at the time when it also first received commentarial attention from Udbhaṭa.

48 Through a consideration of internal evidence, M. Ghosh arrives at a date between 100 BCE and 200 CE, which he later reconsiders, pushing it further back to the fifth century BCE. Following Bharata’s translator, B. Gupt (1986–1987) assigns the text to the fifth century BCE. The arguments in favour of such an early date are nevertheless unconvincing. For a detailed summary of the scholarly debate on dating, see Kuiper 1979: 119–120, n. 44.

49 Kane (1971: 20–22) maintains that the chapters containing the legendary account of the genesis of dramatic art were composed later than the bulk of the technical chapters, i.e. towards the middle of the fourth century CE, that is, immediately before the time of Kālidāsa, in order to raise the status of dramatic art. As to Kālidāsa, he quotes a ‘Treatise on Theatre’ or a ‘Theory of Theatre’ (*nāṭyaśāstra*) by name in the *Mālavikāgnimitra* (prose after 1.15: *deva prayogapradhānaṃ nāma nāṭyaśāstram* ‘Majesty, the “Theory of Theatre” has performance as its main component’), and the sage Bharata as the theatre instructor in

terity to the dramatists Bhāsa and Aśvaghōṣa: while scholars generally concur that Bhāsa (3rd c. CE?) knew and followed the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in composing his plays,⁵⁰ a further lowering of the upper limit to Aśvaghōṣa (2nd c. CE) has not been settled.⁵¹ As for its lower limit, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is considered posterior to Pāṇini (4th–5th c. BC) and the *Naṭasūtras*.

Although the precise date of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is not crucial to the present study and is still open to further scrutiny, the question of composition becomes relevant as far as the place of dance in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is concerned. In the textual economy of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, in fact, dance is dealt with mainly in the fourth chapter, which belongs to the bulk of chapters (chs. 1–5) that were, according to Kane, added to the original textual core at a later point in time.⁵² Were this actually the case, the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* would initially have been conceived as devoid of a codified technique for dance, possibly reflecting a feature of dramatic performance that is implicit in the fourth-chapter narrative on the introduction of dance into the preliminary rite. This view, however, introduces more problems than it solves. How can we justify, for instance, the presence of verses containing a large amount of technical terminology proper to dance, for instance the group of *nṛttahastas* (hand ges-

the *Vikramorvaśīya* (2.17, *muninā bharatena yaḥ prayogo, bhavatiṣv aṣṭarasāśrayo niyuktaḥ | lalitābhīnayaṃ tam adya bhartā, marutāṃ draṣṭumanāḥ salokapālah |* | 'Indra, together with the guardians of the quarters, has set up his mind today to see the performance taught to you by the sage Bharata, which is based on the eight aesthetic emotions and where the acting is graceful'). In the *Kumārasambhava* and the *Raghuvamśa*, there are also references to certain chapters of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Cf. *Kumārasambhava* 7.90–91, 7.95, on which see Kane 1971: 21; Bansat-Boudon 1992: 279, n. 43; and *Raghuvamśa* 19.36, quoted in Bansat-Boudon 1992: 356, n. 342.

- 50 If Tieten's (1993) reassessment of Bhāsa's plays as belonging to the post-mid-seventh-century Pallava court is correct, Bhāsa's knowledge of Bharata would be beyond doubt.
- 51 For arguments for and against Aśvaghōṣa's acquaintance with the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, see Keith 1924: 81–83. The date of Aśvaghōṣa has been assigned to the Kuṣāṇa period, precisely in the epoch of the emperor Kaniṣka (first decades of the 2nd c. CE), on which cf. Bansat-Boudon 2007: 55–56, n. 90.
- 52 According to Kane 1971: 22–23; 27, this addition was meant to elevate the status of dramatic art, opinion of which had suffered in the period of the Dharmasūtras and the early Smṛtis, by endowing it with a narrative of divine origin. Accordingly, Tieten pointed out that 'a problem in *Nāṭyaśāstra* is the relationship between the main part of the text and the first five chapters. The first five chapters describe the divine origin of drama, the construction of the theatre, the consecration of the stage, the origin of the incorporation of dance in drama, and the preliminary rituals of a performance. As chapter 6 begins with a table of contents of what follows [the *nāṭyasamgraha*], the authenticity of the first five chapters has in the past frequently been questioned' (Tieten 1998: 172, square brackets mine).

tures for dance) described in the ninth chapter, that is in a chapter subsequent to the fourth but allegedly part of the original composition? As I will argue, I think it is more reasonable to consider the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as a systematization of diverse materials, issuing from pre-existing artistic traditions—which were possibly already endowed with some kind of textual or oral codification—but deliberately launched as a foundational work. This intentional, coherent, and well-planned unitary structure was conceived by a single author, or by a single editor-in-chief, called Bharata, in order to refer to an illustrious line of predecessors or to a certain class of actors.⁵³ A closer look at the narrative structure of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and its main junctures within the context of similar narratives may help in clarifying this position.

1.3.2 Narrative Structure

It is a well-known fact that many ancient texts beside the *Nāṭyaśāstra* present their subject matter embedded within a mythological narrative frame. Within the literature of Brahmanical law (Dharmaśāstra), Olivelle describes the fact that the *Mānavadharmasāstra* ‘set his text within a narrative structure that consists of a dialogue between an exalted being in the role of a teacher and others desiring to learn from him’ as a major innovation with respect to the earlier Dharmasūtras (Olivelle 2005: 25). Similarly, the whole *Nāṭyaśāstra* is presented as an answer to the questions of a group of sages (*muni, ṛṣi*) led by Ātreya who, eager to learn about theatrical art, approach Bharata and induce him into teaching. This setting corresponds to the outermost narrative frame, comprised of the dialogue between Bharata and the sages, which encloses the story of the origin and transmission of dramatic art, unfolding in the first five chapters and brought to a close in the last two chapters.⁵⁴ Analogously to the *Mānavadharmasāstra*, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* presents a textual history of itself, using different narrative levels as a device.⁵⁵ In it, we learn that the ultimate authority on *nāṭya* and real author of the *Nāṭyaveda* (‘The Veda that is Theatre’) is

53 Besides being connected to the celebrated lineage of the *Mahābhārata*, the name Bharata is found in legal texts such as the *Mānavadharmasāstra*, in the *Arthaśāstra*, and in the *Amarakośa*, where it designates an unspecified class of performers, along with other terms such as *naṭa*, *śailālin*, *śailūṣa*, *kṛśāśvin*, etc. See Iravati 2003.

54 Depending on the edition, the end of the narrative can cover chapters 36 and 37 (as in the GOS), or just chapter 36 in the editions where the two chapters are combined (in the edition by Ghosh for instance). See Ganser & Cuneo 2012: 98, n. 22.

55 For a narratological approach to the much more complex narrative structure of the *Mahābhārata*, using the terminology coined in Bal 1985 and borrowed here to a limited extent, see Malinar 2005.

in fact Brahmā, while Bharata is just the human recipient and intermediary between the divine knowledge and the human performers, fictionally represented as Bharata's own sons.⁵⁶

The narrative begins in the first chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* with the account of the circumstances that led to the creation of theatre. These events—which form part of the story embedded in the overarching dialogue frame—are set at the beginning of the Silver Age, an epoch of decadence in which men are no longer able to distinguish the good and right (*dharma*) from its contrary (*adharmā*), since they have no access to sacred knowledge through the Vedas.⁵⁷ In order to bring this situation to an end, the gods headed by Indra approach Brahmā and ask him for an object of diversion (*krīḍanīyaka*) that would be both visible as well as audible (*drśyaṃ śravaṃ ca*). Absorbed in meditation, Brahmā creates a Fifth Veda, namely theatre (*nāṭya*), by assembling its various components from the four canonical Vedas: dramatic text (*pāṭhya*) from the *R̥gveda*, songs (*gīta*) from the *Sāmaveda*, acting (*abhinaya*) from the *Yajurveda*, and tastes (*rasa*) from the *Atharvaveda*. Asked to put it into practice, the gods suggested handing it over to humans, whom they considered more apt to the task. That is how Bharata comes to be the first human being to receive instruction in dramatic art and to put it into practice. He in fact transmits the knowledge of theatre to his sons, the actors, and is eventually asked to get ready for a performance. First the play is presented to a divine audience during the festival of Indra's banner, the Indradhvajamaha. At that time, a group of hindrances (literally, the *vighnas*) interfere, disturbing the performance to the point that it becomes necessary to build a playhouse so as to ward them off. Various deities are appointed to the different areas of the stage and the theatrical building for the protection of the actors. At the end of the first chapter, the practice of worshipping the deities of the stage (*raṅgadaivatapūjana*) is also instituted. Two accessory chapters follow, in which the minute details of the construction of the playhouse (ch. 2) and the rites of consecration of the scenic space (ch. 3) are laid down. These chapters form a sort of digression with respect to the narrative of the origin of theatre: they are pedagogical in character and, beyond the technical instructions, do not contain any narrative material.

56 According to Olivelle, the tradition of presenting a text as a dialogue in which a teacher instructs a pupil, a son, or a king goes back to the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upaniṣads*, while the transition to divine instruction can be traced to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. Even Buddhist literature might have played a role in the creation of similar kinds of narratives, on which see Olivelle 2005: 27.

57 This corresponds to the second epoch, the *tretāyuga*, in the well-known system of the four ages (*yuga*), progressively deteriorating in a cyclic fashion: *kr̥ta*, *tretā*, *dvāpara*, and *kali*.

The embedded narrative of the origin of theatre proceeds in the next chapter, the fourth, in which Bharata and the actors are asked by Brahmā to prepare for another theatrical performance, this time to be presented to Śiva. After watching the performance, Śiva suggests that dance should be introduced in the 'preliminary rite' (*pūrvaraṅga*), which now precedes the play, so as to make it variegated.⁵⁸ An explanation, technical in character, of the basic units of dance is also found in this chapter, as well as instructions for the application of dance to the musical segments of the *pūrvaraṅga*. Complete details of the performance of the various items comprising the preliminary rite are given in the next chapter (ch. 5), again as an answer to the sages' request for further elucidation.

The next two chapters (chs. 6 and 7) are of central importance, as they concern the emotional life of theatre, the *rasas* and the *bhāvas*. In these two chapters, the germs of an Indian aesthetic theory are laid down, in the celebrated 'aphorism on rasa' (*rasasūtra*), and through the details on the relationship between the various emotions and their theatrical configurations. The rest of the treatise is devoted to the systematic exposition of all the spectacular elements of theatre, starting with bodily acting (*āṅgikābhinaya*) and related matters (chs. 8–13); vocal acting (*vācīkābhinaya*), including the text and the plot (chs. 14–20); ornamental acting, including character typologies (chs. 23, 24 and 26); harmonious and pictorial acting (chs. 22 and 25); and the theatrical success (ch. 27), before ending in a long section devoted to vocal and instrumental music (chs. 28–34) and a chapter on role division (ch. 35).

Bharata's narrative about the origin of theatre is brought to a close with the last two chapters (chs. 36 and 37), through the account of the descent to earth of the knowledge and practice of theatre among mortals. This 'descent' occurs as the result of a curse put upon the actors, who misused their histrionic powers to mock the Ṛṣis. The restoration of dramatic art on earth is attributed to a rightful king, Nahuṣa, who requests that theatre be performed in his royal court. By again teaching and performing the art form according to the rules, the curse is removed, and the sons of Bharata can finally return

58 The 'preliminary rite' (*pūrvaraṅga*) consists of a series of scenic operations, including instrumental music and songs, and the recitation of a benedictory verse (*nāndī*), as well as a number of codified gestures executed by the theatre director along with two assistants. The *pūrvaraṅga* ends with an 'invitation' (*prarocanā*) to watch the play, introducing its topic. On the elaborate procedure of the *pūrvaraṅga*, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 72–80 and Tiekens 2001. On the significance and origin of the *pūrvaraṅga*, see especially Kuiper 1979 and Lidova 1994.

to heaven, leaving the legacy of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* behind in the form of worldly art, together with their progeny.⁵⁹

This multilayered narrative device situates the creation of dramatic art and the composition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in a remote past and establishes a tradition of hearers and reciters, starting from Brahmā and Bharata and continuing all the way back to the Ṛṣis (and the present reader, one is tempted to add), who fictionally provide the occasion for the exposition of the text in its present form. The two accounts of the origin of theatre and the introduction of dance into the *pūrvaraṅga* are on the same narrative level, that of the embedded story or intra-diegetic plot, although they are temporally sequenced. The embedded narrative in fact proceeds in three steps. The first step coincides with the most remote event, the creation of the *Nāṭyaveda* by Brahmā and its transmission to Bharata and his sons. The second step takes place once the theatrical arts, with their principal constituents already established (including the theatrical building, the consecratory rites, and the *pūrvaraṅga*), are put into practice in front of Śiva, which leads to the introduction of dance in the *pūrvaraṅga*, through the intermediary of Taṇḍu. Endowed with the new object, the knowledge of theatre is presumably transmitted anew complete with the instruction on dance, which forms part and parcel of the subject of the *śāstra* in its present form. The third and last step in the narrative concerns the descent of theatre to earth, through the circumstances that led to a new legitimization of the dramatic tradition, before Bharata's sons are finally readmitted to heaven. Thereafter, the chain continues uninterrupted on earth, with Bharata's sons passing on dramatic art to the Apsarases, and his nephews doing the same for successive generations of human teachers and performers.⁶⁰ To ensure the continuity and the authoritativeness of the art, the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is left behind on earth: only when theatre is performed according to the rules, the text repeatedly stresses, does it lead to the desired reward.

At some later point in time, contemporaneous with Bharata as the narrator of the intra-diegetic plot or embedded story, the sages approach him in order to be instructed in their turn, and eventually appear throughout the treatise to ask for elucidation on various points and to move the narration forward. These events presumably take place in heaven, where Bharata and his sons returned once the curse was extinguished. At the far end of this chain of transmission

59 On the foundation myth of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, see Bansat-Boudon 1993. For a detailed analysis of the multiple interpretative levels of the curse-and-atonement episode and its logic internal to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, see Ganser & Cuneo 2012.

60 On the role of the Apsarases in the passage of theatre from heaven to earth, see Ganser & Cuneo 2012.

comes arguably the last hearer, the extra-diegetic reader of the present treatise. The text ends its own textual history on a truly tempting note, with the following *phalaśruti*: ‘Whoever listens uninterruptedly to this [*Nāṭyaśāstra*], as it has been uttered by the Self-born (Brahmā), or whoever learns it and makes a performance in accordance with its teaching, he will obtain the goal of the experts in the Veda, the goal of the performers of sacrifices, the goal of the bestowers of gifts.’⁶¹

Now that the narrative structure of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* has been sketched in outline, the fourth chapter’s place in it, and the instruction on dance it contains, will be taken up next.

1.3.3 *The Tāṇḍavādhyāya*

The fourth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is commonly known under the name *Tāṇḍavalakṣaṇa* (‘An Illustration/The Rules of the *Tāṇḍava*’), which is the name given in the colophon of this chapter in Bharata’s text.⁶² In the *Abhinavabhāratī*, it is referred to as *Tāṇḍavavidhānādhyāya* (‘Chapter on the Regulation of the *Tāṇḍava*’) at the end of the fourth chapter and, in other passages, as *Tāṇḍavādhyāya* (‘Chapter on *Tāṇḍava*’) or, less technically, as *turyādhyāya* (‘fourth chapter’), on one occasion specified as *nṛttaviśayaturyādhyāya* (‘fourth chapter on the topic of dance’). In the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the term *tāṇḍava* refers to the dance taught to Bharata by Tāṇḍu, whereas its archetype is the dance of Śiva, performed by the god after the destruction of Dakṣa’s sacrifice. It is also the name of the dance that was introduced into the ‘preliminary rite’ (*pūrvaraṅga*) at the instigation of Śiva himself.

The separate and later incorporation of dance into the theatrical lore according to the narrative of origin, as well as its special connection with Śiva, have led some scholars to postulate an independent tradition for dance, possibly of Śaiva derivation.⁶³ In the present state of the text, however, it is in no way possible to establish such an independent status for dance, nor is it my aim to say anything new here about the respective origins of dance and theatre or about the historical process by which dance came to be incorporated into dramatic art. The two appear, in the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as we know it today,

61 NŚ 37.26–27: *ya idaṃ śṛṇuyān nityaṃ proktaṃ cedaṃ svayambhuvā | kuryāt prayogaṃ yaś caivam athavā dhītvān naraḥ || yā gatir vedaviduṣāṃ yā gatir yajñakārīṇāṃ | yā gatir dānaśīlānāṃ tāṃ gatim prāpnuyād dhi saḥ ||*

62 *Tāṇḍava Lakṣaṇa* is also the name given to the volume of Naidu et al. 1980, which contains a translation of this chapter.

63 See, for instance, Kane 1971 and Byrski 1974.

as already indissolubly intermingled. Given the impossibility of going beyond the structure of the present text until further critical studies are attempted, a few words about the place of dance within the ‘Treatise on Theatre’, together with some interpretative problems connected to it, are all I can venture at this point.

Although the fourth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is specifically devoted to a detailed explanation of dance in both its formal and practical aspects, it is in the first chapter that dance makes its first appearance in a theatrical context, hence even prior to its formal teaching and introduction into the *pūrvaraṅga*. As famously reported, Brahmā recalled the four canonical Vedas to create the *Nāṭyaveda* (Nś 1.16–17). After its creation as a complex object comprised of different parts, theatre was transmitted to humans (Bharata and his hundred sons) and put into practice (Nś 1.24–25). Upon the conclusion of their training and their mastering of the three manners (*vr̥tti*)—namely, the *bhāratī* (‘vocal’), *sāttvatī* (‘psychophysical’), and *ārabhaṭī* (‘dynamic’)—Brahmā recognizes that something is missing, namely beauty. To remedy this deficiency, he suggests that the *kaiśikī vr̥tti* (‘gorgeous manner’) should be introduced as well, and asks Bharata to name the material adequate for it (Nś 1.41–43).⁶⁴ Although indeed conscious of the importance of the *kaiśikī*, of which he furthermore had direct experience by witnessing Śiva’s dance in the past, Bharata requires the presence of women to put it into practice. He thus asks Brahmā to provide the necessary ingredients for its performance, recalling the dance of Śiva as the embodiment and prototype of the ‘gorgeous manner’:

‘Oh blessed one, be pleased to provide the material for putting the gorgeous [manner] into practice. Endowed with the *aṅgahāras* of dance, consisting of *rasas*, emotions and actions (1.44), the gorgeous manner, in attractive attire, giving rise to the amorous *rasa*, has been seen by me in the dance of the blessed Nīlakaṅṭha (1.45). Without women, however, men are not able to perform it.’ Thus, the majestic, almighty one generated

64 The four ‘manners’ (*vr̥tti*) are the topic of Nś ch. 20. They are the different ‘styles’ or ‘manners’ assumed by Viṣṇu during his fight with the demons Madhu and Kaiṭāba—being verbally expressive at certain times, concentrated, gracious, or vehement at others. The *kaiśikī vr̥tti* derives its name (lit. ‘the manner of the hair’) from Viṣṇu’s action of tying up his topknot, using graceful gestures and dance movements, during the fight, due to a momentary recollection of his loving union with Lakṣmī, in ‘a languid pause in the fury of the fight’, as Lyne Bansat-Boudon (1995: 51) gracefully describes it. On the *vr̥ttis* and their origin, see Raghavan 1993: 242–315; Wright 1963; Bansat-Boudon 1992: 169–180, 1995; and Lidova 2014.

the Apsarases (celestial nymphs) with his mind (1.46). For the performance, he handed over to me those [Apsarases], skilful in the ornaments of theatre (1.47ab).⁶⁵

The narrative continues with a list of the names of the Apsarases provided for the sake of the *kaiśikī* (NŚ 1.47cd–50ab), together with the appropriate musical and vocal accompaniment arranged, respectively, by Svāti and Nārada (NŚ 1.50cd–52ab). As the definition of the *kaiśikī*—given in connection with the narrative of origin of the *vṛttis* in NŚ ch. 20—confirms, dance is only one of its elements. The ‘gorgeous manner’ also contains songs, beautiful costumes, and all kinds of material suitable to be connected with the theme of love.⁶⁶ Yet the very narrative of its introduction into theatre suggests that dance constitutes its most characteristic feature, since it is the dance of Śiva that provides its prototype and inspiration. This dance is not just a formal model to be mimetically reproduced; on the contrary, it is through the divine Apsarases that it was introduced into theatre via the *kaiśikī*. Similarly, instrumental and vocal music are introduced into it through Svāti and Nārada.

Once theatre is thus replete with the four *vṛttis*, it is again practised through a rehearsal by Bharata and his troupe, now also containing the Apsarases and the Gandharvas. This last rehearsal, conducted with the musicians and vocalists, eventually led theatre to its seemingly fully fledged form. It is in this very form that the first performance ever was presented to Brahmā and an assembly of gods and demons reunited on the occasion of the festival of Indra’s banner. And it was that very first performance that was visited by obstacles,

65 NŚ 1.44–47ab: *dīyatām bhagavan dravyaṃ kaiśikyāḥ saṃprayojakam | nṛttāṅghārasaṃpannā rasabhāvakriyātmikā || 44 || dṛṣṭā mayā bhagavato nilakaṇṭhasya nṛtyataḥ | kaiśikī ślakṣṇanaipathyā śṛṅgārarasasāmbhavā || 45 || aśakyā puruṣaiḥ sā tu prayoktuṃ strījanād rte | tato ‘srjan mahātejā manasāpsaraso vibhuḥ || 46 || nāṭyālāṅkāracaturāḥ prādān mahyaṃ prayogataḥ |*

66 The definition of the *kaiśikī vṛtti* in NŚ 20.53 reads: *yā ślakṣṇanaipathyaviśeṣacitrā strīsamyuṭā yā bahunṛttagitā | kāmopabhogaprabhavopacārā tāṃ kaiśikīṃ vṛttim udāharanti ||* ‘They call the gorgeous manner that which, distinguished by a special attractive attire, is connected with women, contains dancing and singing in abundance, and actions arising from the enjoyment of love.’ The ABh *ad locum*, vol. 3, pp. 99–100 comments: *ślakṣṇaḥ sukumāraḥ śliṣyati hṛdaya itī kṛtvā. naipathyaviśeṣo vastramālyādīḥ tena citrā, bahu vipulaṃ gītaṃ nṛttaṃ ca yasyām, kāmopabhogo ratīḥ tataḥ prabhavo yaḥ sa śṛṅgāras tad-bahula upacāro vyavahāro yasyām sā tathoktā.* ‘It is distinguished by a special attire consisting of garments and garlands, that is made attractive, i.e. delicate, clinging to the heart. In it, there are many, i.e. abundant, songs and dances. [And] the actions, i.e. the behaviours in it, abound with the amorous [*rasa*] that arises from the enjoyment of love (*kāma*), [the stable state of] desire (*ratī*). Such a [manner] is called “the [gorgeous]”’

which eventually required the introduction of a scenic rite apt to secure the blessings of the deities and their protective acts towards the actors and the entire performance. This in its turn entailed the building of a playhouse, the installation of the deities in its various sections, and their propitiation. It moreover necessitated Brahmā's pacificatory discourse to the demons, so as to explain to them the true nature of theatre and how they had misrecognized it.⁶⁷

The opening verses of the fourth chapter continue the storyline of the embedded narrative of the origin and transmission of dramatic art as told by Bharata to the Ṛṣis:

In this way, having worshipped [the stage], I addressed the progenitor (Brahmā): 'Oh mighty one, command quickly, which performance should be performed?' (4.1). Then the blessed lord told me: 'Perform the *Amṛtamanthana* ("The Churning of the Ocean"). This [play] generates valour (*utsāhajanana*) and pleases the gods (4.2). This Samavakāra, which I have formerly composed as a means to achieve one's duty (*dharma*), pleasure (*kāma*), and wealth (*artha*), is the performance you ought to perform, oh learned one' (4.3). [When the Samavakāra was performed, gods and demons rejoiced together at the spectacle of actions and emotions (4.4).]⁶⁸ After some time, the lotus-born (Brahmā) told me: 'We shall present today the play to the magnanimous one, the three-eyed (Śiva)' (4.5). Then, having come along with the deities to the abode of [the god] marked by the bull, the progenitor paid homage to Śiva and said: (4.6) 'Oh best among the gods, be so kind as to do me the favour of listening and watching this Samavakāra, which I have composed' (4.7). Śiva replied to Brahmā with the words: 'I shall watch the play.' Then the blessed one told me: 'Get ready, oh magnanimous one' (4.8). Thereafter, on the top of the Himālaya, abounding with numerous mountains full of many Bhūtagaṇas, with beautiful valleys and waterfalls, (4.9) the preliminary rite (*pūrvaraṅga*) was first performed, oh best among the twice-borns,

67 On the aesthetic failure of the first theatrical performance, see Bansat-Boudon 2012.

68 This verse parallels NŚ 4.11ab (*tato bhūtagaṇā hṛṣṭāḥ karmabhāvānukīrtanāt* |) and is not commented upon by Abhinavagupta. If this is an interpolation, which I strongly suspect, Abhinavagupta's comment—that after the teaching was completed, the *Amṛtamanthana* was first shown to Śiva, and not to Brahmā or the other gods (see ABh ad NŚ 4.5 below)—would be justified. This verse is also absent in many of the NŚ manuscripts collated in Tripathi 2015: 55, although it has been retained by Kavi. I have therefore decided to put it here in square brackets.

and then this (i.e. the Samavakāra). Along with it was also performed the *Tripuradāha* ('The Burning of the Three Cities'), technically defined as a *Ḍima* (4.10).⁶⁹

If we regard the fourth verse in Bharata's text as spurious, the spectacle shown to Śiva constitutes the first-ever performance of a fully fledged play preceded by the *pūrvaraṅga*. To be sure, there are actually three elements in this performance: the *pūrvaraṅga*, the *Amṛtamanthana* Samavakāra, and the *Tripuradāha* *Ḍima*.⁷⁰ Enigmatically, the *pūrvaraṅga* finds its first mention in the whole *Nāṭyaśāstra* in this very passage, without any previous indication of instituting the practice of the preliminary rite before a play. In the first chapter, we were told that the first attempt at producing a play was interrupted by obstacles, which required a consecration of the scenic space (*raṅgadaivatapūjana*), an event referred to also at the beginning of this chapter (cf. NŚ 4.1a *evaṃ tu*

69 NŚ 4.1–10: *evaṃ tu pūjanam kṛtvā mayā proktaḥ pitāmahaḥ | ājñāpaya vibho kṣipraṃ kaḥ prayogaḥ prayujyatām || 1 || tato 'smy ukto bhagavatā yojayāmṛtamanthanam | etad utsāhajananaṃ suraprītikaraṃ tathā || 2 || yo 'yaṃ samavakāras tu dharmakāmārthasādhanakaḥ | mayā prāg grathito vidvan sa prayogaḥ prayujyatām || 3 || [tasmin samavakāre tu prayukte devadānavāḥ | hr̥ṣṭāḥ samabhavan sarve karmabhāvānudarśanāt || 4 ||] kasyacit tv atha kālasya mām āhambujasaṃbhavaḥ | nāṭyaṃ sandarśayāmo 'dya trinetraḥ mahātmane || 5 || tataḥ sārḍhaṃ surair gatvā vṛṣabhāṅkaniveśanam | samabhyarcya śivaṃ paścād uvācedaṃ pitāmahaḥ || 6 || mayā samavakāras tu yo 'yaṃ sṛṣṭaḥ surottama | śravaṇe darśane cāsyā prasādam kartum arhasi || 7 || paśyāma iti deveṣo druhiṇaṃ vākyam abravīt | tato mām āha bhagavān saḥ bhava mahāmate || 8 || tato himavataḥ pṛṣṭhe nānānagasamākule | bahubhūtaḥ ākīrṇe ramyakandarānirjhare || 9 || *pūrvaraṅge kṛte [Σ_M: pūrvaraṅgaḥ kṛtaḥ Σ_E] pūrvaṃ tatṛyaṃ dvijasattamāḥ | tathā tripuradāhaś ca ḍimasamijñāḥ prayojitaḥ || 10 ||* I have changed the text of the editions, *pūrvaraṅgaḥ kṛtaḥ pūrvaṃ*, into the locative absolute *pūrvaraṅge kṛte pūrvaṃ*, following Abhinavagupta, who quotes this verse as such twice: in ABh ad NŚ 5.4, vol. 1, p. 208, with which all manuscripts agree, as well as in ABh ad NŚ 1.56, vol. 1, p. 25, with a slight variation but clearly referring to the same verse: *tathā caturthe 'dhyāye vakṣyate: pūrvaraṅge kṛte mayā bhagavate śivabhāṭṭārakāya darśita iti*. The manuscripts that quote the full verse in ABh ad NŚ 4.10a, or have a longer *pratīka*, unanimously read *pūrvaraṅge kṛte*.

70 These are two of the ten dramatic genres, described in NŚ 18.2–3ab as Nāṭaka, Prakaraṇa, Aṅka, Vyāyoga, Bhāṇa, Samavakāra, Vithī, Prahāsana, Ḍima, and Īhāmṛga (*nāṭakaṃ sa-prakaraṇam aṅko vyāyoga eva ca | bhāṇaḥ samavakāraś ca vithī prahasanaṃ ḍimaḥ || ihāmṛgaś ca vijñeyo daśamo nāṭyalakṣaṇe ||*). Of the two dramatic genres of Samavakāra and Ḍima there are almost no specimens. The only available Samavakāra is the *Samudraman-thana* by Vatsarāja (twelfth century CE), who also wrote a Ḍima called *Tripuradāha*. A few other specimens of Ḍima are available, but they are even more recent. The names given by Vatsarāja to these two plays clearly follow those of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, suggesting the artificiality of the plays belonging to these two genres. For more on their plot, see Keith 1924: 267–268. On the distribution and productivity of the different theatrical genres in the classical and medieval period, see Leclère 2013: 42–46.

pūjanam kṛtvā). This fact has led to a multiplicity of interpretations regarding the separate identities of the *raṅgadaivatapūjana* and the *pūrvaraṅga*.⁷¹ Following the analysis of the narrative sequence of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, it appears that the *raṅgadaivatapūjana* described in the third chapter is a ceremony of consecration taking place solely on the occasion of the construction of a new theatrical building, and that is how it is recalled at the beginning of the fourth chapter. It is followed closely by the theatrical rehearsal and production of a new play, which eventually requires a *pūrvaraṅga* prior to its public staging before an audience.

Quite evidently, the context of the second performance differs considerably from that of the first one, which was shown to the gods during the festival of Indra's banner, as described in the first chapter. Here it is not specified which event—be it a religious festival or a commemoration—occasioned the performance shown to Śiva. It is the spectator of this second performance who will prompt the addition of a further element, i.e. dance, to the *pūrvaraṅga*:

Thereafter, the Bhūtagaṇas all rejoiced at the re-narration of actions and emotions, and the great god, delighted, spoke thus to the progenitor (4.11): 'Oh magnanimous one, you have produced this play well, conferring fame, with an auspicious topic, righteous and improving the intellect' (4.12). But I, who dance at the twilight hour, have recollected this dance, embellished by *aṅgahāras* replete with various *karaṇas* (4.13). May you use it in the proper way in the course of this *pūrvaraṅga*, when the *vardhamānaka* is performed, as well as in the *gītakas* and *āsāritas*.⁷² And in the *mahāgītas*, you should properly enact the mea-

71 According to Kuiper (1979: 162), the *pūrvaraṅga* is 'a doubling of the consecration', which was probably never performed in its full form, while Bansat-Boudon (1992: 78–79) maintains, on the basis of Abhinavagupta's commentary, that both the *raṅgadaivatapūjana* and the *pūrvaraṅga* were performed consecutively at the beginning of each theatrical performance. The importance of the *pūrvaraṅga*, she remarks, lies in its anticipation of some of the elements of the following play, which pleads for its necessarily being performed before it. Lidova (1994), on the contrary, refrains from using the *Abhinavabhāratī*, and proceeds to analyse a number of textual sources that describe the *pūjā* outside a theatrical context, but bear strong resemblance to the phases of the *raṅgadaivatapūjana* as described in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Moreover, she finds a parallelism between the operations executed in the *raṅgadaivatapūjana* described in NS ch. 3 and those performed in the *pūrvaraṅga*, and concludes that the latter constitutes a later development of the former, which came to substitute the older *pūjā* rites. Scholarly opinions on the actual performance of the *pūrvaraṅga* in the classical period also differ (cf. Tieken 2001).

72 On the complexities of these types of musical compositions to be performed in the preliminary rite, see, for instance, Te Nijenhuis 1970 and Ramanathan 1999.

nings⁷³ (4.14–15ab). This *pūrvaraṅga* that you have performed as plain (*śuddha*), once commingled with these [*aṅgahāras*], will be known as ‘variegated’ (*citra*) (4.15cd–16ab). Having listened, the self-born replied to the words of the great god:⁷⁴ ‘Oh best among the gods, do teach the performance of the *aṅgahāras*’ (4.16cd–17ab). Then, the lord of the universe (Śiva) called Taṇḍu and said: ‘Do instruct Bharata in the performance of the *aṅgahāras*’ (4.17cd–18ab).⁷⁵

After Śiva’s prompting Taṇḍu to teach the *aṅgahāras* to Bharata, the text typically shifts back to the dialogue frame, where Bharata, before proceeding to the exposition of the various dance movements, addresses the Ṛṣis directly:

Therefore, I will now explain to you the *aṅgahāras*, connected to the *karaṇas* along with the *recakas*, as Tāṇḍu, the great soul, illustrated them (4.18cd–19ab).⁷⁶

The second introduction of dance into theatre as an independent element and not as part of the *kaiśikī vṛtti* occurs at this very juncture. It is clearly as a result of the delight produced in Śiva by the performance that the god is prompted to grant dance, endowed with a formalized technique, as a token of his appreciation.

On the one hand, the reason for introducing dance into drama is of an aesthetic nature: Bharata had seen the dance of Śiva—as we were told in the first chapter—and added it to the performance, together with the other elements of the *kaiśikī vṛtti* (women performers, songs, instrumental music, etc.), so as

73 On the thorny interpretation of this hemistich, where *abhinaya* is mentioned in connection to dance, see § 2.4, n. 129, and Translation 7.2.2.

74 I read *maheśvaravacaḥ praty uktam* (given as variant reading in the Kāvyaṃālā edition of 1894), instead of *pratyuktas*, following the reading of the commentary.

75 NŚ 4.11–17cd: *tato bhūtagaṇā hr̥ṣṭāḥ karmabhāvānukīrtanāt | mahādevaś ca supṛītaḥ pītāmaham athābravīt || 11 || aho nāṭyam idaṃ samyak tvayā sṛṣṭam mahāmate | yaśasyam ca śubhārtham ca puryaṃ buddhivardhanam || 12 || mayā pīdam smṛtam nṛtam sandhyā-kāleṣu nṛyatā | nānākaraṇasaṃyuktair aṅgahārair vibhūṣitam || 13 || pūrvaraṅgavidhāv asmiṃś tvayā samyak prayojyatām | vardhamānakayogeṣu gīteṣv āsāriteṣu ca || 14 || mahāgīteṣu caivārthān samyag evābhineṣyasi | yaś cāyam pūrvaraṅgas tu tvayā śuddhaḥ prayojitaḥ || 15 || ebhir vimīṣṛitaś cāyam citro nāma bhaviṣyati | śrutvā maheśvaravacaḥ praty uktam [Kāvyaṃālā Ed. 1894, *pratyuktas* E₁] tu svayambhuvā || 16 || prayogam aṅgahārāṇām ācakṣva surasattama | tatas taṇḍuṃ samāhūya proktavān bhuvaneśvaraḥ || 17 || prayogam aṅgahārāṇām ācakṣva bharatāya vai |*

76 NŚ 4.18cd–19ab: *tato ye taṇḍunā proktās tv aṅgahārā mahātmanā || tān vaḥ karaṇasaṃyuktān vyākhyāsyāmi sarecakān |*

to add beauty. Unlike theatre, dance is not an object created anew to respond to some circumstantial need, such as the degradation of society and the ritual sphere, and the consequent need to extend the teachings on the aims of mankind to all fringes of the population. On the other hand, the absence of a formal teaching coming along with the gift of theatre personnel—the Apsarases—in the first chapter, requires a further transmission of dance in order to perfect it.⁷⁷ Although Śiva is the archetypal performer of dance, it will be the task of Taṇḍu to instruct Bharata in this art form.

The content of Taṇḍu's instruction follows this narrative interlude as an exposition of the main dance components: the *karaṇas* (basic combinations of movements) and the *aṅgahāras* (choreographic sequences made of *karaṇas*). This exposition comprises their enumeration (*uddeśa*) and definitions (*lakṣaṇa*), which occupy a large section of the fourth chapter (vv. 19cd–247), and consist of a set of highly technical instructions, unique in the genre. These verses were probably intended as mnemonic aids, since it is impossible to understand how specific *karaṇas*, and the *aṅgahāras* derived from them, are formed without previous knowledge of the single definitions of their components (gestures, limb movements, bodily postures, etc.). Even then, reconstructing the *karaṇas* as a single connected movement is an arduous if not impossible task.⁷⁸

The example of first *karaṇa*, called *talapuṣpapuṭa* ('handful of flowers'), may suffice to illustrate the commonality of the building blocks shared by both dance and dramatic acting:

vāme puṣpapuṭaḥ pārśve pādo 'gratalasañcaraḥ ||
tathā ca sannataṃ pārśvaṃ talapuṣpapuṭaṃ bhavet | (4.61cd–62ab)
Talapuṣpapuṭa: [The hand] *puṣpapuṭa* is [held] on the left side,
 the foot is *agratalasañcara*, and the side is *nata* ('bent').

The definitions of the three specific bodily movements involved in this *karaṇa* have to be supplied from the later chapters on the bodily acting (*āṅgikābhīnaya*), where they are in turn presented in the same concise form.⁷⁹ The strong dependence of the definitions of the dance movements in the fourth chapter on the later sections about dramatic acting was noticed and pointed out by Naidu et al.:

77 This is how Abhinavagupta explains it, on which see below, § 2.4, n. 118.

78 On the various attempts at reconstructing *karaṇa* techniques from the texts in the twentieth century, see § 1.2.

79 The *puṣpapuṭa* hand gesture is defined in NŚ 9.150, the *agratalasañcara* foot in NŚ 9.273cd–274ab, and the *nata* side position in NŚ 9.235.

It is true that Bharata has followed an apparently unnatural order in discussing the great topic of Abhinaya. The *Karaṇas* are defined in the fourth chapter, while the technical terms used so profusely in the definitions are explained only in the eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters. The most surprising fact is that these explanations are couched in such simple language that, if the learned author had only rearranged the chapters so that the fourth chapter came after the eleventh, then, even the uninitiated would have no difficulty in following the exposition.

NAIDU et al. 1980: 13

The problem of the chapter arrangement in the economy of the text can be solved by resorting to the perspective of the intra-diegetic narrator as a character in the origin story: Bharata in fact reports the definitions of the *karaṇas*, as Taṇḍu had illustrated them to him at a time when he and his troupe had already assimilated all the knowledge of dramatic art, so their knowledge of the technical terms pertaining to the teachings on *āṅgikābhinaya* can be presupposed.⁸⁰ Obviously enough, the chosen arrangement reduces the pedagogical value of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as a practical manual of instruction, while it makes perfect sense if one thinks of it in terms of the narrative it expounds.

Having provided the complete catalogue of dance movements, Bharata again intervenes in the guise of the intra-diegetic narrator and dialogue partner of the Ṛṣis, with four verses that explain the origin of another group of dance movements or configurations. Of the units characterizing this group, called *piṅḍibandhas*, the definitions are laid down in vv. 253cd–259ab, without them being announced either in the narrative of the origins of theatre or in the narrative of the introduction of dance into the *pūrvarāṅga*, which is its continuation. The four verses introducing the *piṅḍibandhas* are quite at odds with the rest of the narrative: the commentator sets these verses off as *purākalpa*, a story of primordial events connected to the Dakṣa myth and the role of Śiva's dance in it.

Having seen Śaṅkara dancing with *recakas* and *aṅgahāras* and Pārvatī dancing in the delicate manner (*sukumāraprayoga*) (4.249cd–250ab)—Maheśvara, who, [accompanied] by the sound of all [kinds of] percussion (*ātodya*), such as *mṛdaṅga*, *bherī*, *paṭaha*, *bhāṇḍa*,⁸¹ *diṅḍima*, *gomukha*,

80 This is also how Abhinavagupta responds to an objection similar to the one expressed above by Naidu et al. (1980: 13), in ABh ad Nś 4.29cd–30ab, vol. 1, p. 91.

81 In ABh ad Nś 1.85, *bhāṇḍa* is explained as a term encompassing the three main drums, namely the *mṛdaṅga*, the *paṇava*, and the *dardura*, along with their implements, probably

paṇavas, and *darduras* (4.250cd–251ab), following the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice, started to dance in the twilight hour, with various *aṅga-hāras* governed by tempo and rhythm (4.251cd–252ab)—the Gaṇas, headed by Nandin and Bhadra, saw the *piṅḍibandhas* in those [dance movements], gave names to the *piṅḍīs* and made *bandhas* of them, together with [their] definitions (4.252cd–253ab).⁸²

The myth about the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice is well attested in the early sources, and has several versions, differing from one another, in the *Mahābhārata* and other Purāṇas.⁸³ In the version of the myth staged in NŚ 4.249cd–253ab, we are not told whether the dance following the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice is also a destructive dance, or rather one of jubilation. In the first verse, Śiva is even said to be dancing together with Pārvatī, who adopts the delicate mode of performance (*sukumāra prayoga*). The presence of a delicate dance after such a fierce event made some scholars, such as K.M. Varma (1975: 35), consider the first verse mentioning Pārvatī's gracious dance as incoherent with respect to the mythological narrative, and even spurious. Varma thus suggests that the mention of the delicate style in NŚ 4.250ab, as well as its later occurrences in vv. 4.269ab, 4.302cd, and 4.303, must have been added to the text at a time when the opposition between *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* (a synonym for *sukumāraprayoga*, according to Varma) needed to be legitimized by tracing it back to the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

It might be pointed out that, according to the latest edition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* by K.D. Tripathi, v. 249cd–250ab (4.242cd–243ab, in Tripathi) is found neither in the two newly collated manuscripts from Jaipur (called J₁ and J₂), nor in the two manuscripts used in the Kāvya-mālā edition of 1984 (Kāv. A, in Tri-

the smaller drums such as *jhallarī*, *paṭaha*, etc. (*bhāṇḍa iti tripuṣkare sopakarāṇe*, vol. 1, p. 31). I strongly doubt that the reading *bhāṇḍa* is correct here, since we would rather have a single instrument in this position. One possible candidate is *jañjhā*, found together with *bherī* and *paṭaha* in NŚ 34.26. This resembles the form *jañjhyā* read in E₁₍₂₎^{Da}. The text of NŚ 34.26 itself, however, looks corrupt, with manuscripts offering the following variants: °*jambhābhis*, °*kañkābhis*, °*dambhāsu*, and °*bhāṇḍās tu*.

82 NŚ 4.249cd–253ab: *recakair aṅgahāraīś ca nṛtyantaṃ vikṣya śaṅkaram || 249 || sukumāraprayogeṇa nṛtyantīm caiva pārvatīm | mṛdaṅgabherīpaṭahair bhāṇḍadīṇḍimagomukhaiḥ || 250 || paṇavair dardurāīś caiva sarvātodyaiḥ pravāḍitaiḥ | dakṣayajñe vinihate sandhyākāle maheśvaraḥ || 251 || nānāṅgahāraiḥ prānṛtyal layatālvāśānugaiḥ | piṅḍibandhāṃs tato dṛṣṭvā nandibhadramukhā gaṇāḥ || 252 || cakrus te nāma piṅḍīnām bandham āsām salaḥṣaṇam |*

83 On the myth of Dakṣa and its numerous versions, which do not usually contain references to dance, see Mertens 1998, Kramrisch 1981: 322–330 and Klostermeier 1984: 136–145, and, for more recent information, *Skandapurāṇa* vol 11B, p. 6 ff., and Bakker 2014: 173–187.

pathi). All the other manuscripts, among which are the oldest witnesses from Nepal (dated from the 13th c. onwards), mention the *sukumāraprayoga* in this verse. What we also know with certainty is that Abhinavagupta knew this verse and recognized it as part of the original composition. Yet he takes particular notice of the rather convoluted syntax of this quartet of verses, the difficulties arising from their order as well as their content that links the Dakṣa motive, Śiva's dance, and the delicate style assumed by Pārvatī.⁸⁴ We can thus conclude that, in the version circulating in Kashmir at the beginning of the second millennium, this is how the myth was rendered, with the divine couple dancing together after the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice, and Śiva's attendants also dancing along.

Unlike the *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras*, the *piṅḍibandhas* are not defined in terms of body movement, so it is not clear precisely how these shapes or figures looked, nor is there a way to verify how they were used in ancient theatre. In the secondary literature on dance, they are generally understood as group dances performed in the *pūrvaraṅga* by a formation of female dancers.⁸⁵ The *Nāṭyaśāstra* limits itself to listing the names of the *piṅḍīs* in association with the various deities to which they are linked (vv. 253cd–259ab). The mythological account of the dance performance following the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice is brought to a close by mentioning how the complete set of dance movements—the *recakas*, the *aṅgahāras*, and the *piṅḍibandhas*—was transmitted from Śiva to Taṇḍu, and how Taṇḍu connected dance with instrumental and vocal music, giving rise to the *tāṇḍava* (vv. 259cd–261ab).⁸⁶

This is followed by the Ṛṣis' questions about the nature and place of dance in the dramatic performance and in connection with the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga*.⁸⁷ In the account of the introduction of dance in the preliminary ritual related in the *Tāṇḍavādhyāya*, Śiva had in fact suggested using dance in the *gītakas*, *āsāritas*, and *vardhamāna*. The final portion of the fourth chapter (Nś 4.269cd–318) lays down the technical instructions about the use of dance in connection with the various segments of songs with which it is associated in the *pūrvaraṅga*. These instructions presuppose a thorough knowledge of

84 For more on the question of *tāṇḍava*, *sukumāra*, and *lāsya* and its interpretation by Abhinavagupta, see § 2.3.

85 See, e.g., Bose 2007: 112–116. For a new interpretation of the *piṅḍibandhas* as connected with the religious-ritual function of dance, see Ganser (forthcoming).

86 On the connection of dance with music and its consequences in the development of new dance genres, see § 2.4 below, and for Abhinavagupta's interpretation of these verses, crucial in his interpretation of creativity within the tradition, see § 2.5.

87 This portion of the text and its commentary, corresponding to Nś 4.261cd–269ab, have been critically edited and translated in Part 2 of the present book.

the procedure of the various phases of the preliminary rite, which are elaborated in the fifth chapter, as well as of the musical tradition described later in the music chapters (chs. 28–34). Again, this dependence of the fourth chapter on the fifth compelled Varma (1957: 35–37) to argue that the whole section, starting from the second mention of the *sukumāraprayoga* side by side with the vehement dance (*uddhata*) and up to the end of chapter 4 (vv. 268cd–320), must be spurious and result from interpolation, since these verses are devoted to the illustration of dance as used in the preliminary rite, a subject he regards as logically belonging to the fifth chapter. Again, the perspective of the outermost narrative frame, formed by the dialogue between Bharata and the Ṛṣis, can tentatively explain why a detailed exposition of the *pūrvaraṅga* should come as an appendix to the chapter on dance. The fifth chapter is in fact occasioned by the questions of the sages who, having heard that a *pūrvaraṅga* was performed before the play was shown to Śiva, asked about its details.

First introduced into the body of drama as an element of the *kaiśikī vr̥tti*, dance further made its way into the *pūrvaraṅga*, for the sake of making it ‘variegated’ (*citra*). The very first mention of the *pūrvaraṅga*, however, occurs abruptly and without previous notice in the fourth chapter, where the performance is simply said to be preceded by a ‘plain’ *pūrvaraṅga* (NŚ 4.10), which must be connected to the worship of the stage instituted in the first chapter in order to secure the blessings of the deities and thereby their protection. In consequence, the history of the origin of theatre looks like a history of successive additions and expansions of a still incomplete object, justified each time by a mythical antecedent going back to the time of the gods. Such moving back and forth between different timelines and narrative frameworks, combined with the potential open-endedness of the object of *śāstra*, makes the structure of Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra* particularly hard to follow. This explains a certain tendency, among scholars, to consider everything that does not perfectly fit into the main structure of the text as an interpolation. In the present state of the text, it is not possible to solve all the difficulties outlined above, which are especially relevant for evaluating the role of dance in the theatre described by Bharata and its historical development. I have therefore chosen not to discuss the original composition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the authenticity of the text as we have it now, but to concentrate on Abhinavagupta’s understanding of the version of the text he had in front of him in the early eleventh century in Kashmir. Utmost attention is therefore paid to his exegetical strategies and their contextual aim, without expressing value judgements about the historical accuracy and soundness of his interpretations. After all, commentaries are not simply paraphrases, but true creative acts.

1.4 The *Abhinavabhāratī*: A Medieval Document on Performance

Some five to ten centuries later than the supposed date of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Abhinavagupta composed a commentary on it, the *Abhinavabhāratī*, also called *Nāṭyavedavivṛti* or *Nāṭyaśāstravyākhyā* in some of the chapter colophons. Unlike with many other Indian authors, details about Abhinavagupta's life and works are plentiful. To the pieces of information he himself recorded in his writings can be added those transmitted by his epigones.⁸⁸ Some of his works report the date of composition, by means of which we can quite safely situate Abhinavagupta's activity between ca. 950 and 1025 CE (the last dated work is from 1015 CE). The centre of his activity was Kashmir, though his fame spread far beyond the boundaries of his home country, as he became one of the most celebrated mystics, poeticians, and philosophers of his time.

Abhinavagupta's multifaceted production comprises a bulk of texts devoted to tantric speculation—among which his original work *Tantrāloka* stands out—a few but influential commentaries of poetical and dramaturgical content, and a set of philosophical works that culminate in the two famous commentaries on the *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā* and its lost *Vivṛti* authored by Utpaladeva (fl. 925–975), Abhinava's *paramaguru* in the Pratyabhijñā system. Despite the uncertainty of the relative chronology of Abhinavagupta's works, connected with the plausible hypothesis that he worked on more than one text simultaneously,⁸⁹ it is generally agreed that his two major works on poetics and dramatics, the *Dhvanyālokalocana* and the *Abhinavabhāratī*, were composed one after the other and in that sequence.⁹⁰ These two commentaries arguably follow the *Tantrāloka*,⁹¹ and they appear to predate the *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvī-*

88 On Abhinavagupta's life, see the final stanzas of *Tantrāloka* 37 and those of the *Parā-triṃśikāvīvaraṇa*. There is also a pen portrait of Abhinavagupta, possibly teaching the *Abhinavabhāratī*, by his disciple Madhurāja, on which see Pandey 1963: 3–26.

89 According to Pandey, Abhinavagupta started to work on the *Bhagavadgītārthasaṃgraha*—a commentary on the *Gītā* from a monistic Śaiva perspective—while he was writing the *Abhinavabhāratī*. This view appears to be based on the sole evidence of a note on the word *anyatra* in a manuscript of ABh ad Nś 6, section on *sāntarasa*, vol. 1, p. 337, which reads: *anyatra bhagavadgītāvīākhyāyām* (Pandey 1963: 33–34).

90 Besides the greater sophistication of Abhinavagupta's aesthetic theory in his commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the chronological priority of the *Dhvanyālokalocana* is confirmed by Abhinavagupta's references, in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, to theoretical developments already expounded in his commentary on Ānandavardhana's work, to which he refers three times: twice under the name *Sahṛdayālokalocana* (ABh ad Nś 7.1, vol. 1, p. 337 and ABh ad Nś 16.5, vol. 2, p. 300), and simply as *Vīvaraṇa* in the third instance (ABh ad Nś 19.76a, vol. 3, p. 42). On the chronology of Abhinavagupta's works on literary criticism, see Ingalls et al. 1990: 31.

91 Pandey argued that the *Dhvanyālokalocana* mentions the *Tantrāloka*. However, as noted

marśinī (ĪPV) and the *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtivismarśinī* (ĪPVV), which are most probably his last extant works and represent the summit of his philosophical views grounded in Somānanda's and Utpaladeva's Pratyabhijñā school.⁹²

The classical division of Abhinavagupta's works into three main areas of production, although useful for expository ends, fails to account for the multiple influences that many of Abhinavagupta's texts display.⁹³ It is usually assumed that the chapters on *rasa* and *bhāva* in the *Abhinavabhārati*, in which Abhinavagupta's aesthetic theory is laid down, have a highly philosophical character and cannot be understood unless one keeps in mind their philosophical basis.⁹⁴ However, given the fact that Utpaladeva already used aesthetic terms and concepts to make philosophical arguments, it remains unclear whether these were borrowed by the Pratyabhijñā philosophy via dramatic speculation,

by Ingalls et al. 1990: 32, n. 27, this is the result of a corrupt reading of the title of a lost work called *Tattvāloka*, attributed to Ānandavardhana.

92 The *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtivismarśinī* is dated 1050 (Sanderson 2007: 412), but the chronological order of the ĪPVV and the ĪPV is uncertain, and what Bhāskara says in his sub-commentary, although showing a propensity for the priority of the ĪPVV, is contradictory. A passage in the ĪPVV makes reference to the *Vimarśinī*, which has led R. Torella to opt for the sequence ĪPV–ĪPVV, although counterintuitive and against Bhāskara. For a discussion of the chronology, see Torella 2002: xliii. As to the *Abhinavabhārati*, the ĪPVV knows it and quotes it three times: vol. 2, pp. 178–179: *ayam artho 'bhinavabhāratyāṃ nāṭyavedavivṛtau vitatya vyutpādito 'smābhīr iti*. Curiously enough, the other two references to the ABh quote two stanzas preceded by the mention *yathoktam abhinavabhāratyām* (vol. 2, p. 48) and *yad abhinavabhārati* (vol. 3, p. 138). These, however, are not found in the extant version of the text, so they possibly belong to the lost part of the commentary on the seventh or eighth chapters, although verses are in general much less frequent than prose passages in the *Abhinavabhārati*. The *Abhinavabhārati*, in turn, appears to know a commentary on Utpaladeva's *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā* (ĪPK), since it mentions Abhinavagupta's own *Vivarāṇa* on his *paramaguru*'s work in ABh ad NŚ 14.3, vol. 2, p. 224: [...] *iti vibhaktam asmatparamagurupādaiḥ pratyabhijñādau, asmābhīś ca tadvivāraṇe bhedavādavidārāṇādau ca*. The *Bhedavādavidārāṇa* is a lost work of Abhinavagupta mentioned also in the ĪPV and in the *Gītārthasaṃgraha* (Ratié 2011: 328–329). If the *Vivarāṇa* is the ĪPV, then we should have the sequence ĪPV–ABh–ĪPVV, but if it is the ĪPVV, we have to suppose that Abhinavagupta was working on it at the same time as the ABh, or that different versions of one of the two texts existed, possibly due to a subsequent reworking.

93 The most complete and wide-ranging study on Abhinavagupta remains the homonymous work by Pandey (1963). In it, the tripartite division into broad areas of theoretical speculation was first presented as a chronologically ordered one, in which Abhinavagupta's works are assigned to a *tāntrika*, an *ālaṃkārika*, and a philosophical phase (ibid.: 27–34). Ingalls et al. 1990: 32 and Gnoli 1999: 1xxvi have questioned, with good reason, the soundness of the threefold scheme devised by Pandey.

94 This is especially the case with *sānta*, the 'pacified' *rasa*, on whose philosophical connotations, see Raghavan 1940; Pandey 1963; Masson & Patwardhan 1969, 1970; Gerow & Aklujkar 1972; and Gerow 1994.

or whether aesthetic concepts were developed in the former independently as part of religious-philosophical speculation, and then found their way back into aesthetic theory via Abhinavagupta.⁹⁵ What is sure is that many of the concepts developed in his poetic and dramaturgical works find a prominent place in tantric and philosophical speculation as well.⁹⁶

Abhinavagupta's curriculum typically includes a great variety of subjects, and the names of his teachers in the different disciplines are known from his own works.⁹⁷ Despite this, a complete picture of the number of sources and authors that influenced him and contributed to shaping his views on a vast array of topics has not yet been satisfactorily drawn. Not only did a range of different tantric schools of Śaiva orientation prosper between the eighth and eleventh centuries in Kashmir,⁹⁸ but a number of philosophical schools of Brahmanical and Buddhist affiliation engaged in rational debate.⁹⁹ A period of

95 One instance in point is the concept of *camatkāra* ('inner deep savouring', Torella forthcoming) developed by Utpaladeva in the *ĪPK* and *Vṛtti* and then introduced by Abhinavagupta as a main aesthetic concept. On *camatkāra* in Utpaladeva's *Pratyabhijñā*, see Gnoli 1968: xlv–xlvi; Torella 2002: 118, n. 23; and Ratié 2011: 505–507. See also Cuneo 2016a: 34–35, n. 7 for references to *camatkāra* or *camatkṛti* in other works by Utpaladeva. Another case could be *carvaṇā*, also a prominent term in Utpaladeva's philosophy. On the philosophical matrix of Abhinavagupta's aesthetics, see, e.g., Masson & Patwardhan 1969 and Pandey 1963. For the opposite view, which looks at Abhinavagupta's metaphysics in the light of his aesthetics, see Gerow 1994. For a summary of the different positions on the direction of philosophical and aesthetic influence in Abhinavagupta's work, and for a nuanced interpretation of the development of an aesthetic sphere within philosophy, see Cuneo 2016a, in particular pp. 38–40. A new interpretation has been recently proposed by Torella who, looking at Abhinavagupta's aristocratic background as a *Rājānaka* ('Sir'), affirms: 'I am more and more inclined to give prominence to a basic aesthetic flavour as the more or less hidden background of his activity as a whole. This aesthetic flavour goes hand in hand with an aristocratic attitude, the latter being allegedly the very source where the former stems from' (Torella 2020: 845).

96 I need not repeat here the non-dualistic Śaiva philosophy developed by Abhinavagupta, since the chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī* forming the subject of this book is less directly influenced by it. Yet it will be shown on the appropriate occasions how some of the philosophical tenets of the *Pratyabhijñā* are nevertheless presupposed or implicit in statements about dance. On the connections between the aesthetic and religious spheres in Abhinavagupta's work, see Gerow 1994; Bäumer 2003; Ratié 2011; Törzsök 2016; and Torella (forthcoming).

97 Especially, but not exclusively, *Tantrāloka* 37; cf. Pandey 1963: 11–13, Gnoli 1999: lxxv.

98 Among which the Kula, the Krama, the Trika, and the Spanda school. See, e.g., Sanderson 2007.

99 In this respect, and on the bold entrance of the *Pratyabhijñā* into the philosophical arena with Utpaladeva, see Torella 2002 and Ratié 2011. On a variety of intellectual debates taking place in different fields in Kashmir around the turn of the millennium, see Franco & Ratié 2016.

cultural flourishing encompassing almost every field of knowledge is known to have taken place in Kashmir under the great kings Jayāpīḍa (r. c. 773/4–804/5 CE), Ajitapīḍa (r. c. 813/4–850/1 CE), Avantivarman (r. 855/56–883 CE), and Śaṅkaravarman (883–902 CE).¹⁰⁰ Under the reign of these kings, the artistic tradition also found new vigour, and was at the same time provided with a new theoretical basis, expressed through works of systematization and a sustained commentarial activity.¹⁰¹

Abhinavagupta composed two major works on poetics and dramatics, the *Dhvanyālokalocana* and the *Abhinavabhāratī*. In the *Locana*, he sealed the association of the concepts of *dhvani*, the ‘poetic resonance’ theorized by Ānandavardhana (late 9th c.) as the essence of poetry (*kāvyaśāstra*), and *rasa*, the flavour or essence of a play or a literary work. In the *Abhinavabhāratī*, an extremely erudite and difficult prose commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, he developed his aesthetic views, known as the ‘theory of *rasa*’, especially focusing on the dramatic field. He also wrote, in the field of literary criticism, the *Ghaṭakarparakulakavivṛti*, a commentary on the short poem *Ghaṭakarpāra* (‘Fragments of a Pot’) attributed to Kālidāsa,¹⁰² and the now-lost *Kāvyaakautukavivaraṇa*, which comments on the likewise lost *Kāvyaakautuka* (‘Wonder of Poetry’), a work on poetics by Bhaṭṭa Tauta.¹⁰³ As Abhinavagupta reminds his

100 Dates given in Sanderson 2009.

101 On the presence of intellectuals in these courts, see Smith 1985 and Ingalls et al. 1990. Udbhaṭa, Dāmodaragupta, and Vāmana famously worked at the court of King Jayāpīḍa who, according to the tradition recorded in the *Rājatarāṅginī*, was very fond of theatre, and even brought a temple dancer to Kashmir to make her his queen (Raghavan 1980: 101–102). Udbhaṭa wrote a commentary on the *Kāvyaśāstra* of Bhāmaha (whose fragments have been published by Gnoli 1962); the extant *Kāvyaśāstrasārasūtra*, commented upon in Pratihārendurāja’s *Laghuvṛtti*; as well as a lost commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, some quotations of which survive in the *Abhinavabhāratī*. On Udbhaṭa, see especially Bronner 2016. Dāmodaragupta is the author of the *sui generis* poem *Kuṭṭanīmata*, an invaluable source of information about the actual staging of Sanskrit plays in medieval India. See Dezsó & Goodall 2012. Vāmana is the celebrated author of the *Kāvyaśāstrasārasūtra* and *Vṛtti*. His work is important in the history of drama since he is the first author to blur the distinction between dramatic and poetic genres, drawing both from plays and non-dramatic poetry in his work on literary criticism. This method was adopted by later *śāstrīkās*, paving the way for the merging of theatre and poetry into a unified theory of the literary text, on which see McCrea 2008: 50–51. During the reign of Ajitapīḍa lived Śaṅkuka, who commented on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* around 850 CE, on which see Pollock 2016: 77. Ānandavardhana was active at the court of King Avantivarman, under whose patronage he composed the celebrated *Dhvanyāloka* (‘Light on Poetic Resonance’). On Ānandavardhana, see, e.g., Ingalls et al. 1990 and McCrea 2008.

102 For a translation thereof, see Parlier 1975.

103 Some fragments of this work are quoted in the ABh and in the DhĀL. For a collection of

reader in the *Abhinavabhāratī* through constant references to him as ‘my own teacher’ (*asmadācārya* or *asmadupādhyāya*), Bhaṭṭa Tauta (also spelled Tota) taught him dramatics. In the *Dhvanyāloka*, on the contrary, his instructor was Bhaṭṭendurāja.¹⁰⁴

Sanskrit theatre was a popular form of spectacle in eleventh-century Kashmir, as testified by the number of plays and authors quoted in the *Dhvanyālokalocana* and in the *Abhinavabhāratī*.¹⁰⁵ From this wide range of quotations, a lively context of performance emerges, with the staging of plays composed by the great playwrights Kālidāsa, Bhavabhūti, Harṣa, and others, all belonging to the classical period of Sanskrit drama. Directions and details on their actual performance as well as details about the composition of theatrical troupes are scattered throughout the *Abhinavabhāratī*. Side by side with the stage production of Sanskrit plays, other genres of performance start to be recorded in the scholarly tradition. These are mostly expressed in the vernaculars and make profuse use of dance and songs.¹⁰⁶

Despite the fact that the performing arts underwent substantial development during the many centuries that followed their first textual codification, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* continued to represent an almost unquestioned authority in matters of theatre and its allied arts, in particular music and dance. In Kashmir, Bharata’s treatise was studied and commented on at least as early as the eighth century CE. A number of commentaries preceding that of Abhinavagupta are in fact known through quotations in the *Abhinavabhāratī*.¹⁰⁷ The reason for their

Bhaṭṭa Tauta’s quotations, see Raghavan 1980: 108–121 and Pollock 2016: 181–187. According to Raghavan, Abhinavagupta’s first work on poetics is the commentary on Bhaṭṭa Tauta’s work, since it is quoted in the *Dhvanyālokalocana*.

104 Bhaṭṭa Tauta’s and Bhaṭṭendurāja’s names are mentioned—though misspelled in the edition—in the conclusive stanzas of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, together with Abhinavagupta’s father Narasiṃhagupta and his patrilineal ancestor Atrigupta, who moved from Madhyadeśa to Kashmir under King Lalitāditya.

105 I do not know of any comprehensive study on the literary works quoted in the *Abhinavabhāratī*. Indexes of the authorities and works quoted, with page numbers, can be found at the end of each volume in the GOS edition. A number of quotations from lost works in Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa are also interspersed in the *Dhvanyālokalocana* and in the *Abhinavabhāratī*. On the Prakrit verses quoted in the *Locana*, see Ingalls et al. 1990. Unfortunately, those from the *Abhinavabhāratī* have not been listed in the otherwise extremely useful volume by Kulkarni (1988).

106 On the development of the new performance genres, see § 2.1.

107 To the long commentarial tradition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in Kashmir prior to Abhinavagupta belong: Bhaṭṭa Udbhaṭa (8th c.), Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa (early 9th c. CE), Śrī Śaṅkuka (late 9th c.), Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka (9th–10th c.), Kīrtidhara (10th c.), Bhaṭṭa Tauta (10th c.), and Bhaṭṭa Yantra (before the 11th c.). It is not known whether all of them commented on the whole text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s lost work, the *Hṛdayadarpaṇa*, or *Sahṛdayadarpaṇa*, is

loss is most probably to be found in the great fortune that Abhinavagupta's commentary enjoyed among his contemporaries and successors. Apart from the field of dramatics, in fact, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* had become increasingly relevant to the field of poetics (*Alaṃkāraśāstra*) too, especially in so far as the theory of *rasa* is concerned.¹⁰⁸ Long passages from the *Abhinavabhārati* on the *rasasūtra* were incorporated almost verbatim into works devoted to poetics, such as Mammaṭa's *Kāvya prakāśa*. It is possible that the fortune of Abhinavagupta's aesthetic theory in medieval India depended largely on such recastings.¹⁰⁹

probably an independent work responding to Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*, although he supposedly also wrote a commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Pollock 2016: 144). For a list of quotations attributed to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, see Chintamani 1927 and Pollock 2010. Bhaṭṭa Tauta might not have written a fully fledged commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* or a work on dramatics, although he is certainly the author of the already-mentioned *Kāvya koutuka* an independent treatise of poetic content (Pollock 2016: 181). Besides these, other commentaries existed. Abhinavagupta mentions a *Bhāṣya*, a *Vārttika*, and a *Ṭīkā*, as well as other authorities in the fields of music and dance from whom he quotes. It is not known if this earlier tradition was already transmitted with the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, or if it developed in Kashmir following the great intellectual and artistic renaissance inaugurated by Jayapīḍa in the eighth century. In his commentary on the *Samgītaratnākara*, Kallinātha interestingly identifies Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka as the *Bhāratīyaṭīkākāra* (*Nartanādhyāya*, p. 186). If this identification is correct, a closer look at the quotations from the *ṭīkākāra/ṭīkākr̥t* in the *Abhinavabhārati* might broaden our picture of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's work. A certain tradition recorded in later texts on dramatics and in some of the commentaries to the plays wants it that Mātrgupta, allegedly a contemporary of Harṣavardhana (7th c.) composed a commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Following an account in the *Rājataranigīṇī*, Mātrgupta was a poet who later came to rule over Kashmir. Verses of Mātrgupta are quoted by Abhinavagupta, though exclusively in the music chapters. On Mātrgupta, and for a collection of fragments attributed to him, see Chintamani 1928a and Pathak 2009.

108 According to Gnoli, the whole of Indian aesthetics hinged, for generations of rhetors and thinkers, on questions raised and answered while commenting on the *rasasūtra* ('Out of the union of the determinants, the consequents, and the transitory states, *rasa* is born; *vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicārisaṃyogād rasaniṣpattiḥ*): 'What is the nature of *rasa*? What are its relations with the other emotions and states of consciousness? And how are we to understand this word "birth"?' (Gnoli 1968: xv). On Abhinavagupta's *rasa* theory, see Raghavan 1940; Gnoli 1968; Ingalls et al. 1990; Bansat-Boudon 1992; Gerow 1994; McCrea 2008; Cuneo 2008–2009; and Pollock 2016. On Abhinavagupta's aesthetics, the reader can also refer to Pandey 1950. A number of other works, too numerous to be mentioned, have approached Abhinavagupta's aesthetics from different angles. The relevant bibliography will be referred to as required.

109 The sources incorporating Abhinavagupta's commentary on the *rasasūtra* are the following: Mammaṭa's *Kāvya prakāśa* (ca. 1050) and arguably Māṅikyaçandra's commentary *Saiketa* thereon; Hemacandra's *Kāvyañuśāsana* (late 12th c.); Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra's *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* (ca. 1200); and the *Kalpalatāviveka*, an anonymous sub-commentary on Ambāprasāda's lost *Kalpalatā* (11th c.?). Viśvanātha's *Sāhityadarpaṇa* (14th c.), and Jagannātha Paṇḍita's *Rasagaṅgādhara* (17th c.) also draw on Abhinavagupta's

It is generally held that a characteristic feature of Abhinavagupta's aesthetics, which he inherited from Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, is its being focused on the experience of the spectator and the epistemology of *rasa*.¹¹⁰ This is doubtless true, insofar as the *rasa*—the essence and aim of the performance—is analyzed by Abhinavagupta as being located in, and experienced by, the spectator, shifting attention away from a formal analysis of emotions as theatrical objects. However, as argued by Cuneo, the major theoretical novelty characterizing Abhinavagupta's aesthetics and setting him apart from previous thinkers could be recognized in 'the acknowledgement of a clear distinction between aesthetic and common-life (one might also say, pragmatically oriented) emotions, i.e. between emotions aroused by an artwork and emotions aroused by everyday situations. In brief, aesthetic emotions (*rasas*) are essentially different from ordinary emotions (*bhāvas*) insofar as the unique ontological status, neither real nor unreal, of the characters and the situations depicted, for example, in a theatrical performance provokes in the spectator a particular type of emotional response, devoid of any form of attachment (*rāga*) or aversion (*dveṣa*) with respect to the emotional stimuli' (Cuneo 2013: 62–63).

Not only is the difference between aesthetic and everyday emotions reformulated ontologically as one of quality and not of quantity (*rasa* as a distilled and sublimated emotion; cf. Cuneo 2013), but the whole universe of art is reconfigured as essentially non-ordinary or extra-ordinary (*alaukika*). As I will argue, the ontologically ambiguous status assigned to theatre requires a specific method of performance aimed towards this end: neither a theatre that completely conceals the spectacular machinery, thereby giving the illusion of reality, nor a completely artificial-looking one, given conspicuously to dance, lyricism, and reproducing surreal events. Rather, a theatre moving between these two poles, holding a firm grasp on the spectator's emotional participation in the events depicted, but reminding him from time to time of the fiction through the use of distancing procedures within and beyond the play.¹¹¹ This very idea is implied in Abhinavagupta's complex rethinking of dramatic

aesthetic theory. For details, see Pollock 2016, and for a bibliography on these authors, see Cahill 2004, *sub voce*.

110 On Abhinavagupta's indebtedness to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, see Pollock 2010, 2016: 144–154, 181–182, 187–193, and Reich 2018.

111 One of these procedures consists in the *pūrvaraṅga*, where the elements of theatricality are gradually introduced, and the *sūtradhāra*—a hybrid form between actor and character, a universalized actor, one may say—makes his first appearance as the celebrant of the complex ritual procedures preceding a play. The *sūtradhāra* is also the usual protagonist of the prologue (*prastāvanā*), which is already part of the dramatic text and therefore of the fiction. In the *prastāvanā*, the *sūtradhāra* is already an established role, that of the theatre master in charge of the troupe of actors. In this phase, the planes of reality

mimesis as divorced from imitation.¹¹² In this connection, it is my contention that Abhinavagupta did not create such a concept of theatre *ex novo*, but rather reinterpreted it on the basis of his own aesthetic assumptions, keeping one eye on the rules of performance as given in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and the other on the living theatrical traditions existing in his time. Not only did Abhinavagupta have a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit plays as literary texts, but he was also intimately acquainted with theatrical practice, as evidenced even from a superficial perusal of the *Abhinavabhāratī*.¹¹³

By recognizing Abhinavagupta as an authentic *sahṛdaya*, a ‘connoisseur’ of both dramatic theory and practice, I aim to further an integrated approach to the *Abhinavabhāratī*, where no substantial rupture is posited between the more evidently spectator-oriented chapters (those on *rasa* and *bhāva*), and those that are conspicuously practice-oriented (all the others). The practical perspective is indeed ever present, even in those parts of the commentary specifically devoted to the theory of *rasa*, and the theory of *rasa* runs in filigree throughout the treatise as an organizing principle of practice.¹¹⁴ Being the only commentary on the totality of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* available to us, the *Abhinavabhāratī* is an invaluable source of information on the artistic life of late tenth- and early eleventh-century Kashmir. Its exegetical character, however, conceals a double-edged sword: when a particular aspect of practice as described in Bharata’s text has become obsolete enough, no longer amenable to verification in the outside world, Abhinavagupta—in this respect a perfect exponent of the doctrine of *svātantrya*—does not hesitate to take the liberty to twist the meaning of the text of the *mūla* in order to meet his own theoretical requirements.¹¹⁵

and fiction gradually blend into one another: it is not uncommon, at the end of the prologue, that the *sūtradhāra* and the *naṭī*, the first actress accompanying him, or another assistant, leave the scene as they see the characters of the announced play enter the stage. Other distancing effects are achieved through the device of plays-within-plays or other illusionistic effects, as remarked by Shulman 2012: 38. As I show in § 3.4.2, dance and music can also contribute to a distancing effect, emphasizing, through their exuberant character, the extra-ordinary character of theatre.

112 For more on Abhinavagupta’s reformulation of dramatic mimesis, see § 3.3.1, § 3.4.2 and § 3.5.

113 As Bansat-Boudon (2005: 161) puts it, ‘it would be unrealistic to pretend that Abhinavagupta, the philosopher, is not also an authentic *sahṛdaya*, a passionate lover of drama, which he knows from the inside as an ever-present habitué.’

114 An example is the doctrine of the obstacles hindering the proper cognition of theatre, where the various elements of the performance act in different ways to prevent the occurrence of obstructive cognitions invalidating the aesthetic process. A full translation of the passage is available in Gnoli 1968: 62–78, Cuneo 2008–2009: 290–298, and Pollock 2016: 196–201. On the role of dance and acting in this respect, see § 3.4.

115 One such case, with regard to the material in the fourth chapter, is that of the *piṇḍiba-*

Now, it would be unwarranted to advance the hypothesis that Abhinavagupta's aesthetics originated from the direct observation of existing spectacular practices, since theories can well develop in dialogue with the intellectual speculations preceding them and undergo major changes without necessarily presupposing a corresponding transformation in the objective reality.¹¹⁶ But it would not be too far from the truth, I trust, to assume that Abhinavagupta sharpened his theoretical instruments by testing them against the blueprint of the living practices of his time. The arousal of *rasa* in the spectator is progressively built up, in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, starting from the composition of the poem, through the right 'emotional configuration', and for the entire duration of the performance, through the different techniques of enactment and beautifying elements such as dance, songs, and music. The different perspectives of the poet, the actor, the spectator, and the performance, one may add, are thus always contemporaneously present, never mutually exclusive. That is why only a close and deep look into the mentioned 'neglected' chapters of this monumental work is liable to eventually disclose new and little-explored perspectives on Abhinavagupta's theory of art.

1.4.1 *The Many Voices Recorded in the Chapter on Dance*

Various thinkers concerned with theoretical development in dramatic theory in the first millennium are known to us through quotations in Abhinavagupta's commentary, especially in the section on the *rasasūtra*, and in a number of other texts on dramatics and poetics.¹¹⁷ Through these sources, we can indirectly recover some of the major developments that the theory of *rasa* underwent in the lineage of commentaries on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* inaugurated by Udbhaṭa in the eighth century, all composed in Kashmir, and all lost to us.¹¹⁸ Parallel to such theoretical changes, it is quite evident that the multiple artistic disciplines merging in Bharata's work had also undergone significant development in the period separating the root text from its commentary. Even the spectacular object discussed by the treatises had somewhat shifted. Although

ndhas, the study of which has been dealt with in Ganser (forthcoming). The *pinḍibandhas* are mysterious dance movements, usually interpreted as group formations, which in the *Abhinavabhāratī* become the visual representations of the god's attributes, used to rejoice and propitiate the deities in the preliminaries to the play.

116 See the methodological remarks in the Introduction above. An explicative model that takes changes in the theoretical field as reflections of changes in performance practice was adopted by Gerow (1981: 233) with regard to the rise of a new literary theory by Ānandavardhana, and criticized by McCrea (2008: 1–29).

117 The most complete catalogue of quotations on aesthetics from the early commentators on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is certainly Pollock 2016.

118 On these commentaries, see above, n. 106.

a new category, grouping together the arts ancillary to theatre (vocal music, instrumental music, and dance) into an independent form of spectacle, the *saṃgīta* ('concert'), was to appear only with Śaṅgadeva's thirteenth-century *Samgītaratnākara*, several performative genres containing music and dance in various quantities and permutations had already made their way into the technical texts, as for instance the category of *nr̥tya* in Dhanañjaya's tenth-century *Daśarūpaka* and Dhānika's commentary on it.¹¹⁹ A number of different authorities on dance- and music-related topics find their voices through quotation in the *Abhinavabhāratī*.¹²⁰

Among older authorities recorded in the fourth chapter, we find the names of Kohala¹²¹, Tumburu,¹²² Rāhula,¹²³ Viśākhila,¹²⁴ and an unspecified group

119 See Chapter 2 for a discussion of such new genres and their categories.

120 On authors quoted in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, see Raghavan 1980: 101–170.

121 On this semi-mythical figure, see Kane 1971: 24–25. Raghavan (1932: 17) noticed that many works are found under the name of Kohala in manuscript libraries, and that at least a work called *Samgīta Meru*, in dialogue style, should be considered as original. Long excerpts from this work are found in the *Kalānidhi*, Kallinātha's commentary on the *Samgītaratnākara*, in particular in the *Nartanādhyāya*, the seventh chapter, on dance. Fragments attributed to Kohala have been collected by Kane (1933), who situates him after Harṣa and before Udbhaṭa, hence roughly between the seventh and eighth centuries CE.

122 In the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Tumburu is a Gandharva, a semi-divine being and celestial musician (Goudriaan 1973). In NS 3.61, he is mentioned, together with Nārada and Viśvāvasu, as a Gandharva presiding on the scene, to be propitiated with *mantras*. As an author, Tumburu is quoted, to my knowledge, five times in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, although only in the fourth chapter is the reference to his opinion present in all manuscripts, while the other four occurrences are found in vol. 2 of the GOS edition, and they are given in the apparatus without specifying which manuscripts contained those parts. In ABh ad NS 4.248, vol. 1, p. 161, one verse attributed to Tumburu, on the subject of the *recakas*, is quoted. On this *anuṣṭubh* line and a possible correction on the basis of a parallel in the *Nṛttaratnāvalī*, see Raghavan 1980: 187. Tumburu is also mentioned in the *Bṛhaddeśi* (ca. 8th c.) as an authority on music.

123 The work of Rāhula is unfortunately lost, except for the sparse quotations in the *Abhinavabhāratī* and in the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*. It is unclear whether he wrote a commentary on Bharata or an independent work. Abhinavagupta mentions Rāhula (also spelled Rāhulaka) five times in different contexts, mostly with regard to acting. In the fourth chapter, two verses of Rāhula are quoted: the first is in the commentary of the *karāṇa vaiśākharecīta* (ABh ad NS 1.97cd–98ab, vol. 1, p. 113); the second, about the *nāṭyadharmī* ('theatrical convention'), is in the portion edited and translated in this book. His name is mentioned once more with reference to the interpretation of a verse on the connection between *abhīnaya*, dance, and music in the *āsāritās* (ABh ad NS 4.299cd–300ab, p. 193). Another two mentions are found in the chapter on the *sāmānyābhīnaya*, where the name Rāhula is preceded by the epithet *śākyācārya*, which might suggest his Buddhist affiliation. In a variant given in the apparatus of the GOS edition (vol. 2, p. 208), he is mentioned as one of the 'ancients' (*cīrantana*), although there are no indications of which manuscripts contain this reading. On Rāhula, see Pathak 2009.

124 Viśākhila is the author of a lost work that most probably dealt with the music

of ‘ancients’¹²⁵. Of these authorities, Kohala is a most mysterious figure. Quoted by all later writers on dramatics as a master of theatre and as the inventor or systematizer of new spectacular genres, the *uparūpakas*, or *nṛtya* types, Kohala makes his appearance already in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, as one of the sons of Bharata and as the author of a ‘Second Book’. This has led scholars to suggest that the *Nāṭyaśāstra* might have assumed its present form after Kohala’s work had been composed, or that he might have even preceded Bharata. According to Abhinavagupta, based on the authority of the followers of Udbhaṭa, the epitome of theatre—formulated in Nś 6.1 as being composed of eleven elements—belongs to Kohala, and he is also quoted with reference to a famous verse on *sattva* composed by Bharata at the beginning of the chapter on ‘harmonious acting’ (*sāṅgikābhinaya*).¹²⁶ In the fourth chapter, Abhinavagupta reports a couple of poetic verses of Kohala on the origin of the practice of enacting songs through dance, and another verse providing a definition of the genre called *rāgakāvya*.

As noticed by Raghavan (1932), in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, innovations are often presented as Kohala’s expansions on the contents of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The same dynamic seems to be at play in the section of the chapter on dance investigated in the present book. In it, an opponent argues that forms like the *Toṭaka*, the *Prakarāṅikā*, and the *Rāsaka* are not included in Bharata’s definition of the ten dramatic genres, yet they can still be considered theatrical, since ‘Kohala mentions them’. In this connection, it might be added that the *Abhinavabhāratī* quotes a group of verses that provide definitions for the new genres and attributes them to some ‘ancients’ (*cirantana*), while Hemacandra’s *Alaṅkāracūḍāmaṇi* reproduces the same definitions but attributes them to Kohala.¹²⁷ Although he might have been the author of a treatise on drama including new dramatic genres, the name Kohala appears to me as a sort of stock attribution used to introduce novelty, by the very force of the statement,

chapters of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, of which quotations remain in the *Bṛhaddeśi*, the *Dattilam*, and the *Abhinavabhāratī*. Viśākhila is quoted once in the chapter on dance (ABh ad Nś 4.302–303, vol. 1, p. 195) on the topic of *lāsya* songs (a topic pertaining properly to music), and a number of times in the music chapters as Viśākhilācārya, possibly to emphasize his being an authority on the science of music.

- 125 References to the ‘ancients’ are made several times in the chapters of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, but possibly *cirantana* is a general term referring to different groups of earlier authorities. On the ancients’ concept of *rasa*, see § 2.1, n. 15.
- 126 The verse in question is Nś 22.2, which, in an ambiguous passage (ABh ad Nś 4.261cd–262ab, vol. 1, p. 169) appears to be attributed to Kohala himself; such at least is the opinion expressed by Kane (1933: 577). For a different interpretation of the passage, and a translation thereof, see Translation 1.6.2, n. 34.
- 127 See Translation, 1.6.1, n. 29.

towards the end of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, that ‘the rest [of the exposition] will be done by Kohala, by means of a subsequent treatise.’¹²⁸

At the end of the fourth chapter, various opinions on dance are briefly summarized and connected with a number of authors and authorities: Harṣavārttika, Bhaṭṭa Yantra,¹²⁹ Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa,¹³⁰ and Kīrtidhara Ācārya.¹³¹ The first name is, properly speaking, that of a work designated as the ‘Gloss of Harṣa’ (*Harṣavārttika*). Its mention in the chapter on dance is our sole evidence for identifying the author of the Gloss—elsewhere simply mentioned as *vārttikakāra*, or *vārttikakṛt*—as Harṣa.¹³² The opinions of Śrī Harṣa are also quoted a few times. All the quotations either of *Vārttika* or of Śrī Harṣa are found in the first six chapters of the *Abhinavabhāratī*. They are in *āryā* metre and occasionally in prose. On the three occasions where Abhinavagupta refers to the *Vārttika* in the fourth chapter, the opinion that dance and theatre are identical since both have an imitative character (*tulyānukāratva*, ABh ad NŚ 4.320, vol. 1,

128 NŚ 37.18ab: *śeṣam uttaratantreṇa kohalas tu kariṣyati* |

129 Quoted just once at the end of the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī*.

130 On Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa, one of the commentators on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, famously quoted by Abhinavagupta on the *rasasūtra*, see Pollock 2016: 74–77.

131 Kīrtidhara or Kīrtidharācārya is mentioned by Śārngadeva as a commentator on Bharata’s *śāstra*. Several quotations are attributed to him in the *Abhinavabhāratī*. The first appears in the summary of the positions on the nature of dance and theatre at the end of the fourth chapter. In it, Kīrtidhara maintains that dance is indeed theatrical in nature, since it contains words to be enacted (*abhineyapada*) (ABh ad NŚ 4.320, vol. 1, p. 204). The opinions of Kīrtidhara on musical items in the *pūrvaraṅga* are quoted in the *geyadhikāra*, and one *anuṣṭubh* is attributed to him in ABh ad NŚ 29.95, vol. 4, p. 111. In the same chapter, it is said that the opinions of Kīrtidhara regarding the performance of the *pūrvaraṅga* follow the tradition of Nandikeśvara, to which Abhinavagupta had no direct access, except from quotations in Kīrtidhara’s work. Cf. ABh ad NŚ 29.111, vol. 4, p. 120: *yat kīrtidhareṇa nandikeśvaramatāgāmitvena darśitam tad asmābhiḥ sāksān na dṛṣtam. tatpratyayāt tu likhyate saṃkṣepataḥ*. Raghavan (1980: 134) maintains that ‘though the work on Nandikeśvara was not available to Abhinava, a work called *Nandimatam* was available to Abhinava’, and quotes a verse about the movement called *recita*, preceded by the indication *tathā ca nandimatā uktam* (ABh ad NŚ 4.258bc–259ab, vol. 1, p. 167). In my view, the word *nandimatā* could also be interpreted as the opinion of an author called Nandin or Nandikeśvara: ‘The same has been said following the opinion of Nandin’, just as expressions such as *munimata* and *bharatamata* are often used to refer to Bharata’s opinion.

132 Raghavan (1980: 140–147) has collected a number of passages attributed to the author of the *Vārttika* or Gloss, whom he calls Śrī Harṣa. Krishnamachariar (1970: 549) thinks that this Harṣa could be the same Śrī Harṣadeva, King of Ujjain, who lived in the seventh century CE and composed, among others, the famous play *Ratnāvalī*. Although the author of the *Ratnāvalī*, *Priyadarśikā*, and *Nāgānanda* displays a thorough knowledge of Bharata’s dictates in his plays, there is no evidence that he also wrote a commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Besides, the *Abhinavabhāratī* is, to the best of my knowledge, the only source to mention it. See Translation, n. 17.

p. 204) is attributed to it. According to Raghavan (1978: 520), Harṣa's *Vārttika* must have dealt with the *uparūpakas*, based on the identification of the term *rāgadarśanīya*, appearing in the second quotation from the *Vārttika*, with *rāgakāvya*, which is the name of one of the *uparūpakas* in the later tradition. Raghavan's identification is probably correct, however there is no evidence that such a work on the *uparūpakas* by Harṣa ever existed, nor that forms such as the *rāgakāvya/rāgadarśanīya* and others were collectively identified under the label of *uparūpaka* or something of the sort. Under the name *rāgadarśanīya* or *rāgakāvya*, the author of the Gloss might just have recorded one new spectacular genre among others, without having in mind a single overarching category grouping them all.¹³³

Other anonymous commentaries on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* appear to have existed, as they are quoted in other chapters of the *Abhinavabhāratī*. One *ṭikākāra*, for instance, is mentioned several times in the music section, and the various tunes appropriate to the different *bhāvas* and *rasas* are also indicated as given in this commentary.¹³⁴ Moreover, several opinions by Utpaladeva are reported in the chapters on music, sometimes even as contrary to Abhinavagupta's own position, notwithstanding his status of master in the Pratyabhijñā. This strongly suggests, as argued by Raghavan (1980: 121–123) and Rastogi (2017: 104–105), that Utpaladeva wrote an independent treatise of musicological content, unfortunately lost and known to us on the sole authority of the *Abhinavabhāratī*.

A number of quotations in Abhinavagupta's commentary originate from his direct master in dramatics, Bhaṭṭa Tauta. These are either attributed to his lost *Kāvya kautuka*, or to his direct teachings on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. In the chapter on dance, in particular, Bhaṭṭa Tauta/Tota is cited in the context of the entrance of the dancer in the preliminary rite, during the *vardhamāna* song (ABh ad NŚ 4.273, vol. 1, p. 183). He is moreover twice referred to as teacher (*upādhyāya*): in the commentary on the twenty-first *karāṇa*, called *vikṣiptākṣiptakam*, he expresses the view that *karāṇas* might be used for narrative purposes (ABh ad NŚ 4.81cd–82ab, vol. 1, pp. 107–108),¹³⁵ and, at the very end of the chapter, he holds the opinion according to which dance has an invisible result for the dancer, the sponsor of the performance, and the vocalist, and thus differs from theatre (ABh ad NŚ 4.320, vol. 1, p. 203). Finally, in connection with the theorization of dance and the new genres, relevant to the present study, Bhaṭṭa Tauta is mentioned with regard to the *Ḍombikā* called *Cūḍāmaṇi* (ABh ad NŚ 31.331,

133 See Translation 2.4.1, n. 65.

134 On the possible identification of the *ṭikākāra* with Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, see n. 106 above.

135 On the use of *karāṇas* for *abhinaya* as a major novelty of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, but possibly an innovation already voiced by Bhaṭṭa Tauta, see § 2.2, and n. 61.

vol. 4, p. 271), a form of performance treated at length in the passage edited in this book, particularly interesting for the new conceptualization of narrative dance.¹³⁶

From this polyphonic mosaic of opinions and vivid descriptions of dance practices and genres, it emerges that the commentator's discourse on the nature and purpose of dance did not develop in a theoretical and artistic void; on the contrary, a number of sources and authorities on music and dance existed and were known to Abhinavagupta. The fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī* is therefore a crucial source for studying the practice and aesthetic of Indian dance in the first millennium.

¹³⁶ On the *Ḍombikā* as a model for narrative dance, see § 3.5. On this passage, attributed to the *Kāvyakautuka*, and its parallels in the section translated here, see Translation, n. 39.

PART 1

Practice and Aesthetics of Indian Dance



Formalizing Dance, Codifying Performance

With the growth of theatre studies as an academic discipline in the West, the need to abandon the narrow idea of theatre as chiefly a textual and literary phenomenon has repeatedly been highlighted.¹ From an initial concern with the study of dramatic texts—which themselves were the only object considered worth studying due to their connection with ‘high culture’ in the form of literature—scholarly interest shifted to the study of stage performance, under the influence of the so-called ‘performative turn’.² Concurrently, the term ‘dance’, which had formerly been employed mainly in an operatic context, became associated with forms of performance not necessarily linked to a pre-existing text, encompassing highly codified forms such as ballet, but also a number of other forms like ‘free dance’, ‘modern dance’, and ‘Tanztheater’. With the dramatic changes that theatre and dance underwent in the twentieth century, the categories previously used to classify heterogeneous spectacular forms under common headings started being perceived as inadequate. As a result, in the middle of the 1960s, Richard Schechner proposed a new concept of ‘performance’ transcending text-based drama and encompassing even play, games, sports, theatre and ritual.³ Confronted with a plurality of approaches and theories, today we speak of ‘dance theatre’, ‘theatre dance’, ‘dance drama’, ‘dramatic dance’, ‘postdramatic theatre’, and so forth in an attempt to do justice to the multifariousness achieved by the scenic object.

Generally speaking, when a new category comes into use—be it newly invented or borrowed from a different context—it supposedly accounts for some reality for which previous categories are considered unfit, at the same time being distinguished from the old order by some kind of imagined opposition based on certain distinctive features or essential qualities. Once the new category has entered common usage, it is easy to imagine how the new order

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- 1 On the rise of theatre studies, or Theaterwissenschaft, as an academic discipline in Germany in the early nineteenth century, and on the pioneering work of Max Herrmann, see Fischer-Lichte 2001.
 - 2 The ‘performative turn’ usually refers to J.L. Austin’s theorization of speech as performative in the 1950s. It was however preceded by a shift in the perception of culture at large from ‘textual’ to ‘performative’ at the turn of the twentieth century, on which see Fischer-Lichte 2001.
 - 3 On the concept of ‘performance’, see especially Schechner 2003 and 2006.

has a tendency to reproduce itself, either by introducing further subcategories or by incorporating, even retrospectively, a variety of objects—performative practices or genres, in our case—that may be historically and geographically removed from the original context from which the new category emerged. The English term ‘dance theatre’ or ‘dance drama’, for instance, encompasses a variety of staged forms today, although it was originally coined for translating the German term ‘Tanztheater’. The latter had come into use to refer specifically to the work of Pina Bausch and the homonymous Wuppertaler TanzTheater, and to the particular conception of theatrical practice developed by the German director from the 1970s onwards. Nowadays, the same term has become a general label commonly applied to Indian artistic forms like Kathakali, Bharatanatyam, and the like, to which no univocal Western category could ever do full justice.⁴

As argued in the Introduction, when one deals with categories and performance genres for which no direct visual evidence is given, particular attention should be paid to the evaluation of data coming from the textual records. Before proceeding to a detailed exposition of the categories used by Bharata and Abhinavagupta for describing the spectacular object, its genres, and techniques, it would be useful to start with a cursory exploration of the ‘emic’ terminology found in the texts and in contemporary parlance, at the same time pointing out some of the most common misunderstandings that have haunted modern histories of Indian performance from the outset. My intent is not to lock staged genres into strict definitions, but rather to detect some of the strategies and methods adopted by Indian theoreticians of the past to represent the artistic tradition of dance and theatre and its transmission. After scrutinizing the technical terminology, categories, and subcategories the Sanskrit texts employ to make sense of theatre and dance, I will address the ambiguous role of the performer or artist in the transmission of a living art within a traditional lore: when everything is already laid down by the *śāstra*, is there any individual freedom left for the artist? Luckily enough, unlike other *śāstras* on theatre and dance, Abhinavagupta explicitly deals with this topic, drawing on philosophical discussions about tradition well developed in other disciplinary fields.

4 Faced with the difficulty of defining the Indian theatrical reality, the Italian theatre critic Nicola Savarese coined the periphrasis ‘arte del teatro che danza’ (‘the art of dancing theatre’) (Savarese 1992: 173).

2.1 *Nāṭya, nr̥tta, and nr̥tya* between Movement and Mimesis

Those familiar with contemporary forms of Indian ‘dance theatre’ know that the scenic object traditionally counts three aspects: *nāṭya* (‘drama’), *nr̥tya* (‘mimetic dance’ or ‘narrative dance’, also called *abhinaya*), and *nr̥tta* (‘pure dance’ or ‘abstract dance’).⁵ Kapila Vatsyayan, one of the leading exponents of Indian dance studies and author of several pioneering books on the Indian performing arts, traces this threefold classification to Sanskrit medieval treatises, such as the *Abhinayadarpaṇa* and the *Samgītaratnākara*. She maintains that ‘the art of dancing has clearly been classified into *nr̥tya*, *nr̥tta* and *nāṭya*, on the one hand, and *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* or *sukumāra*, on the other. The technique of classical Indian dancing can be broken up into these constituents, which are faithfully followed to this day in all styles of Indian dancing’ (Vatsyayan 1977: 25–27). And yet, those who are acquainted with the Sanskrit textual tradition on the topic of dance know that this is just part of the story; if these categories are used by performers today, it is also the result of a conscious effort to relate modern practices to some older textual authority. Moreover, the above-mentioned categories do not mean something univocal and universal, either in the texts or in oral usages. As clarified at the outset of this chapter, names and categories are better viewed as floating realities, and their relation to their objects is the result of ongoing negotiations. My aim in the present and following sections is to evaluate categories such as *nāṭya*, *nr̥tta*, and *nr̥tya*, as well as other concepts that are typically thought to make up the specificity of Indian dance, such as *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*, within the scope of the *Abhinavabhāratī* and its related sources. This is meant to provide an introduction to the problem of ‘tradition’ dealt with at the end of this chapter. Surely, this will be neither a complete historical survey of the stated concepts, nor an exhaustive analysis of their definitions and consistency across the various texts.⁶

The first Sanskrit text to present us with a tripartite division of the scenic object in terms of the categories identified by Vatsyayan is—as is well known—not the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, but the *Daśarūpaka*. This text on dramaturgy was written in the second half of the tenth century by Dhanañjaya and commented upon

5 Of these three terms, the first translations, borrowed from Vatsyayan 1977, have become quite standard among contemporary exponents of the various ‘classical’ dance forms. However, I tend to privilege the translation ‘narrative dance’ to ‘mimetic dance’—since the term *nr̥tya* applies mostly to dance combined with a poetic text—and ‘abstract dance’ to ‘pure dance’ for [*śuddha*-]*nr̥tta*, in order to avoid the possible connotations of the purity/impurity divide, otherwise quite pervasive in other domains of Indian society.

6 For a chronological survey of the different treatises and their classifications of the scenic object, see Bose 2007. On the limits of Bose’s approach, see § 1.2.

around the same time by Dhanika in the *Avaloka*.⁷ The three categories of *nāṭya*, *nṛtta*, and *nṛtya*, first presented in this text, were successively adopted and adapted in the technical treatises dealing with drama, poetics, music, or dance. Despite the fact that the *Nāṭyaśāstra* usually represents the authority and source for many of these later texts, it presents a simpler twofold division of the spectacular object into *nāṭya* and *nṛtta*. The *Abhinavabhāratī* conforms to it and devotes a lengthy discussion to establishing the specific difference between these two categories and their contents.⁸

In a pioneering study on the development of Indian dramatic genres, D.R. Mankad analyses the three categories of *nāṭya*, *nṛtta*, and *nṛtya* as they occur in different Sanskrit texts, noticing a considerable variation in both their definitions and contents. He then proceeds with an examination of the various spectacular genres described in those texts in order to determine under which categories they are classified. Next, he identifies *nāṭya* with the ten dramatic genres, the *daśarūpaka* described by Bharata, and *nṛtya* with the *uparūpakas*, a group of 'semi-dramatic' forms that, according to him, developed out of dance forms. The fact that some of the existing plays, such as those of Kālidāsa, describe the performance of several of the genres Mankad identifies as *nṛtya* leads him to place the origin of the *uparūpakas* at an early date.⁹ Abhinavagupta, he concludes, must have known and recognized the distinc-

7 The *Daśarūpaka* has been edited several times. The text was first published by Hall in 1865, together with the commentary *Avaloka*. The first English translation was that of Haas in 1912. An edition of the *Daśarūpaka* together with the two commentaries of Dhanika (*Avaloka*) and Bhaṭṭaṅṣiṃha (*Laghutīkā*) was published by T. Venkatacharya in 1969 and, along with the *Dīpikā* of Bahurūpamiśra, by A.N. Pandey in 1979. All quotations here are from Venkatacharya's edition. On the *Daśarūpaka* and its commentaries, see Kane 1971: 243–248. Regarding Dhanika, he is generally considered a younger contemporary of Dhanañjaya, probably his own brother, since they are both presented as the sons of Viṣṇu. Moreover, both lived under king Muñja of Malwa (ibid.: 246), whence the common practice of regarding the *Daśarūpaka* and *Avaloka* as a textual unit. Some scholars even identify the two authors and believe, on the basis of a later source, that the *Avaloka* should be attributed to the same Dhanañjaya, writing under a pseudonym. This thesis was refuted by T. Venkatacharya on the basis of Bhaṭṭaṅṣiṃha's commentary (cf. Introduction to DR: xxv–xxvi).

8 See Part 2, Text and Translation.

9 Through a questionable analysis of linguistic and literary data, Mankad arrives at the conclusion that the *rūpakas* developed from the *uparūpakas*, thus from *nṛtya*, even before the time of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The reason he gives for the *Nāṭyaśāstra*'s silence about *nṛtya* and the *uparūpakas* is that Bharata had no necessity to deal with them. According to him, 'from the point of view of evolution, first comes *nṛtta*, then *nṛtya* and last *nāṭya*. *Nṛtta* is mere dance, *nṛtya* had gesture added to it, while *nāṭya* had speech (i.e. dialogue) too. Thus *nāṭya* incorporated all the three features—dance, music and speech—which are so essential for the creation of drama' (Mankad 1936: 22). A bitter criticism of Mankad's methodology and results can be found in Varma (1957: 14–15), who ultimately rejects Mankad's evolutionary theory as unacceptable and unscientific.

tion between the three different categories, but consciously decided not to use the term *nṛtya*. He intentionally subsumed *nṛtya* under the category of *nṛtta*, thus acknowledging two distinct aspects of the latter (Mankad 1936: 21). It is true that both Kālidāsa and Abhinavagupta knew some genres of performance other than those described by Bharata, but it would be anachronistic to assign such forms to a distinct category called *nṛtya*, opposed to both *nāṭya* and *nṛtta*, and basically coinciding with the *uparūpakas*.¹⁰ While forms of performance exist independently of genre categorizations, categories cannot exist independently of someone using them in a deliberate way.

A different theory about the development of the performative genres was proposed by Varma. Taking for granted the notion that *nṛtya* should include dramatic acting (*abhinaya*) and *nṛtta* be devoid of it—a definition he traces back to the *Daśarūpaka* and the *Avaloka*—he remarks:

For unspecified reasons Abhinava does not accept this well-known *abhinaya* in *nṛtta* which, according to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, is introduced for the first time by Bharata in the *pūrvaraṅga* on the instructions of Śiva.

VARMA 1957: 16

Varma draws evidence from the *Abhinavabhāratī* to support his view. According to him, Abhinavagupta distinguishes two kinds of *abhinaya*: one in which the actor conveys every detail of the song or composition—the type of acting proper to *nāṭya*—and another one in which the performer recollects the meaning of the song into his own mind and moves his limbs following the general trend of the song, without any intention of conveying every detail to the spectator. This second type of less complete *abhinaya* he assigns to the dance performed in the *pūrvaraṅga*. Different from this, he maintains, are the *nṛtya* types—i.e. those same *uparūpakas* identified by Mankad—in which *abhinaya* is of the same kind as required in theatre. Varma explains Abhinavagupta's omission of the word *nṛtya* by his desire to adhere to Bharata's usage in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*: 'it would be fantastic even to imagine that the medieval designation of *nṛtta* and *nṛtya* is unknown to Abhinava who lived in the same epoch

10 Note that if *nṛtya* is used as a separate category in the *Daśarūpaka* by the tenth century, the term *uparūpaka* does not appear in the technical literature before the fourteenth century, when it is used for the first time by Viśvanātha Kavirāja in his *Sāhityadarpaṇa* (SD 6.6). On textual uses of the terms *nṛtya* and *uparūpaka*, see Bose 2000. On the other hand, the *Kāmasūtra* is the earliest known work to quote spectacular forms other than those codified by Bharata as *daśarūpaka*: it mentions Hallisaka and Nāṭyarāsaka by name (at least in the Chowkambha edition), without attributing them to a single category (Raghavan 1978: 520). For other occurrences in later literature, see Bose 2007: 179–192.

in which Dhanañjaya and Dhanika did' (ibid.: 20).¹¹ Varma's automatic inclusion of the new genres of performance discussed by Abhinavagupta under the *uparūpaka/nṛtya* types is quite anachronistic, and his including them on the side of theatre rather than dance fails to properly account not only for Abhinavagupta's description of *abhinaya* in the new genres, but more generally for his subtle analysis of dramatic acting.

What is more, Varma finds proof that the seed of *nṛtya* must be sought in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself, noting that Bharata allowed some *abhinaya* in dance, with the verse: 'The god himself (i.e. Śiva) said to Taṇḍu: this dance, i.e. the *tāṇḍava* and others, should be put to use based on the performance of songs.'¹² Varma thus attributes the origin of *nṛtya* to the very practice of combining acting (*abhinaya*) and dance (*nṛtta*) with songs (*gīta*), as started by Bharata. The absence of a name to designate narrative dance in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is justified in turn by the fact that *nṛtya* is a newborn entity (Varma 1957: 30–33). As I show below, rather than establishing the new category of *nṛtya* as distinct from dance and more akin to theatre, this verse provides Abhinavagupta an occasion to justify the proliferation of a variety of dance types, and to inaugurate a distinction between different kinds of dances, all ultimately falling under the single category of *nṛtta*.¹³

As I see it, the main shortcoming in the method endorsed by Mankad and Varma is their reification of the three categories of *nāṭya*, *nṛtya*, and *nṛtta*, which the two scholars presuppose whenever some of the contents usually associated with them are detected, irrespective of contextual differences. The postulation of a clear opposition between the three categories is, on the contrary, a matter of negotiation, and was variously discussed by different authors in different epochs. Besides the variety in the definitions, there is also a considerable variety with respect to the objects included under these categories.

As noted above, the locus classicus of the threefold classification of the scenic object is the *Daśarūpaka*. Its definitions run as follows:

- Theatre (*nāṭya*) is an imitation of the situations [of the characters] (*avasthā-nukṛtir nāṭyam*). [DR 1.7a] [It is] tenfold [and] based on *rasa* (*daśadhaiva rāsāśrayam*). [DR 1.7d]

11 Quite on the contrary, I believe that the fact that Abhinavagupta was almost a contemporary of Dhanañjaya and Dhanika might be adduced as a strong reason for Abhinavagupta's lack of acquaintance with the *Daśarūpaka* and *Avaloka*, combined with the fact that they worked in different geographical areas. For a hypothesis explaining the similarities of some of the key notions in both texts, see below, n. 27.

12 NŚ 4.267cd–268ab: *devena cāpi samproktas taṇḍus tāṇḍavapūrvakam || gītaprayogam āśṛitya nṛttam etat pravartyatām |*

13 See § 2.4 below and Translation 8.

- *Nṛtya*, which is different [from it], is based on the emotional states (*anyad bhāvāśrayam nṛtyam*), [DR 1.9a] and is an enactment of word meanings (*padārthābhinaya*). [DR 1.9c]
- Dance (*nṛtta*) is based on rhythm and tempo (*nṛttaṃ tālalayāśrayam*). [DR 1.9b]

The opposition between *nāṭya* and *nṛtya* on the basis of their resting on *rasa* and *bhāva*, respectively, is not crystal clear. As pointed out by several scholars, the terms *rasa* and *bhāva* have undergone important semantic shifts from the time of Bharata onwards. For quite a long time, the difference between *bhāvas* and *rasas* was conceived as one of intensity rather than quality.¹⁴ Besides, what Dhanañjaya precisely meant by the term *nṛtya* is not made any clearer by his laconic definitions.

Even prior to Dhanañjaya, the term *nṛtya* had been in use outside the corpus of technical literature. While in a number of texts the terms *nṛtya* and *nṛtta* are used interchangeably, the evidence from a few passages in Kālidāsa's works shows, according to Bansat-Boudon, that the poet knew the triple opposition between *nāṭya*, *nṛtta*, and *nṛtya*, and used the word *nṛtya* as a synonym for the 'harmonious' or 'homogeneous' acting (*sāmānyābhinaya*), a codified acting protocol theorized by Bharata, in which body, mind, and voice are used in combination. This interpretation is mainly based on Kālidāsa's association, in *Raghuvamśa* 19.36, of the term *nṛtya* with the compound *aṅga-sattva-vacana-āśraya*, the three principal means employed for dramatic acting, and on Mallinātha's quotation of Bharata's definition of the *sāmānyābhinaya* in his commentary on this passage.¹⁵

Dhanika's commentary on Dhanañjaya's definitions sheds some light on the first clear occurrence of *nṛtya* as a technical term distinct from both *nāṭya* and

14 In the ABh ad *rasasūtra*, the opinion according to which *rasa* would be nothing but a *bhāva* enhanced by the determinants, consequents, and transitory states is attributed to 'the ancients' (*cirantana*), chiefly Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa. To this group of authors seemingly also belongs Daṇḍin (end of 7th c.), the author of the *Kāvyaadarśa* and one of the first systematizers of Alaṅkāraśāstra, together with Bhāmaha. As pointed out by Ingalls et al. (1990: 18), this position was prevalent for quite some time, since even for Ānandavardhana (9th c.) in the *Dhvanyāloka*, *rasa* was nothing but a heightened form of the basic emotion (*sthāyībhāva*). On the dramatic changes in Sanskrit aesthetics, and especially in the ontology of *rasa*, see, e.g., McCrea 2008; Cuneo 2013; and Pollock 2016.

15 See Bansat-Boudon 1992: 356, 407. It should be pointed out, however, that the evidence of Mallinātha is quite late, and that the earlier, tenth-century commentator Vallabhadeva opts for reading *nṛtta* instead of *nṛtya* in the same verse. Allusions to the *sāmānyābhinaya* remain a possibility in other passages of Kālidāsa, for instance in the description of the *pañcāṅgābhinaya* in Mālavikā's Chalita in the *Mālavikāgnimitra* (on which see *ibid.*: 422–439).

nṛtta. According to Dhanika, the term *nṛtya* is used to refer to some other staged forms (*rūpakāntara*) than the *daśarūpaka*, and is restricted to the seven varieties of *nṛtya* expressed in the verse ‘Ḍombī, Śrīgadita, Bhāṇa, Bhāṇī, Prasthāna, Rāsaka, and Kāvya are the seven types of *nṛtya*, and they are similar to the Bhāṇa [of theatre]’ (AL ad DR 1.9). The verse is quoted within an objection introducing the definition of *nṛtya*, but its author is not specified in the *Avaloka*.¹⁶ The forms enumerated as varieties of *nṛtya* here are treated in the *Abhinavabhāratī* as forms of *nṛtta*, and appear variously in later texts as ‘compositions to be danced’ (*nṛtyaprabandha*), ‘staged forms to be sung’ (*geyarūpaka*), ‘minor genres’ (*uparūpaka*), etc. The *Avaloka* comments on the *Daśarūpaka* definition of *nṛtya* by saying that there is a fundamental difference in the topics of *nāṭya* and *nṛtya*, since the former is based on *rasa*, the second on *bhāva*. Dhanika also says that those who practice the *nṛtya* types, also called ‘staged spectacles’ (*raṅge prekṣaṇīyaka*) in common parlance, are called dancers (*nartaka*)—from the root *nṛt*, having the sense of ‘throwing the limbs about’—due to the predominance of bodily acting (*āṅgika*) in their practice. Those who practice *nāṭya*, on the contrary, are called actors (*naṭa*)—from the root *naṭ*—in the sense of ‘subtly vibrating’ (*avaspaṇḍana*), ‘moving slightly’ (*kiṃcicalana*)—due to the predominance of psychophysical acting (*sāttvika*) in their performance.¹⁷ Moreover, to say that theatre is based on *rasa* amounts to saying that it is the enactment of sentence meaning (*vākyārthābhinaya*), where by ‘sentence’ is meant a combination of the determinants and other aesthetic factors, similar to words forming a sentence.¹⁸ Differently from theatre, *nṛtya* consists in the enactment of word meanings (*padārthābhinaya*):

16 AL, *avataṛāṇikā* ad DR 1.9, p. 8: *nanu ‘ḍombī śrīgaditam bhāṇo bhāṇīprasthānarāsakāḥ | kāvyam ca sapta nṛtyasya bhedaḥ syus te ‘pi bhāṇavat ||’ ityadinā rūpakāntarāṇām api bhāvād avadhāraṇānupapattir ity āśaṅkyāha—anyad bhāvāśrayaṇṁ nṛtyam.*

17 AL ad DR 1.9, p. 8: *rasāśrayān nāṭyād bhāvāśrayaṇṁ nṛtyam anyad eva. tatra bhāvāśrayam iti viśayabhedān nṛtyam iti nṛter gātravikṣepārthatvenāṅgikabāhulyāt tatkāriṣu ca nartakavyapadeśāl loke ‘pi ca raṅge prekṣaṇīyakam iti vyavahārān nāṭakāder anyan nṛtyam. tadbhedatvāc chrīgaditāder nāvadhāraṇānupapattih. nāṭakādi ca rasaviśayam. [...] nāṭyam iti ca ‘naṭa avaspaṇḍane’ iti naṭeḥ kiṃcicalanārthatvāt sāttvikabāhulyam. ata eva tatkāriṣu naṭavyapadeśaḥ.* Note that the definitions of the senses of the roots *nṛt* and *naṭ* are borrowed from Pāṇini’s *Dhātupāṭha*, DP 4.9: *nṛto gātravikṣepe* (Böhtlingk 1964: 72*); DP 10.12: *naṭa avaspaṇḍane* (ibid.: 80*); DP 1.14: *spadi kiṃcicalane* (ibid.: 61*).

18 The analogy to linguistic discourse, where the aesthetic elements are equated to words, and the *rasa* to sentence meaning, might have been derived from Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s hermeneutical analysis of literature. Dhanika in fact quotes Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka on the same analogy in AL ad DR 4.37 and 4.42, on which see Pollock 2010: 152–153 and 172, n. 32. The passages quoted by Pollock, however, are about the effectuation of aesthetic emotions through language alone, where there is no question of *abhinaya*.

The theatrical genres such as the Nāṭaka and the others have *rasa* as their object. By this [verse] it has been shown that [theatre], which consists in the enactment of sentence meaning (*vākyārthābhinaya*), is based on *rasa* (*rasāśraya*), since *rasa* consists in sentence meaning, made of a combination of determinants (*vibhāva*), [consequents (*anubhāva*) and transitory states (*vyabhicāribhāva*),] which are [its different] word meanings (*padārthibhūta*). [...] Since it consists in the enactment of word meanings (*padārthābhinaya*), *nṛtya* is said to be different from theatre [which, on the contrary], consists in the enactment of sentence meaning.¹⁹

Similarly to Dhanika, Abhinavagupta acknowledges a distinction between the enactment of sentence meaning (*vākyārthābhinaya*) and the enactment of word meanings (*padārthābhinaya*). However, he never attributes such a difference to a distinction in the object to be presented on stage, *rasas* and *bhāvas*, respectively.²⁰ In the *Abhinavabhāratī*, these two types of *abhinaya* correspond to alternative ways of delivering the same poetic text through enactment: the first word-for-word, the second in a more synthetic way.²¹ Even though Abhinavagupta recognizes genres such as Ḍombikā, Śrīgadita, etc. as a separate group, he never distinguishes them from theatrical forms proper (*daśarūpaka*) on the basis of the opposition between the enactment of word meanings and that of sentence meaning, nor does he confine these two modalities to the representation of *rasas* and *bhāvas*. On the contrary, in his aesthetic theory, only the *bhāvas* can truly be enacted, not the *rasas*, since the latter are savoured by the spectator alone and are part of his experience.²² At some point, however, while discussing the category of *nṛtta*, Abhinavagupta alludes to a possible distinction between the purpose of the ‘new genres’ and that of the dramatic genres, based on their conveying *bhāvas* or *rasas*, respectively. This opinion, introduced in the guise of an intermediate proposal attributed to the *bhedapakṣin*, is immediately dismissed by the *abhedapakṣin*, who

19 AL ad DR 1.9, p. 8: *nāṭakādi ca rasaviśayam. rasasya ca padārthibhūtavibhāvādikaṣaṅsargātmakavākyārtharūpatvād vākyārthābhinayātmakatvaṃ rasāśrayam ity anena darśitam. [...] vākyārthābhinayātmakatvān nātyāt padārthābhinayātmakam anyad eva nṛtyam iti.*

20 The specificity of Abhinavagupta's understanding of *padārthābhinaya* and *vākyārthābhinaya* was already noted by Raghavan (1978: 521, n. 2), who remarks that the correlation of these two modes of *abhinaya* with the two terms *bhāva* and *rasa* was especially operative in discussions on *dhvani* and *tātparyāśakti*.

21 For examples of the enactment of word and sentence meanings from the existing literature, see Abhinavagupta's analysis of the uses of the *karāṇa talapuspapuṭa* in ABh ad Nś 4.61, quoted in § 2.2 below, n. 44 and 54.

22 On this point of Abhinavagupta's aesthetics, see especially § 3.3.

claims that even forms such as the Ḍombikā and the others, just like theatre, provide instruction in the four aims of mankind, a fact that is invariably connected with the arising of an aesthetic experience, centred on *rasa*, in the spectator.²³

Furthermore, the argument used by Dhanika to differentiate *nṛtya* from *nṛtta* is that the first, like theatre, is an imitation (*anukāra*), while dance lacks dramatic enactment (*abhinayaśūnya*):

Although they are similar, since both are the objects of the throwing of limbs (*aṅgavikṣepa*), *nṛtya* is different from *nṛtta*, as it consists in imitation (*anukāra*). [...] Dance (*nṛtta*) is a throwing of limbs, devoid of enactment (*abhinayaśūnya*), merely depending on the [rhythm and tempo (*tāla-laya*)].²⁴

Again, Abhinavagupta appears to be utterly familiar with all the elements contained in this characterization of dance (*nṛtta*), but treats them in an altogether different fashion. He retains the definition of dance as a throwing of limbs (*aṅgavikṣepa/gātravikṣepa*), nowhere to be found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* but well known from the *Dhātupāṭha*.²⁵ He also agrees, although just *prima facie*, with the statement that dance is devoid of enactment (*abhinayaśūnya*). What he ultimately disagrees with is the collapsing of *abhinaya* with imitation (*anukāra*). This was, in Dhanika's view, the discriminating factor distinguishing *nṛtya* (i.e. the seven *nṛtya-bhedas*) from *nṛtta*. According to Abhinavagupta, on the contrary, genres such as the Ḍombikā and the others are indeed forms of dance, since they *do* use dramatic acting, though not to its fullest extent. The word *abhinaya*, which is variously translated here as 'enactment', 'acting', or 'dramatic representation', for lack of any better equivalent in English, is not a synonym of imitation or mimicry for Abhinavagupta, but designates the process of communication peculiar to theatre, whereby the spectator comes to see the theatrical object *as if* it were directly present in front of him, thanks to the peculiar cognition of the actor and character at once. This is the specific sense of mimesis Abhinavagupta assigns to the *abhinaya* of theatre, which is different from the pseudo- or quasi-*abhinaya* of dance.²⁶

23 See Translation 2.1–2.

24 AL ad DR 1.9, pp. 8–9: [...] *gātravikṣepārthatve samāne 'py anukārātmakatvena nṛtyād anyan nṛttam* [...] *tanmātrāpekṣo 'ṅgavikṣepo 'bhinayaśūnyo nṛttam iti*.

25 See above, n. 17.

26 On Abhinava's refutation of theatre as imitation (*anukāra/anukaraṇa*) and his reshaping of the concept of *abhinaya*, see especially § 3.3 and § 3.5.

Rather than an intentional omission of the word *nṛtya* on the part of Abhinavagupta, this brief account of the fundamental differences in the treatment of dance in the *Abhinavabhāratī* and the *Avaloka* suggests that, at the turn of the millennium, *nṛtya* was being negotiated as a category used to incorporate new genres of performance into the theatrical lore. The commonality of the vocabulary used might be explained by the existence of a lost source common to Abhinavagupta and Dhanika, in which the seven genres were first recorded and discussed within the framework of *śāstra*, although not in a systematic way.²⁷ Though drawing on similar discussions, the two authors end up adopting different solutions. Even if the hypothesis that Abhinavagupta deliberately neglected to use the term *nṛtya* in order to comply with the framework presented by the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is sound, one needs to address the related question as to what exactly it is that was being intentionally omitted by Bharata's commentator: the separate category of *nṛtya*, the concept of narrative dance, or the spectacular forms subsumed under the heading of *nṛtya* in Dhanika's unidentified source?

Quite obviously, Abhinavagupta knew about forms of performance which had not found canonical description in Bharata's text, forms that either originated or came into prominence in the five-hundred- to one-thousand-year time span separating the two authors. As a matter of fact, he quotes definitions for eight of the new genres, i.e. *Ḍombikā* (*Ḍombī* in the AL), *Bhāṇa*, *Prasthāna*, *Ṣidgaka* (*Śṛigaditam* in the AL), *Bhāṇikā* (*Bhāṇī* in the AL), *Rāmākriḍa*, *Hallīsaka*, and *Rāsaka*, which he borrows from the so-called 'ancients' (*cirantana*).²⁸ Yet he appears to be familiar with just a few of them, which he discusses at length, while in the other cases he merely mentions them by name. In addition to this group of eight, Abhinavagupta devotes some attention to other forms, unknown in contemporary extant sources, for instance *rāgakāvya*s and *nṛttakāvya*s.²⁹ As one discerns from Abhinavagupta's commentary, and as

27 Dealing with different textual passages, Pollock likewise concludes that Dhanika and Abhinavagupta must have drawn on a common source since, in general, it appears that the latter did not know the work of the former. See Pollock 2016: 378, n. 175. See also Translation, n. 48.

28 See Translation 8.5.2. Apart from the different spelling of some of the genres, the *Rāmākriḍa* and the *Hallīsaka* do not appear in the *Avaloka* verse, which instead has the *Kāvya* genre. The definitions quoted in the *Abhinavabhāratī* are borrowed by Hemacandra in his sub-commentary on the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*. In this work, however, some confusion and doublings of the genres are found, since Hemacandra appears to have used both the *Abhinavabhāratī* and Bhoja's *Śṛīgāraprakāśa* as his sources. On this issue, see Raghavan 1978: 551.

29 The text of Bharata knows the opposition between 'poetry' (*kāvya*), a name that also denotes the play's text, and 'drama' proper (*nāṭya*), a text arranged for performance. In his

already suggested in the *Avaloka*'s definition, the main characteristic of the new genres and their lowest common denominator is the fact of having a single performer, which makes them similar to both the monologue-play (Bhāṇa) of theatre as well as to the solo-dance and musical pieces called *lāsyaṅgas*.³⁰ The new genres alternated segments of abstract dance with segments of narrative dance performed to a poetic text. The lyrics were mainly, but not exclusively, rendered by the vocalists, to the accompaniment of music, but represented visually by the dancer, through gestures, and through the interpretation of the different characters narrated in the story. Another characteristic that emerges from the textual fragments quoted by Abhinavagupta is that the poetic texts on which these genres were based were essentially composed in Prakrit or Apabhraṃśa.

Coming back to Dhanañjaya's tripartite division of the scenic object, its apparent absence of blemishes gets blurred just a few lines after the definitions. First of all, the author of the *Daśarūpaka* continues by saying that *nṛtya* corresponds to *mārga* ('classical?') and *nṛtta* to *deśī* ('folk?').³¹ Secondly, he affirms that both *nṛtya* and *nṛtta* are used as auxiliaries (*upakāraka*) to the

auto-commentary, *Kāvyaślokaśāstravṛtti*, Vāmana (8th–9th c.) introduced a distinction between 'visible poetry' (*dṛśyakāvya*) and 'audible poetry' (*śravyakāvya*), thus subsuming drama and poetry under the broader category of *kāvya* (see Pollock 2012a). To the best of my knowledge, *rāgakāvya* and *nṛttakāvya* are never theorized as genres in the extant treatises; however, a definition of *rāgakāvya* is quoted in the *Abhinavabhāratī* as attributed to Kohala, while *nṛttakāvya* seems to work there as an inclusive label for Dhanika's *nṛtyabheda* (see Translation, n. 110 and 252). Since these look like super-categories rather than performance genres, I have left them in italics and lowercase. For a survey of the new genres as they appear in the technical and non-technical literature of the medieval period, see Leclère 2013: 62–98. See also Raghavan 1993: 176–200; Bansat-Boudon 1994b; and Bose 2000 on the new genres and their categories.

30 The *Abhinavabhāratī* refers both to *lāsyaṅgas* that are items in a *sukumārapūrvaraṅga*, and to those that are inserted into the body of a play. On the difference between the two sets, see Bansat-Boudon 1991b, 1992: 281–340; and § 2.3.1 below.

31 See DR 1.9: *anyad bhāvāśrayaṃ nṛtyaṃ nṛttaṃ tālāyāśrayam | ādyaṃ padārthābhinayo mārgo deśī tathā param* || The pair *deśī*/*mārga* is not mentioned by Bharata. For later authors, it becomes one of the privileged ways to introduce new forms—especially regional ones—under the *deśī* heading, while reserving *mārga* for the tradition codified by Bharata, seen as transregional. In modern studies, the latter becomes commonly identified with the idea of 'classical', the first with that of 'folk'. Prior to Dhanañjaya, musical discourse had also started to pay attention to regional forms, as attested by the *Bṛhaddeśī* of Mataṅga (8th c.?). On *deśī* and *mārga*, see Raghavan 1956. Dhanañjaya's assignment of *mārga* to the newer category of *nṛtya* and *deśī* to *nṛtta* is quite at odds with the later tradition, with the exception of the *Samgītaratnākara*, which borrows partly from the *Daśarūpaka*.

theatrical genres, such as the Nāṭaka and others, and that they have two varieties each, i.e. *lāsya* and *tāṇḍava*, according to a differentiation into a gentle (*madhura*) and a vehement (*uddhata*) type.³² It thus appears that *nṛtya* and *nṛtta* are not only categories used for incorporating new performance genres that are different and independent from drama, but they also exist as auxiliaries or ancillary arts within a dramatic performance. As Dhanika explains it:

The meaning of the expression ‘[*nṛtya* and *nṛtta*] are auxiliaries (*upakā-raka*) of the Nāṭaka etc.’ is: *nṛtya* is sometimes used in the [dramatic genres], such as the Nāṭaka and others, in the form of an enactment of the meaning of intermediate words (*avāntarapadārthābhīnayarūpa-*), and *nṛtta* is used in the Nāṭaka and the like, since it is the cause of beauty (*śobhāhetu-*).³³

In this passage, the term *nṛtya* indicates something different from the seven *nṛtyabhedas* as genres: it is possibly an acting technique (°*abhīnayarūpa-*) privileging bodily movements over the spoken word, but nevertheless connected to word meanings.³⁴ However, given the extreme concision of Dhanañjaya’s verses and the uncertainty of the meaning of the expression *avāntarapadārtha*° in Dhanika’s gloss, it is not possible to establish what kind of spectacular practice was meant to be indicated by the word *nṛtya*—here opposed to *nṛtta* alone—in the *Daśarūpaka*.

32 DR 1.10: *madhuroddhatabhedena tad dvayaṃ dvividhaṃ punaḥ | lāsya tāṇḍavarūpeṇa nāṭakādīyupakāraṅgam ||* AL *ad locum*, p. 10: *sukumāraṃ dvayam api lāsyaṃ, uddhataṃ dvīṭayam api tāṇḍavam iti.*

33 AL ad DR 1.10, p. 10: *nāṭakādīyupakāraṅgam iti. nṛtyasya kvacid avāntarapadārthābhīnayarūpatvena nṛttasya ca śobhāhetutvena nāṭakādāv upayoga iti.* The role of dance in the creation of beauty (*śobhā*) had already been established by Bharata in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*; cf. NŚ 4.263cd–264ab and ABh thereon in Translation, and on *śobhā*, see § 3.1 and § 3.4.

34 This use of *nṛtya* within theatre might have been akin to the *pañcāṅgābhīnaya* described by Kālidāsa as executed by Mālavikā in the second act of the *Mālavikāgnimitra*, on which see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 422 ff. After an examination of the commentary by Kāṭayavema and other technical treatises, L. Bansat-Boudon concludes that *pañcāṅgābhīnaya* is used by Kālidāsa as a general term to designate the corporal harmonious acting (*śārīrasāmānyābhīnaya*), a technique of representation in which gestures and bodily movements are used—if not independently of a text—at least independently of its recitation (ibid: 439). On the *śārīrasāmānyābhīnaya* and its proximity to dance, especially in the registers called *sūcā*, *aṅkura*, and *śākhā*, see § 3.2, n. 53.

Analogously to Dhanika's polyfunctional use of *nṛtya*, Abhinavagupta uses one and the same term, i.e. *nṛtta*, to talk about different things. On the whole, the *Abhinavabhāratī* and the *Avaloka* feature two different ways of dealing with the same problem, i.e. how to incorporate new material—in this case, new performative genres and techniques—into the *śāstra*.³⁵ The codification of the performative genres was indeed a matter of debate, as is evidenced by the number of different authorities and opinions quoted in the central passage of the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, translated here, where a fundamental difference between *nāṭya* and *nṛtta* is posited in order to account for the specificity of the new genres. Abhinavagupta devotes a lengthy discussion to establishing their natures and purposes, which he eventually resolves through a sophisticated analysis of acting (*abhinaya*) and its different roles in various forms of theatre and dance, between movement and mimesis. Since the reconfiguration of the concept of *abhinaya* has important aesthetic consequences, the topic will be examined separately in Chapter 3. Here I will continue focusing on Abhinavagupta's strategies of inclusiveness and exclusiveness in formalizing dance practice.

2.2 Dance as Technique: *aṅgahāra*, *karaṇa*, *recaka*

As stated in the fourth chapter, the technique taught to Bharata by Tāṇḍu, and then revealed to the Ṛṣis, comprises the *aṅgahāras*, the *karaṇas* and the *recakas*. The strings of movement called *aṅgahāras* are already presented as one of the defining elements of dance in the first chapter, in the verse introducing the gorgeous manner (*kaiśikī vṛtti*).³⁶ As the analysis of the compound suggests, *aṅgahāras* are the movements or displacements (*hāra/haraṇa*) of the limbs (*aṅga*) in space, and as such they can even work as a synonym for dance, commonly defined as a throwing (*vikṣepa*) of the limbs (*aṅga/gātra*). While explaining the term *aṅgahāra*, Abhinavagupta lays emphasis not only on the continuity of the movement, but also on the initial and final positions, which we can understand as the moments of stasis in which the movement originates and comes to rest:

35 As Bansat-Boudon (1994b: 211) puts it, '[O]n s'aperçoit que le *nṛtya* n'a eu d'autre fonction que d'offrir aux théoriciens le moyen de regrouper sous une même rubrique les formes qui ne correspondaient pas aux normes exigeantes que Bharata avait fixées pour le *nāṭya*.'

36 See NŚ 1.44, translated in § 1.3.3, n. 65.

In [dance], *aṅgahāras* are the ‘displacements (*haraṅāni*) of the limbs (*aṅgānām*)’, in which a suitable position in space is attained through an unbroken [movement].³⁷

The *aṅgahāras* are formed by a variable number of *karaṇas*, strung together by means of additional connecting movements, which makes them veritable choreographic structures. In the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the *aṅgahāras* are codified as thirty-two, and the number and sequence of the *karaṇas* forming them is given as fixed for each string. According to Abhinavagupta, *karaṇa* and *nṛtta* are in reality one and the same thing, although in ordinary life we speak of ‘the *karaṇas* of dance’ (*nṛttakaraṇa*) and thus split apart an essentially unitary entity through the abstraction of language.³⁸ Abhinavagupta identifies NS 4.30cd—‘A *karaṇa* of dance is a combination of hands and feet’ (*hastapādasamāyogo nṛttasya karaṇam bhavet* |)—as the general definition (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) of the *karaṇa*, and explains its meaning as follows, interpreting the compound *hastapādasamāyoga* as an action involving the whole body:

Karaṇa means ‘action’ (*kriyā*). Of what is it an action? Of dancing, which is a playful throwing of limbs. That is to say: *karaṇa* is the action of [dancing], which is different from actions concerning [things] to be rejected or accepted. [...] [*Karaṇa*] is a movement (*vṛtti*) and a combination (*yoga* = *yojanā*), on account of a connection (*saṃ*° = *saṅgatatayā*), i.e. the unbroken continuity of the *śākhās*, the major and the minor limbs abiding in the upper part of the body—indirectly expressed [in the verse] by the word ‘hands’—along with the sides, hips, thighs, shanks, and feet in the lower part of the body—indirectly expressed by the word ‘feet’.³⁹ The meaning is: a *karaṇa* is a single action [performed] by breaking con-

37 ABh ad NS 1.44, vol. 1, p. 21: *tatra ye 'ṅgahārā aṅgānām haraṅānīti atruṭitarūpatayā samucitasthānaprāptih.*

38 ABh ad NS 4.30cd, vol. 1, pp. 90–91: *nṛttasyeti vyapadesivattvena ṣaṣṭhi [...] nṛttaśabdena viśeṣaṇam nṛttakaraṇam iti. ekadeśābhīprāyeṇa tu karaṇaśabdasya prayogo bhīmasene bhīma itivat.* ‘The genitive [in the expression “the *karaṇa*” of dance] (*nṛttasya karaṇam*, v. 30cd) is one of designation. [...] By the word “dance” (*nṛtta*), a specification is [intended]: “the action [specified as] dance” (*nṛttakaraṇa*). And when the word *karaṇa* is used [alone], it is intended as a part of the whole, in the same manner as [the word] Bhīma [is used to designate] Bhīmasena.’

39 Major limbs (*aṅga*), are the head (*śiras*), hands (*hastā*), chest (*uras*), sides (*pārśva*), hips (*kaṭi*), and feet (*pāda*). They are opposed to the minor limbs (*upāṅga*) or facial elements that are the eyes (*netra*), eyebrows (*bhrū*), nose (*nāsa*), lips (*adhara*), cheeks (*kapola*), and chin (*cibuka*) (NS 8.13). On *śākhā* see below, n. 46.

tact with the preceding place, extending up to the attainment of a different place that is suitable. In fact, in every case an action has its conclusion in a subsequent contact, and this very desired subsequent contact is well known in the world as the conclusion of the action. This is nothing new. [But still,] in [dance], there is something more, namely playfulness (*savilāsatva*), on account of the introduction of beauty (*sauṇḍarya*).⁴⁰

Although the *aṅgahāras* are primary in dance, the *karaṇas* are instrumental in forming them; that is why the enumeration (*uddeśa*) of the *aṅgahāras* is given first (Nś 4.19cd–27), followed by the list of the 108 *karaṇas* (Nś 4.34cd–55ab), but the definitions (*lakṣaṇa*) of the *karaṇas* precede those of the *aṅgahāras*. To know how to perform the *aṅgahāras*, in fact, one has to know how to perform the *karaṇas* constituting them. In their utmost general form, the *karaṇas* are produced by a combination of static posture and movement.⁴¹ The particular definitions (*viśeṣalakṣaṇa*) of each of the *karaṇas* cover a large and highly technical section of the fourth chapter (vv. 61cd–168ab).

40 ABh ad Nś 4.30cd, vol. 1, pp. 90–91: *kriyā karaṇam. kasya kriyā? ṛttasya gātrāṇām vilāksaṣepasya. heyopādeyaviśayakriyādibhyo vyatirikṭā yā tatkriyā karaṇam ity arthaḥ. [...]* *hastopalakṣitasya pūrvakāyavartīśākhāṅgopāṅgādeḥ pādopalakṣitasya cāparakāyagatāpārśvakaṭyūrujaṅghācaraṇādeḥ saṅgatatayā *truṭitvatena vṛttiyojane [E₁₍₂₎, 'truṭitvatena vṛtti' E₁₍₁₎, 'truṭitvatve vṛtti' E₁₍₄₎]. pūrvakṣetrasaṃyogatyāgena samucitakṣetrāntarapṛptiparyantatayā ekā kriyā tatkaraṇam ity arthaḥ. uttarasaṃyogāntam hi sarvatra karma. sa cāpy abhilaṣitottarasāmyoga eva kriyāvadhītvena loke prasiddha iti nāpūrvam etat. etāvad evehādhikam saundaryānupraveśena savilāsatvaṃ nāma.* In a similar vein, see also § 2.4, n. 113.

41 See Nś 4.59cd–60ab: *yāni sthānāni yās cāryo ṛttahastās tathaiva ca || sā mātrketi vijñeyā tadyogāt karaṇam bhavet ||* ‘Those postures (*sthāna*), those feet movements (*cāri*), and also the hand gestures for dance (*ṛttahasta*) are to be known as the matrix (*mātrkā*). A *karaṇa* [results] from their combination.’ ABh *ad locum*, vol. 1, p. 95: *tatra mahāsāmānyarūpaṃ karaṇam āha—yāni sthānānīti. ihāvasthānaṃ gatis ceti dvayanirvartyaṃ karaṇam. tatrāvasthāne ’parakāyopayogi [conj., karakāyopayogi E₁] sthānakam, gatau tu cāryaḥ. pūrvakāye tu gatau ṛttahastā dṛṣṭayaś ca, sthītau patākādyāḥ. etac cakāreṇa saṅgrhītam. tena gatisthitisaṃmīlīte karaṇam iti.* ‘At this point, [Bharata] explains the *karaṇa* in its broadest generality: “Those postures, etc.” Here, static posture (*avasthāna*) and movement (*gati*) are the two ways by which a *karaṇa* can be brought about. Among the two, in static posture, a bodily pose (*sthānaka*) is executed with the lower part of the body, while in motion, the feet movements (*cāris*) [are used]. As for the upper part of the body, hand gestures for dance and glances (*dṛṣṭi*) [are used] in motion, while [narrative] hand gestures, such as the *patāka* and the others, [are used] in static posture. This has been implied through the particle *ca* [in the verse]. Therefore, we speak of *karaṇa* to designate a combination of static posture and movement.’

As explained previously while looking at the structure of the fourth chapter, it is quite difficult to reconstruct the entire movement of a *karāṇa* by means of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*'s terse definitions unless one already knows what it should look like. Abhinavagupta's commentary seeks to fill the gaps in these definitions by supplying—from the chapters on bodily acting (*āṅgikābhinaya*)—the verses explaining the various units of movement involved.⁴² After this preliminary operation, the commentary explains the sequences and coordination of the different movements thus identified. In case of ambiguity as to how a certain *karāṇa* has to be produced, Abhinavagupta resorts to the opinions of a number of authorities, quoting these as 'some' (*kecid*), 'others' (*anye*), the 'dance masters' (*nṛttācārya*), or by name, such as Kohala, Rāhula (or Rāhulaka), etc. In some cases, the exegete indicates the interpretation he considers preferable; in others, he just lists the various alternatives for the sake of comprehensiveness. Finally, he lays down the dramatic occasions on which a particular *karāṇa* can be used.

The main innovation in Abhinavagupta's treatment of the *karāṇas* is precisely the attribution of a representational function to the different *karāṇas*, a practice that will be followed by Śārṅgadeva in the *Samgītaratnākara*, a text deeply indebted to the *Abhinavabhāratī*. *Karāṇas* can be used in enacting both the meaning of sentences (*vākyārthābhinaya*) or words (*padārthābhinaya*), as Abhinavagupta explains while commenting on the first *karāṇa* of the list:

Whenever the enactment of the sentence meaning (*vākyārthābhinaya*) is featured as the main [element], the *karāṇas* are principal in it. But even when the enactments of [single] word meanings (*padārthābhinaya*) are performed, a *karāṇa*—[placed] at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end [of a sentence], as the occasion demands—is necessary in conveying that [the separate words are] mainly combined into one single sentence meaning (*ekavākyārtha*). This is the secret teaching (*upaniṣad*). Because of that, [Bharata] will say that “the *śākhā* and dance (*nṛtta*) are elements of this [bodily] acting” (NŚ 8.14).⁴³ For [otherwise] the combination [of the separate enactments] into a [unique] course of action (*vartanā*) would end up being grasped by means of the *śākhā* alone[, and there would have been no need to include also dance among the elements of the bodily acting]. And at the end of [the treatment of] the *śākhā*,

42 For the paradigmatic example of the first *karāṇa*, called *talapuspapuṭa* ('handful of flowers'), see above § 1.3.3, n. 79.

43 The full verse in NŚ 8.14 reads: *asya śākhā ca nṛttaṃ ca tathaiivānkura eva ca | vastūny abhinayasyeha vijñeyāni prayoktrbhiḥ ||*

[Bharata] will explain [its] difference [from dance]: ‘The *śākhā* should be a bodily [acting];’ it is said, ‘while dance, which is produced by body movements (*aṅgahāra*), is based on the *karaṇas*’ (Nś 8.15).⁴⁴ This will be clarified there (i.e. in the eighth chapter), so let this be enough for the time being.⁴⁵

Although the last sentence anticipates the explanation of the use of dance for enacting some textual content, side by side with the acting register called *śākhā*, the commentary on the eighth chapter is now lost, so the intelligibility of this passage can only be tentatively reconstructed with the help of parallel passages in the *Abhinavabhāratī*.⁴⁶ Moreover, the teaching on the use of the *karaṇas* as part of bodily acting is presented here as a ‘secret teaching’. The notion that a sentence has a single meaning, which is different from the sum of the word meanings that comprise it, is a common one among grammarians, Mīmāṃsakas, and Naiyāyikas.⁴⁷ Therefore, to say that the meanings of the single words, although enacted separately, have to be grasped as part

44 The whole verse, Nś 8.15, reads: *āṅgikas tu bhavec chākhā hy anikuraḥ sūcanā bhavet | aṅgahāraviniṣpannam nṛttaṃ tu karaṇāśrayam ||*

45 ABh ad Nś 4.61cd–62ab, vol. 1, p. 96: *yatra* [$E_{1(2)}^{pc}$, *tatra* $\Sigma_M E_{1(1)}$] *kvacid vākyārthābhīnaya eva prādhānyena darśyate* [conj., *darśite* $\Sigma_M E_{1(1)}$, $E_{1(2)}^{ac}$, *drśyate* $E_{1(2)}^{pc} E_2$], *tatra karaṇānām eva prādhānyam. yatrāpi padārthābhīnayaḥ kriyante, tatrāpy ekavākyānupraveśaprādhānyaprahyāpanāyām* [D $M_1 T_1^{vi} \Sigma_E$, *ekavākyārthā*° $T_1 T_6 T_7$] *avaśyam ādau madhye 'nte vā yathāvasaram karaṇam ity upaniṣat. tata* [Σ_M , *ata* Σ_E] *eva vakṣyati*—‘*asya śākhā ca nṛttaṃ ca [+tathāivānkura eva ca* Σ_E] *vastūny abhinayasya* [Σ_M , *abhinayasyeha* Σ_E]’ *iti. vartanānupraveśo* [Σ_E , *vartamānānupraveśo* $\Sigma_M E_{1(2)}^{ma, bha} E_{1(1)}^{vi}$] *hi śākhayaiva gatārthaḥ syāt. tatraiva ca śākhānte bhedaṃ vakṣyati. 'āṅgikaś ca bhavec chākhā' ity uktam. 'aṅgahāraviniṣpannam nṛttaṃ tu karaṇāśrayam' etat sphuṭam tatraiva vyākhyāsyata ity āstām tāvat.*

46 In chapter 22, the *śākhā* is described as one of the acting registers of the corporal harmonious acting (*śārīrasāmānyābhīnaya*), on which see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 376–377, and § 3.2, n. 53. Abhinavagupta explains it as the successive movements of the bodily limbs being used two by two by the head and the face, the legs and the hips, and the hands and the feet, with a predominance of *vartanā* (ABh ad Nś 22.47cd–48ab, vol. 3, p. 171: *samastena śākhāvyāpāreṇa vartanāpradhānatayā prayuktaḥ śākhābhīnayaḥ*). Bansat-Boudon interprets *vartanā* as revolving movements, however, other senses of the word *vartanā* may also be read here, on which see below. Given the loss of the commentary on the eighth chapter and the scarcity of information about the *śākhā* in the *Abhinavabhāratī* and other texts, it remains somewhat unclear how this register of *abhinaya*, very similar to dance, was supposed to be used in a play, and how it came into relation with the meanings enacted.

47 For Indian speculations on sentence and word meanings, see, for instance, Brough 1953 and Kunjunnī Raja 1963.

of a unique sentence is quite intuitive, especially when one keeps in mind that the practice of representing a text word-for-word through hand gestures in theatre was already known at the time of Abhinavagupta.⁴⁸ Of particularly difficult interpretation, however, is the word *vartanā* in the compound *vartanānupraveśa* in this passage, which I have tentatively translated as ‘course of action’. The term *vartanā* is used with several meanings in the *Abhinavabhāratī*. In ABh ad NŚ 4.29cd–30ab, the *nṛttahastas*—hand gestures endowed with aesthetic value—are said to consist in *vartanā*, which makes them primarily movements rather than shapes.⁴⁹ If one looks at the definitions of the *nṛttahastas* in the ninth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, it is evident that, unlike the *abhinayahastas*—hand gestures used to represent meanings—they include movements involving the whole arm besides the fingers, palms, and wrists. Moreover, the term *vartanā* appears again and again, together with *valanā*, as a characteristic feature of dance, which I interpret as ‘whirling and spinning’. In all these cases, the accent is on the dynamic aspect of dance, on its being a connected and continuous movement. Another passage, which features a phrasing very similar to that of the passage under discussion, perhaps provides some more convincing evidence for its interpretation. While establishing the aptness of a separate category for the set of hand gestures qualified by the word *nṛtta*, Abhinavagupta explains that one of its functions is to show that the other set of hand gestures, those commonly used for enacting, can be conceived as similar to a fire-wheel because, since dance hides the gaps between one enactment and the successive one, they combine into one single course of action (*ekavartanānupraveśa*).⁵⁰ I thus take the term *vartanā* here to refer to a connected course of action, conceived of as a whole continuous movement, corresponding, on the plane of verbal signification, to the sentence unit.

Now, how does this all translate into practice, and how are *karaṇas* to be applied to the enactment of sentence and word meanings? Again, for our benefit, the commentary provides a rather extensive illustration with regard to the first *karaṇa*, the *talapuṣpapuṭa*:

48 For an example of a stanza from Śrī Harṣa’s *Ratnāvalī*, see Ganser 2007: 73, and on the development of this style of acting in Indian dance, see Ganser 2021.

49 Cf. ABh ad NŚ 4.29cd–30ab, vol. 1, p. 91: *nṛttahastā api vartanātmāno ’śya viditā eva*.

50 ABh ad NŚ 9.11, vol. 2, p. 27: *eteṣāṃ tv abhinayahastānāṃ chidracchādanenaikavartanānupraveśād alātacakrapratimatāṃ darśayituṃ* [...]. For an analysis of this passage and the metaphor of the fire-wheel used to explain the function of dance within the theatrical representation, see § 3.4.2, n. 175.

On this point, there is an illustrative example, aiming at providing a general direction [for using the *karaṇas* in enactment]: in [a sentence] such as ‘Let that which has been proffered by the immaculate one, sitting on a lotus (Brahmā), be victorious’,⁵¹ the enactment of the sentence meaning (*vākyārthābhinaya*) [is done] by means of this [*karaṇa talapuspapuṭa*]. Even in theatre, when one has to enact the sentence meaning in a synthetic form (*upasaṃhāravākhyārthābhinaye*), such as in [the benedictory verse of the *Ratnāvalī*] ‘[The Daughter of the Mountain] stood on her toes, etc.’,⁵² this is indeed the appropriate *karaṇa*, which is the action of throwing flowers while standing on the tiptoes [with a movement] proper to dance.⁵³

It is not difficult to imagine how the *karaṇa talapuspapuṭa* could have been used in the enactment of this stanza, where Pārvatī is shown standing on her tiptoes (the *agratalasañcara* foot prescribed for this *karaṇa*) and releasing flowers in front of Śiva (through the *puṣpapuṭa* hand gesture). This example, I believe, demonstrates those cases in which the sentence meaning is enacted in a synthetic form—this is the sense I ascribe to *upasaṃhāra-* in *upasaṃhāra-vākhyārthābhinaye*—by a single bodily movement. It is possible that the *nāndī* exemplified here was actually a case of *padārthābhinaya*, where the *karaṇa*

51 Untraced quotation in Prakrit. The *Madhusūdanī* gives the Sanskrit *chāyā* as *abhijayati malavimuktakamaḷāsanoditasya*, and explains that the speech that is uttered by the immaculate Brahmā seated on a lotus flower is the Veda.

52 This is the first line of the first benedictory verse at the opening of *Ratnāvalī* 1.1:

pādāgrasthitayā muhuḥ stanabharaṇānīyā namratām
śambhoḥ sasprhalocanatrāyapatham yāntyā tadārādhane |
hīmatyā śirasihitāḥ sapulakasvedodgamotkampayā
viśliṣyan kusumāñjalir girijayā kṣipto 'ntare pātu vah ||

The Daughter of the Mountain stood on her toes,
 but the weight of her breasts kept forcing her to bow low again and again.
 As she brought her offering to Shambhu,
 she came within the range of his three eyes full of desire,
 which so embarrassed her that her skin thrilled
 and she trembled and broke out in a sweat,
 and so the handful of flowers meant for the top of his head
 slipped and fell between them, and may they protect you.

(Translation Doniger 2006: 67)

53 ABh ad nś 4.61cd–62ab, vol. 1, p. 96: *atrodāharaṇam dikpradarśanāya 'abhijai malavimukkakamaḷāsaṇauditassa' ityādāv anena vākyārthābhinayaḥ* [Σ_M , °*ābhinaye* Σ_E]. *nātye 'pi 'pādāgrasthitayā' ityādāv upasaṃhāravākhyārthābhinaye idam eva yuktaṃ karaṇam, yan* [$E_{1(2)}^{pc} E_2$, na $\Sigma_M E_{1(1)}$] *nṛttasya* [corr., *nṛtyasya* D $M_1 T_1^{pc} E_1$, *nṛtvasya* $T_1^{ac} T_6 T_7$, *nṛttena* E_2] *pādāgrasthitatvasya* [$\Sigma_M E_1$, °*agrasthitatvena* E_2] *kusumāñjalikṣepah*.

talapuṣpapaṭa at the end of the enactment was executed to indicate that the different words—enacted word-for-word by gestures, body movements, and expressions—had to be grasped as part of a single sentence.⁵⁴

If such interpretation is correct, the two examples of *vākyārthābhinaya* and *padārthābhinaya*—the first used in the enactment of a Prakrit or Apabhraṃśa sentence, thus probably referring to one of the new performative genres, the second in the context of a dramatic performance—are diametrically opposed to the use of *vākyārthābhinaya* and *padārthābhinaya* theorized by Dhanika, who links these two terms to the enactment of *rasas* and *bhāvas*, respectively, and thus uses this differentiation to set up an opposition between *nāṭya* and *nṛtya*. The choice of examples by Abhinavagupta might not have been a matter of coincidence, but carefully planned, aimed at forestalling any default association of cases of the enactment of sentence meanings and word meanings with performances containing *rasas* or *bhāvas*, and the idea of a hierarchy of the performative genres as being based on a difference in the object enacted and the mode of enactment.⁵⁵

Abhinavagupta typically illustrates the application of each *karaṇa* to some dramatic situation based on their capacity to render the emotions or actions that form the objects of sentences. Among these objects figure the *sthāyi-*, *vyabhicāri-*, and *sāttvika-bhāvas*, but never the *rasas*.⁵⁶ Interestingly, the literary examples given for these uses are mainly in Prakrit or Apabhraṃśa, with just a few in Sanskrit, taken from dramatic dialogues. Given as they are out of context and in a fragmentary form, these quotations unfortunately cannot be traced to any extant source, and their text in Prakrit/Apabhraṃśa is too cor-

54 This interpretation finds support in another mention of the same stanza in connection with the representation through hand gestures in the chapter on *hastābhinaya* (ch. 9), where it is said that the psychophysical states normally expressed by horripilation, perspiration, and tremor (in the compound *sapulakasvedodgamotkampayā*) ascribed to Pārvaṭī do not entail that an actor take recourse to psychophysical enactment (*sāttvikābhinaya*). On the contrary, they can also be enacted by means of hand gestures. See ABh ad NŚ 9.171, vol. 2, p. 66.

55 On Dhanika's forging of the correspondence between *rasa* as the object of the sentence in *vākyārthābhinaya*, expressed through the representation of the determinants, consequents, and transitory states, and *bhāva* as the object of *padārthābhinaya*, see above n. 22.

56 The examples for *karaṇas* used in the enactment of *bhāvas* are indeed numerous: the *karaṇa vartita* (k. 2) is used for *asūyāvākyārthābhinaya* and *roṣavākyārthābhinaya*; *apaviddha* (k. 4) for *asūyākopavākyārthābhinaya*; *kaṭicchinna* (k. 11) for *vismayapradhānavākyārthābhinaya*; *talasaṅghaṭṭita* (k. 93) for *anukampāpradhāne vākyārthe*; and so on. On the difficulty, in Abhinavagupta's theory, of enacting the *rasas*, see § 3.3. Some preliminary considerations can also be found in Ganser 2007, especially pp. 77–78.

rupt to be even tentatively restored to an intelligible meaning.⁵⁷ Besides their use in association with a text, other commonly recognized uses for the *karaṇas* in a play are for the entrances of characters (*praveśa*) and their movements around the stage (*parikrama*), for enacting specific characters or character types, for their gaits (*gati*), and for battle scenes.⁵⁸ Thus, in Abhinavagupta's opinion, *karaṇas* can be used in dance without conveying any meaning, as well as in acting, with a representational function, in a way similar to other codified bodily movements. The rationale for using each *karaṇa* in such an expressive way is suggested by its name—the *karaṇa* called *mayūra*, for example, can be used to represent the peacock's dance—or by the elements with which they are formed, which in other contexts are used to convey meaning—*abhinayahastas*, for instance.⁵⁹ Such dramatic uses of *karaṇas* justify, in Abhinavagupta's view,

- 57 During a research stay in Pune in 2009, I had the opportunity to discuss these quotations with R.P. Poddar, an eminent scholar of Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa literature. Although he generously provided me with tentative Sanskrit *chāyās*, Poddar himself deemed it impossible to restore the text to a comprehensible form, nor could he associate the language of the fragments with any known literary Prakrits with certainty. Herman Tieken, whom I also consulted regarding these passages, was of the same opinion: all of them are corrupt beyond restoration. Besides the lack of original sources, the manuscripts in fact exhibit great variation in these quotations. The fact that most of them are in Prakrit or Apabhraṃśa might point to some of the new genres as their source, or to *dhruvā* songs inserted into the body of the play. On the connection of *dhruvās* with dance movements, especially in the form of gaits, used in the entries of characters etc., see Translation, n. 76.
- 58 A few examples of how such uses are assigned to the various *karaṇas* by Abhinavagupta are: *vikṣiptākṣiptaka* (k. 21) *gamanāgamanapradhāne vākyārthe*; *bhramaraka* (k. 36) *uddhataparibhramaṇaviśaye*; *vyamsita* (k. 48) for *vibhramādirikramaviśayam*; *krāntaka* (k. 51) *uddhataparikrame*; *pārśvakrānta* (k. 63) *raudrapradhāne bhīmasenādeh parikrame*; *nistambhita* (k. 64) *maheśvarābhīnayaśayam*; *elakākriḍita* (k. 97) *adhamaprakṛtigati- viśayam*; *lalātatilaka* (k. 50) *vidyādharaḡatiśayam*; *ākṣipta* (k. 55) *vidūśakagatiśayam*; *pṛṣṭhasvastika* (k. 16) *yuddhaviśaye parikrame*; *pārśvajānu* (k. 73) *yuddhaniyuddhaviśa- yam*. Apart from being implied by the mention of *gatiparikrama*, the movements used for the entrances and movements of the actors on stage, more examples of the use of *karaṇas* in the entrance of specific characters are provided at the end of the chapter. See ABh ad Nś 4.320, vol. 1, p. 204: *praveśe śvatthāmmaḡ sūcividdhordhvajānvādi. purūraso 'la- pallavasūci. garuḡasya garuḡaplutakam. rāvaṇasya puṣkaro vaiśākharecitakaḡ. vatsarāja- syāḡnisamḡbhramo 'tikrāntaḡ* [E₁₍₁₎^{pc}, 'ntaḡ E₁₍₁₎^{ac}]. *jaṭāyūṣo grdhrāvalīnakam elakākriḡdi- taḡ ceti.*
- 59 This is presented as the opinion of Abhinavagupta's master Bhaṭṭa Tauta, reported in the commentary on the *karaṇa vikṣiptākṣiptaka* (k. 21), to which no expressive uses are assigned. See ABh ad Nś 4.81cd–82ab, vol. 1, pp. 107–108: *upādhyāyās tv āhuḡ—abhinaya- hastā ye vakṣyante tatpradhānasya karaṇasya vākyārthābhīnaye prayogāḡ. na tu kevala- vartanāpradhānasya kevalanṛttahastapradhānasya vā. tasya tu nṛtte prayogaḡ prādhānye- na. anye tu kadācid aḡgavicchedarakṣane yathāyogam abhinayāntarāle gatiparikrame* [E₁₍₁₎^{pc}, *gatiparikrama* E₁₍₁₎^{ac}] *tālāntarasamḡdhāne yuddhaniyuddhacārīsthānake sañcāre*

the fact that not all of the 108 *karaṇas* enumerated and defined by Bharata are used in the formation of *aṅgahāras* in the *pūrvarāṅga*. If one looks at the definitions of the *aṅgahāras* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, it appears that the same restricted set of *karaṇas* (more or less thirty in number) is given over and over again. The textual locus for avoiding such incongruence is assigned by Abhinavagupta to NS 4.55cd–56ab, a verse in which Bharata connects the group of *karaṇas* with a few dramatic situations. At the same time, the verse is taken by Abhinavagupta as sanctioning the use of dance for dramatic purposes:

The following doubt might be raised: ‘The [enumeration of the *karaṇas*] has been said to end at 108. But when [the *karaṇas*] are used in the *aṅgahāras*, [their number] is decreased from this fixed number. Therefore, what is the use of determining such a number?’ Anticipating [such a doubt], [Bharata] utters [the verse]:

‘This group of 108 [*karaṇas*, has been stated by me with reference to dance (*nṛtta*), fighting (*yuddha*), and hand-to-hand fighting (*niyuddha*), as well as for moving around (the stage) with the gaits (*gati-parikrama*) (NS 4.55cd–56ab)].⁶⁰

That which will be called ‘dance’ as an element of dramatic acting (*abhināya*) is employed [in theatre] because it hides the gaps occurring in between the various enactments.⁶¹ ‘In fighting and hand-to-hand fighting, as well as for moving around [the stage] with the gaits’: even in fighting with weapons and in hand-to-hand fighting, [this group of *karaṇas*] is used for [displaying a certain] excellence (*sausthava*) in the use of

vā prayoga iti. etac ca sarvatrānusaraṇīyam. ‘My master, for his part, maintains that the *karaṇas* used for enacting sentence meaning are those that have as their predominant element one of the narrative hand gestures treated [in chapter 9], and not those that contain mainly whirls or dance hand gestures. These [abstract *karaṇas*] are used mainly in dance. According to others, sometimes these [*karaṇas*] can be used, as the occasion demands, in the gaps [occurring] between the [various] representations in order to prevent breaks in the body movement. [Moreover, they can also be used] for moving around [the stage] with gaits in combination with different rhythms, and in the movements [associated] with postures and foot movements in fighting and hand-to-hand fighting. And this [use of the *karaṇas*] has to be followed in every case.’

60 NS 4.55cd–56ab: *aṣṭottaraśataṃ hy etat karaṇānāṃ mayoditam | nṛtte yuddhe niyuddhe ca tathā gatiparikrame ||*

61 This is most certainly a hint at NS 8.14, where Bharata treats dance as an element of bodily acting, cf. n. 43. As hinted at above, the idea that the function of dance as an element of dramatic representation is to hide the possible gaps between the various enactments, so that the spectator can grasp the fiction as a continuum, is expressed by Abhinavagupta through the metaphor of the fire-wheel, on which see § 3.4.2 and n. 175.

limbs.⁶² And [the *karaṇas* are also used] independently for moving around [the stage], i.e. for circumambulating [it] with the gaits, which will be stated separately in the chapter on gaits (ch. 12). Therefore, since one sees that [the *karaṇas*] are used [in drama] independently [of the *aṅgahāras*], it is not pointless [to say that they] are 108. We will now state their usages (*vinīyoga*).⁶³

While the use of dance movements in fighting scenes and in moving around the stage can be seen in terms of an aesthetic stylization of the body movement, which does not imply any mimetic function, the use of *karaṇas* and dance as elements of dramatic acting (*abhinaya*) requires further consider-

62 The tenth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, dealing mainly with the foot movements called *cārīs*, provides some clues for the use of dance in connection with fighting scenes or battles. Bharata states that in *vyāyāma*—a bodily training connected with fighting and based on the *cārīs*—the *aṅgahāras* are used to embellish the performance, since they are endowed with the excellence of the limbs (*aṅgasauṣṭhava*) (cf. Nś 10.88cd–89ab). Commenting on this verse, Abhinavagupta explains that Bharata starts his exposition on the *cārīs* with *vyāyāma*, since this is necessary for achieving excellence (vol. 2, p. 114: *aṅgasauṣṭhavaṃ yad uktaṃ tasya siddhaye parikaram āha vyāyāmam iti*). Judging from this and other connected passages, an important place was given to fighting scenes in Sanskrit theatre, which is quite understandable given the natural predominance of action in fights and battles and their consequent suitability for the stage. The fact that these scenes were executed by means of codified dance movements must have made them particularly enjoyable to the public. The definition of *sauṣṭhava*, the excellence in bodily limbs achieved through physical exercise, is repeated twice in the current GOS edition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, in Nś 4.60cd–61ab and Nś 10.92cd–93ab: *kaṭī karaṇasamā yatra kū-rparāṃśaśīrasaṁ tathā || samunnatam uraś caiva sauṣṭhavaṃ nāma tad bhavet |* ‘When the hips are aligned with the ears, and the elbows, shoulders and head [are aligned with one another], [and] the chest is lifted up, one speaks of “excellence” (*sauṣṭhava*).’ As Lyne Bansat-Boudon remarks, this double definition suggests that the concept of *sauṣṭhava*—which she translates as ‘la grâce des membres’ (1992: 264–265, n. 27)—was essential to both dance and theatre, as is also confirmed in Nś 10.90cd–91ab (cf. § 3.1, n. 30). From the various occurrences of the term *sauṣṭhava* listed in Bansat-Boudon (ibid.), it appears that *sauṣṭhava* refers to a position of the body that appears natural, but is in reality acquired through exercise and requires harmony and equilibrium to be maintained. The embodiment of *sauṣṭhava*, the excellence or grace of the limbs, is represented by the archer (ibid.).

63 ABh ad Nś 4.55cd–56ab, vol. 1, p. 94: *aṣṭādihikaṃ śatam iti paryantam uktaṃ yad aṅgahāropayogi tv iyatasamkhyāpratyastamayam* [E₁₍₁₎, *nīyatasamapratyasta*° E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎] *iti kim anena samkhyānirūpaṇenety āśaṅkyāha—*aṣṭottaraśatam ityādīnā. *abhinaye vastutvena yan nṛtṭam vakṣyate ‘bhīnāyāntarālavartīcchidrapracchādanādāv etat prayujyate. ‘nṛtṭe yuddhe nīyuddhe ca tathā gatīparīkrame’ iti. śāstrādīyuddhe bāhuyuddhe cāṅgaprayoga-sauṣṭhavārtham api prayujyate. pṛthaktayā gatyadhyāyavakṣyamāṅsū ca gatiṣu ye parīkramāḥ parīkramaṇāni tatra pṛthak, tena pṛthaktvena prayogadarśanād aṣṭottaraśatavāṇ na nopayogi. eṣa ca yathā vinīyogo bhaviṣyati tathā samanantaram eva vakṣyāmah.*

ation. Although dance is mentioned by Bharata in connection with certain dramatic situations, and dance scenes are certainly seen as contributing, in some of the extant plays, to the development of the plot, in the chapter on dance its role is mainly explained with reference to the *pūrvarāṅga*, while its mimetic potential is never explored or even mentioned explicitly there. Abhinavagupta extends the use of dance to the dramatic context, but is cautious in doing so: the narrative usages he mentions for the *karāṇas* mainly depend on a single element forming them, and the example from the *nāṇḍī* of the *Ratnāvalī* shows that they could be used alongside other gestures and bodily movements when the meanings expressed in the text to be enacted and the visual forms created by the movements of a *karāṇa* matched. The use of a *karāṇa* there, however, is justified not exclusively on the grounds of resemblance, but by the necessity of conveying the content of a verse containing several individual enactments as a single meaningful unit grasped without gaps by the spectators. This function of dance within dramatic acting, which sometimes—but not necessarily—includes a mimetic element, is emphasized time and again by Abhinavagupta and represents an original point of view on dance.⁶⁴ The aesthetic consequences of Abhinavagupta's interpretive strategy will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Apart from the dramatic usages mentioned, *karāṇas* form the basic building blocks of the *aṅgaḥāras*. Although, theoretically, their number could be infinite, just as the possible combinations of the *karāṇas* could be, the *aṅgaḥāras* are given in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as thirty-two. Abhinavagupta justifies such a limited number in view of their superior beauty since, unlike the *karāṇas*, these are used principally in the *pūrvarāṅga* to please both the spectators and the gods.⁶⁵

64 The fact that this is presented as an *upaniṣad*, a 'secret teaching' (cf. n. 45 above), suggests the novelty of such an interpretation.

65 See ABh ad Nś 4.27cd, vol. 1, p. 89: *aṣṭottare karāṇasate jñāte catuṣṣaṣṭīkarāṇayojanayātrutiṭāṅgagatyā yady apy ānantyam aṅgaḥārāṇāṃ tathāpi *prādhānyād dṛṣṭaphalaṃ* [D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, *prādhānyādṛṣṭa*° T₄] *praty adhikoparaktatayā dvātriṃśan nāmato nirdiṣṭāḥ, na tu pariḡaṇanam etat*. 'When the 108 *karāṇas* are known, through the combination of [even] sixty-four *karāṇas*, in which the movement of the limbs is continuous, innumerable *aṅgaḥāras* [are formed]. However, only thirty-two have been mentioned by name, since they are principal in the [production of a] visible result (*dṛṣṭa*), owing to their exceedingly appealing [nature] (*adhika-uparaktatā*). But this is no complete enumeration.' I do not follow the reading *adrṣṭaphala*, preferred by some—for instance Lath (1998: 74, n. 6)—and supported only by T₄. '*Adrṣṭaphala*' literally means 'invisible result', and normally refers to a result that is otherworldly and known only through the *śāstra*. Although such a result is connected to dance in that, by pleasing the gods, it tethers the performer to some kind of otherworldly outcome, here the thirty-two sequences forming *aṅgaḥāras* are said to be endowed with superior beauty, imagined as a capacity for allure, as the term *uparaktatā*

The dancer, explains Abhinavagupta, executes the *aṅgahāras* at the time of the *vardhamāna* by performing them in a square, facing the four directions of the stage and finishing with their fronts to the public.⁶⁶ Half of the *aṅgahāras* are executed to a rhythmical accompaniment of three beats (*tryaśra-tāla*), and the other half to an accompaniment of four beats (*caturaśra-tāla*), according to the number of *karaṇas* they contain.⁶⁷

Besides being made of *karaṇas*, the *aṅgahāras* also contain other movements called *recakas*. Their brief descriptions appear to single out movements executed with the hands, feet, hips, and neck that did not find canonization in the chapters on bodily representation. Despite an evident gap in the written tradition for the performance of *recakas*, Abhinavagupta feels compelled to justify their inclusion in the treatise as dance units, since Bharata mentions them along with *karaṇas*, *aṅgahāras*, and *piṅḍibandhas* as the components of the dance transmitted by Śiva through Taṇḍu. First of all, their separate mention is explained through their having a separate invisible result, and their use is confined to performances in which vocal and instrumental music that is delicate prevail. Secondly, Tumburu is quoted as an authority, holding that *recakas* should be known, together with the *karaṇas*, from the definitions of the *aṅgahāras*, thus justifying the lack of separate definitions for them.⁶⁸

(from the Sanskrit root *raj/rañj*) indicates. It would not be totally out of place to argue, however, that such pleasure belongs both to the spectators and to the gods, and could result, in the case of the latter, in the grant of a religious boon and therefore in an invisible result, whence a possible ambiguity in the reading *dr̥ṣṭa/adr̥ṣṭa*. On the use of *dr̥ṣṭa* and *adr̥ṣṭa* in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, see Ganser 2016, and on the otherworldly results of dance, see Ganser (forthcoming).

66 ABh ad NŚ 4.217, vol. 1, p. 149: *aṅgahāreṣu madhye pariḥṣamāṇo munir etad āha—sarveṣu eva cāṅgahāreṣu pāścātyaṅ karaṇadvayaṅ varjayitvā vartanīyāni karaṇāni. tāni caturdīn-mukheṣu prayujya saṃmukham antye karaṇadvayena pūrayed iti.* ‘In the middle of the explanation of the *aṅgahāras*, the Muni states the following: in all the *aṅgahāras*, the *karaṇas* should be executed while turning around, with the exception of the last couple of *karaṇas*. Having performed the [*karaṇas*] in the four directions, at the end he should complete [the movement] with the [last] couple of *karaṇas* [performed] facing [the audience].’

67 See ABh ad NŚ 247cd, vol. 1, p. 160, whose musicological details exceed my expertise.

68 ABh ad NŚ 4.248cd–249ab, vol. 1, pp. 161–162: *prthagadr̥ṣṭārthataḥkhyāpanārthaṃ* [corr. Raghavan E₁₍₄₎, *prthagdr̥ṣṭa*° E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎] *caīṣāṅ karaṇāṅgahārāntarbhūtānām apy upādānam. sukumāragītavādyapradhāne ca prayoga eṣāṅ prayogaḥ. tumburuṇedam uktam: ‘aṅgahārābhīdhānāt tu karaṇai recakān viduḥ |’* I follow Raghavan (1980: 187), who first proposed to emend *prthagdr̥ṣṭā* to *prthagadr̥ṣṭā*° on the basis of Jāyaseṇapāti’s *Nṛttaratnāvalī*, where the *recakas* are qualified, most probably on the basis of an original reading *adr̥ṣṭa* in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, as *puṅyasampattihetu-* (NR 4.376: *prayuktāḥ puṅyasampattihetavo recakā ime*).

The ordered sequence of the dance units and their set, numbered items, to which sometimes even otherworldly fruits are assigned, might give the impression of a certain fixity in the phenomena codified in the authoritative texts. However, the commentary provides us with a nuanced picture in which innovation is not only acceptable, but finds its way into the text at precisely those times when the living tradition is not able to fill in the time gap separating the root text from its commentary.⁶⁹ Abhinavagupta's theoretical justification of change and innovation within tradition will be dealt with at the end of this chapter.

2.3 Between Gender and Genre: *tāṇḍava*, *sukumāra*, *lāsya*

The categories of *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* nowadays form part and parcel of the common vocabulary of every contemporary performer of 'classical' Indian dance. Most generally, they are used today to refer to two opposite qualities of dance movement, the first vigorous and vehement, the second graceful and delicate. Sometimes, these qualities are attributed to the gender of the performer: a man will naturally dance with vigorous movements, and a woman with soft ones. The opposition, in other cases, has been regarded as depending upon the social status and traditional background of the performer. From this perspective, *tāṇḍava* is identified with a polished dance, especially as promoted during the 'revival' of Indian dance by Rukmini Devi, and having the dance of Śiva in his Naṭarāja form as its main theme, while *lāsya* is identified with the style of the Devadāsīs, centred on erotic themes.⁷⁰

Whereas *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* are generally deemed to stem from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Kapila Vatsyayan has noted that the opposition in Bharata's text is actually between *tāṇḍava* and the *sukumāra-prayoga*, 'the delicate performance': 'Normally, in contemporary usage, the term [*lāsya*] has been used in opposition to the term *tāṇḍava* in the field of dance. Bharata does not establish these as a pair. For Bharata this is a type of solo composition where an actor performs different roles without change of costume' (Vatsyayan 1996: 93). Bharata, she continues, divided dance into '*tāṇḍava* and *sukumāra* as modes of rendering without specifically relating them to male and female' (ibid.: 121). This innovation she attributes to Nandikeśvara, who divided dance into *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* and attributed them to male and female (ibid.).

69 This is the case, for instance, with Abhinavagupta's religious interpretation of the *piṇḍī-bandhas*, on which see Ganser (forthcoming).

70 Cf. Allen 1997: 80. On Rukmini Devi and the 'revival' of Indian dance, see § 1.2, n. 32.

Contemporary views on *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* as specifically masculine and feminine types of dancing were certainly influenced by the wide circulation of the *Abhinayadarpaṇa* of Nandikeśvara and its narrative of the origin of the dramatic lore.⁷¹ According to this narrative, first recorded in the thirteenth-century *Samṅītaratnākara*, after Brahmā's gift of the knowledge of theatre to Bharata, a performance was shown to Śiva. Recollecting his vehement (*uddhata*) dance, Śiva performed it and had Taṇḍu and his attendants show it to Bharata, while Pārvatī showed him the *lāsya*. Having learned the *tāṇḍava* from Tāṇḍu, Bharata instructed the mortals in this dance, and Pārvatī instructed Uṣa, the daughter of Bāṇa, in *lāsya*. She, in her turn, taught it to the shepherdesses of Dvārvatī, and they to the other women of Saurāṣṭra. In this manner, dance came to be established in the world thanks to an uninterrupted line of transmission.⁷²

The narrative of the origin of dance championed in the *Samṅītaratnākara* and the *Abhinayadarpaṇa* has many elements in common with the one in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. In the latter, however, the *tāṇḍava* is granted by Śiva with the instruction to use it in the *pūrvarāṅga*, and there is no mention of a parallel instruction in dance by Pārvatī. Indeed, Śiva simply recollects his own dance, embellished by *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras*, and asks Taṇḍu to instruct Bharata in dance so that he can use it in the preliminary rite in order to make it variegated (Nś 4.13–16ab).⁷³ Pārvatī is mentioned dancing in the delicate mode (*sukumāra prayoga*) only later on in connection with the myth of Dakṣa, namely after the exposition of the full catalogue of the *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras* taught by Taṇḍu. This myth is embedded into the main narrative to justify the origin of the *piṇḍī-bandhas* and their inclusion in Taṇḍu's teaching. According to this, Śiva started to dance upon the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice, and Pārvatī joined him with the delicate performance (Nś 4.249cd–253ab).⁷⁴ Again, no specific mention of the character of Śiva's dance can be found in this episode, where the god is simply said to dance with *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras*. Nor is there any characterization of Śiva's dance in the first chapter, when Bharata recalls it for the sake of introducing the gorgeous manner (*kaiśikī vṛtti*) in the performance of a play. The gorgeous manner, recognized in the dance of Śiva, is characterized by the presence of *aṅgahāras* and its connection with the *rasas* and *bhāvas*, in par-

71 On the success of the *Abhinayadarpaṇa* in connection with the revival of Indian dance, see § 1.2.

72 See SR 7.3cd–8 and, with minor variants in AD 2–7.

73 See § 1.3.3, n. 75.

74 See § 1.3.3, n. 82.

ticular *śṛṅgāra*. For its performance in theatre, the Apsarases were provided, since men alone were deemed unsuitable (NŚ 1.44–47ab).⁷⁵

From these cursory references to dance and its transmission in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, a few facts emerge: first of all, the dance of Śiva is not necessarily vehement; secondly, in theatre dance is performed especially by women (including the *tāṇḍava* of the *pūrvaraṅga*); and lastly, Pārvatī dances in the delicate style but has no active role in the transmission of dance. Before looking more closely at Abhinavagupta's take on this matter, it would be useful to see to what extent a delicate and a vehement style of dance can be traced to the extant version of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and what this opposition consists of there.

2.3.1 *Grace and Vehemence in the Nāṭyaśāstra*

The crucial passage sealing the opposition between *tāṇḍava* and *sukumāraprayoga* is certainly NŚ 4.268cd–269ab, where a general account of how Taṇḍu connected dance with music is presented, before moving on to the details of the application of dance to the musical structures of the *pūrvaraṅga*, i.e. the *vardhamāna* and the *gītakas*:

Generally, the performance of the *tāṇḍava* should be based on the praise of the deities, while the delicate performance (*sukumāraprayoga*) is the receptacle of the amorous *rasa* (*śṛṅgārarasasambhava*).

NŚ 4.268cd–269ab⁷⁶

It appears that this passage does not involve any distinction based on the gender of the performer, but rather one depending on the theme and result one wants to obtain in connection with dance. The link of the delicate performance with the amorous *rasa* is not straightforward, as it is difficult to see how dance could produce a *rasa*. Moreover, we are seemingly still in the domain of the *pūrvaraṅga*, in which the production of *rasa* is not the foremost concern. This passage can be connected with a couple of verses later on, in which the ideas contained here *in nuce* are elaborated on:

That limb (*aṅga*) [of a song] that is based on the praise of the deities (*devastutyāśraya*) should be performed by means of the vehement (*uddhata*) *aṅgahāras* of Maheśvara. But the song that, having as its basis a

75 See §1.3.3, n. 65.

76 NŚ 4.268cd–269ab: *prāyeṇa tāṇḍavavidhir devastutyāśrayo bhavet || sukumāraprayogaś ca śṛṅgārarasasambhavaḥ |*

man and a woman, is linked with the amorous *rasa*, should be performed by means of the delicate (*lalita*) *aṅgahāras* created by the Goddess.

NŚ 4.311–312⁷⁷

We understand from these verses that the theme—either the praise of the deities or the amorous sentiment based on a pair of lovers—is embedded in the song, while the dance used to render it has either a forceful or a soft character, which in turn is connected with the type of *aṅgahāras* performed by the prototypical dancers: those of the God, imbued with a forceful vehemence, or those of the goddess, playful with grace. An implicit opposition between a masculine, vehement dance, called *tāṇḍava*, and a feminine, delicate dance, called *sukumāra prayoga*, used to render different topics in connection with songs, can thus be traced back to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

The use of grace and vehemence as qualifiers of performance can be found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* also outside the specific domain of dance. In particular, a double orientation of the *prayoga*—delicate (*sukumāra*) or vigorous (*āviddha*)—configures a differentiation between the dramatic genres:

The performance is known to be of two types on the basis of the dramatic genres: delicate (*sukumāra*) or vigorous (*āviddha*), according to their aptness to the play [or: according to the various *bhāvas* and *rasas*].⁷⁸

To the *sukumāra* category belong the *Nāṭaka*, *Prakaraṇa*, *Bhāṇa* *Vithi*, and *Aṅka* genres (NŚ 13.64; NŚ 26.25cd): these are based on the amorous *rasa* (*śṛṅgāra*) that is performed by women (NŚ 26.27ab). Among the characteristics of the vehement type of performance, on the other hand, Bharata lists the presence of fights performed by men (NŚ 26.27cd) and the use of vigorous (*āviddha*) *aṅgahāras* (NŚ 13.60ab; NŚ 26.28cd). To this category belong the dramatic genres of the *Ḍima*, *Samavakāra*, *Vyāyoga*, and *Īhāmṛga* (NŚ 13.62ab; NŚ 26.30cd).⁷⁹

77 NŚ 4.311–312: *devastutyāśrayakṛtaṃ yad aṅgaṃ tu bhaved atha | māheśvarair aṅgahārair uddhatais tat prayojayet || yat tu śṛṅgārasambaddhaṃ gānaṃ strīpuruṣāśrayam | devīkṛtair aṅgahārair lalitaṃ tat prayojayet ||*

78 NŚ 13.59: *prayogo dvidvidhaś caiva vijñeyo nāṭakāśrayaḥ | sukumāras tathāviddho nāṭya-yuktisamāśrayaḥ [nānābhāvarasāśrayaḥ NŚ 26.25b] ||* The same verse appears twice: in NŚ 13.59, after the explanation of the stage division (*kakṣyāvibhāga*) and local usages (*pravṛtti*) and before the conventions (*dharmī*), as well as in NŚ 26.24cd–25ab, the chapter on the distribution of roles (*prakṛtivilkalpa*).

79 Among the ten dramatic genres listed in NŚ 18.2–3 only the *Prahasana* is missing from this twofold categorization.

It should be noted that although the quality of movement in a play ultimately depends on its textual material, and although in the *pūrvaraṅga* the opposition between vehement and delicate performance is traced back to the dance of the two gods, the passage on the *kaiśikī* in the first chapter makes it crystal clear that Śiva can also opt for the graceful dance movements connected with the amorous *rasa*. On the other hand, the exclusive mention of female dancers in the *pūrvaraṅga* suggests that women dancers could perform both the *tāṇḍava* and the *sukumāra prayoga*.

Before proceeding to address how Abhinavagupta weaves all these threads together—including the fact that Pārvatī does not play any role in the transmission of dance, and that male performers are excluded from the *kaiśikī*—let me first say a few words about the term *lāsya*, as it occurs in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. First of all, Bharata uses the term *lāsya* both as a substantive and as an adjective. As a substantive, it functions as a collective term designating the ten *lāsyaṅgas*, whose list and definitions appear in two different chapters in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*: in chapter 19, at the end of the discussion on *sandhis* and *sandhyaṅgas* or plot divisions, and in chapter 31, after the descriptions of the structures of the various musical compositions used in the *pūrvaraṅga*. The definition of *lāsya* is given in NŚ 31.331–332ab as follows:

It is called *lāsya* because of the playful action (*lasana*) [it embodies], based as it is on the relationship between men and women. It is known to have a single topic, or several ones, [in connection] with [its] limbs. It should be performed by a single character just like the Bhāṇa, and its theme should be suggested.⁸⁰

As argued by Lyne Bansat-Boudon (1992: 281–340), the treatment of the *lāsyaṅgas* in two different chapters is not simply a matter of repetition, but signifies a difference in the phenomena: the *lāsyaṅgas* described in the thirty-first chapter are short dance and musical pieces executed in the preliminary rite, while those described in the nineteenth chapter are different ‘amorous vignettes’ (Jamison 1997: 390) or beautiful fragments centred on the theme of love, conceived by the theatre director or the actor and integrated into the performance of the play as the occasion arises. Unlike the *lāsyaṅgas* of the *pūrvaraṅga*, which share the nature of dance, from which they are derived, the *lāsyaṅgas* of theatre are ultimately dramatic in nature. It is true that Bansat-Boudon’s interpretation relies

80 NŚ 31.331–332ab: *lasanāl lāsyam ity uktaṃ śrīpumbhāvasamāśrayam | ekārthaṃ pṛthagartham ca tad aṅgais tu prakīrtitam || bhāṇavac caikahāryaṃ syād uhyavastu tathā bhavet |*

heavily on Abhinavagupta's commentary; however, I see no hints in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* to suggest, as Kapila Vatsyayan (1996: 93) does, that 'the *lāsya* was a type of solo composition where an actor performs different roles without change of costume.' To be sure, within the definitions of the *lāsyaāṅgas* as solo pieces inserted into a theatrical performance, there are hints that some of them involved the heroine disguising herself as the lover or imitating his way of speaking in order to amuse her friend; however, nowhere is the interpreter of a *lāsyaāṅga* said to assume different roles one after the other. The descriptions in chapter 19 mainly suggest that *lāsyaāṅgas* were performed by a single character, a heroine, and that they involved vocal and instrumental music, sometimes even recitatives. Their theme was love, variously nuanced. Similarly, the *lāsyaāṅgas* of chapter 31 are said to be performed by women and based on amorous themes, but their descriptions focus especially on their structure in terms of instrumental music and songs. This, in brief, is what Abhinavagupta must have found in the text he set out to comment, which may be represented in the form of the following table.

TABLE 1 *Tāṇḍava* and *lāsya/sukumāra* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*

	<i>tāṇḍava</i>	<i>lāsya/sukumāra</i>
Prototypical dance performers	Śiva	Pārvatī
Type of dance	<i>Recakas</i> and <i>aṅgahāras</i>	<i>Sukumāraprayoga</i>
Type of dance in the <i>pūrvaraṅga</i>	<i>Tāṇḍava</i> : <i>uddhata aṅgahāras</i> of Śiva	<i>Sukumāraprayoga</i> : <i>lalita aṅgahāras</i> of Devī
Limbs of <i>pūrvaraṅga</i>	Based on <i>devastuti</i>	Based on a man and a woman, connected with <i>śṛṅgāra</i>
<i>Prayoga</i> in a play	<i>Āviddha</i> : contains fights performed with <i>āviddha aṅgahāras</i> by men	<i>Sukumāra</i> : based on <i>śṛṅgāra</i> , performed by women
		<i>Lāsyaāṅgas</i> in ch. 31: based on the relationship between men and women, performed by a single character
		<i>Lāsyaāṅgas</i> in ch. 19: based on the theme of love and performed by a single character

2.3.2 *Grace and Vehemence in the Abhinavabhāratī*

As will be clear from what follows, Abhinavagupta endeavours to better integrate the notions of grace implied by the terms *sukumāra* and *lāśya* and to oppose them more effectively to notions of vehemence, designated variously as *āviddha*, *uddhata*, etc. As a second step, he connects them both with the concept of *rasa* in terms of textual content. First of all, Abhinavagupta interprets the opposition between the vehement dance of Śiva and the delicate performance of Pārvatī as being suited to two kinds of *pūrvaraṅga*, each endowed with one of those qualities. Let us recall his commentary on Śiva's recommendation that Bharata add dance to the preliminaries of the *Amṛtamanthana Samavakāra* (NŚ 4.14ab):⁸¹

‘In this’ [*pūrvaraṅga*], i.e. in the course of the performance of the vehement (*uddhata*) *pūrvaraṅga*, appropriate to the play you wish to perform (i.e. the *Amṛtamanthana Samavakāra*), the *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras* are those performed by [Śiva]. The intention is in fact that in a delicate (*sukumāra*) *pūrvaraṅga*, on the contrary, the non-vehement *aṅgahāras* fashioned by the Goddess [should be performed].⁸²

Although the *Nāṭyaśāstra* never makes an explicit distinction between a vehement (*uddhata*) and a delicate (*sukumāra*) type of *pūrvaraṅga*, Abhinavagupta connects it implicitly with the distinction, mentioned in NŚ 4.311–312, between the prototypical dance movements performed by Maheśvara—the *uddhata aṅgahāras*—and those performed by the Goddess—the *lalita* or *anuddhata aṅgahāras*.⁸³ These verses contain practical instructions with regard to the type of *aṅgahāras* that the dancer should use in connection with some musical items in the *pūrvaraṅga*; however, the reference to the two gods here ideally connects the practice with the Dakṣa episode. This is in fact how Abhinavagupta understands the split in the practice of dance, namely when he quotes the relevant verse mentioning the *pas de deux* of the gods in his introduction to vv. 4.311–313:

81 § 1.3.3, n. 75.

82 ABh ad NŚ 4.14, vol. 1, pp. 87–88: *asminn iti. tvatprayuyukṣitaprayogicitodddhatapūrvaraṅgaprayogavidhau tatprayuktā ime karaṇāṅgahārāḥ. sukumārapūrvaraṅge tu devīkṛtā* [E₁₍₁₎^{pc} E₁₍₂₎^{ac}, *daivīkṛtā* Σ_M, *devyā kṛtā* E₁₍₁₎^{ac} E₁₍₂₎^{pc}] *anuddhatā aṅgahārā ityabhiprāyāt*. I propose to read, along with Kavi, *devīkṛtā*, which has a parallel in NŚ 4.312cd (*devīkṛtair aṅgahārair lalitais tat prayojayet* ||) The reading *devyā kṛtā* conjectured by Ramaswami Sastri is also possible, although not supported by the manuscripts, which read *daivīkṛtā*, while the confusion of *de* and *dai* is common in Indian scripts.

83 § 2.3.1, n. 77.

From the episode [quoted in 4.259cd–260ab] onwards, i.e. ‘Having seen Śaṅkara dancing with *recakas* and *aṅgahāras* and Pārvatī dancing in the delicate mode of performance (*sukumāraprayoga*)’, the nature of dance has been perceived as having two branches. [The author] announces this twofold division of dance with the three verses beginning with ‘[That limb,] which is based on the praise of the deities (*devastutyāśraya*), etc.’⁸⁴

This passage grounds the qualities of the dance movements in the two divine prototypical dancers. The choice of the dance to be displayed in the *pūrvaraṅga*, however, is independent of the gender of the human performer—a *nartakī* in every case—and is decided on the basis of the genre of the play to follow, according to the double orientation of the *prayoga*—*āviddha* or *sukumāra*—already allotted to the various genres by Bharata (cf. NŚ 13.59; NŚ 26.24cd–25ab, quoted above).

According to the parallelism inaugurated by Abhinavagupta, the vehement type of dance is particularly appropriate to the *pūrvaraṅga* performed by Bharata in front of Śiva, since this preceded the *Amṛtamanthana* Samavakāra and the *Tripuradāha* Ḍima, two genres listed among the vehement performances. In a similar vein, a distinction into two types of *pūrvaraṅga* based on the genre of the play to follow is endorsed in a passage of the *Abhinavabhāratī* in the chapter on rhythm (*tālādhyāya*, NŚ 31). The passage in question announces and justifies the definitions of the *lāsyaṅgas*, the musical and dance numbers used, according to Abhinavagupta, in a *pūrvaraṅga* of the *sukumāra* type. It moreover importantly introduces *rasa* as a new element for interpreting the twofold division of the theatrical genres:

This theatre is indeed twofold: vehement (*uddhata*) and delicate (*sukumāra*), since the heroic (*vīra*) and amorous (*śṛṅgāra*) [*rasas*]—present in the main character—are operative in the accomplishments of all the aims of man. Among the [two], the vehement (*samuddhata*) *pūrvaraṅga* [has been explained] in the first place, since it has the deeds of Maheśa as principal. As has been taught in the fourth chapter: ‘[That limb (*aṅga*), which is based on the praise of the deities (*devastutyāśraya*), should be performed] by means of the vehement (*uddhata*) *aṅgahāras* of Maheśvara’ (NŚ 4.31), and ‘[He who performs] this action of Maheśvara [will

84 ABh, *avataraṅikā* ad NŚ 4.31–313, vol. 1, p. 199: ‘vīkṣya śaṅkaram || sukumāraprayogeṇa nṛtyantūṃ caiva pārvatīm |’ ity upakramāt prabhṛti dviśākhavenaiva nṛttasvarūpam upadarśitam. tad atra dvividhe nṛttavibhāgam āha ślokatrayeṇa. devastutyāśrayam iti.

reach, free from all sins, the abode of Śiva)’ (Nś 4.319).⁸⁵ But in a play dominated by love, the *pūrvaraṅga* should be delicate (*sukumāra*). For if, in the fourth [chapter], the *lāsya* was generally alluded to along with the instructions on the use of the voice and body, the Sage [Bharata] in fact performed a vehement *pūrvaraṅga*, suitable to the Samavakāra, in front of the Lord. Maheśvara made that very [*pūrvaraṅga*] variegated [by means of dance]. With the same intention, the [following] verse [was uttered]: ‘[one song (*gīta*)] belonging to the group of songs [starting with the *madraka* should be executed here, or else the *vardhamāna*, when the *tāṇḍava* is performed]’ (Nś 5.13).⁸⁶ The word ‘here’ [in this verse is employed] to show that ‘here’, i.e. in the vehement [*pūrvaraṅga*], a *gītaka* [or] a *vardhamāna* [is performed], while ‘there’ [in the delicate *pūrvaraṅga*] a delicate (*sukumāra*) [song is performed].⁸⁷

Abhinavagupta states that the fourth and fifth chapters are concerned with the description of the vehement *pūrvaraṅga* and its limbs, while the thirty-first chapter describes the limbs used in the delicate *pūrvaraṅga*, namely those limbs collectively designated by the word *lāsya*. The *lāsyaṅgas* are thus ideally

85 Nś 4.319: *maheśvarasya caritaṃ ya idaṃ saṃprayojayet | sarvapāpaviśuddhātmā śivalokaṃ sa gacchati ||* For the interpretation of this verse in a soteriological context, see Ganser (forthcoming).

86 Nś 5.13: *gītānāṃ madrakādīnāṃ yojyam ekaṃ tu gītakaṃ | vardhamānaṃ athāpīha tāṇḍavaṃ yatra yujyate ||* This verse indicates an alternative for the first limb of the *pūrvaraṅga* performed after the drawing of the curtain (see n. 94 below): if the *pūrvaraṅga* is of the plain type (*suddha*), one song of the group starting with *madraka* is performed; if the *pūrvaraṅga*, on the contrary, is of the variegated type (*citra*), i.e. it involves a lot of dance, the *tāṇḍava* will be performed as the first limb, together with the *vardhamāna*. Both alternatives belong to the *uddhatapūrvaraṅga*, since the *sukumāra* type has other limbs, on which see below.

87 ABh ad Nś 31.331–332, vol. 4, p. 272: *idaṃ dvīvidhaṃ hi nāṭyam. uddhataṃ sukumāraṃ ca. vīraśrīgārayor eva nāyakaṃ ayor aśeṣapuruṣārthasiddhiṣu vyāpārāt. tatra prathame samuddhataḥ [conj., samudyataḥ M₁ E₁] pūrvaraṅgo maheśacaritaprādhānyena. yathoktaṃ caturthe [E₁ P^c, pañcame E₁ ac] ‘maheśvarair aṅgahārair [E₁, om. M₁] uddhatair’ iti ‘maheśvarasya caritaṃ’ iti ca. śrīngāraprādhāne tu nāṭye sukumāra eva pūrvaraṅgo. yadi hi prāyeṇa caturthe [corr., pañcame M₁ E₁] lāsyaṃ sūcitam, taṃ [E₁, om. M₁] vāgaṅganirūpaṇena. tatra hy uddhataḥ [E₁ M₁ P^c, uddhata° M₁ ac] samavakārasamucitaḥ [M₁ P^c, samavakāraḥ samucitaḥ M₁ ac, samavakāraḥ sūcitaḥ E₁] pūrvaraṅgo muninā bhagavadagre prayuktaḥ. tasyaiva parameśvareṇa citratā kṛtā [E₁, om. M₁]. tadabhiprāyeṇāha gītānāṃ iti śloke. ita samuddhate [E₁, samuddhatair M₁] gītakaṃ vardhamānaṃ tatra sukumāraṃ iti darśayitum ihety uktam. I propose, along with Ramaswami Sastri, to correct *pañcame* into *caturthe* here, since in the fifth chapter there is no mention whatsoever of *lāsya*, while in the fourth chapter Abhinavagupta refers to it.*

connected with the *sukumāra prayoga* of Pārvatī through the introduction of a *sukumāra pūrvaraṅga*, nowhere mentioned as such by Bharata but implicitly justified by his recognition of a category of *sukumāra* plays. The plays, moreover, are clearly distinguished here on the basis of the *rasa* that is principal in them: *uddhata* plays are permeated by *vīra*, delicate ones by *śṛṅgāra*.

In his commentary on the definition of *lāśya* in NŚ 31.331ab, *lasanāl lāśyam ity uktam śrīpumbhāvasamāśrayam*, Abhinavagupta explains *lāśya* in terms of *śṛṅgāra*, following the same constellation of opposites inaugurated by Bharata in the context of dance, where *tāṇḍava* corresponded to *devastuti*, and *sukumāra prayoga* to *śṛṅgārarasa*:

‘Playful action’ (*lasana*) means ‘play’ (*krīḍā*), i.e. the mental attachment of a woman to a man, or his love towards her. In saying ‘of men and women’, the amorous *rasa* is implied. Therefore, [the optative form] *lāśyam* actually means ‘entailing amorous play (*lāsa*), good at that’. This recalls what was stated in the fourth chapter, namely that ‘[t]he dialogue between a man and a woman[, which arises out of desire (*kāma*), is known as the delicate (*sukumāra*) (performance), which is the receptacle of the amorous *rasa* (*śṛṅgārarasasambhava*)]’^{88, 89}

The *lāśya* is thus conceptualized in terms very similar to the *sukumāra prayoga* prescribed for certain types of songs and situations in the fourth chapter, as a playful action linked with a dialogue expressing the amorous relationship between a man and a woman.⁹⁰ In terms of theatrical practice, the *lāśya* is embodied in the ten *lāśyāṅgas*, which are described by Bharata in NŚ 31 in the following order: *geyapada*, *sthitapāṭhya*, *āsīnapāṭhya*, *puṣpagaṇḍikā*, *pracchedaka*, *trimūḍhaka*, *saindhavaka*, *dvimūḍhaka*, *uttamottamaka*, and *uktapratyukta*. As Abhinavagupta interprets them, the *lāśyāṅgas* are the various items, containing songs and dance, used in the *sukumāra-pūrvaraṅga*, which in many ways parallel the limbs of the *uddhata-pūrvaraṅga* described in the fifth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.⁹¹ To every limb of the *uddhata-pūrvaraṅga*

88 NŚ 4.303: *śrīpūṣṇasayos tu saṃlāpo yas tu kāmasamudbhavaḥ | taj jñeyam sukumāraṃ hi śṛṅgārarasasambhavam ||*

89 ABh ad NŚ 31.331–332ab, vol. 4, p. 271: *lasanam krīḍā cittasaṃśleṣaḥ śrīyaḥ pūṣi tasya vā tasyām bhāvaḥ. śrīpūṣṇsety abhidhāne tu śṛṅgāra eva saṅgrhīto bhavet. tena lāsam arhati tatra sādhu lāśyam. anena tūryādhyāyoktam smāritam, śrīpūṣṇasayos tu saṃlāpa iti.*

90 Similarly, see also NŚ 4.269ab quoted above, n. 76 and in Translation, and NŚ 4.312 quoted above, n. 77.

91 The preliminary rite described in the fifth chapter contains nineteen ‘limbs’ (*aṅgas*) in total: nine of them are performed behind a curtain (*antaryavanikā-*), while the remaining

performed after the curtain is drawn (*bahiryavanikā*) Abhinavagupta assigns a corresponding element in the thirty-first chapter. For instance, instead of the *gītaka* or *vardhamāna* used in the *uddhata-pūrvaraṅga* as the first limb, the *sukumāra-pūrvaraṅga* features a song called *pāṇikā* (*gītavidhithāne pāṇikā*, vol. 4, p. 273).⁹² Both of these limbs contain dance: the first is performed with the vehement *aṅgahāras* originally associated with Śiva, the second with the delicate ones performed by Pārvatī (ibid., *pāṇikāprayogaḥ lalitair devīkṛtair aṅgahārair ity āha*).⁹³ Moreover, both dances are said to have a devotional function as the first limbs performed before the public (ibid., *stutiprayuktā pāṇiketi*).⁹⁴ The next two limbs, *utthāpana* and *parivartana*, are substituted in the delicate *pūrvaraṅga* by a single limb corresponding to the first *lāsyaṅga* *geyapada* (ibid., *geyapadaṃ samkṣepeṇothhāpanaparivartanayoḥ sthānam*). The second and third *lāsyaṅgas*, called *sthitapāṭhya* and *āsīnapāṭhya*, substitute the *nāndī* (ibid., pp. 274–276); the fourth *lāsyaṅga*, called *puṣpagaṇḍikā*, substitutes both the *śuṣkāvakraṣṭadhruvā* and the *raṅgadvāra* (ibid., p. 276); the fifth and seventh *lāsyaṅgas*, *pracchedaka* and *saindhavaka*, stand in the place of the *cārī* (ibid., pp. 277 and 280); the sixth and eighth, *trimūḍhaka* and *dvimūḍhaka*, stand in for the *mahācārī* (ibid., pp. 278 and 281); and the ninth, *uttamottamaka*, for the *trigata* (ibid., p. 281). No limb is specified for the tenth *lāsyaṅga*, *uktapratyukta*. Presumably, it stood for the *prarocanā*, the tenth and last limb of the *bahiryavanikā* group, which lacks a corresponding *lāsya* form.

The same opposition between vehement and delicate components is again implemented by Abhinavagupta in the fourth chapter, with reference to those limbs that are added at the end of the various songs in the two types of *pūrvaraṅga*: the *chandaka* (also known as *pratikṣepa*)⁹⁵ is one of the limbs performed with dance at the end of a *gītaka* in the *uddhata pūrvaraṅga*, while the *catuṣpadā* is performed after the *pāṇikā* in the *sukumāra pūrvaraṅga*, and it is said to be accompanied by dance and *lāsya* singing (*lāsyaḡāna*).⁹⁶ In this

ten are performed in front of the spectators after the curtain is drawn (*bahiryavanikā*). To the first group, belong the 1. *pratyāhāra*, 2. *avataraṅga*, 3. *ārambha*, 4. *āsrāvaṅā*, 5. *vaktrapāṇi*, 6. *parighaṭṭanā*, 7. *saṃghoṭanā*, 8. *mārgāsāritā*, and 9. *āsārita*. To the second, 1. *gītaka*/*vardhamāna*, 2. *utthāpana*, 3. *parivartana*, 4. *nāndī*, 5. *śuṣkāvakraṣṭa-dhruvā*, 6. *raṅgadvāra*, 7. *cārī*, 8. *mahācārī*, 9. *trigata*, and 10. *prarocanā*.

92 Note that the *pāṇikā* is not part of the *lāsyaṅgas*.

93 Clearly enough, this is a reference to NŚ 4.312, cf. n. 77.

94 The full passage quotes verses from NŚ chapter 5 to justify the devotional function of the *vardhamāna*: *uktāḥ hi pūrvam. gītakaṣu prayukteṣu devās tuṣyanti* (NŚ 5.47cd). *vardhamāne prayukte tu rudras tuṣyatīti* (NŚ 5.48ab). *kīrtanād devatānāḃ ca jñeyo gītavidhiḥ* (NŚ 5.21cd).

95 On the dance performed in the *pratikṣepas*, see Translation 7.2.5.

96 See ABh ad NŚ 4.310, vol. 1, p. 199: *evaṃ gītakāder ante cchandakam, pāṇikāyās tu lāsya-*

way, all kinds of musical compositions accompanied by dance find their source either in the dance performed by Śiva or in the one performed by Pārvatī, and their introduction into the *pūrvaraṅga* finds its justification in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* version of the myth of Dakṣa, which mentions the two gods dancing together.⁹⁷ From then onwards, says Abhinavagupta, dance is said to have two main varieties or branches, both of which are believed to have been taught by Taṇḍu.

Following Bharata's hint in NŚ 4.311–312, Abhinavagupta explains that the *aṅgahāras* of two types—vehement or delicate, depending on whether the god or the goddess performed the main *karaṇas* forming them—should be used in the vehement and delicate types of *pūrvaraṅga*. As to the quality of the dance movements, to the *uddhata aṅgahāras* belong, for instance, such *karaṇas* as *vidyudbhṛānta* (k. 65) and *garuḍaplutaka* (k. 70), and to the *lalita* type, the *karaṇas talapuṣpapuṭa* (k. 1), *līna* (k. 6), and *nitamba* (k. 85).⁹⁸ Other passages in the commentary on the single *karaṇas* suggest that some of them are considered particularly vehement (*uddhata/āviddha*), or to be used in connection with a vehement performance, while others are especially suited to a soft (*lalita*) performance. Examples of both are found among the uses assigned to single *karaṇas*.⁹⁹

All this points to an intrinsically gendered quality of dance movement, since the applications assigned to the *karaṇas* in connection with *uddhata* and *lalita* qualities are all abstract. They include circumambulations, gaits, etc. However, Abhinavagupta makes it a point to conceptualize the character of dance as a question of genre, not of gender. While commenting on Bharata's statement

gānasvikāriṇī catuṣpadā prayojyā. iyatā gītakādi pūrṇaṃ prayuktam. 'In this way, at the end of a *gītaka* and the like, a *chandaka* should be performed; at the end of the *pāṇikā*, a *catuṣpadā*, containing delicate singing. To this extent the group of songs is performed fully.'

97 The passage continues by recalling the Dakṣa episode, which can be considered as the *avataṛaṇikā* ad NŚ 4.311–313, translated above in n. 84.

98 ABh ad NŚ 4.311–312, vol. 1, p. 199: *uddhatair iti vidyudbhṛāntagaruḍaplutakādipradhānaiḥ. atra hetur yatas te maheśvaraprayuktāḥ. [...] lalitar iti talapuṣpapuṭalīnanitambādyāra-bdhaiḥ. atra hetuḥ yatas te devikṛtāḥ.*

99 Examples of vehement uses of *karaṇas* are: *bhramara* (k. 38): *etat uddhataparibhramāṇaviṣaye prayoktavyam; daṇḍakarecita* (k. 41): *uddhataviṣaye cāsya prayogaḥ; krānta* (k. 51): *uddhataparikrame śya prayogaḥ; cakramaṇḍalam* (k. 53) *uddhataparikramapariṣkaraṇādīviṣaye caitat; vikṣipta* (k. 58): *idam uddhatagatiparikramasūcanādīviṣayam; vivṛta* (k. 61) *asyoddhatagatiparikrame prayogaḥ; vidyudbhṛānta* (k. 65): *tatpadasya vidyuta udbhramāṇad vidyudbhṛāntam uddhatagatiparikramāḍ viṣayam.* Examples of delicate uses of *karaṇas* are: *alātaka* (k. 18): *prayogaś cāsya lalitanṛttaviṣaye; lalita* (k. 33) *tad iti savilāsanṛttaviṣayam etat. ata eva lalitaṃ nāma karaṇam.* On these and other uses assigned to the *karaṇas* by Abhinavagupta, see § 2.2 above.

about the connection of *tāṇḍava* and *sukumāraprayoga* with different topics, i.e. *devastuti* vs *śṛṅgāraraśa*, he explains that dance, in itself, does not produce any *raśa*, but it can be related to a given *raśa* insofar as and to the extent that it is connected with a poetic text, a *kāvya*.¹⁰⁰ For Abhinavagupta, in fact, the *raśa* is primarily a literary and linguistic phenomenon, not a question of ordinary emotions arising from pleasant and painful experiences. It is because the poetic text is rooted in *raśa*, and because dance can in turn be based on songs having those poems as contents, that the bodily movement ends up assuming the quality of the *raśa* expressed by a text.

Thus, in staged presentation, the bodily movement adapts to a literary *raśa*, which will determine the qualities of grace or vehemence in the *pūrvaraṅga* preceding it. In turn, this will affect the poetic text embedded in the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga*, whose dominant *raśa* will ultimately determine the type of dance performed to it. Even when dance is performed independently of a text, such as that performed by the gods, Abhinavagupta makes it a point to connect the quality of bodily movement with the internal mood that it mirrors, although grace and vehemence appear to be linked to the gender of the performer: Śiva dances his *tāṇḍava* in a vehement manner in connection with his exploit—the destruction of Dakṣa’s sacrifice—as well as the auspicious time—the twilight hour. Similarly, one may speculate, Pārvatī adopts the delicate style not just because this is suited to female performers alone, but because her bodily movement follows some inner emotional content, possibly her love towards Śiva.¹⁰¹ Since these are dances performed outside of a theatrical context, they are not connected with a poetic text and hence to a specific *raśa*, but the explanation of their qualities in terms of worldly (or divine) emotions allows the commentator to explain the double curriculum of dance and at the same time to disjoin gender and body movement. Following this line of interpretation, it comes as no surprise that the *kaiśikī*, the gorgeous manner associated with beauty and the arousal of love, is traced to the dance of Śiva alone, without the intervention of the Goddess, as other commentators appear to have claimed.¹⁰²

100 NŚ 4.268cd–269ab, cf. above n. 76, is taken as paradigmatic of the connection of dance with *kāvya*, by a reinterpretation of the terms *vidhi* and *prayoga* in the verse in the sense of ‘poetic text’, on which see Translation 8.4.

101 Although this is a bit speculative, one might tentatively interpret Abhinavagupta’s use of the expression *arthatattvena* in his commentary on NŚ 4.260ab (*sukumāraprayogam eva kṛtvā tu arthatattvena nṛtyantīm bhagavatīm ca vikṣya*, vol. 1, p. 162) and the omnipresent link of *sukumāraprayoga* with *śṛṅgāraraśa* in the fourth chapter in this light.

102 The fact that such an interpretation was perceived as problematic is confirmed by the alternative reading of the passage in chapter 1 as describing the dance of Śiva with Umā,

As to the *lāsyaṅgas*, those of the nineteenth chapter are connected to ideas of grace and amorous desire, as they derive from the *lāsyaṅgas* of full status in the thirty-first chapter.¹⁰³ Although Bharata gives no indication in this regard, Abhinavagupta justifies the inclusion of the *lāsyaṅgas* in the body of the play by the presence of the *kaiśikī vṛtti*, the gorgeous manner, through which dance found its way into the play:

The [*kaiśikī*]—about which much has been said in the first chapter with the words ‘Employ also the gorgeous (*kaiśikī*) [manner], and [name] the material adequate for it’ (NŚ 1.42d–43a)—is manifested [in a play] by the *lāsyaṅgas*. Therefore, the [*lāsyaṅgas*] participate, verily, in that part of [theatre] consisting in the *bhāvas* and *rasas*, which are [its] essence, and have to be employed by all means by poets and practitioners in the context of poetry to be enacted (i.e. theatre).¹⁰⁴

In all these contexts, we see how the concept of *lāsya* was indeed very close to that of *sukumāra prayoga* as well as to the *kaiśikī vṛtti*, and how these participate in the same constellation of ideas about grace, love, and beauty, which are generally thought to be the hallmark of dance. By forging an imaginary link with the *kaiśikī vṛtti* for the *lāsyaṅgas* of chapter 19, it was possible for Abhinavagupta to include them under the nature of theatre rather than dance, and to distinguish them from the *sukumāra prayoga* of chapter 4. However, it is not immediately clear why Abhinavagupta refrained from conflating the *lāsya* of chapter 31, which participates in the *pūrvaraṅga*, with *sukumāra prayoga*. The perfect parallelism he constructs between *tāṇḍava* and *sukumāra* by connecting them with different gods, qualities of movement, *rasas*, type of performances, and *pūrvaraṅgas* suggests that he was familiar with the opposition between *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* common in other texts—first and foremost the *Daśarūpaka*—and possibly drew on that.¹⁰⁵ However, instead of straightfor-

by reading *ḍṛṣṭomayā* [i.e. *ḍṛṣṭā umayā*], instead of *ḍṛṣṭā mayā*, in the verse about the *kaiśikī vṛtti* (NŚ 1.45ab: *ḍṛṣṭā mayā bhagavato nilakanṭhasya nṛtyataḥ* | cf. § 1.3.3, n. 65). See ABh ad locum, vol. 1, p. 71.

103 See Bansat-Boudon 1991b and 1992: 283–291 on this derivation.

104 ABh ad NŚ 19.117, vol. 3, pp. 65–66: *yām uddīśya prathame dhyāye ‘kaiśikim api yojaya yac ca tasyāḥ kṣamaṃ dravyaṃ’ ityādi bahutarāṃ uktam, tadāvīrbhāvakāni, ata evātma-bhūtarasabhāvabhāgābhīniveśāśālīny eva lāsyaṅgāny api kaviprayokṭṛbhir abhinetaṃ vyakāvyaviṣaye sarvathāiva yojyānīti*. Similarly translated in Bansat-Boudon 1992: 304. On the connection between dance, the *kaiśikī vṛtti*, and the arousal of *rasa*, see § 3.4.

105 In DR 1.4, Śiva and Pārvatī are evoked in connection with *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*, [...] *cakre* [...] *tāṇḍavaṃ nilakanṭhaḥ* | *śarvāṇī lāsyaṃ asya* [...], which the *Avaloka* clearly understands as *uddhata* and *sukumāra*: *karaṅgāṅgahārān akarot haras tāṇḍavam uddhataṃ lāsyaṃ sukumāraṃ nṛttaṃ pārvatī kṛtavatī*. See also DR 1.10 and AL, quoted above, n. 32.

wardly adopting *lāsya* as a synonym for *sukumāra*, Abhinavagupta endeavours to give to this opposition a strong anchorage in Bharata’s text. The following table attempts to highlight this derivative approach by marking in bold what Abhinavagupta added to a pre-existing framework, and how he grouped and divided things differently:

TABLE 2 *Tāṇḍava* and *lāsya/sukumāra* in the *Abhinavabhāratī*

	<i>tāṇḍava</i>	<i>lāsya/sukumāra</i>
Prototypical dance performers	Śiva	Pārvatī
Type of dance	<i>Recakas</i> and <i>aṅgahāras</i>	<i>Sukumāraprayoga</i>
Type of <i>pūrvaraṅga</i>	<i>Uddhata pūrvaraṅga: based on the deeds of Maheśa</i>	<i>Sukumāra pūrvaraṅga</i>
Type of dance in the <i>pūrvaraṅga</i>	<i>Tāṇḍava: uddhata aṅgahāras</i> of Śiva	<i>Sukumāraprayoga: lalita/annuddhata aṅgahāras</i> of Devī
Limbs of <i>pūrvaraṅga</i>	Based on <i>devastuti</i>	Based on a man and woman, connected with <i>śṛṅgāra</i>
	<i>Vardhamāna/gītaka: with tāṇḍava + pratikṣepas (chandaka)</i>	<i>Pāṇikā + catuṣpadā, performed with dance and lāsyaḡāna</i>
	<i>Other bahiryavanikā-aṅgas</i>	<i>Lāsyaṅgas</i> in ch. 31: based on the relationships of men and women, performed by a single character
Type of play	<i>Āviddha/uddhata: based on vīra rasa</i>	<i>Sukumāra</i> : based on <i>śṛṅgāra rasa</i>
Prayoga in a play	contains fights performed with <i>āviddha aṅgahāras</i> by men	performed by women
Vṛtti in a play		<i>Kaiśikī: Lāsyaṅgas</i> in ch. 19: based on the theme of love and performed by a single female protagonist

That Abhinavagupta was familiar with the opposition of *lāsya* and *tāṇḍava*, is also confirmed by an anonymous verse that he quotes while discussing the purpose of dance in chapter 4: ‘By whatever is *lāsya*, the goddess is always satisfied; by whatever is *tāṇḍava*, Śiva, along with Umā and his retinue, [is satisfied]’ (*yat kiñcil lāsyam etena devī tuṣyati nityaśaḥ | yat kiñcit tāṇḍavam tena somaḥ sānucaraḥ śivaḥ || iti ||* ABh ad Nś 263cd–264ab, vol. 1, p. 165). At the end of the chapter on dance, he moreover reports an opinion according to which *lāsya* and *tāṇḍava* would be nothing but types of drama, just like the ten dramatic genres, because of their fully mimetic character.¹⁰⁶ But the decisive passage is to be found, I think, at the beginning of the commentary on Nś 4.268cd–269ab, which, as I show above, seals the opposition between *tāṇḍava* and *sukumāraprayoga* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, while connecting these two modes of performing dance to textual content.¹⁰⁷

The word *tāṇḍava* designates the totality of dance. When it [occurs] in the proximity of the word *lāsya*, it behaves after ‘the manner of the cattle and the bull’[, i.e. it indicates that *tāṇḍava* is the general category, whereas *lāsya* is a particular case of it].¹⁰⁸

If *tāṇḍava* owes its name to the dance taught to Bharata by Taṇḍu, it must correspond to a totality comprehending both delicate and vehement varieties, given that the *aṅgahāras* and the *karaṇas* characterizing its technique include both types of movements. Therefore, the term *tāṇḍava* must be coextensive, as Abhinavagupta will argue, with dance in its totality. If one imagines *lāsya* as a particular case of this wider whole—after all, for Abhinavagupta, the term *lāsya* primarily denotes a restricted and fixed number of dance and music items in a *sukumāra pūrvaraṅga*—it becomes possible to expand the field of dance to include other genres as well, which are neither part of the *pūrvaraṅga* nor of the play, but fully fledged dance genres born from the union of movement with a poetic text or narrative. Although these new genres are not discussed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, I will show next how Abhinavagupta, never short of original interpretations, imagines them to be prefigured by it, thanks to the fecund union of poetry and dance.

106 See ABh ad Nś 4.320, vol. 1, p. 204: *daśarūpakabhedaval lāsyatāṇḍavaprayogo nātyabheda eva. tatra pūrṇānukārarūpatvāt.*

107 See above, n. 76.

108 ABh ad Nś 4.268cd–269ab, vol. 1, p. 178: *tāṇḍavam iti sarvaṃ nṛttam ucyate. lāsyāśabdena saṃnidhau, gobalīvardanyāyena pravartate.* For a detailed explanation of the ‘manner of the cattle and the bull’ and a translation of the whole passage, see Translation 8.4.

2.4 Expanding the Idea of *nṛtta*

On the occasion of the first mention of dance in the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Abhinavagupta describes dancing as an activity inborn to man, whose main distinguishing feature is, unlike other human activities, that of being independent of the pursuit of an immediately enjoyable fruit:

‘Dance’ (*nṛtta*) means ‘[the action of] dancing’ (*nartana*), of throwing the limbs about, i.e. the major and minor limbs, in a playful manner (*vilāsenā*), disregarding any obligation whatsoever (*na tu kenacit kartavyāṃśena*). Even the common man talks about it in the very same way, when he says, for instance, that someone is walking as if dancing[, that is, without constraints].¹⁰⁹

This statement relates to the dance that was introduced into the performance as an element of the gorgeous manner (*kaiśikī vṛtti*), which was itself modelled on the dance of Śiva (NŚ 1.44–47ab).¹¹⁰ This dance, blissful and ecstatic, was similarly qualified by Abhinavagupta as bereft of any practical aim whatsoever (*itikartavyāntaravaikalya-*):

I [i.e. Bharata] saw that [*kaiśikī*] as it was performed by the blessed one, indeed auspicious, in a beautiful form whose interior delight came forth from his body brimful of complete bliss. That is why [he was] dancing, fully engrossed in an ecstatic dance thanks to the abandonment of [all] other [practical] activities.¹¹¹

Belonging to men and gods alike, dancing is thus primarily a spontaneous movement executed at leisure and subsumable under the domain of play (*krīḍā, līlā*).¹¹² But while, in the world, dance can be performed by anyone,

109 ABh ad NŚ 1.44, vol. 1, p. 21: *nartanaṃ nṛttam, gātrāṅgāṃ aṅgopāṅgāṅgāṃ vilāsenā kṣepaḥ, na tu kenacit kartavyāṃśena. loko 'py evaṃvidhe viśaye evam evāha—'nṛtyatīva gacchatī' ityādi.*

110 See §1.3.3, n. 65.

111 ABh ad NŚ 1.44–45, vol. 1, p. 21: *śaṅkarasyaiva bhagavataḥ paripūrṇānandanirbhari-bhūta dehocalādāntaranirvārasundarākārasya, ata eva nṛtyataḥ itikartavyāntaravaikalya-lyād ānandanṛttamātrasthitasya, prayojyatvena mayā drṣṭā.*

112 On the notion of divine play in India, and on the metaphor of dance for the activity of gods, see e.g. Colas 1998 and Sax 2009: 85–93; on the relevance of these notions in Kashmir Śaivism, see Bäumer 1996 and Bansat-Boudon 2004: 40, 213.

their social status and gender or the possession of any particular skill or ability,¹¹³ in theatre, its practice is regulated by a codified set of techniques, and its presence within and without a play—for instance, as an independent form of staged dance—is subject to a strict protocol of performance. Although designated by one and the same word, i.e. *ṛtṭa*, and sharing many a common characteristic, two sets of dance can be differentiated, first of all through the self-explanatory distinction between mundane and staged dance.¹¹⁴ For this very reason, before becoming a spectacular object, dance has to be perfected through its formal study with a master and, possibly, along with a treatise expounding its technique.¹¹⁵

As Abhinavagupta remarks at the outset of the fourth chapter, even the incorporation of dance into theatre—via the *kaiśikī*, mainly aimed at beautifying the performance—cannot be left to the arbitrariness of the human practitioner, lest the performance may not look very well assembled and lose its power of allure.¹¹⁶ If rules are necessary for dance to be perfectly integrated into

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- 113 Dance is generally an activity connected with festivities and recreational occasions of different types that do not necessarily involve the participation of professional figures (cf. NŚ 4.265cd–266ab, Translation).
- 114 Such a distinction is reflected in Abhinavagupta's mention of worldly dances (*laukika-ṛtṭa*) and otherworldly (*alaukika-*) or staged dance in his examination of the nature of dance. See Translation 8.6.1.
- 115 As Bansat-Boudon (1992: 402) put it: 'Joie rythmique, la danse est aussi liberté et spontanéité absolues. Raison de plus pour la distinguer du théâtre, lieu même de la contrainte et de la convention. Cependant, lorsque sur les conseils de Śiva lui-même, elle est introduite dans la représentation dramatique, qu'advient-il de la danse?' In this regard, Bansat-Boudon also speaks of the essentially paradoxical nature of dance ('nature essentiellement paradoxale de la danse', *ibid.*: 403, n. 77): 'La danse, que son mythe d'origine définit comme liberté et spontanéité pures, est pourtant, à l'intérieur du mythe lui-même, assujettie à des lois, aussitôt qu'elle a été créée: la danse de Śiva, en effet, est l'occasion d'un enseignement, véritable corpus de règles, grâce auquel le dieu entend transmettre aux hommes cet art qu'il a mis en œuvre, spontanément; voilà tout le sujet du IV^e chapitre du NŚ' (*ibid.*).
- 116 The instructions on dance laid down in the fourth chapter are justified by the same argument: despite its former introduction into the play through the *kaiśikī*, the performance of dance did not look extremely alluring. That is why Śiva asks Taṇḍu to formally instruct Bharata in the technique of dance. Cf. ABh ad NŚ 4.13–14ab, vol. 1, p. 87: *mayāpīdam ity anedam āha—bharatamuninā tāvad bhagavannṛttakaiśikīdarśanāt tatprayogārtham anusmṛtya* [D M₁ T₁^{ga} E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎], *anusṛtya* T₁ T₄ T₆ T₇ E₁^{Bha} E₁₍₄₎] *kīncin niyojitam. tat tu samyagupadeśābhāvān nātīva suśīṣtam iti*. 'With this [verse, i.e. NŚ 4.13–14ab,] it is explained that up to that point, the sage Bharata had employed some [dance], having recollected it for the sake of performing the [*kaiśikī*], since he had seen the gorgeous manner (*kaiśikī*) [displayed] in the dance of the blessed one. However, since there was

the body of a play and exercise its charming function, how much more so when it is used in the *pūrvaraṅga*, whose ordered steps, preceding and preparing the theatrical performance, are amenable to comparison with the complexity of a ritual?

According to the narrative of origin, the divine prototype for the dance introduced in the *pūrvaraṅga* is the dance of Śiva. It was, however, Taṇḍu, one of Śiva's attendants, who taught dance to Bharata, codifying what for Śiva was a perfectly spontaneous throwing of limbs into a formalized exposition of thirty-two *aṅgahāras* and 108 *karaṇas*. Taṇḍu's sphere of activity, however, is not confined to a simple exposition of what Śiva did: he is in fact held responsible for connecting dance with vocal and instrumental music, as well as with the poetic text through *abhinaya*, thus opening up a range of possibilities for the differentiation of dance, according to its various permutations and its combinations with other media.¹¹⁷

The first expansion of the field of dance, provided by its connection with vocal and instrumental music, is sanctioned by the verse following the transmission of the dance movements created by Śiva to Taṇḍu: 'then [Taṇḍu], verily, properly [re]created the practice of dance as connected with singing and drumming. That [dance] is known as the *tāṇḍava*' (NŚ 4.260cd–261ab).¹¹⁸ On the plane of the mythological narrative, its justification must be found in Śiva's original suggestion that Bharata use dance in connection with the musical structures of the *pūrvaraṅga*: the *vardhamāna*, the *gītakas*, the *āsāritas* and the *mahāgītas* (NŚ 4.14–15ab).¹¹⁹ These musical compositions all have very complex structures, containing both instrumental and lyrical parts, which is possibly what the term *mahāgīta* ('great song'), never defined in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, stands for. The technical exposition concerning their combination with dance in their different segments, time divisions, musical and poetic metres, the alternation of instrumental and melodic portions, the meaningless tunes, and the lyrical lines occupy some fifty verses in the second part of the fourth chapter (NŚ 4.269cd–318).¹²⁰

no proper teaching [of dance at that time], it did not [look] extremely attractive (*nātīva suśliṣṭam*) [in the present performance].

117 Vocal and instrumental music were incorporated into theatre through Nārada and Svāti (NŚ 1.50cd–52ab) while Taṇḍu effectuated their combination with dance.

118 For the Sanskrit text and the consequences of Taṇḍu's action in Abhinavagupta's conception of creativity, see below, n. 148.

119 cf. §1.3.3, n. 75.

120 In their musical aspects alone, the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga* are the object of a long and extremely technical portion of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, stretching over more than three hundred verses, in chapter 31 (*tālādhyāya*).

As Abhinavagupta explains it, in the ritually ordered part that is the *pūrvaraṅga*, unlike in theatre, everything is to a great extent fixed in advance by rules, which have to be strictly followed in order to obtain the invisible results expected of them, namely the satisfaction of the deities and their consequent protection of the performance from the obstacles.¹²¹ Despite this fixity of the musical and dance structures, there is variation with regard to the relationship of the principal and subordinate elements: when the musical element is principal, the body movement follows it, but when dance is performed as the principal element to obtain an invisible result, then the songs provide its foundation by adapting to it. The metaphor Abhinavagupta uses to explain how these elements, already fixed in their principal elements, combine with each other is that of two kings, each endowed with an independent kingdom, who have to combine forces in some strategic configuration when they ally against a common enemy.¹²² To carry out this regulated and simultaneous activity, three

121 On Abhinavagupta's analysis of the *pūrvaraṅga* using the categories of ritual exegesis, see Ganser 2016.

122 Cf. some of the relevant statements in the long passage in ABh ad Nś 4.252ab, vol. 1, pp. 163–164: *nanu ca nātya evāṅgānusāritvena layādīḥ. na tu nr̥ta eva. āṅgiko* [Σ_M, āṅgike Σ_E] *nātyasya bhedaḥ. ucyate—ihādṛṣṭaviśeṣasampattihetutvaṃ vardhamānādiprayogasya sopakarananr̥tāprayogasya ca. tatra guṇapradhānabhāvaṃ prati kāmācārah. yadā gītākādeḥ prādhānyam, tadā tadanusāryaṅgaṃ bhavati. [...]* *yadā tu nr̥tasyādṛṣṭasampādatkatve prādhānyam kriyate tadā tadanusāreṇa gītākāder āśrayanam. [...]* *tatrāpi gītā ca prayojyacittavṛttitantram. iha tu gītāṅgaṃ ca dvayam api svapratīṣṭhitam. [...]* *kiṃ tu svapratīṣṭhite 'pi dvaye yena yat saṃmelanayogyam tat tatra prayujyate ity etāvān aṅgāṅgibhāvah. evaṃ śatrujvalanapravṛttāmarśābhimānanarapatidvitayavat* [D M₁ Σ_E, śatruṇmulanapravṛttā° T₁]. 'Someone might object: not only in dance do the tempo (*laya*), [the rhythm (*tāla*),] etc. follow the body [movement], but also in theatre itself. The bodily [acting] (*āṅgika*[-*abhinaya*]) is part of theatre[, not of dance]. We reply: here [in the *pūrvaraṅga*] the performance of the *vardhamāna* and [the *gītakas*] and the performance of dance, properly executed, bring about the attainment of a particular invisible [result] (*adr̥ṣṭa*). With regard to the [body movement and the musical accompaniment], there is free choice with respect to [their] relation of secondary and principal. When the songs are principal, then the body [movement] follows them [...], but when dance is the main element in producing an invisible [result], then the basis of the *gītakas* and the like conforms to the [body movement]. [...] And in [theatre], even the musical accompaniment depends on the mental states (*cittavṛtti*) to be displayed. But here [in the *pūrvaraṅga*], on the contrary, both music and body [movements] are established in themselves. [...] However, although the two are established in themselves, they enter into a relation of principal and secondary that amounts to the following: the one that is capable of combining with another has to be performed in [connection with] it. In this way, [songs and body movements] are similar to two kings whose indignation and self-conceit are kindled towards [a common] enemy.'

ensembles of practitioners are mobilized: that of the singers, the percussionists, and the actors/dancers.¹²³ The singers can either sing a meaningless tune, accompanied by various musical instruments, or deliver a poetic text in song. It is in connection with this second aspect of singing that Abhinavagupta introduces a major innovation with respect to Bharata's text, namely by sanctioning the connection of dance and poetry.

As hinted at above, Varma (1957: 32–33), attributes the connection of dance with a poetic text to Bharata, who received a hint from Śiva as to the use of *abhinaya* for enacting the meaning of the *mahāgītas*. He further identifies this moment with the birth of *nṛtya*, the technique of dance that incorporates *abhinaya*, although the term *nṛtya* is included only much later in the technical treatises.¹²⁴ Abhinavagupta might have envisaged a significant overlap between dramatic enactment and dance elsewhere, i.e. in the new genres of performance that were at some point designated by the term *nṛtya*, but here the context is still that of dance in the *pūrvvaraṅga* and its association with its musical structures. In Abhinavagupta's opinion, the verb *abhinī-* ('to enact', 'to represent dramatically'), should not be taken in its primary sense, but in a secondary one, when referring to the use of dance for enacting the meanings of the *mahāgītas*.¹²⁵ Moreover, Śiva's statement does not imply that *abhinaya* was incorporated into *nṛtta*, but that *nṛtta* could be used as an *abhinaya*, which is what emerges from Abhinavagupta's commentary on the relevant passage:

And in the *mahāgīta*, namely [in the group consisting of] the *gītakas* and the *vardhamāna*, whose form is beginningless, [you should employ dance] properly, according to the sequence of the *vardhamāna* and the [other songs]. And [you should employ dance], insofar as possible, for representing the meaning of the lyrics, through a sequence of *aṅgahāras* and *piṅḍibandhas* applied there. By means of this [procedure], you will be able to enact [the meanings of the songs].¹²⁶

This passage suggests that by means of abstract dance—the *aṅgahāras* and *piṅḍibandhas*, as well as the *karaṇas* forming them—the dancer could execute

123 On these ensembles and their demand for coordinated action, see § 3.4.2.

124 Cf. above, § 2.1.

125 This special use of *abhinaya* is discussed in the passage of the *Abhinavabhāratī* edited and translated here, on which see also § 3.5, n. 250.

126 ABh ad Nś 4.15ab, vol. 1, p. 88: *mahāgītaṃ ca yad gītakavardhamānam anādirūpaṃ tatra samyag vardhamānādikrameṇa tathā vākyārthābhinaye yathāyogaṃ yojyamānāṅgahārapīṅḍibandhakrameṇa, yenābhinetuṃ śakṣyasi.*

a sort of enactment of the parts of the *vardhamāna* and *gītakas* for which a text was designed to be sung and danced at the same time.

The connection of *nṛtta* with *kāvya*, through the incorporation of *abhinaya*, however, is attributed to Taṇḍu. It is indeed Taṇḍu who is directly summoned by Śiva to use dance in connection with the text of the songs: 'And the god (i.e. Śiva) said to Taṇḍu: this dance, i.e. the *tāṇḍava* and the others, should be put into use based on the performance of songs.' (NŚ 4.267cd–268ab).¹²⁷ This verse follows the discussion about the nature of dance and its potential to represent meanings, and precedes the verse on the connection of the *tāṇḍava* with the praise of the deities and the *sukumāraprayoga* with *śṛṅgāra* (4.268cd–269ab).¹²⁸ These two verses are taken together by Abhinavagupta to signify the connection of dance with poetry, which is the reason for its differentiation into a vehement and a delicate type, based on the contents of the lyrics with which the dance is associated. These are distinguished according to the two fundamental *rasas* expressed by the poetic text: the heroic (*vīra*) and the erotic (*śṛṅgāra*).¹²⁹ The two fundamental *rasas* can then be nuanced through a blend of various emotional states so as to cover all other *rasas*. Likewise, the resulting quality of the movement can be nuanced in its turn and give rise to a variety of dance forms that contain vehemence and softness to various degrees. In this way, it becomes possible to expand the field of dance to include other genres that are neither part of the *pūrvaraṅga*, nor of the play, but fully fledged dance genres born of the union of poetry and dance.

By envisaging these two successive developments brought about by Taṇḍu—first the association of dance with music, then with poetry—Abhinavagupta arrives at the enumeration of seven different varieties of dance, all falling under the broad category of *tāṇḍava* and all designated by the word *nṛtta*. These include forms of abstract dance, dance that is based on the *abhinaya* of the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga* or on their melodic and rhythmic features, and dance performed to a poetic text. The term *nṛtta* thus refers in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, to several different objects: dances that are executed in the world—possibly folk dances or dancing during festivities in temples, etc.; dances in the *pūrvaraṅga* associated with a fixed repertoire of songs or musical instrumentation; and forms of dance that were performed independently and obtained the status of separate genres.¹³⁰ Importantly, the establishment of a genealogy for dance,

127 See above, n. 12 and Translation 8.1.

128 See above, n. 76.

129 See above, § 2.3.2.

130 On these seven types of dance, see Translation 8.6.

imagined as a process of amplification and branching taking place through different transmissions, allows Abhinavagupta to expand the category of *nr̥tta* so as to include a plurality of practices, all ultimately justified by the *śāstra*, as they are imagined to be present there *in nuce*. In the next section, I will focus more closely on the process of transmission and its protagonists.

2.5 Tradition, Creativity, and Artistry: A Śaiva Perspective

As is often the case in other fields of knowledge in India, the technical texts belonging to the tradition of Nāṭyaśāstra, namely the science of dramatic art, do not provide much information about their intended addressee, nor do they give us details about the individual figures of the artists or their use of the texts. Questions about the performer, such as those that have driven the Western history of dramatic criticism from Diderot to Stanislavski, have also never been formally raised in the Sanskrit treatises.¹³¹ The living context of artistic reality seems, most of the time, to have simply been omitted by the authors of *śāstra*. As we go through the Sanskrit texts codifying the performing arts, we find before ourselves a list of rules, prescriptions, and prohibitions, typically expressed in the optative. The form assumed by the *śāstra* contributes to building up an image of the Indian actor as someone who would merely adhere to the rules laid down in the treatises and faithfully reproduce an already given set of instructions. Against this background, the impression is that the Indian performer would be denied any kind of liberty in the making of a stage production, and hence be denied what we would call, in modern terms, the status of *artist*.¹³² This section aims at exploring how ideas of artistry were developed in India, within the traditional framework of the *śāstra*.

In the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, it is not uncommon to find passages in which the actor is enjoined to follow the rules, lest he incurs some very undesired consequence. A clear instance can be seen in the prescription to perform the *pūrvaraṅga* according to the rules before any representation of a Sanskrit play:

131 However, for a reconstruction of the debate about the emotional and aesthetic experience of the actor in Sanskrit sources, see Cuneo & Ganser (forthcoming).

132 Ideas about art, the artist, and his counterpart, the artisan, are no doubt historically defined and mutable. The romantic idea of originality is still at the heart of our very conception of the artist in Europe, and can fall short when it is used to produce value judgements of Indian art. For an example of the debate about the existence of Indian 'Art' in the early twentieth century, see Ganser 2018.

Whoever performs these preliminaries to the play (*pūrvaraṅga*) strictly according to the rules will not obtain any inauspicious outcome, and will go to heaven; whoever, on the contrary, neglects the rules and performs [the *pūrvaraṅga*] according to his wishes, will suffer a terrible decline and will be reborn as an animal (NŚ 5.170–171).¹³³

The coercive character of such a statement might be interpreted in line with the ritual-like nature of the *pūrvaraṅga* and its procedures.¹³⁴ However, another passage in the text goes so far as to deny any creativity to human beings who, unlike the gods, need to follow the rules provided by the *śāstra* in their activities:

In the case of palaces and gardens, the creation by divine beings is mental, [but] the activities of men, harnessed to rules, have to be carried out with an effort (NŚ 2.5).¹³⁵

The ambition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is comprehensive with respect to the artistic field; some of its parts are especially concerned with instructions for the practitioners and thus, one might surmise, aimed at recording recognized practices so as to canonize them and make them reproducible. However, this is not the point of view of the authors of *śāstra*: the science is supposed to be created *in illo tempore* by an authoritative author or compiler—the composer, in our case, being Brahmā, and Bharata the compiler—and to have validity for the generations to come: the *Nāṭyaveda* was created in order to counteract a certain period of societal degradation, but is supposed to be valid for the whole *tretāyuga*, as well as the following *dvāpara* and *kaliyuga*.¹³⁶

The normative dimension of the *śāstra* is balanced by the fact that it encompasses much more than a single monolithic and unchallenged technique or

133 NŚ 5.170–171: *ya imaṃ pūrvaraṅgaṃ tu vidhinaiva prayojayet | nāśubhaṃ prāpnuyāt kiñcit svargalokaṃ ca gacchati || yaś cāpi vidhim utsrjya yatheṣṭaṃ saṃprayojayet | prāpnoty apacayaṃ ghoram tiryagyonim ca gacchati ||*

134 See Ganser 2016. In the same vein, see also the *phalaśruti* for the whole treatise, compared to a Veda, quoted in §1.3.2, n. 61.

135 NŚ 2.5: *dīvyānāṃ mānasī sṛṣṭīr grheṣūpavaneṣu ca | narānāṃ yatnataḥ kāryā lakṣaṇābhihitā kriyā ||* Cf. also the later passage, very similar to this: NŚ 2.22–23: *devānāṃ mānasī sṛṣṭīr grheṣūpavaneṣu ca | yatnabhāvābhiniṣpannāḥ sarve bhāvā hi mānuṣāḥ || tasmād devakṛtair bhāvair na vispardheta mānuṣaḥ | mānuṣasya tu gehasya saṃpravakṣyāmi lakṣaṇam ||*

136 See §1.3.2.

practice; it is also supposed to work diachronically and cover usages belonging to a time span as large as possible, which includes all possibilities, be they old or new. Abhinavagupta expounds such ideas about the temporality of the *śāstra* while commenting on the various types of theatrical building described in NŚ chapter 2. Some of these look just impossible: they would measure kilometres of length if one were to build them according to the measurements prescribed. The difficulty does not escape the attentive exegete, who takes this apparent incongruence as an occasion to reason about the *śāstra* and the range of usages it encompasses. The verse attracting Abhinavagupta's attention is one that traces the conception of the three types of theatrical building to Viśvakarman, the divine architect whom Brahmā first asked to build a pavilion to protect the theatrical performance: 'Having seen the playhouse here, Viśvakarman, with a concentrated mind, conceived three types of foundations [for a theatrical building], in conformity with the *śāstra*.¹³⁷ The question it triggers is the following:

[It is said that] Viśvakarman conceived [the different theatrical buildings]. Did he [conceive them] out of his own imagination? No, but in conformity with the *śāstra*. [...] A *śāstra* was created and in its turn it was based on another *śāstra*, which is why we speak of [its] beginninglessness through an unbroken succession (*pravāhānāditva*).¹³⁸

What this passage tells us is that, although he was the architect of the gods and able to create things by the power of his mind, Viśvakarman did not create the types of theatrical building arbitrarily, out of his own imagination. On the contrary, he relied on the *śāstra*, which was based on previous *śāstras*. The idea of beginninglessness or eternity in the form of a continuous flow—*pravāhānāditva* or *pravāhanityatā*—is often connected with ideas of cyclical creations, sometimes by a god who sets the world in place at the beginning of each cosmic age. The creation of the *śāstra* and its transmission is also seen as part of this dynamic, which, as I shall argue below, becomes a strategy to justify change within a given tradition. For the time being, let us see how Abhinavagupta deals with the range of possibilities to be covered by the present *śāstra*, in the light of its beginninglessness:

137 NŚ 2.7: *iha prekṣāgrhaṃ dṛṣṭvā dhīmatā viśvakarmaṇā | trividhaḥ saṃniveśaś ca śāstrataḥ parikalpitaḥ ||*

138 ABh ad NŚ 2.7, vol. 1, p. 49: *viśvakarmaṇā parikalpitaḥ. kiṃ svabuddhyā. na. api tu śāstrataḥ. [...] śāstram kṛtam tad apy aparāśāstramūlam iti pravāhānāditvam uktam.*

Moreover, this whole [treatment of the types of theatrical buildings] is just taught to illustrate the various possibilities, by repeating the [traditional lore]. [It is true that] so many varieties [of playhouses as mentioned in the treatise] are not in use [today]; thus we see that the treatise mentions eighteen sorts of [auditorium]. But even though these are not used anymore nowadays, it is still significant to describe them, if only to avoid an interruption in the tradition (*saṃpradāyāvicchedārtham*). It is possible, in fact, that somebody, at some point in time, will use them. This is what [Kātyāyana] said [with regard to grammar]: ‘[Grammar deals also] with forms which are not in use, just as [the science of ritual deals] with the long sacrificial sessions’ (*Vārttika* 4).¹³⁹

As the quote at the end of the passage clarifies, Abhinavagupta’s model of what a technical treatise should encompass is grammar, which, in turn, takes the sacrificial science as its blueprint. If we have a closer look at the source of the quote, i.e. Kātyāyana, it emerges that Abhinavagupta is actually drawing on Patañjali’s commentary on it:

Although [some linguistic forms] are not in use, they have to be described through rules, just like the very long sacrificial sessions. To illustrate: nobody today performs the long sacrificial sessions of a hundred or a thousand years. It is only because they consider that the tradition of the seers is part of *dharma* that the ritual experts describe [the long sacrificial sessions] in their treatises.¹⁴⁰

From this web of intertextual references, it appears that Abhinavagupta did not conceive the *śāstra* on theatre as the mirror of an artistic practice some hundreds of years old, nor as the record of an immutably perpetuated tradition, but as a compendium of all traditional usages, even those belonging to another time span. Everything is synchronically and diachronically contained in the *śāstra*, which justifies why novelty can and should already be poten-

139 Ibid.: *etac ca sarvaṃ saṃbhavamātrenocyate ’nūvādakatyā, na tv iyanto bhedā upayoginaḥ. evaṃ cāṣṭādaśa bhedās tāvac chāstre dr̥ṣṭāḥ. te cādyatve [E₁₍₂₎]^{pc}, cānyatve E₁] yady apy anupayoginaḥ tathāpi ca saṃpradāyāvicchedārtham nirdiṣṭāḥ. keṣāñcit kadācid upayogo bhaviṣyatīti. yathoktam—’aprayukte dīrghasatratvat’ iti.*

140 *Mahābhāṣya* ad *Vārttika* 4: *yady apy aprayuktā avāṣyaṃ dīrghasatratval lakṣaṇenānuvidheyāḥ. tad yathā. dīrghasatrāṇi vārṣasatikāni vārṣasahasrikāni ca na ādyatve kaścid api vyavaharati kevalaṃ ṛṣisaṃpradāyo dharma iti kṛtvā yājñīkāḥ śāstreṇānuvidadhate.* This passage is discussed in the context of the domain of Sanskrit usage described by the science of grammar in Deshpande 1993: 20–21.

tially covered by it. Moreover, the fear of a fracture in the tradition provides the commentator with good reason to explain and update the *śāstra* through his exegetical moves, and at the same time to record the practices issuing from the continuous usage of the treatise by practitioners.¹⁴¹

Against the background just outlined, how is the tradition of *nāṭya* instituted and perpetuated by men, and how are change and novelty justified at a theoretical level, without resulting in a break in the traditional lore? How can one guarantee that, despite the authoritativeness of the source, the teachings are not corrupted as the art is transmitted from master to pupil? Is it that actors are simply required to reproduce what they have received as already rule-bound? Is the performer, from a theoretical point of view, denied any agency as a creative artist, or is he, under certain circumstances, allowed some freedom to innovate? Similar questions, central to the very notion of ‘tradition’, have been dealt with in various ways by different authors in different epochs. However, they become all the more relevant to the field of art, a field highly liable to innovation, experimentation, and contamination. While discussing the question of transmission, Abhinavagupta introduces a clearly historical perspective on the *śāstra* on theatre, where the notion of historical change plays a central role.¹⁴²

First of all, it should be pointed out that the authoritativeness of the *śāstric* rules is warranted by the divine origin of the teachings on theatre. The *Nāṭyaśāstra*, in fact, is said to be created by Brahmā, who composed it mentally, drawing its elements from the four Vedas, and thereafter transmitted it to a

141 Both strategies are used by Abhinavagupta. The first could be exemplified by Abhinavagupta's original explanation of the *piṇḍibandhas* as configurations of movements that please the deities by the visual shapes they produce, on which see Ganser (forthcoming). ABh ad NŚ 4.258cd–259ab, vol. 1, p. 167: *evam anyad apy ūhyam ity anupayogāt samastam na likhitam. āgamabhraṃśaraḥśaṅāya tu dīnnirūpitā*. ‘In the same way, other [uses] can be inferred. That is why [Bharata] has not given [them] all, as this is of no use. Nonetheless, a direction has been provided in order to preserve traditional knowledge (*āgama*) from disappearance.’ The second, by the introduction, at the end of his commentary on the *citrābhīnaya*, of a long series of verses, attributed to Kohala, in which a whole set of new uses of *abhinaya* is recorded. ABh ad NŚ 25.123, vol. 3, p. 287: [...] *kohalādiśāstralaḥṣyappravāhasiddham api citrābhīnayaṃ sūcayati. tataś codāharaṇārthān darśayāmo mābhūt saṃpradāyappravāhaviccheda iti*. ‘[The author] hints also at pictorial acting, which is established as a continuous flow of *śāstric* usages by Kohala and others (*kohalādiśāstralaḥṣyappravāhasiddha*). That is why we will show [these usages] for the sake of illustration, thinking that no break in the continuous flow of tradition (*saṃpradāyappravāhaviccheda*) should ever take place.’ Let us note in this regard that apart from being known as an author of *śāstra* on performance, Kohala is also considered an actor, on which see n. 146 below.

142 For a very comprehensive introduction and a wide range of contributions on tradition in South Asia, see Squarcini 2005, and on the arts in particular, see Dallapiccola 1989.

human being, Bharata, prompting him to teach the art to his own sons, the actors. Bharata is therefore the first recipient and first reciter of the knowledge of theatre, i.e. the *Nāṭyaveda*, whose action is described by the verb *pra-vac-* (NŚ 1.1: *nāṭyaśāstram pravakṣyāmi*), 'to expound'. Abhinavagupta explains this verb in opposition to the root *rac*, i.e. 'to compose'. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* is also described in the commentary as belonging to explanatory literature (*vyākhyānarūpa*), and as such different from an authorial work (*karaṇa*).¹⁴³ Although *vyākhyāna* is usually the term by which the very act of commenting is designated, the opposition implemented here to speak about literary types appears to me to recover some of the earliest reflections on these distinctions by Pāṇini.¹⁴⁴ This perfect knowledge composed by Brahmā and promulgated by Bharata was further perfected through the addition of dance, whose original conception (*upajñā*) is attributed to Śiva.¹⁴⁵ As a treatise, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is thus to some extent already different from the *Nāṭyaveda* composed from the four Vedas by Brahmā, since it contains such a new teaching about dance, absent in the original—yet-to-be-embodied—knowledge.

Although we are still in the narrative sphere, the account of the origin of theatre is taken by Abhinavagupta as an allegory of theatrical practice in the common world. At the outset of the second chapter, he draws a parallelism between heavenly theatre and human theatre, presented as a summary of the topics dealt with in the first chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Accordingly, the poet

143 ABh ad NŚ 1.1, vol. 1, p. 3: *naitad ity anye. 'nāṭyavedo nāṭyaśāstram' iti hi paryāyau. tatra nāṭyaśāstraśabdena ced iha granthaḥ, tad granthasyedānīm karaṇam na tu pravacanam, tad dhi vyākhyānarūpaṃ karaṇād bhinnam, kaṭhena proktam iti yathā.* 'According to others, this is not the meaning [i.e. *nāṭyaśāstra* = "a text (*grantha*) that is a means for instructing actors"], for the expressions *nāṭyaveda* and *nāṭyaśāstra* are synonymous. In this [interpretation], if the expression *nāṭyaśāstra* in the [first verse (i.e. *nāṭyaśāstram pravakṣyāmi*)] refers to a textbook, then [we should speak] here about the composition (*karaṇa*) of that text, and not about [its] exposition (*pravacana*), since that [exposition] in the form of an explanation (*vyākhyāna*) is different from an [actual] composition, just as when one says that "[this] has been expounded by a Kaṭha".

144 As shown by Agrawala (1953: 313–317), Pāṇini and his commentators speak about a variety of literary types on the basis of their origin, production, and authorship, distinguishing *dr̥ṣṭa* (revealed literature, like the Sāmans), *prokta* (literature promulgated or enunciated by Ṛṣis as founders of Vedic *carāṇas*, one example of which are the Śākhā works such as those of the Kaṭhas, and the Brāhmaṇas, but also such Sūtra works as the Nāṭasūtras of Śilālin and Kṛśāśva), *upajñāta* (literature bringing to light new knowledge expounded for the first time, a subspecies of *prokta* with individual authorship, for instance Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*), *kṛta* (authorial works, also called *grantha*, 'book'), and *vyākhyāna* (literature of exposition and commentaries) as the main types.

145 On *tāṇḍava* as the *upajñā* of Śiva, see ABh ad NŚ 1.1, vol. 1, p. 2: *tadupajñam tāṇḍavapravṛttir.*

(*kavi*) is like Brahmā; the patron (*prayojayitr*) like Indra; the theatre master (*nātyācārya*) like Bharata; the actors (*naṭa*) like Kohala and the other sons of Bharata; the implements for the delicate [performance] like the Apsarases; the expert on percussions (*avanaddhavit*) like Svāti; the expert in vocal music (*gīta-jñā*) like Nārada; the time for performance (*prayogakāla*) similar to the festival of Indra (*indrotsava*); the spectators (*sāmājika*) those appeased with respect to aversion, attachment, and other egoistic feelings (*prāsāntarāgadveṣādika*); and the theatrical performance (*prayoga*) is preceded by the worship of the gods (*devatāpūjanapūrvaka*).¹⁴⁶

The authoritativeness of the source and the shift of focus from a divine to a human plane, analogous to the first, does not explain what happens in the transmission of theoretical and practical knowledge. Abhinavagupta deals with the institute of tradition within the sphere of the mythical narrative of the *tāṇḍava*, since this involves a transfer of knowledge from a deity to a human performer through an intermediary, Taṇḍu. This is explained in two verses of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*:

Having created (*sr̥ṣṭvā*) the *recakas*, the *aṅgahāras* as well as the *piṇḍī-bandhas*, the Blessed one gave [them] to the sage Taṇḍu (4.259cd–260ab). Then [Taṇḍu], verily, properly [re]created (*sr̥ṣṭa*) the practice of dance as connected with singing and drumming. That [dance] is known as the *tāṇḍava* (4.260cd–261ab).¹⁴⁷

The discussion is triggered by an imaginary objection to the use of the root *sr̥j* ‘to emit’, to ‘create’, in these two verses, whereas in NŚ 4.13ab dance was said to have been recollected (*smṛ*) by Śiva, at the time when he suggested its introduction into the preliminary rite. The word *smṛta* was interpreted there as indicating the beginninglessness (*anāditva*) of dance,¹⁴⁸ which clashes with the

146 See ABh ad NŚ 2.1, vol. 1, p. 47: *brahmeva kaviḥ, śakra iva prayojayitā, bharata iva nātyācāryaḥ, kohalādāya iva naṭāḥ, apsarasa iva sukumāropakaraṇam, svātir ivaṅvanaddhavit, nāradavad gitajñāḥ, surakṣito maṇḍapah, indrotsavasadr̥śaḥ prayogakālah, prāsāntarāgadveṣādikāḥ sāmājikāḥ, devatāpūjanapūrvakāḥ prayoga ity evaṃ saṅgrahena pūrvādhyāyanirūpitam artham avadhāryety arthaḥ*. Note that a similar parallelism is drawn in ABh ad NŚ 1.19–22, vol. 1, pp. 16–17, exactly at the time when the knowledge of theatre is transmitted to the sons of Bharata, the first human actors.

147 NŚ 4.259cd–261ab: *recakā aṅgahārās ca piṇḍibandhās tathaiva ca || sr̥ṣṭvā bhagavatā dattās taṇḍave munaye tadā | tenāpi hi tataḥ samyag gānabhāṇḍasamanvītaḥ || nṛttaprayogaḥ sr̥ṣṭo yaḥ sa tāṇḍava iti smṛtaḥ |* On the second verse as the textual locus for the connection of dance with vocal and instrumental music by Taṇḍu, and its use in expanding the field of *nṛtta*, see above n. 121, and Translation 8.6.

148 See NŚ 4.13ab: *mayā ’pīdam smṛtaṃ nṛttaṃ sandhyākāleṣu nṛtyatā |*, and ABh *ad locum*

idea of a creation *ex novo*, suggested by the word *sṛṣṭvā*. To solve this apparent incongruity, Abhinavagupta constructs an analogy between the composition of dance from a set of fixed units of movement, and the composition of the Vedas from the eternal phonemes, comparing the way in which the two are transmitted:

‘Having created [the *recakas* etc.]: if someone objects that this [verse] is contradicted by the [previous one], ‘[But I, who dance] at the twilight hour, have recollected [this] dance (Nś 4.13ab),’ we answer that it is not so. Even though, just like phonemes, the bodily postures, the foot movements, and the various actions of the hand gestures for dance, the eyebrows, pupils, and so on, are beginningless in their continuous flow (*pravāhānādītva*), [dance] is recreated (*punar nirmāṇa*) by the Lord, with the particular beauty (*śobhāviśeṣa*) proper to the supreme self in a qualified form (*viśiṣṭaparamātman*), just like the Vedas. Hence, there is no contradiction [between the two textual passages]. In fact, despite the eternal character (*nityatva*) of the phonemes, even the composition of the Vedas is an artefact (*kṛtaka*), based as it is on a temporal succession manifested by the accomplishment of contact between the articulators and the points of articulation [present] in every sentient being. But still, the [composition of the Vedas] is eternal (*nitya*), owing to a continuous stream (*pravāha*) due to the homogeneity (*sajātīyatva*) of composition with the previous ones (*pūrvapūrvaracanā*). The same applies to dance; hence there is no contradiction [to say that dance was recollected and created at the same time].¹⁴⁹

vol. 1, p. 87: *smṛtam ity anāditvam asya darśayati*. For a translation of this passage and its larger narrative context, see § 1.3.3, n. 75.

- 149 ABh ad Nś 4.259cd–260ab, vol. 1, p. 167: *sṛṣṭveti. nanu smṛtaṃ nṛttaṃ sandhyākāleṣv ity anenaitad viruddhyate. na. sthānakacārīnṛttahastabhrūtārākarmādīnām varṇānām iva pravāhānādītve ‘pi viśiṣṭaparamātmanah [E₁₍₂₎]^{pc}, ‘paramātmanā E₁] śobhāviśeṣeṇa bhagavatā punar nirmāṇaṃ vedānām ivety avirodhaḥ. vedaracanāpi hi *varṇānām nityatve [E₁₍₂₎], varṇānādītve E₁₍₁₎, varṇānādi-nityatve E₁₍₄₎] ‘pi pratīprāṇīsthānakaraṇābhighāta-sampattyabhiviyaktapaurvāparyanibandhanā kṛtakā. sā paraṃ pūrvapūrvaracanāsajātīyatvapravāheṇa nityā. tathā nṛttam apīti na kaścid vīrodhaḥ*. Following both the *Madhusūdanī* (which reads ‘śobhāviśeṣarūpaphalena’) and the *Manoramā*, I interpret ‘śobhāviśeṣeṇa’ as an instrumental of mode qualifying ‘punar nirmāṇa’, and tentatively construe it with the genitive *viśiṣṭaparamātmanah*, following the emendation proposed by Ramaswami Sastri. If *viśiṣṭaparamātmanā* were kept in the instrumental, as in E₁, it would qualify, together with *śobhāviśeṣeṇa*, the substantive *bhagavatā*: ‘[...] dance is recreated by the supreme being in a qualified form, i.e. the Lord with superior beauty.’ The word *śobhā* (‘beauty’, ‘lustre’) is the characteristic mark of dance (cf. § 3.1 and 3.4), which I take to be

Many of the elements in this passage are found, *mutatis mutandi*, in contemporaneous discussions about the composition and transmission of the Vedas, a particularly hotly debated topic in the classical philosophical systems that relied on scripture as the ultimate source of authority. A passage in the *Bhāmatī*, Vācaspati Miśra's (9th/10th c.?) renowned commentary on Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, summarizes the positions of Mīmāṃsakas and Vedāntins regarding the problem of the origin and eternity of the Vedas. This passage comes in the discussion of the third *sūtra* of the *Brahmasūtra*, i.e. *śāstrayonitvāt*, which was already interpreted by Śaṅkara as a *tatpuruṣa*, 'because he is the source of the sacred teaching' dealing with the origination of the Veda from an omniscient being, the Brahman. The fact that the Veda possesses the quality of omniscience indicates that its creator must be equally qualified by omniscience. Vācaspati explains the Mīmāṃsā position on the non-eternality of the manifestation of the Vedas from the eternal phonemes through the analogy of dance, which is created from the combination of the various movements that the dancer learns by imitating her master.¹⁵⁰ Just as the movements manifested by the dancer are similar, although not identical, to those executed by her master, so is every recitation of the Veda by a student similar but not identical to the previous one. Since Mīmāṃsakas do not believe in an initial creation, they hold that transmission—coinciding with every instance of Vedic recitation—is uninterrupted (*avicchinna*) and beginningless (*anādi*). For Vedāntins, on the contrary, who believe in the creation of the Veda by a supreme being, every successive creation—coinciding with a sequential composition of words and sentences from the phonemes—needs to be similar to the immediately previous one, therefore the creator is not completely free with respect to his creation, i.e. the *śāstra*. Although the question whether Abhinavagupta knew Vācaspati's multifaceted work is still an open one, it is quite plausible that this passage—unique, to the best of my knowledge, in Indian speculation—inspired Abhinavagupta's inversion of the analogy in his own text, in a passage that similarly deals with the creation and transmission of an authoritative teaching.¹⁵¹ The relevant passage, reproduced here almost in its entirety, reads:

associated with a quality, present in the creator, that is transferred to his creation, as is the case in parallel explanations of creation in other contexts, on which see below, n. 152.

150 The clear reference to gender—the dance teacher being a male, and the student a female dancer—is interesting. In the *Abhinavabhāratī*, there are also many references to dance teachers (*nṛttācārya*), all men.

151 The argument for the eternity of the Vedas without a divine origin has been variously discussed by Mīmāṃsaka authors, while the claim for the manifestation of the Vedas by a

Even by those who recognize the eternality (*nityatva*) of phonemes (the Mīmāṃsakas), the non-eternality of words and sentences should be admitted. A word is, indeed, composed of phonemes differentiated by sequence. A sentence is composed of words differentiated by sequence. Sequence, which is a property of manifestation, is not a property of the phonemes, since for phonemes, which are eternal and all-pervasive, there can be no relationship of before and after, in respect of time or space. Manifestation being non-eternal, how can word-ness be eternal, though the manifested phonemes be eternal? By the non-eternality of words, the non-eternality of sentences etc. is also explained. Hence the reproduction (*anukaraṇa*) of words etc. is like the reproduction (*anukaraṇa*) of dance. Just as the danseuse, who is instructed, imitates the movements and gestures performed by the dance teacher, but does not exhibit the very same gestures, even so the pupil follows the same sequence among the phonemes, words, etc. of the Veda as that adopted by the Vedic teacher, but does not pronounce the very same (sequence); for, the manifestations (of the sounds) by the pupil are different from the manifestations (of sounds) by the teacher. [...] The Jaiminiyas (i.e. the Mīmāṃsakas), who do not believe in a creation or destruction, teach a beginningless (*anādi*) and uninterrupted (*avicchinna*) succession of teachers and pupils, similar to us, for the study of the Veda. But those who follow the teaching of Vyāsa (i.e. the Vedāntins) say that, though, according to the doctrine of creation and destruction, [...] the supreme self (*paramātman*) [...] is the eternal (*nitya*) source of the Vedas, he is not entirely free (*svātantrya*) with respect to them, since he composes their sequence in such a manner as to conform to the earlier creations.

Translation based on SURYANARAYANA SASTRI & KUHNAN RAJA 1933: 140–142¹⁵²

God, which represents the most common view among Vedānta authors, is also well represented in the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā. I wish to thank Hugo David for having drawn my attention to this passage and for the discussion about it.

- 152 *Bhāmati* ad *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 1.3, pp. 140–142: *ye 'pi tāvad varṇānām nityatvam āsthiṣata tair api padavākyaḍinām anityatvam abhyupeyam. ānupūrvibhedavanto hi varṇāḥ padam. padāni cānupūrvibhedavanti vākyaḡ. vyaktidharmaś cānupūrvī na varṇadharmāḡ, varṇānām nityānām vibhūnām ca kālato deśato vā paurvāparyāyogāt. vyaktiś cānityeti katham tadupagrhitānām varṇānām nityānām api padatā nityā? padānityatayā ca vākyaḍinām apy anityatā vyākhyātā. tasmān nrttānukaraṇavat padādyanukaraṇam api. yathā hi yādṛśam gātracalanādi nartakaḡ karoti tādṛśam eva śikṣyamāṇānukaroti nartakī, na tu tad eva vyanakti, evaḡ yādṛśim ānupūrvim vaidikānām varṇapadādīnām karoty adhyāpayitā tādṛśim evānukaroti māṇavakaḡ, na tu tam evocārayati, ācāryavyaktibhyo māṇavakavyaktīnām anyatvāt. [...] tatra sṛṣṭipralayam anicchanto jaiminiyā vedādhyayanam praty asmādṛśaguruśiṣyaparamparām avicchinnām anādim ācakṣate. vaiyāsakaḡ tu matam*

Abhinavagupta combines elements from both views—the Mīmāṃsaka and the Vedāntin—in his analysis. Just like the Vedas, dance undergoes a further creation by the Lord, although its units of movement, like the phonemes, are beginningless in their use (*pravāhānāditva*). Just like dance, the Vedas are an artefact, since their composition is based on a temporal and spatial sequence, which is connected with their phonic emission through recitation. Yet both the Vedas and dance can be attributed some kind of eternity (*nityatā*), which is guaranteed by the fact that they have been transmitted through an unbroken succession (*pravāha*) of masters and pupils, and recreated each time as similar to their prototype. The term *sajātīya*, used by Abhinavagupta to describe the kind of relationship between the prototype and its reproduction, implies that the two are of the same kind but not exactly identical, just as in the example of Vācaspati, where he speaks about similarity (*yādṛś- ... tādṛś-*) with regard to the reproduction of the sequence of phonemes and words taught in Vedic recitation or the movements in dance training. This implies, in Abhinavagupta's use of the analogy, that in the case of dance, each composition is characterized by the same beauty or multifariousness characterizing the Lord.

While in the position attributed to the Vedāntins by Vācaspati, the supreme self is not entirely free with respect to creation, in Abhinavagupta's formulation, the recipient of the traditional teaching is endowed with freedom (*svātantrya*), as he will clarify while commenting on the transmission of dance from Śiva to Taṇḍu. In the Pratyabhijñā system, to which the commentator belongs, the subject is by definition free (*svatantra*), although he might not be fully aware of it. Freedom (*svātantrya*), together with consciousness (*bodha*), is one of the two components of subjectivity.¹⁵³ It is thanks to his freedom that Śiva manifests himself as the world in its different components. However, unlike the Vedāntic god, he does not simply carry out the task of manifesting the Vedas at the beginning of each cosmic era, but he perpetually and simultaneously executes all the five cosmic operations of creation, preservation, destruction, concealment, and grace, the so-called *pañcakṛtya*. Moreover, the limited subject is also essentially free, since his essence is no different from that of the Lord, that is, since he possesses the same innate power of creation. Yet the individual subject might have forgotten it or ignore it.¹⁵⁴ It is from this perspective,

anuvartamānāḥ [śrutismṛtīthāsādisiddha]sṛṣṭīpralayānusāreṇa [...] paramātmano nityasya vedānām yoner api na teṣu svātantryam, pūrvapūrvasargānusāreṇa tādṛśānupūrvivīracanāt.

153 See, for instance, Torella 2002: xxxii.

154 On the five cosmic activities (*pañcakṛtya*) as belonging also to the subject, see for instance Torella 2002: 133, n. 14. For the afterlife of the concept of *pañcakṛtya* as a set of activities

I believe, that we must read Abhinavagupta's comment on the act of transmission (*dānakriyā*) of dance, by which Śiva allows Taṇḍu the freedom—a freedom he already intrinsically possesses—to introduce multifariousness in dance by a creative act of his mind.

By saying that '[the Blessed one] gave [the *recakas* etc.] (*datta*) [to the sage Taṇḍu] (Nś 4.260ab), [Bharata] shows that the variety (*vaicitrya*) that was introduced in [dance], on the basis of his own imagination (*nijabuddhikṛta*), by the one to whom [Śiva] allows freedom (*svātantrya*), does not go against what was seen [in Śiva's dance]. Therefore, the predominance of beauty (*śobhā*) in [dance] is superior.¹⁵⁵

Although the text of this passage is corrupt, the implication is quite clear: the dance that Taṇḍu taught to Bharata was not exactly the same as the one performed by Śiva, since Taṇḍu was allowed to introduce some novelty into it, seen as variety or multifariousness. To Taṇḍu indeed goes the credit for combining dance with musical instrumentation and singing, as well as with the poetic text, which allows both for new practices and new genres. Therefore, the transmission of dance from Śiva to Bharata, through Taṇḍu, involves a truly creative move, through which variety is envisaged and change is brought about as an expansion of the field of dance.¹⁵⁶

belonging to both Śiva and the limited soul, and its close connection with the idea of Śiva the dancer in Māheśvarānanda's work, see Wenta 2018.

155 ABh ad Nś 4.259cd–260ab, vol. 1, p. 167: *datta iti. *yaṃ svātantryam* [conj., *yā tandryām* M₁ T₁ E₁^{ac}, *yat taṇḍum* E₁₍₁₎, *svātantryam* E₁₍₂₎] *anujānāno nijabuddhikṛtaṃ *yat tena* [E₁₍₂₎, *yatnena* M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎] *tatra vaicitryam anupraveśitaṃ na tad dṛṣṭāpratighātīti darśayati. tena śobhāprādhānyam evātra jyāyaḥ* [...]. The text of the editions is corrupt, and both Ramakrishna Kavi and Ramaswami Sastri have tried to suggest some emendations. If one looks at the few available manuscripts containing this passage—namely M₁ and T₁ alone, since T₄ has a lacuna here—it appears that the manuscripts read *yā tandryām* as a single word, but recognized a possible loss of syllables by placing several dots on the top of the word. One may suppose that a relative pronoun *yaṃ* was followed by *svātantryam* in a double accusative (the one to whom Śiva allows freedom ...), which then requires reading (*yat*) *tena* as a correlative referring to Taṇḍu (... by him was introduced in dance the variety that he conceived by his own imagination ...). This follows a conjecture proposed by Ramaswami Sastri, who silently corrects the text of Kavi and the MSS reading *yatnena*. What remains in the text of the manuscripts can be justified through the loss of a consonant cluster *y(amsv)ātandryam* and the confusion of *drya* for *trya* in *°tandryam*. This restoration is of course tentative in the absence of better manuscripts, and no parallel of this discussion can be found in dance or dramatic literature.

156 On the two main innovations by Taṇḍu, and on the enlargement of the semantic field of *nr̥tta*, see the previous section.

Innovation is therefore sanctioned by the *śāstra* through the very act of handing down knowledge to another individual, which reminds us of Vācaspati's danseuse, with the important difference that Abhinavagupta's dancer is conceived of as a free agent who is allowed to truly innovate by an act of imagination and is not expected to simply emulate the teacher. To be creative, the subject needs to be allowed freedom by the god, a theme that has been developed at length in the Pratyabhijñā.¹⁵⁷ Although, as noted by others, Abhinavagupta's agenda in matters of aesthetics is quite ecumenical,¹⁵⁸ in matters of dance, he adopts what I regard as a peculiarly Śaiva perspective. Two reasons might explain the incursion of specific Śaiva theological positions into an otherwise non-confessional commentary. First of all, Śiva is personally involved in the episode about the transmission of dance and, as Natarāja, his dance is commonly used in India as a metaphor for cosmic creation, which is indeed the model for every successive act of creativity.¹⁵⁹ Secondly, the fact that no ongoing debate about the issue of artistic transmission was available elsewhere in the established field of aesthetics must have allowed the commentator some liberty in the interpretation of the relevant passages. As I have shown, Abhinavagupta's sources in this respect are quite eclectic, and no alternative opinion is referred to, which suggests that the commentator was moving in still uncharted territory.

The central idea of *pravāhanityatā* that Abhinavagupta attributes to the Veda—his model for the creation and transmission of dance—does not only refer to its new recreation at the beginning of a new era, but also to the continuous re-actualization/re-utterance of the Veda in the transmission from master to disciple, which is close to the Mīmāṃsaka view. The same has been shown in more explicit terms to apply to dance, whereby a certain standard for the art is maintained, despite the inevitable changes that every artistic practice is bound

157 See, for instance ĪPK 1.5.16, in the translation of Raffaele Torella: "The Lord, thanks to his freedom which is absence of duality, by creating a self not devoid of freedom variously representing him in the form of Īśa etc. renders the carrying out of practical activity possible" (Torella 2002: 122). In a similar vein, the dynamics of the causative syntax are used by Abhinavagupta to explain that the subject is essentially a free agent, on which see Torella 1987.

158 To describe Abhinavagupta's art theory, Cuneo speaks of an 'ecumenical attitude, i.e. a conscious attempt to underplay the "sectarian" aspects of his thought while commenting on works of a "trans-sectarian" discipline such as *alaṅkāraśāstra*' (Cuneo 2016b: 5, n. 5). See also Cuneo 2016a.

159 See, e.g., Bäumer 1995 on the interplay between cosmic and artistic creation in Kashmir Śaivism and Bäumer 1997 on dance/acting as central metaphors in it. See also Cuneo & Ganser (forthcoming) on the use of the metaphor of the *theatrum mundi* as *samsāra*, with emphasis on the comparison between the actor and the divine creator.

to undergo with its passage from a master to a disciple. This standard of correct practice, coinciding with a superior beauty, is indeed provided by the authoritativeness and qualities of the first transmitter who, by transmitting the art, at the same time allows the freedom to introduce variety and change. Freedom in art is not only allowed within the limits of beauty, but it is also confined to some chosen individuals who, like Taṇḍu, are endowed with specific qualities:

‘[Dance was donated] to the sage [Taṇḍu],’ i.e. to the one capable of discerning the essential from the non-essential.¹⁶⁰

In this connection, one might want to look at the question of the recipient of the *śāstra* beyond the framework of the narrative of dance. Paradigmatic figures in this sense are Bharata, the theatre master, and his hundred sons, the actors. The latter are generally referred to as ‘practitioners’ (*prayoktr*) or ‘experts in the theatrical art’ (*nāṭyajña*). In this way, a direct link is drawn between the divine originator of theatrical practice and the human exponents of the tradition, who have received the teachings and will in their turn transmit the art to the next generations of performers.¹⁶¹ Finally, sages such as Ātreya who ask about the knowledge of theatre and are mentioned as ‘seers’ (*ṛṣis*) or ‘twice-born’ (*dvija* or *dvijottama*) are supposed to be the depositaries of Bharata’s text in its present form. The same quality of discernment expected of Taṇḍu as a recipient of the art is also said to qualify Bharata’s disciples.¹⁶² At the time of the transmission of the newly created theatrical art, in fact, Brahmā is instructed by Indra to hand over theatre to people endowed with discernment and similar qualities. The apt recipients of the teaching are immediately identified as the seers (*ṛṣi*), that is, Bharata and his sons, since the gods are recognized as unfit for this aim.

To those who are skilful, learned, bold, and unwearied, may this Veda named Theatre be passed on by you (1.20). [...] The gods are incapable of receiving (*grahaṇa*), maintaining (*dhāraṇa*), understanding (*dhyāna*), and performing (*prayoga*) it. Oh best and blessed [Bharata], unfit are they in handling theatre (1.22).

Translation based on CUNEO 2008–2009; 157¹⁶³

160 ABh ad Nś 4.260ab, vol. 1 p. 167: *munaye ity ūhāpohādikuśalāya*.

161 However, on the fundamental ambiguity of the status of the actors in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*’s narrative frame, and the non-linearity of the transmission of theatrical art with cases of misuse and their political repression, see Ganser & Cuneo 2012.

162 Cf. ABh ad Nś 1.2–3, vol. 1, p. 6: *śiṣyānām ūhāpohapāṭavam grahaṇayogyatā ceti*.

163 Nś 1.20, 22: *kuśalā ye vidagdḥās ca pragalbhās ca jitaśramāḥ | teṣv ayaṃ nāṭyasamjño hi*

The qualities possessed by the sons of Bharata but lacking in the deities are explained by Abhinavagupta as indicative of the entire process of learning, happening over various phases. The names given to its various phases reveal the influence of another classical text, the *Arthaśāstra*, which I believe to be the source, here as elsewhere, of Abhinavagupta's reflections on instruction. The *Arthaśāstra* gives the various steps of apprenticeship in the following sequence: the desire to learn (*śuśrūṣā*), audition (*śravaṇa*), reception (*grahaṇa*), memorization (*dhāraṇa*), discriminative knowledge (*viññāna*), reasoning (*ūha*), rejection (*apoha*), and adherence to truth (*tattvābhīniveśa*).¹⁶⁴ By matching the qualities absent in the gods to those present in the actors, Abhinavagupta explains the teaching in the following way:

'Learned' means 'capable of discernment' (*ūhāpohasamartha*). 'Bold' means 'not afraid of the audience'. 'Unwearied' means 'capable and endowed with a fit and never exhausted body'. First of all, [the pupil] receives (*grahaṇa*) [the teaching] from the mouth of the guru. [Then,] he maintains (*dhāraṇa*) it, i.e. he does not forget [it], he understands [it], i.e. he considers where he has to apply the teachings and where not (*ūhāpo-*

vedaḥ saṃkrāmyatām tvayā || 20 || *grahaṇe dhāraṇe dhyāne prayoge cāsya sattama | aśaktā bhagavan devā ayogyā nātyakarmaṇi* || 22 ||

164 See Aś 6.1.4: *śuśrūṣāśravaṇagrahaṇadhāraṇaviññānohāpohatattvābhīniveśāḥ prajñāgu-ṇāḥ*. These steps are reiterated by Abhinavagupta at the beginning of chapter 5 as he comments on the questions of the Rṣis, who are eager to learn about the *pūrvaraṅga* in ABh ad Nś 5.2–4, vol. 1, pp. 205–206: *svagatatattvagrahaṇadhāraṇādisāmartyātmakaśiṣya-sampaddarśanāyām* [E₁^{pc} E₂, *svagatatattva*° D M₁^{pc} T₁^{pc} T₆^{pc} E₁^{ac}, *svagata*° M₁^{ac} T₁^{ac} T₆^{ac}, *svagataṃ* T₇] *guruprotsāhanam ityabhiprāyeṇāhuḥ—yatheti*. [...] *ūhāpohaviññānādikam api darśayanti—grhīveti. cakārād dhārayitvā vadhāritam niścitam. nikhilena sākaḥyenetī. yathātattvam iti tattvābhīniveśam* [E₁₍₄₎ E₂, *tattvādiniveśam* D M₁ T₆ T₇ E₁₍₂₎, *tattvābhīniveśanam* E₁₍₁₎] *āhuḥ. pūrvaraṅgaṃ veditum icchāma iti jijñāsā darśitā*. 'When the master sees the competence of [his] pupils, which consists in their own ability to grasp (*grahaṇa*) the essence [of his teaching], retain (*dhāraṇa*) [it], etc., he is encouraged [to explain further]. With this intention in mind, the [Rṣis] utter [the following words]: "The way in which [this theatre was born, and how the *jarjara* originated, how the obstacles were appeased and how the deities were worshipped, all this we have heard, grasped, and ascertained. Furthermore, we would now like to know it in full, as it actually is" (Nś 5.2–3). [...] With the expression "having grasped, etc.," [the seers] also indicate [their competence in the other stages of the learning process,] such as [the ability to] supply the unsaid (*ūha*) and to leave out the inessential (*apoha*), discriminative knowledge (*viññāna*), etc. The mention of the particle *ca* [suggests that the teaching] was retained and then ascertained (*avadhārita*), i.e. determined. "In full" means "entirely". [With the words] "as it actually is," [the seers] express [their] firm conviction to know things as they really are (*tattvābhīniveśa*). [Their] desire to know (*jijñāsā*) has been shown [by the words] "we would now like to know about the *pūrvaraṅga*" (Nś 5.4).'

havicāra), and performs [it], i.e. he manifests it in front of an audience. Furthermore, the word ‘and’ (*ca*) hints at the [various] activities useful to it, such as rehearsal (*guṇanikā*), athletic exercise (*vyāyāma*), repeated practice (*abhyāsa*), and so forth.

Translation based on CUNEO 2008–2009; 158¹⁶⁵

The apprenticeship of theatre, as this passage suggests, comprises both a theoretical and a practical phase, which coincide with the study of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as a recited text and a practical implementation comprising bodily training, which might have involved some martial techniques but possibly also the study of dance techniques.¹⁶⁶ It is not entirely clear if a separate training for the dancer was conceived in this phase, and if that required a previous knowledge of the *śāstra*. The evidence from Abhinavagupta and Vācaspati Miśra suggests that dance instruction was generally taking place under the practical direction of a teacher, in the form of emulation by the student, but of course there must have existed several practices coexisting at the same time. No doubt, with its web of textual references to ideas about instruction and authoritative knowledge, the ‘identikit of the performer’ laid down by Abhinavagupta participates fully in the ideal and normative dimension of the *śāstra*.

Because of their relevance to the conceptualization of the institute of tradition outlined here, and because some of his questions have informed the methodological approach of the present section, I would like to quote some considerations laid down by Federico Squarcini at the end of his introductory essay on tradition in South Asia:

Every tradition has devised complex intellectual practices and strategies, thanks to which, while the elements of the originally established corpus are innovated and changed—though seeking not to formally alter the fundamental unitary picture—an attempt is made to preserve the image of integrity and inalterability. [...] However, ‘novelty’ cannot be avoided for two reasons: on the one hand, by not updating itself, a tradition risks to lose its persuasive force, on the other, those who, while working within a

165 ABh ad 1.20–22, vol. 1, p. 17: *kuśalāḥ grahaṇadhāraṇayogyāḥ. vidagdḥāḥ ūhāpohasamarthāḥ. pragalbhāḥ pariśady abhīraṇaḥ. jitaśramāḥ yogyāḥ samucitadehā akḥinmakāyāś ca. grahaṇa iti. pūrvaṃ gurumukhād grahaṇam* [$\Sigma_M \Sigma_E$, *avagamaḥ E_{1(4)}, Om. T₄]. *tasyāvīsmaraṇam dhāraṇam. jñānam ūhāpohavicāraḥ. prayogaḥ parśadi prakāṭikaraṇam. cakāreṇa ca tadupayogiguṇanikāvīyāyāmābhyāsādīḥ.**

166 Some overlap of martial and dance techniques are evident in the concept of *vyāyāma*, on which see above, n. 62.

tradition, do not sufficiently emphasize the specificity of its role, risk to diminish its importance. The theme of novelty and originality becomes an essential part of traditional discourse, though the fact remains that novelty was never to be presented as an *ex novo* given, but if anything as a renewal, restoration, reformulation of the original.

SQUARCINI 2005: 27–28

Abhinavagupta's attempt to establish a *dispositif* capable of embracing and legitimating novelty within traditional discourse can be interpreted along the same lines. Quite original to the Kashmirian thinker is, I believe, the fact that change, a factor inherent and inevitable in the concept of tradition, is not only presented as sanctioned by the *śāstra* through the myth working as a paradigm, but is also attributed to a certain artistic freedom, recognized and mobilized in the very act of transmission (cf. the verb *datta* 'given', analysed above) of handing over the practical knowledge of dance from an authorized transmitter to an authorized recipient. Moreover, the fact that freedom is conceived as being legitimated by a god has important consequences in that it raises the status of the recipient from a simple consignee in charge of re-transmitting an unchanged knowledge to guarantee its survival—the missing link in a reproduction chain—to a truly creative artist. By this move, the dance tradition finds itself fully justified along with its intrinsic element of dynamism, with artistic creativity and imagination being valued—possibly for the first time in a South Asian theory of art—as legitimate and sought-after factors of change and innovation.

The Aesthetics of Dance

In Abhinavagupta's famous formulation of aesthetic theory, a dramatic text presented on stage with the help of the spectacular machinery, complete with all of its components, triggers, in the spectator, an experience *sui generis* that takes the name of *rasa*. *Rasa* is the sap, flavour or essence of the performance, and its experience is described as a tasting, relishing or savouring (*rasanā, āsvādana, carvaṇā*), drawing on a culinary analogy already in vogue in Bharata's text.¹ The analysis of the process leading to the arousal of *rasa* in the spectator and the components into which this process can be dissected form the core of Abhinavagupta's aesthetics. Its essence can be extracted from the extensive commentary dedicated to the famous *rasasūtra*, Bharata's 'Aphorism on Rasa', *vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicārisaṃyogād rasanīṣpattiḥ*: 'Rasa arises out of the union of the determinants, the consequents, and the transitory states'.² In a scene dominated by *śṛṅgāra* (the amorous *rasa*), for example, the determinants (*vibhāva*) would be all of those factors arousing the character's emotion of delight (*rati*): a beloved, pleasure gardens, unguents and fragrant creams, garlands, etc. The consequents (*anubhāva*) would be all the visible reactions to that emotion, such as sidelong glances, gentle speeches, playful movements, and so on. Finally, the transitory states (*vyabhicārin*) would be those accompanying the primary emotion or stable state (*sthāyibhāva*), for instance joy, jealousy, shame, etc. Abhinavagupta establishes a fundamental difference between the emotions we experience in ordinary life, the *bhāvas*, and those that are triggered by a work of art, the *rasas*.³ In theatre, as in literature more generally, the cognizing subject ideally becomes a sensitive spectator, able to savour

1 For a discussion of the culinary analogy and its implications for understanding Bharata's aesthetic theory, see Cuneo 2013.

2 For a translation of the commentary on the *rasasūtra*, see Gnoli 1968; Cuneo 2008–2009; and Pollock 2016. For a partial translation and a broad analysis of Abhinavagupta's aesthetics, see Bansat-Boudon 1992.

3 The primary emotions or stable states (*sthāyibhāva*) are: delight (*rati*), humour (*hāsa*), sorrow (*śoka*), anger (*krodha*), valour (*utsāha*), fear (*bhaya*), disgust (*jugupsā*), and astonishment (*viśmaya*) (NŚ 6.17, 7.8 ff.). Their corresponding *rasas* are: the amorous (*śṛṅgāra*), the comic (*hāsyā*), the pathetic (*karuṇā*), the furious (*raudra*), the heroic (*vīra*), the fearsome (*bhayānaka*), the odious (*bībhatsa*), and the wondrous (*adbhuta*) (NŚ 6.15, 6.45 ff.). Moreover, Abhinavagupta admits a ninth *rasa*, the pacified (*śānta*), whose primary emotion is ultimately the *ātman* itself. On the number of *rasas*, see Raghavan 1940.

the emotions depicted through a sympathetic response, which is triggered by the generalization of the emotion. The latter guarantees that the spectator can identify himself with the events depicted and thereby savour the emotions in an essentially blissful experience, i.e. as *rasa*, an experience devoid of the ordinary reactions to emotions in real life: attachment, rejection, indifference.⁴

Far from developing a mere psychological theory, Abhinavagupta pays great attention to establishing exactly how such 'purified' emotions are engendered through the performance, paving the way for a phenomenological account of the aesthetic experience. If the sixth and seventh chapters of the *Abhinavabhāratī* are mainly concerned with analysing the composition of a work of art in terms of its emotional configuration (the determinants, the consequents, and the transitory and stable states), and how this can trigger an affective response in the spectator, it may be argued that the rest of the commentary strives to integrate all the disparate components of theatre so as to form a coherent and meaningful whole, where all the parts work in harmony, variously contributing to the arousal of *rasa*.⁵

Once it had been theorized by Bharata as a central principle in the field of dramatics, other theorists—more or less successfully—started to incorporate *rasa* into the treatment of the different artistic forms, including those having an essentially non-linguistic nature, such as music and dance.⁶ One possible way to explain the incorporation of *rasa* into other artistic domains has been proposed in the following terms by Katz:

It is natural that music, being treated as part of a Gesamtkunstwerk, such as theatre, should follow the general aims of dramatic and poetic art, namely, it should be able to contain *rasa* and generate aesthetic responses.

KATZ 1983: 60

4 Although the aesthetic experience is conceptualized as an undivided cognitive event, it can be analysed into a sequence of phases in which the spectator first goes through the 'generalization' of the emotion (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*), implying a process of distancing, since the emotion is felt as common to everybody. This triggers a sympathetic response to the events represented, or empathy (*hrdayasaṃvāda*, literally 'dialogue with the heart'), which leads to an identification with them (*tanmayībhāva*, literally 'the fact of becoming that'), and finally to the savouring or mastication of *rasa* (*rasāsvāda/carvaṇā*). On the different phases of the aesthetic process, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 152–153.

5 To some extent, however, already in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the various *rasas* and *bhāvas* work as organizing principles around which the various dramatic techniques are systematized.

6 In the field of music, such a tendency can already be detected in the *Brhaddeśī* of Mātāṅga, a text on music theory written around the eighth century.

As I will demonstrate in this chapter, instead of treating the incorporation of *rasa* into the domains of music and dance as a natural development of dramatic theory, Abhinavagupta's analysis is fully aimed at problematizing the presence of *rasa* in arts other than poetry and theatre, that is, outside of the specialized field of literature.

To understand Abhinavagupta's reluctance to extend the concept of *rasa* to drama's closest ancillary arts, not to speak of painting and sculpture, one has to keep in mind that his work presupposes a theoretical turn that occurred in Kashmir in the middle of the ninth century, starting in the field of Ālaṃkāraśāstra with Ānandavardhana, and later extending to the adjacent field of Nāṭyaśāstra. In brief, this paradigm shift consisted in applying a model of textual analysis first developed in the field of Mīmāṃsā—the science of ritual hermeneutics—to the literary work or poetic text. Under the influence of Mīmāṃsā, poetics shifted from being dominated by a formalist paradigm, in which single *alaṃkāras* are analysed as functioning independently from one another, to a teleological text analysis, in which all the components of the poetic text conspire to bring about the overriding goal of poetry, identified with the *rasa* principle typically borrowed from the allied discipline of dramatics.⁷ This move entailed a greater focus on the mechanisms of poetic language—the communication of *rasa* typically being conceived in linguistic terms—as well as a new focus on the epistemology of *rasa*.

The main conceptual challenges posed by the extension of Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics to poetry and drama are in my view essentially twofold. First of all, if the unity and coherence of the literary work are guaranteed by the *rasa* principle, and if *rasa* is conveyed by a specific linguistic function, theorized in Ālaṃkāraśāstra as *vyāñjanā* ('suggestion', 'manifestation') or *dhvani* ('resonance', 'implicature'),⁸ how can non-linguistic elements such as dance and music, which are typically seen in a dramatic performance, be independently expressive of a *rasa* or even contribute to its arousal and therefore be meaningfully integrated into a comprehensive theory of aesthetics? In the field of Ālaṃkāraśāstra, in fact, the validity of a poetic work can be assessed in terms of poetic suggestion, without exceeding the boundaries of the text and its lin-

7 This paradigm shift has been analysed in McCrea 2008. The new hermeneutics of the poetic text promoted by Ānandavardhana entailed that 'one must always ask not only whether a particular element is beautiful in and of itself, but whether it is appropriate to the aesthetic objective of the work viewed as a whole' (ibid.: 25). To be even more accurate, as argued in Bronner 2016, the active borrowing of cognitive and hermeneutical models from Mīmāṃsā and its transposition within the field of Ālaṃkāraśāstra had already started with Udbhaṭa.

8 On *dhvani*, the 'soul of poetry' as theorized by Ānandavardhana, see especially Ingalls et al. 1990 and McCrea 2008.

guistic matrix. In the domain of Nāṭyaśāstra, on the contrary, the process of aesthetic communication is much more difficult to account for due to the intrinsic complexity and multimediality of theatre. Apart from a whole array of non-homogeneous artistic techniques, theatre also involves a multiplicity of agents.⁹ Explaining the process leading to the arousal of *rasa* in the spectator, as epitomized in the famous *rasasūtra*, became a major ground for dispute in the tradition of dramatics.¹⁰

The second challenge concerns a development that typically derives from the rapprochement of poetic and dramatic theory. When *rasa* became the accepted aesthetic standard for both drama and poetry, the attention of the theorists shifted from *rasa* as aesthetic object to *rasa* as aesthetic experience.¹¹ This gave rise, in dramatic theory, to a series of new and specific questions, different from those that had first been raised in connection with *rasa* in the field of literary theory. Theatre, in fact, distinguishes itself from poetry due to its paradigmatic use of dramatic representation or acting (*abhinaya*) for the communication of *rasa*. This being the case, how can we account for the communication of *rasa* in the absence of *abhinaya*—for instance, in poetry to be heard, danced, or sung—and how can we preserve the specificity of these other art forms, when they incorporate, to a greater or lesser extent, the representational function proper to theatre?

Abhinavagupta's evaluation of the aesthetics of dance can best be grasped in the light of these new theoretical engagements, which developed in Kashmir at a time of intense intellectual and artistic renewal. In such a climate of cultural effervescence, the newly developed theories could immediately be tested against the existing practices and vice versa. Rather than being simply considered as infused with *rasa*, or as capable of directly conveying *rasa*, the object called *nṛtta* ('dance', in its many acceptations) was examined both in connection with its ability to work within the theatrical performance—seen as an interconnected whole—as well as independently, as a form in its own right, distinct from theatre but sharing many of its features. Under these premises,

9 On the new challenge posed by the analysis of the spectacular object from the hermeneutic perspective elaborated by Mīmāṃsā, see Ganser 2016.

10 In particular, the shift of *rasa* from the character (or the actor) to the spectator (the perceiving subject), in the revolutionary work of the tenth-century literary critic Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, raised compelling new questions about its creation from factors belonging to the dramatic text and its performance.

11 This is just one of the possible ways to explain the semantic shift of the word *rasa* from its first occurrence in the field of aesthetics in Bharata's treatise to its reconceptualization by Abhinavagupta. On the crucial question of the interpretations of the word *rasa* before Abhinavagupta, see Pollock 1998, 2016; Ali 2006; and Cuneo 2013.

the question dealt with in the section of the *Abhinavabhāratī* edited and translated in this book could be put in the following terms: provided that dance is a component of theatre, are we justified in attributing to it an active role in the aesthetic process culminating in the *rasa* experience, or should we consider it a simple embellishment to the performance, the way in which Ālaṃkārikas conceived ornaments and poetic qualities prior to the Kashmirian poetic revolution? And if dance be taken as an independent form of spectacle, connected with a poetic text endowed with *rasa*, does it remain an ornamental art of bodily movement, or does it assume a theatrical nature? Before proceeding to the exposition of Abhinavagupta's detailed and original examination of these connected issues, it will be useful first to have a look at the prodromes of a discussion about dance in Bharata's text.

3.1 Dance within Theatre, Dance without Theatre

To begin with, an enquiry about the place of dance in Bharata's theatre is called for by the very narrative logic built up in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Even though, in the economy of the treatise, dance is treated earlier than all the other elements of performance, from the temporal perspective of the narrated events, it represents a further addition to an already complete entity, the knowledge of which it presupposes.¹²

The questions about the reason for introducing dance into theatre are presented in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as if they were asked, out of sheer curiosity, by the Ṛṣis gathered around Bharata to hear about the origin of theatre. The questions arise, namely, after Bharata's account of how Śiva presented the gift of dance to Taṇḍu, and he in turn connected dance with melodic and instrumental music, thus giving shape to the *tāṇḍava*. This episode recounts the first formal transmission of the art of dancing directly from the deity to an apt recipient. Whether we place it *in illo tempore* or just before the transmission of the art of dance from Taṇḍu to Bharata, chronologically it necessarily precedes Bharata's systematic description of the *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras* to the Ṛṣis, although it follows in the textual economy of the treatise. The account of the *pinḍibāndhas* and their foundation myth and of how Taṇḍu connected dance with music are also presupposed by the seers' questions about dance. Their background could be reconstructed as follows: Śiva advises Brahmā to introduce

12 On the first introduction of dance into theatre via the *kaiśikī vṛtti*, and on its further introduction by Śiva into the preliminary rite, through its formal teaching by Taṇḍu, see §1.3.3.

dance into the *pūrvaraṅga*; he calls Taṇḍu and tells him to instruct Bharata in dance; Śiva transmits the dance to Taṇḍu; Taṇḍu connects dance with instrumentation; and Bharata is instructed by Taṇḍu in the *karaṇas*, *aṅgahāras*, and *recakas*. Having listened to all this, the Ṛṣis pronounce two crucial verses:

Given that dramatic acting has been devised by those experts in [theatre] for the sake of attaining [its] objects, why indeed has this dance been devised [and] what is the nature to which it conforms? It is not connected with the contents of the songs, nor does it bring any object into being. Why has this dance been devised in [connection with] *gītas* and *āsāritas*?¹³

It is not easy to evaluate the exact purport of this sentence in Bharata's order of ideas. Surely, the second part of the question has to be related to the sphere of the *pūrvaraṅga*, since it mentions some of the technical terms proper to it. Śiva, in fact, suggested making the preliminaries variegated by introducing dance into the *vardhamāna*, the *gītakas*, and the *āsāritas*, as well as by enacting the meaning of the *mahāgītas*.¹⁴ The details on the course of action followed in combining dance with songs and instrumental music in the *pūrvaraṅga* are provided immediately after the answers to the questions of the Ṛṣis (v. 4.269cd–270ab ff.). In the various segments forming the longer musical compositions of the preliminary rite, the phases of abstract dance (*nṛtta*), performed to instrumental music, alternate with moments of enactment (*abhinaya*), aimed at representing the meaning of the song lyrics. This alternation is particularly visible in the *vardhamāna*, a musical piece comprised of a collection of four *āsāritas*, and in the *gītakas*, a fixed group of seven musical compositions, starting with the *madraka*, that are performed as the first limb of the *pūrvaraṅga* after the drawing of the curtain.¹⁵ The actual presence of dance side by side with acting in these musical structures suggests two different but contiguous uses of bodily movement. Moreover, Śiva's instruction to use dance to enact the meanings of 'great songs' makes the function of dance overlap with that of *abhinaya*, which might have raised legitimate doubts about their respective domains and separate identity.¹⁶

13 NŚ 4.261cd–263ab: *yadā prāptyarthaṃ arthānāṃ tajjñair abhinayaḥ kṛtaḥ || kasmān nṛttaṃ kṛtaṃ hy etat kaṃ svabhāvam apekṣate | na gītakārthasaṃbaddhaṃ na cāpy arthasya bhāvakaṃ || kasmān nṛttaṃ kṛtaṃ hy etad gīteṣv āsāriteṣu ca |*

14 NŚ 4.14–15ab, cf. § 1.3.3, n. 75.

15 On the structure of the *pūrvaraṅga*, see § 2.3.2, n. 91.

16 Transposed to the terminology nowadays used by scholars of performance, this could be

Alternatively, the first part of the question ‘why indeed has this dance been devised and what is the nature to which it conforms?’ can be viewed as a more general question concerning the nature and scope of the newly introduced object called ‘dance’ within theatre. As told in the narrative of origins, dance assumed the status of an ancillary of theatre only after adding the *kaiśikī vṛtti* to the other manners. In this connection dance is declared to be a constituent element of the bodily acting (*āṅgikābhinaya*), along with two other modes of using the body expressively, namely *śākhā* and *aṅkura*.¹⁷ This suggests that dance must have played a role in the protocol of acting, at least as a mode of bodily expression, if not as directly connected with representational content. As can be gleaned from some famous specimens of classical Sanskrit plays, dance could also function as the content of representation itself: dance scenes indeed became a favourite topic of depiction by dramatists.¹⁸

The laconic answer, provided by Bharata in three verses, does not help us any further in narrowing the scope of the questions posed by the seers:

On this point, it is said that dance does not indeed conform to any object, but it is meant to generate beauty (*śobhā*); that is why dance has come into use. Generally, everybody likes dance in itself. Moreover, this dance is praised because it is considered auspicious (*maṅgalya*). And on [occasions such as] weddings, the birth of a child, welcoming a new child-in-law, jubilation, success, and so forth, it is a cause of merriment. That is why this dance has come into use.¹⁹

regarded as a problem of the fuzzy boundaries between the phenomenal body and the semiotic body, i.e. the body perceived in itself, i.e. in its own materiality, and the body perceived as something else, i.e. as a signifier. On these two concepts, see Fischer-Lichte 2008: 140–147, and for their application to ancient dance discourse, see Schlapbach 2018: 10.

17 The relevant verse is NŚ 8.14: *asya śākhā ca nṛttaṃ ca tathaiṅkura eva ca | vastūny abhinayasyeha vijñeyāni prayoktr̥bhiḥ* || ‘The *śākhā*, dance and the *aṅkura* are known as the elements of this [bodily] acting.’ Abhinavagupta quotes this verse on several occasions, on which see below, n. 182.

18 A famous example is the dance competition described in the *Mālavikāgnimitra*. This and other examples could be regarded as cases of ekphrasis, to borrow a term from classical studies. For a discussion of the importance of ekphrasis in the study of ancient dance, in the less commonly attested sense of ‘literary depictions of dance’, see Schlapbach 2018: 9–18.

19 NŚ 4.263cd–266ab: *atrocyate na khalv arthaṃ kañcin nṛttam apekṣate || kin tu śobhāṃ prajānayed iti nṛttaṃ pravartitam | prāyeṇa sarvalokasya nṛttam iṣṭaṃ svabhāvataḥ || maṅgalyam iti kṛtvā ca nṛttam etat prakṛtitam | vivāhaprasavāvāhapramodābhyudayādiṣu || vinodakāraṇaṃ ceti nṛttam etat pravartitam |*

A straightforward translation of the term *śobhā* as ‘beauty’ may sound reductive and not unambiguous, considering that the concept of beauty in art and aesthetic theory has had such a multiplicity of interpretations in the West.²⁰ The task proves even more arduous when one considers that a fully fledged theory of aesthetics, which might be of help in evaluating these statements on dance, is nowhere to be found in Bharata’s text. In other parts of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the term *śobhā* is connected with the idea of beauty as achieved through ornamentation, that is, through the addition of some beautifying element. Similarly, in the chapter on harmonious acting (*sāmānyābhinaya*), *śobhā* is listed among the seven effortless (*āyatnaja*) graces or virtues (lit. ‘ornaments’, *alaṃkāras*) of women,²¹ and is explained as the action of embellishing (*alaṃkaraṇa*) the limbs with physical beauty (*rūpa*), youth (*yauvana*), and charm (*lāvanya*), enhanced by amorous enjoyment.²² When, on the contrary, *śobhā* is manifested as one of the virtues of the hero, it consists in the display of resolve (*dhairya*), prowess (*śaurya*), valour (*utsāha*), and contempt for menial objects, a quality in which he vies with the best of men.²³ Elsewhere in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, *śobhā* is described as something produced through the addition of some element to an already complete whole, as for instance by adding facial colouring (*mukharāga*)—e.g., blushing—to an already well constructed bodily enactment, complete with the major and minor limbs. Indeed, although bodily acting might be less prominent at some moments in the dramatic performance, when one employs facial colouring, beauty is nevertheless doubled, like the night by the moon.²⁴

20 An informed history of beauty in the Indian context still needs to be written. For the various words used for indicating ‘beauty’ or beauty-related concepts in the field of Sanskrit poetry, see Ingalls 1962 and Smith 2010. A significant step in the interpretation of the concept of beauty in a broader cultural perspective was taken by Ali in his innovative study on courtly culture. Ali (2004: 143) speaks of ‘an enduring concern with beauty’ and suggests that ‘the theory of beauty was something like a worldview’. On beauty in the Indic world, see also Raghavan 2008 and the recent Torella (forthcoming) on spiritual and aesthetic beauty in Abhinavagupta’s work.

21 The other types of graces are the three produced from the body (*aṅgaja*) and the ten natural ones (*svābhāvika*). Cf. Nś 22.5 and, for a study thereof, see Bansat-Boudon 1991a, where these graces are given the collective name of *sāttvikālaṃkāras*.

22 Nś 22.27: *rūpayauvanalāvanyair upabhogopabṛṃhitaiḥ | alaṃkaraṇam aṅgānām śobheti parikīrtitā ||*

23 Nś 22.34: *dākṣyaṃ śauryam athotsāho nicārtheṣu jugupsanam | uttamaiś ca guṇaiḥ spardhāyataḥ śobheti sā smṛtā ||*

24 Nś 8.165cd–167ab: *śākhāṅgopāṅgasamṃyuktaḥ kṛto ’py abhinayaḥ śubhaḥ || mukharāgavihīnas tu naiva śobhānvito bhavet | śārīrābhinayo ’po ’pi mukharāgasamanvitaḥ || dviguṇāṃ labhate śobhāṃ rātrāv iva niśākaraḥ |*

With regard to the use of bodily movement, the production of beauty in the body in both theatre and dance is said to depend on a certain grace of the limbs, called *sauṣṭhava*.²⁵ In all these occurrences, *śobhā* coincides to some extent with the production of a specific kind of beauty in an already beautiful aggregate, through the addition of a special element enhancing it. Is dance used similarly in theatre, as an embellishment that guarantees the production of beauty? And how does beauty contribute to the performance and its overall aim? As a matter of fact, no clear idea about the supposed aesthetic function of dance can be traced in the fourth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, nor is it possible to draw a definite picture of the place of dance within the performance of a play.²⁶

As to Bharata's qualification of dance as auspicious (*maṅgalya*), it should be pointed out that this term has to be seen in connection with the festive occasions to which dance is linked outside of theatre. Apart from dance, instrumental music is also prescribed by Bharata for the depiction of auspicious occasions in a play, suggesting the analogous use of music independently of theatre.²⁷ Situations in which dance and music are used in connection with festivals and rituals find depiction in the extant plays and in literature more generally.²⁸ All this suggests that the use of dance and music for auspicious ends had its basis in worldly practices.

25 NŚ 10.89cd–91ab: *sauṣṭhave hi prayatnas tu kāryo vyāyāmedibhiḥ || sauṣṭhavam lakṣaṇam proktaṃ vartanākramayojitam | śobhā sarvaiva nityam hi sauṣṭhavam samupāśritā || na hi sauṣṭhavahīnāṅgaḥ śobhate nāṭyanṛttayoḥ |* On *sauṣṭhava* and its connection with dance, see § 2.2, n. 62.

26 Besides the intrinsic difficulties in reconstructing scenic practices that are no longer extant, the written medium—be it in the form of theoretical manuals or of dramatic texts—is in any case inadequate to account for a living reality such as dance. Although art forms like Kutiyattam and Kathakali are generally considered the closest 'heirs' of classical Sanskrit drama, the data we receive from modern sources should be handled with care. There has been a tendency among scholars, especially in the pioneering studies on Indian theatre, to superimpose what one sees on stage today onto the ancient theatre outlined by Bharata, so that a 'dance character', similar to that witnessed in contemporary performances of Bharatanatyam and Odissi, has been unjustifiably superimposed onto Sanskrit theatre. On the political motives underlying such over-interpretations, see § 1.2.

27 Cf. NŚ 34.18–19: *utsave caiva yāne ca nṛpāñām maṅgaleṣu ca | śubhakalyāṇayoge ca vivāhakarāṇe tathā || utpāte saṃbhrame caiva saigrāme putrajanmani | idrṣeṣu hi kāryeṣu sarvātodyāni vādayet ||* Note that Abhinavagupta affirms that musical instruments should be played all together on such occasions, both in theatre and in the world (ABh *ad locum*, vol. 4, p. 413: *etac ca nāṭye loke 'pi ca*). The reference here is probably to the dramatic depiction of festivals, which is based on the world.

28 See, for instance, the description of the dance performed ritually in the temple of Mahākāla in Ujjain in Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* (vv. 34–36), or the depiction of Kāma's festival in the first act of Śrī Harṣa's *Ratnāvalī*.

Taking advantage of the intrinsic ambiguity of Bharata's statements, Abhinavagupta unsheathes his exegetical weapons and literally dismantles the questions about dance, starting from the very source of the query. Disregarding the caption 'the seers said' (*ṛṣaya ūcuḥ*) which, in the transmitted text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, precedes the questions about dance, Abhinavagupta interprets the two verses as an imaginary objection (*pūrvapakṣa*), raised by Bharata himself in the guise of an opponent.²⁹ Hidden under such a guise, the opponent/Bharata would raise the following doubt:

Is dance different from theatre or is it no different from it? And if it were considered to be different, would it have a purpose or not?³⁰

In the typical style of a philosophical debate, the presentation of the opponent's view or first thesis (*pūrvapakṣa*) is followed by a long elaboration, in which the positions of various adversaries are exposed and refuted before the established opinion (*siddhānta*) is finally presented in the form of an answer to the *pūrvapakṣa* (Nś 4.263cd–266ab). Two main opponents alternatively take the floor, through objections and counter-objections: the first maintains the identity of dance and theatre, and is thus called '*abhedapakṣin*'; the second argues in favour of their difference, whence the appellation '*bhedapakṣin*'. The arguments of the *abhedapakṣin*, identified with the *pūrvapakṣa* staged by Bharata, will form the main object of Abhinavagupta's refutation. Although the commentator upholds the difference between dance and theatre, the arguments of the *bhedapakṣin* may be regarded as a prima facie view, lacking as they are in proper philosophical acumen. They mainly serve the purpose of moving the debate forward and bringing its different levels of interpretation to the fore. The *pūrvapakṣa* is in fact presented as tripartite, on the basis of three different alternative interpretations of the purport of Bharata's questions, which are derived by playing on the polysemy of the Sanskrit words in Nś 4.261cd–263ab.

Thanks to this sophisticated device, the *pūrvapakṣa* reveals a multiplicity of layers in which the word '*nṛtta*' is seen to refer, successively, to 1) dance as an independent genre of staged performance; 2) dance as an element of the dramatic performance or play; 3) dance as a component of the *pūrvaraṅga*. Accordingly, questions about the nature of dance and its difference from theatre apply to all three domains. In all the three cases, the *pūrvapakṣin*

29 See Translation 1.1.

30 ABh ad Nś 4.261cd–263ab, vol. 1, p. 168: *nṛttaṃ nāṭyād bhinnam abhinnaṃ vā. bhinnatve 'pi saprayojanam aprayojanam vā.*

assumes the presence of a fundamental feature of theatre in dance, namely its mimetic or narrative function, called *abhinaya*, which would be the ground for their assimilation. Even though the thesis that dance and theatre are the same will ultimately be refuted, this does not entail the complete denial of *abhinaya* in dance. The position that dance is a bodily movement devoid of *abhinaya*, which corresponds to the *communis opinio* expressed, for instance, by Dhanika, is presented by Abhinava only as a temporary position in his unprecedented examination of the nature and aesthetics of dance.³¹

In my opinion, Abhinavagupta's original argument aims at enlarging the field of dance so as also to encompass the emerging new spectacular genres, such as *Ḍombikā* and others, which the texts list under a variety of categories: *nṛttakāvya*, *nṛtya*, *uparūpaka*, and the like.³² These genres patently contain some form of enactment, just like the *lāsyāṅga* dance pieces of the *pūrvaraṅga*, since both connect dance with the lyrics of the songs to which they are performed. Moreover, in the case of the other songs in the preliminary rite, it is not the alternation of dance and dramatic acting that raises ambiguity about the respective spheres of application of dance and theatre, but rather the fact that dance *itself* is used to enact textual meaning, that is, as an *abhinaya*.

First of all, Abhinavagupta's definition of *nṛtta* has to be flexible enough to encompass all the different manifestations of dance. Secondly, in order to avoid its conflation with theatre due to their common use of enactment, Abhinavagupta opts for an overall reconfiguration of the meaning of *abhinaya* in theatre and dance. Moreover, just as *abhinaya* enters the sphere of dance,

31 See Translation, 3.1. On this point, my interpretation of Abhinavagupta's ultimate position differs from that of Bansat-Boudon, who declares: 'Du débat, nous ne donnerons que les conclusions: la danse, en effet, diffère du théâtre en ce qu'elle est exempte d'*abhinaya*' (Bansat-Boudon 1992: 400). The definition of dance as a movement of limbs devoid of representational function, however, is the most common by far in the theoretical texts. It appears for the first time in the *Avaloka* on the *Daśarūpaka*, where Dhanika interprets the definition of dance as *tālayāśraya-* (DR 1.9b) as *tanmātrāpekṣo 'ṅgavikṣepo 'bhinayaśūnyo nṛttam iti* (AL ad DR 1.9), cf. § 2.1, n. 24. The *Samgītaratnākara* of Śārṅgadeva (13th c.), which otherwise follows the *Abhinavabhāratī* quite closely, presents the same tripartite object as the *Daśarūpaka* and defines dance in analogous terms: *gātravikṣepamātram tu sarvābhinayavarjitam || āṅgikoktaprakāreṇa nṛttam nṛttavido viduḥ |* (SR 7.27cd–28ab) 'The experts in dance, however, know dance as consisting in a mere throwing of limbs, devoid of all kind of enactment, under the modality that has been stated with regard to bodily acting.'

32 The possibility that Abhinavagupta could have deliberately avoided using the category of *nṛtya*, common in other texts, has been discussed in § 2.1. On the scope of the word *nṛtta* in the *Abhinavabhāratī* and on the seven *nṛtta* varieties, see § 2.4 and Translation 8.6.

dance is seen to participate in theatrical performance, not only in its preliminary phase, but both as a topic in the narrative plot and as a staging technique. In the latter respect, dance is considered, though in a very special sense, to be part of the bodily code used to express emotions and ideas, the so-called *āṅgikābhinaya*. This raises questions about its potential as an expressive medium within drama. Similar questions about expressivity are raised in connection with other non-linguistic elements of theatre, such as instrumental music and vocal singing. Their overwhelming presence during a theatrical performance is suggested by the orchestra being placed directly on stage, as well as by the many instances of songs and instrumental accompaniment punctuating key moments in the dramatic representation, for instance the entrance of characters, sudden changes or transitions in the emotive mood, and so on. The issue of the connection of dance and music might thus be seen to develop from a specific question about the use of bodily movements along with *āsāritas* and other songs in the *pūrvaraṅga*, to a more general query about the coordination of the different elements in the staging of a play. The presence of dance and music within the play calls moreover for a consideration of the role of pleasure and the alluring elements in the aesthetic process, and the contribution of beauty to the attainment of the twofold aim of theatre, i.e. pleasure (*prīti*) and instruction (*vyutpatti*), both encompassed by the notion of *rasa*.³³

Without recounting the whole discussion of the nature of dance and its difference from theatre—which can be consulted in the edition, translation, and explanatory notes presented in this book—in the rest of this chapter I will concentrate on the original motives of what I regard as Abhinavagupta's formulation of an 'aesthetics of dance'. Before we delve into the question of the role of dance as an expressive medium within theatre, we must have a look at its homologue, dramatic acting, and its categories.

3.2 Enacting Emotions: A *vademecum* for the Actor

Si deve trovare un linguaggio—con parole, con immagini, movimenti, atmosfere—che faccia *intuire* qualcosa che esiste in noi da sempre. È una conoscenza molto precisa. I nostri sentimenti, quelli di tutti noi, sono molto precisi.³⁴

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33 On pleasure and instruction as the twofold purpose of theatre, see below, § 3.4.

34 From *Laurea Honoris Causa a Pina Bausch*, Alma Mater Studiorum, Università degli Studi

Dramatic acting (*abhinaya*) has been recognized in India as the characteristic feature distinguishing drama from other literary works. The earliest theoreticians of poetry had already posited a disciplinary boundary between drama and poetry on the basis of the enactment of the literary content in the former.³⁵ The amplitude of the treatment devoted to this defining feature of drama in Bharata's text finds no parallel in other dramatic traditions across the world. The techniques of enactment in fact cover the entire scope of an actor's activity, including his capacity for control over the emotional sphere. Judging from the extent of the treatment of bodily movement in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and as can also be gleaned from contemporary dance/theatre practices, it appears that the Indian tradition never considered gesticulation as a mere appendix to the written text. On the contrary, body language or non-verbal behaviour was viewed as a fully fledged expressive medium, whose techniques could be codified through rules and mastered by actors.

The four registers of acting are the bodily (*āṅgika*), the vocal (*vācika*), the psychophysical (*sāttvika*), and the ornamental (*āhārya*).³⁶ These are, as their names indicate, differentiated according to the medium by which the representation is carried out: the body, the voice, the mind, and the costume. From the most general uses down to the smallest details, dramatic acting was seen as closely intertwined with the emotional sphere, including in its textual encoding.³⁷ The general definition of *abhinaya* is given in NŚ 8.6, based on its etymological formation:

The root *nī*, preceded by [the prefix] *abhi-*, has the sense of determining the meanings (*artha*) [of the dramatic text] as directly manifested in front (*ābhimukhya*) [of the spectator]. It is called *abhinaya* because it carries

di Bologna, 1999, quoted in Lo Iacono 2007: 129. ('One should find a language—with words, images, movements, atmospheres—capable of suggesting something that exists within us since time immemorial. This knowledge is very precise. Our emotions, those of everybody, are very precise' [my translation]).

35 See, for instance, Bhāmaha's *Kāvyaḷamkāra* 1.24cd on drama (*nāṭaka*): *uktaṃ tad abhinayārtham ukto 'nyais tasya vistaraḥ* || 'Drama has been said to have its content enacted, and its details have been expounded by others.'

36 Cf. NŚ 6.23: *āṅgiko vācikaś caiva hy āhāryaḥ sāttvikas tatha | cātvaro 'bhīnayā hy ete vijñeyā nāṭyasaṃśrayāḥ* || For an elaboration of the term 'abhinaya' with respect to the means involved, as opposed to the restricted Western concept of 'acting' or 'reciting', see Ganser 2007: 65–67. This section represents a revised and enlarged version of this earlier article.

37 For instance, of the thirty-six types of looks (*dr̥ṣṭis*) that are classified in NŚ 8.40–44 as part of the *upāṅgābhīnaya* ('acting through the minor limbs'), eight correspond, by a rather artificial parallelism, to the eight *rasas*, eight to the eight *sthāyibhāvas*, and the remaining twenty to some of the *vyābhicāribhāvas*.

(*nayati*) the objects (*padārtha*) [of theatre to the audience]. And it has been called *abhinaya* since it determines the different meanings, according to practice, in association with the twig-limbs (*śākhā*), the major limbs (*aṅga*), and the minor limbs (*upāṅga*).³⁸

Dramatic acting is thus defined according to its function in theatre, which is to communicate the textual meanings to the audience. These meanings are primarily conceived in terms of emotions, as it emerges, for instance, from the use of the term *abhinaya* in what Abhinavagupta regards as the very definition of theatre: ‘This nature proper to the ordinary experience, associated with pleasure and pain, is called theatre (*nāṭya*) when it is conveyed by the means of dramatic enactment such as the bodily and the others (*aṅgādyabhinaya*).’³⁹ An even more specific link between acting and the emotional sphere is provided in the definitions of the *bhāvas* in the seventh chapter: ‘the emotional states (*bhāva*) [are so called, since] they, associated with the voice, the body and the mind (*sattva*), bring the contents of poetry (*kāvyaārtha*) into being (*bhāvayanti*).’⁴⁰

The treatment of acting techniques covers the largest portion of Bharata’s treatise (roughly chapters 8–26). The commentary on the eighth chapter, on bodily acting (*āṅgikābhinaya*), is lost at present, and there is little hope that it will ever resurface. This is all the more regrettable since the eighth chapter is the first in the treatise to deal exclusively with the topic of *abhinaya*, and therefore must have contained important introductory remarks on the art of acting in general, and through the body in particular.⁴¹ I deem it legitimate

38 NŚ 8.6–7: *abhipūrvas tu nūndhātūr ābhimukhyārthanirṇaye | yasmāt padārthān nayati tasmāt abhinayaḥ smṛtaḥ || vibhāvayati yasmāc ca nānārthān hi prayogataḥ | śākhāṅgo-pāṅgasamyuktas tasmād abhinayaḥ smṛtaḥ ||* In NŚ 8.6c, some manuscripts read *yasmāt prayogaṃ nayati*; however, given Abhinavagupta’s insistence elsewhere on the fact that *abhinaya* carries the meanings, I prefer to read *padārthān* here.

39 NŚ 1.119: *yo ’yaṃ svabhāvo lokasya sukhaduḥkhasamanvitaḥ | so ’ṅgādyabhinayopeto nāṭyam ity abhidhīyate ||*

40 NŚ prose before 7.1: *vāgaṅgasattvopetān kāvyārthān bhāvayanti bhāvā itī* | According to Abhinavagupta, the *kāvyaārthas* are the *rasas*, whose savouring is preceded by the knowledge of the stable and transitory states (cf. ABh *ad locum*, vol. 1, p. 337).

41 It might be argued that the first chapter dealing with *abhinaya* should be considered the one on the emotional states (*bhāvas*), namely the seventh chapter, since it is here that the psychophysical states (*sāttvikabhāvas*), which are part of psychophysical acting (*sāttvikābhinaya*), are explained at length. (See NŚ 7.93–117, as well as NŚ 8.10: *sāttvikaḥ pūrvam uktaḥ tu bhāvaiś ca sahito mayā | aṅgābhinayam evādau gadato me nibodhata ||* ‘The psychophysical-[acting] has been treated by me earlier [in the treatise], in connection with the *bhāvas*. Now listen to the explanation of the bodily acting’). The commentary on the seventh chapter, however, breaks off abruptly after the fourth verse.

to assume that something of a fully fledged theory of acting may have been presented in this lost chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, since Abhinavagupta declares on various occasions that he will later engage in explaining some particular aspect of *abhinaya* that one cannot trace to the extant portion of the commentary.⁴² Even though it is not possible, given the present state of the text, to form a complete picture of Abhinavagupta's concept of dramatic acting, occasions for speculation about such a central topic are not lacking throughout the extant text of the *Abhinavabhāratī*. In this perspective, the discussion about dance and *abhinaya* dealt with in the *Tāṇḍavādhyāya* and fully translated here assumes a new relevance for the study of Abhinavagupta's 'lost theory of acting'.

As to the group of four *abhinayas*, these are sometimes referred to with the abbreviated formula *āṅgikādyabhinaya-*, or *āṅgādyabhinaya-*, which refers in

42 For instance, the anticipation of the full explanation of the *śākhā* in ABh ad NŚ 4.61cd–62ab, on which see § 2.2, n. 45. Other examples include mentions of topics to be discussed in the chapter on *upāṅgābhinaya*, suggesting that a full account of *abhinaya* and its various means was to be found there. For instance: ABh ad NŚ 14.2, vol. 2, pp. 220–221: *eṣā hi tanur nātyasya sakalaprayogabhittibhūtatvenātodyagitābhinayānuvrāhakatvāt svayam abhinayarūpatvāc ca. pradarsītaṃ caitad asmābhir upāṅgābhinayārambha eva*. 'For this [i.e. the voice] is the body of theatre since, due to its being the canvas on which the whole performance [is inscribed], it encompasses instrumental music, singing and acting, and since it itself has the nature of enactment [i.e. the *vācīkābhinaya*]. We have shown this at the beginning of the [chapter on the] acting through the minor limbs (i.e. NŚ ch. 8); ABh ad NŚ 22.1, vol. 3, p. 149: *vāgaṅgasattvābhinayā anyonyam sahaçaryamāñāḥ, na tv evaṃ teṣv āhārya ity asyānupādānakriyā. etac ca na muner matam ity āveditam asmābhir upāṅgābhinayāhāryābhinayādhyāyayor ity āstām*, 'The registers of acting through the voice, the body and the mind sustain each other, but the one based on the costume does not [interact] with them in the same way. That is why it has not been included [in the *sāmānyābhinaya*]. But this is not the opinion of the Muni, as we have acknowledged in the chapter on acting through the minor limbs (i.e. NŚ ch. 8) and in the one about ornamental acting. Let the matter rest for the time being'; ABh ad NŚ 22.50, vol. 3, p. 174: *yat pūrvam uktam—asya śākhā ca [corr., na E₁] nṛttaṃ ca tathaiṅvānkura eva ca | trividham vastv abhinayasya [corr. Bansat-Boudon 1992: 387, n. 466a, abhinayaḥ ... E₁] iti tena sahāsyā yathā na virodhas tathaiṅvopapādītam upāṅgābhinaye*. 'As to what has been stated before[, namely that] "the *śākhā*, dance (*nṛtta*), and the *ankura* are the three elements of the [bodily] acting (*abhinaya*)" (NŚ 8.14), it has been demonstrated in the chapter on enactment through the minor limbs how it does not contradict the [reasoning here]' (For the context of this statement, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 387); ABh ad NŚ 22.51, vol. 3, p. 175: *kevalaṃ tatkālikātkālikādīmātreṇa vākyam bhidyatām nāma. etac copāṅgābhinaye vitatyopapādītam*. 'It is possible to disjoin the sentence [from the enactment] only insofar as it may be simultaneous or non-simultaneous with it. Moreover, we have treated this [topic] in detail in the [chapter] on acting through the minor limbs.'

order to bodily,⁴³ vocal,⁴⁴ psychophysical,⁴⁵ and ornamental acting.⁴⁶ The hierarchy between them is explained by Abhinavagupta in metaphorical terms: while vocal enactment is the body of theatre (*tanur nātyasya*), since it is like a canvas on which the whole performance is inscribed (*sakalaprāyogabhitti*), bodily enactment provides theatre with vital breath (*nātyānuprāṇaka*).⁴⁷ Still superior to these is psychophysical enactment, in which theatre is grounded (cf. NŚ 22.1cd: *nātyam sattve pratiṣṭhitam*), and according to the presence of which a performance can be defined as superior, average, or inferior.⁴⁸ As to costume or accoutrements (*āhārya*), its very status as an enactment was a debated topic among theoreticians since, strictly speaking, costumes and scenic props are not acting techniques. Nevertheless, as Abhinavagupta argues, actors use them in order to hide their own identity beneath that of the dramatis persona, hence they help in conveying the determinant factors to the spectators, which is one of the functions specific to *abhinaya*.⁴⁹

43 *Āṅgikābhinaya* covers NŚ chs. 8–12 and is said to be threefold: corporal, facial, and based on gestures (NŚ 8.11: *trivīdhas tv āṅgiko jñeyayaḥ śārīro mukhajaḥ tathā | tathā ceṣṭākṛtāś caiva śākhāṅgopāṅgasamnyutaḥ ||*). Although facial expression (*mukhaja*) is explained in chapter 8 and is based on the minor limbs (*upāṅga*), the scope of the other two subdivisions, i.e. *śārīra* and *ceṣṭākṛta*, and how they differ from one another is not crystal clear. On the range of the major and minor limbs, see NŚ 8.13 (cf. § 2.2, n. 39).

44 *Vācīkābhinaya* does not concern prosody alone, but the written text as well, so that along with instructions on prosody—including intonation, accentuation, pauses, and so forth—directions are given to the poets on how to write a play using the appropriate plot, metres, rhetorical figures, and language. See below, n. 111.

45 The principal object of *sāttvikābhinaya* are the emotions, in which both a psychical and a physical dimension is recognized, hence the English rendering as ‘psychophysical acting’. No specific chapter of the *Nātyasāstra* is devoted exclusively to this means of enactment, and no acting technique can be actually apprehended and systematized under this heading. Nevertheless, Abhinavagupta (ABh ad NŚ 1.23, vol. 1, p. 17) refers to some technique connected with breath control (*prāṇa*) that the actor could use to display on his body the signs of an intensely felt emotion, the so-called *sāttvikabhāvas*, listed as paralysis (*stambha*), perspiration (*sveda*), horripilation (*romāñca*), stammering (*svarabheda*), tremor (*vepathu*), change of colour (*vaivarṇya*), tears (*aśru*), and fainting (*pralaya*) (NŚ 7.94). On *sāttvikābhinaya*, see Bansat-Boudon 1991a, 1992; Malinar 2010; and Cuneo & Ganser (forthcoming).

46 The section on *āhāryābhinaya*, in NŚ chapter 21, describes the dress and the make-up along with a reduced number of accessories, such as bows and banners, and scenic devices like props.

47 Cf. ABh ad NŚ 14.1–2, vol. 2, p. 220: *nātyānuprāṇakatayā pūrvoddiṣṭāṅgikasya*, and n. 42 above.

48 Cf. NŚ 22.2, in Translation, n. 34.

49 On the various arguments for and against the exclusion of *āhārya* from the discussion on *sāmānyābhinaya*, see ABh ad NŚ 22.1, translated in Bansat-Boudon 1992: 363–364.

In order to bring out the emotional core of theatre, the four *abhinayas* need to be used in combination. With a view towards their effective employment by actors and theatre directors, the technique of acting is analysed into a 'harmonious acting' (*sāmānyābhinaya*) and a 'pictorial acting' (*citrābhinaya*), the objects of chapters 22 and 25 respectively. As pointed out by Bansat-Boudon, such a twofold division into basic and combined techniques has to do with the field of theatrical practice, not textual structure:

Whereas the *abhinaya*, when it is presented as quadruple, consists of an inventory of elementary techniques of acting, the *sāmānyābhinaya* and the *citrābhinaya* actually represent the same techniques put into practice on stage by the actor in the specific context of performance according to rigorously codified procedures. Therefore, a new statement whereby the actor will initiate himself to these rules of interpretation unknown to him as yet proves necessary. This accounts for the double treatment given to *abhinaya* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

BANSAT-BOUDON 1995: 150

The *sāmānyābhinaya* is explained by Abhinavagupta through the metaphor of the perfumer who, combining the different essences and basic substances in the right quantities, skilfully creates a fragrant, homogeneous blend.⁵⁰ The section on *sāmānyābhinaya* focuses on the enactment of the inner states, giving ample scope to the unfolding of love between men and women, while that on *citrābhinaya* describes the enactment of the various external realities.⁵¹ According to Abhinavagupta, both methods of acting are ultimately concerned with the communication of emotional meaning. The *sāmānyābhinaya* is a mingling of the means of dramatic enactment for the sake of conveying the objects in which *rasa* is predominant (*rasātmakapradhānaṃ padārthaviśeṣam abhinayānāṃ samāñīkaraṇam*, ABh ad Nś 25.1, vol. 3 p. 264), while the *citrābhinaya* is conceived as a subtype of it, a blend specialized in the depiction of the external objects, useful for bringing the *rasa* and the other emotional states into being (*rasādyupayogibāhyavastuviśayam evābhinayānāṃ bhāvanārūpaṃ miśrikaraṇātmaṃ samāñīkaraṇam*, ABh ad Nś 24.90, vol. 3, p. 263).

50 On the image of the perfumer in the *Abhinavabhāratī* and a translation thereof, see Bansat-Boudon 1989–1990: 68, 1992: 344, and 2004: 158–176.

51 As Bansat-Boudon (1995: 150) states it, 'the *citrābhinaya*—which the *Abhinavabhāratī* presents as an appendix, as a supplement to the *sāmānyābhinaya*—is the multicoloured and, so to speak, pictorial acting by which the world is theatrically depicted'.

Although these acting methods are supposed to contain all four registers of acting, the *sāmānyābhinaya* undergoes a further subdivision into psycho-physical (*sāttvika*), corporal (*śārīra*), and verbal (*vācika*), according to the predominant component in it. Among the three, the *śārīrasāmānyābhinaya* is particularly relevant to the discussion of the difference between dance and theatre, since it displays a succession of phases in which the bodily movement becomes gradually entangled with the spoken word, each to different degrees. Its six phases are given in the following order: *vākyābhinaya* ('verbal acting'), *sūcā* ('indicative acting'), *aṅkura* ('sprout acting'), *śākhā* ('twig-limb acting'), *nāṭyāyita* ('simili-drama' or 'pseudo-drama')⁵², and *nivṛtṭyaṅkura* ('sprout at the end of the acting').⁵³ These various phases create, in the words of Bansat-Boudon (1992: 151), a true 'protocol of acting'. Two of them, the *śākhā* and the *aṅkura*, are listed in NS 8.14 along with dance as components of the *āṅgikābhinaya*, and therefore seem to represent different ways of using the body during the enactment, with different semiotic and expressive values.⁵⁴ From this perspective, the special way in which dance contributes to the bodily enactment without being assimilated to it will be the central topic of discussion in the textual passage on the difference between dance and theatre, as translated and investigated in this book.

More than constituting an infallible means for reproducing external reality as faithful as possible, or providing an automatic mechanism for the actor to enact any kind of written text, this sophisticated acting protocol aims at unfolding all the implicit suggestions and shades of meaning latent in the dramatic text. With regard to its application to the play's text, the skill of a proficient

52 I follow Bansat-Boudon 1995: 152 in this translation, based on the use of the denominative suffix *-āya* and middle endings, which adds the following meanings to the root based on which it is formed: 'to be like', 'act/ behave like', 'play the part of'.

53 The *vākyābhinaya* is when the bodily acting is simultaneous with the recitation of the text; the *sūcā* is a silent phase in which gestures alone convey the interior reflection of a character, followed by its enunciation through words; the *aṅkura* is the silent gestural phase that follows the verbal enunciation and reveals its latent meanings. The *śākhā* is the coordinate movement of the head and face, legs and thighs, and hands and feet, on the verge of dance. The *nāṭyāyita* is of two types: the first is the acting of a play within the play, which corresponds roughly to the later *garbhāṅka*; the second is the enactment of a song inserted in the play, the *dhruvā*. Lastly, the *nivṛtṭyaṅkura* is the display of the feelings of one character affected by the discourse of another. My understanding and rendering of the different phases of the *śārīrasāmānyābhinaya* closely follows Bansat-Boudon 1989–1990, 1992: 341–387 and 1995. The latter contains a translation of Abhinavagupta's commentary with very telling examples of each phase taken from extant plays.

54 For a discussion of the semiotic and expressive value of dance within theatre, see § 3.4 below.

actor lay in his capacity to use all the means of enactment conjointly, with a view to realizing its emotional potential. The *Abhinavabhāratī* provides many an example of how the acting was to be carried out in extant plays, which includes different ways of enacting the same textual portion,⁵⁵ as well as creative expansions of the transmitted versions of well-known plays.⁵⁶ There was, as the examples suggest, a certain freedom on the part of the actor, which was disciplined by his mastery over the acting techniques on the one hand, and by his personal reflection and understanding of the import of the play on the other. Abhinavagupta, while reflecting on how an actor should apply the code of hand gestures to a certain scene, points out that a preliminary consideration of the meaning of the text (*arthayukti*) was required on his part. Actors should ponder which sense would be more logically and efficaciously enacted, be it the primary (*mukhya*), metaphorical (*gauna*), metonymical (*lākṣaṇika*), or suggested (*vyaṅgya*) one.⁵⁷ In exceptional cases, one actor could choose to render several layers of meaning simultaneously, using different means of enactment at the same time. A very telling example is given in the *Dhvanyālokalocana*, in which a stanza of the *Ratnāvalī* containing a double entendre in the form of a simile (*upamāśleṣa*) is said to require that both levels of the simile be enacted, the primary meaning word by word, and the secondary meaning through looks and facial expressions.⁵⁸

55 In the chapter on *hastābhinaya* (ABh ad NŚ ch. 9), some such examples are found, as for instance the option to enact an inaugural stanza either with a hand gesture for every word, or by rendering only the first element in a list or the main action. The example given is the *nāndī* of the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* (*yā sraṣṭuḥ sṛṣṭir ādyā ...*), in which the eight visible forms of Śiva are described. A superior actor, says Abhinavagupta, should enact only the first two of the eight visible forms of Śiva, i.e. water and fire, while an inferior one would represent many of the words because of his faltering nature. See ABh ad NŚ 9.173, vol. 2, p. 67: *atraika eva jalahutāśānābhinaya uttamena prayojyaḥ. adhamena tv anekāś ca calasvabhāvatvāt.*

56 For an example of a *lāsyaṅga* added in the second act of Śrī Harṣa's *Ratnāvalī*, unnoticed in previous studies and alluded to in the discussion of the nature of dance, see Translation, n. 187. Many other instances of such insertions are reported in Bansat-Boudon 1992.

57 Cf. ABh ad NŚ 9.164, vol. 2, p. 64: *arthasya yuktir upapattiḥ mukhyagaunaḥlākṣaṇikavyaṅgyādibhedena.*

58 This is *Ratnāvalī* 2.4, where King Udayana is describing a vine in the palace garden which, he says, looks like a rival woman in love, namely Ratnāvalī, who has just arrived at the palace and is about to arouse the jealousy of the queen (for a translation, cf. Ingalls et al. 1990: 278). In explaining how this stanza should be represented on stage, Abhinavagupta says: *abhinayo 'py atra prākaraṇike pratipadam. aprākaraṇike tu vākyaṛthābhinayenopāṅgādīnā, na tu sarvathā nābhinaya ity alam avāntareṇa* (DhvĀL 2.18–19c, pp. 226–227): '[One may] also [note that] the acting out of the primarily intended meaning, [namely that pertaining to the vine,] should be at every word, while the acting out

The image of the actor as a perfumer demands that he combine the basic ingredients in different doses and that, if the occasion requires it, he even choose to omit some of them. The moments of emotional intensity, in which the *rasa* is supposed to arise in the hearts of the spectators, appear to require a sort of suspension of the scenic action, in which gestures and speech become as if rarefied. In these crucial moments, the dramatic dialogues give way to the lyrical verses, by which the characters more poignantly express their states of mind. This kind of performance is considered to be of a superior type, especially when the character is caught in the act of experiencing his inner feelings. When no visible action takes place and everything occurs in an intimate sphere, suspended, so to say, within the texture of the dramatic text, the outer gestures become still; the dialogue, taking place inwardly, is then rendered through the subtle expression of *sattva*, and its text can be even taken up by a song.⁵⁹

Even from such a limited number of stray examples, it should be clear that acting was not a matter of the mechanical application of a fixed code of gestures and conventional behaviours to the contents of a literary text and its vocal rendering. Rather, each course of action had to be carefully evaluated and constructed on stage by paying the utmost attention to the presence (or absence) of an emotionally demanding situation, around which different strategies—including the addition of scenic protocols, songs, and interludes—were developed. If Bharata had attempted to build a vocabulary for representing the world in theatre, Abhinavagupta is concerned with the creation of a proper scenic syntax, capable of conveying the full spectrum of the emotional sphere to the spectators. Apart from his glimpses into current scenic practices, suggesting a certain degree of autonomy on the part of the actor or theatre director with respect to the author's dramatic text,⁶⁰ Abhinavagupta also stresses on several occasions that the *śāstra* does not offer a complete catalogue of usages, but rather a *vademecum* for the artist.⁶¹ After this brief overview of act-

of the secondary meaning [which pertains to the woman] would be only of the general meaning of the stanza and should be effected by *upāṅgas* (facial gestures). On the other hand, it would be wrong to give no gesture at all [to the secondary meaning]. But enough on this incidental matter' (translation Ingalls et al. 1990: 279).

59 ABh ad Nś 9.173, vol. 2, p. 68: *jyeṣṭhe 'bhinaye pratyakṣavartamānātmajñāsthaviṣaye hasta-vyāpāro 'lpah. 'hīa samassasa' ityādau*. On the possible use of the example in Prakrit as occurring in concomitance with a *lāsyaṅga* involving a song in the *Abhijñānaśākuntala*, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 332–337, and for a new hypothesis about its literary context, see Translation, n. 187.

60 A further evidence is the existence in manuscripts of 'inflated' or 'scenic' versions of some acts from famous plays, on which see Introduction, n. 24.

61 On the scope of the *śāstra*, see § 2.5.

ing as a bridge between the play and its stage performance, it is now time to turn to the mechanisms of dramatic communication vis-à-vis linguistic communication, as examined by Abhinavagupta and as discussed in other intellectual domains.

3.3 Communication without Words

Since their first textual codifications, the performing arts of India have been marked by a constant emphasis on the role played by emotions in these disciplines. In the case of a dramatic production, the *rasa* is said to pervade the whole process, from the composition of the dramatic text by the poet, its staging by actors, and, finally, its aesthetic apprehension by the spectators.⁶² Indeed, the very name *raṅga* ('stage', but also 'auditorium') is said to derive from the Sanskrit root *rañj*, 'to colour', whereby theatre is the place where the mind becomes emotionally tinted.⁶³ Despite the pervasiveness that had been assigned to emotions already in Bharata's treatise, precisely determining the nature and locus of *rasa* became an especially compelling question for literary critics. The dramatic changes that *rasa* underwent, as it was appropriated by *Alaṅkāraśāstra*, posed many a challenge to the adjacent field of *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which prompted dramatic theorists to formulate more and more sophisticated analyses in order to re-appropriate *rasa* as a central concept in dramatic theory. As has been argued by Pollock, a turning point in aesthetic theory is represented by Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, to whom we owe a decisive shift in focus from a formal to a reception analysis of *rasa*.⁶⁴ Following Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka in this and many other respects, Abhinavagupta conceptualizes *rasa* as an experience located in the spectator and, only by affinity, in the poet.⁶⁵

62 The tree metaphor is famously used in *Nāṭyaśāstra* 6.38: *yathā bijād bhaved vṛkṣo vṛkṣāt puṣpaṃ phalaṃ yathā | tathā mūlaṃ rasāḥ sarve tebhyo bhāvā vyavasthitāḥ ||* 'Just as the tree comes from the seed, and from the tree the flower and the fruit, so the *rasas* are the root, and all the other emotional states are established from those.' According to Abhinavagupta, this indicates that the whole is pervaded by *rasa*: the root is the *rasa* belonging to the poet that, like a seed, develops into the poetic text, which is similar to a tree. With regard to the latter, the activities of the actor, consisting in the enactments (*abhinaya*), are like flowers, and the tasting of the *rasa* by the spectators is the fruit (cf. ABh ad Nś 6.38, vol. 1, p. 288).

63 Cf. ABh ad Nś 1.127, vol. 1, p. 46: *rajyate 'neneti raṅgo nāṭyam*; ABh ad Nś 9.40, vol. 2, p. 34: *rajyaty asmin hrdayam iti raṅgaḥ*.

64 See Pollock 2010 and 2016: 144–148.

65 The poet is likened to a spectator who, Abhinava says—echoing his predecessor Ānandavardhana—looks at the world as if at a spectacle: *kavir hi sāmājikatulya eva. tata evoktaṃ śṛṅgārī cet kavīḥ ityādy ānandavardhanācāryeṇa* (ABh ad Nś 6.38, vol. 1, p. 288). 'The poet

The whole problem of aesthetic communication coalesces around the passage of *rasa* from the poet to the spectator, while actors are explicitly excluded from it. The process of *rasa* communication is in fact described as a transferring or a pouring of *rasa* from heart to heart—the *rasa* is in fact first and foremost conceptualized as a liquid—in which the actor becomes a mere vessel for savouring the poem's taste: filled with its liquor, he is however untouched by it.⁶⁶ We have seen in the previous section that the actor avails himself of a whole range of means of communication, especially designed to convey the complete emotional sphere as effectively as possible. However, what does it mean to represent an emotion dramatically if the actor is not intimately touched by it?⁶⁷ Is his action limited to the imitation of the external signs of an emotion? And what does it mean to communicate an emotional meaning dramatically, by way of *abhinaya*? In what follows, I will take a closer look at the role of *abhinaya* as a function in the theatrical communication of *rasa* and its factors.

Although the four *abhinayas* are central to the effective communication of emotions in theatre, the aesthetic factors—the determinants, consequents,

is similar to a spectator. In this vein, Ānandavardhana said that “if the poet is full of love, etc.” The verse quoted is in the *Vṛtti* ad DhvĀ 3.42, p. 498: *śṛṅgārī cet kavīḥ kāvyē jātaṃ rasamayam jagat | sa eva vītarāgaś cen nīrasaṃ sarvam eva tat ||* ‘If the poet is full of love, a world made of *rasa* will arise in his poem; if he himself is dispassionate, then everything will be devoid of *rasa*.’ The idea that the poet looks at the world as a spectator is linked to the experience of Vālmiki, considered by tradition as the first poet (*ādīkavi*). Witnessing a curlew's grief over the loss of his mate, slain by a hunter, Vālmiki transformed his own grief (*śoka*) into verse (*śloka*), and thus composed the *Rāmāyaṇa* (cf. DhĀ 1.5 and *Vṛtti* thereon, translated in Ingalls et al. 1990: 113–114).

66 ABh ad Nś 6.32–33, vol. 1, p. 285: *ata eva ca naṭe na rasaḥ. [...] naṭe tarhi kim. āsvādano-pāyaḥ. ata eva ca pātram ity ucyate. na hi pātre madyāsvādaḥ. api tu tadupāyakaḥ. tena pramukhapātre* [corr. Viśvesvara, cf. Pollock 2016: 391, n. 200, ‘mātre E₁’] *naṭapayoga ity alam.* ‘And so the *rasa* is not in the actor. [...]—What then is there in the actor?—He is the means of savouring. That is why he is called a vessel (*pātra*). For there is no savouring of the wine by the vessel, but yet it is instrumental to it. Therefore, actors are used as the main vessel [for the savouring of *rasa*].’ The common argument used to exclude actors from the tasting of *rasa* is that if they were to taste the *rasa*, they would be unable to follow the rhythm, or would be caught, for instance, in the reality of the experiences represented, such as death. See DhĀL 2.4, p. 183: *anukartari ca tadbhāve layādyananusaraṇam syāt*; and ABh ad Nś 6.11, vol. 1, p. 258: *naṭasya hi rasabhāvayoge maraṇādau tattvāveśo layādibhaṅgaś ca syāt.*

67 Although the actor does not experience the *rasa* while he acts, he should not be thought of as an inert technician, as is suggested by the very existence of a psychophysical acting (*sāttvikābhinaya*), involving the use of the body-mind complex. For an in-depth study on the emotional and aesthetic experience of the actor in historical perspective, see Cuneo & Ganser (forthcoming).

and accompanying emotions—might well just be part of the literary description, and as such able to be conveyed by the mere power of words, as in the case of poetry meant to be heard and not enacted. From the time of Ānandavardhana, and with the incorporation of the *rasa* principle into *Alaṃkāraśāstra*, literary critics began to analyse poetry by paying particular attention to spotting the determinants and other factors leading to *rasa* in particular instances of poetic stanzas. The question of how poetic language could be expressive of *rasa* was first dealt with by Indian theoreticians within the boundaries of verbal language and linguistic analysis.

As Ānandavardhana theorized in the *Dhvanyāloka*, poetic language possesses a special power, called *vyāñjanā* ('suggestion', 'manifestation'), capable of manifesting the unexpressed or implied meaning of poetry, characterized as *dhvani* (lit. 'sound', 'resonance'). He typically considered *rasa* or emotional content a type of *dhvani*—the highest in poetry—to be conveyed through this special mode of verbal signification. In Ānandavardhana's view, in fact, it is impossible to express the *rasas* by their names, in a purely denotative way (i.e. by *abhidhā* or *vācakatva*, in linguistic terminology), or through secondary or figurative expression (i.e. by *guṇavṛtti* or *lakṣaṇā*). Poets had to resort to a third linguistic function, the so-called 'suggestion' (*vyāñjanā*), by which a *rasa* came to be manifested in the mind of the sensitive reader through the linguistic expression of the various aesthetic factors conveying it. As a corollary to this theory, it followed that *rasa* was to be conceived in poetry as a textual meaning or a linguistic entity, albeit one that could be expressed only indirectly by language.⁶⁸

Ānandavardhana essentially relied on dramatic speculation to extend *rasa* to poetry, conforming in particular to Bharata's famous dictum in the *rasasūtra* and the role of the aesthetic factors. He discussed poetic examples alongside dramatic ones, without ever transgressing the boundaries of linguistic analysis. Drawing on an earlier distinction in *Alaṃkāraśāstra*, he recognized a difference between poetry to be enacted (*abhineyārtha-kāvya*) and poetry not to be enacted (*anabhineyārtha-kāvya*).⁶⁹ However, he never dealt with the consequences of such a difference in the medium of communication, as he failed to explore the potential of non-verbal communication alongside the dramatic text for the manifestation of *rasa* in theatre. This is all the more surprising given his familiarity with Bharata's text, and the latter's emphasis on the role of *abhi-*

68 On the controversy over the existence of *dhvani*, and the necessity to postulate a third power of language, see Ingalls et al. 1990; McCrea 2008; and Pollock 2012b, 2016.

69 See above, n. 35, for the definition of theatre as *abhineyārtha* in *Bhāmaha*.

naya in conveying the various aesthetic factors leading to the arousal of *rasa*.⁷⁰ Moreover, while claiming the independence of suggestion from the process of denotation, Ānandavardhana argued for its existence even outside the realm of poetic language:

The power of denotation (*abhidhāna*), in fact, is different from the power of suggestion (*avagamana*), because one sees that the sounds of a song or the like, although they do not have a denotative content (*avācaka*), can suggest objects such as those defined as *rasa* and so on, and because such non-verbal behaviours (*aśabda*) as gestures (*ceṣṭā*) are known to manifest particular meanings. Thus, a good poet has shown that a particular gesture can be the cause of manifestation of a meaning, as in the verse ‘With her face bowed in shyness, etc.’.

Translation based on INGALLS et al. 1990: 555⁷¹

One may interpret the verse quoted here as an example of a gesture, i.e. bowing the head down, suggestive of an emotion in the character, i.e. shyness. However, Ānandavardhana quotes the full verse in an earlier passage of the *Vṛtti*, which reveals a slightly more complex picture. The verse reads:

Her face was bowed in shyness
in the presence of our elders
and she forced back the grief
that gave motion to her breast.
But did not the mere corner of her eye,
lovelier than a startled deer’s,
somehow, as it dropped a tear,
tell me not to go?

Translation INGALLS et al. 1990: 395⁷²

70 See, for instance, the verses defining the various emotional states (*bhāva*), the determinants (*vibhāva*) and the consequents (*anubhāva*), all containing *abhinaya* as a principal component, in NŚ 7.1–5.

71 *Vṛtti* ad DhvĀ 3.33, pp. 417–418: *na hi yaivābhidhānaśaktiḥ saivāvagamanaśaktiḥ. avācakasyāpi gītaśabdāde rasādilakṣaṇārthāvagamadarśanāt. aśabdasyāpi ceṣṭāder arthaviśeṣaprakāśanaprasiddheḥ. tathā hi ‘vrīḍāyogān nataavadanayā’ ityādiśloke ceṣṭāviśeṣaḥ sukavināarthaprakāśanahetuḥ pradarśita eva.*

72 *Vṛtti* ad DhvĀ 3.4, pp. 305–307: *vrīḍāyogān nataavadanayā sannidhāne gurūṇām, baddhotkampam kucakalaśayor manyum antar nigṛhya | tiṣṭhety uktaṁ kim iva na tayā yat samutsṛjya bāṣpam, mayy āsaktāś cakitahariṇihārinetratribhāgaḥ ||* The verse is also found in the *Sūktimuktāvalī*, as reported by Ingalls et al. 1990: 395, n. 1.

In this stanza, the particular sidelong glance of the woman suggests, in a manner similar to that of verbal language, that the lover not leave. Somewhat surprisingly, in the *Vṛtti* ad DhvĀ 3.4, where the verse is quoted in full, Ānandavardhana attributes the suggestive power of the stanza as a whole not to a gesture, but to the word *tribhāga* ('corner') in the compound '*netratribhāga*' ('eye-corner') (ibid.). According to Abhinavagupta, the verse suggests love in separation—a *rasa*—which the reader understands from the presence of the word 'corner' (of the eye), together with the associations it evokes in the speaker, which acts as a stimulating determinant (*uddīpana*-[*vibhāva*]) triggering the context in which the emotion of the narrating voice arises.⁷³

Although Ānandavardhana never explicitly attributes the capacity to suggest *rasa* to gestures, it is tempting to draw from his example an implicit distinction between the suggestiveness of gestures in human communication and the suggestiveness of gestures as embedded in poetic description. In the first instance, gestures can manifest specific meanings (*artha*) in the context of interlocution—just as language—while in the second, their suggestive power is assigned to words that are directed to the reader and—at least according to Abhinavagupta—are ultimately expressive of *rasa*. One may venture to argue that Ānandavardhana is aware of the potential of gestures to suggest emotions both in human and in poetic communication, and that he must have been aware of their centrality to dramatic communication or *abhinaya* in theatre; however, his aim in the *Dhvanyāloka* is restricted to explaining suggestion as a literary phenomenon and *dhvani* as a characteristic peculiar to the poetic text.⁷⁴

Poetic examples in which gestures play a prominent role in betraying and revealing human emotions abound in Ānandavardhana's illustrations of poems and dramatic stanzas containing *rasa*. This choice, one might argue, might be a consequence of the paradigmatic status that Bharata's *rasasūtra* assumed for literary critics. In the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, in fact, the illustration of the various aes-

73 See the translation of the *Locana* in Ingalls et al. 1990: 396. The post-Bharata tradition commonly distinguishes two types of determinants: the foundational determinants (*ālambanavibhāva*), which are the support of the emotion, i.e. the characters, and the stimulating determinants (*uddīpanavibhāva*), which consist in the contextual factors that facilitate the appearance of an emotion in the character. See, e.g., Ingalls et al. 1990: 16 and Pollock 2016: 7.

74 As a matter of fact, Ānandavardhana recognizes suggestion in music and gestures, just as in ordinary language. As McCrea (2008: 186) puts it, 'While admitting that suggestiveness is a property of all human language, Ānandavardhana contends that in poetry this function of language takes on a special and unique importance which distinguishes it from the suggestive aspect of non-poetic language. *Dhvani* is not coterminous with suggestiveness.'

thetic factors for each *rasa* and *bhāva* is laid down mainly in terms of gestures and visible actions, as befits theatrical communication. It is therefore quite understandable that, if *rasa* were to be found in literature as expressed by way of those same *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, and *vyabhicāribhāvas*, examples containing a verbal description of the visible signs of an emotion, especially bodily gestures, would have been found to be particularly fitting for the sake of illustration. What may look somewhat paradoxical is that even while dealing with dramatic examples in particular, Ānandavardhana never takes into account how body language or other non-verbal behaviours—such as dance and music—might have been used to communicate additional meaning in theatre, besides what was already expressed in the words of the playwright.

Some scholars have attempted to explain Ānandavardhana's way of analysing poetic and dramatic examples alike as a reflection, in the theory, of the collapse of the distinction between drama and poetry in practice, a position that was ultimately found to be untenable.⁷⁵ Even a cursory look at the Sanskrit plays of the classical period reveals that we can find many examples of the full array of aesthetic factors as embedded in literary descriptions, without necessarily having to rely on enactment. One might easily be led to wonder if, in the light of the *dhvani* theory, which was a theory conceived within the boundaries of verbal language, enactment would contribute anything at all to the expression of *rasa*, even in theatre. Moreover, it is legitimate to ask the question of whether the poetic stanzas in dramas, which are privileged examples in Ānandavardhana's literary analysis, were originally conceived for enactment through gestures and facial expression in the same way as dramatic dialogues.⁷⁶ A famous instance is the description of the

75 The hypothesis was advanced by Gerow and criticized by McCrea, cf. § 1.4, n. 116. Similarly, it has been commonly assumed that at some point around the end of the first millennium, Sanskrit drama stopped being performed, but continued to be composed throughout the second millennium as an exclusively literary form. For a criticism of this position, see Leclère 2010: 27, n. 5.

76 As is well known, Sanskrit drama is a literary genre combining prose (*gadya*) and verse (*padya*). In contemporary Kutiyattam, these textual portions are enacted differently: dramatic dialogues are usually rendered just through simple gestures, while poetic stanzas can be the object of long elaborations, and they are often the place for inserting side episodes or for giving full space to the play of emotions. The question of how poetic stanzas were rendered on stage must of course have been given different answers at different historical times and in different traditions of the performance of Sanskrit theatre. I have not been able to find any discussion on this topic in the theoretical texts, except for stray examples in Abhinavagupta's commentary and a distinction between prose (*gadya*) and verse (*padya*) in the corporal acting registers called *vākyaābhinaya* and *sūcā*, on which see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 346–347.

frightened deer chased by Duṣyanta in the hunting scene at the opening of the *Abhijñānaśākuntala*. Here the deer, though not physically present on stage, is vividly described through the eyes of Duṣyanta as displaying all the signs of fear:

Repeatedly darts a glance at the pursuing chariot,
 gracefully twisting his neck,
 with his haunches drawn acutely forward
 into his forebody
 out of fear of the arrow strike,
 scattering the path with grass half-chewed,
 dropping from his mouth gaping
 with exhaustion.
 Look! With his lofty leaps he moves
 more through the sky
 and hardly touches the ground.

Abhijñānaśākuntala 1.2, Translation VASUDEVA 2006: 58

This literary passage displays all the elements that build up an emotion and lead to an aesthetic response, according to the well-known *rasasūtra*: the element determining fear in the deer (*vibhāva*) is King Duṣyanta himself, while the consequents of the fear (*anubhāva*) are the physical signs described in the stanza as being displayed by the deer, such as the turning of the neck, the open mouth dropping half-chewed grass, the contraction of the body, and the unsteady movements. The transitory states (*vyabhicāribhāva*) accompanying the main mood are impetus and exhaustion, evident from the deer's pace. All these elements converge in the stable state (*sthāyibhāva*) of fear (*bhaya*), and result in the *rasa bhayānaka*, the fearsome. Such analyses in terms of aesthetic factors are typical of the later commentators on drama.⁷⁷ If *rasa* be part of poetry—and for Abhinavagupta, *rasa* will become definitional of all poetry—it has to be communicated in a way that conforms to the *rasasūtra*, i.e. through

77 This is how a commentator such as Rāghavabhaṭṭa (15th c.) explains this verse, which coincides with similar analyses in dramatic treatises, where this verse is cited as an illustration of *bhayānaka rasa*. To the best of my knowledge, Abhinavagupta is the first to comment on this verse as an example of the fearsome *rasa*, although he does not comment on it in terms of the aesthetic factors, but focuses on the epistemology of *rasa* in terms of the spectator's cognition through the text and its performance. See the beginning of the *siddhānta* in ABh ad *rasasūtra*, quoted and discussed in Gnoli 1968; Cuneo 2008–2009; Pollock 2010, 2016; and David 2016.

the display of the proper configuration of aesthetic elements rather than by mentioning the *rasas* directly by name. Ānandavardhana expresses this as follows:

The third variety [of suggested meaning], concerning the *rasas* and the like, becomes manifest when it is implied by the capacity of the expressed meaning (*vācyasāmārthya*), but it cannot directly be the object of the function of words. That is why it is different from the directly expressed meaning (*vācyā*). To clarify: [a *rasa*] could be directly expressed either by making it known by its proper term, or by means of the communication of the aesthetic factors (*vibhāvādi*). In the first case, one would end up with the unwanted consequence that the *rasas* and so on would not be apprehended lest the proper terms [designating them] were made known. The [*rasas*], moreover, are not always made known by their proper terms. And even when that is the case, they are apprehended only by means of the communication of specific determinants etc. The proper terms [for the *rasas* etc.] would only confirm the apprehension, not constitute it. That is why we do not see the [*rasas* etc.] apprehended in other contexts. In a poem that merely contains isolated words such as 'love' and the like, without communicating the aesthetic factors, there is little apprehension that it contains *rasa*. And because of this positive and negative concomitance—that we apprehend the *rasas* even without their proper denotation, just through the specific determinants [consequents and transitory states], and that by their mere denotation we do not [necessarily] have [such] apprehension—the *rasas* can only be implied by the capacity of the denoted meaning and they cannot be denoted. Hence the third variety [of suggested meaning] is established as different from direct expression.⁷⁸

78 *Vṛtti ad Dhvā* 1.4, pp. 78–84: *tr̥tīyas tu rasādīlakṣaṇaḥ prabhedo vācyasāmarthyākṣiptaḥ prakāśate, na tu sākṣāc chabdavyāpāraviṣaya itī vācyād bhinna eva. tathā hī vācyatvaṃ tasya svaśabdaniveditatvena vā syāt, vibhāvādipratīpādanamukhena vā. pūrvasmin pakṣe svaśabdaniveditatvābhāve rasādīnām apratītiprasaṅgaḥ. na ca sarvatra teṣāṃ svaśabdaniveditatvam. yatrāpy astī tat, tatrāpi viśiṣṭavibhāvādipratīpādanamukhenaivaiśāṃ pratītiḥ. svaśabdena sā kevalam anūdyate, na tu tatkr̥tā viṣayāntare tathā tasyā adarśanāt. na hī kevalaśṛṅgārādiśabdamaṅtrabhāji vibhāvādipratīpādanarahite kāvyē maṅg api rasavattvapatītir astī. yataś ca svābhīdhānam antareṇa kevalebhyo 'pi vibhāvādībhyo viśiṣṭebhyo rasādīnām pratītiḥ, kevalāc ca svābhīdhānād apratītiḥ, tasmād anvayavyatirekābhīyām abhidheyasāmarthyākṣiptatvam eva rasādīnām. na tv abhidheyatvaṃ kathaṃcit, itī tr̥tīyo 'pi prabhedo vācyād bhinna evetī sthītam.* Translated also in Ingalls et al. 1990: 105–106 and Pollock 2016: 90.

Around the time of Ānandavardhana, Śrī Śaṅkuka arrived at similar conclusions about the incommunicability of *rasa* through denotation, though starting from different premises. According to Śaṅkuka—as quoted by Abhinavagupta in the *Abhinavabhāratī*—the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, and *vyabhicāribhāvas* work as inferential signs (*liṅga*) in the cognition of a stable state (*sthāyibhāva*). This emotion is inferred as being in the actor, in the form of an imitation of the emotion belonging to the character, for instance Rāma. A *rasa* is nothing but this inferred emotion which, due to its being an imitation, is designated by a different name.⁷⁹ While the other aesthetic factors can be known either through the poetic text or through their skilful display by an actor, the stable states cannot be simply denoted by their proper terms, but have to be communicated through dramatic enactment:

The determinants (*vibhāva*) can be realized on the strength of the poetic text; the consequents (*anubhāva*) by the training [of the actor] (*śikṣā*); the transitory states (*vyabhicārin*) by force of presenting one's own factitious consequents. But the stable [state] (*sthāyin*) cannot be realized even on the strength of the poetic text. For words such as 'desire', 'grief', and so on, just make desire etc. into verbal referents through denotation, but do not communicate them in the form of vocal enactment. Since vocal [enactment] (*vācika*) is not simply the voice (*vāk*), but what is accomplished through the [voice], just as the bodily enactment (*āṅgika*) [is not just the body, but what is accomplished] through the limbs (*aṅga*).⁸⁰

79 ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 266: *tasmād dhetubhir vibhāvākhyaiḥ kāryaiś cānubhāvātma-bhiḥ saha-cārirūpaiś ca vyabhicāribhiḥ prayatnārjitatayā kṛtrimair api tathānabhimanya-mānair anukartṛsthatvena liṅgalataḥ pratīyamānaḥ sthāyī bhāvo mukhyarāmādigata-sthāyanukaraṇarūpaḥ. anukaraṇarūpatvād eva nāmāntareṇa vyapadiṣṭo rasaḥ.* 'The *rasa* is the stable state (*sthāyī bhāva*), in the form of an imitation (*anukaraṇa*) of the stable [state] belonging to the character, such as Rāma. And it is simply because it is an imitation that it has been designated by a different name. It is apprehended as present in the actor by force of those inferential signs (*liṅga*): the causes, called determinants (*vibhāva*), the effects, i.e. the consequents (*anubhāva*), and the concomitant factors, consisting of the transitory [states] (*vyabhicāri[bhāva]*), all of which are, even though factitious—insofar as they are produced by an effort [of the actor]—not realized to be so.' (Translation based on Cuneo 2008–2009; 270).

80 ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, pp. 266–267: *vibhāvā hi kāvyabalānusandheyāḥ. anubhāvāḥ śikṣā-taḥ. vyabhicāriṇaḥ kṛtrimanijānubhāvārjanabalāt. sthāyī tu kāvyabalād api nānusa-andheyāḥ. 'ratiḥ śoka' ityādayo hi śabdā ratyādikam abhidheyikurvanty abhidhānatvena. na tu vācīkābhīnayarūpatayā 'vagamayanti. na hi vāg eva vācīkam. api tu tayā nirvṛttam. aṅgair ivāṅgīkam.*

This theoretical explanation is followed by some examples in which the stable states are either merely denoted (*abhidheya*) or more effectively enacted (*abhineya*). The second case, which interests us here, is exemplified through a verse pronounced by King Udayana in the *Ratnāvalī*, when he looks at a portrait in which Sāgarikā has depicted him in her company:

The flood of spraying tear-drops
that fell from her as she sketched
seems like sweat breaking out on my body
from the touch of the palm of her hand.

Translation DONIGER 2006: 153⁸¹

Śrī Śaṅkuka explains it thus:

While it denotes (*abhi-dhā-*) its own meaning, this very sentence enacts (*abhi-nī-*) the stable state of delight (*rati-sthāyibhāva*), consisting of pleasure, pertaining to Udayana. But it does not state it [directly]. For dramatic enactment (*abhinayana*) is a power of communication (*avagamanaśakti*) different from verbal denotation (*vācakatva*).⁸²

The example from the *Ratnāvalī* is quite obviously presented as a case of vocal enactment (*vācikābhinaya*), in which all the aesthetic factors are made known by means of the sentence (*vākya*) alone, including perspiration, which is normally counted among those psychophysical reactions that can be rendered visually by a good actor, the *sāttvikabhāvas*. The underlying stable state is said to be enacted rather than being mentioned explicitly. If we connect Śaṅkuka's analysis of the mechanism of communication at play in this stanza with what was stated immediately before, it appears that *abhinaya* is a special power of communication, and that it works through inference. What is inferred is a state, which is imitated. It appears that the function assigned to *abhinaya* by Śaṅkuka is similar to the one assigned to poetic suggestion by Ānandavardhana.⁸³ Both

81 *Ratnāvalī* 2.12, *bhāti patito likhantyāḥ tasyā bāspāmbuśikarakaṇaughah | svedodgama iva karatalasaṃsparśād eṣa me vapuṣi ||* Quoted in ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 267.

82 ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 267: *ity anena tu vākyaena svārtham abhidadhatā udayanaḡataḥ sukhātmā ratiḥ sthāyibhāvo 'bhiniyate na tūcyate. avagamanaśaktir hy abhinayanam vācakatvād anyā.*

83 Cuneo (2008–2009: 271, n. 150) first pointed out the similarity between the communicative power of representation postulated by Śaṅkuka and Ānandavardhana's *dhvani* theory. Building on this insight, I try to show here the limits of Śaṅkuka's theory, and how in his example he fails, despite the very promising declaration of intent, to properly deal with the spectacular dimension of *abhinaya*.

have a special status in aesthetic communication: they are effective in conveying emotions, and they are distinguished from direct denotation. Note also the similarity of their formulations:

- *na hi yaivābhīdhānaśaktiḥ saivāvagamanaśaktiḥ* (*Vṛtti* ad DhvĀ 3.33, p. 417)
- *avagamanaśaktir hy abhinayanam vācakatvād anyā* (ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 267)

Although Ānandavardhana aimed at extending suggestiveness to domains other than words, such as music and gestures, he does not take into consideration enactment as a separate medium for the dramatic suggestion of *rasa*. Analogously, Śaṅkuka identifies dramatic enactment (*abhinaya*) as the specific medium for conveying *rasa* in theatre, but he does so within the boundaries of vocal enactment as confined to the verbal text, without exploring—at least in the restricted number of fragments we possess—the suggestive potential of an actor’s non-verbal communication. The fact that Śaṅkuka mentions the case of bodily enactment, alongside the vocal, suggests that his theory was supposed to be valid for gestures as well.⁸⁴

Although Śaṅkuka’s examples draw the distinction between verbal denotation and vocal enactment on purely textual grounds, the stage dimension of *abhinaya* is not altogether neglected. First of all, Śaṅkuka mentions the training of the actor and his capacity to communicate the transitory states by presenting his own factitious consequents, by which one has to understand the physical reactions affecting his voice and body. The various aesthetic factors, apprehended from the text and from the actor’s enactment, operate jointly as inferential signs, by which the emotion—actually belonging to the character—is inferred as abiding in the actor. In the latter, however, it is only the imitation of an emotion acquired through conscious effort, not a genuine one, and takes the name of *rasa*. Secondly, since his work was a commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Śaṅkuka’s notion of *abhinaya* must necessarily have been quite ample, so as to include the whole spectrum of the means of enactment, among which bodily movement was a primary medium for conveying emotions. To Śaṅkuka goes the credit of formulating what can be regarded as the first theoretical attempt to combine verbal and non-verbal media for the effective communication of theatrical emotions. His choice of an example of *abhinaya* in which *rasa* is enhanced by gestures and psychophysical reactions—the falling drops, the

84 It is difficult to establish whether Ānandavardhana borrowed from Śrī Śaṅkuka or vice versa. For an argument in favour of Śaṅkuka’s predating Ānandavardhana on the basis of later evidence about their different patronage, see Pollock 2016: 77. According to Pollock (ibid.: 13), Śaṅkuka was the first to formulate a distinction between referential and expressive language.

action of painting, the appearance of perspiration, the touch of the hand—which are all just part of the literary description, might be regarded as stemming from a general hesitation to combine words and gestures more effectively in a comprehensive theory of aesthetic communication.

While in oral literature the function by which *rasa* is communicated is taken up by *vyañjanā*—the linguistic function newly theorized by Ānandavardhana—in visual literature the communication of *rasa* is assumed by *abhinaya*, already defined by Bharata as the very medium for conveying emotions in a theatrical context.⁸⁵ Besides the technical but rather unspecific definition of *abhinaya* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, we find another, conventional meaning attached to this term in Indian philosophy, especially within discussions about knowledge acquisition and the validity of the means of knowledge, the so-called *pramāṇas*. The view that gestures and movements communicate meaning by inference is not an original position of Śāṅkuka, but is rather the *communis opinio* in Indian sources. Gestures (including facial expressions) and movements, designated in these texts by the comprehensive term *ceṣṭā*, are recognized to have the power to make something known, and this something is sometimes identified with the inner states of the mind. Some philosophical schools therefore list gestures among the *pramāṇas*, typically as a special type of inference. The *Praśastapādabhāṣya*, a Vaiśeṣika text from the fifth or sixth century CE also known as *Padārthadharmasaṃgraha*, maintains that gestures produce a cognition for someone who knows *abhinaya*, that is, one who knows the invariable concomitance between specific bodily actions and meaning:

Since we see that a cognition comes about through bodily gestures (*ceṣṭā*), for the one who is acquainted with gesticulation (*abhinaya*), even the [cognition issuing thereof] has to be regarded as a case of inference.⁸⁶

The available commentaries on this verse especially stress the fact that gesticulation should fall under the category of inference or, in some cases, even of verbal knowledge.⁸⁷ However one considers them, gestures cannot be thought

85 See above, n. 38, on the definition of *abhinaya* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

86 PDhS, p. 48 (*anumānaprakaraṇam*): *prasiddhābhinayasya ceṣṭayā pratipattidarśanāt tad apy anumānam eva*.

87 This is the case of the *Kiraṇāvalī*, Udayana's commentary on the *Padārthadharmasaṃgraha*, where the most detailed commentary on this verse is found. Udayana analyses both positions: 1) gestures work as the signs of an inference; 2) gestures function like words. In the second case, gestures are compared to writing (*lipivat*), which works through

of as independent means since, for them to produce knowledge, it is necessary to have a previous knowledge of the connection between, say, a certain way of moving the palms and the fingers of the hands, and a meaning, for instance calling or sending somebody away.⁸⁸ The *Vyomavatī*, a commentary on the *Padārthadharmasamgraha* written by Vyomaśiva around 900 CE, uses the following example for a gesture producing knowledge by inference: I see a man raising his cupped hands to his mouth, and I infer that he is thirsty. The source for the knowledge of the invariable connection between the two is the direct observation of worldly behaviour. However, Vyomaśiva adds:

In this way, other kinds of gestures (*ceṣṭā*), known from the science of theatre (*nāṭyaśāstraprasiddha*), should also be subsumed under inference.⁸⁹

These examples suggest that, outside the specialized field of theatre, the word *abhinaya* was understood primarily as gesticulation, as a worldly way of communicating without words, and that this was mainly understood to work by inference, by means of a conventional relation between gestures and meanings. Paradigmatic of this kind of bodily behaviour are certainly the gestures of the hands, but examples with other kinds of expressive gestures are not lacking in philosophical sources. An oft-cited example is that of the winking of the eyes

the memory of the words with which the graphic signs are associated, and would in any case still fall under *anumāna*, since even verbal knowledge is subsumed under inference according to the Vaiśeṣika thinkers. Cf. *Kiraṇāvalī*, pp. 213–214.

88 Interestingly, in a note on his translation of Śrīdhara's *Nyāyakandalī*, Ganganath Jha (1982: 466) says that those who take gestures as an independent means of knowledge are the Tāntrikas. Unfortunately, I have not been able to trace the source of this statement in the available literature.

89 *Vyomavatī*, p. 175: *evam anyāpi ceṣṭā nāṭyaśāstraprasiddhā anumāne 'ntarbhāvanīyati*. The opposition of 'world' and 'science of theatre' is not given explicitly by Vyomaśiva, but it is found in another source, Bhāsarvajña's *Nyāyabhūṣana* (9th c.) in the context of a similar discussion about the status of *ceṣṭā* as *pramāṇa*, where it is recognized to be part of inference on the strength of similar arguments as those of the Vaiśeṣikas. Again, the point of departure is that some people consider *ceṣṭā* as an independent *pramāṇa*. *Nyāyabhūṣana*, p. 435: *anye tu ceṣṭākhyam pramāṇam icchanti. kā punar iyam ceṣṭeti? prayatnajanitā śarīratadavayavānām krīyā ceṣṭā. sā nāṭyaśāstraprasiddhasamayabalena lokakṛtasamayabalena ca puruṣābhīprāyaviśeṣam arthaviśeṣam ca pratipādayanti pramāṇam iṣyate*. 'Some, however, consider the one called *ceṣṭā* a valid means of knowledge. What is then this *ceṣṭā*? *Ceṣṭā* is the activity of the body and its limbs, brought about through an effort. This is considered as a *pramāṇa*, since it conveys the particular intention of a man, or a particular meaning, on the force of the convention known from the science of theatre and on the force of the convention established in the world.'

(*akṣinikoca*), to which the *Dhvanyālokalocana* even assigns a method (*mārga*), similar to dancing and singing.⁹⁰ Before that, grammarians typically took the winking of the eyes as an analogy for the functioning of what they considered as incorrect linguistic forms, such as Apabhraṁśa words. These—explains the philosopher of language Bhartṛhari—do not convey their object directly, but indirectly, either by prompting recollection of the correct word through inference, or by conveying just a vague idea, by force of repetition, similar to the way madmen communicate by winking their eyes.⁹¹ Bhartṛhari's testimony is interesting, since it reflects a negative opinion about gesticulation intended as an indistinct form of language, conveying ideas in a confused way.

Within the theatrical sphere, Abhinavagupta analogously explains the profusion of gestures used to enact certain dramatic scenes as reflecting the mental condition of the character, which in its turn is based on worldly behaviour. In the world, in fact, the excessive use of gestures is attributed to a lack of mental clarity affecting bodily expression. Here one may be tempted to read an indirect allusion to the opposite appraisal of the mastery over one's own psychophysical sphere, typical of a certain courtly milieu.⁹² The philosophical cliché that gesticulation reflects mental confusion is typically used by Abhinavagupta in other works to mock the opponent's way of arguing. One instance is the humorous description of a Buddhist's definition of the means of correct knowledge (*pramāṇa*) in the *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtivismarśinī*: 'This [argument] amounts to nothing but a grimace, a shaking of the head, a snap of the fingers and the like' (Ratié 2013: 384, n. 29).⁹³ In a verse by Manoratha, quoted by Abhinavagupta in his *Locana*, it is the lack of mindfulness on the part of the interlocutor that triggers a dialogue through gestures, clearly expressing scornful derision: 'If a fool asked him [to define *dhvani*], he could reply with such [silly gestures] as raising the eyebrows and rolling his eyes' (Ingalls et al. 1990: 62–63).⁹⁴ Such examples show that Abhinavagupta was aware of the common negative value assigned to gestures in other spheres, but he certainly did not put it on the same plane as the use of gestures proper to aesthetic communication in theatre, i.e. *abhinaya*.

90 See DhvĀL 1.1, p. 22: *mārgasyeti. nṛttaḡitākṣinikocanādīprāyasyeti arthaḡ.*

91 See *Vṛtti* ad VP 1.147, p. 235: *tatra tu sādhuvyavahitā vā bhavaty arthapratipattir abhyāsā vā pramattānām akṣinikocādivat sampratyayamātram jāyate.*

92 For a broader context of the court and its practices, see Ali 2006. With reference to psychophysical practices and following Michel Foucault, Ali speaks of 'technologies of the self' (Ali 1998) and of 'aristocratic body techniques' (Ali 2008). For a treatment of this issue from an actor's point of view, see Cuneo & Ganser (forthcoming).

93 ĪPVV 2.3, vol. 1, p. 91: *mukhabhaṅgamūrdhakampāṅgulimoṭanādīmātratattvaṅ tat.*

94 DhvĀL 1.1, p. 27: *jaḡena pṛṣṭo bhrūbhaṅgakaṡākṣādibhir evottaram datat.*

Vyomaśiva's evidence marks an important step towards the understanding of dramatic enactment as a sphere separate from worldly communication, as is mirrored in Śaṅkuka's discussion of the function of *abhinaya*. But the credit for definitively separating the common sense of *abhinaya* in worldly communication from the *abhinaya* proper to aesthetic communication, including in its epistemological modalities, goes to Abhinavagupta. As will be shown in the next section, Abhinavagupta distinguished dramatic enactment both from the sphere of inference and from that of linguistic expression, giving *abhinaya* a totally new interpretation as a case of direct perception, though a very special one. The formulation of a comprehensive theory, capable of accommodating not only the coordinated actions of speech and gestures, together with costumes and psychophysical reactions, but also the non-representational elements, such as music and dance, was a task our commentator consciously assumed. In what follows, his main presuppositions and achievements will be outlined.

3.3.1 *Dramatic Mimesis vs Imitation*

In the previous sections, the close connection between dramatic enactment and emotions has been investigated both with regard to the actor's training, and as grounded in a literary text. It has been noticed how, around the ninth and tenth centuries, the *abhinaya* of theatre started to be recognized as a specific domain even outside specialistic literature on drama, and how, in the newly enlarged field of literary criticism, attempts were being made to link the question of *abhinaya*, as the specifics of theatre, to the new theories of suggestiveness in poetic analysis. In order to understand Abhinavagupta's redefinition of the status of *abhinaya* as dramatic mimesis (read 'the mimesis proper to drama'), it is now necessary to delve into its theoretical premises, which concern the phenomenological and epistemological status of dramatic fiction. Abhinavagupta takes his cues from the critique of imitation in theatre. It is well known that he rejected the view that theatre is an imitation (*anukṛti/anukāra/anukaraṇa*) both of the world more generally and of emotions in particular. As I will argue, however, it would be a mistake to draw the conclusion that literature and drama—just like painting and sculpture, according to a prejudice common in early twentieth-century perceptions of Indian art—knew no realism whatsoever and preferred to linger on inner and spiritual essences rather than representing external realities.⁹⁵ At the same time, I would like to rehabilitate the concept of mimesis in Indian theatre as a possible equivalent

95 For a recent re-evaluation of imitation in Indian art, see Dave-Mukherji 2016. Dave-Mukherji equates *anukaraṇa* with mimesis, which she understands as imitation or real-

for *abhinaya*. Given the shifts in usage that the term mimesis has undergone in Western theories of representation over the long history of this concept, it would be restrictive to intend mimesis in the limited sense of imitation-qua-mimicry,⁹⁶ which is how scholars commonly understand the term *anukarāṇa* in art after its dismantling by Abhinavagupta.

Following his master Bhaṭṭa Tauta, Abhinavagupta rejects the logical possibility that representation in theatre could be conceived as imitation-qua-mimicry. This theoretical position, however, did not prevent further discussion on representation, on the status of fiction and on the status of reality in art. On the contrary, the rejection of imitation provides an occasion for Abhinavagupta to reflect on the particular status of representation in art and of dramatic representation in particular. If we regard ‘mimesis as a concept (or rather a family of concepts) of representation’, as Halliwell (2002: 16) proposed for the history of mimesis in the West, it becomes possible to view Śaṅkuka’s theory of *anukarāṇa* and Bhaṭṭa Tauta/Abhinavagupta’s rejection of it as part of a continuous discourse on mimesis—in the larger sense of representation-cum-expression—rather than in terms of a rupture with the idea of art as imitation *tout court*, as it has commonly been understood. As I will argue, the concept of *abhinaya* plays a crucial role in Abhinavagupta’s framing of the concept of mimesis in Indian theatre, not only as an artistic medium with the meaning of dramatic acting, but as a mode of representation entailing a reflection on the audience’s cognition of theatre and the ontological status of the world represented. The discourse on representation and *abhinaya* will be particularly relevant in the discussion of mimetic or narrative dance, where the possibility that dance, just like theatre, may function through *abhinaya* becomes a debated issue. The discussion will be framed by Abhinavagupta as a reflection on the specificity of dramatic mimesis and what should fall outside of its semantic field. Unlike for Aristotle, the discourse on mimesis in Abhinavagupta does not take the form of a discourse on the representational arts in general, but on the status of ‘perfect’ and ‘imperfect’ mimesis, whose paradigmatic form is Sanskrit drama.

ism, a position that is not shared by the present author. On the genesis of the prejudice about the lack of imitation-qua-realism in the Indian arts, as it emerged in the cross-cultural exchange between India and Europe in the early twentieth century, see Ganser 2018.

96 A good point of departure for looking at the shifting concept of mimesis from antiquity onwards is Halliwell 2002. According to Halliwell, mimesis was intended in antiquity in the sense of representation-cum-expression, and it was not until the eighteenth century that its semantic sphere was narrowed down to signify imitation, with the negative connotation of the ‘copy’, ‘replica’ or even ‘counterfeit’ (ibid.: 13–14).

To begin with, it would be useful to have a look at what was understood by the term *anukaraṇa* in theatre, and what the theory of imitation—*anukaraṇa-vāda* is a term used in the *Abhinavabhāratī* to refer to Śrī Śaṅkuka's thesis—implied for its most fervent supporter. Although Śaṅkuka's theory is essentially presented as an interpretation of *rasa* as an imitated emotion known via inference, its refutation is connected with a larger critique of theatre as imitation. Abhinavagupta imparts the first blows to this theory in the first chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, taking Bharata's statement that theatre is an imitation of the seven continents (*saptadvīpānukaraṇa*, NŚ 1.117) as his point of departure. The second and fatal blow arrives with the already mentioned refutation of Śaṅkuka's thesis on *rasa* in the sixth chapter. As the number of intertextual references between these two chapters indicates, the two critiques should be read as closely interconnected. Since the relevant portions are available in a number of translations nowadays,⁹⁷ I will limit my account to presenting the arguments for establishing a special status for aesthetic communication that accounts for the full spectrum of representational media, in which dramatic mimesis is irrevocably divorced from imitation, and its epistemology from inference.

Let me start with the limited critique of *rasa* as the imitation of an emotion. In its basic form, according to Śrī Śaṅkuka's *anukaraṇavāda*, a stable state (*sthāyibhāva*) is cognized as being in the actor—the *anukarṭṛ*—by force of the inferential signs (*liṅga*) consisting in the aesthetic factors (*vibhāvādī*), which correspond to the causes, effects, and accompanying elements that configure a certain emotion in real life. The stable state inferred from them is an imitation (*anukaraṇa*) of the stable state belonging to the character—the *anukārya*—and takes the name of *rasa*.⁹⁸ The main problem highlighted by Bhaṭṭa Tauta/Abhinavagupta does not concern the cognition of emotions by means of some externally visible signs acting as inferential reasons (*liṅga*),⁹⁹ but Śaṅkuka's explanation of the object inferred in theatre as the imitation of an emotion and not simply as the emotion itself, just as in real life. The idea that *rasa* is an imitation of the emotion of a fictional character, in fact, is triggered

97 Most importantly in Gnoli 1968, Cuneo 2008–2009, and Pollock 2016.

98 The theory is summarized in the concise formula '*bhāvānukaraṇam rasāḥ*' (ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 270). For details, see above, n. 79.

99 As also stated at the beginning of the section on the essence of *rasa*, we recognize emotions in theatre because we have learned to infer other people's emotions from the display of the appropriate signs in real life. See ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 278: *tatra lokavyavahāre kāryakāraṇasahacārātmakaliṅgadarśane sthāyīyatmaparacittavṛtīyanumānābhīyāsapātvād* [...] 'In this regard, in ordinary life, one develops, through repeated practice, the ability to infer the stable states belonging to others, by seeing the inferential signs consisting of causes, effects, and concomitant elements.'

by the fictional context of the theatrical performance or poem. This, according to Śaṅkuka, accounts for the unreality of the events represented or depicted, including the emotions. At the same time, however, he seems to argue that the spectators do not recognize the aesthetic factors as factitious, otherwise the inferential process would be invalidated.

Now, Bhaṭṭa Tauta argued that for *rasa* to be an imitation, somebody has to apprehend it as an imitation and not as the real thing, which means that a distinction has to be made between the imitator, the imitated, and the term of the imitation. The example he gives is the imitation of somebody drinking alcohol in a particular way. For it to be grasped as an imitation, the imitator must be perceived drinking water, which would be the term of the imitation standing for the imitated thing.¹⁰⁰ Analogously, to apprehend *rasa* in theatre as an imitation, a spectator would have to apprehend the actor as the imitator of the character's emotion by means of something analogous but not equal to that emotion. It would be difficult, however, to see how the perception of the external paraphernalia of an actor, or his actions and psychophysical reactions, would lead to the cognition of the imitation of an emotion, and how that imitated emotion could be attributed to a fictional character, like Rāma, that nobody has ever seen.¹⁰¹ Moreover, the only way to explain how the inferential

100 ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 268: *kiñcid dhi pramāṇenopalabdham tad anukaraṇam iti śakyam vaktum. yathā 'evam asau surāṃ pibati' iti surāpānānukaraṇatvena payahpānam pratyaḥśāvalokitam pratibhāti.* "Something can be called an imitation when it is grasped as such by a valid means of knowledge. For instance, the cognition "he drinks alcohol in this way" manifests itself as the imitation of the drinking of alcohol when the drinking of water is directly perceived' (Translation based on Pollock 2016: 183–184). The context for this particular case of imitation is not totally clear; possibly, it was intended as a case of mimicry aimed at caricaturing someone, not necessarily a case of fiction, and certainly not a *trompe-l'œil*. To convey the idea of drinking on stage, in fact, an actor would normally just reach up with his hands to his mouth, possibly displaying afterwards the effects of intoxication (*mada* being one of the 33 *vyabhicāribhāvas*) through the appropriate *anubhāvas*, thereby conveying the idea of an intoxicating drink.

101 ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 268: *iha ca naṭagatam kiṃ tad upalabdham yad ratyanukaraṇatayā bhātīti cintyam. taccharīram tanniṣṭham pratiśīrśakādi romāñcakagadgadikādi bhujākṣepalanaprabhṛti bhrūkṣepakaṭākṣādikaṃ ca na rateś cittavṛttirūpatayānukāratvena kasyacit pratibhāti. jaḍatvena bhinnendriyagrāhyatvena bhinnādhipikaraṇatvena ca tato 'ti-vailakṣaṇyāt. mukhyāvalokane ca tadanukaraṇapratibhāsaḥ. na ca rāmagatām ratim upalabdhapūrvīṇaḥ kecīt. etena rāmānukārī naṭa ity api niraśtaḥ pravādaḥ.* 'In the case [of theatre], one has to reflect on what it is that one perceives in the actor, which looks like the imitation of desire. The body of the actor, the headdress and the other [elements of the costume] fixed on him, [the psychophysical reactions] such as horripilation, stammering and so on, the shaking and spinning of his arms, the frowns of the eyebrows, the side glances and so on; for nobody does this appear as an imitation of the mental state of desire,

signs of an emotion, i.e. the determinants, the consequents, and the transitory states, could lead a spectator to apprehend the imitation of an emotion instead of the emotion itself would be to admit that they *are* indeed grasped as fictitious. And this leads to an impasse, since it invalidates the possibility of inferring either a real emotion or an imitated one: from a fake inferential sign recognized as such, it is neither possible to infer something real nor something imitated. In the famous example used in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, mist perceived as an imitation of smoke cannot lead one to infer a bouquet of red flowers as an imitation of fire.

The discussion then shifts from an epistemological to a phenomenological plane, where the acting process is examined for evidence for the claim that the actor is imitating the character's emotion. But this would be untenable since, even if imitation (*anu-karaṇa*) be understood as 'making similar to' (*sadrśa-karaṇa*), the actor, just like the audience, has never seen Rāma, let alone his emotion. The experience of the actor is described as follows by Bhaṭṭa Tauta/Abhinavagupta:

Moreover, the actor simply gesticulates (*ceṣṭate*), while displaying (*pradarśayan*) the consequents alone—thanks to his training, to the recollection of his own determinants, and to his empathy through the generalization of the emotion [in the text]—and while reciting (*paṭhan*) the poetic text with the help of the appropriate intonations etc. To this alone amounts his experience, but he does not have the experience that [what he is doing] is an imitation. For there can be no imitation of the gestures of Rāma (*rāmaceṣṭita-anukāra*) in the same way that the attire of the beloved can be imitated (*kāntaveṣa-anukāra*). Moreover, we have already explained this in the first chapter.¹⁰²

since, given that they are insentient and therefore grasped by different sense organs, and that they have different substrata, [these external manifestations] are radically different from desire. And if one argues that the imitation of [desire] is manifested as observed in the character, our answer is that nobody has ever perceived the desire belonging to Rāma. Therefore, to say that the actor is imitating Rāma is just empty talk' (Translation based on Pollock 2016: 184).

102 ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, pp. 269–270: *kiṃ ca naṭaḥ śikṣāvāsāt svavibhāvasmaraṇāc cittavṛttisādhāraṇibhāvena hṛdayasaṃvādāt kevalam anubhāvān pradārśayan kāvyam ucitakākuprabhṛtyupaskāreṇa paṭhanś ceṣṭata ity etāvan mātṛe 'sya pratītir na tv anukāraṃ vedayate. *kāntaveṣānukāravād dhi [conj. Gnoli, °ānukāravṛddhi E₁] na rāmaceṣṭitasyānukāraḥ. etac ca prathamādhyāye 'pi darśitam asmābhīḥ*. In his translation, Gnoli refers to one of the graces of women known in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as *līlā*, in which the woman dresses up and makes a mimicry of the lover's appearance and speech to amuse her companion friend (Gnoli 1968: 40). The reference to the practice of *līlā* and its resulting in somebody

The reference to the *Abhinavabhāratī*'s first chapter in this passage has the function of connecting the critique of *rasa* as the imitation of an emotion with the more general critique of theatre as an imitation-qua-mimicry. A similar phrasing and reference to the general rejection of imitation in theatre is found just a few lines below the above-quoted passage, while discussing the possibility that Bharata could ever have meant *rasa* as the imitation of a stable state:

As to the statement that '[theatre] is an imitation (*anukaraṇa*) of the seven continents' (NŚ 1.117cd), it can be explained in a different way. Moreover, even if one admits that there is imitation of the [stable state], why is there not a different name [i.e. *rasa*] in the case of the imitation of the attire and the gait of the beloved (*kāntaveṣagaty-anukaraṇa*)?¹⁰³

As this passage hints, in the first chapter Abhinavagupta sets out to justify Bharata's use of the word *anukaraṇa*. Many of the arguments used by Bhaṭṭa Tauta to refute Śaṅkuka's theory of *rasa* as imitation are reused in the first chapter to refute the general idea that theatre is an imitation. However, since the first chapter does not aim to counter Śaṅkuka's thesis, but to explain Bharata's—at first view—puzzling statement that 'theatre is an imitation (*anukaraṇa*) of the seven continents' (NŚ 1.117cd), it provides the occasion for presenting a general theory of what theatre is and does. Abhinavagupta takes his cue from Bharata's use of another term, i.e. *anukīrtana*, in NŚ 1.107cd, to which he assigns a meaning different from imitation, namely 'celebrative renarration' of the three worlds. The term *anukaraṇa* would then be reinterpreted as similarly nuanced, thereby justifying Bharata's use of it.¹⁰⁴ Bharata's statement that theatre is an imitation of the seven continents in NŚ 1.117cd is moreover acceptable, provided that the term *nāṭya* in it is understood as 'the activity

else's amusement is pertinent, since it is analogous to the case of parody or caricature (*vikāraṇa*), which is described in ABh ad NŚ 1.107, vol. 1, p. 36 as one of the possible senses of *anukaraṇa*.

103 ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 270: *saptadvīpānukaraṇam ityādi tv anyathāpi śakyagamanikam iti. tadanukāre 'pi ca kva nāmāntaram kāntaveṣagatyānukaraṇādau*. My translation, on the whole, follows Pollock 2016: 186. Cf. also Gnoli 1968: 41, and Cuneo 2008–2009: 278, who understand the passage slightly differently.

104 The relevant verses are NŚ 1.107cd: *trailokyasyāśya sarvasya nāṭyam bhāvānukīrtanam* || 'Theatre is the renarration of the states of these three entire worlds'; and NŚ 1.117cd: *saptadvīpānukaraṇam nāṭyam etad bhaviṣyati* || 'This theatre will be an imitation of the seven continents.' NŚ 1.112 also defines theatre as 'an imitation of the conduct of common people' (*lokaṅgītānukaraṇa*). On the notions of *anukīrtana* and *anukaraṇa*, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 125–127.

of actors, consisting of an imitation of the seven continents, that one sees on stage' (*saptadvīpānukaraṇamayī hi naṭakriyā raṅge dṛśyate*, ABh *ad locum*, vol. 1, p. 42). At this juncture, there is an interesting overlap, never made explicit as such by Abhinavagupta, between the concept of *anukaraṇa* and that of *abhinaya*. What could the activity of actors—conforming to the ways of the world and seen on stage—ever be, other than dramatic acting, i.e. *abhinaya*? *Abhinaya* is the activity of actors par excellence, and it is often qualified in terms of activity (*kriyā*) in the *Abhinavabhāratī*.¹⁰⁵ As to the reference to NŚ 1.117cd in the quotation from the *rasasūtra* discussed above, it must hint at this interpretation of *anukaraṇa* as the activities of actors on stage, which correspond largely to worldly ones, according to the sense of *anukaraṇa* as *anusaritayā karaṇa* ('acting in conformity [with the world]') ABh *ad* NŚ 1.107cd, vol. 1, p. 37). To say that their activities conform to the ways of the world is indeed utterly different from saying that the actors imitate the *emotions* while acting. Clearly, the discourse on *anukaraṇa* in the first chapter is intended as a general discourse on representation in theatre, in which imitation is just one of the possible options for thinking about the connection between art and reality. And that is rejected as an impossibility under every point of view.¹⁰⁶

The challenge posed by Śrī Śaṅkuka's *anukaraṇavāda* was to theoretically distinguish the aesthetic factors leading to the cognition of *rasa* in theatre from the corresponding inferential signs leading to the inference of emotions in real life, without letting the whole distinction between art and life collapse. Emotions or *bhāvas* are acknowledged almost unanimously by Indian literary critics to exist in the world and in theatre alike, and in both domains they are displayed through the same configuration of external signs. In art, however, emotions are conveyed conjointly by the literary text and by actors displaying the appropriate visible reactions on their body. According to Abhinavagupta, Śaṅkuka's

105 See, for instance, Abhinavagupta's insistence on the *sāmānyābhinaya* as having the character of an activity (*kriyā*), with some reservations about the *āhāryābhinaya*; cf. Bansat-Boudon 1992: 345 and 363, n. 358.

106 The verses under discussion are part of Brahmā's discourse on the nature of theatre, pronounced to pacify the obstacles (NŚ 1.106–119), who had mistaken the first performance for a mockery of their own defeat by the gods. The commentary on these verses contains many of Abhinavagupta's reflections on the status of fiction in art. A full translation of these passages is available in Cuneo 2008–2009. A translation of ABh *ad* NŚ 1.107 appears as Appendix 1 in Gnoli 1968, and a portion of it in Pollock 2016: 218–222 (*On the Nature of Dramatic Acting*). A new French translation and critical edition of the totality of the first chapter is currently under preparation as a collaborative project of the present author with Lyne Bansat-Boudon and Daniele Cuneo.

account fails to differentiate the process by which an onlooker or a spectator cognizes an emotion in real life and in theatre.¹⁰⁷ Although Śāṅkuka ascribes a special power to poetic language, as a matter of fact, his theory of *rasa* as an imitated emotion requires an actor (the *anukartr*) as the locus of the display of the inferential signs of the character's emotion (the *anukārya*), which ultimately seems to confine the communication of emotions to gestures and other visible behaviours. This echoes the *communis opinio*, mentioned in the previous section, by which *abhinaya* works as a synonym of gesticulation (*ceṣṭā*) as a means of knowledge based on inference that encompasses worldly and theatrical gestures alike.

Abhinavagupta, on the contrary, is adamant when he says that dramatic acting (*abhinaya*)—a function proper to theatre and distinct from imitation—does not work through inferential signs, or through convention like ordinary language. The explanation of the functioning of *abhinaya* in epistemological terms is provided in his commentary on what is commonly regarded as the definition of theatre, i.e. Nś 1.119,¹⁰⁸ where *abhinaya* is the very means by which theatre, and the emotions embedded in it, become an object of cognition for the spectators:

In this way, how can such an object defined as theatre (*nāṭya*) enter the field of cognition? [In reply to this question, Bharata] says: [when it is conveyed by] the bodily and the other (*aṅgādi*) [means of dramatic enactment]. The enactments, such as the bodily and so on, cannot be assimilated to inferential signs (*liṅga*) or to linguistic convention (*saṅketa*). On the contrary, they are akin to an immediate direct perception (*pratyakṣasākṣātkāralpa*). †The entity defined as theatre does not† consist in worldly knowledge and so on, [to be established as] true or false. Its essence is indeed the [*rasas*] such as the amorous one (*śṛṅgāra*) and others, which are instrumental to the cognition coinciding with a relishing, different from that of [states of] delight and so forth. Precisely because they are causal in bringing (*naṃana*) [the meanings] directly in front (*abhimukya*) [of the spectators], they are technically designated by the word *abhinaya* ('enactment', 'dramatic representation'), unknown

107 Abhinavagupta expresses this idea in ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 278: *laukikacittavṛtṭyanumāne kā rasatā? tenālaukikacamatkāratmā rasāsvādah smṛtṭyanumānalaukikasamvedanavilakṣaṇa eva*. 'Where is the relish in inferring a worldly mental state? Therefore, the savouring of *rasa*, consisting in a super-mundane rapture, is absolutely different from worldly forms of awareness such as memory or inference.'

108 See above, § 3.2, n. 39.

with this meaning in the *śāstra* (i.e. Veda), in the world (i.e. in ordinary discourse), or elsewhere.¹⁰⁹

In this passage, Abhinavagupta asserts the deep and irreducible distinction between the functioning of aesthetic communication and ordinary communication. The special cognition derived from *abhinaya* is not of a worldly order, since it transgresses ordinary experience, where cognitions are qualified as true, false, or doubtful. To emphasize its extraordinariness, the cognition resulting from dramatic representation is defined as similar—but not identical—to a direct perception, which will become a leitmotiv throughout the *Abhinavabhāratī*. The special status of *abhinaya* in theatre, as endowed with the directness of perception, sets aesthetic communication apart from the *abhinaya* known from other knowledge systems with the non-technical sense of gesticulation (*ceṣṭā*), as well as from the speculation on gestures and linguistic convention in the sphere of grammar.¹¹⁰ At the same time, since *abhinaya* is conceptualized in the dramatic tradition as a blend of voice, body, mindfulness, and costume, its mechanism cannot be conflated with that of poetic suggestion, which works exclusively through language. Thus Abhinavagupta conceives the vocal enactment as twofold, since it cannot be reduced to the literary text disjoined from its vocal rendering by an actor, which includes aspects of prosody and melody as well.¹¹¹

109 ABh ad NŚ 1.119, vol. 1, p. 44: *evambhūto* [$M_1^{ac} T_1^{ka} T_5 T_6 T_7 E_{1(2)}^{pc} E_{1(4)}^{pc}$, *evam dayāratyādirūpānusaraṇabhūto* $M_{1pc} T_1 E_{1(2)}^{ac} E_{1(4)}^{ac}$, *evam mayā ratyādirūpānusaraṇabhūto* $E_{1(1)}$] *nātyalakṣaṇo 'rthaḥ kathaṃ pratīgocarībhavatīty āha—āṅgādīti. ye 'bhīnayāḥ āṅgikādāyāḥ na ca te līṅgasāṅketādirūpāḥ, api tu *pratyakṣasākṣātkāraḥkalpāḥ. †nātyalakṣaṇo 'rtho† 'laukikasamyānīthyājñānādirūpāḥ* [conj., *pratyakṣasākṣātkāraḥkalpalaukika*° $M_1 T_1 T_5 T_6 E_1$, *pratyakṣasākṣātkāraḥkalpalaukika*° $T_1^{ka} T_7$, *pratyakṣasākṣātkāraḥkalpā pratītiḥ. ato na laukika*° E_2] *tasyaiva bhāvāḥ* [M_1 , *bhāvāḥ* $\Sigma_M \Sigma_E$] *śṅgārādayo ratyādivilakṣaṇāsvādaparyāyapratītyupayoginaḥ. ata evābhīmukhyānanahetutvād anyalokaśāstrāprasiddhenābhīnayaśabdena vyapadeśyāḥ*. My translation is based on the text of the ongoing critical edition of the first chapter of the ABh, which requires a conjecture in order to make sense of the text.

110 The reference to the workings of language by the use of the word *sāṅketa* in the passage under discussion is made clear by a parallel expression used to describe the process of dramatic communication in the sixth chapter (*rasasūtra*, section on the obstacles, vol. 1, p. 275): *abhinayanaṃ hi saśabdalingavyāpāravisadrśam eva pratyakṣavyāpārakalpam iti niśceṣyāmaḥ*. 'Dramatic acting, in fact, is different from the operation of inferential signs or words, as it is similar to the operation of perception. We will ascertain this later on'. This is possibly a reference to the lost *Abhinavabhāratī* on NŚ chapter 8.

111 From this perspective, the statement in NŚ 14.2ab—*vāci yatnas tu kartavyo nātyasyaiśā tanuḥ smṛtā* | 'An effort should be made in the verbal [component], for this is known to be the body of theatre'—is interpreted by the commentator as referring to the twofold effort

Although *rasa* had clearly been conceptualized since Ānandavardhana's time as the domain of the literary text, which became a prerogative of every *kāvya*, it appears that Abhinavagupta considered the performative dimension as absolutely primary for the production of *rasa* in theatre. The first one to express this idea in clear terms was possibly Bhaṭṭa Tauta, according to whom the experience of *rasa* in theatre is paradigmatic and definitional, and cannot but be achieved through the staged performance of the poetic text. However, *rasa* can also be found in poetry to the extent that poetry behaves like a theatrical performance (*nāṭyāyamāna*)—in other words, when it gives rise to an especially vivid awareness that is similar to a direct perception (*pratyakṣakalpasamvedana*). And this is exactly what *abhinaya* is bound to achieve in theatre.¹¹² As we will see in the next section, if the purpose of dramatic acting is to convey the meanings of the poetic text in a lifelike manner that cannot be mistaken for an imitation, the discourse on aesthetic communication also takes into account—possibly for the first time, with Abhinavagupta—those aspects of non-verbal communication less directly connected with the play's text and proper to the specific spectacular format of dramatic performances, including singing and dancing. At given times in the performance of a play, music and dancing can in fact assume a particularly prominent role and appear as inextricably intertwined with a text and its enactment. The presence of such spectacular elements in the performance of a play is taken by Bhaṭṭa Tauta/Abhinavagupta as an argument against the interpretation of *rasa* as the imitation of a stable state and of theatre as an imitation in general:

required by the poet and the actor in *vācīkābhinaya*. Cf. ABh ad Nś 14.2ab, vol. 2, p. 220: *vācī yatnas tu kartavya iti kavinā nirmānakāle naṭena prayogakāle*: 'An effort in the verbal [component] should be made by the poet at the time of the composition [of the dramatic text], [and] by the actor at the time of [its] performance'.

112 ABh ad 6.33, vol. 1, pp. 284–285: *nāṭyāt samudāyarūpād rasāḥ. yadi vā nāṭyam eva rasāḥ. rasasamudāyo hi nāṭyam. nāṭya eva ca rasāḥ. kāvye 'pi nāṭyāyamāna eva rasāḥ. kāvyārthaviśaye hi pratyakṣakalpasamvedanodaye rasodaya ity upādhyāyāḥ. yad āhuḥ kāvyakautuke: 'prayogatvam anāpanne kāvye nāsvādasambhavaḥ |' iti 'varṇanotkalitā bhogapraudhoktyā samyag arpitāḥ | udyānakāntācandrādya bhāvāḥ pratyakṣavat sphuṭāḥ ||' iti. '[The compound *nāṭyarasāḥ* can be interpreted as:] "the *rasas* arising from theatre", which is a composite entity. Or, as "the *rasas* that are theatre", for theatre is indeed a collection of *rasas*. Moreover, the *rasas* are found in theatre alone. Yet *rasa* is also found in poetry to the extent that it behaves like theatre. For according to my master [Bhaṭṭa Tauta], the *rasa* arises when an awareness similar to a direct perception arises with respect to the content of a literary text. As he stated in the *Kāvyakautuka*: "As long as a poem does not reach the status of a performance, it is not possible to savour [it]. When factors such as a garden, a beloved woman, the moon, etc. appearing in a [poetic] description are properly conveyed by a verbal expression fully developed with enjoyment, they become as vivid as if they were directly perceived?"*

Contrary [to the opinion that *rasa* is the imitation of a stable state, which can be inferred by the display of its external signs], [Bharata's] illustrations [of the *rasas*] etc., enlivened by the *dhruvā* songs, the variety of rhythms and the *lāsyaṅgas*, is rather a sign to the opposite.¹¹³

Echoes of a discussion about the imitative value of songs and music in theatre are also found in the first chapter, again within the general critique of theatre as an imitation:

Moreover, since [theatre] is no imitation, then even the objection raised by some [against theatrical extravagance and the lack of similitude]—namely that nobody can be imitated as accompanied by songs and instrumental music in all situations—has no place. For we did not say that songs and the like [in theatre] are objects of imitation. Besides, a counter-objection to this has been voiced as follows: ‘in the world, vocal and instrumental music are commonly encountered during activities such as sitting, walking, bathing, sleeping, awakening, eating, and so forth[, therefore the musical accompaniment in theatre imitates those].’ This is untenable too, for in the world we do not find vocal and [instrumental music] in the form of *dhruvās*, rhythms, etc.[, proper to theatre,] in [association with] activities such as walking and so forth, with the sole exception of auspicious [occasions]. And [the imitative value of music in theatre is also untenable] because the very idea of imitation does not logically hold also with regard to such actions as singing, playing instruments, etc. That is all.¹¹⁴

113 ABh ad Nś *rasasūtra* (refutation of Śrī Śaṅkuka by Bhaṭṭa Tauta), vol. 1, p. 270: *pratyuta dhruvāḡānatālavacitryalāsyaṅgopajīvanam nirūpaṅādi viparyaye liṅgam*. Gnoli (1968: 40) translates *lāsyaṅga* as ‘sub-divisions of women’s dance’, and Pollock (2016: 186) as ‘components of the preliminary dance’, which cannot be the case here, since the context is the performance of drama and not the preliminary rite. An essential difference between the two types of *lāsyaṅgas* described in chapter 19 (the *lāsyaṅgas* of the play) and in chapter 31 (the *lāsyaṅgas* of the *pūrvaraṅga*) has been clearly established by Lyne Bansat-Boudon (cf. § 2.1, n. 30 and § 2.3.1).

114 ABh ad 1.107, vol. 1, p. 38: *yataś cedam nānukaraṇam tato yat kaiścic coditam tad anavakāśam—‘na ca gītavādyayuktaḥ sarvāvasthāsu kaścid anukāryaḥ’ iti. na hy [Σ_M E₁₍₁₎, tv M₁ T₁^{ga} E₁₍₁₎^{vi} Σ_E] anukāryatvena gītādaya ity uktam. parihāro ‘pi ya uktaḥ ‘*āsanagamanasnānasvāpapatibodhabhojanādyāsu vastuto [E₁₍₄₎, °ādyāsu vastu māsu M₁^{pc}, °ādyāsu(...)māsu M₁^{ac}, °ādyāsu yastumāsu T₁, °ādyāsu vyastumā T₅, °ādyāsu Σ_E] gītavādyam loke ceṣṭāsv atiprathitam’ ityādi, tad apy anupapannam. na hi gamanādau taddhruvātālādirūpeṇa gītādi loke ‘sti maṅgalamātravād ṛte. gāyanavādanādiṣv api cānukārabuddhyāpatter ity alam. My translation and understanding of this passage are based on the ongoing critical edi-*

This passage establishes an important difference between the use of music in theatre and in the world. In the world, playing instruments or singing songs can be performed in connection with other actions for the sake of auspiciousness, i.e. in ritual contexts. In theatre, although playing and singing are seen in connection with the enactment of some dramatic situation, they should not be considered as either the imitation of music played in connection with real-world events, nor as imitating anything in particular. They are a part of aesthetic communication on a par with enactment, but they are further removed from an external referent and hence from imitation because of their non-mimetic nature. As we shall shortly see, such spectacular elements that do not imitate anything are not just accessory elements, but are integral to the very idea of the fabrication of dramatic fiction and its educational goal.

To sum up, *abhinaya* can neither be equated with simple gesticulation, nor with the capacity of poetic language alone. On the contrary, it is a peculiar way of representing things on stage, involving the four means of the body, voice, mind, and costume, plus an array of non-semantic elements. As such, it must be distinguished from the mimicry of other people's behaviours and emotions, both in epistemological and in phenomenological terms. If *abhinaya* were to coincide with an imitation recognized as such, it would turn out as a parody, while if imitation were so perfectly achieved as to create a sense of illusion, it would be impossible to properly account for the cognition of theatre and its content as different from reality. The special status Abhinavagupta assigns to the cognition resulting from dramatic enactment, as a quasi- or simili-perception (*pratyakṣasākṣātkāraikalpa-pratīti*), pleads for a nuanced interpretation of his rejection of *anukaraṇavāda*, where there is no absolute denial that theatre has any mimetic relation whatsoever to the world, but rather a re-qualification of dramatic representation and its object. As will be shown in the next sections, this re-qualification entails an even stricter mimetic connection between the actor, the enactment, and the enacted thing or character, which is exploited to distinguish theatre from the new genres of danced poetry or narrative dance.¹¹⁵

tion and translation of the first chapter of the ABh. The passage is translated differently in Cuneo 2008–2009: 206, and omitted both in Gnoli's and Pollock's translations of ABh ad NŚ 1.107.

115 This distinction will be treated in detail below, in § 3.5, and constitutes one of the foci of the discussion of the nature of dance in the passage from the fourth chapter as edited and translated in this book.

3.4 Dance, Beauty, and the Fabrication of Dramatic Fiction

śobhāpradhānaṃ hi nāṭye sarvam (ABh ad NŚ 1.121, vol. 1, p. 45)

The famous dictum that scripture instructs like a master, history like a friend, and poetry like a lover appears time and again in discussions on literary genres in poetic treatises. Such a neat threefold distinction in the didactic modes of operation of different textual types was popularized through the writings of Abhinavagupta.¹¹⁶ Although not expressed in the form of a maxim, the peculiar capacity of poetry to instruct and delight at the same time was already present *in nuce* in Bharata's treatise,¹¹⁷ as well as in some of the first non-systematic discussions about the function of literature embedded in literary works, famously in Aśvaghōṣa's second-century poems.¹¹⁸ From a discourse used to justify the beginnings of a new genre in Sanskrit with didactic aspirations, the pleasurable experience ascribed to literature crystallized, in the works of literary critics, into a debate about the double purpose of art: pleasure (*prīti*) and instruction (*vyutpatti*).¹¹⁹

116 As Pollock (2016: 31; 152; 369, n. 28; 371, n. 59) remarks, the division existed even earlier and was possibly inaugurated by Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka. The textual locus of this attribution is a fragment of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka in DhvĀL, p. 39 (ibid. 149, #7).

117 Notably, at the beginning of the treatise, when the gods ask Bhramā for an object of diversion, a *kṛīḍanīyaka* (NŚ 1.11c), which is at the same time an instrument of moral instruction, the Fifth Veda (NŚ 1.12); for other passages suggesting such a twofold purpose of theatre, see Cuneo 2015: 75.

118 The image of the bitter medicine coated in honey is used at the end of the *Saundarananda* as a metaphor for the teachings imparted by poetry. *Saundarananda* 18.63: *ity eṣā vyupaśāntaye na rataye mokṣārthagarbhā kṛtiḥ | śrotṛñāṃ grahaṇārtham anyamanasām kāvyo-pacārāt kṛtā || yan mokṣāt kṛtam anyad atra hi mayā tat kāvyadharmāt kṛtam | pātuṃ tiktam ivāusadhaṃ madhuyutaṃ hr̥dyaṇ katham syād iti ||* 'This composition on the subject of liberation is for calming the reader, not for his pleasure. It is fashioned out of the medicine of poetry with the intention of capturing an audience whose minds are on other things. Thinking how it could be made pleasant, I have handled in it things other than liberation, things introduced due to the character of poetry, as bitter medicine is mixed with honey' (translation Covill 2007: 363). See also *Buddhacarita* 28.74. The metaphor of poetry as the sweet honey allowing people to swallow the bitter remedy was taken up by Bhāmaha in the seventh-century. *Kāvyaḷamkāra* 5.3 reads: *svādukāvyaṣaṣṭamīśāstram apy upayujjate | prathamālīḍhamadhavaḥ pibanti kaṭu bheṣajam ||* 'One would use even a scientific treatise, provided it is mixed with the sweet flavour of poetry. Those who have first licked honey, drink the bitter medicine.'

119 On the development of this debate and on the priority assigned to either purpose by literary theorists, see for instance Cuneo 2015.

Given the predominantly courtly production of poetry in the classical and medieval periods, poetry was conceived—at least in theory, but probably also in practice—as an art to be consumed in the elite, restricted circle of literary connoisseurs.¹²⁰ Theatre, on the contrary, seems to have enjoyed a larger audience from the beginning, given the diversity of occasions for the performance of drama besides the royal *sabhā*.¹²¹ At least in theory, drama was presented as an art whose ambition was to reach out to all levels of Indian society, irrespective of caste affiliation and including even those strata of the population less exposed to Sanskrit education, i.e. women, children, and the feeble-minded (*strībālamūrkhā*°, as NŚ 34.222 puts it). This capacity to affect larger audiences, which delineates theatre from poetry, was contingent on its spectacular dimension, a fact that was already stressed by Bhaṭṭa Tauta in his *Kāvya-kautuka*.¹²² But establishing what exactly singles out the pleasure provided by the performance of a play from the one provided by the recitation of a poem, the reading of an epic text, a solo dance recital, or a musical performance, is Abhinavagupta's original contribution to the field of aesthetics. His fine analysis relies on an

120 Abhinavagupta's remarks about the need of poetry for the instruction of the royalty, in DhvĀL 3.10–14, p. 336, are revealing in this regard: *iha prabhusammitebhyah śrutismṛti-prabhṛtibhyah kartavyam idam ity ājñāmātraparamārthebhyah śāstrebhyo ye na vyutpannāḥ, na cāpy asyedaṃ vṛttam amuṣmāt karmaṇa ity evaṃ yuktīyuktakarmaphalasambandhaprakāṭānakārikebhyo mitrasaṃmītebhyo itihāsaśāstrebhyo labdhavyutpattayah, atha cāvaśyaṃ vyutpādyāḥ prajārthasaṃpādanayogyatākṛāntā rājaputraprāyās teṣāṃ hṛdayānupraveśamukhena caturvargopāyavyutpattir ādheyā. hṛdayānupraveśāś ca rasāsvādā-maya eva*. 'Princes, who are not educated in scripture—those works of *śruti*, *smṛti*, etc. which consist in commands, like those of a master, to do this or that—and who have not received instruction from history, which like a friend reveals to us the connection of cause and effect as endowed with reasoning, such as “this result came from such an act”, and who are therefore in pressing need of instruction, for they are given the power to accomplish the wants of their subjects, can be given instruction in the four goals of man only by entering into their hearts. And what enters into the heart is the relish of *rasa* (*rasāsvāda*)' (translation based on Ingalls et al. 1990: 437).

121 Festivals, whether religious or not, were also typical occasions for the staging of Sanskrit drama, as many of the prologues of the extant plays indicate. The historical evidence about the staging of Harṣa's seventh-century plays, collected in Bakker 2014, suggests that theatrical performances were primarily public events, attended by royals and citizens alike.

122 See above, n. 112, for Bhaṭṭa Tauta's quotation on the importance of *prayoga*. As Abhinavagupta explains on several occasions, the accessibility of the instruction (*vyutpatti*, *upadeśa*) given by theatre about the right means for obtaining the four aims of mankind is linked to its character of being similar to a directly experienced reality. While watching a play, in fact, a spectator sees the display of actions connected with their results, and thus receives an ethical teaching on how to behave like Rāma to obtain good results, and unlike Rāvaṇa to avoid bad ones. For an elaboration on the connection between *drama* and *dharma* (and the other aims of man), see Bansat-Boudon 2001.

essential distinction among the elements participating in the aesthetic process into those that serve the communication of specific textual meanings and those that merely provide pleasure. This distinction could be conceptualized, in terms of functionality, as one between semiotic elements and, to borrow a term well established in classical studies, psychagogic ones.¹²³ Moreover, Abhinavagupta pays utmost attention to how these two kinds of elements interact with one another at different times in a performance, and to how they merge, as it were, into one another in the fabrication of the fictional object. This object, it is worth reminding, aims at the arousal of *rasa* for the totality of the spectators and in its twofold dimension of pleasure and instruction.

3.4.1 *On the Psychagogic Power of Dance*

As hinted above, dramatic acting in its four registers guarantees an especially vivid cognition of the contents of the literary text, by which all spectators see things as if they were taking place directly in front of their eyes. Only connoisseurs, however, intended as individuals especially gifted with aesthetic sensibility and imagination, are believed to be able to experience the *rasa* merely by reading or hearing a poem, or by having a drama read out, and not enacted. According to Abhinavagupta, such individuals are endowed with a heart especially similar to a spotless mirror, since their mind is not guided by desire, confusion, or anger, which characterize the human condition. Due to this special quality, they may obtain a vivid cognition of the content of literature and sympathize with the emotional core of a poem, or get to taste the various *rasas* of the text of a drama that is simply read out.¹²⁴ Those who are not susceptible to poetry, on the contrary, depend on the actors and the means of dramatic

123 I use the term psychagogy (and the adjective psychagogic derived from it) in the Hellenistic sense of an aesthetic principle that singles out the function of art as the 'leading of the soul', connoting 'pure entertainment' (also 'enchantment') as opposed to 'instruction' (Zanker 2015: 63). The idea, used to designate the function of music in antiquity but extending to other arts as well, especially in the Hellenistic period, is that art should 'lead or persuade the spirit' into aesthetic pleasure (ibid.: 67).

124 ABh ad NŚ 6.33, vol. 1, p. 285: *hṛdayasaṃvādatāratamyāpekṣayā śrotṛpratipatṛsphuraṇaṃ sphuṭāsphuṭatvenātivicitram. tatra ye svabhāvato nirmalamukurahṛdayās tata eva saṃsārocitakrodhamohābhilāṣaparavaśamanaso na bhavanti teṣāṃ tathāvidhadaśarūpakākārṇanasamaye sādharmaṇarasanātmakacarvaṇagrāhyo rasasañcayo nāṭyalakṣaṇaḥ sphuṭa eva.* 'Now, given the varying degree of their heart's concurrence, those who hear a reading or watch a play can have a highly differentiated appreciation, depending on its clarity or obscurity to them. Someone whose heart is by nature like a spotless mirror has, for that very reason, a mind no longer subjected to the anger, confusion, craving, and so on typical of this phenomenal world; for such a person, on the occasion of hearing a play with its various appropriate components, the cluster of *rasas*—the defining feature of

enactment for achieving a vividness of the cognition and experiencing the depicted events more directly.¹²⁵ Key terms recurring as a leitmotif in Abhinavagupta's explanation of the distinctive perception of theatre achieved by means of the fourfold enactment (*abhinaya*) are the aforementioned *pratyakṣasākṣātkāraikalpapratīti*, the loosely synonymous *pratyakṣakalpasamvedana*, *sphuṭādhyavasāya*, *sākṣātkāraikalpānuyavasāya*, and so on.¹²⁶

In order to untie the knots in the hearts of those spectators who are still prey to their own passions so that they might become absorbed in the events represented, Abhinavagupta recommends pleasant activities such as singing, instrumental playing, and the like.¹²⁷ Key words in this connection are (*upa*)*ra-ñjanā*, **hṛdayahāraṇa*, etc., all having to do with notions of entertainment, beauty, charm, and allurements, typically assigned to a group of elements said to be entertaining (*uparañjaka*, lit. 'colouring') or charming (*hṛdya*, lit. 'heartly'). These typically include vocal music, instrumental music, and dance, performed alone or in combination. The role played by the charming elements in purifying the still opaque heart of the spectators so as to enable an aesthetic experience even for the least aesthetically endowed individuals is best illustrated in the following passage from the *rasasūtra*. The passage contains an explanation as to how to get rid of one of the main obstacles hindering the cognition of *rasa* (the third obstacle), lying in the fact that a spectator may be overwhelmed by his own worldly concerns and find it difficult to concentrate on another object:¹²⁸

drama—will be entirely clear and cognized by a relishing that is essentially a tasting of their commonality' (translation Pollock 2016: 209).

125 ABh ad NŚ 6.33, vol. 1, p. 285: *ye tv atathābhūtās teṣāṃ pratyakṣocitatathāvidhacarvaṇālābhāya naṭādīprakriyā*. 'Someone else, by contrast, who lacks these traits will require the procedures of actors and the rest of stagecraft in order to attain that sort of perception-like relishing' (translation Pollock 2016: 209).

126 On *anuyavasāya*, see below, n. 164, and Translation, n. 140.

127 ABh ad NŚ 6.33, vol. 1, p. 285: [...] *svagatakrodhaśokādīsaiṅkaṭahṛdayagranthibhañjanāya gītādīprakriyā ca muninā viracitā. sarvānugrāhakaṃ hi śāstram iti nyāyāt*. '[...] for such a person the sage—on the maxim that a work of systematic thought must seek to fulfil everyone's needs—has made further provision in the procedures of singing and so on, to loosen the knot of the viewer's heart, hardened as it is by the anger, grief, and so on he bears inside' (translation Pollock 2016: 209). See also, at the end of the *rasasūtra* (vol. 1, p. 281), Abhinavagupta's statements on music and dancing as means to purify the hearts of even insensitive spectators: *ahṛdayānām ca tad eva nairmalyādihāyi. yatra pratitā gītavādyagaṅikādayo na vyanitāyai paryavasyanti nātyopalakṣaṇāt*. 'But for those lacking in receptivity, drama alone can produce such clarity, because it is only there that the apprehension of singing, music, and the courtesan actresses does not lead to vicious behavior, since they are simply features of drama' (translation *ibid.*: 204).

128 Gnoli (1968: xli, n. 1) described these 'obstacles' in the following way: 'The *vighna*, ob-

Moreover, how could someone who is under the sway of his own pleasure[, pain, or indifference] make his consciousness rest on another object? In order to remove such an impediment, [Bharata] has resorted to the charm (*uparañjana*) of vocal and instrumental music, well-adorned playhouses, courtesans skilful in eloquence, and so on. These [charming elements], made of vocal objects and the like, residing in all the different components [of the performance], are liable to be enjoyed by all the [spectators] thanks to their power of generality (*sādhāraṇya*). Thanks to this ['colouring'], even a person devoid of any sensibility is turned into a connoisseur by obtaining a limpidity of the heart. In fact, it has been said that [this theatre must be] 'visible and audible (Nś 1.11d)' [i.e. pleasing and instructing].¹²⁹

Turning the spectator into a connoisseur, a *sahrdaya* (lit. 'endowed with heart'), is indeed what the charming elements are supposed to effectuate during a theatrical performance. This coincides with a cleansing of the heart of all possible distracting and obstructing mental states, which is a prerequisite for being aesthetically touched by the performance. This 'aesthetic susceptibility' (Rastogi 2016: 142), proper to *sahrdayas*, was initially described by literary critics as the capacity to appreciate poetry.¹³⁰ Abhinavagupta's famous definition of the 'ideal connoisseur' in the *Locana* states that *sahrdayas* are 'persons who are capable of identifying with the subject matter, as the mirror of their hearts has been polished by the constant study and practice of poetry, and who respond

stacles, are all the extraneous elements which break the unity of a state of consciousness (desire for gain, worry of all kinds, etc.).'

- 129 ABh ad *rasasūtra* (section on the hindrances), vol. 1, p. 275: *njasukhādīvivaśībhūtaś ca kathaṃ vastvantare saṃvidamṃ viśrāmayed iti tatpraṭyūhavyapohanāya pratipadārthanīṣṭhaiḥ sādharānyamahimnā sakalabhogyatvasahiṣṇubhiḥ śabdādīviśayamayair ātodyagānavicitramaṇḍapapadavidagdhagaṇikādibhir uparañjanam samāśritam. yenāhrdayo 'pi hrdayavaimalyaprāptyā sahrdayikriyate. uktaṃ hi 'drśyam śravyam ca' iti* (translation based on Cuneo 2008–2009: 292–293). I understand *sādharānyamahiman-* as strictly connected to the process of *sādharāṇīkaraṇa* or generalization, in that the charming elements transform the experience of the viewer and thus allow the suppression of the usual references of the cognition to one's own limited experience. On *sādharāṇīkaraṇa*, see below, n. 167 and 173. *Prīti* and *vyutpatti* are to be read in filigree under the 'visible and audible nature of theatre', as declared in ABh ad Nś 1.11d, vol. 1, p. 12: *drśyam iti hrdayam śravyam iti vyutpattipradam iti prīti vyutpattidam ity arthaḥ*.
- 130 In one of the earliest uses, Vāmana wrote that a certain poetic style known for its excellence, called *vaidarbhī*, was assumed to produce a certain ripening that is charming (*rañjaka*) to the hearts of *sahrdayas*. See *Kāvyaḷaṃkārasūtravṛtti* ad 1.2.21, quoted in Smith 1985: 46: *sahrdayahrdayānām rañjakaḥ ko 'pi pākaḥ*.

to it sympathetically in their own hearts'.¹³¹ Similarly, in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, Abhinavagupta attributes the capacity to appreciate poetry independently of stage presentation to those who are already connoisseurs thanks to the repeated practice of poetry, previous merit, and so forth: for them, 'heard' *rasa* can be the object of a quasi-direct perception.¹³² Whereas poetry is produced by *sahṛdayas* and for *sahṛdayas*, theatre has to appeal to everybody by developing one's aesthetic susceptibility. Turned into a *sahṛdaya* thanks to the special charm brought forward by some of its spectacular elements, the spectator will be able to sympathetically respond to the events represented and access the *rasa*, and through it the twofold goal of theatre, pleasure and instruction.

A concrete example of how the charming elements operate in a theatrical performance is seen in the use of the gorgeous manner (*kaiśikīvr̥tti*). With regard to its introduction into the performance, Abhinavagupta voices the idea that although the meanings may be vividly expressed through the enactment, charm or beauty are required in order to access the *rasa*. The *kaiśikī*, containing elements of dance as well as instrumental and vocal music, is said to be a supporting element of the performance (*upakaraṇa*); yet it is not just an accessory item, but is defined more than once as the vital essence of the performance (*sakalaprayogaprāṇa*).¹³³ Abhinavagupta describes the *kaiśikī* as a 'heart-catching multifariousness' (*hṛdayahāri vaicitryam*),¹³⁴ necessary for the manifestation not only of *śṛṅgāra rasa*—quite intuitively enhanced by beautiful elements such as dances and songs—but of all the other *rasas* too. Without such a beautiful multifariousness, he argues, the performance would not appeal to the spectators, and the dramatic representation would remain completely unintel-

131 DhvĀL 1.1, pp. 38–39: *yeṣāṃ kāvyānuśīlanābhyāsavaśād viśadibhūte manomukure varṇanīyatanmayibhavanayogyatā te svahṛdayasaṃvādabhāṣāḥ saḥṛdayāḥ* (translation Ingalls et al. 1990: 70).

132 ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 281: *tena ye kāvyābhyāsaprāktanapūnyādihetubalādibhiḥ saḥṛdayās teṣāṃ parimitavibhāvādyunmilane 'pi parisphuṭa eva sāksātkāraikalpaḥ kāvyārthaḥ sphurati. ata eva teṣāṃ kāvyam eva pr̥tivyutpattikṛd anapekṣitanāṭyam api*. 'Thus, for those who are receptive readers thanks to, among other things, their study of literature and their good karma from past lives, the "aim of a literary text" manifests itself with absolute clarity, as if before their very eyes, even when only a limited number of aesthetic elements is disclosed. And hence for them, literature alone, without any reference to dramatic spectacle, can bring at once pleasure and instruction' (translation Pollock 2016: 204).

133 Cf. *avatarāṅikā* ad NŚ 1.41, vol. 1, p. 20: *atha sakalaprayogaprāṇabhūtakaiśikyupayuyamānopakaraṇāntarasamharaṇāyopakramaṃ darśayati bhāratim ityādi*; ABh ad NŚ 4.5, vol. 1, p. 86: *evam itihāsasya parisamāptiṃ paśyan sakalaprayogaprāṇabhūtakaiśikisarvasvabhūtanṛttaprayogaprastāvanāyetiḥāsam anusandhatte*.

134 ABh ad NŚ 1.44, vol. 1, p. 21: *etanmadhye hṛdayahāri vaicitryam yojanīyam iti*. 'a heart-catching multifariousness should be employed among these [other manners].'

ligible or barely accessible, which would invalidate the manifestation of *rasa*, jeopardizing all efforts towards a lifelike representation:

However, how would the [*kaiśikī*] be useful in theatre? [...] From the [gorgeous manner] springs the amorous *rasa* taught in theatre, not in any other manner. [...] Therefore, if one employs the enactment, even if fourfold and delicate (*sukumāra*), as a means to manifest the amorous *rasa*, without sweet and indolent spins and whirls, without frowns of the eyebrows, sidelong glances, etc., one cannot even mention the relishing of *śṛṅgāra rasa* [let alone experience it!] [...] Even if one has to bring about the manifestation of [other] *rasas* such as *raudra* and so on, the enactment employed cannot be the cause of the manifestation of *rasa*, insofar as it is hardly alluring or non-alluring if it is not commingled with the beautiful multifariousness [of the gorgeous manner,] consisting in alliterations, spins and whirls, and the like. Therefore, in every possible case [i.e. for every *rasa*], the gorgeous (*kaiśikī*) [manner] is the vital essence [of the performance]. This is what Bharata will say in NŚ 8.14: ‘The *śākhā*, dance (*nṛtta*), and the *aṅkura* [should be known here by practitioners] as the elements of this [bodily] acting (*abhinaya*)’. Therefore, without the [*kaiśikī*] one cannot even mention the name of *śṛṅgārarasa*.¹³⁵

Such remarks about the necessity to use the *kaiśikī* alongside the acting for the sake of every *rasa*, be it the amorous or the furious, can be read, I think, against the background of the function ascribed to the charming elements in theatre, which operate side by side with the enactment for enabling the experience of *rasa*. However, besides loosening the knots in the spectator’s heart and preparing him for a cognitive immersion in the object of representation, this passage suggests that the beautifying elements have an effect on the enactment itself, with which they are closely intermingled. To be sure, it is sometimes difficult to clearly distinguish the charming elements from the means of dramatic enactment, since these two, though their function may be distinguished for the

135 ABh ad NŚ 1.44–45, vol. 1, p. 22: *nanu sā nāṭyopayoginī katham [...] tan nāṭyoktaśṛṅgāra-rasaḥ sambhavati, nānyathā. [...] tena śṛṅgārābhivyaktihetau sukumāre caturvidhe 'py abhinaye yojite madhuramantharavalanāvartanābhrukṣepakaṭākṣādinā vinā śṛṅgārara-sāsvādasya nāmāpi na bhavati. [...] raudrādirasābhivyaktāv api kartavyāyām yo 'bhinaya upādīyate so 'py anuprāsavalanāvartanādyātmakasundaravaicitryasyāmisraṇayā duḥśli-ṣṭo 'śliṣṭa eva vā na rasābhivyaktihetur bhavati sarvatraiva kaiśikī prāṇāḥ. yad vakṣyati—'asya śākhā ca nṛttaṃ ca vastūny abhinayasya' iti śṛṅgārasasya tu nāmagrahaṇam api *tayā vinā na śakyam [Σ_M, na tayā vinā śakyam Σ_E]. Translation based on Cuneo 2008–2009: 171–172. Partially translated also in Bansat-Boudon 1992: 176–177, n. 509 and 517.*

sake of theory, are in practice not found in isolation. It suffices to think of the songs used in theatre, the so-called *dhruvās* which, besides featuring elements of melody, also contain meaningful lyrics; or dance, which may sometimes come very close to bodily acting. In the passage above, for instance, the ‘sweet and indolent spins and whirls, frowns of the eyebrows, sidelong glances etc.’ are movements common to the vocabulary of dance as well as to the *āṅgikābhinaya*.¹³⁶ Moreover, the verse quoted by Abhinavagupta on this occasion in order to motivate the use of dance as part of the *kaiśikīvr̥tti*, and its consequent incorporation into the dramatic production, indicates that dance *is* an element of bodily acting (NŚ 8.14ac: *asya śākhā ca nr̥ttaṃ ca vastūṇy abhinayasya*). Does this mean that, under certain conditions, dance can be used to communicate meaning, i.e. as bodily enactment?

The problem of grasping the specific purport of the charming elements alongside dramatic enactment, which allows for distinguishing the use of dance within theatre vis-à-vis bodily acting, is at the heart of Abhinavagupta’s second interpretation of the *pūrvapakṣa* in the passage translated in this book.¹³⁷ The opponent, in fact, puts dance in the same category as instrumental and vocal music, arguing that these provide variety, entertainment, and beauty to the performance, all notions encompassed by the term *uparañjaka*. Nonetheless, he argues, one clearly sees that songs—typically of the *dhruvā* type—are added in order to provide pieces of information about the type of character, his mood, and situation by supplying what is only implicit in the dramatic text. On the other hand, he continues, instrumental music is seen to enhance the rhythm, which is introduced for harmonizing the song.¹³⁸ From this perspective, the opponent concludes, one cannot attribute any independent nature to dance, lest it end up being a form of bodily acting (*āṅgikābhinaya*). Abhinavagupta’s mordacious reply pins his opponent in a corner, revealing the fallacies of his argument: if songs be used only to supply information absent from the play’s text, then the *dhruvās* may just as well be read out, and all the vocalists’ singing efforts be dispensed with.¹³⁹ The opponent’s mistake lies indeed in confining the role of songs to their meaningful portion (the lyrics that are delivered through singing), which can easily be equated with a simple case of vocal enactment (*vācīkābhinaya*) that relies primarily on its semiotic value. However, semiotic elements (the text recitation) coexist with psychagogic ones

136 As remarked by Bansat-Boduon (1992: 176, n. 509), such movements as ‘spins and whirls’ (*valanā-vartanā*) are especially found in dance and in the register of acting called *śākhā*.

137 See Edition and Translation 3.1–6.

138 See Edition and Translation 3.4.3.

139 See Edition and Translation 6.9.3.

(the various tonal structures and vocal ornaments) in songs, and they are not always easy to disentangle. Moreover, the very presence of psychagogic elements differentiates singing from vocal acting. Similarly, dance can be mingled with bodily acting to various degrees, but should not be confused with it.¹⁴⁰

Abhinavagupta compels the opponent to modify his position with regard to how the pleasurable elements in theatre help the audience grasp the meanings that are brought forward through the acting: by piercing the heart like a needle, pleasure enables the spectator to access the contents of the play and identify sympathetically with the characters, thereby learning which forms of conduct must be accepted and which should be rejected.¹⁴¹ This function of pleasure is evocative of the innate pedagogy of theatre, and literature more generally.

Now that a psychagogic function has been ascribed to the charming elements—distinct but complementary to the semiotic one¹⁴² proper to dramatic acting—the commentator proceeds to attribute another function to dance within dramatic performance, one that is specific to it. Before looking at the details, it might be useful to point out that a subtle nuance is at play here between the beauty characteristic of dance performed even outside theatre, out of sheer joy—for instance, Śiva's dance performed at dusk, the model evoked for the theatrical *kaiśikī*—and the beauty of dance performed within a play, which is directed at charming the spectator. In itself, dance is described merely in terms of movements characterized by beauty, having no aim outside itself, unlike other purposeful actions.¹⁴³ This amounts to saying that it is different both from the purposeful actions of the characters represented in theatre, whose model is clearly worldly, human action, and from theatre itself, which aims at instructing the audience in what to do and what to avoid in order to pursue an ethical life. However devoid of any aim or meaning outside itself, when it enters the complex object that is theatre, dance is put into its service, in particular by providing pleasure. It is the latter that I have dubbed the psychagogic power of dance, close to the function that the Greeks assigned to music in leading or persuading the soul to enjoy aesthetic pleasure.

140 As the title of a penetrating section in Bansat-Boudon's analysis of dance reads, 'Allier, mais ne confondre' ('Associate, but don't conflate') (2004: 193–198), one cannot avoid thinking of the necessary co-existence of the phenomenal and semiotic body in performance as theorized by Fischer-Lichte 2008: 82, and their relationship as being 'in constant flux' (Schlapbach 2018: 18).

141 See Edition and Translation 6.9.4.

142 As Bansat-Boudon (1994b: 195) says about the role of dance within theatre, 'indépendamment de la diversité des intrigues, elle ouvre au sens, par la beauté'.

143 See the definition of *karāṇa* in § 2.2, n. 40, and § 2.4, n. 111.

3.4.2 *Like a Fire-Wheel: Dance and Fiction*

Besides its special power to charm the spectator, dance has also another, more specific use in theatre, which has much to do with the construction of fiction and its cognition by a spectator. Abhinavagupta expresses this function by means of two metaphors, the fire-wheel and the bracelet:

In particular, without [dance], theatre could not be mentally grasped by the [spectators] in the image of a fire-wheel (*alātacakrapratimatve*). For this very reason, dance—consisting of spinning, [whirling,] and the like—is similar to a thread (*sūtra*) that joins together into a bracelet (*gumpha*) the clear rubies of *abhinaya*. Due to [its] proximity to [dance], [namely] the fact of being homogeneous [with it, since both display bodily movement], theatre encompasses the songs and the other [pleasurable elements] that are part [of it].¹⁴⁴

Of the two images evoked with regard to theatre, the *alātacakra* motive is not completely absent from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, since it is found in a single occurrence in chapter 28, at the beginning of the section on music. This is most certainly the source for its various uses by Abhinavagupta. Besides its theatrical uses, the example of the fire-wheel (*alātacakra*) produced by the quick rotation of a firebrand (*alāta*) has been extremely productive in the philosophical literature of South Asia, acquiring different shades of meaning in its various uses. It is moreover current already in the epics, with some of the connotations that will be proper to later philosophical uses, but also with meanings specific to them.¹⁴⁵ Now, whereas the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is a text closer in date to the epics, Abhinavagupta's use of the *alātacakra* trope is rather marked by

144 ABh ad nś 4.263cd–264ab, vol. 1, p. 178: *viśeṣato hi tadvinā 'lātacakrapratimatve tair buddhigrāhyam eva nāṭyaṃ na syāt. tata eva vimalābhīnāyamāṇīkyagumphaividhāyīsūtrasthānīyaṃ valanādirūpanṛttasajātīyatvān nikaṭatvād antaraṅgagītādivyāpi nāṭyaṃ*. See Edition 3.9.5. This passage was first brought to my attention in the French translation of Bansat-Boudon (1992: 403 and 62, n. 50). As I will clarify in what follows, my translation differs mainly in the interpretation of the compound '*alātacakrapratimatve*'. In the French translation, it is interpreted as the reason for the impossibility to mentally grasp theatre, which, in the absence of dance, is bound to remain an *alātacakra*, i.e. a vortical but inaccessible spinning wheel: 'en effet, sans elle, il serait à l' image d' un cercle de feu (*alātacakra*) dont les (spectateurs) ne pourraient se saisir mentalement' (ibid.). On the contrary, I tend to read '*alātacakrapratimatve*' as the *conditio sine qua non* for grasping theatre, which cannot be achieved without dance. Both translations are syntactically possible; the reasons for my privileging the second interpretation has to do with how I understand the peculiar use of the metaphor of the fire-wheel in theatre.

145 For references on early occurrences of *alāta* and *alātacakra* in philosophical contexts, see

its later philosophical adaptations. Therefore, in order to properly grasp its connection with dance, it is necessary to proceed to a comparison of the use of the *alātacakra* trope in the theatrical field with its use in philosophical texts.

In Nś 28.7, Bharata says:

In this way, theatre practitioners should make songs (*gāṇa*), music (*vādyā*), and drama (*nāṭya*) having different bases, similar to a fire-wheel (*alātacakrapratima*).¹⁴⁶

This verse, found at the beginning of the section on music, immediately follows the description of the three ensembles (*kutapa*) responsible for a theatrical performance, which includes their configuration and arrangement on the stage. These are the ensemble of stringed instruments (*tatakutapa*), to which belong the vocalists, the *vipañcī* and *vīṇā* players, and the flautist; the ensemble of percussionists (*avanaddhakutapa*), including the various drummers playing on the *mṛdaṅga*, *paṇava*, and *dardura*; and the ensemble for enactment (*nāṭya-kutapa*), including actors impersonating all classes of characters.¹⁴⁷ The three basic elements singled out by Bharata in 28.7 as songs (*gāṇa*), instrumental music (*vādyā*), and theatre (*nāṭya*) stand for the various means of expression appointed to these three different groups of practitioners. The first group, that of the singers, along with the players of stringed and wind instruments, is responsible for the melodic part. The second, to which the drummers belong, is responsible for the rhythmic part, and the last one, formed by the actors, is responsible for the enactment. Although distinct and belonging to separate artistic disciplines, in theatre these three groups should function interdepend-

Bouy 2000: 255–256 and Schmithausen 1965, and for the epic background of some philosophical usages, see Fitzgerald 2012.

146 Nś 28.7: *evaṃ gānaṃ ca vādyam ca nāṭyam ca vividhāśrayam | alātacakrapratimam kartavyam nāṭyayoktrbhiḥ ||*

147 On the three *kutapas*, see Nś 28.3–6. A double semantic analysis is given to the word *kutapa* in the *Abhinavabhāratī*. See ABh ad Nś 2.72, vol. 1, p. 64: *kur nāṭyabhūmīs tām tapati ujjvalayatiḥ kṛtvā. kutam śabdaṃ pātīty anye*. '[The word *kutapa* signifies] that which heats up (*tapati*) the earth (*ku*), i.e. the theatrical stage. According to others, it is that which protects (*pāti* from root *pā*; cf. DP 2.47) what resounds (*kuta*, from root *ku/kū*, cf. DP 2.33), i.e. the sound.' Cf. also ABh ad Nś 5.17, vol. 1, p. 210: *evaṃ kutam pāti kuṃ tapatīti śabdaviśeṣapālakasya nāṭyabhūmikojjvalatādhāyinaś ca vargasya*; ABh ad Nś 4.271: *kutam śabdaṃ pātīti caturvidham ātodyam kutapam tatprayoktrjātam ca*; ABh ad Nś 28.2, vol. 4, p. 2: *kutam śabdaṃ pāti, kuṃ ca raṅgam, tapaty ujjvalayati*.

ently and work in unison. While using the *alātacakra* image, Bharata must have had in mind the unification and harmonization of the performers of the multiple media used in theatre. However, he might also have used this specific image with a view to the cognitive act grasping the unity of the fire-circle, hence to the experience of spectators: after all, the circle is 'real' only insofar as it is perceived as a unitary image by an onlooker. As will be shown below, even in other contexts, the image of the *alātacakra* is invariably connected with the cognitive act grasping it.

While reflecting on Bharata's usage of the fire-wheel image, Abhinavagupta places it explicitly in the realm of cognition and focuses on the act of perceiving the *alātacakra* as a single image formed by the disparate elements of theatre. At the same time, he does not lose sight of its being the product of human activity, which requires an effort towards the harmonization of the different parts by theatre practitioners:

Since [theatre] is based on various [elements], i.e. has the form of various actions grasped by different organs of perception, its unity must be produced by [theatre practitioners] through an effort, by means of which it may become, for the spectators, the object of a single cognition. For in reality, a spark from the flame of a firebrand cannot be connected simultaneously with several points in space. However, just as [the fire-wheel] is brought to homogeneity through an effort [to achieve] speed, so too is the performance. For, similarly, [the performance] does not consist in one single action, but can be produced in the same way [as the fire-wheel] through an effort aimed at achieving a harmonization [of its different parts]. Therefore, [Bharata] says that this [theatrical performance] is 'similar to a fire-wheel'.¹⁴⁸

The comparison of a theatrical performance with the image of the *alātacakra* here indicates the functioning of the various parts of theatre in dependence on one another, which allows the spectator to have a cognition of theatre as a single object.¹⁴⁹ Not only should the three ensembles work together harmoni-

148 This is a tentative translation of ABh ad Nś 28.7, vol. 4, p. 4, with some emendations to what appears to be a highly corrupt text: *yasmād vividhāśrayaṃ bhinnendriyagrāhyavividhā-kriyārūpam, tasmād yatnenāyaikatā tatsampādyā, yenaikabuddhiviśayatā sāmājikasya gacchet. alātatejaḥkaṇo hi na vastuto yugapad anekadeśasaṃbandhī. lāghavayatnena tu yathā* (conj., *tathātathā* E₁₍₄₎) *sāmyam āpāditam, evaṃ prayogo 'pi. *tathā hi* (conj., *tathāpi* E₁₍₄₎) *naikakriyātmā, sāmāyāpādanāya yatnena* (conj., ... *tnena* E₁₍₄₎) *tu tathā saṃpādita ity etad āha 'alātacakrapratimam' iti.*

149 In the fifth century, the grammarian Bhartṛhari had already noticed the multimedial

ously; each ensemble, forming a complex unity in itself, should be responsible for the harmonization of its peculiar medium of expression. The overarching principle governing their combination is a hierarchical arrangement in which enactment is the primary element, and the two musical ensembles are secondary elements that colour it. Abhinavagupta expresses this by way of an imaginary objection, in which the reader is reminded that the *alātacakra* image was already used by the commentator in the chapter on the *sāmānyābhīnaya* or harmonious acting:¹⁵⁰

An objection may be raised, [namely] that the fact [that the performance is similar to a fire-wheel] has already been stated in the chapter on the harmonious acting. True, but that was [said] with regard to the enactment, while here it concerns the mutual [combination] of vocal music, instrumental music, and acting. The objector might continue: but why have they been distinguished into three groups? Bharata removes this doubt by uttering the seventh verse (i.e. NŚ 28.7). First of all, acting (*nāṭya*) is the element to be enhanced (*uparañjanīya*) [by vocal and instrumental music].¹⁵¹ If one says that in harmonious acting (*sāmānyābhīnaya*), one group (*rāśi*) is brought to unison by force of the enactment,

nature of theatrical performance, pointing out that theatre is a complex and composite action involving different agents, cf. VP 2.373.

150 The *alātacakra* image is used in ABh ad NŚ 22.1 (vol. 3, p. 147) to express one of the possible analyses of the compound *sāmānyābhīnaya*: *sāmānyasya samānūkṛtasakalāṅgopāṅgakarmanā sato 'bhīnayanam yenālātacakrapratimatā prayogasya jāyate*. 'Sāmānyābhīnaya is the action of enacting the *sāmānya*, i.e. the existent, by means of the action of all the major and minor limbs brought into harmony, by which the performance is produced in the likeness of a fire-wheel'. The same image is taken up again in ABh ad NŚ 22.73–74, vol. 3, p. 180: *evaṃ viśiṣṭaḥ sāmānyenābhīnīyamānaḥ saṃbhūyābhīnayair yuktaḥ sarvābhīnayeṣu sāmānyabhūta ity evaṃ yaḥ sāmānyābhīnaya asyā ekībhāvanibandhanabhūtāyā alātacakrasaṃnibhatvasaṃpādikāyā sāmānyābhīnayakriyāyāḥ prādhānyapradarśanārtham āha [...]* 'In this way, *sāmānyābhīnaya* is that which is common to all the enactments, i.e. the particular thing enacted in a general way, i.e. connected with the means of enactment taken together. In order to show the primary character of the activity of this *sāmānyābhīnaya*, which, being the cause of unification [of the registers of acting] produces the resemblance [of the performance] to a fire-wheel, [Bharata utters the next verse].'

151 I am interpreting *nāṭya* as *abhīnaya* on the force of a parallel in ABh ad NŚ 28.3, vol. 4, p. 2, where Abhinavagupta explains the elements of performance while introducing the three ensembles: *tatra caturvidhātodyam uparañjakam, uparañjanīyaś* [corr., *uparaścānīyāś* E₁₍₄₎] *cābhīnaya iti tayor ekasaṃniveśātmakaḥ samūhaḥ kartavyaḥ*. 'Among the [elements of the performance], the fourfold instrumental music is the enhancing element, while enactment is what has to be enhanced. These two have to be made into an aggregate composed as a unit.'

there is no disagreement about it. Furthermore, the group responsible for the melody, mutually combining [the action of the singer with that of the other melodic instruments], has to be constituted, as it were, into a fire-wheel. The regulation of the orchestra, which has in its turn different bases including the *vīṇā*, the flute, and the singer, has to be similarly unified. Thus, these three [groups] subsequently have to be made into a lump. That is why what has been said [in Nś 28.7] is appropriate.¹⁵²

The image of the *alātacakra* is clearly used in all these passages as a metaphor for theatre, in which processes of combination and unification occur on multiple levels and involve the activity and effort of multiple agents. Theatre is indeed a complex case of multimedial and intermedial performance that combines different arts such as dance and vocal and instrumental music. The preoccupation with the unity of theatre is referred to time and again in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, and its problematic cognition is addressed already in the first chapter:

If the [various] ancillaries [of theatre] are performed simultaneously, how is it possible to have a cognition of theatre as one, as it is impossible to be simultaneously aware of objects perceived by different sensory faculties? In addition, since the performance entails succession, it is even more problematic [to cognize theatre as one]. Therefore, how is the performance possible?¹⁵³

152 ABh ad Nś 28.7, vol. 4, p. 4: *nanu sāmānyābhinaye 'dhyāye etad uktam, satyam, tat tv abhinayaviśayam, idaṃ tu gītavādyanātyānāṃ parasparasya viśayam. nanu kasmāt trayo rāśayaḥ kṛtāḥ ityāśaṅkamānenavāpasārāyati evaṃ gānaṃ ceti nātyaṃ tāvad uparañjanīyam. sāmānyābhinaye 'bhinayabalād ekatvaṃ nīta eko rāśir iti nātra vivādaḥ. svaragata-rāśiś cānyonyasaṃmilito 'lātacakravat kāryaḥ. vividhāśrayo 'pi vīṇāvaṃśagātrādigato 'pi vādyavidhir ekībhāvaṃ neya iti trayāṅgāṃ apy atha grāsikaraṇam iti yuktam uktam.*

153 ABh ad Nś 1.5, vol. 1, p. 7: *yadi yugapad aṅgāni prayujyante tad bhinnākṣagrāhyeṣu yugapatsaṃvedanābhāvāt katham ekaṃ nātyam iti pratīpattiḥ? kramaprayoge 'pi nītarām. tasmāt katham prayoga iti* (translation based on Cuneo 2008–2009: 135). See also the following remarks about theatre being a visible and audible object extended over time in ABh ad Nś 1.11cd, vol. 1, p. 11: *cakāreṇedam āha—tādṛśā kenacid upāyena saṃbandhas tat kurute yena bhīṃendriyagrāhya api dṛśyaśravye ekānusandhānaviśayatvaṃ na vijahīta iti sāmānyābhinayakālapraṇatvaṃ prayogasya sūcitam.* 'With the word "and" [in "visible and audible"], the author means this: the correlation with such a means, whatever it may be, makes it so that the visible and the audible, even though perceived by different sensory faculties, do not relinquish the nature of the object as a single interconnected unity. Thus it is suggested that the harmonious acting and the temporal [succession] are the vital breath of the performance.'

Considerations of a similar order certainly match well with a spectator-oriented aesthetics like the one developed by Abhinavagupta, although, as I suggest above, an attempt at finding unity amid multiplicity can already be spotted in Bharata's use of the *alātacakra* motive in chapter 28. As Bansat-Boudon (1992: 62) remarks, the metaphor of the fire-wheel also has the function of emphasizing theatre's power of illusion. The circle produced by the swift motion of a firebrand in fact becomes a stock example in the philosophical sources in talking about perceptual error, along with the 'city of the Gandharvas', the 'two moons', the 'moving trees', and the 'silver in the mother-of-pearl'.¹⁵⁴ The question remains, however, how illusion is evaluated in Indian theatre, and how dance contributes to its construction.

In the context of Indian philosophy, says Fitzgerald (2012: 776), 'the theme of the *alātacakra* is familiar primarily as a Madhyamaka argument made to undermine naïve confidence in the accuracy of sensory experience and essentialistic conceptualization, and as such it is invoked by Nāgarjuna and his intellectual progeny alongside other things that may appear to the human senses but are not real: foam, bubbles, magic tricks, and Gandharva cities floating in the air'. While Nāgarjuna uses the *alātacakra* metaphor to point out the unreality of the *saṃskāras*, similar to dreams or mirages, the later Madhyamaka commentator Candrakīrti has a more articulated description of the formation of a circle of fire:

Just as an inflamed firebrand quickly revolving is apprehended with the shape of a circle, since it depends on a mistaken vision of that [firebrand], [...].¹⁵⁵

The *Āgamaśāstra* of Gauḍapāda (c. 550–700AD?) probably contains the most developed image of the *alāta*, elaborated in six consecutive verses [Āś 4.47–52]. In this passage, the various trajectories created by the moving firebrand stand as a metaphor for the illusory movement of consciousness (*vijñānaśpanda*) appearing as fragmented into an act of perception (*grahana*) and a perceiver

¹⁵⁴ These examples are analysed differently in the different *darśanas*. The most complete study on error in the various philosophical schools is Schmithausen 1965. See also Rao 1998 on perceptual error. As for Abhinavagupta's conception of error, see Rastogi 1986. For error in the Pratyabhijñā system, see Torella 2002: 171, where the more common example of silver in the mother-of-pearl is dealt with by Utpaladeva in ĪPK 2.3.13 and *Vṛtti* thereon.

¹⁵⁵ *Catuhśatakavṛtti* 197: *yathā sajalānasya indhanasya āśu bhrāmyamāṇasya tadgatadarśanaviparyāsanibandhanatvāc cakrākāropalabdhir bhavati [...]*. This reference from the early seventh century is noted in Schmithausen 1965: 149.

(*grāhaka*).¹⁵⁶ Without entering into Gauḍapāda's philosophical tenets, nevermind the possible origin of this example in a Madhyamaka milieu, as some have suggested, it is quite evident that the *alāta* and the various shapes created by its movement stand here for the illusory character of phenomenal reality as it appears in the perceptive act. As the title of the chapter of the *Āgamaśāstra* containing these verses suggests—i.e. *alātaśānti* ('The Repose of the Firebrand')—one is expected to overcome the outer appearance of the shapes traced by the firebrand in order to arrive at the absolute reality.

In the *Nyāyasūtra*, the *alātacakra* motive is used to explain the non-simultaneity of the cognition of different actions, which may appear as simultaneous due to the rapidity of their succession, just as in seeing the circle traced by a firebrand in motion. In the *Bhāṣya*, Vātsyāyana explains that it is impossible for either the same sensory faculty to produce several cognitions simultaneously, since one instrument can only accomplish one thing at a time, or for different sensory faculties to grasp several objects simultaneously. If it is argued that the cognition of several actions can happen simultaneously, the answer is that the simultaneity is only apparent: just as with the fire-circle, where the sequencing is not perceived because the swiftness of the rotatory movement allows the idea of the circle to be perceived as uninterrupted, the sequencing of neither cognitions nor actions, though real, is grasped because of their occurrence in rapid succession, and therefore one has the erroneous impression that actions happen simultaneously.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, for the grammarian Bhartṛhari, the *alātacakra* is a metaphor that explains the nature of actions that, although actually happening in a sequence, are perceived as if unitary and simultaneous. Just as the

156 Cf. *Āgamaśāstra* 4.47: *rjuvagrādīkābhāsam alātaspaṇḍitaṃ yathā | grahaṇagrāhākābhāsaṃ vijñānaspaṇḍitaṃ tathā || 47 ||* 'De même que le mouvement d'un Brandon ardent (*alāta*) a une apparence droite, courbe, etc., de même le mouvement de la Conscience (*vijñāna*) a l'apparence de la saisie et du sujet saisissant' (translation Bouy 2000: 254).

157 See NS 3.2.56–58, pp. 107–108: *jñānāyugaṇapadyād ekaṃ manaḥ || na yugaṇapad anekakriyopalaṅdheḥ || alātacakraḍarśanaṇat tadupaḷaṅdhir āśusañcārāt ||* NSBh 3.2.58, p. 208: *āśusañcārād yathā alātasya bhramato vidyamānaḥ kramo na grhyate, kramasyāgrahaṇād avicchedabuddhyā cakravat buddhir bhavati, tathā buddhīnaṃ kriyāṇaṃ cāśuvrttītvād vidyamānaḥ kramo na grhyate. kramasyāgrahaṇād yugaṇat kriyā bhavatiṭy abhimāno bhavatiṭi.* 'In the case of the whirling fire-brand, even though there is sequence among the several perceptions of fire, yet it is not perceived, by reason of the extreme rapidity of motion; and the sequence not being perceived, there arises the idea of the continuity (of fire in revolution), which gives rise to the notion that there is a single *circle of fire*;—similarly in the case of cognitions also, sequence, even though present, fails to be perceived by reason of the rapidity of the cognitions or actions, and the sequence failing to be perceived, there arises the notion that the actions (or cognitions) appear simultaneously' (translation Jha 1939: 391).

fire-wheel, in fact, corresponds to the points in time and space touched by the revolving firebrand, brought together in the mind, actions are made up of innumerable micro-actions happening in succession and grasped in succession, but conceived by the intellect as a single and unitary idea.¹⁵⁸ Both Bhartṛhari and Vātsyāyana stress the fact that the senses cannot simultaneously perceive different objects, or complex objects such as actions or words, although at times they may appear to do so.

Whereas in many philosophical systems the illusory character of the perception of the *alātacakra* has been regarded in negative terms, as a reality to overcome, in the grammarian's version, this trope works more as an operational device for describing the apprehension of actions. Similarly, despite being ultimately illusory in nature, the fashioning of the various elements of theatre into a unitary and continuous image—the fire-wheel—is the very condition for grasping the object called 'theatre' as a single and continuous whole. If, in Gauḍapāda's metaphor, one is expected to overcome appearances to arrive at reality, in theatre it is quite the opposite: the illusion of the continuous circle has to be accepted for the entire duration of the theatrical performance.

Abhinavagupta explains in clear terms how the recognition and acceptance of the theatrical illusion are necessary conditions for a successful aesthetic experience, while he speaks about a group of obstacles threatening the experience of *rasa* for the spectators and how to remove them.¹⁵⁹ The fourth and fifth obstacles, says the commentary on the *rasasūtra*, are 'deficiency in the means of cognition' (*pratītyupāyavaikalya*) and 'lack of vividness' (*spṛṣṭatvābhāva*), which are removed together. Sticking to the primacy of direct perception over the other means of valid knowledge, Abhinavagupta maintains that even when we perceive something illusory, such as a fire-wheel, our perception can be invalidated only through a more forceful direct perception that is subsequent to it. The means to achieving such a clear apperception are indeed the four registers of acting, the *abhinayas*, combined with all those elements that

158 See VP 3.8.7–8: *yathā gaur itī saṃghātaḥ sarvo nendriyagocaraḥ | bhāgaśas tūpalabdhasya buddhau rūpaṃ nirūpyate || indriyair anyathāprāptau bhedāṃśopanipātibhiḥ | alātacakravād rūpaṃ kriyānām parikalpyate ||* 'Just as the entire group [of phonemes forming] the word "cow" cannot [simultaneously] be the object of the senses, its form however is determined in the intellect after it has been apprehended part by part. Likewise, the form of actions is imagined [as one in the intellect], just like a fire-wheel, even if it is grasped differently by the sensory faculties rushing towards the parts of differentiation.' The example given by Bhartṛhari in *kārikā* 9 for the non-unitary and processual nature of action is cooking, which includes parts such as the pouring of water and so on, which in turn have their own parts.

159 On the obstacles, see above, n. 128.

provide a somewhat realistic touch to the performance, namely the worldly convention (*lokadharmī*),¹⁶⁰ manners (*vr̥tti*),¹⁶¹ and local usages (*prav̥rtti*):¹⁶²

Moreover, in the absence of the means of cognition, how is the cognition possible? Even though a word or an inferential sign causing a non-vivid cognition might be present, the cognition does not come to rest [in them], because the expectancy persists for a proper understanding, i.e. a direct perception consisting of a vivid cognition. As [Vātsyāyana] said [in the *Bhāṣya* ad *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.3]: ‘All valid knowledge resolves into direct perception’. This is so because even in the case of [an illusion such as] a fire-wheel etc., that knowledge can be dismissed only by means of another forceful direct perception, since there is an intimate awareness that what we have directly perceived ourselves cannot be proved to be otherwise even by hundreds of verbal testimonies and inferences. This is indeed the ordinary sequence. Therefore, the consecrated way to remove both obstacles are the registers of acting, assisted by the worldly convention, the manners, and the local usages. For dramatic representation (*abhīnaya*), differently from operations requiring words or inferential signs, is akin to the operation of perception. We will establish this later on.¹⁶³

160 Two conventions (*dharmī*) are listed in the *nāṭyaśāstra* as topics of theatre, namely the *lokadharmī* or ‘worldly convention’, and the *nāṭyadharmī* or ‘theatrical convention’. The two are described by Bharata in Nś 13.70–82 as conventions, or manners of performance (*dharmī* or *dharma*, glossed by Abhinavagupta as *itikartavyatā*), used for representing things on stage. *Lokadharmī* is the way of enacting in a realistic fashion, following the way things are in the world, while *nāṭyadharmī* typically involves a greater degree of stylization and dramatization, and follows the ways that are proper to theatre. For the definition of *lokadharmī*, see Translation n. 79, and n. 82 for *nāṭyadharmī*. On *lokadharmī* and *nāṭyadharmī*, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 155–169 and Raghavan 1993: 201–241.

161 On the four manners, see §1.3.3, n. 64.

162 The four *prav̥rttis* are described in Nś ch. 13 as local usages or customs, which correspond to the four regions of India in the four cardinal directions. See Bansat-Boudon 1992: 178–180.

163 ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 275: *kiṃ ca pratīyupāyānām abhāve katham̐ pratītiḥ? asphuṭa-pratītikāriśabdalingasambhāve ’pi na pratītir viśrāmyati, sphuṭapratītirūpapratyakṣocīta-pratyayasākāṅkṣatvāt. yathāhuḥ ‘sarvā ceyam̐ pramītiḥ pratyakṣaparā’ iti, svasākṣātkr̥ta āgamānumānaśatair apy anyathābhāvasya svasam̐vedanāt, alātacakrādau sāksātkr̥tāntareṇaiva balavatā tatpramītyapasāraṇād* [corr. Pollock (2016: p. 387, n. 115) following KA, *taptam̐ ity apasāraṇād E₁₍₄₎*] *iti laukikas tāvad ayaṃ kramah̐. tasmāt tadubhayavighnavighāte ’bhīnayaḥ lokadharmīvr̥ttiprav̥rttyupaskr̥tāḥ samabhiśicyante. abhīnayanam̐ hi saśabdalingavyāpāravisadṛśam̐ eva pratyakṣavyāpārakalpam̐ iti niśceṣyāmah̐. In this same passage, Gnoli (1968: 68–70) translates the expression ‘iti laukikas tāvad ayaṃ kramah̐’ as ‘this is quite an ordinary process’. Pollock (2016: 197) does not translate this. I tend to agree,*

Although it might be quite evident that the representation should aim at creating a unitary and coherent image, one must not forget that this image has been given the status of an *alātacakra*. The spectator is indeed well aware that what he is witnessing is not real, but he accepts the ‘reality’ of the fiction. To be precise, it is the very judgement of his cognition of theatre according to the criterion of truthfulness and falsity that is suspended. More than an illusion, I would argue, the *alātacakra* of theatre has the status of a fiction, which has to be accepted wholeheartedly by the spectator lest the aesthetic process be on the whole invalidated. This ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ is guaranteed for the spectator by the special cognition of theatre in general as neither real nor unreal, a cognition whose status is incessantly repeated to be that of a quasi-evident direct perception (*pratyakṣasākṣātkāraikalpa*), and that of the performer in particular, whose identity is perceived as ambiguously oscillating between the actor and the character.

The personal identity of the performer—his being Caitra or Maitra, living in a particular time and space, in the classical example—is concealed by the costume and his skilful use of the registers of acting, combined with the superimposition of the name of a famous character like Rāma.¹⁶⁴ However, the performer is not perceived as the character superimposed on him as in illusionistic play, since his identity as ‘actor’ was disclosed to the spectator on the occasion of the preliminary rite, the *pūrvarāṅga*; the latent impression ‘this is an actor’ is still lingering in the spectator, and his cognition does not come to rest completely on the character evoked by the poetic text. In the preliminary rite, in

with Cuneo (2008–2009: 293), that a more apt translation would be: ‘This is indeed the ordinary sequence’. I believe in fact that what Abhinavagupta wants to stress here is that the sequence by which the perception of a fire-wheel comes to be invalidated by another, subsequent perception—for instance, that of the firebrand coming to a halt—is proper to the ordinary experience. In theatre, on the contrary, different dynamics between cognitions are at play.

164 This is explained in the first chapter as follows, with regard to the particular cognition of theatre as a determination or ‘recognitive cognition’ (*anuvyavasāya*). ABh ad NŚ 1.107, vol. 1, p. 37: *āhāryaviśeṣādīnā nivṛtte taddeśakālacaitramaitrādīnaṭaviśeṣapratyakṣābhīmāne, viśeṣaleśopakrameṇa ca vinā pratyakṣāpravṛtter āyāte, rāmādisābdasyātropayogāt prasiddhatadarthatayādarāṅgīyacaritavācasyāsaṃbhāvanāmātranirākaraṇenānuvyavasāyasya pratyakṣakalpatā* [conj. Gnoli, °*kalpanā*° Σ_M E₁₍₁₎, °*kalpanātye* E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎]. ‘When the presumption of perceiving a specific actor such as Caitra, Maitra, etc. in their specific time and place is removed by a particular costume and [other accoutrements], and [at the same time] is achieved because there can be no direct perception without the introduction of a minimum part of particularity, the determination [of the spectator] gets the status of a “quasi-perceptual cognition” by averting the mere non-verisimilitude, because the words expressing such worthy deeds have well-known referents thanks to the use of the names of Rāma and so forth in this [narration].’

fact, all the spectacular elements are on display and the performer enters as the *sūtradhāra*, accompanied by two assistants, who are perceived as actors since they are not properly *dramatis personae*, although they do play a part, as they enact the prologue (*prastāvana*) composed by the dramatist.¹⁶⁵ The whole is moreover immersed in the alluring complex of the charming elements, which allows the spectator to emotionally adhere to the fiction.¹⁶⁶

The construction of the fictionality of the character, as I have just sketched here, is explained by Abhinavagupta as tightly connected to the process of generalization (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*),¹⁶⁷ the absence of which coincides with the second obstacle to the aesthetic experience, the ‘immersion in temporal and spatial determinations perceived as limited to one’s own self or to somebody else’ (*svagatatvaparaगतatvaniyamena deśakālaviśeṣāveśaḥ*):

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- 165 In the prologue (*prastāvanā*) of the play, the stage manager or *sūtradhāra* usually engages in a metatheatrical dialogue with an assistant, the jester, or an actress about the play that is just about to start, providing information about the name of the play and the playwright, their qualities, etc. The *sūtradhāra*, besides announcing the play in the guise of an actor, does also enact a character in the story. The importance of the prologue for the construction of the ambiguous cognition of theatre is stressed in the same passage, ABh ad NŚ 1.107 (ibid.): *abhinayacatuṣṭayena svarūpapracchādanaṃ prastāvanādīnā naṭajñāna-jasaṃskārasācīvyam*. ‘As to the concealment of the identity [of the actor] through the fourfold enactment, it is assisted by the latent impressions born out of the knowledge “it is an actor” due to the prologue[, the preliminary rite, etc.]’
- 166 ABh ad NŚ 1.107 (ibid.): *hr̥ḍyagitādyanusyūtatayā camatkārassthānatvād dhṛḍyānupraveśayogyatvam*. ‘[The cognition of theatre] has the capacity of entering the heart, as it is the abode of rapture on account of its being intertwined with elements such as pleasant music and so forth.’
- 167 Famously, *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* is the ‘generalization’ (or ‘commonalization’, as Pollock translates Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s concept) of the emotional situation embedded in a work of art. Through generalization, the emotions are freed from their spatial and temporal connotations, as well as from the reference to a particular individual. In my understanding of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* in theatre, and how it is boosted by the charming elements, I follow Reich 2018, who speaks of a twofold process concerning both the object of the poetic description (the *vibhāvas* and other aesthetic factors) and the awareness of the spectators. *Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, which Reich equates with the transformative power that Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka calls *bhāvakatva*, ‘also applies to the spectators, changing the nature of their awareness. When it strips the objects of their particularity it also strips the spectators of the ordinary, habitual reactions they would have to such objects’ (ibid.: 537–538). Reich’s analysis of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*/*bhāvakatva*/*bhāvanā* in Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka stresses its Vedantic background as the creation of a special state of awareness that in literature is prompted by rhetorical figures and other literary devices (ibid.: 549). In Abhinavagupta’s analysis of the aesthetic experience triggered by drama, however, the accent is not on literary language, but on stage presentation, and the role of the literary devices is transferred to the charming, extraordinary elements (cf. also the elimination of the third obstacle in n. 129 above).

As far as its elimination is concerned, the expedient consists in the manner in which the individuality of the actor is concealed through the headgear and the [other accoutrements], after it has been apprehended through the disclosure of the preliminary rite¹⁶⁸ as [seen] in the verse ‘one should not insist too much on [dance and song ...]’¹⁶⁹ and through the viewing of the prologue. This is assisted by the theatrical convention (*nātyadharmī*), which encompasses extraordinary (*alaukika*) [elements such as the] distribution of conventional languages, the *lāsyaṅgas*, the subdivisions of the stage and of the playhouse, and so forth.¹⁷⁰ When this [obstacle is removed], in fact, there is no such [cognition] as: ‘it is the pleasure or pain of this specific [actor or character], in this specific place, at this specific time’, because the nature of the [performer] is concealed,

168 Here Pollock seems not to take into account the negative particle in *a-niguhana*, as he translates ‘and the occultation effected by the theatrical preliminaries’. On the contrary, in the preliminaries, just as in the prologue, the idea that ‘this is an actor’ is disclosed. See following note.

169 NS 5.158–159: *kāryo nātiprasaṅgo 'tra nṛttagitavidhiṃ prati | gūte vādye ca nr̥tte ca pravṛtte 'tiprasaṅgataḥ || khedo bhavet prayoktṛñāṃ prekṣakāñāṃ tathaiva ca | khinnānāṃ rasabhāveṣu spaṣṭatā nopajāyate ||* ‘In the [*pūrvaraṅga*], there should not be too much elaboration towards dance and songs. When vocal music, instrumental music and dance are protracted for too long, the performers will be tired and the spectators bored. If the [performers] are tired and [spectators] bored, a clear [cognition] of *rasas* and *bhāvas* cannot be obtained.’ The disclosure of the idea of the actor occurring in the *pūrvaraṅga* is explained by Abhinavagupta in connection with the second verse, in ABh ad NS 5.159, vol. 1, p. 244: *prekṣakāñāṃ ity anena sāmajikāñāṃ pūrvaraṅge sphuṭaiva naṭabuddhir bhavatīti darśayati. tatsaṃskārasaṃskṛtatvāt tattvadhīḥ* [E₁₍₁₎]^{pc}, *tantudhīḥ* E₁₍₁₎^{ac}, *tu* E₁₍₄₎] *bhrāntyādibuddhiś ca nātyadhīr bhavatīti sūcayati. yadi hi teṣu nātyabuddhir evotpādānīyā syāt prayuta prayatnena naṭabuddhisampādakam pūrvaraṅgaprastāvanādi tān prati gopanīyaṃ syāt. darśitaṃ caitad asmābhiḥ prathamādhyāye.* ‘By the word “spectators”, [Bharata] indicates that for the audience, the idea of the actor [and not that of the character] becomes clearly evident in the *pūrvaraṅga*. Later on, on account of having prepared their minds through the impregnations of the [cognition of the actor], the idea of reality (*tattva*) and the idea of illusion (*bhrānti*) etc. become the idea of theatre (*nātyadhī*). For if only the idea of theatre had to be produced for the [spectators], then the *prastāvanā*, the *pūrvaraṅga*, and the other parts that produce the idea of the actor should have been concealed from the [spectators]. This has been already explained in the first chapter.’ The reference is to ABh ad NS 1.107, quoted above in n. 165.

170 The extraordinary elements of the *nātyadharmī* referred to here belong to the performance of the play, so the *lāsyaṅgas* must be the ‘dramatic fragments’ or ‘amorous vignettes’ described in NS chapter 19, and not those of the *pūrvaraṅga*. My understanding is based on the distinction established in a penetrating analysis by Bansat-Boudon (see above, n. 113), against Gnoli’s (1968: 65) translation of *lāsyaṅga* as ‘women’s dance’ and Pollock’s (2016: 197) as ‘preliminary dance’.

and because [the cognition] does not come to rest on the nature proper to the other superimposed individuality, [i.e. the character,] either, as there can be no rest in a [fictional] appearance [that is recognized to be so]. The [cognition], in fact, culminates only in the concealment of the nature belonging to that real [spectator].¹⁷¹ To clarify: [types of dramatic *lāsya-ṅgas* such as] the *āsīnapāṭhya*, the *puṣpagandhika*, and the like are not seen in the ordinary world. Anyway, it cannot be said that they do not exist at all, because they could exist somehow.¹⁷² The sage has resorted to all this as a preparation, insofar as it facilitates the gustation of *rasa* through the accomplishment of the state of generality (*sādhāraṇībhāva*).¹⁷³

This passage shows quite well how opposite trends are at play in the construction of dramatic fiction, a process ultimately aimed at triggering the relish of *rasa* for the spectator, the real protagonist of the aesthetic experience: the

171 I understand *tadīya-* in *satyatadīyarūpanihnavamātra* as referring to the spectator himself, along with Cuneo (2008–2009: 292). Gnoli (1968: 66) takes it as referring to both ‘the real being of the actor and the real being of the character he is playing’, Pollock as the ‘real form of the actor’. I think that the concealment here concerns the individuality of the spectator, which corresponds to the action of the charming elements, explained just afterwards, in effecting the process of generalization of emotion for the spectator, so that the spatio-temporal limitations connected with himself are suppressed. The reference to the spatio-temporal limitations concerning another (the actor or the character) are, on the contrary, explained as being removed by the enactment, and by the preliminary rite and the prologue.

172 Gnoli contrasts this sort of existence with that of nonentities, since the former is ‘a datum of one’s own consciousness’ (Gnoli 1968: 66, n. 4). According to Gnoli, such a kind of existence applies, in Abhinavagupta’s statement, to the represented character; however, I think it refers to the extraordinary elements of the *nāṭyadharmī*, to which the *lāsyaṅgas* belong. These elements are often defined as otherworldly (*alaukika*), yet possible (*sambhavin*). As Bansat-Boudon (1992: 155) puts it in her treatment of *nāṭyadharmī*, ‘*l’alaukikatva* du théâtre n’est en aucune façon invraisemblable ou impossible: pour le retrouver dans la réalité, il n’est que de savoir regarder, et c’est à quoi, précisément, le théâtre forme son public’. See also *ibid.*: 337, n. 270.

173 ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, pp. 275–276: *tadapasāraṇe ‘kārya nātiprasaṅgo ‘tra’ ityādīnā pūrvarāṅgānigūhanena prastāvanāvalokanena ca yo naṭarūpatādīghamas tatpurassaraḥ pratīśīrṣakādīnā tatpracchādanaprakāro ‘bhyupāyaḥ alaukikabhāṣādībhedalāsyaṅgarāṅgapīṭhamaṇḍapagatakakṣyādīparigrahanāṭyadharmisahitaḥ. tasmīn hi sati ‘asyaivātraivaitarhyaiva ca sukhaṃ duḥkhaṃ vā’ iti na bhavati pratītiḥ, svarūpasya nihnavāt, rūpāntarasya cāropitasya pratībhāsavīśrāntivaikalyena svarūpe viśrāntyabhāvāt. satyatadīyarūpanihnavamātra eva paryavasānāt. tathā hi—āsīnapāṭhyapuṣpagandhikādī loke na dr̥ṣṭam. na ca tan na kiṃcit. kathamcit sambhāvyatvāt iti eṣa sarvo muninā sādharmaṇībhāvasiddhyā rasacarvaṇopayogitvena parikarabandhaḥ samāśrita*. Pollock (2016: 197) does not seem to translate the last example with the *lāsyaṅgas*.

first operates through a distancing from the events represented, reminding the spectator that what he is witnessing is, after all, a fiction, while the other hides the fiction and entangles him in those very events, accounting for his sympathetic response to them. This twofold tension alone can provoke the special cognition of theatre as neither real nor unreal, necessary for an aesthetic experience detached from the limitations of ordinary experience.¹⁷⁴ From the point of view of the performance, three stages can be tentatively identified in provoking this 'detached-cum-involved' cognition: initially, the spectator is allowed to see all the elements of theatricality that are used to construct the fiction, the firebrand and the hand holding it, so to say; then, the dramatic representation starts and the various scenes are displayed, i.e. the firebrand begins to revolve and the image of the fire-wheel is formed; finally, through the action of the charming elements, the spectator turns towards the illusory image and sympathetically adheres to the events represented. Obviously enough, this schematic picture is bound to involve a certain degree of imprecision and simplification. The charming elements, such as singing, music, and dance, for instance, are present throughout the play, for instance in the *lāsyaṅgas*; however, they are operative from the preliminary rite, where they prepare the spectator to attend to an extraordinary event by getting rid of their own personal everyday preoccupations. Besides being enchanted by the extraordinariness of the group of charming elements, to the extent that he does not even start wondering about the reality of the representation and becomes disentangled from his own state of mind, the spectator is at the same time reminded that what he is witnessing is nothing but a wondrous *alātacakra*. It does not matter, for the sake of the effect, that the image provided by the revolving firebrand is illusory; as long as the circle is perceived as unitary and the stick is unseen, the image has validity in the mind of the spectator who grasps it.

It seems to me that in all the occurrences examined so far, the *alātacakra* motive raises a concern about the construction of a unitary and ordered cognition of theatre from disparate and heterogeneous elements, rather than pointing to the fact that, if theatre is created in the image of a fire-wheel, it remains an object impossible to grasp. Even though a certain distance from the events

174 See also Cuneo (2013: 64–65) who talks about a 'sort of clash between cognitive stances'. Using the modern perspective of theatrical 'embodiment', Fischer-Lichte (2008: 148) talks about the phenomenon of 'perceptual multistability', in which the spectator's perception is made purposefully to oscillate between the 'phenomenal body' (read: the actor) and the 'semiotic body' (read: the character). 'Aesthetic perception', she says, 'takes the form of oscillation. It switches focus between the actor's phenomenal and semiotic body, thus transferring the perceiving subject into a state of betwixt and between' (ibid.: 88–89).

represented is indeed required of the spectator, this does not strike me as the specific function assigned to dance with regard to the *alātacakra* metaphor of theatre.¹⁷⁵

One last occurrence of the fire-wheel image in the ninth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, which treats the hand gestures, might provide further evidence for the interpretation of dance as a cohesive factor in the performance.¹⁷⁶ After describing the hand gestures that are commonly used for enacting different meanings (*abhinaya-hasta*), Bharata lists a separate group of hand gestures that he qualifies as gestures for dance (*ṛtta-hasta*). Since these hand gestures do not represent anything, their treatment in one of the chapters devoted to bodily acting is quite at odds with the rest of the exposition. One would have expected to find this group of gestures in the fourth chapter, entirely devoted to dance and its units of movement in their abstract, non-semiotic dimension. The commentator provides the following explanation for this unusual arrangement in Bharata's treatise:

By saying '*ṛttahastān* etc.' [Bharata] qualifies this [group of gestures] with the word 'dance' in order to show that the hand gestures for enacting (*abhinayahasta*) are similar to a fire-wheel because they are part of a single course [of action] (*ekavartanānupraveśa*)¹⁷⁷ since the gaps [occurring between them] are hidden [thanks to dance]. [...] [Moreover, the qualification 'dance' is used] in order to proclaim the fact that the [various cognitions issued from the enactments] come to rest in a single sentence meaning (*ekavākyaārtha*), since it is in [their] nature to [follow] a course [that is sometimes] mild, [sometimes] vehement.¹⁷⁸

175 With this I would like to take distance from Bansat-Boudon's interpretation of the passage expounding the role of dance in theatre. As I mentioned in n. 144 above, Bansat-Boudon interprets dance as a sort of intermezzo that provides the spectator with some pause in the performance, by means of which he is able to plunge into the meaning and taste the *rasa*: 'Aussi convient-il [...] d'interrompre de temps à autre le lent tournoiement de ce cercle de feu que doit être la représentation afin que soit évité le vertige qu'il susciterait inmanquablement et qui serait tout le contraire d'un enchantement. [...] La danse, explique l'*Abhinavabhāratī*, a pour vocation de ménager ces pauses nécessaires, [...]' (Bansat-Boudon 1992: 63).

176 Bansat-Boudon also recognizes this role for dance, though with regard to other passages: 'par la vertu de la grâce et de la tendresse qu'elle déploie inlassablement, la danse assure la cohésion de la représentation (notamment, lorsqu'il s'agit de passer d'un *rasa* à un autre, ou d'un registre de jeu à un autre)' (Bansat-Boudon 1992.: 402).

177 For an analogous use of the compound *vartanānupraveśa*, see ABh ad Nś 4.61cd–62ab in § 2.3, n. 45, and the explanation thereof.

178 ABh ad Nś 9.11–17, vol. 2, p. 27: *eteṣāṃ tv abhinayahastānām chidracchādanenaikavartanā-*

In my understanding of this passage, dance provides the necessary link between the various enactments, which are chained one after the other so as to encompass the whole performance. However, one should not necessarily imagine that each scene was linked to the following by means of a danced intermezzo. Even though it is possible that moments of dance were indeed added to the performance, either by embedding them in the plot as cases of ekphrasis or, at the discretion of theatre practitioners, as part of the gorgeous manner or as an element of the theatrical convention (in a *lāsyaṅga*, for instance), I would refrain from overemphasizing the presence of dance in classical Sanskrit theatre. It seems to me that Abhinavagupta's analysis is subtler and is meant to operate within the smallest units of the enactment. If this is correct, the general definition given by Abhinavagupta to the basic units of dance, the *ṅṛttakaraṇas*,

*nupraveśād alātacakrapratimatāṃ darśayitum, masṛṇoddhatavartanātmakatayā caikavā-
kyārthaviśrāntatām prathayitum, [...] ṅṛttaśabdena viśeṣyaṃ nirdīśati ṅṛttahastān ityādi-
nā.* The compound *masṛṇoddhatavartanātmakatayā* is not straightforward, but one could connect it with the twofold character of the text to which the acting and dance are applied, which in turn determines the character of the movement as mild or vehement, since *masṛ-
ṇa* and *uddhata* are the two terms consecrated to describing bodily movement when it combines with a poetic text, on which see § 2.3.2 and Translation 8.4.1–2. The other editions give a slightly different, more elaborate text, which I suspect has been supplied by Madhusudan Sastri and then followed by Dvivedi and Nagar: *eteṣāṃ tv abhinayahastānām
alātacakrapratimatāṃ darśayitum, mārgāṇāṃ masṛṇoddhatachidravartanātmakatayā
masṛṇatādinivṛttaye vālukotkṣepaṇena uddhatotsāraṇena chidracchādanena caikavarta-
nānupraveśavad ekābhineyārthe viśrāntatām prathayitum, [...]* (E₂, vol. 2, pp. 871–872; E₃, vol. 2, p. 387; E₄, vol. 2, p. 20). It could be translated as follows: 'In order to show that these hand gestures for enacting are similar to a fire-wheel, and in order to proclaim the fact that the [various cognitions issuing from the enactments] come to rest in a single sentence meaning, just as when one enters a single path and, since it is in the nature of roads to have muddy patches and bumps and holes, throws sand [over the mud], removes the bumps, and fills the holes in order to remove such [obstacles] as softness etc. [...]. In both cases, dance is seen to supply the unity or homogeneity required for the spectator's cognition to rest on its object, be it a single scene or the whole play. The same idea is repeated and developed in Kallinātha's *Kalānidhi*, which quotes the same passage of the *Abhinavabhāratī*. *Kalānidhi* ad SR 7.90, vol. 4, p. 27: *kiṃ cābhi-
nayaḥprastāve ṅṛttam apy upakarotīti. āveṣṭitādibhiḥ abhinayaśya* [conj., *abhinayaśyā* Ed.] *vicchinnākāratām apohya vākyārthaviśrāntipratīṭijananāt. yathāha abhinavaguptācāryo
bhāratīyavivṛtau.* 'Moreover, it is said that when the enactment is produced, dance also assists since, by means of the *āveṣṭita* and other [rotatory movements of the hands, the four *karaṇas* belonging to dance,] it prevents the acting from appearing as interrupted and thus engenders a cognition that comes to rest in sentence meaning, as Abhinavagupta stated in his commentary on Bharata's text.' The *āveṣṭita* is part of a group of four *karaṇas* executed by the hands through a rotating motion of the fingers and wrists. They are defined in NŚ 9.213–219, and are often mentioned by Abhinavagupta to exemplify the connecting movements in some of the *karaṇa* sequences.

could be extended to include any beautiful movement leading from an initial position in space to a final one,¹⁷⁹ hence even to movements occurring between one enactment and the other, or between one expressive gesture and the one immediately following it, if we consider that by enactment, even the single representation of an object through a gesture can be intended, and that there were cases in which the text was enacted word by word.¹⁸⁰

Such interpretation relies on an extended meaning of 'dance' as including any abstract movement performed in an uninterrupted manner, which at the same time accounts for its irruption into the realms of dramatic enactment, where it aims at providing continuity by hiding the unavoidable gaps. To adduce an additional piece of evidence, I would like to recall another key passage in the fourth chapter, where Abhinavagupta comments on the uses of *karāṇas* in a play, enumerated in NŚ 4.55cd–56ab, in the following way:

That which will be called 'dance' (*nr̥tta*) as an element of dramatic acting (*abhinaye*) is employed [in theatre] because it hides the gaps (*chidrapracchādāna*) occurring in between the various enactments (*abhinayāntarāla*).¹⁸¹

No doubt, the implicit reference is the oft-quoted verse in NŚ 8.14, of difficult interpretation, in which Bharata lists dance, along with the *sākhā* and the *aṅkura*, as elements of [bodily] acting.¹⁸² In this light, it becomes evident that Abhinavagupta is attempting to establish the autonomy of dance outside of its canonical performance as part of the *karāṇas* and *aṅgahāras* in the preliminary rite, and to account for its autonomous function within the theatrical performance, keeping it apart from bodily acting yet deeply intertwined with it. Once more, the modern concept of semiotic and phenomenal body elaborated by Fischer-Lichte comes to our aid in understanding how the same body movement can be analysed as carrying out two distinct functions in performance, without necessarily postulating phases of abstract dance that alternate with phases of mimetic acting. The sentence, and the *rasa* it encapsulates, is

179 See § 2.2, n. 40.

180 See above, n. 58.

181 ABh ad NŚ 4.55cd–56ab, vol. 1, p. 94: *abhinaye vastutvena yan nr̥ttaṃ vakṣyate 'bhinayāntarālavarticchidrapracchādānād etat prayujyate*. For the whole passage, see § 2.2, n. 61.

182 For the text and translation of NŚ 8.14, see above, n. 17, and for other quotations of this verse, see § 2.2, n. 45, § 3.2, n. 53, § 3.4.1, n. 135, and Translation n. 71. On *sākhā* and *aṅkura* as stages in the protocol of the corporal harmonious acting, see above n. 53, and below n. 186.

indeed the meaningful unit that the body movement is called on to express. The semiotic body communicates the meanings by way of mimesis, while the phenomenal, non-semiotic body helps the spectator grasp the enacted meanings as a continuum, culminating in the sentence unit: on the one hand, it hides the gaps occurring in the intervals between the enactments, revealing the image of the fire-circle; on the other hand, it allows the mind of the spectator to rest on the sentence meaning.

Besides the image of theatre as an *alātacakra*, a homogeneous and wondrous whole, in which dance assures cohesion and dynamism, the relation of dance to theatre shall now be considered in the light of the second metaphor as well, that of the bracelet. Together with the fire-wheel, the bracelet and the garland work as similar metaphors for theatre as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Yet the metaphor of the bracelet works even better in highlighting how dance operates in close association with dramatic acting and the other components of theatre, to the point of raising a possible confusion about their respective identities and roles. As pointed out by Bansat-Boudon (1992: 62), as metaphors for performance, the garland and the bracelet highlight the multifariousness of the flowers or gems joined in the thread. While the theatrical performance, in our passage, is compared to the whole bracelet, and the enactments to its clear gems, dance is the thread that keeps them together and remains visible throughout. This, in my view, makes a stronger argument for the specific role of dance within theatre.¹⁸³ While it strings together the various enactments, dance also provides the necessary link between theatre and music: dance is homogeneous with theatre, since both use the body as a main instrument, albeit in different ways, while with music it shares an alluring character and the connection with rhythmic patterns, while remaining non-homogeneous with it.¹⁸⁴

Although drawing on a reconstructed net of cross references, sometimes fragmentary, this exploration of the role of dance in the construction of dramatic fiction has highlighted Abhinavagupta's attempt at finding a rationale in Bharata's own words, while skilfully furthering his own personal interpretation of the aesthetic experience as triggered by the multimedial object that is theatre. The loss of the commentary on the eighth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the first one dealing with bodily acting, represents a serious but unavoidable

183 In a similar vein, although in a different context, a passage at the beginning of the section on music assigns to rhythm, or to the rhythmic part of theatre (*tālāmśa*), the function of a thread that joins together or coordinates the performance and its various elements. Cf. ABh ad nś 28.1, vol. 4, p. 1: *tālāmśo 'pi prayogaṃ sūtrakalpatayā samikurvan*.

184 The terms used are *samajātīya* (passage under discussion, cf. Edition 6.9.5), and *dvitīyajātīya* (*nṛttasya gītadvitīyajātīyavāt*, cf. Edition 2.4.6).

limit to the present enquiry. However, it has been shown how an exploration of the chapter on dance and its network of textual references allows us to partly reconstruct the context of the discussion on the nature and function of dance, namely its problematic relation with dramatic acting. Besides the problematic use of dance within theatre, the use of theatre—or at least some of its characteristic features—within dance will be considered next.

3.5 Reshaping the Idea of *abhinaya* in Dance

The characteristic feature of *abhinaya* is that, unlike dancing or singing a melody, it always depends on a text, which it seeks to communicate in a particularly vivid way, engaging the mind of the spectator as if he or she is witnessing real-life events. Even when it appears disconnected from a text, it may simply be the case that the bodily acting is not being performed at the very same time as the vocal acting; however, both ultimately rely on the dramatic text and its linguistic matrix. An illustration of such diachronicity between words and gestures is offered in those phases of the acting protocol, defined in the chapter on harmonious acting (*sāmānyābhinaya*), in which gestures and facial expressions are used by actors to communicate meaning even without speaking. In these phases, the dependence of gestures on the dramatic text can be called into question, as Abhinavagupta suggests at the junction between the explanation of the corporal harmonious acting (*śārīra-sāmānyābhinaya*) and verbal harmonious acting (*vācika-sāmānyābhinaya*):¹⁸⁵

Even if a sentence (i.e. a text) may be [pronounced], the body [can move] even on its own, without any [verbal] object [to be enacted]. That is why some people considered the *śākhā*, the *aṅkura*, and the *nātyāyita* as [bodily acting] disjoined from verbal sentences. Thus they restrict [Bharata's statement]—when he says that [he will explain the verbal object] of all these [forms of corporal acting]—to the *vākya*, the *sūcā*, and the *nivṛtṭyaṅkura* alone. [However,] they do not know the real state of things, since each and every enactment (*abhinaya*) depends on a sentence, otherwise impropriety would ensue. Apart from this, in fact, there is no other restriction [in the use of *abhinaya*]. It is possible to disjoin the sentence

185 Cf. Bansat-Boudon 1992: 12 ‘That homogeneous acting is presented by Bharata as threefold: thus, there are an «emotional» (*sāttvika*), a «verbal» (*vācika*), and, lastly, a «corporal» (*śārīra*) *sāmānyābhinaya*.’

[from its bodily enactment] only insofar as it may be simultaneous or non-simultaneous with it.¹⁸⁶

The connection of the *śākhā* with a sentence is the most difficult to explain, since all definitions available are elliptical, and its explanation as an acting technique was probably to be found in the lacuna in chapter 8.¹⁸⁷ What emerges from the sparse references to it is that the *śākhā* must have been a coordinated bodily movement on the verge of dance.¹⁸⁸ The *aṅkura* is explicitly said, in Bharata's definition, to be performed without words,¹⁸⁹ while the *nivṛtṭyaṅkura* looks more like the *sūcā* in that it displays the symptoms of the emotions affecting the character when hearing the words of another, but is also followed by a sentence pronounced by the same character. In this sense it is categorized, together with the *vākya* and the *sūcā*, with the phases of the bodily acting protocol more evidently connected with the verbal enactment.¹⁹⁰ The phase called *nāṭyāyita* represents an especially interesting case in the discussion of the nature of dance in the fourth chapter. In the *nāṭyāyita* of the second type, a *dhrūvā* song is delivered by the vocalist, to which the actor adds bodily acting through gestures and facial expressions.¹⁹¹ Indeed, this may look quite similar

186 ABh ad Nś 22.51, vol. 3, pp. 174–175: *vākyabhāve yady apy ātmāpi śarīro nirviśaya eva tena yad eke śākhāṅkuranāṭyāyitānām ca vākyavirahitvaṃ manyamānā eteṣām iti sarveṣām ityādi vākyasūcānivrṭṭyaṅkuramātraviśayatvenaiva saṃkocayanti, te na tattvajñāh, sarvo 'py abhinayo vākyopajīvanam antareṇa nīyamahetvabhāvād asamañjasatām abhyeti. kevalaṃ tatkālikātkālikādimātreṇa vākyam bhidyatām nāma.*

187 See n. 42 above.

188 As Bansat-Boudon expresses it: 'Ainsi la *śākhā*, succédant à l'*aṅkura* qui déjà avait evincé la parole au profit du corps, mais dont la vocation était de déployer le sens, représente-t-elle le point ultime de la gestualité aux frontières de la danse avec laquelle elle entretient des relations privilégiées' (1992: 350). The common traits of dance and the *śākhā* would be the use of the *vartanā*, movements typical of the dance lexicon (cf. § 2.2, n. 46), and their belonging to the *kaiśikī vr̥tti*.

189 Cf. the expression *nirvacana-* in the definition of the *aṅkura* (Nś 21.46: *hṛdayastho nirvacanair aṅgābhīnayaḥ kṛto nīpuṇasādhyah | sūcāvautpattikṛto vijñeyas tv aṅkurābhīnayaḥ ||*), glossed by Abhinavagupta as *vacanaśūnya*. For a translation of the whole passage, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 375–375.

190 An example of *nivṛtṭyaṅkura* in the *Ratnāvalī*, quoted by Abhinavagupta and translated in Bansat-Boudon 1992: 386, is quite telling in this regard. Bansat-Boudon (ibid.: 353) considers the *nivṛtṭyaṅkura* more akin to the *aṅkura*, because both make use of the *sa-ttva*, the facial expression, and body, to represent feelings rather than objects. This is undoubtedly the case; however, the discourse pronounced by the second character in the *nivṛtṭyaṅkura*—the one who, unseen, hears the words uttered by the first one—seems to be definitional of this phase of the acting protocol.

191 On the two types of *nāṭyāyita* in the *sāmānyābhīnaya*, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 377–384, 1995, and n. 53 above.

to a dance, since the orchestra takes up both the instrumental and the vocal parts, while the actor makes just a visual display based on the text of the song. In this case, the actor does not enact the lyrics of the song word for word, but mainly uses the *sāttvikābhinaya* for the expression of his own feelings in reaction to the text of the *dhruvā* he hears.¹⁹²

The practice of joining a bodily enactment with a text that is not delivered directly by a character and is accompanied by music triggers legitimate doubts about where to set the border between theatre and dance, at a time when new types of intermedial performance¹⁹³ were gaining visibility in the disciplinary discourse embedded in the *śāstra*.¹⁹⁴ Although the *nāṭyāyita* described above is typically regarded as a device in theatrical performances, where it is used, for instance, in combination with the *lāsyāṅgas* to communicate meaning in a more poignant and emphatic way, what exactly prevents us from considering it a kind of dance? And what prevents us from applying the definition of the *nāṭyāyita* to other kinds of solo performances, in which the performer does not speak but nevertheless executes bodily gestures at the same time that a text is rendered by a vocalist, to the accompaniment of instrumental music executed by an orchestras? And what happens when such a performance becomes the main focus, i.e. when a solo performance is executed by an actor/dancer independently of a dramatic performance? And what if the music in it, carrying its own narrative plot, becomes the main medium in the delivery of the poetic text? How can we distinguish such performances from, say, a one-actor monologue play like the *Bhāṇa*, classically listed as a dramatic genre? Does the only difference lie in the fact that the text is sung by a vocalist in the first case, while it is recited by an actor in the second?

All of these figures have been carefully analysed in the long passage edited in this book, where Abhinavagupta seeks to distinguish the new performance genres, such as danced or sung poetry (*nṛtta-kāvya* and *rāga-kāvya*), from theatre proper (*nāṭya*) while taking into account the specific interaction of the bodily and the verbal media in both. As hinted above, this was achieved through the reinterpretation of the term *abhinaya* in the particular sense of

192 For a definition of the *dhruvā* defined as a *nāṭyāyita*, see Translation, 1.5.1, n. 26, and for a discussion of its enactment, see Translation, 6.5.3–4, n. 182 and n. 185.

193 I borrow the notion of intermediality from the theory of narratology, where forms of dance and theatre are nowadays analysed in terms of intermedial performances, i.e. performances that combine several media—here dance, prosody, music—that interact with verbal narratives. For an approach to the study of ancient Greek drama using narratological insights, see Gianvittorio-Ungar 2020.

194 On the new genres and on the verge between dance and theatre and their classifications in the technical texts, see Chapter 2, especially, § 2.1.

‘dramatic mimesis’, which allowed for singling out Sanskrit drama from other genres that are characterized by what I have designated elsewhere as forms of ‘incomplete mimesis’.¹⁹⁵

In the last part of this chapter, dealing with the aesthetics of dance, I would like to illustrate such an exegetical strategy by focusing on Abhinavagupta’s analysis of the genre called *Ḍombikā*, cited as a case of *nṛttakāvya* (‘danced poetry’ or ‘poetry based on dance’), a term implying the presence of a poetic text in which dance is nevertheless the overarching category. The *Ḍombikā* represents a particularly exemplary case of what I regard as an instance of meta-dance or ‘dance-within-dance’, where the representation of a second-degree dancer by a dance performer reveals an original theoretical reflection about narrativity and its media, unique in the whole of Indian literature. It moreover allows some insights into the practice, protocol, and audience reception of a genre which, albeit lost both in its textual and performative dimensions, appears to have enjoyed considerable popularity around the turn of the millennium in Kashmir. As I shall demonstrate, the *Ḍombikā* as a performance genre described by Abhinavagupta must have been a sort of parody of another worldly—in the sense of non-fictional—dance performed by a *ḍombikā*, a low-caste dancer. The dance of the *ḍombikā* becomes the second-degree dance, the object represented in the genre that goes by the same name, *Ḍombikā*.¹⁹⁶ An instance of what I consider the worldly counterpart of the *Ḍombikā*—the latter standing for a genre recorded in the dramatic treatises—has been described in Kalhaṇa’s twelfth-century *Rājatarāṅginī*. We shall have a look at it shortly, after a review of scholarly opinions about the *Ḍombikā*.

In his masterful study of the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*—an early eleventh-century treatise on poetry and drama contemporaneous with but unknown to Abhinavagupta—V. Raghavan (1978) remarks the absence of a definition of the *Ḍombikā* among the twelve minor genres, or *padārthābhīnayaṭmaka-prekṣyaprabandha* (‘compositions to be seen, based on the enactment of the word meanings’), listed by Bhoja. He instead notes the mention of a genre called *Ḍombalikā* and the definition of another genre by the name *Durmilitā*, also appearing with the spelling *Durmilikā*. A reference to *Ḍombalikā* is also made in the tenth chapter of the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*, along with *Prasthāna*, where both are identified as performance genres (*prekṣya*) realized through bodily enactment and devoid of other means of representation, such as the vocal. On the

195 See Ganser 2020.

196 To avoid possible confusion I visually distinguish, here and in the translation, *Ḍombikā* as a performance genre and *ḍombikā* as the performer/danseuse.

Durmilitā/Durmilikā, Raghavan (1978: 549, n. 1) quotes the opinion of Bhayani, according to whom the name of the genre would be a Sanskritization of Ḍombalikā—appearing also as *ḍombilī/ḍombilikā* in narrative sources in Prakrit—and both would correspond to the Ḍombikā referred to several times in the *Abhinavabhārati* (Bhayani 1993: 27–28). As we have seen, this form was already known to Dhanika, who mentions it by the name Ḍombī in his list of the *nṛtya* types in the *Avaloka*. Abhinavagupta is the first to provide a definition for the Ḍombikā, which he borrows from some earlier, unidentified source attributed to some equally unidentified ‘ancients’.¹⁹⁷ A later treatise, Śāradātanaya’s *Bhāvaprakāśana* (first half of the 13th c.), lists the Ḍombī and the Durmallikā (a variant of Durmilitā/Durmilikā) as separate genres complete with their own definitions.¹⁹⁸ As noted by Bhayani, the definition of the Durmilitā given by Bhoja looks very similar to the definition and the descriptions of the Ḍombikā in the *Abhinavabhārati*, such that both can be traced to a single genre, common to earlier Jain sources.¹⁹⁹

The definition of the Ḍombikā by Abhinavagupta reads:

When the mind of the king is seduced by words full of concealed passion,
that graceful [genre] is known as Ḍombikā.²⁰⁰

And that of the Durmilitā by Bhoja:

The female messenger secretly betrays a clandestine affair or presents a description, through vulgar stories, of the passion between two young people. She, who belongs to a lower caste, dispenses counselling on that matter and begs for goods, and as soon as she has received [them] she longs to receive [more]. [When such is the content of the performance, the genre] is called Durmilitā.²⁰¹

197 On the ‘ancients’, see § 1.4.1, n. 123, Translation, n. 30.

198 According to Cox (2016: 57–90), the *Bhāvaprakāśana* is indebted to the *Daśarūpaka* and *Avaloka*, the *Śṛiṅgāraprakāśa*, and the *Abhinavabhārati*.

199 Leclère (2013: 69–70) traces the genre to the lists contained in Jain narratives as early as the eighth century, spelled variously as *ḍombilaya*, *ḍombillīya*, *ḍombilaga*, and *ḍumbaḍaa*.

200 ABh ad N§ 4.268cd–269ab, vol. 1, p. 179, see Edition and Translation 8.5.2.

201 ŚP 11, p. 466: *cauryapratibhedam yunor anurāgavarṇanam vāpi || yatra grāmyakathābhiḥ kurute kila dūtikā rahasi | mantrayati ca tadviśayaṃ nyagjātivena yācate ca vasu || labdhvāpi labdhum icchati durmilitā nāma sā bhavati |*

Apart from such inevitably concise definitions of the genre, the only textual passage containing some more details about the Ḍombikā is the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī*. Here, Abhinavagupta provides information about the Ḍombikā on several occasions, especially, but not exclusively, in the passage edited in this book. He even quotes two Ḍombikās by name, the *Cūḍāmaṇi* ('The Crest Jewel') and the *Guṇamālā* ('The Garland of Qualities'), and possibly the name of two Ḍombikā composers, the poets and masters Rāṇaka/Raṇaka and Guṇjīyaka.²⁰² In his article on the Ḍombikā and Ṣidgaka genres, Bhayani identifies four quotations from the scripts of Ḍombikās in the *Abhinavabhāratī*: three are from the Ḍombikā called *Cūḍāmaṇi*, and one from the *Guṇamālā*. Despite the ill-preserved state of these quotations, Bhayani's reconstructions—based on the less corrupt text of the *Kāvyānuśāsana* (in particular, on Hemacandra's sub-commentary, the *Viveka*)—highlight their linguistic and metrical form. The language is Apabhraṁśa, or Prakrit in the sole case of the third quotation from the *Cūḍāmaṇi*, and the metre is *rāsaka* for the portions in Apabhraṁśa and *gāthā* for the one in Prakrit.²⁰³ From the descriptions of Abhinavagupta, it is clear that these verses were set to music and delivered through song. Another quotation in Sanskrit—unrecorded by Bhayani and Raghavan but most probably also part of the *Guṇamālā*—suggests that the Ḍombikā was a multilingual genre that followed its own conventions.²⁰⁴

In the Ḍombikā, Raghavan saw an antecedent of the Nautch, since he believed that its songs were rendered vocally by the accompanying vocalists while a dancer or *ḍombī* interpreted them through her dance. However, the

202 See ABh ad Nś 4.280, vol. 1, p. 186: *ata evaitatsthānopajīvbhīr eva śrīrāṇakādīkavibhīr ḍombikādau caturapasārakah prayogaḥ* and ABh ad Nś 4.318cd–319ab, vol. 1, p. 203: *raṇaka-guṇjīyakādeś caturapasārakādividhā ca ḍombikādiṣu krameṇa nartakīvrddhīr ācāryair ādheyā*. The indication that Śrīrāṇaka/Raṇaka is a *kavi* points to his being a composer of the text of a Ḍombikā. The title *ācārya* in the second quotation might indicate that such figures were both text composers and theatre or dance masters, which is also suggested by the content of both quotations, namely the increase in the number of dancers in a Ḍombikā to four, and their entering and exiting the stage in succession, just as in the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga*.

203 According to Warder (1972: 157), who adduces a reference from the *Abhinavabhāratī*, the text of the Ḍombikā was, like that of the Prasthāna, composed in Saindhava, a type of Apabhraṁśa originally from Sindhu. Bhayani states that the other *uparūpakas* also used Apabhraṁśa and *rāsaka* metre, namely the Rāsaka and Nātyarāsaka (also known as *carcarī*), since some literary works of the same name exhibit these very characteristics. He concludes: 'This evidence for the use of Apabhraṁśa for some of the Uparūpakas significantly extends the hitherto known range of Apabhraṁśa literature' (Bhayani 1993: 26).

204 A passage with both Apabhraṁśa and Sanskrit words is quoted in connection with the *Guṇamālā* in ABh ad Nś 4.263cd, vol. 1, p. 173, on which see Translation 6.4.4, n. 150 and 152.

dancer in the Ḍombikā did not render the words and meaning closely through *abhinaya*, but concentrated mainly on bodily movements and expressions similar to everyday ones, whereas in the Nautch the *padams* (lyrical compositions) are generally rendered word for word. Raghavan attributes this difference to the popular character and origin of the genre called Ḍombikā. He derives this idea from the description, in Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅginī*, of a musical and dance performance by an ensemble composed of a *ḍomba* singer (*ḍombagāyana*) and his two daughters, also *ḍomba* singers (*ḍombagāyikā*), collectively referred to as a *ḍomba* ensemble (*ḍombamaṇḍala*). Raghavan further mentions the existence of a peripatetic community of performers in South India called *ḍombas*, whose performances, the *ḍombakūṭṭādis*, featured acrobatic numbers, drumming and rope-dancing (Raghavan 1993: 190–191). *Rājatarāṅginī* 5.354–380 recounts the visit of a troupe of *ḍombas* to the court of Kashmir in the tenth century, and how the ruling king Cakravarman, flattered and seduced by the singing and dancing of the two daughters of Raṅga, the *ḍomba* singer, introduced them into his court. Blinded by passion, Cakravarman let the *ḍombas* take control over the affairs of his kingdom, while he fell into misery and was eventually murdered.²⁰⁵

Such commonalities led Raghavan and Warder to consider the Ḍombikā described by Abhinavagupta on a par with the performance by the *ḍombamaṇḍala* described in the *Rājatarāṅginī*. The differences between the two, however, were not properly taken into account, so the nature of the Ḍombikā as a genre has generally been misconstrued. Looking at the occurrences of forms similar to '*ḍombī*' in the Prakrit sources, Bhayani concludes that the *ḍombī* or *ḍomba* girl must have been the central figure of this genre, giving its name to it (Bhayani 1993: 28). According to Bose (2007: 123), the Ḍombikā is 'a minor dramatic form which shows how a woman performs the actions of flattering a king'. Although these statements seem to suggest that the *ḍombī*, or a comparable figure carrying out the seduction of the king, was the main character of the Ḍombikā, the failure to make a distinction between the *ḍombī*/*ḍombikā* as a performer or as a character has led scholars to identify these two figures. Because of this confusion, scholars have tended to consider the genre called Ḍombikā as a lower one, since it was thought to be performed by a *ḍombī*, a low-caste dancer, in order to flatter a king and obtain material gain, just as the two singers in the episode recorded in the *Rājatarāṅginī*.²⁰⁶

205 See also Warder 1972: 156–157. For reference to *ḍombas* in Dharmasāstra literature, see Kane 1930: 82.

206 Raghavan (1993: 190) compares the theme of the Ḍombikā, i.e. love affairs, in particular clandestine ones, with the theme of the 'lower specimens of *padas* in *bharata nāṭya*'. Obvi-

In my opinion, the *ḍombī* as a danseuse of a lower form of spectacle, especially aimed at entertaining the king in a courtly context, is just a 'fictional character' of the *Ḍombikā* as a genre of danced poetry described in the dramatic sources. If this interpretation is correct, the genre called *Ḍombikā* should have been analysed at great length by Abhinavagupta as an instance of narrative dance, to be carefully distinguished from theatre, not only because it displays a complex structure, in which parts of abstract dance alternate with songs and *abhinaya*, but because the status of the performer (the interpreter) and that of the character (the interpreted) are particularly difficult to grasp in this genre. Let us have a closer look at the protocol of performance in a *Ḍombikā* as described in the *Abhinavabhāratī*. I will attempt to separate the different phases by numbering them, in what I regard as a possible reconstruction of this lost genre. I will then contrast these data with the descriptions of this performance in the *Rājataranṅinī*. Finally, I will address the theoretical problems raised by this genre in Abhinavagupta's reformulation of *abhinaya* as a specific mode of dramatic mimesis that cannot be extended to the art of dancing.

The protocol of performance in a *Ḍombikā* can tentatively be reconstructed as follows:²⁰⁷ 1. *gīta*: invocatory song rendered by the vocalists, entrance of the dancer; 2. *pratijñā*: announcement of the *Ḍombikā* and its theme; 3. *varṇana-gīta*: storytelling by the *ḍombikā* with different embedded characters, in the form of a sung text; 4. *samuddeśa*: address to the king or patron; 5. *anyat ceṣṭitam*: telling of another story; 6. *upasaṃhāra*: conclusion by the *ḍombikā*; 7. *sābhinayanṛtta*; 8. *śuddhanṛtta*.

Although there may have been some variability, and some of the descriptions might well reflect just one particular instance among the existing *Ḍombikās*, it emerges from the sparse references in the fourth chapter that the main portion of the *Ḍombikā* was narrative and to some degree fictional, and that this was framed by an initial invocation and some further dancing performed by the dancer without interpreting any character, to the accompaniment of the orchestra. The main part featured the character of the *ḍombikā* proper, a dancer

ously enough, this judgement rests on the bias against Indian dance as a degraded and vulgar practice at the beginning of the twentieth century (cf. my remarks in §1.2).

²⁰⁷ All the passages dealing with the *Ḍombikā* are extremely corrupt and difficult to restore to some degree, since the only manuscripts that preserve those passages are D, M₁, and T₁, which provide the same readings most of the time. Unfortunately, T₄ skips all the relevant passages. In this respect, the ΚΑΥ has proved an invaluable tool for instituting some better readings or confirming some conjectural emendations. The secondary literature on the subject does not help either. On the descriptions of the *Ḍombikā* in the technical literature, see Raghavan 1978 and Bose 2001.

who seduces the king to obtain material benefits. This part corresponds to the main content of the *Ḍombikā* as a genre endowed with a poetic script (a *kāvya*), and is itself divided into several phases alternating singing and dancing, also including narrative portions aimed at displaying embedded characters within a plot of clandestine love (phases 3–6). The second part of the performance consisted in dance without any depiction of secondary characters, in which songs and instrumental music were performed together with dance, alternating phases of pure movement and phases including some kind of *abhinaya*. In this part, multiple dancers possibly performed together (phases 7–8).

The performance by the *Ḍomba* party described in the *Rājatarāṅginī* shows some similarities: it is mainly presented as a musical performance, with a main vocalist, and two female singers. The female performers sing and accompany their singing with coquettish bodily gestures, by means of which they seduce the king. As they notice his feelings, they sing tenderly with smiles, exchanging glances with him. At the end, the king gives jewels to the *ḍomba* party and retires. The *ḍomba* singer designates the king with some epithets and allusions and by name during a violent *tāṇḍava*. The narrative of the seduction of the king by the performer through singing, facial expressions, and bodily gestures is thus analogous in both descriptions, and similar to the singing by the women who play the role of seducers, alternating with that of a male vocalist. The manner of addressing the king with flattering words is also a common feature. In the account of the *Rājatarāṅginī*, however, no mention is made of either a narrative text underlying the singing or an enactment of the meanings of the song, whereas by contrast the *Ḍombikā* is presented as a *nṛttakāvya*, a name that emphasizes dance as the main performative medium, joined with a poetic text delivered by the dancer or by the vocalist with musical accompaniment. My suggestion is that the *Ḍombikā* as a danced genre is profoundly different from the performance described in the *Rājatarāṅginī*, and represents a sort of parody of it.

Abhinavagupta takes in fact great pains to draw a distinction between the worldly dancer, who has arrived in order to dance and engage in performing the genre called *Ḍombikā*, and the *ḍombikā* as a ‘fictional character’ in that first-degree performance. The second-degree or embedded performance, of which the *ḍombikā* character is the second-degree performer, aims at charming the king with stories about furtive love. The vocabulary used by Abhinavagupta to describe these narrative parts suggests that these stories and their embedded characters were not enacted by the *ḍombikā* dancer in a gestural pantomime, but rather that they were rendered through vocal narrative or songs. Typically, the verb used to speak of her activity in such a narrative part is *abhidhā-* (‘to speak’, ‘to denote’), not *abhinī-* (‘to enact’). Even when the dancer displays

some gestures, she is just showing (*pradarś-* 'to show') or making a display (*darśanamātra*^o) of how a *ḍombikā* dances, with or without *abhinaya*. Again, the dancer is said to perform in a way similar (*sadrś-*) to how the real *ḍombikā* performed in the past, which is marked by Abhinavagupta through the opposition *prayuñkte* (present 'performs', for the performer of the *Ḍombikā*)/*prāyūñkta* (imperfect 'performed', for the *ḍombikā*). The dancer, however, does not enact the *ḍombikā* as if she were directly present in front of the spectators, since she does not conceal her own self with the costume of the *ḍombikā*. Moreover, her dialogues are sometimes rendered by the vocalist and only punctuated by some coquettish gestures, which violates the basic coordination of words and gestures prescribed for the harmonious acting.²⁰⁸ Abhinavagupta's choice of words to refer to the pseudo-enactment in a *Ḍombikā* indeed emphasizes the relation of similarity between the performer and the character, which typically defines imitation-qua-mimicry, and hence also parody. As shown above, imitation was exactly what Abhinavagupta wanted to ban from theatre in general and from dramatic acting in particular, in the reconfigured sense of 'quasi-direct perception'. This amounts to saying that in a *Ḍombikā*, as in all genres of narrative dance, there is no *abhinaya* in the fullest sense, since the quasi-direct experience that is definitional of theatre is lacking.

Dance can indeed combine with a poetic text and have a narrative content, but even if the quality of its movements conforms to its basic flavour, it cannot give rise to that particularly vivid experience of the characters and emotions proper to theatre, in which the confusion between performer and character is a necessary prelude to the generalization of the emotion that alone can lead a spectator to give the consent of the heart and identify with the emotional situation depicted.²⁰⁹ Although the phases of the aesthetic process leading to the savouring of *rasa* are not a direct topic of discussion in the analysis of narrative dance, the lack of a quasi-direct perception of a character is linked by Abhinavagupta with the theme of instruction and pleasure as the twofold purpose of theatre. In the *Ḍombikā*, it is said, instruction is not the primary aim, nor is pleasure. Although the activity of the dancer is directed at pleasing the king, this nevertheless applies to the worldly activity of the *ḍombikā*, while the genre, like all other danced genres, ultimately aims at satisfying the deities. Instruction, in its turn, can be derived indirectly from the manifestation of the extraordinary characters evoked in the narrative parts. This is indeed a charac-

208 On the necessary dependence of one's gestures on one's speech, see my remarks, at the beginning of this section, on the diachronic yet interdependent use of gestures and sentences in the various phases of the *śārīrasāmānyābhīnaya*.

209 On the successive steps in the aesthetic process, see n. 4 above.

teristic of all genres of danced or sung poetry, in which the pedagogical ends are subordinated to the pleasurable nature of the medium, and both of these to higher ritual ends. At the other end of the spectrum, Abhinavagupta evokes another class of texts that were publicly recited, thus in a way performed, corresponding to the Purāṇas, where the depiction of the good and evil deeds of men aims exclusively at instruction in the aims of mankind, without the pleasurable filter of poetic or theatrical embellishments and the persuasive force of the direct presence of the character.²¹⁰

The incomplete mimesis that characterizes narrative dance is no anodyne detail, since it accounts for the very incommensurability of theatre and dance. It was perhaps the need to preserve Bharata's twofold division of the spectacular object, while at the same time accounting for the undeniable presence of narrative content in the newly recorded genres, that prompted the commentator's reflection on the specificity of representation and its media in theatre and other forms of performed narratives. The differentiation between different kinds of *abhinaya*—foregrounded by the recognition of a technical and a non-technical sense of the word—became not only a strategy to explain narrative dance as a genre distinct from theatre, but also an expedient to account for all the passages in which Bharata spoke of *abhinaya* in the context of dance. How exactly the root *abhinī* has to be understood in such cases is explained with reference to the dancer's enactment of the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga*:

The expression 'after [paying homage to the deities] the [dancer should perform] the acting (*abhinayam ācaret*)' is to express the extraordinariness [of its object], through a visualization (*bhāvanā*) of the meaning of that [song] by means of an abundant devotion (*bhakti*). The enactment (*abhinaya*) of the text of the *āsāritā*, which has as its object the meaning of words and sentences, is a conveying in front of one's own self (*svātmany ābhimukhyanayanam*), which does not aim at the spectators.²¹¹

This passage assigns a specific value to the preverb *abhi-*, so that *abhinaya* comes to mean 'conveying in front of one's self', possibly through a visualiza-

210 See Translation 6.6.5, n. 202. For an in-depth study of the public reading, narration, and performance of the Purāṇas, in particular the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, until the present day, see Taylor 2016.

211 ABh ad NŚ 4.276ab, vol. 1, p. 184: *tato 'bhinayam iti. bhaktyatiśayena tadarthabhāvanayā viśiṣṭatām* [M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ E₂, *viśiṣṭaviśayatām* T₄ E₁₍₄₎] *pradarśayitum. āsāritavākyaśya padārthavākyaṛthaviśayo 'bhinayaḥ svātmany ābhimukhyanayanam* [T₄ E₂, *ābhimukhyanayanāt* Σ_M E₁]. *na tu sāmājikān prati*. See also Translation 7.2.2 on the secondary meaning of *abhinaya* in connection with the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga*.

tion (*bhāvanā*) of the deity described by the song, which assumes the character of a meditation by the artist filled with devotion. In the primarily ritual part of the performance that is the *pūrvaraṅga*, in fact, the various songs are meant to praise and satisfy the deities. Another secondary use of the word *abhinaya* is that of storytelling, in which the story is rendered through speech and gestures, although the body movements just adequate to the song's content and rhythm.²¹² These examples suggest that there existed a number of forms that used a blend of several media, in particular vocal speech and bodily gestures, combined with musical accompaniment, to bring out verbal content. Based on their characteristics, these forms were regarded as either literary or performative by Indian theoreticians. However, all of them were ultimately found to be different from theatre, lacking as they were that specific kind of embodiment that can be assured only in the case of an actor putting on the costume of a character and rendering the dialogues with the appropriate linguistic code and accompanying movements.

212 See Translation 7.2.3.

PART 2

*Critical Edition and Annotated Translation
of Abhinavabhāratī ad Nāṭyaśāstra
4.261cd–269ab*



Introduction to the Edition

4.1 General Remarks on the Transmission of the *Abhinavabhāratī*

The text of the *Abhinavabhāratī* is available today in a number of manuscripts and printed editions. Besides being the only commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* to have come down to us, this exegetical work represents a sort of repository of previous glosses, commentaries, and fragments of related works. The *Abhinavabhāratī* in fact incorporates, through quotations and cursory references, a number of different texts and living traditions that developed between the time of Bharata and that of Abhinavagupta. But what happened afterwards? What is the legacy left by the *Abhinavabhāratī*? How was the text preserved and transmitted and how did the present text come about?

All the available manuscripts of the *Abhinavabhāratī* postdate the original work by many centuries and contain many passages that look corrupt beyond any possible reconstruction. As Sheldon Pollock remarks, part of the responsibility for this state of affairs may be assigned to Abhinavagupta himself: ‘his thinking is subtle, sometimes even counterintuitive, and he expresses his thoughts in a style virtually unique among Sanskrit authors for its Hegelian syntactical complexity and Heideggerian semantic idiosyncrasy. Frequently his style is refreshing; sometimes it is turbid as well as turgid; occasionally it is maddening. Added to this (and possibly as a result of it), his major work on aesthetics suffered terribly in the course of transmission’ (Pollock 2016: 193).

Despite their poor condition, a careful inspection and collation of the available manuscripts and editions for the section edited here allow us to formulate a number of hypotheses on the transmission of the fourth chapter of Abhinavagupta’s commentary up to the present day. Moreover, the genealogy of the present text may be tentatively reconstructed by cross-examining the indirect transmission, witnessed by the external testimonies. This should avert the risk of overextending general considerations that may hold true for some of the sections of the *Abhinavabhāratī* to the totality of the text.¹ In his recent

1 In most likelihood, such an extensive text did not circulate principally in complete copies, as the lacuna spanning chapters 7 and 8 in all manuscripts suggests. This means that quite a different set of manuscript relations might exist for the different sections of the work transmitted independently of one another.

study of the commentary on the *rasa-sūtra* and other related passages from the first and sixth chapters, Pollock (2016: 189) concludes that the *Abhinavabhāratī* must have fallen into desuetude soon after it left Kashmir, and that in any case, nobody read it after the twelfth century, even beyond Kashmir. He argued that Abhinavagupta's aesthetic theory was transmitted mainly through Abhinavagupta's commentary on the *Dhvanyāloka* and through Mammaṭa's synthesis of the latter in his *Kāvya prakāśa* ('Light on Poetry'), composed around 1050. He further states that the text of the *Abhinavabhāratī* was preserved in a single manuscript and a few late medieval copies of it, all stemming from Malabar.

The present editorial work shows that the first point cannot be generalized to the whole of the *Abhinavabhāratī*. In my study of the fourth chapter, I have come across three independent works, belonging to different regions and periods, that reuse parts of Abhinava's commentary sometimes almost verbatim and without acknowledging their source, others by rewriting the prose into verse. The first textual reuse² of the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī* can be detected in the two auto-commentaries on Hemacandra's *Kāvyaṅuśāsana* ('Instruction on Poetry'), the *Alaṅkāracūḍāmaṇi* (KAA) and especially the sub-commentary *Viveka* (KAV). Both commentaries were composed by the Jain author Hemacandra, who was active in Gujarat in the middle of the twelfth century.³ The last chapter of the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*, the eighth, is devoted to the description of literary genres. An original distinction is introduced here between what Hemacandra dubs 'poetry to be recited' (*pāṭhya-kāvya*) and 'poetry to be sung' (*geya-kāvya*).⁴ In the *Viveka* on this passage (pp. 445–449), Hemacandra incorporates long textual portions of Abhinavagupta's debate about the nature of dance and its difference from theatre, found in the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī*. In Hemacandra's work, however, the discussion centres exclusively on poetic genres, so the Jain author leaves out the specific context in which the debate originated, namely the determination of

2 On textual reuse, see Freschi 2015 and 2017.

3 On Hemacandra's work and poetics, see, e.g., Upadhyay 1987; Kulkarni 2003: 91–96; and Tubb 1998. For a German translation of the first two chapters of the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana* with the *Vṛtti* (*Alaṅkāracūḍāmaṇi*) and *Viveka*, see Both 2003. The relationship between Hemacandra and Abhinavagupta with respect to aesthetic theory has been treated cursorily in Pollock 2016. On Hemacandra's reuse of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, see Cuneo 2017.

4 On the distinction between theatrical and dance genres as underlined by these categories, see § 2.1. Hemacandra's distinction stems from the super-category of 'poetry to be seen' (*prekṣya-kāvya*), itself distinguished from 'poetry to be heard' (*śravya-kāvya*). On the latter classification in treatises on dramatics and poetics, see Pollock 2012a.

the nature and function of dance within (and without) the enactment of a play. His original textual source is moreover left unacknowledged.⁵

The second text to draw on the *Abhinavabhāratī*'s fourth chapter is the *Samgītaratnākara* ('Ocean of Music and Dance') (SR),⁶ written presumably before 1247 by Śārṅgadeva, who was active in the northern Deccan under the Yādava king Siṅghaṇa of Devagiri. His work, as its title indicates, deals with *saṃgīta*, an inclusive term that in the technical literature comes to designate the 'concert' or 'recital', intended as a combination of vocal music (*gīta*), instrumental music (*vādyā*), and dance (*nr̥tta*). Its seventh chapter, devoted to dance, is practically a versification of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, though not one particularly concerned with its aesthetic and poetic aspects. The section translated and analysed in this book does not find any parallel in it, most probably due to the fact that the *Samgītaratnākara* is not a text concerned with theatrical practice and has omitted all references to it. The name of Abhinavagupta is mentioned among other commentators on the discipline of Nāṭyaśāstra in SR 1.19, and in chapter seven, Śārṅgadeva quotes him twice by name. Incidentally, Kallinātha, who commented on the *Samgītaratnākara* in the second half of the fifteenth century in the southern kingdom of Vijayanagara, appears to use the *Abhinavabhāratī* independently of its source text in his commentary, the *Kalānidhi*.⁷

The third text comes from the Āndhra region, and was composed in 1253–1254 by Jāyasenāpati. The *Nṛttaratnāvalī* ('Necklace of Dance') (NR),⁸ as the work is named, is the only available medieval treatise devoted exclusively to dance.⁹ Similarly to the *Samgītaratnākara*, the *Nṛttaratnāvalī* makes extensive use of Bharata's text as interpreted by Abhinavagupta, who is however mentioned by name only once with regard to the interpretation of the *hasta niṣāda*

5 While Hemacandra's incorporation of the *Abhinavabhāratī* definitions of the genres of narrative dance in the *Alaṃkāracūḍāmaṇi* has been acknowledged by Raghavan (1978), the reuse of passages from Abhinavagupta's discussion on the nature of theatre and dance has rarely been noticed. Two remarkable exceptions are Mankad (1936: 23–24) and Bhayani (1993: 20). The comparison of the relevant passages with the text of the *Abhinavabhāratī* and its inclusion in the critical apparatus presented here is an original contribution of the present edition.

6 The *Samgītaratnākara* of Śārṅgadeva and its two commentaries, the *Kalānidhi* and the *Sudhākara*, have been edited by S. Subrahmanya Sastri. A translation of the seventh chapter of the SR, on dance, has been published by Kunjunni Raja and Burmier (1976).

7 Cf. Raghavan 1980: 103. For concrete evidence of the independent use of the *Abhinavabhāratī* by Kallinātha, see Translation, n. 178.

8 The *Nṛttaratnāvalī* is edited by Raghavan and contains a very good introduction with the parallels between this text and the *Abhinavabhāratī*. An English translation of the work has recently been published by Venugopala Rao (2013).

9 The *Nṛtyādhyāya* (14th–15th c.) and the *Nṛtyaratnakośa* (15th c.) were parts of larger works, though published independently. On these two works, see Bose 2007: 75–82.

(NR 2.182).¹⁰ Jāyasenāpati's reliance on the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī* for his description of the *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras* has been noticed and illustrated by Raghavan in his introduction to the edition. The relationship between the *Nṛttaratnāvalī* and the *Samgītaratnākara* is itself problematic, since the two works were composed around the same time in contiguous parts of the subcontinent. Historical research has shown that the neighbouring kingdom ruled at that time by king Gaṇapati Deva of the Kakaṭīya dynasty—to which Jāyasenāpati belonged—conquered the region where Śārṅgadeva was active. The hypothesis has been thus advanced that Jāyasenāpati knew but did not acknowledge the work of Śārṅgadeva, emulating it for reasons of cultural prestige rather than practical artistic needs.¹¹

The fact that the *Abhinavabhāratī* was read and studied by these three authors—or four if we take into account the independent testimony of Kallinātha—suggests an extensive circulation of manuscript sources in medieval India, and a general movement of the *Abhinavabhāratī* towards the South.¹² As a matter of fact, a manuscript tradition of the *Abhinavabhāratī* is extant exclusively in South India, in particular in the area of present-day Kerala. The oldest available manuscripts, written on palm leaf, belong to this area. Devanāgarī paper transcripts are found in several manuscript libraries in North India as well, although on close inspection, they all appear to be copies produced from Malayālam palm-leaf prototypes. Although this would require a separate study, it would be meaningful to assess how a systematic analysis of the borrowings from the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*, *Samgītaratnākara*, and *Nṛttaratnāvalī* might in fact suggest new ways of looking at the textual transmission of the *Abhinavabhāratī*.¹³

10 Curiously, the section on dance in the *Mānasollāsa* (ca. 1130), called *Nṛtyavinoda*, quotes the same interpretation in the definition of *niśāda hasta*, with a silent acknowledgement of Abhinavagupta. According to U. Srinivasan (1985: 68), this may be taken as positive evidence of the Cālukya king Someśvara's indebtedness to Abhinavagupta. According to Raghavan (NR Introduction, p. 68), the *Mānasollāsa* is the source of material on *deśī* for both the *Samgītaratnākara* and the *Nṛttaratnāvalī*.

11 See Raghavan, NR Introduction, pp. 73–74.

12 Cox 2013 gives evidence for the reception of the *Abhinavabhāratī* (at least the section on *sāntarasa*) in Tamil Nadu as early as the late eleventh or twelfth centuries, as evidenced in the *Cēyirriyam*, a text devoted to drama, quoted in the earliest commentary on the *Tōlkāppiyam* by Ṭampūraṇar.

13 For instance, it would be interesting to determine whether the *Samgītaratnākara* and the *Nṛttaratnāvalī*, which each dedicate a long section to the *āṅgikābhinaya*, had access to Abhinavagupta's now lost commentary on the eighth chapter at all. While they both incorporate a great deal of material from the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī* on the

4.2 Genealogy of the Present Text: The Sources

4.2.1 Editions

First of all, a few remarks on the available editions of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the *Abhinavabhāratī* are in order. Differently from § 1.1, where the main aim was to present the cultural context that prompted the production of printed editions of the *mūla* text and its commentary, in what follows I provide information on the constitution of the edited texts, including the editorial policies, textual interventions, and flaws of previous editors. In the particular case of the *editio princeps* and its two main revisions, I supply data about our present knowledge of specific manuscript sources that were available to and/or used by the editors in constituting the text, with particular attention to *Abhinavabhāratī* chapter 4.

4.2.1.1 The Baroda or Gaekwad Edition (= E₁)

The project of editing the whole of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Abhinavabhāratī* was carried out in various stages by Manavalli Ramakrishna Kavi between 1926 and 1964, but produced a number of revised editions both during and after this time.

The various volumes of this edition were published as follows:

- Vol. 1 (chapters 1–7), GOS no. 36.
 - 1st edition, M. Ramakrishna Kavi (ed.), 1926. (= E₁₍₁₎)
 - 2nd edition, K.S. Ramaswami Sastri (ed.), 1956. (= E₁₍₂₎)
 - 3rd edition (abridged reprint of the 2nd edition), 1980. (= [E₁₍₃₎])¹⁴
 - 4th edition, K. Krishnamoorthy (ed.), 1992. (= E₁₍₄₎)
- Vol. 2 (chapters 8–18), GOS no. 68.
 - 1st edition, M. Ramakrishna Kavi (ed.), 1934. (= E₁₍₁₎)
 - 2nd edition, V.M. Kulkarni and Tapasvi Nandi (eds.), 2001. (= E₁₍₄₎)¹⁵
- Vol. 3 (chapters 19–27), GOS no. 124.
 - 1st edition, M. Ramakrishna Kavi (ed.), 1954. (= E₁₍₁₎)
 - 2nd edition, V.M. Kulkarni and Tapasvi Nandi (eds.), 2003. (= E₁₍₄₎)

subject of *karaṇas* and *aṅghāras*, at first sight they do not appear to bear traces of original material that might stem from what is now a lacuna in all manuscripts.

- 14 This edition contains the first seven chapters of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, but only the sixth chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī*. It is based on the second edition and does not incorporate any new manuscript material.
- 15 For the sake of convenience, although volumes 2 through 4 have only two editions each, I have named the second editions E₁₍₄₎, since these formed part of the Oriental Institute in Baroda's unified project to re-edit the whole text which, for vol. 1 alone, coincided with the fourth edition of the text.

- Vol. 4 (chapters 28–37), GOS no. 145.
 - 1st edition, M. Ramakrishna Kavi and J.S. Pade (eds.), 1964. (= E₁₍₁₎)
 - 2nd edition, V.M. Kulkarni and Tapasvi Nandi (eds.), 2006. (= E₁₍₄₎)

In his preface to the *editio princeps* of the first volume of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, M.R. Kavi states that he collected forty manuscripts for editing the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* but does not describe any of them, nor does he explain how he used them in the collation. The text of the *mūla* he gives is mostly in agreement with Abhinavagupta's commentary; however, at times, he brackets off some verses that he considers redundant or interpolated without indicating which manuscripts contained which verses.¹⁶ On the whole, it does not seem that Kavi had anything in front of him like a single manuscript containing what he considered the transmitted text used by Abhinavagupta, or a Kashmirian recension of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. To be sure, from the commentary it emerges that Abhinavagupta himself consulted different witnesses of the *mūla* text, since he sometimes records and discusses variant readings (*pāthāntara*), cases of verses that were not read unanimously, and different readings accepted by other commentators before him.¹⁷ Since Kavi's interest was in reconstructing a text that would match Abhinavagupta's commentary as closely as possible, his edition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* looks more like a patchwork in which the connecting threads have been effaced except for a few *variae lectiones* given in the apparatus, with the different sigla corresponding to the manuscripts described succinctly in the preface.

As for the text of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, whose edition represented the main motivation for Kavi's ambitious enterprise, the introduction informs us that two sets of manuscripts were used, as well as a summary of the commentary covering the first six chapters and probably composed by the Keralite dramatist and literary commentator Pūrṇasarasvatī. According to Kavi, the first set, called A, followed the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*. This set is said to be more complete, but in the fourth chapter, the palm leaves of the original manuscript were shuffled. The B set is said to be less correct, and has a lacuna in the fourth chapter shared by Pūrṇasarasvatī's summary. The lacuna is said to correspond to the textual part at which set A has its folios mixed up.

16 This lack of transparency in the editing procedures was harshly criticized by De in his review, which came out in 1927, one year after the publication of the first volume. On De's critique of Kavi's philological process, see Ollett (forthcoming).

17 See for instance, ABh ad Nś 4.55cd–59ab, vol. 1, p. 94: *atra 'aṣṭottaraśatam' ityādi ślokaṃ kecin na paṭhanti. anye tato 'py adhikaṃ—'hastapādapracāran tu kaṭipārśvorusaṃyutam' iti ślokaṃ paṭhanti*. For an example of different readings (of Nś quotations) accepted by other commentators, see ABh ad Nś 5.21ab, vol. 1, p. 212: *śaṅkukas tu paṭhati 'uttaras tathā caiva' iti sthāne 'uttaras tathā dvikalaha' iti, 'ekakala' ity atra ca sthāne 'nirdiṣṭa' iti*.

In 1929, in a much-resentful response to De's acrimonious review of the first volume of the Baroda edition, Kavi set out to describe some of the sources he used to edit the text of the *Abhinavabhārati*.¹⁸ As he explains, he started to collect copies of the *Abhinavabhārati* in Malabar after having determined to edit the text as early as 1912. The manuscript copies he managed to locate and secure are listed as follows:

1. MS at the Mahārāja's Library at Trivandrum, with the first 19 chapters, but full of lacunae. A copy of the MS was given by T. Ganapati Sastri to Ganganath Jha. The same copy was loaned to Kavi by the late Pandit Govinda Das of Benares.
2. MS with chapters 1 to 6: damaged but without many omissions
3. MS with chapters 9 to 31: damaged but without many omissions
4. MS in Travancore secured by Gopinath Rao, with chapters 1 to 19, as bad as the Palace copy (1.)

Manuscripts obtained by the Madras Government search party after 1915:

5. MS with chapters 1 to 19, fairly good and complete (= 2478)*
6. MS with chapters 20 to 28 (= 2785)*
7. MS with chapters 30 to 32 (= 2774)*¹⁹
8. MS with chapter 6
9. MS with chapters 19 to 20
10. Summary of the first six chapters by Pūrṇasarasvatī

MSS obtained by Kavi on his own in Malabar:

11. MS with chapters 29 to 37
12. MS with chapters 4 to 6

Kavi further mentions that the Madras Govt. transcript (5.)²⁰ was collated with the copy of Ganganath Jha (the one taken on loan from Govinda Das of Benares, 1.), and claims to have consulted eight different manuscripts for

18 Kavi promised to provide a fuller description of all the sources and the variant readings in an extensive introduction that was to be published after the edition of the full text had been prepared. This project, however, was never completed, since Kavi passed away in 1957, before the publication of the fourth volume, which was taken up by J.S. Pade and completed in 1964 on the basis of a transcript of the *Abhinavabhārati*, with corrections prepared by Kavi and subsequently revised by Pade at the demand of the press and the general editor (see Preface to the fourth volume by Pade).

19 As the second editor informs us (Ramaswami Sastri 1956: 26), the three manuscripts listed by Kavi (5., 6., and 7.), i.e. MSS 2478, 2785, and 2774, were acquired by the search for manuscripts prompted by the Madras Government, and they form the basis of the transcript at the GOML, our M₁, on which see more below. Although Ramaswami Sastri says that the third manuscript contains chapters 29 to 31, direct inspection shows that it actually contains chapters 29 to 32 (incomplete).

20 About this transcript (= M₁), Kavi (1929: 569) informs us that it was prepared by copyists at

the sixth chapter, including the original Malayālam palm leaves whenever the transcripts were unintelligible. An interesting detail Kavi provides us with is that he also consulted (8.) ‘a copy of the 6th chapter alone copied and collated by Deśamaṅgalavariar, who was the owner of all the copies of Abhinava’s works brought to the Madras Library’ (1929: 560–561). This statement needs to be contextualized. The Deśamaṅgala Vāriyam ‘is an ancient family of Sanskrit scholars in Central Kerala, situated in the village of Deśamaṅgalam, 35 kms. north of Trichur, in the erstwhile State of Cochin’ (Sarma 1993: ix). The Vāriyam functioned in the Middle Ages as a ‘college of learning’, specializing in Sanskrit grammar and *belles lettres* (ibid.: vii). It hosted one of the largest private libraries of Kerala, whose important manuscript collection has partly been dispersed in various libraries across India, and partly lost in the heavy floods of 1907. Before this natural catastrophe, some manuscripts had been transferred to other libraries such as the Zamorin’s Kovilakam in Koṭṭakkal, or given away to manuscript collectors like M.R. Kavi and R.A. Sastri (ibid.: xiii), which is why a number of Deśamaṅgala manuscripts are still extant.²¹

Most interestingly, in the same article, Kavi acknowledges the editorial plan of T. Ganapati Sastri for the preparation of a critical edition of the *Abhinavabhārati* to be published in the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series. T. Ganapati Sastri would have borrowed a MS containing chapters 9 to 19 (possibly the GOML transcript) from Kavi for his edition, which he abandoned after encounter-

the GOML quite early on, at a time where they were not properly trained in the Malayālam script.

- 21 For an introduction to this large manuscript collection and the old lists recovered, see Sarma 1993. Sarma is moreover credited with the identification of 285 manuscripts now in public libraries but once belonging to the Deśamaṅgala Vāriyam collection. These were identified on the basis of the family *mudrā* or other indications inscribed on the flyleaves. The lists given by Sarma contain six manuscripts of the *Abhinavabhārati*, but Sarma provides no evidence that any of them are now extant. To the list of the identified manuscripts can be added manuscript C. 1854 of the *Abhinavabhārati* (= T₅), now in Trivandrum. This manuscript contains chapters 1, 18, and 19, and bears the following indication on a flyleaf at the beginning: ‘Deśamaṅgalatta Vāriyatte Abhinavabhārati’. The manuscript is indexed as No. 1218 (C.O.L. No. 1854) in *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Curator’s Office Library*, vol. 7, Trivandrum: V.V. Press Branch, Ravi Varma 1940. It is described there as belonging originally to Brahmadattan Nambūdiripāḍ from Kūṭallūr, and containing 2580 *granthas*, which allows for its identification with the Malayālam manuscript listed as no. 126 in the *Annual Report of the Department for the Publication of Sanskrit Manuscripts for the Year 1929* (= Tra. Ad. Rep. 1104.126 in NCC). As Sarma (ibid.: xiii) explains, a number of Deśamaṅgala manuscripts had ended up in the Kūṭallūr Mana, acquired as gifts, loans, pledges or by purchase. This Mana, also called Nāneri Mana, entertained privileged relationships with the Deśamaṅgala Vāriyam, and the Kūṭallūr Nambudiris moreover acted as their literary patrons (ibid.: xvi).

ing difficulties with the fourth chapter (Kavi 1929: 560). Editing the fourth chapter of the *Abhinavabhārati* represented an especially arduous task, no matter how good one's mastery of the Sanskrit language and familiarity with Abhinavagupta's thought. In response to De's criticism, who had moreover charged him with carrying out amateurish work, Kavi answered with a note of sarcasm: 'If Dr. De had taken a few examples from the fourth chapter and could make out anything from his copy of the commentary construing the proper text and then compared it with our edition his conclusions would have been quite contrary' (ibid.: 568). The main problem with the fourth chapter was in fact that the folios had been shuffled in several places throughout the chapter, yet simply copied out regardless of the mismatched passages. This is what Kavi had to say about the state of the fourth chapter in his preface to the *editio princeps*:

'A' set though fairly correct badly blundered in the fourth chapter where the scribe quietly copied leaves which had been arranged in incorrect sequence. In Malabar we frequently come across old MSS. with unnumbered leaves and if the thread gives way and the leaves get misplaced even a good scholar would feel the work of re-arrangement an arduous task. Thus for eight leaves or in 16 places the commentary breaks off and the corresponding portion is a lacuna in the other set and also in the epitome. It is here that I experienced the greatest difficulty. With the help of the *Nṛttaratnāvalī* and *Samgītaratnākara* which closely follow Abhinavagupta the proper connection of the missing link in the commentary was traced and some lacuna were filled up by my own commentary based upon the two works mentioned above.²²

The part where the commentary breaks off several times corresponds mainly to the technical portions of the definitions of the *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras*. However, there is also a break in the passage edited in the present book, as has been pointed out in the notes to the Edition. As to the lacunae mentioned above, Kavi took the initiative to supply his own commentary in three places where the text was wanting, and gave references to the page and line numbers in his preface, bracketing off the newly composed passages in edition.²³

The first of the two sets of manuscripts mentioned by Kavi consists in the GOML transcript, whose original palm leaves came from private libraries

22 Preface to the first edition by Kavi, cited in Ramaswami Sastri 1956: 62.

23 Ramaswami Sastri (1956: 62) lists the three places as follows, with the numbering corresponding to E₁₀₁: 1. page 133, from *yogāt tannāma* to *prayogah*; 2. page 143, lines 7 to 11, *karamāvrta* to *pariyastakah*; and 3. from page 147, line 24 to page 152, line 20.

in Malabar. The numbers and provenances of these transcripts are given by Ramaswami Sastri on the basis of the Triennial Catalogue. The second set was based on a palm leaf manuscript in Malayālam script preserved at the Palace Library in Trivandrum, a copy of which was supplied to the Sarasvati Bhavan Bhandars in Benares. A copy of this copy was supplied to the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune and collated with the Madras MS. According to Ramaswami Sastri, both sets contained the same textual portions, and therefore must likely have derived from the same archetype.²⁴ Copies of copies of these two sets of manuscripts, identified as those used by Kavi to prepare the *editio princeps*, were compared and partially collated by the second editor Ramaswami Sastri under the sigla Ma and Bha.²⁵ These copies are:

- Ma (= E₁₍₂₎^{ma}):²⁶ MS No. 14049 at the Library of the Oriental Institute of Baroda (= V^a). This is a transcript of chapters 1 to 7 of MS No. 2478 at the Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Madras (= M₁).
- Bha (= E₁₍₂₎^{bha}): MS No. 343 at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune (= P₂). This is a copy of a manuscript at the Sarasvati Bhavan in Benares (= B₂, collated with M₁), which is a transcript of an original Malayālam manuscript discovered in Trivandrum, in the library of the Maharaja of Travancore.

Although the originals of these manuscripts had already been used by Kavi in his 1926 edition, variant readings had hardly been recorded in the apparatus, and in the rare cases where this had been done, no indications of their provenance were provided. This task was assumed by the second editor. Apart from recording variants from these two transcripts whenever Kavi's text did not find support in any of them, Ramaswami Sastri also copied in his apparatus the *variae lectiones* listed in the text of the first edition. These readings were not preceded by a siglum, as their sources remained unidentified. Similarly,

24 Despite all their divergences, neither set transmits the commentary on chapters 7 (only partially) and 8, and the commentary on chapter 5 is interrupted at the same place (Ramaswami Sastri 1956: 26–27). Regarding their readings, Kavi states in his preface to the first edition: 'These two sets differ in readings, but the differences are due to the erroneous deciphering of a scribe or to an intelligent suggestion of a missing word or letter where insects had damaged the leaf. However, set A closely follows Hemaçandra [...], and B set differs in several places and is generally less correct' (Preface by Kavi, quoted in *ibid.*: 62).

25 Ramaswami Sastri (1956: 27) also noticed that both manuscripts had been collated with other manuscripts, since they contained some different readings noted in the margins. On these variants, see below the description of the manuscripts.

26 This is the siglum assigned to this transcript—i.e. the variants listed in the apparatus by Ramaswami Sastri as 'Ma'—in the present critical edition. I could not consult directly the transcript in Baroda, but I collated here its original from Madras under the siglum M₁.

the readings preferred by Kavi but substituted by seemingly better readings found in the transcripts were moved to the apparatus without sigla. Among the other editorial principles followed was bracketing off passages taken from Hemacandra's *Kāvyaṅuśāsanaviveka* in the sixth chapter,²⁷ as well as Kavi's own completion of unfinished verses; in the case of a defective text, better readings were suggested in parentheses.

Just like his predecessor, after collating the fourth chapter with the two manuscripts available to him, Ramaswami Sastri felt compelled to offer a word of caution on its unsatisfactory transmission:

The manuscript copy of B.O.R.I. Poona, though transcribed by a good hand, has still lacunae in many places and the portion corresponding to pages 166 to 184 of this edition²⁸ has been omitted completely in the 4th chapter. Luckily this portion has been copied out from the original manuscript into the transcript preserved by the Madras Library and these readings have been taken into the foot-notes, wherever the printed portion differed from the manuscript. But the case of the Madras manuscript is quite different. Though some of the emendations of the Madras scholars and also a few other readings from MSS. have been noted in the margins of the pages of the transcript it contained many errors and the copy was therefore unsatisfactory. The fourth chapter seems to have been copied out from a palm leaf manuscript, where the several folios of the manuscript were misplaced in no less than 14 places. In each place, matter to the extent of about 20 pages has been shifted from its original place to different places, either ahead or backward, so that the link of the commentary has been hopelessly broken. To re-establish this broken connection in the transcript of the commentary, which difficulty every editor or reconstructor has naturally to face, was, in this particular instance, a hard task.

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27 De (1927: 865) first complained in his review that Kavi had used the text of the *Kāvyaṅuśā-sana* to correct or silently change some difficult passages in the sixth chapter. He himself had first edited the commentary of Abhinavagupta on the *rasasūtra*, using the GOML transcript and a transcript of a manuscript from Trivandrum procured for him by Ganganath Jha (De 1925: 240).

28 This part corresponds to ABh ad Nś 4.253–282, i.e. from the explanation of the *piṇḍibandhas*, up to the end of the portion translated here.

Ramaswami Sastri also provided a useful table with the fourteen places where the Madras manuscript was interrupted, listing the page in his edition where the link was broken and the pages following the break in the manuscript. Though useful, this table is also quite approximate, since instead of giving the line number and last word or half-sentence before the break, it only indicates the section or name of the *karāṇa* or *aṅgahāra* where the break occurs, for instance *bhujāṅgatrāsita* and *ardhanikuṭṭakam*, where the link is first broken at the very end of the description of the *karāṇa bhujāṅgatrāsita* (p. 109, l. 11 in E₁₍₂₎) and continues after the first half-line in the description of the *aṅgahāra ardhanikuṭṭaka* (p. 162, l. 6 in E₁₍₂₎). This table also records the portion missing in all the manuscripts (pp. 146–150 in E₁₍₂₎), which Kavi had filled in with his own commentary, although the other two places where such practice had been followed remained unnoticed.²⁹

Ramaswami Sastri's revision work was aimed at making the editing process more transparent, though in many cases it cannot be said to have achieved its goal. Although he signalled the readings Kavi had incorporated from Hemacandra's *Kāvyānuśāsanaviveka* while editing the sixth chapter, he did not notice that Kavi had used the same text in the fourth chapter. The eighth chapter of the KAV has in fact proved an important source for the present edition, since it incorporates many passages from the discussion about the nature of dance and theatre in the section on the various genres of performance. In a few instances, Kavi's corrections or suggestions for correcting the text of the commentary coincide with readings from the KAV, most certainly because they were taken from it, although without acknowledgement.³⁰ If this procedure is not commendable, neither is that of Ramaswami Sastri (followed by the third editor, K. Krishnamoorthy), when he decided, for instance, to simply efface Kavi's suggestion to read *abhidhāyānte* (*abhidhāya* + *ante*) and silently corrected the manuscript reading *abhidhāyante* into *abhidhāyate* in order to match the verb with the subject in the singular.³¹

29 See Ramaswami Sastri 1956: 24. For passage 1 given by Kavi (p. 131, l. 9–15 in E₁₍₂₎), Ramaswami Sastri just brackets off a verse in a note with the indication '*etac cihṅāṅkīto bhāgo Ma. Bha. pustakayor nāsti*', although the portion supplied by Kavi is longer. For passage 2 (not bracketed off in E₁₍₁₎; p. 141, l. 7–11 in E₁₍₂₎), a slightly shorter passage is signalled in a note as '*Ma. etac cihṅāntargato bhāgo nāsti*'. Passage 3 is the only one properly signalled as (p. 143) '*itaḥ parivṛttakarecī(19)ṅgahāraparyantavyākhyābhāgo plutāḥ. sampādakasya kṛtir iyam*'.

30 For instance, the reading *yad gṛyate tat kasyoktīrūpam*, found in the KAV and retained in all editions, against *yat kasyoktir iyam*, given in E₁₍₂₎^{ma}, and the manuscript's reading, *yat kasyoktīrūpam*, in D, M₁, and T₁. Cf. Edition, p. 316.

31 See Edition, p. 320. Another case where Kavi corrected the text following the KAV and

Ramaswami Sastri based his collation work on the text edited by Kavi, which already contained his own corrections and emendations, and only recorded in the apparatus what he considered variant readings, omitting all evident scribal mistakes and other readings he could not make sense of. In this way, many of Kavi's emendations were accepted in the second and then fourth editions although they find no basis in the available manuscripts. If the readings of the manuscript are provided systematically, on the other hand, it is sometimes possible to arrive at different emendations and conjectures based on reasoning about the type of corruption, which takes into account possible confusions between *akṣaras* that might eventually have occurred in the transition from one script to the other. When good readings are found only in Kavi's edition but not corroborated by either the available manuscripts or the KAV, we are therefore faced with a dilemma: either Kavi had better manuscripts of the *Abhinavabhārati* among those that could not be identified, or he was silently correcting the text with his own conjectures.³² No doubt, Kavi's knowledge of Sanskrit was finely tuned: he came from a family of Sanskrit scholars and underwent training in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* under his own father, who is said to have composed a commentary on the treatise. However, he certainly did not have all the instruments we now possess for editing the text, including a corpus of electronic texts to look for parallels, especially within the long text of the *Abhinavabhārati*.³³

A further revision of the second edition was commissioned to V. Raghavan, but could only be completed by K. Krishnamoorthy in 1992, since the renowned Sanskrit scholar passed away in 1979. Krishnamoorthy accepted the task since he had been persuaded by Raghavan and others that new manuscript material was available for revising the text. After collating a Devanāgarī transcript of the *Abhinavabhārati* acquired by the Oriental Institute in Baroda, however, he realized that he could make only minimal changes to the previous editions, and on the whole retained the improvements made in the second edition. In his own examination of previous editorial work, added to the paucity of manuscript materials, he concluded that although Kavi was virulently criticized because of his 'omissions and commissions', 'his remains the only edition up to date which records virtually all available variant readings which are significant from the

Ramaswami Sastri and K. Krishnamoorthy did not record the variant, though preferable in my opinion, can be seen at p. 324 of the Edition (cf. *laukikamātrasvabhāva eva rāmanatādivyavahārat*).

32 See, for instance, Kavi's reading °*ākṣiptiḍombikāprāyah*, where all the manuscripts have the lacuna °*ākṣipta(...)*kāprāyah. Cf. Edition, p. 356. and Translation n. 245.

33 Most useful for the present work, and for any critical work on the *Abhinavabhārati*, is the electronic version of the text in its entirety, prepared for SARIT (Search and Retrieval of Indic Texts).

perspective of higher criticism' (Krishnamoorthy, Preface in $E_{1(4)}$, p. 2). On the other hand, while the second editor 'affected a good many improvements by providing full details of the critical apparatus and also very useful and informative appendices, he maintained the textual readings and variant readings intact, by and large' (ibid.).

In his re-evaluation of previous work, Krishnamoorthy was especially frustrated by the discovery that the much-awaited transcript of a new manuscript of the *Abhinavabhāratī* was in fact 'a scrappy summary' that did not contain anything from chapters 6 to 31, left out 'all lengthy discussions' and 'had been prepared by someone for personal use'. In a previous essay printed in his *Indian Literary Theories*, Krishnamoorthy (1985: 141) informs us that this was a transcript of a palm-leaf manuscript found at the manuscript library in Trivandrum, which he managed to obtain after three years of negotiations. In spite of Krishnamoorthy's word that the transcript is 'now available for consultation in the Oriental Institute Library' (1992: 3), I was not able to locate it on my visit to Baroda in 2012. However, I am persuaded that its original must be manuscript no. 17703 kept at the ORI in Trivandrum (= T_4), which I am tempted to identify, for reasons that I will clarify below, with the much-vaunted summary of the *Abhinavabhāratī* by Pūrṇasarasvatī.³⁴ Krishnamoorthy did not describe the manuscript, since he said he was only able to consult its transcript; however, he retained some of its readings whenever he considered them valuable. Although he did not change the commentary much, he compared all of the identified parallel passages, incorporating their variant readings, especially for the sixth chapter. Among the texts he consulted for the indirect transmission of Abhinavagupta's text are the *Kāvyaṅuśāsanaviveka*, in a new Keralite manuscript, the *Kalpalatāviveka*, also in a Keralite manuscript, the two *Saṅketas* on the *Kāvya prakāśa* by Māṇikyacandra and Someśvara, a *Kaumudī* on the *Locana* kept in Madras, the *Rasārṇavasudhākara*, and the modern *Rasa Bhāva Vicāra* by Kangle, not to mention the available studies of De, Raghavan, and Kulkarni, in which improvements to the text of the *Abhinavabhāratī* had been made.

Apart from following the previous editors in many cases without signalling it in the variants, shortcomings in this fourth revised edition are represented by cases in which the editor changed the text, possibly based on E_2 or his own intuitions, cases in which he follows T_4 without acknowledging the variants of the other manuscripts, and cases in which he simply conflates two versions, as the previous editors had done.

34 The transcript, still in Baroda in 1992, might be the same as 7559A now in Tirupati, described below as T^i .

The passage edited here covers, in vol. 1, pp. 172–184 in E₁₍₁₎, pp. 170–182 in E₁₍₂₎, and pp. 168–180 in E₁₍₄₎.

4.2.1.2 The Madhusudan Shastri Edition (= E₂)

- Vol. 1 (chapters 1 to 7), 1971
- Vol. 2 (chapters 8 to 18), 1975
- Vol. 3 (chapters 19 to 27), 1981

This edition, prepared by Madhusudan Shastri from Benares, contains the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the *Abhinavabhāratī* with no variants, a Sanskrit commentary called (*Madhusūdanī*), a Hindi translation, and a Hindi commentary (*Bālakrīḍā*), which is a prose rendering of the *mūla* text and Abhinavagupta's commentary, with all textual problems left mostly unsolved. Among the editions consulted, the one by Madhusudan Shastri sometimes provides unexpectedly better readings, as well as consistent rearrangements of the textual materials.³⁵ At the end of the lengthy Hindi introduction, Madhusudan Shastri says that he prepared his edition on the basis of three manuscripts: the first belonged to his guru, Śrī Bālakṛṣṇa, and was acquired through the intermediary of his student Gaurīśaṅkar Śāstri from a Lingayat master; the second came from the Sarasvati Bhavan Library in Benares (possibly the same prototype of E₁₍₂₎^{bha?}); and the third was provided by a private owner. Despite the availability of these primary sources, Madhusudan Shastri informs us that the teachings and insights of his own master were of the utmost importance in his own constitution of the text, subtly implying that he emended the text wherever he did not find it satisfactory.

The passage edited here covers, in vol. 1, pp. 409–439.

4.2.1.3 The Nagar Edition (= E₃)

- Vol. 1 (chapters 1 to 7), 1981
- Vol. 2 (chapters 8 to 18), 1984
- Vol. 3 (chapters 19 to 27), 1983
- Vol. 4 (chapters 28 to 37), 1984

This edition contains the full text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Abhinavabhāratī* prepared on the basis of the four previous editions (GOS, Kashi Sanskrit Series, Kāvyaṃālā, Ghosh), in addition to a good number of printing mistakes. It was published in the Parimal Sanskrit Series in Delhi. This edition has not been used here.

35 This is less evident in the passage edited here, but it has been noticed on various occasions with respect to the first chapter.

4.2.1.4 The Dvivedi Edition (= E₄)

- Vol. 1 (chapters 1 to 5), 1992
- Vol. 2 (chapters 6 to 11), 1996
- Vol. 3 (chapters 12 to 18), 2001
- Vol. 4 (chapters 19 to 27), 2004

This edition was published by Parasanatha Dvivedi at the Sampurnananda Sanskrit University in Benares (= E₄). It came out in four volumes between 1992 and 2004 and covers chapters 1 to 27. It contains a Hindi commentary called *Manoramā*, composed by the editor and comprised of a Hindi translation of the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, one of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, and some comments on the *Abhinavabhāratī* under the name *Vimarśa*. As to the edited text, no variants are given for the commentary, which basically reproduces the text of E₁₍₂₎. I have therefore not deemed it necessary to collate the text of this edition, since it only contains already published material.

4.2.2 *Manuscripts*

A description of all the manuscripts of the *Abhinavabhāratī* is beyond the scope of the present work, which offers a critical edition of a limited section of the fourth chapter based on the collation of all the available manuscripts containing it. Consequently, only the manuscripts containing the fourth chapter will be described here, and the specific features of those containing the edited fragment alone will be pointed out in greater detail while comparing the sources used and formulating some hypotheses about their relationships. To aid the reader eager to engage in further research on other chapters of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, I first of all provide a full inventory of all the manuscripts located so far.³⁶ This inventory lists the manuscripts in alphabetical order according to the siglum used in the edition (based on the provenance),³⁷ the accession

36 The present inventory is based on the entries of the NCC, as well as some library catalogues. A useful database of the Nś and ABh manuscripts was compiled by K. Vatsyayan at the IGNCA in Delhi and given as Appendix in Vatsyayan 1996: 181–208. This was also consulted, despite its many inaccuracies and duplicates. The list given here was prepared together with Daniele Cuneo during our PhD years, and was revised on the occasion of a recent collaborative work on the critical edition of the first chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, an ongoing project that includes the critical edition of that chapter prepared by the present author and Daniele Cuneo, and a French translation of the same under the responsibility of Lyne Bansat-Boudon. A full description of all manuscript sources is planned for the introduction to the critical edition of the first chapter, for which more manuscripts have been collated.

37 Although not all of the manuscripts were used in the present edition, the same sigla as

number, the chapters covered, the script and material support, and, whenever available, the date.

TABLE 3 Inventory of located manuscripts of the *Abhinavabhārati*

	Place	Siglum ³⁸	Accession number	Chapters ³⁹	Script	Support	Date
1.	Adyar	A	TR 479 (38.G.14)	1–32 (inc.)	DN	Paper	
2.	Benares	B ₁	40765	1–6 (inc.)	DN	Paper	
3.	Benares	B ₂	40768	1–19	DN	Paper	
4.	Benares	(B ₃)	40766	20–31	DN	Paper	
5.	Delhi	D	148	1–32 (inc.)	DN	Paper	Jan. 1924 (Vol. 1)
6.	Lucknow	(L) ⁴⁰	?	(1–32 copy of A)	DN	Paper	
7.	Madras	M ₁	2478	1–19	DN	Paper	31.12.1917 28.4.1924 (compared with T ₄)
8.	Madras	M ₂	2774	29–32 (inc.)	DN	Paper	

provided in the list have been maintained in order to create a reference system that can be followed in other works on the *Abhinavabhārati*, and to avoid too many tables for the concordance of various works.

38 Most of the manuscripts have been inspected directly in India, or via the acquisition of digital copies or photocopies. The manuscripts that could not be inspected directly have their sigla in brackets.

39 The numbers of the chapters and verses in the description follow the last edition (E₁₍₄₎), although chapter 32 is given in the catalogues and in the manuscript as chapter 31. All of the manuscripts have a lacuna for part of chapter 7 and all of chapter 8.

40 The NCC records four manuscripts at Luck. Uni., p. 32, which is a list of about 200 manuscripts at Lucknow University. R.A. Sastri sent the names of a few manuscripts selected from this collection to the editors of the NCC. I had no access to this list; however, Yohei Kawajiri kindly looked for *Abhinavabhārati* manuscripts while in Lucknow in 2008 and found a transcript copied from the original of Adyar Library 38. G. 14 1,2. This and other MSS are not recorded in the *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Akhila Bharatiya Sanskrit Parishad Lucknow* compiled by Daulat Ram Juyal.

TABLE 3 Inventory of located manuscripts of the *Abhinavabhārati* (cont.)

	Place	Siglum	Accession number	Chapters	Script	Support	Date
9.	Madras	M ₃	2785	20–28	DN	Paper	
10.	Paris	P ^a	SL. 55 ⁴¹	17	DN	Paper	(7.4.1924) ⁴² 29.9.1924
11.	Pune	P ₁	No. 38 of 1916–1918 (342desc)	1–3	DN	Paper	
12.	Pune	P ₂	No. 41 of 1925–1926 (343desc) [= E ₁₍₂₎ ^{bha}]	1–32 (inc.)	DN	Paper	31.12.1925 (copied from B ₂ and collated with M ₁)
13.	Tirupati	Ti ⁴³	7559A	1–6	DN	Paper	

41 This manuscript is a transcript that was made for Sylvain Lévi and is now kept in his manuscript fund at the Bibliothèque de l'Institut d'Etudes Indiennes du Collège de France, Paris. I thank Ronan Moreau for sending me pictures of the first and last pages of the manuscript, at a time where the library was being moved and the manuscript was not accessible to the public.

42 This earlier date is found at the end of the manuscript with the indication 'Compared with original ms. MR J. S'. This looks like the same name and hand that had signed at the end of the first and second volumes of M₁ and of D. I believe that the copy was likely produced in Madras.

43 I came across this MS by chance while checking out *Abhinavabhārati* manuscripts on the website musicresearchlibrary.net (<http://musicresearchlibrary.net/omeka/items/show/129>, last accessed on 28.10.2019). I thank N. Ramanathan for drawing my attention to this rich corpus of online resources, including manuscripts and rare editions of musicological and dance texts. The number 7759A is also assigned to this manuscript in Premalatha 2011: 'Another Paper manuscript written by Kavi bears the number 7559a titled *Abhinavabhārati* and contains similar variant readings. This covers chapters 1–5 complete and 6th incomplete. This gives a lot of commentary than 7562a'. Manuscript 7562a, also according to V. Premalatha, 'is written by M R Kavi and contains plenty of variants from different manuscripts, mentioned by him in the Preface to the I and the II editions. This covers the chapters 17–22 complete and 23rd incomplete'. Premalatha says that in the Oriental Research Institute (ORI), Tirupati, there are manuscripts titled *Nāṭyaśāstra/Abhinavabhārati*, but only the two mentioned above actually contain sections of Abhinavagupta's commentary. Unfortunately, I was not able to locate any record of the *Abhinavabhārati* in the *Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts: Kāvya & Alankāra*

TABLE 3 Inventory of located manuscripts of the *Abhinavabhāratī* (cont.)

	Place	Siglum	Accession number	Chapters	Script	Support	Date
14.	Trivandrum	T ₁	T. 566A/B/C	A: 1–5 B: 6–9 (inc.) C: 29–31	DN	Paper	13.11.1922/ 5.12.1921/ 14.8.1922
15.	Trivandrum	T ₂	T. 551 A/B	A: 9 (inc.)–17 (inc.) B: 17 (inc.)–28 (inc.)	DN	Paper	10.5.1922, 20.5.1922
16.	Trivandrum	T ₃	T. 259	1 (inc.), 18, 19	DN	Paper	
17.	Trivandrum	T ₄	17703	1–6	Mal	Palm leaf	
18.	Trivandrum	T ₅	C. 1854	1, 18, 19	Mal	Palm leaf	
19.	Trivandrum	T ₆	20410	1–19 (inc.)	Mal	Palm leaf	
20.	Trivandrum	T ₇	20411	1–14 (inc.)	Mal	Palm leaf	
21.	Trippuni- thura	Tr	B. 239	6	Mal	Paper	
22.	Vadodara/ Baroda	V ^a	14049 [= E ₁₍₂₎ ^{ma}]	1–7	DN	Paper	1946
23.	Vishakha- patnam	V ⁱ	249	1	Tel	Paper	

4.2.2.1 Manuscripts Containing the Fourth Chapter

A Adyar Library, Madras/Chennai. MS TR 479 (1–4). Paper. Devanāgarī script. Described in the seventh volume of the library's *Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts* (Sarma 2015: 106–107). Dimensions as per catalogue: 21 × 16.5 cm. The catalogue lists chapters 1 to 29, 1,373 pages, but on direct inspection, the chapters are 1 to (31)32 (incomplete) and the number of pages 2,073. Lined paper, with 15 lines to a side. Bound in 4 volumes. Other identifiers found on the manuscript are 63557; XXIX D 11 (1–4). This manuscript is indexed under number 38.G.14 in *A Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Adyar Library, Part II*, p. 46 (Chintamani

of the Tirupati Sri Venkateswara University Oriental Research Institute (Ramamurthi & Matha 1993), nor in the *Alphabetical Index of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha Manuscripts Library, Tirupati* (Govindan et al. 2003).

1928b) under the title *Bharataśāstravyākhyā* (*Abhinavabhāratī*), 2079 *granthas*.

Vol. 1: chapters 1 to 4.

Chapter 4: pp. 127–408. Edited passage: pp. 196–202, 318–350.

Vol. 2: chapters 5 to 14. Pages are numbered 1 to 700 for chapters 1 to 6. After chapter 6 there are a few blank pages, then foliation starts anew with chapter 7.

Vol. 3: chapters 15 to 23. Page numbers continue from vol. 2.

Vol. 4: chapters 24 to (31)32. Page numbers continue from vol. 3, up to 1,373. End: *atrāpi pratāpahlādatvaśaighrāyavāntaram rājāder anyeṣyam evaṃ sarvatra grahājīnādayaḥ, uktavṛṣagās trivyādayaḥ kālā iti śasyagāhuḥ, hariḥ om*. This is marked as chapter 31, but it actually corresponds to ABh ad Nś 32.351–352, vol. 4, pp. 377–378. Incomplete.

Notes: The fourth chapter contains indications about a manuscript having different readings at the places where the text breaks. Some of them refer to the ‘manuscript of Govindadas of Vizagapatam’.

- B₁ Sampurnanand Sanskrit Visvavidyalaya, Sarasvati Bhavan Library, Benares. MS 40765. Paper. Devanāgarī script. Described in *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts, Acquired for and Deposited in the Sanskrit University Library (Sarasvati Bhavana), Varanasi, during the years 1791–1950*, Vol. XI of 1964, pp. 30–31. Dimensions as per catalogue: 8.6×13.5 inches (= 21.8×34.3 cm). Feint-lined paper, with 28 to 30 lines to a side. Chapters 1 to 6 (incomplete). 180 pages.

Chapter 4: p. 57 to 146. Edited passage: not transmitted.

Ends abruptly after six pages of chapter 6: *gāndharvavede gītakaviśeṣe devaṇakādiśabdaḥ tad etad uktam* (= ABh ad Nś 6.12–13).

Notes: It gives the *pratīkas* for the verses of the Nś with numbering. The MS is lacunose, but signals lacunae with dots.

- B₂ Sampurnanand Sanskrit Visvavidyalaya, Sarasvati Bhavan Library, Benares. MS 40768. Paper. Devanāgarī script. Described in *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts, Acquired for and Deposited in the Sanskrit University Library (Sarasvati Bhavana), Varanasi, during the years 1791–1950*, Vol. XI of 1964, pp. 32–33. Dimensions as per catalogue: 8.6×12.5 inches (= 21.8×31.7 cm). Feint-lined paper, with 18 lines to a side. Chapters 1 to 7 and 9 to 19.

On the front page of the manuscript, the chapters and number of pages are indicated. Chapter 7 is marked as ‘incomplete’ and chapter 8 as missing (*nāstī*). The numeration is continuous until chapter 14, p. 463, after

which chapters 15 to 17 are marked as 'supplied', and the numeration continues from chapter 18, p. 467, up to p. 620.

Chapter 4: pp. 61–165. Edited passage: not transmitted.

Notes: The first four pages contain the beginning of chapter 1 up to *yā gatir dānaśīlānām tām gatim prāpnuyāt tu saḥ || iti ||* These pages are not numbered and are written by a different hand. They are prefaced with an indication written in pen: 'Addenda to the volume of *Abhinavabhārati* sent by Mr. Govinda D.' After the change of pen and layout, numeration starts on p. 1 with *ti. etena 'kāmaḥ daśako guṇa' iti*. The MS is lacunose, but signals lacunae with dots. Sometimes a more complete text is added on top of the line in which the lacuna has been signalled.

- D National Archives, Delhi. MS 148, 3 parts. Listed in the *List of Sanskrit Manuscripts in National Archives of India*. Paper. Devanāgarī script. Lined paper, with 24 lines to a side. Chapters are 1 to (31)32 (incomplete).

First part: Chapters 1 to 6, pp. 1–311; at the end, written in a different hand: 'Compared with Original MSS MR. JS.'

Second part: Chapters 7 (incomplete) and 9 to 19, pp. 1–319

Third part: Chapters 28 to 32, pp. 1–246. On p. 106, the text is interrupted: *rudraśyānuvaro bhūtveti kecit. tasyārthasya*. (ABh ad Nś 28.11, vol. 4, pp. 7–8). After that, written in a different hand: *ataḥ prabhṛti adhyāyaparyantaṁ mātrkāyāṁ luptam*. Written in a third hand: 'Compared with Original MSS MR. JS 23.1.24.' The text ends on page 246: *atrāpi pratāpahlādakatvaśaighrādyavāntaraṁ rājer anyeṣyam evaṁ sarvatra grahājīvādayaḥ, uktavṛṣagās trivyādayaḥ kālā iti śasyagāhuḥ*. (ABh ad Nś 32.351–352, vol. 4, pp. 377–378). Written in a fourth hand: 'Compared with Original MSS JS., MR 15.5.24.'

Chapter 4: pp. 127–408. Edited passage: pp. 102–107, 154–172.

Notes: This manuscript is not recorded in the database by Kapila Vatsyayan. It incorporates different readings by bracketing them off after the original reading. Moreover, it features corrections in red by a second hand, thus indicating redactional activity.

- M₁ Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, University of Madras, Chennai. MS R. 2478. Paper. Devanāgarī script. Described in *A Triennial Catalogue of Manuscripts Collected During the Triennium 1916–17 to 1918–19 for the Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Madras, Volume III, Part 1, Sanskrit B* (Sastri 1922: 3477–3480). Dimensions as per catalogue: 10.7/8 inches, 9.5/8 inches (= 27.6 × 24.5 cm), 271 folios. Feint-lined paper, with 20 lines to a side. Chapters 1 to 19, bound in two volumes. Transcribed in 1917–

1918 from a MS. of M.R. Ry. Ampalakāt Karuṇākara Menon of Chalapuram, Calicut.

Vol. 1: chapters 1 to 6, pp. 1–275.

Chapter 4: pp. 64–167. Edited passage: pp. 90–93, 132–145.

Vol. 2: chapters 7 (incomplete) and 9 to 19, pp. 276–543.

Notes: At the end of volume 1, on p. 275, in blue pen, ‘Compared with original MSS’, signed ‘MR 15.1.18’. The following lines are also found on the same page: ‘Compared with the MS of Mr. Govindadas of Vizagapatnam Benares. Transcribed from the Ms. of M. R. Ry. Ampalakāt Karuṇākara Menon of Chalapuram, Calicut in 1917–1918. Compared with a different MS on laned (sic.) from Manavikrama Anujan Kunjunni Raja Second Raja Calicut.’⁴⁴ Two dates are found near this note, the first being 31.12.17, signed ‘M’ (?), and the second 28.9.24, bearing a different signature.

It is possible that another manuscript was consulted in 1924, hence after the date of publication of the 1922 catalogue and most probably before that of the 1926 *editio princeps*, which incorporates its variants. In the manuscripts, a number of corrections and marginal additions is in fact added in blue pen and, from page 3, in red pen. It appears that GOML 2478 was on loan for a certain period (at least since 1921, the date of the record of its variants in T₁, on which see below) at the Curator’s Office in Trivandrum, as recorded in vol. 7 of *A Catalogus of Mss. Collected by the Curator for the Publication of Sanskrit Manuscripts*, Trivandrum, by T. Ganapati Sastri, (1923). (= Triv. Cur. 137 in the NCC). The entry is listed as ‘*Abhinavabhārati* (*Nātyavedavivṛti*), [name of the person or library from which the manuscript was obtained] Mr. M. Ramakrishna

44 The same name appears as the owner of a manuscript containing the first 19 chapters of the *Abhinavabhārati*, recorded in 1923 in vol. 7 of *A Catalogue of Mss. Collected by the Curator for the Publication of Sanskrit Manuscripts*, Trivandrum, by T. Ganapati Sastri (1923) (= Triv. Cur. 138 in the NCC). The manuscript is said to belong to ‘Anujan Kunjunni Tampuran, Second prince, Calicut, Malayalam, 9000 *granthas*, *āditaḥ* 19 *adhyāyāḥ*’. This could have been the original Malayālam manuscript on which the copy of M₁ was based. It is reasonable to assume that the change in name in vol. 1, from ‘M. R. Ry. Ampalakāt Karuṇākara Menon of Chalapuram, Calicut’ to ‘Manavikrama Anujan Kunjunni Raja Second Raja Calicut’, must be due to a change in ownership of the MS between 1922 (the date of the Sastri catalogue) and 1923, when the manuscript was in the Curator’s Office, as recorded by T. Ganapati Sastri. Moreover, ‘Manavikrama Anujan Kunjunni Raja 3rd Raja Calicut’ appears as the owner of the original of vol. 2 of GOML 2478, dated 1917–1918, which means that he must have been upgraded to ‘Second Raja’ between 1918 and 1923, following the succession system of the Zamorins of Calicut, on which see Haridas 2016.

Kavi, Madras, Devanagari, 5000 *granthas*, 1-*adhyāyaikadeśam ārabhya* 19 *adhyāyāntam*’.

At the end of volume 2, on p. 543, the following is written:

‘Copied J. S. (?) 31.1.18’. ‘Copied in 1917–18 from a MS. of Manavikrama Anujan Kunjuni Rajha 3rd Raja Calicut’. In blue pen, there is written ‘Compared with original MSS.’ and signed ‘MR 31.1.18’; and ‘Compared also with the Manuscript of Mr. Govindadas of Vizagapatnam Benares’, signed ‘M (?) 3.2.18’. Another signature prints ‘M.A. J. 3.2.18’.

- P₂ Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune. MS 41 of 1925–1926 (343 desc). Paper. Devanāgarī script. Lined paper. Chapters 1 to (31)32 (incomplete). Feint-lined paper, with 21 lines to a side. Described in the *Descriptive Catalogue of the Government Collections of Manuscripts Deposited at the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, vol. XII, Alamkāra, Saṃgīta and Nāṭya*, Gode 1936. Dimensions as per catalogue: 8.3/8 × 13.3/8 inches (= 21.3 × 34). Feint-lined paper, with 28 to 30 lines to a side. 539 pages.

Chapter 4: pp. 42–93. Edited passage: not transmitted.

Notes: Written on the front page: ‘This MS. is copied from the MS. in the Benares Sanskrit Library by Ganesh Narhar Shrigondekar. B.A., Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Poone (India). Tuesday 31st December 1925’.

On the back of the front page, the *anukramaṇikā* gives the following information: chapter 7 is incomplete, chapter 8 is not given, chapter 22 has no ending, chapter 23 has no beginning, and chapter 31 is incomplete (this is actually chapter 32 in Kavi’s edition and has the same ending as A and D).

Written on the same page after the *anukramaṇikā*: ‘N.B. This manuscript is copied from the MS. in Benares Library. The MS. in Benares Library was copied at Trivandrum and subsequently collated with a MS. in the Government Oriental Library, Madras. The Benares MS. consisted of two volumes, first being a bound one containing 620 pages with additional loose 92 pages placed in several chapters. All these contained 19 chapters out of which 8th not being found. The second volume contained two loose sets of 78 and 189 pages. This contained next 12 chapters, the last is 31st being incomplete’.

- T₁ Oriental Research Institute, Trivandrum. MS T 566A/B/C. Paper. Devanāgarī script. Lined paper. Chapters 1 to 4, 5 to 9, and 29 to 31. Paper, with 20 lines to a side. Described as No. 1216 A&B/C (C.O.L. No. 566/C.O.L. No. 566 C) in *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Cur-*

ator's *Office Library*, vol. 7, Trivandrum: V.V. Press Branch, Ravi Varma 1940 (= TDC 1216 A&B+C). Dimensions as per direct inspection: 22×35 cm (the catalogue gives 8.1/4×13.1/2 inches).

T 566 A+B = No. 1216 A&B = COL 566 (From Curator's Office), chapters 1 to 9 (incomplete). 6000 *granthas*. Continuous foliation: 1–530. End: *paripatanam vāto cakram vakratvam maṇḍalaṃ vartulatvam* (ABh ad NŚ 9.67, vol. 1, p. 42).

Chapter 4: pp. 118–297. Edited passage: pp. 235–264.

T 566 C = No. 1216 C = COL 566 C (From Curator's Office), chapters 29 to (31)³² (incomplete; same ending as A, D, and P₂). 3300 *granthas*.

Notes: The manuscript is actually the beginning of the edition that was being prepared by T. Ganapati Sastri. The first 8 pages are printed and bear the date 29.3.1998, i.e. 13.11.1922. The rest is in manuscript form and gives the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* on the top half of the page and the *Abhinavabhāratī* on the bottom half. It offers an apparatus with variants for the *mūla* text and commentary, variously given with unidentified sigla: 'ka', 'kha', 'ga' ... The identification of the manuscripts used in the collation must await the future examination of a broader portion; however, for a few hypotheses concerning the portion edited here, see below. In the fourth chapter, the continuity of the text has been restored by arranging the displaced pages in the right order and subsequently renumbering them (the pagination is changed in several places). The first pages of the fourth chapter (pp. 118–158) are edited in red and black pen, and an apparatus of variants written in red pen. Thereafter (pp. 159–169), corrections are made only with a black pen and the apparatus is missing for the commentary.⁴⁵ The text continues with corrections in blue (pp. 170–199), black (pp. 200–232), blue (pp. 233–239), and again in black pen until the end (pp. 240–297).

T 566 A/B ends abruptly (the text will continue in 551 A), after which, on page 531 (unnumbered), it is written in Malayālam that what follows are variants from the manuscript of the *Abhinavabhāratī* at the Oriental Institute in Madras.

On page 532 (unnumbered): a date is written as 5.12.1921 at the top left of the page, followed by series of variants (*pāṭhabheda*), listed with *prṣṭha* (page) and *pañkti* (line) according to T₁. This continues for 5 pages. Then there is a page marked '1' at the top right, and '*prṣṭham* 46, *pañktiḥ* 93' at

45 This must be the point at which T. Ganapati Sastri gave up his editorial project after struggling with the fourth chapter, as Kavi reported.

the top left: *hastābhyām athetyādinā yat paścāt svastikākhyam karaṇam*. In the middle of page 4, another list of variants resumes. The next page restarts the numeration from 1, and again contains a long variant text, starting with *pādasvastikabhramaṇād dehasya sākṣātṛtaḥ | saṃjñāyām kan*. As far as I could verify, as concerns the passage edited here, the variants given at the end of T 566B correspond to the text of M₁, without the additions of T₄.⁴⁶

On the last page of variants, written in the same red pen as the variants, is written 'E.R. Krishnamacharya Sanskrit Pandit G.O. Mss Library Egmore Madras'.

On the very last page of the manuscript is written 'Manavikrama Anujan Kunjunni Raja 3rd Raja Kalikut'.⁴⁷

At the end of T 566 C, written in blue pen, is 'Compared with Original A.S. Charī 14.8.22 M.K. Srirangachariar'.

T₄ Oriental Research Institute, Trivandrum. MS 17703. Palm leaf. Malayāḷam script. Chapters 1 to 6 and 31 to 37. Described in the *Alphabetical Index of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the University Manuscripts Library*, vol. 6, Supplementary, Trivandrum: University of Kerala, Vijayan et al. 1995. Dimensions as per direct inspection: 39 × 4.5 cm. 7500 *granthas*.

The manuscript has two parts, written in different hands. The first part covers chapters 1 to 6 (incomplete), the second chapter 31 (incomplete) to 37.

Fourth chapter: 14v2–20r3. Edited passage: 14v2–17r8.

Ends in chapter 6: *etan neti śrīśaṅkukaḥ*.

The second part of the MS starts on f. 34 with ABh ad Nś 31.140. The foliation starts anew with *hariḥ* and the numeral '1' in Malayāḷam letter numerals written in the left margin.

Colophon of the MS: *nārāyanalikhītam idaṃ pustakam. Kāṭṭumāṭam*.

Written on the wooden cover: '169' (possibly the MS no. of the Kāṭṭumāṭam group donated to the library).⁴⁸

46 These variants have been labelled as T₁^{vl} in the apparatus of the present edition. They were most probably recorded in T₁ at the time when the manuscript GOML 2478 was on loan for a certain period at the Curator's Office in Trivandrum, on which see the notes on M₁ above.

47 This must correspond to the owner of the MS with the variants, i.e. M₁, that were incorporated by Krishnamacharya in Trivandrum.

48 On the Kāṭṭumāṭam *illam*, famous for its practice of *mantravāda*, see Parpola 1999: 181–182. I am grateful to Christophe Vielle for this reference and for his invaluable help in

- T₆ Oriental Research Institute, Trivandrum. MS 20410. Palm leaf. Malayālam script. Chapters 1 to 19 (incomplete). 130 folios. Described as n. 1404 in *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in H.H. the Maharajah's Palace Library*, vol. 7, Trivandrum: V.V. Press Branch, Sambasiva Sastri 1938. Dimensions as per direct inspection: 55 × 5 cm (the catalogue gives 22 × 2 inches, 130 leaves, 8 lines per page).
 Chapters 1, 2 (incomplete) and 4 to 19 (incomplete). 6750 *granthas*.
 Chapter 4: 19r5–42v5. Edited passage: not transmitted.
 End of manuscript: ABh ad Nś 19.97.
- T₇ Oriental Research Institute, Trivandrum. MS 20411. Palm leaf. Malayālam script. Chapters 1 to 14 (incomplete). 118 folios. Described as n. 1404 in *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in H.H. the Maharajah's Palace Library*, vol. 7, Trivandrum: V.V. Press Branch, Sambasiva Sastri 1938. Dimensions as per direct inspection: 53.5 × 5 cm (the catalogue gives 21.5 × 2 inches, 118 leaves, 10 lines per page).
 Chapters 1 to 14 (incomplete). 5300 *granthas*.
 Chapter 4: 19v10–46v9. Edited passage: not transmitted.
 End of manuscript: ABh ad Nś 14.1.
Notes: Lacunae are signalled with added spaces in this MS.
- Tⁱ Tirupati MS 7559A. Paper. Devanāgarī script. Chapters 1 to 6 (incomplete). 63 pages.⁴⁹
- V^a Vadodara/Baroda MS 14049. Paper. Devanāgarī script. Chapters 1 to 7 (incomplete). These data are given by Ramaswami Sastri in his preface to the second edition, while in the *Alphabetical List of Manuscripts in the Oriental Institute, Baroda*, vol. 11 (Nambiyar & Nyāyabhūṣaṇa 1950: 1112), there is a manuscript listed as no. 152 in the Alaṃkāra section under the label *Bharatanātyaśāstravyākhyā 'Abhinavabhārati'*, with the accession number 13282. This manuscript is said to consist of 137 leaves and 2250 *granthas*, and to contain only chapters 18 and 19, which does not correspond to the transcript collated by Ramaswami Sastri.

discussing details about Keralite manuscripts, as well as for providing me with PDFs of hard-to-find manuscript catalogues and lists.

49 I have been able to view this manuscript only online (<http://musicresearchlibrary.net/omeka/items/show/129>). The microfilm, made on 4 August 1986, is unfortunately almost illegible. For more on the history of this manuscript, see above, n. 43.

4.2.2.2 Relationship between the Manuscripts

Among the twelve manuscripts containing the fourth chapter, only seven contain the passage edited in this book, namely A, D, M₁, T₁, T₄, V^a, and Tⁱ. The others, i.e. B₁, B₂, P₂, T₆, and T₇, are all interrupted before the start of the passage and have a lacuna covering ABh ad Nś 4.253–282, as was noticed by Ramaswami Sastri for MS Bha (E₁₍₂₎^{bha}) = P₂. Among these two groups, a number of relationships can be identified on the basis of common omissions, conjunctive errors,⁵⁰ marginal notations, lacunae and repetitions.

In the first group of manuscripts, T₁ and T₄ (and Tⁱ, which I consider its copy) stand alone, for reasons I explain below. The other manuscripts can thus be grouped into two sets, which correspond to the A and B sets described by Kavi, i.e. the Madras and the Trivandrum sets:

A) To the Madras set belong manuscripts A, D, M₁, and V^a.

B) To the Trivandrum set belong manuscripts B₁, B₂, P₂, T₆, and T₇.

Regarding group A), manuscripts A, D, and V^a, can safely be considered to be copies of M₁. Ramaswami Sastri already informs us that V^a, the manuscript Ma he used to re-edit the text (= E₁₍₂₎^{ma}), is a transcript of M₁, produced in 1946. As to A, it also appears to be a direct copy of M₁, since it features the same breaks in chapter 4 and even provides the same indications about the different readings of another manuscript that was compared with M₁, the one of Govinda Das, to which I will return below.

The breaks in the text of M₁ are signalled in the left margin when they occur, and the page where the text continues after the interruption is also indicated there. This has indeed been very helpful in establishing some relationships of filiation between the manuscripts. The following can be given as evidence for A being a copy of M₁:

– When the text is interrupted the first time in M₁, on p. 81, l. 14, one reads in the left margin: ‘see of the pg. 84 for different reading’. The break is as follows:

l. 13: *pātayec cāgrayogena ... [sā sūcī]* (added with a different pen) [E₁₍₂₎, p. 105, l. 8]⁵¹

50 I use ‘conjunctive error’, in Paul Maas’s terminology, as ‘an error common to B and C of such a nature that it is highly improbable that B and C committed it independently of each other’, as quoted in Pecchia 2009–2010: 128, n. 33.

51 The first break is indicated by Ramaswami Sastri as on p. 109; however, a direct inspection of M₁ reveals that it is actually on p. 105, l. 8 of his edition that the link is first broken. The same should be corrected in the indication of the continuing passage after the second break, i.e. ‘2 After the Break on 166 are found pages 109–119’. Pp. 105–119 should be listed instead.

l. 14: *litaṃ kṛtveti nūpurapādam. dūtam ākṣiptetyādinā vivṛttaṃ karaṇam ihākṣiptaṃ hastapādaṃ ca [tritaṃ caiva]* (added with a different pen) *vipattitaṃ* [E₁₍₂₎, p. 162, l. 6–8]

The same reading can be found in A, p. 161, l. 12, with the number of pages indicated in the left margin changed accordingly: ‘See on the page 169 for different reading’.

l. 12: *pātayec cāgrayogena ... (sā sūcī)* (bracketed to mark the addition in M₁) [E₁₍₂₎, p. 105, l. 8]

l. 13: *litaṃ kṛtveti nūparapādam. dūtam ākṣiptetyādinā vivṛttaṃ karaṇam ihākṣiptaṃ hastapādaṃ ca tritaṃ caiva ...* [p. 162, l. 1] *vipattitaṃ* [E₁₍₂₎, p. 162, l. 6–8]

- Similarly, on p. 84b, the first two lines in M₁ read: ‘Different readings found in the ms. of Govindadas of Vizagapatam (from 14th line of 81st page to 84th page)’.

The text continues on p. 84b from the interruption on p. 81: *ardha ūrdhvaśabdena dvitīyasmin pāde sūcī kāryā.* [E₁₍₂₎, p. 105, l. 9]

Again, A adds the same reference, with pages indicated according to manuscript A. On p. 169, l. 11: ‘Different readings found in the ms. of Govindadas of Vizagapatam (from 13th line of 161st page to 169th page)’.

- References to the MS of Govindadas are similarly found in M₁ on:
 - p. 88a: ‘different readings found in the MS of Govindadas of Vizagapatnam from 13th line of 89th page to 6th line of 95th page’;
 - p. 108a: ‘Different readings found in the MS of Govindadas of Vizagapatam from 2nd line of 109th page to 4th line of 147th page’.

The same breaks and the same references to the MS of Govindadas are found in A:

p. 185, l. 5: ‘Different readings found in the MS of Govindadas of Vizagapatam from 7th line of 185th page to 10th line of 193rd page’;

p. 234: ‘different readings found in the MS of Govindadas of Vizagapatnam from 15th line of 234 page to ... page’.

- On A p. 235, l. 13, in the left margin, ‘108-b’ is written, which corresponds to p. 108b in M₁.

Manuscript A should therefore be considered a copy of M₁, and this is the reason why it has not been considered for the present edition, just as V^a.

As to manuscript D, I have examined it directly at the National Archives of India in Delhi. Whereas M₁ signals the interruption of the text in the margins, D signals it by writing ‘*nātra granthapātaḥ*’, then divides the page into two parts with a line, printing the text after the interruption in M₁ at the top, and the text as it should have followed continuously at the bottom, marking it as ‘*pāṭhāntaram*’. This *pāṭhāntara* corresponds to the text of M₁ as it is given after

the interpolated passages, and helps the reader to restore the continuity of the text.⁵² Although it looks like a copy of M_1 with a different layout in which the text is interrupted, I have nevertheless included D in the collation to show how, most of the time, it incorporates the additions of the second hand in M_1 . These additions (written in faded blue ink in M_1) are placed in brackets in D after the reading of the *prima mano* (though not systematically; sometimes M_1^{sm} is just incorporated into D without marking it off from the main text). Where the correction in M_1 is inserted by the *prima mano* (a normal 'pc'), D just transcribes the corrected version. In very rare cases, when the readings in D differ from M_1 , I suspect that they might have been corrected with the help of the edition or another manuscript, especially when the correction is suggested above the line and in brackets. D does not seem to incorporate the variants in M_1 that correspond to T_4 , more on which see below.

The constitution of M_1 deserves more detailed treatment, since this manuscript features clear signs of contamination or horizontal transmission.⁵³ As mentioned above, this transcript incorporates corrections by the copyist and additions in blue pen and red. These were not recorded in the incipit of the 1922 catalogue by Sastri, but they were recorded in $E_{1(1)}$ and should therefore give us some hints about the manuscripts that were used by Kavi. The variants in M_1 indeed correspond to the readings of T_4 . For instance, *sarvaśaktimayaṃ* in the third *maṅgala* verse in chapter 1 is corrected in the manuscript to *dhartṛśaktimayaṃ* (M_1^{sm}), which corresponds to the reading of T_4 . Although not recorded in Sastri's catalogue, this reading was accepted by Kavi in his edition, whereas he prints *sarvaśaktimayaṃ* in the apparatus as a variant of Ka (= $E_{1(1)}^{ka}$). The same holds for the reading *tadupajñāṃ pravṛttir* in M_1 (ABh ad NŚ 1.1, vol. 1, p. 2), printed as such in the catalogue but corrected to *tadupajñāṃ tāṇḍavapravṛttir* in M_1^{sm} . The original reading of M_1 is retained in Kavi's edition and the reading *tāṇḍavapravṛttir* is printed in the apparatus as $E_{1(1)}^{sā}$. Another hint to the fact that a manuscript corresponding to T_4 must have been compared with M_1 in April 1924—the date recorded at the end of the first part of M_1 —is that its variants are not recorded in D, which is a transcript of M_1 that bears January 1924 as the date of the copy. It remains unclear whether the comparison with T_4 was undertaken in Trivandrum, where M_1 seems to have been on loan between 1921 and 1923 (cf. n. 46), or in Madras, after the manuscript was

52 The list of the disconnected portions in the text of the fourth chapter provided in Ramaswami Sastri 1956: 24 has also proven useful in dealing with manuscript D.

53 On these and other technical terms in textual criticism, see, e.g., the carefully designed introduction to the critical edition of the *Nyāyamañjarī* in Graheli 2015, as well as Pecchia 2009–2010.

returned to the GOML, though the date 28.4.24 at the end of M_1 would plead for the latter assumption.

For the portion edited in this book, the *secunda mano* of M_1 does not seem to provide the variants of T_4 as in the first chapter, save for a few exceptions, but possibly the corrections made by comparison with the original Malayālam manuscript or with a manuscript close to T_1 , since in many cases M_1^{sm} corresponds to its readings. The manuscript of Govinda Das, also mentioned in the colophon of M_1 , is certainly part of group B, which does not showcase the relevant passage of the *Tāṇḍavādhyāya*. Hence, the *secunda mano* of M_1 in the passage edited here certainly does not include variants from this manuscript.

As already pointed out, T_1 represents the beginning of an edition containing variant readings, although for the passage that concerns us here, T_1 provides no apparatus, but only corrections made directly to the text, which I chose to signal as T_1^{pc} , since it is difficult to decide whether this is a second hand. T_1^{pc} appears to have been corrected largely based on a manuscript similar to M_1 , even in cases where the reading in T_1^{ac} was clearly better, possibly representing a work still in progress, where the corrections do not necessarily represent the chosen variant but simply the collation, though not done systematically. In many cases, its readings correspond to the text of T_4 , either as unique readings or before correction. In other cases, T_1 offers readings that are not found in other manuscripts, a few of which present a more readable text and have thus been retained against other testimony. It is unfortunately impossible, given the present state of the available sources, to decide with any certainty whether T. Ganapati Sastri was using better manuscripts for his edition that are no longer available (possibly the original Malayālam manuscript of M_1 ?), or if the scribe in charge of the transcript had sufficient knowledge of the text to silently correct it when the original did not make sense. An example in point is the following variant: *gītakārtheti gīteṣv*] T_1^{ac} ΣE, *gītakārtheti gīteṣy* D M_1 T_1^{pc} , *gītakārthe 'bhihiteṣv* T_4 . The text of T_1^{ac} , adopted by all the editions, was obviously corrected based on a manuscript that had an incorrect text corresponding to M_1 , while the text of T_4 might represent a *lectio facillior*, issuing from the confusion between *gī/hi(teṣv)* and the suppletion of the syllable *bhi* at the beginning, replacing the *ti* of (*gītakārthe*)*ti*. Now, whether T_1 copied an original manuscript with the reading *gīteṣv* or whether the scribe restored it—possibly also having T_4 in front of him, since some of their readings coincide where M_1 has something else—cannot be settled at present. Nevertheless, although showing contamination and editing, T_1 is considered a valuable witness in the present edition, midway between a manuscript and an edition.

With regard to group B), manuscripts B_1 , B_2 , P_2 , T_6 , and T_7 have not been used in the collation, since they have a lacuna where the relevant passage is given in

the other set. Some of the manuscripts, however, have been collated for the rest of chapter 4, and their variants, whenever preferred to the editions, have been given in a sort of minimum negative apparatus to the Sanskrit text, supplied in the notes to the various chapters of the book. In particular, T₆ and T₇ have been considered, since they are in Malayālam script and since the transcripts in Devanāgarī are clearly copies of these. A number of shared conjunctive errors between T₇, B₁, and B₂ suggest that T₇ must reasonably be considered B₁ and B₂'s common exemplar.

As mentioned above, B₁ signals lacunae with dots, as for instance in *muni-munipra ... py eṣāpūjāka ... prasaṅgād* (ABh ad Nś 4.1, vol. 1, p. 84). This passage shows the same lacunae and the same repetition 'munimuni' as in T₇, which T₆ does not display. However, it sometimes differs from T₇, suggesting a possible perusal of M₁. See, for instance, ABh ad Nś 4.320, vol. 1, p. 203: *gītākādeś ca*] Σ_E: *gītādeś ca* A B₁ D M₁ T₁^{pc}, *gītā(...)**dyasya* B₂, *gītādyo 'sya* T₁^{ac} T₇^{pc}, *gītā(śyo)**dyāsyā* T₆, *gītādyasyā* T₇^{ac}. Its exemplar appears to be a Malayālam MS; cf. *ibid.* for errors such as *tattvāpatty*] M₁ T₁ Σ_E, *tattvā ca ny*° B₁ B₂ T₇, *tattvāpaty*° A T₆.

B₂ starts with a text that is marked as 'Addenda to the volume of *Abhinavabhāratī* sent by Mr. Govinda D.' These addenda correspond to the text of the GOML manuscript (M₁), with which the Benares manuscript was subsequently collated, according to what is written in P₂, which is a direct copy of B₂. Chapters 15 to 17 are also marked as 'supplied', and they do in fact appear to have been supplied from M₁. As to P₂, the number of chapters and pages make it clear that it cannot be but a copy of B₂, which itself was copied from a Trivandrum MS and collated with M₁. The first three pages of P₂ correspond to the initial four pages supplied in B₂ from M₁, and are separated from the following by repeating the title of the work. The part copied thereafter is from the Trivandrum original, whose lacunae had already been filled in B₂ with the more complete readings of M₁. Here, however, the text is copied as a continuum, without signalling the breaks in the text. Only the bracketed parts of B₂ are still visible. All of the transcripts in the B) group therefore show signs of contamination with M₁. As to the exemplar of B₂ from Trivandrum, the spaces left in B₂ are usually the same as those of T₆ and T₇; however, the repetition of *muni-muni*°, present in T₇ but not in T₆, suggests that it must be T₇, just as in the case of B₁.

It is now not difficult to determine the identity of the original manuscript, of which T. Ganapati Sastri gave a copy to Ganganath Jha. This same copy was borrowed by Kavi from Govinda Das of Benares (formerly in Viśākhapatnam = Vizagapatnam) and collated with M₁. The copy of Govinda Das must later have been given to the Sarasvati Bhavan Library in Benares, where the missing

parts were again supplied by means of M_1 . My conclusion is that the Malayālam exemplar of Govinda Das's copy—which had circulated so widely among early editors—must be T_7 , although Kavi indicated its number of chapters as 19 (Kavi 1929: 560), which would rather point to T_6 . It is possible that Kavi was informed about a manuscript with 19 chapters at the Mahārāja's Library in Trivandrum, corresponding to T_6 , but then received only the copy of T_7 , also from the Palace Library, which he mistakenly took for T_6 . He in fact records that 'the late Mr. Gopinath Rao secured in Travancore another copy of the commentary (chs. 1–19) which was as bad as the Palace copy' (ibid.), in all probability corresponding to T_6 . A direct inspection of T_7 shows that this is a much more recent copy, showing similar lacunae to T_6 , but most probably not a direct copy of T_6 , since the length of the lacuna sometimes differs and they do not have the same scribal mistakes (for instance the already quoted repetition in T_7 *munimunipra* ...).

Besides the two groups of manuscripts thus isolated, ultimately all copies of M_1 or T_6/T_7 (except for the exceptional T_1), a further manuscript merits some attention, namely T_4 . This is not, properly speaking, a manuscript of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, but it is a synthesis of its first six chapters (up to the middle of ch. 6), which reproduces most of its text verbatim, but avoids many lengthy passages and sometimes provides a summary. As I have suggested above, it can only be the summary Kavi attributed to Pūrṇasarasvatī, although I have not been able to find any evidence in support of its authorship by the renowned Keralite dramatist and literary critic.⁵⁴ T_4 sometimes has better readings, although they have to be considered with some reservations, since the author of this summary might have improved on what was already a corrupt copy of the text. Since T^1 presents the same summarized text, its lineage is safely established. This copy of T_4 , possibly made by Kavi, has therefore not been considered for collation.

54 Many authors report with scepticism the attribution of such an epitome of the *Abhinavabhāratī* to Pūrṇasarasvatī on the sole evidence of Kavi's word in the *editio princeps*. The only connection I can see between T_4 , which I believe was the epitome seen by Kavi, and Pūrṇasarasvatī is that this author is traditionally associated with the Kāṭṭumāṭam family (Unithiri 2004: 16–17), where the manuscript is said to come from, at least its second part if we follow the colophon.

4.3 A Note on the Sanskrit Text and Translation

In the following section, I present the critical edition of the Sanskrit text of Abhinavagupta's *Abhinavabhāratī* ad *Nāṭyaśāstra* 4.261cd–269ab, furnished with an annotated translation on the opposite pages. The collation work was based on the text of the fourth revised edition of the GOS by Krishnamoorthy from 1992, which was collated with the four manuscripts that contain the relevant passage: D, M₁, T₁, and T₄. Their variants as *post correctionem* or *secunda mano* have been also recorded, so that cases of contamination remain visible to the reader. I have also provided the text of E₁₍₁₎, E₁₍₂₎, and their variants, as well as E₂, whenever different from E₁₍₄₎.

In the sections that bear parallels in Hemacandra's *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*, I have provided the textual variants from the two auto-commentaries *Alaṃkāracūḍāmaṇi* (KAA) and *Viveka* (KAV), as well as the reconstructed passages in Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa in Bhayani 1993. Though, strictly speaking, these qualify as reference sources,⁵⁵ I have treated them as primary sources for the sake of visibility, and in order to signal places where the editors might have preferred the readings transmitted in the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana* to those available in the manuscripts. As explained in the previous section, the case of T₄ is somewhat comparable to that of the KAA and KAV, since its text represents a case of rewriting by a later author. But while T₄ is a summary of the *Abhinavabhāratī* closer to the original, the commentaries on the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana* present a more complex case of textual reuse in which the text is rearranged and modified to fit the different context of Hemacandra's discussion of theatrical and dance genres. The Appendix at the end of the book provides the text of *Kāvyaṅuśāsana* 8.4, with its two commentaries, which feature excerpts from the passage edited here, in the second revised edition of 1964 by Parikh and Kulkarni.

The critical apparatus has three registers: the first, from the top to the bottom, records the textual variations in the manuscripts (in alphabetical order), the editions, and the two commentaries on the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*. The middle register indicates longer textual portions where the text in T₄, KAA, KAV, or elsewhere differs, providing the beginning and end of the passages that vary significantly or are not preserved. These two registers are connected to the transliterated text through line numbers, and occasionally page numbers, whenever the text extends to the following pages. The third layer provides quotations and parallels from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, indicated in the transliterated text by letters that restart on each new page. This is to avoid confusion with the notes on

55 On 'reference sources' and their range, see Pecchia 2015: 100–102.

the translation, which proceed in ascending order also on the pages with the Sanskrit text.

As stated repeatedly, the text of the fourth chapter is extremely corrupt, and the manuscript transmission appears to be highly contaminated. Even though errors may not be helpful for understanding the contents of the text, they can be useful in order to individuate genetic relations between manuscripts. The choice of retaining them in the critical apparatus was guided by the consideration that a positive apparatus, however full of scribal mistakes, can certainly be useful as a basis for further comparison of the manuscripts for other portions of the text that may show different characteristics. Moreover, it avoids the unexciting prospect of repeating the process of collation a second time.

As is the standard practice in the publication of Sanskrit texts, the root text, i.e. the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, is given in bold characters and followed by the *Abhinavabhāratī*. *Pratikas* and words in the commentary taken from the *mūla* text are also printed in bold. The paragraphs of the translation follow the general layout of the Sanskrit text, which in its turn is largely based on the text of the printed editions. The paragraphs nonetheless have occasionally been divided differently, and punctuation marks have been changed or supplied for the sake of clarity. Changes in punctuation have generally not been indicated in the notes, except when they considerably alter the understanding of the meaning, and the sandhi has been standardized. *Loci desperandi*, as well as passages in Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa that I have tentatively restored without any certitude, have been placed within cruces.

An analysis of the text and its contents, with numbers assigned to the different sections and arguments presented, has been prefaced to the edition and translation, with the aim of helping the reader follow the flow of the argumentation and its different interlocutors—in particular, its main divisions into a *pūrvapakṣa* and an *uttarapakṣa*, and the two main opponents voicing them: what I have dubbed the *abhedapakṣin*, i.e. the holder of the non-difference between theatre and dance, and the *bhedapakṣin*, i.e. the holder of their difference. The same numbering is maintained in the edition and translation to facilitate their parallel reading. Titles within square brackets have been added in the translation to mark the *pūrvapakṣa* and its three main interpretations, as well as the beginning of the *uttarapakṣa* or *siddhānta*. Words that are not explicit in the Sanskrit text but need to be supplied in the translation for the sake of clarity, additional explicative sentences, and changes of interlocutor have been placed within square brackets.

As a general principle, while translating the *Nāṭyaśāstra-Abhinavabhāratī* complex as a textual unit, I have rendered Bharata's text as interpreted in the light of Abhinavagupta's commentary. Within the limits allowed by the terse-

ness of the *mūla* text, I have opted for a translation of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* that is as plain as possible in order to preserve something of its own narrative style and language, which are closer to those of a Purāṇa. Given the free syntax of some of the verses, however, I was frequently obliged to turn to Abhinavagupta's commentary in order to solve ambiguities or multiple possible interpretations for the same passage. Whenever Abhinavagupta's reading appeared significantly removed from that of Bharata, or from what we can hypothetically reconstruct as attributed to him, I have signalled it in the notes to the translation.

Apart from recording such variation in Abhinavagupta's interpretation of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the footnotes to the translation also provide a philological rationale whenever I have chosen to translate a reading that is different from the one provided in the text of the edition. My conjectural reconstructions are based, as far as possible, on hypotheses about the textual transmission and corruption, sometimes supported by palaeographic considerations, or by parallel passages in other portions of the *Abhinavabhāratī* and elsewhere, which are also supplied in the annotations to the translation. On occasion, the critical notes contain a reader-friendly recapitulation of the arguments and how they connect logically with previous or successive steps in the discussion, according to my own numbering in the analysis of the text.

4.4 Symbols and Abbreviations in the Apparatus

ABh	<i>Abhinavabhāratī</i> [pages given according to E ₁₍₄₎]
Nś	<i>Nāṭyaśāstra</i> [pages given according to E ₁₍₄₎]
D	<i>Abhinavabhāratī</i> manuscript, Delhi National Archives no. 148
M ₁	<i>Abhinavabhāratī</i> manuscript, GOML Madras no. 2478
T ₁	<i>Abhinavabhāratī</i> manuscript, ORI Trivandrum no. T 566A
T ₄	<i>Abhinavabhāratī</i> manuscript, ORI Trivandrum no. 17703
Σ _M	Reading in all manuscripts
E ₁₍₁₎	First edition GOS by M. Ramakrishna Kavi
E ₁₍₂₎	Second edition GOS by K.S. Ramaswami Sastri
E ₁₍₄₎	Fourth edition GOS by K. Krishnamoorthy
E ₁₍₂₎ ^{ma}	Variants in E ₁₍₂₎ from <i>Abhinavabhāratī</i> Manuscript no. 14049, Oriental Institute, Baroda
E ₁₍₂₎ ^{bha}	Variants in E ₁₍₂₎ from <i>Abhinavabhāratī</i> Manuscript no. 343, BORI, Pune
E ₁	Reading in GOS (E ₁₍₁₎ , E ₁₍₂₎ , E ₁₍₄₎)
E ₂	Edition by Madhusudan Shastri
Σ _E	Reading in all editions

KAA	Variants in Hemacandra's <i>Alaṃkāracūḍāmaṇi</i> ad <i>Kāvyaṅuśāsana</i>
KAV	Variants in Hemacandra's <i>Viveka</i> ad <i>Kāvyaṅuśāsana</i>
Bhayani	Variants in Bhayani 1993
corr.	correction
conj.	conjecture
nāṭya→nṛtta	passage from <i>nāṭya</i> to <i>nṛtta</i> is missing
nāṭya ... nṛtta	text breaks off after <i>nāṭya</i> and continues with <i>nṛtta</i>
nāṭya(...)nṛtta	same, but the lacuna is signalled by an added blank space
nāṭya[...f]nṛtta	illegible syllable(s), occasionally with the number of syllables or the syllables presumed missing given within brackets
nāṭya(+1)nṛtta	missing syllable signalled by the scribe
ac	<i>ante correctionem</i> = before correction
pc	<i>post correctionem</i> = after correction
sm	<i>secunda mano</i> = second hand
vl	<i>varia lectio</i> = variant reading
om.	omitted
p.n.p.	passage not preserved
†...†	text corrupt beyond reconstruction

Analysis of ABh ad NŚ 4.261cd–269ab

1. The opponent's doubt (*pūrvapakṣa* [PP]= NŚ 261cd–263ab)
 - 1.1. Introduction to the PP
 - 1.2. Doubt: Is dance different from theatre or not? If different, does it have a purpose?
 - 1.3. First thesis/*abhedapakṣa*: Dance is no different from theatre
 - 1.3.1. Argument of the *abhedapakṣin* [AP]: Dance and theatre have the same characteristics; they contain bodily movements and songs
 - 1.3.2. Dance, just like theatre, contains acting that is applied to a text rendered through singing, whose content has to be brought into being
 - 1.3.3. Minor differences in characteristics do not constitute a difference in nature, even among the ten dramatic genres. Example: having a single performer and using *ākāśabhāṣita* are characteristics of the monologue play Bhāṇa
 - 1.3.4. Rāhula (supporting 1.3.3): Dance uses the theatrical convention of *ākāśabhāṣita* to address absent characters
 - 1.3.5. Bharata (supporting 1.3.3): The *lāsya* dance, like the Bhāṇa, is enacted by a single performer
 - 1.3.6. *Vārttika* (supporting 1.3.1): Theatre and dance both express textual content through bodily movements; thus they are not different
 - 1.4. Objection of the *bhedapakṣin* [BP]: Dance is different from theatre, since it produces no evident cognition of the contents enacted
 - 1.4.1. AP: No, since cognitions of the imitated characters in specific situations arise also in dance
 - 1.5. Intermediate proposal of the BP: In dance, acting is performed to a text that is sung (as per 1.3.2)
 - 1.5.1. Objection of the AP (reinforcing 1.3.3): Minor differences in characteristics do not constitute a difference in nature; in theatre too we see a dramatic text delivered through singing, for instance in the *nāṭyāyita*
 - 1.6. Imaginary objection of the BP: The Ḍombikā etc. are not theatre, since they are not included among the ten dramatic genres
 - 1.6.1. Answer of the AP: This is inconclusive, since there are other dramatic forms not listed by Bharata, and since Kohala has included dramatic genres along with dance genres

- 1.6.2. AP: All the different registers of acting are seen in dance as well, though in different degrees, as in the *lāsyāṅgas*
- 1.7. Imaginary objection of the BP: The various segments in a Ḍombikā etc. are not reciprocally connected, while in theatre they are all connected to the main topic
- 1.7.1. Answer of the AP: Even in dance there is a main theme—either the praise of the deities or the amorous *rasa*—as argued by Bharata, and as is demonstrated in the Ḍombikā genre, which declares its theme at the outset
- 1.8. Conclusion of the first view, or *abhedapakṣa*: Dance is no different from theatre, since it has its same characteristics
- 1.9. Recapitulation of the PP: Since acting has been devised for grasping the meanings of a poetic composition as if they were directly present, why has dance been designated with a different word?
- 1.10. *Abhyupagama*: Examination of the second view, or *bhedapakṣa*: Dance is different from theatre
- 1.10.1. Objection of the AP: If dance is different from theatre, what nature and characteristics does it have?
- 1.10.2. AP: If dance were considered to be worldly, it would be just a shadow of theatre; if otherworldly, it would be a subspecies of theatre
2. The BP: Dance as an independent genre
- 2.1. BP: If dance were imagined to be a subspecies of theatre (as per 1.10.2), it would still have a different purpose; it would be characterized by the *bhāvas*
- 2.2. AP: No, because we see instruction in the aims of mankind also in the *rāgakāvya*s and other danced genres
- 2.3. AP: It is not possible to establish a difference between theatre and dance on the basis of purpose
- 2.4. First interpretation of the PP (against 2.1): Since the danced genres have been devised for attaining the ends of men, why should dance not be theatre? Since their characteristics and purpose are the same, they cannot but have the same nature
- 2.4.1. *Vārttika* supporting AP (2.2)
- 2.5. Conclusion of the AP: Dance is no different from theatre since their nature and purpose are no different
3. Dance within the play
- 3.1. Intermediate proposal of the BP: The danced genres are dramatic because they use enactment, but abstract dance that is devoid of it is not

- 3.2. Objection of the AP: What would be the purpose of such dance?
- 3.3. Answer of the BP: It is used in theatre as an element of bodily acting
- 3.4. Second interpretation of the PP (against 3.3): In theatre, the means of enactment are useful for attaining the meanings as directly manifested, but dance that is devoid of enactment has no purpose of its own
 - 3.4.1. Imaginary objection of the BP: Dance is employed for allure, like songs and instrumental music
 - 3.4.2. Answer of the AP: Songs do communicate implicit meaning in theatre, and music coordinates the instrumentation and the enactment; but what is the purpose of dance?
- 3.5. Answer of the BP: Dance is used in theatre for combat and other movement on stage
- 3.6. The AP retorts: In that case, what is the nature of dance? If worldly, it would be a kind of bodily acting; if otherworldly, it would be counted as *nātyadharmī* and abides by theatrical convention
4. Dance in the *pūrvaraṅga*
 - 4.1. Intermediate proposal of the BP: Dance is used for multifariousness in the *pūrvaraṅga*
 - 4.2. Question of the AP: Even then, is it performed simultaneously with songs or in a certain relation of principal and subordinate?
 - 4.2.1. The first case would lead to impropriety, but as dance is connected with music, it must be a form of bodily acting
 - 4.2.2. The narrative about the introduction of dance in the *pūrvaraṅga* supports 4.2.1
 - 4.3. Third interpretation of the PP (against 4.1): If enactment is devised for conveying the meanings of the songs before the spectators, why should one call it 'dance'? If dance is used to enact the content of a song, what different nature, other than bodily acting, could it have?
 - 4.4. Intermediate proposal of the BP: Dance is not used as an enactment in connection with songs
 - 4.5. Question of the AP: How then is dance used in connection with music?
 - 4.6. Interpretation of the second part of the PP (against 4.4): Dance is not connected with songs, i.e. it is not counted as one of its constituent elements, since it belongs to a different class
 - 4.7. Imaginary objection to 4.6 by the BP: Dance is used with songs like instrumental music
 - 4.8. Answer to 4.7 in the PP: Dance does not bring any object into being, i.e. it does not forward the goals aimed at by music

- 4.8.1. Elaboration of 4.8 by the AP: All the different musical instruments contribute to either the melodic, rhythmic, or lyrical part of music. Dance falls under the lyrical part; therefore it is a form of acting (4.2.1) and thus no different from theatre (4.3)
- 4.9. Intermediate proposal of the BP: Dance, consisting in *recakas* and *aṅgahāras*, does not enact the meanings, but brings about a good result, just like ritual formulas and visualizations
 - 4.9.1. Bharata supports the connection of the *aṅgahāras* with the various components forming the songs of the *pūrvavaṅga*
- 4.10. The AP: Given the BP's premises, such a connection amounts to nothing
5. Summary of the PP as threefold: Dance cannot be established as different from theatre if we intend it as:
 - 5.1. An independent genre
 - 5.2. Part of the play
 - 5.3. Part of the *pūrvavaṅga* in connection with songs
6. *Uttarapakṣa*: Refutation of the *pūrvapakṣa*
 - 6.1. *Avataranikā* of the three verses of Bharata refuting the PP (Nś 4.263cd–266ab)
 - 6.2. The *uttarapakṣin* (UP) or BP, correcting 1.3.1: To say that forms of staged dance like *rāgakāvya*s are no different from theatre since they contain bodily movements and songs is inconclusive, since the logical reason extends to mundane dance
 - 6.3. Answer of the AP, recalling what said in 1.4.1 and recapitulating the sense of *abhinaya* in the PP 1.9: Unlike in staged dance and theatre, in mundane dance the words, whether a) recited or b) sung, are c) neither enacted d) nor are they brought to direct perception
 - 6.4. UP: Dance does not conform to any object to be brought to direct perception (against 1.9)
 - 6.4.1. The UP, refuting 6.3: It is not established that only in theatre and staged dance are meanings enacted, because a) in the world, gestures accompany words, and b) singers use some form of enactment
 - 6.4.2. Further fallacy of 6.3 c): If forms lacking *abhinaya* fall outside the scope of theatre, then this applies to forms of staged dance as well. An example is the *Ḍombikā*, echoing 1.5: the meaning of the song is brought out through singing, and bodily movement just adapts to its delicate form, without enacting it

- 6.4.3. Refutation of 6.3 d): In the *Ḍombikā*, there is no direct perception of the content of the song, since we cannot attribute the dialogues to a character uttering them
- 6.4.4. Description of the narrative phase of a *Ḍombikā*, which aims at charming the king through song, dance, and music
- 6.4.5. Description of the dance phase of a *Ḍombikā*, where the song is taken up by the vocalist, and the dancer does not enact its content, but just follows the rhythmic and melodic patterns
- 6.4.6. Instruction is not the aim of the *Ḍombikā* (against 2.2), since the dancer-performer does not show the *ḍombikā* as similar to a directly perceived character
- 6.4.7. The gestures of the dancer are mainly for display—they are not a form of bodily acting; thus, dance only metaphorically shares the features of theatre
- 6.5. To say that dance is like the prologue, life, or reflection of theatre is metaphorical speech, since no restriction on bodily movement, language, or costume with respect to contents or characters applies to the *lāsyāṅgas* of the *pūrvaraṅga*
- 6.5.1. The *lāsyāṅgas* do not use *ākāśabhāṣita* like the *Bhāṇa*, since they have no dramatic dialogue, but songs (against 1.3.3 and 1.6.2)
- 6.5.2. There is no *anukārya* in dance, since the dancer does not wear a costume appropriate to the character (against 1.4.1)
- 6.5.3. The nature of *nātyāyita* cannot be attributed to *lāsyā* dance (against 1.5.1), since the *nātyāyita* is a reaction to the emotional core of a song, not just its gestural rendering
- 6.5.4. Similarly, the nature of *nātyāyita* cannot apply to *nṛttakārya*, since the psychophysical states triggered by the song do not affect the acting in the latter
- 6.6. Dance does not conform to any object to be taught (against 2.1)
- 6.6.1. The UP: Dance has a different aim than theatre; though pleasure and instruction may be obtained secondarily, its primary aim it to satisfy the deities, which is an invisible result
- 6.6.2. Even the *Ḍombikā* as a staged form aims at satisfying the deities, though the *ḍombikā* as its embedded character aims at delighting the king and earning material gain, which is a visible result
- 6.6.3. Both the dancer and her patron aim at satisfying the deities through dance, as supported by an anonymous quotation

- 6.6.4. Objection of the AP (recalling 2.2): Pleasure and instruction are experienced in dance just as in theatre, by adding a pleasurable element to the pedagogical content of the text
- 6.6.5. Answer of the UP: It should be the same for songs, too. The difference is that in theatre, instruction in the aims of man is principal, just like in Purāṇic storytelling. Thus the result of dance is different from that of theatre
- 6.7. The UP announces a further difference in the characteristics of dance and theatre
- 6.8. The UP: The logical reason behind the commonality of characteristics and purpose in theatre and dance is not established
 - 6.8.1. Restatement of Bharata's UP (according to 6.4): Dance does not conform to any object to be directly manifested
 - 6.8.2. Restatement of Bharata's UP (according to 6.6): No object in dance depends on instruction in the means to attain the goals of men
 - 6.8.3. Conclusion of the UP: Therefore, dance is different from theatre, which invalidates the threefold PP (as per 5.1–3)
- 6.9. Objection of the PP, recalling 3.2: If it is different from theatre, what would be the use of dance within it?
 - 6.9.1. Counter-objection of the UP: What about songs?
 - 6.9.2. Answer of the PP, recalling 3.4.3: As previously stated, songs provide additional content
 - 6.9.3. The UP, showing the faults in the PP's reasoning: Then let songs be simply recited without the notes and embellishments
 - 6.9.4. Readjustment of the PP, recalling 3.4.1: We agreed that what is pleasurable helps in grasping the meanings
 - 6.9.5. The UP: This is indeed how dance is used in theatre, which moreover guarantees its cognition as a fire-wheel
- 6.10. The UP, stating the positive role of dance as meant to create beauty, which helps the aesthetic experience
- 6.11. Imaginary objection: charm is not specific to dance, but to other pleasurable actions as well, like eating
 - 6.11.1. In this connection, Bharata utters the next verses (NŚ 4.264cd–266ab), where the pleasurable nature of dance is connected with its auspicious character
 - 6.11.2. The link between dance and beauty has already been stated in connection with the *kaiśikī vṛtti*

7. *Avatarāṅikā* to NŚ 4.266cd–267ab: What is the nature to which dance conforms?
- 7.1. Dance was introduced in the *pūrvarāṅga* because the dry syllables were rejected by the gods and put into practice by the Bhūtas
 - 7.2. UP: Abstract dance is performed in the musical segments containing dry syllables, which are used at the beginning of songs
 - 7.2.1. Therefore, it is not true that dance can only be included among the elements of a song provided it is a kind of bodily acting [refutation of 4.8.1]. *Kriyās* are an example to the contrary
 - 7.2.2. To say that dance is used to enact the meanings of a song is metaphorical
 - 7.2.3. *Abhinaya* is also used in a secondary sense in storytelling (as stated in 6.4.1 against 6.3)
 - 7.2.4. A deviant interpretation of the word *pratīkṣepa* in the verse
 - 7.2.5. A second acceptable interpretation of the word *pratīkṣepa* in the verse
 - 7.3. Conclusion: Dance is used purposefully within theatre and in the *pūrvarāṅga* in connection with songs
8. *Avatarāṅikā* to NŚ 267cd–268ab: Bharata illustrates the scope of narrative dance through a story of the past
- 8.1. Śiva asks Taṇḍu to connect dance with the text of the songs
 - 8.2. Story of the past (justifying 8.1): While Śiva was dancing, Nārada sang a story and enacted it; Śiva asked Taṇḍu to connect the *tāṇḍava* with the acting
 - 8.3. Doubt introducing NŚ 4.268cd–269ab: What is the semantic scope of the word *tāṇḍava*?
 - 8.4. Answer: *Tāṇḍava* refers to the totality of dance, and *lāsya* is a particular case of it
 - 8.4.1. *Tāṇḍavidhi* as a vehement dance performed to a poem in praise of the deities in which *dharmavīra* is the main *rasa*
 - 8.4.2. *Sukumāraprayoga* as a delicate dance performed to a poem in which *śṛṅgāra* is the main *rasa*
 - 8.4.3. *Rasa* is found in theatre, and poetry is a part of it, thus it contains *rasa*. When dance is connected with the *rasa* in a poem, it is metaphorically called ‘theatre’
 - 8.5. Mixed uses of dance depend on the topic of the poetic text
 - 8.5.1. Exemplification of mild and vehement dance in the existing genres

- 8.5.2. Definitions of the genres of narrative dance given by the ancients
- 8.5.3. Despite their having several topics, these genres find unity in the praise of the deities or the amorous *rasa* (refuting the objection of unconnectedness adduced by the BP in 1.7)
- 8.5.4. Definition of the *rāgakāvya*
- 8.5.5. In *rāgakāvya*, the melodic pattern and language are independent of the poetic meaning
- 8.6. Conclusion: Śiva created dance in seven forms, and Taṇḍu connected it with the musical accompaniment, as well as with the poetic text
 - 8.6.1. Two main divisions among the seven forms: abstract dance, and dance connected with songs.
 - 8.6.2. Recapitulation of the narrative told in chapter 4

Edition and Translation: *Abhinavabhārati* ad *Nāṭyaśāstra* 4.261cd–269ab

Nāṭyaśāstram (NŚ)

[1]

ṛṣaya ūcuḥ—

5 na yadā prāptyarthaṁ arthānāṁ tajjñair abhinayaḥ kṛtaḥ || 4.261 ||
kasmān nṛttaṁ kṛtaṁ hy etat kaṁ svabhāvam apekṣate |

na gītakārthasambaddhaṁ na cāpy arthasya bhāvakaṁ || 4.262 ||
kasmān nṛttaṁ kṛtaṁ hy etad gīteṣv āsāriteṣu ca |

(ABh)

[1.1]

10 atra bharatamunir eva parakīyām āśaṅkāṁ upanibadhnāti. anabhijñānāc ca
munīnām abhinayādīnām apy aviduṣāṁ katham ‘abhinayaḥ kṛta’ iti gītakā-
rtheti gīteṣv āsāriteṣv iti ca vacanopapattis syāt. tasmān munir evedaṁ svayam

9 upanibadhnāti] Σ_E , upanibaddha iti D M₁ T₁, upanibandhnāti T₄ || anabhijñānāc] $\Sigma_M \Sigma_E$, ana-
bhijñānāṁ T₁^{ac} 10 munīnām abhinayādīnām] $\Sigma_M \Sigma_E$, munīgannāmābhinayān T₄ || aviduṣāṁ]
T₁ T₄ Σ_E , aviduṣāṁ D M₁ 10–11 gītakārtheti gīteṣv] T₁^{ac} Σ_E , gītakārtheti gīteṣy D M₁ T₁^{pc}, gīta-
kārthe ‘bhīhiteṣv T₄ 11 ca] T₄ Σ_E , om. D M₁ T₁ || vacano°] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, na vacano° T₄
E₁₍₁₎ || tasmān] T₄ Σ_E , om. D M₁ T₁, na tasmāt E₁₍₂₎^{pc} || svayam] $\Sigma_M \Sigma_E$, om. T₄

9–276.4 atra bharatamunir→sphuṭa evāsti p.n.p. KAV

Nāṭyaśāstra [NŚ]

[1 The opponent's doubt (*pūrvapakṣa*)]

The seers said:

|| 261cd–262ab ||

Given that dramatic acting (*abhinaya*) has been devised by those experts in [theatre] for the sake of attaining [its] objects (*artha*), why indeed has this dance (*nṛtta*) been devised [and] what is the nature (*svabhāva*) to which it conforms?

|| 262cd–263ab ||

It is not connected with the contents of the songs, nor does it bring any object (*artha*) into being (*bhāvaka*). Why has this dance been devised in [connection with] *gītas* and *āsāritas*?

Abhinavabhāratī [ABh]

[1.1 Introduction to the *pūrvapakṣa*]

At this point, the sage Bharata presents a doubt belonging to somebody else. However, since the sages [such as Ātreya and the others] have not been instructed [in dance] and are not even aware of dramatic acting (*abhinaya*) or the other [elements of theatre], how can we logically account for statements such as ‘dramatic acting has been devised’, ‘[it (i.e. dance) is not connected with] the contents of the songs’, and ‘[devised] in [connection with] *gītas* and *āsāritas*’¹ [as formulated by them]? Therefore [we must admit that] the sage [Bharata] raises the doubt himself. Otherwise, the phrase ‘the seers said’ has

1 *Gītas/gītakas* and *āsāritas* are musical compositions performed in the *pūrvavariṅga* that alternate moments of singing and instrumental music. In NŚ 4.14–16ab, dance was said to have been added to these musical structures, at the suggestion of Śiva, in order to make the preliminaries variegated. See §1.3.3, n. 75.

āśāṅkate, pūrvapakṣatvena vā śāṅkeyam iti prakāṣayitum sukumāramatibhir madhye 'ṛṣaya ūcuḥ' iti prakṣiptam.

[1.2]

tatrettham āśāṅkā. nṛttaṃ nāṭyād bhinnam abhinnaṃ vā. bhinnatve 'pi saprayojanam aprayojanaṃ vā.

[1.3]

5 [1.3.1] na tāvad bhinnam, aṅgavikṣepanṛttaḡāṭavattvenāvailakṣaṇyāt.

1 sukumāramatibhir] $E_{1(2)}^{pc} E_{1(4)}^{pc}$, sukumāram itihir $D M_1 T_1^{pc}$, sukumāram iti hi T_1^{ac} , sukumāram iti $E_{1(1)} E_{1(2)}^{ac} E_{1(4)}^{ac} E_2$, sukumāramatihir $E_{1(2)}^{ma}$ 3 āśāṅkā] Σ_E , āśāṅkāṃ $D M_1 T_1$ 4 saprayojanam aprayojanaṃ] $D M_1^{pc} T_1^{pc} \Sigma_E$, saprayojanaprayojanaṃ $M_1^{ac} T_1^{ac}$ 5 aṅgavikṣepanṛttaḡāṭavattvenā] $D M_1 T_1^{pc} \Sigma_E$, aṅgavikṣepaṃ nṛttaḡāṭavattvenā° T_1^{ac}

1–5 pūrvapakṣatvena→aṅgavikṣepanṛttaḡāṭavattvenāvailakṣaṇyāt] pūrvapakṣatvenāvailakṣaṇyāt T_4

2 I read the text as conjectured by Ramaswami Sastri (= $E_{1(2)}^{pc}$) *sukumāramatibhiḥ*. This reading of an instrumental connected with *prakṣiptam* is justified through a possible corruption of *bhi* into *hi* in the manuscripts. The characters *ha* and *bha* in fact look quite similar in Malayālam script and are liable to create confusion. The 'feeble-minded persons' (*sukumāramati-*) would be those who have transmitted the text, either professional copyists or students producing copies of the text for their own personal use. The past participle *prakṣipta-* would then indicate that the phrase *ṛṣaya ūcuḥ*, attributing the formulation of the doubt to the seers—presumably the same group of sages led by Ātreya, who approach Bharata and question him at the beginning of the treatise (cf. §1.3.2)—was regarded by Abhinavagupta as an interpolation. However, I have not been able to trace other instances in the *Abhinavabhāratī* where spurious passages are singled out in the same way. Another possibility would be to conjecture *sukumāramatiṃ/-in* as an accusative governed by the infinitive *prakāṣayitum*. See the parallel construction with a double accusative in the concluding stanza of Abhinavagupta's *Bodhapañcadaśīkā: sukumāramatiṃ śiṣyān prabodhayitum aṅgajā | ime 'bhinavaguptena ślokaḥ pañcadaśoditāḥ* || In light of this parallel, the passage at stake could be translated as follows: 'Or else, the phrase "the seers said" has been inserted in the middle [of the text] in order to clarify to the unsophisticated [students] that this doubt [has to be regarded] as the view of an opponent'. In this case, the stress would be on the addressee of the text and not on its transmitters, and the insertion could be regarded as either brought about by Bharata himself or by a later copyist. This reading has the advantage of explaining '*sukumāram iti*' in the edition by Kavi as a *lectio difficilior*, a corruption from an original accusative *sukumāramatiṃ/-in* corrected by a copyist into an instrumental, more easily construed with the past participle *prakṣipta-*. However, this reading is not supported by the available manuscripts (M_1 being the

been interpolated [in the text] by some feeble-minded persons in order to make it clear that this doubt [has to be regarded] as the view of an opponent (*pūrvapakṣa*).²

[1.2 Doubt]

In this regard, the doubt amounts to the following: is dance different (*bhinna*) from theatre or is it no different (*abhinna*) [from it]? And if it were [considered] to be different, would it have a purpose (*saprayojana*) or not (*aprayojana*)?³

[1.3 First thesis or *abhedapakṣa*: dance is no different from theatre]⁴

[1.3.1] To begin with, [dance] is no different [from theatre] since its characteristics do not differ [from it], inasmuch as it contains dance (*nṛtta*), which consists in throwing the limbs about (*aṅgavikṣepa*), and songs (*gīta*).⁵

only witness), and we cannot be sure that Kavi actually had a manuscript reading *sukumaram iti*. This is why I have opted for the instrumental, closer to the reading of M₁. As to the other possibility, namely that the doubt presented in these verses was raised by Bharata himself, it would entail that the sage is referring to himself in the third person plural *ṛṣayaḥ*, using an honorific address. It would not be surprising that an author himself might raise a doubt in the *mūla* text and then provide an answer; at least, this is how many commentators have interpreted the dialectical structure of famous *sūtras* (cf. Angot 2017: 740–757). The attribution of the doubt to the *ṛṣis* is definitely untenable: such an articulated question would presuppose from them at least some technical knowledge of both dance and dramatic acting, which the sages, who are listening for the first time to Bharata's account about theatre, do not have.

- 3 Here Abhinavagupta sets the parameters of the question along which dance will be discussed, i.e. with respect to its nature (*svabhāva*) and purpose (*prayojana*). In the typical style of Sanskrit scientific argumentation, the presentation of the *pūrvapakṣa*, in the form of a doubt, is followed by a long elaboration, in which preliminary views are exposed and refuted in detail before arriving at the established view (*siddhānta*).
- 4 For the sake of clarity in the exposition, I hereafter refer to the *pūrvapakṣin* as the *abhedapakṣin* (AP) ('one who upholds the non-difference [between theatre and dance]'), and to the *uttarapakṣin* as the *bhedapakṣin* (BP) ('one who upholds the difference [between theatre and dance]').
- 5 The first argument of the *abhedapakṣin* is that dance is no different from theatre, since the two share the same characteristics, namely a combination of bodily movements and songs. The gloss *aṅgavikṣepa* for *nṛtta*, alternating with the variant *gātravikṣepa* and found in many definitions of dance (AL ad DR 1.9, pp. 8–9; SR 7.27cd–28ab, cf. § 3.1, n. 31), conforms to the sense Pāṇini attributes to the radical *nṛt* in *Dhātupāṭha* 4.9: *nṛto gātravikṣepe*, cf. § 2.1, n. 17.

[1.3.2] abhinayaprayogasya gīyamānapadārthavākyaṛthagatanātyaviṣayasya bhāvyaṅvikalasya darśanam asti tāvat. [1.3.3] avāntaravailakṣyaṅam ca daśarūpake na na vidyate. ekapātrahāryatvam asaṃnihite 'pi ca priyatamasakhīpra-

1 gīyamānapadārthavākyaṛthagata°] $\Sigma_M E_{1(1)} E_{1(2)}$, nīyamānapadārthavākyaṛthagata° $E_{1(4)}$, gīyamānapadārthasamsargātmakavākyaṛthabhūta° E_2 || °nātyaviṣayasya] $D M_1 T_1 E_{1(1)}^{vl} E_{1(2)} E_{1(4)}^{Ma}$ E_2 , °nātyārthagataviṣayatve 'sya T_4 , °nātyārthagataviṣayatve $E_{1(1)} E_{1(2)}^{vl} E_{1(4)}$ 2 bhāvyaṅvikalasya] conj., bhāvyaṅvikalasya $\Sigma_M E_1$, nṛttavikalasya na E_2 2–3 daśarūpake na na vidyate] $D M_1 T_1$, daśarūpake na vidyate $M_1^{sm} T_4 E_{1(2)} E_{1(4)}$, daśarūpakeṇa na vidyate $E_{1(1)}$, daśarūpake vidyate E_2 3 ekapātrahāryatvam] $D M_1 T_1 E_{1(1)}$, ekapātrahāryatvam $T_4 E_{1(1)}^{vl}$, ekapātrahārye tv $E_{1(2)} E_{1(4)} E_2$ || 'pi] $D M_1^{sm} T_1 T_4 \Sigma_E$, om. M_1 || priyatama°] $T_4 \Sigma_E$, priyasama° $D M_1^{sm} T_1 E_{1(1)}^{vl} E_{1(4)}^{vl}$, prayasaṭa° M_1 3–266.1 °prabhṛtau] $T_4 \Sigma_E$, °prabhṛto $D M_1$, °prabhṛtayo T_1

6 I read as a conjecture *bhāvyaṅvikalasya*, ‘not devoid of a *bhāvya*’, understanding *bhāvya*° as akin to *anukārya* or *abhineya*, the representational content—be it a specific character or an emotional state—to be brought into being on the stage by an actor, in order for it to be perceived by a spectator as if directly present in front of him. The *abhedapakṣin*’s argument will in fact be devoted to developing both of these ideas: in dance, we perceive specific characters, and the contents of the songs are brought into being by the dancer through *abhinaya*. The same term, *bhāvya*, is used in the commentary on the *lāsyaṅga trimūḍhaka*, one of the musical and dance pieces used in the *sukumāra pūrvaraṅga* (cf. § 2.3.2). This *lāsyaṅga*, it is said, does not contain any ornamental acting, i.e. the costume indicating a specific character (*āhārya*). However, some representational content (*bhāvya*) is found in it, which entails the presence of a text and hence of its vocal enactment. Cf. ABh ad nś 31.358, vol. 4, p. 279: *trividho bhinayo jāyeta. āhāryasyātrābhāvāt. bhāvyaṅam tu kiṃcid bhavatiṭi jñāpayaṣyate na pāṭhyaṅ svalpam ity atreti* (nś 31.360). *tena vāciko 'py abhinayo 'sty eva*. The *lāsyaṅga saindhava* (defined in nś 31.360, quoted here), on the contrary, is said to contain no vocal enactment whatsoever. The use of the word *bhāvya* also resonates with nś 4.262b, where it is said that dance does not bring any object into being (*na cāpy arthasya bhāvakam*). Note, however, that Abhinavagupta will interpret the word *artha* in this line of the *pūrvaapakṣa* in different ways.

[1.3.2] In the first place, one sees that enactment (*abhinaya*) is used [in dance] with reference to a dramatic text (*nāṭya*), in which the word meanings (*padārtha*) and the sentence meanings (*vākyārtha*) are rendered through singing. [Such uses of enactment] are not without some representational content to be brought into being (*bhāvyā*).⁶ [1.3.3] Moreover, it is not that internal differences in characteristics (*avāntaravailakṣaṇya*) do not occur among the ten dramatic genres (*daśarūpaka*) [listed by Bharata].⁷ The characteristic of being enacted by a single actor (*ekapātrahāryatva*)⁸, as well as the use of state-

7 I read a double negation (*na na vidyate*) as in M₁^{ac}, D, and T₁, since we need a positive statement here to comply with the argument: internal differences in characteristics, accounting for subdivisions, are found within the group of the ten dramatic genres, and yet they are all classified as dramatic forms (*rūpaka*) and are all considered to be *nāṭya*. Characteristics differentiating the various dramatic genres are, for instance, the number of acts, the type and number of characters, the *rasas* involved, etc. Although, as the *abhedapakṣin* will show, in dance one performer alone is present on stage and enacts a dialogue with other, absent characters by means of the theatrical convention of *ākāśabhāṣita* (see n. 10 below), the same occurs from time to time even in the dramatic genres, so it cannot constitute a valid criterion for distinguishing dance from theatre. As the *abhedapakṣin* will argue, what primarily characterizes drama is the union of a text and its enactment through bodily gestures and voice, and these may be found, although in different proportions and with slight differences, in the various dramatic genres as well as in dance. Since dance contains songs, here intended as a dramatic text (*nāṭya=rūpaka=kāvyā*), and movements (*nṛtta=āṅgavikṣepa=āṅgikābhinaya*), it conforms to this definition of theatre. The *bhedapakṣin* will later argue that the difference lies in the very fact that in dance the text is delivered through singing and not through vocal acting (*vācīkābhinaya*) [1.5]. This position will be refuted through the same argument used here, namely that internal differences leading to minor differences or mere subdivisions can be seen in all dramatic genres [1.5.1].

8 I follow the manuscripts and Kavi and read an abstract *ekapātrahāryatvam*. The term *pātra* is formed by the root *pā* plus the agentive suffix *-tra*, and literally means 'vessel', 'cup', a term commonly used to designate both the actor and the character represented. I render it here as a single actor reporting the dialogues of other characters. Obviously enough, the opponent is thinking about dance forms in which a single performer is present on stage, a situation comparable to the dramatic genre of the monologue play (Bhāṇa), performed as a solo (cf. n. 11 below). Another dramatic genre that can be performed by a single actor, and optionally by two, is the *Vithī*. Cf. NŚ 19.112cd.

bhṛtau tadviṣayoktipratyukyādiprayogo nāṭye 'pi ākāśabhāṣitādau bhāṇarū-
pake ca vidyate.

[1.3.4] yathāha rāhulaḥ:

'parokṣo 'pi hi vaktavyo nāryā pratyakṣavat priyaḥ |
sakhī ca nāṭyadharmo 'yaṃ bharatenoditaṃ dvayam ||' iti.

5

1 °pratyukty°] Σ_M Σ_E, °prayukty° E₁₍₁₎^{v1} || °bhāṣitādau] Σ_M Σ_E, °bhāṣitatvādau T₁ 1–2 bhāṇarū-
pake ca] Σ_M Σ_E, bhāṇe rūpake E₂ 3 yathāha] T₁ T₄ E₂, te ca yathāha D M₁^{pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, te ca
yathāhu M₁^{ac}, ca yathāha E₁₍₁₎ 4 parokṣo 'pi hi] T₄ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, parokṣo 'pi D M₁ T₁, parokṣe 'pi ca
E₁₍₁₎^{v1}, parokṣe 'pi hi E₁₍₁₎ E₂ 5 iti] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, om. T₄

9 *Uktipratyukti* is dialogue enacted through statements and counterstatement, for instance questions and answers. In the chapter on the 'harmonious acting' (*sāmānyābhinaya*), the *uktipratyukti* is defined as one of the twelve ways to deliver a text, i.e. the 'dialogue' (*saṃlāpa*). See NŚ 22.56ab: *uktipratyuktisamyuktaḥ saṃlāpa iti kīrtitaḥ* | 'The one called "dialogue" (*saṃlāpa*) consists of statements (*ukti*) and counterstatement (*pratyukti*). Although it is usually carried out by two actors, a dialogue can be enacted even by a single performer, as suggested in this passage, provided that he uses the convention called *ākāśabhāṣita* (see following note).

10 The convention called 'speaking to the sky' (*ākāśabhāṣita*) is defined in the chapter on the 'pictorial acting' (*citrābhinaya*), along with other stage directions. See NŚ 25.86cd–88ab: *dūrasthābhāṣaṇaṃ yat syād aśarīranivedanam* || *parokṣāntaritaṃ vākyam ākāśavacanam tu tat* | *tatrottarakṛtair vākyaiḥ saṃlāpaṇi saṃprayojayet* || *nānākaraṇasamyuktaiḥ kāvyabhāvasamutthitaiḥ* | 'Addressing [someone] staying at a distance, communicating with somebody absent or speaking to somebody hidden or not in sight, is called "speaking to the sky". In it, [the actor] should deliver a dialogue by means of replies arisen from the emotional states [present] in the poetic text and variously occasioned.' Although this convention is prominent in monologue plays, as these are performed by a single actor, it is not confined to them, as it occurs at times in other genres too. Generally speaking, in the *ākāśabhāṣita*, a question is asked, followed by stage directions such as '*ākāśe*', '*ākāśe kaṇṇam dattvā*', etc. Before the answer of the absent character is reported, the character on stage addresses him with the question: 'What do you say?' (*kiṃ brūtha?* | *kiṃ bravīṣi?*).

11 The Bhāṇa, or monologue play, is one of the ten dramatic genres canonized in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Its peculiarity is that of having a single actor, with the presence of other characters suggested through stage directions such as the *ākāśabhāṣita*. The Bhāṇa is defined in NŚ

ments and counterstatements (*uktipratyukti*)⁹ concerning a lover, a friend, or other [characters], even when they are not present [on stage], occurs also in theatre, [namely] in [the case of stage conventions] such as the [one called] ‘speaking to the sky’ (*ākāśabhāṣita*)¹⁰, as well as in the dramatic genre of the monologue play (Bhāṇa).¹¹

[1.3.4] As Rāhula said:¹²

Indeed the lover, though absent [from the scene], should be addressed by the heroine as if he were actually present. The same holds for her friend.¹³ Such is the theatrical convention (*nāṭyadharmā*); the two [conventions] have been stated by Bharata.¹⁴

18.107cd–110: *bhāṇasyāpi tu lakṣaṇam ataḥ paraṃ saṃpravakṣyāmi || ātmānubhūtaśaṃsī parasamśrayavarṇanāviśeṣas tu | vīvidhāśrayo hi bhāṇo vijñeyas tv ekahāryas ca || paravacanam ātmasamsthāṃ pratīvacanair uttarottaragrathitaiḥ | ākāśapurūṣakathitair aṅgavikārair abhinayaś caiva || dhūrtaviṭasamprayojyo nānāvasthāntarātmakaś caiva | ekāṅko bahuceṣṭaḥ sataṃ kāryo budhaiḥ bhāṇaḥ ||* ‘I will next define the monologue play. The monologue play is based on many [characters] but it is enacted by a single [performer], who relates what he himself has experienced, but also describes what concerns others. The speech of others rests on the [actor] himself, [who enacts it] by means of replies, rendered in dialogue and uttered to others as if they were present (lit. “uttered to people in the sky”), and by means of facial expressions and enactments. Experts should make use of rogues (*dhūrta*) and pimps (*viṭa*) and should always execute the monologue play as containing various situations, one single act, and many actions.’ The most famous example of Bhāṇa is the *Caturbhāṇī*, ‘The Quartet of Causeries’, a canonical group of four monologue plays, translated in Dezső & Vasudeva 2009.

12 I follow T₁ and T₄, and read *yathāha*. On Rāhula, see § 1.4.1, n. 123.

13 Note that the dialogue that occurs between the heroine and a friend in the absence of her beloved, taken here as a case illustrating a similarity in the means of communication used in both dance and theatre, is exemplified by Bharata in NŚ 4.309 as a typical dramatic situation where dance should be avoided: *sakhīpravṛtte saṅlāpe tathā ‘saṃnīhite priye | na hi nṛttam prayoktavyaṃ yasyā vā proṣitaḥ priyaḥ ||* ‘Analogously, dance should not be used when a dialogue occurs with a female friend, and the lover is absent, or else, with regard to [a heroine] whose lover has set out on a journey.’ Here, however, Rāhula is most certainly referring to dance performed outside the story of the play; thus the rule does not apply.

14 The context in which this quotation occurs is unknown, but we can safely take the neuter *dvayam* to refer collectively to the two modes of presentation, the worldly convention (*lokadharmā/lokadharmī*) and the theatrical convention (*nāṭyadharmā/nāṭyadharmī*), on which see § 3.4.2, n. 160. The object of the present quotation is the stage convention called *ākāśabhāṣita*, by which absent characters can be addressed by a single character on stage. This is regarded as an element of *nāṭyadharmī* (cf. NŚ 13.76c, and ABh *ad locum*, vol. 2, p. 216: *anuktaṃ śrūyate, ākāśabhāṣitaṃ ca*. ‘[When] what has not actually been told is heard and when a voice speaks to the sky[, that is a case of *nāṭyadharmī*’]).

[1.3.5] tathā bhāṇa evaikākī vā yo yojyo 'nekāṅgahāriṇy api munināpi vakṣyate 'bhāṇavac caikahāryaṃ syāt' iti.

[1.3.6] vārttikakṛtāpy uktam:

'vācyānugate 'bhinaye pratipādye 'rthe ca gātravikṣepaiḥ |
ubhayor api hi samāne ko bhedo nṛttanātyagataḥ ||'

5

[1.4]

atrocyate, sākṣādbuddhyabhāvān na nātyaṃ.

1 bhāṇa evaikākī] conj., bhāṇaivaikākī D M₁ T₁^{pc}, bhāṇaivaikākīṃ T₁^{ac}, bhāṇe vaikākī T₄, bhāṇe caikākī E₁, bhāṇas caikākī E₂ || vā yo yojyo] D M₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, vā yojyā T₁^{ac}, vā yo yojyā T₁^{pc}, vā yojyo T₄ E₁₍₁₎ || 'hāriṇy api] E₁₍₁₎ °hārīṇi D M₁ T₄^{pc}, °hāriṇyo 'gni T₁, °hārīṇya T₄^{ac}, °hārīṇi E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂ 1–2 munināpi vakṣyate] conj., muninā vivakṣyate D M₁ T₄, munināpi vakṣyante T₁, muninā hi vakṣyate Σ_E 2 bhāṇavac] Σ_M, bhāṇakavac Σ_E || caikahāryaṃ] T₄ Σ_E, caitahāryaḥ D M₁ T₁ 3 vārttikakṛtāpy] T₁ T₄ Σ_E, vārttikam kṛtvāpy D M₁ T₁^{v1} 4 vācyānugate 'bhinaye] T₄ Σ_E, vācyānugata na ye D M₁ T₁ || ca] Σ_M E₁, 'pi E₂ 5 hi samāne ko] T₁^{ac} Σ_E, hi samo 'neko D M₁ T₁^{pc}, samāne hi eko T₄ || °nātyagataḥ] Σ_M E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} E₂, °nātyayoḥ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} 6 atrocyate] D M₁ T₁ E₁, iti atrocyate T₄, athocyate E₂ || sākṣād°] E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} E₂, sākṣātkṣu° D M₁ T₁^{pc}, yadi sākṣād° T₁^{ac} E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}, sākṣā(...)^o T₄, sākṣātkāra° E₁₍₁₎^{ac}, yadi sākṣātkāra° E₁₍₁₎^{pc} || °abhāvān] T₁^{ac} Σ_E, °ā bhārān D M₁ T₁^{pc}, °abhāvānātyan T₄ || na nātyaṃ] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, nātyaṃ Σ_M E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}, na nātyaṃ iti E₂

15 I have corrected *bhāṇaka* into *bhāṇa*, as in the manuscripts, which is confirmed by NŚ 31.332ab, where the *lāśya* dance is equated with the dramatic genre *Bhāṇa* on the basis of their having a single performer: *bhāṇavac caikahāryaṃ syād ūhyavastu ca tad bhavet* | '[The *lāśya*] should be performed by a single actor, like the *Bhāṇa*, and its theme has to be suggested.' See also ABh *ad locum*, vol. 4, p. 271: *bhāṇa ivaikaprayojyam iti. ekena pātreṇa haraṇyaṃ nirvāhyam iti yāvat*. A similar quotation is also found with reference to the theatrical *lāśyāṅgas*, described in ch. 19 (cf. NŚ 19.117d: *bhāṇa ivaikaprayojyāni*), amorous vignettes added to the various theatrical genres in the appropriate place and aimed at charming the audience. On the difference between these two types of *lāśyāṅgas*, see § 2.3.1. In the *Avaloka ad Daśarūpaka* 1.8 and in *Bhāvaprakāśana* 9 (p. 256), the seven *nṛtya-bhedas* (cf. § 2.1, n. 16) are also collectively called *bhāṇavat*.

16 I conjecture a reading *bhāṇa evaikākī*, similar to *bhāṇaivaikākī* in D and M₁, possibly resulting from the incorrect application of *sandhi* rules. The locative '*nekāṅgahāriṇy api* parallels the locative *bhāṇe*, although it looks like a conjecture by Kavi. However, it is supported by the reading *aṅgahāriṇy* in T₁, suggesting that something was missing thereafter. T₄ signals this with a dot in the manuscript. The compound *anekāṅgahārin*, which is a hapax in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, must be a *bahuvrīhi* referring to the *lāśya*, a kind of dance used in the delicate type of preliminary rite (*sukumāra-pūrvaraṅga*), whose limbs (*lāśyāṅgas*) are explained in the chapter on *tāla* ('rhythm') (NŚ 31). The *lāśyāṅgas* described in ch. 31 are musical pieces connected with dance and based on the sentiment of love. According to Abhinavagupta, they substitute the *aṅgas* of the vehement *pūrvaraṅga* described

[1.3.5] In the same way, with the words ‘[the *lāsya* dance] should be enacted by a single performer, just like the Bhāṇa’ (Nś 31.332a),¹⁵ the sage [Bharata] too will say that the [performer] employed in that very Bhāṇa performs alone, just as one performs [alone the *lāsya* dance of the *pūrvarāṅga*], endowed with different limbs (*anekāṅgahārin*).¹⁶

[1.3.6] Even the author of the *Vārttika*¹⁷ has said:

When the acting (*abhinaya*) follows the content expressed [in the text] (*vācya*) and the meaning (*artha*) is conveyed through bodily movements (*gātravikṣepa*), since these two are common to both dance and theatre, what difference [can there ever be] between the two?¹⁸

[1.4 Objection of the *bhedapakṣin*.]

On this point, we reply¹⁹ that [dance] is not [identical to] theatre because it lacks an evident cognition (*sākṣātkārabuddhi*) [of the characters and the contents enacted].

in the fifth chapter (cf. § 2.3.2). I take the masculine in *ekākī yojyaḥ* to refer to an implicit *naṭa-* or *prayokṭṛ-*. The reading *muninā hi vakṣyate* adopted in the editions has been corrected to *munināpi vakṣyate*, following the manuscripts’ *vivakṣyate*, which exhibits the *pi/vi* confusion common in Malayālam script. I interpret this difficult passage as connecting the conventions proper to the Bhāṇa, such as the *ākāśabhāṣita*, with the *lāsya* dance described in Nś 31, based on their being performed by a single actor. The presence of the *ākāśabhāṣita* in the *lāsyaṅgas* will be refuted in 6.5.1.

- 17 Three references are made in chapter 4 to a lost work called *Vārttika*, which cannot be taken with certainty as a ‘Gloss’ commenting on the entire *Nāṭyaśāstra*. In the last quotation (see ABh ad Nś 4.320), the work is attributed to Harṣa, possibly the same Śrī Harṣa, whose verses in *āryā* metre are mentioned in other quotations from different chapters of the *Abhinavabhāratī*. See § 1.4.1, n. 132.
- 18 The verse is in *āryā* metre, with 12 *mātrās* in the first and third *pādas*, 18 in the second, and 15 in the fourth. The question is rhetorical: the words *abhinaya* and *gātravikṣepa* refer to the canonical definitions of theatre and dance respectively.
- 19 I follow the reading *atrocyate*, as in E₁ and in the manuscripts, although *athocyate* in E₂ would have been preferable. The expression *athocyate* generally introduces an intermediate proposal, which might take the form of an objection, while *atrocyate* marks the end of a *pūrvapakṣa*, or the answer of the *siddhāntin* on some specific point of the objector’s argument. It seems more likely that more *pūrvapakṣins* are debating here, while Abhinavagupta’s position will be given only after the adversaries’ theories have been preliminarily refuted. The position advanced in the intermediate proposal is not completely untenable for Abhinavagupta, it just needs to be refined in order to convincingly refute all the objector’s arguments.

[1.4.1] tad asat, iyaṃ priyatamaḡaṇakīrtanaparā nṛtyati, khaṇḍitā nṛtyati, kalahāntarītā nṛtyati—iti buddheḡ saṃbhavāt. yad āha:

‘yā caivaṃ ḡaṇakīrtanavacaneṡu priyatamasya saṃraktā |
sakhyaḡ samakṡam ucchaiḡ pramadā saivānukāryā ’tra ||’

5 etenotsāhagātavyānām arthe ’nukāryatvaṃ darsītam.

1 iyaṃ] D M₁ T₄ Σ_E, idaṃ T₁ || ’parā] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, °pā T₄ 2 iti buddheḡ] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, (...) bu-
dhaiḡ D M₁, ity et buddheḡ T₄^{ac}, ity etadbuddheḡ T₁ T₄^{pc} E₁₍₁₎ 3 caivaṃ°] T₄, caivaṃvidha° D
M₁ T₁ Σ_E || saṃraktā] T₁^{ac} T₄ Σ_E, saṃraktāḡ D M₁ T₁^{pc} 4 sakhyaḡ] T₄ Σ_E, saṃkhyāḡ D M₁ T₁ ||
samakṡam] T₄ Σ_E, samartham D M₁, samaṃrkṡam T₁ || ’tra] D M₁ T₄ Σ_E, tṛetyādi T₄ 5 °gātavyā-
nām] Σ_E, °gātavyānām D M₁^{pc} T₁, °gāntavyaunām M₁^{ac} || ’nukāryatvaṃ] T₁^{ac} Σ_E, sukāryatvaṃ
D M₁ T₁^{pc}

5–280.2 etenotsāhagātavyānām→’paḡamacūḡāmaṇiā’ iti] p.n.p. T₄

- 20 ‘Praising the qualities’ (*ḡaṇakīrtana*) is one of the ten stages of desire (*daśakāmāvasthā*) mentioned in NŚ 22.169–172: *abhilāṡa* (desire), *cintana* (preoccupation), *anusmṛti* (remembrance), *ḡaṇakīrtana* (praising the qualities), *udvega* (distress), *vilāpa* (lamentation), *unmāda* (madness), *vyādhi* (illness), *jaḡatā* (apathy), and *marāṇa* (death). In the stage called *ḡaṇakīrtana*, the woman remembers her lover with contrasting feelings of happiness and sadness. For a comprehensive treatment of these ‘étapes de l’amour’, see Insler 1988.
- 21 These two are among the eight types of heroines (*aṡṭanāyikās*) described in NŚ 24. The one called *khaṇḡitā* is the woman who, discovering the infidelity of her husband, is enraged with him. The *kalahāntarītā* is a woman whose husband forsakes her as the result of a love quarrel. Quite contrary to these statements, in NŚ 4.308 such kinds of heroines are explicitly forbidden to dance: *khaṇḡitā vipralabdhā vā kalahāntarītāpi vā | yasminn aṅge tu yuvatir na nṛttaṃ tatra yojayet* || ‘Dance should not be employed in those parts where the young heroine is a deceived woman, a woman away from her lover, or a woman separated [from her beloved in consequence of] a quarrel.’ Interestingly, Abhinavagupta will interpret this and the following verses as referring to a prohibition about abstract dance being performed on a sung text depicting a lovelorn situation for the heroine, and not to the prohibition of narrative dance altogether. In such songs, abstract dance would be reserved for the instrumental parts, which do not bear a meaningful text.
- 22 I read *evaṃ ḡuṇa°* as in T₄, in order to have an *āryā* metre with 12 + 18 + 12 + 15 *mātrās*. The quotation is untraced, but might likewise belong to the *Vārttika*. The name *pramadā* is a generic designation for the woman in love. It seems that one of the new spectacular forms mentioned by Abhinavagupta, namely the *ṡidgaka*, consisted of the depiction of love in separation (*vipralambha*), executed by the heroine through a description of the qualities of the beloved to her friend. Although this form is defined later on in the chapter, I believe that this quotation rather refers to one of the *lāśyāṅgas* described in ch. 31 as a limb of the *sukumāra pūrvavaṅga* (cf. § 2.3.2), namely the one called *trimūḡhaka*, which stands

[1.4.1] [The *abhedapakṣin*:] This is unsound, since cognitions having the form ‘she is dancing, intent upon praising the qualities of the beloved’;²⁰ ‘a deceived heroine (*khaṇḍitā*) is dancing’, and ‘a heroine separated [from her lover] by a quarrel (*kalahāntaritā*) is dancing’²¹ arise [while seeing a dance performed]. As has been said:

And that very woman in love (*pramadā*) has to be represented (*anukārya*) here, who is passionately engaged in praising the qualities of [her] beloved in this manner, talking aloud in front of her friend.²²

With this we have shown that [also in dance] there is a mimetic presentation (*anukāryatva*) of the content of songs about the valour (*utsāha*) [of the lover].²³

in the delicate *pūrvaraṅga* for the *mahācārī* of the vehement *pūrvaraṅga*. This is defined in NŚ 31.355 as follows: *aniṣṭhuraślakṣṇapadaṃ gāndhārījātim āśritam | caicitputeṇa yuktavyaṃ trimūḍhaṃ dvikalena tu ||* Abhinavagupta explains the word *aniṣṭhura*° as follows (ABh ad lucum, vol. 4, p. 278): *atha mahācārīsthānakam trimūḍhakam. aniṣṭhureti. prayatodyuktakāntasya pauruṣapradhānaṃ guṇanikaram varṇayet. yatra kāvyārtha utsāho vā syād athaveti raudrasthānikatvakṛtauddhatyāḥ labdham.* ‘Now he explains the [*lāsyaṅga* called] *trimūḍhaka*, which [is employed] in the place of the *mahācārī* [of the vehement *pūrvaraṅga*]. The word “not harsh” means: she should illustrate the collection of qualities, predominantly manly, of the beloved she longs for, who has set out [on a journey] (read *prayatā*° for *prayatā*°?). [The *trimūḍhaka* should contain verses (*pada*)] in which the content of the poetic text is valour (*utsāha*), or else [in which the verses] are obtained from the vehement quality (*auddhatya*) based on [the fact that the *trimūḍhaka*] stands in the place of the [*rasa* of] heroism[, which is central in the *mahācārī*].’ The fact that the dancer is alone on the stage, although she appears to speak to an absent friend, has been already justified by the use of the *nātyadharmī* in the *lāsyaṅgas* which, like the *Bhāṇa*, are executed by a single performer (cf. n. 14).

23 Since the woman is talking about the qualities of her lover, the content of her speech will be valour (*utsāhā*), which is the stable state (*sthāyibhāva*) generally attributed to a hero (cf. also the parallel from ch. 31 in the previous note: *yatra kāvyārtha utsāho vā syād*). This suggests that the dancer is making a mimetic presentation (*anukāra*) of some textual content, if just through her singing, but most probably also through bodily gestures and movements following the song of a vocalist, as explained for the *lāsyaṅga trimūḍhaka* (ABh ad NŚ 31.357, vol. 4, p. 279): *trividho ’bhīnayo jāyeta, āhāryasyātrābhāvāt.* ‘The threefold enactment should be produced, since the costume is absent here’. This will be clarified in the answer to the *pūrvapakṣa*; see below, 6.5.2, n. 178 and 180. In conclusion, the *abhedapakṣin*’s claim is that in dance there is *anukāryatva* of the character and of the mood, in this case *utsāha*. This implies in turn that there is a *bhāvya*, an object to be brought into being. On the *Vārttika*’s claim of the identity between dance and theatre—based on their common mimetic character (*tulyānukāratva*)—in ABh ad NŚ 4.320, see § 1.4.1.

[1.5]

atha gīyamānarūpakābhīnayadarśanāt nāṭyato vailakṣaṇyam.

[1.5.1] na tat tāvat, vailakṣaṇyamātraprayojakāvāntarabhedasya sarvatra saṃbhavād iti hy uktam. na cedam vailakṣaṇyam, nāṭye 'pi tasya bhāvāt. va-
kṣyate cāṅgopāṅgakaśārīrābhīnayalakṣaṇavidhau:

- 5 'sthāne dhruvāsv abhinayo yaḥ kriyate harṣaśokaroṣādyaiḥ |
bhāvarasasaṃprayuktair jñeyam nāṭyāyitaṃ tad api ||^a iti.

1 °rūpakābhīnaya°] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, °rūpakādinaya° T₁^{ac} || °darśanāt nāṭyato] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °darśanam nāṭyato E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ma} E₁₍₄₎^{ma} 2 na] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, om. D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ 3-4 vakṣyate] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, vakṣyate T₁^{ac} 4 cāṅgopāṅgaka°] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, pādmaka° D M₁ E₁₍₂₎^{ma}, 'pātmakā° T₁^{ac}, 'pātmaka° T₁^{pc}, aṅgopāṅgaka° E₁₍₁₎, padmaka° E₁₍₁₎^{vl} 5 abhinayo] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, adīnayo T₁^{ac} || yaḥ] NŚ 22.49, 'yam D M₁ T₁, yat Σ_E || °roṣādyaiḥ] Σ_E, °doṣādyaiḥ D M₁ T₁ 6 °saṃprayuktair] NŚ 22.49, °saṃprayuktaṃ Σ_E, prayuktaṃ D M₁ T₁ || api] NŚ 22.49, ca E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, om. D M₁ E₁₍₁₎, v T₁

a NŚ 22.49: sthāne dhruvāsv abhinayo yaḥ kriyate harṣaśokaroṣādyaiḥ | bhāvarasasaṃprayuktair jñeyam nāṭyāyitaṃ tad api ||

24 In *Kāvyaṅuśāsana* 8.2-4, Hemacandra distinguishes between *pāṭhya-rūpaka* and *geya-rūpaka*. In the first, the dramatic text is predominant; in the second, it is music and dance. The *geyarūpakas* of the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana* correspond roughly to the various *nṛtyaprabhandas* and *uparūpakas* of the subsequent tradition (see n. 30 below), forms that might have been present in the mind of the opponent, since they will explicitly be dealt with in 1.6 below. Here, however, the object of reference could still be the *lāsyaṅgas* of dance.

[1.5 Intermediate proposal of the *bhedapakṣin*:]

Now, we argue that there is [still] a difference in characteristics from theatre, since [in dance] we see the enactment (*abhinaya*) of a dramatic text that is sung (*gīyamāna-rūpaka*)[, while in theatre the text is recited].²⁴

[1.5.1 The *abhedapakṣin*:] First of all, such [a difference] does not hold, since we have already said that a secondary distinction leading to a general difference in characteristics can be found in all [dramatic genres]. Furthermore, this is not [even] a [substantial] difference in characteristics, since [the enactment of a text delivered through singing] also occurs in theatre. And this will be expressed in the instruction on the characteristics of the corporal acting (*śārī-rābhinaya*) through the major and minor limbs:²⁵

The enactment (*abhinaya*), carried out at the proper time during [the performance of] *dhruvā* songs, by [the performers] intent (*saṃprayukta*) on the *bhāvas* and *rasas*, by means of [such movements and facial expressions suggestive of] joy, grief, anger, and so forth, is also called a ‘simili-drama’ (*nāṭyāyita*). (Nś 22.49)²⁶

25 The reference is to the ‘corporal harmonious acting’ (*śārīra-sāmānyābhinaya*), which includes the *nāṭyāyita* (‘simili-drama’ or ‘pseudo-drama’), quoted next as one of its six registers defined in Nś 22.44–50.

26 I translate the verse, which is in *āryā* metre, by supplying what is missing from Abhinavagupta’s commentary on it in ABh ad Nś 22.49, vol. 3, p. 173: *bhāvair vyabhicāribhiḥ rasaiḥ svasthāyibhiḥ ye saṃprayuktā āviṣṭāḥ tatsaṃpādanaikamanasaḥ prayoktāras tair ity arthaḥ* (for a translation, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 377; 383–384). The definition quoted here refers to the second kind of *nāṭyāyita*, where a *dhruvā* song, embedded in the dramatic text by the poet or stage director, is delivered by a vocalist and enacted simultaneously or immediately afterwards by the actor. The singing can be optionally accompanied by instrumental music, however the *dhruvā* is defined primarily as a song (*gāna*). On the two types of *nāṭyāyita*, cf. § 3.2, n. 53. The characteristic common to the two *nāṭyāyitas* is that the actor becomes the spectator of a drama embedded within the main drama. Only in relation to the characters of the main play is the *nāṭyāyita* a drama (*nāṭya*), while for us spectators it is a pseudo-drama, whence its name. On the *nāṭyāyita*, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 377–384 and 1995. On *dhruvā* songs, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 206–213 and Gupt 1987–1988.

uparañjakam api tatra gītaṃ nāṭyavad rūpakam vācyābhinayaś ca vyakta iti tatprayogaś ca sarvatra.

[1.6] ḍombikāprasthānaśidgakahāṇakabhāṇikārāgākāvyaḍer daśarūpakalakṣaṇeṇāsaṃgrahān nāṭyād bheda iti cet, [1.6.1] na tad aikāntikam, toṭakaparakaraṇikārāsakaprabhṛtes tadasaṃgrhītasyaḍpi nāṭyarūpatvāt, 'kohalas tu bravīti' iti ca parihārasya samānatvāt.

1 nāṭyavad rūpakam] conj., nāṭyayavarūpaka° D M₁, nāṭyayadrūpaka° T₁, nāṭyayavarūpaka° E₁₍₁₎, nāṭyāyitaṃ rūpakam E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ 1–2 nāṭyavad→tatprayogaś ca] nāṭyāyitaṃ rūpakam iti tatprayogaś ca vādyābhinayayor vyaktaḥ E₂ 1 vācyābhinayaś] conj., °vādyābhinayo D M₁, °vādyābhinnayayo T₁, vādyābhinayayoś E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎, vācyābhinayayoś E₁₍₄₎ 2 tatprayogaś ca] E₁^{pc}, tatprayogasya D M₁ T₁ E₁^{ac} E₂ 2–3 sarvatra. ḍombikā°] Σ_E, sarvatrastho 'mbikā° D M₁ T₁ 3 °śidgakahāṇaka°] T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, °śidgabhāṇaka° D M₁sm, °śidgata° M₁, °śidgakahāṇa° E₂, °śilpakabhāṇa° E₁₍₁₎ || °rāgākāvyaḍer daśa°] Σ_E, °rāgākāvyaḍeśe D M₁ T₁^{pc}, °rāgākākyāḍeśe T₁^{ac} 3–4 °lakṣaṇeṇāsaṃgrahān] Σ_E, °lakṣaṇeṇāyaṃ grhān D M₁ T₁ 4 na] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎, om. E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂ || tad aikāntikam] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, daikāntikaṃ D M₁ T₁, tad anaikāntikam E₁₍₁₎ E₂ 4–5 toṭakaparakaraṇikā°] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, todaparakaraṇikā° D M₁ T₁^{pc}, todaparakaraṇitā° T₁^{ac}, toṭakaparakaraṇa° E₁₍₁₎, toṭakaparakaraṇikā° E₂ 5 °rāsakaprabhṛtes] Σ_E, °sakāḥ gabhṛtes D M₁ T₁ || °grhītasyaḍpi] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °grhītasthavi D M₁ T₁, °grhītam, tathāpi E₁₍₁₎ || °rūpatvāt] M₁ T₁ Σ_E, °rūpyatvāt D 5–6 tu bravīti] Σ_E, tadvatīti D M₁ T₁ 6 iti] Σ_E, om. D M₁ T₁

- 27 The text of the editions is not satisfactory here, and the only manuscripts available have corrupt readings. I read *vācyā*° instead of *vādyā*°, as corrected in E₁₍₄₎, possibly on the basis of a conjecture by Krishnamoorthy, although it is not mentioned as such. Unfortunately, no Malayālam manuscript is available to check, as T₄ is lacunose here. The reading *vācyā* agrees with the argument advanced so far, namely that since both dance and theatre present a dramatic text (*rūpaka*) connected with the enactment of textual content (*vācyābhinaya*), no difference can be postulated between them (cf. the verse attributed to the *vārttikakāra* above, in 1.3.6, starting with *vācyānugate 'bhinaye'*). The corruption to *vādyābhinayayoś* and the reading of a dual might have taken place since enactment (*abhinaya*), vocal music (*gīta*), and instrumental music (*vādyā*) are often mentioned together in the *Abhinavabhāratī* as the fundamental components of *nāṭya*. Here, however, the emphasis is slightly different, since it is the combination of a text and its enactment that is considered enough to define a form as theatrical (*nāṭyavad*, as in T₁), even if the text might be sung by a vocalist. The reading *nāṭyavad* recalls the explanation of the *nāṭyāyita* in ABh ad NŚ 22.49, vol. 3, p. 173: *anāṭyam api nāṭyam iva śāsate* (vol. 3, p. 173, with *nāṭyam* corrected into *anāṭyam*, following Bansat-Boudon 1992: 384), 'although it is not a dramatic text, the [*dhruvā* song] governs [the acting] just like a dramatic text' (For the full passage, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 383–384, and cf. below, n. 182). Similarly, in the thirty-second chapter, the opinion is reported that the *dhruvā*—the type of song in the *nāṭyāyita* on which the comparison with dance is constructed—is nothing but a dramatic composition that is sung: *ata eva lakṣye gīyamānaṃ rūpakam eva dhruvety āhuḥ* (ABh ad NŚ 32.8, vol. 4, p. 292).
- 28 I read *iti cen na tad aikāntikam* and supply a missing *aḥsara* (*ta*)*d* dropped in the manuscripts. The alternative is to read, along with E₂ *iti cet, tad anaikāntikam*. The *savyabhicārahetu*, or logical reason endowed with exceptions, is classified in the Nyāya tradition as an instance of 'apparent reason' (*hetu-ābhāsa*) and is defined as inconclusive (*anaikāntika*). It is considered to be such when the reason does not coexist uniquely, totally, and constantly with the thing to be established (*sādhyā*), since it is either too gene-

Although the song there (i.e. in the *nāṭyāyita*) is meant for allure (*uparañjaka*), it is a dramatic text (*rūpaka*) just like a drama (*nāṭyavad*), and the enactment of the textual content (*vācya*) is also evident (*vyakta*).²⁷ And thus the practice of [enacting the content of a text that is sung] is [found] everywhere[, be it dance or theatre].

[1.6] It might be argued that [forms of performance] such as the Ḍombikā, the Prasthāna, the Ṣidgaka, the Bhāṇaka, the Bhāṇikā, the *rāgakāvya*, etc. are different from theatre since they are not included in the definition of the ten dramatic genres (*daśarūpaka*). [1.6.1] [Our answer is that] the reason [provided] is not conclusive (*aikāntika*),²⁸ because forms such as the Toṭaka, the Prakaraṇikā, and the Rāsaka [definitely] have a theatrical nature, even though they have not been included in the [canonical list of the ten dramatic genres],²⁹ and because the refutation [having the form] ‘But Kohala mentions [them]’ will apply to both [sets of staged forms not included in Bharata’s enumeration of the ten dramatic genres].³⁰

ral or too particular. See for instance Foucher 1949: 126–127 and Matilal 1990: 54–56. In the case at hand, the logical reason is too general or over-inclusive since it extends to other genres too, such as the Toṭaka, the Prakaraṇikā, and the Rāsaka, which some authors recognize as forms of theatre. Hence the syllogism ‘forms such as the Ḍombikā and the others are different from theatre since they are not covered by the definition of the ten dramatic genres’ is false.

29 Toṭaka and Prakaraṇikā are given in later treatises as dramatic genres and they are added to the canonical list of the ten *rūpakas* (§ 1.3.3, n. 70). The Rāsaka is variously treated as a dramatic form or as a form of dance. In the *Abhinavabhārati*, for instance, the definition of the Rāsaka is given together with those of the new genres, starting with the Ḍombikā. It is possible, however, that another dramatic form called Rasakāṅka is referred to here. Abhinavagupta records a Rāsakāṅka called *Rādhāvīpralambha* composed by Bhejjala, and mentions it together with Rājaśekhara’s Saṭṭaka *Karpūramaiñjarī* as an instance of a dramatic form (*rūpaka*) using mainly Prakrit language, namely the *Saindhavabhāṣā*. It is possible that the Rāsaka, when mentioned together with the Toṭaka and Prakaraṇikā, corresponds to the Rāsakāṅka, different from the Rāsaka mentioned by Abhinavagupta as a form of dance along with Preraṇa, Rāmākriḍaka, Hallisaka, etc. Abhinavagupta attributes the description of the multifariousness in the use of languages in the *daśarūpaka*, including the Saṭṭaka and the Rāsakāṅka, to Kohala, in ABh ad NŚ 19.131cd, vol. 3, p. 72: *tena daśarūpakasya yad bhāṣākṛtaṃ vaicitryaṃ kohalādibhir uktam tad iha muninā saindhavāṅganirūpane svīkṛtam eva*. It is probably also Abhinavagupta who first attributed the mention of new dramatic genres to Kohala and others, as he states in ABh ad NŚ 18.1, vol. 2 p. 407: *uktavyākhyāne tu kohalādilakṣitatotaṭakasatṭakarāsakādisamgrahaḥ phalam*. However, in ABh ad NŚ 18.6, vol. 2, p. 410, he states that Kohala and others just mentioned their names, while he will provide the definitions: *teṣāṃ paraṃ kohalādibhir nāmāntaraṃ praṇītam. lakṣaṇena tv iha samgrhītā eva te*.

30 On the attribution of the introduction of new dance genres in the dramatic lore to Kohala, for instance in the *Alaṃkāracūḍāmaṇi* ad *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*, see below, n. 281, although the direct source for their definitions seems to be the *Abhinavabhārati*.

[1.6.2] vāciko 'py abhinaya āsīnapāṭhyādau kvacid asty eva, †'aho gāṇa-gāṇabullī bhāṇa'† ityādau. āhāryas tu prādhānyenaikaḥ kṛtaḥ, bhāṇādāv api na kṣaṇe kṣaṇe parivartate. sāttviko 'py āṅgikṛta eva kohalādyaiḥ 'sattvātirikto 'bhinayaḥ'^a ityādivacanam ālikhadbhiḥ. āṅgikas tu sphuṭa evāsti.

5 [1.7] ḍombikāṣidgākānām anyonyānanvitatvaṃ vākyānām iva samavakāre

1 abhinaya] M₁ Σ_E, abhiniya D M₁sm T₁ || °pāṭhyādau] D M₁sm T₁ Σ_E, °pādyādau M₁ 2 °bulli] D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁, °valli E₂, °br̥llī T₁^{ac} || āhāryas] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, āhāryikas E₂ 3 parivartate] Σ_E, parivartanta D M₁ T₁ || sāttviko] Σ_E, lāttviko D M₁ T₁ || kohalādyaiḥ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, kohalādyais tu M₁sm || sattvātirikto] D M₁ T₁ E₁, sāttviko 'tirikto E₂ 4 ālikhadbhiḥ] Σ_E, alikhadabhr̥iḥ D M₁ T₁ || evāsti] conj., vyāvāstrī D M₁, vāvāstī T₁, eva. aśtrī (?) E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, eva. anyāstrī° E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}, eva. anyāstrī-pradhānānām E₂ 5 ḍombikāṣidgākānām anyonyānanvitatvaṃ] Σ_E, (...)kācit gandhakāṭhinyānanvitatvaṃ M₁, ḍombi kācit gandhakāṭhinyānanvitatvaṃ D M₁sm, ḍombikārṣīt gandhakānyo 'nvitatvaṃ T₁, °ḍombi kācid granthakāṭhinyānanvitatvaṃ E₁₍₁₎^{vl} E₁₍₂₎^{ma} E₁₍₄₎^{ma}, °ḍombikāṣidgākānām anyonyān anucitatvaṃ E₁^{vl} || samavakāre] D M₁ Σ_E, samasamavakāre T₁

5–278.3 ḍombikāṣidgākānām→strīpuṃbhāvasamāśrayam |] nanu ḍombikāśīngakādau anyonyānucitatvaṃ vākyānām tataś cānanvaye kathaṃ rañjakatvaṃ iti cet, na, devatāstuteḥ strīpuṃbhāvasamāśrayasya ca śrīṅgārasya sarvatrānugamāt. tathā cāha—'devastutyāśrayakṛtaṃ strīpuṃbhāvasamāśrayam |' KAV

a NŚ 22.2: sattvātirikto 'bhinayo jyeṣṭha ity abhidhīyate | samasattvo bhaven madhyaḥ sattva-hīno 'dhamāḥ smṛtaḥ ||

31 All the four means of representation proper to theatre—the bodily (*āṅgika*), the vocal (*vācika*), the psychophysical (*sāttvika*), and the ornamental (*āhārya*)—are now weighed carefully as to their role in what the opponent considers to be 'dance'. Internal differences in the use of the means of enactment, such as those seen in dance, will also be attributed to the different dramatic genres—what is regarded as 'theatre' proper—by the *abhedapakṣin*. First of all, the *lāsyaṅga āsīnapāṭhya* is presented as endowed with vocal enactment, something that is suggested by its name 'that which is recited while sitting'. The *āsīnapāṭhya* referred to here is evidently the one described in ch. 31, which is an item of the *sukumāra* type of *pūrvaraṅga*, and not the theatrical *lāsyaṅga* with the same name, treated in ch. 19. The refutation of this argument later on, in fact, makes it clear that its performer is a dancer, not a dramatic actor.

32 Untraced quotation in Prakrit or Apabhraṃśa. The same fragment appears later on in this chapter as '*aho gāṇe' ityādi*. In order to refute the argument that the *lāsyaṅgas* of dance contain vocal enactment, and hence are to be equated with theatre, the *bhedapakṣin* will

[1.6.2] As to the vocal enactment (*vācīkābhīnaya*), it is indeed present sometimes in [forms of dance] such as the *āsīnapāṭhya* and the other [*lāsyāṅgas* of the *pūrvaraṅga*].³¹ As for instance in [the recitation of the following words]: †[...].³² The ornamental [enactment] (*āhārya*) is mainly maintained as the same [throughout], as also in [theatrical forms such as] the monologue play (Bhāṇa) etc., in which it does not change at each and every moment.³³ And the psychophysical [enactment] (*sāttvika*) is indeed included [in dance forms] by Kohala and others, when they comment on statements such as: ‘The dramatic representation where *sattva* is abundant [is said to be superior,] [the one having an ordinary *sattva* is said to be medium, and that which is devoid of *sattva* is known as inferior]’, acknowledging different degrees of *sattva* in different forms of performance].³⁴ The bodily [acting], in its turn, is indeed evident [in dance].³⁵

[1.7] If [you, the *bhedapakṣin*, argue] that in the Ḍombikā, Ṣidgaka, and the other [danced genres], the sentences, as it were (*vākyānām iva*), are reciprocally unconnected, while in the Samavakāra[, which is a dramatic form,] the

argue that this text, belonging to the *lāsyāṅga āsīnapāṭhya*, is a song and not a vocal enactment (cf. below n. 177). It is not surprising that the text is in some form of Middle Indic, since theatrical songs are mostly not in Sanskrit (cf. n. 171 below). Moreover, in the *pūrvaraṅga*, in which these dance pieces are performed, there are no linguistic restrictions.

33 The costume, or ornamental enactment (*āhāryābhīnaya*), is kept the same throughout the play as it merely identifies the single character in a Bhāṇa, and not the other characters whose speeches are reported by him. On the *lāsyāṅgas* of the *pūrvaraṅga* and the *nṛtyabhedas* as being similar to the Bhāṇa in this respect, see above, n. 16.

34 I translate the root *ālikh* as ‘to comment’, since the verse in question cannot possibly be attributed to Kohala, as it is found in NŚ 22.2: *sattvātirikto 'bhīnayo jyeṣṭha ity abhidhīyate | samasattvo bhaven madhyaḥ sattvahīno 'dhamah smṛtaḥ ||* ‘The acting where *sattva* is abundant is maintained to be superior, the one having an ordinary *sattva* as medium, and the one devoid of *sattva* is known as inferior.’ Moreover, authors of *śāstra* are normally said to ‘utter’ (*vac-*) their texts, not to write them. The psychophysical acting (*sāttvīkābhīnaya*) concerns the emotional involvement of the actor and is achieved through a series of techniques aimed at displaying the same physical symptoms that intensely felt emotions provoke in real life, the so-called *sāttvikabhāvas*. On the topic of *sattva*, *sāttvīkābhīnaya*, and *sāttvikabhāva*, see Bansat-Boudon 1991a and Malinar 2010. See also Cuneo & Ganser (forthcoming).

35 I conjecture *evāsti* as belonging to the previous sentence, which has the advantage of maintaining at least one of the two ‘ā’ of the manuscripts.

'py aṅgānām asti pradhāne 'rthe tatrānvaya iti cet, [1.7.1] ihāpi samānam, deva-
tāstuteḥ strīpuṃbhāvāśrayasya ca śṛṅgārasya sarvatrānugamāt. tasyaiva ca prā-
dhānyād vakṣyati—'devastutyāśrayakṛtaṃ strīpuṃbhāvasamāśrayam |^a iti. ata
eva cūḍamaṇiḍombikāyāṃ pratiñātaṃ †'bindi vi ḍombi guṇaṃ vami sahii

1 asti] T₁, astrī° D M₁ Σ_E || samānam] Σ_E, samāna° D M₁ T₁ 2 śṛṅgārasya] Σ_E, om. D M₁ T₁
3 vakṣyati] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, yakṣyati T₁^{ac} || °stutyāśraya°] E₁₍₁₎^{pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, °stutyāṃ traya° D M₁,
°stutyān traya° T₁, °stutyātraya° E₁₍₁₎^{ac} || iti. ata] D M₁ Σ_E, iti ca ta T₁, iti tata KAV 4 eva] D
M₁ T₁ KAV, eva ca Σ_E || cūḍamaṇiḍombikāyāṃ] D M₁sm T₁ Σ_E KAV, cūḍamaṇi(...)mbikāyāṃ M₁ ||
bindi vi ḍombi guṇaṃ] T₁^{ac}, bindihaḍombiguṇaṃ D M₁sm T₁^{pc}, bindiguṇaṃ M₁, biṃduguṇaṃ Σ_E
4–280.1 bindi→uṃ] he dvevi ḍombī ṇavvamisahii homi haṃ | coriyamihuṇahaṃ vammahasāru
kahemi tau || KAV, heṭṭhe vi ḍombī ṇaccami sahii homi haṃ | coriyamihuṇahaṃ vammahasāru
kahemi tau || *Bhayanī* || hodi haṃu cori] T₁^{ac}, hodihaṃvaco D M₁ T₁^{pc}, hodihaṃvaco Σ_E

a NŚ 4.311–312: devastutyāśrayakṛtaṃ yad aṅgaṃ tu bhaved atha | māheśvarair aṅghārair
uddhatais tat prayojayet || yat tu śṛṅgārasaṃbaddhaṃ gānaṃ strīpuruśāśrayam | devikṛtair
aṅghārair lalitaṃ tat prayojayet ||

36 An argument is presented here through the comparison between the Samavakāra, one of the ten dramatic genres (*daśarūpaka*), and the new forms of staged dance, the Ḍombikā, Ṣidgaka, etc. The implication seems to be that dramatic genres need mutual coherence between their parts to be effective, just like sentences need to be reciprocally connected to express their meaning. Dramatic forms find this connectedness in the main theme, while in dance, the argument goes, the various parts are mutually disconnected. The Samavakāra is described in NŚ 18.63–76 as having a particular structure as it consists of three acts (*aṅka*) quite different from one another: each act has a separate topic, a different kind of love, and deals with joy and sorrow. Abhinavagupta explains that although each act has a different topic, they are all ultimately connected with one another and the result of the whole play is reached only at the end of the third act. Each act is conceived as an intermediate sentence (*avāntaravākya*) with respect to the play in its totality, the whole sentence (*mahāvākya*).

various parts are connected with reference to the main topic (*artha*),³⁶ [1.7.1] [we reply that] also in this respect it is the same, because [in dance] all [the various parts] follow (*anugama*) the praise of the deities (*devastuti*) and the amorous *rasa* (*śṛṅgāra*) that rests on the relationship between a man and a woman. And since this is the main [theme in dance], [Bharata] will say: '[Dance is] based on the praise of the deities and rests on the relationship between a man and a woman.'³⁷ For the same reason, the [subject matter] in the Ḍombikā called 'The Crest-Jewel' (*Cūḍāmaṇi*) is introduced as follows: †'[...] I will

See ABh *ad locum*, vol. 2, pp. 437–438. The question of the connection between the different parts of dance with one main theme is also discussed in the section on the *lāsya-ṅgas* in ch. 31. These 'elements of *lāsya*' are in fact dance pieces that are performed one after the other in a delicate type of *pūrvaraṅga* (see § 2.3.2). They can have a single topic or different ones according to Nś 31.331 (cf. § 2.3.1, n. 80). Abhinavagupta explains that even when the topics are more than one, they are nevertheless connected with the main theme, and this concerns the love between a man and a woman. The same is said there of Ḍombikās, which also deal mainly with the theme of love. Cf. ABh ad Nś 31.331, vol. 4, p. 271: *nanu pṛthagarthatve anyonyasaṃbandhe vairasyaṃ syād ity āśaṅkyāha. tad aṅgaiḥ pṛthagartha iti. vacanasya paścāt paripāthyā* [to be corrected into *paripāthyā?*] *vacanāntaram ity anena krameṇa yady api saṅgatir nāsti tathāpi strīpuṃsabhāvarūpe pradhane 'rthe sarvam anvitam eva. tathā ca *ḍombikāsu sa evārthaḥ* [E₁^pc, *ḍombikāsv ekārthaḥ* E₁^ac] *pradhānabhūta iti cūḍāmaṇau spaṣṭam evoktam*. 'Anticipating the objection, according to which, if there are several distinct topics, the mutual connection [between the parts] would be disregarded, [Bharata] says that "the [*lāsya*] can have several topics, [in connection] with [its] limbs". Although there might be no syntactic relation between two sentences that are consecutively recited, everything is nonetheless linked to the main topic, which is the relationship between a man and a woman. Analogously, that very topic is principal in Ḍombikās. This has been clearly stated with regard to the *Cūḍāmaṇi*'.

37 This quotation is a condensation of the twofold distinction of dance into a vehement (*uddhata*) or a delicate (*sukumāra*) style. This is first advocated in Nś 4.268ab–269cd, in whose commentary the present argument is recalled [8.5.3], and reiterated in Nś 4.311–312 (cf. § 2.3.1, n. 77).

hodi haṃu cori amihūṇadhama mahasārukaḥ hete uṃ.† ata eva ca saḥṛdayāḥ smaranti ‘paḍamacūḍamaṇiā’ iti.

[1.8] tasmān nṛttaṃ nātyād abhinnaṃ tallakṣaṇopetatvāt.

1 amihūṇadhama] T₁^{ac}, amibhūṇavidhama D M₁ T₁^{pc}, amiduṇadhama Σ_E || mahasārukaḥ hete] T₁^{ac}, mahasārukaḥ gete D M₁ Σ_E, mahasārukaḥ gete T₁^{pc} || eva ca] D M₁ T₁^{pc}, eva T₁^{ac} Σ_E 1–2 saḥṛdayāḥ smaranti] Σ_E, saḥṛdayāsmarann iva D M₁ T₁ 2 paḍamacūḍamaṇiā] conj., dhamacūḍamaṇiā D M₁ T₁, vadhamacūḍamaṇiā E₁^{ac}, vasamacūḍamaṇiā E₁^{pc} E₂, vadha(sa)macūḍamaṇiā Bhayani || iti] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}, om. E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂ 3 nṛttaṃ nātyād] T₄ Σ_E, nṛttanātyād D M₁ T₁ || abhinnaṃ] Σ_E, bhinnam Σ_M E₁₍₂₎^{ma} E₁₍₄₎^{ma}

1–286.3 ata eva→asiddham etat] p.n.p. KAV

38 This passage is corrupt beyond restoration, but an improvement of the text—a quotation from the Ḍombikā Cūḍamaṇi—as well as a partial translation have been proposed by Bhayani on the basis of the better reading preserved in the *Viveka ad Kāvyānuśāsana* (KAV), as well as on his own emendations of the text of Hemacandra. My own text, although between cruces, is based on T₁^{ac}, since it contains the closest version to the one reconstructed by Bhayani. Compare the four texts:

Σ_E: —*biṃ duḡa ṇaṃ vamisahū—hodi va—co—amiduṇa—dham | mahasāra kaḥ ge teuṃ ||*

T₁^{ac}: *bindi vi ḍombi guṇaṃvami sahū hodi haṃu coriamihūṇadhama mahasāru kaḥhe teuṃ ||*

KAV: *he dvevi ḍombī ṇavvamisahū homi hauṃ | coriyamihūṇahama vammahasāru kahemi tau ||*

Bhayani: *heṭṭhe vi ḍombī ṇaccami sahū X homi hauṃ | coriamihūṇaham vammahasāru kahemi tau ||*

Bhayani proposes that the second line be translated as: ‘I narrate to you clandestine intercourse, which is the essence of love.’ He furthermore identifies this quotation as being in Apabhraṃśa, on the basis of some of the morphological elements it presents. He moreover suggests that the metre is a *rāsaka*, a rather popular metre of 21 *mātrās*, typically used in the Apabhraṃśa literary genre called *rāsābandha* (Bhayani 1993: 21–23). The soundness of Bhayani’s translation—here adopted between cruces in the absence of a better interpretation—is partly confirmed by Abhinavagupta’s statement just a few lines below: *ḍombikādaḥ tu kāmaśyaiva pracchannarāgaparamarahasyopadeśāt* (see 2.2). This is based in its turn on the definition of the Ḍombikā in the ABh, quoted from an unknown source and attributed to the ‘ancients’: *channānurāgagarbhābhīr uktibhīr yatra bhūpateḥ | āvarjyate manaḥ sā tu maṣṇā ḍombikā matā ||* (See 8.5.2). Another interesting parallel

narrate to you of clandestine intercourse, which is the essence of love'†.³⁸ For the same reason, connoisseurs (*sahṛdaya*) call this by the name 'The Foremost Crest-Jewel' (*Prathamacūḍāmaṇi*).³⁹

[1.8] That is why we conclude that dance is no different from theatre since it has the same characteristics.⁴⁰

can be found in ABh ad Nś 31.331, vol. 4, p. 271: *coriamikuṇabhavaṃ maha sā kukuhe mitai*, for which the editor has provided a Sanskrit gloss (*chāyā*) in brackets: (*cauryamaithuna-bhavaṃ mahat sā kukude mitre*). This verse seems very close to the second part of the one quoted here and indeed Abhinavagupta says that this is how the main topic is announced in the Ḍombikā *Cūḍāmaṇi*. This passage in chapter 31 is part of the introduction to the treatment of the *lāsyaṅgas*, where Abhinavagupta compares the predominance of the amorous theme in the *lāsyaṅgas* of the delicate type of *pūrvaraṅga* to that of the Ḍombikā (cf. n. 36).

39 According to Bhayani (1993: 24), this quotation might be taken as the end portion of a metrical line, namely a post-caesura segment of ten *mātrās* conforming to the *rāsaka* metre. The *rāsaka* has 21 *mātrās*, with a caesura after the eleventh, twelfth, or thirteenth *mātrās*. In the same passage quoted above in n. 36, ABh ad Nś 31.331, vol. 4, p. 271, the text continues: *tathā ca cirantano 'yaṃ (...dayapravāda(dah) paḍamacūḍāmaṇiyā (prathamacūḍāmaṇinā [chāyā added by the editor]) iti*. My reading is a conjecture based on this passage. Another possibility would be to have an equivalent for the word 'love' in the first part of the compound '*vadhama(madana?)-cūḍāmaṇiā*' in the passage under discussion, so as to have the *Ḍombikā* referred to as the 'Crest-Jewel of Love'. Although the parallel in chapter 31 is too corrupt to provide any firm understanding, it confirms that this is another name given to the Ḍombikā *Cūḍāmaṇi*, and may eventually suggest the identification of the connoisseurs (*sahṛdaya*) with the 'ancients' (*cirantana*) mentioned in chapters 4 and 31, respectively. The term 'ancients' in the *Abhinavabhārati* variously refers to previous writers in *Alaṃkāraśāstra* or *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It is possible that Abhinavagupta's own master, Bhaṭṭa Tauta, likewise belonged to this group, as he is mentioned immediately after, in the same passage in chapter 31, as having dealt at length with the topic of this Ḍombikā in his lost *Kāvyaakautuka*. Cf. ABh ad Nś 31.331, *ibid.*: (*tad etad) bhaṭṭatotenā kāvyakautuke vitatyā darśitam ca [...]*.

40 Here ends the exposition of the first *paśya*, according to which dance and theatre are identical. Now, the interpretation of the meaning of Bharata's verse according to this view is given.

[1.9]

etad āha—**yadā prāptyartham** iti^a. yato hetor **arthānām** kāvyārthānām **prāptyartham** sākṣātkārabuddhyā svīkārārthaṃ tattvajñaiḥ prayokṭṛbhir āṅgikādyabhinayaḥ kṛtaḥ, tatra **kasmād etan nṛttaṃ kṛtam**, nṛttaśabdena vyapadiṣtam, na tu nātyaśabdenaivety arthaḥ.

- 5 [1.10] bhavatu vā bhinnam, [1.10.1] tathāpi **kaṃ svabhāvaṃ** lakṣaṇaṃ ca svātmāny āṅgīkaroti, laukikatvaṃ lokottaratvaṃ vā? [1.10.2] laukikatve ghaṭādivastutulyatvaṃ tadanukāratvaṃ pratibimbādirūpatā vā. tatrāpi nātyacchāyātmakataiva. nātyasyaiva hy amī bhāgaṇiṣyandās citraputrikāpustaprabhṛtayo

2 tattvajñaiḥ] Σ_M , tajjñaiḥ Σ_E 2–3 āṅgikādyabhinayaḥ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E , abhinayaḥ āṅgikādiḥ T₄
 3 kasmād] E₁₍₁₎^{pc} E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₂, tasmād Σ_M E₁₍₁₎^{ac} E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎ 4 na tu] T₄ Σ_E , nanu D M₁ T₁ || nātyaśabdenaivety] T₄ Σ_E , nātyaśabdena naivety D M₁ T₁ 5 °bhāvaṃ lakṣaṇaṃ ca] E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ E₂, °bhāvalakṣaṇaṃ ca D M₁sm T₁^{pc}, °bhāvalakṣaṇaṃ tu M₁, °bhāvalakṣaṇaṃ tya T₁^{ac}, °bhāvaṃ lakṣaṇaṃ apekṣate T₄, °bhāvaṃ lakṣaṇaṃ apekṣate ca E₁₍₄₎ 5–6 svātmāny] T₄ Σ_E , svāny D M₁ T₁ 6 āṅgīkaroti] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E , āṅgīkaroti T₄ || laukikatvaṃ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E , lokikatvaṃ T₄ || laukikatve] T₄ Σ_E , laukikatve vā D M₁ T₁ 7 °rūpatā] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ Σ_E , °rūpakā T₁^{ac} 8 °ṇiṣyandās] T₁^{ac} T₄ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °ṇiṣpandās D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ || °pustaprabhṛtayo] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E , °prabhṛtayo T₄

a NS 4.261cd–262ab: yadā prāptyartham arthānām tajjñair abhinayaḥ kṛtaḥ || kasmān nṛttaṃ kṛtaṃ hy etat kaṃ svabhāvaṃ apekṣate |

41 I read *tattvajñaiḥ* as a gloss of NS *tajjñaiḥ*, as in all the manuscripts.

42 I read *kasmād* with the editions and as in the *mūla* text. The difference between *ka* and *ta* in Malayāḷam is minimal and these two *akṣaras* are often confused in the manuscripts.

43 The imaginary *pūrvapakṣin* now proceeds to examine the second thesis given in the *vikalpa*, namely that dance is different from theatre. This view is put forward as an *abhyupagama*, a provisional acceptance of the opponent's view for the sake of argumentation, aimed at strengthening one's own position, but finally rejected.

[1.9 Recapitulation of the *pūrvapakṣa*
(*abhedapakṣa*) expressed by Bharata]

This is what [Bharata] says [in NŚ 4.261cd–262ab]: ‘Given that [dramatic acting has been devised by those experts in (theatre)] for the sake of attaining [(its) objects, why indeed has this dance been devised (and) what is the nature to which it conforms?]. The meaning is: since (*yadā* = *yato hetor*) dramatic acting such as the bodily and the others (*āṅgikādyabhinaya*) has been devised by practitioners (*prayoktr*) who are experts in the essence [of theatre]⁴¹ for the sake of attaining [its] objects, i.e. for the appropriation (*svikārārtha*), by means of an evident cognition (*sākṣātkārabuddhi*), of [its] objects, i.e. the meanings of the poetic composition (*kāvyaārtha*), why⁴² has this dance been devised then? [That is to say, why has this object] been technically designated by the word ‘dance’ (*nṛtta*) and not simply by the word ‘theatre’ (*nāṭya*)?]

[1.10] Alternatively, let us admit that [dance] is different (*bhinna*) [from theatre].⁴³ [1.10.1] But even then, what nature (*svabhāva*) and defining characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) does it possess (*āpekṣate* = *āṅgikaroti*) in itself? Does it have a worldly (*laukika*) or an otherworldly (*lokottara*) nature? [1.10.2] If its nature [is regarded] as worldly, [dance] is either similar to things such as pots and the like, or it is an imitation of these (*tadanukāra*), or else it consists in a mirror image, [a portrait,] etc. (*pratibimbādīrūpatā*).⁴⁴ But even if such were the case, it would be nothing but a shadow of theatre (*nāṭyachchāya*), and not something entirely different from it]. In fact, these [entities], such as a painting (*citra*), a puppet (*putrikā*), a statue (*pusta*), etc., which are nothing but the overflows of [the meaning] portion of theatre (*bhāgani-*

44 This list of worldly entities to which dance would be equated if it were given the status of something belonging to the ordinary world (*laukika*) parallels the first three elements in the list of entities given in ABh ad NŚ 1.1, vol. 1, p. 3, from which theatre differs as an object of cognition: *tatra nāṭyaṃ nāma laukikapadārthavyatiriktatṅ tadanukārapratibimbālekhyasādṛśyāropādhyavasāyotprekṣāsvapnamāyendrajālādīvilakṣaṇaṃ tadgrāhakasya samyagjñānabhṛāntisaṃśāyanavadhāraṇānādhyavasāyavijñānabhinnavṛttāntāsvādanarūpa-saṃvedanasamvedyaṃ vastu rasasvabhāvam*. ‘Theatre—dissimilar from worldly objects (*laukikapadārtha*), different from their imitation (*anukāra*), reflection (*pratibimba*), portrayal (*ālekhyā*), similarity (*sādṛśya*), superimposition (*āropa*), mental apprehension (*adhyavasāya*), fancy (*utprekṣā*), dream (*svapna*), illusion (*māyā*), magic (*indrajāla*), and so forth—is, for its perceiver, an object (*vastu*) cognizable through an awareness (*saṃvedana*) consisting of a relish (*āsvādana*) in the story of the plot, distinct from correct knowledge (*samyagjñāna*), error (*bhṛānti*), doubt (*saṃśaya*), indeterminate knowledge (*anavadhāraṇa*), pre-conceptual knowledge (*anādhyavasāya*), and insight (*vijñāna*). The nature (*svabhāva*) of this object is *rasa*’ (translation based on Cuneo 2008–2009: 124).

granthakāraikalpitāḥ sākṣātkāraikalpapratyayasam̐padā kathāparyantam. tathā lokottaratve tu nāṭyasyaivāvāntarabhedamātram̐ tat.

1 granthakāraikalpitāḥ] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, granthikarikalpitam̐ D M₁sm T₁ E₁₍₁₎, grasthikarikalpitam̐ M₁, granthakarikalpita° T₄ || sākṣātkāraikalpa°] D M₁^{pc} T₁ T₄ Σ_E, sākṣātkāraikalpaḥ M₁^{ac} || °paryantam. tathā] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, °paryantadantā T₄ 2 tu] T₁^{ac} T₄, na tu D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E || nāṭyasyaivā°] D M₁sm T₁ T₄ Σ_E, nāṭyasyaivā° M₁

45 I read *bhāganīṣyandās*, as confirmed by T₁^{ac} and T₄, with *-nīṣyanda-* paralleling *-abhiṣyanda-* in chapter 6. Here, in fact, paintings, sculptures, and other reproductions are taken to be the overflowings or distillates (*abhiṣyanda*) from the meaning portion (*arthabhāga*) of theatre, just as courtly epics (*sargabandhas*, i.e. *mahākāvya*s such as the *Kumārasambhava*) and other poetic genres are said to be the overflowings of its word portion (*śabdabhāga*): *citrapustādy api ca nāṭyasyaivārthabhāgābhiṣyando yathā sargabandhādi śabdabhāgābhiṣyandaḥ* (ABh ad NŚ 6.32–33, vol. 1, p. 285). Unfortunately, Abhinavagupta says that he will expound on the topic in his commentary on NŚ 7.7, which is part of the lacuna covering most of chapters 7 and 8. It is thus difficult to contextualize it. The immediate context of chapter 6 is the relation of *rasa* to theatre, seen as a particular literary genre among others that also fall under the broad category of *kāvya*. Other poetic genres, from courtly epic to stray verses, borrow from theatre textual structures such as scenes and episodes (ibid.: *tena tadaṅgasandhyādisaṅghaṭanam* [E₁^{pc}, *tadaṁśa*° E₁^{ac}] *uddhṛtya sargabandhādiyāvan muktakam* [E₁^{pc}, *muktam* E₁^{ac}]). The dichotomy of word (*śabda*) and meaning (*artha*), or text and content referred to here serves, on the one hand, to distinguish theatre from other literary compositions, such as *mahākāvya* or *kathās*, and, on the other hand, to differentiate it from arts or crafts that use some kind of representation to bring out a content, such as painting or sculpture. Although the latter—representational or referential arts—may appear similar to theatre, they are nevertheless referred to in the first chapter of the *Abhinavabhāratī* as producing a kind of cognition dissimilar to the one concerning a character in theatre. It is stated that the cognition of the character is not that of a replica of something, as in the case of a painting or a sculpture. See ABh ad NŚ 1.107, vol. 1, p. 35: *na tatpratīkṛtīvena citrapustavat*.

46 The point being made here is that even though painting and sculpture may have an independent status as arts different from theatre, they are also used as subservient to *nāṭya* or other kinds of narrative arts, as elements of the plot. Here the accent is not on their alterity, but on their use within a play as subservient to the *rasa*. These arts become the topic of a literary composition and are especially used to provoke that vivid cognition

syanda),⁴⁵ are imaginatively fashioned by the authors within the limits of the narrative, since they produce[, for the responsive reader/viewer,] a cognition similar to a direct perception (*sākṣātkāraikalpapratyaya*).⁴⁶ In the same way, if its nature were [found to be] otherworldly, [dance] would end up being a mere subspecies (*avāntarabheda*) of theatre.⁴⁷

similar to a visualization (*sākṣātkāraikalpapratyaya*), which is necessary for the production of *rasa* (see § 3.4.1). In a similar vein and with similar wording, see also the statement in ABh ad NŚ 37.25, vol. 4, p. 518: *sarvaṃ nātyasyāṃśāḥ sarvatra rasaprādhānyāt sākṣātkāraikalpabuddhisampādanāt prakāśayantīti*. 'Since in every [play] *rasa* is predominant, the [various] parts (*aṃśā*) of theatre manifest the whole (*sarva*) [play] by bringing about a cognition similar to a direct perception.' The mention of these aids to representation in the case of a *kathā*, which is another genre of narrative literature in prose, is reminiscent of the passage where Patañjali (MBh ad 3.1.26) describes the use of representation in painting, theatre, and storytelling. Just like dramatic mimesis, other means of representation can be used to evoke things as if they were directly perceived (*sākṣātkāraikalpapratyaya*), and that is why these are said to behave similarly to a theatrical performance, or a shadow of it. In storytelling, or narrative literature, these means are just imaginatively fashioned (*kalpita*), since storytelling is based on words alone and has no external reference. Through literary expression the narrator is able to evoke a direct cognition of the mental objects, and he may choose to do it through the description of a portrait or a statue. These are in fact used as literary or metatheatrical devices to evoke the vivid presence of an object through its replica. It is a simple observation that Indian literature abounds in stories about heroes and heroines falling in love with one another just from a glimpse of the person in a portrait. Famous examples of portraits or other forms of replicas are found for instance in the second act of the play *Ratnāvalī*, when Sāgarikā admires the portrait of the king and experiences the pangs of love as if he were actually present (cf. below, n. 187). Later in the same act (*Ratnāvalī* 2.10), the king is seen looking at a portrait of Sāgarikā and himself and describing it to his friend. Both scenes are cited by Abhinavagupta in the *Locana* as examples of literary passages conveying the amorous *rasa* with all the aesthetic factors (See Ingalls et al. 1990: 443 and 218). Portraits, statues, or mirror images have also typically been used by dramatists to make powerful statements about the nature of fiction and reality, on which see Saunders 1919 and Granoff 2001.

47 I have corrected the text following T₁^{ac} and T₄, which read *lokattaratve*, so as to have a construction parallel to the preceding *laukikatve* and in order to avoid the negative particle *na*, which is unwarranted here. The otherworldly (*lokottara/alaukika*) nature of theatre is taken for granted here, but it is repeatedly emphasized in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, as for instance in the statement about the nature of theatre quoted in n. 44 above. If dance is otherworldly, it must automatically be—if not a type, since it is not listed among the ten *rūpakas*—at least a subtype or subspecies of theatre, which I take to be the meaning of *avāntarabheda*. The partial conclusion of the argument is that the nature of dance, its *svabhāva*, does not constitute any real difference from theatre, whether we conceive it as worldly or otherworldly. The whole argument is evidently put forward by the *abhedapakṣin*.

[2]

[2.1] tathāvidham api ca tan na niṣprayojanam, tadbhāvādyupalakṣaṇīyaṃ syāt.

[2.2] asiddham etat, caturvargopadeśasya rāghavavijayādikarāgakāvyēṣu dṛṣṭatvāt. ḍombikātau tu kāmasyaiva pracchannarāgaparamarahasyopadeśāt,
5 ‘yad vāmābhīniveśitvam’^a ity anena sāmānyābhīnaye pracchannarāgasyātīva

1 tan] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, tataṃ T₁^{ac} || tadbhāvādyupalakṣaṇīyaṃ] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, tat bhāvā hy upalakṣaṇīyaṃ D M₁ T₁^{pc}, tadbhāvā hy alakṣaṇīyaṃ T₁^{ac}, tat bhāvā hy upalakṣaṇīyaḥ E₁₍₁₎^{ac}, tat bhāvo hy upalakṣaṇīyaḥ E₁₍₁₎^{pc} 3 asiddham etat] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, asiddha vaiat T₁^{ac} || °ādikarāgakāvyēṣu] Σ_E KAV, °ādikā rāgakārye D M₁, °ādirāgakārye tu T₁^{ac}, °ādikarāgakārye tu T₁^{pc} 4 pracchannarāga°] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, pracchannānurāga° KAV 4–5 °rahasyopadeśāt yad vāmābhi°] Σ_E KAV, °rahasyopadeśodvadvāmā° D M₁sm T₁^{pc}, °haṃsyopadeśodvadvāmā° M₁, °rahasyopadeśodyadvāmā° T₁^{ac} 5 sāmānyābhīnaye] Σ_E D M₁ T₁, om. KAV || pracchannarāgasyātīva] Σ_E, pracchannānurāgasyātīva D M₁ T₁^{pc}, pracchannānurāgasyātīvam T₁^{ac}, om. KAV

1–288.3 tathāvidham→puruṣārthasyaivopadeśadarśanād iti] p.n.p. T₄

a NŚ 22.207: yad vāmābhīniveśitvam yatās ca vinivāryate | durlabhatvam ca yan nāryaḥ sā kāmasya parā ratih [var. kāmīnaḥ sā ratih parā] ||

48 The holder of the thesis of difference is now trying to prove that dance can be conceived as different from theatre—although only a subspecies of it—and still be endowed of a purpose of its own, i.e. conveying the *bhāvas*. As the objection to this makes it clear, the statement refers to the new genres such as Ḍombikā and the others. As independent performance genres, they share the principal characteristics of theatre—something the *abhedapakṣin* has just shown—but they are differentiated through some secondary characteristic (*upalakṣaṇa*), which accounts for their being considered as a secondary division or subspecies (*avāntarabheda*) of theatre. Their secondary characteristic, coinciding with their purpose (*prayojana*), would be the *bhāvas* etc., i.e. the *sthāyi-*, *vyabhicāri-*, and the other *bhāvas*, to the exclusion of the *rasas*. If we take *bhāva* in its theatrical meaning of ‘mental state’ or ‘emotion’, as opposed to the *rasa*, this position in fact becomes common to that of the *Daśarūpaka* and its commentary, according to which *nāṭya* is an *anukṛti* based on *rasa* (DR 1.7), *nṛtya* is based on *bhāva* and is an *abhinaya* of the word meanings (DR 1.9 and AL), and *nṛtta* is a movement of the limbs exempt from *abhinaya*, based on *tāla* and *laya* (DR 1.9 and AL) (cf. § 2.1). After providing a list of the seven *nṛtyabhedas*, starting with Ḍombikā, Dhanika comments: ‘If someone argues that it is not logically tenable to limit [the number of dramatic genres to ten], since other genres have been stated as well, our answer is that *nṛtya* is different as it is based on the *bhāvas*’ (AL ad DR 1.9, p. 8, quoted above, § 2.1, n. 16, and see also Bansat-Boudon 1992: 410 and 1994b). The *abhedapakṣin*’s answer may thus be regarded as supporting a similar view. This constitutes a difference in

[2 Dance as an independent genre]

[2.1] [The *bhedapakṣin*.] Yet, even if you conceived [of dance as a subspecies of theatre], it would not be devoid of a purpose [of its own] (*na niṣprayojana*): it would be secondarily characterized (*upalakṣaṇīya*) by the emotional states (*bhāva*) etc. of [theatre, and not by the *rasas*!]⁴⁸

[2.2] [The *abhedapakṣin*.] This is not established, since we see an instruction concerning the four aims of mankind (*caturvarga-upadeśa*) in *rāgakāvya*s such as the *Rāghavavijaya* ('Rāma's Victory') and so on;⁴⁹ and moreover, because in [danced genres such as] the *Ḍombikā* and others there is instruction in love (*kāma*), one of the four *puruṣārthas*, whose supreme secret is illicit passion (*pracchanna-rāga*). And illicit passion has clearly been expressed in [the chapter on] the harmonious acting (*sāmānyābhinaya*) as the quintessence of

the very purpose of theatre and dance since, as Abhinavagupta insists, *rasa* is necessary to reach the end result of theatre, i.e. instruction. See ABh ad NŚ 6.15–16, vol. 1, p. 261: *tena rasa eva nātyam. yasya vyutpattiḥ phalam ity ucyate. tathā ca rasād ṛta (NŚ 6.31) ity atraika-vacanopapattiḥ*; and ABh ad NŚ 6.31, vol. 1, p. 265: *yataś ca taṁ vinā 'rthaḥ prayojanaṁ ca prītipurassaraṁ vyutpattimayaṁ na pravartate* (for a translation, see Pollock 2016: 208). The argument of the *bhedapakṣin* is refuted by attributing the same purpose as theatre, namely instruction (*upadeśa* = *vyutpatti*) in the four aims of man (*puruṣārtha*), to musical and dance genres. Instruction is very closely associated with the arousal of an affective response (*rasa*) in the spectator, on the basis of the famous association between pleasure (*prīti*) and instruction (*vyutpatti*), so much so that *rasa* is invariably believed to lead to instruction. Conversely, the presence of the mere *bhāvas* does not invariably lead to *rasa* and therefore to instruction (see § 3.4, and n. 57 below). The main problem in identifying the position of the *bhedapakṣin* with that of the *Daśarūpaka* and *Avaloka* is that Abhinavagupta probably did not know this text, as he never quotes from it. It is possible, however, that some of its concepts and taxonomies were known to him from another source, or that the *Abhinavabhārati* and the *Avaloka* had a common source, now lost (cf. § 2.1, n. 27).

- 49 *Rāgakāvya*s 'melodic poems' are forms of performance that make use of dance and music. The name *rāga* comes from their being performed on a single *rāga* (musical mode), and *kāvya* from their being endowed with a poetic text. After the list containing the group starting with the *Ḍombikā*, Abhinavagupta mentions two such specimens of *rāgakāvya*—the *Rāghavavijaya* ('Rāma's Victory') and the *Māricavadha* ('The Slaughter of Mārica')—both lost to us, along with their *rāgas* and a definition of the genre attributed to Kohala. See below, 8.5.4–5. It is not known how the genre evolved, since *rāgakāvya*s are never mentioned by later writers, with the exception of Hemacandra, who appears to draw his material from the *Abhinavabhārati*.

manmathasārasarvasvatvenābhīdhānāt, siṃhasūkarabhallūkakāsarādivarṇa-
nenāpi bhāṇapraṇabhāṇikādāv aprastutaprasāmsārthāntaranyāsadr̥ṣṭāntā-
dinā puruṣārthasyaivopadeśadarśanād [2.3] iti prayojanabhedād api na bhe-
daḥ.

1 manmathasārasarvasvatvenābhīdhānāt] E₁^{pc} E₂^{pc}, devasāra sarvasvatvenābhi/.../abhīdhānāt
D (manuscript breaks off on p. 107 to continue on p. 154) M₁ (manuscript breaks off on
p. 93 and continues on p. 132), eva sārasarvasvatvenābhīdhānāt T₁ (manuscript breaks off on
p. 239, previously numbered 170, with a note written below in Malayālam. Text continues on
p. 240, in which the first three lines have been cancelled), devasārasarvasvatvenābhīdhānāt E₁^{ac},
manmathasārasarvatvenābhīdhānāt KAV || siṃhasūkarabhallūkakāsarā°] Σ_E, hastakaradvayakā-
sārā° E₁^{ma}, hastakaradvalakāsārā° D M₁, siṃhasūkaradhvalakāsārā° T₁, hastakaradhvalakāsārā°
T₁^{vl}, siṃhasūkaradhvalā° KAV 2 bhāṇa°] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, bhāṇaka° KAV || °praṇabhāṇikādāv]
E₁ KAV, °praṇabhāṇikād iva D M₁ T₁^{ac}, °praṇabhāṇikādi vā T₁^{pc}, °prasthānabhāṇikādāv E₂ ||
aprastuta°] Σ_E KAV, prastuta° D M₁ T₁ || °nyāsadr̥ṣṭāntā°] D T₁ Σ_E, °nyāsā dr̥ṣṭāntā° M₁, °nyāsanida-
rśanā° KAV 3 prayojanabhedād] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, prayojanabhedanād T₄ || na] Σ_M E₁, om. E₂ 3-4
bhedaḥ] D M₁sm T₁ T₄ Σ_E, bhedataḥ M₁

3-314.3 iti prayojanabhedād→samānaḥ] p.n.p. KAV

50 I accept the reading *manmathasāra*° given by Kavi, no doubt on the basis of the *Viveka* ad
Kāvyānuśāsana.

51 NŚ 22.207

love personified⁵⁰ in the [verse]: ‘Being devoted to the object of love, [being kept away from it, and the difficulty in obtaining the desired woman—these are the supreme delight of love].’⁵¹ Also, because in [staged forms such as] the Bhāṇa,⁵² the Preraṇa, the Bhāṇika, and so on, one sees that instruction in the goals of mankind is [provided] by means of the depiction of [animals] such as lions, boars, bears, and buffalos,⁵³ through [figures of speech such as] indirect expression (*aprustutaprasaṃsā*),⁵⁴ illustration of a general truth through a particular case (*arthāntaranyāsa*),⁵⁵ exemplification (*drṣṭānta*),⁵⁶ and so on. [2.3] Therefore, we cannot establish a distinction [between theatre and dance] even on the basis of a [possible] difference in purpose.⁵⁷

52 Should we read *bhāṇaka*, as in the parallel in KAV (p. 447)? This confirms the alternation between the forms *bhāṇa* and *bhāṇaka* in the lists of the ‘minor’ genres, as noted by Bose 2007.

53 The definition of the Bhāṇa as a ‘minor’ genre includes descriptions of Viṣṇu in his incarnations as a man-lion and as a boar, while the Bhāṇika mentions the play of boars and lions among its subjects. The latter might have been allegorical plays. See below 8.5.2.

54 *Aprustutaprasaṃsā*, ‘mention of the irrelevant’ according to Udbhaṭa’s definition, is a figure in which the real but implicit subject matter is obliquely referred to by means of an explicit, but apparently irrelevant, subject, which however stands in a specific relationship to the former (Gerow 1971: 111). It often functions like allegory.

55 *Arthāntaranyāsa* ‘introduction of another matter’: a figure in which a proposition or remark is justified or substantiated by the addition of a relevant moral or rationale; apodixis. [...] This figure is different from *drṣṭānta* in that the intention of the speaker is to establish his remark, not to clarify it (Gerow 1971: 118).

56 *Drṣṭānta* ‘exemplification’: the addition of a second situation that bears upon the same point as the first and where the purpose is entirely one of illustration (Gerow 1971: 199).

57 In the *Abhinavabhāratī*, the twofold aim of theatre is composed of pleasure (*prīti*) and instruction (*vyutpattī*). Instruction concerns the means for attaining the four aims of mankind (*puruṣārthas*): *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*. By seeing the appropriate actions displayed on the stage, together with the results of those actions, the spectator develops a capacity to act in the right way. This teaching, in its turn, is said to be achieved by means of pleasure, *prīti*, itself sometimes used as a synonym for *rasa*. The presence of instruction through pleasure is indeed the characteristic of theatre or literature in general, which distinguishes it from other kinds of textual instruction, on which see § 3.4.

[2.4]

tad āha yato 'rthānām dharmādiprayojanānām prāptyartham tajjñair nānṣibhiḥ kavibhir abhinaya ity abhinīyamāno rāgākāvyaḍiḥ kṛtaḥ. tasmāt kasmād dhetoṛ etan nṛttam na nāṭyam. nāṭyam ca kasmān na nṛttam. gātravikṣepātmakam hi tad api. tulye ca tathā 'rthe kam bhedakam svabhāvam apekṣate.

5 nāsty asau bhinnasvabhāva iti yāvat. [2.4.1] yad vārttikam—

1 tad āha yato] conj., tadobhayato D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{Ma}, tad āha yadā prāptyartham iti T₄, yadā yato E₁₍₂₎ E₂, tad āha yadā prāptyartham iti. yadā yato E₁₍₄₎ || dharmādiprayojanānām] T₄ E₁₍₄₎, dharmādīnām prayojanādīnām D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎, prayojanādīnām E₁₍₂₎ E₂ || °artham taj°] T₄ Σ_E, °artha° D M₁ T₁ 1–2 nānṣibhiḥ] conj., anṛtādibhiḥ D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₁₎^{ac} E₁₍₂₎^{ac}, anutādibhiḥ T₁^{ac}, om. T₄ E₁₍₄₎, anuvādibhiḥ E₁₍₁₎^{pc}, anuvādibhiḥ nṛttānurāgibhiḥ E₁₍₂₎^{pc}, nṛttānurāgibhiḥ E₂ 2 kavibhir] T₁ T₄ Σ_E, kavir D M₁ || ity abhinīyamāno] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, ity abhidhīyamāno T₁^{ac}, i bhinīyamāno T₄ || kasmād] Σ_M Σ_E, tasmād T₁^{ac} 3 na] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, om. T₄ || kasmān na] T₄ Σ_E, tasmān D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₁₎, kasmād T₁^{ac}

58 I read *tad āha yato*, with *yato* standing for *yadā* in Bharata's verse (Nś 4.261a), which is commented upon once more here. This conjecture is closer to what the manuscripts read, apart from T₄, which has the full *pratīka*, but does not repeat the first word with the gloss as in E₁₍₄₎. Such changes are quite typical in the abbreviated version found in T₄, which is why it has not been followed here, against the editions.

59 In the *Abhinavabhāratī*, the word *abhinaya* can mean: the means of representation or enactment; the act of representing or dramatic acting; and the represented or enacted genre. In this interpretation of Bharata's text, *abhinaya* is taken to mean *abhinīyamāna* 'the genre that is enacted'.

60 The text is problematic at this point. The reading *nṛttānurāgibhiḥ* in E₂ would be acceptable, except that it neither conforms to the manuscripts, nor does it add anything meaningful to the interpretation. My conjecture *nānṣibhiḥ* is closer to the manuscripts and can be explained through a parallel found in Hemacandra's commentary on his *Kāvyānuśāsana*, a text indebted to the *Abhinavabhāratī*. The passage is about the double value of poetry as something to be both seen and heard (KA 8.1: *kāvyam prekṣyam śravyam ca*). In the following quotation in the KAA *ad locum*, p. 432, this characteristic of poetry is attributed first of all to the activity of the poet: *nānṣiḥ kavir iti kavṛ varṇana iti ca darśanād varṇanāc ca kavir taṣya karma kāvyam*. 'Since it has been said that "a poet must also be a

[2.4 First interpretation of the *pūrvapakṣa*
(*abhedapakṣa*) expressed by Bharata]

That is why [Bharata] says: since⁵⁸ **dramatic acting** (*abhinaya*), i.e. the *rāgakāvya* and the other [genres] that are enacted (*abhinīyamāna*),⁵⁹ **has been devised by those experts in [theatre]** (*tajjñā-*), i.e. by the poets who are seers (*nānṛṣi-*),⁶⁰ **for the sake of attaining [its] objects** (*artha*), i.e. the ends (*prayojana*) [of man] such as *dharma* and the others,⁶¹ therefore, for which reason would **this dance** not be theatre?⁶² And why would theatre not be dance? In fact, even [theatre] consists in throwing the limbs about (*gātravikṣepa*).⁶³ And since their goal is equally similar, **what is the nature** (*svabhāva*), entailing a difference [from theatre], **to which [dance] conforms?** This amounts to saying that such a distinct nature does not exist. [2.4.1] As the *Vārttika* [goes].⁶⁴

seer”, and that “the verbal root *kavṛ* has the meaning of describing”, the poet is qualified by the insight and the gift for description, and his activity as poetry. The second quotation is likely to derive from Pāṇini’s *Dhātupāṭha*, although the root is given there as *kabr* instead of *kavṛ* (cf. *Dhātupāṭha* 1.405: *kabr varṇe*, in Böhtlingk 1964: 64*). The first quotation is repeated in KAV 8.1, in a series of verses attributed to Bhaṭṭa Tauta, defining the poet and his activity, starting with *nānṛṣiḥ kavir ity uktam ṛṣiḥ ca kila darśanāt* | The full passage is translated in Bansat-Boudon 1992: 319, n. 198, Cuneo 2008–2009: 70, n. 39, and Pollock 2016: 182. According to Pollock (ibid. 383, n. 6), this passage shows that Bhaṭṭa Tauta possibly first formulated a distinction between the Vedic and the literary poet, and in my opinion this is the reference Abhinavagupta has in mind in this passage. It is in fact possible that the interpretation of *artha* as the aims of man might have called for the connected interpretation of the knowledgeable ones (*tajjñaiḥ*, in Bharata’s verse) as the poet who is at the same time a seer and therefore has an intimate knowledge of *dharma* and the other ends of man, as well as the means to realize them.

- 61 The reading of the manuscripts, *dharmādīnām prayojanādīnām*, is also possible and does not change the meaning, although the °*ādī-* after *prayojana*° is slightly more difficult to explain. For this reason, T₄ has been preferred here.
- 62 The *abhedapakṣin* is now interpreting Bharata’s statement by playing on the polysemy of the Sanskrit words. The word *artha-* is reinterpreted here as a goal, or aim (*prayojana*), that is *dharma* etc.; *abhinaya-*, as the enacted genre (*abhinīyamāna*), such as the *rāgakāvya* etc.; and the *tajjñā-* (experts), as the poets (*kavi*).
- 63 On the definition of dance as ‘throwing the limbs about’ in the *Dhātupāṭha*, see above, n. 5.
- 64 The verse attributed to the *Vārttika* is again in *āryā* metre, just as the two verses quoted above (cf. n. 18 and n. 22).

‘evam avāntaravākyair upadeśo rāgadarśanīyeṣu |
siṃhādivarṇanair vā kvacid apy arthāntaranyāsāt ||’ iti ||

[2.5] tasmāt svabhāvasya prayojanasya cābhedān nṛttaṃ nāṭyād abhinnaṃ iti.

[3]

[3.1] athocyate rāgakāvyaḍiprayogo nāṭyam eva, abhinayayogāt. yat tv abhinayādisūnyam kevalam valanāvartanābhrūkṣepatārācalanacaraṇadhāraṇakampasphuritakaṭicchedarecakādi tad asmākaṃ nṛttaṃ bhaviṣyati. yatra nāṭyaśānkāpi nāsti. [3.2] nanu kiṃ tena mokṣitena prayojanam. [3.3] nanūktaṃ

1 rāgadarśanīyeṣu] T₁ Σ_E, rāgadarśanīyeṣu yeṣu D M₁ T₁^{vl} 2 siṃhādivarṇanair] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, siṃhādivarṇakair E₁₍₁₎, siṃhādi ... nair (broken off) T₄ || arthāntaranyāsāt] Σ_E, akṣāntaranyāsah D M₁sm T₁^{ac}, akṣāntaranyāsatas M₁, arthāntaranyāsah T₁^{pc}, antarthāntaranyāsāt T₄ || iti] Σ_E, om. Σ_M 3 cābhedān] Σ_E, ca bhedam D M₁ T₁, cābhedā(vā)n T₄ || abhinnaṃ] T₄ Σ_E, bhinnam D M₁ T₁ 4 athocyate rāga°] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} E₁^{ma}, rāghavavijayādikam rāgakāvyaṃ tathocyate rāga° T₄, rāghavavijayādirāga° E₁₍₁₎, athocyate rāghavavijayādirāga° E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂ || yat tv] Σ_E, ya tv D M₁ T₁ 4–5 abhinayādisūnyam] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, abhinayādis ca sūnyatvam D M₁sm, abhinayā diśya sūnyatvam M₁ T₁, abhinādisūnyam T₄, abhinayādisūnyatvam E₁₍₁₎ 5 valanā°] T₄ Σ_E, vacanā° D M₁ T₁ || °caraṇadhāraṇa°] Σ_E, °raṇadhāraṇa° D M₁ T₁^{vl} T₄, °raṇāvāraṇa° T₁ 5–6 °kampusphuritakaṭi°] Σ_E, °kampusphuritakaṭi° D M₁ T₁^{vl}, °kam parisphuritakaṭi° T₁, °kampusphuritakaṭi° T₄ 6 yatra] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, yan T₄ 7 nāsti] T₄ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎ E₂, om. D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} || tena mokṣi°] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, te mokṣi° T₄, tena prekṣi° E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂

65 It is possible to agree with Raghavan (1978: 520) that *rāgadarśanīya* should be the same as *rāgakāvya*, since Abhinavagupta has just spoken of *rāgakāvya*. Otherwise, if the term *rāga* is not taken in its technical musical meaning, it could refer to passionate love. The translation would then be ‘in those [representations] displaying passionate love’, and could include other forms such as the Ḍombikā and Ṣidgaka. Since we do not know anything about the author of the *Vārttika* (is he the same Śrī Harṣa who wrote the *Ratnāvalī* in the 7th c.?), and since we know that the musical *rāgas* are first described by Mataṅga in the *Brhaddeśī* (8th c. CE?), it is difficult to determine with certainty what the expression *rāgadarśanīya* refers to. It is certain that Abhinavagupta knew the concept of *rāga* as a musical mode, since this is how he intends it in *rāgakāvya*. See below, n. 284 and 285.

In this way, in those staged performances [based on] a musical mode (*rāga-darśanīya*),⁶⁵ instruction [is attained] by means of intermediate sentences (*avāntaravākya*)⁶⁶ or, in some cases, also by means of the depiction of [animals such as] lions etc., through the illustration of a general truth through a particular case (*arthāntaranyāsa*).

[2.5] Therefore, since [their] nature (*svabhāva*) and purpose (*prayojana*) are no different, dance is no different from theatre.

[3 Dance within the play]

[3.1 Intermediate proposal of the *bhedapakṣin*:] To this argument, it is answered that staged performances such as *rāgakāvya*s and so on are indeed [forms of] theatre, since they make use of enactment (*abhinayayoga*). But that which, devoid of the various kinds of enactment (*abhinayādīśūnya*), merely consisting of spinning and whirling, knitting of eyebrows, casting of glances, placing of feet,⁶⁷ shaking and oscillating, the hips opening, [the feet, hips, hands, and neck] rolling, etc., is what we mean by [the word] ‘dance’ (*nṛtta*), which cannot even be suspected as being [a form of] theatre.⁶⁸ [3.2] [Objection of the

66 *Avāntaravākya*s are the propositions that form a *mahāvākya*. The various *pādas* or verses in poetry can be considered *avāntaravākya*s. As stated above (cf. n. 36), Abhinavagupta also takes each single act of a play as an *avāntaravākya* with respect to the whole play, the *mahāvākya*.

67 I read °*caraṇadhāraṇa*°, as in the editions.

68 I follow the reading of the editions and T₄ *nāṭyaśāṅkāpi nāsti*. The *bhedapakṣin* now makes a concession, saying that the *abhedapakṣin*'s claim that forms such as Ḍombikā, Bhāṇaka, *rāgakāvya*s, etc. are theatrical is not wrong, provided that they are distinguished from those other forms of bodily movement that do not dramatically represent anything. This last is what the opponent actually means by the word *nṛtta*. His main argument is that dance is different from theatre since it is devoid of enactment (*abhinayādīśūnya*). This position corresponds *grosso modo* to the definition of *nṛtta* given in the AL ad DR 1.9 (§ 2.1, n. 31), but it is not Abhinavagupta's final position, as Bansat-Boudon (1992: 399–404) seems to take it. This is because the absence of enactment cannot be attributed to dance in its totality, which includes also forms such as Ḍombikā etc., but to that dance consisting exclusively of *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras*, what performers would refer to today as ‘pure dance’ (§ 2.1, n. 5). If we intend the word *abhinaya* in its technical and stronger sense, as the dramatic way of representing the contents of a play as if they were directly present in front of the spectators, then even Ḍombikās will be found as lacking it. On the nature of *abhinaya* in dance, and on its twofold meaning as a general or a technical term, see § 3.5.

nāṭyopayogitvaṃ—'tasya śākhā ca nṛttaṃ ca tathāivāṅkura eva ca | vastūny abhinayasya'^a iti.

[3.4]

5 etad dūṣayati—**yadā prāptyartham** iti^b. iha 'yo 'yam svabhāvo lokasya'^c iti lakṣaṇena nāṭyaṃ lakṣitam. tatrābhinayānām upayoga ukto 'rthābhīmukhyaprāptiḥ. nṛttasya tūktarūpasya na kiñcit prayojanam. [3.4.1] uparañjakatayā gītāvādyaḍivad upayoga iti cet: [3.4.2] gītasya tāvat 'yat tu kāvyena noktaṃ syāt

1 tasya] D M₁ T₄ Σ_E, tasya ca T₁ || ca tathāivāṅkura eva] Σ_E, tathāivāṅkuraṅyā D M₁ T₁^{vl} T₄, tathāivāṅkuraṅyā T₁ || vastūny] T₄ Σ_E, vastūny D M₁ T₁ 4 ukto 'rthābhi°] D M₁ T₁, ukthābhi° E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, ukto 'rtho 'bhi° T₄ E₁₍₁₎ 4–5 °prāptiḥ] T₄ Σ_E, °prāptim D M₁ T₁ 5 nṛttasya] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, tasya T₄ E₁₍₁₎, anye tu E₁₍₁₎^{vl} || tūktarūpasya] T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, taduktarūpasya D M₁ T₁^{vl}, uktasya rūpasya T₄, tūktasya E₁₍₁₎, tūlarūpasya E₂ 6 °ādivad upayoga] T₄ Σ_E, °avad apayona D M₁, °apadayona T₁^{ac}, °avad ayona T₁^{pc} || gītasya] D M₁ T₄ Σ_E, gītāvādyaḍya T₁ || noktaṃ] D M₁ T₄ Σ_E, noktaḥ T₁

- a NŚ 8.14: asya śākhā ca nṛttaṃ ca tathāivāṅkura eva ca | vastūny abhinayasyeha vijñeyāni prayoktrbhiḥ ||
 b NŚ 4.261c–262ab: yadā prāptyartham arthānām tajñair abhinayaḥ kṛtaḥ || kasmān nṛttaṃ kṛtaṃ hy etat kaṃ svabhāvam apekṣate |
 c NŚ 1.119: yo 'yam svabhāvo lokasya sukhaduḥkhasamanvitaḥ | so 'ngādyabhinayopeto nāṭyam ity abhidhīyate ||

- 69 I read *tena mokṣitena* with the manuscripts, although this is not a completely satisfactory reading. Another, possibly better, option, though not supported by the manuscripts, is to read *tena parikṣitena* ('examined as such') as proposed by H.V. Nagaraj Rao during one of our readings in Mysore in 2012. A similar phrasing is used also by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa in his *Nyāyamañjarī*, a text that Abhinavagupta was conversant with. See *Nyāyamañjarī*, vol. 1, p. 686 (12): *kim anena parikṣitena prayojanam ubhayatrāpi prāmānyam nopapadyata iti tad artham evedam parikṣyate* ||
- 70 I interpret the two '*nanu*' as follows: the first introduces an objection to the intermediate proposal of the *bhedapakṣin*, while the second is the answer to it: 'abstract dance' is essentially different both from theatre and 'narrative dance', and its use in theatrical performance has been stated in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.
- 71 The commentary on this verse is unfortunately part of the lacuna common to all the manuscripts. However, it is quoted on other occasions in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, which shed some light on the use of dance as an element of *āṅgikābhinaya* (cf. § 3.4.2, n. 181). In the first chapter, commenting on the introduction of the *kaiśiki vṛtti* into theatre, Abhinavagupta quotes the same verse to explain the importance of mingling acting with dance for the arousal of the amorous *rasa* in particular, and of any kind of *rasa* in general, on which see § 3.4.1, n. 135. On the importance of dance vis-à-vis the *śākhā* in *abhinaya*, see also § 2.2, n. 43.

abhedapakṣin:] But what is the purpose of this [dance] freed [from enactment]?⁶⁹ [3.3] [Answer of the *bhedapakṣin:*] [Its] usefulness in a theatrical performance has indeed been taught [by Bharata]:⁷⁰ ‘The *śākhā*, dance (*nṛtta*), and the *aṅkura* [should be known here by practitioners] as the elements of this [bodily] acting (*abhinaya*)’ (NŚ 8.14).⁷¹

[3.4 Second interpretation of the *pūrvapakṣa*
(= *abhedapakṣa*) expressed by Bharata]

[Bharata, in the guise of *pūrvapakṣin*,] shows the unsoundness of this [argument, namely that dance would be different from theatre as devoid of enactment, and still be useful to it]: ‘Given that [dramatic acting has been devised by those experts in (theatre)] for the sake of attaining [(its) objects, why indeed has this dance been devised (and) what is the nature to which it conforms?]

In this [treatise], theatre has been given the following definition: ‘This nature proper to the ordinary experience, [associated with pleasure and pain, is called theatre (*nāṭya*) when it is conveyed by the means of dramatic enactment such as the bodily and the others (*aṅgādyabhinaya*)]’ (NŚ 1.119). In this connection, the means of enactment (*abhinaya*) have been taught as useful for attaining (*prāpti*) the meanings (*artha*) [of the dramatic text] as directly manifested in front (*ābhimukhya*) [of the spectators].⁷² But dance, in the form [you] describe it [i.e. as devoid of enactment], has no purpose at all [in theatre]. [3.4.1] You may argue that it is employed for allure (*uparañjaka*), just like songs (*gīta*), music (*vādyā*), and the other [beautifying elements].⁷³ [3.4.2]

72 For the definition of *abhinaya* in similar terms in NŚ 8.6, see § 3.2, n. 38. In the edition, I follow the reading of the manuscripts, *ukto 'rthābhimukhya'*, with *artha*° compounded with °*ābhimukhya*°, since the means of enactment have indeed been expressed, in the commentary on the definition of theatre in NŚ 1.119, in terms of their being causal in bringing theatre and its objects into the direct presence (*ābhimukhyānanahetu*) of the spectators. For a translation and analysis of this passage, see § 3.3.1, n. 130.

73 In order to distinguish the role of vocal and instrumental music from that of *abhinaya*, Abhinavagupta characterizes them as ‘entertaining’ or ‘beautifying’ (*uparañjaka*), a term that refers to their pleasurable and alluring nature. See, for instance, Abhinavagupta’s comments on the introduction of the *kaiśikī vṛtti*, in ABh ad NŚ 1.47–52, vol. 1, p. 23: *gītātodyābhyām uparañjakābhyām yogam darśayati*. [Bharata] shows the association [of theatre] with vocal (*gīta*) and instrumental music (*ātodya*) as beautifying elements.’

tad gītena prasādhayet ||^a iti 'yāni vākyais tu na brūyāt' iti 'na tair eva tu vākyārthaiḥ'^b iti nyāyena prakṛticittavṛttikathāvasthādi sūcayato 'sty upayogaḥ; vādyasyāpi gītasāmyākṣiptatāloddīpakatvena; etanmadhyāt tu **nṛtṭaṃ** karṭṭi **kaṃ svabhāvam apekṣate**.

- 5 [3.5] tena yuddhaniyuddhagatiparikramādāv asyopayoga ity uktam. [3.6] tatrāpi kaṃ svabhāvaṃ laukikam alaukikaṃ vāpekṣate. laukikatve prayojya-

1 yāni] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, yadi T₄ E₁₍₁₎ 2 °ārthaiḥ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, °ārther T₄ || prakṛti°] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, prakṛ[ti°]tati T₄ || sūcayato] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, sūcako T₄ E₁₍₁₎ 3 °ākṣiptatāloddīpaka°] D M₁ T₁^v Σ_E, °ākṣiptatālo dīpaka° T₁, °... ptakāloddīka° (broken off) T₄ || nṛtṭaṃ karṭṭi] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, nṛkarṭṭi T₄ 4–5 apekṣate. tena] conj., apekṣate. na T₄ Σ_E, apekṣyante. na D M₁, apekṣyaṃ tena T₁ 5 °niyuddhagati°] Σ_E, °ṃ niyuddhagati° D M₁ T₁, °niyuddhag[ti°]ti° T₄ 6 kaṃ] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ Σ_E, taṃ T₁^{ac} || vāpekṣate] T₄ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, vāpy apekṣite D M₁ T₁, vāpy apekṣate E₁₍₁₎ 6–298.1 laukikatve prayojyatvena] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, laukikatvena prayojyatve E₁₍₁₎, om. T₄

- a ABh ad NŚ 4.261cd–263ab, vol. 1, p. 178: yat tu kāvyena noktaṃ syāt, ABh ad NŚ 5.87cd–88ab, vol. 1, p. 232: yat tu kāvyena noktaṃ syād gītena, ABh ad NŚ 22.49, vol. 3, p. 173: yatra kāvyena (vākyena?) noktaṃ syāt tat tu gītaṃ prasādhāyet
- b NŚ 32.349: yāni vākyais tu na brūyāt tāni gītair udāharet | na tair eva tu vākyārthair anyair aupamyasaṃśrayaiḥ || (As quoted in ABh *ad locum*, vol. 4, p. 371). The *mūla* text in the edition reads: yāni vākyais tu na brūyās tā(t tā)ni gītair upa(dā)haret | na tair eva tu vākyā(kāvya)ṛthair anyaiḥ pravakevalā(nyair aupamya)saṃśrayaiḥ

- 74 The discussion is centred on the songs called *dhruvā*. While providing directions regarding the use of *dhruvā* songs in the dramatic representation, Bharata explains in NŚ 32.328: *evam arthavidhiṃ jñātvā deśakālaṃ ṛtuṃ tathā | prakṛtiṃ bhāvaliṅgaṃ tu tato yojyā dhruvā budhaiḥ* || 'Experts should apply the *dhruvā* after considering the situation, the time and place, the season, the character, and the symptoms of the emotional state.' Bharata explains these elements in detail in the verses following this one. On the use of *dhruvās* in theatre, see below, n. 76.
- 75 Untraced quotation. A slightly different version is found in the commentary on the *nātyāyitā* performed on the song *dhruvā* in ABh ad NŚ 22.49, vol. 3, p. 173. Two more quotations of the same passage, one in chapter 4 (see below, n. 214), the other in chapter 5 (ABh ad NŚ 5.87cd–88ab, vol. 1, p. 232), confirm the reading beginning with *yat tu kāvyena*, which in any case looks to me like a better one.
- 76 NŚ 32.349, as quoted in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, with a text slightly different from the *mūla*. This verse concludes the explanation of those elements that have to be considered when introducing a *dhruvā*. According to the principle of similitude at play in the *dhruvās*, based on the rhetorical device of *anyokti* or *anyāpadeśa* (cf. n. 142 below), particular character types can be compared with objects, animals, natural phenomena, etc., that are express-

As far as songs are concerned, they are used [in theatre] since they provide information about the character (*prakṛti*), [his] mental state (*cittavṛtti*), the situation in the story (*kathāvasthā*), and so on,⁷⁴ according to the following principles: ‘that which is not stated by the literary text, he should accomplish with a song’;⁷⁵ ‘those [things] that cannot be expressed by the sentences [of the literary text], [he should illustrate through songs]; and ‘not by those sentence meanings [of the play], [but by others, based on similitude].’⁷⁶ Instrumental music, for its part, [is used,] since it clearly manifests (*uddīpaka*) the musical metre (*tāla*) supplied for the coordination (*sāmya*) of the songs.⁷⁷ Among these [elements meant for allure], however, **to what nature (*svabhāva*) does dance**—[understood as] the logical subject (*kartr*) [supplied from the verse]—**conform?**

[3.5] [The *bhedapakṣin*.:] [As an answer] to that, it has already been said that [dance] is used in fighting, wrestling, moving around the stage with gaits (*gati-parikrama*), etc.⁷⁸ [3.6] [The *abhedapakṣin* retorts:] Even so, to what nature

ive of their status and emotional condition. As NŚ 32.251 goes, for instance, the sun, moon, and wind are suitable standards of comparison for gods and kings; clouds, hills, and seas, for *daiṭyas* and *raṅśasas*. On the use of *dhruvā* songs in theatre and on its explanation in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, see Gupt 1987–1988: 314–316. A similar use of allegorical songs has been identified by Bansat-Boudon (1998) in a longer version of the fourth act of Kālidāsa’s *Vikramorvaśīya*. The function of *dhruvā* songs in Indian theatre recalls the words of the Western director and theoretician of Tanztheater Pina Bausch at a *lectio magistralis* in Bologna: ‘[...] Ci sono ad esempio coccodrilli o c’è una scena d’amore bella e triste con un ippopotamo. Con tutto questo si possono raccontare storie, là dove non si riesce con le parole. E nello stesso tempo si può mostrare qualcosa della solitudine, della necessità, della tenebrezza.’ (Lo Iacono 2007: 127) (‘There are for instance crocodiles, or a beautiful and sad love scene with a hippopotamus. With all this it is possible to tell stories where it is impossible with words. And at the same time, it is possible to show something about solitude, necessity, tenderness’ [my translation]).

77 This conforms to the etymology of the word *tāla* given in ABh ad NŚ 28.11, vol. 4, p. 7: *tālo nāmātmā tatsāmyenopakāraḥ ‘tala pratiṣṭhākarane’ iti tāla evaitad āha*. ‘The one called *tāla* helps in the harmonization of the [songs]. The radical *tal* has the meaning of “making the foundation”. That is why it has been called *tāla*.’ The reference is to the etymological meaning of *tal* as given by Pāṇini (cf. *Dhātupāṭha* 10.58: *tala pratiṣṭhāyām (pratiṣṭhākarane)*, in Böhtlingk 1964: 80*).

78 The *bhedapakṣin* replies by referring to NŚ 4.55cd–56ab, where the dance movements called *karana*s were prescribed for the martial scenes and for covering space on stage with the various gaits: *aṣṭottaraśataṃ hy etat karaṇānāṃ mayoditam || nṛtte yuddhe nīyuddhe ca tathā gatiparikrame* | Translated in § 2.2, n. 60. As Bansat-Boudon explains it, *parikrama* or *parikramaṇa*—circumambulation—is a stage convention which is sufficient for signifying the moving of the actor and the change of place’ (1995: 162, n. 18).

tvena lokadharmyā saṃgraho 'sya, cārīmaṇḍalādikrameṇa ca tasyāṅga eva nirūpaṇaṃ bhaviṣyati. athāpy alaukikaḥ, tathāpi 'sitam ūrdhvena tu kuryāt'^a ityādicaturahastābhinetavyaviṣayavibhāganyāyenābhyadhikaṃ, sundaropara-

1 °dharmyā] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, °dharmā T₄ || 'sya] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, 'syālaukikatve nātyadharmyā T₄ || tasyāṅga] Σ_E, tasyāṅka D M₁ T₁ 2 sitam] conj., siddham D M₁ T₁ Σ_E 3 °ābhinetavya°] D M₁sm T₁ Σ_E, °ābhinnnetavya° M₁

1-300.2 cārīmaṇḍalādikrameṇa→abhyadhikatā] p.n.p. T₄

a NŚ 9.100: sitam ūrdhvena tu kuryāt raktaṃ pītaṃ ca maṇḍalakṛtena | parimṛḍitena tu nilaṃ varṇāṃś catureṇa hastena ||

79 The worldly convention (*lokadharmī*) and the theatrical convention (*nātyadharmī*), pertain to the practice of the poet writing the dramatic text, as well as the actor who performs the text. Here only the conventions pertaining to the practice of the actor are referred to by the word *prayoḥjyātvena*. The worldly convention is defined as follows in NŚ 13.71–72: *svabhāvabhāvopagataṃ śuddhaṃ tv avikṛtaṃ* [E₁^{pc}, *tu vikṛtaṃ* E₁^{ac}] *tathā | lokavārtākriyopetaṃ aṅgalilāvivarjitaṃ || svabhāvābhinayopetaṃ nānāstripuruṣāśrayam | yad idṛśaṃ bhaven nātyaṃ lokadharmī tu sā smṛtā ||* 'If a play agrees with the natural emotional states, if it is simple and non-artificial, if it contains the activities common to the world, if it is devoid of the play of limbs, furnished with a natural kind of acting, and based on men and women of various kinds, that is called the "worldly convention" (*lokadharmī*).'⁷ Interestingly, Abhinavagupta glosses the compound *aṅgalilāvivarjita-* in the following way: *aṅgalilāyā vartanādikayā varjitaṃ kṛtvā* (vol. 2, p. 214). '[The expression "devoid of the play of limbs" means:] deprived of the play of limbs, that is, [of that movement] consisting of turns (*vartanā*) etc.' Such an ornate bodily movement can be safely identified with dance, as the terms *vartanā* and *valanā* are commonly associated with it.

80 I read *tasyāṅga* with the edition, taking *aṅga-* as a locative in the sense of *āṅgikābhinayādhyāye*.

81 NŚ 9.100: 'Colours [are represented] by the hand gesture *catura*: the colour white should be enacted with the raised [palm], red and yellow by moving it in circles, blue by rubbing [the palms together].'⁸ My conjecture of reading *sitam* instead of *siddham*, against the manuscripts and editions, is based on this verse, which is the source of the quotation here. The example refers to the depiction of colours by the hand gesture called *catura*, and indicates a highly conventional way of enacting. This example appears to have become standard for describing the use of the theatrical convention within bodily acting, itself already a highly conventionalized practice. The same is alluded to in the first chapter, when Abhinavagupta compares Bharata's bowing of the head out of respect for Brahmā and Śiva, at the very outset of the treatise, to a bodily enactment. See ABH ad 1.1, vol. 1, p. 1: *lokasiddho hy ayam abhinayo na ca nātyadharmirūpaḥ, catura iva bhujādāv ūrdhvādibhinna [...]*. 'This [type of] acting is indeed well known [in the world], and

does [dance] conform: a worldly (*laukika*) one or an otherworldly (*alaukika*) one? If its nature, as something to be performed (*prayojyatvena*), were regarded as worldly, then it would be included in the worldly convention (*lokadharmī*),⁷⁹ and it would just be described in the [chapter on] the bodily [acting],⁸⁰ along with the *cārīs*, the *maṇḍalas*, etc. While if, on the contrary, [its nature were regarded as] otherworldly, dance would be over and above [the world] owing to the principle[, proper to theatre alone,] of differentiating the objects to be enacted through hand gestures—the *catura* [for instance]—[by conventions] such as ‘the colour white should be enacted with the raised [palm].’⁸¹ And yet, by falling into the theatrical convention (*nāṭyadharmī*)⁸² due to its inclusion

does not belong to the theatrical convention, unlike the gesture *catura*, [whose uses are] differentiated according to the different directions of the arms, [palms, fingers,] and the like.’ One might see a trace of the theatrical convention in the extreme codification of movements in Kutiyattam, where conventional hand gestures are used to enact even such abstract entities as colours, speech particles, grammatical cases, verbal endings, number, etc. While new uses of hand gestures can be created by the practitioners by observing the world—and this is a principle pointed out repeatedly in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*—the conventional gestures tend to become more standardized. For instance, the hand gesture called *catura*, with the palm pointing upwards, is still used in Bharatanāṭyam to indicate colour in general. In Kutiyattam another gesture is used for colours, which are differentiated according to the direction of the circular movement (clockwise or anticlockwise) as well as the movement of the fingers, which are rubbed against one another or kept still. On hand gestures and their treatment by Abhinavagupta, see Ganser 2004–2005.

- 82 The theatrical convention (*nāṭyadharmī*) is described in the following way in NŚ 13.73–74: *atīvākyakriyopetaṃ atisattvātibhāvakam | līlāṅgahārābhīṇyaṃ nāṭyalakṣaṇalakṣitam || svarālaṃkārasaṃyuktam asvasthapuruṣāśrayam | yad īdṛśaṃ bhaven nāṭyaṃ nāṭyadharmī tu sā smṛtā ||* ‘If a play is endowed with actions that exceed the dialogues, if it has exceeding *sattva* and exceeding emotions, if the enactment in it includes playful *aṅgahāras*, if it is marked by the characteristics of theatre, if it is associated with musical notes and ornamentation and based on actors (lit. men) who are not [interpreting] a role that conforms [to them], that is called the “theatrical convention” (*nāṭyadharmī*).’ The connection between the theatrical convention and allurement (*rañjanā*) is established in ABh ad NŚ 13.70, vol. 2, p. 213: *yady api laukikadharmavyatirekeṇa nāṭye na kaścid dharmo ’sti, tathāpi sa yatra lokāgataprakriyākramo rañjanādhikyaaprādhānyam adhirohayituṃ kavinaṭavyāpāre vaicitryaṃ svikurvan nāṭyadharmity ucyate.* ‘Even though there is no other *dharma* in theatre distinct from the worldly *dharma*, we call it “theatrical convention” when its course of actions is understood from the world but accepts [in itself] a multifariousness concerning the activity of the poet and the actor, so that a predominance and an excess in allurement (*rañjanā*) is assigned to it.’

ñjakabhāgānupraveśena nāṭyadharmyanupraveśe punar api na nāṭyād abhyadhikatā.

[4]

[4.1] athocyate—pūrvaraṅgaprayogasya vaicitryasiddhyai tad etad iti. [4.2] tatrāpi pūrvaraṅgaprayojyayā brahmagītyā sākam asyāṅgāṅgibhāvena vā.

5 [4.2.1] tatrādye pakṣe syād asāmañjasyam. antye tu pakṣe katham āṅgikahastacāryādyabhāvāḥ. [4.2.2] tad uktam—‘mahāgīteṣu caivārthān samyag evābhineṣyasi |^a iti.

1 °ānupraveśena nāṭyadharmyanupraveśe] D M₁ T₁^{vl} E₁, °ānupraveśananāṭyadharmyanupraveśe T₁, °ānupraveśena E₂ || na nāṭyād] conj., nāṭyād D M₁ T₁ Σ_E 1–2 abhyadhikatā] E₁, abhyadhikagatā D M₁ T₁, abhyadhikatā na E₂ 3 °siddhyai tad etad iti] Σ_E, °siddhyaikam ekam iti D M₁ T₁, °siddhy ... iti (broken off) T₄ 4 °gītyā sākam asyā°] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, °gītyāsyā° T₄, °gītyā sākam athā° E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}, °gītyā sākam athāsya° E₂ || °bhāvena] M₁^{pc} Σ_E, °bhāvo na D M₁^{ac} T₁ T₄ 5 tatrādye pakṣe] T₁ T₄ E₁, tatrādyapakṣe D M₁ T₁^{vl} E₁₍₂₎^{ma} E₂ || syād a°] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, 'sya nā° D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁^{Ma}, syād ā° T₁^{ac} T₄ E₁₍₁₎, nā° E₂ || antye] D^{pc} Σ_E, anye D^{ac} M₁ T₁, anya T₄, om. E₁₍₁₎ 5–6 antye→uktam] om. E₁₍₁₎ 5 āṅgika°] T₄ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}, āhita° D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, āhika° T₁^{ac}, om. E₁₍₁₎, āhitāṅgika° E₂ 6 tad uktam] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, tanūktam D M₁ T₁ ... ktam (broken off) T₄, om. E₁₍₁₎ || °gīteṣu] T₁^{ac} T₄ Σ_E, °gītiṣu D M₁ T₁^{pc} || caivārthān] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, caivārthā T₄ 6–7 evābhineṣyasi | iti] Σ_E, vyābhineṣyasīti T₁^{ac}, vābhineṣyasīti D M₁ T₁^{ac}, evābhineṣyati T₄

a NŚ 4.15ab: mahāgīteṣu caivārthān samyag evābhineṣyasi |

83 The text is problematic and my interpretation of this passage is conjectural. Instead of reading the negation at the end as in E₂, I read it before *nāṭyād*, imagining that the *akṣara na* has been dropped due to its similarity with the following *nā*. A negation is certainly necessary, since here the *abhedapakṣin* wants to prove that we cannot establish an independent use for dance, lest we conflate it with the dramatic acting (*abhinaya*) that is the characteristic of theatre. One might hold that the function of dance is to beautify the performance for the spectator's enjoyment, just like vocal and instrumental music. However, vocal and instrumental music are found to have a purpose within the dramatic representation itself, in that they provide additional information on the dramatic text—through song—or emphasize the rhythmic aspect of the songs and coordinate the timing of the various elements—through instrumentation. Even if we maintain that dance plays a role in fighting scenes or in the movements for going around the stage, its nature cannot be established as exceeding the essence of theatre.

84 This argument is based on the introduction of dance in the preliminary rite in order to make it variegated, as narrated in NŚ 4.14–16ab, on which see § 1.3.3, n. 75.

85 The *brahmagīti* is mentioned in Bh ad NŚ 4.247ab, vol. 1 p. 161, as a label collectively designating the different songs performed in the *pūrvaraṅga*, such as the *gītakas*, the *āsāritā*, the *vardhamāna*, the *pāṅikā*, etc. See below, 4.9.1 and n. 108.

86 I follow the manuscripts and read *asyāṅgāṅgibhāvena*, understanding *asya* as *nṛttasya prayogasya*.

87 Unlike in the play, where the use of songs and bodily movement depend on the mental

in the beautiful part used for allurements (*uparañjaka*) [in theatre], [dance] would not be over and above (*abhyadhika*) theatre.⁸³

[4 Dance in the *pūrvaraṅga*]

[4.1 Intermediate proposal of the *bhedapakṣin*:] At this point, we argue that this [thing we are discussing here] is indeed that [dance] which is [used] for attaining multifariousness (*vaicitrya*) in the performance of the preliminaries (*pūrvaraṅga*) [, and not the one used in the performance of the play].⁸⁴

[4.2. The *abhedapakṣin*:] But even then, [you will have to determine] whether [dance is executed] simultaneously with the *brahmaḡūti*⁸⁵ that is performed in the preliminary rite, or [in combination with it], i.e. in a relation of principal and subordinate?⁸⁶ [4.2.1] With regard to this [question], in the former case impropriety would ensue.⁸⁷ But in the latter case, how could the gestures (*hastā*) and steps (*cārī*), which belong to bodily [acting], be absent [in such a dance performed in combination with musical compositions that contain lyrics]?⁸⁸ [4.2.2] This is what has been stated [with the words]: ‘And in the *mahāḡītas*, you should properly enact the meanings’ (NŚ 4.15ab).⁸⁹

moods to be conveyed, in the *pūrvaraṅga*, just like in a ritual, songs and dance have fixed structures. That is why they cannot be performed simultaneously, but have to undergo some sort of adaptation in order to be combined with one another. As Abhinavagupta explained earlier in the chapter, music and dance can both perform the leading role in the *pūrvaraṅga*, according to the situation. The one that is leading—the *aṅgin*—provides the main frame of reference for performance, while the other—the *aṅga*—adapts itself to it. In this connection, see the long commentary on NŚ 4.252ab, vol. 1, pp. 164–165, discussed and partially translated in § 2.4, n. 122: *iha tu ḡitam aṅgaṃ ca dvayam api svapratīṣṭhitam. tathā hi yasya yādṛṣaṃ layayatisvarūpādikaṃ nirūpitaṃ tan na viparyeti, mantrādivat *vedavat vā. na tu* [conj., *vedavann ivā tu* D T₁, *vedavasiddhā tu* T₁, *vedavat. na vā* E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac}, *vedavat. iha tu* E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₂] *yogyatayāṅgāṅgibhāvaḥ. tathā hi—‘apaviddham drutaṃ caiva’* (NŚ 4.207) *ity aṅghāre, ḡitakādāv api ‘madhye srotogatalayādir’* (Dattilam 175) *ityādikaṃ nānyathā kriyate. tena ‘pradhānam anubadhyante guṅāḥ’ (?) ity etad iha saṅkocayati. kiṃ tu svapratīṣṭhite ‘pi dvaye yena yat saṃmelanayogyam tat tatra prayujyate ity etāvān aṅgāṅgibhāvaḥ. evaṃ śatrujvalanapravṛttāmarṣābhimānanarapatidvityavat.* For a parallel in the KAV, see Appendix.

88 I follow T₄ and read *āṅgikahastacāryādy*^o. This conforms to the interpretation of Bharata’s verse in the next paragraph, and parallels the expression *āṅgikahastacāryādyabhinaya-yyatiriktam* there.

89 The counterargument of the *abhedapakṣin* is that the only way to conceive of dance in the preliminary rite is through its entering into some kind of relationship with the songs. However, since Śiva said that one should enact the meanings in the *mahāḡītas* by means of dance (cf. § 1.3.3, n. 75), how is it possible to conceive of such a connection without relying on those gestures and steps proper to the bodily acting (*āṅgikābhinaya*)? The implied consequence is that dance is nothing but bodily acting.

[4.3]

atrāha—yadā prāptyartham iti^a. arthānām gītakapadābhidheyānām prāptyartham abhimukhaṃ nayanārtham yady ayaṃ nṛttābhimato 'bhinayo vihitas tat kasmād abhinayatve tulye nṛttam etan na nāṭyam. tathā hi—
5 kām anyam āṅgikahastacāryādyabhinayavyatiriktaṃ svabhāvam apekṣate. na kaṃcid anyam ity arthaḥ.

[4.4] athocyate—na gītakāḍipadārthābhinayatayā 'syopayoga iti. [4.5] kiṃ tarhy anyathā gītakādāv asyopayoga iti.

[4.6] tatrāha—na gītakārthasambaddhaṃ na cāpy arthasya bhāvakam^b iti. iha gītakārthās tadārambhakā vastvaṅgaprabhṛtayaḥ, teṣu na sambaddhaṃ
10 tanmadhye na parigaṇitam ity arthaḥ. yadi hy aṅgavastvāditanmadhyapari-

1 atrāha] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, tatrāha T₄ || °kapadābhidheyānām] T₄ Σ_E, °kānabhipadābhidheyenā D M₁ P^c T₁ V^l, °kābhinabhipadābhidheyenā M₁ ac, °kānābhivadābhidheyenā T₁ 2 abhimukhaṃ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, abhinayamukha° T₄ || nayanārtham] Σ_E, nāyanārtham D M₁ T₁, °nayanārtham T₄ || yady ayaṃ] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, yad ... yaṃ (broken off) T₄, yad ayaṃ E₁₍₁₎ 3 tat kasmād] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, tasmād T₄ || nāṭyam] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, nāṭyam na nāṭyam T₄ 4 kam anyam] D T₁ T₄ Σ_E, ktaṃ anyam M₁ || āṅgikahastacāryā°] E₁₍₂₎ P^c E₁₍₄₎ P^c, āṅke hastakaryā° D M₁ T₁ V^l, āṅgikahastakaryā° T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ ac E₁₍₄₎ ac E₂, āṅgika ... kāryā° (broken off) T₄ 5 svabhāvam] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, om. T₄ || kaṃcid] Σ_E, kiṃcid Σ_M 6 na] D M₁ T₄ Σ_E, om. T₁ 7 °ādāv asyopayoga] T₁ ac Σ_E, °ābhāvasyopayoga D M₁ T₁ P^c, °ādāv asyopa[ṇā?] T₄ 8 °sambaddhaṃ] Σ_E, °saṃbandhaṃ D M₁ T₄, °saṃbandhaḥ T₁ || arthasya] T₄ Σ_E, asya D M₁ T₁ 9 gītakārthās] Σ_M Σ_E, gītārthās T₁ ac || na] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, om. T₄ || saṃbaddhaṃ] T₄ Σ_E, saṃbandhaṃ D M₁, saṃbandhas T₁ 10 hy] D M₁ T₁ P^c Σ_E, tv T₁ ac || °tanmadhya°] Σ_M E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ ac E₁₍₄₎ ac, °vanmadhya° E₁₍₂₎ P^c E₁₍₄₎ P^c, °vattanmadhya° E₂

10–304.2 yadi hy→gītadvitīyajātīyatvāt] p.n.p. T₄

a NŚ 4.261cd–262ab: yadā prāptyartham arthānām tajjnair abhinayaḥ kṛtaḥ || kasmān nṛttaṃ kṛtaṃ hy etat kaṃ svabhāvam apekṣate |
b NŚ 4.262cd–263ab: na gītakārthasambaddhaṃ na cāpy arthasya bhāvakam || kasmān nṛttaṃ kṛtaṃ hy etad gīteṣv āsāriteṣu ca |

90 I follow the reading proposed by Ramaswami Sastri in E₁₍₂₎ āṅgikahastacāryādy°, which seems to agree with T₄ and parallels the previously used expression āṅgikahastacāryādy° (cf. n. 88).

91 Bharata's verse is once more adapted to the context of dance in the *pūrvarāṅga*: if dance is used for presenting the meanings of the songs in front of the spectator, i.e. to carry out an enactment of the song lyrics, it cannot be different from bodily acting; hence one has to conclude that it is a form of theatre.

92 Here starts the commentary on the second verse of the *pūrvapakṣa*. NŚ 4.262cd–4.263ab. Bharata, in the guise of the *abhedapakṣin*, is trying to prove that dance cannot be connected with the songs in any meaningful way, lest it be considered a form of *abhinaya*.

[4.3 Third interpretation of the *pūrvapakṣa*
(= *abhedapakṣa*) expressed by Bharata]

In this regard[, assuming the guise of a *pūrvapakṣin*, Bharata] says: ‘Given that [dramatic acting has been devised by those experts in (theatre)] for the sake of attaining [(its) objects, why indeed has this dance been devised, (and) what is the nature to which it conforms?].’ If (*yadā* = *yadi*) this dramatic acting (*abhinaya*), which you claim to be dance (*nṛttābhimata*), has been devised (*vihita*) for the sake of attaining, i.e. for the sake of carrying the objects, i.e. the meanings expressed in the lyrics of the songs [of the *pūrvaraṅga*] in front [of the spectators] (*abhimukhaṃ naṅānārtham*), why is this [called] ‘dance’ and not [simply] ‘theatre’, given the fact that they amount to the same, as [both are a kind of] acting? To explain: when the contents of a *gītaka* have to be enacted, what different nature (*svabhāva*), other than a bodily acting [consisting of] gestures, steps, and other [mimetic movements],⁹⁰ [would dance ever] **conform to?** This means that [dance has] no different [nature] at all.⁹¹

[4.4 Intermediate proposal of the *bhedapakṣin*:] Now, it is proposed that [dance] is not used as an enactment of the contents of the *gītakas* and the other songs (*gītakādīpadārthābhinaya*). [4.5 The *abhedapakṣin*:] How then would it be differently used in the various musical compositions?

[4.6] On this point, [Bharata in the guise of *pūrvapakṣin*] says: ‘It is not connected with the contents of the *gītakas*, nor does it bring any object into being.’⁹² The meaning is: in this verse (*iha*), by ‘contents of the *gītakas*’ (*gītakārtha*) are meant its constituent parts (*ārambhaka*), i.e. the *vastus*, *aṅgas*, and so on.⁹³ [Dance] is not connected (*sambaddha*) with them, i.e. it is not enumerated among them. For if [dance] was enumerated along with those

93 By *gītakas*, he means a group of seven songs that are used in the *pūrvaraṅga* and are regarded as *gāndharva* forms. They are listed in NŚ 31.200cd–201ab as *madraka*, *ullopyaka*, *aparāntaka*, *prakarī*, *oveṅaka*, *rovindaka*, and *uttara*. *Aṅgas* and *vastus* are their main constituents, or segments, and they distinguish, according to NŚ 4.292cd–293ab, two types of songs: those composed with *vastu* (*vastunibaddha*) and those based on *aṅga* (*aṅgakṛta*): *yāni vastunibaddhāni yāni cāṅgakṛtāni tu || gītāni teṣāṃ vakṣyāmi prayogaṃ nṛttavādyayoḥ |* In ABh *ad locum*, Abhinavagupta states that the *vastus* are longer and the *aṅgas* shorter, and identifies the songs belonging to these two groups: *bhūyaṃsi khaṇḍalakādivastūni svalpāni tv aṅgāni. tatra vastunibandhanāni trīṇi gītakāni—madrakam aparāntakam prakarī ca. anyāni catvāry aṅgāny ullopyakam rovindakam oveṅakam uttarāṃ ca.* ‘The *vastus*, having sections etc., are longer. The *aṅgas* are shorter. Among them, three *gītakas* are composed with *vastu*: *madraka*, *aparāntaka*, and *prakarī*. The other four, [made of] *aṅgas*, are: *ullopyaka*, *rovindaka*, *oveṅaka*, and *uttara*.’

gaṇanam asya bhaven, na tad bhaved apy asya anyatadupayogas, tadārambha-
katvāt. na caitad upagatam, na ca yuktaṃ, nṛttasya gītadvitīyajātīyatvāt.

[4.7] nanu yathā tatasuṣīrādvīdyam tadaṅgāsaṃbaddham api tatropayogi
tathedaṃ bhaviṣyatītyāśaṅkyāha—[4.8] **na cāpy arthasyeti.** arthyate pradhā-
5 natayā gītakādaṃ nirūpyata ity **arthah** svarapadatālādīḥ. tasyāpy etad **bhāva-**
kaṃ prāpakaṃ na bhavati.

[4.8.1] etad uktaṃ bhavati—svarātmake bhāge pratibimbarūpatayā lagna-
svaratvena sthānapradāyitayā svaraparamārthaprāpakatayā svarātmagīti-

1 bhaven] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, bhave T₁^{ac} || anyatad°] D^{pc} M₁ T₁ Σ_E, atad° D^{ac} 3 tatasuṣīrādi°] E₂,
tatsuṣīdi° D M₁ T₁, tat suṣīrādi° T₄ E₁ || °āsaṃbaddham] conj., °saṃbaddham T₄ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂,
°saṃbhandham D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ 4 arthyate] Σ_E, anye tu D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₁₎^{vi} E₁₍₂₎^{ma}, anyate T₁^{ac}, aryate
T₄ 4–5 pradhānatayā] Σ_M Σ_E, pradhānatam yā T₁^{ac} 5 arthah] T₄ Σ_E, artha° D M₁ T₁ || sva-
rapadatālā°] E₂, °svarūpapadakālā° D, °svarūpadatālā° M₁, svarūpapadatālā° M₁sm T₁ T₄ E₁ 7
°ātmake bhāge] D M₁ T₁ E₁, °ātmakagītibhāgasya E₂ 8 sthānapradāyitayā] D M₁^{pc} T₁ Σ_E, °prad-
hānatayā M₁^{ac} 8–306.1 °gītibhāge] D M₁ T₁ E₁, °kagitatibhāge E₂

7–306.6 etad uktaṃ→gīte] p.n.p. T₄

- 94 To sum up the reasoning: dance could be attributed an essence different from that of
bodily acting and still be meaningfully connected with the *gītakas* if it were counted
among their constituents, just like *vastus* and *aṅgas*. In the verse, Bharata denies the
existence of such a connection of dance with the *gītakas*, since the class of dance is dif-
ferent from that of music; dance in fact belongs to bodily movement, which is akin to
acting.
- 95 In NŚ 28.1–2, Bharata describes four classes of instruments: *tataṃ caivāvanaddham ca
ghanaṃ suṣīram eva ca | caturvidham tu vijñeyam ātodyam lakṣaṇānvitam || tataṃ tantri-
kṛtam jñeyam avanaddham tu pauṣkaram | ghanaṃ tālas tu vijñeyah suṣīro vaṃśa ucya-
te ||* ‘The musical instruments are of four kinds, endowed with their proper characteristics:
the stringed (*tata*), the covered (*avanaddha*), the solid (*ghana*), and the hollowed (*suṣīra*).
The stringed are made of strings; the covered are the percussions; the solid are the cym-
bals; and the hollowed, the flutes.’ I read *tatasuṣīrādvīdyam* with E₂, since stringed and
wind instruments—the lute and the flute—are always treated together as regards their
function in songs. See n. 100 below in support of this reading.
- 96 I conjecturally read *tadaṅgāsaṃbaddham*, since we need a negation in order to make
sense of the opponent’s hypothesis. The *bhedapakṣin* argues further: even if, just as you
say, we do not consider dance a constituent part of the songs, we may still affirm that it is
used in connection with them just like instrumental music.
- 97 I suggest reading *svrapadatālādīḥ* along with E₂, since notes (*svara*), lyrics (*pada*), and
rhythm (*tāla*) are usually the three consecrated objects that define the essence of *gā-
ndharva* music. See NŚ 28.8: *yat tu tantrikṛtam proktaṃ nānātodyasamāśrayam | gāndha-*

[constituents], such as *aṅgas*, *vastus*, and the others, then its use would not be different from theirs, since it [would be treated] as a constituent of [the musical compositions]. But this is neither accounted for, nor it is reasonable, since dance belongs to a different class (*dvitīyajāti*) than song.⁹⁴

[4.7 The *bhedapakṣin* may object:] In the same way as instrumental music (*vādyā*), [produced by various instruments] such as strings (*tata*), pipes (*suṣīra*), etc.,⁹⁵ is used in those [songs] although it is not connected with (read: it is not counted among) its components,⁹⁶ so too will this [dance] be [used in songs]. [4.8] Anticipating such an objection, [Bharata as *pūrvapakṣin*] says: ‘**nor does it bring any object into being.**’ [Here the word] ‘object’ (*artha*) means ‘that which is aimed at’ (*arthyate*), i.e. that which is considered as predominant in the *gītakas* and [other musical compositions], namely the melody (*svara*), the lyrics (*pada*), the rhythm (*tāla*), and so on.⁹⁷ This [dance] **does not even bring into being** (*bhāvaka*), i.e. does not convey (*prāpaka*),⁹⁸ such an [object to the audience].

[4.8.1] Here is what is meant: the use of strings and pipes is praised in the melodic part (*gīti-bhāga*) consisting of musical notes (*svara*),⁹⁹ since these [instruments] convey (*prāpaka*) the highest goal of the notes (*svara-paramārtha*).¹⁰⁰ This is due to the fact that, by reflecting (*pratibimba*) the part [of the songs] consisting of musical notes, [the lute and the flute] give the key (*sthāna*)¹⁰¹ [to the singers], since they are endowed with fixed notes

rvam iti taj jñeyaṃ svaratālapadātmakam || For a translation of this chapter, see Pande 1997. Abhinavagupta often refers to these three aspects of music: the melodic (*svarāṃśa*), the lyrical (*padāṃśa*), and the rhythmical (*tālāṃśa*).

98 This sense conforms to *Dhātupāṭha* 10.300: *bhū prāptāv ātmanepadī* (Böhtlingk 1964: 82*).

99 The term *svara* means a musical note, or better, a degree in the musical scale, since in the Indian musical system the notes do not have fixed values. The seven degrees of the Indian scale (*grāma*) are: *sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni*. See Te Nijenhuis 1970: 103–125.

100 See also ABh ad NŚ 28.1, vol. 4, p. 1: *tatra svarāṃśe tatasuṣīrayor upayogaḥ. tau hi svarasya paramārtham raktilakṣaṇaṃ vitarataḥ*. ‘In this regard, stringed and wind instruments are used in the melodic part, for they deliver [to the spectator] the highest goal of the notes, characterized as pleasure.’

101 The term *sthāna* indicates the octave, referred to as the ‘place’ or ‘register’. Bharata speaks of three *sthānas*—the chest, the throat, and the head (NŚ 17.104)—and associates them with the three octaves. On *sthāna*, see Te Nijenhuis 1970: 72. On this same function attributed to the pipes, see also *Kumārasambhava* 1.8: *yaḥ pūrayan kīcakarandhrabhāgān | darīmukhothēna samīraṇena | udgāsyatām icchati kimnarānām | sthānapradāyitvam ivopagantum* || ‘He fills the hollow bamboos with their breath that comes from the mouth of his caves, as if to give the key for *kim-naras* beginning their song’ (translation Smith 2005: 27).

bhāge stutaḥ tatasuśiropayogaḥ. avanaddhasyāpi tatsāmyopāyatālāmśaprāpakatvena. padapātād abhidheyopayogitve 'py abhinayarūpatayā nātyād abheda eva syād ity uktam.

- [4.9] athocyate recakāṅgahāranibandhātmaḥ yan nṛttaṃ na tena kaścid
 5 artho 'bhiniyate. api tu yathā viśiṣṭair mantraiḥ bhāvanāviśeṣaiś cābhya-
 yasiddhis tathā, viśiṣṭadevatāsūcakair mantraiś tathā. [4.9.1] tad gīte cābhya-
 dhāyi—brahmagītāṅgavastuṣu saptaviṃśatisaṅkhyeṣv āsāriteṣu vardhamānā-

1 tatasuśiro°] E₂, suśiro° D M₁ T₁ E₁ 1–2 tatsāmyopāya°→abhinayarūpatayā] tatsāmyopāya-
 tālāmśaprāpakatvenābhidheyam upayogitvam padapātādayabhinayarūpatayā E₂ 1 °sāmyo-
 pāya°] E₁, °sāmye 'pāya° D M₁ T₁ 2 °pātād abhi°] E₁, °pākād abhi° D M₁, °pākābhi° T₁ || °rūpatayā]
 E₁^{pc}, °rūpāyā D M₁ T₁^{pc}, °rūpayā T₁^{ac} E₁^{ac} || nātyād abheda] D T₁ Σ_E, nātyādeḥ bheda M₁ 4
 °nibandhā°] Σ_E, °vibandhā° D M₁ T₁ 5 'bhiniyate] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, 'bhiniyate T₁^{ac} 6 tathā] D M₁ T₁
 E₁, om. E₂ || mantraiś] D M₁ T₁ E₁, om. E₂ || tathā] D M₁ Σ_E, tadā T₁ 6–7 cābhyadhāyi] D M₁ T₁^{pc}
 Σ_E, ceti abhyadhāyi T₁^{ac}, abhyapāyi T₄ 7 brahmagītāṅga°] E₁₍₁₎^{pc} E₁₍₂₎^{pc}, bhavābhaginītarāṅga°
 D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎^{ma}, bhavābhagītāṅga° T₄, bhavābhagītāṅga° E₁₍₁₎^{ac} E₁₍₂₎^{ac}, bhāvārambhagītāṅga°
 E₁₍₄₎, tadārambhakagītāṅga° E₂ || °saṅkhyeṣv āsāriteṣu] T₁ T₄ Σ_E, °saṅkhyaiśāsāriteṣu D M₁ T₁^{vl}
 7–308.1 vardhamānārambhakeṣu caturṣu] Σ_M E₁, caturṣu vardhamānakayor dvayoḥ E₂

- 102 I tentatively interpret this passage, full of musical terminology beyond my expertise, in the light of ABh ad Nś 28.1, following the translation by Pande (1997: 27–28). In producing the melody of a song, the voice is principal and the lute (*vīṇā*) is a reflection (*pratibimba*) of it. Despite this, strings and wind instruments are said to have a natural sweetness, as their notes are fixed and thus they cannot incur the faults that may be committed by the singers.
- 103 This role of the *tāla* as harmonizer, providing coordination (*sāmya*) between the various elements of the songs, is repeatedly stated (see n. 77). Among the musical instruments, the *tāla* aspect is expressed by drums and cymbals.
- 104 The expression *padapātād* is unusual. Shall we conjecture a *padaprāpakatvād*, although not supported by the manuscripts?
- 105 I follow E₁^{pc}, a conjecture by Kavi, who reads *abhinayarūpatayā*.
- 106 The argument of the *abhedapakṣin*, attributed to Bharata in the guise of *pūrvapakṣin*, is the following: if someone objects that dance, even though it is not counted among the constituents of the songs, could still be imagined to convey one of the 'objects' aimed at by the songs, namely the lyrics, then it would be necessarily a kind of enactment, so that again its difference from theatre would be blurred.
- 107 It is useful to remember that the discussion at this point has shifted to dance in the context of the *pūrvaraṅga*. As pointed out at the beginning of chapter 4, dance was introduced in the preliminary rite, in connection with songs, for the sake of creating variety. That is why the *bhedapakṣin* advocated multifariousness (*vaicitrya*) as the specific aim of dance, differentiating it from the aim of *abhinaya*. The problem raised by the opponent, the *abhedapakṣin*, is that however we conceive of dance, we cannot put it into any relation

(*lagnasvara*).¹⁰² Similarly, the [use] of drums [is praised] since these convey (*prāpaka*) the rhythmical part (*tāla-aṃśa*) [of the songs], which is the means for the harmonization (*sāmya*) of all the [parts of the songs].¹⁰³ And even if, by falling¹⁰⁴ into the lyrical [part of the songs] (*pada[-aṃśa]*), [dance] were used for [conveying] the subject matter (*abhidheya*), it would [necessarily] end up being a form of enactment (*abhinaya*),¹⁰⁵ and as a result there would be no difference from theatre. This has already been said.¹⁰⁶

[4.9 Intermediate proposal of the *bhedapakṣin*:] Now, we argue that dance, which consists in a combination of *recakas* and *aṅgahāras*, does not enact any meaning. Yet, in the same way as a good result (*abhyudaya*) is realized through specific ritual formulas (*mantras*) and through particular visualizations (*bhāvanās*), i.e. through ritual formulas indicating specific deities, just so [a good result is brought about through dance].¹⁰⁷ [4.9.1] Moreover, that[, namely dance,] has been already expressed [by Bharata] as [connected] with the songs [of the *pūrvaraṅga*, when he said that] this dance, consisting of *aṅgahāras* of thirty-two types, is connected (*sambaddha*) with the twenty-seven

with song, unless we regard it as an enactment of its lyrics. The *bhedapakṣin* now plays his last card to save the autonomy of dance: he equates its role in bringing about the aim of the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga* with that of *mantras* and *bhāvanās* in bringing about the good outcome of a ritual. It is difficult to determine exactly what Abhinavagupta meant by these terms. However, it seems likely that a difference in the way a result is produced is envisaged here, which would allow for interpreting the connection of dance with songs as a means to help realize an invisible goal, such as *abhyudaya* 'a good result', achieved through ritual formulas indicating the various deities. One might recall here that the *pūrvaraṅga* aims at satisfying the deities in order to assure the protection of the performance; that its songs are mainly of the *gāndharva* type, which are believed to have an invisible result; and that the components of dance, such as the *piṇḍibandhas*, *kaṛaṇas*, *aṅgahāras*, and *recakas*, are supposed to please the deities as they indicate (*sūcaka*) some of their attributes. On the aim of the *pūrvaraṅga* and its various elements, see Ganser 2016, and for further details on the view of dance as an *imitatio dei*, as it is developed in dramatic and religious sources, see Ganser (forthcoming). The argument put forward here is also reminiscent of a discussion in Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*, on the connection or relation (*sambandha*) between non-expressive words—such as *mantras*—and visible and invisible results—such as healing from the poison of a snakebite—produced through a *saṃskāra*. The discussion unfolds in the *Sambandhasamuddeśa* (VP 3.35–36) and in the commentary by Helarāja (cf. Houben 1995: 372–373). Although the relationship between the latter and Abhinavagupta is not established beyond a doubt (see Vergiani 2016), it is possible that a similar discussion might have been at the back of Abhinavagupta's mind while writing this passage. On the efficacy of *mantras* as discussed in philosophical sources, see Eltschinger 2001.

rambhakeṣu caturṣu cakārāt pāṇikāyām ity eteṣu saṃbaddham etad aṅga-
hārātmakam dvātriṃśatprakāraṃ nṛttam iti.

[4.10] tatsaṃbandhaś cedānīm na kiṃcit.

[5]

[5.1] evaṃ pṛthān nṛttakāvyaḍau nāṭyarūpataiva, [5.2] nāṭyopayogitvenāpi,

5 [5.3] nṛttatālagītakādyupayogo 'pi durghaṭa ity tridhā pūrvapakṣasaṃkṣepaḥ.

1 pāṇikāyām] T₁^{ac} E₁₍₁₎ E₂, pāṇikāyam D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, pāṇikāyāy T₄ || ity eteṣu] D M₁ T₁ E₁,
ity eṣu T₄, ekaprakārāyām E₂ || saṃbaddham] E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎^{ac} E₂, saṃbandham D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄,
asaṃbandham T₁^{ac}, na saṃbandham E₁₍₄₎^{pc} || etad] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, etad iti T₄ 2 °ātmakam] Σ_E,
°ātmakā D M₁ T₁ 3 °saṃbandhaś] Σ_E, °saṃbandham D M₁ T₁ 4 nṛtta°] E₁^{pc}, nivṛtta° D M₁ T₁
E₁^{ac}, nivṛtte rāga° E₂ 5 °tālagītakādyupayogo 'pi] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, °tāgītakādyupayogād api T₁^{ac}

1–5 aṅgahārātmakam → durghaṭa iti] p.n.p. T₄

108 The mention of the particle *ca*, justifying the inclusion of the *pāṇikā* among the musical compositions with which dance is connected (*cakārāt pāṇikāyām*), suggests that a verse must be understood here as the basis for such interpretation, which would be a very common way to stretch the meaning of Bharata's text. I strongly suspect that the verse in question is Nś 4.14, which the reader is simply supposed to recall from the previous exposition: *pūrvanāṅgavidhāv asmimś tvayā samyak prayojyatām | vardhamānakayogeṣu giteṣv āsāriteṣu ca* || According to Abhinavagupta, by the special interpretation of the particle *ca* at the end of the last *pāda*, all the elements discussed in this passage are mentioned: the *vardhamānaka*, the *gītakas*, the *āsāritas*, and the *pāṇikā*. The connection of dance with music was also advocated earlier in the commentary as a justification, attributed to some exegetes, for the number of *aṅgahāras* as thirty-two. See Nś 4.247cd: *dvātriṃśad ete saṃproktā hy aṅgahārā dvijottamāḥ* || 'The *aṅgahāras* have been explained as being thirty-two [in number], oh best among the twice-born', and ABh *ad locum*, vol. 1, p. 160: *anye tu gītakānām aṅganibandhānām vastunibandhānām ca vastu trividham. vardhamānakaraṇāni* [E₁₍₁₎^{pc}, *baddhamāna*° E₁₍₁₎^{ac}] *catvāri āsāritāni, pāṇikaikaprakārā ity evaṃbhūtaṃ ca yato brahmaḡitvaicitryaṃ dvātriṃśadbhāsitaṃ tasmāt tatprayogātmake* [E₂, *tatprayogānatmano* D^{pa} T₆ T₇ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎], *prayogānatmano* D M₁ T₁, *tatprayogātmano* E₁₍₁₎] *'aṅgahāre 'pi tāvad evety ahuḥ*. 'According to others, the *vastu* of the *gītakas* composed with *aṅgas* and of those composed with *vastu* is threefold; four *āsāritas* cause a *vardhamāna*; [and] the *pāṇikā* has only one kind. And since such is the multifariousness of the *brahmaḡiti* appearing as thirty-two[fold], such will be [the multifariousness] with regard to the [group of] *aṅgahāras* as well, which consists in a performance [connected with] those [songs]. The text of this passage is problematic and highly corrupt, such that it seems

aṅgas and *vastus* [forming] the *brahmagīta*, the four *āsāritas* constituting the *vardhamāna*, as well as the *pāṇikā*, owing to the mention of the particle *ca* ('and') [in the verse: 'May you use [dance] in the proper way in the course of this *pūrvaraṅga*, when the *vardhamānaka* is performed, as well as in the *gītakas* and *āsāritas*'].¹⁰⁸

[4.10 The *abhedapakṣin*:] Still, given your premises (*idānīm*), this connection [of dance] with the [musical compositions of the *pūrvaraṅga*] is nothing at all (*na kiṃcīt*).¹⁰⁹

[5 Summary of the *pūrvapakṣa*]

[5.1] In this way, if [we consider dance] independently, like in [staged performances such as] *nṛttakāvya*s etc.,¹¹⁰ [it would end up] having the nature of a play. [5.2] The same holds if [we considered it] as [an element] used in theatrical performance. [5.3] Furthermore, the use of dance [in connection with] rhythms (*tāla*), *gītakas*, and other [songs in the *pūrvaraṅga*] is also difficult to assess. Therefore, the summary of the opponent's view (*pūrvapakṣa*) is threefold.¹¹¹

difficult to arrive at the number thirty-two with the songs enumerated thus. The *Nṛttaratnāvalī* gives a different list. NR 4.359cd–360ab: *viṃśatīr gītakāṅgāni caturbhir adhikāni ca | āsāritāni catvāri vardhamānakahetavaḥ || vastu trividham ekaiva pāṇiketi pare viduḥ | brahmaṇo gītivaicitryād dvātriṃśac ceti kecana ||* 'Other maintain that there are twenty *aṅgas* of the *gītakas* and four more (24). Four *āsāritas* (4) are the causes of the *vardhamānaka*. The *vastu* is threefold (3) and the *pāṇikā* is single (1). And according to some, [the *aṅgahāras*] are thirty-two because of the multifariousness of the *brahmagīti* (24 + 4 + 3 + 1 = 32).'

109 I read *tatsaṃbandhaś* as in the editions. Otherwise, one would have to take the neuter as a *bahuvrīhi* connected with *nṛtta*. The *abhedapakṣin* is refuting the analogy of dance and mantras, although no argument against it is presented.

110 I read *nṛttakāvyaḍau* as proposed by Kavi in E₁₍₁₎^{PC}, and understand this as a general label including *Ḍombikās*, *Śiḍgakas*, and all the new genres of staged dance. See below, 6.4.2.

111 The *pūrvapakṣa* put forward by the opponent who wants to establish the identity of dance and theatre consists of three parts, which correspond to the three uses of the word *nṛtta* examined above: 1) as a separate form such as danced poetry (*nṛttakāvya*), a general label for the independent genres of staged dance, and as the *lāsyaṅgas* of the *pūrvaraṅga*, dance amounts to the same as theatre, since it has the same characteristics and goal; 2) as an element of the dramatic representation or play, it is difficult to see what other function dance might have other than that of enacting some meaning, i.e. bodily acting; and 3) as an item of the *pūrvaraṅga*, the relation of dance to song is seen in terms of that between a bodily enactment and the meanings to be represented embedded in the lyrics.

[6]

[6.1] etat parihartum āha—atrocyata ityādiślokatrayeṇa.

(NŚ)

atrocyate na khalv arthaṃ kaṃcin nṛttam apekṣate || 263 ||
kiṃ tu śobhāṃ prajanayed iti nṛttam pravartitam |

5

prāyeṇa sarvalokasya nṛttam iṣṭaṃ svabhāvataḥ || 264 ||
maṅgalyam iti kṛtvā ca nṛttam etat prakīrtitam |

vivāhaprasavāvāhapramodābhyudayaḥ || 265 ||
vinodakāraṇaṃ ceti nṛttam etat pravartitam |

(ABh)

10 [6.2] asmin pūrvapakṣe tūcyate pratyuttaram iti śeṣaḥ. tatra yad uktam
aṅgavikṣepanṛttagītamayatvān nātyād abhedo rāgakāvyaḍinṛttasyeti tad anai-
kāntikam, asya hetor laukikanṛtte 'pi sphuṭatvāt. [6.3] nātyādilaṅkaṣaṇasaṃgo-

11 °vikṣepanṛttagītamayatvān] E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₄₎, °vikṣepaṃ nṛttagītamayatvaṃ D M₁ T₁, °vikṣepaṃ nṛtta-
gītamayatvān E₁₍₂₎, °vikṣepa sahaḥṛtagītamayatvān E₂ || nātyād abhedo] E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂, nātyā-
der bhedo D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} || rāgakāvyaḍinṛttasyeti] D M₁ T₁ E₁, nṛttasyeti E₂ 11–12
anaikāntikam] T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} E₂, anekāntikam D M₁, anaikāntikatvam E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} 12
laukikanṛtte] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, laukike nṛtte T₁^{ac} || sphuṭatvāt] E₂, sphuṭam D M₁ T₁ E₁ 12–312.1
°saṃgopane] conj., °sahagāpane D M₁ T₁^{pc}, °sahagāpana T₁^{ac}, °sahagopane Σ_E

10–342.6 tatra yad→tad āha] p.n.p. T₄

112 In Bharata's verse, I translate *artha* simply as object, although in Abhinavagupta's gloss on what he considers as the *uttarapakṣa*, the term *artha* is interpreted in two different ways: 1) *artha* in the sense of textual content to be brought to direct perception (*arthya-mānaṃ sāḥṣātkāraṃ prāpyamānaṃ*); and 2) *artha* in the sense of a didactic goal to be taught (*vyutpādanīyaṃ dharmādyupāyāyatamaṃ*). Accordingly, the *uttarapakṣa* will be divided into two parts, which correspond to the refutation of 1) the identity of the characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) of theatre and dance; and 2) the identity of their goal (*prayojana*). Cf. below, n. 204.

113 In Abhinavagupta's understanding of the narrative structure, both questions and answers are formulated by Bharata, who successively assumes the fictional guise of a *pūrvapakṣin*, upholding the *abhedapakṣa*, and that of an *uttarapakṣin*, upholding the *bhedapakṣa*, which will also correspond to Abhinavagupta's final position, the *siddhānta*.

[6 *Uttarapakṣa* (= *bhedapakṣa*): refutation of the *pūrvapakṣa*]

[6.1] In order to refute this [threefold *pūrvapakṣa*], [Bharata] utters the three verses starting with ‘On this point, it is said etc.’

NŚ

|| 263cd–264ab ||

On this point, it is said that dance does not indeed conform to any object,¹¹² but it is meant to generate beauty (*śobhā*); that is why dance has come into use.

|| 264cd–265ab ||

Generally, everybody likes dance in itself. Moreover, this dance is praised because it is considered auspicious (*maṅgalya*).

|| 265cd–266ab ||

And on [occasions such as] weddings, the birth of a child, the welcoming of a new child-in-law (*āvāha*), jubilation (*pramoda*), success (*abhyudaya*), and so forth, it is a cause of merriment. That is why this dance has come into use.

ABh

[6.2 The *uttarapakṣin* = *bhedapakṣin*:]¹¹³ With regard to this *pūrvapakṣa* (= *atra*), it is said—one has to supply—in reply: the argument provided in the [*pūrvapakṣa*]¹¹⁴—namely that forms of dance such as *rāgakāvya*s and others are no different from theatre¹¹⁴ since they contain dance (*nṛtta*), which consists in throwing the limbs about (*aṅgavikṣepa*), and songs (*gīta*)—is inconclusive (*anaikāntika*), since its logical reason is also evident¹¹⁵ in the case of mundane forms of dance[, and not only in staged dance].¹¹⁶ [6.3 The *abhedapakṣin*:] But

114 I read *nāṭyād abhedo*, as conjectured by Ramaswami Sastri in E₁₍₂₎ and as accepted in E₂.

115 I follow the reading *sphuṭatvāt* in E₂.

116 This is the refusal of the first argument put forward in the *pūrvapakṣa* to claim the identity of theatre and dance (1.3.1): *aṅgavikṣepanṛttagītavattvenāvailakṣanyāt*. The reason is inconclusive since it is too general (see the remarks on *anaikāntika-hetu* in n. 28 above): not only does it apply to staged performances such as danced poetry (*nṛttakāvya*), but also to worldly dances or to any kind of bodily movement connected with song.

pane tu laukike gātravikṣeṣaṇe paṭhyamānaṃ gīyamānaṃ vā yat padajātaṃ tadartho nābhiniyate iti kiṃ nānusaṃdhīyate. kiṃ vā na sāksātkriyāyogyatāṃ nīyate.

[6.4]

[6.4.1] prāpyaḥ kalpo 'siddhaḥ. loka 'pi saumanasyābhāvād aṅgopāṅgapa-

1 °vikṣeṣaṇe] E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂, °vikṣeṣaṃ na D M₁ T₁^{pc}, °vikṣeṣaṇa T₁^{ac} °vikṣeṣaṇaṃ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} || paṭhyamānaṃ] D M₁sm T₁ Σ_E, paḍyamānaṃ M₁^{ac} || gīyamānaṃ] conj., hānīyamānaṃ D M₁ T₁, abhinīyamānaṃ E₁, abhidhīyamāno E₂ || vā yat] T₁^{ac} E₁₍₁₎, yāvat D M₁ T₁^{pc}, vā yāvat E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂ 1–2 padajātaṃ tadartho] conj., padajātadartho D M₁ T₁, padajātam artho E₁, artho vā E₂ 2 nānusaṃdhīyate] Σ_E, nānusaṃdhīyate D M₁ T₁ 4 prāpyaḥ kalpo] D T₁, prāptaḥ kalpo M₁, prāpyakalpo E₁, etena prākkalpo E₂ || saumanasyābhāvād aṅgo°] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, saumanasyābhāvāṅgo° D M₁ T₁^{pc}, saumanasyādāv aṅgo° T₁^{ac} somanasyābhāvād aṅgo° E₁₍₁₎, aṅgo° E₂ 4–314.1 °pāṅga-parikṣepā°] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °pāṅge parikṣepā° D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎

- 117 I read *gātravikṣeṣaṇe* as conjectured by Ramaswami Sastri in E₁₍₂₎ and understand *gātravikṣeṣa* as a synonym of dance. Cf. above, n. 5.
- 118 I have conjectured the reading °*saṅgopane* here in order to make sense of the initial sibilant found in the manuscripts, i.e. °*sahagāpane*, which makes no sense as it is. In Malayālam, the corruption of *o* to *ā* is quite easy to imagine, since the vowel *o* is formed by the sign for *e* (which in Malayālam always precedes the consonant character with which it is read) and *ā* (following the consonant). The editions have changed the text to °*sahagopane*, of which I am not able to make any sense either.
- 119 I read *vā yat padajātaṃ tadartho* as a conjecture, partly corresponding to the reading in T₁^{ac}, where the syllable *-taṃ* in *padajātaṃ* has been dropped, due—as I suspect—to the following *tad-* in *tadartho*. The corruption of *vā yat* to *yāvat* in D and M₁ can be explained as a case of metathesis.
- 120 I conjecture *gīyamānaṃ* against *abhinīyamānaṃ* in the edition, which makes no sense if we consider the following *tadartho nābhiniyate*. Moreover, the alternative between a sentence being enunciated or sung is perfectly in tune with the reason given in the following paragraph, with *udīrita-* corresponding to *paṭhyamāna-* and *gāyat-* to *gīyamāna-*.

can't you just keep in mind that in a mundane throwing of limbs,¹¹⁷ in which the characteristics of theatre and [staged dance] are completely out of sight,¹¹⁸ when a group of connected words¹¹⁹ is recited or sung,¹²⁰ its meaning is not enacted (*nābhinīyate*)? Or, in other words, that [the meaning] is not brought into the state of being directly perceived (*sākṣātkriyāyogyatā*) [by a spectator, unlike in theatre and staged dance]?¹²¹

[6.4 Dance does not conform to any
object to be brought to direct perception]

[6.4.1 The *uttarapakṣin*:] The thesis that you want to establish[, namely that only in theatre and in staged dance are the meanings enacted,] is not realized (*asiddha*).¹²² In fact, also in the world, we see that sentences are uttered¹²³

121 Faced with the fallacy of his inference, the *abhedapakṣin* invokes the definition of theatre, whose main feature is acting (*abhinaya*) that aims at making meaning manifest [3.4]. This definition would, in his view, encompass staged dance—which, as a subspecies of theatre (*avāntarabheda*), is considered otherworldly (*alaukika*) (see above, n. 47)—but not mundane dance (*laukikanṛtta*). The impatience of the *abhedapakṣin* at this point can be imputed to his previous refutation of the *bhedapakṣin*'s claim that dance contains no evident cognition of its content (*sākṣādbuddhyabhāva*-, cf. 1.4).

122 Here the reasoning of the *abhedapakṣin* is taken to its extreme conclusion, by arguing that the claim that *abhinaya* is an exclusive property of theatre and staged dance, which would in turn be the basis for their non-difference, is contradicted by what we see in the world.

123 I propose to emend *vākyādīritasya* to *vākyodīritasya*. The vowel *o* in Malayāḷam is formed with the *prṣṭhamātrā e* (cf. n. 118) and *ā* following the consonant, so that if the first is dropped or overlooked, it can be easily read as *ā*. The presence of the vowel *e* in T₁^{ac}, a transcript in Devanāgarī sometimes preserving better readings, might suggest an original *prṣṭhamātrā e*, followed by *ā* in the Malayāḷam prototype.

rikṣepānuyātasya vākyodīritasya dṛṣṭatvāt. gāyatām padārthasamvādakṛtatanmayibhāvadagdhānām ca sphuṭam eva sāttvikāṅgatāvalokanāt.

[6.4.2] athāparaḥ pakṣas tu nṛtte 'pi samānaḥ. tathā hi—nṛttakāvye ḍombikādaḥ varṇacyutādāv iva varṇādiprayoge tāvad abhinaye kathaiva nāstīti kiṃ tatra vicāryate. kevalanṛttasvabhāvamātram hi tat, kevalam bhāvitakāvya-

1 vākyodīritasya] conj., vākyādiritasya D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, vākye dirasya T₁^{ac} || dṛṣṭatvāt] D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁, dṛṣṭatvā T₁^{ac}, ca sāmānjasyābhāvo dṛṣṭaḥ E₂ || gāyatām] E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}, gīyadā D M₁ T₁, gīyatā E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} || °samvādakṛta°] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °samvādakṛtam D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ 2 °dagdhānām] conj., °dagdhāyās D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, °baddhāyās E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}, °daśāyām E₂ || ca] D M₁ T₁ E₁, om. E₂ || °āṅgatāvalokanāt] D M₁ T₁ E₁, °abhāvāvalokanam E₂ 3 samānaḥ] E₁^{pc} E₂, samānam D M₁ T₁ E₁^{ac} || nṛttakāvye] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, om. KAV 3–4 ḍombikādaḥ] D^{ac} M₁ T₁^{ac} 4 varṇacyutādāv iva] conj., varṇacyutād iva D M₁ T₁ E₁, varṇacyutādaḥ E₂, varṇacchaṭā KAV || varṇādiprayoge] D M₁ T₁^{vl} E₁ KAV, varṇāprayoge T₁, varṇaprayogasyeva E₂ || abhinaye kathaiva] conj., abhinayas tathaiva D M₁ T₁^{pc}, abhinaya tathaiva T₁^{ac}, abhinayakathaiva Σ_E KAV || nāstīti] Σ_M Σ_E, nāsti KAV 5 kevalanṛtta°] KAV, kevalam nṛtta° D M₁ T₁ E₁, yat kevalam nṛtta° E₂ || °svabhāvamātram] Σ_M Σ_E, °svabhāvam KAV || hi tat] KAV, api tat D M₁ T₁^{vl} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, ahitam T₁, api hi tat E₁₍₁₎ || bhāvita°] Σ_E, bhāvita D M₁ T₁

5–316.2 kevalam→etat] p.n.p. KAV

124 The refutation of the first articulation of the *abhedapakṣin's* proposal consists in pointing out the fallacies one can commit when the word *abhinaya* is understood in its conventional sense of bodily gesticulation (*ceṣṭā*) outside the dramatic tradition. On this non-technical meaning of *abhinaya*, see the discussion in §3.3. In this case, one would not be able to exclude the gesticulation that people use to accompany their speech, namely in order to convey their confused ideas, from the definition of theatre. In a similar vein, one may think of the English use of the adjective 'theatrical' as referring to a certain kind of people. Abhinavagupta's provocative reply, as *uttarapakṣin* or *bhedapakṣin*, is of course only a *prima facie* view, which aims at neutralizing the opponent's reasoning by pushing it to its extreme consequences. Note that the characteristic that triggers the use of gesticulation in the world, namely the absence of mental clarity (*saumanasya*), can affect both the speaker and the listener. For a few examples of gesticulation outside theatre, see §3.3, n. 93 and 94. In the context of the dramatization of worldly behaviour in theatre, Abhinavagupta reports an opinion according to which an actor should use profuse gesticulation when enacting an inferior character, since their use of gesticulation is analogous to the confusion of their discourses: *adhamās tu yathāvacaṇam śliṣṭam āhus tathā prakīrṇabhūyastvam abhineye sandihyamānasyābhinayāyattam utkarṣaṇam vikarṣaṇam ityādi—evaṃ kecit* (ABh ad NŚ 9.173, vol. 2, pp. 67–68).

125 I follow the emendation given by Ramaswami Sastri in E₁₍₂₎; *gāyatām*.

126 I conjecturally read °*kṛtatanmayibhāvadagdhānām* as a genitive connected with *gāyatām*. This example definitely proves that one cannot say that staged dance and theatre are the same as both are endowed with an enactment following a speech or song, since this definition would also include everyday gesticulations and the experience of vocal singing.

in combination with profuse movements (*parikṣepa*) of the limbs and facial expressions (*aṅgopāṅga*) on account of the lack of mental clarity.¹²⁴ Moreover, because one clearly sees that singers,¹²⁵ who are consumed as by fire through the identification [with the subject matter] (*tanmayībhāva*-) based on the attunement (*saṃvāda*) [of their hearts] with the meaning of the lyrics [expressed in their songs], resort to the *sāttvika* [type of acting].¹²⁶

[6.4.2] Now, as to the other side of the argument[, namely that forms lacking *abhinaya* would fall outside the domain of theatre], it extends even to¹²⁷ [staged] dance[, which you claim to be non-different from theatre].¹²⁸ To explain: in danced poetry (*ṅṛttakāvya*), such as in the Ḍombikā and so on, no discussion about acting (*abhinaye kathā*) is ever possible, just as [no discussion is possible] concerning (*tāvat*) the good usage of syllables and so on in poetry where [those very] syllables have been dropped or added (*varṇacyuta*), or in other [kinds of poetic riddles].¹²⁹ Therefore, what is there to debate on

Singers, in fact, get involved in what they sing: they use gestures and even display *sāttvika* states. For a telling passage about the involvement (*āveśa*) of the singers on stage in the emotional content of the songs, see, for instance, the description of the *lāsyaṅga geyapada* in ABh ad NŚ 19.121, translated in Bansat-Boudon 1992: 307–309, and n. 149. A later text such as the twelfth-century *Nātyadarpaṇa* also contemplates the emotional involvement of the singers while singing. *Svapajñātikā* ad ND 3.7, p. 142: *gāyanās ca paraṃ rañjyantaḥ kadācit svayam api rajyante*. ‘Even singers themselves can sometimes be enraptured, while they are enrapturing somebody else[’s mind].’ On such cases of emotional and ‘quasi-aesthetic’ involvement, see Cuneo & Ganser (forthcoming).

127 I follow the correction proposed by Kavi in E₁₍₁₎ and read *samānaḥ*.

128 That is, the claim that worldly dance, or any other worldly movement, can be excluded from the definition of theatre since they do not contain enactment of the meanings, ends up extending to staged dance as well, thereby excluding it from the definition of theatre. The very argument put forward by the opponent to maintain the identity of theatre and staged dance is brought to an unwanted conclusion, and brings us a step closer to Abhinavagupta’s understanding of the meaning of *abhinaya*.

129 I propose to read *abhinaye kathā* instead of *abhinayakathā*, which the editions seem to borrow from the KAV, in order to have a series of locatives and thereby construe *kathā* with both sides of the comparison, i.e. *varṇacyutāḍau varṇādīprayoge*’ and *ḍombikāḍau abhinaye*. The *varṇacyutaka* or *aḥṣaracyutaka* is a poetic riddle in which it is necessary to drop or add some syllables in order to understand the verse. In the *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, Viśvanātha describes it as a variety of *prahelikā* that hinders the *rasa* and should not be considered an *alamkāra* (SD 10.13). For more on *varṇacyuta*, see also Bansat-Boudon 1992: 400, n. 60, where this comparison is first discussed.

rthagatārthatattvasaukumāryakṛtam aṅgasya tathātvaṃ iti nirṇeṣyata ity āstāṃ tāvad etat.

[6.4.3] tadanantaram tu dhārāparikramapūrvakalayaprayogāvasare †pāā-laalosasāhiṇi hu jaya jaya lacchi maccamaliā† ityādi yad gīyate tat kasyoktirūpam? yadi tāvan nartitum āgatāyā laukikyā ḍombikāpravṛttanartakyāḥ tadā

1 °gatārthatattva°] Σ_E, °gato 'rthattva° D M₁, °gato 'rdhatattva° T₁^{ac}, °gato 'rthatattva° T₁^{pc} 3–4 pāālaalosasāhiṇi hu] Σ_E, vā āga ālase sahiṇi ca D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₂₎^{ma}, āgu ālase sāhiṇi ca T₁^{ac}, pāālaale sesāhiṇi hu KAV, pāālaale sesahi, ṛihu *Bhayani* 4 jaya jaya lacchi maccamaliā] Σ_E, japrajaalacchimaṅgadalāmaliā E₁^{Ma}, ja aja aḷacchimaṅgadalāmali ā D M₁ T₁^{pc}, ja aja alacchimaṅchadalāmali ā T₁^{ac}, jaya jaya lacchivatthalamaliā KAV, jaa jaalacchivacchathalamaliā *Bhayani* 4–5 yad gīyate tat kasyoktirūpam] Σ_E KAV, yat kasyoktirūpam D M₁ T₁, yat kasyoktir iyam E₁₍₂₎^{ma} 5 ḍombikāpravṛttanartakyāḥ] Σ_E KAV, ḍombikapravṛtṭam nartakyāḥ D M₁ T₁

130 I follow the KAV and read *kevalanṛttasvabhāvamātram hi tat* as an independent sentence, and the following one as a gloss of it.

131 I think that this statement is supposed to echo and indirectly refute an argument presented by the *abhedapakṣin* at the very beginning of the *pūrvapakṣa*, namely that dance and theatre are no different since dance makes use of *abhinaya* to bring into being the contents (*bhāvya*) of a dramatic text, whose words and sentences are sung (see n. 6). Here the statement is revised: although some dance seems to express emotional content, this content is in reality expressed by the song and not by bodily acting. The bodily movement in dance just adapts its quality to the poetic content, thus clearly differing from enactment proper. This is also hinted at in a passage that discusses the role of dance as variously constructed, as a principal or subordinate element, with music and song (cf. ABh ad NŚ 4.251cd, vol. 1, pp. 164–165). About the Ḍombikā, it is stated: *yadā* [conj., *yathā* T₁, om. D M₁ Σ_E] *gītam* [Σ_E, *gītim* D M₁ T₁] *eva pradhānaṃ* [T₁, om. D M₁ Σ_E] *tadā* [D M₁ T₁ E₁, *yadā* E₂] *nyārthaṃ tadanyagatvena nṛttādi, yathā ḍombikādau. tatra hi pariṣvaṅgakarāṇādy* [conj., *pariṣvakarāṇādy* D M₁ T₁, *pariṣkarāṇādy* E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac}, *parikramaṇādy* E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₂] *api sukumāreṇaivāṅgena*. ‘[To explain:] when a song is the principal element, dance and the other [subordinate] elements [are performed] for the sake of that other one, i.e. [dance and so on] follow that other [element that is principal]. This occurs in the Ḍombikā and other [forms of staged dance], for in it even the circumambulations (*pariṣvaṅgakarāṇa*) and the other [parts of abstract dance are executed] with a delicate body movement [appropriate to the amorous theme expressed in the song].’ I suggest reading *pariṣvaṅgakarāṇa* as a synonym of *parikramaṇa*, following ABh ad NŚ 4.274, vol. 1, p. 184: *raṅgapīṭhe yaḥ pariḡamaḥ samantataḥ pariṣvaṅgakarāṇam*. The expressions *layapariṣvaktakarāṇa* and *layapariṣvaṅkitalayatalaparikrama* are also found in the passage edited here with reference to the part of the Ḍombikā performed with abstract dance set to a variety of tempos, on which see n. 135 and 156 below.

132 The distinction between the delicate and the vehement quality of dance as based on the poetic content of the song, be it love or the praise of powerful gods, is discussed below in 8.4.1–3.

this point? In fact, the nature of [danced poetry] is just dance, and nothing else.¹³⁰ The way the bodily movement (*aṅga*) appears just depends on a delicacy (*saukumārya*) whose nature inheres in the meaning of the poetic text that is brought into being (*bhāvita*) [through the song].¹³¹ This will be discussed later on; therefore, let this matter rest for the time being.¹³²

[6.4.3] As for¹³³ the [text] starting with a [praise of Lakṣmī] †[...]†¹³⁴ that is sung in its immediate contiguity on the occasion of the performance [of the dance] to [different] tempos (*laya*) based on the stream-like circumambulation [of the stage] (*dhārāparikrama*); whose speech is that?¹³⁵ To begin

133 This refutes the second step in the reasoning of the *pūrvapakṣin/abhedapakṣin*, namely that in ordinary bodily movements, which accompany words that are sung or recited, the objects are not brought to the state of being directly perceived, while it is so in staged dance.

134 According to Bhayani (1993: 25), the verse is in Prakrit and is a regular *pūrvā-dala* of the *gāthā* metre. He attributes it to the Ḍombikā *Cūḍāmanī*. For the sake of the present discussion, it is important to keep in mind that this text appears to be sung first by the dancer, and then by the singer, whence the doubt about the attribution of the utterance to the character, the dancer/performer, or the singer. My interpretation that this is a verse in praise of Lakṣmī is based on a very tentative reconstruction of the text, where *lacchi* stands for Sanskrit *lakṣmi* in the vocative.

135 This sentence contains some technical terminology which, as far as I can verify it with the e-text of the *Abhinavabhāratī*, is limited to this chapter. The performance called *dhārāparikrama* could refer to the part of a Ḍombikā consisting in circumambulating the stage (*parikrama*) with dance steps, following a given tempo (*laya*). Circumambulations of the stage in the Ḍombikā are also referred to in an earlier passage (cf. n. 131). The term *dhārā-* possibly refers to a gradual increase in tempo, and hence also of the bodily movements accompanying it, performed at three different speeds, just as in the performance of dance in the *parivartas* (musical cycles that also include circumambulations of the stage by the performers) described for the *pūrvaraṅga*. This practice could in turn account for the use of the term *dhārā-*, literally 'stream', as another occurrence of the term *dhārāparikrama* in ABh ad Nś 4.318cd–319ab, vol. 1, p. 203, seems to suggest: *ḍombikādiṣu [...]* *tālānusāreṇa ca 'tripāñīlayasaṃyuktam' ityādyanusāreṇa dhārāparikramādeḥ layapariṣvaṅkitalayatālaparikramādeḥ*. 'And [the performance] of the stream-like circumambulations etc. in the Ḍombikā and the like, i.e. of the circumambulations [following] the rhythm and tempo, embraced by the tempo, should conform to the rhythm, according to what was said [apropos of the use of circumambulations following some of the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga*]: "at that point instrumental music should be performed, connected with the triple tempo" (Nś 4.301ab)'. In this passage, some parallels are drawn between the structure of the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga* and the Ḍombikā, where music, dance, and singing are found in different proportions and successively assume the leading role. It appears that when the dancer is engaged in performing these (presumably) fast dance steps, the singer takes up the task of singing, just as it would happen in the *gītakas* in the *pūrvaraṅga*, where the first repetition of the song is performed by the dancer with *abhinaya*, and the remaining three with pure dance steps (cf. Nś 4.299–301 and ABh thereon). This seems to be the context of the next sentence as well.

saivedānīm evaṃbhūtaṃ vasturūpaṃ laukikaṃ vacanam abhidhatte. gāya-
nādisaṃkramitasvavākyata ekavākyatayeti kaḥ sāksātkāraḥkālpārthaḥ. sāksā-
tkāraḥkālpānuvyavasāyagocarīkāryatvaṃ ca nātyasya lakṣaṇam ity avocāma.

[6.4.4] tena yathā kaścit kaṃcid anyāpadeśagānādikrameṇa vastūdbo-
5 dhanakaraṇadvāreṇa vā chandānupraveśitayā vā kasyacin manasy āvarjanā-

2 °saṃkramita°] T₁^{ac} E₁₍₁₎ KAV, °svakramika° D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂ || °svavākyata] D M₁ T₁ E₁, °svavākyāni E₂, svavākyā° KAV || ekavākyatayeti kaḥ] conj., ekavākyāḥ D M₁ T₁, ekavākyataḥ E₁, tadaikavākyataḥ E₂, °tayeti kaḥ KAV 2–3 °ārthaḥ. sāksātkāraḥkālpā°] T₁^{pc} Σ_E KAV, °ārthasāksātkāraḥkālpā° D M₁, °ārthaḥ. sāksātkāraḥkālpō T₁^{ac} 3 °ānuvyavasāya°] Σ_M Σ_E, °ādhyavasāya° KAV || °gocarīkāryatvaṃ] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ KAV, °gocarākāryatvaṃ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, °gocarākārthatvaṃ E₂ || nātyasya lakṣaṇam ity avocāma] Σ_M Σ_E, pāthyasya pradhāno 'ṃśaḥ KAV 4 kaścit] D T₁ Σ_E, kiścit M₁, loke kaścit KAV || anyāpadeśa°] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, anyopadeśa° KAV || °gānādi°] Σ_E KAV, °tānādi° D M₁ T₁ E₁^{ma} E₁₍₁₎^{vl} 5 °dvāreṇa] Σ_E KAV, °vāreṇa D M₁ T₁ || chandānu°] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, chando 'nu° E₁₍₁₎^{vl} KAV

136 The whole passage is corrupt and its interpretation is uncertain. To get a coherent meaning out of this and the following argument, it is essential to keep in mind the distinction—implied though not explicitly stated by Abhinavagupta—between the ‘worldly’ or ‘real’ dancer performing the genre called Ḍombikā and interpreting the character of the *ḍombikā*, and the *ḍombikā* as the ‘fictional’ or ‘enacted’ character, itself a dancer (see § 3.5). The adjective *laukika* in *laukiki-nartaki-* refers to the ‘real’ dancer who is interpreting the Ḍombikā, and in *laukika-vacana-*, to the speech belonging to the ‘real’ dancer, and not to a fictional dialogue.

137 Literally ‘transferred to’ (*saṃkramita*) the musical ensemble; cf. below, n. 152.

138 The text is corrupt here, and something has fallen out. I conjecturally read *gāyanādisaṃkramitasvavākyata ekavākyatayeti kaḥ*, which is close to the KAV version, where the part with *ekavākyata-* has been dropped, possibly because of its similarity with the previous °*svavākyata-*.

139 My interpretation and understanding of this passage is based on a conjectural reading reconstructed on the basis of both KAV 8, p. 448, and the manuscripts. Besides being confirmed by T₁^{ac}, the emendation of *gāyanādisvakramika°* to *gāyanādisaṃkramita°* conforms to the expression *tanmadhyavartigāyanamukhasaṃkramitanijavacanā*, used by Abhinavagupta later on as he elaborates on this phase of the Ḍombikā and its ‘vocal’ aspects (cf. 6.4.4). Abhinavagupta here is discussing the possibility, evoked by the opponent, of attributing a theatrical nature to the Ḍombikā and other genres of danced poetry, while at the same time excluding forms of worldly dance from the definition of theatre. Through an attentive scrutiny of the various means of representation displayed in the Ḍombikā, it will be shown that this form does not meet the primary requirements of *abhinaya*. Speech, first of all, does not bring any content to a quasi-direct perception (*sāksātkāraḥkālpā*). If the speech of the dancer enacting the Ḍombikā is considered to be that of the *ḍombikā* character, the fact that this speech is first pronounced by the dancer and then transferred to the singers as her steps grow faster does not give the spectator a direct perception of the character.

with, if it belongs to the worldly dancer who has arrived in order to dance [and] is engaged (*pravṛtta*) in [performing] the Ḍombikā, we must conclude that she must be the one pronouncing such a worldly speech, whose subject matter is [described in the Prakṛit verse just mentioned].¹³⁶ [But] since that same sentence is syntactically connected (*ekavākyatā*) with her own speech that has been taken up by¹³⁷ the singer and [the other members of the music ensemble],¹³⁸ how could [its] content [ever be grasped] as similar to [the object of a] direct perception (*sākṣātkāraikalpa*)?¹³⁹ And we have already said that the characteristic proper to theatre is its being made into the content of a determination (*anuvyavasāya*) that is similar to a direct perception (*sākṣātkāraikalpa*).¹⁴⁰

[6.4.4] Therefore, just as [in the world,]¹⁴¹ someone attracts (*āvarjana*) somebody else's mind to a greater degree through a succession of allusive songs (*anyāpadeśagāna*)¹⁴² by causing narrative content to arise or by instigating desire, while dancing and singing, the same should be considered in the case of the Ḍombikā and [the other forms of danced poetry]. That very *ḍombikā*, who

140 The reading *ḡocarīkāryatvam* is better and parallels ABh ad NŚ 1.107, vol. 1, p. 37: *tenānuvyavasāyaviśeṣaviśayikāryam nāṭyam*. 'Therefore, theatre is made into the content of a special kind of determination (*anuvyavasāya*).' This passage explains the nature of theatre as the object of a cognition defined as *anuvyavasāya*, which has been translated by Gnoli (1968: 99–101) as 're-perception', although it is explained in the ĪPVV as an ascertainment of the order of discursive awareness following the perception, which is itself non-discursive (Torella 2002: 158, n. 7), thus a kind of recognitive cognition or subsequent determination. In theatre, the particularity of this cognition lies in the ontological ambiguity of its object, which is neither real nor unreal. See ABh ad NŚ 1.119, vol. 1, p. 43, where the definition of theatre is laid down: *ayam iti pratyakṣakalpānuvyavasāyaviśayaḥ, lokaprasiddhasatyāsatyādivilakṣanatvāt yacchabdavācyaḥ*. 'Since it is different from [objects that are] well known in the world as real, false, etc., the object of [the relative pronoun] *yat* [referring to "theatre" in the sentence *yo 'yam svabhāva lokasya* etc.] is the content of a subsequent determination (*anuvyavasāya*), similar to a direct perception [having the form] "this" (*ayam*).' On the special status of the cognition of drama as *anuvyavasāya*, see also § 3.4.2, n. 164.

141 The specification *loke* is added in the KAV.

142 *Anyāpadeśa*, 'allusion to another [topic]', is a literary process that consists, as its name suggests, in alluding to a subject that is not explicitly mentioned, through the mention of a different subject by virtue of a common relation between the two. Also mentioned by literary critics as *anyokti* or *aprasutaprasāmsā* (cf. above, n. 54), such a literary device can take the form of both praise and blame (see Filliozat 1967: 42–43; Bansat-Boudon 1998: 63–64, n. 20; Ganser & Cuneo 2012). In the plays, it often takes the form of an allegory where the stanzas have an image from the natural world as their topic, but allegorically describe the state of some character in the play (cf. n. 76 above on the function of *dhruvā* songs).

tiṣayaṃ vidhatte, nṛtyann api gāyann api, tadvad eva ḍombikādaṃ dra-
 ṣṭavyam. †viḍambiḍombīyādāv api† vacasi saiva ḍombikā narapatiparito-
 ṣakārthābhīdhāyivacananiṣṭhena gītena nṛttena vādyena ca rājānam anu-
 rañjayituṃ gr̥hītodyamāmantritvena pūrvaṃ sthitvā, madhye kācid idṛśī
 5 cauryakāmukakelilālasamānasā, kāpi punar evaṃvidhā, kaścīd evaṃbhūtaś
 cauryakāmukaḥ, ko 'py evaṃbhūtaś, tatra kācid evaṃbhūtā prauḍhadūtīty
 evamādi rājaputrahr̥dayānupraveśayogyam tatprasādēna dhanārjanopāyam
 abhidhatī tam eva rājaputraṃ paratvena tathaiiva vā samuddiśya, anyad
 api ceṣṭitam abhidhāyānte ḍombikākṛtyam evopasaṃharatī guṇamālāyāṃ

1 nṛtyann api] Σ_E KAV, nṛttann avi D M₁ T₁ || gāyann] D M₁ T₁ E₁ KAV, gāyann api vādyann E₂ ||
 °vad eva] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E KAV, °vareva T₁^{ac} || °ādaṃ] Σ_E, °āryādaṃ D M₁ T₁, °ākāvīyādaṃ KAV 2
 viḍambiḍombīyādāv] E₁, viḍambiḍovīyādāv D M₁ T₁, viḍambinī ḍombīyādāv E₂, heṭṭhe vi ḍo-
 mbīyādāv KAV || ḍombikā] D M₁ E₁ KAV, ḍombitā T₁, ḍombikā yathā E₂ 2–3 °paritoṣakārthā°
 D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂ KAV, paritoṣakathā° E₁₍₁₎ 3 nṛttena] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, nṛtyena KAV || vādyena]
 T₁^{ac} E₁₍₁₎^{vi} E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} KAV, vānyena D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} || rājānam] D M₁ T₁ E₁ KAV, rajñā
 svam E₂ 4 gr̥hītodyamāmantritvena] conj., gr̥hīto māmitratvetvena D, gr̥hīto māmantritvena
 M₁ T₁^{pc}, gr̥hīto māmantritvena T₁^{ac}, gr̥hītamāmantritvena E₁₍₁₎, gr̥hīto mantritvena E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, pūrvaṃ
 gr̥hītā madhye mantritvena E₂, gr̥hītodyamā vaktritvena KAV || pūrvaṃ sthitvā] D M₁ T₁ E₁, sthitā
 E₂, pūrvasthitā KAV || madhye kācid idṛśī] D M₁ T₁ E₁ KAV, kāmīcid idṛśīm E₂ 5 °kelilālasamā-
 nasā] KAV, °kelivāsamānasādi D M₁ T₁, °kelilālasamānasādi E₁₍₁₎, °kelivāsam anāsādyā E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎,
 °kelivāsānam āsādyā E₂ || kāpi] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, kācit KAV || evaṃvidhā] E₁ KAV, eṣa vidhā D M₁ T₁,
 evaṃvidhā cauryakāmukī E₂ 6 cauryakāmukaḥ] E₂ KAV, cauryakāmukaiḥ D M₁ T₁ E₁ || tatra]
 D M₁ T₁ E₁ KAV, tatra viṭaḥ E₂ || kācid] D M₁ T₁^{ac} Σ_E KAV, kaścīd T₁^{pc} || evaṃbhūtā prauḍhadūtīty]
 Σ_E, evaṃbhūtāprauḍhamūrtīty D^{ac} M₁, evaṃbhūtāprauḍhadūrtīty D^{pc} M₁sm, evaṃbhūtāprau-
 ḍhamū(dū)ṭīty T₁, evaṃ prauḍhadūtīty KAV 8 abhidadhatī] D M₁ T₁ E₁ KAV, api vidadhatī E₂ ||
 paratvena] D M₁ T₁ E₁ KAV, patitvena manvānā E₂ || vā samuddiśya] KAV, vāsanam uddiśya D M₁
 T₁, vā dhanam uddiśya Σ_E 9 ceṣṭitam] Σ_E KAV, veṣṭitam D M₁ T₁ || abhidhāyānte] E₁₍₁₎^{pc} KAV,
 abhidhīyante D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₁₎^{ac}, abhidhāyante T₁^{ac}, abhidhīyate E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, abhidhatte. ityādaṃ
 E₂ || guṇamālāyāṃ] T₁ Σ_E KAV, guṇamālāyāṃ D M₁

143 As a conjecture, I read *gr̥hītodyamā* (+ *āmantritvena*) as a *bahuvrīhi* connected with the feminine subject *saiva ḍombikā*. This conjecture partly follows the KAV, which reads *gr̥hītodyama vaktritvena*, but maintains the long *-ā* of the manuscripts in *māmantritvena*, so that the corruption in the manuscripts—especially T₁^{ac}, which reads *gr̥hīto māmantritvena*—could be imagined to have taken place through the dropping of the *akṣara -āya*. For a similar phrasing with infinitive + *gr̥hītodyama* by Abhinavagupta, see ĪPVV, vol. 1, p. 18: *viśeṣataḥ samastalokam abhyuddhartuṃ parigr̥hītodyamaśya*. On the meaning of *āmantritvena*, see the following note.

has taken upon herself the effort of charming¹⁴³ the king by means of [her] songs—based as they are on words conveying meanings most delightful to a prince—together with dance and music, first assumes the task of inviting [her audience to watch the performance],¹⁴⁴ with words such as †[...]¹⁴⁵. In the middle [of her performance,] she narrates [the story] as follows: ‘There is a certain woman of this kind, her mind eagerly longing for a love affair with a secret paramour,¹⁴⁶ and another woman of some different kind, a secret lover having such [qualities],¹⁴⁷ some [other character] who is such and such, and among them a skilled go-between’. All such [fictional characters and narrated events] are liable to find acceptance in the heart of the prince and, through his favour, [to become] a means of material profit [for the *ḍombikā*]. And while [she utters this story], she reports on other deeds as well, addressing that very prince as somebody else or in his own guise.¹⁴⁸ Finally, she sums up¹⁴⁹ the pur-

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- 144 I interpret the reading *āmantritvena pūrvam sthītvā* as referring to the introduction of the theme of the *Ḍombikā* executed by the dancer at the very beginning, as in the example quoted, provided that Bhayani’s reconstruction is correct (cf. n. 38). If such were the case, the dancer herself could be seen to announce (*āmantrin-*) the theme of her performance. In theatre, this role is assumed by the *sūtradhāra* who, in the last part of the *pūrvaraṅga*, called *prarocanā*, provides hints about the play to come and its narrative. This phase is said to be an invitation (*āmantraṇa*), as it arouses expectation in the audience. See, for instance, NŚ 5.29: *upakṣepeṇa kāvyasya hetuyuktisamāśrayā | siddhenāmantraṇā yā tu vijñeyā sā prarocanā ||* Another possible, but less likely, option would be to read *mantritvena pūrvam sthītvā* as a way to describe the function of the *ḍombikā* after the *pratijñā* (introduction or declaration of intent). In this interpretation, which is based on a parallel in Bhoja’s definition of the genre *Durmilitā*, the *ḍombikā* would first of all dispense counselling on matters of clandestine love, and would then narrate stories illustrating it. Although the definition of the *Durmilitā* in ŚP 11 shows a striking similarity with the *Ḍombikā* defined by the ‘ancients’ and illustrated profusely by Abhinavagupta, the counselling phase follows there the narrative and precedes a request for goods. See § 3.5, n. 201.
- 145 According to Bhayani (1993: 21), this corresponds to the first part of the opening verse of the *Ḍombikā Cūḍāmaṇi*, which was given a few pages above as a *pratijñā*, and which he reconstructs on the basis of Hemaandra’s text. See n. 38 above.
- 146 The text is irremediably corrupt. I read it as in the KAV: *cauryakāmukakelilālasamānasā*. To read *°kelivilāsa°* instead of *°kelilālasa°* is also possible and does not alter the sense.
- 147 I read E₂, which follows the KAV: *cauryakāmukah*.
- 148 This might refer to the practice of addressing the king or leader of the assembly as the hero of the story (*nāyaka*), who could in turn be a god. Such practice was common for instance in the tradition of the *Thumrī*, a courtly performance executed by highly skilled courtesans with songs and dance, accompanied by a musical ensemble (see Du Perron 2007).
- 149 This last part is reconstructed on the basis of KAV.

†jāmi harārdhātum giapuṇṇaṃ cisami† ityādau. tatra sā nṛtyantī ḍombikā
ca bahutaroparañjakagītādīpaṭuṇṇaḥkaparivṛtā tvāṃ praty evam aham upa-
ślokitavatīti tanmadhyavartigāyanamukhasaṃkramitanijavacanā laukikenaiva
rūpeṇa tadgīyamānarūpakagatalayatālasāmyena tāvan nṛtyati. tadgīyamāna-
5 padārthasya ca sātīśayam āvarjanīye rājādau hṛdayānupraveśītāṃ darśayi-
tuṃ laukikavyavahāragatahastabhrūkarmaromāñcākṣivikāratulyayogakṣema-
tayaivāṅgavikārādisambhavam apy ākṣipati.

[6.4.5] evaṃ gītena rañjanaṃ prādhānyena vidhāya tadupayoginaṃ cā-
ṅgavyāpāraṃ pradarśya nṛttena punas taccittagrahaṇaṃ kurvatī nṛttaṃ pra-
dhānabhāvaṃ gītaṃ ca tadupasarjanabhāvaṃ nayantī tata eva tadabhina-
10 yam anādriyamāṇā †tadgīyamānād bhāvād vikṣiptatadudītabhāvaṃ† evāṅga-

1 jāmi harārdhātum giapuṇṇaṃ cisami] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E. jāmi tāṛā anuḍia puṇu ṇavvīsamī KAV, jāmiha
rāa tuḍia puṇu ṇaccisami *Bhayani* || tatra] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, tatra tu KAV || nṛtyantī] E₂ KAV, nṛtyati D
M₁ T₁ E₁ || ḍombikā] Σ_E KAV, ḍombikāś D M₁ T₁ 2 bahutaro°] Σ_E KAV, hutaro° D M₁, hataro°
T₁ || °ceṭaka°] Σ_E, °peṭaka° D M₁ T₁ KAV 4 °laya°] Σ_E KAV, °vaya° D M₁ T₁ 4–5 tadgīya-
mānapadā°] M₁ T₁^{vl} Σ_E KAV, tadagīyamānasya mānapadā° D T₁^{pc}, tadagīyamānasya padā°M₁sm,
tadgīyasya mānapadā° T₁^{ac} 5 ca] D T₁ Σ_E KAV, om. M₁ || āvarjanīye] Σ_E KAV, āvartanīye D M₁
T₁ 7 °saṃbhavam] Σ_E KAV, °samabhayam D M₁ T₁ 8 °upayoginaṃ] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E KAV, °avayo-
ginaṃ T₁^{ac} 8–9 cāṅgavyāpāraṃ] T₁ KAV, cāṅginaṃ cāṅgavyāpāraṃ D M₁^{pc} T₁^{vl} Σ_E, cāṅginaṃ
cāṅginaṃ cāṅgavyāpāraṃ M₁^{ac} 9 pradarśya] D M₁ T₁ E₁ KAV, pradarśyaṃ E₂ || taccittagra-
haṇaṃ] T₁^{ac} Σ_E, taccittagrahaṇam D M₁ T₁^{pc}, cittagrahaṇaṃ KAV || kurvatī] Σ_E KAV, kurvati D M₁
T₁ 10 °bhāvaṃ] Σ_E KAV, °bhāvāḥ D M₁ T₁ || nayantī] Σ_E KAV, nayanti D M₁ T₁^{vl}, abhinayantī T₁ ||
tata] D M₁ T₁^{vl} Σ_E KAV, ta T₁ 10–11 eva tadabhinayam] T₁ Σ_E KAV, evābhinayam D M₁ T₁^{vl} 11
anādriyamāṇā] Σ_E KAV, anādriyamāṇā D M₁ T₁^{pc}, anādriyamāṇā T₁^{ac} || °gīyamānād] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂,
°gītamānād D M₁ T₁, °gīyamānāṅga° E₁₍₁₎ KAV || bhāvād vikṣiptatadudīta°] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, bhāvāt
kṣiptatadudīta° D M₁ T₁^{pc}, bhāvāḥkṣiptatatsamudīta° T₁^{ac}, °bhāvāḥkṣiptatatsamudīta° E₁₍₁₎ KAV

150 As Bhayani (1993: 24) explains it, this passage from the lost ḍombikā *Guṇamālā* is likely to be in the *rāsaka* metre, like the verses quoted above from the ḍombikā *Cūḍamaṇi*. It seems, in fact to be a portion of a *rāsaka* line, coming after the four initial *mātrās*, which are missing. Thus, according to his emendation, we would have: 4 *mātrās* + *jāmiha rāa tuḍia puṇu ṇaccisami*, with the caesura falling after the eleventh *mātrā*. This, according to Bhayani, is the concluding part of the ḍombikā *Guṇamālā*. Note that the dancer speaks in the voice of the *ḍombikā*, using the first person (*ṇaccisami*; compare with *ṇaccami* in the *pratijñā* reconstructed by Bhayani, n. 38), and addresses the king directly with the vocative *rāa*.

151 I follow KAV, followed by E₂, and read *nṛtyantī*.

152 Note that the voice is always that of the *ḍombikā*, expressed in the first person (*aham upaślokitavatī*), and the addressee is the king (*tvāṃ prati*). Her words, however, are now transferred to the singer and rendered in Sanskrit. This feature is at odds with the linguistic convention of drama, where the status of the character and not that of the performer determines the language used, and is said to invalidate the possibility of the direct experience of the character; cf. above, n. 139.

pose of the *Ḍombikā* in passages such as the one from the *Guṇamālā* †‘[...]’†.¹⁵⁰ And at that point, the dancing¹⁵¹ *ḍombikā* is surrounded by attendants who are skilled in various types of alluring songs and [instrumental music]. Her own words [addressed to the king]—‘I have thus eulogized you’—are transferred to the mouth of the singer who stays in the middle [of the musical ensemble],¹⁵² as she first dances in a mundane way (*laukikena rūpeṇa*),¹⁵³ in keeping with the rhythm and tempo connected with the dramatic text (*rūpaka*) that is sung (*gīyamāna*) by the [singer]. And in order to show that the meaning of those lyrics have to find acceptance in the heart of the king or [the sponsor of the performance], who has to be pleased to a higher degree, [the dancer] further exhibits visible changes to her body (*aṅgavikāra*)¹⁵⁴ and other [symptoms of love]. [This she does] in a manner in every respect resembling ordinary behaviour, through the gestures of the hands, the movements of the eyebrows, the [display of] horripilation, and modified glances.

[6.4.5] Having caused [the king’s] allurement (*rañjana*) in this way mainly through singing, and having displayed the bodily movements useful to it,¹⁵⁵ she again captivates his mind through dancing. While doing so, she brings dance to the main role, and song is subordinated to it. For this very reason, at the time of the circumambulations [and the other movements of abstract dance], bound by the tempo, she throws her limbs about without engaging in the enactment (*abhinaya*) of the [contents of that song]. †The essence [of her dance] (i.e. its delicate quality) merely arises (*udita*) from the [song] and is projected (*vikṣipta*) from the emotion (*bhāva*) that is being sung by the [singer].†¹⁵⁶

153 I.e. she is no longer narrating stories, but just dancing in a way common to the world.

154 By *aṅgavikāra*, the *sātvikabhāvas* are usually meant, those bodily manifestations such as tremors, horripilation, tears, etc., that are the invariable external signs of an intense emotional state. See § 3.3, n. 45.

155 I have corrected the text following the better reading preserved in T₁ and in the KAV: *tadupayoginaṃ cāṅgavyāpāram*.

156 Due to the corrupt state of the text, this passage is highly uncertain. If my interpretation is sound, this description alludes to the phase of the *Ḍombikā* mentioned above as the performance of the tempo accompanied by stream-like circumambulations (*dhārāparīkramapūrvakalayaprayoga-*), also referred to as *layapariṣvaktakaraṇa* (cf. above, n. 131 and 135). Here the movements of abstract dance maintain their delicate quality as they conform to the content of the song and the whole performance, the subject of which is amorous. The latter lends its character to dance and provides emotional colouring, which is reflected in the quality of the body movements. However, it is emphasized more than once that no *abhinaya* of the contents of the song occurs in this phase. This ‘colouring’ of dance in conformity with the contents of the songs to which it is performed will be clarified later on in connection with the distinction into delicate (*masrṇa*) and vehement (*uddhata*) performance (see §.2.3, and 8.4.1–3 below).

vikṣepaṃ karoti layapariṣvaktakaraṇādau. [6.4.6] tatreyaty aṃśe laukikamā-
 trasvabhāva eva rāmanaṭādivyavahāravat kva prayojyaprayojakabhāvāśāṅkā.
 kasya vā sāmājikasya vyutpādanam abhisamhitam. tadanantaram ca yathaiva
 sā gītanṛttādi prāyuṅkta tathaiva tatsadṛśaṃ nartakī prayuṅkte, na tu ḍo-
 mbikāṃ sāksātākākalpena darśayati, tadiyahāryādinā svātmarūpapracchāda-
 nādyabhāvāt. tata eva na ḍombikāṃ sāksātākākalpena sā darśayati, api tu

1 °pariṣvaktakaraṇādau] Σ_E, °pariṣvakṛnnādau D^{ac} M₁, °pariṣvaktann ādau D^{pc} T₁, °pariṣvakva-
 nādau KAV || tatreyaty] Σ_E KAV, tatra yati D M₁ T₁ 2 °svabhāva eva rāma°] E₁₍₁₎ KAV, °sva-
 bhāvarāma° D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂ || kva prayojyaprayojaka°] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, mā prayojyaprayojaka°
 D M₁ T₁^{ac}, mātraprayojyaprayogaka° T₁^{pc}, kvāprayojyaprayojaka° E₁₍₁₎, kāvyaprayojyaprayojaka°
 KAV || °śāṅkā] Σ_E KAV, °āṃśakā D M₁ T₁ 3 kasya→abhisamhitam] om. KAV || abhi°] E₂, ati°
 D M₁ T₁, ābhi° E₁, om. KAV 4 sā gītanṛttādi prāyuṅkta] Σ_E KAV, nṛttādiprayuktaṃ D M₁^{pc}, sā
 gītanṛttādiprayuktaṃ M₁^{ac}, sā gītanṛttādiprayuṅktaṃ T₁ || tatsadṛśaṃ] KAV, sadṛśaṃ na D M₁
 T₁ E₁, tatsadṛśaṃ eva E₂ 4–5 ḍombikāṃ] D M₁ T₁ KAV, ḍombikā E₁, ḍombikā sā tu E₂ 5
 tadiyahāryādinā] Σ_E KAV, tad ihāryā na D M₁, tadiyahāryānāṃ T₁^{ac}, tadiyahāryā na T₁^{pc} 5–6
 °pracchādanādy°] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E KAV, °pracchādanāny° T₁^{ac} 6 tata→darśayati] D M₁ T₁ E₁ KAV,
 om. E₂ || api] D M₁ Σ_E KAV, api iti T₁

- 157 The reading *laukikamātrasvabhāva eva rāmanaṭādivyavahāravat* preserved by Hemacandra is definitely better, and it alone makes sense. The relationship between the performed character and the performer can be assimilated to the one between instigated (*prayojya*) and instigator (*prayojaka*), as in a causative relationship. The actor is in fact the one who makes the character perform some actions, which belong to the fictional world of the play. If, in the 'narrative' phase, one might wonder if the dancer is enacting the heroine, the hero, and the other characters in the story, as she might use gesticulation and some mimicry, in the phase of 'pure' dance no narrative content is interpreted, so no doubt arises about the dancer making an enactment of a character.
- 158 I read *abhisamhitam*, as in E₂. The sense, I think, is that there can be no instruction (*vyutpatti*, one of the two aims of theatre; cf. § 3.4) for a spectator in the absence of narrative content enacted by an actor. In theatre, spectators learn to behave like Rāma and unlike Rāvaṇa, since they are made to see the results of the actions of the enacted characters. But if no character is enacted, there can be no question of instruction through a narrative. Again, if the narrative phase of the Ḍombikā might have been thought to provide instruction in the means to attain love (as in the argument of the *abhedapakṣin* presented in 2.2), in the phase of abstract dance no instruction is aimed at. Interestingly, the KAV drops this sentence, most probably since Hemacandra is not at all interested in establishing a difference between theatre and dance, which the *bhedapakṣin*'s argument aims at here.
- 159 I interpret *tadanantaram* as referring to the sequence of the reasoning. The *bhedapakṣin* is now extending his argument about the absence of an actor-character opposition to the whole performance of a Ḍombikā.
- 160 I have emended the text following the KAV: *tatsadṛśam*. The reading in E₂, *tatsadṛśam eva*,

[6.4.6] In such a part of the [performance], whose nature is simply worldly, how could one even suspect a relationship of a performer to a performed [character], just as when people refer to Rāma and to the actor [enacting him as distinct entities]?¹⁵⁷ Or else, what sort of spectator could [such a performance] ever aim to instruct?¹⁵⁸ And it follows closely¹⁵⁹ that the [worldly] dancer performs in a way similar¹⁶⁰ to that in which the [*ḍombikā*] used to perform songs, dances, etc.¹⁶¹ But she does not show the *ḍombikā*¹⁶² as similar to a directly perceived (*sākṣātkāra*) [character], since she does not conceal her own identity and [appearance] by putting on the costume and the other [accoutrements] of a [*ḍombikā*].¹⁶³ For this very reason the [dancer] does not show the *ḍombikā* [character] as if she were directly present (*sākṣā-*

is also possible. In any case, a negation is unwanted here because the opposition is between acting similar to a *ḍombikā*, and showing the *ḍombikā* as if directly present in front of a spectator.

- 161 The imperfect *prāyunkte* has to be construed with the pronoun *sā* as referring to the *ḍombikā*, the implicit subject of the sentence. Abhinavagupta is usually aware of the semantic nuances implied by the use of certain grammatical forms, on which see Torella 1987 and 1999. The three features attributed by Sanskrit grammarians to the imperfect are: reference to the past (*bhūta*), not pertaining to the present day (*anadyatana*), and being within the reach of experience (*aparokṣa*). This means that the *ḍombikā*'s performance pertains to the past, but not so remotely as to lie beyond the perception of the speaker. See also below the opposition between the aims of the *ḍombikā*'s performance in the past, and those of the *Ḍombikā* as a staged dance, marked below by the expression '*adyatve tu*' (n. 193). The use of the imperfect here, as well as the use of the adverb *tatsadṛśam*, which implies similarity but no mimesis, confirms my hypothesis that the *ḍombikā* referred to here is a fictional character, which the dancer depicts, possibly in some kind of parodic manner. Yet, the depiction of the *ḍombikā* by the dancer cannot be compared to that of an actor representing a character dramatically. This is explained immediately after, when *sadṛśa-prayoga* is opposed to *sākṣātkāra*-*darśana*, the latter being proper to dramatic acting alone.
- 162 I correct *ḍombikā* into *ḍombikām*, as in the manuscripts and KAV, since we definitely want to keep the dancer (*nartakī*) as the subject, and have *ḍombikā* in the accusative as the object of *darśayati*. The reason given immediately after makes it absolutely clear that we are talking about the dancer, who does not put on the costume of the *ḍombikā*.
- 163 The condition for having a quasi-direct perception of the character is that the actor conceals his/her own identity by putting on a costume and by displaying the appropriate speech, gestures, and psychophysical reactions appropriate to the character (cf. § 3.4). In a similar vein, Abhinavagupta will say that the dancer in the *pūrvaraiṅga* does not conceal herself by assuming the appearance of a character such as Rāma, standing before the spectator's eyes, like in the theatre. See ABh ad Nś 4.278cd, vol. 1, p. 185: *nartakī na tu nātya iva sākṣādrāmādirūpatāpracchannātmikā*.

tathaiva nṛttam sābhinayaṃ kevalaṃ ca pradarśayati. [6.4.7] tena nātyāṅgatayā yad dṛṣṭam patākādi tad darśanamātratayā. ato nātyaṃ saṃskārakaṃ nṛttasyety aṅgādivyapadeśa ity upacārād ucyate.

[6.5] nātyasya prastāvanāprāṇapratibimbakalpaṃ nṛttam ity ayam api vya-
5 vahāras tatastyā eva. nātyasyātra nāmāpi nāsti madamūrcchātau cāturaśrya-

1 sābhinayaṃ] D M₁ Σ_E KAV, sābhinaṃ T₁^{ac}, sābhineyaṃ T₁^{pc} || pradarśayati] Σ_M Σ_E, pradarśaya-
tīti nālaukikarūpāntaraprādurbhāveneti KAV 1–2 nātyāṅgatayā yad] conj., nātyāṅgatayāṃ yad
D M₁ Σ_E, nātyāṅgatā yaḥ T₁^{ac}, nātyāṅgatā yāṃ T₁^{pc} 2 saṃskārakaṃ] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, saṃskārakāṃ
T₁^{ac} 4 °prāṇapratibimbakalpaṃ nṛttam] E₁₍₁₎^{pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, °prāṇapratibimbakalpyanṛttam D
M₁ T₁, °prāṇapratibimbakalpaṃ nṛtyam E₁₍₁₎^{ac}, °prāṇasya pratibimbakalpaṃ nṛttam E₂ 5 tata-
styā] D M₁ Σ_E, tatasya T₁ || nāmāpi nāsti] conj., nāmāpy asti D M₁ T₁ Σ_E || madamūrcchātau]
conj., padamūrcchātau D M₁^{pc}, padamūrdhnātau M₁^{ac}, padamūrcchātau T₁, padam ūrdhvātau
E₁, kiṃ padam ūrdhvāṃ ityātau E₂ 5–328.1 cāturaśryabhaṅgābhāve] T₁^{pc} E₁, vātaraśryabha-
ṅgābhāve D M₁ T₁^{ac}, cāturaśryabhaṅgābhāve tu E₂

1–328.1 tena nātyāṅgatayā→tadbhāvādyayogāt] p.n.p. KAV

- 164 Despite the repetition, I would read *ḍombikāṃ* as an accusative as before, keeping the worldly dancer (*nartakī*) as the subject (*sā*). As should be clear by now, *ḍombikā* is both the name of the genre and of the main character it displays. It is hence necessary to distinguish between the dancer showing the behaviour of a *ḍombikā* in a performance called *Ḍombikā*, and the *ḍombikā* as a socio-cultural figure that has inspired and given the name to the genre. The *ḍombikā* as a character appears to be a woman who makes a living out of her activities as a courtly entertainer, alternating dance, songs, and storytelling, possibly a sort of courtly Devadāsī *antelitteram*. On the *ḍombikā* as a historical figure described in the chronicles of Kashmir, *Rājatarāṅginī* v.354–386, see § 3.5.
- 165 I conjecture an instrumental of an abstract noun in the relative sentence, *nātyāṅgatayā yad dṛṣṭam*, in order to maintain the same construction as in the correlative *tad darśanamātratayā [dṛṣṭam]*.
- 166 The *upacāra*, or ‘metaphorical reference’, consists here in saying that the *Ḍombikā* and other forms of staged dance possess the features of theatre, since they display enactment. In these forms, however, no character is brought to direct manifestation as in theatre through acting. Cf. Bansat-Boudon 1992: 402, n. 70.
- 167 Similarly translated into French in Bansat-Boudon 1992: 402, n. 70: ‘la danse est pour ainsi dire le prologue du *nātya*, sa vie même, son reflet.’ The *Madhusūdanī* reads *nātyasya prastāvanāprāṇasya pratibimbakalpaṃ* and interprets it differently: ‘dance is similar to a reflection of theatre, whose vital breath is the prologue.’ I follow Bansat-Boudon in

tkārakalpa) [on stage].¹⁶⁴ On the contrary, she makes a display of dance just as that [of a real *ḍombikā*], along with enactment and without it. [6.4.7] Therefore those gestures, such as the *patāka* etc., which are commonly regarded as part of a dramatic performance,¹⁶⁵ [should be considered in the *Ḍombikā*] as merely for display. That is why saying that theatre provides refinement to dance, and that the latter should consequently be defined technically by the bodily and the other types of [acting] (*aṅgādi*), is [just] a metaphorical way of speaking[, since nothing in dance is really brought to direct manifestation].¹⁶⁶

[6.5] Even this common way of saying that dance is like the prologue, the life, or the reflection of theatre¹⁶⁷ is metaphorical (lit. proceeds thence, i.e. from secondary usage). With regard to [dance], one cannot even mention the name of theatre[, let alone its nature!]¹⁶⁸ [This is so] because when [mental states such as] delirium (*mada*), swoon (*mūrccha*), etc. [are displayed in dance] without [provoking] any [consequential] break in the [line of the bodily posture called]

taking the compound *prastāvanāprāṇapratibimbakalpaṃ* as containing a *dvandva* with three coordinated members. In support of this, see other similar occurrences in ABh ad NŚ 4.320, vol. 1, p. 203: *kāvyē vastvapekṣatvān nātyaprastāvanāprāṇapratibimbātmakatā trividhatvān*, and in the commentary on the *lāsyaṅga* called *trimūḍhaka* (cf. n. 22 above), which is said to be performed as a *nātyāyitam* (NŚ 31.357bc: *kevalaṃ pauruṣair bhāvair vākyam nātyayitena yat ||*). This is explained as follows by Abhinavagupta: *pauruṣasūcakā bhāvāḥ sāttvikādayo 'tra vākyārthe yojyāḥ. tena nātyāyitā nātyakalpā na tu sarvathā nātyarūpā eva. pratibimbapraṇaprastāvanākalpaṃ hi nātyasya nṛtagītam ity uktam prak. tan nātyāyitam vā. sthāne dhruvāsv abhinaya iti tatsādṛśyāc cātra vyapadeśaḥ* (ABh ad locum, vol. 4, p. 279). 'In the [*trimūḍhaka*] the feelings, i.e. the psychophysical reactions and [the facial expressions] that are suggestive of heroism, should be connected with the content of the sentences. Thus, the *nātyāyitā* is similar to a *nātya*, but it does not consist in a *nātya* in every respect. In fact, it has previously been said that a song that is danced is similar to the prologue, the life, or the reflection of theatre. Alternatively, [one can say that it] behaves like a *nātya*. And since [the *trimūḍhaka*] is similar to [the *nātyāyitā*], [defined in NŚ 22.49] as "the enactment (*abhinaya*), carried out at the proper time during [the performance of] *dhruvā* songs", the technical designation of [*nātyāyitā*] has been used here (i.e. in the definition of the *lāsyaṅga trimūḍhaka*).' Here the word 'kalpa 'similar to' is clearly emphasized: although it looks like theatre, it is actually not theatre.

168 I read *nātyasyātra nāmāpi nāsti* as a conjecture, although it is not supported by the manuscripts. The expression *nāmāpi nāsti/na bhavati* is quite common in Sanskrit and is used elsewhere in the *Abhinavabhāratī*. See, for instance, § 3.4.1, n. 135.

bhaṅgābhāve tadbhāvādyayogāt. nātyarūpatve hi sāksātkārakalpānuyavasā-
yasampattyupayoginaḥ pātraṃ prati bhāṣāniyamasya, chandolaṅkāradiniya-

1 hi] $\Sigma_M \Sigma_E$, hi tasya E_2 2 °upayoginaḥ] Σ_E , °upayoginama° D $M_1 T_1$ 2–330.1 °niyamasya
rūpodyogopa°] conj., °niyamo 'vaśarūpād yoga° D $M_1 T_1 E_1^{ac}$, °niyamo 'vaśyarūpād yoga° E_1^{pc} ,
°niyamasya rūpodyoga° E_2

1–330.1 nātyarūpatve hi sāksātkārakalpānuyavasāyasampattyupayoginaḥ pātraṃ prati bhā-
ṣāniyamasya, chandolaṅkāradiniyamasya] kiṃ ca pāṭhye sāksātkārakalpānuyavasāyasamppra-
tyu(samppratayayo)payoginaḥ pātraṃ prati bhāṣāniyamasya niyatasya chandolaṅkāraḍeś cābhi-
dhānaṃ dṛśyate KAV

169 By *cāturaśrya* is meant the quality of the limbs assuming the *caturaśra*, a stylized bodily stance described in NŚ 10.94cd–95ab: *kaṭīnābhicarau hastau vakṣaś caiva samunnatam | vaiṣṇavaṃ sthānam ity aṅgaṃ caturaśram udāhṛtam ||* ‘When the body assumes the posture called *vaiṣṇava*, with the two hands moving at the waist and navel, and the chest is raised, it is called *caturaśra*.’ This ‘quadrangularity’ of the body must have been fundamental in dance, as Abhinavagupta explains in his commentary on the *nṛttahasta* bearing the same name, i.e. the *caturaśra-hasta*: *tatra cāturaśryamūlaṃ nṛtte 'ṅgasya jīvitam [...]* (ABh on NŚ 9.184, vol. 2, pp. 70–71) ‘There, i.e. in dance, the life of the limbs is based on *cāturaśrya* [...]’. A tentative comparison could be made with the basic position of Bharatanatyam, called *aramandi* (*ardhamaṅḍala* in Skt.), from which almost every movement originates and into which a sequence of movements usually culminates in a composition of abstract dance. When the meaning of the text is enacted, on the contrary, more variety is to be found in the bodily postures and in the hand gestures. These follow the sense of the lyrical lines on the whole; however, the basic symmetries of the lines are never broken. In theatre, on the contrary, the overarching principle is that characters affected by strong emotions modify their bodily movement accordingly. Specific prescriptions advising the actor not to rely on hand gestures when affected by mental states including delirium and loss of consciousness are provided in NŚ 9.186–187. Therefore, we cannot possibly speak of theatre when there is no break in the symmetry of the basic bodily stance, particularly when certain emotional states are enacted.

170 My understanding of the passage rests on a conjecture, partly agreeing with the manuscripts in reading °*mūrccādau*. The change of *pada*° into *mada*° is supported by a reading later in the same chapter, i.e. ABh ad NŚ 4.320, vol. 1, p. 203: *madamūrccādau tattvāpattyayogād*. This sentence immediately follows the one quoted in n. 167 above, which furthermore confirms that the sequence of performative practices quoted in NŚ 4.320— itself a summary of the different referents of the word *nṛtta*—follows the same order discussed here. The state called *mada*, ‘delirium’, or ‘intoxication’, is listed among the thirty-three *vyabhicāribhāvas*, the temporary states accompanying the eight stable states. Although *mūrcca*, ‘swoon’ or ‘loss of consciousness’, is not part of the same list, it is

cāturaśrya,¹⁶⁹ it would be inappropriate [to assign to it] the nature of [theatre, its characteristics,] and so on.¹⁷⁰ For if [dance] had a dramatic nature, a restriction on the actor concerning the language—namely, a restriction concerning the [use of] metres, ornaments, etc.—would ensue, useful for bringing about a cognition [of the character] similar to a direct perception.¹⁷¹ Moreover, a particular costume useful to the effort of [bringing about] the external form (*rūpa*)

mentioned in Nś 7.99 along with *mada* as one of the causes of the psychophysical reaction (*sāttvikabhāva*) called *pralaya* ‘fainting’. These two states are mentioned together on other occasions too, for instance in Nś 8.36 in the application of a rolling gesture of the head, and in Nś 19.46 in the application of certain ornaments (*alaṃkāra*) of the voice. *Mada* and *mūrccā* appear as a couple also in the *Carakasamhitā* as symptoms of various diseases. See for instance CS 1.24.27, 42, 58, and 60. Since the mental states of *unmāda* and *mūrccā* are listed in the *Kāmasūtra* as visible signs of the eighth and ninth stages through which a lovelorn woman goes, the so-called *daśakāmāvasthā* culminating in death (*maraṇa*) (cf. Insler 1988: 311), I suspect that Abhinavagupta here is hinting at those very stages where the heroine is supposed to completely lose control of her body. The list also appears with slight differences in Nś 20.154–156: *unmāda* (‘lunacy’) is the seventh stage, followed by *vyādī* (‘sickness’) and *jaḍaṭā* (‘paralysis’, ‘loss of consciousness’).

171 In the chapter devoted to *dhruvā* songs, detailed explanations of the different metres (*chandas*) used in each song and in connection with particular characters are provided (Nś 32.387 ff.). Ornaments (*alaṃkāras*) of the voice are similarly explained (Nś 32.8 ff.), as well as rules about the use of languages in connection with the characters portrayed (Nś 32.381–382). The general language of *dhruvās* is, according to Abhinavagupta, Śauraseni; however, in theatre it has to be adapted to the different characters. What is more, among other opinions on the use of language, he claims that according to the Muni, the language of the song of a certain character should correspond to that of his lines (*yasya yā pāṭhe bhāṣā tasyaiva gītam iti munimatam ity apekṣyam*, ABh ad Nś 32.382, vol. 4, p. 384). As noticed by Bansat-Boudon (1998: 52) with regard to the actual practice of dramatists, in some of the transmitted *dhruvās*, even superior characters can express themselves in Prakrit, while Sanskrit is reserved for the evocation of characters or things of divine essence.

masya, rūpodyogopayogina āhāryaviśeṣasya jātyaṃśakāder gatiparikramādeś ca sarvasyaivopayogo bhavet. na caivam asti.

[6.5.1] mūlabhūtasya ca pāṭhyasya saṃbhāvanānuṣaktam ākāśabhāṣitam api syāt, pādatāḍitakādibhānarūpaka iva. iha tu mūlata eva na kenacit kiṃcid ucyate. ‘aho gāṇe’ tyādi gāyanam.

[6.5.2] yac cokatam ‘pramadā saivānukāryātra’ iti, tad apy anena pratisamāhitam, nartakyāḥ svarūpānācchādanāt. kalahāntariteyaṃ khaṇḍiteyaṃ nṛtya-

1 °viśeṣasya] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °viśayasya E₁₍₁₎ || °aṃśakāder gati°] conj., °aṃśakādeti D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ ac E₁₍₄₎ ac, °aṃśakāder iti E₁₍₂₎ pc E₁₍₄₎ pc, °aṃśakāder ati° E₂ 2 sarvasyaivopayogo] conj., sa nāsyavopayogo D M₁ T₁ pc E₁, sa nasyavopayogo T₁ ac, kiṃ nātrevopayogo E₂ || na caivam asti] conj., na vaivam asti D M₁ T₁ E₁, om. E₂ 3 saṃbhāvanā°] Σ_E, saṃbhavatā° D M₁ T₁ 4 syāt] D M₁ T₁ E₁, na syāt E₂ || bhānarūpaka] E₁₍₁₎ pc E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, bhāsā rūpi D M₁ T₁, bhāsārūpaka E₁₍₁₎ ac || iva] D M₁ T₁ E₁, iva nātraivam asti E₂ 7 °cchādanāt] Σ_E, °cchādanyāt D M₁ T₁ 7–332.1 nṛtyatīti] Σ_E T₁ ac, nṛtyatī D M₁, nṛtyatīm T₁ pc

1–332.5 rūpodyogopayogina→ tāvantam] p.n.p. KAV

172 My reading is a slightly modified version of E₂: *chando'laṃkāradīnyamasya rūpodyog[op]ayogina*. On the term *rūpa* used to indicate the external form of the character on stage, which is revealed by the costume of the actor (*āhārya*, *nepathyā*), see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 395 and n. 38.

173 I conjecture *jātyaṃśakāder gatiparikramādeḥ* in order to get rid of the *iti*, which makes no sense to me here. The formulation, however, is not completely satisfactory. *Jāti*s are melodic modes, like their later counterparts, called *rāgas*. They are described technically in NŚ 28, while in NŚ 29 their application to the different *rasas* is explained. These melodic modes, each of which is characterized by *aṃśa*, a particular note that plays the role of the dominant in them, are said to be used in theatre in the *dhruvā* songs, in conformity with the particular situation they hint at (cf., for instance, NŚ 29.4). On *jāti* and *rāga*, see Te Nijenhuis 1970: 169–193. *Jātyaṃśaka* and *gatiparikrama* are also used in the *pūrvaraṅga*, when the *dhruvā* called *avakṛṣṭā* is sung. However, unlike in theatre, in the *pūrvaraṅga* they are just used conventionally and not in combination with all the other features—the sense I give to the conjecture *sarvasyaivopayoga*—that aim at enacting a character, i.e. the particular language, metre and costume. This could possibly be the implied context of the dance described here. The term *prastāvanā* in the expression ‘*prastāvanāprāṇapratibimbakalpaṃ nṛttam*’ and the parallel phraseology noted in the section on the *lāsyaṅgas* of the *pūrvaraṅga* (cf. n. 167 above and n. 177 below) strongly suggest that the dance talked about here is the one that is performed in the *pūrvaraṅga*. The reference, however, could be to dance more generally, including independent staged dance, since the allusion to the presentation of mental states such as *mada* and *mūrccha* without using the corresponding bodily expressions is exemplified below (cf. n. 188) in the context of danced poetry (*nṛttakāvya*).

174 I read *na caivam asti*, which is a very common way of dismissing a hypothesis on the basis of experience. The confusion of *ca* and *va* is indeed very common in Devanāgarī transcripts of Malayāḷam prototypes, and our manuscript M₁ is certainly one of these cases.

[of the character],¹⁷² the melodic *jātis*, and other [musical accompaniments], as well as circumambulations with gaits and other [types of movements appropriate to the character and the situation], would all be used.¹⁷³ But this is not the case.¹⁷⁴

[6.5.1] Further[, if dance were dramatic in nature], [the convention called] ‘speaking to the sky’ (*ākāśabhāṣita*) would also be [used in it], just as in the *Pādatāḍitaka* (‘The Kick’) and [other plays] belonging to the dramatic genre of the monologue play (Bhāṇa).¹⁷⁵ [This convention] relies on the imagination of a dramatic dialogue (*pāṭhya*) [taking place between two or more characters], which is rooted in the [dramatic] text (*mūla*).¹⁷⁶ But here (i.e. in dance) nobody says anything as grounded in a [dramatic] text (*mūlatas*). [The text] starting with ‘Oh, Gāṇa’ etc.[, belonging to the *lāsyāṅga āsīnapāṭhya*], is [indeed] a song[, not a dramatic dialogue].¹⁷⁷

[6.5.2] As to the statement that ‘that very woman in love (*pramadā*) has to be enacted (*anukārya*) here’,¹⁷⁸ it also stands refuted by this [very reasoning]. The dancer, in fact, does not conceal her own appearance [by putting on the costume appropriate to a character]. [Moreover,] the common way of saying that ‘a heroine separated [from her lover] by a quarrel (*kalahāntarītā*) is dancing’ [or]

175 The *Pādatāḍitaka*, belonging to the dramatic genre of the monologue play (Bhāṇa), has been critically edited by Schokker (1966) and translated by Schokker & Worsley (1976). See also Dezsó and Vasudeva 2009 for the text and translation of ‘The Kick’. On the characteristics of the Bhāṇa, see n. 11 above.

176 On the functioning of the convention called *ākāśabhāṣita*, see n. 10.

177 This quotation brings us back to the arguments put forward at the beginning of the *pūrvapakṣa*, according to which the four types of acting that are proper to theatre would be found even in dance [1.6.2]. The opponent claimed that a text such as ‘*aho gāṇagānabullbhāṇa*’, belonging to the *lāsyāṅga* of the *pūrvaraṅga* called *āsīnapāṭhya*, is sufficient to prove that we also find vocal enactment (*vācīkābhīnaya*) in dance, just as in theatre (cf. above, n. 32). The reference to the *ākāśabhāṣita* suggests that, in this *lāsyāṅga*, a dialogue is reported through this convention by the woman alone on stage. However, there is a basic difference here: the dancer does not report the speech of another character, whose replies she gives echo to, but simply puts the words of her lover in a song. This is described by Abhinavagupta while explaining the reference to *pāṭhya* or ‘recitation’ in the name *āsīnapāṭhya*. See ABh ad NŚ 31.342, vol. 4, p. 275: *uktaṃ hi pūrvam puruṣasya pāṭhe ‘traiva striyā gītam iti*: ‘The speech of the man [delivered] earlier through recitation becomes here the song of the woman’.

178 This is the end of the quotation, possibly from the *Vārttika*, that was used by the *abhedapakṣin* while concluding his argument about the presence of *abhinaya* in dance [1.4.1]. For the possible reference to the *lāsyāṅga trimūḍhaka* in this quote, see above, n. 22.

tīti vyavahāra aupacārikaḥ, tadarthaḡiyamānarūpakagatagītavādyānusāritvāt tannr̥ttasya. na tu mukhyaḥ, lambālakatvaveṇīdhāraṇamaṅgalavalayāparigrahādītaducitaveśādirigrahavaikalyāt.

[6.5.3] yac ca nātyāyitatvam āśaṅkitam, tad asthāne bhrāntam, saḡḡdayair
5 nātyāyitam iti hi tāvantam ḡiyamānaṃ nābhiniyate, asaṅgatyāpatteḡ. api tu

1 °gatagīta°] D M₁ Σ_E, °gīta° T₁ 2 °nr̥ttasya] T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °nr̥tyasya D M₁ E₁₍₁₎ || °dhāraṇa°] D M₁ T₁ E₁, °dharāṇa° E₂ 2–3 °āparigrahādi°] D M₁ T₁ E₁, °ādirigraha° E₂ 3 °vaikalyāt] D M₁ T₁ E₁, °vaiphalyāt E₂ 4 yac] Σ_E, yar D M₁ T₁ || saḡḡdayair] D M₁ T₁^v Σ_E, ḡḡdaye T₁ 5 nātyāyitam iti] Σ_E, nātyāyite D, nātyāyiteti M₁ T₁, nātyāyita iti E₁₍₁₎ || ḡiyamānaṃ] Σ_M Σ_E, ḡiyamānaṃ ca KAV || nābhiniyate] KAV, abhiniyate D M₁ T₁ Σ_E || asaṅgaty°] D M₁ T₁ KAV, asaṅgaty° E₁, ity asaṅgaty° E₂

179 The reference is to the same argument of the *abhedapakṣin*, who claimed that in the *lāsyāṅgas*, we identify the dancer as a certain type of heroine [1.4.1]: in reality, the dancer just follows the music, whose narrative contents are about those heroines (cf. n. 21), but she does not enact them as a character in theatre. Slightly different is the French translation in Bansat-Boudon 1992: 402, n. 71: ‘la voici en héroïne repentante; la voici en héroïne brisée; elle joue. L’affirmation est au sens second—parce que sa danse se conforme au jeu des instruments et au récital vocal qui intervient dans la pièce où l’on chante [pour communiquer] ce sens là—, pas au sens premier.’

180 The *Nātyāśāstra* prescribes a simple costume for the heroine separated from her lover. Nś 21.74cd–76ab: *tathā proṣitakāntāsu vyasanābhīhatāsu ca || veṣo vai malinaḡ kārya ekaveṇīdharaṃ śīraḡ | vipralambhe tu nāryās tu śuddho veṣo bhaved iha || nātyābharaṇa saṃyukto na cāpi mṡjāyānvītaḡ |* ‘Similarly, those [women] whose lover is departed and who are afflicted with misery should wear a filthy dress and a single braid of hair [falling] from the head. But the dress of women who are separated from their lover should be white, and they should not wear many jewels, nor maintain cleanliness.’ On the hairstyle of women distanced from their beloved, see also Kālidāsa’s description of the Yakṣī in *Meghadūta* 81: *nūnaṃ tasyāḡ prabalaruditocchūnanetraṃ prīyāyā, niḡṣvāsānām aśīśratayā bhinnavarṇādharoṣṡtham | hastanyastaṃ mukham asakalavyakti lambālakatvād, indor dainyaṃ tvadanusaraṇakliṣṡtakānter bibharti ||* ‘Doubtless her face, eyes swollen from intense crying, lower lip discoloured by the heat of many sighs, will be resting in her hand, only partly visible behind her hanging curls, and as pale as the moon when your approach obscures its

‘a deceived heroine (*khaṇḍitā*) is dancing’ is metaphorical, since [her] dance [merely] follows the vocal and instrumental music connected with the dramatic text that is sung and has those [heroines] as its object.¹⁷⁹ [When people say that a certain heroine is dancing, this is] not [to be understood] literally, since [the dancer] has not taken up the costume (*veṣa*) and [the other characteristics] proper to those [heroines], such as the fact of leaving her hair with its curls hanging [loose] or in a [single] braid, the avoidance of auspicious bangles, and so on.¹⁸⁰

[6.5.3] As for the doubt about the nature of *nāṭyāyita* [being attributed to the *lāsya* dance], it has been misapprehended in the wrong place.¹⁸¹ For what connoisseurs (*sahṛdaya*) consider a ‘simili-drama’ (*nāṭyāyita*) is when that which is sung is not enacted to its full extent, because incongruity (*asaṅgati*) would

brilliance’ (translation based on Mallinson 2006: 76). See also Vallabhadeva’s commentary on this verse: *lambālakatvāt, na hi virahiṇī keśān sammārjayati*. ‘Behind her hanging curls (*lambālakatvāt*), since a woman separated from her husband does not comb her hair.’ That is, if such types of heroine were to be dramatically represented on stage, the dancer would have had to wear a costume appropriate to the specific character, and not the hairstyle, bracelets, and other ornaments typical of a dancer. Bansat-Boudon interprets differently, based on the reading *°vaiphalyāt* at the end of the compound, conjectured by Madhusudan Shastri, against the *°vaikalyāt* (= *°abhāvāt*) of the GOS edition confirmed by the manuscripts: ‘la *ḍombikā* est-elle ou non imitation? La danseuse qui l’exécute joue-t-elle un rôle ou ne présente-t-elle qu’elle-même? La *ḍombikā* n’imite rien, répond AG; la danseuse n’interprète aucun personnage. Si, malgré tout, le spectateur en vient à trouver un sens à cette danse, s’il reconnaît dans la danseuse une héroïne brisée (*khaṇḍitā*) ou repentante (*kalahāntarītā*), ce peut être que secondairement, parce qu’il se souvient d’avoir vu au théâtre l’une ou l’autre de ces héroïnes. Pourquoi? “En raison de l’inutilité [qu’il aurait, en ce cas] à faire usage [au théâtre] des bracelets auspicioseux et du costume appropriés au rôle, à porter une tresse ou à laisser retomber ses boucles” (Bansat-Boudon 1992: 401, n. 67).

181 In theories of error, *bhrānti* is an illusion that consists in seeing a property in the wrong substratum, the typical example being silver in mother-of-pearl. The property of *nāṭyāyita*, consisting in the union of a dramatic text delivered through song and dramatic acting, was erroneously attributed to dance by the *abhedapakṣin*, who most probably had in mind some type of *lāsyaṅga* in the *pūrvaraṅga*, combining a *dhruvā* and its enactment by a dancer [1.5.1]. On the possibility that the *lāsyaṅga trimūḍhaka* is the dance providing the grounds for confusion with the *nāṭyāyita*, cf. n. 167 above. As the *bhedapakṣin* will demonstrate, the nature of *nāṭyāyita* cannot be attributed to this *lāsyaṅga*.

yādṛśā layatālādinā yādṛg arthasūcanayogyābhinayaḥ, sāttvikādiḥ pradhāna-rasānūsāritayā prayogayogyas, taducitārthaparipūraṇaṃ dhruvāgītena kriyate. sūcyā hy amī pallavaprakārā āṅkurādayo nivṛtṭyaṅkurāntā ye. vighnāyitavac ca nātyāyitam. etac ca svakṣetra eva vitaniṣyāmaḥ.

5 [6.5.4] evaṃ nātyāyitāśaṅkā 'py atra na kācit, mūlabhūtasyābhinayasyai-

1 yādṛg artha°] Σ_E KAV, yādṛśa° M₁ D T₁ || °yogyābhinayaḥ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, °yogyo 'bhinayaḥ KAV || sāttvikādiḥ] KAV, sāttvikādi° D M₁ T₁ Σ_E 2 °yogyas] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E KAV, °yogyam T₁^{ac} || °paripūra-ṇaṃ] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂ KAV, °paripūrṇa D, °paripūraṇa° M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ 3 sūcyā] E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} E₂, sūcyā D M₁ T₁, sūcyo E₁₍₁₎, sūkṣmā E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} || pallava°] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, vallava° T₁^{ac} || nivṛtṭyaṅkurāntā ye vighnāyitavac ca] D M₁ T₁ E₁, nivṛtṭiparyantā yair E₂ 4 nātyāyitam] T₁ Σ_E, nātyāyitavac ca nātyāyitam D M₁ T₁^{vl} 5 nātyāyitā°] D M₁ T₁, nātyāyitā° Σ_E

3-340.4 sūcyā→śivaḥ ||' iti ||] p.n.p. KAV

182 I interpret *tāvantaṃ* as an adverb governed by the verb *abhinīyate*, which I read with a negation as in the *Viveka* ad *Kāvyānuśāsana*: *tāvantaṃ gīyamānaṃ nābhinīyate*. I have also restored the reading *asaṅgatyāpatteḥ* from the manuscripts. The presence of a negation is justified contextually, and through the parallel in ABh ad Nś 22.49, in a gloss on the second type of *nātyāyita* under discussion here (cf. n. 26): *yo 'bhinayaḥ śāriro nātyāyitam. nanu kiṃ pratipadam abhinayatā, nety āha harṣādibhir iti tatsūcakair aṅgo-pāṅgasattvair ity arthaḥ*. (vol. 3, p. 172). 'C' est ce *śārīrābhīnaya* qui est le *nātyāyita*, Mais, dira-t-on, est-ce qu' [il est exécuté] par l'acteur jouant les mots un par un (*pratipadam*)? Non, dit [Bharata], mais au moyen [de l'expression] de la joie, etc. C'est à dire au moyen de l' [*abhīnaya*] du corps (*aṅga*), du visage (*upāṅga*) et du *sattva*, indicateur[s] (*sūcaka*) de cela (la joie, etc.). Tel est le sens' (translation Bansat-Boudon 1992: 384). The *nātyāyita*, in fact, is a type of bodily acting in which the actor interprets the meaning of a song in the way that it affects the character he enacts. The song is a *dhruvā* delivered by a vocalist, and its enactment by an actor consists in showing the character's reactions upon hearing that song. Abhinavagupta explains the meaning of the name *nātyāyita* ('pseudo-drama') as follows: *aprayujyamānāpi dhruvā kākatālyena prayogam upāṃśurūpā 'nātyam api nātyam iva śāsata iti tathāvidhanātyāyitatvāpādakah śārīrābhīnayo nātyāyitam iti darśayati*. (ABh ad Nś 22.49, vol. 3, p. 173). 'Although not a *nātya* (*anātyam api*), the *dhruvā* nevertheless rules (*śāsate*) the performance (*prayoga*), as would a *nātya* (*nātyam iva*), [always] synchronized with it (*kākatālyena*), since even when it is no longer being performed, the *dhruvā* is [taken up by the actor] in the form of a whisper. This is why the *śārīrābhīnaya*, which enables [the *dhruvā*] to rise to that particular status of a simili-drama, is called *nātyāyita*' (translation Bansat-Boudon 1995: 158). On the necessary coordination of text and enactment in the various phases of the *śārīrasāmānyābhīnaya* despite their non-necessary simultaneity, including in the *nātyāyita*, see § 3.5, n. 186.

ensue.¹⁸² On the contrary, some kind of enactment—as for instance the psychophysical (*sāttvika*) [enactment], which is suitable to the performance since it conforms to the main *rasa*—[will be used] following a particular rhythm and tempo, insofar as it is apt to suggest the meaning.¹⁸³ [And] the *dhruvā* will bring to fulfilment the meaning suitable to that [enactment].¹⁸⁴ For these [types of bodily acting], starting from *aṅkura* up to *nivr̥tṭyaṅkura*, are suggested to function in the manner of blossoms.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, a ‘pseudo-drama’ (*nāṭyāyita*) is [in any case] analogous to a ‘pseudo-obstacle’ (*vighnāyita*)[, i.e. it is not a real one]. We will expatiate on this [topic] in the proper place.¹⁸⁶

[6.5.4] In this way, there is not even the slightest doubt that [dance] could be [equated with a] *nāṭyāyita*, since acting as grounded in a text[—be it recited or sung—]is totally absent [from it]. If that were the case, it would be similar

183 I split the compound, as in KAV, into *sāttvikādīḥ pradhānaraśanusāritayā*.

184 This echoes the function of the *dhruvā* evoked above by the *abhedapakṣin*, according to which its use is to make explicit what the dramatic text does not say (cf. n. 76). Its psychophysical enactment (*sāttvika*) through the *nāṭyāyita* aims to show the character’s reaction to the meaning of the song by reflecting the main *rasa* required contextually.

185 The acting in the *nāṭyāyita* does not adhere precisely to the meaning expressed by the lyrics, but aims at unfolding what is implicit in them, and gives voice, by means of silent gestures and psycho-physical expressions, to the characters’ reactions to the meanings of the *dhruvā*, thus revealing their emotions. Among the different phases of the acting protocol, the first two registers, *vākṣyābhinaya* (‘verbal acting’) and *sūcā* (‘indicative acting’), connect closely the text and its *abhinaya*, as grounded in the same *dramatis persona*, while the remaining phases—*aṅkura* (‘sprout acting’), *śākhā* (‘twig-limbs acting’), *nāṭyāyita* (‘simili-drama’ or ‘pseudo-drama’), and *nivr̥tṭyaṅkura* (‘sprout at the cessation’)—convey the reactions of a character to the words of somebody else, be they spoken or sung (on these phases of the *śārīrasāmānyābhinaya*, see § 3.2, n. 53). That is why they are comparable, as their names also suggest, with the blossoms of a flower, which indeed point to the seed from which they develop. This also explains their being performed after the delivery of the text from which they sprout.

186 The discussion of the *nāṭyāyita* in the chapter on *sāmānyābhinaya* is organized around the derivation of the term (see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 351), namely on the value conferred to the denominative construction of this substantive through the secondary suffix *-āya*. Morphologically, it is the past participle of a denominative root, expressing a state of being. In it, the characters of the drama become the spectators of a play within the play, or of a show within the show. This drama is a real *nāṭya* just for the characters, but for the real audience it is a fake one, a *nāṭyāyita* or ‘pseudo-drama’. Hence, however one tries to conflate *nāṭyāyita* and *dance*, it will nevertheless remain only a simili- or pseudo-drama, not a fully fledged one. On the *nāṭyāyita*, see Bansat-Boudon 1995. Cf. also n. 168 and 182 above.

vābhāvāt. tadbhāve, yathā †‘muṃcai vaḷaviam̐ a airo a guhaṃsī ṇaḷiṇa agni ci ḍiṃja’† ityādau mūrcchādisākṣātkāraḥ śayyāyās cāṅganipatanādibāhulyam,

1 vaḷaviam̐] D M₁ T₁, kaḷaviam̐ Σ_E || airo] D M₁ T₁ E₁, airau E₂ || °haṃsī] D M₁ T₁, °haṃsa° Σ_E 2
ci ḍiṃja] D M₁ T₁, ciṅja Σ_E || °sākṣātkāraḥ] D M₁ T₁ E₁, °sākṣātkāraḥ °hoṣaṃ daṇaṣaka hamahu-
māiṣaka’ ityādau E₂ || śayyāyās] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, śayyāyāñ E₁₍₁₎ E₂ || cāṅga°] Σ_E, cāgayi° D M₁
T₁¹, cāṅgayi° T₁ || °bāhulyam] E₂, °bāhus D M₁ T₁ E₁

187 The Prakrit text is highly corrupt, but it is nevertheless possible, I think, to identify in this passage part of another passage, quoted as an example of *nātyāyita* in the chapter on *sāmānyābhinaya*: *yathā—†ṇaḷiṇidaḷae ṇisahasukadehiṃ ā tathā muccai | paḷai viabbhai vijjai haṃsī ṇaḷiṇivaṇe vi natthijjai ||†* (ABh ad NŚ 22.49, vol. 3, p. 17). The text is given by the editors as a verse, however I would rather see them as two different fragments, the second of which is separated by the *tathā* (following from the *yathā*) and corresponds to the passage quoted here. We would have: 1) *yathā—ṇaḷiṇidaḷae ṇisahasukadehiṃ ā*, 2) *tathā—muccai paḷai via bbhai vijjai haṃsī ṇaḷiṇivaṇe vi natthijjai* (here: *muṃcai vaḷaviam̐ a airo a guhaṃsī ṇaḷiṇa agni ci ḍiṃja*). The first fragment looks very similar to another passage quoted as an example for the *lāsyāṅga uktapratyukta* in ch. 19, which is described by Bharata as a dialogue born from the appeasement of anger, based on words of contempt and associated with the meaning of a multifarious song (see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 333). The Prakrit text forming the basis of the song in this *lāsyāṅga* is given in ABh ad 19.35, vol. 3, p. 76, supplemented by a Sanskrit *chāyā* added, presumably, by Ramakrishna Kavi: *ṇaḷiṇidaḷaṇisahasamuttadehiā | aidullāhapaḍibamdhānurāiā | (ṇaḷiṇidaḷaṇiṣa-
hamuktadehā atidurlabhapratibandhānurāgā)*. Now, the first part of the verse, despite the evident corruptions, undoubtedly looks the same as the first fragment of the text of the *nātyāyita* given by Abhinavagupta in the *sāmānyābhinaya* chapter. Lyne Bansat-Boudon, who has studied in detail and translated the whole section on the theatrical *lāsyāṅgas* in ABh ch. 19, translates as follows: ‘Elle abandonne son corps sans force sur les pétales de lotus, elle qui connaît une passion contrariée pour un amant extraordinairement inaccessible, etc.’ (ibid.: 335). According to Abhinavagupta, this is the text of a *dvīpādikā* song, and in this *lāsyāṅga* the enactment of the meaning of the song (*gītārthābhinaya*) should occur along with the interpretation of the sense of the poem (*kāvyārthasya ca*), i.e. the dramatic text, given in this particular case as *hīaa samāssasa* (Skt. *hr̥daya samāśvasīhi*. ‘My heart, take courage!’). Following the indications of the Indian editor, who assigns the quotation *hīaa samāssasa* to the play *Śakuntalā*, Bansat-Boudon maintains that this *lāsyāṅga* must have been embedded in the seventh act (21+) of Kālidāsa’s play, when Śakuntalā recognizes Duṣyanta after many years of separation, and accordingly pronounces the words *hīaa samassasa samassasa* as an aside (Vasudeva 2006: 344). Although we cannot rule out the possibility that such a *lāsyāṅga* could have been embedded there, the mention of a lotus-leaf bed at that point in the play does not really suit the context. The text of the *dvīpādikā*, on the contrary, perfectly matches the opening of the second act of Śrī Harṣa’s *Ratnāvalī*, in which the heroine Sāgarikā, suffering from the pangs of separation from king Udayana, draws a portrait of him. Seeing her in such a lovelorn condition, her worried friend Susangatā proposes gathering lotus leaves from the nearby pond, and makes a bed out of it for Sāgarikā to lie on and cool down. She utters the words: *sahi*,

to [the text of a *dhruvā*] such as the one in [the second act of the *Ratnāvalī*] †‘[...]’†, that is enacted as a *nātyāyita*,]¹⁸⁷ with [psychophysical states] such as the loss of consciousness (*mūr̥ccha*) and so on, and [physical reactions] such as the frequent falling of the limbs from a bed.¹⁸⁸ Just so would [the appropriate

samassa, samassa. java imāo digghīāo naliṇivattāim muṇālīāo a giṇhia lahuṃ āacchāmi. ‘Courage, my friend, courage. I’ll go quickly and gather lotus leaves and stalks from this long pond’ (text and translation Doniger 2006: 129). Sāgarikā rejects the comfort of the lotus leaves and asks her friend to remove them. She loves someone out of reach (*dullaha-jaṇaṇurāo*), she says in a verse, and invokes death as the best refuge for her lovesickness, after which she finally faints (*iti mūr̥cchati*). Note that *mūr̥ccha*, according to the ten stages of desire listed in the *Kāmasūtra*, is the penultimate phase, followed by death (see n. 170 above), and it is quoted by Abhinavagupta in the passage under discussion as the state to be brought to manifestation by enacting the limbs falling from a bed (cf. following note). It is thus possible that the *nātyāyita* hinted at here was part of the enactment of the *madanāvasthā*, announced twice in Sāgarikā’s monologue through stage directions. The falling of the limbs onto the lotus bed is certainly suggested by the first fragment, quoted in full in chapter 19 with the Sanskrit *chāyā*. The second part of the same passage (*aidullāhapaḍibamdhānurāīā*) indeed echoes the words pronounced by Sāgarikā—using the expression *dullaha-jaṇaṇurāo* (Doniger 2006: 130)—just before fainting, which represents the climax of the scene. Also in the beginning, however, immediately after her entrance, Sāgarikā starts her monologue as follows: *hīaa, pasīda, pasīda! kim imiṇāa āasamettaphaleṇa dullaha-jaṇaṇappatthanāṇubandhena?* ‘Be still, my heart, be still. What’s the use of this obsessive longing for a person impossible to get?’ (Doniger 2006: 124–125). This monologue corresponds to a series of broken sentences marking a sort of inner dialogue, in which the heroine addresses her heart, then herself, and finally even the god of love, Kāma. As to the second fragment of the *dhruvā/dvipadikā* given here and in chapter 22 (*muccai paḷai via bbhai vijjai haṃsī naliṇivaṇe vi natthijjai*), I can see a similar wording in Susangata’s reference to the female royal swan: *kahaṃ, bhaṭṭa ālihido! sāarie, sādhu! aha vā ṇa kama-lāaraṃ vājjiā rāahaṃsī aṇṇassiṃ ahiramadi!* ‘What’s this? She’s drawn the king! Bravo, Sagarika, bravo! But, of course, a female royal swan wouldn’t be happy anywhere but in a lotus pond!’ (Doniger 2006: 126–127). It is not entirely clear whether the two fragments formed the text of a single *dhruvā* that was enacted as part of the *lāsyaṅga uktapratyukta* by way of *nātyāyita*, since these were usually added at the initiative of the stage director and were not part of the script. It seems to me, however, that many of its elements, reconstructed with the help of the *Abhinavabhārati*, point to the beginning of the second act of the *Ratnāvalī* as their immediate context. The enactment of Sāgarikā’s monologue might have been triggered by the song and executed in immediate contiguity to it, as the *uktapratyukta* requires, with the lyrics of the song continuing to echo in the heroine’s and her friend’s words until the climax, Sāgarikā’s fainting (*mūr̥ccha*), and her limbs falling lifelessly on the lotus bed.

188 Falling or loose limbs are prescribed as consequents of sorrowful states, and are used for their enactment (see for instance NŚ 7.21, describing *śoka*). These states, among others, include loss of consciousness (*mūr̥ccha*), delirium (*mada*), and so on (see n. 170).

tathā nr̥ttakāvye 'pi syāt †'hośam̐ daṇaṣaka hamahumāiṣaka'† ityādau. na caivam astīty uktam asakṛt.

[6.6]

[6.6.1] etena prayojanabhedo 'pi prāptaḥ. na hi sāmājikāḥ prīyantām vyutpadyantām vetyabhisandhinā nr̥ttaprayogaḥ. tatsampattis tu nāntariyakatvād
5 bhavatu. jyotiṣṭomādīprayoge saṃgītavinodādivat, adṛṣṭaviśeṣoddeśenaiva hi tasya prayogaḥ. [6.6.2] ḍombikāder dr̥ṣṭoddeśena rājaputrādīpṛitaye yady api

1 tathā nr̥tta°] E₁, tathānyātra° D M₁, tathānyātra° T₁, nr̥tta° E₂ || hośam̐] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, hochan T₁^{ac} || °māiṣaka] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, °māiṣaka T₁^{ac} 2 astīty uktam] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, uktam astīty E₁₍₁₎^{vl} || asakṛt] T₁ Σ_E, asat D M₁ T₁^{vl} E₁₍₁₎^{vl} 3 prāptaḥ] conj., pratyāptaḥ D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, pratyuktaḥ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂ || prīyantām] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, pīyikām pīyatām D M₁ T₁, pīyikām pīyatām (?) E₁₍₁₎ 4 nr̥tta°] E₁₍₁₎^{pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, vr̥tta° D M₁ T₁, tta° E₁₍₁₎^{ac} 5 °prayoge saṃgītavinodādivat] conj., °prayogasaṃgītāpanodādivat D M₁ T₁ E₁, °prayogavat E₂ || adṛṣṭaviśeṣo°] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, dṛṣṭam viśeṣo° D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ || hi] D M₁ T₁ E₁, hi saṃgītāmanovinodāda E₂

189 According to Bhayani (1993: 31, n. 9), this passage is hopelessly corrupt. Although it is impossible to reconstruct it, we can infer that it possibly dealt with a lovelorn heroine, just as the *nātyāvīta* described for theatre, the difference being that, in dance, there is no direct perception of her emotional states, since the dancer does not enact the psychophysical reactions.

190 I conjecture the reading *prāptaḥ*, which is closer to the manuscripts, and a typical way to mark an inevitable consequence in the reasoning. Cf. Angot 2017: 744–746.

191 Abhinavagupta now takes up the question of the purpose of dance, testing it against the twofold purpose of theatre, i.e. pleasure (*prīti*) and instruction (*vyutpatti*), a leitmotiv across the whole *Abhinavabhāratī* (see § 3.4).

192 I conjecturally read *jyotiṣṭomādīprayoge saṃgītavinodādivat* in order to construe a parallel between sacrifice and dance: just as music is performed in solemn sacrifices like the *jyotiṣṭoma* with a specific invisible result (*adṛṣṭa*) in mind but, owing to an invariable concomitance, also brings about secondary results—entertainment, in this specific case—so too does dance aim at a specific invisible result—to please the gods and thereby obtain transcendental rewards—although it can also bring pleasure and instruction, the primary results typically attributed to theatre, since these are invariably connected with dance and its narrative content. The *jyotiṣṭoma*, a *soma* sacrifice normally lasting over five days, includes many different operations (cf., for instance, Kane 1941: 1131 ff.). The term *saṃgīta* might refer to a phase where several priests sing together, forming a sort of choir (ibid.: 1167–1168). The *Abhinavabhāratī* ad Nś 28,33 confirms that various types of songs, such as *sāma*, *ṛk*, and *gāthā*, were used in sacrifices of the *yajña* type to praise the gods. Their result for the performer was considered to be invisible, consisting for instance in deliverance from sin or the attainment of Rudraloka. See, for instance, vol. 4, p. 30: *agniṣṭomikasāmena śivaṃ stutvā tatphalam iti ca prayoktur adṛṣṭam śrīyate. tathā sadasyam*

consequents and accompanying states] also be found in a poem to be danced (*nr̥ttakāvya*), in a passage such as †‘[...]’†.¹⁸⁹ But this is not the case, as we have stated more than once.

[6.6 Dance does not conform to any object to be taught]

[6.6.1] By the same token[, namely through the difference in the characteristics of theatre and dance just stated], a difference in purpose is also obtained,¹⁹⁰ since dance is not performed with the aim of pleasing or instructing the spectators.¹⁹¹ [Pleasure and instruction], however, may be attained, since they are invariably connected (*nāntarīyaka*) [with dance that has a narrative content], just like the entertainment [produced] by singing in the performance of the *jyotiṣṭoma* and other sacrifices. The performance of [dance], in fact, aims only at a specific invisible result (*adr̥ṣṭa*)[, namely the satisfaction of the deities].¹⁹²

[6.6.2] Although, aiming at a visible result, the activity of the *ḍombikā* [and her entourage] has the delight of princes and [other wealthy men] in view, that [activity] is of a worldly order[, i.e. it belongs to the *ḍombikā*, as a character embedded in the story, who used to perform in royal courts in order to gain material benefit].¹⁹³ However, in today’s [performance, be it a *Ḍombikā* or other danced genres], the two aims [proper to theatre, consisting in pleasure

agniṣṭomasāma śr̥ṇvataḥ ‘pātakair̥ mucyate lokān jayati’ iti. ‘Authoritative sources affirm that the fruit of praising Śiva with the *sāmans* of the *agniṣṭoma* is invisible and goes to the performer. Accordingly, one who listens to the *sāmans* sung at the *agniṣṭoma* during a sacrificial session is said to “be freed from sins and win the [three] worlds”. The passage quoted immediately after, *dakṣaproktaṃ paṭhed yaś ca śr̥ṇuyāc chuddhaśad̥jayā | pratya-haṃ sandhyayos tau tu rudralokaṃ gamiṣyataḥ ||* ‘One who recites or listens every day at dawn and sunset to the [*sāmans*] proffered by Dakṣa with the pure scale will go to Rudraloka’, is explained by Abhinavagupta as indicating that the performer achieves happiness via merit, or the invisible result of music, while the listener obtains happiness through the variety of scales sung by the performer. On the production of visible and invisible results through music and dance in theatre, see Ganser 2016, and on the use of the performing arts for religious merit in early Śaiva sources, see Ganser (forthcoming).

193 That is, the case of the *Ḍombikā* does not hinder the reasoning concerning the difference between dance and theatre, since it is only the worldly *ḍombikā*, the subject of the genre called *Ḍombikā*, who aims at pleasing the king. See n. 136 and § 3.5 on this subtle but crucial distinction. The next sentence also points in this direction, with *adyatve* referring the *Ḍombikā* as a danced genre. See above, in n. 161, the contrast with the imperfect used to speak about the *ḍombikā* as a historical figure, whose performative practices are recorded for instance in the *Rājatarāṅginī* v.354–386 (cf. § 3.5).

pravṛttir, laukikī sā. adyatte tu na dvayam. [6.6.3] nartakyāḥ pravṛtṭiḥ pravartanā vā devatāpariṭoṣaṇaphalaiva. yathoktaṃ tatra—

‘yatkiṃcil lāsyam etena devī tuṣyati nityaśaḥ |
yatkiṃcit tāṇḍavam tena somaḥ sānucaraḥ śivaḥ ||’ iti ||

- 5 [6.6.4] mūle ca sūdāder iva vastubhūtarūparasādimadhyapātiṣayaviśeṣayojanayā kṛtā prītiḥ sādhyā, ḍombikāvārṇanagatasyaivālaukikarūpāntaraprādurbhāvanayā vyutpattyabhisandhānaṃ cānubhavatīti [6.6.5] keyaṃ saṃbhāvanā geye ‘pi. nāṭye tu tad eva pradhānam, bharatamuniprabhṛtīnām tathaiva mūlataḥ pravṛtteḥ. anyatte tu jīvikāparyavasitatvam iti puruṣasumatipuruṣa-

1 pravṛttir] Σ_E , vṛttir D M₁ T₁^{pc}, vṛtī T₁^{ac} || sā] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, tu sā D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ 3 devī] E₁^{pc} E₂, devas D M₁ T₁ E₁^{ac} 5 mūle] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E , geye KAV || °rūparasādimadhyā°] E₁ KAV, °rūpasādimadhyā° D M₁ T₁, °madhya° E₂ 6 kṛtā] D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁ KAV, latā T₁^{ac}, rūparasāder iva nṛtṭyāḥ E₂ || ḍombikāvārṇanagatasyaivā°] Σ_E , ḍombikārṇanagasyaivā° D M₁^{ac} T₁^{pc}, ḍombikāvārṇanagasyaivā° M₁^{pc}, ḍombikārṇanagasyaivā° T₁^{ac}, ḍombikāder na naṭasyevā° KAV || °rūpāntara°] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E , °rūpa° KAV 7 °bhāvanayā] KAV, °bhāvāntarayeti D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎, bhāvāntarasyeti E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, °bhāvasyeti E₂ || °abhisandhānaṃ] Σ_E KAV, °atisandhānaṃ D M₁ T₁ || cānubhavatīti keyaṃ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E , ca KAV 7–8 saṃbhāvanā] Σ_E , saṃbhāvanādi D M₁ T₁, om. KAV 8 geye] M₁sm Σ_E KAV, ye D M₁ T₁ || ‘pi] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E , nāstī KAV || nāṭye] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E , pāṭhye KAV || tu] D^{pc} M₁ T₁ Σ_E KAV, api D^{ac} 9 mūlataḥ] Σ_E KAV, dūtaḥ D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₂₎^{ma}, mūtaḥ T₁^{ac} || pravṛtteḥ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E , pravṛtter ity alaṃ bahunā aprastutaprapañcēneti KAV || anyatte tu] T₁^{ac} E₁, anyatte D M₁ T₁^{pc}, nṛtṭaṃ tu E₂ || jīvikā°] E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂, jīvitā° D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} 9–342.1 puruṣasumatipuruṣadaurā°] E₂, puruṣam iti puruṣadaurā° D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, puruṣamatipuruṣadaurā° E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}

9–366.5 anyatte tu→sūcitam] p.n.p. KAV

- 194 Interestingly, Abhinavagupta makes a difference here between the aim of the performer’s activity (*pravṛtti*) and the aim of the patron or sponsor of the performance, the one who sets in motion or instigates the activity of the performer (*pravartanā*). As we have seen, the aim of the worldly *ḍombikā* was to gain material benefit in exchange for her performance by pleasing the king [6.4.4], which might have been a common practice in a courtly context. The aim of the dancer, in turn, might be differentiated from the aim of the sponsor of the performance, namely to be entertained.
- 195 I read *devī* as in E₁^{pc}.
- 196 Untraced source. The purpose of this quotation is to show that any dance can be used as a means to satisfy the deities, independently of its being performed in a religious context. It is also possible that, by the time of Abhinavagupta, the temple and the court were both venues of dance and theatre performances alike, and that no strict divide was perceived between the two spheres in terms of a purely religious and a secular one.

and instruction,] are not given [as principal]. [6.6.3] The activity (*pravṛtti*) of the dancer, or the activity she is instigated to perform (*pravartanā*) [by a patron],¹⁹⁴ has as [its] only result the satisfaction of the deities. As has been said in this connection:

By whatever is *lāśya*, the goddess is always satisfied;¹⁹⁵

By whatever is *tāṇḍava*, Śiva, along with Umā and his retinue[, is satisfied].¹⁹⁶

[6.6.4 The *abhedapakṣin* could further argue:] As in the case of a [bitter] root (*mūla*) [to which] a sweet syrup and other [pleasurable substances are added in order to obtain the benefits of the medicine], pleasure can be realized [in dance] as it is determined through the addition of a special ingredient dropped in the middle of the forms (*rūpa*), tastes (*rasa*), etc., which are the subject matter [of the poetic text] (*vastu*). Moreover, through the manifestation of the various otherworldly forms [i.e. the embedded characters],¹⁹⁷ [a spectator] experiences a pedagogical intention only with reference to what pertains to the depiction by the *ḍombikā*.¹⁹⁸ [6.6.5 To this, we answer:] If this were the case, [shouldn't we conceive] the same possibility also in the case of [narratives] delivered through singing?¹⁹⁹ In theatre, however, [the intention of instruction] is indeed primary, since [dramatic] action (*pravṛtti*) was conceived

197 I have changed the text following the KAV, which reads the compound as ending in *ṅprā-durbhāvanayā*, so as to have an instrumental paralleling *ṅyojanayā* in the line before. The first instrumental thus corresponds to the way in which pleasure is achieved in narrative dance, and the second to the way instruction is attained. This argument recalls the one put forward in the *pūrvapakṣa*, according to which a *Ḍombikā* teaches the supreme secret of love (one of the four aims of man) and should be therefore considered eligible for *vyutpatti* along with *prīti*, just like theatre [2.2].

198 This passage draws on the well-known parallel between aesthetic and culinary experience. The name *rasa* in fact originally means 'taste', 'flavour'. Nś 6.37 famously reads: *vyañjanaśadhisaṃyogo yathānnaṃ svādutāṃ nayet | evaṃ bhāvā rasās caiva bhāvayanti parasparam ||* 'Just as the combination of condiments and herbs imparts a good taste to food, so too do the emotional states and the *rasas* bring one another into being.' The mention of a root to which a sweet syrup is added echoes the famous dictum by Aśvaghoṣa on the pedagogical function of poetry, which is compared to a bitter medicine mixed with honey. See § 3.4, n. 118.

199 Again, the *bhedapakṣin* takes the opponent's argument to its undesired end: if it is enough to have a narrative in the form of a poetic text delivered through some pleasurable media in order to obtain a theatrical form, then one could not possibly distinguish it from sung poetry, which everyone understands to be different from theatre.

daurātmyam etad dharmādicatuṣṭayopadeśi purākālpopadeśanam iva pustakavācakānāṃ mūlena pravartanāt tatra vyutpattyabhisandher eveti phalabhedah.

5 [6.7] anyo 'pi lakṣaṇabhedo nātyarūpatāśāṅkāparākaraṇahetugranthavyākhyānāvasare vakṣyate.

[6.8] tan nātyalakṣaṇaprayojanābhedād ity asiddho hetuḥ. [6.8.1] tad āha nṛttam kartṛ kaṃcid artham arthyamānaṃ sāksātkāram prāpyamānaṃ nātyavad nāpekṣate yena lakṣaṇābhedaḥ syāt. [6.8.2] tathā na kaścid arthaḥ sāmājikān prati vyutpādaniyaṃ dharmādyupāyānyatamaṃ vyapekṣate yena prayo-

4 °karaṇahetugrantha°] Σ_E, °karaṇam hetugraha° D M₁ T₁^{pc}, °karaṇam hetugrantha° T₁^{ac}, °karaṇahetugraha° E₁₍₂₎^{ma} 6 tan nātyalakṣaṇa°] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, tan nātyam nṛttādibhinnaṃ lakṣaṇa° E₂ || tad āha] T₁ Σ_E, tad āham D M₁ 7 nṛttam kartṛ] T₄ Σ_E, nṛttakartṛ D M₁ T₁^{vl}, nṛttam akartṛ T₁ || arthyamānaṃ] Σ_E, aryamāna T₄, aryamānaṃ D M₁ T₁ || prāpyamānaṃ] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ E₁, aprāpyamānaṃ T₁^{ac}, prāpyamānaṃ prati E₂ 7–8 nātyavad] T₁, nātyavedam D M₁ T₁^{vl} Σ_E, nātyam T₄ 8 nāpekṣate] T₄ E₁₍₄₎, apekṣate D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ || lakṣaṇābhedaḥ] E₁₍₄₎, lakṣaṇābhedaḥ Σ_M E₁₍₂₎ E₂ || syāt] Σ_M E₁, kathaṃ syāt E₂ || na kaścid] Σ_M Σ_E, kaścid T₄ 8–9 arthaḥ sāmājikān] Σ_M Σ_E, arthasāmājikān T₁^{ac} 9 vyutpādaniyaṃ dharmādy°] Σ_M, vyutpādaniyadharmādy° Σ_E 9–344.1 prayojanābhedo] Σ_M, prayojanabhedo Σ_E

- 200 This refers to the narrative of the origins of theatre in NŚ chapter 1, where it is said that dramatic art is created in order to instruct men who have fallen to the vulgar norm, since the Vedas are no longer accessible to them. The twofold nature of theatre as imparting pleasure and instruction is conceived in such a narrative as being particularly appropriate to an era of decadence.
- 201 I have given the text of the compound *puruṣasumatipurūṣadaurātmyam* as in E₂, which is close to the manuscripts if one imagines that a syllable *su* must have been dropped, and the following *ma* later replaced with *mi* in an attempt to correct the text, i.e. *puruṣa[su]m i[<ma]tipuruṣadaurātmyam*.
- 202 This most probably refers to the public recitation of the Purāṇas, texts of ancient lore. Despite the comparison here between the teaching of theatre and that of professional narrators, we know from other textual sources that Abhinavagupta, possibly following Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, considered the category of *itihāsa* as different from drama in the way it instructs. See, for instance, DhvĀL 2.4, p. 190: *vyutpādanaṃ ca śāsanapratipādanābhyāṃ śāstreitihāsakṛtābhyāṃ vilakṣaṇam. yathā rāmas tathāham ity upamānātirikṭāṃ rasāsvādopāyasvapratibhāvijṛmbhārūpāṃ vyutpattim ante karottī kam upālābhāmahe*. '[We further admit that] the educative effect (*vyutpādana*) [of poetry] is different from that which comes from scripture through its mandates and from history through its narrations. For in addition to the analogy which it furnishes that we should behave like Rāma [and not like Rāvaṇa], it produces in the final result an expansion of one's imagination which serves as the means of tasting the *rasas*. With this view we find no fault' (translation Ingalls et al. 1990: 226). On the distinction between the instruction of theatre and that of the Vedas and *itihāsa*, see also § 3.4, n. 120.
- 203 This possibly refers to the commentary on NŚ 4.266cd–267ab, on the use of the word *abhinaya*, again with a different sense, in the context of dance performed together with songs in the *pūrvarāga*, translated below [7.2.3].

from the beginning by the sage Bharata and his troupe with this very [aim in mind].²⁰⁰ If it were otherwise, [theatre] would [only] be a means [for the actors] to make a livelihood. Therefore, the [dramatic depiction of] the good and the evil of man, which instructs in the four purposes of man, such as *dharma* and others,²⁰¹ is similar to the instruction [imparted] by professional narrators (*pustakavācaka*) by means of ancient stories (*purākalpa*), since their practice was instituted (*pravartana*) from the beginning as aiming at instruction alone.²⁰² And thus the result [of dance] is different [from theatre].

[6.7] One further difference in the characteristics [of dance and theatre] will be pointed out in view of the commentary on the textual portion [stating] the cause setting aside the doubt about the theatrical nature [of dance].²⁰³

[6.8] Thus, the logical reason ‘since the characteristics and purpose [of dance] are no different from [those of] theatre’[, put forward by the *pūrvapakṣin* to prove the identity of theatre and dance,] is not established.²⁰⁴ [6.8.1] This is what [Bharata] says [in NŚ 4.263cd–264ab]: unlike theatre²⁰⁵, **dance**—[to be understood as] the logical subject (*karṭṛ*) [of the sentence]—**does not**²⁰⁶ **conform to any object (*artha*)**, i.e. to what is aimed at (*arthyamāna*), or attained as directly manifested [in front of the spectators]. If that were the case, there would be no difference in [their] characteristics.²⁰⁷ [6.8.2] In the same way, [in dance,] no object (*artha*) depends on (*vyapekṣate*) any of the means for [attaining the aims of mankind, such as] *dharma* and so on, to be taught to the spectators. If that were so, there would neither be a dif-

204 The *asiddha-hetu* (unestablished logical reason) is technically a type of *hetu-abhāsa* (resemblance of logical reason), where the logical reason (*hetu*) is never coexistent with the subject of the inference (*pakṣa*), and therefore does not lead to the property to be established (*sādhya*). In this case, the inference would be: ‘dance is identical to theatre, since [its] characteristics and purpose are no different from [those] of theatre.’ The property to be established (*sādhya*) is ‘identity with theatre’, the subject of the inference (*pakṣa*) is dance, and the logical reason (*hetu*) is the identity of their characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) and aim (*prayojana*). Since the previous reasoning has shown that the logical reason is not established, it follows that dance is different from theatre. Indeed, this is the way in which Abhinavagupta interprets Bharata’s statement in NŚ 263ab: *atrocyate na khalv arthaṃ kaṃcin nṛttam apekṣate* |, where *artha* means both *lakṣaṇa* and *prayojana*. Cf. above, n. 112.

205 I read *nāṭyavad* as in T₁.

206 I read *nāpekṣate* as in T₄, since a negative particle *na* needs to be added to maintain the parallel with Bharata’s text, which Abhinavagupta is glossing: *na khalv arthaṃ kaṃcin nṛttam apekṣate*.

207 I read *lakṣaṇābhedaḥ*, as corrected in E₁₍₄₎, since this has to be an unwanted consequence, marked by *syāt*: if dance required the meanings of the dramatic text to be brought to direct manifestation, which has been said to be the characteristic proper to theatre achieved through the medium of *abhinaya*, it would end up having the same *lakṣaṇa* as theatre.

janābhedo 'pi syād [6.8.3] **ity** ato hetor etan **nṛttaṃ pravartitaṃ** nṛttavācoyuktyaiva vyavahṛtam, na tu nāṭyam iti, kiṃcid api śuddhaṃ nāṭyāṅgaṃ pūrvaraṅgādikaṃ veti pāṭho vā yadā prāptyartham ityādi pratisamāhitam.

[6.9] nanu bhavatv evambhūtaṃ nṛttam, nāṭye tu katham asyopayoga ity uktam. [6.9.1] gītakasyāpi katham upayogaḥ. [6.9.2] uktaṃ—'yāni vākyaḥ tu na brūyāt' iti 'yat tu kāvyena noktaṃ syāt' iti. [6.9.3] dhruvāyās tu saṃpāthamātram evāstu, alaṃ varṇālaṅkārayo janātmakagānakriyādi prasārāyāsena.

1 hetor] Σ_E , gahator D M₁ T₁, hotor T₄ || pravartitaṃ] T₄ Σ_E , pravartitaḥ D M₁ T₁ 1–2 °yuktyaiva] $\Sigma_M \Sigma_E$, °yukty eva T₄ 2 na tu] E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂, nanu D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, om. T₁^{ac} 3 vā] D M₁ T₁^{vl} Σ_E , vāgu T₁ || yadā] T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ E₂, yathā D M₁ T₁^{vl}, iyatā tadanu T₄ E₁₍₄₎ || prāptyartham] D M₁sm T₁ T₄ Σ_E , prāptārtham M₁ 4 nṛttam, nāṭye] Σ_E , nṛttanāṭye D M₁ T₁ 5 upayogaḥ] D M₁ T₁ E₂, om. E₁ || uktaṃ] M₁sm Σ_E , naktam D M₁ T₁ 6–7 saṃpātha°] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E , pāṭha° T₁^{ac} 7 °prasārāyāsena] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E , °prasāre yāse T₁^{ac}

2–3 na tu nāṭyam iti, kiṃcid api śuddhaṃ nāṭyāṅgaṃ pūrvaraṅgādikaṃ veti pāṭho vā] p.n.p. T₄
4–346.8 nanu bhavatv→tad etad āha] p.n.p. T₄

208 I follow the manuscripts in reading *prayojanābhedo* as an unwanted consequence parallel to *lakṣaṇābhedaḥ* (cf. previous note). As stated above (cf. n. 112), Abhinavagupta's interpretation of Bharata's answer to the *pūrvapakṣa* consists in proving the difference between dance and theatre on the basis of their characteristics and aim, by taking the word *artha* in the two different senses of 'object/meaning' and 'goal'. Since Abhinavagupta wants to avoid saying that dance has no purpose at all, in the second interpretation, he slightly alters the structure of Bharata's verse, taking *artha* in the nominative as the grammatical subject of the sentence: the goal [of dance] does not depend on any of the means of attaining the aims of man to be taught to the spectators, which entails a difference in their *prayojana*.

209 This refers to the fourth hemistich in the verse: *iti nṛttaṃ pravartitaṃ* (= NŚ 4.264b).

210 I read *na tu nāṭyam iti*, as corrected by Ramaswami Sastri in E₁₍₂₎^{pc}.

211 The text is not completely devoid of problems. Although the word *pāṭha* normally refers to a variant reading in the text, here it seems to refer to the various interpretations of the word 'dance' in the *pūrvapakṣa* (cf. n. 111 above). Accordingly, the 'non-narrative limb of theatre' refers to the use of abstract dance within theatre (cf. above: *yat tv abhinayādi-śūnyam kevalam valanāvartanābhrūkṣepatārācalanacaranadhāraṅgakampasphuritakāṭicchedarecakādi tad asmākaṃ nṛttaṃ bhaviṣyati*), and dance as a 'part of the *pūrvaraṅga*' refers to dance performed in the preliminary rite in order to make it variegated (*pūrvaraṅgaprayogasya vaicitryasiddhyai tad etad iti*). In their case, no separate refutation is needed to demonstrate that they cannot be assimilated to theatre on the basis of their characteristics and purpose, since they display no narrative content.

212 The opponent is referring to the previous objection about the role of abstract dance within theatre [3.2], which was formulated in the second interpretation of the *pūrvapakṣa* [3]. If independent dance can be said to be different from theatre and endowed with its own purpose of pleasing the deities, it still needs to be established what independent function dance can have within a theatrical performance, if not that of communicating meaning in the form of bodily acting.

ference in [their] purpose.²⁰⁸ [6.8.3] **That is why (*īti*)**, i.e. for this reason, this **dance has come into use (*pravartitam*)**,²⁰⁹ i.e. it has indeed been designated by the word ‘dance’, and not by the word ‘theatre’.²¹⁰ The objection expressed in the verse ‘Given that [dramatic acting has been devised by the experts] for the sake of attaining [the objects], [why indeed has this dance been devised, etc.]’ stands refuted also in the alternative interpretations [of the word ‘dance’] as a non-narrative part of theatre, as [a part of] the *pūrvaraṅga*, and so on.²¹¹

[6.9 The *pūrvapakṣin* might insist:] Let the nature of dance be as [you maintain, i.e. different from theatre]. Nonetheless, it has already been asked, how would this be used in theatre?²¹² [6.9.1 The *uttarapakṣin*:] And how, then, would song be used?²¹³ [6.9.2 The *pūrvapakṣin*:] This has already been said: ‘Those [things] that cannot be expressed by the sentences [of the literary text, he should illustrate through songs]’, and ‘That which is not stated by the literary text, [he should accomplish with a song].’²¹⁴ [6.9.3 The *uttarapakṣin* retorts:] Then, let a *dhruvā* simply be read out, and let the effort [of the singers] in bringing out the melody (*gānakriyā*) and so on, consisting in the use of the tonal structures (*varṇa*) and the embellishments of the voice (*alaṃkāra*), not be pursued any further.²¹⁵

213 The reading of the manuscripts and E₂ is better: *gītakasyāpi katham upayoga*.

214 This function of *dhruvā* songs within drama was argued before with the same quotations [3.4.2]; cf. n. 75 and 76.

215 Abhinavagupta is definitely being ironic: if, as you (the opponent) maintain, songs (*gīta*: the union of a poetic text with melodic singing) are only meant to supply what the dramatic text does not say, why don’t we just read out their text, without making an effort to render them through the devices proper to singing? *Varṇas* and *alaṃkāras* are mentioned one after the other as part of the definition of the *dhruvā* given in NŚ 32.8: *dhruvā varṇās tv alaṃkāṛā yatayaḥ pāṇayo layāḥ | dhruvam anyonyasambaddhā yasmād tasmāt dhruvā smṛtā ||* ‘The *dhruvā* is so called since [in it] tonal structures (*varṇa*), ornaments (*alaṃkāra*), progression of speed (*yati*), *pāṇi*, and tempo (*laya*) are fixed, and firmly connected with one another.’ The *varṇas* are the tonal structures described in NŚ 29.14–19ab as ascendant (*ārohin*), descendant (*avarohin*), stable (*sthāyin*), and variable (*sañcārin*). The *alaṃkāras* are the thirty-three embellishments of the voice, described in NŚ 29.19cd–45. In other passages, Abhinavagupta establishes a distinction between singing and reciting on the basis of the notes (*svara*). ABh ad NŚ 17.100, vol. 2, p. 384: *yadi hi svaragatā raktiḥ pāṭhye prādhānyenāvalambyeta tadā gānakriyāsau syāt, na pāṭhyah* [corr., *pāṭhah* E₁]. ‘For if, in the text to be recited, the pleasure connected with the notes was especially endorsed, then it would become an activity of singing, not of reciting.’ See also ABh ad NŚ 17.107, vol. 2, p. 390: *pāṭhyayoge kāvyē svarasya raktibhāgam apahāya varṇā eva vaktavyāḥ. raktibhāgābhīniveśe tu gānayogo na pāṭhyayogaḥ syād ity avādiṣuḥ*. ‘With respect to a poetic text connected with prosody, one should mention only the tonal structures (*varṇa*), leaving out the pleasurable part [endowed with] the notes (*svara*). On the contrary, when [the notes] participate in the part [of theatre that produces] pleasure, there ends up being a connection [between the poetic text] and the singing, not the prosody. So the [experts] said.’

[6.9.4] nanu rāmarāvaṇādīgatagrāhyatyājyarūpacarītārthaḍambarasya hṛdayānupraveśadvārabhūtaṃ hṛdyaṃ tat sūcīkalpaṃ svayaṃ hṛdayānupraveśītvād ity uktam prāk. [6.9.5] sa eva tarhi nṛttasya valanāvartanāder antaraṅgasya nāṭya upayogaḥ. viśeṣato hi tadvinā 'lātacakrapratimatve tair buddhigrāhyam
 5 eva nāṭyaṃ na syāt. tata eva vimalābhīnaya māṇikyagumpha vidhāyisūtrasthānīyaṃ valanādirūpanṛttaṃ samajātīyatvān nikaṭatvād antaraṅgaḡādīvyāpi nāṭyaṃ.

[6.10] tad etad āha—**kiṃ tu śobhāṃ prajānyed iti nṛttaṃ pravartitaṃ | prakṣṭam atruṭitaṃ vartanāvilāsavalanādīdakṣiṇaṃ yad vartitaṃ kāyāvayavā-**

1 °gatagrāhya°] conj., °gatagrāmya° D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, °gatagrāmya° E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂ || °rūpacarītārtha°] D M₁ T₁ E₁, °caritarūpārthā° E₂ 2 hṛdyaṃ] D M₁sm T₁ E₁, om. M₁, hṛdya-tvaṃ E₂ || tat sūcīkalpaṃ] D^{pc} M₁sm T₁ E₁, sūcīkalpaṃ E₂, tatsūvikalpaṃ D^{ac}, tatsūvikalpaṃ M₁ || hṛdayā°] E₁₍₁₎^{pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, hṛdyā° D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎^{ac} 3 sa] D M₁ T₁ E₁, tata E₂ || nṛttasya valanā°] D M₁ T₁ E₁, nṛttasyāṅgavalanā° E₂ || antaraṅgasya] conj., antaraṅgo 'sya D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎, antaraṅge 'sya E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, om. E₂ 4 tair] Σ_E, kair D M₁ T₁ || °grāhyam] Σ_E, °grāyatvaṃ D M₁ T₁ 5 na] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, om. T₁^{ac} || °māṇīkya°] Σ_E, °māṇīkka° D M₁^{pc} T₁, °māṇīkta° M₁^{ac} 6 °nṛttaṃ sama°] D M₁ T₁, °nṛttasa° Σ_E || °tvād antaraṅga°] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °tvāvāntaraṅga° D M₁ T₁, °tvād antaraṅga° E₁₍₁₎ || °vyāpi] D T₁ Σ_E, °vyāpya M₁ 8 prajānyed iti] Σ_E, pracchannayed iti D M₁ T₁, prajānyeti T₄ 9 prakṣṭam atruṭitaṃ] Σ_M Σ_E, om. T₄ || vartanāvilāsavalanādīdakṣiṇaṃ] D M₁ T₁, iti vartanānavilāvalanādi T₄, varṇanāvilāsavalanādīdakṣiṇaṃ Σ_E || vartitaṃ] E₂, varṇitaṃ Σ_M E₁ 9–348.1 kāyāvayavānām, kāyasya] D M₁ E₁₍₁₎^{ac} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, kāyāvayavā nākāyasya T₁^{ac}, kāyāvayavānām kāyasya? E₁₍₁₎^{pc}

216 I propose to read *rāmarāvaṇādīgatagrāhyatyājyarūpa°*, with the correction of *°grāmya°* to *°grāhya°*, in order to preserve the opposition between the actions of Rāma as an ethical model to be followed (*grāhya*), and those of Rāvaṇa to be abandoned (*tyājya*). This is more commonly expressed, in the context of discussions about the pedagogical function of theatre, by the two opposites *heya* and *upādeya*. See, for instance, ABh ad NŚ 1.119, vol. 1, p. 45: *tena heyopādeyavyutpattiḥ phalam*. ‘Therefore, the result [of theatre] is instruction about what has to be accepted and what has to be abandoned.’ This is explained in DhvĀL 2.4, p. 190, in connection with the deeds of Rāma and Rāvaṇa, the ideal protagonist and antagonist in a play (see n. 202 above).

217 To understand this passage, one must refer to the first chapter of the ABh, where the role of the pleasurable elements such as songs etc. is explained with reference to the aesthetic process leading to instruction. These elements, in fact, are helpful for inscribing the teachings in the mind of the spectator, since they enter it without any conscious effort on the part of the person in need of instruction (this is the meaning I give to *svayam*, ‘spontaneously’). See, for instance, ABh ad NŚ 1.107, in § 3.4.2, n. 166. The connection between the pleasurable elements and instruction is also mentioned as a characteristic of theatre (and of poetry more generally) in ABh ad NŚ 1.1, vol. 1, p. 4: *api tu svarasata eva tāvaṃ manojñaviśayāsvādapravrṛttasyāta eva vedaśāstrapurāṇādībhīrūhṛdayasya tanmanojñavastumadhye tādrīg idaṃ vastv anupraveśitaṃ yadbalād eva pumarthopāyāvagatiṃ karotīti vakṣyāmaḥ*. ‘Rather, [in theatre,] the subject matter (*vastu*) has been introduced

[6.9.4 The *pūrvapakṣin* might reply:] As has previously been stated, the pleasurable [part of theatre] is the door of access into the heart for the multitude of meanings [related to] the conduct, whether to be accepted or rejected, belonging to [characters] such as Rāma or Rāvaṇa.²¹⁶ [What is pleasurable] is in fact akin to a needle, since it has the quality of penetrating the heart spontaneously.²¹⁷ [6.9.5 The *uttarapakṣin*:] Then this is indeed the use of dance (*nṛtta*) in theatre. Consisting of spinning (*valanā*), whirling (*vartanā*), and the like, it is a part²¹⁸ [of it]. For in particular, without [dance], theatre could not be mentally grasped by the [spectators] in the image of a fire-wheel (*alātacakrapratimatve*). For this very reason, dance—consisting of spinning, [whirling], and the like—is similar to a thread (*sūtra*) that strings together into a bracelet the clear rubies of *abhinaya*. Due to [its] proximity to [dance], [namely] the fact of being homogeneous [with it, since both display bodily movement], theatre encompasses the songs and the other [pleasurable elements] that are part [of it].²¹⁹

[6.10 Bharata] indicates all this [with the words]: ‘**But it is meant to generate beauty (*śobhā*); that is why dance has come into use**’.²²⁰ That dance, which is an exalted (*pra = prakṛṣṭa*) and unbroken (*atruṭita*) activity (*varṭita*) of the bodily limbs, pleasing with its whirls,²²¹ playful spinning, etc., and which is an

among those charming objects [such as music and dance] specifically for the sake of those who, out of their own sensibility, are moved and prompted to act by the relish of such charming objects, thus for the sake of those whose hearts are afraid of Vedic texts, treatises, ancient stories, and so forth. By force of this, [theatre] makes [such a spectator] understand the means [of attaining] the goals of mankind. We will expatiate further’ (translation based on Cuneo 2008–2009: 126). On the psychagogic power of dance and the other pleasurable elements of theatre, see § 3.4.1.

218 I conjecturally read *antaraṅgasya* in order to have a genitive connected with *nṛttasya*.

219 Unlike in my translation and analysis of this passage in Ganser 2013: 184, for which I had not been able to consult the available manuscripts, here I adopt the reading *valanādirūpanṛttam samajātīyatvān*, confirmed by all manuscripts, which seems better to me as it makes dance, and not theatre, akin to a thread, as Bansat-Boudon has interpreted it (1992: 62, n. 50) on the basis of the reading of the editions. This function makes a stronger argument, I think, for the independent use of dance within theatre, and accords with the *alātackra* image, whereby the various *abhinayas* are connected with one another like pearls on a bracelet (another image of theatre as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*), namely through the thread that is dance, described here as a revolving movement made of spins and whirls (*valanāvartanādi*), which accounts for the continuity of the image of the *alātackra*. For an in-depth discussion of this crucial passage and its metaphors, see § 3.4.2.

220 Cf. Nś 4.264ab: *kiṃ tu śobhāṃ prajānayed iti nṛttam pravartitam* |

221 I follow the manuscripts (except for T₄) and read *vartanā*°.

nām, kāyasya ca vilāseṣṭāvasthānātmakam **vartitam**, tadātmakam yan nṛttam, tac **chobhām** rañjanāyogyatvam śobhānāntariyakacamatkāram **prakarṣeṇa** gānādinā vilakṣaṇyena **janayed iti nṛttam pravartitam** ity antenābhisambandhaḥ. hetau liṅ.

- 5 [6.11] nanu rañjakatvam bhojanādinām apy asti. [6.11.1] tat tadanupraveśaniyamo 'treyi āśānkām madhye 'pākaroti—**prāyene**ti. **vivāhaprasavāvāhādiṣu sarvasya lokasya svabhāvataḥ** svabhāveṣv ātmābhimateṣu svadehenātmanā nartanam **iṣtam** vallabham. sarvo 'pi jano vivāhādu nṛtyati, yo 'pi vādayan nṛtyati tenāpi dardurārūḍheṇāpi. **maṅgalyam iti. vivāho** vadhvā ānyanam.
10 tatpūrvakaḥ sarva utsavaḥ. putrajanma **prasavaḥ**. tato jāmātuḥ savadhūka-

1 āvasthānā°] D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, āvasthāpanā° T₁^{ac} T₄ E₁₍₁₎ || tadātmakam] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, tadātma T₄ 2 chobhām] Σ_E, chobhā° D M₁ T₁, chobhanām T₄ || rañjanāyogyatvam] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, rañjanayogyatām T₄ || śobhānāntariyakacamat°] E₁₍₁₎^{pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, śobhanāntariyakaś camat° Σ_M, śobhanāntariyakacamat° E₁₍₁₎^{ac} 3 gānādinā] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ E₂, gānādi° T₄ E₁₍₄₎ 3–4 ity antenābhisambandhaḥ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, om. T₄ 5 rañjakatvam] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, rañjakatva T₄ 5–6 °praveśaniyamo 'treyi] D M₁ T₁^{vi} E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ E₂, °praveśaniyamātreyi T₁, °praveśiniyama 'treyi T₄ E₁₍₄₎ 6 āśānkām] D M₁ T₁^{vi} Σ_E, āśānkya T₁, āśānkā T₄ || 'pākaroti] T₄ Σ_E, vā karoti T₁, avakaroti D M₁ || vivāhaprasavāvāhādiṣu] Σ_E, vibhā(...)hādiṣu D M₁, vibhāhādiṣu T₁ 7 °ābhimateṣu] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °ābhimate D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ || °ātmanā] Σ_E, °āttēno na D M₁ T₁ 8 vallabham] Σ_E, vallaṃ D M₁ T₁ || 'pi jano] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎, janasvabhāvataḥ svābhimate T₄ E₁₍₄₎, 'pi jano yo 'pi E₂ || yo 'pi] Σ_M E₁, om. E₂ || vādayan] Σ_E, vādam D M₁ T₁ 9 dardurārūḍheṇāpi] conj., dardurārūḍheṇā° D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₁₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, dardurārūḍheṇā° T₁^{ac}, dardureṇā° E₁₍₁₎^{pc}, daridreṇā° E₁₍₂₎^{pc}, dardurūṭheṇā° E₁₍₄₎ E₂ || iti] T₄ Σ_E, iti śreyakatrayasyāsambandhaḥ. etac ca 'kaiśikim api yojaya' ity atra darśitam D M₁ T₁ 10–350.1 savadhūkasya] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, svavadhūkasya E₁₍₁₎^{vi}

6–8 vivāhaprasavāvāhādiṣu→vallabham] p.n.p. T₄ 8–9 yo 'pi vādayan nṛtyati tenāpi dardurārūḍheṇāpi] p.n.p. T₄ 9–350.3 vivāho→sambandhaḥ] p.n.p. T₄

222 I read *vartitam* in both cases, along with Madhusudan Shastri in E₂, although the manuscripts support only the second occurrence. This looks in fact like a double gloss on the word *pravartita* (separated by *ca*), referring to *nṛtta* in the verse, which is typically regarded as an exalted, continuous, and playful movement of the limbs, or of the body alternating dynamic movement and still postures. The two terms *ceṣṭā* and *avasthāna* correspond in fact to *gati* and *avasthāna/shīti*, which were referred to in ABh ad Nś 4.59 as defining the *karaṇas* in their broadest generality. (Cf. § 2.2, n. 41).

223 *Camatkāra* is one of the key terms informing the conceptualization of the aesthetic experience. It indicates the aesthetic pleasure experienced in the act of relishing the *rasa*, which creates a sense of wonder or rapture. Abhinavagupta glosses the term with the follo-

activity (*varṭita*)²²² of the [whole] body, consisting of playful movements and still postures, **is meant to generate (*janayet*) beauty.** [That is to say that dance creates] in an exalted way (*pra* = *prakarṣeṇa*), i.e. distinctively by means of songs and [musical accompaniment], the capacity of allurements, i.e. a rapture (*camatkāra*), which is invariably connected to beauty.²²³ **That is why dance has come into use.** Thus the optative [in *prajanayet*] is meant to indicate the reason [and] is syntactically construed with the end [of the verse].

[6.11 Someone might argue:] Well, even [activities] such as eating etc. are pleasurable. [6.11.1] Therefore in the middle [of his refutation of the *pūrvapakṣa*], [Bharata] dispels the doubt concerning a restriction [aiming to prevent] the inclusion of [other pleasurable activities] in the case under discussion: ‘Generally, [everybody likes dance in itself], etc.’ On [occasions] such as weddings, the birth of a child, the welcoming of a new child-in-law (*āvāha*), and so on, everyone likes (*iṣṭa*) the act of dancing with one’s own body in itself (*svabhāvataḥ*). [That is, dance] is beloved among the natures desired for themselves[, i.e. without any practical goal in mind]. Each and every man dances on the occasion of weddings and other [festivities]; even the one who is playing [the drum] dances as he rides on the *dardura*.²²⁴ [And because it is considered] auspicious’. Wedding (*vivāha*) [means] bringing the bride [home]. All festivities are preceded by it. The birth of a child (*prasava*) is the

wing words: *bhuñjānasyādabhutabhogaspaṇḍāviṣṭasya camataḥ karaṇaṃ camatkāra itī* (ABh ad *rasasūtra*, vol. 1, p. 273, with the emendation proposed by Gnoli 1968: 14): ‘Rapture (*camatkāra*) is the action of tasting (*camataḥ karaṇaṃ*) on the part of an enjoying subject, immersed in the vibration of a marvellous enjoyment.’ *Camatkāra* or *camatkṛti* are terms that also occur in the context of the Pratyabhijñā philosophy, where they correspond to the fruition of one’s own unlimited consciousness. As this experience rests on the cognizing subject, it is compared to the experience of the person savouring a dish, which is dissimilar to that of a glutton jumping towards food at the impulse of his unrestrained senses. The term *camatkāra*, difficult to render in translation, epitomizes the three dimensions of ‘cognition’, ‘bliss’, and ‘wonder’, on which see Torella 2002: 118, n. 23. Cf. also § 1.4, n. 95.

224 I conjecture the reading *dardurārūḍheṇāpi*, which is closer to the manuscripts than Kavi’s conjecture. The *dardura* or *dardara* is a big drum with one face, similar to a pot in shape. See ABh ad NŚ 28.5, vol. 4, p. 2: *darduro mahāghaṭākāraḥ* ‘The *dardura* has the shape of a large bell.’ In NŚ 33.11ab it is said to be covered with leather, just like the *mṛdaṅgas*: *carmaṇā cāvanaddhāms tu mṛdaṅgān dardaraṃ tathā* | A semantic analysis of the word *dardara* is given in NŚ 34.286cd: *dāraṃ śabdaṃ dārayati tasmād bhavati dardaraḥ* || ‘It is called *dardara* since it splits up (*dārayati*) the sound “*dāram*”’. We may surmise that the *dardura* had to be played while sitting, such that here the dancing of a musician while seated on his drum seems to be suggested.

sya sarvatra śvaśuraḡhagamanam **āvāhaḥ. pramodā** rājñām arthakaraṇādayaḥ. **abhyudayo** manorathaprāptir abhilaṣitasoyodaya iti. **ādighraṇeṇ**nānākā-
rñkṣitaśubhaprāptyādi. etena maṅgalyam iti ślokatrayasya saṁbandhaḥ.

[6.11.2] etac ca 'kaiśikīm api yojaya'^a ity atra darśitam.

5 [7] **kaṁ svabhāvam apekṣata** iti pratisamādhātum āha—**ataś caiveti**.

(NŚ)

ataś caiva pratikṣepād bhūtasamghaiḥ pravartitāḥ || 266 ||
ye gītakāḍau yujyante samyañṛttavibhāgakāḥ ||

1 sarvatra] Σ_E , sarvasya D M₁ T₁^{pc}, sarvatra sya T₁^{ac} || śvaśuraḡhagamanam] conj., śvaśuraḡ-
dagamam D^{ac} M₁, śvaśuraḡbhagamam D^{pc} T₁, śvaśuraḡbhavanagamam E₁, śvaśurādibhavana
gamanam E₂ || āvāhaḥ] Σ_E , avābhaḥ D M₁ T₁ || pramodā rājñām] Σ_E pramodājñām D M₁ T₁ ||
artha°] Σ_E , athā° D M₁ T₁^{pc}, adhā° T₁^{ac} 2–3 °nānākāṅkṣita°] Σ_E , °nānākṛtāṅkṣita° M₁^{ac}, °nānā-
kṛkāṅkṣita° T₁^{ac}, °nānā tu kāṅkṣita° D M₁^{pc} T₁^{pc} 3 etena] M₁ T₁ Σ_E , nānā tu D || maṅgalyam]
conj., ninim D M₁ T₁ E₁^{ac}, vinim E₁₍₁₎^{pc}, vinodanam E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}, vinodakaraṇam E₂ 4 api]
 Σ_M Σ_E apy atra E₁₍₁₎ || yojaya] D^{ac} M₁ T₁^{ac} Σ_E , yojayed D^{pc} T₁^{pc} T₄ 5 kaṁ] T₄ Σ_E , kaḥ D M₁ T₁ ||
pratisamādhātum] D Σ_E , prātisamādhātum° M₁, prātisamāsātum° T₁, prātisamāsātum T₄

a NŚ 1.42cd–43ab: athāha māṁ suraguruḥ kaiśikīm api yojaya || yac ca tasyāḥ kṣamaṁ dravyaṁ
tad brūhi dvijasattama |

- 225 I conjecture the reading *śvaśuraḡhagamanam* in order to make sense of the semivowel *r* in the manuscripts, which alternate between °*hṛda*°/°*hṛbha*°. Note that *da*, *bha*, and *ha* are easily confused in Malayālam. On the sense of *āvāha* as the giving away of a son or daughter in marriage, or as acquisitive marriage by the in-laws, see Meyer 1953: 56, n. 1.
- 226 I conjecturally read *maṅgalyam*, although the only manuscripts containing this passage, basically M₁ and T₁, present a corrupt reading. However, they seem to have miscopied this line above, where they present a corrupt version: *maṅgalyam iti śreyakatrayasyāsambandhaḥ*. Something might have been lost from the text, given that the word *vinodakaraṇam* in Bharata's verse is not glossed anywhere, which is why, I believe, the editors have conjectured the reading *vinodanam* here.
- 227 The whole verse reads: *athāha māṁ suraguruḥ kaiśikīm api yojaya || yac ca tasyāḥ kṣamaṁ dravyaṁ tad brūhi dvijasattama |* "Then the master of the gods (Brahmā) told me: "Employ also the gorgeous (*kaiśiki*) [manner], and name the material adequate for it, oh best among the twice-born". In the first chapter, the gorgeous manner is introduced in the play—along with the other manners already in use—for the sake of creating beauty in it. The *kaiśikī vṛtti*, whose essential elements are dance, songs, and other charming elements, is especially stated to be an activity useful for creating beauty (*saundaryopayogī vyāpārāḥ kaiśikīvṛttir*, ABH ad NŚ 1.41, vol. 1, p. 20). On the introduction of dance in the performance through the *kaiśikī*, see §1.3.3. In other passages, the *kaiśikī* is said to guarantee that every spectator has access to the meanings of theatre, irrespective of their social or mental condition, through that very beauty that causes allurements. Abhinavagupta links the widespread use of dancing during festivals, and its generally recognized

delivery of a son. Then there is the **welcoming of a new child-in-law** (*āvāha*), whenever the son-in-law goes with his bride to the house of the in-laws.²²⁵ **Jubilation** (*pramodā*) is the acquisition of riches and other goods by kings. **Success** (*abhyudaya*) is the attainment of a wish, the occurrence (*udaya*) of something desired (*abhi* = *abhilaṣita*). The word ‘etc.’ (*ādi*) [in the verse] is used [to indicate] the attainment of unexpected goods and other [auspicious occasions]. For this reason, [dance] is considered auspicious.²²⁶ This is the connection between the three verses.

[6.11.2] Moreover, this [role of dance in beautifying the performance] has been [previously] illustrated while commenting on the verse: ‘the gorgeous manner (*kaiśikī*) should be used [in theatre] as well’ (NŚ 1.42d).²²⁷

[7] In order to reply to the question ‘**what is the nature** (*svabhāva*) **to which it** (i.e. dance) **conforms?**’ [Bharata] utters the next verse: ‘**And [dance has come into use] because, etc.**’

NŚ

|| 266cd–267ab ||

And [dance has come into use in the *pūrvaraṅga*] because, due to [their] rejection [by the gods], the [dry syllables of the *nirgīta*] which, used at the beginning [or end] of the *gītakas*, supply the sections for dance proper, were employed by the hosts of beings (*bhūta*).²²⁸

auspicious nature, with its lack of any practical purpose. This is indeed a characteristic of activities that are beautiful in themselves, different from activities that are pleasurable, such as eating etc., but aim at some practical result, for instance bodily sustenance. The mention of the *kaiśikī* is meant to remind the reader that the context of the discussion here is dance as used within the dramatic performance, and its psychagogic role in the aesthetic experience, on which see especially § 3.4.1.

228 My rendering of Bharata’s verse is based on Abhinavagupta’s commentary. M. Ghosh reads: *ataś caiva pratikṣepāḥ bhūtasāṅghaiḥ prakīrtitāḥ* || *ye gītakādau yujyante samyañ nṛttavibhāgakāḥ* | and translates: ‘Hence, the hosts of *bhūtas* have ever praised the *pratikṣepas* which are used in songs and in regulating the division of dances.’ Unni (2014: 501) has the same text as Ghosh, but reads *pravartitāḥ* instead of *prakīrtitāḥ*, and translates quite freely: ‘That is why the *Bhūtas* have given rise to *Pratikṣepas* (laudatory songs full of panegyrics) which are used as introductory songs by the actors.’ The reading *pratikṣepāḥ* is also a possible alternative reading for Abhinavagupta, which suggests that he had manuscripts with both variants in front of him. In the latter reading, one does not need to supply *śuṣkāṣarāḥ* (‘dry syllables’) as the subject of *pravartitāḥ*, as Abhinavagupta does. Cf. below, n. 248.

(ABh)

[7.1] **ataś ca kāraṇān nṛtṭam pravartitam, prārambhe pūrvaraṅge lakṣaṇavartitaṃ** yojitam iti saṃbandhaḥ. evakāro hetau. yasmāt **pratikṣepāt. jhaṅṭumādayaḥ śuṣkākṣarā devaiḥ pratikṣiptatvāt bhūtasāṅghaiś ca daityādi-**
 5 **bhiḥ pravartitāḥ.** 'nirgītaṃ tu savādītram idaṃ gr̥hṇīmahe vayam |^a iti va-
 kṣyate.

[7.2] ata evaṃbhūtā **gītānāṃ madrakādīnām ādau samyañnṛttasyābhineya-**
 padārthābhāvenābhinayaśūnyatayā 'nāśaṅkitānāṭyāṅgatvasya śuddhasya **vi-**

2 ataś] Σ_E , itaś Σ_M || kāraṇān] $\Sigma_M \Sigma_E$, karaṇān $E_{1(1)}$ ^{ac} 2–3 lakṣaṇavartitaṃ] $D M_1 T_1 E_1$, lakṣaṇam
 vartitaṃ E_2 3 yojitam] $D M_1 T_1^{pc} \Sigma_E$, ayojitam T_1^{ac} 3–4 jhaṅṭumādayaḥ] conj., ṅḍumāda-
 yaḥ $D M_1$, ḍuṅḍumādayaḥ T_1^{ac} , ḍuṅḍumādayaḥ T_1^{pc} , jhaṅṭumādyāḥ Σ_E 5 nirgītaṃ] Σ_E , nijatan
 D, nijitaṃ $M_1 T_1$ || savādītram] Σ_E , vādītram] $D M_1 T_1$ || idaṃ] Σ_E , om. $D M_1 T_1$ || gr̥hṇīmahe] Σ_E ,
 gr̥hṇīṣva yem abhiye $D M_1 T_1$ 7 ata] $D M_1 T_1^{pc} \Sigma_E$, om. T_1^{ac} || °bhūtā] $D M_1 T_1^{pc} \Sigma_E$, °bhūta
 T_1^{ac} || madrakā°] Σ_E , mudrakā° $D M_1 T_1$ 7–8 °ābhineyapadā°] Σ_E , °ābhineye padā° $D M_1 T_1$ 8
 'nāśaṅkitānāṭyāṅgatvasya] conj., nāśaṅkitā nāṭyāṅgaṃ kasya $D M_1 T_1$, nāśaṅkitā nāṭyāṅgasya $E_{1(1)}$
 $E_{1(2)}$ ^{ac} $E_{1(4)}$ ^{ac}, nāśatayāśaṅkitā nāṭyāṅgasya $E_{1(2)}$ ^{pc} $E_{1(4)}$ ^{pc}, nāśyaṅkitā nāṭyāṅgasya E_2 8–354.1
 vibhāgākā] Σ_E , vibhāparāga $D M_1 T_1$

2–354.2 pravartitam→nṛtṭam] p.n.p. T_4

a NŚ 5.34cd: nirgītaṃ tu savādītram idaṃ gr̥hṇīmahe vayam ||

229 By connecting this verse with the conclusion of the previous one, 4.265d (*iti nṛtṭam etat pravartitam*), Abhinavagupta avoids the repetition in 4.263d (*iti nṛtṭam pravartitam*). He in fact interprets the verse at stake as providing another reason why dance has been put into use, in this specific case in the *pūrvaraṅga*, and not in the performance of the play as before. This allows him to explain how dance is different from bodily acting also in the *pūrvaraṅga*, where it is used in connection with songs.

230 Although the reading *jhaṅṭumādyāḥ* in the editions is also possible, I read *jhaṅṭumādāyāḥ*, as it is closer to the manuscripts. *Jham* and *tum* are often given as examples of 'dry syllables' (*śuṣkākṣara*), which are produced by strokes on the *vīṇā*, but can also possibly be reproduced by the voice, as an example of the *āśravaṇā bahirgīta* of the *pūrvaraṅga* suggests: *jhaṅṭuṃ jagati yavalitaka jambuka jhaṅṭuṃ titi ca laghu ca jhaṅṭuṃ (titi cā) | diṅgle gaṇapatipaśupatijambuka diṅgle varabhuja diginigi cā* | (NŚ 29.88). The principle

ABh

[7.1] The connection [with the previous verses] is [as follows]: **and dance has come into use**, it has been put to use (*vartitam*) according to the definitions, i.e. it has been added at the beginning (*pra = prārambha*), in the preliminary rite (*pūrvaraṅga*), **because** of the reason [given in the present verse].²²⁹ The word *eva* [is used] in the sense of reason: [dance was put into use in the preliminary rite] **because** the dry syllables (*śuṣkāḥṣara*) [making up the *nirgīta*], such as *gham*, *tum*, etc.,²³⁰ were rejected by the gods. And due to this **rejection, they were employed by the hosts of beings (*bhūta*)** such as the demons (*daitya*) and others. As will be said [in Nś 5.34cd, the demons said]: ‘Let us accept this *nirgīta* together with the instrumental accompaniment.’²³¹

[7.2] Therefore, [those dry syllables] that were [accepted by the demons] are used at the outset, i.e. **at the beginning of the *gītakas***, such as the *madraka* and others, **supplying the sections (*vibhāgaka*) for dance proper (*samyak*)**. [That is to say,] they provide the sections for abstract (*śuddha*) [dance] which, due to the absence of words to be enacted, is devoid of dramatic acting and is therefore

regulating dry syllables is explained in Nś 34.31–33: the sounds produced by the wooden *viṇā* are based on those produced by the bodily *viṇā*, i.e. the human voice. Both in turn are based on the mnemonic patterns derived from the strokes of the percussive instruments and the strokes of the strings of the *viṇā*. Examples of these basic sounds are *gham* and *tum*, which recalls the practice of dancing on rhythmical syllables, as for instance the *śollukattus* of Bharatanatyam, or the *bols* of Kathak and Odissi. On dry syllables in ancient Indian music, see Lath 1978: 116–117.

- 231 The term *nirgīta*, or *bahirgīta* (external song), refers to those songs that are executed in the *pūrvaraṅga* behind the curtain (*antaryavanikā*) and are devoid of meaningful text. Their origin is narrated in Nś 5.31–41, which is the immediate context for the quotation here. During the preliminary rite, the demons were provoked to jealousy on hearing the various songs performed in praise of the gods, and demanded that only the *nirgīta*—the meaningless song performed with the dry syllables (*śuṣkāḥṣara*) produced by strokes of the lute (*viṇā*)—should be performed. The gods were enraged and asked the divine singer Nārada to stop the *nirgīta*. But Nārada said that the *nirgīta* should not be stopped. On the contrary, combined with the *upohana* and embellished by the notes produced by strokes of the strings of the lute (*dhātuvādyā*), the *nirgīta* should be produced in seven forms, just like the seven songs (*gītakas*) in praise of the gods. Satisfied with the *nirgītas*, the demons would not create any obstacle to the performance. According to N. Ramanathan (1999: 350), by the time of Abhinavagupta, the *nirgītas* were no longer performed as part of a living tradition of practice, since all the commentators—Śrī Śaṅkuka and Kīrtidhara among them—interpret their definitions exclusively on the basis of the various readings of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, without adding anything new.

bhāgākā vibhāgaprāpakā ādau prayujyante. etad uktaṃ bhavati—gītakānām yāny upohanāni tatra tāvan nṛttaṃ śuddham eva kartavyam. yad vakṣyati— ‘tatrāvatarāṇaṃ kāryaṃ nartakyāḥ sarvabhāṇḍakam. kṣepapratikṣepakṛtaṃ |^a iti. [7.2.1] tadgataś ca gītakāṅgamadhye tu praveśābhāvo ‘siddhaḥ. vicāraṇīyasya 5 cāvāpaniṣkrāmāder gītakāṅgatvam asty eva. [7.2.2] yady api ‘mahāgīteṣu

1 vibhāgaprāpakā] E₁, vihaḡaprāpakā D M₁ T₁, vibhāgapramāpakā E₂ || ādau] D M₁ T₁ E₁, om. E₂
 2 tāvan] D M₁ Σ_E, kāva T₁^{ac}, tāva T₁^{pc} || eva] T₄, ekaṃ D M₁ T₁^{pc}, eka T₁^{ac}, evaṃ Σ_E 3 kṣepa] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, akṣepa° T₁^{ac}, upakṣepa° T₄ 4 tadgataś] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} E₂, tataś E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} || °āṅga°] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, °āṅgaka° T₁^{ac} || praveśābhāvo] Σ_E, praveśābhāvo D M₁ T₁ || ‘siddhaḥ] T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, siddhaḥ D M₁ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂ 4–5 vicāraṇīyasya] D M₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, vicāraṇīyasya T₁, vicāraṇīyasya E₁₍₁₎ 5 °krāmāder] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, °krāmāde T₁^{ac} || gītakā°] conj., agītakā° Σ_E, atītakā° D M₁ T₁^{pc}, gatītakā° T₁^{ac} || asty eva] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, asyai D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ || yady api] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, yavapi E₁₍₁₎ || mahāgīteṣu] D M₁ Σ_E, mahānīteṣu T₁^{ac}, mahānīteṣu T₁^{pc}

4–358.6 tadgataś ca→anugrāhakam] p.n.p. T₄

a Nś 4.293cd–294ab: tatrāvatarāṇaṃ kāryaṃ nartakyāḥ sarvabhāṇḍikam | kṣepapratikṣepakṛtaṃ tantrīgānasamanvitam ||

232 I conjecture the reading *anāśaṅkitanātyāṅgatvasya* instead of the manuscript reading *nāśaṅkitā nātyāṅgaṃ kasya*. The negative particle has probably been joined with the preceding *ā* and given as a nominative plural *nāśaṅkitā* due to the following word, *vibhāgākā*. However, it does not make sense to have this adjective outside the compound. What Abhinavagupta wants to say here is that the dance performed on the dry syllables does not raise any doubt as to its being a part (*aṅga*) of theatre, since there is no content to be enacted here. The corruption of °*nātyāṅgatvasya* to °*nātyāṅgaṃ kasya* is easy to imagine through the similarity of the syllables *ta* and *ka* in Malayāḷam script. Bharata is now dealing with abstract dance as it was originally introduced in the *pūrvarāṅga*, applied to its musical parts, which will be also the topic of the rest of Nś chapter 4. Although the suspicion of abstract dance being identical to theatre does not arise, it certainly needs to be taken into account to answer the question in Nś 4.261d: *kaṃ svabhāvam apekṣate?* ‘What is the nature to which it conforms?’ As pointed out in the *avatarāṅikā*, Abhinavagupta considers the present verse to be an answer to that question.

233 The *upohana* is explained by Bharata in the chapter on *tāla* as a melodic prelude preceding a song, executed with conventional sets of syllables without any meaning, technically called ‘dry syllables’ (*śuṣkākṣara*) (cf. n. 230). Nś 31.138–139: *upohyante svarā yena tena gītaṃ pravartate | tasmād upohanaṃ jñeyaṃ śuṣkākṣarasamanvitam || athavopohyate yasmāt prayogaḥ sūcanādibhiḥ | tasmād upohanaṃ hy etad gānabhāṇḍasamāśrayam ||* ‘The song begins with that [part] by which the notes are introduced (*upohyante*). Therefore it is known [by the name] *upohana*, [and] is connected with the dry syllables (*śuṣkākṣara*). Otherwise, it is [known as] *upohana*, since the performance is introduced (*upohyate*) by hints and the like, based on singing and drumming.’

234 I read *eva* as in T₄ instead of *evaṃ* as corrected in the editions.

235 Nś 4.293cd–294ab: tatrāvatarāṇaṃ kāryaṃ nartakyāḥ sarvabhāṇḍikam || kṣepapratikṣepa-

not suspected of being a part of theatre.²³² This is tantamount to saying that, in the melodic preludes (*upohanas*) of the [songs called] *gītakas*,²³³ dance should be first of all executed only²³⁴ as abstract. This is what [Bharata] will say: ‘At this point[, when the *gītaka* begins], the dancer should execute the entry (*avataraṇa*), along with all the percussions, after the *kṣepa* and *pratīkṣepa* [executed with strings and singing] (Nś 4.293cd–294a).²³⁵ [7.2.1] And [so] the fact that [dance] should not be included²³⁶ among the elements of a *gītaka*[, lest it be considered a kind of bodily acting,] is not established.²³⁷ Moreover, [the gestures of the hands in keeping the time (*kriyā*),] such as *āvāpa*, *niṣkrāma*, etc., which are yet to be discussed, are certainly elements of the *gītakas*[, although they consist of pure movements executed with the hands, having no connection with the meanings of the songs].²³⁸ [7.2.2] Even though it has been said

kṛtaṃ tantrīgānasamanvitam [E₁₍₂₎^{va}, *bhāṇḍopohanasamskṛtam* E₁₍₂₎]] Note that the variant *sarvabhāṇḍakam* in the quotation of this verse in the commentary here in no way affects the meaning or the metre. The reading given as variant in E₁₍₂₎^{va} for the last *pāda* is preferable according to Abhinavagupta’s commentary on this verse. In it, *kṣepa* and *pratīkṣepa* are given as synonyms of *upohana* and *pratyupohana*. The *upohana* is the musical prelude to the first sections or theme (*vastu*) of the song (cf. n. 233), while the *pratyupohana* fulfils the same function in the other sections or *vastu* of a song. In Nś 4.272, it is said that the dancer enters after the *upohana*, accompanied by the sound of drums, which is how Abhinavagupta interprets the entry of the dancer here. On the structure of the *upohana* in the different songs, see Te Nijenhuis 1970.

- 236 I follow the manuscripts and read *tadgataś ca*, as an adjective of *praveśabhāvaḥ*, taking *tat°* to stand for *nṛtta°*.
- 237 I believe that this is a hint at the previous discussion in the *pūrvapakṣa*, on the connection of dance and music [4.6], and I therefore supply the rest of the argument accordingly. The previous argument of the *abhedapakṣin* was as follows: if a connection between dance and the songs to which it is performed in the *pūrvaraṅga* is established, it would be difficult not to consider it as bodily acting aimed at conveying the meanings of the songs [4.8]. The use of dance in parts of the *gītakas* where only instrumental music is used, however, invalidates such an argument by pointing to a connection between music and dance independent of a textual portion to be enacted.
- 238 *Āvāpa*, *niṣkrāma*, *vikṣepa*, and *praveśa* are the four *niṣśabda-kriyās*, hand movements that were used in ancient Indian musical practice to mark time measurement. See Te Nijenhuis 1970: 328–331 and Lath 1988: 133–136. I think that a positive statement is needed here: *kriyās* can be connected, subordinated, or even included (all meanings denoted by the term *°aṅgatva*) among the elements of a *gītaka*. *Kriyās* are in fact an essential part of *kalā*, a notion central to *tāla*, the rhythmical part of songs. I have thus emended the text to *gītakāṅgatvam*, in spite of the manuscripts. The whole passage is corrupt and lacunose, which I think justifies the emendation here on the basis of the sense. Moreover, T₁^{ac}, which on other occasions has proved useful for reconstructing the original meaning, reads *gatītakāṅgatvam* without the negation. The *kriyās*, meaningless movements used to mark rhythm in a visible form, are a further example of bodily movement connected with music without being a form of enactment.

caivārthān^a ity uktam, vakṣyate ca ‘tato ’bhīnayam ācaret^b’ itī prathamatve ’bhīnayane ’syāpi, tathāpi tatra na mukhyo nāṭyaprasiddho ’bhīnayārtha ity uktam.

[7.2.3] kiṃ cābhīneyatvena nāṭyāṅgatvadaśāyām avalokanāt tathāvācoyuktiḥ, laukikakathāsv ivāṅgavyavahārādāv. abhimukhībhāvamātranayanaś cāpi svārtho yathāvācyam abhinītaḥ. na hi tatra sākṣātkārakalpatāpādanam abhinayārthaḥ, kiṃ tu tallayādyāhāritvamātram. evam atrāpi tadarthānusāritvamātram parapatipattimātram syāt.

[7.2.4] †(...)dasthenaiṅgabhūtatve ’py anugīyamānakālāt pṛthagbhūta evāḍau prayujyamāno lokaprasiddhaprathamagīyamān†ākṣiptikā†prāyaḥ

1 °ārthān] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, °ārdhān T₁^{ac} || vakṣyate] Σ_E, lakṣyate D M₁ T₁ || iti] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, om. D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ || prathamatve] D M₁ T₁^{vl} E₁, prathame tv T₁, prathamatvam E₂ 2 ’bhīnayane] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, ’pi nayane D M₁ T₁^{vl}, api nayane T₁, ’vatarāṇe E₁₍₁₎ 4 cābhīneyatvena] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, cābhīnayatvena T₁^{ac} || nāṭyā°] D M₁ T₁^{vl} E₁₍₁₎^{ac} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, na syān nāṭyā° T₁ E₁₍₁₎^{pc} 5 laukikakathāsv ivāṅga°] D M₁sm T₁^{pc} Σ_E, laukikaka(...)vāṅga° M₁, laukikathāsthivāṅga° T₁^{ac} 6 abhinītaḥ] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, abhinītam D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎, abhidhām nītaḥ E₂ || sākṣāt°] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, saraśāt° T₁^{ac} 7 °āhāritva°] Σ_E, °ahāritva° D M₁ T₁ || atrāpi] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, ātrāpi T₁^{ac} 7–8 °sāritvamātram] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, °sāritvam mātram T₁^{ac} 8 °mātram syāt] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °mātrasya(...) D M₁ T₁, °mātra syāt E₁₍₁₎ 9 (...)dasthenaiṅgabhūtatve ’py] E₁, (...)dasthenaiṅgabhūtatvety D M₁ T₁, pracurastutipadasthenaiṅgabhūtatve ’py E₂ || °gīyamānakālāt] E₂, °gīyatakāntālāt D M₁ T₁, °gayitekālāt E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, °gamitakālāt E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}, °gīyalakāntālāt E₁₍₂₎^{ma} 10 °ākṣiptikāprāyaḥ] conj., °ākṣipta(...)kāprāyaḥ D M₁, °ākṣiptakā prāyaḥ T₁, °ākṣiptiḍombikāprāyaḥ E₁₍₁₎, °ākṣiptāḍombikāprāyaḥ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂

a NŚ 4.15ab: mahāgīteṣu caivārthān samyag evābhīneṣyasi |

b NŚ 4.276ab: praṇamya devatābhyaś ca tato ’bhīnayam ācaret ||

239 The same half-verse was quoted in the *pūrvapakṣa* to argue that dance should work as dramatic acting [4.2.2]; cf. n. 89 above.

240 NŚ 4.275cd–276ab: *puṣpāñjalim visrjyātha raṅgapīṭham parītya ca | praṇamya devatābhyaś ca tato ’bhīnayam ācaret* || ‘She should release a handful of flowers, circumambulate the stage area, and pay homage to the gods. After that, she should perform the acting.’

241 I take this to refer to what is stated in NŚ 4.294cd–295ab, which is the verse immediately following the one quoted previously on the use of abstract dance when the dancer makes her entrance (see n. 235): *prathamam tv abhīneyam syād gītaka sarvavastukam || tad eva ca punar vastu nṛttenāpi pradarśayet* | ‘First of all, the complete *vastu* in the *gītaka* should be enacted, then it should also be shown with dance.’ The text of the ABh is not fully satisfactory here, and I suspect it might have been corrupted from an original quotation of the verse just quoted, in which case the text should be restored to *prathamam tv abhīneyam syād ity api*.

242 Here, Abhinavagupta explains those statements where dance is explicitly prescribed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* for use in the *pūrvaraṅga* as an enactment (*abhīnaya*). In such cases, the word *abhīnaya* does not have to be taken in its primary, stronger sense of dramatic acting, but secondarily. This is elaborated upon in the commentary on NŚ 4.276ab, on which see § 3.5, n. 211.

that ‘moreover, in the *mahāgītas*, [you will properly enact] the meanings’ (Nś 4.15ab),²³⁹ and it will be said that ‘after [the entrance] she should perform the acting’ (Nś 4.276b),²⁴⁰ i.e. [even though dance] is first of all [used] in connection with acting,²⁴¹ still it is said that in [all those uses], the meaning of [the word] ‘acting’ (*abhinaya*) is not to be taken in its primary sense, which is well known in [the context of] drama.²⁴²

[7.2.3] Moreover, the same way of speaking [about *abhinaya*] occurs when [a text] is considered to be dramatic by being enacted, just like when bodily gestures and so on are used in ordinary storytelling. And one’s own content is [said to be] enacted along with [one’s own] speech, although it is merely carried out in front [of another person]. For in [storytelling] the word ‘acting’ (*abhinaya*) does not mean bringing [the meanings] to the condition of being as if directly manifested (*sākṣātkāraikalpa*), but just bringing out the tempo, [rhythm, etc.] in connection with the [story]. In the same way, also with regard to this [dance in the *pūrvarāṅga*], [the word *abhinaya*] should be [considered] as the simple adequation of [the bodily movement to] the content of the [song], resulting merely in causing another [person] to understand something.²⁴³

[7.2.4] [Somebody] maintains that the *pratikṣepa* is a particular melody,²⁴⁴ connected with plentiful words of praise (*stuti*), performed **at the beginning** [of a musical composition], similar to the †inserted melody† that is sung initially and is well known in the world.²⁴⁵ Although [a *pratikṣepa* so conceived]

243 The parallel between storytelling and dance, in which *abhinaya* is present but has to be taken in a secondary sense, is not straightforward. Some clues might be found in KAA 8.8, where an example of narrative (*kathā*) endowed with enactment (*abhinaya*) is given, while defining *kathā* among other literary genres: *prabandhamadhye parabodhanārtham nalādyupākhyānam ivopākhyānam abhinayan paṭhan gāyan yad eko granthikaḥ kathayati tad govindavad ākhyānam*. ‘A sub-tale (*upākhyāna*) within a larger narrative (*prabandha*)—just as the sub-tale of Nala told by a bard while he enacts, recites, and sings, for the sake of causing somebody else to understand [something] (*parabodhanārtham*)—is called an *ākhyāna*, as for instance the *Govinda*.’ Note that the term *paraprabodhana*° used by Hemacandra is parallel to Abhinavagupta’s *parapratipatti*°. It is possible that Abhinavagupta knew of such cases of narrative texts to be enacted, which, similarly to dance, do not produce the same type of direct cognition one has in theatre through dramatic enactment. On the ordinary account of *abhinaya* in contexts outside of theatre, see § 3.3, and on the limits of dramatic mimesis in narrative dance, see § 3.5.

244 I follow Kavi and read *gītvīśeṣaḥ pratikṣepa iti*.

245 The text is lacunose here, and for reasons unknown to me, Kavi filled up the lacuna and read °*ākṣiptiḍombikāprāyaḥ*, though the available manuscripts do not contain hints to the Ḍombikā, nor do other passages dealing with the Ḍombikā suggest such a context. I tentatively read *ākṣiptikā(gīti)* as a reconstruction closer to the manuscripts, in the light of ABh ad Nś 4.293cd–294ab (cf. n. 235 above), vol. 1, p. 191: *prathame vastuny ākṣiptikām upohanam ca prayujya nartakīpraveśaḥ*.

pracurastutipadayukto gītivīśeṣaḥ **pratikṣepa** ity āha. idaṃ bharatamuninā na kvacil lakṣitam.

[7.2.5] anye tu gītānte prayojyās chandakādayaḥ. evaṃ nṛttavaicitryāśrayā yathāruci pratikṣipyamāṅgakāḥ **pratikṣepāḥ**. ādiśabdaś ca vyavasthāyām āsāritādisaṅgrahārthaḥ prayuktaḥ. satīti cādhyāhāra iti.

munimataṃ cādyā tayor anugrāhakam.

[7.3] evaṃ nātyāṅgatā nṛttasya gītāṅgādyupayogaś ca samarthitaḥ.

[8] adhunā nṛttapradhānarāgakāvyaḍivīśayaḥ kāvyam ca nātyāṅgam iti darśayan purākālpacchāyayā prakārāntaram api nṛttasya samarthayitum āha—
10 **devenetyādi**.

1 pracurastutipadayukto] D M₁ T₁^{Pc} Σ_E, pracura iti padayukto T₁^{ac} || °vīśeṣaḥ pratikṣepa] E₁₍₁₎, °vīśeṣapratikṣepa D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂ || idaṃ bharata°] D M₁ T₁^{Pc} Σ_E, daṃ saradu° T₁^{ac} 3
gītānte] D M₁ T₁^{Pc} Σ_E, gīkānte T₁^{ac} || chandakādayaḥ] T₁ Σ_E, chandādayaḥ D M₁ T₁^{vl}, chandādyāḥ
E₁₍₁₎^{vl} || evaṃ] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, eva E₁₍₁₎, evaṃvidha E₂ || °āśrayā] D M₁ T₁^{Pc} Σ_E, °āguyā T₁^{ac} 4
pratikṣipyamāṅgakāḥ pra°] Σ_E, prakṣipyamāṅgatvāpra° D M₁ T₁ || °śabdaś ca vyavasthāyām]
E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °śabdasthāvyavasthāyām D M₁ T₁^{Pc}, °śabdasthāvyavasāyām T₁^{ac}, °śabda vyavasthā-
yām E₁₍₁₎ 5 °saṅgrahārthaḥ] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °saṅgrahāyārthaṃ D M₁ T₁, °saṅgrahās tathārthaṃ
E₁₍₁₎ || prayuktaḥ] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, prayunkte D M₁ T₁, prayukte E₁₍₁₎ 7 °āṅgatā] T₄ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₄₎, °āṅgā-
nāṃ tvam D, °āṅgānāṃ(...) M₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₂, °āṅgānātvaṃ T₁^{Pc}, °āṅgānātvaṃ T₁^{ac} || nṛttasya] T₄ E₁₍₁₎
E₁₍₄₎, (...) M₁ E₁₍₂₎, om. D T₁, nṛttānām E₂ || °āṅgādyupayogaś ca] D M₁ T₁^{Pc} E₁₍₂₎ °āgādyupayogaś
ca T₁^{ac}, °ādivad upayogaś ca T₄ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₄₎, °āṅgādeś copayoga E₂ 8 °kāvyādivīśayaḥ] D M₁ T₁,
°kāvyādivīśaya° T₄ E₁₍₁₎, °kāvyādir vīśayaḥ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂ || kāvyam ca] E₁₍₁₎^{Pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, kāvyas
ca D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎^{ac}, °kāvyasya T₄ 8–9 nātyāṅgam iti darśayan] Σ_E, nānāgamitṛ darśaya D M₁ T₁,
nānāgam iti darśayan M₁sm T₄ 10 devenetyādi] Σ_E, Nś 4.267cd–268ab Σ_M

246 The purport of the entire passage is not crystal clear and the text is lacunose. I suppose that the context is whether the *pratikṣepa* is part of the *gītaka* or not, if it is performed at the beginning of it but separately from the main composition. I read *anugīyamānakālāt* as conjectured in E₂, although another possibility would be to read *anugītakālāt* ('separate in time from the following song'). This interpretation seems to read *pratikṣepa* as a musical segment inserted at the beginning of the *gītaka* but independent from it. Unni's understanding of *pratikṣepas* as 'laudatory songs full of panegyrics which are used as introductory songs by the actors' (cf. n. 228 above) is probably based on the passage here under discussion.

247 *Chandakas* are songs that are performed at the end of *gītakas* or other musical compositions in the preliminary rite, and accommodate dance. see § 2.3.2, n. 96. See also Ramana-
than 1999: 265.

248 The *adhyāhāra* is a hermeneutic strategy for interpreting a sentence by supplying some words in it. In this case, if the word *satī* is added, *gītakādu* is reinterpreted as a locative absolute. The sentence would read: ye [*pratikṣepāḥ*] *gītakādu* [*satī*] *yuyjante*.

249 It seems that different interpretations of the verse at hand (Nś 4.266cd–267ab) were possible, all based on the lack of agreement over the term *pratikṣepa*, read in connection with the compound *gītakādu* either as an ablative *pratikṣepād* or as a nominative plural *pratikṣepāḥ*, and interpreted accordingly as 'rejection' (ablative), 'a particular melody added

would be [considered] †an element [of the *gītaka*] †, [it would be performed] separately in time from [the composition] sung thereafter.²⁴⁶ This [interpretation] has not been suggested anywhere by Bharatamuni.

[7.2.5] Others, on the contrary, maintain that the *chandakas* and the like can be performed at the end of the songs. In this manner the limbs [called] *pratikṣepas*, inserted (*pratikṣipyamāna*) according to one's pleasure [in a song], become the support for the multifariousness of dance.²⁴⁷ And the word *ādi* [in the compound *gītakādau*] would be employed [with the meaning of 'and so on'] for the sake of including the *āsāritas* and other musical compositions in the rule. The word *sati* should be then supplied [to complete the sentence: 'the *pratikṣepas* that are performed when there is a *gītakas* an *āsārita*, and the like'].²⁴⁸

At present, the view of the sage [Bharata] supports both these [interpretations].²⁴⁹

[7.3] In this way, the fact that dance is a part of theatre,²⁵⁰ as well as its use in [connection with] the various limbs of the songs [of the *pūrvaraṅga*], have been justified.²⁵¹

[8] At this point, [Bharata] illustrates the scope of those [genres] in which dance is predominant, such as melodic poetry (*rāgakāvya*)[, danced poetry,] and so on,²⁵² as well as the poetic text [on which these genres are based], which is a part of theatre. While doing so, in order to justify another kind of dance through the expedient of a story of the past, he utters [the next verse, starting with] 'The god himself [said to Taṇḍu], etc.'

before the beginning of a musical composition', and 'an additional segment added to a song in the *pūrvaraṅga*'. The indeclinable *adya* might point to a practice current at the time of Abhinavagupta, or to the interpretations of Bharata by authoritative commentators.

250 I follow the reading of T₄, *nātyāṅgatā nṛttasya*, since the manuscripts are lacunose here.

251 As the sequence of the arguments suggests, the previous verse about the auspiciousness and beauty of dance (Nś 4.265cd–266ab) justified the insertion of dance into the body of the play through the *kāśikī* (6.11.2, n. 227), while the present verse (Nś 4.266cd–267ab) justifies its use in connection with the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga*. Both uses of dance had been questioned in the *pūrvapakṣa*, along with the use of dance as an independent genre [5], which is dealt with next.

252 I have tentatively restored the reading of D, M₁, and T₁, with the compound ending in a nominative singular (*nṛttapradhānarāgakāvyaḍviṣayah*), which I understand as a *bahuvrīhi* construed with ...^o*upayoga* in the previous sentence, where the use of dance in connection with the various limbs of the musical compositions of the *pūrvaraṅga* was established. Now, the focus is on another variety of dance, which determines a new category of staged genres (cf. § 2.3)—i.e. danced poetry (*nṛttakāvya*) and melodic poetry (*rāgakāvya*)—both depending, as their name indicates, on a poetic text (*kāvya*).

(NŚ)

devena cāpi saṃproktas taṇḍus tāṇḍavapūrvakam || 4.267 ||
gītaprayogam āśritya nṛttam etat pravartyatām |

(ABh)

- 5 [8.1] cakāra evakārthe. devenaiva maheśvareṇaiva taṇḍuḥ santoṣapūrvaka-
kaṃ prakarṣeṇādareṇoktaḥ. kim ity āha—gīyata iti gītaṃ kāvyam. tasya
yaḥ prakarṣeṇa yogas tadarthānupraveśalakṣaṇas tam āśritya, na chāyām, ā
samantāc chritvā. aṅgavikṣepitāṅgatvaṃ sāmāryalayāsattvādinā nṛttam. ta-
cchabdasvabhāvam api yad abhūt tāṇḍavaprabhṛtinṛttaṃ, tad gīyamānarūpa-
10 kagatavarṇālaṅkāralayapadārthavākyārthasaṃmilitaṃ sat pravartyatām. [8.2]
tad uktaṃ kohalena—

2 taṇḍus tāṇḍavapūrvakam] D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁, taṇḍus santoṣapūrvakam E₂, taṇḍutāṇḍavapūrvakam
T₄, taṇḍur tāṇḍavapūrvikam T₁^{ac} 5 taṇḍuḥ] Σ_E, taṇḍulaḥ D M₁ T₁ || santoṣa°] M₁ T₁ Σ_E, satusa°
D 6 gīyata] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, ... yata (broken off) T₄ || gītaṃ] T₄ Σ_E, gītakaṃ D M₁ T₁ 7 yogas]
D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, prayogas T₄ || °lakṣaṇas tam āśritya] E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂, °lakṣaṇam āśritya D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎
E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, °lakṣaṇataḥ tayāśritya T₄ 8 samantāc] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, samantrac T₁^{ac} || sāmārya-
syalaya°] Σ_E, vyāmarārthasaya° D M₁, sāmāmrārthasaya° T₁^{ac}, sāmārārthasaya° T₁^{pc} 8–9
sāmāryalayāsattvādinā nṛttam tacchabdasvabhāvam api] (sāmāryalayātālādinā nṛttaṃ ta-
cchabdasvabhāvam api?) E₂ || nṛttaṃ tacchabda°] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, nṛtvaitacchabda° D M₁ T₁^v, nṛtyai-
tacchu(bda?ddha)° T₁, nṛtyaitacchabda° E₁₍₁₎ 9 tāṇḍavaprabhṛtinṛttaṃ] E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, tāṇḍava-
prabhṛtinṛtta° D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₁₎, tāṇḍaprabhṛtinṛtta° T₁^{ac} 10 °padārtha°] Σ_E, °pādārtha° D M₁ T₁ ||
sat] D M₁ T₁, yat tat Σ_E

5–6 maheśvareṇaiva→āha] p.n.p. T₄ 7–10 ā samantāc→pravartyatām] p.n.p. T₄

253 Abhinavagupta takes °pūrvaka to mean °prabhṛti. E₂ changes the text to *santoṣapūrvakam*,
since this expression appears in the immediately following commentary. However, I do
not think that this is how Abhinavagupta read Bharata's verse.

254 I read the text as corrected by Ramaswami Sastri in E₁₍₂₎^{pc}: *tadarthānupraveśalakṣaṇas
tam āśritya*.

NŚ

|| 267cd–268ab ||

The god himself (i.e. Śiva) said to Taṇḍu: this dance, i.e. the *tāṇḍava* and the like,²⁵³ should be put into use based on the performance of songs.

ABh

[8.1] The word *ca* [in the verse] means ‘himself’ (*eva*): the god himself, i.e. Maheśvara himself, out of satisfaction, addressed Taṇḍu with great (*pra = prakarṣeṇa*) respect. [Bharata] explains what [Maheśvara said to him]: A song (*gīta*) is that which is sung (*gīyate*), i.e. a poetic text (*kāvya*). Based on an intense (*pra = prakarṣeṇa*) use (*yoga*) of that [song], characterized as being permeated by [its] meaning,²⁵⁴ [one should connect dance with song,] not as a shadow [of it], [but] as completely (*ā = samantāt*) based (*śritvā*) [on it].²⁵⁵ Dancing (*nr̥tta*) is characterized as depending upon the fact that somebody is throwing their limbs about in conjunction with a coordinated action of the tempo (*laya*), the psychophysical reactions (*sattva*), and so on.²⁵⁶ [This] dance, such as the *tāṇḍava* and the like, whose nature also came to be [conveyed] by the same word [*nr̥tta*], should be put into use as being intermingled with the tonal structures (*varṇa*), the embellishments of the voice (*alaṃkāra*), the tempo (*laya*), the word meanings (*padārtha*), and the sentence meanings (*vākyārtha*), which are inherent in the dramatic text that is sung (*gīyamāna-rūpaka*).²⁵⁷ [8.2] This is what Kohala said:

255 This practice stands in opposition to the previous uses of dance in connection with the various parts of the musical compositions in the *pūrvarāga*. In those uses, dance was in fact said just to bring out the rhythmical and melodic parts, and to simply follow the meaning of the song lyrics without presenting it as vividly as if directly perceived. Here, as we shall see, dramatic acting in the fullest sense is still lacking, but the quality of the dance movement strictly depends on the poetic text.

256 This looks like a general definition of dance in accordance with the sense of *nrt-* in the *Dhātupāṭha* (cf. n. 5 above), while *tāṇḍava* is the name of the dance that was connected with vocal and instrumental music in theatre by Taṇḍu (cf. § 2.4, n. 118). Here the third and last step in the expansion of the field of *nr̥tta* is envisaged, namely the connection of dance with a poetic text, which will give rise to the new genres (cf. § 2.4, n. 127, and 8.6 below).

257 We find in this long compound all the aspects typically attributed to music: the melodic, the rhythmical, and the meaningful part (cf. above, n. 97). On *varṇas* and *alaṃkāras* as technical terms concerning the melodic aspect of songs in musical terminology, see above, n. 215.

'sandhyāyāṃ nṛtyataḥ śambhor bhaktyā 'rdro nāradah purā |
 gītavāṃs tripuronmātham taccittas tv atha gītake ||
 cakārābhinayam pṛitas tatas taṇḍuṃ ca so 'bravīt |
 nātyoktābhinayenedaṃ vatsa yojaya tāṇḍavam ||' iti ||

- 5 athaśabdān na kevalam idaṃ śuddham eva, nāpi gānakriyābhāṇḍavādyamā-
 trasambandham eva yāvad gītyādhārapadānusāry api. tadarthānusaraṇāc ca
 tadanusāraṇam iti.

[8.3] nanu kiṃ tat tāṇḍavapravṛttinimittam ity āśaṅkyāha—**prāyeṇeti**.

(NŚ)

- 10 **prāyeṇa tāṇḍavavidhir devastutyāśrayo bhavet || 4.268 ||**
sukumāraprayogaś ca śrīṅgārasasamḥbhavaḥ |

(ABh)

[8.4] **tāṇḍavam** iti sarvaṃ nṛttam ucyate. lāśyaśabdena saṃnidhau, gobalīva-

1 bhaktyā 'rdro] D M₁ T₁^{v1} T₄ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, bhaktyendro T₁, bhaktyādrau E₁₍₁₎ || nāradah] D M₁
 T₄ Σ_E, nāradam T₁ || purā] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, om. T₄ 2 °mātham taccittas tv atha] T₄ Σ_E, °mātha
 dantacittvatha D M₁ T₁^{pc}, °māthadantacittas tv atha T₁^{ac} 3 °ābhinayam] T₄ Σ_E, °ābhinaya° D,
 °ābhinayaḥ M₁ T₁ || pṛitas tatas taṇḍuṃ ca] Σ_E, °pṛitaḥ(...)ś caṃ D M₁, pṛitas(...)ś caṃ T₁^{pc}, pṛitas
 tatas taṇḍu(...)ś caṃ T₁^{ac}, pṛitas tatas taṇḍuś ca T₄ 4 nātyoktā°] Σ_M, nātyoktyā° Σ_E || vatsa] T₄
 Σ_E, vatsam D M₁ T₁ || yojaya] T₄ Σ_E, yojana° D M₁ T₁ || tāṇḍavam] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, tāṇḍam T₄ 5 atha-
 śabdān] D M₁ Σ_E, aśabdān T₁ || eva] D M₁ T₁ E₁, eva gānam E₂ || °kriyābhāṇḍa°] T₁, °kriyā. bhāṇḍa°
 D M₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎, °kriyāyā bhāṇḍa° E₁₍₁₎, °kriyāyāṃ bhāṇḍa° E₂ 6 °padānusāry] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎
 E₁₍₄₎ E₂, °pādānusāry E₁₍₁₎ || °ānusaraṇāc] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, °ānusāraṇāc T₁^{ac} 7 tadanusāraṇam]
 D M₁ T₁ E₁, tadabhinayam E₂ 8 tāṇḍavapravṛtti°] Σ_E, tāṇḍavaprabhṛti° D M₁ T₁^{pc}, tāṇḍa pra-
 bhṛti° T₁^{ac}, tāvatprabhṛti° T₄ || āśaṅkyāha—prāyeṇeti] Σ_E, āśaṅkyā D M₁ T₁, āśaṅkyāha—prāyeṇa
 T₄ 10 devastutyāśrayo] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ Σ_E, devaḥ stutyāśrayo T₁^{ac} 13 tāṇḍavam] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎
 E₁₍₄₎ E₂, tāṇḍavidhir T₄ E₁₍₁₎ || lāśyaśabdena] D M₁ T₁^{v1} E₁, lāśyaśabda° T₁, tena lāśyaśabdas tat° E₂
 13–364.1 °vardanyāyena] Σ_E, °varda(...) D M₁, °va(...)tyo(...)yena T₁^{ac}, °varda(...)tyo(...)yena T₁^{pc}

5–7 athaśabdān→tadanusāraṇam iti] p.n.p. T₄ 13–364.2 lāśyaśabdena→cāśrayati. tena] p.n.p.
 T₄

In the past, Nārada was filled with devotion for Śiva,
 who was dancing at the twilight hour,
 and sung the destruction of the three cities.
 Then, with his mind intent upon [that story],
 he carried out an enactment (*abhinaya*) of the song.²⁵⁸
 Pleased with that, [Śiva] said to Taṇḍu:
 'My son, connect this *tāṇḍava* with
 the acting (*abhinaya*) that has been taught for drama.'²⁵⁹

Since [Kohala] says 'then' (*atha*) ['with his mind intent upon that story, he carried out an enactment of the song'], this [dance] is not only meant to be abstract, nor is it just connected with the activity of singing and the playing of drums,²⁶⁰ in so far as it also conforms to the lyrics (*pada*) that are grounded in a melody (*gīti*). And it is said to conform to the [lyrics] by conforming to their meaning.

[8.3] Someone might ask: 'But what is the semantic scope of the word *tāṇḍava*?' Anticipating this doubt, Bharata utters [the next verse]: 'Generally, etc.'

NŚ

|| 268cd–269ab ||

Generally, the performance of the *tāṇḍava* should be based on the praise of the deities, while the delicate performance (*sukumāraprayoga*) is the receptacle of the amorous *rasa* [and originates from it].

ABh

[8.4] The word *tāṇḍava* is taught to designate the totality of dance. When it [occurs] in the proximity of the word *lāṣya*, it behaves following the manner of 'the cattle and the bull', i.e. it indicates that *tāṇḍava* is the general cat-

258 Contra Varma (1957: 32), I take the person performing the *abhinaya* to be Nārada himself and not Taṇḍu. His singing and dancing at the same time, out of devotion, provides a reason for Śiva to be pleased and ask Taṇḍu to connect singing with dramatic acting.

259 I read the text as *nātyoktā*° instead of *nātyoktyā*°, following the manuscripts. This text was also preferred by Varma (1957: 32).

260 I read *gānakriyābhāṇḍavādyamātrasaṃbandham* as in T₁. The opposition is between a dance that conforms only to the rhythmical and melodic structure of a song, and one that conforms to the meaning as well. The first is given in the commentary on the same verse as one of the seven types of dance: *gānakriyāmātrānusāri vādyatālānusāri ca* [8.6].

rdanyāyena pravartate. [8.4.1] tatra vidhīyate 'smin nṛttam iti **vidhiḥ**, vidhīyamānaṃ kāvyam. sa **devastutiṃ** varṇanīyatvena cāśrayati. tena dharmavīrapradhānaṃ tatra kāvyam ity uddhatarūpatāsūcanenānyarasaparigrahaḥ. [8.4.2] prayujyata iti **prayogaḥ** kāvyam **sukumāro** masṛṇo 'nusṛto yasya
 5 taṃ darśayati. **śṛṅgārasasya sambhavo** vidyamānatvam asmin, śṛṅgārasāc ca paripūrṇāt sambhavo yasya. kāmāvasthā manaso 'sminn astīti śṛṅgāreṇa pūrṇāpūrṇarūpeṇa masṛṇaprayogopalakṣaṇam.

1 pravartate] Σ_E , vardhate D M₁ T₁ || 'smin] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E , tasmin T₁^{ac} || vidhiḥ] Σ_E , om. D M₁ T₁
 1-2 vidhīya°] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E , vijīya° T₁^{ac} 2 sa devastutiṃ] T₁^{ac} E₁₍₄₎, sadaiva stutiṃ D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₂₎^{ac}
 E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, yad devastutiṃ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} || 'tvena] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E , °stutvena T₁ 2-3 dharmavīra°] D M₁
 T₁ E₁, sukumāraprayogo lāsyaṃ tāṇḍave dharmavīra° T₄, dharmavīrasa° E₂ 3-4 tatra kāvyam
 ity uddhatarūpatāsūcanenānyarasaparigrahaḥ] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₂₎ E₂, kāvyam tatra rasāntaram
 apy astu T₄, tatra kāvyam E₁₍₂₎^{ma}, tatra kāvyam. tatra rasāntaram apy asti. nāṭye śṛṅgāraḥ E₁₍₄₎
 4 prayujyata] D M₁ Σ_E , prayujya T₁ || 'nusṛto] Σ_E , anusato D M₁ T₁ 6 °āvasthā] Σ_E , °āvasthāṃ D
 M₁ T₁^{pc}, °āvasthān T₁^{ac} 7 pūrṇāpūrṇa°] D M₁ T₁ E₁, pūrṇāpūrṇa° E₂

4-7 prayujyata→masṛṇaprayogopalakṣaṇam] p.n.p. T₄

261 This maxim is explained in Apte 1965 (Appendix E, *sub voce*) along the lines of the *brāhmaṇavasīṣṭhanyāya* and the *brāhmaṇaparivrajanyāya*. This last is explained as follows: 'In such a sentence as *brāhmaṇā bhōjayītavyāḥ parivrajakāś ca*, the separate mention of the mendicants, who are included in the class of *brāhmaṇas*, merely emphasizes their position as a special part of the general body' (ibid.). As for the *gobalīvardanyāya*, Apte quotes the *Vācaspatya*, according to which the mention of cattle and bull is simultaneously used to express that the bull is cattle, though we know that it is a particular kind of cattle. In the same way, this rule is used to immediately convey the general (*sāmānya*) and the particular (*viśeṣa*) denoted by two juxtaposed words. When two similar words are mentioned together, then the maxim of the cattle and the bull avoids the fault of redundancy (Kullūka on *Mānavadharmasāstra* 8.28, quoted in Apte, ibid.). The difference is that in the *brāhmaṇavasīṣṭhanyāya* a part is mentioned separately since it is considered more important than the others, while in the *gobalīvardanyāya*, something unknown is placed in relation to something known. See also Jacob 1983: 25. In the case in hand, when the words *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* are used together, it is to point out that *lāsya* is a particular instance of *tāṇḍava*, the general category that is already known. It has to be noted that Abhinavagupta here takes *sukumāraprayoga* as a synonym for *lāsya*. In ABh ad Nś 4.302, vol. 1, p. 196, the following expression occurs: *sukumāre pūrvaraṅge lāsyaṃpradhāne*. '[The song called *pāṇikā* is used] in the delicate preliminaries, which have *lāsya* as their main element'. The explanation of the combined mention of *lāsya* and *tāṇḍava* suggests that Abhinavagupta was aware of such a juxtaposition of the two terms, as they occur for instance in *Daśarūpaka* 1.4 and 1.10. For a discussion of *tāṇḍava*, *sukumāra*, and *lāsya*, see § 2.3.

262 The correction Ramaswami Sastri proposes in E₁₍₂₎^{pc}, *yad devastutiṃ*, is not required if we take the manuscripts' pronoun *saḥ* to refer to *vidhi*.

263 See Nś 6.79: *dānavīraṃ dharmavīraṃ yuddhavīraṃ tathaiva ca | rasaṃ vīraṃ api prāha brahmā trividham eva hi* || 'Brahmā also declared the heroic *rasa* to be threefold: heroism-in-giving, heroism-in-duty, and heroism-in-battle.'

264 This alludes to the possibility of subsidiary *rasas* accompanying the main one, in this case heroism-in-duty, which is the *rasa* typically attributed to gods and heroes.

egory, whereas *lāśya* is a particular case of it].²⁶¹ [8.4.1] In the [verse], that to which dance is performed (*vidhīyate 'smin*) is called **performance** (*vidhī*), i.e. the poem that is performed. And that [performed poem] is **based on the praise of the deities**, since [the deities] are depicted [in it].²⁶² Therefore, the poem to which [*tāṇḍava* is performed] has heroism-in-duty (*dharmavīra*) as the main [*rasa*].²⁶³ Thus, by suggesting that [the performance] has a vehement (*uddhata*) nature, other *rasas* are included as well.²⁶⁴ [8.4.2] [Then Bharata] illustrates that **performance** (*prayoga*)—‘that which is performed (*prayujyate*)’, i.e. the poetic text (*kāvya*)²⁶⁵—that is accompanied by the **delicate** (*sukumāra*), i.e. mild (*masṛṇa*) [dance]. It is a **receptacle** (*saṃbhava*) for the **amorous *rasa*** (*śṛṅgārarasa*), i.e. [the amorous *rasa*] abides in it. And [that poem] originates (*saṃbhava*) from the amorous *rasa* in its fully fledged [form].²⁶⁶ Given that in it the mind [of the hero or heroine] is in a desiring condition (*kāmāvasthā*), [the presence of] the amorous [*rasa*], be it in its fully fledged or partial form,²⁶⁷ is an indicator of the mild performance.

- 265 Abhinavagupta takes both *vidhī* and *prayoga* in Bharata's verse as *karmakāraka*, i.e. ‘that which is performed’ (*vidhīyamāna, prayujyate*), which he understands to mean the poetic text (*kāvya*). As he will clarify in the next paragraph, the mention of *rasa* necessarily involves the presence of a poetic text, not just a bodily movement. The quality of the performance, be it vehement or delicate, is in its turn determined by the quality of the poetic text.
- 266 Abhinavagupta interprets the compound *śṛṅgārarasasaṃbhavaḥ* in two different ways: first, as a *tātpuruṣa* meaning ‘a receptacle of the amorous *rasa*, in which the amorous *rasa* exists’, and secondly, as a *bahuvrīhi* meaning ‘which originates from the amorous *rasa*’. A poem, in fact, is thought both to originate from the *rasa*, to contain it, and to culminate in it (cf. § 3.3, n. 62).
- 267 Here a difference between a fully fledged and a partial form of *śṛṅgāra rasa* is hinted at. The fully fledged form refers to reciprocated love between two persons, whereas the partial one is found in cases in which desire is unidirectional or unrequited, where no reciprocity or acknowledgement of the sentiment by both parties is required. A typical instance of the second case is the depiction of the lovelorn heroine going through the ten stages of desire (cf. above, n. 20). This distinction builds on the one theorized in the section on *śṛṅgārarasa*, in ABh ad NŚ 6 (prose after v. 45, vol. 1, p. 296), while commenting on the word *strīpuruṣa* *ahetuka*, given as an adjective of *śṛṅgārarasa*: *strīpuruṣasābdena parasparābhilaṣasāṃbhogalakṣaṇayā laukikyā 'asyeyam strī' iti dhiyā* [E₁₍₂₎^{pc}, yā E₁₍₂₎^{ac}] *tenābhilāṣamātrasārāyāḥ kāmāvasthānuvartinyā vyabhicārirūpānītāyā* [E₁₍₂₎^{pc}, vyabhicārirūpānīti yā E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎] *vīlakṣaṇaiva iyaṃ sthāyirūpā prāraṃbhādīphalaprāptiparyantā vyāpinī paripūrṇasukhaikaphalā ratir uktā* [E₁₍₂₎^{pc}, śaktā E₁₍₂₎^{ac}] *bhavati hetur aśya*. ‘Through the expression “men and women”, i.e. through the worldly idea “this is his woman”, defined as the union caused by reciprocal longing, delight (*ratī*) has been taught as a stable [state] (*sthāyīn*) that pervades [the dramatic action], extending from the commencement up to the obtainment of the result, and its only fruit is a fully fledged pleasure. This [delight] is completely different from the one that, conforming to the stages of desire (*kāmāvasthā*) and consisting of mere longing, is arrived at through a mere transitory [state] (*vyabhicārin*)’ (translation based on Cuneo 2008–2009: 341).

[8.4.3] yady api ca nātyān nānyatra rasa iti vakṣyate tathāpi kāvyam nātya-
niṣyanda evety asti rasānupraveśaḥ. anena ca rasāṅgatvān nṛttasya nātyam.

[8.5] **prāyeṇeti** vacanān narapaticātukādy api saṅgrhītam. cakārān maṣṇ-
nam apy uddhatamiśram uddhatam ca maṣṇamiśram ityādikam api saṅgrhī-
5 tam bhaviṣyatīti sarvaṃ lakṣyam anena sūcitam.

[8.5.1] tathā hi—ḍombikāsu narapaticātukaprādhānyena pravṛttāsu suku-
māram eva śuddham rūpam. bhāṇakeṣu nṛsimhādicaritavarṇanam uddhatam
eva. yat punar maṣṇe 'py uddhatam praviśati tat taducitam eva. tato 'py alpa-
tvabahutvakṛto bhedaḥ. pūrvaḥ prasthānaprabandhaḥ. uttaraḥ ṣidgakabhe-
10 daḥ. uddhate tu maṣṇānupraveśād bhāṇikābhedaḥ. anyad api preranaṛāmā-
krīḍakarāsakahallisakādikam alpatvabahutvavaicitryakṛtam ihaiva praviṣṭam
veditavyam.

[8.5.2] tad uktaṃ cirantanaiḥ—

1 yady api ca] D M₁sm T₁ Σ_E, yady api M₁, lāsyē śṛṅgārā ... yady api (broken off) T₄ || nānyatra
rasa] M₁sm T₄ Σ_E, to 'nyatrāsa D M₁ T₁ || kāvyam] T₁ T₄ E₁₍₄₎, kāvyān D M₁ T₁^{vl} E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ E₂ 1–2
nātyaniṣyanda] T₁ T₄ E₁₍₄₎, nātyam niṣpadyata D M₁ T₁^{vl} E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ E₂ 2 evety asti] T₄ Σ_E, evety
asmin D M₁ T₁^{vl}, evāsti T₁ || rasānupraveśaḥ] T₁ T₄ E₁, nānupraveśo D M₁, kāvyē rasānuprave-
śaḥ E₂ || rasāṅgatvān] E₂, rathāṅgān D M₁ T₁^{pc}, rathāṅga T₁^{ac}, rasāṅga° T₄, rasāṅgān E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac}
E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, rasāṅgaṃ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎ || nātyam] Σ_M E₁, nātyatvaṃ jñeyam E₂ 3 vacanān] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄
Σ_E, vācanān T₁^{ac} || °cātukādy] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ Σ_E, °cātukādy T₁^{ac} 4 uddhatam] Σ_E, uddhataś Σ_M ||
maṣṇamiśram] T₄^{pc} Σ_E, maṣṇam D M₁ T₁ T₄^{ac} 5 lakṣyam anena] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, lakṣyamānena
T₄ 6 °cātuka°] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E KAV, °cātu° T₄ 6–7 sukumāram] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E KAV, sukāmaram
T₄ 7 °caritavarṇanam] T₄ Σ_E, °parītarṇanam D M₁ T₁, °caritavarṇane KAV 8 tat] Σ_M E₁₍₁₎^{vl}
E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, om. E₁₍₁₎ KAV || tato 'py] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ E₂, ato 'py T₄, atrāpy° E₁₍₄₎, tatrāpy KAV
9 pūrvaḥ prasthānaprabandhaḥ] Σ_E KAV, pūrvasthānaprapaṅca D M₁ T₁, p.n.p. E₁₍₂₎^{ma} || uttaraḥ
ṣidgaka°] E₁₍₁₎, uttarpiṭagaṭaka° D M₁ T₁, uttaraḥ ṣiṅgaṭaka° E₁₍₁₎^{vl} KAV, uttaraḥ ṣidgaka iti dvi° E₂
10 bhāṇikā°] T₄ Σ_E KAV, gāṇikā° D M₁ T₁ 11 °ādikam alpatva°] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, °ādikalpa° T₄, °ādim
alpatva° KAV || °bahutvavaicitrya°] T₄ Σ_E KAV, °vaicitrya° D M₁ T₁ || ihaiva] Σ_E KAV, iti haiva D M₁
T₁, itīhaiva T₄ 13 uktaṃ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, aktaṃ T₄ || cirantanaiḥ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, cintaraiḥ T₄

6 tathā hi] trividho hi geyakāvyaśya prayogaḥ. maṣṇa uddhato miśraś ca. tathā hi KAV 9–10
pūrvaḥ→ṣidgakabhedah] p.n.p. T₄ || pūrvaḥ→bhāṇikābhedaḥ] p.n.p. E₁₍₂₎^{ma} 13 tad uktaṃ
cirantanaiḥ] padārthabhinayasvabhāvāni ḍombikādini geyāni rūpakāṇi cirantanair uktani. tad
yathā KAA

268 I have privileged the reading of T₁ and T₄, *kāvyam nātyaniṣyanda*, although the reading
of D and M₁, i.e. *kāvyān nātyam niṣpadyata*, is also possible and would be translated as
‘[nevertheless] theatre arises from poetry’. The first sense is preferable, in my opinion,
since theatre is regarded by Abhinavagupta as the paradigmatic form from which other
forms of literary compositions are imagined to derive. For instance, while discussing the
possibility that *rasa* might also be found in other literary genres, Abhinavagupta says that
courtly epics (*sargabandha*) are overflowings (*abhīṣyanda*) of theatre (see the next note,
and n. 45 above). The same idea, that *rasa* is a prerogative of theatre and that it can be
found in poetry only by its being akin to drama, was attributed to Bhaṭṭa Tauta’s com-
ments on the compound *nātyarasāḥ* in ABh ad NŚ 6.33. See § 3.3.1, n. 112.

[8.4.3] And although it will be said that *rasa* does not arise anywhere but in theatre, nevertheless, poetry is a distillate of theatre.²⁶⁸ Therefore, [danced poetry] is permeated with *rasa*. And for this reason, since dance is subordinated to the *rasa* [by being connected with the poem], it [has been called, metaphorically,] 'theatre'.²⁶⁹

[8.5] By the word 'generally', words in praise of kings and so on are also included [as topics of danced poetry].²⁷⁰ Moreover, by saying 'and' (*ca*), other [uses of dance] such as the mild mixed with the vehement, the vehement mixed with the mild, and so on will also be included [under the definition of the *tāṇḍava*]. Hence the object to be defined[, namely dance and its genres, designated collectively as *tāṇḍava*,] has been indicated in its entirety by this [verse].

[8.5.1] To explain further: in Ḍombikās, which are performed [to poems] having the praise of kings as [their] main [theme], the delicate (*sukumāra*) [performance] is in an unmixed form. In Bhāṇakas, the [dance form] containing descriptions of the deeds of Nṛsiṃha and so on is indeed vehement (*uddhata*). As for that vehement [form] that mingles with a mild [one], it has to suit that very [mildness]. And again, the genre depends on the minor and major proportions [of vehemence], the former being [exemplified by] the compositions [called] Prasthāna, the latter [by] the genre [called] Ṣidgaka. And when a mild [form] mingles with a vehement [one], one has the genre called Bhāṇikā.²⁷¹ Depending on the variety in proportions, [other genres,] such as the Preraṇa, Rāmākṛīḍaka, Rāsaka, Hallīsaka, and so on, should also be known to be included under [the definition of danced poetry].

[8.5.2] As the ancients said:²⁷²

269 The text is not totally satisfactory. I have retained the reading *rasāṅgatvān nṛttasya* in E₂, but I am reluctant also to accept the following emendation in E₂, *nātyatvaṃ jñeyam*, since here Abhinavagupta is talking about an ordinary way of speaking, which has to be taken in its secondary sense, since forms of narrative dance, though based on a poetic text, lack dramatic enactment in the fullest sense, and are therefore to be considered as different from theatre (see above, 6.4.7, n. 166).

270 As stated immediately after, this remark aims at including the Ḍombikā, where the king and not the god is praised by the dancer. Therefore, it appears that all dance is based on the praise of gods, the Ḍombikā being just a particular instance of it, mingled with the theme of love as suggested by its purely *sukumāra* form.

271 I read this passage as part of the text, as supported by D, M₁, and T₁.

272 The same definitions are given by Hemacandra, Vāgbhaṭa, and Śāradātanaya. See Bose 2007: 182.

'channānurāgagarbhābhir uktibhir yatra bhūpateḥ |
āvarjyate manaḥ sā tu maṣṇā ḍombikā matā ||

nṛsimhasūkarādīnām varṇanām jalpayeḍ yataḥ |
nartakī tena bhāṇaḥ syād uddhatāṅgapravartitaḥ ||

5 gajādīnām gatiṃ tulyām kṛtvā pravasaṇam tathā |
alpāviddham sumasṇam tat prasthāṇam pracakṣate ||

sakhyāḥ samakṣam bhartur yad uddhataṃ vṛttam ucyate |
maṣṇam ca kvacid dhūrtacaritam ṣiḍgakas tu saḥ ||

10 bālakrīḍāniyuddhādī tathā sūkarasiṃhajā |
dhvajādīnā kṛtā krīḍā yatra sā bhāṇikā matā ||

hāsyaprāyam preraṇam tu syāt prahelikayāṇvitam |
ṛtavarṇanasamṃyuktaṃ rāmākṛīḍam tu bhāṣyate ||

maṇḍalena tu yan nṛttam hallisakam iti smṛtam |
ekas tatra tu netā syād gopastrīṇām yathā hariḥ ||

1 °garbhābhir] T₄ Σ_E KAA, °garhābhir D M₁ T₁ || uktibhir yatra] T₁ T₄ Σ_E KAA, ukṣi(...)tra D M₁ T₁^{vl} || bhūpateḥ] Σ_E KAA, bhūpatiḥ Σ_M 2 āvarjyate] Σ_M Σ_E KAA, ācaryate E₁₍₁₎^{vl} || maṣṇā ḍombikā] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ Σ_E KAA, maṣṇāṇo 'mbikā T₁^{ac} || matā ||] T₄ Σ_E KAA, matā || iti D M₁ T₁ 3 nṛsimhasūkarādīnām] D M₁^{pc} T₁ T₄ Σ_E KAA, nṛsimhasūkarādīnām nṛsimhasūkarādīnām M₁^{ac} || varṇanām] T₄ Σ_E KAA, varṇānā T₁, varṇanā D M₁ || jalpayeḍ] T₁^{ac} Σ_E KAA, jallayed D M₁ T₁^{pc}, kalpayeḍ T₄ E₁₍₄₎ 4 tena] Σ_E KAA, teta D M₁ T₄, te 'ta T₁ || °pravartitaḥ] T₄ Σ_E KAA, °pravartiṇaḥ D M₁ T₁ 5 gajādīnām] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ Σ_E KAA, gajādī T₁^{ac} || gatiṃ] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ Σ_E KAA, gadiṃ T₁^{ac} || pravasaṇam] D M₁sm T₁ T₄ E₁ KAA, pravaṇam M₁, pravacaṇam E₂ 6 alpāviddham] Σ_E KAA, allāviddham M₁, alpaviddham D T₁, alpaviddha° T₄ || sumasṇam] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E KAA, °masṇam T₄ 7 samakṣam] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ Σ_E KAA, samakṣa° T₁^{ac} || bhartur yad] T₄ Σ_E, etat tu D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₂₎^{ma}, vattur yam T₁^{ac}, patyur yad KAA 8 dhūrtacaritam] Σ_E KAA, brūte caritam Σ_M E₁₍₂₎^{ma} || ṣiḍgakas] Σ_M Σ_E, ṣiṅgakas KAA 9 bālakrīḍā°] T₁^{pc} Σ_E KAA, bālakrīḍādī° D M₁ T₁^{ac} T₄, bālakrīḍā KAA^{vl} || °siṃhajā] D M₁ T₄ Σ_E KAA, °siṃhajāḥ T₁ 10 dhvajādīnā kṛtā] Σ_E, nvajādikṛtā D M₁ T₁^{pc}, dhvajādīkṛtā T₁^{ac}, dhvajādīkṛtam T₄, dhavalādīkṛtā KAA || krīḍā] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E KAA, sā T₄ || bhāṇikā] T₄ Σ_E KAA, hāṇikā D M₁sm T₁^{ac}, gaṇikā M₁, (gā)ṇikā T₁^{pc} 11 hāsyā°] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ Σ_E KAA, āsya° T₁^{ac} || prahelika°] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ Σ_E KAA, pramehika° T₁^{ac} 12 °samṃyuktaṃ] T₄ Σ_E KAA, °samṃyuttaṃ T₁^{ac}, °samṃyukta° D M₁ || rāmā°] T₄ Σ_E KAA, °māma° D M₁ T₁ 13 nṛttam] T₄ T₁^{ac} Σ_E KAA, nāttam D M₁ T₁^{pc} || hallisakam] T₄ Σ_E KAA, bhaliḍakam D M₁ T₁ 14 ekas] T₄ Σ_E KAA, etat D M₁ T₁^{pc}, etas T₁^{ac} || netā] T₄ Σ_E KAA, tētā D M₁ T₁

When the mind of the king is seduced by words full of concealed passion, that mild [genre] is known as *Ḍombikā*.

When a dancer utters a description of *Nṛsiṃha*, the Boar, and so on, [that genre] is [known as] *Bhāṇa*, [and is] performed with vehement body movements.²⁷³

[When the dancer] adopts a gait similar to that of an elephant and the like, and sets out on a journey, [that genre,] endowed with scarce vehement [movements] and plenty of mild [ones], is called *Prasthāna*.

When the vehement behaviour of the husband is reported in the presence of a friend, commingled from time to time with [the narration of] his mild coquettish exploits,²⁷⁴ [the genre] is called *Ṣidgaka*.

That [genre] in which there are the sports of young children, combat, and so on, as well as sports relating to boars and lions, executed by means of banners and other [props], is called *Bhāṇikā*.²⁷⁵

The [genre called] *Preraṇa* is mainly [full of] mirth and is endowed with riddles. When it is connected with the description of seasons, [the genre is] called *Rāmākriḍa*.

The dance that is performed in a circle (*maṇḍala*) is called *Hallīsaka*. One single person should lead the [dance], just like *Hari* (i.e. *Kṛṣṇa*) among the shepherdesses.²⁷⁶

273 On this *Bhāṇa* and its connection with Vaiṣṇava themes, see Raghavan 1978: 536–537.

274 I follow the editions and the version transmitted by the KAA and read *dhūrtacaritaṃ*, although the reading of the manuscripts, *brūte caritaṃ*, is not incorrect, and could be translated as ‘and sometimes [the woman] relates [his] mild conduct’.

275 This might refer to a dance with a Krishnaite theme, narrating the deeds of *Kṛṣṇa* as a child, as well as those of *Viṣṇu* as the *Nṛsiṃha* and *Varāha avatāras*. On this topic, see Raghavan 1978: 543–544. According to Raghavan (*ibid.*: 536, n. 1), the mention of banners suggests a practice whereby the actors show or suggest the different animals by carrying banners depicting those very animals.

276 On *Hallisaka* and its similarity with some contemporary Indian dances with a Krishnaite theme, see Raghavan 1978: 537–538.

anekanartakīyojyaṃ citratālalayānvitam |
ā catuṣṣaṣṭiyugalād rāsakaṃ masṛṇoddhatam ||'

ityādi

5 etac ca granthavistārabhīyā bahutaraṃ yathāsambhavaṃ na likhitam anu-
payogāc ca. yat tūpayogi tad yathāvasaraṃ varṇayīṣyāmaḥ.

[8.5.3] eṣa tāvat padagate cchedyakaparakāraḥ. tatra tu parasparam asaṅgati-
doṣo 'yaṃ kaiścid udbhavyate, sa pūrvādinaiva pratisamāhitaḥ.

1 °ānvitam] Σ_M Σ_E KAA, °ānviṭaḥ T₁ 4 °taraṃ] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, °karaṃ T₁^{ac} || °sambhavaṃ] Σ_E, °sambhavanaṃ D M₁ T₁ 5 yathāvasaraṃ] D M₁^{ac} T₁ Σ_E, yathāsaraṃ M₁^{pc} 6 °gate] D M₁ T₁ E₁, °gataḥ E₂ || cchedyaka°] D M₁ T₁, codyaka° Σ_E 7 sa] D M₁ T₁ E₁, sa pūrvam E₂

3 ityādi] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎^{ma}, ityādi. ete prabhandhā nṛttātmakāḥ na nātyātmakanāṭakādivilakṣaṇāḥ. rāghavavijayamāricavadhādikaṃ rāgakāvyaṃ T₄ E₁₍₁₎ E₂ (in brackets in E₁₍₂₎ and E₁₍₄₎) 3–372.2 ityādi→kohalena] p.n.p. KAA 4–372.7 etac ca→tathā hi] p.n.p. T₄

277 On Rāsaka, see Raghavan 1963: 543–549, where he states that 'Bhoja says that Hallisaka itself becomes Rāsa if it is danced to definite Tālas' (ibid.: 544).

278 Two more sentences are given in T₄ and in the editions; Ramaswami Sastri puts these in brackets, as he remarks that they are not present in the manuscript he consulted, a transcript of M₁. If one considers the nature of T₄, and the following omissions in the same manuscript, it appears that these lines are in fact just a summary of the longer elaboration given in the other manuscripts, including the definition of *rāgakāvya*. The abridged version given in T₄ provides a transition between the verses attributed to the ancients and the examples of *rāgakāvya*s, leaving out the definition of the genre by Kohala. Moreover, the negative particle *na* makes no sense in these lines, which would better be read as *ete prabhandhā nṛttātmakāḥ nātyātmakanāṭakādivilakṣaṇāḥ. rāghavavijayamāricavadhādikaṃ rāgakāvyaṃ*. 'These compositions, which have the nature of dance, are different from [genres such as] the *nāṭaka* etc., which have a dramatic nature. Forms such as the *Rāghavavijaya* ("The Victory of Rāma") and *Māricavadha* ("The Slaughter of Mārica") etc. are called *rāgakāvya* ("melodic poems)": Madhusudan Shastri and P. Dvivedi do not notice the incongruence and take the said genres as dance-based but dramatic, while only *rāgakāvya*s are assumed to be non-theatrical. It may be possible to explain the negative particle in T₄ as the result of the reduplication of the syllable *na*, triggered by the following word *nātyātmaka*°, or as the interpretation of the author of the text of T₄. The author of the text copied in T₄ was certainly active some centuries later than Abhinavagupta, and possibly had in mind the more common name *uparūpaka*, given to these genres by later critics and aimed at emphasizing their dramatic nature. Another detail supporting the interpretation of these two lines as a later addition by the author of the text of T₄ is that Abhinavagupta does not use the term *prabandha* to refer collectively to this group, although this appellation becomes common by the time of Bhoja, who uses the name *prekṣyaprabandha*. On the composition of T₄ and its alleged author, see § 4.2.1.1 and § 4.2.2.2, n. 54.

[The genre] endowed with various *tālas* and *layas*, performed by more than one dancer, up to sixty-four couples, [is called] Rāsaka, [and] it has mild and vehement [movements].²⁷⁷

And so on and so forth.²⁷⁸

And insofar as possible this [group] has not been described very profusely for fear of prolixity, and because this is also of no use [to the present discussion]. We will just describe whatever is useful [to it] as the opportunity arises.

[8.5.3] With regard to [the] verbal content, this form [of dance connected with a poetic text contains] several sentences [with several topics] (*chedyaka*).²⁷⁹ However, the fault of reciprocal unconnectedness [between the sentences or topics], pointed out by some in this connection, has been refuted with the beginning of the previous [verse].²⁸⁰

279 I retain the reading of the manuscripts, i.e. *chedyakaprakāraḥ*, since *chedyaka* is one of the possible ways of arranging the verbal text (here *pada*) into a musical structure, which fits well with the topic of dance performed to poetry set to music. *Chedyaka* and *kulaka* are described in Nś 31.321 as follows: *dvividhā prakṛtiś cāśya kulakaṃ chedyakaṃ* [E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, *bhedyakaṃ* E₁₍₄₎^{pc}] *tathā | ekārthaṃ* [corr. H. Ramanathan, *ekārđham* E₁₍₄₎] *kulakaṃ tatra pṛthak chedyakam* [E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, *bhedyakaṃ* E₁₍₄₎^{pc}] *iśyate ||* ‘The nature of the [group of seven *gītakas*] is twofold: *kulaka* and *chedyaka*. Among the two, the *kulaka* has a single topic, while the *chedyaka* has several’. Abhinavagupta defines the two as follows, in ABh *ad locum*, vol. 4, p. 268: *ekārthaparasparānvitārthavastvaṅgayuktaṃ kulakam viparītaṃ chedyakam* [corr., *bhedyakam* E₁₍₄₎]. ‘The *kulaka* is endowed with *vastus* or *aṅgas* that have a single topic or mutually related topics. *Chedyaka* is the opposite.’ The reading *chedyaka* as opposed to *kulaka* is also confirmed by a further remark at the end of chapter 4, where Abhinavagupta recalls the different types of dance taken into consideration in his commentary and the reasons why they are different from theatre. One of them is described as: *kulakāchedyātmanaḥ kāvyasya gītyādhāratānāntarīyakatvamātṛeṇa* (ABh *ad* Nś 4.320, vol. 1, p. 203). ‘[Theatre has been said to be different from dance] by the simple fact that [in dance] the poetic text (*kāvya*), consisting in *kulakā* [corr. into *kulaka*?] or *chedyaka*, is invariably connected with the melody that is its basis’.

280 According to the *Madhusūdanī*, the inconsistency lies in the fact that dance had previously been said to be dependent on *laya* and *tāla*, while it is now being connected with words. In the light of the correction to *chedyaka* and its meaning, I think that the fault of reciprocal unconnectedness (*asaṅgatidoṣa*) refers to a previous discussion earlier in this chapter, where the fault of reciprocal unconnectedness between the topics of the *Ḍombikā* and other danced genres was dismissed—on the grounds that dance is said always to conform to the praise of the deities or the theme of love—by quoting the present verse, i.e. Nś 4.268cd–269ab. Cf. above, 1.7.1 and n. 36.

[8.5.4] eṣa eva tu prakāraḥ kalāvidhinā nibadhyamāno rāghavavijayamārīcavadhādikaṃ rāgakāvyaḥ udbhāvayatīti. yathoktaṃ [kohalena—
‘layāntaraprayogeṇa rāgaiś cāpi vivecitam |]
nānārasaṃ sunīrvāhyakathaṃ kāvyam iti smṛtam ||’

- 5 [8.5.5] layataś cāsyā gītyādharatvenāprādhānye gīter eva prādhānyam iti na kāvyārthaviparyāsaśena rāgabhāśādiviparyāso nātya iva.
tathā hi rāghavavijayasya hi ṭhakkarāgeṇaiva vicitravarṇanīyatve ‘pi nirvāhaḥ. māricavadhasya kakubhagrāmarāgeṇaiva. ata eva rāgakāvyanīty ucyanta etāni. rāgo gītyātmakatvāt svarasya tadādhārabhūtaṃ kāvyam iti.

1 eva] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, va T₁^{ac} || kalā°] E₁₍₁₎^{pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, kala° D M₁ T₁, lā° E₁₍₁₎^{ac} || nibadhya°] E₁₍₁₎^{pc} E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, nipathya° D M₁ T₁^{pc}, nipadhya° T₁^{ac}, niṣathya° E₁₍₁₎^{ac} 2 °ādikaṃ rāgakāvya°] D M₁ T₁ E₁, °ādikarāgakāvya° E₂ || udbhāvayatīti] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎ E₁₍₄₎ E₂, udbhāyatīti E₁₍₁₎ || kohalena] Σ_E, om. D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎^{ma} 3 layāntaraprayogeṇa rāgaiś cāpi vivecitam] Σ_E KAA, om. D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₂₎^{ma} || vivecitam] Σ_E KAA^{vl}, vicitritam KAA 5 layataś] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, iyataś T₁^{ac} 6 rāgabhāśādi°] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎ E₂, rāgabhāvādi° E₁₍₄₎ 7 ṭhakkarāgeṇaiva] Σ_E, gākā(...).rāgeṇaiva D M₁ T₁, rāgeṇaiva T₄, ḍhakkarāgeṇaiva KAV 8 kakubhagrāmarāgeṇaiva] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, kakubhagrāme rāgeṇaiva T₄, kukubhagrāmarāgeṇaiva KAV || rāgakāvyanīty] Σ_E, rāgakāny Σ_M || ucyanta] T₄ Σ_E, ucyate D M₁ T₁ 9 gītyātmakatvāt] D M₁ T₁ E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} E₂, gītyātmakaḥ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} || svarasya] D M₁ T₁ E₁, svarapradhānaḥ E₂

5–376.4 layataś→ darśitam] p.n.p. KAV 9–374.11 etāni→vyāptam] p.n.p. T₄

- 281 The manuscripts do not read *kohalena* as the author of the definition of *rāgakāvya*, and T₄ summarizes this part (cf. n. 278 above). I suspect that the attribution of this quotation to Kohala, together with the first part of the verse, was supplied by Ramakrishna Kavi from the *Alaṃkāracūḍamaṇi*. I have therefore left both in square brackets in the text as well as in the translation. In the edition by Parikh, the verse is slightly different, but the readings given in E₁₍₁₎ are provided in the apparatus there as variants. This verse comes at the end of the series of verses defining the Ḍombikā and other forms of staged dance, common to the *Abhinavabhāratī*, to which Goṣṭhī and Śrīgadita (defined in terms very similar to the Śiṅgaka/Ṣidgaka) are added: *layāntaraprayogeṇa rasaiś* [KAA, *rāgaiś* KAA^{vl}] *cāpi vicitritam* [KAA, *vivecitam* KAA^{vl}] | *nānārasaṃ sunīrvāhyakathaṃ kāvyam iti smṛtam* || *iti* || [...] *ādīgrahaṇāt śampāccalitadvipadyādīparīgrahaḥ. prapañcas tu brahmabharata-kohalādisāstreḥyo ’vagantavyaḥ* (KAA 8.4, vol. 2, p. 449). I take *ādīgrahaṇāt* as a reference to the *ādi°* in the compound in KA 8.4, which looks like an incomplete enumeration: *geyaṃ ḍombikābhānaprasthānaśiṅgakahānikāpreṇarāmākriḍahallisakarāsakagoṣṭhī-śrīgāditarāgakāvyaḍi* ||.

[8.5.4] When it is regulated by units of time (*kalā*) [in the musical metre], this very form is said to give rise to the type [called] *rāgakāvya*—such as the *Rāghavavijaya* ('Rāma's Victory'), the *Māricavadha* ('The Slaughter of Mārica'), and so on. As [Kohala] said:

[The *rāgakāvya*] is known to be a poem (*kāvya*) with a well-performed story, [endowed with] various *rasas*, [distinguished by the use of different tempos (*layāntara*) and musical modes (*rāga*)].²⁸¹

[8.5.5] The tempo (*laya*), however, is not the main component of a [*rāgakāvya*], since this is based on the melody (*gīti*), so the melody is indeed principal.²⁸² Therefore, the musical mode (*rāga*), the language (*bhāṣa*), and so on do not change depending on the changes in poetic meaning, unlike in drama.²⁸³

To illustrate: even though it is meant to depict various [episodes], the *Rāghavavijaya* is performed exclusively with the *rāga ṭhakka*; and the *Māricavadha*, with the *kakubha grāma-rāga* alone.²⁸⁴ That is why they are called *rāgakāvya*s. [The *rāgakāvya* is] a poem (*kāvya*) grounded in a *rāga*, since [its] notes (*svara*) are [arranged in a certain] melody.²⁸⁵

282 The word *gīti* is used to refer to the tune or the melodic aspect alone of musical forms. See Ramanathan 1999: 54–55.

283 One of the characteristics of drama is that all its elements ultimately depend on the emotional meaning to be conveyed, and undergo variation according to the change in the meaning of the poetic text. Musical modes are used according to the time of the day, the season, and the *rasa* within the particular play, while languages vary according to the character types. This does not happen in dance, nor in *rāgakāvya*s. As their name indicates, although they are endowed with a poetic text and a story, *rāgakāvya*s are governed by fixed melodic modes.

284 Mataṅga, who first describes the *rāgas* in the *Brhaddeśi*, refers to *grāmarāgas* and *deśirāgas*. The first type seems to have been more ancient, associated with drama and derived from the *jātis*, on which see Te Nijenhuis 1970: 168–193. *ṭhakka* and *kakubha* are listed among the thirty *grāmarāgas* by Śārṅgadeva (SR 2.1.8–14).

285 The particularity of a musical composition based on *rāga* is that its structure is organized around a melodic form, while in other kinds of musical composition, the melodic organization is concretized in a fixed framework of *tāla* and *pada* (cf. Ramanathan 1999: 50).

[8.6] evam idaṃ ca nṛttaṃ saptakṛtiprakārair bhagavata eva prasṛtam. tathāhi—śuddham eva nṛttaṃ recakāṅgahārātmakam. tato gītakādyabhinayonmukham. tato 'pi gānakriyāmātrānusāri vādyatālānusāri ca bāhupreñkhaṇoraḥkampaṇāśvanamanonnamanacaraṇasaraṇasphuritakampitabhṛūtārāparispandakaṭicchedāṅgavalanamātrarūpam. yac cokatṃ—'taṇḍunāpi tataḥ samyag gānabhāṇḍasamanvitaḥ || nṛttaprayogaḥ^a ityādi. gītir gānam itihy atra vyutpattir uktā. tato 'py uddhatasukumāramiśrātmakabhedacatuṣṭayabhinnakāvyaṛthānusāritayā caturvidham.

10 [8.6.1] tatra prathamo bhedo laukike svatantranṛtte devatātoṣaṇādau vā. dvitīyaḥ pūrvaraṅgavidhau, pariśiṣṭanṛttalakṣyatayā vāsya tāṇḍavādiviśvaṃ vyūptam itihya pūrvam uktam 'prayogam aṅgahārāṇām ācakṣva bharatāya vai |^b iti

1 ca nṛttaṃ] Σ_E, ca(...)ttaṃ D M₁ T₁^{pc}, tyaktaṃ T₁^{ac} || saptakṛtiprakārair] D^{pc} M₁sm Σ_E, saptakṛtiprakārair D^{ac}, saptakṛtiḥ prakārair M₁, satptatiḥ prakārair T₁ 3–4 ca bāhupreñkha^o] E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc} E₂, cañcālapreñkha^o D M₁ E₁₍₁₎^{vl} E₁₍₂₎^{ma}, ca preñkha^o E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac} 4 'saraṇasphuritakampita^o] T₁ E₁, 'saraṇakampita^o D M₁sm, 'saraṇakañcuka^o M₁, 'saraṇanetrakampita^o E₂ 4–5 'bhrūtārā^o] Σ_E, 'bhūtabhūtārā^o D M₁, 'bhrūtabhṛūta^o T₁^{ac}, 'śrūtaśrūtārā^o T₁^{pc} 5 yac cokatṃ] E₁₍₂₎^{pc} E₁₍₄₎^{pc}, yatroktaṃ D M₁ T₁^{pc} E₁₍₁₎ E₁₍₂₎^{ac} E₁₍₄₎^{ac}, ye 'troktaṃ T₁^{ac}, yathoktaṃ E₂ 10 'nṛttalakṣyatayā] D M₁ E₁, 'nṛttalakṣyam taya T₁^{ac}, 'nam ṛttalakṣye tayā T₁^{pc}, 'nṛttalakṣye E₂ || vāsya tāṇḍavādiviśvaṃ] D M₁ T₁ E₁, savādyam tāṇḍavādi vidhau E₂ 11 itihya] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, iti guhā T₁^{ac}, i T₄ || ācakṣva] D M₁ T₁^{pc} T₄ Σ_E, ācakṣma T₁^{ac} || vai] T₄ Σ_E, om. D M₁ T₁

a NŚ 4.260cd–261ab: tenāpi hi tataḥ samyag gānabhāṇḍasamanvitaḥ || nṛttaprayogaḥ sṛṣṭo yaḥ sa tāṇḍava iti smṛtaḥ |

b NŚ 4.17ab: prayogam aṅgahārāṇām ācakṣva surasattama |

286 It is possible to agree with Varma (1957: 32) that the word *bhagavant* ('the blessed one') here must refer to Śiva as the origin of the dance tradition; however, in what follows, a special role is ascribed to Taṇḍu in the transmission, especially with respect to the *tāṇḍava* as a dance closely connected with music.

287 According to the *Madhusūdanī*, the seven varieties explained here are the genres—such as the Ḍombikā, Bhāṇa, Prasthāna, etc.—defined by the ancients, which does not agree with Abhinavagupta's commentary. Moreover, although the types of *nṛtya* are listed in the *Avaloka* ad *Daśarūpaka* 1.8 as seven, the dance forms listed by Abhinavagupta as given by the ancients are eight, and do not fully correspond to the list given in the *Avaloka* (cf. § 2.1, n. 28).

[8.6] And in this way, this dance issued from the blessed one²⁸⁶ in seven forms.²⁸⁷ To illustrate: 1) the abstract dance (*śuddha*), made of *recakas* and *aṅgahāras*; 2) then, the one that rests on the enactment of [the songs of the *pūrvaraṅga*, i.e.] the *gītakas*[, the *āsāritas*], and so on (*gītakādyabhinayonmukha*); 3) thereafter, [the dance] that, accompanying the mere action of singing (*gānakriyāmātra*) and the rhythm [provided] by the percussion (*vādyatāla*), consists in swinging the arms, jerking the chest, bending up and down at the sides, quickly moving the feet, quivering and shaking, the eyebrows and eyeballs throbbing, the hips opening, and the body spinning. This has been also expressed [in Nś 4.260ab–261cd]:²⁸⁸ ‘Then Taṇḍu, for his part, properly [(re)created] the practice of dance as connected with singing and drumming.’²⁸⁹ For in this [verse], the word *gāna* (‘song’) has been explained etymologically as *gīti* (‘melody’).²⁹⁰ And then, [dance is said to have] four varieties by conforming to the different meanings of the poetic text, according to a fourfold division into 4) the vehement, 5) the delicate, 6–7) and the mixed [genres, namely, the vehement commingled with the delicate and the delicate commingled with the vehement].²⁹¹

[8.6.1] Among these [seven types of dance], the first variety (i.e. abstract dance) [is found] in worldly dance, which is independent [of theatre], or [dance] aimed at satisfying the gods and so on.²⁹² The second [variety, i.e. the one that aims at enacting some specific songs, is found] in the performance of the preliminary rite (*pūrvaraṅga*). Alternatively, this [second variety of dance connected with song] extends to the totality [of dance], starting with the

288 I follow the correction proposed by Ramaswami Sastri in E₁₍₂₎: *yac cōktam*.

289 The verse starts slightly differently in 4.260a: *tenāpi hi tataḥ samyag*, § 2.5, n. 147. The action of connecting dance with vocal and instrumental music is seen, in the commentary on this verse, as a proper creative act performed by Taṇḍu, on which see § 2.5.

290 In ABh ad Nś 4.260cd–261ab, vol. 1, p. 168, *gāna* was glossed with *gīta*. With the term *gīti*, Abhinavagupta probably wants to point out that dance is connected with the mere melodic aspect of the song, and not yet with the meaning of the lyrics.

291 According to Varma (1957: 17–20), the last four forms can be called *nṛtya*, since they require an *abhinaya* similar to that used in *nātya*. This position is not shared by the present author, since the value of the word *abhinaya* in danced poetry is discussed at length in the passage translated here, and is ultimately found to be different from that in theatre, on which see also § 3.5.

292 This use of abstract dance for satisfying the gods refers to dance performed on the occasion of ritual festivities before an icon.

bhagavatā tatra taṇḍunā 'ṅgahārāḥ saprayogāḥ proktāḥ. tatraivaṃbhūtās tāvad aṅgahārā mahyaṃ proktā itī recakaiḥ piṇḍibandhaiś ca sahitāṃ muninā nirūpitāḥ, karaṇāny api tadupayogitvena. āśaṅkitacodyanirākaraṇaprasaktānuprasaktaṃ nṛttasvarūpaṃ darśitam.

2-3 nirūpitāḥ] D M₁ T₁ Σ_E, nirūpitām T₄ 3 karaṇāny] T₄ Σ_E, karaṇādy D M₁ T₁ 3-4 °prasaktaṃ] D M₁ T₁^{pc} Σ_E, °prasaktā T₁^{ac}, °praktā T₄ 4 nṛttasvarūpaṃ] T₄ Σ_E, nṛttam ca rūpa° D M₁ T₁

tāṇḍava etc., since it characterizes all the remaining dance forms.²⁹³ [8.6.2] Thus it was stated earlier in this [chapter] that [Śiva called Taṇḍu and said:] ‘Do instruct Bharata in the performance of the *aṅgahāras*’ (NŚ 4.18ab).²⁹⁴ Thus the blessed Taṇḍu explained the *aṅgahāras* along with their uses. At that junction, the sage [Bharata] illustrated the *aṅgahāras*, to the extent that they had been told to him [by Taṇḍu], together with the *recakas* and *piṇḍibandhas*, as well as the *karaṇas*, since they are used in [them].²⁹⁵ The essence of dance has been illustrated along with the removal of objections and doubts, and all the collateral topics.

293 This statement seems to indicate that the second variety of dance, the one depending on the enactment of songs, can alone signify all the remaining genres. The following passage comprises a summary of the salient steps in the transmission of dance. The introduction of dance into the *pūrvaraṅga*, the proper object of this chapter, depends on the first transmission of abstract dance from Śiva to Bharata, through Taṇḍu. This last is responsible for connecting dance with songs and music, which explains why the *tāṇḍava* bears his name, as narrated in NŚ 4.260cd–261ab (cf. § 2.5, n. 147). From this connection will derive all the other genres of staged dance falling under the categories from 2 to 7, such as *rāgakāvya*s, *ṛttakāvya*s, etc. All of these staged forms differ from the first category, which includes worldly dance as well as the abstract dance used to satisfy the gods outside a theatrical context, since they are connected, albeit to different degrees, with vocal and instrumental music, as well as with the content of the lyrics. Such recalling of the narrative of the transmission of dance justifies the exclusive focus of the fourth chapter on dance as performed in the *pūrvaraṅga* and the following detailed description of the sequence of performance in it, despite Abhinavagupta’s long digression on the other genres of narrative dance. On the narrative structure of the *Tāṇḍavādhyāya*, see § 1.3.3.

294 For the full verse and its context, see § 1.3.3, n. 75.

295 This looks like a paraphrase of the following verse, NŚ 4.18cd–19ab: *tato ye taṇḍunā proktās tv aṅgahārā mahātmanā || tān vaḥ karaṇasaṃyuktān vyākhyāsyāmi sarecakān* | For a translation, see § 1.3.3, n. 76.

Appendix: Hemacandra's *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*

Kāvyaṅuśāsana (KA)

geyaṃ ḍombikābhāṅaprasthānaśiṅgabhāṅikāpreraṅarāmā-
krīḍahallisakarāsakagoṣṭhīśrīgaditarāgakāvyaḍi || 8.4 ||

Alaṅkāracūḍāmaṅi (KAA)

padārthābhinayasvabhāvāni ḍombikādīni geyāni rūpakāṅi cirantanair uktāni. tad ya-
thā—

- (59) channānurāgagarbhābhīr uktibhīr yatra bhūpateḥ |
āvarjyate manaḥ sā tu maṣṅṅā ḍombikā matā ||
 - (60) ṅṣiṅṅhasūkarādīnāṃ varṅanaṃ jalpayeḍ yataḥ |
nartakī tena bhāṅaḥ syāḍ uddhatāṅgapravartitaḥ ||
 - (61) gajāḍīnāṃ gatīṃ tulyāṃ kṛtvā pravasaṅaṃ tathā |
alpāviddhaṃ sumasṅṅaṃ tat prasthāṅaṃ pracakṣate ||
 - (62) sakhyāḥ samakṣaṃ patyur yaḍ uddhataṃ vṛttam ucyate |
maṣṅṅaṃ ca kvacid dhūrtacaritaṃ śiṅgakas tu saḥ ||
 - (63) bālakrīḍāṅiyuddhāḍi tathā sūkarasiṅṅhajā |
dhalāḍikṛtā krīḍā yatra sā bhāṅikā matā ||
 - (64) hāsyapṛāyaṃ preraṅaṃ tu syāt prahelikayāṅvitaṃ |
(65) ṛtavarṅanasāṅyuktaṃ rāmākṛīḍaṃ tu bhāṅyate ||
 - (66) maṅḍalena tu yaṅ ṅṛttaṃ hallisakam iti smṛtam |
ekas tatra tu netā syāḍ gopastrīṅṅaṃ yathā hariḥ ||
 - (67) anekanartakīyojyaṃ citratāḍalyāṅvitaṃ.
ācatuḥṣaṣṭīyugaḍād rāsakaṃ maṣṅṅoddhataṃ ||
 - (68) goṣṭhe yatra viharataś ceṣṭitaṃ iha kaiṭabhadviṣaḥ kiṅcī |
riṣṭāsurapramathanaprabhṛti tad icchanti goṣṭhīti ||
 - (69) yasṃiṅ kulāṅṅanā patyuh sakhyagre varṅayed guṅāṅ |
upāḍambhaṃ ca kurute geye śrīgaditaṃ tu tat ||
 - (70) ḍayāntarapṛayogeṅa rāgaīś cāpi vicītritaṃ |
nāṅarasaṃ sunīrvāhyakathaṃ kāvyam iti smṛtam || iti ||
- āḍigrahaṅāt śāṅpācchalitadvīpadyāḍīparigrahaḥ. pṛapaṅcas tu brahmabharatakoha-
ḍāḍīśātrebhyo 'vagaṅtavyaḥ.

Viveka (KAV)

masṛṇeti. trividho hi geyakāvyaṣya prayogaḥ masṛṇa uddhato miśraṃ ca. tathā hi—
'ḍombikāṣu narapaticāṭukaprādhānyena pravṛttāsu sukumāram eva śuddhaṃ rūpam.
bhāṇakeṣu nṛsimhādicaritavarṇane uddhatam eva. yat punar masṛṇe 'py uddhatam
pradiśati tad ucitam eva. tatrāpy alpatvabahutvakṛto bhedaḥ. pūrvaḥ prasthānapra-
bandha. uttaraḥ śiṅgaṭakabhedaḥ. uddhate tu masṛṇānupraveśād bhāṇikābhedaḥ.
anyad api preraṇarāmākṛīdarāśakahallīśakādim alpatvabahutvavaicitryakṛtam ihaiva
praviṣṭam veditavyam.

nanu ḍombikāśiṅgaṭakāḍau anyonyānucitatvaṃ vākyānāṃ tataś cānanvaye katham
rañjakatvam iti cet, na, devatāstuteḥ strīpumbhāvasamāśrayasya ca śṛṅgāśraya sarva-
trānugamāt. tathā cāha—'devastutyāśrayakṛtam strīpumbhāvasamāśrayam.' iti. tata
eva cūḍāmaṇiḍombikāyāṃ pratijñātam—

he devi ḍombī ṇavvamisahii homi haum |
coriyamihuṇahaṃ vammahasāru kahemi tau ||

caturvargopadeśasya rāghavavijayādirāgakāvyēṣu dṛṣṭatvāt. ḍombikāḍau tu kāmasyai-
va pracchannānurāgaparamarahasyopadeśāt. 'yad vāmābhīniveśitvam' ity anena ma-
nmathasāratvenābhīdhānāt. śiṃhaśūkaradhavalādivarṇanenāpi bhāṇakapreraṇabhā-
ṇikāḍāv aprastutapraśamsārthāntaranyāsanidarśanādīnā puruṣārthasyaivopadeśada-
rśanāt.

atha pāṭhyasya geyasya ca rūpakasya ko viśeṣaḥ. ayam ākhyāyate—pāṭhye hi—
aṅgaṃ gītaṃ cety ubhayam apratiṣṭhitam. tathā hi karakaraṇacārīmaṇḍalādi yat ta-
trāṅgopayogi tat svarūpeṇa layādivyavasthayā cāniyatam eva yathārasam prayujyamā-
natvena viparyāsāt. geye tu gītaṃ aṅgaṃ ca dvayam api svapratīṣṭham. tathā hi—
yasya yādṛśam layayatisvarūpādikam nirūpitaṃ tan na viparyeti mantrādivat. yady
api kvacid varṇāṅgaprādhānyam yathā prasthānāḍau, kvacid vādaprādhānyam yathā
bhāṇakādiṣu bhagnatālaparikramaṇāḍau, kvacid gīyamānarūpakābhīdheyaprādhā-
nyam yathā śiṅgaṭakāḍau, kvacin nṛttaprādhānyā yathā ḍombilikādiprayogānantaram
huḍukkārādyavasare. ata eva tatra lokabhāṣayā vallimārga iti prasiddhiḥ. tathāpi gītā-
śrayatvena vādyādeḥ prayoga iti geyam iti nirdiṣṭam. rāgakāvyēṣu ca gītenaiva nirvā-
haḥ. tathā hi rāghavavijayasya vicitravarṇanīyatve 'pi ḍhakkarāgeṇaiva nirvāhaḥ, māri-
cavadhāsyā tu kakubhagrāmārāgeṇaiveti. kiṃ ca pāṭhye śakṣātkāraḥkalpānuvyavasāya-
sampraty u(? sampratyayo)payoginaḥ pātraṃ prati bhāṣāniyamasya niyatasya chando-
lamkārādeś cābhīdhānam dṛśyate. gīyamānam ca nābhīniyate asaṅgatyāpatter api tu
yādṛśā layatālādīnā yādṛgarthasūcanayogyo 'bhīnayaḥ sāttvikādi. pradhānarasānusāri-
tayā prayogayogyas taducitārthaparipūraṇam dhruvāgītena kriyate. geye ca sūdāder iva
vastubhūtarūparasādīmadhyapātiviśayaviśeṣayojanayā kṛtā prītiḥ sādhyā. ḍombikāder
na naṭasyevālukikarūpapṛadurbhāvanayā.

tathā hi—ḍombikāḍau varṇacchaṭā varṇāḍiprayoge tāvad abhinayakathaiva nāsti, kiṃ tatra vicāryate, kevalanṛttasvabhāvaṃ hi tat. tadanantaraṃ tu dhārāparikrama-pūrvakalayaprayogāvasare

pālaale sesāhiṇi hu jaya jaya lacchivatthalamaliā ||

ityāḍi yad gīyate tat kasyoktirūpam. yadi tāvan nartitum āgatāyā laukikyā ḍombikāpra-bhṛter nartakyās tadā saivedānīm evaṃbhūtaṃ vasturūpaṃ laukikaṃ vacanam abhi-dhatte. gāyanāḍisamkramitasvavākyatayeti kaḥ sākṣātkārakalpārthaḥ. sākṣātkāra-ka-lpatvādhyavasāyagocarīkāryatvaṃ ca pāṭhyasya pradhāno 'ṃśaḥ. tena yathā loke kaścit kaṃcid anyopadeśagānāḍikrameṇa vastūdbodhanakaraṇadvāreṇa vā chandonupra-veśitayā vā kasyacin manasyāvarjanāḍiśayaṃ vidhatte nṛtyann api gāyann api, tadvad eva ḍombikākāvyaḍau draṣṭavyam.

'heṭṭhe vi ḍombī'

ityāḍāv api vacasi saiva ḍombikā narapatiparitoṣakārthābhidhāyivacananiṣṭhena gīte-na vādyena nṛtyena ca rājānam anurañjayituṃ grhītodyamā vaktrītena pūrvasthītā madhye kācid īḍṣī cauryakāmukakelilālasamānasā, kācit punar evaṃvidhā, kaścid evaṃbhūtas cauryakāmukaḥ, ko 'py evaṃbhūtas tatra kācid evaṃ prauḍhadṛṭīty eva-māḍi rājaputrahṛdayānupraveśayogya tatprasādanena dhanāḍyārjanopāyam abhida-dhatī tam eva rājaputraṃ paratvena tathaiva vā samuddiśya anyad api ceṣṭitam abhi-dhāyānte ḍombikākṛtyam evopasaṃharati. guṇamālayāṃ—

'jāmi tārā anuḍia puṇu ṇavvīsami' ||

ityāḍau tatra tu sā nṛtyantī ḍombikā bahutaroparañjakagītāḍipaṭuṭeṭaka parivṛtā tvāṃ praty evam aham upaślokitavatīti tanmadhyavartigāyanamukhasamkramitanijavaca-nā laukikenaiva rūpeṇa tadgīyamānarūpakagatalayatālasāmyena tāvan nṛtyati. tadgī-yamānapadārthasya ca sātīśayam āvarjanīye rājāḍau hṛdayānupraveśitā darśayituṃ laukikavyavahāragatahastabhrūkarmaromāñcākṣivikāratulyayogakṣematayaivāṅgavi-kārāḍisambhavam apy ākṣipati. evaṃ gītena rajanaṃ prādhānyena vidhāya tadupayo-ginaṃ cāṅgavyāpāraṃ pradarśya nṛttena punaś cittagrahaṇaṃ kurvati nṛttaṃ pradhā-nabhāvaṃ gītaṃ ca tadupasarjanabhāvaṃ nayanti tata eva tadabhinayam anāḍriya-māṇā tadgīyamānāṅgabhāvākṣiptatatsamucitabhāvam evāṅgāvīkṣepaṃ karoti layapa-riṣvakvaṇāḍau. tatreyatyamśe laukikamātrasvabhāva eva rāmanaṭāḍivavahāraṇa kā-vyaprayojyaprayojakabhāvāśaṅkā. tadanantaraṃ ca yathaiva sā gītanṛttāḍi prāyuṅkta tathaiva tatsaḍṛśaṃ nartakī prayuṅkte. na tu ḍombikāṃ sākṣātkārakalpena darśayati tadiyāḍhāyaryāḍinā svātmarūpapracchādanāḍyabhāvāt. tata eva na ḍombikāṃ sākṣātkārakalpena sā darśayati, api tu tathaiva nṛttaṃ sābhinayaṃ kevalaṃ ca pradarśayatīti

nālaukikarūpāntaraprādurbhāvaneti. vyutpattyabhisandhānaṃ ca geye nāsti pāṭhye
tu tad eva pradhānaṃ bharatamuniprabhṛtīnāṃ tathaiva mūlataḥ pravṛtter ity alaṃ
bahunā aprastutaprapaṅceneti.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

ABh	<i>Abhinavabhāratī</i>
AL	<i>Avaloka</i>
AŚ	<i>Arthaśāstra</i>
ĀŚ	<i>Āgamaśāstra</i>
CS	<i>Carakasamhitā</i>
DhĀ	<i>Dhvanyāloka</i>
DhĀL	<i>Locana ad Dhvanyāloka</i>
DP	<i>Dhātupāṭha</i>
DR	<i>Daśarūpaka</i>
GOS	Gaekwad's Oriental Series, see <i>Nāṭyaśāstra</i> and <i>Abhinavabhāratī</i>
ĪPK	<i>Īśvarapratyabhijñānakārikā</i>
ĪPV	<i>Īśvarapratyabhijñānavimarśinī</i>
ĪPVV	<i>Īśvarapratyabhijñānavivrtivimarśinī</i>
KA	<i>Kāvyaṅuśāsana</i>
KAA	<i>Alaṅkāracūḍāmaṇi ad Kāvyaṅuśāsana</i>
KAV	<i>Viveka ad Kāvyaṅuśāsana</i>
MBh	<i>Mahābhāṣya</i>
ND	<i>Nāṭyadarpaṇa</i>
NR	<i>Nṛttaratnāvalī</i>
NŚ	<i>Nāṭyaśāstra</i>
NS	<i>Nyāyasūtra</i>
NSBh	<i>Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya</i>
PDhS	<i>Padārthadharmasamgraha = Praśastapādabhāṣya</i> . See Bronkhorst & Ramseier 1994.
SD	<i>Sāhityadarpaṇa</i>
ŚP	<i>Śṛṅgāraprakāśa</i>
SR	<i>Samgītaratnākara</i>
VP	<i>Vākyapadīya</i>

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