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The Surprise of Spanda: An Aesthetic Approach to a Phenomenology of Transcendence (Rāmakaṇṭha ad Spandakārikā 2.6 [1.22/22])

Lyne Bansat-Boudon

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'Verità e bellezza'
Essays in Honour of Raffaele Torella

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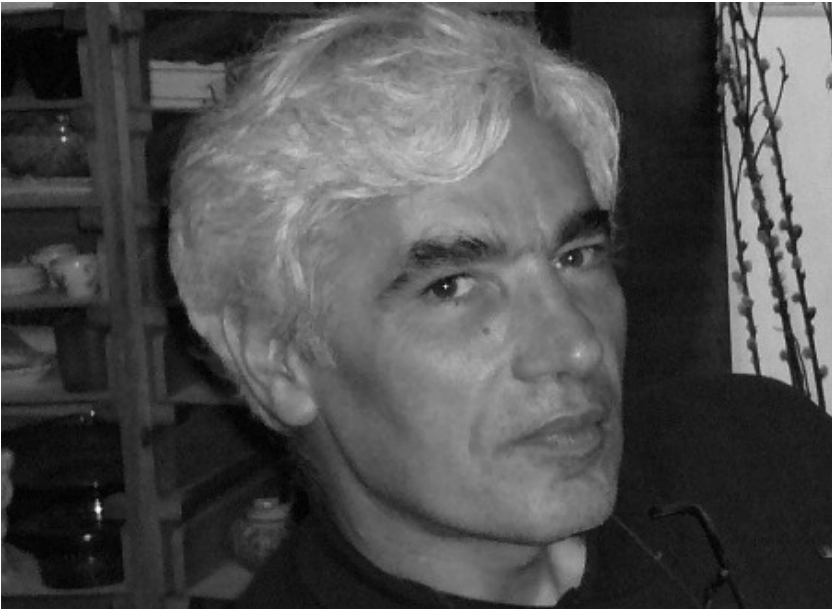
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Raffaele Torella

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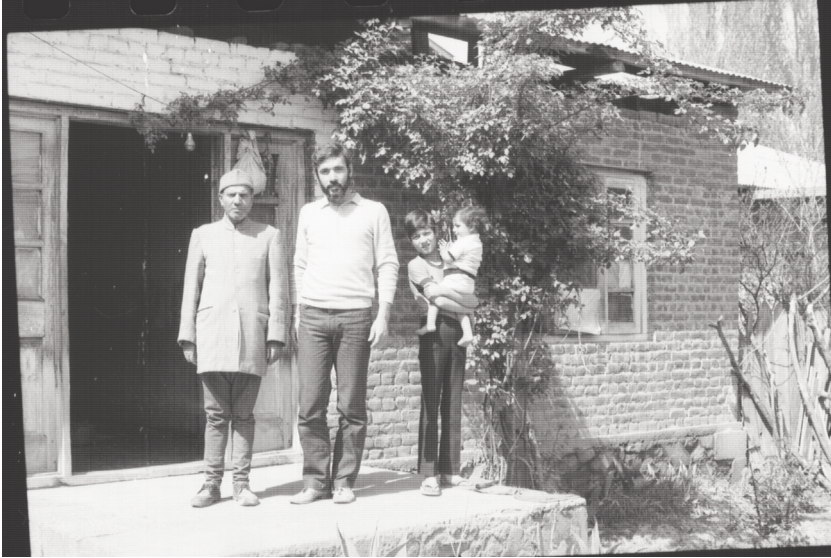
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Dinanāth Yach and Raffaele Torella in Śrīnagar in the mid-1980s



Raffaele Torella in the countryside near Bracciano with students

*The Surprise of Spanda:
An Aesthetic Approach to a Phenomenology of
Transcendence (Rāmakaṇṭha ad
Spandakārikā 2.6 [1.22/22])*

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1. Spanda and the phenomenology of transcendence

The main injunction in the *Spandakārikā* is that ‘one should experience for oneself’ the transcendent and essential vibration of *spanda*.¹ Due to its immediacy, this experience is a substitute for the necessarily discursive doctrine, or, rather, completes and crowns it. It is the only way for the yogin to have access to the ineffable Absolute (*anākhyā*), which, among other names, receives that of *spanda*, the archetypal vibration that the famous formula in *Tantrāloka* [TĀ] 4.184–186a strives to seize, describing it as an

¹ *svayaṃ tam upalakṣayet*, verse 41d; and *svayaṃ evāvabhotsyate*, in *tadā kiṃ bahunohtena svayaṃ evāvabhotsyate*, verse 43cd [in this first section of the paper, references are given to the unsegmented *mūla* text of the *Spandakārikā*].

While examining Rāmakaṇṭha’s *Spandakārikāvivṛti* [SpV], references are given to his division of the *mūla*, whereas references to the corresponding verse in Kṣemarāja’s *Spandanirṇaya* and in the unsegmented *mūla* text are given within square brackets, for instance: SpV 2.6 [1.22/22]. While quoting *Spandanirṇaya*, it is the reverse process: references are given to Kṣemarāja’s division of the text, and references to Rāmakaṇṭha and to the *mūla* text are given within square brackets (SpN 1.22 [2.6/22]).

‘indefinite,’ that is, ‘imperceptible’ movement (*kiṃcicalana*).² In this sense, it may be regarded, *mutatis mutandis*, as what I would call a ‘phenomenology of transcendence,’ to adapt the Husserlian theory of ‘transcendent phenomenology’ to the issues of the Indian system.

In effect, the *Spandakārikā* offer a very subtle analysis, which can arguably be described as precociously phenomenological, of the entire set of empirical phenomena, that is to say of all that presents itself to consciousness, whether it be emotions, cognitive processes or activities in ordinary life. This is not the place to compare the differing approaches of Husserlian phenomenology and the Spanda system. Suffice it to say that they exhibit more differences than similarities.³

I shall only emphasize here that Indian analysis would probably object to the Husserlian *cogito* because of its discursive character (*savikalpa*), offering in opposition the experience of transcendent (or *nirvikalpa*) *spanda* that appears when dualizing thoughts (*vikalpa*) — which construct ordinary experiences — are abolished, as we shall see.

This is why non-standard experiences are necessary in order to achieve the realization or the recognition of the absolute (and vibrant) principle of *spanda*. Only they are able to activate absorption in the ultimate nature of Reality, at least at the first stage. What are these non-standard experiences? They may be either, as in verse 22, extreme experiences, hyperesthesia, or experiences that are in the range of aesthetic or sensual enjoyment.⁴

2. *Spandakārikā* 22 [1.22/2.6]

My analysis of the doctrine focuses on the interpretation of verse 22 of the *Spandakārikā*. It is famous, and even more so is its theme,

² The entire verse reads: *kiṃcicalanam etāvad ananyasphuraṇam hi yat | ūrmir eṣā vibodhābdher na samvid anayā vinā ||* ‘That [vibration (*spanda*)] which is imperceptible movement, autonomous scintillation, is a wave in the ocean of consciousness. Consciousness cannot be without it.’ The entire passage (TĀ 4.182cd–186ab) is relevant to this topic. See Bansat-Boudon 2014. We may notice that, if the Spanda school privileges experience above everything else, later exegetes, those of the Pratyabhijñā, attempt to demonstrate that scriptural tradition and reasoning participate equally in the construction of the doctrine.

³ I shall elaborate on this in an augmented version of this paper.

⁴ See *infra*, p. 77ff.

which highlights experiential intensity and immediacy:

atikruddhaḥ prahṛṣṭo vā kiṃ karomīti vā mṛṣan |
dhāvan vā yat padaṃ gacchet tatra spandaḥ pratiṣṭhitah ||

At the height of anger, or transported by joy, or [desperately] wondering what to do, or launched on a [frantic] run, whatever state one reaches, there ‘vibration’ is well established.

The verse has scriptural sources, in particular the *Vijñānabhairava* (especially verses 71, 101, and 118, quoted in the *Nirṇaya ad 1.22*⁵). Later exegetic tradition will resume the content, as in *Śivadṛṣṭi* (1.9–10)⁶ and *Tantrāloka* 4.182b–186.⁷

⁵ See, for instance, VBh 118: *kṣutādyante bhaye śoke gahvare vā raṇād drute* [var.: *vāraṇadrute*, or: *vāraṇe raṇe*] | *kuṭūhale kṣudhādyante brahmasattamayī daśa* ||, ‘The condition of Brahmic existence occurs at the beginning and the end of sneezing, in terror and in sorrow, when [hanging] over a precipice, when fleeing from the battlefield, in a moment of curiosity, at the beginning or the end of hunger.’

⁶ *Śivadṛṣṭi* 1.9–11cd: *sā ca dṛśyā hṛduddese kāryasmarāṇakālataḥ | praharṣāvedasamaye darasamdarśanaḥ | anālocanato dṛṣṭe visargaḥ sarvāśpade | visargoktiprasaṅge ca vācane dhāvane tathā || eteṣv eva prasāṅgeṣu sarvāśaktivilolataḥ |*, ‘That [the first moment of will (*tuṭi*, in 1.8d)] moreover can be seen in the area of the heart from the moment one remembers something that should be done; at the time of [receiving] delightful news; the moment one sees something frightening; when one sees something unexpectedly; at the time of orgasm and on the event of expressing it; when reading aloud and when running. All of the powers are active in these very occasions’ (tr. Nemeč 2011: 115–116, with slight modifications). Note that *Śivadṛṣṭi* (1.9–11cd) emphasizes the dimension of surprise characteristic of the *spanda* experience: *anālocanato dṛṣṭe*, ‘when one sees something unexpectedly.’

⁷ Apart from the four examples given in SpK 22, there are numerous other occasions for the surge of *spanda*. VBh gives several partially overlapping lists, which also share common elements, and of these many are found in other texts as well, such as orgasm (VBh 69 and 70), anger (VBh 101 and 118, SpK 22, ŚD 1.9), extreme joy (VBh 71, ŚD 1.9, SpK 22), running or escape (ŚD 1.10, SpK 22), dismay (VBh 101 — *moha* —, SpK 22 — *kiṃ karomīti mṛṣan* —). What these circumstances have in common is that they are all moments of heightened experience, partaking of surprise. If SpK 22 evokes the onset of certain emotions or sensations, VBh considers both the beginning and the end of the sharpened experience by which consciousness is pierced. For instance, VBh 118 (quoted *supra*, n. 5) treats of the beginning and the end of the sneeze (however, note that SpP *ad 22* has the variant *krodhādyante* instead of *kṣutādyante*) or the beginning and the end of hunger. This is the issue elaborated in TĀ 4.182cd–183abc, dealing with *sāmānyaspanḍa*, which occurs just before the famous definition of *spanda* in v. 184, quoted *supra*, p. 74: *hṛdaye svavimarśo ’sau drāvītāśeṣaviśvakaḥ || bhāvagrahādīparyantabhāvī sāmānyasamjñakaḥ | spandaḥ sa kathyate śāstre [...]*, ‘This self-aware-

As observed in the *Spandasandoha*, verse 1.22 constitutes a tetrad with verses 1.23 to 1.25:⁸

yām avasthāṃ samālambya yad ayaṃ mama vakṣyati |
tad avāṣyaṃ kariṣye 'ham iti saṃkalpya tiṣṭhati || 1.23 [2.7]
tām āśrityordhvamārgeṇa candrasūryāv ubhāv api |
sauṣumne 'dhvany astamito hitvā brahmāṇḍagocaram || 1.24 [2.8]
tadā tasmin mahāvryomni pralīnaśāśibhāskare |
sauṣuptapadavan mūḍhaḥ prabuddhaḥ syād anāvṛtaḥ || 1.25 [2.9]

Once he [the yogin] has reached that state [of *spanda* experience], he abides there, and resolves: ‘Whatever he [the Lord] says, I will surely do it.’⁹ Having that state as their support, both the Moon and the Sun [i.e. the inspired and exhaled breaths], abandoning the domain of Brahmā’s egg [i.e. objectivity, the domain of the body], go to rest in the channel of *sūṣumnā*, by the upward path. Then, once the Moon and the Sun have dissolved in that Great Sky [the ether of universal consciousness], he [, who experiences that state] as a kind of deep sleep, remains stupefied (*mūḍha*), whereas the one who is no longer covered [by the veil of *māyā*¹⁰] is fully awakened (*prabuddha*).

Verses 1.22 and 1.23 of this passage represent the speculative aspect of the doctrinal exposition: verse 1.22 surveys the different

ness (or awareness of the Self) within the Heart, into which the entire universe has melted, is present at the beginning of the apprehension of things and at their end. In the Treatise [on *spanda*], it is termed “generic vibration” [...].’ For other parallel passages to ŚD 1.9–11, see Nemeč 2011: 115, n. 115.

⁸ SpS (pp. 6–7): [...] *yat svarūpābhijñānāya sphuṭayisyati atikruddha ityādi anāvṛtaḥ ityantam ślokatuṣṭayam*, ‘[...] the tetrad of verses starting with *atikruddhaḥ* and ending with *anāvṛtaḥ* will make it clear in order to lead [the yogin] to the recognition of his own essence.’ Note that v. 1.17 [2.1] announces v. 1.22 [2.6]: *tasyopalabdhiḥ satatam tripadāvryabhicāriṇī | nityam syāt suprabuddhasya tadādyante parasya tu ||*, ‘He who is fully awakened permanently enjoys the undeviating knowledge of the [Self] in all the three states. Others[, partially awakened,] only enjoy it at the beginning and at the end of [each state].’

⁹ This passage describes one who fully surrenders to *spanda* against a background of perfect vigilance, and illustrates a major feature of the experience — its paradoxical nature.

¹⁰ See SpS (p. 7): *yat [...] ślokatuṣṭayam | paraśaktipātaprakāśadvastamāyā-varaṇasya tu karālanamanam dadaty eva [...]*, ‘That tetrad of verses [...] is helpful in allowing the [yogin] for whom the veil of *māyā* has been destroyed by the light of supreme grace to reach the domain of Śiva [i.e. the domain of perfect self-awareness, or *spanda*]; see also *māyāmūḍhān* in SpS (p. 22).

experiential states, and verse 1.23 provides the content of experience in a direct style and in the first person singular. Verses 1.24–25 are more practical, pertaining to the āgamic yoga, more precisely to the practice of *kuṇḍalinī*.

In Kṣemarāja's *Spandanirṇaya* (11th c.), the context is very clearly that of *jīvanmukti* (or *jīvanmuktatā*), 'liberation in life.' According to *Spandanirṇaya ad 1.21 [2.5]*, the hyperaesthetic states described in verse 1.22 [2.6] function for the yogin who is already 'awakened' (*prabuddha*) as an introduction to the supreme experience that will make him into one who is 'perfectly awakened' (*suprabuddha*) — in other words, a *jīvanmukta*:

He, always intent upon the perception of his own introverted essence, attains, in a short time, even in the state of waking, his own nature, innate, which is that of Śaṅkara himself. Then, that inner nature, which is that of Śaṅkara, emerges of itself, because of which, thanks to his ever-present absorption in it, the 'awakened' one (*prabuddha*) becomes 'perfectly awakened' (*suprabuddha*), that is, becomes liberated while living (*jīvanmukta*). Such is the meaning.¹¹

The reasoning is the same in the preamble (*avataraṇikā* [intro.]) of *Spandanirṇaya ad 1.23–25 [2.7–9]*, in which Kṣemarāja gives an extremely lucid, even initiatory exposition of the issues in the passage (1.22–25 [2.6–9]), allowing us to see a procedure in two steps — the first contact with *spanda* (which occurs in the states described in 1.22) and the assiduous practice of such an experience are followed, this time in all states, whatever they be, by an absorption in the *spanda*, previously glimpsed, albeit fleetingly. This is what is taught by verses 1.24–25 [2.8–9] in which the practice of *kuṇḍalinī* must be read:

First of all, by assiduously practising the energy of *spanda* by way of the states mentioned, then, by being continuously attentive to it all through the states, the ever-vigilant one (*satatodyukta*) attains liberation in this life (*jīvanmuktatā*), which consists in permanent

¹¹ SpN 1.21 [2.5/21] (p. 39_{6–11}): [...] *satatam evāntarmukhasvarūpanibhālanapravaṇo yaḥ sa jāgrad eva jāgarāvasthāsthita eva nijam ātmīyaṃ śaṅkarātmakamsvasvabhāvam acireṇādhiḡacchati tathā asya śaṅkarātmā āntaraḥ svabhāvaḥ svayam evonmajjati yena prabuddho nityodītasamāveśāsādanāt suprabuddho jīvanmukto bhavatiṭy arthaḥ.*

absorption therein [in the energy of *spanda*]. This is what he [i.e. Vasugupta] is teaching now.¹²

Here Kṣemarāja makes an interesting distinction between the states mentioned in verse 1.22 [2.6], which are the prolegomena of, or propaedeutics to, the experience of transcendent *spanda*, and the totality of states, whatever they be, even if infinitely more ordinary, in which the yogin, with eyes now unsealed, is able to recognize the same supreme reality as that which the hyperaesthetic states described in 1.22 [2.6] had allowed him to be aware of and to feel. There can be no liberation in life except under these conditions.

What is illustrated in verse 1.22 [2.6] is the intrasensitive recognition (*pratyabhijñā* — the term is recurrent in the *Nirṇaya*¹³) of a transcendent reality, that is not, as such, suprasensitive (*atīndriya*, as is said of Dharma, for example), but rather hypersensitive, sensitive throughout, without residue. Moreover, this sudden recognition of the Absolute is felt in the sensitive modality of wonderment.¹⁴ This also explains that the experience may be a pre-condition for experiencing *jīvanmukti*.

Both *jīvanmukti* and hyperaesthetic states are paradoxical forms of existence, and in some way oxymora, in the eyes of the common man at least. Consequently, a conversion of experience into its opposite operates at the heart of logical contradiction itself, as perfectly illustrated by *Śivastotrāvalī* 20.12, through the rhetorical use of a grammatical form, the denominative.¹⁵ And it is only possible because ultimate reality itself is in the range of

¹² SpN, intro. ad 1.23–25 [2.7–9] (p. 41_{5–7}): *evam etāsv avasthāsūktayuktyā prathamam spandaśaktim pariśīlyā tadanu tām evānusaṃdadhat sarvāsu avasthāsu tad-dārdhyānupraveśamayim jīvanmuktatām āharet satatodyukta ity upadiśati.*

¹³ See also SpS quoted *supra*, p. 76, n. 8.

¹⁴ Such a sentiment of wonder is condensed in the practice of *vismayamudrā*, the ‘*mudrā* of astonishment,’ described in *Spandakārikā* 1.11. We observe that, in aesthetic theory, ‘astonishment’ (*vismaya*) is the permanent feeling (*sthāyibhāva*) which is transformed, in the aesthetic register, into the ‘taste’ of the Marvelous, the *adbhutarasa*. See *infra*, p. 84, the way Rāmakaṇṭha makes use of aesthetic theory in his exegesis of v. 2.6.

¹⁵ *Śivastotrāvalī* 20.12: *duḥkhāny api sukhāyante viśam apy amṛtāyate | mokṣāyate ca saṃsāro yatra mārgaḥ sa saṃkaraḥ ||* ‘Where even miseries become pleasure; where even poison turns into ambrosia; where the world of transmigration becomes liberation — that is the path of Śaṃkara.’

experience — a speculative posture that is just as extraordinary as its object.

This is why the doctrine distinguishes between *sāmānyaspanda* and *viśeṣaspanda*, between generic or universal *spanda* and particular or individual *spanda* (or more precisely the infinite diversity of all individual *spandas*), present at transcendent and immanent levels respectively.

In principle, then — it is correlative to this experiential conception of the Absolute —, there should be no reason why this achievement could not be accessible to everyone: everyone has experienced these extreme situations. However, the texts show that there is an implicit condition of excellence for the aspirant, and this involves competence (*adhikāra*) that is neither social nor ritual, but of a spiritual nature. As observed by the *Nirṇaya* (see *supra*), the aspirant to this achievement is already a yogin, moreover, an ‘awakened’ yogin whose vocation is to become ‘perfectly awakened.’

The emotional and sensory exacerbation described in verse 1.22 [2.6] thus points to the effraction (as sudden as it is fleeting) of the transcendent in the immanent, the irruption of the intrinsic and irresistible energy of generic *spanda* into its empirical ‘manifestations,’ that is, into the multiplicity of the specific *spandas* — those intense moments when the subject is at the most extreme point of himself. And it is this same dynamism that, when it reverses itself, leads to the perennial and ever-vibrating experience of itself, in other words to a quivering stasis, imbued with wonder, in which ‘liberation in life’ is achieved.

Thus, the essential effervescence of the Absolute breaks the thread of discursive thought, triggering a powerful movement of introversion,¹⁶ and allows access to a higher plane of reality which has never ceased to be there as the ‘archetype,’ of which the states of emotional and cognitive acme are but the empirical concretization. It is the essence of *spanda* to be continually upsurging (*ni-tyodīta*)¹⁷ and thus to find itself at the height of extreme situations

¹⁶ This feature of experience is highly emphasized by Kṣemarāja and Rāmakaṇṭha in their commentary on verse 1.22 [2.6].

¹⁷ The adjective is recurrent in the speculations of non-dualist Śaivism of Kashmir; see, among other examples, Kṣemarāja’s *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya, sūtra* 19 (p.

in common experience. Symmetrically, extreme sensations are the indisputable clues of something beyond themselves, that is both their source and principle. The homology cannot be other than complete between *sāmānyaspanda* and *viśeṣaspanda*. It has, then, both a pedagogical and initiating function.

The *Nirṇaya* suggests a metaphor for this effraction characterized by both intensity and suddenness: the seal that is broken to reveal the hidden treasure of *spanda* — a seal that is imposed on it by an indefinite series of dualizing thoughts. This is the most beautiful image of the introduction of *Spandanirṇaya ad verse 1.22 [2.6]*:¹⁸

[...] *asyodyuktasya balavadāmbanavaśoditānāyāsataadanyasakalavyttikṣayamayīṣu nīyatāsu yāsv avasthāsu spandanidhānam unnudrita-
tam abhimukhībhūtam āste* [...] |

[...] the treasure of *spanda* stands unsealed (*unnudrita*) to him who is determined [to find it], i.e. comes face to face with him, through these particular states where all mental activities other than [the awareness of] that [*spanda*] which has appeared to him thanks to his powerful seizing [...] have easily ceased.¹⁹

In the *Nirṇaya*, this essential idea of effraction is explained primarily by way of two semantic fields: i) that which is constructed around the term *mudrā* (in both its meanings of ‘seal’ and ‘mystical posture’) and its denominative *mudrayati* (to be read here, in

46): *nityoditasamādhibhāḥ* and its auto-commentary; also auto-commentary *ad 1 (p. 3)*: *vyāpakanityoditaparipūrṇarūpā iyam* [...], and *ad 12 (p. 27)*: [...] *nityoditamahāmantrarūpā pūrṇāhaṇvīmarśamayī yeyam parāvāksaktiḥ* [...]; *Tantrāloka 2.4cd: svabhāva eva mantavyaḥ sa hi nityodito vibhuḥ*, and the quotation in *Tantrālokaivēka ad 8.14*: *nityoditam sukhaṃ viddhi nīstaraṅgam tu kathyate*; also, Rāmakaṇṭha in his *SpV 2.6*: [...] *nityoditapratiṣṭhitaspandaprakāśaparispuritasamāpattim unmiṣitum eva prabhavanti*.

¹⁸ Also present (and equally close to the root *truṣ*; see n. 20) in the second *maṅgala* of the *Spandasandoha*, where the extended metaphor (*mudritam ... unnudrya*) is governed by the mystical notion of *mahāmudrā*, and is thus associated with highly esoteric connotations: *caitanyābdheḥ prasaraḍ amṛtaṃ troṭitāyāsatantraṃ sarvasyāntaḥ sphurad api mahāmudrayā mudritam yat | pūrṇānandaḥpradam atitarāṃ etad unnudrya yuktā yo ’ntarvaktraṃ rasayati jayaty eṣa vīrah kulendrah* ||. On *mahāmudrā*, see *Tantrikābhīdhānakośa 3*: 393.

¹⁹ *SpN ad 1.22 [2.6] (p. 39₁₂₋₁₅)*, whose complete text is: *yathāsyodyuktasya balavadāmbanavaśoditānāyāsataadanyasakalavyttikṣayamayīṣu nīyatāsu yāsv avasthāsu spandanidhānam unnudritam abhimukhībhūtam āste tā etāḥ ṣrathamam udyogasya viśayā ity upadeṣṭum āha* |.

unmudrita, intro. *ad* 1.22 [2.6]); and ii) that which is governed by the root *truṭ* (and its variant *tut*), ‘break,’ ‘shatter.’²⁰

Both metaphors find their counterpart in yogic practice: on the one hand, corresponding to the image of the broken ‘seal,’ there is the *bhairavī mudrā*, where one’s eyes are wide open, not in order to keep the intensely perceived world at a distance, but to wholly interiorize it, make it one’s own in an equally intense way;²¹ on the other hand, this element of yogic practice that is the *tutīpāta*, ‘the fall of the first instant [of all sensation],’ which, according to the texts, lasts a hundredth of a second.²² In such a way, suddenness creates suspense, instantaneity duration, effervescence immobility, vertigo equilibrium, and surprise creates the regaining of one’s composure. Such is the glory of paradox!

Thus, *sāmānyasṅpanda*, another name for the all-powerful divine energy — the *svātantryaśakti* which is irresistible power — is in itself both the means and the end. It works (in the form of *icchāśakti*, the energy of will) to make itself known to him who may not know it yet, or who thinks he may not know it.

3. *Spandakārikā* 22 and the exegesis of *Rāmakaṇṭha* [= 2.6]

But let us return to verse 22 [2.6]:

atikruddhaḥ prahṛṣṭo vā kiṃ karomīti vā mṛṣan |
dhāvan vā yat padaṃ gacchet tatra śpandaḥ pratiṣṭhitah ||

These emotional and perceptive acmes provide the opportunity and the means by which to achieve a reversal: that to which one was subjugated (are extreme anger and extreme joy not ‘passions’?) now liberates. Anger and joy, embodying in their very excess the archetypal effervescence that arouses them, give the yogin the possibility to recognize and experience it, and therefore to free him-

²⁰ The *Spandanīmāya* employs it in the form of a past participle: *truṭita*, especially *ad* 1.11 [1.11/11] (p. 25₂₂₋₂₃), where the wonderful experience of recognizing one’s own nature as vibrant reality (*spanda*) is described, all of which implies the disappearance of dualizing thoughts (*vikalpa = vṛtti*): [...] *jhaṭiti truṭi-tasakalavyṭtiḥ* [...], ‘[...] Instantly, all his activities (or thoughts) break [...].’

²¹ See the definition quoted in SpN *ad* 1.11 [1.11/11] (p. 25₁₇₋₁₈): *antarlakṣyo bahirdṛṣṭir nimeṣonmeṣavarjitaḥ | iyaṃ sā bhairavī mudrā sarvatantrēṣu gopitā ||*. Thus, the *bhairavī mudrā* also partakes of paradox and oxymoron.

²² See Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi 2011: 344.

self from nescience. It is the same for extreme dismay, since the deliberation of verse 2.6 [1.22] (to be read in the present participle *mṛśan*), by which the man lost in terror questions himself in vain, is destined to accomplish itself in *vimarśa(na)* — self-awareness.

Of the four exegetes of the *Spandakārikā*, it is Rāmakaṇṭha (also named Rājānaka Rāma) who gives, in his *Vivṛti*, the longest and most profound commentary on verse 22 [2.6]. Rāmakaṇṭha, who claims to be the direct disciple of Utpaladeva,²³ probably lived between 950 and 1000 CE,²⁴ thus preceding Abhinavagupta and two other exegetes of the *Spandakārikā*, Kṣemarāja and Bhāgavatopala (a.k.a. Utpalaviṣṇava or Utpalācārya), the author of the *Spandapradīpikā*.

For each of the terms in verse 2.6 [1.22] (*atikruddhaḥ/ prahṛṣṭaḥ/ kiṃ karomīti mṛśan/ dhāvan*), Rāmakaṇṭha supplies an interpretation of psychological and factual nature: his example of extreme anger is ‘the intense wrath aroused by the sight or the voice of an enemy in a terrible and fierce battle’; his example of intense joy is the exultation one feels at the sight of a loved one thought dead, and who appears suddenly. As for the absolute dismay expressed by *kiṃ karomīti mṛśan*, the example is that of a princeling who, beset by a more powerful king or a furious enemy, does not know what counter-attack to employ. The situation evoked by *dhāvan*, ‘running,’ is of another order, since it is no longer a question of affects, but of an activity coming from *karmendriya*, an ‘organ of action,’ here the foot. In this case too other exegetes only read it as a psychological situation (a man who runs away from a mad elephant, for example, in Kṣemarāja), but Rāmakaṇṭha suggests another interpretation, by virtue of which, in accordance with the scheme he has established for the other terms (see *infra*), running represents not only itself but also the categories of action associated with the five *karmendriyas*.

From the outset, Rāmakaṇṭha gives unexpected depth to the different issues evoked in the verse, applying to them the Śaiva

²³ In the concluding verse of the *Sarvatobhadra*, a commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*, which Rāmakaṇṭha probably composed; on Rāmakaṇṭha, exegete of the *Bhagavadgītā*, see Bansat-Boudon and Törzsök 2018: 39–42.

²⁴ See Sanderson 2007: 411.

grid of interpretation, of Sāṃkhya origin, that organizes empirical experience in *tattvas*, ‘levels of reality.’ Such empirical experience begins with *prakṛti*, constituted by *sukha*, *duḥkha* and *moha* (pleasure, pain and delusion), themselves corresponding to the three *guṇas*, or ‘qualities,’ *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, respectively. The three following *tattvas*, which proceed directly from the *prakṛti*, are *buddhi*, *manas* and *ahaṅkāra*, ‘volitive intellect,’ ‘mind’ and ‘ego,’²⁵ grouped under the heading *antaḥkaraṇa*, the ‘inner organ.’ From this inner organ are produced, in turn, the five *karmendriyas*, or organs of action, and the five *buddhīndriyas*, or cognitive organs. So, as we have observed, the fourth term of the verse, the present participle ‘running,’ illustrates an empirical situation pertaining to these organs of action. Further in his commentary on verse 2.6 [1.22], Rāmakaṇṭha says that the *buddhīndriyas* are also indirectly referred to in verse 4.6 [3.4]. The thirteen ‘senses’ or ‘organs’ (*indriyas* or *karaṇas*) are thus to be read under the four terms of verse 2.6 [1.22], which thus suggest the totality of the sensitive experience, but considered in its paroxysmal modality. In doing so, Rāmakaṇṭha shows that there is nothing arbitrary about the enumeration of the empirical perceptions given in verse 2.6 [1.22].

We have no difficulty in understanding the functioning of the tattvic explanation of these affects. Anger, in effect, partakes of both *rajas* and *duḥkha*, joy of *sattva* and *sukha*, dismay of *tamas* and *moha* — all modalities that fall within the activity of the *antaḥkaraṇa*, which perceives them.²⁶

²⁵ From the point of view of Sāṃkhya and its theory of the *tattvas*, *buddhi* is more than the intellect, it is the locus where volition is formed. Therefore, volition is an essential aspect of the meaning of the term, although it is implied by the cognitive process. As Hiriyanna observes (1993: 286): ‘If now the perception is to lead to any action the *buddhi* intervenes and decides upon what action has to follow and issues instructions, so to say, to the proper motor organ (*karmendriya*), the result being either some action or desistance from it. The *buddhi* thus corresponds to the will-aspect of conscious life.’ This is the reason why, from the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* to the Trika corpus, *buddhi* is described as *niścaya*, or *adhyavasāya*; see, especially, *Paramārthasāra* 19 and its commentary (Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi 2011: 159–162 and n. 556), and TĀ 1.38b–40 and TĀV *ad loc.*: *adhyavasāyo buddhiḥ*.

²⁶ SpV *ad* 2.6 [1.22] (p. 71₇₋₈): *duḥkhasukhamohāt maviśayagrahaṇarūpāntaḥkaraṇavyāpāra*°. The question the man asks himself in a state of dismay: ‘What

Then, refocusing his analysis on the first two terms (*atikruddhaḥ*, *prahṛṣṭaḥ*) of verse 2.6 [1.22], Rāmakaṇṭha superimposes a grid of interpretation borrowed from aesthetics on the existing Saiva-Sāṃkhya explanation. And he does it almost surreptitiously, leaving to the reader, who is a *sahyodaya* after all, the task of recognizing the main features of aesthetic doctrine in this new stratum of the exegesis. What does he say? The complete text is given in the Appendix; here I shall limit myself to a synthesis.

It is clear in this passage that each qualification — whether anger or joy — ceases to be uniquely self-referential, insofar as they are both valid as a paradigm of a series of four affects in which, once the two sequences are combined, one may recognize the eight ‘permanent feelings’ (*sthāyibhāva*) of the Indian aesthetic theory,²⁷ here distributed into these two groups of feelings. Respectively under the headings of *rajas* and *sattva*, these eight *sthāyibhāvas* are determined as either negative or positive. Anger (the *krodha* implied by *atikruddhaḥ*) governs the rajasic tetrad: anger, grief, fear, disgust; joy (the *harṣa* implied by *prahṛṣṭaḥ*) governs the sattvic tetrad: joy (standing for *rati*, amorous pleasure), ardor, astonishment, laughter.²⁸ See the chart below (p. 101).

shall I do?’ admirably resumes the cognitive process described in Sāṃkhya. The *manas* seizes the facts of the senses, the *ahamkāra* brings them to the knowing subject, and the *buddhi* (volition as much as intellect) takes the appropriate decision. In this precise case, it is *buddhi* which is flawed.

²⁷ The eight *sthāyibhāvas* are anger (*krodha*), grief (*śoka*), fear (*bhaya*), disgust (*jugupsā*), amorous pleasure (*rati*, here represented by *harṣa*, ‘joy’), ardor (*utsāha*), astonishment (*vismaya*), laughter (*hāsa*) which are respectively the emotional substrata of the eight *rasas* or aesthetic sentiments: the Furious (*raudra*), the Pathetic (*karuṇa*), the Dreadful (*bhayānaka*), the Odious (*bibhatsa*), the Amorous (*śṛṅgāra*), the Heroic (*vīra*), the Marvelous (*adbhuta*), the Comic (*hāsyā*); see the chart below (p. 101).

In French I have opted to translate: le Furieux, le Pathétique, le Terrible, l’Odieux, l’Amoureux, l’Héroïque, le Merveilleux, le Comique. These terms imply the word ‘sentiment,’ in the aesthetic sense it has in French: we refer to the ‘sentiment du Furieux,’ the ‘sentiment du Pathétique,’ the ‘sentiment du Merveilleux,’ etc., on the model of the ‘sentiment tragique’ or the ‘sentiment comique.’

²⁸ SpV ad 2.6 [1.22]: [...] *krodhaśokabhayajugupsābhedenā caturvidhasya duḥkharāśeḥ atikruddhaśabdēna upalakṣitatvāt* [...]], ‘[...] for, by the word ‘extremely angry’ the fourfold group of pains is implied, that is, anger, grief, fear and disgust, [...]’; and: [...] *harṣotsāhavismayahāśabdēna catūrupasukharāśer atiprahṛṣṭaśabdenopalakṣitatvāt*], ‘[...] for, by the word ‘extremely happy’ the four-

At this precise point Rāmakaṇṭha brings the whole of aesthetic theory into his exegesis. He does it in a veiled manner though, without ever using an aesthetic lexical field. Be that as it may, the introduction of the aesthetic paradigm in the *Vivṛti ad 2.6 [1.22]* is unique in the exegetic tradition of the *Spandakārikā*.

Thus, when he evokes the context of appearance of a particular *sthāyibhāva*, Rāmakaṇṭha describes its possible causes, which the aesthetic doctrine exposed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the ‘Treatise of theatre’ (ca. 2nd c. CE), calls ‘*vibhāvas*,’ ‘determinants,’ without actually naming them as such.²⁹ In the tetrad of negative affects, the tiger and the serpent are the *vibhāvas* of fear; the news of the death of a loved one, that of sorrow; and similarly in the tetrad of positive affects, the sight of an object or a being of extraordinary beauty is the *vibhāva* of wonderment; tickling, that of laughter.

Again, Rāmakaṇṭha brings in the *anubhāvas*, ‘consequents’ or ‘effects’ of an affect, in his demonstration — still without using the corresponding technical terms. Thus, it would be more correct to say that he introduces them *in absentia*. In fact, when he mentions ‘tears, fainting, etc., that manifest grief’ (*śokavyaṅjakāsrupralayādi*³⁰), it is *only* to highlight that the experience of *spanda* — which seizes the opportunity of this emotional acme — arises *before* the onset of the tears,³⁰ in other words, before the empirical emotion, whatever it be, extends to its ultimate consequences (or rather breaks up into them) — this small number of external manifestations being sufficiently universal to allow the *Nāṭyaśāstra* to establish a list of them and their respective assignments.

Why then, in this context, do away with the *anubhāvas*? The explanation lies in yogic and mystic practice: the *avataraṇikā* of *Nirṇaya ad 1.22 [2.6]* teaches that pulling away from the empirical quagmire can only be achieved through intense effort (*udhyoga*).³¹

fold group of pleasures is implied, that is, joy, ardor, astonishment and laughter [...].’ On the distribution of the eight *sthāyibhāvas* and the eight *rasas* into two groups of four, see also Sathaye 2010.

²⁹ On the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *vyabhicāribhāvas*, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 111–117.

³⁰ See *infra*, n. 34.

³¹ SpN, intro. *ad 1.22 [2.6]* (p. 39_{14–15}): [...] *tā etāḥ [avasthāḥ] prathamam udyogasya viṣayā ity upadeṣṭum āha*, ‘[...] the author teaches that the [particular] states [described in the verse] should, first of all, pertain to the domain of an intense

Indeed, seizing the affect precisely when it is at its most intense must coincide with a powerful movement of introversion which instantly (*jhaṭiti*) creates a blissful and wonder-filled stasis in which the yogin firmly establishes himself. (Remember that here the timescale is *tuti* or a hundredth part of a second.)

So, as Rāmakaṇṭha observes while commenting on *atikruddhaḥ* of the verse, it is crucial that the emotions described in verse 2.6 [1.22] be seized in the nascent state (*jātamātrakrodhaḥ*).³² Thus, in the next stage, *vibhāvas* — tears, shouts and so on — are merely ‘alterations’ (*vikāra, vikṛti*) of the state of consciousness resulting from such intense emotions (*tajjanyavikārāvasthāyāḥ*). Therefore, the transcendent *spanda* experience takes place *immediately* (*jhaṭiti*) and *before* (*prāg eva*) any alteration in the emotion that has just occurred.³³

The same analysis is valid for sorrow (*śoka*), which Rāmakaṇṭha infers from anger (*krodha*):

Therefore, just as in the case of one who is extremely angry, the one who is extremely aggrieved attains the domain [where *spanda* reveals itself], by hearing, for instance, of the unexpected death of someone dear, i.e. when grief begins to extend its sway, but before this grief is altered by the shedding of tears, etc., that manifest this feeling.³⁴

Circumscribed and explained in this way, the experience of *spanda* is pure emotion, free from empirical effects. The climax of a ‘mundane’ (*laukika*) emotion is the instrument of its transformation into a ‘supra-mundane’ (*lokottara*) experience, that of generic *spanda*.³⁵

effort (*udyoga*) [on the part of the yogin still partially awakened]’; see *supra*, the complete text quoted in n. 19, in which *udyukta* echoes *udyoga*.

³² Anger is seized by the aspirant to *spanda* at the very instant it is born in him (*jātamātrakrodhaḥ*); such is the case also for sorrow (*samunmiṣitamātraśokaḥ*).

³³ SpV ad 2.6: *yat padam atikruddho gacchet — tajjanyavikārāvasthāyāḥ prāg eva jhaṭiti jātamātrakrodho yat padam [...] gacchet.*

³⁴ SpV ad 2.6: *tena atikruddhavat aśaṅkiteṣṭajanavināśaśravaṇādīnā kāraṇena atīśokāvīṣṭo ’pi śokavyaṅjakāsrupralayādivikyateḥ prāg eva samunmiṣitamātraśoko yat padam gacchet.*

³⁵ Cf. SpN intro. ad 1.12–13 (p. 26_{13–14}): [...] *lokottaratam prakaraṇaśavīrasya spandatattvasya nirūpayati*, ‘He [the author of the *Spandakārikā*] describes the extraordinary character (*lokottaratā*) of *spanda* (i.e. vibrant Reality) — which is a central theme in this treatise.’

It should be emphasized that Rāmakaṇṭha's aesthetic exegesis makes no mention of the *rasas* corresponding to the *sthāyibhāvas*. Yet the correspondence is implicit because, in the aesthetic register, the *sthāyibhāvas* can only be accomplished in *rasas*. In other words, empirical feelings (which, reduced to eight, are already a re-ordering of the human psyche) are to be transformed into aesthetic sentiments; *sthāyibhāvas* and *rasas* are coextensive, subject to the appropriate process for the transformation of the former into the latter.³⁶ In the same way the experience of *spanda* is called by (and recognized in) the appropriate treatment to which yogic practice submits ordinary emotions, at least when they are at their highest point.

The homology that is thus established between *spanda* and *rasa* invites us to reflect further on aesthetic experience itself and its doctrine.³⁷

³⁶ On the stages of this process, see Bansat-Boudon 1992a: 145ff.

³⁷ Although in a very different register, Kṣemarāja's exegesis is no less the work of a virtuoso. It agrees perfectly with an essential feature of his hermeneutics: the key place accorded to *śakti*, the sovereign Energy, and her many hypostases. Moreover, his *Spandasandoha* is entirely devoted to a review of the many interpretations of *śakticakra*, the 'Wheel of energies,' the subject of the first verse of the SpK. Commenting on verse 1.22 [2.6], the *Nirṇaya* treats examples of sensorial and emotional experience brought to an extreme degree of intensity as the work of goddesses (*devatā* or *devī*), in other words, of *śaktis*. They are goddesses previously unmentioned, who seem to have been forged *ad hoc*, in virtue of the principle that everything is *śakti* — they are neither the goddesses of the senses, *stricto sensu*, nor the *mātrikās*, nor the countless others that are well-known and consigned to lists. The *Nirṇaya* thus presents the burst of violent anger (*atikrodha*) as a manifestation, almost an epiphany, of the suitably named *saṃjihīrṣā devatā*, the 'goddess aspiring to destroy,' whose desire to destroy remains nevertheless potential, interiorized, until the occasion for its outburst presents itself, for instance, the sight of an enemy threatening serious injury. Extreme joy (*prahaṅṣā*) is treated in a similar way — for instance, when one sees again the beloved that one had thought lost —, a joy understood as an exteriorization of the *abhilāṣadevatā*, the 'goddess of desire.' As for the frantic desire to escape (*dhāvana*) caused by a furious elephant, for instance, it is to be understood as an exteriorization of the inner activity of another goddess named *udyo-gadevī*, the 'goddess of intense effort.' The experience of extreme dismay alone (*kiṃ karomi vā myśan*) remains without an allegorical goddess, being nonetheless described as the total suspension of other mental activity, in this case, of lucidity and decision-making skills. Thus, the experience of *spanda* is itself fleetingly apprehended in this absolute suspense, be it brief. The suspense inherent in the emotional exacerbation whose consequence is the abolition of mental activity is

4. Aesthetic experience as a speculative and hermeneutic paradigm

Now, as Rāmakaṇṭha explains *spanda* by way of aesthetics, I would like to make the symmetrical hypothesis of aesthetics explained through *spanda*.

I shall first refer to the famous *rasasūtra*³⁸ of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* which teaches that ‘*rasa* [the aesthetic emotion] is born from the conjunction of the determinants (*vibhāva*), consequents (*anubhāva*) and transitory feelings (*vyabhicāri*[*bhāva*]),’ which leaves out the *sthāyibhāvas*. Why is this? I have already offered a tentative explanation elsewhere³⁹ but, in this essay, I would like to look at another level of interpretation.

A possible reason why the *rasasūtra* makes no mention of the *sthāyibhāva* is that the *sthāyibhāva* can only be seized in act and in essence during the very brief instant when it is *spanda*, the essen-

the basis for that other suspense (equally vibratile and effervescent) that is the *spanda* experience. Therefore, according to the *Nirṇaya*, the four hyperesthesias of v. 1.22 [2.6] are manifestations of *śaktis* and condition the access to the state of *spanda*. One still has to get rid of these hyperesthetic states which, though essential steps in the process, are nonetheless parasitic. As soon as he perceives the flash of the *spanda* experience, the accomplished yogin instantly represses anger and dismay, retracting them within himself, just as the turtle retracts its feet into its shell (*kūrmāṅgasamkocayuktyā*), so that he abides once and for all in the *spanda* state, experienced as a pulsating and beatific stasis. Likewise, exultation and frantic running, though they are occasions for apprehending that transcendent experience, and though they participate in the symmetric movement of expansion (*mahāvīkāsavyāptiyuktyā*), must be gotten rid of as the final hindrances to the yogin’s quest for the absolute. Running and exultation abolish themselves in their own expansion, so that the yogin, now commensurate with the universe, effortlessly reaches the effervescent repose in the Self that is the *spanda* experience: *tasmād etad vṛttikṣayapadaṃ saṃcetya jhaṭiti kūrmāṅgasamkocayuktyā krodhasamśayavyūṭṭiḥ praśamaya mahāvīkāsavyāptiyuktyā vā prahaṛṣadhāvanavṛttir vi-sphāryabhimukhibhūtanijaspandaśaktivimarsavatā yoginā bhāvayam* (SpN ad 1.22, p. 40). Anger, jubilation, dismay, distraught running are all occasions for, as well as fleeting indices of the transcendent and durable *spanda* experience. The SpS (p. 22) completes the exposition, recognizing several intense affects (attachment, aversion, anger, etc.) as a ‘group of experiences’ (*pratyayagrāma*) that are manifestations of a given ‘Wheel of energies’ (*śakticakra*): *api ca śakticakrasya āgamasampradāyaprasiddhanānādevatāparamārthasya rāgadvēṣakrodhavikalpādi-pratyayagrāmasya, [...] yo vibhavaḥ [...], ‘Again, the Wheel of energies [represents] the group of such experiences as attachment, aversion, anger, dualizing thoughts, etc., which, in reality, are the various deities attested by the agamic tradition [...]; of this Wheel of energies, there is power [...].’*

³⁸ *Nāṭyaśāstra* 6, *rasasūtra*: *vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicārisamyogād rasanīṣpattih*.

³⁹ See Bansat-Boudon 1992: 109–111.

tial vibration associated with its cause (*vibhāva*), before physical effects come to pulverize this moment of grace. As is shown in the *Vivṛti*, the *sthāyibhāva* is by nature fleeting, that is momentary,⁴⁰ whether its effects annul it, when the experience is that of the ordinary man (tears are a sign that emotion, as such, is no more), or whether, before this breakdown, the yogin takes hold of the vibrant essence of the same *sthāyibhāva* in order to transform it instantly into the enjoyment of the absolute in which he immerses himself, like the spectator, at least for the duration of the performance (and for a few days after it, says Abhinavagupta⁴¹), within the homological experience of *rasa*.

In the same way as the performance arouses *rasa* in the heart of the spectator, so the practice of emotional acmes allows the yogin to have access to the calm stasis of generic *spanda*. The work of the yogin, unlike that of the actor, is not to dwell on the *anubhāvas* (the effects of the emotion) but to take the intensity of pure emotion away from their inevitability, in order to retain only the archetypal vibration, prolong it indefinitely and establish himself within it. The absorption, exempt of all empirical impurities, of the spectator in the performance, that is, in *rasa*, or of the yogin in *spanda*, is liberation in this life.

As witnesses of experiences that have in common their being *alaukika*, ‘extra-ordinary,’ the spectator and the yogin are both ‘emancipated spectators.’⁴² Still, whereas the experience of liberation is acquired once and for all for the yogin — whatever obsta-

⁴⁰ To anticipate a possible objection, let us specify that this description of the *sthāyibhāva* does not contradict its ‘permanence.’ Indeed, the ‘permanence’ of the *sthāyibhāva* does not equate to immobility or even durability: the *sthāyibhāva* is ‘permanent’ in that it is ‘fundamental,’ i.e. consubstantial to human nature — the psyche described here as eightfold. Yet it may be regarded as ‘permanent,’ that is, ‘stable,’ in so far as it is to be distinguished from ‘transitory’ feelings (*vyābhicāribhāva*) which only pass through it. For the *sthāyibhāva* is by nature the key (in the musical sense of the word) in which the play is set, in whole or in part.

⁴¹ See *Abhinavabhāratī ad Nāṭyaśāstra* 1.107: [...] *bhavat pañcaśair divasaḥ sacamatkāratadīyacaritamadhyapraviṣṭasvātmarūpamatih svātmadvāreṇa viśvaṃ tathā paśyan pratyekaṃ sāmājikaḥ* [...], ‘[...] the spectator thus views every particular through the lens of his own self, [though the spectacle] continues for five or six days, for his attention is now one with his own self, which has entered into the midst of that action with a sense of wonder’; see Bansat-Boudon 2011: 56.

⁴² Phrase borrowed from the title of Rancière’s book (2008); see Bansat-Boudon 2011: 56.

cles or difficulties may arise from maintaining himself in his body —, for the spectator it has to be renewed at each performance.

This constant movement back and forth between two experiences that are equally *alaukika* (or *lokottara*) reveals the propensity of aesthetic experience to function in the Indian system of representations, and even more so in the non-dualist Śaivism of Kashmir, as a hermeneutic and speculative paradigm.⁴³

The two experiences share the affinity of their essences. Nevertheless, on the model of the universal metaphor of ‘the world like a theatre’ — where the world is that which is being compared and the theatre that to which it is being compared — the primary function of aesthetic experience is to give an illustration of the experience of the Absolute (*spanda* as *rasa*), although both experiences are of the same nature. By reflection, aesthetic experience can in its turn be explained through the experience of *spanda*, just like theatre can become the tenor and the world can become the vehicle: theatre as the world in miniature (i.e. *rasa* as *spanda*). Yet there is some asymmetry between the terms of the analogy; no doubt this is because one of them is transcendent and the other immanent. *Spanda* is the principle of *rasa*, not the metaphor of it. If *rasa* illustrates *spanda*, *spanda* explains *rasa*.

The *Tantrāloka* (3.208cd–210) and the *Viveka*, its 13th-c. commentary by Jayaratha, offer a typical example of the reversibility constantly at work in the homology between *spanda* and *rasa*. Verses 3.208cd–210 explain the notion of *sahjdaya*⁴⁴ — the man ‘with heart,’ sensitive and with a genuine taste for poetry — in the speculative context of ‘the emitting Energy of the Lord’ (*visargaśakti*; 208cd). Every ‘perturbation’ (*vibhrama*) [of one’s ordinary indifference] comes from this energy, whose essence is felicity (*ānanda*) (209ab). This also applies both to aesthetic experiences (such as listening to a melodious song) and sensorial experiences (the feeling of sandalwood on the skin; 209cd).⁴⁵

⁴³ As already pointed out in Gerow 1994.

⁴⁴ The theme is taken up again in TĀ 3.239–241ab, in reference to its antonym, *ahjdaya*.

⁴⁵ TĀ 3.208cd–210: *visargaśaktir yā sambhoḥ setthaṃ sarvatra vartate ||* (208cd) *tata eva samasto ’yam ānandasavibhramah | tathā hi madhure gīte sparśe vā canda-nādike ||* (209) *mādhyaśthyavigame yāsau hṛdaye spandamānatā | ānandaśaktiḥ sai-*

In these verses, *sahyodayatā* is defined as the yogin’s ability to free himself from the misconceptions of the Self and to become absorbed in the blissful experience of the Absolute (or supreme principle, or Deity), which *spanda* represents in verse 210ab. In the same vein, the passage establishes the analogy between the *sahyodaya*-yogin and the *sahyodaya*-finite being: as is the case for the yogin, so is it for the ordinary man. Even in this world, he, the ordinary man, who is exposed to an aesthetic or simply sensory pleasure, experiences ‘in his heart’ (*hṛdaye*) the same ‘perception of *spanda*-vibration (*spandamānatā*),’ that is, the same ‘energy of felicity’ (*ānandaśakti*) as that which is within the yogin’s reach. Therefore, because this experience takes place in the heart, the yogin and the finite being are both equally *sahyodayas*, or beings ‘endowed with heart.’⁴⁶

Here the metaphysical and mystical experience of *spanda* explains the aesthetic experience, thereby offering a quasi-myth of the origin of the aesthetic concept of *sahyodayatā*.

Yet, further on in the *Viveka* (*ad* TĀ 3.208cd–210), the exegetic movement reverses itself, and it is aesthetics which provides an interpretative grid for the experience of *spanda*. In order to sub-

voktā yataḥ sahyodayo janah || (210), ‘In this way, Śambhu’s emitting energy (*visa-rgaśakti*) is present everywhere. It alone is the source of every “perturbation” [of one’s ordinary indifference — or: “It alone is the source of every effervescence”] (*vibhrama*) whose essence is felicity. Such as is experienced in melodious song or in the touch of [cooling unguents made of] sandal. It is that state of [empathetic] vibration in the heart produced when all indifference has vanished that is said to be the “energy of felicity” (*ānandaśakti*) — and it is due to it that a man is [considered] a *sahyodaya*, “having a heart” [receptive to felicity].’

⁴⁶ This is developed in the *Viveka ad* TĀ 3.208cd–210: *iha khalu yasya kasyacana pramātuḥ, gītāḍau viṣaye yadā mādhyaस्थ्यavigamaḥ tāṭasthyaparihāreṇa tadekatānatā, tadā yeyaṁ hṛdaye viṣvapraṭiṣṭhāsthāne bodhe, spandamānatā tanmayatayā pariṣphuradrūpatā, saiveyam ānandaśaktir uktā sarvaśāstreṣu abhihitā ity arthaḥ*, ‘When the state of indifference has utterly vanished, as when listening to [melodious] song — [and this may happen] to any sentient being whomsoever in this world —, and a state of identification with that [source of felicity] (*tadekatānatā*) is brought about by the disappearance of such impartiality, then, within the heart — the place of awareness whereupon all experience is founded — a state of vibration (*spandamānatā*) is produced such as can only be produced by the lightning flash [of joy accompanying] the [sudden] mergence of the self with the [delightful] object (*tanmayatayā*); this state alone may be called the “energy of felicity” (*ānandaśakti*), and it is this state alone that is rehearsed in all the *śāstras*. This is the meaning.’

stantiate his interpretation of the *spandamānatā* of verse 210ab, based on the very notion of *tanmayībhāva*, ‘identification,’⁴⁷ Jayaratha goes so far as to give a veiled aesthetic interpretation of one of the most philosophically dense verses in the Pratyabhijñā, namely *Īśvaraṣṭyabhijñākārikā* 1.5.14:⁴⁸

sā sphurattā mahāsattā deśakālāviśeṣiṇī |
saiṣā sāratayā proktā hṛdayaṃ parameṣṭhinaḥ ||

It [dynamic consciousness (*citī*)] is ‘scintillation’ (*sphurattā*), Great Being (*mahāsattā*), beyond the limitations of space and time, it is that which is said to be the Heart (*hṛdaya*) of the Supreme Lord in so far as it is his essence.

Here is the passage in the *Viveka*:

[...] *bhogasya sukhaduḥkḥādyābhāsasādhāraṇyam anaśnuvānā —*

sā sphurattā mahāsattā deśakālāviśeṣiṇī |
saiṣā sāratayā proktā hṛdayaṃ parameṣṭhinaḥ || (ĪPK 1.5.14)

ityādinirūpitasvarūpā pariṣphuradrūpataiva svātantryam iti vimarśa iti ānanda iti ca sarvatraiva udghoṣyate, yanmāhātmyād eva ca jaḍo ’pi nikhilo ’yaṃ janaḥ sacetana ity ucyate, ata eva loke ’py ānandātiśayakāry eva janaḥ saḥḍayaḥ iti prasiddhiḥ [...]

[...] The fact that the experience [of the transcendent principle] shines forth [in the heart], by taking on the form described in [ĪPK 1.5.14]: ‘*sā sphurattā mahāsattā deśakālāviśeṣiṇī | saiṣā sāratayā proktā hṛdayaṃ parameṣṭhinaḥ ||*’ — that is, not having the ordinary character of manifestations of pleasure and of pain etc. —, is widely celebrated as ‘absolute freedom’ (*svātantrya*), ‘self-awareness’ (*vimarśa*), ‘felicity’ (*ānanda*), and, through its very powerfulness, all beings, even the insensitive (*jaḍa*), become, it is said, sensitive (*sacetana*). This is why, even in the world, those who are capable of intense felicity are said to be ‘endowed with heart.’

The yogin is a *saḥḍaya* in the fullest sense of the term, strengthened by all the esoteric connotations the use of the word ‘heart’

⁴⁷ On this notion as employed in the aesthetic register, see Bansat-Boudon 1992a: 145ff., and 2012: 213ff.

⁴⁸ For a philosophical interpretation of the verse, see Bansat-Boudon 2014.

(*hṛdaya*) implies in a Śaiva context; that is, he is able to accede to a supra-mundane reality. And the *sahṛdaya* of the empirical register is his counterpart in the register of *rasa*, which may be qualified as ‘mundane’ only from certain points of view. Thus, *sahṛdayatā* also designates the qualification (*adhikāra*) required of one or the other subject.

The two experiences are therefore in a relation of reciprocal analogy. But aesthetic experience, as much in empirical existence as in philosophical discourse, is the more accessible of the two. Because of its accessibility, which the homological experience of the Absolute lacks, it enables one to understand the latter, that is, to grasp a metaphysical truth that has a tendency not to show itself. The energy of felicity associated with the experience of *spanda* is, to quote the *Viveka*, ‘perceived with great clarity’ in aesthetic process:

[...] *yady api sarva evāyaṃ viśvaḥprapañca ānandaśaktisphāraḥ tathāpi sphuṭopalambhād atra tasyā evam uktam*

[...] Even if it is true that the entire deployment of the universe is an expansion of the energy of felicity, nevertheless it may be reaffirmed [with these verses] because [in the case of the aesthetic experience implied by melodious songs⁴⁹] [this energy] is perceived with [great] clarity.

⁴⁹ Such songs are referred to in TĀ 3.209cd and in VBh 73, which the *Viveka ad v. 210* quotes just before ĪPK 1.5.14; here is the complete text of the passage (vol. 2, pp. 200–201): [...] *iha khalu yasya kasyacana pramātuḥ, gītādaḥ viśaye yadā mādhyaṣṭhyavigamaḥ tāṭasthyaḥparihāreṇa tadekatānatā, tadā yeyaṃ hṛdaye viśva-pratiṣṭhāsthāne bodhe, spandamānatā tanmayatayā pariṣphuradrūpatā, saiveyam ānandaśaktir uktā sarvaśāstreṣu abhīhitā ity arthaḥ | yad uktam —*

gītādīviśayāsvādāsamasaukhyaiikatātmanah |
yoginas tanmayatvena manorūḍhes tadātmatā || (VBh 73)
iti | bhogasya sukhaduḥkḥhādābhāsasādhāranyam anaśnūvānā —
sā sphurattā mahāsattā deśakālāviśeṣiṇī |
saiṣa sārātayā proktā hṛdayaṃ parameṣṭhinaḥ || (ĪPK 1.5.14)

ityādīnirūpitasvarūpā pariṣphuradrūpataiva svātantryam iti vimarśa iti ānanda iti ca sarvatraiva udghosyate, yanmāhātmyād eva ca jaḍo ’pi nikhilo ’yam janaḥ sacetana ity ucyate, ata eva loke ’py ānandātiśayakārye eva janaḥ sahṛdayaḥ iti prasiddhiḥ | yady api sarva evāyaṃ viśvaḥprapañca ānandaśaktisphāraḥ tathāpi sphuṭopalambhād atra tasyā evam uktam |.

5. *Spanda, rasa and nāṭya: the role of theatre in the constitution of Indian aesthetic thought*

Thus, certain Śaiva texts make *spanda* the speculative principle of aesthetic experience. Dramaturgical treatises retain the traces of it when, as in the 10th-c. *Daśarūpaka* and the *Avaloka*, its commentary, they make a distinction between *nāṭya*, ‘theatre,’ and *ṛtṭa*, ‘dance.’⁵⁰

The *Avaloka ad Daśarūpaka* (1.9) defines *nāṭya* as a ‘vibration’ (*avaspaṇdana*), in turn described as *kiṃccicalana* — the very notions at issue in TĀ 4.184ab quoted above (p. 74, n. 2). Such is the meaning denoted by the root *naṭ* (incidentally, the Prakritization of *ṛt*), whereas the root *ṛt* denotes a mere ‘extension of the limbs’ (*gātravikṣepārtha*°).⁵¹

This is why, as the commentary points out, the ‘vibration’ that characterizes theatre makes it the very place of *rasa* (it is *rasāśrayam*) and of the predominance of *sāttvikābhinaya*.⁵²

Symmetrically, the role of dance (*ṛtṭa*), nothing but ‘extension of the limbs,’ does not contribute directly to the experience of *rasa* but rather introduces beauty into the performance.⁵³

It is therefore no surprise that the technical definition of *nāṭya* should use the notion of *spanda*, understood, not just as the recurring *kiṃccicalana* of speculative Śaiva texts, but also as the other form of vibration that characterizes *sattva* in its aesthetic usage.⁵⁴

The reason why, in this world, theatre is the locus *par excellence* for the supra-mundane (*alaukika*) experience of *rasa* is simply that, with *rasa*, theatre achieves the transcendent principle of *spanda*.

⁵⁰ In fact, the *Daśarūpaka* and the *Avaloka* study the ulterior triad — *ṛtṭya*, *ṛtṭa* and *nāṭya* —, but here I shall concentrate on examining the couple of opposites *nāṭya/ṛtṭa*, the only one known to *Nāṭyaśāstra*. On these matters, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 407–415 (and chart: 409); 1994; 1998.

⁵¹ *Avaloka ad Daśarūpaka* 1.9: [...] *ṛtṭyam iti ṛtṭer gātravikṣepārthatvenāṅgi-kabāhulyāt* [...] *nāṭakādi ca rasaviṣayam* [...] *nāṭyam iti ca naṭa avaspaṇdane iti naṭeḥ kiṃccicalanārthatvāt sāttvikabāhulyāt* [...].

⁵² *Ibid.* On *sāttvikābhinaya*, see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 117–125, 145–148, and Bansat-Boudon 1991.

⁵³ See Bansat-Boudon 1992: 408ff and 1994.

⁵⁴ On this, see, especially, Bansat-Boudon 1992: 118–125, 148, 183, and *passim*.

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Appendix

Complete text of Rāmakaṇṭha's *Vivṛti ad SpK 2.6* [1.22/22]

evaṃ prabuddhasyaiva jāgaraturyapadayor upadeśyatve vyava-
sthāpi te sarvaśarīrisādhāraṇajāgradvṛtтыantaralīnām eva tāvat
paratattvopalabdhim upadeṣṭum āha —

atikruddhaḥ prahṛṣṭo vā
kiṃ karomīti vā mṛśan |
dhāvan vā yat padaṃ gacchet
tatra spandaḥ pratiṣṭhitaḥ || 2.6 (1.22/22)

sāmānyaviśeṣabhēdena pratiṣṭhitāpratiṣṭhitarūpatvāt spandasya
dvaividhye sthite, upādeyaḥ **pratiṣṭhitaḥ spandaḥ** tatra pade upa-
labhyate iti saṃbandhaḥ | yaḥ pratiṣṭhitaś calatvavyapadeśa-
hetusukhityādyanityaviśeṣaspandāviśayatvād aprakampasthitiḥ
svabhāvamātrādhāraḥ sāmānyarūpo mukhyaḥ spandaḥ praty-
stamitasamastaviśeṣaśakticakraparamātmadharmāḥ, sa **tatra** ta-
smin adhunaiva nirdīśyamāne pade upalakṣaṇīyaḥ | kasmin? **yat**
padam atikruddho gacchet pratyagrakṣatadāruṇopadravadviśa-

ddarśanādinā tivratarakopāviṣṭaḥ tajjanyavikārāvasthāyāḥ prāg eva
jhaṭīti jātamātrakrodho yat padaṃ yāṃ bhūmikāṃ **gacchet** man-
asā āsādayet; tathā **atiprahṛṣṭo yat padaṃ gacchet** mṛtapratyutthi-
taprāṇasamapramadādidarśanādinā prahṛṣṭaḥ prakṛṣṭena para-
meṇātiśayena hṛṣṭaḥ pramudita ānandanirbharah, tathaiva utpan-
namātraharṣo yat padaṃ gacchet; tathā **kiṃ karomi iti mṛśan** yat
padaṃ gacchet; kruddhena rājñā ripuṇā vā balavatābhuyuktas tat-
pratīkārāya kartavyaniścayam alabhamānaḥ kevalaṃ **kiṃ karomi**
kim upāyam atrāvalambeya — iti pratipattimūḍha eva mṛśan
vikalpayan nirālabhanacittavṛttir yāṃ bhūmikāṃ adhiṣṭhet tatra
pratiṣṭhitaspandopalabdhir ity arthaḥ etena prakāratrayeṇa
duḥkhasukhamohātmaviṣayagrahaṇarūpāntaḥkaraṇavyāpāra-
mayajāgradavasthāviṣayeṇa evaṃvidhāni prakārantarāṇi saṃgrāhi-
tāni veditavyāni | tena atikruddhavad aśānkiteṣṭajanavinā-
śāsraṇādinā kāraṇena atīśokāviṣṭo 'pi śokavyāñjakāsrupralayādi-
vikṛteḥ prāg eva samunmiṣitamātraśoko yat padaṃ gacchet; tathā
akasmāt kupitakṛṣṇoragavyāghrādigrāsagocaragamanādinā nimit-
tena atibhītaḥ tathaiva sadyaḥ samudbhūtamātrabhayo yat padaṃ
gacchet; tathātyantajugupsāspadapadārthadarśanādihetunā jāta-
mātrajugupso yat padaṃ gacchet, tatrāpi pratiṣṭhitaspandopala-
bdhiḥ — ity upadiṣṭaṃ bhavati; krodhaśokabhayajugupsābhedena
caturvidhasya duḥkharāśeḥ atikruddhaśabdena upalakṣitatvāt |
tathā prahṛṣṭavan nijavīryabalasaṃpattisaṃbhāvanādihetunā
suduḥkaram api kāryaṃ nirvartayituṃ nirvikalpam eva utsā-
hamāno jhaṭīti yat padaṃ gacchet; tathaiva adṛṣṭapūrva-
paramaramaṇīyādipadārthadarśanādinā sapadi ativismayāviṣṭo yat
padaṃ gacchet; tathā kuhanādinā kāraṇena utpannamātrātihāso
yat padaṃ gacchet, tatrāpi pratiṣṭhitaspandopalabdhiḥ — ity
upadiṣṭaṃ bhavati; harṣotsāhavismayahāsabhedena catūrūpa-
sukharāśer atiprahṛṣṭaśabdenopalakṣitatvāt | tathā kiṃkarta-
vyatāmūḍhavad dūrātvinā dṛṣṭārthaniścayāvadhāraṇābhāvāt
saṃśayāviṣṭo yat padaṃ gacchet, tatrāpi pūrvavad upalabdhiḥ —
ity upadiṣṭaṃ bhavati; vismaraṇādidaśāsu tattvāpratipatti-
lakṣaṇasya bahuvīdhasya moharāśeḥ kiṃkartyatāmūḍhabhāve-
na upalakṣaṇāt | evam antaḥkaraṇavyāpārarūpajāgradavasthā-
śrayaṃ paratattvopalabdhyupāyam abhidhāya, buddhīndriya-
vyāpārarūpajāgradavasthāśrayasya asya yathā hy artho 'sphuṭo
dṛṣṭaḥ (SpK 4.6a [3.4a/36a]) ity atra prasaṅgād vaksyamāṇatvāt;
saṃprati karmendriyavyāpārarūpajāgradavasthāśrayaṃ taṃ pa-

daṃ pratipādayitum āha — **dhāvan vā yat padaṃ gacchet tatra** iti, tatra tasmīn api pade pratiṣṭhitaspandopalabdhiḥ | tatra hi icchāprayatnajñānakriyādivṛttinām vibhāgāgrahaṇād advayeśvararūpābhivyaktiḥ | tathā hi — dhāvataḥ pratipadaṃ padojjihirṣoddhāraprayatnadeśāvadhāraṇapadavinyāsakriyādiṣu vṛttiviśeṣeṣu satsv eva anavadhāryamāṇavibhāgatvāt asatsv iva saṃvit avibhāgaparasvabhāvamātrapratiṣṭhitā bhavati, tadā paravaśa eva pumān aiśvaraṃ rūpam āviśati | etad api vāgādikarmendriyavyāpāropalakṣaṇārthaṃ veditavyam | tena dhāvadvad aticaturavarnasvaroccaravyagravāgṛttir api yat padaṃ gacchet, tathā vīṇāveṇuvādanādītvaritataravyāpāryamāṇakarāṅgulikalāpo yat padaṃ gacchet; tatrāpi pratiṣṭhitaspandopalabdhiḥ — ity upadiṣṭaṃ bhavati; sarvakarmendriyavyāpārāṇām dhāvātpadena upalakṣaṇāt | yathā hy artho 'sphuṭo dṛṣṭa ityādi śloke (SpK 4.6a [3.4a]) buddhīndriyavyāpāragatām etām upalabdhiṃ darśayiṣyati | yady api ca sarvasya prāṇabhṛtaḥ sarvasu avasthāsu sarvendriyavṛttayo na antareṇa nityoditapratiṣṭhitaspandaprakāśaparishpuritasamāpattim unmiṣitum eva prabhavanti, tathāpi māyāśaktyudbhāvitabhedāvabhāsabalāt nānātvena ullasadbhiḥ anantaiḥ jñānakriyāviśeṣaiḥ vyavadhīyamāna ivāsau pratiṣṭhitaḥ spandaḥ prabuddhasyāpi upalabdhiḡocaratvaṃ gamayitum aśakya — iti tadupalabdhiyogyāḥ kāścid eva atikruddhatvādayo daśā upāyatvena saṃgr̥hya upadiṣṭāḥ | etās ca prabuddhasya pratyavamṛṣyamānāḥ sadyaḥ pratiṣṭhitaspandopalabdhyupāyatām bhajante, na tu anubhūyamānāḥ; sā hi avasthā duḥkhādīmāy eva | tato niṣkrāntas tu prabuddha upadeśabalād upajātatādṛṣātmasvarūpavivecanakṣamaprajñātiśayaḥ spandatattvam anubhavati; yad anuśīlanāikāgryāt krameṇa suprabuddhapadavīm adhirūḍhaḥ sarvatra anubhaviṣyati — iti |

vivṛtam etat

tasya ca spandatattvasya

ityādinā vṛttau ||

Chart

Rāmakaṇṭha ad SpK 2.6 [1.22/22]																
tathas	Prakṛti & amalakarṇa						Karmendriya			Buddhindriya						
	rajas/dujkha			sattva/sukha			pāda	pāpi	vāc							
avasāhās	atikṛādhāp			prahr. āṭṭh			kṛp karomñi mṣan			dhāvan	to play an Instrument	see SpK 4.6 [3.4.36] to speak/to sing				
													sthāyibhāva	rasa	sthāyibhāva	rasa
													krodha	raudra	harsa (= rati)	śm. gāra
													śoka	karuṇa	utsaha	vīra
													bhaya	bhayānaka	vismaya	adbhuta
													jugupsā	bībhatsa	hāsa	hāsya

