

The Place of Speculation in Kabbalah and Tantra

In this paper I consider the apparently distinctive outlooks indicated by the mystical thought of Jewish kabbalah and Hindu tantra as they aim at realizing the scope of divine awareness. It is a profound horizon of light that beckons to the master kabbalist and adept tantric, which shows them to be on the verge of touching God. For both traditions there is a demonstrative *reflective* consciousness incurred in realizing and recognizing the place of God's being, as a supernal and mundane reality. It is an attempt to grasp that which is otherwise unreachable and unknowable, by pointing to a sublimely felt reality. I argue that there are some phenomenological similarities to the way in which approaching the divine is understood in these two systems, especially in regard to the role of specularly in apprehending and discriminating the place of God.

Introduction

The attainment of divine awareness through a dedicated and lucid state of mind is an important goal in both kabbalistic and tantric mystical speculations. This is so regardless of the differing understanding of the experience that is generated, and it constitutes a phenomenological hermeneutic which involves a situated being there, as a placement of one's own consciousness of divinity. It is to point the way to being with God. The touchstone of these inquiries into the nature of existence is that the divine is mapped onto the mundane—that, in other words, human beings are a reflection of the cosmic reality. We are made in the image of God.¹ More especially, it is conjectured that God effects movement below as human beings effect movement above. From a divine perspective, the universe is a reflection, with human beings appearing as images in the mirror of Reality. From a mundane perspective, the world is a reflection, with the objects of perception appearing as images in the mirror of reality. It is the elements of this world that make up the silvered glass—a composition of ether, air, water, fire, and earth. If in terms of a natural theology God is represented in or by the world, then the idea of God is indicative of an anthropocentric mirror. Put another way, the view into the worldly mirror with its affective and cognitive exports is the site of the realized presence of God. It is only to assert that God may be seen reflectively, arrayed before the mind's eye, in the mirror of the imaginary. In a demonstrative way, the transcendental being of God is one that is far away, but it is immanently brought near by the discriminating mind. I shall consider this issue firstly in respect to the kabbalah, as it is presented in the classical text, the *Sefer ha-Zohar (The Book of Radiance)* and secondly in respect to tantra, as it is presented in texts of the Śaiva tantra.² I then assess these understandings comparatively, drawing on the scholarly work that has provisionally been done in this area, as well as venturing into territory of a mystical hermeneutic of my own. I conclude that kabbalistic and tantric systems of thought converge on the effort to bring into clear focus the awareness of the hidden place of God, which is clouded over by the ordinary and limited human understanding, but which remains to be uncovered by the penetrating light of divine consciousness. In experiencing this sense of divinity, the adepts or masters enjoin with God's presentative being, scored in nature, and by doing so they become luminously associated with God. I shall use the terms 'the divine' or 'divine being' when referring to the occluded realm of God and Godhead, and the term 'divinity' when referring to the play of imaginary in the mystic experient—as performed in the theatre of imagination and understanding.

The Specular Imaginary of Beauty

The Jewish Perspective

In the theology of kabbalah there is the ultimate notion of God as being invisible, a divine conceptual emptiness, which occupies no place and yet every place. It is called Ein Sof, ‘without end’, or, ‘there is no end’.³ How can this incomprehensible realm be realized? It is done through means of the *sefirot*, which are ten attributive powers that comprise the Godhead. In the hermeneutic of the *Zohar* the paramount, concealed reality that is Ein Sof begins to reveal itself through an aura, an airy space, called Keter (‘Crown’). It is yet an imperceptible realm to human consciousness, a realm of nothingness, ‘no-thingness’, *ayin*. From here, a singularity appears, which is the primordial point of Ḥokhmah (Wisdom), and within this is engraved a hidden design, Binah (‘Understanding’), which is the ‘holy of holies’. She is called מי (*Mi*), *Who*, and from her is created אלה (*elleh*), *these*, the seven lower *sefirot*. While Binah is enigmatic, and is open only to interrogation—who?—*these* are available for acknowledgement.⁴ In this development, Binah is translated into Elohim as she natively lights up creation; that is, in ‘[s]eeking to be revealed, to be named, [Binah] garbed itself in a splendid, radiant garment’.⁵ Binah is that ‘beyond which no one can contemplate or know’, since she ‘is enclosed in thought’, that is, Ḥokhmah,⁶ who is supernal wisdom, and who ‘is totally unknown to anyone’ except for Elohim, that is, Binah, who understands.⁷ As the supernal mother, Binah is the expression of divine being, and the illuminating power of the darkness, who is earnestly sought after. She is the unknown firmament, only a profound object of inquiry. In the unfolding of the divine realm Shekhinah marks the end of the process, and from her, physical creation is born; consequently, she can be questioned as *Mah, What?*⁸ She is the reflective outcome of Binah, and ‘is called ים (*Yam*), Sea, of the supernal expanse called מי (*Mi*), *Who*’.⁹ God proclaims the divine name to Moses at the burning bush on Mount Sinai: אהיה אשר אהיה (*Ehyeh asher ehyeh*), which can be rendered either as ‘I am who I am’ or ‘I will be who I will be’. In the zoharic formulation the initial word, *ehyeh*, ‘I will be’, refers to Keter, while *asher*, ‘who’, refers to Binah. This sacred name is engraved ‘in the crown (*atarah*)’, which is to say, Binah or Shekhinah.¹⁰ It is a nominal combination, which implies that Binah demonstrates the place of becoming, “‘therefore I shall be’—I shall be [there] to produce and beget everything’.¹¹ God is the agent who enacts judgement: ואני (*Va-Ani*), *And I, I am about to bring the Flood, waters* (Genesis 6.17)’, where *I* and *I am about to* refers to Shekhinah. In other words, God declares himself as ‘I am’ through Shekhinah, who is *Ani, I*, ‘standing revealed, verging on being known’, and who is ‘throne to what is above’, i.e., Tif’eret.¹² Therefore, Shekhinah is evidently the divine identity, known as *I*, since she is the place in which God presently reveals himself in glory. When the inquirer refers to her, Shekhinah is denominated in the second person, אתה (*Attah*), *You*, as that which is revealed, and so she is addressed directly.¹³ So Shekhinah is perspectival: she is known as *Attah, You*, from the human standpoint, but she is also known as *I*, from God’s standpoint, because the flow of the divine into existence is a pronominal flow of God’s being, the *I am that is about to reveal myself* in perceptual reality. She is, so to say, intelligible in his hand, and is called ‘I’ (*anokhi*) because she ‘fully expresses the personality of God’.¹⁴ Indeed, she is the holy subject, who is brought to light by God’s being as that realm of divine becoming to the world, and who is to be found in the blessed sanctuary of life.¹⁵ Binah and Shekhinah are phenomenologically and psychologically there and here.

The *sefirot* are levels or stages within the Godhead, and as the self-revealing aspects of God, they are ‘the reflection of En-Sof in the mirror of revelation’.¹⁶ Each *sefirah* comprises all the others.¹⁷ Divine life bursts forth in a shocking splendour, forcefully sparking light.¹⁸

The *sefirot* are measured out in a line, extending from the point of Ḥokhmah through Binah, from whom it radiates straightly to the other rungs.¹⁹ While Ein Sof is infinite and immeasurable, the *sefirot* ‘are finite and measurable’.²⁰ Concomitantly, Ein Sof is beyond and outside time, but the *sefirot* are within and inside time; and, as stretching through past, present and future, they exist in a ‘timeless time’ or ‘unending time’.²¹ The *sefirot* then are the horological reality of divine existence, the timepiece of God’s being, which makes divinity the pendulum clock of consciousness. As for Shekhinah, she is the arbiter of time, the metric by which the kabbalist establishes himself in divine consciousness.²² At the appointed time, on the Sabbath, the souls of the righteous are elevated to the firmament above the Garden of Eden in the holy chariot that circles the royal Throne of Glory. Their ascending spirits are adorned with the joy of conjugal union, and the worlds are becalmed ‘in tranquillity and bliss’, as the Holy Name is traced across the heavens in the sublime light of daybreak. They are infused with the wisdom of learning, ‘[s]parkling in radiant perfection of the supernal ספר (*sefer*), book’. Indeed, ‘[t]hey sparkle and shine by themselves from the radiant scintillation of the supernal book, shining and sparkling to every single *glory* adjoining them, because from them—from that ספירו (*sefiru*), sapphire radiance, and glow—every single ring shines, sparkling shimmeringly’.²³ After the fall of the Temple, which is her dwelling place, Shekhinah moved into exile following Israel, and she lapses into disarray in sympathy with her people.²⁴ The light that God created at the beginning of the universe was boundless and allowed for infinite perception: ‘This is the light that the blessed Holy One showed Adam, who gazed with it from one end of the universe to the other’.²⁵ This sefirotic illumination was provided through Ḥesed, who ensouls loving-kindness. God ‘enwrapped Himself in [this primordial light] as in a *tallit*, as is written: *He wraps in light as in a garment* (Psalms 104:2)’.²⁶ The *sefirot* as a whole conform to God’s creative impulse, as provided by the divine will. This makes Shekhinah the to-be shaping light that covers reality, as the presenting being of God. Interestingly here, Shekhinah is identified with the older mystical idea of an exalted angel, who is in effect the manifestation of God, and who is called *Meṭatron*.²⁷ As a divine messenger, this ‘angel of the Lord’, or ‘angel of the glory’, corresponds moreover to the idea of the numinous shape of God, which hypostatically sits on the throne, and which is able to be measured as the stature, the *Shi’ur Qomah*.²⁸

The kabbalist would step towards heaven, i.e., Tif’eret, by walking upon the beam of light that spans Binah and Shekhinah.²⁹ It is to tread the deliberate path on the way to eternity (*ein sof*). On this foot-bridge, the body is struck into recognition of divinity.³⁰ The soul is prepared for displaying in the Garden of Eden, where this luminous place symbolizes the togetherness of Shekhinah and Tif’eret. Here the space of the imaginary is lit up in a lightning radiance. The powerful light of God as reflected throughout the *sefirot* is the means by which the divine being is revealed to the kabbalist, whose irradiated mind registers the state of divinity as a twisting descent into the reality of spiritual consciousness.³¹ The intention of the kabbalist is to unify the divine name, and thereby to return to God, by following a virtuous life, so that his soul may ‘ascend to the site of the bundle of life’, which is Shekhinah; these souls ‘bask in [the] radiance of the resplendent speculum, shining from the highest site of all’.³² In the collapse to divine being, which is finalized upon leaving the body, the shining light of the *sefirot* can overwhelm the workman soul, so it has to be matchfully clothed in a radiant garment in order to reach the heavenly heights.³³ The one who aspires to know God is ‘transformed into an ordained attendant, ministering before the blessed Holy One among the other angels’.³⁴ In other words, by rising to Shekhinah, the holy soul can reflectively view the magnificence of Tif’eret, who focuses the radiance of those *sefirot*—Ḥokhmah and Binah—above him. The rejoicing that God experiences when the kabbalist endures to cohere the divine forces is also an internal realization, for God has set his

splendour above the heavens, who is the river that runs deep into the sefirotic world, and whose flowing forth brings joy.³⁵ In the Garden of Eden, at the midnight hour when God proclaims the holy words of Torah, the kabbalist is sojourning with Shekhinah, and ‘a thread of love is drawn upon him by day’.³⁶ He is there praising God with all his heart.³⁷ By constantly desiring Shekhinah the ‘master of the house’ is fathoming divinity; and it is the focal intent of his heart and mind to direct his will above, to draw down the will of the Lord, and so much to cleave to him all in all.³⁸ This aspirational activity may also be phenomenologically rendered in painterly ways.³⁹

The kabbalist is rightfully a pillar that supports the divine. He seeks to exist in the presence of God, as a righteous soul. By soaring into the sky, into the Academy of Heaven, he becomes a column of light amongst his peers, surrounded by angels, chief among whom is Metatron, the ‘Master of Wings’.⁴⁰ Whilst out walking, Rabbi El’azar and Rabbi Abba heard a proclamation: ‘Holy sons of God, dispersed among the living of this world! Luminous lamps, initiates of the Academy! Assemble at your places to delight with your Lord in Torah!’.⁴¹ The companions epitomize light.⁴² They have a shining desire to be clustered with God, to be able to exhibit the aspectual spectrum of divine being.⁴³ The expressed goal of the kabbalist is to ‘shine like the זָהָר (*zohar*), radiance, of the sky’.⁴⁴ It is to go on the way of delightfulness, ‘for whoever follows the ways of Torah is showered by the blessed Holy One with the delight of Shekhinah, never departing from him’.⁴⁵ Studying Torah is a perennial occupation, and by this continual ritual, the kabbalist is adorning Shekhinah, preparing her for her marriage to Tif’eret, for she enters the bridal canopy ‘arrayed and illumined with Her adornments’, and she ‘sparkles with the radiance of סַפִּיר (*sappir*), sapphire, sparkling and radiating from one end of the universe to the other’.⁴⁶ In this fashion, she is endowed as the glory of God, the crown of light. She is the bride, כַּלָּה (*kallah*), who is made complete, ‘like the moon consummated by the sun with all radiance and sparkle’.⁴⁷ The kabbalist prays in the temple, and this sacred space is an enclosure which extends out to envelop the natural world; it is the place of his all-being with God. As a symbolic representation, nature is ‘a mirror in which the imageless form of God is seen’, and this view is facilitated by the feminine looking glass of the imagination.⁴⁸ It is a psychological activation of Shekhinah as the medium for visualization. Through her the kabbalist is able to see the divine (masculine) image because she has no image of her own to mar the reflection. As Wolfson writes, ‘[t]he mirror best performs its function as a reflecting medium to the extent that its surface is invisible: to see a thing in a mirror requires that one does not see anything on the mirror’, and so ‘*Shekhinah* is an invisible surface that allows the images from above to be seen because she has no image of her own’.⁴⁹ The sharp clarity of the mirror of imagination as it is polished by the spirit is like a sword.⁵⁰ Shekhinah is the dark ark that houses the *sefirah* of Yesod, who is the covenant, the circumcised phallus of God, and who illumines her and the world.⁵¹ Given that she has no light of her own, she is considered to be black, or blue-black, yet she lies in a flaming embrace with the white light of Tif’eret.⁵² An alternative image is that Shekhinah is the rainbow, an arc of colourful light.⁵³ This, however, may be understood as an androgynous symbol, as the conjunction of Shekhinah and Yesod.⁵⁴ When these two are separated then the rainbow will appear in darkened colours.⁵⁵ If God is concealed from the world by a heavenly curtain, and if Shekhinah represents this partition, then it is a foggy one as she hangs over Israel.⁵⁶

In the discourse about divinity what is understood of God is that which can be pointed out, either realistically or phenomenologically.⁵⁷ The *sefirot* can be so demonstrated, realistically insofar as the qualities—wisdom, understanding, love, power, beauty, endurance, splendour, righteousness, and majesty—of God are exemplified by a human being, and

phenomenologically insofar as these forces are modes of divine awareness in the imaginary.⁵⁸ As he studies the scriptures the kabbalist is aligning himself with divinity, in what are genuine states of being with God. The Torah as the textualized presence of God is regarded as feminine, and the kabbalist reads himself into her world. The view of Hellner-Eshed is apposite here: ‘The state of consciousness that characterizes the sefirah *Malkhut* is dynamic, verbal, erotic, and feminine; and in this state, higher states of consciousness and the higher levels of divinity are experienced as reflections in a mirror, one of the chief symbols of *Malkhut* consciousness’.⁵⁹ Grammatically, Tif’eret/Yesod and Shekhinah are acknowledged as, or represented by, the singular demonstrative pronoun ‘this’, *zeh* (masc.) and *zot* (fem.), which means that these forces are ostensibly available to the human mind.⁶⁰ It is evident, for example, in the biblical allusion to ‘this house of God’, which is the awesome place of divine convenantal presence.⁶¹ By giving himself over to God and entrusting in the divine name, *be-zot*, ‘with this’, or ‘in this’, the kabbalist is bringing together Shekhinah and Yesod, who are naturally, ontologically, inseparable. They share in the sign of the covenant.⁶² Being the sign, or mark, of the covenant, Shekhinah is ‘always “right here” in the body’.⁶³ As the Holy Spirit, she is divinity realized nearby not away, and so she is known as ‘this’, as that which is always present.⁶⁴ Impelled together, יהוה (*YHVH*), which stands for Tif’eret, and האלהים (*ha-Elohim*), which stands for Shekhinah, constitute the name of God.⁶⁵ Mundanely speaking, given that a woman is said to embody or represent Shekhinah,⁶⁶ and is the object of desire, then she is this one that is here before a man in the flesh, or that one who is there before him in his memory. He is demonstratively looking at divinity incarnate. Tif’eret moves not approximately, but exactly, to the place of holiness, Shekhinah. With them, thus, it is to be blessed with life.⁶⁷ Shekhinah conveys the divine riches from the higher *sefirot*, from Ḥokhmah, who is far away.⁶⁸ She is nearby as the vast sea upon which the angelic ships sail, the gathering place for ‘those streams and bubbling springs’ emanating from on high—from the everlasting conjunction of Ḥokhmah and Binah—which are channelled through Yesod, the Righteous One. Rabbi Yehudah asks, ‘Who attains that?’, to which Rabbi Yitshak responds: ‘One who has a share in the world that is coming—in the world that is coming, precisely!’⁶⁹ Binah is there, while Shekhinah is here, ‘the place’ (*ha-maqom*) of God’s being on earth.⁷⁰ God connects with this place whenever he remembers his covenant, and so when he couples with her, i.e., Shekhinah, he can announce ‘I am YHVH’.⁷¹

In the history of Jewish theology there is a tension between the idea of God as transcendentally invisible, and so beyond human ken, and the idea of God as immanently visible, and thus comprehensible. In the Bible God does not permit his face to be seen by Moses (Exodus 33:20, 23);⁷² although later, Isaiah sees ‘the Lord seated on a throne’ (Isaiah 6:1, 4).⁷³ The rabbis of the talmudic era worked around this disparity by saying that Moses could not see any form of God because he saw through the ‘speculum that shines’ (*ispaqlarya ha-me’irah*), whereas Isaiah (and the other prophets) glimpsed God’s form because they saw through the ‘speculum that does not shine’ (*ispaqlarya she-einah me’irah*).⁷⁴ This viewpoint came to be adopted by the practitioners of kabbalah, making Tif’eret the shining mirror, and Shekhinah the non-shining mirror. It is said that the ‘primordial light’ extended into the far reaches of the divine realm, encompassing the angels and ‘the speculum that does not shine together with the speculum that shines’, which is to say Shekhinah and Tif’eret.⁷⁵ The zoharic author follows the talmudic belief that the generation of the Exodus was favoured since they were ‘shown the splendid luster of their Lord face-to-face’.⁷⁶ When the Israelites stood at Mount Sinai and received the divine revelation, they saw ‘supernal radiancies’, that is, the *sefirot*, and were ‘enlightened by the resplendent speculum’.⁷⁷ For the kabbalists, the vision of God by the *maskilim* is a dazzling one.⁷⁸ The *Zohar* reports that YHVH spoke to Abraham in a vision (*be-mahazeh*), through Shekhinah: ‘In that הַיְזוּ (*heizu*), mirror—a rung in which all

images appear'.⁷⁹ At this point, Abraham only saw the divine incompletely, since the higher *sefirot* were hidden within the obscuration of Shekhinah. However, upon being circumcised he was allowed the full and splendid sefirotic vision of God, at least as it pretends to be given in the kaleidoscope of Shekhinah.⁸⁰ In this way, he is opened to the divine reality, the radiance of God: YHVH is revealed to Abraham as he sat 'at the opening of the tent', where the 'supernal world [was] poised to illumine it'.⁸¹ God blessed him *בכל* (*ba-kol*), *with everything*, in the 'heat of the day', as he felt the love that is worn as the 'tenth crown', namely Shekhinah, in whose presence Abraham dutifully sat.⁸² While the prophets only saw through the dimmer revealed colours, Moses was able to see into the bright unconcealed heights of divine being.⁸³ The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob observed the supernal colours of the Godhead as glowing less radiantly than did Moses.⁸⁴ This means that Moses is the 'husband, as it were, of that *מראה* (*mar'eh*), *appearance, of the presence of YHVH*, for he was worthy of conducting this rung on earth in any way he wished—something no other human attained'.⁸⁵ Shekhinah is the avenue of prophetic vision, along and through whom the divine landscape of holy Jerusalem is to be seen in all its glory, for she is about the *Valley of Vision*.⁸⁶

The Tantric Perspective

In the tantric tradition God, or the Absolute, which is to say, Paramaśiva (Supreme Śiva), is the invisible ground, or substratum, on which the universe is erected.⁸⁷ It becomes visible through the working of the divine light, the *śakti* (a feminine noun), which is the unfolding flux of energy, via the means of the thirty-six *tattvas*, as they extend from *śiva-tattva* through to *prthivī-tattva*.⁸⁸ This means that access to the concealed divine nature is through the aegis of Śakti, who is the standard of awareness and inquiry.⁸⁹ The objective world, according to Utpaladeva, is a manifestation of Śiva's own self-awareness, which is freely conceived by the power of his will, by *svātantrya śakti*, within his own purview, and which appears in the luminous mirror of his self.⁹⁰ Śiva projects his consciousness playfully on to the mirror of Reality, which is just called Śakti.⁹¹ It is axiomatic that although the consciousness-light (*citi*) of Śiva appears differentiated as the various objects of the phenomenal universe, this is so only in the sense of reflections in a mirror. Accordingly, Abhinavagupta proclaims in *kārikās* 12–13 of his *Paramārthasāra*:

As, in the orb of a mirror, objects such as cities or villages, themselves various though not different [from the mirror], appear both as different from each other and from the mirror itself, so appears this world [in the mirror of the Lord's consciousness], differentiated both internally and vis-à-vis that consciousness, although it is not different from consciousness most pure, the supreme Bhairava.⁹²

Kṣemarāja states that the 'Supreme Lord', Śaṅkara, that is, Śiva, 'is both the Great Light (of universal consciousness) and the perfect medium of reflection (*vimala*)'.⁹³ In exercising his freedom to distribute himself in the universe Śiva is unaffected by the spatial and temporal order, yet his consciousness is the same as that which is ordinarily employed to know the changing variety of objects in human experience. It is only as a reflection appears in a mirror that there is cognition of an object, e.g., as in 'this is a jar', which shines on the background of the subject. It is 'this' that is really 'I'.⁹⁴ In effect, Śiva illuminates all the acts of cognition, which are just reflectively his own, and as such they constitute the working of his self-hood. What this means for the human self—which is simply a contraction of Śiva's being as the cosmic soul⁹⁵—is that there is no subject–object dichotomy in the state of I-consciousness, as there is in this-consciousness, which is typified by *vikalpas*, or thought-constructs.⁹⁶ As a mirrored reality, everything is dependently reflective upon Śiva. 'Śiva appears within each entity in a twofold way: as the "(original) image" (*bimba*) and as the "reflection" (*pratibimba*) of this image'.⁹⁷ Given that the light of consciousness, Śiva, is

instantiated in the human mind, this means that for human beings, as the subject, the cognizable reality is like the reflections in a mirror. For the *yogin*, the realization of his identity with Śiva means that he views the universe as a playful act of himself as creator, or emanator.⁹⁸ Śiva has six divine attributes, namely 1) *sarvajñatā*—‘omniscience’; 2) *tr̥pti*—‘contentment’; 3) *anādibodha*—‘beginningless consciousness’; 4) *svatantratā*—‘perfect freedom’; 5) *aviluptaśakti*—‘imperishable power’; and 6) *anantaśakti*—‘infinite power’.⁹⁹ The *siddha* seeks to embody or exemplify these qualities.

Śiva inherently appears as the various manifestations of the objective world through the power (*śakti*) of reflectively realizing his own self-awareness. Śiva and Śakti exist in the relation of *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*, where the latter is, according to Bhāskarāya, the ‘spontaneous vibration’ of the former.¹⁰⁰ This is understood to mean that Śiva as the divine light, *prakāśa*, has a reflective awareness, *vimarśa*, of his own nature.¹⁰¹ In tantric terms, the knower (*pramātr̥*) is self-luminous (*svaprakāśa*) and sovereign (*aiśvarya*).¹⁰² While the knowing self is self-shining, that shining externality which is presented to the mind shines only dependently.¹⁰³ To say that worldly objects appear is not to say that they ‘look like something’, but rather that an *appearance* ‘is the objective aspect of every cognitive event, it is “that which has appeared”’.¹⁰⁴ It is said that no apprehensible object can exist outside the light of consciousness,¹⁰⁵ which ‘shines as (*yogena*) the appearance of the world’;¹⁰⁶ and thus ‘every time the power of the Lord causes the manifestation of duality, consciousness flows into objects’.¹⁰⁷ The multitude that is held up as objective reality actually rests within the Lord Śiva and thus shines without differentiation in his reflective awareness.¹⁰⁸ The manifold conception of the world involves ‘an act of ascertainment (*vinīścayah*)’, a consciousness that is ‘acquired through the negation of the opposite, and, as regards pure light, there is no possibility of the existence of something that is its opposite’.¹⁰⁹ In fact, those manifestations (*ābhāsas*) are but outward forms of the internal light of consciousness.¹¹⁰ Thus objects are the flickering light of own consciousness, or the scintillating pulse thereof.¹¹¹ The world thus cognitively appears in the mirror of (shining) consciousness, and the universe is only the subjective consciousness expansively realized. If the world is a mirror-like representation then the indiscriminating consciousness is like the beclouding or befogging of that mirror.¹¹² Indeed, it is like a stain; and so as a consequence the condition of stainlessness, or unmanifestedness, is taken as an indication of realizing one’s authentic nature as Śiva.¹¹³ Abhinavagupta quotes the *Tattvarakṣāvidhāna* in this regard: ‘Dwelling in the interior of the maṇḍala of the lotus of the heart, whose nature is man, energy, and Śiva, is to be known, by the distinct dissolution, as the knowing seminal nucleus, the stainless liberator’.¹¹⁴ The nature of self-awareness of the divine is also understood in more dynamic ways; for consciousness is imbued with a vibratory nature, and can be stable or unstable; that is, as ‘the (sole) inherent attribute (*dharma*) of the Supreme Self’, or as ‘transitory pulsations (of the sensations of) “pleasure” and the rest, [which] are said to render (individualized consciousness) mobile’. It is in the space between these states of consciousness, the moment of entry from stability to instability, where *Spanda* is to be experienced, and consequently the *yogin* ‘should fix his attention (*upalakṣaṇīyā*), “there” in that state’.¹¹⁵ Maheśvara (i.e., Śiva) is not perceptible, and thus is not an object of cognition; and because the divine light is indeterminate, God is immeasurable, i.e., unknowable.¹¹⁶ He however measures out the universe into its manifest state, by the gauge of Śakti.¹¹⁷ On the principle that *śakti* upholds consciousness, this means that the tantric recognition of unity with Śiva calibrates reality. The adept in realizing his own nature as being one with the cosmic nature of vibration, *Spanda*, which sustains the universe, is in a state of amazement or astonishment. ‘He sees the totality of objects appearing and disappearing in the ether of his consciousness like a series of reflections appearing and disappearing in a mirror’.¹¹⁸ If human consciousness is like a crystal, or mirror, or water, in

which the world is reflected, then oneself is a brilliant, or limpid, reflection of divine light, and is moreover identical with God (Śiva). For the tantric practitioner (*sādhaka*) the state of non-recognition is like being in exile from Paramaśiva.

The projection of (apophatically dark) Anuttara¹¹⁹ into the to-be dichotomizing relationship of Śiva (who is *prakāśa*, or the luminous aspect) and Śakti (who is *vimarśa*, or the reflective aspect), means that the perception of differentiation begins to arise, that is, of I and this, subject and object. It has to be remembered that these two—Śiva and Śakti—are essentially one.¹²⁰ From the state of Śiva and Śakti emerges the *tattva* called Sadāśiva, which is the third principle of manifestation; here, consciousness is of the form ‘I am this’, *Ahamidam*, which refers to the absolute or universal I (*ahantā*), as the divine experient; and at this stage the will, *iccha*, is predominant. Next is the *tattva* of Īśvara, in which the consciousness of an ‘I’ and a ‘this’ (*idantā*) is both equally prominent; the experient thinks ‘This am I’, *Idamaham*. At this level, knowledge, *jñāna*, is predominant. After this comes the stage of Śuddhavidyā, where the experient has consciousness of both ‘I’ and ‘this’ with distinction, though not yet difference. It is the level of unity-in-diversity, *bhēdabheda*, where action, *kriya*, is predominant.¹²¹ In the circle of creation, the world is known and un-known, expanded and withdrawn.¹²² The evolutionary cycle is at the same time an involutionary cycle since it is all contained in Śiva, and recognition of this involves recursive awareness. Dyczkowski explains that Kṣemarāja ‘identifies the state of withdrawal with the principle Sadāśiva, which corresponds to the awareness of universal consciousness that “I am all this”, and that of expansion with Īśvara, which corresponds to the awareness that “all this am I”’.¹²³ For the liberated *yogin* who recognizes his own identity with Śiva, and realizes that ‘I am this’ (i.e., Sadāśiva), objective reality is perceived as his body of consciousness, indistinct from himself as a reflected image.¹²⁴ The yogic body is thus a reflective ensoulment of the universe.¹²⁵ According to the *Vijñānabhairava*, ‘If one contemplates simultaneously that one’s entire body or the world consists of nothing but Consciousness, then the mind becomes free from thoughts and the supreme awakening occurs’.¹²⁶ By concentrated effort and self-reflective practice, the *yogin* will follow the path into unity with Śiva.¹²⁷ The description of divine experiential awareness is charted by the human experient in the progress of return to Paramaśiva.¹²⁸ A prime tenet of *Pratyabhijñā* theology is that this world, this reality, lies in the sphere of Śiva’s reflective awareness, and the objects of perception are fitted to the individual I, which is only a fictitious limitation of the supreme Lord.¹²⁹ Śiva’s consciousness is unitary, which means that his activity is non-successive; it is only when differentiation occurs with the advent of *Māyā*, ‘She who measures’, that successive activity takes place. Utpaladeva states: ‘Succession pertains to ordinary action, which is dependent on the power of Time [*kālaśakti*]; it is not, however, admissible for divine eternal action, as it is not for the Lord’.¹³⁰

The unfoldment of being (*sattā*) is a gradient of cosmic and microcosmic principles.¹³¹ It proceeds through the *tattvas* as the various powers of consciousness, bliss, will, knowledge, action, and all the while a progressive deepening of objectivity occurs, until it is finally realized cognitively (and ignorantly) as the mundane occupations of the human mind over against an external world.¹³² The Great Lord (Maheśvara) instigates this differentiation through his power of exclusion (*apohana-śakti*), in addition to his powers of knowledge (*jñāna-śakti*) and memory (*smṛti-śakti*), which enable unification of the disparate elements of practical living, and hence conscious orderly activity.¹³³ Abhinavagupta explains that ‘[a]lthough there is only one Śiva-Tattva, yet its own power of freedom shows in itself multifarious forms, like reflections’.¹³⁴ His reflections are not illusions, or unreal, since they faithfully represent him, which implies that the universe is not unreal.¹³⁵ It is a prevalent idea

of tantric ontology in its extensive analogies on reflection ‘that the power-holder, be it Viṣṇu, Śiva or Bhairava, is the mirror, while the form and source of its reflections is His power’.¹³⁶ It demonstrates Śiva’s ultimate freedom or independence, the play of his intuition on the mirror of his own being, which is none other than the supreme goddess (Parā).¹³⁷ The *sādhaka* obliquely views the objective world in the mirror that he holds up to himself, and this self-conscious experience is that which is called *śakti*.¹³⁸ The *yogin* may be bound by Śiva’s power of action, but when he realizes his place as an image of Śiva he wields his consciousness as his own expressive power.¹³⁹ He is a placeholder for Śiva. Abhinavagupta accordingly writes: ‘He who knows the Self of all, thus described – [source of] supreme and incomparable bliss, omnipresent, utterly devoid of diversity – becomes one with that Self’.¹⁴⁰ Reflecting Śiva, the *yogin* is capable of bringing to life all that he wills, for the world is constituted of the imaginary depictions in the mirror of his mind. Abhinavagupta states: ‘And unceasing is his meditation; moreover, the Lord [who is his Self] creates manifold forms. That alone constitutes his meditation – [the realization] that the true form of things is nothing but that which is drawn [on the wall of consciousness] by his imagination’.¹⁴¹ The adept shines in the ecstasy of being with Śiva.¹⁴² It is to participate ‘in the great festival of worship’ (*pūjanamahotsava*), which brings unparalleled joy.¹⁴³ According to the philosophical psychology of *Pratyabhijñā*, the aim of the tantric practitioner is not to supplant or subsume the ego, but rather to transfigure or transform it into a higher sense of I (*aham*), that is, as a deindividualized I, or I-hood (*ahanta*).¹⁴⁴ This is what impels the breath, the senses, and the mind.¹⁴⁵ In this state of consciousness, of a self-reflective recognition of identity with Śiva, the island of thisness is submerged in the ocean of I-ness.¹⁴⁶ Awareness has an essential nature, which is recognitive apprehension, and which is the Supreme Sun ‘in the highest heaven’; it is the space within the heart.¹⁴⁷ The unified self ‘shines’ as light and darkness.¹⁴⁸ In the *Manthānabhairavatantra* the goddess Kubjikā (a cognomen of Śakti) is visualized in her gross form with with six faces. Her heart ‘shines like a clean mirror’, and ‘[h]er countenance . . . shines with the rays of the newly risen sun and is radiant with brilliant energy’.¹⁴⁹ Śakti is determined as a colourful rainbow.¹⁵⁰

The highest reality cannot be pointed to, for to do so is to limit it.¹⁵¹ This is not surprising, since the ultimate ground, *anuttara*, is beyond comprehension.¹⁵² By contrast, Abhinavagupta explains that the objective manifestations of the Lord’s consciousness are conventionally expressed as ‘this’, and so it is akin to pointing something out with one’s finger.¹⁵³ What lies on, or in, or by, that plane of existence is Śiva and his expressive power of *śakti*. As mentioned, Śiva is both *prakāśa*, I-consciousness, and *vimarśa*, this-consciousness, where the latter is that which displays the diverse images of Śiva’s desire for manifestation. Although worldly objects are perceived as separate from the Self, and so demonstrated as ‘this’ (or ‘that’), in fact those manifold objects are really contained within the ‘I’-consciousness of Śiva.¹⁵⁴ Śiva comes into view through discriminate attention—through the power of discrimination, *apohana-śakti*.¹⁵⁵ In the *Pratyabhijñā*, recognition is predicated on memory and experience, which in this case means remembering that oneself is actually a godself, namely Śiva.¹⁵⁶ Just as, according to non-dual Śaiva doctrine, the knower, the known, and means of knowledge are essentially one, so too the diversity of objects of knowledge is in fact unitary; as Virūpākṣa explains:

I, who am free, manifest the universe as ‘That’, ‘This’, and ‘This is that’ [respectively] due to the force of memory, direct experience, and recognitive synthesis. And these are differentiated from each other through conceptual exclusion.¹⁵⁷

In other words (by interpretation), the experience of the past, which is ‘that’, is pulled into the present as ‘this’, by the cord of memory, and demonstrates a recognitive apprehension, ‘this

is that'.¹⁵⁸ In his commentary on this verse Vidyācakravartin states that without the 'recognitive synthesizer' (*anusamdhātr*), which is nonsequential, and which 'threads through all cognitions', then '[i]t would be like a painting without a background surface'.¹⁵⁹ To repeat, there is no distinction ultimately between the knower, the known, and means of knowledge, as they are all aspects of Śiva, and the realization of this is a triadic recognition of oneself in the mirror of reality. Phenomenologically, the world as brightly established in the mind is full of coruscating or shimmering objects; but whereas to the unrealized self these are perceived as 'this' or 'that' thing, to the realized self (in the recognition of Śiva) they are perceived as fused with the mind, to be just 'I'. The nearness is an asymptotic embrace, a touch of light, so to speak.¹⁶⁰ Actually, the experience of divine recognition involves blending 'this' and 'that', where this is the passing show of that event of divine consciousness. It is the interminable moment of recall—the intense realization of godhood and its fading away.¹⁶¹ A liberated being (*jīvanmukta*) understands that the determinate cognition (*adhyavasā*) of external objects, as in 'this is a jar', which entails 'the linguistic sign and the thing signified (*nāmarūpa*)', is in truth non-differential in the Self, realized as 'the very power of the supreme Lord', and therefore is to be treated as the unlimited I, not this.¹⁶²

In-general, for the *sādhaka* the encounter with divinity is face-to-face, that is, directly perceived, given that *śakti*—the agentive and gnostic aspect of God—is apparently embodied in the female as a ritual participant.¹⁶³ In order to attain perfection the *sādhaka* merely has to recognize his own identity with Śiva, which he can do through the silvered form of his female consort, and which makes her only an appearance in this scheme, one that sparks his self-awareness of himself as deified. (She is an appearance in the tantric sense of being his cognitive manifestation.) In this respect, women are cast into the role of phenomenological or psychological objects, as that idea brought to recollection, or that external object brought to mind; but when the *sādhaka* recognizes himself as Śiva the woman is seen to be not other than himself as subjectively enclosed. Epistemologically, she is the one he knows as before him, this, his ritual partner, and as the materialized object of his consciousness. According to Śivopādhyāya, the *yogin*, as a 'master of himself', 'should then enter the temple of the young woman's beautiful body, thinking the while, according to his capacity to do so: "I am Śiva, Who is consciousness and bliss, while this is my consort (*bhaṅgī*, an extension of my being)".'¹⁶⁴ This means that as the *sādhaka* engagingly erotically comprehends ('knows') his consort, as Śakti, his semantic consciousness flows into her, who is only a foil for himself as the god in waiting. He thereby comes to know himself. At a prosaic level, a woman is that mirror of the *sādhaka*'s own self which he is entering into communion with by gazing at intently. He perceives reality in his state of divine consciousness as a reflection in and by the mind, so that he sees himself as Śiva, through his instrumental adjunct, Śakti.¹⁶⁵ In his realizational awareness, the *yogin* is keenly aware, and he would see God plainly, in a clear mirror of his own recognizance. According to Abhinavagupta, writing in the *Paramārthasāra*, 'As a face is reflected clearly in a mirror free of dirt, so does this [Self] become manifest, being nothing but radiance, in the "intellect-principle", made pure by Śiva's grace'.¹⁶⁶ Again, writing in the lineage of Abhinavagupta, the circa thirteenth-century *yogin* Puṇyānanda describes Śakti as the 'taintless mirror of Śiva's recognitive apprehension of his own form'.¹⁶⁷ Ultimately then, *śakti* is the reflection (*pratibimba*) of that which is reflected (*bimba*), which is Śiva, although to say this betrays a dichotomizing approach, since Śiva is all.¹⁶⁸

The Speculum of Recognition

The 'visible', revealing perception of God is obtained through means of light, and it is a feature of both kabbalist and tantric conceptions that the idea of divine light is strongly in evidence. It is indeed a mysticism of light.¹⁶⁹ Ein-Sof and Paramaśiva are imperceptible, in and of the void, and therefore dark, but Keter and Śiva are the thoughtless light of creation.¹⁷⁰ They are the incipient awarenesses of divine being, which stand at the head of the sefirotic and tattvic forces, and God is brought into self-realization by the passage of these emanatory energies. Both kabbalah and tantra underscore the manifesting nature of God's being, which however remains unaffected by the revelatory circuit.¹⁷¹ The ontological status of the divine powers is open to consideration.¹⁷² A sophisticated simile used in the kabbalah of the Gerona school is that of a candle flame that is passed on to light anew each sefirotic wick-figure.¹⁷³ In the tantric understanding, the *tattvas* are expansionary, and the emanation proceeds through the propagation of the light-filled sound of *spanda-śakti*, of the oscillating pulses that undulate through the thirty-six categories of being.¹⁷⁴ In both systems, the structure of the Godhead is one of complete interdependence and interlocking forces. The *sefirot* are the mirrors of light that are reflectively arrayed as the divine being.¹⁷⁵ Likewise, the *tattvas* are illuminatingly reflective: 'the highest state of consciousness [is] reached through rays of consciousness bouncing back on one another like a great hall of mirrors'.¹⁷⁶ The state of coming into being with God is graphically illustrated by the play of light and dark forces in the picture of consciousness; it is the chiaroscuro of divinity.¹⁷⁷ The *sefirot* enumerate the will of God (Keter) into the universal reality, and accordingly reflect the operational nature of the divine; likewise, the *tattvas* factorize the will of God (Sadāśiva) into the universal reality, and accordingly reflect the experiential nature of the divine. By correspondence, these qualitative forces are inculcated into the human mind as phenomenological entities. The kabbalist and tantric are composed of the energetic principles of being and they incarnate the divine body, which is Adam and Puruṣa. The kabbalist as he climbs towards the heavenly realm grasps the nature of the Godhead, beginning with the rung of Shekhinah, who reflects the light-rungs of the upper *sefirot*.¹⁷⁸ She is the first step on the dimensional ladder to God (Ḥokmah–Binah).¹⁷⁹ Similarly, the tantric in returning to Śiva 'ascends successively step by step, as one does along a ladder'.¹⁸⁰ In both cases the attributive imaginary is the equipmental means for travelling into the heavens. If a commonality can be ascribed to kabbalah and tantra it is a topological one, since divine space is homeomorphic to human space, with the *sefirot* and *tattvas* as invariant properties of divinity, i.e., they are a bounded yet open set of functions. Imaginary space is a deformation of God-space.¹⁸¹

The epistemological presumptions of kabbalists and tantrics are of a kind in that Ein Sof and Paramaśiva are viewed negatively, as unknowable, because of an absence of light.¹⁸² These absolutes however are viewed positively through the forces or levels of the *sefirot* and *tattvas*, which are knowable, that is, experiential (to some degree or other). They do at least set a limit for comprehending God, who is highly concealed. For the master kabbalist a lustrous state of mind leads to a recognition that the radiance of external objects is a reflection of internal radiance, and so '[a]t the moment of vision, through the force of the imagination that has been purified by ascetic practice and the purging of all discriminate forms, the heart of the mystic becomes a translucent mirror'.¹⁸³ In a similar way, for the adept tantric the mind is marvellously pellucid to divinity, and the universe dances as a liquid reflection; indeed, according to the *Vijñānabhairava*: 'This (the universe) appears as a reflection in *buddhi* (the intellect) like the image of the sun in water'.¹⁸⁴ For the master or adept, divinity is a light-filled, reflective awareness. Again, there is a correspondence between light and water, as divine consciousness is symbolically realized as a glistening

liquidity.¹⁸⁵ Prosaically, an unenlightened mind betrays a turbid awareness, where God appears murkily, while an enlightened mind shows a still awareness, where God appears clearly. The observation of God by the kabbalist and tantric can be likened to that of seeing through a microscope or telescope.¹⁸⁶ So, the glassy imaginary can be thought of in astronomical terms as a lens or mirror.¹⁸⁷ If the mystical mind is like a refracting telescope then it could be said analogically that the divine light is refracted through the lens of the mind's eye to form an image in the imagination, whereupon it is magnified for viewing by the understanding as the idea of God. If it is like a reflecting telescope then it could be said that the heavenly light is collected by the mirror of imagination and reflected by the understanding into the mind, which focuses it as the idea of God. The kabbalist and tantric have the ability to place themselves at the focal point of divinity, where the light of God converges on their soul by way of the lens or mirror of Śakti and Shekhinah.¹⁸⁸ It takes work to manage a sense of acuity in divine perception. The parabolic mirror of the mystical mind is polished by the fine grains of awareness of Śakti–Shekhinah.¹⁸⁹ If ignorance of God's being is effectively to be in exile, lost from divinity, then it might be said that it is akin to a condition of chromatic or spherical aberration.¹⁹⁰ In the recognition of God's being however it is as if these faults in consciousness have been corrected, and the divine image is sharply defined. The power of divine knowledge (*jñānaśakti*) enhances the capacity of consciousness, and it becomes like a lens that focuses the light of the Godhead onto the wall of paper being. It burns a hole through mundane consciousness, searing the mind.¹⁹¹ God, that is Tif'eret/Shekhinah and Śiva/Śakti, is normally at the limit of resolution, and is seen as one, but the perception of the kabbalist and tantric is powerful enough to be able to separate them into partnership.¹⁹² The mystic experients exist in a phenomenological and psychological space, and their god-consciousness is defined coordinately on the stellar map of human understanding, the declination and right ascension of being.¹⁹³ From the ordinary perspective Śiva–Tif'eret is occluded by Śakti–Shekhinah, but the kabbalist and tantric can see through this shroud. In other words, the light of Śiva–Tif'eret is normally obscured by the dust of Śakti–Shekhinah, but it can be penetrated by the discriminating mind of the mystic experient.¹⁹⁴ The kabbalist would view God, i.e., Tif'eret, as looming large in his consciousness through the concave lens of his imagination, which is *shekhinah*, and equivalently the tantric would view God, i.e., Śiva, as an enlargement of his consciousness through the imaginative lens of *śakti*. (By contrast, a non-spiritual state of mind is to view divine being as if in a convex lens, as further away than it really is.)

The kabbalist and tantric move about in the world, that is, in the phenomenological world of imaginal light. They are—if I may extend (tantricize) Heidegger—a 'mystische Dasein', the ones who are captivated by the situation of being-in-the-divine-world.¹⁹⁵ It is to make of divine awareness an everyday conception, a mode of being in which the kabbalist and tantric would abide with God. The mystic experient is at home in the divine world, in this special place with Śiva–Tif'eret, which he achieves through being-with Śakti–Shekhinah.¹⁹⁶ God may be known through the iconic attributes given to him (it), and these are the handy tools by which the mystic experient is able to encounter the divine being. We might say that the praxis of holiness enables a 're-tooling' of the mind. It is to be struck by Śakti–Shekhinah; for divinity is a hammering light.¹⁹⁷ This understanding belongs to a circumspensive activity, in which these (attributive) qualities are 'ready-to-hand', and which are the references for being involved with God; they serve to signify the worldliness of divine consciousness; indeed, divinity is the state in which God is significantly revealed.¹⁹⁸ The kabbalist and tantric would find their place in the presence of God by orienting themselves to the skyways of sanctity; by rising or setting into the region of divinity. To exist on the plane of there-being is to move towards infinity, in the direction of God (Ein Sof/Anuttara).¹⁹⁹ The integral over which the

movement to God is summed is in effect the area of divine consciousness. The mystic experient operates in a clear space, and by taking care of the attributive nature of God, within the workshop of the mind, he is attuning himself to divine consciousness. In this mood of effulgence, divinity is disclosed as a luminous pattern of understanding, and one is thrown into one's ownmost light, open to seeing the possible ways of being-with God.²⁰⁰ It is a project of endeavour, in which God (Ein Sof/Anuttara) is *understood* to be distantly unavailable to consciousness, yet potentially knowable as Tiferet-Śiva, which is *interpreted* as presently available to consciousness, and actually knowable as Shekhinah-Śakti.²⁰¹ If God, moreover, is specified in the facticity of being-with Śakti-Shekhinah, then it is an engagement that is objectively revealed in the fullness of sublime nature. The kabbalist and tantric is each absorbed in this realm, where that means an affective immersion in the divine attributes. They would then relate to God in an ordinate way, subject to the everyday entanglement of being-in divine consciousness. In crossing over to stand in the powerful presence of God (Śakti-Shekhinah) the mystic experient realizes that he is always already there, dwelling in the garden of light, in the authentic condition of divine awareness.²⁰² This is the true story of existence, which is apt to be forgotten and covered over, but which is remembered and uncovered by the kabbalist and tantric in the course of time.²⁰³ Through being divinely aware, they are comporting themselves with their own transcendent nature, anticipating the whole of being integrated with God. It is the end towards which they freely aim at by becoming, through *exemplifying*, the divine qualities; and so to fall into the earthy activity of life is to die in the light, to die unto God.²⁰⁴ Given this, as the kabbalist and tantric resolutely project themselves into the void, the abyss of holiness, through the ecstatic potentiality of being-with God, they remember the meaning of infinitude in the divine presence, in the exhibition of the power of divine consciousness.²⁰⁵ Yet, it is only a retrieval of the vision of being-there with God, of existing in the eternal moment of being-here with Śakti-Shekhinah.²⁰⁶ The mystic experient moves gracefully upon a temporal horizon, rapt in divinity, and as he descends (transcends) into the divine qualities he is delivered over to the care of God.²⁰⁷ To be situated in divine consciousness, in the play-space (*Spielraum*) of the soul, is to range ecstatically over the horizon of being, and to make room for handling and knowing the place of God.²⁰⁸ Here, there is no escape from the clutches of eternity.²⁰⁹

The philosophy of the Śaiva tantrics explicitly uses the metaphor of reflection (*pratibimba*) in apprehending the placement of God (Śiva) in the world, and the adept's relationship to divine being.²¹⁰ Indeed, the universe is the embodied realization of Śiva; hence, for Abhinavagupta, 'just as the whole universe is the Śakti-body of the Self as Śiva, it is also one's *own* reflection'.²¹¹ Correspondingly, we may say that the universe is embodied by the divine presence, Shekhinah, as the self-hood of God (Tiferet), and as the grand image of the human spirit. The kabbalist consorts with Shekhinah, either in imaginary form through a hermeneutic realization, or in physical form through a copulatory realization with his wife, who, as noted, embodies Shekhinah.²¹² Similarly, the tantric consorts with Śakti, either in imaginary form through a yogic realization, or in physical form through a conjunctive realization with a female partner (*dūtī*).²¹³ Of course, the actions can be complementary, and are not exclusive of each other. During intercourse on Sabbath eve the kabbalist faithfully directs his attention towards Matronita as she couples with the King.²¹⁴ By comparison, the tantric indulges in sexual intercourse with his *śakti*, with the intention of contemplating the undivided nature of divine consciousness, Śiva-Śakti.²¹⁵ As the kabbalist would overcome the (ostensible) polarity of gender through reintegrating the feminine in the masculine, by means of prayerful intentions, so the tantric seeks to rectify himself from the multiplicitous ego by means of spiritual practice involving a yoga of mantra. To be sure, God is invoked mantrically in both kabbalah and tantra—if the term mantra is understood broadly and

pragmatically as a formulaic inducement to the power and presence of divine being. In tantric metaphysics, the mantras are diagrammed on the grid of the maṇḍala, and by performative meditation Śakti is installed there as a glorious depiction.²¹⁶ The kabbalist and tantric both aim at transforming their consciousness into one that is translucent or transparent to God.²¹⁷ To their mind, awareness is clear through to the pervasive ground of being. Reality sparkles with consciousness, and the liberated mind is a sensible mirror to that flux. The knowledgeable kabbalist and tantric, who see themselves respectively as microcosmic reflections of Tiferet and Śiva, measure the scintillating divine being through the perceptual glass of their soul.²¹⁸ So, one can say that the characteristic of a shining speculum is that it scintillates, while the characteristic of a non-shining speculum is that it does not. The master and adept would recognize their own nature as divine, as an engendered speculum that shines. Shekhinah and Śakti are the specula that do not shine, for they are the representations of divine being—the material determinations of God. In truth, for both the kabbalist and tantric the ultimate aim is to see God through a speculum that shines, i.e., one that is bereft of imaginative projection;²¹⁹ accordingly, they desire to see God (Tiferet or Śiva) indeterminately. In terms of the rationale of Trika, Moses saw through his universal I-consciousness, i.e., he saw God through the shining mirror of his freedom, unclouded by his imagination, whereas the prophets saw through their contracted ‘I’ consciousness, i.e., the dim mirror of their limitation, beclouded by their imagination. So the prophets and uninitiated tantrics see God determinately, i.e., constructively.²²⁰ One might think that one is looking at God, whereas one may well be looking only at an idea of God as reflected in a mirror—in the mirror that is of one’s imagination.²²¹ Whether determinate or indeterminate it constitutes a glassy recognition, since God is to be seen in, or through, a fluidic reflection; for chemically, glass is just a frozen liquid.²²² The transmental world is an iridescent one;²²³ it glints with consciousness; and the sefirotic/tattvic mind is a pure mirror to that effect. Wolfson writes that ‘[t]he cleaving to the supernal knowledge, moreover, is depicted as an augmented luminosity of the face and as being garbed in the Holy Spirit, characteristics that are adduced from several biblical and rabbinic figures’.²²⁴ Similarly, for the tantric, the recognition of his undivided nature brings a shine to his countenance, an astonishment and ‘savouring’ (*camatkāra*).²²⁵ The visionary touch of God requires work to make it happen, yet it is a festival of delight, a pageant of love and beauty, where the spectacular ribbons of divinity are thrown onto the caravans of life.²²⁶ Just as the kabbalist projects his erotic fantasy upon the female in an attempt to achieve a psychosomatic wholeness,²²⁷ so the tantric projects his fantastic yearning for identity with Śiva upon his (or ‘the’) female consort. Recall that non-dual Śaiva tantra teaches that *śakti*, as the evolutionary/involutionary factor of universal manifestation, is essentially the projective force of Śiva’s will, which means that she is only ‘the mirror in which Śiva realizes His own grandeur, power and beauty’.²²⁸ This corresponds to the male tantric habitually gazing in reflective wonder at his phallicized self as the instrument of creation.²²⁹ At root, Śiva recognizes himself self-reflectively in the mirror of his own being, and that mirror is called *śakti*,²³⁰ who is later reified as his consort, Śakti, by his followers. As a reflection of Śiva, the *sādhaka* recognizes himself in the mirror of his autonomous jubilation, as lucently comprehended in his partner. For practitioners in both systems then, divine consciousness is committed as the throbbing awareness of phallic realization. In this fruitful exchange, the adept and master are looking longingly into the eyes of God.

As I have tried to argue, in both kabbalistic and tantric thought it is notable that the realization of God is fundamentally demonstrative in nature.²³¹ As a ‘coefficient of presentness’—to use Betty Rojzman’s intriguing term—it serves to thematize God as concrete (visualizable) and known (recognizable).²³² Demonstration is a normal feature of human

consciousness, and is consequently also evident in the state of divine consciousness.²³³ ‘This’ and ‘that’ denote the human action of pointing to something as proximal and distal to the subject.²³⁴ The idea of demonstration can be used in various ways. It might be said that theologically ‘this’ refers to the presence of God, while ‘that’ refers to the absence of God (i.e., the remoteness of the divine ground from human understanding). If an object seen externally in the world is ‘that’, *there*, but when cogitated it is ‘this’, *here*, then in a realistic conception God is there, *that*, when manifested as the realm of nature, but is here, *this*, when contemplated as the beauty of the world. In a phenomenological conception, God as the imbued power of experience, *shekhinah-śakti*, is realized in that object of perception, and when it is reified in presentative consciousness, as Shekhinah-Śakti, it is realized as this object of perception. So God is always here, to be remembered in any environment.²³⁵ According to *Spanda* doctrine, even states of consciousness (besides their content) are understood to be objective.²³⁶ If God’s presentation is given as here-there, it is recognized as Shekhinah or Śakti, in the scale of nature or in a person (the face of the other). The meaning of divinity for the kabbalist and tantric is demonstrated by estimating the reality of God’s being, and the mystic experient should extrapolate the place of God from the earthly world by the force of imagination. In this gathering of horizontal awareness, which is an upsurge of sensible presencing, and which is apprehended as the spacing of natural images, there is to be found the self-showing of divine consciousness.²³⁷ Ritually, religious adherents worship God, or the divine, by pointing out and manipulating the sacred objects. In a critical reading, it appears that in both kabbalistic and tantric thought men use the locutionary idea of the feminine, and even the female, as proximal and distal to their perception of divinity, as ‘this’ and ‘that’ indication of their being. It allows them to discriminate what is here and there, nearby and away. Epistemologically, the aim is to overcome notions of polarity, and thereby to achieve continuity; and to be in the state of non-dual awareness leaves nothing to point to. The notion of here and there is conflated and perception ranges throughout everything, simply because one is (in) everything. What is near is yet far and what is far is yet near in being aware of the divine. This is only to say that immanence is grounded in transcendence.²³⁸ Just as Shekhinah is the gateway to Tif’eret, and therefore the support for the proximal awareness of Ein-Sof,²³⁹ so is Śakti the gateway to Śiva, and therefore the support for the proximal awareness of Anuttara.²⁴⁰ Shekhinah and Śakti are then likewise portals to God, for they are the high gates of the imaginary; in this respect, they are both maṇḍalas.

It has been said that while the prophets saw the glory of God in a speculum that does not shine, and thereby formed a mental image (*dimyon*), Moses saw this excellent divine light in a speculum that shines, and hence saw ‘a formless or imageless vision’.²⁴¹ In kabbalistic terms, Moses did not have a vision of the unending God, that is to say, Ein Sof, since there is nothing to ‘see’ here (not even intellectually).²⁴² In order at least to recognize divine beauty, the kabbalist tries to emulate Moses, who had directly seen God (Tif’eret) unhindered by his imagination, and who thus realized an intellectual vision.²⁴³ It is equally true that the *yogin* cannot see Anuttara since it is nothing (*śūnya*), and nothing is that which cannot be contemplated.²⁴⁴ The recognition of divine beauty is achieved through the embodiment of *śakti* (i.e., power), which likely gives the intellection of Śiva. The kabbalist and tantric would noetically see a masculine divinity through an imaginary lens, which they then conceive as a feminine medium.²⁴⁵ The attempt to commune with God as it is designed in the kabbalistic and tantric schemes is fairly open to feminist analysis. Man wants to view his invisible God through the speculum that shines, as Moses purportedly did, but he is seemingly incapable. He can only see through the speculum that does not shine, as did the (male) prophets, and therein is found the image of God, which is composed as Shekhinah, and which man projects

ideally onto woman. So she is the astral sign of his desire for transcendence.²⁴⁶ This notion of reflexivity can be applied to the medieval idea that the Holy Spirit (*ruah ha-qodesh*), as a correlative of Shekhinah, and as the lambent presence of the glory of God, is like a reflected image in a mirror; but, as an amorphous light that is only given definite form by the observer, it amounts to a mental construction.²⁴⁷ In terms of Śākta Tantra, however, women can ordinarily view the invisible God through the speculum that shines, and can see themselves as the radiance of God, *because they are already* Śakti–Shekhinah (the Power of Life). Although *śakti* may be conceived as only Śiva’s aspect of power, yet as she becomes distinctive and personified she will typify a Śākta tantra perspective; that is, one in which the apprehensible appearance of divinity serves to outline God. In effect, this standpoint then proceeds to equate Śakti with Brahman, and thus the recognizably qualitative God becomes feminine.²⁴⁸ The power and presence of God as it is contemplatively realized, i.e., brought before consciousness, is an incandescent glow.²⁴⁹ The mirror of divinity is ablaze with fire, and is an adequate reflection of God’s immanence; in other words, the soul is a blazing mirror.²⁵⁰ Shekhinah–Śakti is the airy mirror of divine being that reflectively arrays the rainbow of holiness.²⁵¹ Phenomenologically, Shekhinah–Śakti is not a discrete object, and has no particular position in (mental) space; and even though she may be perceived as relatively near, as an image, she is really placed at infinity.²⁵² As such, it is not that she can be confined in one place, but that she is the near yet far presence of God, who is located everywhere in the universe.

Conclusion

I have sought to argue that the kabbalist and tantric both endeavour to reveal, in a not dissimilar way, that the hidden and pervasive ground of the Absolute (God) is open to mystical inquiry. The scenarios they postulate within their traditional outlooks have this in common; namely, the indefeasible urge to bring to realized consciousness that God is available for purposes of recognitive apprehension. By standing in the clearing where the imaginary light falls, the mystic experient knows that he is surrounded by the divine being. In the blessed duty of exemplifying the divine qualities—the power and presence of love and beauty—he is bringing to present consciousness the absent awareness of God. Śakti and Shekhinah are, to put it phenomenologically, the horizon over which reality disappears into the night of God. The uncovering of the divine realm is possible because the human being is fashioned as an image of God, and he would perceive the divine world reflected in the mundane world; hence, the affective and intellectual resources normally brought to bear in earthly understanding are topologically related to divine understanding. The kabbalist and tantric strive to perceive God through the glass of divinity, at the level of indeterminateness—indeterminate, that is, in the sense of overwhelming light. Divine consciousness is not devoid of conceptual elements, because it is established through the vitreous manufacture of the mind. It is by the force of imagination, as a feminized realization, that the kabbalist and tantric can point their way towards heaven. Shekhinah–Śakti is the ostensible means by which the mystic experient can see himself come before divinity, and she is the lens or mirror by which he can bring to focus the infinite idea of God. Through the projection of inscriptional desire upon his partner, in a speculative relationship, he would see God in the shifting phases of the play of imagination; for he understands that in this place, freedom reigns.

Notes

1. This is a long-standing idea in theology. See Alexander Altmann, 'Homo Imago Dei in Jewish and Christian Theology', *Journal of Religion* 48 (1968): 235–59. Francis X. Clooney considers the application of the notion of *sāmya*, 'sameness', in his recent paper 'Imago Dei, Paramaṃ Sāmyam: Hindu Light on a Traditional Christian Theme', *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 12, no. 3 (2008): 227–55.
2. The *Zohar* is a monumental work dating from the late thirteenth century, written by Moses de León (or by a group around him), with some associated writings that were incorporated later. Internally, it is reputed to be the account of the exegetical observations of the second-century *tanna* Rabbi Shim'on bar Yoḥai and his circle of disciples, who are known as Companions in the Book *Zohar*. I have utilized the critical edition of the main commentary on the Torah that has been translated into English by Daniel C. Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004–16). He provides an invaluable commentary, which is essential for understanding this obscure text, and which I shall implicitly or explicitly refer to. He also usefully provides copious cross-references and background information. On the *Zohar's* significance as a literary masterpiece see Eitan P. Fishbane, 'The Scent of the Rose: Drama, Fiction, and Narrative Form in the *Zohar*', *Prooftexts* 29, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 324–61. By 'Śaiva tantra' I mean the metaphysical speculations developed in the period from the ninth to eleventh centuries in Kashmir by the stand-out figures of Somananda, Utpaladeva, and Abhinavagupta, in one stream of thought (*Pratyabhijñā*, or Doctrine of Recognition), and Vasugupta and Kallata, in a related stream of thought (*Spanda*, or Doctrine of Vibration), along with their subsequent commentators, which also influenced the goddess oriented (Śākta) systems in South India. The relevant texts will be mentioned as necessary.
3. On the status of this term in relation to the theistic idea of God as creator see Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Keter; New York: Quadrangle/New York Times, 1974), pp. 88–91.
4. See *Zohar* 1:1b–1:2a; Vol. 1, pp. 5–8. On *ayin* see Daniel C. Matt, 'Ayin: The Concept of Nothingness in Jewish Mysticism', in *Essential Papers on Kabbalah*, ed. Lawrence Fine (New York: New York University Press, 1995), pp. 67–108. As Isaiah Tishby puts it, these lower *sefirot* 'come within the boundary of perception' (*The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, trans. David Goldstein [Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1989], p. 294; and moreover, '[i]t designates . . . the way in which *Binah* moves from the secrecy of the unanswerable question in order to reveal itself as the originator of creation' [ibid., 294–95]). 'These' refers to *Ḥesed* (Love), *Gevurah* (Power), *Tiferet* (Beauty), *Netsaḥ* (Endurance), *Hod* (Splendour), *Yesod* (Foundation), and *Malkhut* (Kingdom) or *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence).
5. *Zohar* 1:2a; Vol. 1, p. 8. *Elohim*, אֱלֹהִים, is a combination of the letters מִי (*mi*), and אֵלֶּה (*elleh*).
6. *Zohar* 1:21a; Vol. 1, pp. 160–61.
7. *Zohar* 1:49a; Vol. 1, p. 269.
8. *Zohar* 1:2a; Vol. 1, p. 9.
9. *Zohar* 1:86a. Matt glosses that '*Shekhinah* absorbs the letters of *Binah*: מִי (*Mi*), "Who", and reflects them in reverse: יָם (*Yam*), "Sea"' (Vol. 2, p. 48, n. 373). See also 1:30a; Vol. 1, p. 180, and note 598. The belief that knowledge of *Binah* can only be fleeting, 'an occasional and intuitive flash which illuminates the human heart', is likened by Moses de León to the way in which 'sunbeams play on the surface of water' (Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* [New York: Schocken Books, 1995], p. 221).
10. *Zohar* 1:15a–b, and Matt's commentary at Vol. 1, p. 111.
11. See *Zohar* 3:65b, as cited in Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. (note 4), p. 346 (his bracketing). Matt translates here: "Once a beginning emerges and that river is impregnated, to channel all, then it is called אֲשֶׁר אֵדְיָה (*asher eh'yeh*), that I am, meaning: 'Until here I am; I am ready to convey and give birth to all'" (Vol. 7, p. 429).
12. *Zohar* 1:65b; Vol. 1, p. 382, with Matt's explanatory glosses.
13. *Zohar* 1:154b; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 2, p. 362, n. 342. By comparison *Binah* as the 'higher world' is called הוּא (*Hu*), the third-person pronoun, 'He', and so can only be referred to indirectly (ibid., and n. 343).
14. Matt, *Zohar*, Vol. 1, p. 35, n. 242; cf. ibid., p. 39, n. 269. In this manner, God grasps the nature of being in his own reality. Cf. below, note 101.
15. *Shekhinah* is symbolized as the sanctuary (*Zohar* 1:64a; Vol. 1, p. 373).
16. Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. (note 4), p. 233. He further explains that '[t]he *sefirot* themselves dwell in the heights and cannot be known, but the influence that flows from them turns the whole of creation into a mirror that reflects the life of the Godhead' (ibid., 273). Later, he writes that the *sefirot*

- essentially reflect the nature of almighty God, and as such they are a celestial mirror, from which power flows (see *ibid.*, 782).
17. *Zohar* 1:18a, and Matt's gloss: 'Each *sefirah* reflects the entire array of *sefirot*' (Vol. 1, p. 135, n. 215).
 18. The emergence of the sefirotic structures is a castellation of power: 'By the impact of His truncheons, ramparts are revealed' (*Zohar* 1:29a; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 1, p. 172, nn. 513 and 514; cf. 1:30a, Vol. 1, p. 178). Tishby remarks: 'Every link in the chain of the *sefirot* is depicted as a new sparking forth of light; the descent of divine influence is a torrent of light; and the whole world of emanation is a sea of brilliant splendour. Even the acts of Will and Thought within the Godhead are frequently portrayed as hidden flashes of light, and a common simile is that the divine forces act "like a hammer striking sparks"' (*Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. [note 4], p. 290).
 19. See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. (note 4), p. 281. Exegeting the biblical verse, 'God said, "Let the waters under heaven be gathered to one place!"' (Genesis 1:9), the *Zohar* proclaims: 'יקוו' (*Yiqqavu*), *Let [the waters] be gathered*—in קו (*qav*), a line, following a straight path' (1:18a; and Matt glosses that this refers to '[t]he flow of emanation, proceeding in a line, referred to elsewhere in the *Zohar* as קו המדה (*qav ha-middah*), "the line of measure"' [Vol. 1, p. 137, n. 228]). It continues in this vein: 'יקוו' (*Yiqqavu*), *Let [the waters] be gathered*—surveying by קו (*qav*), line, and measure. Measure, plumb of dark brilliance, as is written: *Who measured the waters with the hollow of His hand?* (Isaiah 40:12)... *YHVH of Hosts—to one place*, in the mystery of this name' (1:18b; *ibid.*, pp. 140–41; and Matt's gloss: 'As the waters of emanation flow, the various *sefirot* take shape, assuming size and dimension' [*ibid.*, 140, n. 255]).
 20. Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. (note 4), pp. 271–72.
 21. These are terms employed by Elliot R. Wolfson in his analysis of the temporal poetics of kabbalistic being—see *Alef, Mem, Tau: Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth, and Death* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), esp. pp. 61–98. He would 'distinguish two vectors of time according to kabbalistic teaching, one that applies to the physical universe, the world of discriminate beings . . . and the other to the unfolding of the enfolded light of the divine pleroma, the world of integration' (81); moreover, he goes on to say that 'in kabbalistic teaching, time in its primordially is not extrinsic to God but is the radiance of divine becoming recounted in the narratological telling of enumerated iteration' (81–82). Again, 'the transitory patterns in the physical universe partake of the "timeless time" of divine energy in which everything is contained contemporaneously, the fullness of time calibrating the never-ending depletion of the infinite will' (83). I would note his suggestion that it is 'plausible to apply to Ein Sof the description of Durgā-Kālī, the Mother Goddess in Śākta Hinduism, as "the ultimate trans-theistic symbol of Timelessness—the Not-Time", on account of which she merits the name Ādyakālā' (74, quoting Wendell Beane).
 22. It is said that there is a time set for everything, even for being with God (YHVH), which is shown by 'actualizing' Shekhinah for her union with Tif'eret (see *Zohar* 1:194a; Vol. 3, pp. 187–188). Matt glosses that Shekhinah denotes time here, and she 'conducts the world according to a cosmic schedule, enabling each phenomenon to unfold in its proper time' [*ibid.*, 188, n. 57]). See also 2:155b; Vol. 5, pp. 410–11, and Matt's notes thereto, 635–36.
 23. See *Zohar* 2:136a–b; Vol. 5, pp. 256–60. There is a 'lower' Garden of Eden, on Earth, in which the souls of the righteous abide, and a 'higher' Garden of Eden, in Heaven, in which the blessed Holy One abides.
 24. *Zohar* 1:159b; and Matt glosses: 'From one perspective *Shekhinah* is exiled along with Israel, while from another perspective she has withdrawn from earth and dwells in heaven, protecting Israel from above, wherever they are' (Vol. 2, p. 390, n. 573). Historically, the first Temple fell in 586 BCE with the invasion of the Babylonian army.
 25. *Zohar* 1:31b; Vol. 1, p. 192. It is elsewhere stated that God created the universe as light-filled, 'its radiance flashing from one end of the universe to the other' (1:45b; Vol. 1, p. 242).
 26. *Zohar* 1:31b (my brackets). Matt notes that *tallit* originally meant a 'gown, cloak' worn by distinguished scholars and the wealthy, but that it later came to mean 'prayer shawl' (Vol. 1, p. 193, n. 696).
 27. See Gershom Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, trans. Alan Arkush, ed. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 187; and Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 256.
 28. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. (note 27), pp. 258–60. See furthermore, Scholem, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 16–17; and idem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Schocken, 1991), pp. 15–55. Meṭaṭron is the biblical figure Enoch transformed and translated (Wolfson, op. cit., pp. 83 and 109; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. [note 4], pp. 626–27). For the German Pietists of the twelfth century Shekhinah is identified with Meṭaṭron as the measure of God's glory (Wolfson, op. cit., pp. 224–25).

29. See *Zohar* 1:1b; Vol. 1, pp. 5–7.
30. According to the *Zohar*: ‘[a] body in which the light of the soul does not ascend—let them strike it, and the radiance of the soul will ascend; they will unite with one another, shining. For there may be a body in which the radiance of the soul does not shine until it is struck. Then the radiance of the soul shines, and she is united with the body—and the body, with her. Then the body raises radiance from within the soul—glorifying, exalting, and praising; offering prayers and supplications; blessing its Lord. Behold, then all shines!’ (3:168a; Vol. 9, p. 107).
31. The mystical language of light is pervasive in the *Zohar* (Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988], pp. 35–38). See also Melila Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden: The Language of Mystical Experience in the Zohar*, trans. Nathan Wolski (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 256–58. The kabbalist is on the loop of divinity tracking God, who ‘was, is, and shall be’ in the enduring time of being, as ‘the compresence of past, present and future in the moment at hand’ (see Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, op. cit. [note 21], p. 166). Wolfson sees an affinity between the Heideggerian analysis of time and the kabbalistic rendition of time.
32. *Zohar* 1:65b–66a; Vol. 1, p. 384. Matt glosses that a parallel for the idea of a body of light which is clothed in meritorious ways appears in Islam and Iranian eschatology as well as in Mahāyāna Buddhism (ibid., p. 385, n. 331). See also also 1:231b; Vol. 3, pp. 400–1.
33. *Zohar* 1:224a–b; Vol. 3, pp. 346–49.
34. *Zohar* 1:100a. Matt glosses that ‘[s]ouls of the righteous turn into angels’ (Vol. 2, p. 122, n. 44).
35. See *Zohar* 2:49b, in relation to exegeting the psalmic verse: ‘YHVH our Lord, how majestic is Your name throughout the earth! אשר תנה (*Asher tenah*), *You have set, Your splendor above the heavens!*’. Rabbi Yose syntactically interprets the phrase as ‘Who, set Your splendor upon the heavens’, where the relative pronoun אשר (*asher*), ‘who’, is a reference to Binah, ‘the deepest river of all’ and the nexus of ‘אשר אהיה אהיה (*ehyeh asher ehyeh*), *I will be who I will be*’ (see Vol. 4, pp. 240–1, and Matt’s glosses there, esp. nn. 153, 155, and 156). Rabbi Yose continues his homily: ‘When this deepest river of all flows forth, all is joy. *Matronita* [i.e. Shekhinah] is crowned by the King, all worlds are joyous, and dominion of other nations is eliminated in the presence of *Matronita*. Then all who are linked to Her raise their heads’.
36. *Zohar* 1:178b; Vol. 3, p. 81. On the kabbalistic ritual of studying Torah at midnight see 2:195b, and Matt’s note there at Vol. 6, p. 111, n. 14.
37. *Zohar* 1:155b; Vol. 2, p. 367.
38. See *Zohar* 2:134b. Rabbi Shim’on expounds:
 Happy are the righteous who know how to focus the aspiration of their hearts on the Holy King, and whose hearts’ intention is not at all directed to this world and its vain desires; rather, they know and strive to direct their will and cleave above, drawing the will of their Lord to them from above to below. Where do they obtain the will of their Lord, drawing it to them? From a certain supernal holy place, whence issue all holy desires. And who is that? כל איש (*Kol ish*), every man—Righteous One, called *kol*, as is said: *The abundance of earth is בכל (ba-kol), in all* (Ecclesiastes 5:8); *Therefore כל פקודי כל (kol piqudei khol), by all Your inclusive precepts, [I walked straight]* (Psalms 119:128). *Man*—as is said: *a righteous man* (Genesis 6:9). This is *kol ish, every man*—master of the house, whose desire is constantly for *Matronita*, like a man who loves his wife. Incessantly *his heart impels him*—He loves Her, and *his heart, His Matronita*, is impelled to cleave to him. (Vol. 5, p. 246).
- Matt explains that the zoharic expression ‘master fathomers’, used by Rabbi Shim’on to introduce this homily, ‘may refer to kabbalists who know the מדות (*middot*), the divine “qualities, attributes” (*sefirot*), or who know שעור קומה (*shi’ur qomah*), “the measure of the [divine] stature” (ibid., n. 155; cf. ibid., p. 429, n. 676, and 441, n. 708). He further glosses that the reference to *every man* and Righteous One is to the *sefirah* Yesod, who supplies Shekhinah with all her abundance and who is her master, or husband, hence the title ‘master of the house’ (ibid., p. 246, n. 156). This title also pertains to the one who knows ‘all [the] hidden secrets and all the hidden ways’ of Torah (2:99a–b; Vol. 5, pp. 34–35, and Matt’s gloss at note 101).
39. In another context I have considered in some detail the artistically phenomenological characteristics available in describing consciousness in Western Christian mysticism: ‘The Art of Mysticism: An Inquiry into the Notion of Ineffability in (Cataphatic) Mystical Experience’ (PhD diss., University of Queensland, 2007), pp. 175–255.
40. *Zohar* 1:4a; Vol. 1, pp. 21–23.
41. *Zohar* 1:7a; Vol. 1, p. 46. Furthermore, when they sat down they heard a voice call out: ‘Mighty boulders, towering hammers, behold the Master of Colors, embroidered in figures, standing on a dais’ (ibid.). The term ‘Master of Colors’ refers apparently to Meṭaṭron, who ‘is often associated with the Heavenly Academy’ (Matt, *Zohar*, Vol. 1, p. 46, n. 322).

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42. Rabbi Shim'on is commonly referred to as Holy Lamp, בוצינא קדישא (*Botsina Qaddisha*) (1:3b; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 1, p. 18, n. 124). See further Hellner-Eshed, *River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. (note 31), p. 36, where *botsina kaddisha* is translated as 'the holy luminary'.
43. *Zohar* 1:150a. Jacob stood with Shekhinah from whence 'he saw the cluster of faith as one'. Matt notes in this regard that 'Jacob saw the full spectrum of *sefirot* arrayed upon the ladder, *Shekhinah*' (Vol. 2, p. 335, n. 121).
44. See *Zohar* 1:15a; Vol. 1, p. 109. The allusion derives from Daniel 12:3, 'And the knowledgeable will be radiant like the bright expanse of the sky, and those who lead the many to righteousness will be like the stars forever and ever'. Biblical citations are taken from the *TANAKH* Translation of the Jewish Publication Society, in *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); in this case, p. 1665. On the importance of this allusion in the *Zohar* see Hellner-Eshed, *River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. (note 31), pp. 261–65.
45. *Zohar* 1:197b; Vol. 3, p. 209. While travelling it is gainful to engage in Torah, for by doing so one is accompanied by Shekhinah, the presence of God, who illuminates the path of the righteous (1:58b–59a; Vol. 1, pp. 334–36). On the subject of the zoharic exegetical wanderings see Hellner-Eshed, *River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. (note 31), pp. 111–20.
46. *Zohar* 1:8a; Vol. 1, p. 53.
47. *Zohar* 2:2b; and Matt glosses that the word כלה *kallah*, 'bride' is linked 'with the root כלל (*kl*), "to complete, make perfect", or the root כלה (*klh*), "to be completed". *Shekhinah*, symbolized by the moon, is illumined and fulfilled by the radiance of *Tif'eret* (the sun)' (Vol. 4, p. 5, n. 20).
48. See Elliot R. Wolfson, 'Mirror of Nature Reflected in the Symbolism of Medieval Kabbalah', in *Judaism and Ecology: Created World and Revealed Word*, ed. Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 305–31 (the quote appears at 311).
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 321–22.
50. When God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden he stationed 'the fiery ever-turning sword' to guard the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). Wolfson notes that according to the text *Sha'arei Sedeq*, this twirling sentry 'is interpreted . . . as an allegory for the imaginative faculty (*koah ha-dimyon*) depicted as a polished mirror that reflects ever-changing forms' (Elliot R. Wolfson, *Abraham Abulafia – Kabbalist and Prophet: Hermeneutics, Theosophy, and Theurgy* [Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2000], p. 173, n. 213).
51. *Zohar* 1:33b; Vol. 1, p. 209.
52. The unification of the holy name (YHVH) is likened to the two lights of a 'glowing ember or a burning candle': 'one, a white light, radiant; the other, a light tinged with black or blue', where the blue-black light 'is a throne of glory for the white' (see *Zohar* 1:50b–51a; Vol. 1, pp. 282–84). Citing this homily, Gershom Scholem remarks that '[t]he black light, which shines also in red and blue iridescence, is the sensual in contrast to the intellectual "white" light, which represents the passage from the world of matter to the purely spiritual one and therefore leads to and brings about the unity between the lowest and the highest' ('Colours and Their Symbolism in Jewish Tradition and Mysticism', *Diogenes* 28 [March 1980]: 64–76 at 75–76).
53. The rainbow is a central feature of human apprehension of the divine, given that it marks the establishment of the covenant with God after the cessation of the flood (Gen. 9:16).
54. See Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. (note 27), pp. 340–1, n. 48.
55. As Wolfson explains: 'In the exilic state, there is separation of male and female, and hence the rainbow appears in darkened colors; in the redemptive state, by contrast, there is a reunion of male and female, and the rainbow shines in bright colors, like a bride adorned before the bridegroom' ('Re/membering the Covenant: Memory, Forgetfulness, and the Construction of History in the Zohar', in *Luminal Darkness: Imaginal Gleanings from Zoharic Literature* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), pp. 185–227 at 206). When darkened by exile, Shekhinah is, so to speak, like a 'cloudbow', or a 'lunar rainbow'. A cloudbow is generated similarly to a rainbow, but instead of the sunlight reflecting and refracting from raindrops it does so from the water drops that make up the clouds themselves, which are 10 to 100 times smaller than raindrops. Since moonlight is much less intense than sunlight the colours of a lunar rainbow are dim or unobservable. See Raymond L. Lee, Jr., and Alistair B. Fraser, *The Rainbow Bridge: Rainbows in Art, Myth, and Science* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press; Bellingham, WA: SPIE Press, 2001), pp. 243–47, 255–58, 324–25.
56. *Zohar* 1:4a; Matt explains that the curtain conceals God from the world (Vol. 1, p. 22, n. 151).
57. According to a rabbinic interpretation of Exodus 15:2—'This is my God and I will glorify Him'—'they said that it indicates that they pointed to Him with a finger', and this action otherwise indicates comprehension, with the ensuing pleasure of union (see Wolfson, *Abraham Abulafia*, op. cit. (note 50), p. 166; and see furthermore his note there at p. 193).

58. See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. (note 4), p. 271, who writes that '[i]n this symbolic system the *sefirot* are seen as spiritual forces, as attributes of the soul'; moreover, they display 'a spiritual pattern of categories, both of content and of character'.
59. *River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. (note 31), pp. 69–70.
60. *Zohar* 2:37b; Vol. 4, p. 173. By contrast to the singular demonstrative, the demonic forces are known by the plural *these*, which 'implies both their multiplicity and their being present here in the world' (Matt, *Zohar*, Vol. 3, p. 373, n. 371).
61. *Zohar* 1:150b; Vol. 2, p. 338.
62. The kabbalist trusts in this, 'בזאת *be-zot*': 'So it has been taught: What is *be-zot*? Sign of the covenant, always accessible to a man, intimating above. So it is said: *be-zot, in this*, as is written: *Zot, This, is the sign of the covenant* (Genesis 9:12); *Zot, This is My covenant* (ibid. 17:10)—all on one rung. It has also been taught: זֶה (*Zeh*), This, and זאת (*zot*), this, occupy one rung inseparably' (*Zohar* 1:93b; Vol. 2, p. 93). It is the conditional requirement for entering the holy of holies: 'As is written: בזאת (*Be-zot*), *With this, shall Aaron enter the holy zone* (Leviticus 16:3)—agent of all, as we have established. Consequently, all is honor of *Matronita*' (2:51a; as Matt glosses: 'One may enter the holy zone only with, or through, *Shekhinah*' [Vol. 4, p. 254, n. 204]).
63. Matt, *Zohar*, Vol. 2, p. 93, n. 707; see also Vol. 4, p. 170, n. 108. The separation of Yesod, 'sign of covenant', from *Shekhinah*, 'its place', is deprecated (2:26b; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 4, p. 98, n. 103).
64. *Zohar* 1: 228a (Vol. 3, p. 373); 2:236b (Vol. 6, p. 364, n. 301).
65. *Zohar* 1:12a; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 1, p. 84, n. 635.
66. Matt glosses: '*Shekhinah* is the feminine archetype, embodied and realized in all females' (Vol. 5, p. 48, n. 133, with his pertinent references thereto).
67. See the homily on the biblical saying delivered by David's ambassadors to a rich man of Caleb: 'Say: Thus for life! And peace to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that is yours! (1 Samuel 25:6)', which the zoharic author interprets as David's proclamation of holiness on Rosh Hashanah: 'Say: *Koh le-hai, Thus for life!*—to link *koh, thus, le-hai*, to the living one, on whom all life depends' (*Zohar* 2:23b; Matt glosses: 'David sought to join *Shekhinah* (known as *koh*, "thus") to *Yesod* (known as *hai*, "the living one"), thereby ensuring that vitality would flow to the world on this fateful day' [Vol. 4, p. 82, n. 43]). Elsewhere, the *Zohar* interprets contextual verses from Numbers and Psalms on God's blessing the community of Israel and their reciprocal praise as directly indicative of the divine presence, i.e., *Shekhinah* (2:79b; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 4, p. 431, n. 231).
68. *Zohar* 1:107a; Vol. 2, p. 149. In this regard, Proverbs is adduced with reference to the woman of strength: 'She is like a merchant fleet, bringing her food from afar' (31:14). The notion of distance is also used existentially, as it is said that Tif'eret (YHVH) appears through *Shekhinah*, who, in her un-united state, is afar from God (2:125b; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 5, p. 178, n. 108).
69. *Zohar* 2:50b. Matt glosses that 'עלמא דאתי (*Alma de-atei*) is the Aramaic equivalent of the rabbinic Hebrew העולם הבא (*ha-olam ha-ba*), "the world that is coming". This concept is often understood as referring to the hereafter and is usually translated as "the world to come". From another point of view, however, "the world that is coming" already exists, occupying another dimension.... In Kabbalah, "the world that is coming" often refers to *Binah*, the continuous source of emanation.... Here Rabbi Yitshak's point is that a truly virtuous person attains the realm of *Binah*—the world that is constantly coming and flowing—and participates in the perpetual divine union' (Vol. 4, p. 251, n. 193). Scholem notes that the Hebrew word for 'emanated', נאצל, has the same root as the preposition 'by' or 'near', אצל (*Origins of the Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 27], p. 185, n. 210).
70. Scholem writes that the crown that is *Shekhinah* rises to the place 'whose name is "there", which is *binah*' (*Origins of the Kabbalah*, op. cit. [note 27], p. 175). Matt notes that '[i]n rabbinic literature, המקום (*ha-maqom*), "the place", is a name of God, emphasizing divine immanence and omnipresence' (*Zohar*, Vol. 2, p. 320, n. 5; cf. Vol. 3, p. 399, n. 485). Elsewhere it is said that Jacob, symbolically Tif'eret, 'gave blessings to this place', i.e. *Shekhinah* (*Zohar* 1:228b; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 3, p. 379, n. 398).
71. *Zohar* 2:26a states: 'Come and see: Of arousal below—when Israel aroused toward the blessed Holy One, crying out before Him—what is written? ואזכור (*Va-ezkor*), *I have remembered, My covenant* (Exodus 6:5)—for in covenant is זכור (*zakhor*), remembering. Then, desire for all to join in a single bond. As soon as this covenant arouses, joining of all arouses. *I have remembered My covenant*—coupling it with its place. So, *Therefore say to the Children of Israel: "I am YHVH"* (ibid., 6)' (Vol. 4, p. 96; and Matt glosses that '[t]he word זכור (*zakhor*), "remember", suggests זכר (*zakhar*), "male", alluding to the male potency of *Yesod*, who is the divine phallus and covenant.... The closing words, *I am YHVH*, may allude to the union of *Shekhinah* (known as *I*) with Her male partner, *YHVH*' [ibid., n. 96]). See furthermore Wolfson, 'Re/membering the Covenant', op. cit. (note 55). He elucidates that *Shekhinah* is characterized as the place of forgetfulness that is redeemed by the masculine memory, the incised

- phallus. Therefore, '[t]he forgetting of the covenant is more than a subjective lapse of memory; it is the ontological state of oblivion' (ibid., p. 203).
72. Cf. however Numbers 12:8 and Deuteronomy 34:10, where respectively God speaks 'face to face' with Moses and God knows Moses 'face to face'. The biblical reference to the 'face' of God is understood to mean God's 'presence' (Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, trans. Ralph Manheim [New York: Schocken Books, 1996], p. 105).
73. On the contradictory question of God's visibility see Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. (note 27), pp. 24–28.
74. According to the Babylonian Talmud, *Yevamot* 49b: 'All the prophets gazed through a dim glass [literally: an *ispaqlarya* that does not shine], whereas Moses our Rabbi gazed through a clear glass [literally: an *ispaqlarya* that shines]' (cited by Matt, *Zohar*, Vol. 1, p. 209, n. 824, also p. 291, n. 1401; cf. Vol. 4, p. 81, n. 39, where he translates respectively as 'opaque glass' and 'translucent glass'). It is instructive that the term אִסְפַּקְלָרְיָא (*Ispaqlarya*, 'speculum') can refer to glass, mirror, or lens (Matt, *Zohar*, Vol. 1, p. 268, n. 1239). Matt notes elsewhere that '*Ispaqlarya* derives from Greek *speklon*, "mirror, window-pane", and Latin *speculum*, "mirror"' (Vol. 3, p. 114, n. 191). I note, by the by, that Fisbane translates the term '*aspeqlaria ha-me'irah* as 'the clear and bright lens' ('The Scent of the Rose', op. cit. [note 2], p. 359, n. 48).
75. *Zohar* 1:45b–46a; Vol. 1, pp. 242–44.
76. *Zohar* 1:22a; Vol. 1, p. 169. Elsewhere, it is said that all Israel gazed at God directly, 'as if seeing eye-to-eye' (2:60a; and Matt's gloss at Vol. 4, p. 319, n. 425).
77. *Zohar* 1:52b; Vol. 1, p. 291.
78. The epithet *maskilim* is frequently employed in the *Zohar* to designate the kabbalists who contemplate supernal matters. Hellner-Eshed explains that '[c]ontemplation (*iyyun*) and gazing (*histaklut*)—cognitive terms derived from seeing and vision—are the traits of the wise and the *maskilim*' (*River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. [note 31], p. 79).
79. *Zohar* 1:88b; vol 2, p. 64. Matt explains that '[t]he Aramaic word חֵיזוּ (*heizu*) means "vision, appearance", but in the *Zohar*, it also means "mirror"' (ibid., n. 504).
80. *Zohar* 1:88b–89a (Vol. 2, pp. 64–65), 91a–b (Vol. 2, p. 74), 97b–98a (Vol. 2, pp. 117–19).
81. *Zohar* 1:98b. In the Bible it is said that 'The Lord appeared to him [viz. Abraham] by the terebinths of Mamre; he was sitting at the entrance of the tent as the day grew hot' (Gen. 18:1), and the *Zohar* symbolizes the tent opening as *Shekhinah* (Vol. 2, p. 119, n. 22). The reference to the illuminative supernal world denotes Binah as she 'conveys the flow of emanation to *Shekhinah*' (ibid., n. 23). Cf. *Zohar* 2:36a, where Rabbi Shim'on states: 'Until a man is circumcised, he is obstructed and closed on every side. Once he is circumcised, he is opened totally, no longer obstructed and closed' (Vol. 4, p. 163). If for Abraham, 'through this holy, transformative act, he attained *Shekhinah*' (ibid., 164, n. 84), then so shall it be for the kabbalist.
82. See *Zohar* 2:36a, and Matt's glosses at Vol. 4, p. 164, n. 87 and p. 165, n. 88.
83. *Zohar* 1:183a; Vol. 3, p. 114. Hellner-Eshed explains that the concept of the speculum that shines 'designates a kind of clear spiritual vision through a mirror or illuminating glass, undimmed by the materiality of earthly reality' (*River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. [note 31], p. 37).
84. *Zohar* 2:23a–b; Vol. 4, pp. 79–81. Matt glosses *inter alia*: 'The patriarchs saw the colors of the *sefirot* as reflected in *Shekhinah*, but they could not gaze at them directly. Moses, however, attained fully the rung of *Tif'eret* (known as *YHVH*), who includes all of the *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. His vision of the colors is unmediated' (ibid., 79, n. 33). The glowing concealed colours of the *sefirot* are discernible by a technique of closing the eye and turning the eyeball (2:23b; and Matt glosses: 'By closing one's eyes and pressing a finger on the eyeball until it moves, colors of the spectrum appear, corresponding to the concealed sefirotic colors' [Vol. 4, p. 81, n. 38]). On this point see also Hellner-Eshed, *River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. (note 31), pp. 269–70.
85. *Zohar* 1:6b; Vol. 1, p. 41.
86. The allusion to the 'Valley of Vision' is employed by Isaac in his prophetic description of the siege of Jerusalem, prior to the Assyrian invasion of 705–701 BCE (*Jewish Study Bible*, op. cit. [note 44], p. 825). The *Zohar* alludes to this image in reference to *Shekinah*'s once residing in the Temple but as now being in exile (see 1:203a; Vol. 3, pp. 243–5).
87. Abhinavagupta begins his excursus on realizing ultimate reality: 'To You, the transcendent, situated beyond the abyss, beginningless, unique, yet who dwell in manifold ways in the caverns of the heart, the foundation of all this universe, and who abide in all that moves and all that moves not, to You alone, O Śambhu, I come for refuge' (*An Introduction to Tantric Philosophy: The Paramārthasāra of Abhinavagupta with the Commentary of Yogarāja*, trans. Lyne Bansat-Boudon and Kamaleshadatta Tripathi; introduction, notes, critically revised Sanskrit text, appendix, indices by Lyne Bansat-Boudon

- [Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011], kārikā 1; p. 63). This text is a synopsis of the doctrine Abhinavagupta sets out fully in his *magnum opus*, the *Tantrāloka* (*Light on the Tantras*), which itself is hereafter abbreviated TĀ.
88. The *tattvas* are the general factors that make up the whole range of experience, both physical and super-physical. In the philosophy of Sāṃkhya, twenty-five of these experiential factors are posited: the principles of materiality, i.e., earth, water, fire, air, and ether; the subtle elements of smell, taste, sight, touch, and sound; the powers of conation, i.e., genitals, anus, food, hand, and speech; the powers of cognition, i.e., hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell; the psychological or mental factors of *manas* (mind), *ahamkāra* (I-maker), and *buddhi* (understanding); the principles of individuation, *puruṣa* (person) or *anu* (atom), and *prakṛti* (creatix). To these, the Śaiva tantras added eleven additional factors, namely the five ‘coverings’ of *māyā*: *niyati* (necessity), *kāla* (time), *rāja* (attachment), *vidyā* (knowledge), and *kalā* (part); plus the limiting principle of *māyā* herself; as well as the universal principles of *Sadvidyā* (knowledge of being) or *Śuddhavidyā* (Pure Knowledge), *Īśvara* (Lord), *Sadākhya* (That which is named Being [*sat*]) or *Sadāśiva* (Ever-Benevolent), *Śakti* (Power), and *Śiva* (the Benevolent) (see Georg Feuerstein, *Tantra: The Path of Ecstasy* [Boston: Shambhala, 1998], pp. 62–66). For a detailed consideration of these thirty-six principles see J.C. Chatterji, *Kashmir Shaivism* (1914; repr., Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986).
89. The goddess Lakṣmī pronounces: ‘I, consisting of consciousness, am ever inherent in all beings and produce sound (speech)... All the Vedas establish (*kāye*) me. I am the object of such enquiry about “who is she” (*kā iti*)...’ (see *Lakṣmī Tantra* 50.91–94; *Lakṣmī Tantra: A Pāñcarātra Text. Translation and Notes with Introduction*, Sanjukta Gupta [Netherlands, 1972; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000], p. 343). The *Lakṣmī Tantra* is a text of the Vaiṣṇava tradition, but is well informed by the Śākta tradition. Lakṣmī is another name for Śakti. It will be useful to distinguish the force that is called *śakti* from its hypostatization, and I shall designate the latter by a capital unitalicization, Śakti.
90. See *Īśvarapratyabhijākārikā* 1.5.13–14 (in *The Īśvarapratyabhijākārikā of Utpaladeva with the Author’s Vṛtti. Critical edition and annotated translation*, Raffaele Torella [Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1994], pp. 120–22). Respectively, these verses are: ‘Consciousness has as its essential nature reflective awareness (*pratyavamarśa*); it is the supreme Word (*parāvāk*) that arises freely. It is freedom in the absolute sense, the sovereignty (*aiśvaryam*) of the supreme Self’; and, ‘It is the luminous vibrating (*sphurattā*), the absolute being (*mahāsattā*), unmodified by space and time; it is that which is said to be the heart (*hrdayam*) of the supreme Lord, insofar as it is his essence’. This text is hereafter cited as ĪPK, with section, chapter, and verse, plus page number to this edition.
91. In the *Kāmakalāvilāsa* it is said: ‘She the Primordial Śakti, who excels all and who in Her own true nature is eternal, limitless Bliss, is the seed (*Bīja*, that is, source or cause) of all the moving and motionless things which are to be, and is the Pure Mirror in which Śiva experiences Himself [*Śivarūpa-vimarśa-nirmalādarśaḥ*]’. In *Kāmakalāvilāsa of Śrīmanmāheśvara Puṇyānanda Nātha along with ‘Cidvallī’ Sanskrit Commentary of Śrī Nāṭanānanda Nātha & English Translation*, ed. and trans., Ramayana Prasad Dwivedi and Sudhakar Malaviya (Delhi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 2004), p. 12. The ‘*Kāmakalāvilāsa* is an authoritative work on Śākta philosophy’ (N.N. Bhattacharyya, *History of the Śākta Religion*, 2nd rev. ed. [New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1996], p. 209).
92. In *Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. (note 87), p. 112, and see the commentary thereon at pp. 112–17. Bhairava is another name for Śiva. This metaphor is common in the sacred literature and commentaries; e.g., the eleventh century commentator Kṣemarāja states in his glossarial work, *Spandanirṇaya* (*Discernment of Vibration*), that the *tattvas* are wholly revealed ‘on the canvas of Her own free, clear Self just as a city is reflected in a mirror (from which it is non-distinct)’ (*Spanda-Kārikās: The Divine Creative Pulsation. The Kārikās and the Spanda-nirṇaya translated into English*, Jaideva Singh [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980], p. 1). Mark S.G. Dyczkowski translates this verse slightly differently, substituting ‘screen’ for ‘canvas’ (in *The Stanzas on Vibration: The Spandakārikā with Four Commentaries. Translated with an Introduction and Exposition* [Varanasi, India: Dilip Kumar Publishers, 1994], p. 54). The *Spandakārikās* are said to be a series of revelatory stanzas on the nature of reality given by Śiva to Vasugupta (who lived in the first half of the ninth century).
93. *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. (note 92), p. 63.
94. See the comments by Abhinavagupta in his *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī* 1.7.1 (in K.C. Pandey, *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vimarśinī of Abhinavagupta: Doctrine of Divine Recognition* [1954; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986], pp. 99–100). This text is a critique of the ĪPK, and is hereafter cited as ĪPV, with section, chapter, and verse, plus page number to this edition.
95. See Gavin D. Flood, *Body and Cosmology in Kashmir Śaivism* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993), pp. 27–54.
96. Kṣemarāja comments in his summative text, *Pratyabhijñāhrdayam*, apropos the means of liberation:

When (an aspirant) keeps his *citta* (individual consciousness) concentrated on the *samvid* or *cit* (lit. heart) restraining . . . the *vikalpas* that obstruct staying in one's real nature, by not thinking of anything whatsoever, and thus by laying hold of *avikalpa* state, he becomes used to the habit of regarding his *cit* as the (real) knower, untarnished by body etc., and so within a short time only, he attains absorption into *turya* and the state transcending *turya* (*turyāṭīta*) which are on the point of unfolding.

Kṣemarāja, *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam: The Secret of Self-Recognition. Sanskrit Text with English Translation, Notes and Introduction by Jaideva Singh*, 4th rev. ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982), p. 95. Singh notes that 'Vikalpa means difference of perception; an idea as different from other ideas; differentiation. Vikalpanam (Viśeṣeṇa vividhena kalpanam) = ideating a "this" as different from "that", differentiation-making activity of the mind' (ibid., 131).

97. Ernst Furlinger, *The Touch of Śakti: A Study in Non-dualistic Trika Śaivism of Kashmir* (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2009), p. 126, adducing TĀ 3.10–11.
98. See *Spanda Kārikā*, verses 30–31. Respectively: 'Or, constantly attentive, and perceiving the entire universe as play, he who has this awareness (*samvitti*) is undoubtedly liberated in this very life'; and, 'This indeed is the arising of that object of meditation in the mind of the meditator, namely, the adept's realization of his identity with it by the force of (his) intent' (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], p. xvi).
99. As enumerated by Dyczkowski in *Stanzas on Vibration*, ibid., p. 362, n. 13. He adds that these are understood by Śaiva commentators to correspond to the six divine attributes as understood in Vaiṣṇava theology, namely 1) *Jñāna* – 'knowledge' or 'consciousness'; 2) *Śakti* – 'power'; 3) *Aiśvarya* – 'sovereignty'; 4) *Bala* – 'strength'; 5) *Vīrya* – 'vitality'; and 6) *Tejas* – 'brilliance' (ibid.).
100. Bhattacharyya, *History of the Śākta Religion*, op. cit. (note 91), p. 188.
101. The translation of the term *vimarśa* as connoting a 'reflective awareness' is problematic, argues Furlinger. It is based on a certain Gadamerian 'prejudice'. In fact, he observes, there are two modes of *vimarśa*: a higher and lower form, pure and impure, where the reflective awareness 'I' (*ahampratyavamarśa*) as 'the very essence of Light is not a mental construct' (*vikalpaḥ*), and where under the veil of *māyā* this reflective awareness as the recognition of one's true nature as Śiva is a thought construct (*vikalpaḥ*). So one is metaphysical and the other pragmatic (see *Touch of Śakti*, op. cit. [note 97], pp. 53–57). Isabelle Ratié has argued that *vimarśa* can usefully be translated by the English word 'grasping', because consciousness as shining (*prakāśa*) is a *dynamic* manifestation of light, not a mere reflection, but a knowing that gets hold of itself and of objects ('Otherness in the Pratyabhijñā Philosophy', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 35 [2007]: 313–70 at 336–39, esp. 337, n. 51). Cf. above, note 14.
102. ĪPK 1.1.2, pp. 85–86. See also Abhinavagupta's commentary (ĪPV 1.1.2, pp. 10–12; note that the eighteenth-century commentator Bhāskaraṇṭha treated Abhinavagupta's exegesis of the second verse of ĪPK as subordinate to the first, introductory verse, and Pandey shows this by numbering it (i), which then gives a different numbering to the rest of the chapter's verses—see the explanation by Ratié, 'Otherness in the Pratyabhijñā Philosophy', op. cit. [note 101], 336, n. 47). For an analysis of this view see Bruno M.J. Nagel, 'Unity and Contradiction: Some Arguments in Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta for the Evidence of the Self as Śiva', *Philosophy East and West* 45, no. 4 (1995): 501–25 at 505–6. He writes that 'Abhinavagupta has declared the knower to be of *self-shining nature* (*sva-prakāśa-svabhāva*) and the object of knowledge to have a light-nature (*prakāśa-svabhāva*) or to have a shining nature (*prakāśa-māna-svabhāva*)' (510).
103. Abhinavagupta disputes the philosophical position of the Buddhist epistemologists, in particular the Vijñānavādins, where they argue that the world of objective manifestation is an appearance (*ābhāsa*), in the sense that it is only a reflection in the mirror of the mind, or intellect (*buddhi*). Nor does he entirely accept the view of Sāṃkhya philosophy that the *buddhi* illuminates the world of objects, owing to its 'crystalline purity' reflecting the light of the Self (*ātman*), because, he avers, the intellect *shines as well* by dint of its being innately held within the effulgent field of Śiva (see Abhinavagupta's commentarial analysis in the second chapter of section one of the ĪPV, pp. 19–31). For a detailed analysis of the way in which Abhinavagupta (and Utpaladeva) engaged with the arguments of the Buddhist 'logico-epistemological school' in developing and defending the idealistic views of the *Pratyabhijñā* system see Isabelle Ratié, 'The Dreamer and the Yogin: On the Relationship between Buddhist and Śaiva Idealisms', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 73, no. 3 (2010): 437–78.
104. Harvey P. Alper, 'Śiva and the Ubiquity of Consciousness: The Spaciousness of an Artful Yogi', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 7 (1979): 345–407 at 392, n. 31. Alper cautions that translating *ābhāsa* as 'appearance' does not imply that it means 'what something looks like', but rather that '*ābhāsa is the objective aspect of every cognitive event, it is "that which has appeared"*'. Moreover, '[i]n German *ābhāsa* may be translated as *Erscheinungsbild*'; and so, in short, 'for Abhinavagupta *ābhāsa* is not an

- image of a cognition which itself has a separate existence, but the objective aspect of a single flash of cognition’.
105. ĪPK 1.5.9; p. 117.
106. *Mālinīśloka-vārttika* 1.240cd (in Jürgen Hanneder, *Abhinavagupta’s Philosophy of Revelation: An Edition and Annotated Translation of Mālinīśloka-vārttika I, 1–399* [Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998], p. 99). The *Mālinīśloka-vārttika*, or *Mālinīvijayavārttika*, is a commentary by Abhinavagupta on chapters 1–17 of the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* (*The Tantra of Victory of the Garlanded Goddess*), which he considers to be a foundational text for his synthesis of Śaivite doctrine in the Trika metaphysic.
107. Ibid. 1.242; p. 99.
108. ĪPK 1.5.10 and comm.; p. 118.
109. ĪPK 1.6.1 and comm., with Torella’s clarifying footnotes at pp. 128–30.
110. See ĪPK 1.8.7–9, pp. 149–51; ĪPV 1.8.7–9, pp. 115–17.
111. Dyczkowski explains that objects acquire luminosity ‘by being bathed with the radiance of the light of consciousness that shines within the perceiver as his essential conscious nature’ (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], p. 37). It is worth quoting him more fully on this point:
 In this way, they distort, as it were, the radiant field of the light’s brilliance which thus appears as if to sparkle with the luminous presence of the objects illumined by it. In this way, they shine in the field of consciousness, contributing to the seeming diversification of its light by the variegated quality of their own manifest appearance. This seeming alteration in the light of consciousness is its scintillating radiance—*sphurattā*—and its dynamic pulse—*Spanda*. It is *Spanda* both in terms of the individual manifestations appearing in the field of consciousness (the ‘sparks’ of its scintillating brilliance) and universally as the entire sparkling mass of manifestations that appear and disappear in the field of consciousness which thus constantly changes while remaining the same. (ibid.)
112. The commentator Bhagavadutpala cites Vidyādhpati that *māyā* ‘is like the (apparent) stain (appearing in a) mirror (reflecting) smoke from a fire, or like the bubbles (that cease) once water is tranquil and free of change’ (see *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], p. 152). Another allusion is that of an infant clouding a mirror with his breath, which is similar to the way that a dull-minded (*jaḍa*) person clouds his consciousness with his own thoughts (unattributed; cited by Bhagavadutpala in ibid., 157–58).
113. As Stanza 27 of *Spanda Kārikā* puts it: ‘It is “there alone” that they, quiescent and stainless, dissolve away along with the adept’s mind and so partake of Śiva’s nature’ (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], p. xvi). The corollary is that he remains unaffected by his actions. Abhinavagupta states: ‘Whether he performs a hundred thousand horse sacrifices, or kills a hundred thousand Brahmins, he who knows ultimate reality is not affected by merits or demerits. He is stainless’ (*Paramārthasāra*, kā. 70; in *Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 87], p. 247; cf. kā. 67, p. 240). See furthermore the informative remarks by Dyczkowski on the nature of the principles of passion, pervasion, and the stainless in the Kaula tantras (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, pp. 279–81). The condition of stainlessness (*nirañjana*) is the converse of *añjana*, which means a ‘stain’ or ‘colouring’, ‘and hence, by extension, it denotes manifestation which seemingly stains or colors consciousness’ (ibid., 281).
114. TĀ 3.112a–113a (as translated by Kerry Martin Skora, ‘Consciousness of Consciousness: Reflexive Awareness in the Trika Śaivism of Abhinavagupta’ [PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2001], p. 139).
115. See Rājānaka Rāma’s commentary on stanza 22 of the *Spandakārikās* (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], p. 100). This entails that if the *yogin* reflects upon these emotions correctly, ‘these (intense feelings) become direct means by which he can perceive *Spanda* in its stable state’ (ibid., p. 102).
116. *Mālinīśloka-vārttika* 1.370cd–373 (in Hanneder, *Abhinavagupta’s Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 106], p. 119). The *Vijñānabhairava* advocates a meditation of ‘unwavering awareness, formless and without support.... [that] does not consist in imaginative visualisation of the body (of the deity) with organs, face, hands, etc.’ (verse 146; *Vijñāna Bhairava: The Practice of Centring Awareness. Commentary by Swami Lakshman Joo*, trans. Bettina Bäumer [Varanasi: Indica Books, 2002], p. 171).
117. Cf. the proclamation of Lakṣmī: ‘I cognize (*mime*) and mete out (*mīye*) (the creation) with the help of all standards of measurement. At the time of dissolution the creation is engulfed within me [lit. ‘corresponds in measure with me’]. I consist of God’s essence and I pervade (*meti*) the clear apprehension of Self’ (*Lakṣmī Tantra* 50.88–89; op. cit. [note 89], p. 342).
118. Kṣemarāja, in his commentary, *Spanda-nirṇaya* (*Spanda-Kārikās*, op. cit. [note 92], p. 69). See *Spandakārikā* 1.11: ‘How can this accursed way of life and death be his (any longer) who stands struck with amazement as he observes that nature (*viz. Spanda*) which presides over all the activities of life (as I)? (ibid., 67).
119. This term literally means ‘without a Higher’, composed of the prefix *an-*, negation, and *uttara*, ‘upper, higher, superior’ (Fürlinger, *Touch of Śakti*, op. cit. [note 97], p. 156).
120. B.N. Pandit, for example, remarks: ‘He is called Śiva because of His being *Prakāśa* and is called Śakti because of His being *Vimarśa*. He is being differentiated, as it were, by the only means of these two

- names for the purpose of understanding; but, in reality, there is no differentiation at all' (*Mirror of Self-Supremacy or Svātantrya-Darpaṇa* [New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1993], pp. 30–31). He explains that 'Paraśiva is Himself both Śiva and Śakti' (34).
121. See the explication by Pandit, *ibid.*, pp. 30–34, and further reference below, note 132.
122. On the expansionary and contracting role of consciousness, the driving force of which is *Spanda*, see Kṣemarāja's commentary, *SpandaSamdoha*, which elaborates on the first stanza of the *Spandakārikās*: 'We praise that Śaṅkara who is the source of the power of the wheel of energies by whose expansion (*unmeṣa*) and contraction (*nimeṣa*) the universe is absorbed and comes into being' (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], pp. 61–72).
123. In *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. (note 92), p. 183.
124. *Śivasūtra* 1.14 and comm. (in *Śiva Sūtras: The Yoga of Supreme Identity. Text of the Sūtras and the Commentary Vimarśinī of Kṣemarāja*, translated into English with introduction, notes, running exposition, glossary and index by Jaideva Singh [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979], pp. 56–57; see also the commentary and exposition by Mark S.G. Dyczkowski in *The Aphorisms of Śiva: The ŚivaSūtra with Bhāskara's Commentary* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992], pp. 40–41).
125. As Kṣemarāja explains: 'The (individual) experient also, in whom citi or consciousness is contracted has the universe (as his body) in a contracted form' (*Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, op. cit. [note 96], sūtra 4, p. 55). According to Virūpākṣa: 'I [recognize that I] have the nature of consciousness [and that] this universe, beginning with the void state and ending with the earth, is my body. This [fact that the universe is one's body] is proven because [the universe] is perceptible, like the fleshly body' (in David Peter Lawrence, *The Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One: A Study and Translation of the Virūpākṣapañcāśikā with the Commentary of Vidyācakravartin* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008], p. 64). This work, the 'Fifty Verses of Virūpākṣa', dates from the eleventh or twelfth centuries in Kashmir while the commentary possibly dates from fourteenth century South India. 'Virūpākṣa' is a compound of *virūpa* and *akṣa*, meaning 'the Odd-Eyed One', and is a common name for Śiva.
126. Verse 63; in *Vijñāna Bhairava*, op. cit. (note 116), p. 69.
127. Abhinavagupta concludes his teaching in the *Paramārthasāra* (kā. 103): 'This being the case, [the adept] should bend every possible effort toward that ultimate goal, thinking that whosoever is deeply engaged in this right path [to liberation] reaches the condition of Śiva' (in *Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 87], p. 311).
128. ĪPV 3.1.2–4; pp. 190–94. Dyczkowski notes that 'there are eight types of experiencing subjects. The first five reside at the pure level, above the principle of *Māyā*, one for each of the five pure categories ranging from Śiva to Pure Knowledge (*śuddhavidyā*).... The other three reside on the impure level' (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], p. 351, n. 105).
129. ĪPK 4.1.2 and comm., pp. 210–11; ĪPV 4.1.2, p. 220.
130. ĪPK 2.1.2; p. 153. Time, as a succession of moments, does not become experienced until the twenty-sixth *tattva*, i.e., with *Kāla* (Chatterji, *Kashmir Shaivism*, op. cit. [note 88], p. 21, n. 2). The word *māyā* derives from *mā*, 'to measure, mete out, mark off' (Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, new edition [1899; repr., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956], pp. 804 and 811).
131. Mark S.G. Dyczkowski uses the evocative word 'gradient' in his book *A Journey in the World of the Tantras* (Varanasi: Indica Books, 2004), p. 48.
132. See Abhinavagupta, *Paramārthasāra*, verses 14–22, and Yogarāja's commentary (in *Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. [note 87], pp. 117–45).
133. See ĪPK 1.3.6–7, pp. 102–3; ĪPV 1.3.6–7, pp. 36–39; see also the translation and commentary by B.N. Pandit, *Īśvara pratyabhijñā kārikā of Utpaladeva: Verses on the Recognition of the Lord*, ed. Lise F. Vail (New Delhi: Muktabodha Indological Research Institute in association with Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2004), pp. 34–36.
134. ĪPV 3.1.2, p. 191. The projective imaging of Śiva on to the mirror of reality demonstrates a gerundive force. Grammatically, a gerund is a word that has characteristics of a noun and a verb. This divine imaging has a substantive and verbal function; that is, we might say, Śiva's imaging of himself means either the fact that he is reflected in reality as Śakti, or the manner in which this is achieved by *spanda-śakti*.
135. See the remarks by André Padoux, *Vāc, the Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), pp. 80–81. It is contrary at any rate to the Buddhist position on the transitoriness and unreality of the world (David Peter Lawrence, *Rediscovering God with Transcendental Argument: A Contemporary Interpretation of Monistic Kashmiri Śaiva Philosophy* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999], p. 75). Cf. Gavin Flood's statement that for the monistic Śaivas the everyday world—'the world wherein the indexical-I operates'—is ultimately unreal,

- in the sense that it is not ‘ontologically distinct’ (*The Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion* [London: I.B. Tauris, 2006], p. 172).
136. See the introductory remarks by Dyczkowski in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. (note 92), p. 55. Kṣemarāja cites a tantric text: ‘The Great Lord is the power-holder and His powers are the universe’ (in *ibid.*, p. 67). Rājānaka Rāma writes: ‘The purpose of referring to phenomena (*bhāvavyakti*) as “power” is to indicate (implicitly) that there is no difference between them and the Supreme Lord Who is the possessor of (every) power’ (in *ibid.*, 76).
137. In this regard Abhinavagupta asserts: ‘All this universe is a reflection in this way in the Lord, unaided by anything else. The perfect independence of the Lord is His cosmic nature, this, they say, is the supreme intuition (*pratibhā*)—the Goddess Absolute (*anuttarā*)’ (TĀ 3.65–66; cited by Dyczkowski, in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], p. 361, n. 12).
138. He scans himself into the world, parsing a reality that is revealed in the mirror of his own divine power. Abhinavagupta writes that the goddess, as ‘the highest power of creative word (*parāvāk*) is of the form of all the letters’, who ‘reveals within her pure mirror of Self endless manifestation, maintenance and absorption’ (*A Trident of Wisdom. Translation of Parātrīśikā-vivaraṇa*, Jaideva Singh [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989], p. 96).
139. See Stanza 48 of the *Spanda-Kārikās*: ‘This, Śiva’s power of action, residing in the fettered soul, binds it, (but) when (its true nature) is understood and it is set on its own path, (this power) bestows the fruits of yoga (*siddhi*)’ (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], p. xvii; and see Dyczkowski’s exposition at pp. 259–63).
140. *Paramārthasāra*, kā. 82; in *Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. (note 87), p. 271.
141. *Paramārthasāra*, kā. 77; in *Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, p. 260. Yogarāja comments here that the Lord as ‘the Great Master’ freely composes the manifold reality by his thought-constructs; ‘that is, he ceaselessly inscribes the numerous objects that are nothing but constructions of his imagination, as forms upon the mirror of his intellect’; and these constructions are nothing other than the contemplations of the *jñānin*, or spiritual knower (*ibid.*).
142. According to *Śiva Sūtra* 1.19, ‘The bliss of the Light is the joy of contemplation’; and in this regard Dyczkowski remarks that ‘Bhāskara presents us with a mysticism of Light’ (*Aphorisms of Śiva*, op. cit. [note 124], p. 6). See further below, note 169.
143. See Fūrlinger, *Touch of Śakti*, op. cit. (note 97), pp. 127–28.
144. On the transfiguring nature of tantric consciousness, see for example the remarks by Lawrence in *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. (note 125), pp. 45–46. Mark S.G. Dyczkowski explains that Kashmiri Śaiva doctrine teaches that transcendence is achieved through active participation, and involves not freedom ‘from’, but rather freedom ‘to’: ‘[d]esire is not denied, but accepted at a higher level as the pure will or freedom (*svāntarya*) of the absolute. Desire is to be eliminated only if it is desire “for” (*ākāṅkṣā*), rather than desire “to” (*icchā*)’ (*The Doctrine of Vibration: An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987], p. 39). Everything is groundingly imbued with I-hood: ‘No single material or immaterial object exists that is not infused with this I-hood. I-hood is inherent in whatever is stamped as “this” (*idam*, i.e. phenomena)’ (in *Lakṣmī Tantra* 2.7; op. cit. [note 89], p. 8). See the remarks by Dyczkowski on ‘self-awareness, own being and egoity’, in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. (note 92), pp. 37–48.
145. According to Virūpākṣa: ‘Possessing the germinal essence, breath, Śakti, the mind, the collection of senses and the [fleshly] body, contemplate I-hood as impelling all of them’ (verse 7; in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. [note 125], p. 72).
146. See *Lakṣmī Tantra* 18.10–15; op. cit. (note 89), pp. 98–99. The Goddess refers to the ‘island of *idam*tā [that] becomes submerged, as it were, in the ocean of consciousness’ (*ibid.*, p. 99).
147. See *Virūpākṣapañcāśikā*, verses 18–19, and commentary; in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. (note 125), pp. 86–89).
148. Virūpākṣa proclaims: ‘I am unitary and have the nature of unsetting awareness. I am established within lights and darknesses. And lights and darknesses are [established] within me who am unitary’ (verse 22 of the *Virūpākṣapañcāśikā*; in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. [note 125], p. 93; see also the commentary, where Vidyācakravartin glosses, ‘I am established within lights, that is, what are ordinarily conceived [*abhimatānām*] as lights, including faculties such as the intelligence and [apparently external] lights such as the sun. Since I shine as them, I am their inner nature. In the same manner, since I shine as darkness, I am established as internal to darknesses such as the germinal essence, Māyā and so on’ [*ibid.*]).
149. Dyczkowski, *Journey in the World*, op. cit. (note 131), p. 182, n. 13. Kubjikā is the presiding goddess of the so-called Western Tradition (*Paścimāmnāya*), which probably originated in the western Himalayas. She is equated with Kuṇḍalinī as the matrix (*yonī*) or Triangle (*sṛgāta*), i.e., the organ of generation

- (*bhaga*), the three-fold aspect of divine power that is the source and end of creation (see Mark S.G. Dyczkowski, *The Canon of the Śaivāgama and the Kubjikā Tantras of the Western Kaula Tradition* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988], pp. 87–92).
150. According to the Śākta text, *Lalitāsahasranāma* (*Thousand Names of Lalitā*), the almighty Lalitā is called Indradhanuhprabhā, the one who ‘shines in the colours of the rainbow’ (*Lalitā-Sahasranāma: A Comprehensive Study of One Thousand Names of Lalitā Mahā-Tripurasundarī*, trans. L.M. Joshi [New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 1998], name 594, p. 211). In classical Sanskrit literature the most common word for rainbow is *indradhanus*, ‘bow of Indra’ (see Walter H. Maurer, ‘The Rainbow in Sanskrit Literature’, *Adyar Library Bulletin*, 31–32 [1967–68]: 360–81). One theory of the cause of the rainbow, as noted by Bhaṭṭa Kṣīrasvāmin in the *Amarakośodghāṭana*, is that it is ‘the sun’s rays reflected on a cloud and appearing in the form of a bow’; and Maurer remarks: ‘This simple explanation was probably that which most generally prevailed elsewhere in the world before the true scientific explanation became generally accepted’ (ibid., 370).
151. See the analysis by Abhinavagupta in his *Parātrīśikāvivaraṇa* (*Trident of Wisdom*, op. cit. [note 138], p. 22).
152. The attempt to understand *anuttara* is likened by Abhinavagupta ‘to the difficulty one has in stepping on the shadow of one’s own hat’ (Paul Eduardo Muller-Ortega, *The Triadic Heart of Śiva: Kaula Tantricism of Abhinavagupta in the Non-Dual Shaivism of Kashmir* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989], p. 89).
153. ĪPV 4.1.7; p. 224.
154. As Utpaladeva explains: ‘internality is the reflective awareness “I” (*ahamvimarśah*), externality is the reflective awareness “this” (ĪPK *vṛtti* 1.8.8; p. 151). See also the statement by Virūpākṣa: ‘That [awareness] has two presentations. One, which is differentiated, is referred to as “this”. The other, which is undifferentiated, is referred to as “I”. The first appears in the aspect of the object of consciousness as that which is manifested. The other appears in the aspect of consciousness as that which manifests’ (verse 11; in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. [note 125], p. 79).
155. Utpaladeva discourses on the power of discrimination in section 1, chapter 6 of his ĪPK.
156. Utpaladeva concludes his treatise: ‘Just like the beloved, who, after much insistence finally stands in the presence of the maid in love, though he is there before her he does not give her any pleasure until she recognizes who he is – as he seems just like other men until that moment –, so for mankind the self, who is yet the Lord of the world, cannot manifest his own glory until his qualities have been brought to light. For this reason the doctrine of the recognition of the Lord has here been expounded’ (ĪPK 4.1.17; p. 218).
157. *Virūpākṣapañcāśikā*, verse 38 (in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. [note 125], p. 111).
158. See *Virūpākṣapañcāśikā*, verse 39: ‘The wise know: Memory is the manifestation of a [past] direct experience [expressed] “That”. [Direct experience is the manifestation] of an object. Recognitive synthesis [is the manifestation] of the two together. This triad [of manifestations] would not be possible without myself, who am unitary and devoid of sequence’ (in Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. [note 125], pp. 112–13).
159. Ibid., p. 113, and Lawrence’s gloss at note 4 on p. 114.
160. After dispensing his knowledge of the *dhāraṇās*, or the ways of centring awareness, Śakti embraces Śiva (*Vijñāna Bhairava*, op. cit. [note 116], v. 163, p. 185. On this point see Furlinger, *Touch of Śakti*, op. cit. [note 97], p. 123. He elsewhere refers to the existential knowledge of the passage of life energy (*praṇava*) into the beyond of Brahman—the sounding away of death—to the experience of ‘fall[ing] into the embrace of the Divine’ [p. 245]). Kerry Martin Skora cogently reminds us of the valuable role of touch in the liberating consciousness of radiant being-in-the-world. See his paper, ‘The Hermeneutics of Touch: Uncovering Abhinavagupta’s Tactile Terrain’, *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 21 (2009): 87–106.
161. See the commentary by Pandit on ĪPK 1.4.1 (in *Īśvara pratyabhijñā kārikā of Utpaladeva*, op. cit. [note 133], p. 38). Navjivan Rastogi makes the point that ‘self-realization consists in harmonizing the two polarities (Śiva and Śakti)’, which is to say, harmonizing this and that (‘Recognition in the Pratyabhijñā School’, *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 58–59 [1977–78]: 841–61 at 861). Recognition is, he explains, the concurrent outcome of the elements of presentative and re-presentative (perceptual and recollective) knowledge, where ‘that’ refers to determinate apprehension and ‘this’ refers to indeterminate apprehension (853). See further below, note 235.
162. See ĪPK 1.5.20, pp. 126–27; ĪPV 1.5.20, p. 84.
163. The term *sādhaka* is masculine, while the feminine equivalent is *sādhikā* (Agehananda Bharati, *Tantric Traditions* [Bombay: Hindustan Publishing Company, 1993], p. 312). Bharati critically explores the biases against women in Hindu thought, and how they are the object and not the subject of tantric discourse (ibid., 303–18). For a trenchant analysis of the problematic, two-faced, approaches towards

- women in a tantric sect headed by Swami Muktananda (1908–82) see Sarah Caldwell, ‘The Heart of the Secret: A Personal and Scholarly Encounter with Shakta Tantrism in Siddha Yoga’, *Nova Religio* 5, no. 1 (2001): 9–51.
164. Cited by Dyczkowski, in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. (note 92), p. 207. Dyczkowski further adds, ‘He should then make love to her with this attitude of mind and unswayed by physical passion’ (ibid.).
165. Śakti proclaims: ‘In the pure yogic mirrors (minds) of (yogins) who have ascended to the absolute state through the channel of the *suṣuṃṇā* duct, my image (*bimba*) is reflected. (And then) I saturate the superb *sattva* (pure essence) of the yogins with the divine nectar-sap derived from the reflected Self, which is infused with consciousness’ (*Lakṣmī Tantra* 50.106–7; op. cit. [note 89], p. 344).
166. Kārikā 9; in *Introduction to Tantric Philosophy*, op. cit. (note 87), p. 100.
167. *Kāmakaḷāvilāsa*, op. cit. (note 91), verse 2 (cited by David Lawrence, ‘Remarks on Abhinavagupta’s Use of the Analogy of Reflection’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 33 [2005]: 583–99 at 597).
168. Singh notes that the metaphor of a mirror is an inadequate one, since, firstly, in a mirror an external object is reflected, whereas Maheśvara is reflecting his own ideation, and secondly, a mirror is non-conscious, unlike the ideating awareness of Maheśvara (in *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, op. cit. [note 96], pp. 18–19). See furthermore the discussion by Lawrence in ‘Remarks on Abhinavagupta’s Use of the Analogy of Reflection’, op. cit. (note 167), 589–92.
169. See the essays by see Paul E. Muller-Ortega, ‘Luminous Consciousness: Light in the Tantric Mysticism of Abhinavagupta’, in *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Religious Experience*, ed. Matthew T. Kapstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 45–79), and Elliot R. Wolfson, ‘Hermeneutics of Light in Medieval Kabbalah’, in ibid., pp. 105–18.
170. Tishby notes that in the kabbalah practised by the Gerona school ‘*Keter* is called “the cessation of thought” (*afisat ha-maḥashavah*), that is to say, it is like nonexistence, nothing, with regard to thought, which cannot attain it’. Even so, ‘it is the source of all the lights of emanation and creation’ (*Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. [note 4], p. 280).
171. According to Singh, the ‘entire text of Spandakārikā is meant to prove that Śiva is changeless and one’ (in *Spanda-Kārikās*, op. cit. [note 92], p. 21).
172. Tishby makes the following observation: ‘Should one see the formation of the *sefirot* as a dynamic expansion of the divine power, or as an emanation in substance of the divine being?’ (*Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. [note 4], p. 274).
173. Ibid. Tishby adds that this simile would seem to imply an expansion of the divine power, which would satisfy the idea that God is essentially undiminished in the process of emanating the universe. However, the view of the zoharic author, namely that the *sefirot* are part of the divine being, entails that they are an emanation in substance of God, which would then imply a diminishment in the divine being. The kabbalists resolved this difficulty by ‘explain[ing] emanation as the uncovering of preexistent roots, or as a transference from the unknown to the known’ (pp. 274–75).
174. Scripture says that for the *yogin*, as for Śiva, ‘*svaśaktipracayo ‘sya viśvam*’, i.e., ‘The universe is the aggregate of his powers’ (*Śiva Sūtra* 3.31, with comm.; in *Aphorisms of Śiva*, op. cit. [note 124], pp. 146–47). The universal vibrations are like electromagnetic or acoustic waves, and both notions are employed in the literature (not, of course, in a modern technical sense).
175. See Moshe Hallamish, *An Introduction to the Kabbalah*, trans. Ruth Bar-Ilan and Ora Wiskind-Elper (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 156; Daniel C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), p. 48; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, op. cit. (note 3), pp. 113–16; idem, *On the Mystical Shape*, op. cit. (note 28), p. 43; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, op. cit. (note 4), p. 291.
176. Skora, ‘Consciousness of Consciousness’, op. cit. (note 114), p. 439. The manifestation of the universe is depicted as a reflective arrangement in Abhinavagupta’s exposition of the *Parātrīśikā*, as a linguistic unfoldment (see *Trident of Wisdom*, op. cit. [note 138], pp. 99–121). He appeals to the scriptural declaration that ‘[e]ach *tattva* (category of existence) has the characteristics of all the thirty-six *tattvas*’, and adduces the *Spanda* saying: ‘When the *yogī* wishing to see all objects by pervading them all i.e., infusing them all with the light of his consciousness, then what is the use of saying much, he will experience for himself (the splendour of that vision)’ (ibid., p. 116; citing the *Spanda Kārikās* 3.11, which corresponds to stanza 43 in the *Stanzas on Vibration* [Kṣemarāja divides the 51 or 52 verses into three sections based on the tripartite division of the *Śiva Sūtra*—see Dyczkowski, in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. {note 92}, p. 12]).
177. The term *chiaroscuro* is a compound of the Italian *chiaro* (‘light’, ‘clear’) and *scuro* (‘dark’), and can refer to either ‘the gradations in light and dark values of a colour on a figure or object, which produce the illusion of volume and relief as well as the illusion of light and shadow’, or to ‘the distribution of light and dark over the surface of the whole picture, which serves to unify the composition and creates an

- expressive quality’ (Janis Callen Bell, in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner [New York: Macmillan, 1996], s.v. ‘Chiaroscuro’; Vol. 6, p. 569).
178. *Zohar* 1:149a, and Matt’s gloss: ‘The ladder symbolizes *Shekhinah*, who moves up or down, depending on human action.... The word נטיל (*nateil*) can mean “moving” or “taking/receiving”. According to the latter sense (adopted by several commentators), *Shekhinah* receives the flow of emanation and prophecy from above, and the arousal of virtuous human conduct below’ (Vol. 2, p. 331, n. 83).
179. As the *Zohar* states, the highest is also the deepest: ‘Above, from the site deepest of all’ (1:60a; and Matt’s gloss at Vol. 1, p. 345, n. 46). This spiritual journey is a parallel of the geographical journey. ‘Then Abraham was crowned from rung to rung until he ascended to his rung, as is written: *Abram journeyed, continually journeying toward the Negev* (Genesis 12:9)—the South, share of Abraham’ (1:80a; Vol. 2, pp. 18–19). This rung refers to *Ḥesed*, to which Abraham clings; and equally this *sefirah* is denoted by the direction of south.
180. This is the remark of an anonymous commentator on *Śiva Sūtra* 2.1 (*Aphorisms of Śiva*, op. cit. [note 124], p. 66).
181. Topology is ‘[t]he branch of mathematics that studies the qualitative properties of spaces, as opposed to . . . geometric or analytic properties’; e.g., ‘if a round sphere is deformed to be pear-shaped (or even more irregularly shaped, like the surface of the earth), then the geometric notions of distance, straight line, and angle are changed, but the topological properties of the surface are left unchanged’ (*McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science & Technology*, s.v. ‘Topology’; Vol. 14, p. 503). Algebraic topology is concerned with ‘the study of algebraic invariants associated to topological spaces’ (ibid., 504). A homeomorphic space is one which maps continuously to another, e.g., a circle to an ellipse, or a circle to a square. From this, it can be said therefore that the ‘rounded light’ of God is homologous with the ‘square light’ of the mind. The algebraic structure of the mind with its expressed values of beauty, love, power, etc. is mapped one-to-one to the idea of God. Comparatively speaking, the divine space for the kabbalist and tantric may be topologically the same, occupying a manifold of the imaginary, but it is differently geometrized, for it realizes different aspects, that is to say, angles of understanding.
182. Torella remarks that for Abhinavagupta ‘at the level of Paramaśiva one cannot speak of any objectivity whatsoever, this only beginning to emerge when he assumes the nature of Sadāśiva and Īsvara (indeed the plane of the Lord...’) (*Īsvaraṣṭyabhijñānārikā*, op. cit. [note 90], pp. 213–14, n. 15).
183. Elliot R. Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), p. 235.
184. Verse 135 (in *Vijñānabhairava or Divine Consciousness: A Treasury of 112 Types of Yoga. Sanskrit text with English translation, expository notes, introduction and glossary of technical terms*, Jaideva Singh [1979; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006], p. 124). Abhinavagupta states that *buddhi* is ‘like a reservoir of clear water’ (ĪPV 3.1.8; p. 197).
185. In the *Zohar* the image affording mystical consciousness is one of being saturated in light, of flowing in the ‘river of light’ (*nahara di-nahora*) (see Helner-Eshed, *River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. [note 31], pp. 274–79). Śakti, in one of her guises, namely Sarasvatī, essentially has the quality of liquidity (*Lakṣmī Tantra* 50.71–75; op. cit. [note 89], p. 341). According to Śaiva scripture: ‘By the attentive continuity of meditation on the great ocean of consciousness, the power of supreme I is attained’ (*Śiva Sūtra* 1.22; *Śiva Sūtras: The Supreme Awakening; with the commentary of Kshemaraja, revealed by Swami Lakshmanjoo*; ed. John Hughes [New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2007], p. 68).
186. Idel has suggested that the hermeneutics of the *Zohar* is ‘microscopic’ or ‘telescopic’ in its exegetical observations (cited by Hellner-Eshed, *River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. [note 31], pp. 192–3).
187. There are basically two types of telescope, the refracting and reflecting, where the former employs lenses and the latter employs mirrors (a third type, catadioptric, combines lenses and mirrors). The refracting telescope was invented by a Dutch spectacle-maker, Hans Lippershey, in 1608 (at least he obtained a patent on it; there is evidence that it was invented earlier, e.g. by Roger Bacon [1214–94]). In this configuration, starlight passes through an ‘object glass’ or ‘objective’, composed of two or more lenses or ‘elements’, to form an image at a focal plane, while a second lens (concave or convex) magnifies the image for viewing. The reflecting telescope was invented by Isaac Newton in 1668, and utilizes a concave paraboloidal primary mirror that collects starlight, which is then reflected by a diagonal (convex) plane mirror at 45° to the main mirror and focused at the eyepiece. Shortly after, a variation on this was invented by Laurent Cassegrain in 1672, in which the light from a concave paraboloidal mirror is reflected by a convex mirror back down the telescope tube to an eyepiece. See Geoff Anderson, *The Telescope: Its History, Technology, and Future* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 25–43; and Ian Ridpath, ed., *Norton’s 2000: Star Atlas and Reference Handbook*, 18th ed. (Harlow, Essex: Longman Scientific & Technical, 1989), pp. 64–71. The early reflecting telescopes ‘were mostly

- produced by polishing a metal surface, often tin, silver or speculum (an alloy consisting of four parts copper to one part tin)' (Anderson, *Telescope*, pp. 33–34).
188. Shekhinah is imagined to be a lens because she is the medium through which the higher *sefirot* are divined. Matt glosses a zoharic discussion on almanac and calendrical calculations made by the moon (i.e., Shekhinah), that '[t]he various divine measurements are perceived through the lens of *Shekhinah*' (Vol. 1, p. 248, n. 1104). If it is granted that there are levels of mystical awareness, then in a shallow spiritual consciousness the image of God is 'real': it is metaphorically seen through a positive, or converging lens; at a deeper level however the image of God is 'virtual', because it is seen through a negative, or diverging lens (i.e., a virtual image cannot be projected onto a screen). The kabbalistic master is the lens through which his students may foster a state of divine awareness. I note here the interesting remark by Hellner-Eshed, in regard to the distress caused by the death of Rabbi Shim'on: 'The teacher's death, however, heralds the cessation of the flow of divine plenty, the darkening of the light of revelation, and the blurring of the clear understanding of reality as it was refracted through the pristine lens of the teacher's consciousness' (*River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. [note 31], p. 55).
 189. Unlike ordinary mirrors which are backed with a coating of silver, telescope mirrors generally have a coating of aluminium deposited on their front surface, which gives a higher reflectivity (Anderson, *Telescope*, op. cit. [note 187], p. 98).
 190. Chromatic aberration occurs because wavelengths of light are bent at different rates when passing through a lens, and so are not brought to the same focus, which means that a star's image will be surrounded by a fringe of out-of-focus colours. This effect can be overcome by making the lens out of two or more different types of glass, thus combining materials of different refractive indices. Spherical aberration occurs as light rays arriving at the outermost part of a lens or mirror are focused closer than those rays striking the innermost part, with the result of a blurry image. This effect can be overcome by giving the lens faces non-spherical curves, or by using multiple mirrors with different conics (Anderson, *Telescope*, op. cit. [note 187], pp. 53–59; Patrick Moore, gen. ed., *The Astronomy Encyclopedia* [London: Mitchell Beazley, 1987], p. 358).
 191. Gershom Scholem remarks, apropos the linguistic theology of kabbalah, that the 'worlds are nothing but names inscribed on the paper of the divine reality' (cited by Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, op. cit. [note 183], p. 201). Puṇyānanda explains how the light of divine consciousness penetrates the mind: 'Upon the mass of the rays of the Sun *Parāśiva* being reflected in the pure *Vimarśa*-mirror, the *Mahābindu* [i.e. *Sādaśiva*] appears on the *Citta*-wall illumined by the reflected rays' (*Kāmakalāvīlāsa of Śrīmanmāheśvara*, op. cit. [note 91], v. 4; p. 22 [my interpolation]). Cf. below, note 250.
 192. Put another way, although the starry light of Śakti and Shekhinah normally hides the direct sight of Śiva and Tiferet, the tantric and kabbalist are able to perceive them as a brightened halo, because Śakti and Shekhinah are acting as a gravitational lens. Astronomically, light rays are bent by the gravitational influence of a massive body, and when two stars are aligned with Earth the image of the background star will be distorted into a ring of light, with a consequent increase in the apparent brightness of the background star—an effect called 'gravitational lensing' (John Bally and Bo Reipurth, *The Birth of Stars and Planets* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], p. 190).
 193. Declination (dec., symbol δ) and right ascension (RA, symbol α) are terms used in the celestial coordinate system to define the place of astronomical objects on the celestial sphere, and correspond respectively to geographical latitude and longitude (Ridpath, *Norton's 2000*, op. cit. [note 187], p. 41).
 194. Interstellar dust can obscure the light of background stars—an effect known as interstellar extinction—and can only be penetrated by far infrared light and radio waves (*The Cambridge Atlas of Astronomy*, ed. Jean Audouze and Guy Israël [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Middlesex: Newnes Books, 1985], pp. 300–1).
 195. In this paragraph I shall briefly posit some analogies using the early work of the philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), namely that of *Sein und Zeit*, first published in Germany in 1927. I have read the English editions: *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (1962; repr., Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005); and *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996). Unless otherwise noted, page references are to the German edition of *Sein und Zeit* as these are commonly enumerated in the margins of both translations. Theodore Kisiel has considered Stambaugh's differing translation in his book *Heidegger's Way of Thought: Critical and Interpretive Signposts*, ed. Alfred Denker and Marion Heinz (New York: Continuum, 2002), pp. 64–83. For a fine introduction to Heidegger's thought, principally in *Being and Time*, see Richard Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1999). Heidegger employed the term *Dasein*, or *Da-sein*, which may be translated as 'existence', but which etymologically means 'being-there', to indicate the understandingly moving nature of human activity in the world, i.e., the ways of being situated in the complex of life. (Although Stambaugh followed Heidegger's expressed

- wish that in future translations the word Da-sein should be hyphenated, in his recent revision of her translation Schmidt has reverted to the form Dasein, unless the context has demanded otherwise—see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, revised and with a foreword by Dennis J. Schmidt [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010], p. xx.) Heidegger’s thought underwent a significant shift, or ‘turn’ (*Kehre*) in the 1930s, from a focus on Dasein to Being, and this apparently changing viewpoint has been called Heidegger I and II (William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, 4th ed. [New York: Fordham University Press, 2003], pp. 243–45). Elliot R. Wolfson has sought to apply Heideggerian notions to the hermeneutic of kabbalah, although he appeals mainly to Heidegger’s work subsequent to *Being and Time*, and is particularly concerned with delineating the role of poetic imagination; for, as he writes, ‘[a]ttested in the intricate symbolic world of medieval kabbalah is a nexus of language, imagination, and world-making that is indicative of a poetic orientation to being in the world’ (*Language, Eros, Being*, op. cit. [note 183], pp. 25–26).
196. The basic state of human beings, according to Heidegger’s analytic, is an active being-in-the-world, *In-der-Welt-sein* (see §12; pp. 52–59). However, he carefully distinguishes the existential sense of ‘being-in’ from its usual, or categorial, sense of entities spatially located in something; where e.g., water is ‘in’ the glass, or the dress is ‘in’ the closet—such beings or entities are ‘present-at-hand’ (*Vorhandenes*) to each other (Stambaugh translates this term as ‘objectively present’). He rather characterizes Dasein as ‘inhabiting’ or ‘dwelling’ in the world, and the way in which it (i.e., Dasein) engages with this world is a matter of ‘concern’ (*Besorgen*) to it, which is shown up as ‘care’ (*Sorge*). In short, being-in-the-world involves an understanding, which is disclosed to Dasein as it takes care to be in a particular mode of consciousness; it is to be in touch with being, i.e. ways of be-ing. It is a manner of knowing that is not based on a subject–object distinction or predicated on a theoretical standpoint, given as a deliberation of things that are present-at-hand, but rather involves a ‘fascination’ with the world in which Dasein is concerned; the first kind of knowing is founded on the second kind, and as such is a ‘deficient’ mode (§13; pp. 59–62). Heidegger employs the idea of *world* (*Welt*) phenomenally, since it designates the ontologico-existential concept of ‘worldhood’, or ‘worldliness’ (*Weltlichkeit*), that is, the structure of Being, wherein Dasein exists and shows its *worldly* (*Weltlich*) character; moreover, the world is to be seen thematically within the horizon of ‘average everydayness—the kind of being which is *closest* to Dasein’ and which is the space of the surrounding world (*Umwelt*), the ‘environment’ (see §14, pp. 63–66). For a thorough consideration of the significance of place in Heidegger’s thought see Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger’s Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006). Heidegger understood the term ‘*Topologie*’ non-mathematically, in the sense of a ‘saying of place’ (*Ort-reden*), and in connection with his later thinking on articulating ‘the place of being’ (*die Ortschaft des Seyns*) (Malpas, *ibid.*, p. 33).
197. Dasein concernfully deals, or associates, with things in the world, the ‘equipment’ (*das Zeug*), such as those used for driving, measuring, sewing, and writing, which are geared towards the work to be produced, as ‘something in-order-to...’ (*etwas um-zu...*); and the various ways of the ‘in-order-to’, such as manipulability, serviceability, and usability, constitute the totality of equipment, or useful things. The kind of being in which equipment ‘reveals itself by itself’ Heidegger calls ‘readiness-to-hand’ (*Zuhandenheit* [Stambaugh translates this as ‘handiness’]); moreover, we deal with things in a pragmatic or practical way, handily looking ‘to the manifold of references of the “in-order-to”’; and our accommodation to this kind of seeing is called *circumspection* (*Umsicht*). A hammer is one such tool, which exists as part of a material world, the workshop in which things are assigned a use. In the act of hammering, the being of the hammer is uncovered and as a thing it becomes transparent, since the focus is on the task for which it is determined. Dasein itself can become transparent, as it becomes absorbed in the world. See the remarks by Heidegger in §15 (pp. 66–72) and also Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), pp. 64–67. The word *Umsicht* is compounded of *um*, ‘(a)round’, or ‘in order to’, and *Sicht*, ‘sight’, i.e. ‘seeing’ or ‘looking’; and so it may be thought of as meaning to ‘look around’, or to ‘look around for something’, to see what one needs, etc. ‘in order to’ get something done—see *Being and Time* (trans. Macquarrie and Robinson), p. 98, n. 2; and Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), s.v. ‘sight and circumspection’, p. 194.
198. Heidegger argues that signs are items of equipment, or useful things, which characteristically consist in ‘showing’ or ‘indicating’. However, he adds, signs are not indicators of a relationship between things, but rather they are that by which a totality of equipment is brought into our circumspection (*Umsicht*) and the worldly character of the ready-to-hand announces itself. In this view, it establishes an orientation to the world. On the function of references and signs see §17 (pp. 76–83). It is through ‘letting something be involved’, of setting it free to be, that its handiness is discovered in and for which the world is made

- significant as a meaningful totality. On the referential character of involvement (*Bewandtnis*) see §18 (pp. 83–88).
199. In §22 (pp. 102–4) Heidegger argues that what is ready-to-hand in our everyday dealings within the world has the character of *closeness*, which however is not to be ascertained by measuring distances, but rather in ‘calculative’ manipulating and using. Equipment has its place (*Platz*) within a context of belonging to a totality of things environmentally ready-to-hand, which is round about us in a familiar setting, a ‘region’ (*Gegend*). He gives the example of the sun, ‘whose light and warmth are in everyday use, [but] has its own places—sunrise, midday, sunset, midnight; these are discovered in circumspection and treated distinctively in terms of changes in the usability of what the sun bestows’ (*Being and Time* [trans. Macquarrie and Robinson], p. 137). If spatiality is to be attributed to Dasein it is only on the basis of its being-in as characterized by its ‘de-severing’ or ‘de-distancing’, as remoteness is made to disappear and brought up close, allowing beings to be encountered within the world through concerned circumspection. In this realization we are struck by that which comes before us as ‘ready-to-hand within-the-world’. Dasein is also characterized by its directionality, its directed orientation to being-in-the-world (§23; pp. 104–10).
200. In an important analysis, Heidegger argues that the place of Dasein is both ‘here’ and ‘over there’ (or ‘yonder’), since its ownmost being discloses its existential spatiality, its unclosed ‘there’. This means that Dasein proceeds under a natural light (*lumen naturale*), and so has the structure of being illuminated (*erleuchtet*), of being ‘cleared (*gelichtet*) in itself’, and in fact ‘is itself the clearing [*Lichtung*]’ (§28; pp. 132–33). In his writings, Heidegger makes sustained use of this notion of clearing (Kisiel, *Heidegger’s Way of Thought*, op. cit. [note 195], p. 180). Ontologically, Dasein finds the being of its ‘there’ in the state of ‘attunement’ (*Befindlichkeit*), which is manifest everyday in its ‘moods’ (*Stimmung*), and which discloses ‘that-it-is’. The world is characteristically unveiled by Dasein’s ‘thrownness’ (*Geworfenheit*), which ‘is meant to suggest the *facticity of its being delivered over*’. We fundamentally encounter the ‘world’ through our moods, and in this state it affects us, ‘matters’ to us. It is only because of this existential constitution that the ‘senses’ can be ‘touched’ by anything; and so to look at the world merely in a detached manner, ‘staring at it’, is to dim it down (see §29; pp. 134–40). I note that Dreyfus (*Being-in-the-World*, op. cit. [note 197], p. 168) and Malpas (*Heidegger’s Topology*, op. cit. [note 196], p. 99) translate *Befindlichkeit* as *affectedness*.
201. If attunement is essential for disclosing Being, then so is understanding (*Verstehen*), which gives the ‘for-the-sake-of-which’, and so the world is made significant in a network of meaningful relationships. Dasein is ‘projected’ on to the world, always throwing itself into being-there. In this existential structure called ‘project’ (*Entwurf*), Dasein understands its potentiality of being (*Seinkönnen*), i.e., the possibilities that are open to it; moreover, in thus seeing the possible ways of being-in-the-world, the ‘Self’ is transparently known in its ‘clearedness’ (*Gelichtetheit*); or, to put it another way, the sighting of existential significance allows beings to be encountered in themselves and clears the way to ‘self-knowledge’ (*Selbsterkenntnis*) (see §31, pp. 142–48). Polt helpfully explains that for Heidegger understanding is ‘*having possibilities*, “projecting” available ways to be.... Thanks to our projection of possibilities, we understand things. When we pursue a possibility intensively and use it to reveal beings further, we are *interpreting*. Interpretation can give rise to *assertions*’ (*Heidegger*, op. cit. [note 195], p. 69). So interpretation is existentially grounded in understanding, and while the former has an ‘as-structure’, the latter has a ‘fore-structure’. Heidegger expatiates on understanding and interpretation in §32 (pp. 148–153).
202. Heidegger situates Dasein in an everyday world, where it encounters others in the shared environment of concern or solicitude (§26, pp. 117–25). This being-with-one-another tends to dissolve Dasein into the average routine and thinking of ‘the they’ (*das Man*), so that it loses itself and becomes the ‘they-self’ (*das Man-selbst*), which is to be ‘inauthentic’ (*Uneigentlich*); but if one exists ‘minefully’, that is, grasps one’s possibilities, then it is to be authentic (*Eigentlich*) (§27, pp. 126–30). The notion of minefulness may be correlated with the Buddhist notion of mindfulness, as the attentive awareness of oneself in the surrounding world. Dasein is characteristically disclosed in ‘idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity’, and is normally revealed in the phenomenon of ‘falling’, which is an existential movement of being thrown at or into the world, of getting entangled in life. As an eddying or turbulent movement, it is an inauthentic state only if Dasein regards itself as an isolated ‘I’ or subject, ‘as a self-point from which it moves away’ (see §§35–38, pp. 167–80). On the Heideggerian idea of dwelling as an existential spatiality, see Malpas, *Heidegger’s Topology*, op. cit. (note 196), pp. 74–83.
203. Heidegger argues that the traditional conception of truth as an agreement or correspondence between an assertion (judgement) and its object is in fact derivative of a more primordial conception in which truth is ‘uncoveredness’ (or ‘discoveredness’) and ‘uncovering’ (or ‘discovering’) (§44, pp. 212–30). He relates this to the Greek notions of *alēthēs* and *alētheia*, connoting that which is ‘not hidden or forgotten’, or one

- who ‘does not hide or forget’ (Inwood, *Heidegger Dictionary*, op. cit. [note 197], s.v. ‘aletheia and truth’, p. 13). The beings of the world are phenomenologically disclosed in existence, ‘[b]ut to those who are lacking in understanding, what they do remains hidden....They forget it . . .; that is, for them it sinks back into hiddenness’ (*Being and Time* [trans. Macquarrie and Robinson], p. 262). Heidegger maintains that Dasein essentially discloses the world, and so is able to uncover the beings within it because it is constituted by attunement, understanding, and discourse. He writes: ‘In that Da-sein essentially *is* its disclosedness, and, as disclosed, [it] discloses and discovers, it is essentially “true”. Da-sein *is* “in the truth”’ (ibid. [trans. Stambaugh], p. 203).
204. Heidegger is preoccupied with the fundamental ontology of death in *Being and Time*, at §§46–53 (pp. 235–301). When understood existentially, the phenomenon of death involves a ‘not-yet’, which Dasein will be; i.e., it would become ‘what it is not yet’. He likens it to an unripe fruit, which ‘goes towards’ its ripeness. For Dasein, moreover, death is a being-towards-the-end (*Sein zum Ende*), an anticipation no less, a running ahead into the possibility of being grounded in care as the ultimate disclosure. As a commonplace, ‘death’ can be understood as a continual terminal point within one’s life, as one attains a goal, or believes that one has done so.
205. Heidegger denies that there is an isolated Self, an enduring subjective ‘I’; rather, self-hood steadily exists in the I think that acts to be in the world, which is the authentic potentiality of being attuned to the understanding of care (§64, pp. 316–23). In the next section he states that if beings ‘have meaning’ this only signifies that they ‘become accessible *in their being*’, which happens when Dasein comes toward itself, i.e., lets its ownmost possibilities appear. What makes possible this realization is ‘anticipatory resoluteness’, as a ‘letting-*come-towards-itself*’, and as such, being-towards-death is ‘futural’. There is a temporal character to Dasein as ‘having been’, which releases the future into the present (§65, pp. 323–31). Heidegger ‘call[s] the phenomena of future, having-been, and present, the *ecstasies* of temporality’ (*Being and Time* [trans. Stambaugh], p. 302).
206. Heidegger summarizes the temporality of everydayness:
 Understanding is grounded primarily in the future (anticipation or awaiting). Attunement temporalizes itself primarily in having-been (repetition or forgottenness). Falling prey is temporally rooted primarily in the present (making present or the Moment). And yet, understanding is always a present that ‘has-been’. And yet, attunement temporalizes itself as a future that ‘makes present’. And yet, the present ‘arises’ from or is held by a future that has-been. From this it becomes evident that *temporality temporalizes itself completely in every ecstasis; that is, in the ecstatic unity of the actual, complete, temporalizing of temporality the wholeness of the structural whole of existence, facticity, and falling prey is grounded—that is the unity of the structure of care.* (p. 350; *Being and Time* [trans. Stambaugh; rev. Schmidt], pp. 333–34)
207. In §69c Heidegger considers the significance of temporality and transcendence. The ontological meaning of ‘care’ is temporality, which constitutes the disclosedness of the ‘there’. The past, present, and future are each aspects of temporality, and are ‘ecstatic’, since we ‘stand out’; and, moreover, that towards which we are carried off is horizontal. Heidegger states: ‘*The existential-temporal condition for the possibility of the world lies in the fact that temporality, as an ecstatical unity, has something like a horizon*’ (p. 365; *Being and Time* [trans. Macquarrie and Robinson], p. 416). Since the world has ‘its ground [gründend] in the horizontal unity of ecstatical temporality’ it is transcendent (p. 366; *ibid.*, 417). See the helpful analysis here by Polt, *Heidegger*, op. cit. (note 195), pp. 110–11.
208. Heidegger asserts that the spatio-temporal character of Dasein does not mean that it is objectively determined in space and time, but rather that its spatiality is temporally ordered as care, ‘in the sense of factually entangled existing’. Dasein ‘takes space in’ and by its ‘[e]xisting, it has always already made room for a leeway [Spielraum]’ (pp. 367–68; *Being and Time* [trans. Stambaugh], p. 336). Within this ecstatic and horizontal temporality, the totality of useful things is brought near to Dasein, making present its understanding of being (see §70; pp. 367–69).
209. Mathematically, it might be said that in mystical consciousness the kabbalist and tantric are encountering the event horizon of divine being: as they are captured by the gravitational pull of God they will utterly fall into the black hole of forever. In astronomical terms, a black hole is formed by the gravitational collapse of a massive star into an infinitely dense state of matter, a space-time singularity; for light that enters past the ‘surface of infinite redshift’ there is no escape back to the outside world (Malcolm S. Longair, *Our Evolving Universe* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], pp. 84–86. Divinity is a relativistic awareness, a movement towards spiritual light-speeds, where time appears slowed down by comparison with mundane consciousness. I would note here the pertinent remarks by Hellner-Eshed on the altered sense of time in kabbalistic mystical experience (*River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. [note 31], pp. 300–2).
210. See Lawrence, ‘Remarks on Abhinavagupta’s Use of the Analogy of Reflection’, op. cit. (note 167). Abhinavagupta makes particular use of it in his explanation of the sexual ritual (*kulayāga*), where he

- alludes to sexual sensations as being like other forms of sense experience in having the character of reflections.
211. Lawrence, *Teachings of the Odd-Eyed One*, op. cit. (note 125), p. 17.
 212. In rabbinic tradition, it is said that Moses abstained from sexual contact with his wife after his encounter with God on Mount Sinai, and instead united with Shekhinah. He is 'called איש האלהים (*ish ha-elohim*), *man* [or: *husband*] of God (Psalms 90:1)' (*Midrash Tehillim* 90:5; cited by Matt, *Zohar*, Vol. 1, p. 165, n. 463; cf. Vol. 4, p. 74, n. 17). Frequent appeal is made in the *Zohar* to the effusive, unquenching love demonstrated in the biblical book Song of Songs, which often symbolizes the love of Shekhinah for Tiferet (see e.g. 1:245a; Vol. 3, pp. 499–500). In traditional exegesis, the Song of Songs, with its distinctive erotic theme, has been used as a proof-text for the divine–human relationship, where it indicates the yearning of Israel for God, and vice-versa. The rabbis also interpreted it individualistically as the love of the soul for spiritual matters. From this, the kabbalists interpreted it as a dialogue between the human soul, personified as female, and the divine, imaged as male, or as the soul of the male Jew seeking Shekhinah, besides the intradivine relationship of male and female potencies (Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, op. cit. [note 183], pp. 334–36, 345–56).
 213. According to the Kaula ritual an external partner is required, who is other than one's wife (because the ritual requires steady dispassion—see further below, note 215); and it does not necessarily mean coition in the usual sense, but rather the consumption of sexual fluids (see for example, chapter 29 of the *Tantrāloka*; available in English translation by John R. Dupuche, *Abhinavagupta. The Kula Ritual as Elaborated in Chapter 29 of the Tantrāloka* [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2003], esp. pp. 240–93). There is an internal aspect to the ritual in so far as the *kuṇḍalinī-śakti* is activated (this force is the accumulator of energy that resides on the subtle planes of reality). Abhinavagupta writes, in the context of the four states of consciousness, viz. waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and beyond (the transmental state, *turya*): 'At the Fourth, however, there is just the single [*śakti*, viz. *Kuleśvarī*] who is called "the sexual partner"' (TĀ 29.223a; pp. 318–19 [Dupuche's brackets]).
 214. *Zohar* 2:89a; Vol. 4, p. 506. The kabbalists otherwise abstain from sexual intercourse while they devote themselves to Torah study, 'but on the eve of Sabbath they engage in marital sex because they know the secret of the holy union of the feminine and masculine aspects of God that is consummated precisely at that time'; and they 'are called eunuchs, therefore, for their sexual abstinence during the week is a metaphorical castration' (Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, op. cit. [note 183], p. 319).
 215. See the commentary of Jayaratha, in Dupuche, *Abhinavagupta*, op. cit. (note 213), pp. 249–51. He emphasizes that in this sexual ritual one's wife is to be avoided since there is 'a danger of focussing on sexual pleasure', because the aim is to put aside 'fluctuating mental states' to centre 'on the non-duality of consciousness'.
 216. See e.g. Alexis Sanderson's observations on the Trika ritual, 'Maṇḍala and Āgamic Identity in the Trika of Kashmir', in *Mantras et diagrammes rituels dans l'hindouisme: table ronde, Paris, 21–22 juin, 1984*, Centre national de la recherche scientifique (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique: Diffusion Presses du CNRS, 1986), pp. 169–214. The practitioner sets out to possess himself of God's power and fuse his consciousness with her tridentine presence, thereby to see himself in the mirror of divine being: 'Daily recreating the maṇḍala in mental worship he summons from within his consciousness the deities it enthrones, projecting them on to a smooth mirror-like surface to contemplate them there as the reflection of his internal, Āgamic identity' (ibid., 169–70).
 217. It could also be said that they seek to translate their consciousness into the mirror of being-there, and thus to be transported to another place. I am reminded here of the fantasy novels by Stephen Donaldson, who entertainingly utilized this idea of spatial relocation in his series *Mordant's Need*, comprising *The Mirror of Her Dreams* and *A Man Rides Through* (London: Collins 1986, and 1988).
 218. The notion of scintillation (*sphurattā*) is apt, for in physical terms, it refers to the way in which a crystalline and transparent material fluoresces, i.e. flashes, under the impact of charged particles or high-energy photons, which can be measured by a counter (a spectrometer). By analogy, the soul of the mystic experient is the crystalline material that fluoresces after absorbing the spiritual radiation produced by God, and this sense of divine light is counted by the mind as the *sefirot* and *tattvas*.
 219. One might be inclined to say here rather 'phantastic' projection, as it relates to notions of phantasy (fancy) rather than imagination. The negative ancient and medieval views of imagination as the sensible appearance of images, or doubtful impressions in the soul, can be contrasted with positive modern views about imagination as a productive power in cognition. For a detailed treatment of the complicated history of ideas about imagination and phantasy from the ancient Greeks to Dante see Murray Wright Bundy, *The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1928).

220. There could be a more nuanced understanding. Hellner-Eshed suggestively attempts to define ‘three main states of mystical consciousness in the zoharic world’, viz., ‘rose consciousness’, at the level of Malkhut, ‘tree of life consciousness’, at the level of Tiferet, and ‘white light consciousness’, at the level of Keter (*River Flows from Eden*, op. cit. [note 31], pp. 340–51). By comparison, in Trika there are three ways (*upāyas*) to God, namely *ānava*, *śākta*, and *śāmbhava*: the first involves transforming particularized consciousness by developing thought construction supported by mantra, meditation upon the body, and external objects; the second involves concentration upon a pure thought construction, such as ‘I am Śiva’, which must be directly understood and existentially apprehended; and the third involves meditating without conceptual or discursive thought, but with instead an ‘upsurge’ of emotional and instinctive drives that will lead to a shattering realization. Besides this, however, the highest way is *anupāya*, which is a ‘pathless path’, and which is the complete immersion in, or possession by, Śiva, an intense descent of Śakti that is given through the auspices of the guru (Flood, *Body and Cosmology*, op. cit. [note 95], pp. 245–56).
221. Instead of painting the world by viewing it directly it is as if one paints the world by viewing it in a mirror. Interestingly, David Hockney has (controversially) argued that many Western artists from as early as the fifteenth century used optical devices, viz. lenses and mirrors, to create living projections, from which they produced features in drawings and paintings (see his *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters*, new and expanded ed. [London: Thames & Hudson, 2006]). The ‘visually evident compositional details qualify certain paintings as “photorepresentations” composed both by the hand and the mind of the artists, but resulting from optical geometry as well’ (Charles M. Falco and Aimée L. Weintz Allen, ‘Ibn al-Haytham’s Contributions to Optics, Art, and Visual Literacy’, in *Painted Optics Symposium: Re-examining the Hockney-Falco Thesis 7 Years On; Florence, September 7–9, 2008*, D. Hockney, et al. [Firenze: Fondazione G. Ronchi 2009], pp. 115–28 at 127). This paper is available at the extensive web site developed by Charles Falco (Hockney’s collaborator)—see <http://fp.optics.arizona.edu/SSD/art-optics/index.html>, which also includes informative videos of public lectures at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2008) and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (2009).
222. In the tantric literature, the metaphor that is used to indicate the perception of oneness is that of the yolk of the egg of the peacock. According to Swami Lakshmanjoo, ‘just as the yolk of the egg of the peacock has only one color and yet gives rise to the peacock, which has so many colors, so, in the same way, [the *yogin*] perceives that this whole universe is made of that liquid of consciousness and bliss (*cidānanda*)’ (in *Śiva Sūtras*, op. cit. [note 185], p. 50).
223. I note the suggestive remarks by Fūrlinger on the equivalence of the terms *anuttara*, *hṛdaya*, and *dhāman*, where ‘[i]n each of these words, spiritual and sexual connotations overlap each other, and at the same time, the words interact with each other, resulting in an iridescence which we only know otherwise within poetic language. It reminds us of the opalescent effect when we see sunlight shining through moving leaves of a tree’ (*Touch of Śakti*, op. cit. [note 97], p. 221). Although water does not shine, it does sparkle, as it is touched by sunlight (see above, note 184 and text).
224. *Language, Eros, Being*, op. cit. (note 183), p. 253.
225. Utpaladeva comments that ‘[i]n the Lord, the infinite agency, whose essence is “savouring” (*camatkāra*), is called activity and consists of supreme light and beatitude’ (ĪPK *vṛtti* 4.1.6; pp. 212–13).
226. It is admitted that śakti can be correlated with the function of work, which is mathematically just the change in kinetic energy experienced by an object, but it could be applied to shekhinah too. According to the Zohar: “‘At the pace of המלאכה (ha-melakhah), the livestock (Genesis 33:14). Who is melakhah, work? The speculum that does not shine, through whom workings of the world are actualized. Before me (ibid.)—She is constantly ‘before YHVH’” (1:172a; and Matt’s relevant notes at Vol. 3, p. 39).
227. See Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, op. cit. (note 183), p. 373.
228. As Singh puts it, in his introduction to the *Śiva Sūtras*, op. cit. (note 124), p. v.
229. There is an aesthetic delight experienced by the *yogin* as he comes into alignment with his Self, which is none other than the place of Śiva. See the remarks by Kṣemarāja to *Śivasūtra* 1.12 (*Śiva Sūtras*, op. cit. [note 124], p. 52).
230. Abhinavagupta writes: ‘We bow to that Śiva, who, manifesting the objects and different types of causal relation on His clear mirror-like self, shines as the creator’ (introduction to ĪPV 2.4; p. 166). Puṇyānanda explains how ‘the notion of “I-ness” (*Ahambhāva*) . . . arises from the gaze of Śiva upon His own luminous Śakti’ (*Kāmakalāvīlāsa*, op. cit. [note 91], p. 26).
231. This may be equally true of all religious traditions.
232. See her discussion in *Black Fire on White Fire: An Essay on Jewish Hermeneutics, from Midrash to Kabbalah* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), esp. pp. 37–44, 68–98.
233. It may be that demonstratives as grammatical markers are originally primitive, being indeed important in the emergence of language itself, and are, furthermore, universal (see Holger Diessel, ‘Demonstatives,

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- Joint Attention, and the Emergence of Grammar’, *Cognitive Linguistics* 17, no. 4 [2006]: 463–89; and R.M.W. Dixon, ‘Demonstratives. A Cross-Linguistic Typology’, *Studies in Language* 27 [2003]: 61–122).
234. In grammatical terms, the demonstrative determinative ‘this’ indicates that the referent is close to the speaker, while ‘that’ indicates what is less close, although the notion of closeness is partially subjective (see *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*, ed. Rodney Huddleston and Geoffrey K. Pullum [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], pp. 373 and 1505). Lynsey Wolter explains that the demonstrative noun phrases of a language are those noun phrases with a characteristic use in which the speaker gestures towards, or *demonstrates*, the intended referent. It is this special sensitivity to extra-linguistic features that has captured the most attention from philosophers of language and natural language semanticists’ (‘Demonstratives in Philosophy and Linguistics’, *Philosophy Compass* 4, no. 3 [2009]: 451–69 at 451). She likewise explains that ‘the English proximal-demonstratives *this* and *these* indicate that the demonstratum is close to the speaker, while *that* and *those* are used when the demonstratum is far away from the speaker or when the distance from the speaker is irrelevant, and are arguably unmarked for distance’ (455).
235. In the epistemology of Pratyabhijñā, cognition fundamentally involves a reflective awareness, realized in ‘direct perception’ (*pratyakṣa*) and ‘direct experience’ (*anubhava*); moreover, it is through the action of memory that recognition is possible, where the perception of an object that is seen is carried through different times by the persistent self. At the time of perception the object that is before one’s mind is treated as ‘this’, and likewise the remembrance of that perception is treated as ‘this’, but the object itself, even as remembered, is treated as ‘that’. For my interpretation I would adduce ĪPK 1.4.1, p. 104, and 1.4.3–4, pp. 106–7; ĪPV 1.4.1, pp. 41–42, and 1.4.3–4, pp. 44–46. I have consulted Lawrence’s insightful analysis of the function of cognition and memory in recognitive judgement (*vimarśa*) (see his *Rediscovering God*, op. cit. [note 135], esp. pp. 108–9, 123–29), but my reading does not necessarily accord with his exposition. I otherwise note his claim that ‘[i]n the contemporary intellectual scene, there are some strong analogies between the Śaiva arguments for the necessity of recognition and Martin Heidegger’s conception of truth as disclosure’ (ibid., p. 117).
236. Dyczkowski writes that ‘[t]hey are perceived in a manner analogous to the perception of objects, and the same principles apply’ (in *Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], p. 194).
237. See the richly evocative analysis by John Sallis, *Force of Imagination: The Sense of the Elemental* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), esp. pp. 98–146. He makes the germane observation that the horizons of perception are recessive:
- This seam joining earth and sky has a double character: on the one hand, the horizon recedes indefinitely, always withdrawing still farther as one moves toward it, never becoming simply determinate in its presence; on the other hand, it delineates the compass of the visible so that whatever lies beyond the horizon cannot be seen unless, moving toward the horizon, one induces it to recede. In short, the horizon lets things be seen while itself withdrawing from determinate vision. At the limit, it bounds the visible by receding from visibility. (107–8)
- In addition, he states that in ‘force of imagination’ the genitive ‘does not signify the possession of one thing by another’, but rather it is the effectual showing of being, ‘just as the word *lightning* implies something behind the flash (lightning itself) that then comes into effect’ (133–34; cf. 122).
238. This is *Spanda* doctrine, which, as Dyczkowski points out, ‘stresses immanence grounded in transcendence’, whereas Pratyabhijñā doctrine ‘stresses transcendence without ignoring or minimizing immanence’ (*Stanzas on Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], p. 193).
239. Wolfson writes: ‘*Shekhinah* is the gateway through which the worshipper must enter to reach the holy One—a basic tenet of the mystical understanding of ritual promulgated by kabbalists, already expressed in the recommendation in *Sefer ha-Bahir* that before one inquires about the king, one should ask about his dwelling, with the entry thereto portrayed in explicitly erotic terms’ (*Language, Eros, Being*, op. cit. [note 183], p. 377).
240. Lawrence writes: ‘The approach to Śiva through Śakti is an ancient and pervasive tradition. As Śiva’s self-identical, sexually united consort, operating as His energy emanating the universe—She provides the way for the approach to Him via ordinary experience’ (*Rediscovering God*, op. cit. [note 135], p. 58).
241. See Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. (note 27), pp. 147–48, 274, n. 11. In citing a text by Eleazar of Worms in relation to this account, Wolfson writes that the ‘prophets beheld the glory . . . through images that distort reality’ (ibid., 214). Returning to a telescopic metaphor, this limited consciousness is to see God as only a speckle of light, as it is viewed through the swirling atmosphere of the imagination; but in a state of unlimited awareness (full mystical consciousness) the Godhead is clearly resolved into the divine elements by the adaptive use of the understanding. By way of explanation, for ground-based telescopes atmospheric turbulence interferes with the image quality of astronomical objects, but this can

- be overcome by the use of so-called adaptive optics (see Anderson, *Telescope*, op. cit. [note 187], pp. 130–37). Otherwise, the alternative is to go into the vacuum of space.
242. According to Joseph Gikatilla (1248–after 1305), Moses reached so high an understanding of divinity that he could speak to Tif'eret, as the essence of YHVH, but even he could not ascend through the last of the fifty gates (levels) of Binah, past whom lies Hokhmah, Keter and the infinity of Ein Sof (*Sha'are Orach. Gates of Light*, translated with an introduction by Avi Weinstein [Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 1994], p. 245; cf. 298, 323, 330, 336, 369).
243. On the role of imagination in spiritual vision in thirteenth-century kabbalah see Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. (note 27), pp. 288–306.
244. See *Spanda Kārikā*, stanza 12: 'Nothingness can never be an object of contemplation because consciousness is absent there. (It is a mistake to believe that one has perceived nothingness) because when reflection (subsequently) intervenes, one is certain that "it was"' (*Stanzas in Vibration*, op. cit. [note 92], pp. xv–xvi).
245. This implies that the feminine is contained in the masculine, which is a definite concern in kabbalistic thought. See Elliot R. Wolfson, 'Left Contained in the Right: A Study in Zoharic Hermeneutics', in *Luminal Darkness*, op. cit. (note 55), pp. 1–28.
246. The access to the divine is a contentious issue, with the French philosopher Luce Irigaray complaining that women cannot see themselves reflected in divinity, but only men can. I have considered elsewhere the question of women's access to God in the context of a post-structuralist approach to divine power: 'The Feminine in the Making of God: Highlighting the Sensible Topography of Divinity' (unpublished paper), available at <http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:240190>. In a recent interesting paper Anne van Leeuwen considers the way in which Heidegger's phenomenological ontology, as it instantiates the principle of identity as a sameness, or oneness, may be reformulated by Irigaray's notion of *sexuate difference* ('Sexuate Difference, Ontological Difference: Between Irigaray and Heidegger', *Continental Philosophy Review* 43 [2010]: 111–26).
247. See Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, op. cit. (note 27), pp. 151–54.
248. In the *Lalitāsahasranāma*, Lalitā is named Kevalā, or '[t]he absolute one' (623), and Brahman, which is 'the knowledge of the undifferentiated self' (822) (*Lalitā-Sahasranāma*, op. cit. [note 150], pp. 217 and 268). Lalitā is an appellation of Śakti. As Dikshitar puts it: 'Brahman is static Śakti and Śakti is dynamic Brahman' (V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *The Lalitā Cult* [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1942], p. 78). The term *brahman* is a neuter noun.
249. It is said that the presence of God may be manifested in a supernatural glow of light, known as the 'radiance (*ziv*) of the *Shekhinah*' (Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, op. cit. [note 28], p. 147).
250. Irigaray seeks to appropriate the notion of the Platonic sun of philosophy. She writes: 'And if "God" had already appeared to me with face unveiled, so my body shines with a light of glory that radiates it... A burning glass is the soul who in her cave joins with the source of light to set everything ablaze that approaches her hearth. Leaving only ashes there, only a hole: fathomless in her incendiary blaze' (*Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985], p. 197). So it is that she dwells with Śakti–Shekhinah, as the speculum that shines. For Philippa Berry the Irigarayan motif of the *speculum* is a 'burning or fiery mirror, a *miroir ardent* that sets *things on fire*' ('The Burning Glass: Paradoxes of Feminist Revelation in Speculum', in *Engaging with Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy and Modern European Thought*, ed. Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford [New York: Columbia University Press, 1994], pp. 229–46 at 230).
251. A rainbow is caused by the reflection and refraction of light by water droplets, thus it is a rebounding light. In the historical development about the causes of rainbows there are a number of interesting and pertinent conjectures. It is noteworthy that in the medieval period a rainbow was thought to be caused by small mirrors in clouds. This idea derived from Aristotle, who reasoned that clouds are 'composed of mirrors so small that they reflect only colors, not images' (Lee and Fraser, *Rainbow Bridge*, op. cit. [note 55], p. 146; cf. 160). In the view of Francesco Maurolico (1494–1575), 'the raindrop is a hall of mirrors in which reflections carom around octagonally, eventually exiting toward the observer in much-strengthened form' (172).
252. As Lee and Fraser explain, the rainbow is actually a distorted image of the sun, and is optically at infinity whether it is seen in the sky or in a water sprinkler close by; it is not an object that can be touched (*Rainbow Bridge*, op. cit. [note 55], pp. 121, 128, and 221).