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## The Reformulation of the *svātantryavāda* and *ābhāsavāda* in the Doctrinal Teachings of the *Tripurārahasya*

SUMMARY: The aim of this article is to discuss a specific element of the teachings of the *Tripurārahasya* (TR), a Sanskrit work of South Indian origin, possibly composed between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and associated with the Tantric Śākta religious tradition of the Śrīvidyā. The element in question is the reformulation, to be found in the TR, of the Pratyabhijñā twofold doctrine known as *svātantryavāda* and *ābhāsavāda*. According to this doctrine, characterized by a realistic idealism, the divine luminous Consciousness, by Her sovereign freedom (*svātantrya*), manifests the world, which appears as a reflection (*ābhāsa*, *pratibimba*) in the mirror of Her own self. Scrutiny of the relevant passages from the TR, in the light of some extracts from the works of the authors of the Pratyabhijñā, makes it possible, on the one hand, to highlight the main features of this doctrine as it was recast in the TR, and, on the other, to put forward explanations for the inconsistencies detectable in the text of the TR, which may be ascribed to the influence of the illusionism of the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*.

KEYWORDS: *ābhāsa*, *pratibimba*, *pratyabhijñā*, *vimarśa*, *svātantrya*

The aim of this article is to highlight a specific, crucial element of the teachings of the *Tripurārahasya* (TR) (“The Secret [Doctrine] of [the Goddess] Tripurā”), a Sanskrit work of South Indian origin, probably composed between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and associated with the Tantric Śākta religious tradition of the Śrīvidyā. The element in question is the reformulation, to be found in the TR, of the Pratyabhijñā doctrines known as *svātantryavāda* and *ābhāsavāda*.

The doctrinal teachings of the TR do not receive a systematic treatment in the *Māhātmyakhaṇḍa* (*mk*)—i.e. the first of the two extant parts of the work—on account of the mythic-narrative character of this section of the work, yet they may be found in various

passages throughout the text, within some of the hymns of praise and in several discourses uttered by both human and divine characters. The ideas expounded in the *mk* are further developed and elaborated in the *Jñānakhaṇḍa* (*jk*) where, in accordance with the stylistic devices characterizing the whole work, they are set out within the frame of dramatic dialogues and philosophical tales. In order to elucidate the topic on which the present article focuses, the relevant passages from both *mk* and *jk* will be scrutinized, and whenever formulations are scanty, or ideas are suggested only by means of metaphors, possible lacunas will be filled by referring to the sources which might have inspired and influenced the author(s) of the TR.

In fact, the philosophical and theological teachings of the TR reveal, in their terminology and in the ideas expressed therein, the influence of the Kashmirian Śaiva non-dualism of the Pratyabhijñā and of the Spanda, both schools which moulded the philosophical and soteriological background of the Dakṣiṇāmnāya of the Śākta Kulamārga, and specifically of the later South Indian developments of the tradition of Tripurā. As in other texts of this tradition, in the TR too the influence of the Kashmirian Śaiva authors was probably exerted through the medium of the South Indian commentators of their works, such as Śivānanda, Amṛtānanda and others.<sup>1</sup>

To briefly outline the chief tenets of the doctrine of the TR, the Goddess Tripurā is conceived as ultimate Reality both metaphysically and soteriologically. She personifies the Energy permeating the supreme Consciousness (*cicchakti*), an energy consisting in an illuminating, manifesting power (*prakāśātmikā*), endowed with a free, playful will (*svatantrā cidvilāsinī*). With respect to Śiva, who is luminous Consciousness, or conscious Light, the Goddess represents the active, reflective awareness of the self, i.e. the *vimarśa*. Her dynamic,

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<sup>1</sup> For an exhaustive and detailed survey of the texts and traditions of the Kulamārga, see Sanderson 2012–2013: 57ff; for his remarks about the impact of the Kashmirian Śaiva non-dualism on the Tripurā tradition, see particularly *ibid.*: 74, 77–78.

vibrating and flashing (*sphūrti*) power of action (*kriyā*) is realized in her relation to the world. This relationship is conceived in terms of both immanence and transcendence, corresponding to the unfolding of the Goddess in the world, an unfolding that entails the withdrawing of her true nature. The Goddess's entire cosmic activity results from the exuberance of her free and joyful playfulness (*līlā*).<sup>2</sup>

This idea of the spontaneous, wanton character of the cosmic divine play harmonizes with the concept of the absolute freedom and independence (*svātantrya*) of the godhead—here the Goddess—as well as with the related conception of the world envisaged as a manifestation, a reflection (*ābhāsa*) projected by the divine Consciousness within herself. In his Introduction to the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* by Kṣemarāja—which is a synthetic presentation of the teachings of the homonymous school—Singh writes: “From the point of view of the creativity of Ultimate Reality, this philosophy is known as *svātantryavāda*; from the point of view of its manifestation, it is known as *ābhāsavāda*” (Singh 1982: 17). This twofold doctrine is outlined in a few extracts of the *mk* of the TR, but it is especially in the *jk* that it is extensively elaborated and discussed. Therefore, following a presentation of the relevant passages of the *mk*, attention will be focused on the reformulation of this doctrine in the *jk*, in the light of the pertinent Kashmirian sources.

In the *mk*, in a hymn in praise of Tripurā, one reads:

Your wonderful appearance, [all] exteriority suppressed, is like a mirror [that contains] the totality of this [world]. This is your great being, your victorious power, which accomplishes what is difficult to be accomplished. [77]

O Lady, though [your] own form is all-pervading, by taking a limited form thanks to [your] power—[which is] difficult to be accomplished—you make appear all the manifold distinctions of perceiving subjects and perceived world. [78]

You who, having taken a limited form, consider such manifold form of yours as binding, being aware [of it] in [your] consciousness, you appear as such again by virtue of [your] inner volition. [79]

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<sup>2</sup> The doctrinal teachings of the TR will be discussed in detail in my forthcoming monographic study of this work.

Thus you, [acting] under the impulse of your freedom, call into existence the vast divine play [of the manifestation of the world] in the mirror of your own self [and,] contemplating this work of yours, rejoice incessantly. O Goddess, homage to you! [80].<sup>3</sup>

The text conveys the idea that the all-pervading Goddess, according to her free will and by means of her unfathomable power, somehow contracts herself, taking the form of the limited subjects and objects of the world, a world that is characterized by bondage; thus, projecting this world on her own self as if it were an image reflected in a mirror, she rejoices in her divine play.

These verses of the *mk* recall, and indeed seem to be based on, an extract from the *Yoginīhṛdaya* (YH)—a seminal Kashmirian source of the Tripurā tradition—which reads:

When Consciousness becomes luminously aware of the universe [appearing] on the screen of her Self, filled with the desire for action, she [produces it] by her own free will. [56]  
[She is then] energy of activity, called *mudrā* because she gladdens the universe and makes it flow. [57ac]<sup>4</sup>

In Padoux's explanation, based on Amṛtānanda's commentary (*dīpikā*), one reads that when the Consciousness, which is energy of reflective awareness (*cidvimarśasakti*), unfolds in the universe, projecting it on herself as its substratum, she becomes energy of action and rejoices in her own transformation by making the universe flow from

<sup>3</sup> TR, *mk*, 51, 77–80: *naipūnyam etad darpaṇasadṛṣaṃ bāhyānirodhe'py aticitraṃ te | vijayaty etad tava durghaṭanāghaṭanāśaktir mahatīsattā || 77 || svam rūpaṃ tad vitatam apīśvari durghaṭasaktiḥ parimitarūpaṃ | kṛtvā darśanadrśyavibhedān vividhān sarvān paribhāsayasi || 78 || evaṃ svīyaṃ rūpaṃ anekaṃ parimitarūpā paśyantī tvam | bandhakaṃ citparimṛśyāntary-atnād bhūyo bhāsi yathāvat || 79 || svātmādarśe pravitalalīlāṃ bhāvayasiṭṭham svātantryāt tvam | dṛṣṭvā kalpitam etad svīyaṃ nandasy aniśaṃ devi namas te || 80 ||.*

<sup>4</sup> YH, I, 56–57ac: *cidātmabhittau viśvasya prakāśāmarśane yadā | karoti svecchayā pūrṇavicikīrṣāsamanvitā || 56 || kriyāśaktis tu viśvasya modanād drāvaṇāt tathā | mudrākhyā | 57ac.* (Eng. trans. by Padoux and Jeanty in Padoux and Jeanty 2013: 45–46).

Śiva to earth [where *mūdrā* is traditionally interpreted as signifying “rejoicing” (*modanena*) and “making flow” (*drāvaṇena*)].<sup>5</sup>

A comparison of these two extracts from the TR and the YH makes it possible to see the correspondences of terms and concepts (see the table below). *Parimṛśya* in the TR and *āmarśane* in the YH—both deriving from the root *mṛś*, from which the term *vimarśa* also stems—indicate the reflective awareness arising in the luminous consciousness, expressed by *cit* and *prakāśa*, respectively; *darpaṇa* in the TR and *bhittau* in the YH indicate the mirror/surface on which the universe appears; *antaryatnāt* in the TR and *svecchayā* in the YH indicate the Goddess’s own will; her power to act, expressed by *kriyāśakti* in the YH, corresponds in the TR to *svātantryāt*, which stresses the idea of a free, unbounded action; finally, *nandasi* in the TR and *modanāt* in the YH express the joy of the Goddess at her creative act.

TR, <i>mk</i> , 51, 77–80	YH, I, 56–57ac
<p><i>naipuṇyam etad darpaṇasadṛśam bāhyanirodhe’py aticitram te  </i>  <i>vijayaty etat tava durghaṭanāghaṭanāśaktir mahatīsattā    77   </i>  <i>svaṃ rūpaṃ tad vitatam apīśvari durghaṭaśaktyā parimitarūpam  </i>  <i>kṛtvā darśanaḍṛśyavibhedān vividhān sarvān paribhāsayasi    78   </i>  <i>evaṃ svīyaṃ rūpam anekaṃ parimitarūpā paśyantī tvam  </i>  <i>bandhakaṃ citparimṛśyāntaryatnād bhūyo bhāsi yathāvat    79   </i>  <i>svāmādarśe pravitatatīlām bhāvayasūttham svātantryāt tvam  </i>  <i>ḍṛṣtvā kalpitam etat svīyaṃ nandasy anīśam devi namaste    80   .</i></p>	<p><i>cidātmabhittau viśvasya prakāśāmarśane yadā  </i>  <i>karoti svecchayā pūrṇavicikīrṣāsamanvitā    56   </i>  <i>kriyāśaktis tu viśvasya modanād drāvaṇāt tathā   mudrākhyā   57ac.</i></p>

Both texts can be said to mean that, when the Goddess, *alias* supreme luminous Consciousness, becomes aware of the universe which is shining as an image reflected in the mirror/surface of her own self,

<sup>5</sup> See Padoux 1994: 154–155.

then urged by her own free will, she unfolds in this universe, playfully rejoicing in her unbounded action.

The metaphor of the reflecting surface is taken up at other points in the text of the *mk*:

[You are] she in whose body appears, like a painting on canvas, the manifold series of *tattvas* from Śiva to earth; in the same way the sky with the Moon and the stars [appear] in the water. You alone, the Supreme one, you are everything. [20]<sup>6</sup>

and:

She alone is there, like a mirror on the surface of which the universe is taken as a picture. [93ab]<sup>7</sup>

The ideas inherent in these metaphors, which are only hinted at in the extracts of the *mk* quoted above, are further developed in the *jk*, where the analogy of the mirror occurs in many places, beginning with the opening verse of the Invocation:

*Om*, homage [to you who are] appearing as origin [of everything] and bliss, [you] made of the supreme Consciousness, [you who are] appearing as a mirror [on which] shines the manifold wonder of the worlds. [1]<sup>8</sup>

To begin with a general principle, in the *jk* of the TR it is maintained that every manifested thing exists within that which manifests it.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, it is said that everything which is manifested, whether inside or outside, abides within the manifesting light; the whole world is absorbed in this light, i.e. in the supreme Consciousness, called Tripurā, which freely

<sup>6</sup> TR, *mk*, 30, 20: *śivādikṣitiprāntatattvāvalir yā vicitrā yadyē śarīre vibhāti | paṭe citrakalpā jale sendutārānabhovāt parā sā tvam evāsi sarvā* || 20 ||.

<sup>7</sup> TR, *mk*, 59, 93ab: *saivāsty atra jagaccitrabhittidarpaṇasammitā* | 93ab.

<sup>8</sup> TR, *jk*, 1, 1: *om namaḥ kāraṇānandarūpiṇī paracinmayī | virājate jagaccitracitradarpaṇarūpiṇī* || 1 ||.

<sup>9</sup> See TR, *jk*, 14, 37cd: *atas tu bhāsakasyāntarbhāsyam astūti yujyate* || 37cd ||. Most of the passages of the *jk* discussed in this article will be summarized and quoted in Sanskrit in the footnotes. For an annotated translation of the whole *jk*, the reader may refer to the excellent work by Michel Hulin (Hulin 1979).

manifests herself, everywhere and always, within herself.<sup>10</sup> This fundamental tenet that nothing exists outside the luminous Consciousness, or conscious Light, which is to be regarded as the “absolute inside” (according to the locution used by Hulin<sup>11</sup>) is upheld also in Utpaladeva’s ĪPK:

Insofar as they are essentially constituted by consciousness (*cinmayatve*) the manifestations permanently reside internally; insofar as they are manifested as external owing to the power of *māyā*, they also exist externally.<sup>12</sup>

To illustrate this idea of the “absolute inside”, the text of the *jk* again makes use of the analogy of the mirror and its reflections. Thus, in Chapter 11—where the doctrine of the *ābhāsa* is extensively discussed—one reads that just as the images reflected in a mirror are, notwithstanding their distance from it, reflections that abide within the mirror, in the same way the whole universe is contained in the divine Consciousness and is supported by the great Goddess.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, in another part of the text, it is claimed that this world, although regarded as exterior, is in fact a purely mental creation (*bhāvanā*) projected onto the undeveloped, which is itself made of consciousness; the variegated world is painted onto the canvas of the undeveloped, a canvas woven by consciousness within herself.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See TR, *jk*, 14, 42–44b: *antar bahir vā yat kiñcid bhārūpodarasaṁsthitam | atas tan nāpādānaṁ syāt śṛṅgasyeva hi parvataḥ || 42 || evaṁvidhaṁ hi bhārūpaṁ grastasarvaprapañcakam | bhāti svatantrataḥ svasmin sarvatrāpi ca sarvadā || 43 || etat parā citiḥ proktā tripurā parameśvarī || 44ab.*

<sup>11</sup> “Dedans’ absolu” (Hulin 1979: 126).

<sup>12</sup> ĪPK, I.8.7: *cinmayatve ’vabhāsānām antar eva sthitiḥ sadā | māyayā bhāsamānānām bāhyatvād bahir apy asau || 7 ||* (Eng. trans. by Torella in Torella 2013: 149).

<sup>13</sup> See TR, *jk*, 11, 83c–85: *darpaṇe bhāsamānasya dūrāder dūratā yathā || 83cd || tathaiṅvāsya svabhāvo ’pi vicāre na sthīro bhavet | ata āśrayarūpeṇa vinā nāsti hi kiñcana || 84 || yad astīti bhāti tat tu citir eva maheśvarī | evaṁ jagaccidekātmarūpaṁ te samyag īritam || 85 ||.*

<sup>14</sup> See TR, *jk*, 14, 88c–90b: *tasmād bhāvanamātrātmārūpaṁ etaj jagat bahiḥ || 88cd || cidātmārūpe ’vyakte vai bhāsate manujādhipa | tasmād bāhyātmakāvvyaktabhittāu citramayaṁ jagat || 89 || avyaktabhittimātraṁ syāt sā svabhitticidātmikā | 90ab.*

Statements such as these contained in the TR may be elucidated in the light of the relevant considerations made by Abhinavagupta.<sup>15</sup> In his comparison of the ontological status of the world with respect to its reflection in the divine Consciousness, to that of an original image (*bimba*) with respect to its reflection (*pratibimba*) in a mirror, Abhinavagupta notes that, whereas an original image—for instance a face—exists outside the mirror in which it is reflected, the world does not exist outside the divine Consciousness, independently from her, but rather is blended (*miśra*) with her. Thus the status of the world is comparable to the status of a reflection for, just as a reflected image is blended with its support, i.e. the mirror, in the same way the world is blended with its support, i.e. the divine Consciousness; however, in the case of the world there is no external, original image, because it is the divine Consciousness herself which makes the image of the world appear within herself.<sup>16</sup>

To strengthen the tenet that the world exists only inside the divine Consciousness, the TR asserts that the whole universe, which is reflected in the Goddess Tripurā (*alias* supreme Consciousness) like a city in a mirror, though appearing as separate (*vibhinnavat*) from her, is not separate (*avibhinna*) from her.<sup>17</sup> Not only the world is not separate from the divine Consciousness but, what's more, it is not different from her. In fact, it is said that, just as without a mirror no reflected image can appear, so without consciousness nothing can shine; hence just

<sup>15</sup> In the third chapter of his *Tantrāloka* (TĀ), dealing with the *śāmbhavopāya* (“the way of the Lord”), Abhinavagupta provides a detailed exposition of the *abhāsavāda* (particularly in verses 1–66 and 268ff).

<sup>16</sup> These ideas are elaborated in TĀ, III, 49–61 and in the related commentary by Jayaratha. See the Sanskrit text in Shāstri (ed.) 1921: 59–69 and the Fr. trans. in Silburn and Padoux (eds.) 1998: 148–150.

<sup>17</sup> See TR, *jk*, 7, 90c–92b: *ataś cetana eveśas taddehaḥ syāc citiḥ parā* || 90cd || *citir eva mahāsattā samrājñī paramēśvarī | tripurā bhāsate yasyām avibhinnavibhinnavat* || 91 || *ādarśanagaraprakhyam jagad etac carācaram* | 92ab.



as the reflection is not different (*na-atirikta*) from the mirror, so there is nothing different from consciousness.<sup>18</sup>

This idea of non-difference between the supreme Consciousness and the world, is also expressed, *mutatis mutandis*, at the beginning of the third chapter of the TĀ:

Thus, the supreme Lord, who is completely free, manifests in the sky of his own self the whole immensity of the cosmic emanations and reabsorptions. As in a clear mirror appear, without merging together, earth, water and so on, in the same way in the unique Lord, pure Consciousness, [shine] all the modes of existence of the universe.<sup>19</sup>

In his commentary, Jayaratha explains that, just as the diverse forms reflected in a mirror—which are different from one another—also appear as different (*atirikta*) from the mirror, although they are not different (*anatikta*) from it, in the same way the cosmos, though appearing as different from the Lord, is not truly different from him and, in all its variety and manifoldness, is simply a reflection within the divine Consciousness.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, both the TĀ and the TR maintain that, just as the images of the objects reflected in a mirror may appear as distinct from the reflecting surface of the mirror, yet, as reverberations, they do not have an existence separate from that of the mirror which contains them, so in the same way the cosmos, shining in all its manifoldness, does not have an existence independent from the divine Consciousness which

<sup>18</sup> See TR, *jk*, 18, 63c–65b: *naivaṃ citir abhāne kiṃ kadā kutra vibhāsate* || 63cd || *yathādarśaṃ vinā kiñcit pratibimbaṃ na bhāti vai | ādarśān nātirikto 'taḥ pratibimbo bhaved yathā* || 64 || *evaṃ citimṛte kiñcid atiriktaṃ na vidyate* | 65ab.

<sup>19</sup> TĀ, III, 3–4: *ato 'sau paramesānaḥ svātmavyomany anargalaḥ | iyataḥ sṛṣṭisamhārāḍambarasya pradarsakaḥ* || 3 || *nirmale makure yadvad bhānti bhūmijalādayaḥ | amiśrās tadvad ekasmimś cinnāthe viśvavṛttayaḥ* || 4 || (Shāstri 1921: 3–4).

<sup>20</sup> See Jayaratha's commentary in Shāstri 1921: 3–4, and its Fr. trans. in Silburn and Padoux (eds.) 1998: 141.

manifests it. Thus the whole cosmos is nothing but an image reflected in the mirror of the divine Consciousness.

This metaphor—implying a similarity between Consciousness and mirror on the one hand, and world and reflected image on the other hand—is also used to account for the consistency between the oneness of the divine Consciousness and the manifoldness of the world. Thus in the TR it is stated that, just as a mirror seems affected by the multiple images reflected in it, even though its surface is uniform, in the same way the Consciousness, though being one, appears as manifold because of the variety of her manifestations.<sup>21</sup> To explain this apparent contradiction, it is stated that, as it is only possible for a city to be reflected in a mirror in all its rich variety thanks to the fullness, density and uniformity of the reflecting surface of the mirror, in the same way the entire multifarious world can abide in the full, dense and uniform Consciousness.<sup>22</sup> Thus, it is in virtue of a perfect purity that the unity of the mirror is not affected by the diversity of the images reflected in it, and, in the same way, the unity of Consciousness is not altered by the variegated world shining in her.

This problem of the consistency between oneness and manifoldness is tackled also by Uṭpaladeva in his ĪPK where, within a discussion on causal relation, he explains that, as far as the fact of being a cause is concerned:

This is not possible for an insentient reality, because its nature which is single would conflict with its appearing in differentiated forms. On the contrary, it is possible for an absolutely limpid (*svacche*), unitary, conscious reality, because there is no conflict here between its unity and its capacity to receive manifold reflections.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See TR, *jk*, 18, 59c–60b: *citir ekaiva vaicitryād bhāsata iti sambhavet* || 59cd || *ekarūpo yathādarśaḥ pratibimbād anekadhā* | 60ab.

<sup>22</sup> See TR, *jk*, 14, 48c–50b: *darpaṇātmani sampūrṇe nibiḍe caikarūpiṇi* || 48cd || *yathā hi bhinnam nagaram sarvathā nopapadyate | tathā pūrṇe sunibiḍe caikarūpe cidātmani* || 49 || *jagat sarvātmanā naiva hy upapattiṃ samaśnute* | 50ab.

<sup>23</sup> ĪPK, II.4.19, *vṛtti*: *jaḍasyābhinnātmano bhedena avasthiter virodhād ayuktam, svacche cidātmany ekasminn evam anekapratibimba dhāraṇenā-virodhād yujyate* || 19 ||. (Eng. trans. by Torella in Torella 2013: 186).

Utpaladeva underscores the fundamental difference between an insentient (*jaḍa*) and a conscious reality, showing thus the limits of the analogy between mirror and Consciousness.

This fundamental difference is also elucidated in the TR. In this regard, it is first reaffirmed that, for all things the fact of being (*astitā*) is none other than manifestation (*prakāśa*), and the latter is itself Consciousness. The highest form of manifestation is that which is produced freely. Now, whereas insentient realities are not self-manifesting, because they appear on account of Consciousness, Consciousness instead, without depending on anything else, manifests herself in herself.<sup>24</sup> Therefore—it is said—the existence of things in the world is none other than the light of Consciousness. It is then reasserted that, as the existence of a mirror conditions that of the images reflected in it, so the existence of Consciousness conditions that of all things;<sup>25</sup> however, whereas the mirrors, which are insentient things, devoid of freedom, depend on the presence of external objects, i.e. original images (*bimba*), in order to reflect them, Consciousness in her absolute and pure freedom (*svātantrya*) manifests in herself her own reflections.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, a major characteristic of Consciousness is that, though reflecting, like a mirror, the multifarious world, her own essence remains unaltered.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> See TR, *jk*, 11, 49–51: *astitā hi padārthānām prakāśo nāparaḥ khalu | prakāśas tu citiḥ proktā nāciteḥ syāt prakāśatā || 49 || prakāśas tu sumukhyaḥ syād yaḥ svatantraḥ prakāśate | jaḍā na svaprakāśā hi citiyogaprakāśanāt || 50 || anyānapekṣaṇenaiva citiḥ svamin prakāśate | jaḍās citim samāśritya prakāśante na cānyathā || 51 ||*

<sup>25</sup> See TR, *jk*, 11, 53–54b: *tasmād vastvastitā loke citprakāśo na cāparaḥ | yathā hi pratibimbānām sattvaṃ darpaṇa eva hi || 53 || tathā citir jagatsattā tataḥ sarvaṃ citir bhavet | 54ab.*

<sup>26</sup> See TR, *jk*, 11, 56c–57: *jaḍatvād darpaṇādes tu svātantryaparivarjanāt || 56cd || bimkāpekṣā citeḥ svacchasvātantryād anapekṣatā | nirmalatvaṃ svataḥ siddhaṃ citer mālinyavarjanāt || 57 ||*

<sup>27</sup> See TR, *jk*, 11, 62: *citir vicitrānyabhāvair uparaktāpi bhāsinī | svarūpād apracyutaivādarśavallesato 'pi hi || 62 ||*

Therefore, besides the fact—underscored by Utpaladeva—that, unlike the mirror which is insentient, Consciousness is sentient, an essential exception in the analogy of the mirror is to be made on account of the absolute freedom and independence (*svātantrya*) of Consciousness, considered as an essential characteristic of hers.

A further argument, connected with this line of reasoning, can be found in the commentary by Jayaratha on the following verse of Abhinavagupta's TĀ:

Thus this whole universe is an image reflected in the pure sky of the Bhairavic consciousness, in the Lord, without the aid of anything else.<sup>28</sup>

Jayaratha explains that the luminous and absolutely free nature of the Lord is essentially related to reflective awareness (*vimarśa*).<sup>29</sup> Then, quoting from other sources, he writes:

The whole universe shines within the self, like a many-coloured picture in the midst of a mirror. However Consciousness, by a movement consisting in the reflective awareness of her own self, is fully aware of the whole, but it is not so for a mirror.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, by demurring to the analogy between divine Consciousness and mirror, the authors of the Pratyabhijñā emphasize the chief characteristics of divine Consciousness, namely *vimarśa* and, closely connected with it, *svātantrya*. Her sovereign freedom opens the possibility of the manifestation of the world and of its being endowed with ontological substance.

In fact, as Isabel Ratié has remarked, both Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta make use of another analogy, i.e. that of the creations by the *yogin*—to be considered as more cogent than the analogy

<sup>28</sup> TĀ, III, 65: *itthaṃ viśvaṃ idaṃ nāthe bhairavīyacidambare | pratibimbamalaṃ svacche na khalv anyaprasādataḥ || 65 ||* (Shāstri 1921: 73).

<sup>29</sup> See [...] *na hi nirvimarśaḥ prakāśaḥ sambhavaty upapadyate vā* [...] in Shāstri 1921: 73.

<sup>30</sup> “*antar vibhāti sakalaṃ jagad ātmanīha yadvad vicitraracanā makurāntarāle | bodhaḥ punar nijavimarśanasāravrṭtyā viśvaṃ parāmṛśati no makuras tathā tu ||*” (Shāstri 1921: 73).

of the insentient mirror—to show the essential characteristics of the divine Consciousness.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, in his ĪPK Utpaladeva writes:

Indeed, the Conscious Being, God, like the *yogin*, independently of material causes, in virtue of His volition alone, renders externally manifest the multitude of objects that reside within Him.<sup>32</sup>

In his commentary (*vimarśinī*) on this *kārikā*, Abhinavagupta argues that, since the *yogin* is able to create various objects by a mere act of his will (*icchā*), without resorting to any material cause (*nirupadāna*), his free creations constitute an appropriate example to show how the divine Consciousness, on account of her freedom, manifests the world independently from any material cause.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore—adds Abhinavagupta—the analogy of the *yogin* shows that it is thanks to her freedom that the divine Consciousness can take any objective form, manifesting the diverse objects, which appear as distinct from her only to the empirical subjects, but which are in reality identical with her.<sup>34</sup>

Thus also the TR makes use of the analogy of the creations by the *yogin*, but the purpose of presenting this example and the conclusions which are drawn from it seem to diverge from the tenets of the Pratyabhijñā. The creative powers of the *yogin* are highlighted in the story of a *yogin* who, by means of his meditative realization

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<sup>31</sup> In Chapter 6 of her work *Le Soi et l'Autre* (see Ratié 2011: 367ff), Ratié discusses in detail how Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta—in confuting both the idealism of the Buddhist *vijñānavādins* and the externalism of the Buddhist *sautrāntikas*—preferred the analogy of the creations by the *yogin* in order to illustrate their thesis that the sole cause of the manifoldness of the phenomenal world is the sovereignty (*aiśvarya*) and freedom (*svātantrya*) of the divine Consciousness, which manifests manifold and diverse objects, while remaining one and the same.

<sup>32</sup> ĪPK, I.5.7: *cidāmaiva hi devo'ntaḥsthitam icchāvaśād bahiḥ | yogīva nirupādānam arthajātaṃ prakāśayet || 7 ||* (Eng. trans. by Torella in Torella 2013: 116).

<sup>33</sup> For the translation of Abhinavagupta's *vimarśinī* and the related discussion, see Ratié 2011: 404ff and 418.

<sup>34</sup> See *ibid.*: 421–422.

(*bhāvanā*), brought into existence a whole universe inside a mountain.<sup>35</sup> This story is told to illustrate the statement that the world appears to everyone according to his own imagination;<sup>36</sup> furthermore, that the world appears as endowed with reality only on account of and according to the *bhāvanā* that makes it real.<sup>37</sup> In a comparison of the respective creative powers of the divine and human imaginations, the text states that, before creation the divine Consciousness is absolutely pure, and then, upon creation, her great freedom takes the form of an imagination (*saṃkalpa*) which makes the world appear like an image reflected in herself. It is thanks to the steadfastness of her great imagination that the world has duration, and it is because of the fullness of her freedom that the world is common to all (*sādhāraṇa*). On the contrary, human beings are able, on account of the restriction (*saṅkoca*) of their imagination, to create only private worlds, which cannot be common to all.<sup>38</sup>

In this regard, besides the *kārikā* quoted above (ĪPK, I.5.7), Utpaladeva explains elsewhere in his own commentary (*vṛtti*) that the individual subject (and *a fortiori* the *yogin*) truly has a creative power, akin to the Lord's, on account of the fact that his nature, although he may ignore it, is identical with that of the Lord. However, whereas the phenomenal world created by the Lord is common to all subjects, individual creations are not common to all (*sādhāraṇa*), and they cannot be experienced by other subjects. Moreover, all that which is created by the individual subject depends upon the world created by the Lord.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> This story is contained in chapters 12–14 of the *jk* of the TR.

<sup>36</sup> See TR, *jk*, 12, 10ab: *yo yathā bhāvayed etaj jagat tasya tathā bhavet* | 10ab.

<sup>37</sup> See TR, *jk*, 14, 96c–97a: *evaṃ jagat satyabhāvabhāvanāmātrahetutaḥ* || 96cd || *bhāti satyātmarūpeṇa* | 97a.

<sup>38</sup> See TR, *jk*, 11, 67–69: *evaṃ citer viśuddhaikarūpāyāḥ sṛṣṭitāḥ purā* | *bṛhat svāntaryam abhavat saṅkalpātmakam eva tat* || 67 || *tata etat samābhātam pratibimbātmakam jagat* | *bṛhatsaṅkalpasusthairyaḥ cīram etad vibhāsate* || 68 || *sādhāraṇam jagad bhāti pūrṇasvāntaryahetutaḥ* | *anyeṣāṃ tadapūrṇatvād bhāty asādhāraṇātmanā* || 69 ||.

<sup>39</sup> See ĪPK, IV.9–10 and the related *vṛtti* in Torella 2013: 77, Eng. trans. by Torella in *ibid.*: 214–215; see also the relevant note 20, p. 215.

Therefore, for Utpaladeva, whereas the worlds created by the limited powers of human beings lack solidity and permanence (*sthairya*) and cannot be common to all (*sādhāraṇa*), the world manifested by the infinite power and absolute sovereign freedom of the divine Consciousness draws its reality from that of the divine Consciousness herself. Therefore, the analogy of the *yogin* aims, on the one hand, at evoking the sovereign freedom of the divine Consciousness and, on the other hand, at advocating the reality of the world manifested by her.

For the TR instead, the lesson that can be drawn from experiencing a world created by a *yogin* is that the world is none other than the mental creation, the creative imagination (*bhāvanā*) that one projects upon it; in the very moment in which that imagination vanishes that world dissolves too. Hence—the text states—the world is like a dream. In fact, in both the dream and the waking state one projects oneself, like an image on a mirror, on the surface of one's own consciousness.<sup>40</sup> Comparing the world of the experience of waking with the world of dreams, it is remarked that both the experiences of waking and dreams are consistent while they last. Moreover, if the world of dreams is invalidated (*bādhita*) in the waking state, the world of waking is also invalidated during deep sleep. Finally, in both the experiences of waking and dreams the impression of continuity (*anuvṛtti*) is illusory, because even in the world of waking things are changing incessantly. Consequently, the world of dreams may be considered as being as purposeful [*arthakriyākārin* (TR, *jk*, 13, 78ab)], non-contradicted (*abādhita*, *ibid.*) and steady (*sthira*, *ibid.*) as the world of waking.

Hence man realizes, through his experience of yogic creations as well as through his dreams, that the world is nothing but his own mental creation, a product of his creative imagination, so that like

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<sup>40</sup> See TR, *jk*, 13, 88c–91b: *asmād etad viddhi jagat bhāvanāmātra-sārakam* || 88cd || *abhāvyamānaṃ caitat tu līyeta kṣaṇamātrataḥ | tasmāc chokaṃ jahi nṛpāvetya svāpnasamaṃ jagat* || 89 || *svāpnacitrabhittibhūtaṃ svātmānaṃ saṃvidātmakam | darpaṇapratimaṃ matvā saṃsthito 'si yathā tathā* || 90 || *jāgraccitradarpaṇaṃ cāvehyātmānaṃ cidātmakam* | 91ab.

Prospero, he might say that “we are such stuff as dreams are made on and our little life is rounded with a sleep”.<sup>41</sup> This would entail that the world is evanescent like a dream and devoid of ontological substance. As a matter of fact, the attitude of the author(s) of the TR to the issue of the reality of the world is not unproblematic and the text expresses, at various points, different and somewhat contradictory views. Indeed, following the remark regarding the creative powers of the divine and human imaginations,<sup>42</sup> the text states that:

Whereas things created by a *yogin* are manifested outside himself on account of his limited powers, this world created by the Lord-who-is-Consciousness (*cinnātha*) abides inside himself on account of his boundless powers. [73c–74b]

Therefore, insofar as it differs from the conscious self, the world is not real, like a reflected image which does not exist without a mirror. Thus the non reality [of the world] results from this consideration. [74c–75]<sup>43</sup>

The text asserts here that the difference/separateness (*vyatireka*, v. 74d) of the world from the divine Consciousness proves its non-reality (*asatyatā*, *ibid.*). The use of the technical term *vyatireka*—which, besides its literal meaning of “difference, separateness”, connotes a “logical discontinuance”—is an apt one since it suggests that the contrast between the world and Consciousness is such that the absolute and full reality of Consciousness excludes the possibility of the existence of anything else, anything that might be different from her. In fact the conclusion of this passage is as follows:

That which is real would never give up its own nature, whereas that which is non-real would do so. Look, o Rāma, this world is by nature very unsteady. [76] One can ascertain that reality and non reality manifest in completely different ways, like a mirror and its reflections. [77]

<sup>41</sup> Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act IV, scene I.

<sup>42</sup> See above, p. 260.

<sup>43</sup> TR, *jk*, 11, 73c–75: *yoginas tu mitatvena sṛṣṭir bāhyāvibhāvitā || 73cd || amitatvāt sṛṣṭir iyaṃ cinnāthasyāntar eva hi | ata eva cidātmavvyatirekāḍ asatyatā || 74 || jagataḥ pratibimbasyādarśātmavaṃ vinā yathā | ata eva vicāreṇāsatyatāṃ yāti nānyathā || 75 ||.*



The mirror is immovable, the reflections are movable; in the same way the world is movable and Consciousness is immovable. This is recognized by everybody. [78]  
Therefore these considerations prove that all things are unsubstantial. [79ab].<sup>44</sup>

The authors of the Pratyabhijñā were well aware of the risk inherent in the analogies of the dream (*svapna*) and of the imagination (*saṃkalpa*). Although these analogies may be apt for conveying the idea of the spontaneity by which a wonderful diversity of worlds can arise from the subject, they may also lead to the conclusion of the unreality of the phenomenal world, because the images arising in dreams, or fashioned by the imagination—with which the phenomenal world is compared—cannot withstand the objections of being unsteady (*asthairyā*) and of not being common to all (*asādhāranya*).<sup>45</sup>

This is what occurs in effect in the TR, where the analogies of the dream and of the imagination are conducive to a sense of universal relativity, expressed in the statement that the world is like a dream (*svāpnasamaṃ jagat*, TR, *jk*, 13, 89d). In the above-mentioned story, this is the lesson imparted to the prince when he experiences the world created by the *yogin*. After exploring the universe inside the mountain under the guidance of the *yogin*, the prince learns from him that the day they had spent there had been equivalent to millions of years in the ordinary world, thus apprehending the relativity of the space-time frames of ordinary human experience.

The idea of the unsubstantiality of the world does not derive from the Pratyabhijñā, which did, however, exert a definite influence

<sup>44</sup> TR, *jk*, 11, 76–79b: *satyaṃ svabhāvaṃ no muñced asatyaṃ taṃ parityajet | jagat paśya bhārgavaitat svabhāvād aticañcalam || 76 || satyāsatyē vibhāgena bhāsete sarvato 'khīlam | pratibimbādarśabhānam iva tat pravīcāraya || 77 || ādarśo hy acalas tatra calaṃ hi pratibimbakam | tathā jagac calaṃ saṃvid acalaṃ sarvabhāvitam || 78 || ata eva hi bhāvānāṃ vicārāsaharūpatā | 79ab.*

<sup>45</sup> For a detailed discussion of the use and limits of the analogies of dream, imagination and memory in Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, in which the critics and objections of the Nyāya and of the Mīmāṃsā are also taken into account, see again Ratié 2011: 424–438.

on the doctrinal teachings of the TR; all the more so, since, in another part of the text—as will be shown subsequently—the TR upholds the claim of the reality of the world, in agreement with the Pratyabhijñā. In order to account for these inconsistencies within the text, it may be possible to hypothesize the influence of a different philosophical background, namely the pure idealism and illusionism of the *Yoga-Vasiṣṭha* (YV). The literature concerning the YV is so vast that it would be far beyond the scope of this article to deal with the historical-philological problems connected with the transmission of this work, or to set forth in detail the several elements testifying to affinities between the TR and the YV.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless it is worth pointing up at least some general similarities between these two texts, that have relevance to the matter in question.

As Ātreya summarized in his pioneering study, according to the philosophy of the YV:

The objective world is a manifestation of the mind. It is a system of ideas, a play of mentation. Everything is a creature of the mind as dream-experiences are. [...] On this view there is little or no difference between the waking-world and the world of dreams, with regard to the quality of their contents. Both are alike in nature and, as long as each lasts, it gives us the same sense of reality and stability as the other. (Ātreya 1936: 65–66)

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<sup>46</sup> The scholars involved in the *Mokṣopāya* Project, beginning with W. Slaje, J. Hanneder and others, argue, in the material published so far, that the *Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* constitutes a later version, reworked by Advaita-Vedāntic redactors, of an earlier Kashmirian recension of the work known as *Mokṣopāya* (MU), composed in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. It is difficult to ascertain whether the author(s) of the TR might have had access to this ur-form of this great metaphysical poetic narrative, or rather to its later version represented by the YV, a work of pan-Indian popularity and influence. Therefore, the similarities between TR and YV which will be pointed out in the present article are to be considered as preliminary suggestions, which might be corrected at a more advanced stage of my research on the TR. In fact, a discussion about the affinities between the TR and the YV/MU, concerning both their literary stylistic devices—namely their similar frame-stories and their choice of dealing with doctrinal issues chiefly by means of philosophic tales—and their common ideas, will be found in my forthcoming monographic study of the TR.

These formulations could also be applied to the view expressed in the above-quoted passage of the TR and in the related discussion concerning the alleged difference between dream and waking.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, as regards the criteria of reality adopted by the YV, Ātreya writes:

The test of reality is eternal persistence. That which has a beginning or an end cannot be said to be real. Nothing in the world is absolutely real according to this test of reality, for everything comes into existence and goes out of it. The Absolute alone is real. The world is only an appearance, a phenomenon. It is real only relatively to the individuals who experience it and to the time when it is being experienced. It is like a dream or mirage. (ibid.: 70)

Here again, one can clearly recognize the same view expressed in the above-quoted passage of the TR claiming the unsubstantiality of all things.<sup>48</sup>

To quote just one instance of the formulation of these views in the YV itself, in what is an especially significant passage:

[...] this universe, which looks so solid, is in reality entirely a tissue of mentation [*vikalpa-jālikā*] and the stuff of reflections (*pratibhāsātmikā*); [...] it is constructed from fierce, tough acts of imagination [*ugraih saṅkalpair dṛḍha-kalpitaiḥ*]. Nothing whatsoever exists apart from the imagination. Whatever is there by force of the imagination is not really a 'something', or it might be a 'little something'. [...] the existence of the world is an imaginary production, tremulous, shimmering all around us.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> See above p. 261 and note 40.

<sup>48</sup> See above, pp. 262–263 and note 44.

<sup>49</sup> Eng. trans. by David Shulman in Shulman 2012: 111. For the entire passage, see YV, 3, 101, 32–37: *iyam saṃsāraracanā sthitim evam upāgatā | bālakākhyāyikevogrāiḥ saṅkalpair dṛḍhakalpitaiḥ || 32 || vikalpajālakaiveyam pratibhāsātmikānagha | bandhamokṣādikalanārūpeṇa pariḥrambhate || 33 || saṅkalpamātrād itarad vidyate neha kiṃcana | saṅkalpavaśataḥ kiṃcin na kiṃcit kiṃcid eva vā || 34 || dyauḥ kṣamā vāyur ākāśam parvatāḥ sarito diśaḥ | saṅkalpakacitam sarvam evam svapnavadātmanah || 35 || rājaputrās trayo nadyo bhaviṣyan nagare yathā | yathā saṅkalparacanā tatheyam hi jagat sthitiḥ || 36 || saṅkalpamātram abhitaḥ parisphurati cañcalaḥ | payomātrāt-mako 'mbhodhir ambhasīvātmanātmani || 37 ||.*

These striking similarities between the formulations of the YV and various statements of the TR may certainly be explained by acknowledging the presence of a number of influences from different sources on a text like the TR, whose philosophical teachings make it difficult to classify according to one exclusive doctrinal standpoint. Moreover, the inconsistencies within the text may be the result of interpolations which are, however, difficult to ascertain. It is also possible that these apparent inconsistencies may have an internal *raison d'être*, which can be understood by considering the way in which the doctrinal teachings of the TR are expounded. In fact, such teachings are not revealed in a straightforward manner, but are disclosed by the spiritual teacher (Dattātreyā) progressively, with the digressions imposed by the doubts and perplexities expressed by his pupil (Paraśurāma), taking into account the degree of development of the latter's spiritual maturity. From this perspective, the sense of universal relativity and of unsubstantiality of the world can be said to represent the limited point of view of the finite subject who, though aware of the vanity of human existence and in search of the liberating knowledge, is still bound and, unable to see the world as ultimately identical with the Self, considers all things as evanescent as dreams. This very world, insofar as it is apprehended as identical with the Self, will appear as real to the liberated subject.

In fact, in the concluding verses of the *jk*, it is stated that, “for he who has known the Reality, the world—though continuing to appear as endowed with all its qualities—is [perceived as] nothing else than his own self.”<sup>50</sup> Finally, it is advocated that:

The statement that the world does not exist [is to be regarded as] an incomplete point of view, o son of Bhṛgu. In fact the conviction that it does not exist is untrue and can never be admissible; moreover, that is evident on account of the existence of the *sādhaka* himself, who holds this point of view about the world. How could there be the dissolution of the world only by the negation of its existence? [100–101] As a city [reflected] in a mirror draws all its existence from the very condition of the mirror, in the same way the reality of the world is claimed

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<sup>50</sup> TR, *jk*, 22, 98: *eva viditatattvasya jagad etāvad īdṛśam | bhāsamānam api svātmamātram eva na cetarat || 98 ||.*

on account of its having the same nature of the pure Consciousness. [102]  
To give up this full knowledge [would entail] a restriction [of the pure  
Consciousness]; it is because of the excellence of her own majesty that  
the knowing [subject] is grasped only through the knowable world. [103]<sup>51</sup>

These statements are in full agreement with the Pratyabhijñā's conception of the ontological status of the world in terms of a realistic idealism. As Abhinavagupta writes: "Thus the universe, reflecting itself in the mirror of Consciousness, avers the purity of the cosmic form of the Lord."<sup>52</sup> In his commentary Jayaratha explains that the Lord's own pure form is that of the universe, which is inseparable from Him, and he concludes: "This whole universe is the form of the sole, unique, supreme Lord, who is Consciousness."<sup>53</sup> Thus—as stated in the text of the TĀ—the world partakes of the qualities of the Lord: "This universe, reflected in Consciousness, will retain all her essential qualities: brightness, freedom etc."<sup>54</sup> Jayaratha adds: "Therefore this whole universe, all the knowable, become the body of the supreme Lord, who is light."<sup>55</sup> The teaching of the way of the Lord is synthesized as follows: "All this is arisen from me, is reflected in me, is inseparable from me."<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.:100–103: *jagan nāsty eveti dr̥ṣṭir apūrṇaiva bhṛgūdvaḥ | nāstīti viparīto hi nīscayo naiva siddhyati || 100 || sādhakātmajagaddr̥ṣṭer bhūyaḥ sambhavataḥ sphuṭam | nāstīti śāpamātreṇa katham syāj jagato layaḥ || 101 || ādarśanagaram sarvam asty ādarśasvabhāvataḥ | evaṃ jagaccidātmaikarūpaṃ satyam udīritam || 102 || pūrṇavijñānam etat syāt saṅkoca\*parivajanāt (em. parivarjanāt) | dr̥g eva dr̥śyatām prāptam svamāhātmyaprakar̥ṣataḥ || 103 ||.*

<sup>52</sup> TĀ, III, 44: *tena saṃvittimakure viśvam ātmānam arpayat | nāthasya vadate 'muṣya vimalām viśvarūpatām || 44 ||* (Shāstri 1921: 53).

<sup>53</sup> *nikhilam idaṃ jagat saṃvittiyātmanaḥ parameśvarasyaivaikasya rūpaṃ* (Shāstri 1921: 54).

<sup>54</sup> TĀ, III, 46: *tathā viśvam idaṃ bodhe pratibimbītam āśrayet | prakāśatvasvatantratvaprabhṛtiṃ dharmavistaram || 46 ||* (ibid.: 55).

<sup>55</sup> *ata eva ca sarvam evedaṃ vedyajātaṃ prakāśātmanaḥ parameśvarasya sārīrabhūtam* (ibid.: 56).

<sup>56</sup> TĀ, III, 280: *matta evoditam idaṃ mayyeva pratibimbītam | madabhinnam idaṃ ceti || 280ac ||* (ibid.: 253).

To sum up and in conclusion, scrutiny of the relevant passages from the *mk* and *jk* of the TR showed that the twofold doctrine of the *svātantryavāda* and *ābhāsavāda*, even if not systematically treated, was successfully incorporated into the Śākta outlook of the text, thereby amounting to an essential element of the philosophical and theological teachings of the TR. The references to the Kashmirian sources which inspired the ideas expounded in the TR helped to elucidate these ideas and to give them consistency. The first quoted passage from the *mk*, read in the light of the quoted verses from the YH, contained the chief notions of this doctrine in a nutshell, namely: the Goddess's awareness of the world reflected in her own self, her will to act and her sovereign freedom which shapes her playful, joyful creative act of manifestation of the universe.

Further on, the comparison between the relevant passages from the *jk* of the TR and some extracts from the works by Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta and his commentator, showed how the versatile metaphor of the mirror and its reflections was worked out: on the one hand, this metaphor proved apt for showing the inwardness, non-separation and ultimate non-difference of the multifarious world with respect to the one divine Consciousness; on the other hand, this analogy revealed its limits, because the insentient mirror was considered as an inadequate touchstone to express the active awareness and sovereign freedom of the divine Consciousness. To solve this problem, the authors of the Pratyabhijñā availed themselves of other analogies, particularly that of the creations by the *yogin*, to express the free creativity of the divine Consciousness, and thereby, to uphold the ontological substance of the world, in accordance with their realistic idealism.

In interpreting the analogy of the *yogin*, and even more so in choosing the analogies of the dream and of the imagination, the author(s) of the TR instead betrayed the influence of the pure idealism and illusionism of the YV, thereby diverging from the conclusions of the Pratyabhijñā. This ambivalent attitude to the issue of the reality of the world is in consonance with the aporetic outlook characterising the sapiential dialogues of the *jk*, in which the pupil is continuously

baffled by the disorienting stories and paradoxical examples by which the spiritual teacher challenges his common-sense certitudes. However, in the final chapter of the *jk*, where Dattātreyā is requested by Paraśūrāma to summarize the essence of his teaching, the realistic side of idealism eventually prevails. It is worth remarking that such acknowledgement of the reality of the world harmonizes also with the soteriology of the TR, which envisages the possibility of a liberation in this life (*jīvanmukti*) and in this world, where the liberated continues to take part in the ordinary life, while at the same time maintaining his equanimity and detachment.

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