

The Hermeneutics of Touch: Uncovering Abhinavagupta's Tactile Terrain*

Kerry Martin Skora

Department of Religious Studies, Hiram College

SkoraKM@hiram.edu

Abstract

This article introduces a “hermeneutics of touch” in order to uncover the place of tactile experience in the work of Abhinavagupta, the Kashmiri Hindu Tantric sage (c. 975-1025 C.E.). I focus on his understanding of the liberation of touch, especially as articulated in his *Trankāloka* (*TĀ*), his encyclopedic synthesis of Trika Śiva discourse and ritual. Inspired by the scholarship of the new emerging fields of anthropology of the senses as well as religion and the senses, I purposely break with the primary emphasis on vision and cognition seen in Abhinavagupta Studies, to reconsider the significance of the tactile sense.

Keywords

Abhinavagupta, Thomas Csordas, mandala, Michael Taussig, Alexis Sanderson, embodied phenomenology

In this article, I employ a “hermeneutics of touch,” in order to uncover the tactile terrain leading up to and surrounding Abhinavagupta, the Kashmiri Hindu Tantric sage (c. 975-1025 C.E.). I focus on his understanding of the liberation of touch, especially as articulated in his *Tantraloka* (*TĀ*), his encyclopedic synthesis of Trika Śaiva discourse and ritual. Inspired by the scholarship of the new emerging fields of Anthropology of the Senses (cf. Howes 1991 and Classen 1993) and Religion and the Senses (cf. Chidester 2000), I purposely break with the primary emphasis on vision and cognition seen in Abhinavagupta Studies, to consider the significance of the tactile sense to ask: How might we understand Abhinavagupta's notions of transformation and liberation in terms of touch?

* This article is a revision of a paper that I presented at the Society for Tantric Studies 2005 Meeting, in Flagstaff, Arizona, USA, on October 1, 2005. I would like to express my deep appreciation to my friends and colleagues in the Society for their support and helpful comments. I am especially grateful to Jeffrey Lidke for his insightful responses and remarks, and Kara Ellis Skora for her endless support and encouragement.

My argument is presented in three parts. In the first part on “Tactile Sensitivity,” I discuss the primacy of the sense of touch in Hindu traditions both prior to Abhinavagupta and beyond. In the second part, “From Tactile Oppression to Tactile Liberation,” I focus on various tactile notions used by Abhinavagupta to show that he understood transformation as a bodily and tactile process. In my concluding section, “From Representation to Bodily-Felt Image,” I argue for a model of religious transformation as the liberation of touch which has the virtue of resonating with Abhinavagupta’s own understanding.

I. Tactile Sensitivity: The Primacy of the Sense of Touch

In this first section, I discuss the primacy of the sense of touch (*sparsā*) in Hindu religious traditions. Toward that aim, I need to first counter an idea that seems to be the general scholarly consensus, that vision is the predominant sense in Hindu thought, the primordial sense on which knowing is based.

More than any other scholar, Jan Gonda has illuminated the role of vision, eye, and gaze in Vedic Hindu traditions. Two of his works in particular—*Vision of the Vedic Poets* (Gonda 1963), and *Eye and Gaze* (Gonda 1968)—have had a profound influence on other scholars who emphasize the dominant role played by vision in the Indian worldview. For example, in her influential work, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* (1998), Diana Eck tells us that her work is:

based on the conviction that “seeing” is not only the goal and prerogative of the sages, the “seers,” but it is part of all our learning and knowing. As teachers and students of a culture as visually oriented as that of India, we too must become “seers” (1998: 1).

She adds:

In India, as in many cultures, words for seeing have included within their semantic fields the notion of knowing. We speak of “seeing” the point of an argument, of “insight” into an issue of complexity, of the “vision” of people of wisdom. In Vedic India the “seers” were called *ṛṣis*. In their hymns, collected in the *R̥g Veda*, “to see” often means a “mystical, supernatural beholding” or “visionary experiencing” (Eck 1998: 9-10).

Putting forth a similar view and also influenced by Gonda, Harvey Alper claims that “most of Indian epistemology displays precisely the same objectivist tendency and precisely the same ocular metaphor as does Western thought” (1987: 189). Alper suggests that the visual paradigm dominated Indian thinking, and provides the following examples:

from the concept of “vision” among the Vedic “seers” as early as 1200 to 800 B.C.... through the priority given to perception in the epistemology of the Buddhist philosopher Dignāga in the 4th to 5th centuries A.D.... to the statement of a modern Naiyāyika, Chatterjee... [who wrote]: “there are certain important considerations in favour of the... view that perception is the most primary and fundamental of all the sources of knowledge recognized in any system of philosophy” (1987: 189, n. 1).

Finally, the following Vedic passage was highlighted by all three scholars,—Gonda, Eck, and Alper—to make what they saw to be an important connection between vision and epistemological certainty within the minds of Vedic thinkers: “The eye is the truth (*satyam*). Surely, the eye is the truth. Therefore, if two persons were to come disputing with each other... we should believe him who said ‘I have seen it,’ not him who has said ‘I have heard it’” (Gonda 1969: 9; cf. also Eck 1998: 9 and Alper 1987: 189, n. 1). The Vedic passage has nothing to say when it comes to touching and other similar modes of “contacting” reality. The similar silence of scholars may be taken to imply that touching is inferior.

As we shall find out, Abhinavagupta understood touching to be the highest of the senses; he understood the divine path as marked by various sensuous experiences: first light, then sound, and finally, as one approached the highest level, touch itself. Touch was closest to his heart. Was Abhinavagupta making a complete break with the Vedic “seers of vision”? I believe Gonda’s scholarship actually shows a continuity between the two. For example, he notes that for the Vedic seers, vision in fact was precisely understood as touching (Gonda 1969: 19). Beyond that, his works in fact point to the extra-ordinary nature of the *ṛsis*’ seeing: the “vision” of the Vedic poets was not ordinary spectator vision and the Vedic poets themselves were not mere spectator “seers.” A significant point of Gonda’s analysis—de-emphasized by both Alper and Eck—is that the *ṛsis* were essentially “the vibrant ones” (*vipra*) (cf. Gonda 1963: 36-9), that is to say, the process of revelation was both tactile and kinaesthetic. The important point here is that revelation was not simply a matter of vision (or of hearing for that matter), but involved highly complex images that were also bodily felt. In short, I fear we have a case of one “hegemony of vision” in the Indian world giving rise to another “hegemony of vision” in our own Western world of scholarship. The preferential treatment given to vision by the Dignāgas and Chatterjees of the Indian world becomes superimposed on all Indian lifeworlds.

What I want to do in this paper is to begin to recover the importance of tactility in Indian religion, and towards this end I want to introduce two examples of the centrality of touch.

The first example I want to draw attention to is the triad of memorization, rhythm and revelation. The great oral traditions in India required highly

developed kinaesthetic and tactile senses: (1) the memorization of Vedic texts; (2) the capacity to feel, recognize, and respond to complex rhythmic patterns; and (3) the process of revelation itself, involving the bodies of those vital *ṛṣis*, not just mere “seers” as it were, but in fact great “vibrant ones” (*vipra*).

Memorization is quite literally the incorporation of the tradition. In other words, the tradition becomes embodied in the person. Knowing becomes knowing-in-the-body, involving touching or bodily-felt sense. Charles Malamoud helpfully explains how:

the text becomes truly incorporated into the person, and all the more so for the fact that the teacher, in order that he may ‘get the text into the student’s head’, moves that head forwards, backward, and, sideways, with violent movements that follow the rhythm of recitation.... [T]he pre-eminence of knowledge by heart bars tradition from being transformed into history (1996: 256-7).

Memorization of the texts involved both kinaesthetic and tactile senses. To know by heart is to know by means of the body, what the tradition refers to as “knowing by throat” (Malamoud 1996: 256). This connection between, on one hand, word/text/tradition/knowledge and, on the other hand, body/throat/head/rhythm/motion/vibration/feeling/touching underlines the intertwining of the mental and bodily planes within Indian traditions.

Other parts of Hindu religious and cultural traditions also required the same deep development of the kinaesthetic and tactile senses experienced while memorizing texts. Richard Lannoy points out that the Indian oral tradition, similar to other oral traditions, perfected such senses (Lannoy 1971: 277). Lannoy refers to the *tālas* system, the rhythm system of Indian classical music. Although the various rhythms do manifest complex mathematical patterns, recognition takes place kinaesthetically, not by means of abstract cognition:

due to the speed at which they are played, the *tālas* are registered as... a complex Gestalt involving all the senses at once.... [T]he effect is subjective and emotional.... The audience at a recital of Indian classical music becomes physically engrossed by the agile patterns and counterpatterns, responding with unflinching and instinctive kinaesthetic accuracy to the terminal beat in each *tāla* (Lannoy 1971: 277).

Feeling, recognizing, and responding to rhythm is at once tactile, kinaesthetic, and synaesthetic.

The process of revelation is similar to the processes of memorization and pattern recognition. The *ṛṣis* received revelation neither solely through vision nor solely through hearing. Revelation was a tactile, kinaesthetic, and synaesthetic experience. *Ṛṣis* in fact are not merely seers; they are “the vibrant ones” (*vipra*), feeling vibration tactilely, kinaesthetically, and synaesthetically. As Roberto Calasso poetically puts it (consistent with Gondā’s account): the *ṛṣis*

excelled in “the sensation of being alive,” in being wakeful, vigilant, and aware; “they saw the metaphysical in the physiological,” understanding the secret of existence to be found in waking, breathing, sleeping, and coitus (Calasso 1999: 161-4). Related to the notion of *vipra* is that of *spanda*, or “vibration”, a central notion in Abhinavagupta’s lifeworld, and one that I would suggest is also best understood as tactile, kinaesthetic, and synaesthetic (cf. Gonda 1963: 39). That consciousness is vibration implies that “knowing is feeling,” i.e., that it involves tactile processes. I also want to suggest that the process of memorization—also involving deep kinaesthetic and tactile senses—seems to be the opposite of the process of revelation. Revelation arises through the body, while memorization involves words dissolving back into the body; words and images become interdependent with “embodied subjectivity” (cf. Jackson 1998: 23, n. 14).

The second example I want to draw attention to is the complex relationship between guru and student and the initiation ritual which plays an essential role in that relationship. Here I want to refer to an important connection made by Lilian Silburn (1988: 87-8) between tantric initiation and the Brahmanical father-son ceremony, also called “the rite of transfer” (*sampritti*), described in the *Upaniṣads*. This connection is important to us because it points to the significance of touching in ritual performance and, in particular, the ritual of tantric initiation. This rite of transmission is described in the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* (1.5.17) and *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* (2.14). Here, instead of the relationship of guru and student, we have its exemplary model, namely, the relationship of father and son; and, instead of the tantric initiation which simulates death-and-rebirth, we have its inspiration, the ritual that negotiates real life and death. This sacrificial ceremony takes place precisely “at the hour of death” of the father, and involves a transmission of vitality from the father to the son, taking place through the body and its senses, especially the sense of touch (Silburn 1988: 87):

A father, when he is close to death, calls his son. After the house has been strewn with fresh grass, the fire has been kindled, and a pot of water has been set down along with a cup, the father lies down covered in a fresh garment. The son comes and lies on top of him, touching the various organs of the father with his own corresponding organs. . . .

The father then makes the transfer to the son: “I will place my speech in you,” says the father. “I place your speech in me,” responds my son. . . . If he finds it difficult to talk, the father should say very briefly: “I will place my vital functions (*prāṇa*) in you.” And the son should respond: “I place your vital functions in me.” Then as the son, turning around towards his right, goes away toward the east, his father calls out to him: “May glory, the lustre of sacred knowledge, and fame attend you!” The son, for his part, looks over his left shoulder, hiding his face with his hand or covering it with the hem of his garment, and responds: “May you gain

heavenly worlds and realize your desires!” (*Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 2.14: Olivelle 1996: 214-5).

The rite is significant in involving what anthropologists Michael Taussig and Thomas Csordas refer to as the “material transfer” of “vitality” or “vital functions,” establishing a “substantial” connection between father and son. Analyzing the rite solely in terms of abstract cognition or symbolic representation ignores how the lived body of the son becomes transformed through bodily-felt experience. Transmission here is a mimetic process, fully involving the body and senses. The ritual gives rise to a bodily-felt image tactilely experienced in the individual, substantially connecting him to his partner in the ritual (cf. Taussig 1992: 145, Csordas 2002: 173). I say more about this below with respect to mandalic and tantric initiation practices. Significantly, as the father prepares to leave his own body he must depend on the body of the son to carry on his vitality. We are told: “it is only through a son that a man finds a secure footing in this world” (*Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* 1.5.17 excerpt: Olivelle 1996: 21). This is no mere metaphor; the son bears responsibility for his father in his body and senses, carrying forward the continuity of his ancestry now embodied in him.

Similarly, tantric initiation may also be understood as involving the transmission of vitality. To give just one example for now, I want to cite Dirk Jan Hoens’ description of the dramatic role often played by touch:

The guru should look at him [the student] with a divine look, unite the pupil’s mind with his own and then perform the purification of the (six) paths. . . : while touching the pupil’s leg the guru thinks of the *kalā* path, while touching his genitals he should think of the *tattva* path; while touching his navel he should think of the *bhuvana* path; while touching his heart he should think of the *varṇa* path; while touching his throat he should think of the *pada* path and touching his head he should think of the *mantra* path. In this way the six paths are destroyed in Śiva and then produced again (Hoens 1979: 81).

This passage and Hoens’ analysis alerts us to the central role played by the body and senses. Citing Mircea Eliade, Hoens suggests that initiation leads to “a radical change of the aspirant’s religious and social state” (1979: 71). I would suggest that radical change only takes place because of a radical change in the body and senses. For example, Hoens describes initiation as purification that prepares the student for “receiving contact with the divine world,” to touch the Heart of God. Further, initiation gives the student practical knowledge (not merely metaphysical), the purpose being to give the student the ability for deeper study and practice, for the living out of a *sādhanā*. Additionally, the guru not only has moral qualifications but physical, again indicating the involvement of the body. He instructs the student in bodily gestures, creating powerful experiences, some described as dangerous. Additionally, the guru

knows when the student is ready precisely because of bodily changes arising in the student. There should be no doubt that body and touch play important roles in tantric initiation. Later, I will suggest that such touching is part of a wider use of tactility that serves the precise purpose of creating an alternative bodily-felt sense. The student feels his body in a new way, moving from an oppressive contracted state—under the power of a Brahmanical orthodox culture that dulls the senses—to a liberating expansive state, feeling the power of senses re-awakened.

In concluding this section and anticipating my overall argument, I want to ask: How might we begin to understand the complex processes of initiation and transmission? My thesis is that the guru and disciple are not working with mere representations but with imagery that is embodied. Inner visualization is not the same as “spectator seeing,” simply seeing an object outside of the body. I am suggesting that, in order to understand tantric processes involving images, we need to move from visual experience in geometric space to imaginative experience in lived space (cf. Levin 1985: 340).

Similar distinctions between the “visual field” and the “imaginal field” have been emphasized by Thomas Csordas, who has paid particular attention to body and touch. In order to interpret both the process of revelation and the tactile relationship between healer and patient in the context of Christian charismatic healing rituals, Csordas moves from explanation in terms of visual representations to interpretation in terms of imaginatively experienced mimetic images. Supported by both Taussig’s anthropology of transgression and Walter Benjamin’s philosophy of shock, Csordas shows that revelation and healing involve images that cross vision with touching. These images are not reducible to visual representations precisely because they are “substantial” or “material”—what I refer to as “bodily-felt images” or “tactile images” (cf. Csordas 2002: 73-4). Below I will show the relevance of approaches by Csordas, Taussig, and Benjamin—and other related methodologies—to interpreting tantric ritual and transformation as understood by Abhinavagupta. What is important to us is that attention to imaginative experience entails embracing bodily experiences that are irreducible to ordinary visual experience. To talk about imagery then is to replace “representation” with bodily being-in-the-world, or bodily-felt sense (Csordas 1999: 181-4).

II. From Tactile Oppression to Tactile Liberation

Alexis Sanderson (1985) has masterfully documented the culture in which Abhinavagupta’s tradition was embedded. Later in this paper, I will challenge his overall paradigm, one that I will argue emphasizes abstract cognition and

vision at the expense of concrete bodily and tactile experience. However, I need to state initially two basic axioms that I freely borrow from Sanderson in his magnificent work on the Brahmanical culture, since it allows us to immediately sense the Brahmanical culture's oppressive nature in terms of tactility. First, the Brahmanical orthodox culture of light and purity surrounding Abhinavagupta created strategies that attempted to master and control the body, especially the sense of touch, as exemplified by their codes of purity based primarily on laws of what could, and could not, be touched. Second, such oppression was reflected in their representation of the Ultimate, reduced to pure light, and visible only to those Brahmans with immaculate vision attained by mastering and controlling the body and its tactility. I refer back to Sanderson where support for these points is readily found. I use these points here as a springboard for my main thesis, namely, that Abhinavagupta understood liberation as freedom from such oppression of the body and its tactility, the oppression of bodily-felt sense. In positive terms, liberation for Abhinavagupta means the tactile or bodily-felt awareness of Ultimate Being so that contracted forms of tactile awareness are transformed into more expansive forms.

In other words, Abhinavagupta understood oppression as naturally requiring an equal and opposite reaction. Precisely because control and oppression focused *on the body and its senses*, transformation had to be transformation *of the body and the senses*. Transformation was never a matter of wishful thinking, of willfully changing one's mind about how the world should be. Transformation was a much deeper matter, one that gave bodily and sensuous attention to the lifeworld, the world as lived, not as it was simply thought to be. This is reflected by the various terms used by Abhinavagupta in describing both transformation and liberation: *vimarśa*, "touching;" *visarga*, "resurrectional energy;" *vibhrama*, "inner movement;" *rasa*, "liquid-y bliss;" *kṣobha*, *camatkāra*, *saṃvega*: "tactile shock;" *ucchalana*, "opening;" and *vikāsa*, "expanding" (cf. Skora 2007). In other words, in articulating his sense of transformation and liberation, Abhinavagupta consistently used terms that refer to bodily-felt sense.

Significantly, Abhinavagupta and his followers continually describe Ultimate Reality itself not simply in terms of light and vision, but also in terms of touching. This naturally follows from Abhinavagupta's high evaluation of the sense of touching. One of the strongest examples signaling the essential role of touching for Abhinavagupta is in the 11th chapter of the *TĀ* when Abhinavagupta provides a unique commentary on a verse in the revelatory Śaiva text, the *Spandakārikā* (*The Stanzas on Vibration*). The verse describes subtle forms of yogic experience, mentioning other senses, but excluding the sense of touch. Abhinavagupta uses this as an occasion to highlight the importance of touch, saying that while the others have to be left behind as they are ultimately

hindrances to enlightenment, touch actually serves as an aid to liberation (Dyczkowski 1992b: 251-5). Abhinavagupta writes:

... abiding at the end of the principle of Śakti, being most subtle... , is a certain Touch, which yogins always long for. And at the limit of this Touch [there arises] recollection,... the pure sky of consciousness.... [To ascend to this] is to move toward the Supreme (*TA* 11.30a-31b).

Reaching for the highest level of reality, Abhinavagupta pushes the body in its finitude to its limits. In doing so, he clearly distinguishes touch from the other senses: touch brings the practitioner closest to the Infinite.

The fundamental axiom for Abhinavagupta is that Ultimate Reality is Śiva-and-Śakti, where Śiva is Light, and Śakti is Touch. This idea is continually echoed by Abhinavagupta's successors. For example, his foremost disciple Kṣemarāja, in his commentary on the *Svacchandatantra*, refers to this notion when he writes: "She emits a deep roar, because [while it is the Light of Being (*prakāśah*) that is predominant in Bhairava] in her it is [that Light's power of] Touching (*vimarśah*)" (Sanderson 1995: 69).¹

Now, it is not the case that Abhinavagupta simply places two models side by side so that light and touch remain separate. Rather, Abhinavagupta shows us that light and touch interrelate dynamically, forming a seamless whole. Touch allows Śiva to be fully alive (cf. also Padoux 1990b: 77-8), knowing itself by dynamically touching and being touched by an Other. Thus, for example, to describe this precise relationship between Śiva-Who-Is-Light and Śakti-Who-Is-Touch, Abhinavagupta playfully brings together abstract and concrete notions, using the term *mṛś-*, the term most associated with Śakti, and which means both "to touch" and "to know." In his *Parātrīṃśikā-vivarāṇa*, Abhinavagupta writes: "Śakti would not even think (*āmarśayet*) [of herself] as different from Śiva." There is no *vimarśa* that can "*mṛś*" itself into difference; to be *vimarśa* is to intertwine with Śiva, to touch and be touched by Śiva. There is no Śakti that is not in the state of blissful union with Śiva, just as there is no fully alive Śiva without Śakti.

One of the most potent images embodied by the Trika practitioner evokes such meaning, the image of the goddess Kālasaṃkarṣinī, the Attractress of Time, or Lady Black Hole, standing above an inert, motionless Sadāśiva, lying flat and motionless. Lilian Silburn describes this scene:

¹ I have changed Sanderson's translation of *vimarśa* as "Representation" to "Touching," following the move I am making in this work from "representation" to "bodily being-in-the-world" (see Csordas 1999: 181-4).

The superiority of the Goddess over Sadāśiva, lying motionless at her feet, unconscious of the universe but supremely happy, is that she has perfect self-awareness (*vimarsā*) which is both freedom and power. For his part, Śiva possesses the undifferentiated Consciousness (*prakāśā*) and, while he indeed transcends all the levels of reality, the Goddess is still beyond immanence and transcendence because she is the Whole. So at the ultimate stage of indescribable energy (*unmanī*), Kuṇḍalinī is seated on Śiva while illuminating the universal Consciousness (1988: 83).

Most significantly, Śiva-Who-Is-Light is motionless without touch. Thus, the image embodies the vast difference between, on one hand, pure Light, representing pure consciousness or pure vision, remaining inert without Touching, and, on the other hand, a “Scintillating Light” or “Illuminating Touch,” that is, Light and Touch intertwining.

Such understanding has implications for the practitioner, too. The intertwining of light and touch refers not only to ultimate Being but to the dynamic tactile awareness of Being that Abhinavagupta saw as the highest awareness. Thus, for example, Bhāskara refers to the same primordial polarity in the process of Śiva-Śakti’s manifestation in the world (Dyczkowski 1992a: 53-6). Significantly, he describes the consciousness felt by the individual practitioner in terms of both Light and Touch:

(When) the agential aspect (of consciousness assumes a) dominant role it becomes, through its activity, a pure experience (devoid of thought constructs) called “light” and a (subtle, inner) tactile sensation which is bliss (*āhlāda*) (Bhāskara, commentary on *Śivasūtra* 1.21: Dyczkowski 1992a: 54).

Touch, being essential to the highest level of reality, trickles to all levels of being-in-the-world. Just as Śiva is most fully aware being in touch with śakti, so, at all levels of reality and experience, being fully alive is the development of one’s capacity—one’s *śakti*—to touch-and-be-touched. Touching is nothing less than the complex process of knowing, of knowing the Self through knowing the Other. Abhinavagupta suggests that in touching the Other, the Self becomes most fully aware of its bodily-felt sense of Being.

We also see the significance of the body and of the senses for Abhinavagupta in his interpretation of worship, for example. It is clear that Abhinavagupta understands worship in terms of sensuous acts that blissfully awaken one’s consciousness, that allow one’s awareness to be penetrated by bliss. In the third chapter of the *TĀ*, Abhinavagupta writes:

The resurrectional energy of Śambhu [or Śiva]... dwells everywhere. Out of it [arises] the ensemble of motions of the liquid bliss of joy. So indeed, when a sweet [song] is sung, when [there is] touching, or when [there is the smelling of] sandalwood and so on, when [the state of apathy] ceases, [there arises] the state of vibrating in the heart, which is called precisely “the energy of bliss,” because of which a human being is with-heart [is sensitive] (*TĀ*: 3.208b-210b).

Abhinavagupta is describing an aspect of Śiva-śakti known as *visarga-śakti*, the resurrectional energy of Being, continually surging back and forth. The state of awareness Abhinavagupta describes is an imitation of this divine energy of Śiva-śakti, and, at the same time, the divine arises out of this state. Abhinavagupta states that such energy manifests on the human plane as motions; this parallels the Western notion of “e-motions” (cf. Mazis 1993). Thus, joy or bliss is a type of motion, movement, or agitation (*vibhrama*)—something felt in the body in other words. For Abhinavagupta then, feeling is experienced as a type of motion in the body; awareness is rooted in touching.

Further, one who experiences bliss is said to be sensitive; literally, one-with-heart. The capacity to be moved for Abhinavagupta is the proper state for both aesthetic performance and religious performance. The opposite is not “getting it,” being inert (*jada*), i.e., being like a rock and not being able to be moved or shocked by anything, and therefore not being able to attain any meaningful experience. Meaning then is connected to bodily-felt sense. In the religious context, being-without-heart means not being aware of Being, tantamount to being dead. Having heart is also related to terms such as *camatkāra* or *ksobha* that connote “wonder” or even “tactile shock,” the bodily-felt sense of being suddenly surprised. To be alive is to be open to wonder. Having heart, or being sensitive or sense-awakened, is being fully alive, able to move and be moved, to enjoy oneself sensuously. In the third chapter of the *TĀ*, Abhinavagupta writes:

Into the oblation-eating belly of one’s own consciousness, all existing things are hurled suddenly; they sacrifice their portion of differentiation, consuming it by fire with their own energy. When the fragmentation of existing things is dissolved... the divine sense-energies of consciousness eat the universe that has become the nectar of immortality. Feeling satisfied, these deities repose, intertwining with Divine Bhairava, the Sky of Consciousness, who dwells in the secret space of the full heart of their selves (*TĀ*: 3.262a-264b).

Abhinavagupta is discussing the deities of consciousness, that is, the sense-energies that are the senses, bodily capacities that allow interaction with reality. Further, he is talking about the senses as being satisfied. Referring to the earlier Kaula tantric *habitus*, Abhinavagupta describes worship as extracting liquid bliss and satiating the deities of the senses who reunite with the Heart, their Center, their Lord Bhairava. The satisfaction of one’s senses, the senses enjoying themselves, is a way of awakening one’s awareness. From these brief examples, we can see that awareness is based in the body and the senses, especially the sense of inner touching or feeling.

III. From Abstract Representation to Bodily-Felt Image

In this section, I argue against a paradigm established by Alexis Sanderson that understands religious transformation primarily in cognitive and visual terms. This explanatory model distorts Abhinavagupta's own understanding of transformation, one that involved both body and touch recollecting a deeply felt sense of Being. I will direct my attention to Abhinavagupta's understanding of *maṇḍala* and initiation rituals. In one of his classic articles, "Maṇḍala and Āgamic Identity in the Trika of Kashmir," Alexis Sanderson (1986) provides us with the most extensive analysis of mandalic ritual, an example of the daily ritual practice of the ordinary Śaiva householder (*tantra-prakrīya*) (cf. Flood 2004: 105), as described by Abhinavagupta in *TĀ* 15.

Sanderson suggests that through mandalic practice, the Trika initiate "ritually internalizes a metaphysical ontology" (Sanderson 1986: 172). This phrase might tell us more about Sanderson's worldview than it does about how the initiates themselves experienced ritual and how Abhinavagupta himself understood such experience. Sanderson implies that abstract, conceptual, and rational metaphysics comes prior to the more concrete and intimate experience of ritual. Ritual here seems to be at the service of high ontology, a mere instrument used by ontology to indoctrinate the initiates. If Sanderson is correct, the purpose of the ritual is to superimpose a prefabricated metaphysics on the mind-body complex—in other words, a pre-conceived, pre-constructed map of reality.

This is one way of viewing the relation between the body of an individual and the superstructure of society, but it is not the only way of understanding the body (cf. Levin 1989: 92-103). In fact, it is in direct contradiction with the way Abhinavagupta understood body, ritual, and initiation. A series of questions seem to be unanswered by this cognitive-centered approach: If ritual were merely a means of acquiring metaphysical knowledge, how did it take the Trika initiate beyond the mere conceptual learning that Abhinavagupta repudiates? Why did one continue practicing if it were simply a matter of exchanging one form of metaphysics for another? In what sense was the practitioner truly transformed? In what way would it have been deeply blissful? How in the end would ritual liberate a person? I suggest that we redress this imbalance in Abhinavagupta studies and see what happens if we take an approach from the ground up, i.e., give priority not to abstract concepts but to the body and its intimate perceptions and experiences. I believe Abhinavagupta himself would give his blessing to such a project. Abhinavagupta and his followers continually prioritized experience, distinguishing the Trika master from a mere scholar, and deep experience from mere conceptual learning (cf. Silburn 1988: 92).

Might we begin taking Abhinavagupta at his word? Let us assume Abhinavagupta was interested in imparting the same type of rich and powerful transformative ritual experiences that he himself had undergone. This might be a more fruitful approach.

As I have mentioned, Sanderson's analysis of *maṇḍala* practice and initiation focuses on Abhinavagupta's fifteenth chapter in the *TĀ*. The same or similar material appearing in the *TĀ* has been analyzed by other scholars, including Dirk Jan Hoens, Lilian Silburn, and André Padoux (Hoens 1979; Silburn 1988; Padoux 2003). I will be using the work of each of these three latter scholars to help me set up my argument against Sanderson, and to show that a hermeneutics of touch allows us to uncover Abhinavagupta's own understanding of tantric transformation. Although I realize I am being highly speculative in this section, I think such a first step is necessary and thus I will take the risk with the hope that this will eventually lead to a more rigorous way of recovering the body's lived sense of being-in-the-world for the study of Abhinavagupta.

I want to first suggest then that *maṇḍala* practice is more than some abstract cognitive/visual practice. Certainly, the *maṇḍala* is visual, at least in part, and mandalic practice does involve vision. However, the *maṇḍala* is not only visual, and mandalic practice involves more than just vision. Essential to Abhinavagupta's understanding of *maṇḍala* practice is that both *mantra* and *mudrā* are essential. At the very least then, we need to include the senses of hearing and touching. For Abhinavagupta, *maṇḍalas*, *mantras*, and *mudrās* are effective because they are used simultaneously. Abhinavagupta's commentator, Jayaratha, for example, in his commentary on *TĀ* 15 says that for *mantras* to work, they must be used in conjunction with *mudrās* (Jayaratha, *TĀV*, commenting on *TĀ* 15.159: Hoens 1979: 116). Also, Abhinavagupta, for example, describes the power of the *maṇḍala* precisely in terms of the power of *mantras*; precisely because *mantras* are installed within it, the *maṇḍala* is able to become effective (*TĀ* 15.388 and 451b-452a: translated by Padoux 2003: 228).

Further, however, even if we were able to isolate the mandalic aspects from *mantra* and *mudrā*, it would be misleading to describe the *maṇḍala* practice as primarily visual and cognitive. Aesthetic and emotional factors are present also. Thus, *TĀ* 21 states that the master must propitiate powers and perform the ritual "as richly as possible in order that the powers are fully satisfied" (Padoux 2003: 230). Also, according to the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra*, the primary text being interpreted by Abhinavagupta, colored powders may be used because quite simply their beauty makes the deities happy (Padoux 2003: 226). Sometimes perfumed substances were used to make up the *maṇḍala* (*TĀ* 15.387: Padoux 2003: 226, 228, and 228, n. 4). The complex relationship between guru

and student needs to be considered also. No doubt being touched by the guru in the context of initiation carried extra emotional weight for the student who endearingly touches his guru's feet and who has waited and prepared for initiation over a long period of time (Hoens 1979: 72-3). Thus, *maṇḍala* practice may not be reduced to the simple cognitive and visual plane; rather, for Abhinavagupta, it must be understood as a multi-sensory and full-bodied performance.

Thomas Csordas makes it clear that in both the visual field and imaginal fields, there is always a crossing between sight and tactility (2002: 73-4). Applied to Abhinavagupta's context, the imagining or image-ing of the *maṇḍala* in the body must involve tactility, and, in particular, inner touching, or bodily-felt sense. Abhinavagupta himself recognized this. In *TĀ* 15 he describes three *mudrās* as being associated with body, mind, and speech, which in turn, Dirk Jan Hoens suggests, seem to correlate with three fundamental constituents of tantric practice: *mudrā* or touching, *dhyāna* or visualizing, and *mantra* or hearing (Hoens 1979: 116, in reference to *TĀ* 15.259). Given that *mudrās* are bodily-felt gestures, is Abhinavagupta saying that visualizing and hearing are based in touch?

Also important here is that Abhinavagupta does not describe the so-called visualization aspect of the practice from the point of view of a spectator, as if he is looking at the *maṇḍala* and its deities from the outside. For example, in his description of the *triśūlābjamaṇḍala* in *TĀ* 15 (the focus of Sanderson's study), the deities in relation to Parā, the central deity, are not described as if the practitioner is looking at the deities; rather, they are described in relation to Parā Herself. This is significant because it means that the *maṇḍala* becomes a living image inside the interior of the practitioner's body. The image is bodily felt. The *maṇḍala* may be seen, but most importantly it is to be bodily experienced (cf. Padoux 2003: 228-235). Further, Abhinavagupta makes it clear that contacting the deities of the *maṇḍala* is no mere metaphor; he compares such "touching" to the powerful experiences arising in the encounter between a lover and his beloved: "Just as one who is struck by love directly experiences the various qualities of his loved one, so one who is consecrated by the flash of divine energy directly experiences the presenting of the mantras" (*TĀ* 15.452b-453a). The practitioner-participant internalizes a new way of perceiving his body and his bodily-felt sense of interior space. Visualization then is no ordinary spectacle-type vision. Most importantly, although the *maṇḍala* is seen during worship or initiation, it is the body that experiences the *maṇḍala* as an interior image.

A distinction made by Oliver Sacks lends a helpful hand in trying to understand these complicated forms of visualization. Sacks distinguishes between low- and high-level imagination. "Simple visual imagery," he writes:

may suffice for the design of a screw, an engine, or a surgical operation, and it may be relatively easy to model these essentially reproductive forms of imagery or to simulate them by constructing video games or virtual realities of various sorts. Such powers may be invaluable but there is something passive and mechanical about them, which makes them utterly different from the higher and more personal powers of the imagination, where there is a continual struggle for concepts and form and meaning, a calling upon all the powers of the self. Imagination dissolves and transforms, unifies and creates, while drawing upon the 'lower' powers of memory and association. It is by such imagination, such 'vision,' that we create or construct our individual worlds (Sacks 2005: 41).

He adds that at these "higher" levels of the imagination, "one can no longer say of one's mental landscapes what is visual, what is auditory, what is image, what is language, what is intellectual, what is emotional—they are all fused together" (Sacks 2005: 41). So, where the former type of imagination parallels ordinary vision, the latter type of imagination is more complex and involves the whole body. More similar to the latter type, mandalic imagination involves other senses, requires the fusion of two different images (the *maṇḍala* image and self image), and has as its purpose nothing less than dissolving and transforming the practitioner's deepest sense of Self and Being. This is precisely a type of imagination that, like high-level imagination, "call[s] upon all the powers of the self." We need to ask then: Could ordinary vision or low-level imagination possibly produce the same type of transformation?

Instead of thinking of *maṇḍalas* as mere "representations," i.e., mere instruments of Trika metaphysical indoctrination, I suggest that we begin to recognize *maṇḍalas* as "presentations." Here, I am adopting the scholarship of historian of religion Sam Gill, and paralleling his thesis about Arrernte and Warlpiri *tjurungas* (Gill 1998: 310); while Śaiva experiences of reality became represented in the *maṇḍalas*, it does not necessarily follow that the *maṇḍala* itself is simply a representation. It is more accurate to say that *maṇḍalas* themselves—along with *mudrās* and *mantras*—are presentations. Rather than black-and-white two-dimensional visual representations, for Abhinavagupta, *maṇḍalas* are to be bodily experienced as live presentations, made alive by the deities. A *maṇḍala* possesses vitality and *maṇḍala* performance is "co-involved" with reality itself, with the very presencing of the divine (cf. Sullivan 2000: 226).

Abhinavagupta's interpretation of *maṇḍala* practice in various sections of the *TĀ* supports understanding the *maṇḍala* as "presentation." These have been translated and summarized by André Padoux. Important for us are the following two points: (1) The *maṇḍala* is full of the power and presence of the divine. For example, in *TĀ* 16, the *maṇḍala* is described as being pervaded by Parā and "entirely full of her presence" (*TĀ* 16.16: Padoux 2003: 229-30). And according to *TĀ* 29, the deity is "made present" by the *maṇḍala*-body of

the yogin and *dūti* (*TĀ* 29.170; Padoux 2003: 231-2). (2) Without the presence of the divine, the *maṇḍala* would neither be effective nor transformative. For example, according to *TĀ* 15, the practitioner is able to share in and bodily feel such power and presence, as his body fuses with divinity, and the universe is felt as present within the body (Padoux 2003: 233-4). To perform is to experience a radical change in one's awareness.

Abhinavagupta's movement has been described by Sanderson as the infusion of power into the path of purity. I contend that such infusion of power would only make sense if there were a corresponding transformation of perceptions by the new bodies in this new movement. That is, if the new practitioner continued maintaining his neurotic obedience, and if external standards of purity, rules of touch and touch-me-not only continued to inhibit the body and its senses, then in fact there was no change, and we can not rightly speak of an infusion of power. Sanderson conceives of the transformation in terms of top-down metaphysics, as if Abhinavagupta overlaid a metaphysical system on top of bodily practices. I am suggesting that we begin thinking with Abhinavagupta through the paradigm of the body, and, in particular, through a paradigm of Touching, in which knowing is a type of Touching. One does not simply think away bodily inhibition, inhibition that has been heavily weighing on one's body, holding it down, and sup-pressing and op-pressing it, and ultimately preventing any creative gathering, laying down, and re-collecting of Being. Abhinavagupta's recovery of the body and senses demonstrate that one only transforms one's way of being in the body by means of the body.

Thus, *maṇḍala* practice transforms the senses and the ways these senses perceive the world. Through *maṇḍala* practice, the practitioner bodily experiences the presence of deities, not only worshipping them but fusing with them. Clearly, fusion is not a mere conceptual process. This is no simple cognitive exercise; fusion involves the whole body and is bodily felt. Abhinavagupta writes:

because the term *maṇḍa* [forms the word] *maṇḍala* this word expresses the essence, it means Śiva (*TĀ* 37.21a).

And Jayaratha elaborates: "the *maṇḍala* gives the essence which is Śiva" (Jayaratha, *TĀV*, commenting on *TĀ* 37.21a). For Abhinavagupta there is no separation between the *maṇḍala* and Śiva itself. *Maṇḍala*—similar to both *mantra* and *mudrā*—is a form of the deity, an image (*pratibimba*) co-involved with the presencing of the deity, through which fusion of practitioner and deity is effected (Padoux 2003: 231, n. 11). In the thirty-second chapter of the *TĀ*, Abhinavagupta tells us that an image both reflects ultimate reality and gives rise to that reality. Padoux summarizes Abhinavagupta's view that *mudrā* is:

pratibimba, reflection, or rather *pratibimbodaya*. . . First, . . . [*mudrā*] arises from an original image. . . : the *mudrā* appears from the deity and is a reflection, a reproduction by man of the appearance (and nature) of the deity. Or . . . [*mudrā* is] that from which the original arises, that which is a means whereby the original appears. . . For Abh[inavagupta], these two interpretations are equally valid. A *mudrā* has therefore a twofold nature and function: It reflects reality; i.e. the hand and body postures adopted by the adept, together with the visualizations, reflect, reproduce, the form and attitude of the deity. But from these postures, etc., reproducing those of the deity, and from the visualizations of the divinity, there arises, for the adept, an identification with that deity. For him, the original appears and takes the place of the merely reflected image: he is possessed by the *devatā*, identified with her; the original is born from the reflection (1990a: 71-2).

In this sense, *maṇḍala*, *mantra*, and *mudrā* are best understood as images or presentations, not mere representations.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to suggest that tantric transformation is not a matter of wishful thinking, the will, simple fancy, or wildly thinking the impossible. Rather, for Abhinavagupta, it involves deep imaginative thinking that reproduces and gives rise to divine reality, not representational thinking, but mimetic thinking. Following anthropologist Michael Taussig, himself inspired by Walter Benjamin, we might describe the ability of the mandalic practitioner to transform himself as his mimetic capacity: “[t]he ability to mime well . . . the capacity to Other” (Taussig 1993: 19). In Abhinavagupta’s environment, the practitioner “mimes” or resonates with his teacher, who is, of course, “miming” Śiva (cf. Silburn 1988:100). We might say then that he is Other-ing or becoming the Other in his body. He feels in his body what it is like to be the Other, sensing—in his flesh and bones—his Self as Other. Such a capacity is deeply imaginal involving the crossing of the visual and tactile. Taussig draws on Benjamin’s description of the experience of Dadaist artwork which emphasizes the “merging of the object of perception with the body of the perceiver and not just with the mind’s eye” (1993: 25). Taussig offers habit as an example of such “tactile knowing.” “Habit offers a very profound example of tactile knowing,” he observes, “only at the depth of habit is radical change effected, where unconscious strata of culture are built into social routines as bodily disposition” (Taussig 1993: 25).

I want to suggest that mandalic practice is aimed at the change of habit. Radical transformation takes place at the level of habit where the unconscious strata of Brahmanical culture have been built as corporeal disposition. Deeply

ingrained habits require deep bodily transformation. Hence, the use of images that work profoundly on the various senses is required. This is supported by Abhinavagupta's interpretation of the "plenary oblation," which is:

offered into the sacrificial fire which, fed by each and every thing, internally consumes the seeds of latent impressions (*vāsanā*); it consists in forsaking the limited I through self-surrender which alone gives access to the supreme I-ness, an undivided mass of consciousness and plenitude, namely Śiva and his energy (Silburn 1988: 88).

The *vāsanās*—impressions that have been "pressed into" the body—are precisely heavily ingrained habits. Indeed, an interesting parallel exists between the Sanskrit semantic field of *vāsanā*—derived from the root *vas*, "to dwell"—and the English semantic field of *habit*—associated with *habitat* as well as Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus*. Like habits, *vāsanās* are part of the Trika practitioner's *habitus*, how he dwells in the world because of how things dwell within him, his "indwellings," in other words. Radical transformation is precisely a transformation of these indwellings.

Michael Jackson, the phenomenological anthropologist, interprets the transformation of deep habits in terms of the body as embodied subject. This is relevant to Abhinavagupta's understanding of ritual. The mind cannot be separated from the body. This is not only the postmodern consensus but, of course, one of the major points of Abhinavagupta's writings and one of the major goals of Abhinavagupta's tantric ritual. Once we accept that the body is indeed an embodied subject, our notion of ritual must be consistent with that understanding. Jackson reflects on what it means to live with awareness of the body, feeling both will and consciousness as embodied. He writes that "dys-tonic habits of body use cannot be changed by desiring to act in different ways. The mind is not separate from the body... it is pure superstition to think that one can "straighten oneself out" by some kind of "psychical manipulation without reference to the distortions of sensation and perception which are due to bad bodily sets" (Jackson 1989: 119).

Yet Sanderson has separated the mind from the body. It is more fruitful to interpret Abhinavagupta as referring to lived experiences. Further, it is clear that Abhinavagupta was aware of bodily distortions and bad habits and that he understood ritual as directly transforming such bodily distortions. Jackson reminds us that habits can not be changed simply by thinking them away, or by disembodied will, precisely because habits are the will of the body:

To change a body of habits, physical or cultural, can never be a matter of wishful thinking and trying; it depends on learning and practicing new techniques. In the language of F. M. Alexander, whose work profoundly influenced John Dewey... it is a matter of displacing "end-gaining" with new "means-whereby" (1989: 119).

Transformation for Abhinavagupta must work at the same pre-cognitive, primordial level, in order to liberate the *śaktis*, the “divine sense-energies” or “capacities,” that have been constrained through force, habit, tendency, or psychosomatic patterning. To transform is to liberate Śakti who is Touch, unleashing the opposing force that is necessary to finally break oppressive habits and boundaries, reawakening the senses, and allowing Flesh and Bones to rise again.

References

- Alper, Harvey P. (1987). *Svabhāvam avabhāsasya vimarśam*: Judgement as a Transcendental Category in Utpaladeva's Śaiva Theology. *Adyar Library Bulletin* 51: 176-241.
- Calasso, Roberto (1999). *Ka: Stories of the Mind and Gods of India*. New York: Vintage International.
- Chidester, David (2000). Haptics of the Heart: the Sense of Touch in American Religion and Culture. *Culture and Religion* 1(1): 61-84.
- Chrétien, Jean-Louis (2004). *The Call and the Response*. Trans. Anne A. Davenport. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Classen, Constance (1993). *Worlds of Sense*. London: Routledge.
- Csordas, Thomas J. (1999). The Body's Career in Anthropology. In Henrietta L. Moore (ed.), *Anthropological Theory Today*, 172-205. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- (2002). *Body/Meaning/Healing*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dyczkowski, Mark S.G. (trans.) (1992a). *The Aphorisms of Śiva: The ŚivaSūtra with Bhāskarā's Commentary, the Vārttika, translated with exposition and notes*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- (trans.) (1992b). *The Stanzas on Vibration*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Eck, Diana (1998). *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India* (Third Edition). New York: Columbia University.
- Flood, Gavin (2004). *The Ascetic Self: Subjectivity, Memory, and Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gendlin, Eugene T. The Wider Use of Bodily Sense in Thought and Language. In Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (ed.), *Giving the Body Its Due*, 192-207. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Gill, Sam (1998). Territory. In Mark C. Taylor (ed.), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, 298-313. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gnoli, Raniero (trans.) (1985). *Il Commento di Abhinavagupta alla Parātrīṃśikā. Parātrīṃśikā-ttvavivaraṇam, Traduzione e Testo*. Serie Orientale Roma, no. 58. Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.
- Gonda, Jan (1963). *Vision of the Vedic Poets*. The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton & Co.
- (1969). *Eye and Gaze*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company.
- Hoens, Dirk Jan (1979). Transmission and Fundamental Constituents of the Practice. In Sanjukta Gupta, et. al., *Hindu Tantrism*, 69-117. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Howes, David (ed.) (1991). *The Varieties of Sensory Experience*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Jackson, Michael (1989). *Paths Toward a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Enquiry*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- (1998). *Minima Ethnographica: Intersubjectivity and the Anthropological Project*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

- Lannoy, Richard (1971). *The Speaking Tree: A Study of Indian Culture and Society*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Levin, David Michael (1985). *The Body's Recollection of Being: Phenomenological Psychology and the Destruction of Nihilism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- (1988). *The Opening of Vision: Nihilism and the Postmodern Situation*. London: Routledge.
- (1989). *The Listening Self: Personal Growth, Social Change and the Closure of Metaphysics*. London: Routledge.
- Malamoud, Charles (1996). *Cooking the World: Ritual and Thought in Ancient India*. Trans. David White. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Mazis, Glen (1993). *Emotion and Embodiment: Fragile Ontology*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Nagatomo, Shigenori. An Eastern Concept of the Body: Yuasa's Body-Scheme. In Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (ed.), *Giving the Body Its Due*, 48-68. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Olivelle, Patrick (trans.) (1996). *Upaniṣads*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Padoux, André (1990a). The Body in Tantric Ritual: The Case of the *Mudrās*. In Teun Goudriaan (ed.), *The Sanskrit Tradition and Tantrism*, 66-75. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- (1990b). *Vāc: The Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras*. Trans. Jacques Gontier. Albany: SUNY Press.
- (2000). The Tantric Guru. In David Gordon White (ed.), *Tantra in Practice*, 41-51. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- (2003). *Maṇḍalas in Abhinavagupta's Tantraloka*. In Gudrun Bühnemann, et. al., *Maṇḍalas and Yantras in the Hindu Tradition*, 225-38. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Pinard, Sylvain (1991). A Taste of India: On the Role of Gustation in the Hindu Sensorium. In David Howes (ed.), *The Varieties of Sensory Experiences*, 221-230. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Sacks, Oliver (2005). The Mind's Eye: What the Blind See. In David Howes (ed.), *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*, 25-42. Oxford: Berg.
- Sanderson, Alexis (1985). Purity and Power Among the Brahmans of Kashmir. In Michael Carrithers, et. al. (eds.), *The Category of the Person: Anthropological and Philosophical Perspectives*, 191-216. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1986). Maṇḍala and Āgamic Identity in the Trika of Kashmir. In André Padoux (ed.), *Mantras et diagrammes rituels dans l'Hindouisme*, 169-207. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.
- (1995). Meaning in Tantric Ritual. In Anne-Marie Blondeau and Kristofer Schipper (eds.), *Essais sur le rituel*, vol. 3, Colloqu du Centenaire de la Section des Sciences Religieuses de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études. Louvain and Paris: Peeters.
- Silburn, Lilian (1988). *Kuṇḍalinī: The Energy of the Depths*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Singh, Jaideva (1991). *Yoga of Delight, Wonder, and Astonishment*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Skora, Kerry Martin (2007). The Pulsating Heart and Its Divine Sense Energies: Body and Touch in Abhinavagupta's Trika Śaivism. *Numen* 54: 420-58.
- Sullivan, Lawrence (2000). The Net of Indra: Comparison and the Contribution of Perception. In Kimberley C. Patton and Benjamin C. Ray (eds.), *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age*, 206-36. Berkeley: University of California.
- Trankāloka* of Abhinavagupta. R. C. Dwivedi and Navajivan Rastogi (eds.), *The Trankāloka of Abhinavagupta with the Commentary (-viveka; TĀV) of Jayaratha*, 8 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987; reedition of the 1918-38 12-volume edition.
- Taussig, Michael (1992). *The Nervous System*. New York and London: Routledge.
- (1993). *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. New York and London: Routledge.