

ON UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE INTERPRETATION OF MYSTICISM

Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis. Edited by Steven T. Katz, pp.264, Sheldon Press, London 1978, Eight pounds ninety five cents.

This book came my way when I had just finished a paper on "Mysticism as Doctrine and Experience" to be read as an introduction to the Fifth Symposium on Indian Religions (Holly Royde College, Manchester 20-22 April 1979) whose theme was "Indian Mysticism". The immediate reaction was: have I to rewrite the paper? The write-up on the dust cover describes the book as a "work of major importance" written "with a combination of religious sensitivity, philosophical rigour and clarity". Its "famous contributors" challenge the "accepted 'orthodox' interpretation of those like W.T. Stace that all mystical experience is the same or similar". Not being satisfied "with naive oversimplifications and misleading generalisations. . .this thoughtful and exact work represents something of a new beginning in the study of mysticism" nobody can afford to ignore. Having read the book with some eagerness and trepidation I decided against rewriting my paper which was eventually published in this Journal (vol. , no. , pp.) to whose editor I am grateful for giving me the opportunity of reviewing the book.

It consists of ten papers solicited by its editor with the object of advancing the discussion and analysis of mysticism "beyond James and Otto, Stace and Zaehner". The authors were asked to avoid positivistic rejection of mysticism as "nonsense" as well as the rejection of logic, criteria and analysis as out of place in mysticism. But the editor himself already reveals a certain preconceived attitude to the subject in the opening sentences of his Introduction: "Mysticism is a subject with a special fascination". It derives it "from its subject matter as well as from its form of expression which seem to promise something for everybody if not everything to everybody". Past authors, including James, Underhill and Otto manifested strong biases and problematic presuppositions and the works of Zaehner, Stace and Smart must be regarded as merely preliminary. The implication must therefore be that this book will start a new era of true research into mysticism. The reader will start reading the book with high expectations.

It starts with Ninian Smart's essay on "Understanding Religious Experience" which skilfully shows that understanding is not an all or nothing affair, but a matter of what degree of understanding can be obtained under certain conditions. There are two main varieties of it: existential, i.e. derived from one's own experience, or theoretical, i.e. based on explanation. He also ponders over the meanings of the term "religious", but concludes that by "religious experience" is usually meant

“something like a vision or intuition” and mystical experience is of this variety. The tricky question of what is mysticism Smart solves broadly by linking it to inner visions and practices which have a contemplative character. The other tricky question of understanding religious experience only theoretically yet adequately he answers: it means knowing enough about it to discuss intelligently theories of its genesis and validity. Hence the ineffability of mystical experience does not quite exclude its describability so that it is not utterly incomprehensible even if it is not totally comprehensible. The question of validity Smart approaches with Goudenough-like caution. Supposedly scientific theories of projectionists (Marx, Freud) are in conflict with theologies based on faith; so before we can really evaluate, we have still to do a lot more phenomenologically. Smart does actually little more in his short essay than spell out anew what he has written before elsewhere or what is now more or less generally known, but he does so clearly and his point about the ineffable experience being to some extent describable and therefore comprehensible even theoretically should certainly be borne in mind by advocats of indescribability. After all, mystics of all ages and traditions covered many pages with descriptions of the indescribable. The nature and degree of precision of such descriptions is another point.

The editor contributed the second, by far the longest, paper, “Language, Epistemology and Mysticism”. He first disposes of the issue of verification of the mystical experience. No veridical propositions can be based on it, because it cannot be publicly demonstrated. This holds true for truth claims in all religions. He next attacks claims of identity, similarity or typological relatedness in mystical experiences across cultural boundaries. Well-meaning ecumenicists and “dyed-in-the-wool” dogmatists believing in a common Truth are wrong. Despite Huxley and Schuon there is no *philosophia perennis* and the propositions of Zaehner, Stace and Smart are unsatisfactory, because their cross-cultural accounts of mystical experience are phenomenologically and philosophically suspect. And in any event, the preoccupations of these and other authors since James are second order concerns, while Katz is after the first order problem: “Why are the mystical experiences the experiences they are?” His single epistemological assumption is that “there are no pure experiences”, all mystical experience is at least partially preformed and anticipated so that a Hindu experiences Brahman, a Christian his God etc. And, of course, Katz knows that “the Hindu experience of Brahman and the Christian experience of God are not the same”. Some two dozen pages contain variations on this theme, with references to all possible traditions, including Castaneda’s experiences. Similar language of mystics only misled authors from Bucke to Stace;

there are no similarities in the actual experiences, let alone an underlying “core”. The numerous expressions for the Ultimate Reality in different traditions designate an entirely different experience and possibly even a different object. Katz believes that he has marked out a new way of approaching the data and has disabused scholars of the preconceived notion of identity or similarity without showing bias to one tradition as did Stace (to monism) and Zaehner (to theism and Catholicism). He concludes: “Our discussion, though somewhat lengthy, has only begun to touch upon some of the more fundamental issues relating to a proper philosophical and phenomenological study of mysticism”. Before him there was no such thing. Yet we are not convinced that he has demonstrated his thesis of irreducible plurality of mystical experience based possibly on a plurality of its objects (in the ultimate sense). It is his preconceived idea which he seeks to illustrate on selected materials in a way reminiscent of the early years of comparative religious studies before Eliade. Any theory could be “proved” that way. His crude, forceful approach is well below the intellectual subtlety of Smart or the philosophical sophistication of Stace and there is little true analysis.

Carl E. Keller’s paper, “Mystical Literature”, first establishes a criterion for this type of literature: it deals with ultimate knowledge and the path to its realisation. In order to establish the relationship between mystical writings and mystical experience, he analyses the genres found in mystical writings: aphorisms, commentaries, dialogues, instructions, prayers and religious poetry and fiction. In all these he finds it “impossible to chart the passage from the text to the experience”. Consequently he recommends concentrating on the study of mystical language. This is sound advice, but he goes too far when he dismisses all effort to generalise: “In order to avoid misunderstanding, it would perhaps be wise to avoid speaking of ‘mysticism’ at all,” for it is “a purely formal concept”. We had seen philosophy reduced to linguistic analysis in some quarters. Religious studies are not likely to follow that path.

The title of Peter Moore’s article, “Mystical Experience, Mystical Doctrine, Mystical Technique”, reminds us of the traditional classification of mysticism into experience, doctrine and path. Although European in origin, it is perfectly applicable to all other traditions (cf. my article). His two main concerns are the phenomenological characteristics of mystical experience in different traditions and the epistemological and ontological status of this experience. He classifies mystical sources into (1) autobiographical reports, (2) impersonal accounts and (3) theological or liturgical accounts, all of which may occur in a single text. Their language clearly shows that there is a distinction between mystical experience and the modes of its interpretation. Here, showing much higher

analytical skill than Katz, Moore distinguishes (1) *retrospective interpretation* using doctrinal formulations after the experience, (2) *reflexive interpretation* formulated spontaneously during or immediately after the experience, (3) *incorporated interpretation* conditioned by prior beliefs and (4) references to *raw experience*. The difficulties of actually discriminating between the different elements in any one mystical account are considerable, but Moore rightly says that it must be attempted. With it should go attention to mystical techniques which often comprise deliberately created images and ideas relevant to the understanding of assimilated interpretation. The investigator needs an adequate descriptive vocabulary consistent with the mystic's description yet neutral to final truth claims. These must be carefully investigated — first by the formulation of an accurate typology. Moore's own is fourfold: (1) *subjective claims* concerning changes in the mystic, (2) *causal claims* about practical and metaphysical conditions of mystical experience, (3) *existential claims* asserting evidence of a metaphysical entity and (4) *cognitive claims* about the nature of that entity and the world. A further distinction is between inferential and non-inferential kinds of claims, but neither of them is self-authenticating. Any confirmation of mystical claims still lies in the future and perhaps always will.

Donald M. MacKinnon's contribution, "Some Epistemological Reflections on Mystical Experience" has two distinct kinds of thrust. Steeped in the disciplines of Aristotelian and Kantian studies he first gives a revealing examination of the epistemological status of "the proleptic vision of the whole" with the additional help of Gestalt psychology. We can thus understand the quality of wholeness often found in mystical experiences. But when he uses Paul's letters to the Corinthians and Revelations of Divine Love of Julian of Norwich to illustrate how the mystic's experience of God's love overcomes the opposition of the subjective and objective we lack a clear neutral language of analysis and feel that we could follow him only if we shared his faith.

Frederick J. Streng's "Language and Mystical Awareness" is the only paper in this collection not steeped in faith which dares go beyond the platform of academic agnosticism and makes several methodological assumptions with ontological consequences: (1) "there is a 'spiritual realm' . . . which cannot be totally comprehended by analyses which define it solely in terms of material energy or social function"; (2) this spiritual realm is a dimension of existence manifested, in different degrees, in some experiences and cultural forms, including physical and social forces, and therefore also language; (3) an analysis like his has the function of bringing about conceptual clarity about possible relations between verbal expression and mystical experience. Mysticism is to him

“an interior illumination of reality that results in ultimate freedom”. Purification of one’s attitude and ideas is necessary for right perception and thinking. Rejection of thought and all logical forms is not required in mystical apprehension, but mystical experience has the quality of “total awareness” which “represents a shift in how to look at oneself and the world” though it is not totally unrelated to conventional thought and can be expressed and even “developed through a use of language that must be aware of both its potential and its limitations”. He demonstrates this by analysing the use of language in the Mahāyāna “Perfection of Wisdom” which contains descriptive passages to be taken literally while others have a transformative function. What is to be carefully avoided is drawing a simple correlation between words and enlightenment, because that deprives language of its soteriological significance. This is a most important point, since the soteriological aim of many mystical writings is frequently disregarded.

Robert M. Gimello’s paper “Mysticism and Meditation” distinguishes the two concepts forming its title on the grounds of the traditional Buddhist division of meditation into the tranquillity type (*samatha*) leading to mystical absorptions (*jhānas*) and the insight type (*vipassanā*) leading to enlightenment which he regards beyond mystical experience. This is a terminological problem. Keller and Streng would both include the ultimate goal in mysticism (and that would mean also enlightenment in Buddhism) and that, I think, is the prevailing opinion. On the other hand, Gimello’s contribution is a salutary reminder of the need for a unified, neutral and cross-cultural terminology in the study of mysticism.

Renford Bambrough’s essay on “Intuition and the Inexpressible” is a defence of our powers of understanding and its articulation in the field of mysticism. When poets like T.S. Eliot or writers like R. Otto speak of the limits of thought (which includes articulation by language) and of understanding they represent as impossibility what is only a difficulty. “It is not clear that there need be any limit to the extent to which our understanding and its expression may be increased as individuals and as species.” The background of our understanding is unreflective knowledge acquired through perception or intuition. Perception is knowledge without procedure like knowing an object is red without measuring the wavelength of the light it reflects. Intuition is spoken of where there is non-perceptual knowledge without procedures. This is clear in mathematics or logic, but becomes more controversial in, say, ethics. The process of accumulating unreflective knowledge is continuous and constantly pushes further the boundaries of our understanding which are not the same as boundaries of what we can express. But

to say that something is inexpressible itself expresses a certain quality of that knowledge. *Via negativa* is still a way of communication. Here is support for Smart's descriptability.

The contribution of Nelson Pike, "On mystic Visions as Sources of Knowledge" moves exclusively within the Roman Catholic mystical tradition, testing it on the criteria of correct faith as approved by the Church. Although finely argued and of interest to the historian of religions, it is out of character in this collection and hardly a contribution to the general philosophical discussion of mysticism.

The last paper is "Real v. Deceptive Mystical Experiences" by George Mavrodes. He focuses on experiences which comprise a reference to an object's existence outside the experience and calls them "intentional". If the object is really there, the experience is veridical. The question is: is there a criterion to sort out the veridical type of mystical experience with intentionality from non-veridical ones? The answer is no. But Mavrodes arrives at it after a lengthy discussion of the visions and locutions of Teresa of Avila and her wrestling with the problem of whether they were from God or from the devil. He sees them as valid in the way she did, viz. by inner certainty. This he considers to be something everybody has — apparently if one has faith. But that, of course, is again outside the province of analytical philosophy, although the point about veridicality remains a general one in the study of mysticism.

When we survey the positive results of this publication, we have to say that the claims the editor makes for it are exaggerated. The quality of previous literature on mysticism is not as poor and the excellence of this volume not as high as he is trying to make out. His one strong claim is that there is a near-consensus in the articles "against the 'common core' thesis, either in the whole or in the part. As a consequence, this collection represents in itself, and argues for more generally, a strongly pluralistic position in the study of mysticism". But in reality it does not convey this impression. Smart has a different approach in the editor's own admission and the other authors do not make their positions expressly clear. But not even the editor's fierce argumentation makes a strong philosophical case for his stance. A proof is, of course, impossible, so an element of choice always remains in the adoption of a theory, although there are probabilities to be weighed against each other. I see three possibilities:

1. For a positivist the spiritual dimension does not exist so that mystical experiences have their only real basis in man's nervous system like emotions etc.
2. For a committed believer the highest mystical experience is akin to the attainment of salvation as taught in his tradition. Mystical exper-

iences outside his tradition are either (a) false or (b) partial attainments to be superseded only by conversion to his tradition.

3. For an uncommitted philosopher/truth-seeker the existence of the spiritual dimension is a serious possibility or, given all the evidence which of course is not veridical in the sense of public demonstrability, a high probability. If it exists and can be apprehended mystically in its totality, it must be one. There cannot be a plurality of mutually unrelated spiritual dimensions, all accessible at times to human mystical experience and accounting for its variety. This variety can come only from different stages of mystical experience, from partial apprehensions of the vastness of the spiritual dimension, from approaches to it from the different vantage points of cultures and also from linguistic differences. These account also for different names for the experience of the ultimate, together with the fact that the ultimate must be bigger and deeper than words can convey. Let us remember here again Smart's point of partial describability and comprehensibility which must take different forms of expression in different times and cultures.

Katz's position is ambiguous. He asserts the plurality and the unrelatedness of mystical experiences and possibly even their objects. But that fits only the position (1) or (2a), otherwise it makes no sense. Both positions are reductionist in their respective ways and so is position (2b) in its own peculiar fashion. I favour position (3) as expressed in my article. Another legitimate approach is methodical agnosticism advocated by Smart in several of his works, though it does not seem to me to be promising enough and it was once objected to on the grounds of hidden reductionism.

All said, the merit of the book is very great. It brings together several existing approaches to the subject and enables the reader to confront them in his mind and measure one against the other. All the contributions are carefully worded and will undoubtedly influence choices of terminology in future writings on mysticism. Immaculate bibliographical notes help further pursuits of particular themes. The whole undertaking is challenging and stimulating. The editor deserves our thanks for it.

Dr. Karel Werner
University of Durham

THE DIVINE PLAYER (A STUDY OF KṚṢṆA LĪLĀ)

by David R. Kinsley, Delhi, 1979, Motilal Banarsidass,
pp.xii, 306. RS.65.

The concept of “divine play” or “divine sport”, often designated by the Sanskrit word *līlā*, occurs frequently in the Purāṇas and much *bhakti* literature thereafter. *Līlā* is one of the most important words in the *bhakti* lexicon. As a concept designating the motive for the actions of certain gods, it is central in *bhakti* thought and it is arguable that it represents a logical development from the Upaniṣadic cosmogonies where the reasons given for Brahman engaging in the act of creation were always rather forced. Moreover, such a concept was essential for the development of the doctrinal side of *bhakti*. This was so for two reasons. Firstly, it provided a motive for the supreme god to create, the supreme god of the particular devotee usually being held responsible for the act of creation. *Līlā* was a motive which did not imply any dependence of the creator on the creation for which he or she was responsible or any feeling of intentional desire on his or her part to engage in such an act. The god or goddess could remain in *mokṣa*, a state in which the notion of desire is largely meaningless, and still have a motive for involvement in the creation, which by its nature is *saṁsāra*. Secondly, it establishes and is consistent with the joyful mood that is so much associated with *bhakti*.

The purpose of the book under review is to examine the concept of *līlā* in a range of texts from the Purāṇas to the literature of fifteenth and sixteenth century Bengali Vaiṣṇavism. Because of the importance of this concept in the early development of *bhakti* and its quick ascendancy to the status of being a paradigm for *bhakti* devotional activity, a book on the topic of *līlā* has long been a desideratum. The work under review largely restricts itself to Vaiṣṇava *bhakti*, and then concentrates mainly on the Kṛṣṇa myths. This is understandable as the literature of India that has been inspired by *bhakti* is of vast compass and to attempt anything like complete coverage would be in vain.

The book opens with a survey of *līlā* in Indian literature, liberally drawing upon, but not restricted to, passages from the *Mahābhārata* and Purāṇas. In this the first chapter, *līlā* is treated under various sub-categories some of which are entitled “*māyā*, Divine madness, Divine Comedy and Combat as Play”. Some of these categories are unclear and their appropriateness for the study of Indian culture, not to mention *līlā*, is dubious. Their relationship with the latter is never made entirely clear. The second chapter is the longest in the book and is entirely devoted to a study of the myths of Kṛṣṇa inasmuch as *līlā* is expressed through the activities of this god. The third chapter makes an attempt to analyze in

theoretical terms the meaning of play and takes its cue from Huizinga. In this chapter parallels between play and cultic activity are also explored. The fourth chapter seeks to locate the importance of play in the life of some Hindu saints, drawing heavily upon the biographies of Caitanya and Rāmakṛṣṇa. This is followed by a fifth chapter wherein comparisons are made between Hindu concepts of play and those of other religions. Finally, there is a brief conclusion.

Several major criticisms can be directed against this book. Though published in 1979, it is based on a University of Chicago doctoral dissertation which, judging from the bibliography contained at the back of the book, was completed some time in 1970. The bibliography makes no reference to anything published after this date. Unless the manuscript was in the publisher's hands for nine years before its appearance, there is no excuse for not taking account of recent works on Indian mythology. One only has to mention the names of O'Flaherty, Biardeau and Hiltebeitel, several of whose recent works have an indirect and sometimes a direct bearing on the concept of *līlā*.

The author seems to have relied on English translations of the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas rather than going directly to the original. The danger here is that all translators have idiosyncrasies and passages are often translated without justice being done to the original. A completely faithful translation, one that captures the flavour of the original is almost an impossibility. Some translations of the Purāṇas, especially those of the *Matsya* and *Brahmavaivarta*, upon which the author has relied heavily, are little better than paraphrases of the original.

One of the main problems encountered in using translations is that all words which have a similar meaning are sometimes rendered by the same English word, even though the Sanskrit words themselves are different. If *līlā* is often to be translated as "play, sport" (is there an exact lexical equivalent in English?), does this require that in the *śloka*

tatra sakṣatpaśupatirdivyairbhūtaiḥ samāvṛtaḥ

umāsahāyo bhagavānramate bhūtabhāvanaḥ // *Mbh.* (Cr.Ed) 6,7,23 [cited by Kinsley (p.40)] *ramate* should be translated as "sporteth" as it is by Roy (*Mbh.* trans. Vol. 5, p. 15). Why not "delight, rejoice" or to "dally with", where the sexual sense of the latter is implied by the compound *umāsahāyo*. The point I wish to make is that *ram* and derivatives do not necessarily have the same meaning as *līlā*, and accordingly should be rendered with a different word. This problem becomes almost ridiculous in passages with contents similar to that just cited where the appropriate verbal roots are *krīḍ* and *mud* [*Mbh.* (Cr.Ed) 9,36,3-5; Kinsley, p.47]. All this merely underlies the need for a detailed philological study of the uses of *līlā* and its synonyms. Such a study is not given in this book.

Though the author has given a general introduction to the book, this introduction only deals with *līlā* itself. It is not accompanied by an introductory statement which gives a theoretical overview of the author's understanding of Hindu mythology and religion. A statement of this kind is essential if *līlā* is to be understood within the greater religious context in which it occurs. If passages such as *Bhagavadgītā*, 3,22 can be cited where Kṛṣṇa says that he has no need to do anything (*na . . . kartavyam . . . kimcana*), implying that he acts because of *līlā*, what about the Kṛṣṇa of other parts of the *Mahābhārata* who is portrayed as a diplomat and trickster, intent upon upraising *dharma* out of the mire of *adharma*, the symptom of which is the Bhārata war? What is lacking is an attempt to relate *līlā* understood as play and unmotivated action, to other important aspects of Hinduism such as the sacrifice and renunciation, each of which has as much prominence in the myths as *līlā*, but which have utilitarian goals. Is *līlā* a concept meaningful only within the context of *bhakti*?

A few other minor points of disagreement with the author.

p.13. *Māyin* translated as "magician". Very few gods are given this epithet. It presupposes that there is such a thing as "magician" in ancient Indian thought and underestimates the metaphysical connotations of the word. Rudra-Śiva is called *māyin* at *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad*, 4,10, but here it seems to mark him as a god who determines individual and cosmic destinies through his capacity to prevent people seeing the truth because he deludes them with *māyā*. Similarly he can remove the veil of *māyā*, which suggests that he is a god who grants *mokṣa*, and not a magician in the western sense of the word.

p.14. ". . . *māyā* is independent of space and time". *Māyā* is really a characteristic of space and time and surely this is reflected in its root meaning of "to measure out" as in the sense of measuring out periods of time and artificial conceptions of space and form such as an individual bodily self. Whoever attains *mokṣa*, a prerequisite of which is the piercing of *māyā*, goes to a "state" beyond space and time where nothing is measured out.

p.32, third para. The examples adduced do not show Śiva to be a god "who is not entirely in control". Rather, they show two different aspects of the one god.

p.59, para. 3, line 1. "The nature of Kṛṣṇa no doubt, changed noticeably between the epic and Purāṇic periods". What are these periods and what are their dates? The epics and Purāṇas may represent different literary genre, but both are based on oral tradition which (due to its nature) is exceedingly difficult to date, if not impossible.

p.143, para.2, line 17. "It suggests that for the gods play is a typical

activity, while for man it is extraordinary — a special kind of activity that defies his basic nature as a creature in bondage to work". However, the gods can be shown from at least two perspectives to be in bondage. In the epics and Purāṇas they are in bondage to their main role which is to uphold *dharma* and oppose the *asuras*. And, some texts say that because of their abundant happiness and bliss (*sukhaprītibahulā*), the gods are incapable of realising the true nature of existence as *duḥkha*, hence they cannot become liberated (*Kūrmapūrāṇa*. 1,7,8; *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*. 1,5,13-14). From this perspective they are in bondage to their happiness.

These are only a few examples taken from many others. The majority come from those sections of the volume which are based on translations of Sanskrit originals. They give the distinct impression that much of the research was done hastily. The best chapter is the fourth, which deals with the role of *līlā* as exemplified in the lives of Bengal saints such as Caitanya and Ramakṛṣṇa. If the author had restricted himself to this aspect of Vaiṣṇavism and had studied it thoroughly, a very useful piece of research might have resulted. As it is a work which does give a comprehensive coverage of *līlā* in any period of the history of *bhakti* is still awaited.

UN TEXT TAMOUL DE DÉVOTION VISHNOUITE: LE TIRUPPĀVAI D'ĀṆṬĀĻ

Jean Filliozat, Pondichéry: Institut Francais d'Indologie, 1972.
XXVII pps, 139 pps, Paperback.

Until the Tamil Vaiṣṇava scripture, the Āḷvārs' 4000 hymns entitled the *Nālāyirativvyappirapantam*, is translated and interpreted according to the commentaries (*vyākhyāna*), the Srīvaiṣṇava tradition of South India will remain an hermetic tradition known only to Tamilians and scholars of Tamil.

Jean Filliozat has initiated the scholarly venture into this area by his French translation of the popular *Tiruppāvai* by ĀṆṬĀĻ. While this text is one of the few compositions by the Āḷvārs to have been previously translated into French and English, Filliozat's is the first definitive study. It includes an introductory essay; a bibliography of Tamil editions and translations; the text in Tamil script with French translation and notes; two Sanskrit commentaries in transliteration with French translations; an index of all the Tamil words of the *Tiruppāvai* with their Sanskrit equivalents found in the commentaries; and finally a series of plates. As such Filliozat's format is a model to be imitated in the translation and interpretation of the remaining works by the Āḷvārs. There is, however, one recommendation to be made. The original Maṇḍiravāla commentaries by Piḷḷāṇ, Nañjīyar, Vaṭakkuttiruvitippillai, and Periyavāccāṇṇipillai written between the 12th and 14th centuries should be included rather than the much later Sanskrit commentaries. For the Maṇḍiravāla commentaries provide both the basis of the *sampradāya*'s interpretation of the hymns of the Āḷvārs and the theological reflection on the *Nālāyirativvyappirapantam*, which is formative for such doctrines as *arcā* (the 'image-form'), *prapatti* (surrender), *kainkarya* (service), etc. Consequently, we find it curious that Filliozat bypasses Periyavāccāṇṇipillai's commentary on *Tiruppāvai* and does not even mention Nañjīyar's commentary on the same. Furthermore, Filliozat provides little information about the Sanskrit commentaries that he does include. For instance, in his introduction he does not mention that these are 19th-20th century works, and it is left to the reader's sleuthing to locate them in the descriptions of the editions. Especially obscure is the commentary entitled in Filliozat's work as "Śrīvrata", for there is no entry in the bibliography under this title and one must posit its identity as part of Govardhanaraṅgācāryasūri's *Sahasragītiḥ* from the brief line found in the introduction: "Une version, éditée également ici est extraite de la Sahasragīti . . .".

When Filliozat suggests that the Ācāryas' use of Sanskrit helped to propagate the thought of the Ālṅvārs in North India, thereby giving impetus to the North Indian *bhakti* revival from the 12th century, the reader is left with the impression that it is these Sanskrit commentaries cited by Filliozat, that provided the link. But, of course, the commentaries are much later, definitely after Vedāntadeśika and probably post 17th century (Filliozat gives no clue to their dates).

Equally misleading is Filliozat's comment regarding Āṅṅāl's works, that "Cette connaissance s'est surtout propagée et implantée an pays Andhra et notamment an grand centre religieux de Tirupati". The association of Āṅṅāl and Tirupati, however, was not the effect of propagation and implantation, for Āṅṅāl herself sings of Veṅkaṭam in *Nācīyārtirumoli* 1:1; 1:3; 4:2; 5:2; 8:10; 10:5 and 10:8. Tirupati since the Caṅkam Age was considered the northern boundary of Tamilnad; all the Ālṅvārs praised the mountain as the residence of Māl (Viṣṇu) in over 120 references, thereby establishing it in the tradition as the second most popular Vaiṣṇava holy place in Tamilnad. After the 15th century, the hymns of the Ālṅvārs were chanted at Tirupati; this would reinforce Āṅṅāl's association with the temple. We conclude that Veṅkaṭam (Tirupati) was always central to the Tamil Vaiṣṇava tradition, (ranking second only to Śrīraṅgam), and that Āṅṅāl's association with it was an indigenous and not "implanted" tradition. At Tirupati, the works of Āṅṅāl would have been introduced to Telugu devotees, translated and then propagated throughout Andhra. To Filliozat's argument that the reference to Koṅku in *Periyālvārtirumoli* II.6.2 should not be taken as the proper name of a place, we add the following substantiation. There is a very precise tradition in Śrīvaiṣṇavism from the 13th century of enumerating each place mentioned by an Ālṅvār; Koṅku nowhere figures in this list of 108 places. (See *Nūrreṅṅutiruppati Antāti* by Pillaiperumālai yaṅkar.)

While we agree with Filliozat that the *Tiruppāvai* focuses on the vow of submission to Kṛṣṇa and does not explicitly state that this vow will win Kṛṣṇa as husband, we do find that the explanation of the relationship between the devotee to God is not the simple slave — master relation posed by Filliozat. Indeed, there is a striking reversal of this relationship, for it is Āṅṅāl's impudence and impetuous insistence that makes God surrender to her wish.

Āṅṅāl poetically interweaves multiple images. On the one hand, she utilizes the imagery of the child Kṛṣṇa sleeping at his home in Northern Mathura. At the same time she invokes Nārāyaṇa who is in His *yoganidra* pose (i.e., apparently asleep) reclining on his serpent couch in the Ocean of Milk. We can presume that she is addressing the God in

His reclining 'image-form' in the temple. Not only is the identity of these *avatāra*, *vyūha*, and *arcā* forms posited, but also poetic and religious power is gained through such juxtaposition. Āṅṅāl and her friends do not wish merely to awaken the God at the break of day. They want the Lord in His *yoganidrā* pose to *open His eyes and gaze directly at them*. In the context of the *arcā*, 'image-incarnation', in the temple, this is no less a demand, that the reclining God *open His 'stone' eyes*.

Āṅṅāl uses her 'feminine charm' to make God comply to her wish. She, and her friends perform a vow (*vrata*) hoping to barter their 'penance' for this boon of sight and then the boon of receiving the drum. They *praise* Him as the Supreme God, then they *coo* to Him as child and remind Him that the birds and dairymaids are awakening, why not He; they *beg* help from others in the household; they *impatiently shout* aloud His names. They *indignantly remind* the guardian that the Lord just yesterday had promised to give them the drum; they *coax* Him to open little by little His red eyes and beg that a mere *glance* will be sufficient; once again they *barter* praise for the drum. They *pressure* Him by reminding Him of their shared kinship and then *coyly apologize* for their motherly words, perhaps inappropriate for the Supreme God. *In exasperation they chide* Him saying that it is improper that He, their own kin, withdraw and reject them. Finally, they offer the supreme barter: His slaves, not just for today but for sevenfold lives; service and one-pointed love to Him alone. Thus through multiple moods and roles the devotees relate to God, and ultimately win His compliance; with the gift of the drum they have the sign of this gracious commitment to the relationship and insure the ultimate Bliss.

Enjoyment of the *variety* of relationships is characteristic of the Āṅṅāl's hymns; the same Āṅṅāl may praise the overwhelming magnificence of the Supreme God thereby stressing the difference and distance between Creator and creature, Master and slave. From this perspective the devotee views his/her surrender (*prapatti*) and service (*kjainkarya*) as essential to the relationship. But at the same time intimacy and spontaneity are valued more highly in the tradition than awe, duty, and obedience. While affirming that God is the Supreme Creator and Master, one must simultaneously 'break' the idea of God as *paratva* (supremacy). Shattering the barriers through intimacy allows for spontaneous enjoyment of God; and when *bhoga* has no restriction, there is no bondage. When there is no bondage, there is no *samsāra*. Hence there is union or Bliss, the salvific goal. For this intimate relation, God Himself accepts the *arcā* (image-form) offered by the devotee as His very own body (*divyavighraha*) and surrenders (*prapatti*) to even the whim of His devotee.

This is why the two works by Āṇṭāḷ are paradigmatic for the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition. In the *Tiruppāvai* the surrender of the devotee as slave, to God as Master is subtly reversed through *strīhaṭṭha*, the women's impetuous insistence that God conform Himself to their wish and give the boon demanded by their *vrata*. While the *Tiruppāvai* uses only the language of the meeting of the Eyes, surrender, commitment, service and bliss, this scenario is not antithetical to the imagery of the love relationship (*nāyakanāyakībhāva*) alluded to in Āṇṭāḷ's *Nācciyārtirumoḷi*. The phases of this relationship too are expressed as sight, infatuation, surrender, commitment, service and marriage or union which is none other than Supreme Bliss. In either situation, the *prapatti* must be mutual for union.

Thus though the roles and moods may differ (and that is the avenue to experiencing fully a relationship), the goal remains the same. No wonder the commentators equated the language of Bliss in the *Tiruppāvai* with Āṇṭāḷ's dream of marriage with Araṅkā (Raṅganātha) in the *Nācciyārtirumoḷi*.

Katherine K. Young
Faculty of Religious Studies
McGill University
Montreal, P.Q. Canada