

ered manner with the focus on the ideas and not qualitative value judgments on the theoreticians. The transition from Saussure through Derrida to Lacan is smooth and flawless given the complexity of Bhartrhari's arguments and their relationality with these three theoreticians. From Saussure to Lacan, the continuity of formulations and the range of implications are neatly placed in the context of Bhartrhari's work by Dwivedi. The methodology of quoting from *Vākyapadiya* to elucidate the concepts is enriching for scholars who are seeking to place the rich Sanskrit tradition of grammar and philosophy (*vyākaraṇa* and *darśana*). The chapter on Bhartrharian and Lacanian thought is unique and immensely rich. The relationship of reality, mind and language in poststructuralist thought and in the psychoanalytical propositions of Lacan are introduced firstly through *Vākyapadiya* that makes them contextual and therefore naturally understandable. The relationship between manifest world, impressions, memory and language that Bhartrhari expounds upon in *Vākyapadiya* appears complex and universally valid when seen in the context of modern linguistic and psychoanalytic inquiry. The comparative study of Bhartrharian and Lacanian propositions is truly rewarding for the reader.

The paradigms of comparativist approach in linguistics as offered by Dwivedi's book demand attention and engagement. The works of classical Indian philosophers, grammarians and literary critics are pertinent to scholarly inquiry and must be placed as such. The Orientalist baggage that Indian literature, philosophy and criticism have

been carrying requires to be shed in order to identify refreshing approaches like this book offers. The discussions on central ideas in the complex language philosophy of Bhartrhari and the reassessment of these ideas in contemporary contexts of local as well as global lived experience is an approach that has been missing in scholarly work. In conclusion, it is important to recognise the possibilities embedded within comparative studies and the paradigms they offer to scholars and general readers alike.

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CATEGORIES, CREATION AND COGNITION IN VAIŚEṢIKA PHILOSOPHY. By ShashiPrabha Kumar. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore, 2019. 187 p.

ShashiPrabha Kumar's reference book, *Categories, Creation and Cognition in Vaiśeṣika Philosophy*, aims to help students and researchers study Vaiśeṣika, one of Indian philosophy's early and foundational traditions. There are few book-length treatments of Vaiśeṣika itself, as opposed to its later incorporation into Nyāya: for instance B.K. Matilal's contribution to *A History Of Indian Literature* is titled *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*. Wilhelm Halbfass' *On Being and What There Is*, an important treatment of Vaiśeṣika, integrates a philosophical approach with the philological, while recently, Anant Lal Thakur's *Origin and Development of the Vaiśeṣika System* focuses on the tradition's textual-historical development. Kumar herself has already

contributed to the literature with an introductory textbook, *Classical Vaiśeṣika in Indian Philosophy*.

Against this background, Kumar's newest work aims to help readers navigate the source material in the Sanskrit texts, explicitly disclaiming originality and comprehensivity (vii). This approach is evidenced in the book's wealth of footnotes and an entire chapter (fourteen) devoted to bibliography. While Kumar characterizes the book as having fourteen chapters, it would be more accurate to say it is a set of fourteen overlapping papers, each focusing on a different aspect of Vaiśeṣika. As a guide to source material, the book will be useful to readers already somewhat familiar with Vaiśeṣika, and as a reference guide, the book's lists of categories (*padārthas*) and other related concepts will also be handy for the same. However, the book is less satisfactory for readers wishing for a general introduction to the study of Vaiśeṣika, given its organization, coupled with its heavy use of untranslated Sanskrit and assumption that readers are already familiar with Indian philosophy. Philosophically speaking, the book is useful in sketching out the commitments of Vaiśeṣikas and their interlocutors, more on which below, but is sparse when it comes to developing the nuances of the sustained arguments and objections throughout the lengthy history of Vaiśeṣika influence on Indian thought.

The book begins with two chapters introducing Vaiśeṣika and its textual-historical connections: "Veda and Vaiśeṣika" and "Yoga and Vaiśeṣika." General readers will immediately find themselves perplexed by the various names of schools and technical terms:

who are the "Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika" and what is "validity"? (There is in fact, no sustained discussion of the relationship between Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, only scattered remarks throughout.) Specialists may find certain unsubstantiated claims unsatisfactory: such as that Vaiśeṣika has a more "logical view" than Mīmāṃsakas when it comes to the origin of the Vedas (4), or that Vaiśeṣika's commonsense realism makes it convincing (64). Such positive evaluations of Vaiśeṣika against all possible objections (which are typically underdeveloped if stated at all) continue, without support, throughout the volume. Still, these chapters lay the connections between Vaiśeṣika and the earliest textual sources for brahminical Sanskrit thought, with copious references to these texts. Some, but not all, are translated in the main text. Readers will easily be able to trace these discussions themselves in the sources with the help of the notes.

The subsequent chapters deal with a range of topics within Vaiśeṣika: categories (Chapter Three), creation (Chapter Four), atomism (Chapter Five), consciousness and cognition (Chapter Seven), *śabda* or speech/language (Chapter Eight), hermeneutics (Chapter Nine), *niḥśreyasa* or ultimate bliss (Chapter Ten), and ethics (Chapter Twelve). Some of the chapters, such as Chapter Three, include helpful tables grouping Sanskrit terms for important concepts or for lists of such terms. As many of these resources do not include English translations, this limits the book's reach to readers with some Sanskrit. Most of the chapters begin with some summary of what Vaiśeṣika is, and a list of the categories. Throughout, there are

repeated, redundant discussions of topics such as how atoms are combined, how creation occurs, how categories are grouped, and so on. For instance, Chapter Nine, “Hermeneutical Principles in Vaiśeṣika,” is mostly a restatement of the categories and their analysis through similarity and difference already treated in previous chapters, along with a few remarks about semantic theories—and not so much a treatment of textual interpretation. Thus the book is probably best treated as a reference to find source material related to discrete topics, rather than read as a sustained take on Vaiśeṣika.

One cautionary note about its use as a reference guide: Kumar’s treatment of Vaiśeṣika is more nuanced than of its opponents. For instance, she claims (44) that “the Mīmāṃsakas” accept resemblance (*sādrśya*) as an additional category, and that early Vaiśeṣikas might argue in response that *sādrśya* should be subsumed under *sāmānya* (“universal”). However, it is only Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas who take *sādrśya* as a category; Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas do not, in fact explicitly understanding it in relationship to *sāmānya* (see Kumārila’s *upamāna-pariccheda* in the *Ślokavārttika*). Likewise, references to “the Buddhists” (e.g. 120) obscure the differences among different Buddhist groups. Drawing out some of these distinctions would also help her exposition of Vaiśeṣika’s relation to other Indian approaches.

In addition to exploring Vaiśeṣika topically, Kumar takes a few other approaches: comparative (Chapter Six), historical (Chapter Eleven), and bibliographic (Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen). Chapter Six is titled “Vaiśeṣika approaches to Science.”

Unfortunately, the discussion of science, which Kumar defines as an approach to reality that involves “observation and experimentation,” in contrast to philosophy’s “introspection and reflection” is disappointing (78). She first flatly distinguishes science and philosophy: “science aims at exploring the reality and formulating theories thereof, while philosophy tries to expound and examine those theories” (78). The rest of the chapter then primarily consists in listing claims made by Vaiśeṣikas along with some apparent analogs in experimental science. For example, the Vaiśeṣika claim that atoms in a pot are subject individually to “chemical action” (*pāka*) is implied to be similar to the “modern method of heating through a microwave oven”; this thereby “proves” that Vaiśeṣikas have a more “scientific” outlook than Naiyāyikas, who argue that *pāka* applies to the pot as a whole (82). Setting aside the tendentious translation of *pāka* as “chemical action” rather than “heating” (while heating always involves chemical action, the converse is not true) such an anachronistic approach is not only in tension with Kumar’s stated goals of evaluating Vaiśeṣika on its the basis of its own presuppositions (74), but it threatens to obscure the genuinely important observational merits of these thinkers, who, as Kumar rightly emphasizes in an interesting discussion of kinds of motion (84-88), were astute observers of the natural world. Further, we lose a chance to consider whether these careful differentiators carved the lines between observation and reflection and between science and philosophy differently from the way Kumar does or modern thinkers might.

Chapter Eleven tentatively answers the question of whether and how Vaiśeṣika is connected to Śaivism: "Are Vaiśeṣikas Paśupatas?" Her view is that we do not have sufficient evidence to answer the question definitively, but that they were likely part of the Māheśvara sect, and maybe closely connected to Paśupatas. This chapter collects together evidence from original sources as well as existing views on the matter, with a nice introduction to the main contours of Śaivism. Given earlier discussion of creation and divinity (Chapter Four) and *nīḥśreyasa* (Chapter Ten), some motivation of the importance of this question for understanding Vaiśeṣika would have been both appropriate and useful at the outset. Finally, in Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen, Kumar introduces us to a set of five modern Sanskrit commentaries on Vaiśeṣika and fourteen international scholars of Vaiśeṣika, respectively. While much of the material in the last chapter is available in the form of bibliographic databases, it is a useful collection of references that graduate students might use for their studies. Chapter Thirteen, in contrast, gives attention to modern Sanskrit work (1958 to 1979) that may not be as well-known. This brief chapter gives highlights of these commentaries, which readers with facility in Sanskrit may wish to explore further.

On the whole, Kumar does what she sets out to do: collect together a set of chapters which treat important aspects of Vaiśeṣika thought and give readers assistance in navigating their original sources. It can be a useful reference work for established scholars with existing

background in Vaiśeṣika, with the limitations noted above kept in mind.

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THE SUBLIME READER. By Robert R. Clewis (Ed.) London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. xii+439 pp.

It is important to point out at the very outset that *The Sublime Reader* does not have an academic peer, historically speaking. It is the first book of its kind, and I emphasize that it might remain so for at least half a decade. The only book which dare approach it tangentially is Peter De Bolla's *The Sublime: A Reader in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1996). Having charted a circumference ranging from Longinus and Bharata Muni to as contemporary a figure as Emily Brady, Clewis can be legitimately excused for having