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JOHN A. TABER

## THE THEORY OF THE SENTENCE IN PŪRVA MĪMĀṂSĀ AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

Recent work by Mark Siderits on the *abhihitānvaya*- and *anvitābhidhāna-vādas* — the Mīmāṃsā theories of how words in sentences combine to produce a sentence meaning — has suggested certain ways in which they might be relevant to contemporary Western philosophy of language.<sup>1</sup> In the present study I would like to present a somewhat different view of how they are relevant. While Siderits sees the importance of the Mīmāṃsākas, in particular the Prābhākara Mīmāṃsākas, to lie in their development of a sense-reference distinction, I see it to lie more just in their discovery that the meanings of words *change* from sentence to sentence. I begin from scratch with a general summary of the *abhihitānvaya* and *anvitābhidhāna* positions, even though Siderits has done an admirable job of expounding the texts. This will allow me to bring out more clearly than others have done what I take to be the basic insights of the two positions.<sup>2</sup> Also, there is a need to rectify Siderits's under-appreciation of the *abhihitānvaya* (Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā) view. More detailed discussions of textual passages, however, especially of Pārthasārathimīśra's *Vākyārthanirṇaya*, on which I base many of my findings, are relegated to the notes. Then, in the second part of the paper, I make a modest attempt to apply the fact that the meanings of words change in different contexts to an issue in modern Western philosophy of language — the analysis of intensional sentences.

### I

The Mīmāṃsā concern with the semantics of sentences stems from the concern with the eternality of language. On the Mīmāṃsā view, if the Veda is to be considered authoritative (*pramāṇa*) it must be seen not to originate from human beings or even God (*apauruṣeya*). This requires in turn that language be seen as in some sense eternal (*nitya*), for the Veda consists of language. In the first *pāda* of the first

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*adhyāya* of the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra* it is established that words, their meanings, and the relation between word and meaning are eternal (1.1.12–23). But of course the Veda is not just a bunch of words; it consists of sentences. It is argued then that sentences, which are made up of words, derive their authority from those words. This is established in Śabara's commentary (ad 1.1.24) in response to a *prima facie* position to the effect that there is no way to explain how the comprehension of sentence meaning is derived solely from linguistic factors. Each word in a sentence cannot give the sentence meaning individually, for the latter is understood only when all the words have been heard. On the other hand, the collection of words could not designate the sentence meaning, because many sentences we encounter are new. In the case of a new sentence we could not have learned from past usage the correlation of the collection of words with a meaning. Nor can the *meanings* of the words effect awareness of the sentence meaning; for words designate universals and the meaning of a sentence is a particular, complex state of affairs. And there is obviously no necessary connection between any single word meaning and a particular sentence meaning; for a word is used in many sentences meaning many different things. Thus, according to the *pūrvapakṣin*, sentence meaning does not emerge naturally from the constituent words themselves or their meanings. In the case of Vedic sentences it must either be somehow man-made (*kṛtrima*) — that is, presumably, established merely by convention — or else altogether without basis and delusory (*vyāmoha*).<sup>3</sup> In view of the *Mīmāṃsā* claim that the Veda has no author, the first alternative is just as threatening to the authority of the Veda as the second.<sup>4</sup>

In answer to this challenge four basic possibilities are considered in the *Mīmāṃsā* discussions of sentence meaning: (1) the *sphoṭa-vāda*, according to which the real cause of cognition of sentence meaning is a single, undivided, abstract linguistic entity (the *sphoṭa*) which is manifested serially by the audible syllables; (2) the *antyavarna-vāda*, according to which a valid cognition of sentence meaning is delivered by the last syllable of the sentence together with the memory impressions of all the previous syllables; (3) the *abhihitānvaya-vāda*, which states that the words of a sentence first indicate their separate meanings and then all these meanings combine to give the sentence

meaning; and (4) the *anvitābhīdhāna-vāda*, which holds that each word individually gives the entire sentence meaning by indicating its own meaning qualified by the meanings of the other words with which it occurs. The expression *abhihitānvaya* means, then, ‘the association of meanings already indicated [separately by the words of the sentence]’ — this is considered the cause of sentence meaning in that view. Siderits renders, happily, *abhihitānvaya* as ‘designated relation.’ *Anvitābhīdhāna* — ‘related designation’ in Siderits’s terminology — means ‘the indication of a meaning [by a word] as related [to the meanings of the other words in the sentence]’ — this is thought to be the real cause of sentence meaning in the *anvitābhīdhāna* view. The Mīmāṃsā philosopher defends the possibility of deriving sentence meaning from words by developing either one of these two latter alternatives while rejecting the first two.

Both Mīmāṃsā positions depart from certain basic observations. The first of these is: the comprehension of the meaning of a sentence obviously depends in some way on understanding the meanings of the words that comprise it, because we only know what the sentence means when we know what the words mean. Otherwise, people who did not understand the meanings of the constituent words of a sentence would still get the sentence meaning — which never happens. And it cannot be the case that for every grammatical sentence we learn a corresponding sentence meaning. That would be impossible, because there are too many grammatical sentences — an infinite number in fact. Another basic observation — already noted by Śābara, as we have seen — is that we are able to cognize the meanings of sentences we have never heard before. This also suggests that sentence meaning is derived somehow from word meanings. Word meanings are knowable, because they are finite, but they can be combined in an infinite number of ways. We get new sentence meanings from those combinations.<sup>5</sup>

What, then, is the *abhihitānvaya* position? The tenth century Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā philosopher Pārthasārathimīśra, besides noting all the reasons for rejecting the *anvitābhīdhāna-vāda*, says the *abhihitānvaya-vāda* accords with experience.<sup>6</sup> What is the experience he is talking about? It seems to be this: If I pronounce any sentence — for example, “The beautiful, sweet-voiced, silk-clad birds moving about in the lotus forest seem to dance” (a popular Mīmāṃsā example) — the hearer,

when he hears the first word, understands its meaning; and when he hears the second, he understands its meaning, and so on for each of the words in the sentence. Having heard all the words and understood their meanings, he immediately comprehends the sentence meaning. Sentence meaning directly follows comprehension of all the word meanings, so it would seem — just from our experience — that the word meanings are the *cause* of the sentence meaning. Again, we get the meaning of each word as we hear it. Each word indicates its meaning as it is pronounced. These meanings stay in our mind until all the words of the sentence are heard. Then, when the last word is heard, we understand what the sentence means. In this way we can understand very long sentences, even discourses. We do not remember every *word* the speaker says, but the meaning of each word is somehow registered, and these assemble together at the end. After hearing the last word of a sentence or discourse we are typically unable to go back and recollect all the words. It is the meanings we reflect upon in understanding what was said — they must be the cause of sentence meaning.<sup>7</sup>

The above is essentially Pārthasārathi's statement. The Nyāya philosopher Jayantabhaṭṭa, in his exposition of the debate about sentence meaning in his *Nyāyamañjarī*, adds another point: We feel that words have discrete meanings, that their meanings are of a definite extent. One word in the above sentence, say 'dance,' refers to a particular kind of action, another word, 'birds,' refers to a particular kind of substance. To be sure, words are never employed in isolation; they always occur together in sentences, for the purpose of referring to concrete, complex states of affairs. But through *āvāpa* and *udvāpa* — adding or taking away a word from a sentence to alter its meaning — we are able to analyze out their discrete meanings, and that suggests that their original capacity to signify is with reference to simple or "pure" meanings, as opposed to complex ones. Now if, as the *anvītabhidhāna-vāda* suggests, a verb indicated an action together with a substance, and a noun indicated a substance together with an action, then their meanings would be roughly the same, not distinct. Moreover, we believe that the meaning of a word remains constant throughout all its uses, and that we can identify it. But according to

the *anvitābhidhāna-vāda* it is always shifting. ‘A bird’ means at one time a-bird-sitting-on-a-branch, again a-bird-singing-in-the-spring, or again a-bird-flying-in-the-air. You cannot really ever pin down the meaning of a word. But that is contrary to our intuition. Every word must have some constant, basic meaning.<sup>8</sup>

A third basic notion of the *abhihitānvaya-vāda* is that meanings (*artha*) — let us say here “ideas” — themselves have the capacity to associate together. The standard example is from Kumārila. Someone sees a vague white shape in the distance; he hears neighing; and he also hears the sound of galloping hooves. As a result he receives the complex idea, “A white horse is running.”<sup>9</sup> The various ideas ‘whiteness,’ ‘horse,’ and ‘running’ are combined together in a single cognition, but in this case none of them individually is conveyed by a word, nor is their relationship. So it is not necessarily through any capacity of words that ideas or meanings associate together. Rather, they do so of themselves. Therefore, once the meanings of words in a sentence are brought to mind by the words, they naturally combine together to produce a cognition of the sentence meaning, which is a complex state of affairs.<sup>10</sup> The fact that only certain ideas associate together — the fact, e.g., that when I happen to be looking at a cow standing in the pasture and someone says, “A horse is running,” I only get the cognition of a running horse and not some cognition combining ideas got from what *he said* and what *I see* (say, “A cow is running,” or, “A horse is standing”) — this has to do with the fact that ideas conveyed by words tend to associate together only with other ideas conveyed by words occurring within the same sentence, that is, roughly, only ideas from the same source associate together.<sup>11</sup>

In sum, the *abhihitānvaya-vāda* presents us with the following straightforward picture: The meanings of words are discrete concepts; the several words occurring in a sentence successively indicate their own, individual meanings; these meanings then combine more or less automatically to produce the sentence meaning. As such, the theory captures certain intuitions we have about language. But other intuitions, apparently in conflict with these, are captured by the *anvitābhidhāna* theory.

The heart of that theory is awareness of the fact that the sentence is

the unit of linguistic communication. We always speak in sentences. We learn language from people using sentences. As a modern philosopher would say, only by uttering a sentence can one make a move in a “language game.” A word never functions by itself to communicate anything. If I were to say just “cow,” you would receive no information from my utterance. Only if “cow” occurs in a sentence, such as, “Bring the cow” — or in a context where such a sentence is understood — does it convey information. So the meaning of the word ‘cow’ is dependent on its occurrence together with other words in a sentence. Words do not mean anything — that is, nothing is really intended by them — just by themselves. This is a point stressed by various Western philosophers, too — Frege, the later Wittgenstein, and Quine.

This fact can be approached in other ways. Jayanta asks, what is a sentence, after all? (for here we are talking about the theory of *sentence* meaning). He answers, after Śābara, that it is not considered to be just a bunch of words, but a bunch of words which together indicate a meaning — *saṃhatyārtham abhidadhati padāni vākyam*.<sup>12</sup> That is, we feel that a sentence is a group of words functioning somehow as a unit to produce a single effect — the sentence meaning. Now the idea that each word in the sentence separately indicates only its own meaning does not jibe with this impression. Here we get the picture of each word in the sentence standing on its own, like a series of stakes. But a more appropriate analogy (Jayanta’s analogy) of how words function together in a sentence is that of several stones supporting a pot. A single stone cannot support the pot all by itself; it requires the presence of the other stones. It makes an individual contribution to the supporting of the pot only insofar as it supports it together with the others. So a word in a sentence designates its individual meaning only insofar as it designates the sentence meaning together with the other words. This insight, indeed, is held in common with the *sphoṭa-vādin*. The difference here is that the *anvītabhidhāna-vādin* feels that it is possible to an extent to identify the individual contributions words make.

But the *abhihitānvaya-vādin* pointed out that we have an intuition that the meaning of a word remains constant throughout all its uses. It does not totally change every time we use it. Here, while the *anvītabhidhāna* theorist agrees with this — the meaning of a word remains

*basically* the same — he stresses that the meaning of a word is qualified (*viśiṣṭa*) by its context.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps the best way to see this is

Tom opened the door.  
Sally opened her eyes.  
The carpenters opened the wall.  
Sam opened his book to page 37.  
The surgeon opened the wound.

As Searle says, the literal meaning of ‘open’ is the same in each of these five sentences, but it is understood differently in each. “In each case the truth conditions marked by the word ‘open’ are different . . . What constitutes opening a wound is quite different from what constitutes opening a book, and understanding these sentences literally requires understanding each differently, even though ‘open’ has the same basic semantic content throughout.”<sup>14</sup> So we can say here that it appears that the basic meaning of the word ‘open’ is made specific by the words with which it occurs — and that, together with the claim that this specific meaning is what the word *designates* (*abhi √dhā*), is the gist of the *anvitābhīdhāna-vāda*.

Lest one think that this is only a property of verbs — “action words” — and not other parts of speech, consider how the word ‘green’ refers to quite different colors in the phrases ‘green apple,’ ‘green eyes,’ ‘green water,’ ‘green grass,’ and ‘green face.’ Or, consider the adjustments in the meaning of ‘soft’ in ‘soft mattress,’ ‘soft peach,’ ‘soft glove.’<sup>15</sup>

Is this also a phenomenon of nouns? Perhaps we can detect subtle shifts in the meaning of the noun ‘cat’ in the following:

The cat is on the mat.  
The cat scratched the dog.  
The cat loves milk.

In one sentence a cat is considered as a mere physical object, in another as an (unpredictable) animal with claws, and in the third as a domestic pet. Yet if the meaning of ‘cat’ does change in these sentences, it changes very little. That may have something to do with why we consider a cat a more solid, real kind of thing than the color green. Nevertheless, we also have such sentences as,



The porcelain cat broke when it fell off the shelf.

Unless one is ready to argue that we have to do here with a homonym, which is implausible, it seems that one must admit that the meanings of nouns, too, can alter significantly from context to context. Consider also the series: 'front door,' 'car door,' 'cat door,' 'jogging shoe,' 'snow shoe,' 'horse shoe,' etc. Isn't it correct to say also of 'door' and 'shoe' in these expressions that, although the basic meaning of the word is the same, it is understood differently in each case?

Thus, it seems that the *anvitābhīdhāna-vāda* is more adequate to some aspects of our experience of language than the *abhihitānvaya-vāda*.

(Modern philosophers have noticed that even extra-syntactic factors can modify the meanings of words — as happens, for example, with indexical words such as 'I,' 'here,' 'now,' The basic semantic content of the word 'I,' no doubt, remains the same throughout its uses, and yet the reference of the word 'I' varies — not according to the other words it occurs together with, but according to the person who utters it.)

But it can be asked here: Isn't this "basic semantic content" or "literal meaning" which remains constant just the universal? And isn't the qualification that it undergoes just a result of the specification of the universal through interaction with the ideas indicated by the other words in the sentence? Why do we have to assume here that the words themselves refer to this qualification? Can it not take place just as a result of the combination of the word meanings after they have been presented by the words? In other words, do we really need to move beyond the *abhihitānvaya* theory to explain this?

Here the *anvitābhīdhāna* theorist insists on what I take to be his main point, viz., that they feel that words are *expressive*. They have a unique power to give us an awareness of things that does not depend on perception, inference, or implication. We hear a sentence and immediately get an idea of a certain complex state of affairs — even one of which we have no previous experience — and we feel that the words are responsible for this. In other words, *śabda* — language — is a separate *pramāṇa* or means of knowledge. Now in what does this expressive capacity of language consist? Does it consist just in the words indicating their separate individual meanings? Here the *anvitā-*

*bhidhāna* theorist argues that words do not really *designate* (*abhi√dhā*) their individual meanings, they only *remind* us of them. When we learn language a correspondence gets set up for us between each word and a basic semantic content. These two things become associated in the mind. Subsequently, when we encounter one, we naturally remember the other. So a word is not expressive insofar as it presents its simple individual meaning; it is only a reminder of that. Its expressiveness must rather consist in the designation of this meaning in relation to other meanings.<sup>16</sup>

But even if it is granted that words do designate their individual meanings (for the thesis that they are just reminders is hard to establish, I think, and Śālikanātha, e.g., does not insist on it) — even granted this, says the *anvitābhidhāna* theorist, you still cannot adequately account for the common intuition that it is the words that are responsible for our idea of what the sentence means. The *abhihitānvaya* theorist was confident that once simple meanings or ideas are made present to the mind — whether by words or some other means — they will associate together automatically. But the *anvitābhidhāna-vādin* argues that this in fact never happens. Although words may not be involved, the awareness of a complex state of affairs will always be brought about, through various *pramāṇas*, by the combination of complex ideas, not simple ones. Śālikanātha demonstrates this in a penetrating discussion of Kumārila's example of the running white horse. The perceptions of whiteness, neighing, and hoofbeats yield, either by inference or implication, *complex* ideas of 'a galloping horse' or 'a white horse,' from which one arrives at 'a galloping white horse.' One never has a case of the simple, unconnected ideas 'white,' 'horse,' and 'running' combining together of themselves.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, since simple meanings do not combine together by themselves (*pramāṇas* will be involved), yet at the same time, because we feel that language is responsible for their combination and not some other *pramāṇa* — that when some one says, "A white horse is running," the meanings of the words are brought into combination by the fact that he *said* it — because of all this, words must designate not simple individual meanings but meanings related to other meanings.<sup>18</sup>

Let the above suffice as an outline of the *anvitābhidhāna* theory. The main points are: (1) Words do not mean anything by themselves. They convey information only insofar as they function together with

other words. (2) Although their semantic content remains the same through all their uses, it is also qualified to a certain extent. (3) Since the designative function of words carries all the way through to the sentence meaning, it cannot stop just with the indication of simple meanings, because meanings do not combine of themselves.

Before going on to consider how all this relates to Western philosophy a few critical remarks are in order. How are we to decide between the *abhihitānvaya*- and *anvitābhīdhāna-vādas*? It often seems that the dispute between them is just quibbling about the meaning of the term 'cause.' Both theories want to account for what causes our awareness of sentence meaning. If one defines 'cause' as the factor that immediately precedes an effect, then it would seem that the *abhihitānvaya-vāda*, as the theory that claims that the awareness of sentence meaning is caused by awareness of word meanings, is correct. For, indeed, the adherents of both theories admit that our awareness of the individual meanings of words immediately precedes awareness of sentence meaning. If, however, you define 'cause' as the initial impetus toward the realization of an effect, then the *anvitābhīdhāna-vāda*, as the theory that claims that sentence meaning is caused by words, is correct. Neither partisan would deny that words initiate our eventual awareness of the meanings of sentences. So, the debate, looked at in this way, is without much substance. Each side is right or wrong depending on one's definition of causality.

At the same time, a more substantial difference between the two theories may be seen in how each accounts for language as a distinct *pramāṇa*. It is fundamental to Mīmāṃsā that language produces an awareness of states of affairs (or of prescriptions or prohibitions) by virtue of a unique capacity of its own, without depending on knowledge provided by other means. The authority of the Veda, which pronounces on matters not accessible to the senses and which has no author whose intentions could be *inferred* as the meanings of its sentences, rests on this principle. Now, on the *anvitābhīdhāna-vāda* it is clear how words carry all the way to sentence meaning, viz., by their own power to *designate* their meanings as *qualified* by other meanings. But on the *abhihitānvaya* theory this fact is not so well secured. The meanings of words, once designated by the words, are supposed to

assemble into a complex meaning automatically by themselves. But one suspects, together with the Prābhākara, that other cognitive processes would in fact have to be involved, that separate, unconnected ideas can assemble together in the mind of the hearer only insofar as he consults other things he knows about the world, through other means of knowledge. Thus, on the *abhihitānvaya-vāda* the force of words can be usurped by other *pramāṇas*. But this evaluation is made only on the basis of the premise that language must be a separate *pramāṇa*. If one does not accept that premise, as indeed it seems most modern philosophers would not, then there is no clear criterion for choosing between these two theories.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, I believe that it is more important to see what the *anvitābhīdhāna*- and *abhihitānvaya-vādas* have in common. Both understand the function of words in sentences in basically the same way. According to both — even, in spite of appearances, to the Bhāṭṭa — the meanings of words *change* as they are used in sentences. That is to say, the meaning of a word, once it is brought to mind by the word, interacts with the meanings of the other words. The Prābhākara says this by claiming that a word designates its meaning as qualified by the meanings of the other words in the sentence. The Bhāṭṭa says this by claiming that, after the meaning has been designated separately by the word, it combines with the other meanings to imply the specific state of affairs (the particular) in which it (as a universal) inheres. Thus, on both theories, no word really in the end — once our awareness of the sentence is complete — will mean the same thing in one sentence as it does in another. To be sure, the *anvitābhīdhāna* theorist puts more emphasis on this fact insofar as he claims that the word *designates* this context-adjusted meaning, whereas the *abhihitānvaya* theorist puts more emphasis on the fact that the meanings of words remain *basically* the same from sentence to sentence by insisting that the own-meaning of a word interacts with other meanings only *after* being designated by the word (cf. above, Jayanta's appeal to our intuition that the meanings of words do remain constant). But as I see it, this is no more than a difference of emphasis, having to do, as suggested above, ultimately with matters that are of importance only to Pūrva Mīmāṃsā. It is just this insight, common to both schools — that the

meaning of a word is never quite the same in any two sentences — that I take to be the point about the Mīmāṃsā discussion of sentence meaning of most relevance to Western philosophy of language.<sup>20</sup>

## II

How does the Mīmāṃsā theory of the sentence relate to Western philosophy of language? Here, again, I must provide some background.

Western philosophers and linguists have, like their Indian counterparts, sought to explain how the meanings of sentences are derived from their component words. But the motives behind the discussion have been quite different. There is no concern on anyone's part to establish the eternality of language. It goes almost without saying among modern philosophers and social scientists that language is entirely a human phenomenon, an institution established through convention.

The concern with sentence meaning in the West, rather, stems from considerations of symbolic logic. Symbolic logic was created as an artificial language in which logical and mathematical proofs could be formalized. Now, the validity of a proof depends on the meanings of the statements which form its premises, intermediate steps, and conclusion. A formally valid proof consists of a set of statements for which there is no interpretation of their meaning such that the statements which comprise its premises are true and the statement which is its conclusion is false. So, in evaluating proofs symbolic logic must have a way of determining the exact meanings of statements. This is done by specifying at the outset the denotations of all names and predicates in the artificial language and, by recursive rules showing how the meanings of complex expressions are built up from the meanings of their parts, the meanings of all possible combinations of names and predicates. Thus, symbolic logic involves the assumption that the meaning of a statement is determined by the meanings of its parts. Although symbolic logic was originally devised as an artificial language for expressing mathematical notions, it is based on principles taken from natural language, and it is usually considered to represent clearly the workings of natural language, so that it is believed by some

that if you want to make the logical structure of a sentence in natural language explicit, you should translate it into a corresponding sentence of symbolic logic. In this way, the idea that the meaning of a sentence is determined by the meanings of its words has become a basic assumption of the modern study of natural language.

However, there are certain situations recognized by philosophers where it does not appear to be the case that the meaning of a complex expression is determined by the meanings of its parts.<sup>21</sup> One such situation is indirect discourse, where the meanings of the words of a sentence embedded in a 'that'-clause are not necessarily the same as when the sentence stands by itself as an assertion. Consider for example the two sentences:

1. Mr. Smith is an honest man.

and

2. The judge believes that Mr. Smith is an honest man.

The dependent clause following 'that' in 2 is formed of the same words as sentence 1, yet it has different logical properties. Existential generalization is valid for 1 — if it is true, then it is true that there is some man who is honest. Also, the substitution of other expressions referring to the same object will preserve truth value in 1 — e.g., if Mr. Smith is an honest man, and Mr. Smith is Mary's father, then "Mary's father is an honest man" will be true. But neither of these conditions holds for sentence 2. So the problem is, if the meaning of the whole is a function of the meanings of the parts, and if the relevant parts in 1 and 2 — the words which make up the clause in question — have the same meanings, then how can it be that that clause in 1 and 2 has such different properties?

The well-known explanation offered by Frege is that the referents of words change in intensional sentences (sentences such as 2 above). Whereas ordinarily in extensional sentences (such as 1) a word refers to an object, in intensional sentences it refers to its customary "sense," the concept or the "mode of presentation" of the object (referent) by the word. Substitutivity in intensional contexts is not possible without changing truth value because, while, for example, 'Mr. Smith' and 'Mary's father' usually refer to the same thing, the ideas associated

with those expressions are quite different, and it is the latter which become the referents here. On the other hand, Frege suggested that existential generalization is not a proper inference in the case of intensional sentences because the phrase of the ‘that’-clause is not a proposition but only the name of a proposition. (A proposition can be the direct object of certain verbs such as ‘believes,’ ‘thinks,’ ‘says,’ etc., and when it occurs as such it is not asserted but only referred to by a name — a name made out of the very words usually used to assert the proposition.) Since the proposition is not asserted, the person who utters it is not committed to its truth, and so it would be wrong to infer from his statement that there is in fact some thing which has the properties which the proposition, taken by itself just as an assertion, ascribe to it.

Philosophers after Frege have criticized and yet built upon his ideas, but to discuss all the theories, even Frege’s in any detail, would take us too far afield. What I wish to suggest is that the Mīmāṃsā understanding of how the meanings of words change in different contexts offers a somewhat different and, perhaps, more satisfactory approach to the phenomenon of intensional sentences than Frege’s (though of course this specific problem is not anywhere discussed in Mīmāṃsā literature).

Before considering the qualification of meanings in intensional sentences, however, let us return to consider — as we did above in discussing the *anvitābhīdhāna-vāda* — how the meanings of nouns are qualified by adjectival constructions. It is well known that adjectives are noun “modifiers,” that they serve to make the meanings of nouns specific in certain ways. But it is not often noticed that some adjectives modify the meanings of nouns so as to make them almost inapplicable. Consider such adjectives as ‘so-called,’ ‘fake,’ and ‘artificial’ in such phrases as ‘the so-called philosopher,’ ‘the fake driver’s license,’ ‘artificial flowers,’ etc. These adjectives render the basic meanings of the nouns they modify applicable only in an analogous sense to the things being talked about — an analogous sense, I stress, which is not another fixed meaning of the nouns, but apparently just the result of adjectival modification.<sup>22</sup> Note further that the adjective ‘so-called’ renders the noun it modifies “referentially opaque,” that is, it indicates not only the thing but also the word that



has been used to talk about it. Thus, in constructions with the adjective 'so-called' the noun cannot necessarily be replaced by another that usually refers to the same thing.

While the things referred to by the nouns in the above examples can at least be said to exist even if they are not authentic instances of the noun category, other kinds of adjectives render dubious the very existence of the referent of the noun, e.g., 'presumed,' 'hypothetical,' 'reputed,' 'supposed.' Still other adjectives, e.g., 'illusory,' 'imaginary,' and modifying phrases such as 'which he dreamed about' serve to deny outright that there exists any concrete referent of the noun.

Now there seems to be no reason why intensional sentences should not be viewed as continuous with the above phenomena. One need only accept that the meaning of a noun can be qualified not just by an immediately preceding adjective or modifying phrase but also by the whole sentence in which it is used. Once again, the problem of intensional sentences with reference to the example given above is: How is it that the logical properties of the phrase "Mr. Smith is an honest man" in 1 and 2 are so different (you can have existential generalization and substitution for 1 but not for 2) if the meaning of the whole is a function of the meanings of its parts and if the words in 1 and 2 — let us consider in particular 'Mr. Smith' — have the same meanings?<sup>23</sup> The Mīmāṃsaka's answer to this question would be that, while the meaning of 'Mr. Smith' in 1 and 2 is basically the same, it is nevertheless qualified in 2 so as to give rise to the unusual properties noted. After all, 'Mr. Smith' in 1 occurs simply as the subject of the predicate 'is an honest man,' while it also stands in relation to the phrase 'the judge believes' in 2. The contribution of the phrase 'the judge believes' to the meaning of 2 is to render uncertain the existence of any referent of 'Mr. Smith,' just as the adjectives 'presumed' or 'hypothetical' in noun phrases do for the nouns they modify. Thus, existential generalization from 2 is not permissible. Moreover, 'the judge believes' renders the words that form its complement referentially opaque — that is, they potentially serve to indicate the very words in which the judge's belief is formulated — similar to the way in which the adjective 'so-called' affects its noun. Therefore, 'Mary's father' may not necessarily be substituted for 'Mr. Smith,' even though both usually refer to the same person.



In other words, we could say that in 1 and 2 the expression 'Mr. Smith' has different meanings. Similarly, 'cat' has different meanings in "The cat is on the mat" and "The porcelain cat broke when it fell off the shelf." But these meanings are variations or qualifications of a single, identical, basic meaning. The qualification is brought about — I, though not the Mimamsaka, would say that this is brought about in the mind of the hearer, consulting his knowledge about the world — as a result of the influence of the meaning of the whole sentence on that of the individual expression 'Mr. Smith' or 'cat' which partly comprises it. In 2 this qualification is so drastic as to involve a change in the usual properties and implications of the meaning of the expression 'Mr. Smith,' in particular, that there corresponds to it a physically existing referent which is independent of how anyone conceives it.

The spirit of this solution — the details of which still have to be worked out — is of course quite similar to that put forward by Frege. But there are differences. First, in this view the peculiarities of intensional sentences are seen as related to a larger phenomenon, viz., the qualification of meanings by context in *all* discourse. Thus, this solution of the problem of intensional sentences is less *ad hoc* than Frege's, which seems designed to deal with only this one problem. Second, the Mīmāṃsā solution also offers a way of understanding the transition from a *de dicto* to a *de re* interpretation of an intensional sentence, that is, of how in certain circumstances (when Smith exists) 2 can be interpreted to be a sentence *about* Mr. Smith and not, as Frege paradoxically suggests, only about the *sense* of the expression 'Mr. Smith.' For in this view 2 would still be about Mr. Smith insofar as the *basic meaning* of 'Mr. Smith' in this sentence is the same as in 1.

Indeed, in general, this solution does not suggest that in intensional sentences the usual sense of a word becomes its referent. Here, I see no reason not to accept Siderits's proposal that there is a sense-reference distinction in Mīmāṃsā: the meaning of a word is its sense; the particular thing in which the universal, as the meaning of the word, inheres is its referent.<sup>24</sup> But, then, according to Mīmāṃsā the sense of the word 'cat' is the universal 'cat-hood,' and it is hardly plausible that the universal 'cat-hood' becomes the referent of the word 'cat' in an intensional sentence such as, "Joe believes that the cat died." Rather,

the Mīmāṃsā position seems to imply just that, in any kind of sentence, the sense of a word, its meaning, is always specified or qualified in some way to determine the referent — the specific thing that is being talked about — in conjunction with the other words of the sentence. Precisely how it is determined, I would suggest, is something only our experience of the world tells us, case by case. But it need not be strictly a concrete, physical entity — it could be a conceptual one. Indeed, it seems that for sentences like, “Unicorns do not exist,” it is most accurate to say that the word ‘unicorn’ has no referent. (It could hardly be ‘unicorn-ness.’) Nevertheless, even here the sense of the word still functions to determine precisely what kind of thing does not exist.<sup>25</sup> In any case, the sense *per se* does not become the referent.<sup>26</sup>

In conclusion, I suggest that the Mīmāṃsā insight that the meanings of words change as they are used in different sentences offers an interesting, new angle on an important issue in Western philosophy of language. Thus, I would emphasize this feature of Mīmāṃsā thought over the discovery of a sense-reference distinction, which is old hat to modern philosophers. Nevertheless, nothing I have said vitiates Siderits’s findings. There is indeed something akin to a sense-reference distinction in Mīmāṃsā. But I would also stress that in Mīmāṃsā the referent of a word — as, once again, the object that is being talked about, the particular in which the universal expressed by the meaning or sense of the word inheres — emerges from the interaction of the meaning of the word with other words. The referent of a word, thus, changes somewhat from sentence to sentence. That is to say, it is not even the same *type* of thing in every case. And I believe that that is a slightly different understanding of reference than is found in modern Western philosophy of language.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

MSBh	<i>Mīmāṃsādarśanam with Śābarabhāṣya and Prabhābhidyākyā of Vaidyanāthaśāstri, Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, no. 97 (Poona, 1973)</i>
NM	<i>Nyāyamañjarī of Jayantabhaṭṭa, Kāshī Sanskrit Series, no. 106, (Varanasi: Chowkhambha Sanskrit Series, 1971)</i>
NRM	<i>Nyāyaratnamālā of Pārthasārathimīśra, Gaekwad Oriental Series, no. 75 (Baroda, 1937)</i>

- PP *Prakaraṇapañcikā* of Śālikanāthamiśra, *Benares Hindu University Darśana Series*, no. 4 (Varanasi: Benares Hindu University, 1961)
- ŚV *Śloka-vārttika* of Kumārila-bhaṭṭa, *Prācyabhāratī Series*, no. 10 (Varanasi: Tara Publications, 1978)

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> “The Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā Theory of Related Designation,” in *Analytical Philosophy in Comparative Perspective*, ed. B. K. Matilal and J.L. Shaw (Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel, 1985), pp. 253–298; “Word Meaning, Sentence Meaning, and *Apoha*,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 13 (1985): 133–151; “The Sense-Reference Distinction in Indian Philosophy of Language,” *Synthese* 69 (1986): 81–106.

<sup>2</sup> For other expositions see Sreekrishna Sarma, “Syntactical Meaning — Two Theories,” *Adyar Library Bulletin* 23 (1959): 41–62 and K. Kunjunni Raja, *Indian Theories of Meaning* (Madras: Adyar Library, 1963), pp. 191–227.

<sup>3</sup> MSBh, pp. 110–112. The *pūrvapakṣa* continues through p. 114.

<sup>4</sup> There are several obscurities about this *pūrvapakṣa*. First, it is not clear what, p. 111, *na cāyaṃ samudāyo 'sti loke yato 'sya vyavahārād artho 'vagamyate*, means. My attempt at interpretation above differs from that of Kumārila, ŚV, *vākya-adhikaraṇa*, 100–101. Second, it is not clear how the *pūrvapakṣin* thinks we comprehend the meanings of sentences in ordinary discourse. For it seems — Kumārila and Pārthasārathi at any rate take it to be the case — that all the arguments brought forward against deriving sentence meaning from words or word meanings are intended to apply both to Vedic and ordinary language. And the notion that convention could secure the meaning of each sentence in ordinary discourse separately is patently absurd (there would have to be an infinite number of stipulations). Here, Kumārila suggests (ŚV, *vākya*, 108) that the opponent means to say that the meaning of a sentence is got from the “purpose” for which it is used (*arthād bhavel loke*). Finally, it is unclear to me just who this opponent is. Could it be the Mādhyamika, who tended to claim that all verbal discourse, except insofar as it has a use, is delusory? See in this regard Malcolm Eckel, “Bhāvaviveka and the Early Mādhyamika Theories of Language,” *Philosophy East and West* 28 (1978): 323–337.

<sup>5</sup> NRM, p. 95, ll. 21ff. I would like to thank Pandit J. Veṅkatarāma Śāstrī of Madras Sanskrit College, who assisted me in understanding this text when I was in Madras, 1984–85. Thanks also to the Fulbright Foundation (Indo-American Scholars Program), which supported my research during that period.

<sup>6</sup> *atrābhidhīyate naitan matam api upapattimat /  
adrṣṭakalpanātasmin mate hi syād gariyāsī //  
drṣṭabādhaprasaṅgaś ca tasmād abhihitānvayaḥ //  
drṣṭānugunyaṃ tatra syāt, kalpanā ca laghiyāsī //*

NRM, p. 102, verses 10–11.

<sup>7</sup> NRM, p. 104, ll. 16–28: *kiñ ca dīrghatameṣu vākyeṣv aśakyam eva [padārthā-nusandhānam. saty api ca tasmin padārthānusandhānamātreṇa vākyaṛthaḥ pratiyāta iti sarvajanīnam etat.*

Pārthasārathi points out that even on the *anvitābhīdhāna-vāda* words first produce an awareness of their individual meanings, subsequent to which an awareness of the sentence meaning arises. For otherwise, if the words in a sentence did not first yield an awareness of their meanings (*svārtha*), a particular word could not designate its meaning qualified by the meanings of the other words in the sentence. Granted this, however, he argues, it is more reasonable to consider the word meanings as the cause of the sentence meaning rather than the words: "... Words, which are removed [from the sentence meaning], do not somehow produce knowledge of the sentence meaning by jumping over the word meanings which immediately precede [the cognition of the sentence meaning]. And so it is correct to suppose that the comprehension of word meanings is the cause of the comprehension of the sentence meaning' (*tataś cānantarabhūtapadārthātikrameṇa vyavahitāni padāni na kathaṁ cit vākārtham pratipādayantīti yuktam padārthāvagatiḥ vākārthāvagateḥ kāraṇam bhavatīti kalpayitum*, p. 104, ll. 21–22).

Thus, one of the main reasons given by the Prābhākaras for their position — that words are cognized first, prior to the word meanings — is taken by the Bhāṭṭa to be a reason for his own position. The significance of this fact for the Prābhākaras is that words appear to *initiate* our eventual awareness of the sentence meaning; so any power to convey sentence meaning ought to be vested in them.

Another argument given by the Prābhākaras for their position is that words are employed by the speaker with the *intention* of conveying the sentence meaning (cf. PP, p. 401, ll. 9–14). Usually, that which is taken up in order to achieve a certain effect is the cause of that effect. But Pārthasārathi counters (NRM, pp. 104, l. 30 — 105, l. 3) that the general principle is not valid. We employ sticks to cook food, but the sticks are not the cause of the cooking. Rather, the fire produced from the sticks is. So, although one takes up words to convey the complex state of affairs that is the meaning of the sentence, they are not necessarily the cause of the awareness of the meaning of the sentence. It may well be that an intermediate effect, the comprehension of the word meanings, is the actual cause.

Finally, Pārthasārathi attacks (pp. 106, l. 26 — 107, l. 26) the third traditional reason given by the Prābhākaras in support of an *anvitābhīdhāna*, that words are acknowledged to have indicative or designative force (*abhidhātva*), whereas any assumption of indicative force on the part of word meanings is problematic. Moreover, the latter position would seem to deprive words completely of indicative power (PP, pp. 400, l. 19 — 401, l. 2); for according to the Prābhākara (and perhaps also Kumārila — see ŚV, *śabdapariśeṣa*, 107) words only *remind* us of their own meanings, they do not indicate them. The indicative power of words for the Prābhākara could lie only in their indicating their *qualified* meanings (*viśiṣṭārtha*) after merely reminding us of their simple meanings. Pārthasārathi, in a lengthy discussion, considers whether in fact there is anything wrong in holding that words could merely remind us of their meanings. He concludes that a word cannot be a mere reminder, since it does not function according to the mechanics of memory, i.e., awaken a memory impression (*saṁskāra*), which in turn gives rise to an awareness of its meaning. Rather, the cognition of the meaning of a word seems to follow immediately upon hearing the word. Thus, on the *abhihitānvaya-vāda*, words have indicative force after all — but with respect to their simple, not qualified, meanings.

The Prābhākara position is summed up in the traditional verse (see PP, p. 400, *kārikā* 11):

*prāthamyād abhidhārtvāt tātparyāvagamād api /  
padānām eva sā śaktir varam abhyupagamyatām //*  
“Because they are [cognized] first, because they are [universally  
recognized to be] designative, and because the intention [of the speaker  
to use them to convey the sentence meaning] is accepted [even by the  
opponent], it is better to assume that that capacity [to cause awareness of  
the sentence meaning] belongs to words [instead of word meanings].”

Against this Pārthasārathi presents his own *kārikā* (NRM, p. 107):

*Prāthamyam kāraṇam yat tu tad viparyayasāadhanam /  
ye tātparyābhidhārtve te 'pi anaikantikikrte //*  
“The reason [given by the *anvitābhidhāna-vādin* for his view, that words]  
are prior [to our cognition of word meanings], is a means for proving the  
opposite [i.e., the *abhihitānvaya-vāda*]. And [the two reasons] ‘because of  
the intention [of the speaker]’ and ‘because of the [universally accepted]  
indicative capacity [of words]’ — these have been shown to be incon-  
clusive.”

<sup>8</sup> NM, pp. 364–365.

<sup>9</sup> ŚV, *vākya-adhikaraṇa*, 358–359.

<sup>10</sup> NRM, p. 117, *kārikā* 31, ab: *klptam anvitāsamarthyam padārthānām svabhāvataḥ*  
Cf. p. 102, *kārikā* 13:

*syāt svarūpābhidhāne 'pi dhīr viśiṣṭārthagocarā /  
viśeṣadhīr hi sāmānyād anāyāsena siddhyati //*

The awareness of the particular follows “automatically” from the universal, for a universal cannot exist except in a particular. Therefore, when something in general is indicated by a word as its simple meaning, the hearer immediately understands a particular thing as determined by the combination of that simple meaning with the simple meanings of the other words of the sentence. Pārthasārathi maintains that this implication of the particular by the universal is well-established (*klpta*). The only thing the *abhihitānvaya-vāda* must postulate which is not altogether obvious is the principle that simple meanings are restricted in combining with other simple meanings by occurrence together in the same sentence (*niyamamātram ekavākyatayā kalpayitavyam*, p. 118, l. 2). But the *anvitābhidhāna-vādin* must also postulate this principle, for he, too, must account for how a word, in “indicating” a meaning qualified by other meanings, is restricted as to the other meanings with which it may interact. See the discussion of *kārikā* 14 (*tulyo 'bhidhānapakṣe 'pi sa doṣaḥ śabdagocaraḥ/ yat tu tatraikavākyatvam padārtheṣv api tat samam //*), pp. 103–104.

The mechanics of how awareness of the particular is got from the universal are further discussed by Pārthasārathi, *kārikās* 38–43. Insofar as the sentence meaning (as the particular state of affairs in which inhere the universals indicated by the individual words of the sentence) is yielded by implication, Pārthasārathi, following Kumārila, characterizes it as *lākṣaṇika* (p. 125, l. 10 and *kārikā* 43), that is, as *indirectly* indicated by the individual words of the sentence.

<sup>11</sup> NRM, pp. 103, l. 1 — 104, l. 11.

<sup>12</sup> NM, p. 366, ll. 9ff.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. PP, p. 384, *kārikā* 8:

*ākaṅkṣāsannidhiprāptayogyārthāntarasaṅgatān svārthān āhuḥ padāni . . .*

<sup>14</sup> *Intentionality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 145–146.

<sup>15</sup> It seems unlikely that we have to do with different established senses of 'green' and 'soft' here. For there seems to be no limit, e.g., to the various shades of green the word 'green' can mean. Is the meaning of 'green' then any color within a certain range? Certainly. But the point here is just that the particular color within that range is specified when the word is used in a certain context.

<sup>16</sup> *tasmāt sambandhagrahaṇasamayānadhigatānvitārthapratipādanābhyupagama eva śabdānām abhidhāyakateti tam aṅgikurvātā padānām anvitābhidhāyakatāśrayaṇīyā*, PP, pp. 400, l. 22 — 401, l. 2.

<sup>17</sup> PP, pp. 392–394. I read this difficult passage somewhat differently than Siderits (cf. "Prābhākara Theory," pp. 263–264). According to the Bhāṭṭa, one *sees* whiteness, *infers*, from the sound of neighing and hoofbeats, the presence of a horse, and *infers*, from the hoofbeats, that something is running. Then these three separate ideas — of whiteness, a horse, and running — got by *pramāṇas* other than language, combine automatically to produce the complex notion, "A white horse is running." But Śālikanātha denies that the *pramāṇas* of perception and inference — or, as the case may be, implication (*arthāpatti*) — yield three such uncombined ideas (which then go on to combine of themselves). He considers three cases: (1) One sees a flash of white and hears the sounds of neighing and rapidly beating hooves, but does not know where they are coming from. In this case, having inferred that the neighing and galloping sounds belong to a horse, one immediately infers that the swift motion *belongs to a horse*. It is not the case that one just comprehends swift motion and that idea in turn combines, of itself, with that of 'horse' (*tadāsav aśvavartinim eva vegavatīm gatim anuminoṭī, na punaḥ kevalām evāvagamya, tasyānvayaṃ padārthasāmarthyena avabudhyate*, p. 393, ll. 3–5). (2) One knows that the neighing and galloping sounds are coming from the white thing one sees. In this case, one understands immediately by inference that horseness and running belong to the white thing. One does not obtain the ideas of horseness and running separately; they do not of themselves combine with the idea 'white' to form the notion "A white horse is running." (3) This is a variation of the first case in which one knows in addition that there are only horses in the area. Here, the common substratum of horseness and whiteness is obtained by implication. One does not separately cognize horseness and whiteness.

Pārthasārathi, mercifully, considers a much simpler example in the Prābhākara *pūrvapakṣa* of his text (p. 98, ll. 27–29): Although one sees Devadatta and wonders who his father is, and Yajñadatta, his father, is standing nearby, it may not dawn on one that Yajñadatta is his father!

<sup>18</sup> Pārthasārathi, in one of the most fascinating passages of his *Vakyārthanirṇaya* (pp. 108–117), turns the tables against the Prābhākara in arguing that words lose their expressiveness (*vācakatva*) on *his* theory. This has to do with the fact that the Prābhākara, unlike the Bhāṭṭa, considers every word in a mere statement of fact (*siddhārthavākya*) to be used figuratively, insofar as the sentence as a whole indirectly designates a prohibition or an injunction. All meaningful employment of language must involve reference to actions to be carried out. But if every word in a sentence is used figuratively, then, because there is no meaning directly designated in the sentence which can anchor the meanings of the other words, the sentence cannot involve an *anvitābhidhāna*. Thus, the Prābhākara believes that there are meanings associated with such sentences only by virtue of *inferences* to the intentions (*tātparya*) of the speakers who utter them. Experience indeed teaches us that people use certain combinations of words to express certain ideas in their minds. Pārthasārathi brings out several

problems with this approach: (1) There seems to be no reason why it could not also be applied to injunctions and prohibitions. But then no type of sentence would involve an *anvitābhidhāna* (pp. 109, l. 21 — 110, l. 26). (2) This kind of account could also be applied to individual words. Just as there are correspondences between certain sentences and ideas in the mind of the speaker, so are there more specific correspondences between individual words and ideas. Thus, again, all language comprehension would be based on inference. But this, in particular, would undermine the authority of the Veda, which has no author whose intentions could be inferred as the meanings of its sentences and words (pp. 110, l. 26—114, l. 21). Finally, (3) a reliable inference to the intention of a speaker in using certain words in fact seems impossible (pp. 114, l. 25—117, l. 12).

<sup>19</sup> Siderits is correct to suggest ("Prābhākara Theory," pp. 287—288) that one should not take too seriously the charge of theoretical prolixity (*gaurava*) brought by each side against the other. If a theory, in order to account for the facts, has to be more complex than another that makes less sense of them, then that is no fault. Moreover, the charge of prolixity usually depends on a skewed interpretation of the opponent's theory, and so is often merely polemical. Siderits discusses how the Prābhākara sees the Bhāṭṭa as postulating three *śaktis* in his theory: a capacity of words to designate their own meanings, a capacity of those meanings to combine and evoke the sentence meaning, and a capacity of words to endow their meanings with the latter capacity! The Bhāṭṭa, however, by arguing that word meanings combine automatically (insofar as universals necessarily imply particular things or states of affairs in which they inhere) is able immediately to get rid of two of the *śaktis* the Prābhākara imputes to him. In turn, he accuses the Prābhākara of *gaurava* just insofar as the capacity of words to designate complex (*anvita*) meanings is not universally accepted (whereas both the capacity of words to designate universals and the tendency of universals to imply particulars are) (NRM, p. 118, ll. 1—4), or else, insofar as a capacity to designate the *anvaya* is required in addition to a capacity for designating the *anvitārtha* (on the principle that there can be no awareness of a *viśiṣṭārtha* without awareness of the *viśeṣaṇa*, p. 102, ll. 13—16).

The silliness of the issue becomes manifest when Pārthasārathi takes on the challenge (p. 119, ll. 19ff.) of showing the *abhihitānvaya* theory to be simpler than the *anvitābhidhāna* theory even when it assumes a *śakti* on the part of word meanings. In the case of a single word which has a single meaning (i.e., a single, unambiguous word) both the *anvitābhidhāna*- and *abhihitānvaya-vāda*s posit two *śaktis*. On the *anvitābhidhāna-vāda*, the word has both, one with regard to its *anvitārtha* and another with regard to the *anvaya*; whereas on the *abhihitānvaya-vāda* the word has a *śakti* with respect to its own meaning and the *meaning* has a capacity to yield awareness of the sentence meaning (in combination with other word meanings). But on the *abhihitānvaya-vāda* fewer *śaktis* are involved in the case of several words expressive of one meaning (synonyms), such as the words *pāṇi*, *kara*, and *hasta*, which all mean 'hand.' Here, a *śakti* to designate this meaning must be posited for each word and a *śakti* to evoke the sentence meaning must be posited for the meaning, which equals a total of four *śaktis*. On the *anvitābhidhāna-vāda*, however, six *śaktis* will be involved: two for each of the three words. Hence, the *abhihitānvaya* is the simpler theory!

Although he does not subscribe to the exact arguments of the Prābhākaras,



Siderits believes that the *anvitābhīdhāna-vāda* is preferable to the *abhihitānvaya-vāda*, because, as he sees it, the latter implies a more complex psychological process of language comprehension (“Prābhākara Theory,” pp. 266–290). But in making this judgment Siderits accepts the Prābhākara interpretation of the *abhihitānvaya-vāda* as involving three separate *śaktis*. As I mentioned, however, the Bhāṭṭas themselves do not see their theory that way. According to them, once again, words have only the capacity to designate their meanings; the latter then in turn combine together of themselves to yield the sentence meaning. This is certainly no more complicated than the process the Prābhākara describes. The real issue seems to be, rather, whether this can really happen as the Bhāṭṭa says, without the help of any awareness derived from another *pramāṇa*.

<sup>20</sup> Siderits sees an important difference between the two theories (“Prābhākara Theory,” pp. 260–261) in that on the *anvitābhīdhāna-vāda* a word designates only its context-qualified meaning. He takes this as a version of the doctrine, basic to the theories of meaning of Frege and Quine, that words “do not have meanings except in the context of sentences.” The Bhāṭṭa, on the other hand, in insisting that a word designates its own-meaning before it interacts with the other meanings, would seem to believe that a word does have a meaning in isolation. But this slightly misrepresents both positions. It is not really accurate to say that for the Prābhākara words do not *have* meanings except in sentences, for he admits that every word as it is heard reminds us of its own-meaning. Rather, it is better to say just what the Prābhākara himself says, that according to him a word only *designates* a meaning in the context of a sentence. On the other hand, according to the Bhāṭṭa, although a word may *designate* its meaning in isolation, its meaning is completed only after it is combined with the meanings of the other words of a sentence. For the meaning of a word is a universal, and a universal implies a particular. The particular is specified by the meanings of the other words in the context in which the word is used.

Moreover, although Kumāṛila certainly does argue at length, and with considerable ingenuity, that words are able to evoke meanings in isolation (see esp. ŚV, *vākya-adhikaraṇa*, 143–149), he also makes it clear that a word by itself is not a *pramāṇa* (ŚV, *śabdapariccheda*, 99ff.), for it always denotes something with which we are already acquainted. (It is in this context that he says a word is “not different” from a reminder, *ibid.*, 107 [see note 7 above]. But that may not have meant for him that it is precisely a reminder. For cf. *śabdapariccheda*, 73–76 and 94–95, where he suggests that an individual word “expresses” [*vācaka*] its meaning. Pārthasārathi, NRM, p. 107, argues that the *vācya-vācaka* relationship is distinct from the *smārya-smāraka-bhāva*.) For Kumāṛila, language is a *pramāṇa* only in the form of sentences, which bring to mind states of affairs that have not been previously experienced. All this, of course, relates to the definition of *pramāṇa* as *anadhigatārthagamaka*.

<sup>21</sup> Strictly speaking, the concern of Frege, who first discussed this issue, was with the apparent fact that the truth value of a sentence, which is its referent, is not determined by the referents of the component expressions. In presenting this as a problem about meaning I have followed Searle, *op. cit.*, pp. 181f.

<sup>22</sup> Although we have flowers only in an analogous sense in the expression ‘artificial flowers,’ the basic sense of the word ‘flowers’ must be the same here as in ‘real flowers’ — otherwise, it seems, we would not regard artificial flowers as the *opposite* of real flowers.



<sup>23</sup> Searle, *loc. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> See Siderits, "Sense-Reference Distinction." Siderits tends to see this distinction being made only in Prābhākara Mīmāṃsā, but I am arguing that it is also to be found in Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā.

<sup>25</sup> See Kumāṛila's discussion of negation, ŚV, *vākya-adhikaraṇa*, 301–313.

<sup>26</sup> Except of course in a sentence such as, "Cat-hood is a universal."

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