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Where the structure comes from. The MPYP 001 Dissertation collection on eGyanKosh holds *Research in Philosophy: A Student Manual* (2017; units by V. John Peter). Unit 1, Systematic Research in Philosophy, says a synopsis consists of a provisional title, the aim and objective of the research, an outline of the contents of the topic, the method of procedure and the source materials available, and it describes a working bibliography prepared alongside. Sections 1 to 5 below follow those five parts in that order, followed by the working bibliography.

What you must change. Everything in [square brackets] is yours to fill in. The topic is only an illustration: choose your own topic with your supervisor. Unit 1 stresses consulting the supervisor, leaving enough time for the supervisor to correct and guide, and carrying out the corrections carefully.

What this file does not settle. In the documents we could read on 7 October 2026 we did not find an MPYP-001 proforma, a stated synopsis length, a prescribed cover format or a submission address for the synopsis. Confirm each of these with your Regional Centre before you submit.

References. Every work cited below is a real publication, checked on 7 October 2026. Read a work yourself before you cite it. Never list a book or article you have not read.

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Meaning Without Universals? Dignāga's Theory of Exclusion (Apoha) and Frege's Distinction between Sense and Reference

Synopsis for MPYP-001 Dissertation

Master of Arts (Philosophy) (MAPY)

School of Inter-Disciplinary and Trans-Disciplinary Studies

Indira Gandhi National Open University

Submitted by	[Name of the learner]
Enrolment number	[Enrolment number]
Study Centre	[Code and name]
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Month and year	[Month Year]

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1. Provisional Title

Meaning Without Universals? Dignāga's Theory of Exclusion (Apoha) and Frege's Distinction between Sense and Reference

The title is provisional: Unit 1 of the manual treats the provisional title and the outline as preliminary preparation, so it may be sharpened after discussion with the supervisor. It names both thinkers, the concept under study and the comparative form of the work, so a reader knows the scope at once.

2. Aim and Objectives of the Research

Aim. To examine whether a general word such as "pot" can be meaningful without a real universal, a potness that all pots share, by comparing Dignāga's exclusion theory of meaning (apoha) with Frege's distinction between the sense and the reference of an expression.

Objectives.

- (a) To set out Dignāga's account of how a word conveys its meaning by excluding what is other, using [the English translation of Chapter 5 of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* available to you] and the studies collected in Siderits, Tillemans and Chakrabarti (2011).
- (b) To set out Frege's distinction between sense and reference as stated in "On Sense and Reference" (1892), read in Max Black's translation (Geach and Black 1952).
- (c) To compare the two accounts on three questions: what a general word picks out; whether meaning requires a shared real property; and how different speakers can understand the same word in the same way.
- (d) To evaluate which account answers the problem of universals more convincingly, and to state the limits of comparing a fifth-century

Buddhist logician with a nineteenth-century German logician.

3. Outline of the Contents (Chapters and Sub-titles)

Chapter 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The problem of universals and word meaning
- 1.2 Why Dignāga and Frege can be compared
- 1.3 Aim, objectives and method
- 1.4 Plan of the chapters

Chapter 2. Dignāga on Meaning by Exclusion

- 2.1 Perception and conceptual construction (Hattori 1968)
- 2.2 Exclusion of the other as word meaning
- 2.3 Realist objections from Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā thinkers

Chapter 3. Frege on Sense and Reference

- 3.1 The puzzle of informative identity statements
- 3.2 Sense as a mode of presentation
- 3.3 Reference and the question of shared meaning

Chapter 4. Comparison and Evaluation

- 4.1 What a general word picks out
- 4.2 Meaning without a shared real property
- 4.3 Shared understanding among speakers
- 4.4 Limits of the comparison

Chapter 5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Findings in relation to the objectives
- 5.2 Limits of the study

5.3 Questions for further research

Bibliography follows the last chapter. Add appendices only if the work needs them.

4. Method of Procedure

This is a comparative and analytic study of texts. It uses no field data, questionnaire or interviews. The work proceeds in four steps.

- (i) Close reading of the primary texts in English translation, noting the original key terms (for example *apoha*, *Sinn*, *Bedeutung*) where the translation depends on them.
- (ii) Reconstruction of each thinker's central argument, premise by premise, so that the two positions can be set side by side fairly.
- (iii) Comparison on the three questions named in objective (c).
- (iv) Evaluation in the light of the objections discussed in the secondary literature.

Footnotes and the bibliography will follow one style throughout. Unit 3 of the manual, Writing a Research Paper, explains citation, footnotes and bibliography in the Turabian and APA styles; this study will use [the style approved by the supervisor]. Unit 1 of the manual refers learners back to the first-year Research Methodology course for the study of method.

5. Source Materials Available

Primary sources.

Hattori (1968): an annotated translation of the chapter on perception of Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, which sets out the distinction between perception and conceptual construction on which the exclusion theory depends.

[The English translation of *Pramāṇasamuccaya* Chapter 5, on exclusion, that your library or supervisor can supply.]

Frege, "On Sense and Reference", translated by Max Black, in Geach and Black (1952); the same paper appears as "On Sinn and Bedeutung" in Beaney (1997).

Secondary sources.

Siderits, Tillemans and Chakrabarti (2011), especially the chapters by Tillemans and by Pind on Dignāga's theory, and the essays on the realist criticism of it.

[Two or three journal articles on apoha or on Frege's theory of sense that you have read in full.]

Where the sources can be consulted. [Name the libraries or e-resources you will actually use, for example your Regional Centre library, a university library you can visit, or databases your supervisor recommends.]

Working Bibliography

Example entries in a notes-and-bibliography style. Follow the style your supervisor approves.

Beaney, Michael, ed. *The Frege Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.

Frege, Gottlob. "On Sense and Reference." Translated by Max Black. In *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, edited by Peter Geach and Max Black. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952.

Hattori, Masaaki. *Dignāga, On Perception: Being the Pratyakṣapariccheda of Dignāga's Pramāṇasamuccaya from the Sanskrit Fragments and the Tibetan Versions*. Harvard Oriental Series 47. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Pind, Ole. "Dignāga's Apoha Theory: Its Presuppositions and Main Theoretical Implications." In Siderits, Tillemans and Chakrabarti, *Apoha*.

Siderits, Mark, Tom Tillemans and Arindam Chakrabarti, eds. *Apoha: Buddhist Nominalism and Human Cognition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Tillemans, Tom. "How to Talk about Ineffable Things: Dignāga and Dharmakīrti on Apoha." In Siderits, Tillemans and Chakrabarti, *Apoha*.

[Add each further book or article only after you have read it.]

Declarations and signatures: add only those your Regional Centre or the official proforma asks for.

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