

### Presentation and the Ontology of Consciousness

**(Abstract)** In this paper, I consider some potential implications for the metaphysics and ontology of consciousness of an idea that is crucial to many central developments of the phenomenological tradition beginning with Brentano and Husserl. This is the idea of an essential link between *consciousness* and *presentation*, such that we can understand key aspects of the metaphysics of consciousness by understanding conscious states as having, essentially, a *presentational* character. If set in the context of recent modal and two-dimensional arguments for the falsity or limitations of physicalism, consideration of the presentational character of consciousness motivates a novel kind of ontological option for its placement in the world. This option vindicates the irreducibility of consciousness (in one sense of “irreducible”) to description or explanation in terms only of physical facts, and clarifies this irreducibility as resulting ultimately from broadly modal/semantic features of the presentation and individuation of entities across possible worlds. At the same time, it does not thereby require or invite anything like a substance or property dualism, since the features of consciousness that make for its irreducibility can also (as I shall argue) be accounted for by means of a global *monism* of substances and properties.

#### Husserl: The “Principle of all Principles”

“No conceivable theory can make us err with respect to the *principle of all principles: that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originarily (so to speak, in its ‘personal’ actuality) offered to us in ‘intuition’ is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there.*” (Husserl 1913[1983]: 43-44).

#### Hintikka and Individuating Functions

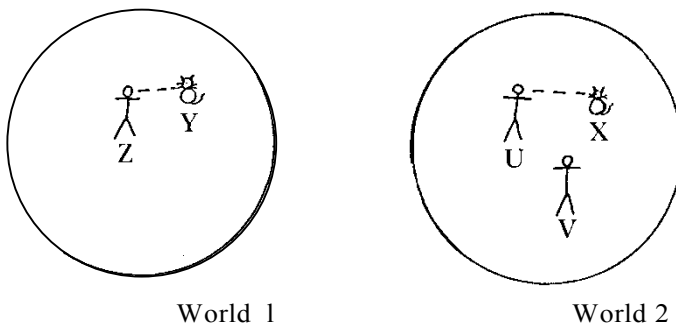
To capture the content of a subject’s *de re* attitudes, posit a set  $F$  of (possibly partial) functions  $f$ . Each of those will pick out, for each situation or world  $\mu$ , at most one individual from that world’s domain of individuals  $I(\mu)$ .

Then substitutivity of identicals will generally fail, i.e. if there are there are two distinct individuating functions  $f_1$  and  $f_2$ , relevant to  $a$ ’s attitudes involving singular terms, such that  $f_1(\lambda)=f_2(\lambda)$  but not  $f_1(\mu)=f_2(\mu)$ , the general rule of substitutivity

$$(\forall x)(\forall y)(x=y \rightarrow (Q(x) \rightarrow Q(y)))$$

will fail with respect to  $a$ ’s attitudes  $Q$ .

### Subjective cross-identification and third-person inaccessibility



**Question:** Are Y and X counterparts by acquaintance for Z?

### Two-Dimensional Semantics

**Secondary ('metaphysical') intensions:** actual reference of the concept is held fixed and what is evaluated at each world (considered as counterfactual) is *this referent* (example: Water=H<sub>2</sub>O)

**Primary ('epistemic') intensions:** what is held fixed is the *initial profile* or *presentation* associated with a concept, and worlds are evaluated *as if* actual in order to assess *which* referent the concept would have (if that world turned out to be actual) (example: water= (roughly) the clear liquid stuff in our environment)

### Chalmers' Two-Dimensional Argument Against Materialism

Where P is the conjunction of physical truths about the universe, and Q is an arbitrary fact about consciousness:

1.  $P \& \sim Q$  is *conceivable* or 1-possible
2. If  $P \& \sim Q$  is *conceivable* or 1-possible,  $P \& \sim Q$  is 2-possible OR there is a world, W, that verifies P but does not satisfy P (i.e. 'Type-F' monism)
3. If  $P \& \sim Q$  is 2-possible, materialism is false

Conclusion: Materialism is false or 'Type-F' (intrinsic) monism is true

### "Presentational" monism

- The variation between our world and W turns on the presence or absence of the *presentational* aspects of consciousness itself.

-We might further see these as turning on the *total presentational individuating functions*, rather than on any properties of the individual entities themselves.

-Then the existence or non-existence of presentational consciousness in a world would depend *on global aspects of that world itself in the context of the framework of possible worlds* rather than properties of the entities within it.