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Dissertation Abstract: *Two-Dimensionalism and Semantic Content*

Standard modal semantics assigns truth to a proposition at a world. *Two-dimensional* semantics assigns truth to a proposition relative to *two* parameters. Depending on the application of the two-dimensional framework, the additional parameter may be the context of utterance, the actual world, or something else entirely. This dissertation offers a general characterization of two-dimensionalism and considers several applications.

The first section concentrates on problems that arise when the domains of the two parameters are not identical. If sentences containing names express singular propositions and some individuals are contingent beings, how do we evaluate those singular propositions at circumstances where the relevant individual fails to exist? Conversely, how does a speaker express propositions about individuals who fail to exist at her context of utterance? The two-dimensional machinery can be used to distinguish between context of utterance and circumstance of evaluation, but we need answers to these questions to develop further two-dimensional semantics.

In the next section, I apply two-dimensionalism to the sentential operator ‘According to the fiction’: ‘According to the fiction, S’ is true with respect to the parameters (actual world, evaluation world) just in case S is true with respect to (fiction, fiction). A principal advantage of this treatment is that we can avoid some of the familiar problems with empty names within a unified treatment of fictional names and ordinary names, and without settling for descriptivism. Part of the development of this view involves the contention that reference-determination for names can be captured within the two-dimensional framework while maintaining that the semantic content of names is directly referential.

The final section offers some critical remarks on two recent applications of two-dimensionalism. First, I contend that a two-dimensionalist treatment of actuality should distinguish the world of the context of utterance from the actual world to make room for the metaphysical view that actuality constitutes a kind of ontological privilege. Second, I contend that no development of the two-dimensional framework will plausibly explain away the necessary a posteriori or the contingent a priori.