

Thinking with words

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Table of contents

1. Some Brief Background
2. What I Am Aiming To Explain
3. Granularity Problems For Shared Content
4. Coordination
5. Network-Based Approach to Shared Concepts

Some Brief Background

Type/Token Distinction For Concepts

Mental Representations (e.g. a memory, a belief or a desire) are states of the central nervous system of a thinker.

Type/Token Distinction For Concepts

Hence, mental representations *qua* mental particulars aren't shareable.

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But they share a type.

What I Am Aiming To Explain

Hence we may ask:

Under what conditions do thinkers (or a single thinker at different times) deploy the same concept?

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To which extent do words contribute to bring about conceptual sharing?

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Granularity Problems For Shared Content

The Same-Content-As Relation

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Frege's Constraint (FC)

If a minimally rational subject S believes an object O to be F and at the same time also believes O not to be F , then there are distinct concepts C_1 and C_2 such that S believes O to be F under C_1 and disbelieves O to be F under C_2 .

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Oedipus both believes and disbelieves of Jocasta that he wants to marry her. By (FC), Oedipus thinks of Jocasta under *two distinct concepts*.

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Example

Your and my understanding of the Oedipus example to the left suggest that we share an OEDIPUS-concept.

Oedipus Example, in more detail

Cognitive significance

Although Oedipus' concepts `JOCASTA` and `MOTHER` both refer to Jocasta, they dramatically differ in **cognitive significance**. By this I mean that Oedipus' `JOCASTA`-beliefs and his `MOTHER`-beliefs lead to very different actions, inferences, emotions, and so on. Accordingly, they have different roles in rationalizing psychological explanation.

Concepts Must Be Individuated Modulo Cognitive Significance

Cognitive significance matters for sharing a concept

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Let us say that Oedipus' JOCASTA-beliefs and his MOTHER-beliefs are *un-coordinated*.

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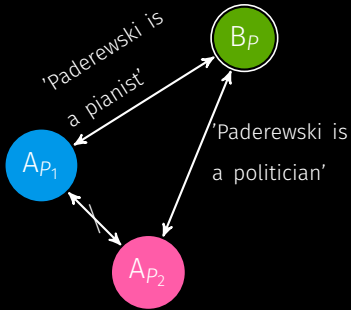
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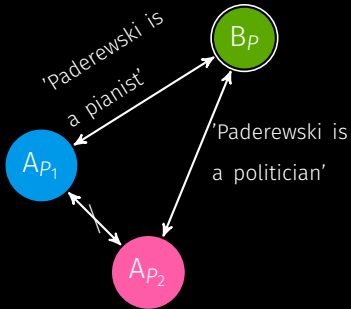
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 - 3.3 **But is absolutely essential for sharing encyclopedic concepts**

Network-Based Approach to Shared Concepts

Coordination Is Not Transitive



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Coordination is *not* an equivalence relation on the domain of concept tokens.

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2. Coordination is not transitive;
3. But identity is transitive;
4. Therefore, **Publicity**, strictly speaking, is *false*;
(Publicity, remember, says that thinkers routinely have thoughts that are identical in content.)

Sharing Without Publicity (a Vast Programme!)

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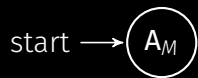
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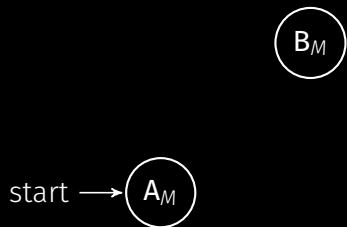
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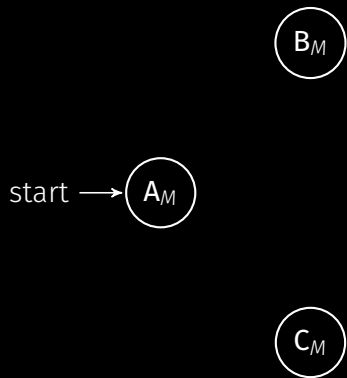
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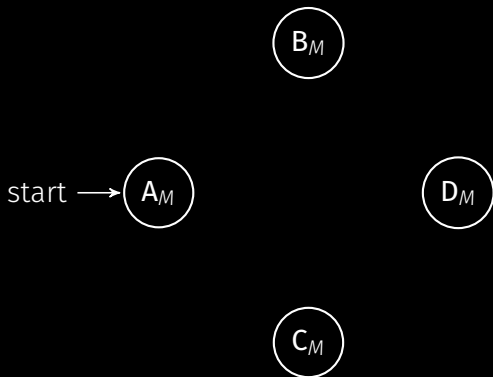
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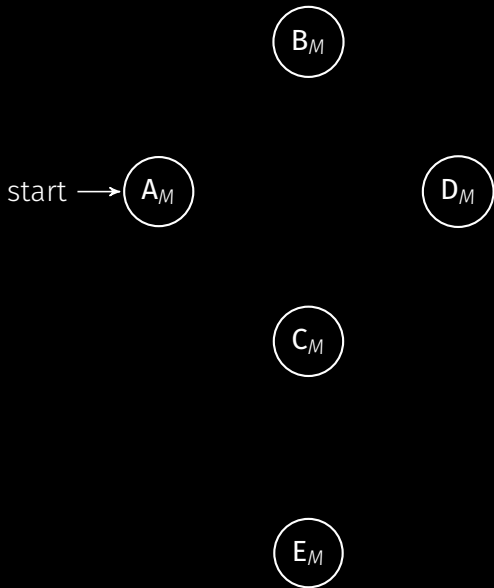
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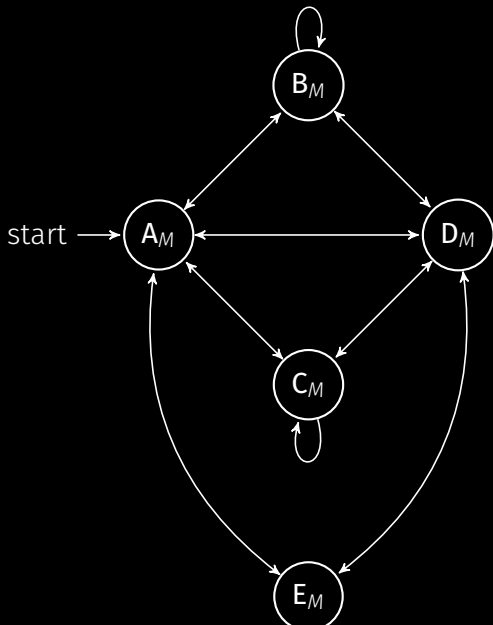
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Thank you!

