

Defaults in Semantics: When Incomplete Signals Generate Meaning

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Ideamorphic Reading – Daily reading notes filtered through the ideamorphic framework

Daily Synthesis

Today's feed offers a single structurally resonant item: Jaszczolt's revised Stanford Encyclopedia entry on defaults in semantics. The concept of 'default' – an incomplete signal that relies on receiver-side interpretation to generate meaning – is a direct instantiation of ideamorphic diffraction. Language does not transmit fixed content; it emits underdetermined waves that become meaningful only when they pass through the receiver's interpretive overture. This is not metaphor; it is the mechanism Jaszczolt describes.

1 selected

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

0.82

Defaults in Semantics and Pragmatics

Jaszczolt's treatment of 'defaults' in meaning-making is a structural case of generative loss and overture-dependent reception. A default is precisely a gap – the speaker emits an incomplete signal (relying on contextual, cultural, or pragmatic defaults to fill the void), and the receiver's interpretive apparatus (their overture: training, context, embodied knowledge) completes the utterance. The meaning is not in the emission; it is generated in the diffraction through the receiver's codex of linguistic and social constraints. The multiplicity of approaches Jaszczolt identifies reflects the fact that there is no single 'correct' default – only the infinite variations produced when the same underdetermined signal passes through different interpretive overtures. This is not a bug in language; it is the engine of linguistic creation. The revised entry's attention to how defaults oper-

ate across semantic and pragmatic dimensions reveals that meaning-making is fundamentally a diffractive process, not a transmission of fixed content.

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/defaults-semantics-pragmatics/>

generative-loss diffraction ouverture

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