A Modern Person as a Subiectum Neglegens:

On the Problem of Constructive and Destructive Ignoring

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Abstract

Under the pressure of information, a person is transformed into a Subiectum Neglegens, multidimensional specifics of which is in time-binding and correlating form, meaning and intention in the informational flow. It serves both as a personal self-defense mechanism in the informational hypertension and as a new communicative means. These are the means that can be either destructive or constructive due to the labels and mythologemes, as well as due to successful or less successful overcoming of the traps and obstacles in the process of building common communicative space.

Constructive ignoring as an informational self-defense mechanism implies a variety of search modes for filtering the flow of information. It gives an idea of a person managing in the daily flow of information by ignoring the least relevant items, regardless of possible omissions and mistakes connected with the relevant ones.

Destructive ignoring is the reverse side of the previous mechanism leading to omission of relevant information. It can be roughly subdivided into some aspects according to the omitted relevant issue and the labels and mythologemes connected with it and reflecting some term or aspect of traditional social-cultural importance. Ignoring of meanings, subjects, insights, influences and conclusions are also the indicators of destructive informational gap-forming.

Keywords

social-cultural space, communication, destructive ignoring, constructive ignoring, mythologeme, Subiectum Neglegens

1. Introduction

The modern state of human existence can easily be compared with an attempt of a daily struggle with a huge tidal wave of information. The scope and accessibility of information of different kinds outreach human imagination and prediction, and even most brilliant philosophers of the XX century lack reasons and explanations for those inevitable changes that occur under the impact of this informational flow on the spheres of human knowledge about the world having been constructed for centuries as a barrier for evaluating the information. The spheres of the kind incorporate linguistic means of coding and decoding, rational operations of analysis and synthesis, social-cultural imprints of proper and alien

engraved in laws and norms.

2. Method

2.1 Functional Approach to a Social-Cultural Space Gap-Forming

So far information can form a flow of demands, intentions, interchanging meanings and requirements for adequate responses, either linguistic or not. The problem for investigation lies within the conditions of this adequacy may change regardless of situation, and the any actor of communication faces the necessity of standing against dissolving in the chains of random transformations in the informational conditions. Thus, functional approach is basic for informational gap-finding as it helps to reveal the contextual grounds for emerging mythologemes and labels and their further influence on the mind screen of a person in a particular social-cultural surrounding.

This approach, applied to a social-cultural space, should be distinguished from the concept of time-binding, stated by Alfred Korzybsky in "Manhood of Humanity" (1921) as a main characteristic of a human being, dimensionally distinguishing this kind of creature from all other forms of life, does not seem universal enough to point out the constant and significant struggle of this creature in the modern conditions of informational overflow where the indices for denoting particular objects can literally break loose and multiply every single moment.

For instance, the levels-dimensions of a speech act, suggested by John Searle and discussed upon in the ordinary language philosophy, are to denote the subdimensions of general time-binding by means of linguistic coding. Locutionary aspect leads to form-binding in the process of linguistic units combination while producing information. Illocutionary aspect in its wider perception is reflected in meaning-binding, necessary for the interactions to take place and for further existence of informational space. The aspect of perlocution can also be described in terms of intention-binding in the situations of impact.

But increasing number of phatic interactions and general tendency to self-isolation as a result of overflow of contacts, real or virtual, a person comes across daily, makes it merely possible to discuss speech acts in the same terms as in the times of J. Searle. The categories and theories of the ordinary language philosophy come to the edge relevance in the modern informational state of things.

Describing the state as a sort of felt-like cloth or mosaics in the context of culture, Abraham Moles suggested a model of non-systemic highly random and situationally-bound pressing of the informational "threads" into some "cloth" of our experience.

The suggestion formulated for further investigation by means of functional approach to a social-cultural space gap-forming is based on the thesis that instead of traditional attempts of looking for information, a person under informational pressure and overflow is to change the tactics and stick to the opposite operation: ignoring the information in order to realize informational self-defense. In other words, if it is impossible and harmful to absorb all the mass of information streaming from various channels and sources, there should be some adaptation mechanism for grading, sieving and ignoring

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most of it, interweaving only some particular "threads" into the general "cloth" of social-cultural experience.

3. Result

Ignoring, either on purpose or not, in a constructive way or a destructive one, is as important a mechanism as mind distinguishing Homo Sapience from other species. In modern linguistic studies, there can be found the descriptions of "homo codificant"—a person trying to make the linguistic norm remain unaffected by communication, and "homo reflectens" —a person understanding inevitability of the changes. The personal types are compared with the term "homo neglegens" that is used to denote a person indifferent to any facts of language (I. Vepreva, S. Popov). But this indifference lies outside intention, thus ignoring is wider in both constructive and destructive realizations and results. Nowadays it is possible to define the new adaptation mode of Subiectum Neglegens, having to be capable of information grading. The most important here is the basis for ignoring. The previous theories, stating the cognitive frames due to the possibilities and limitations of human mind (even if tried to overcome the limitation by suggesting unlimited range of abstractions as in general semantics), led to predicting the advanced form of Homo Ignoramus, "not knowing human being", restricted from the informational flow by means of normative ignorandum ("the information that should not be known") and general limited access to information sources.

Constructive ignoring as an informational self-defense mechanism implies a variety of search modes for filtering the flow of information. To illustrate it one can imagine the process of informational filtering after the input of some phrase or term into an online search engine. The number of possible results connected with the term may overrun the possibilities for analysis, and the information is "sieved" by a person due to its relevance, consistency, context and so on. The mistakes are possible as well, and you may overlook some useful result among 100,000 other responses. It is possible too to have the wrong impression and to find some irrelevant information with seemingly proper response beginning. This simple example of a search mode gives an idea of a person managing in the daily flow of information by ignoring the least relevant items, regardless of possible omissions and mistakes connected with the relevant ones.

Destructive ignoring is the reverse side of the previous mechanism leading to omission of relevant information. It is connected with distortions between different levels of abstractions and is inevitably accompanied with various labels and mythologemes. Destructive ignoring can be roughly subdivided into the following aspects according to the omitted relevant issue and the labels and mythologemes connected with it and reflecting some term or aspect of traditional social-cultural importance.

1) Ignoring of facts. Label: "Everything should be proved". Mythologeme: "Need for evidence".

2) Ignoring of meanings. Label: "You should keep to the norm". Mythologeme: "Own point of view".

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3) Ignoring of subjects. Label: "Be cautious unless you get manipulated". Mythologeme: "Narcissism and Self-sufficiency".

4) Ignoring of insights. Label: "Rationality is in the first place". Mythologeme: "Best and worst ways of thinking".

5) Ignoring of influences. Label: "Rely on yourself". Mythologeme: "Independence".

6) Ignoring of conclusions. Label: "Keep to the present state of things". Mythologeme: "Being sensible".

This way all the information that should be ignored in a process of constructive ignoring can be defined as "neglegendum" (if we refer to the modal meaning of obligation in this Latin Future Passive Participle). It contains the information, irrelevant for the communicative context, or adding too little if any to the realization of intention and impact. On the other hand, destructive ignoring "sieves" the aspects that in a particular situation may seem irrelevant due to implied labels and "ready-made" opinions, and this way some sphere may become blocked out of the general "cloth" of social-cultural experience (see Figure 1).
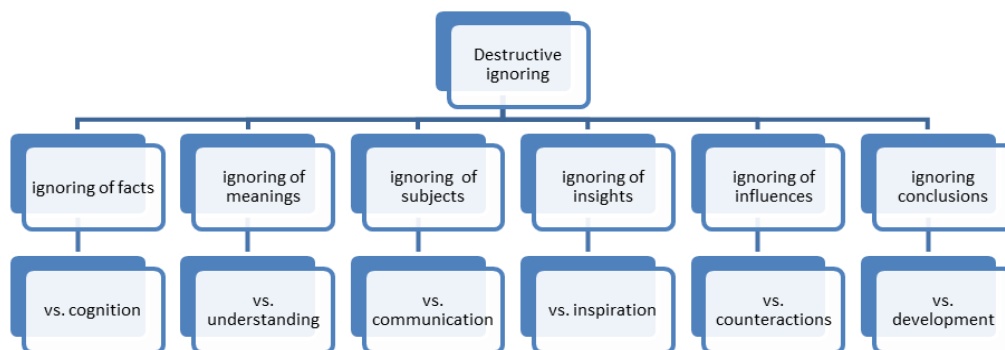

Figure 1. Aspects of Destructive Ignoring

4. Discussion

To sum up the problem of constructive and destructive ignoring, it is necessary to state the following landmarks.

1) Ignoring similarities. If constructive, it means information grading in accordance with its relevance and with the number of significant repetitions in the informational space. The repetitions themselves may be ignored as similarities but the general idea of the spreading degree of the information can be obtained as an additional point of its evaluation. If destructive, it results in mythologemes like "Political Split", "Split-up" (as in the Ukrainian political discourse: the idea of Split-up between

regions of the country is constantly escalated), or general range of the situations based on explicit or implicit intolerance.

2) Ignoring on the basis of similarities. This aspect should be distinguished from the previous one. The similarities between pieces of information are "sieved" to retain the general set of relevant elements. It is a sort of generalization that is best observed in the integrated social-cultural space (from the level of groups connecting individuals up to the communities combining several states and cultures), where the social-cultural codes of common are unified and thus their grading and sieving becomes irrelevant in the common social-cultural space.

3) Ignoring differences. The constructive way of this type of ignoring is best illustrated in the Structural Differential model by A. Korzybsky. Some qualities and differences should be ignored for a person to be able to shift from one level of abstraction to another one. On the other hand, labeling the objects is based on ignoring various differences, improper unifying and generalization. In a social space it may lead to a destructive mythologemes of "Unity", "National Idea" and other vague concepts that can be easily speculated on and re-adjusted in a political discourse in order to create some model of "justice" useful for particular communicative actors.

4) Ignoring on the basis of differences. It can be either constructive or destructive in the context of interaction, and it results in "sieving" out differences and unique characteristics standing out of the common informational space. The consequences may include disregarding and ignoring of outstanding persons due to their clash with the approximately homogeneous or normative sphere (like in so called "tall poppy" syndrome) as well as outburst of localization intentions and fundamentalisms as a way to resist dissolving in the global space.

5. General Conclusion

Evaluation of semantic impact on social-cultural spheres is based on numerous studies starting with the correlations between language and social space and ongoing to the problems of speech/language correlations, "person-person" interactions in some informational interchange, and even further—to self-evaluation and self-identification of particular linguistic personality, resulting from the worldview and concepts suggested in the sign system.

And also there arises a wide range of questions for further investigation.

What is the scope and content of neglegendum ("the things that should be ignored")? What are the mechanisms for forming and adapting the neglegendum in a particular interpersonal, cross-cultural or interstate communication?

How can "search mode" influence norms (for example, ethical ones)?

Is there any connection between the typical isolation and narcissism of a modern person (as in the theory by Charles Taylor) and the leading type of ignoring?

What are the common points between the problems of responsibility and ignoring? Can Cain problem, outlined by E. Levinas ("I am not my brother's keeper") and discussed further by Z. Bauman, be also regarded in the modern informational context as a problem of destructive ignoring of subjects?

What are the possible effective ways for overcoming destructive ignoring?

These and other questions form the problematic field for further cross-discipline studies involving philosophy of language, social philosophy, discourse analysis and, partially, general semantics.

Acknowledgement

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