New Approaches in Social and Humanistic Sciences

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https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc.nashs2017.49

3rd Central & Eastern European **LUMEN** International Conference
New Approaches in Social and Humanistic Sciences |
NASHS 2017| Chisinau, Republic of Moldova | June 8-10, 2017

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Abstract

This study is circumscribed to the science of communication. It aims to illustrate, exemplify, and conceptualize the idea of objectual message. The meta-analytical method and the comparative method are used. Two historical and one semiotic messages are examined. The first message is extracted from Herodotus's "Histories": in the form of a message, the Scythian kings send Emperor Darius a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows. The second message is extracted from Cassius Dio's "Roman History": Decebalus sends Trajan a huge mushroom on which he wrote in Latin the advice to make way back and start peace talks. The third element is an analysis of Roland Barthes, in which he states that an object like "a scarf" constitutes a message with haptical meanings. From the comparison of the three messages, the characteristics of the objectual message are infered. In a related way, it is found that in practical order the objectual message is one of the most important types of message, along with the verbal message, the oral message and the written message.

Keywords: *message, communication, historical message, objectual message, conceptualization.*

1. Introduction

Our research starts from the observation that some of the messages we receive or expedite are made up of objects. An object (or a set of objects) that is given to someone is loaded with meanings, and the meanings are structured as a message. Messages transmitted through objects carry with them the generic meaning of "gift" and are especially understood as gifts.

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The perception of objects handed over on specific occasions and at certain dates as gifts is natural. The gifts received by someone at their anniversary are messages.

Starting from the observation of the dichotomy of the understanding of the objects offered as "gift" and/or message, we first try to answer the question: the objects received from the other are gifts or messages? On the other hand, by reinforcing with examples the evidence that some transmitted or received objects are messages, we are committed to conceptualizing the idea of an objectual message.

2. Object, gift, message: theoretical background

Our thesis is that by sending non-ordered objects to someone an object message is made. The purpose of our study is to conceptualize the objectual message.

At the center of the objectual message are objects. Generally speaking, objects form a "objects' system", as Jean Baudrillard notes [1]. For thousands of years, people have lived in a world of objects [2], in a vantage of objects: from Maltese's artistic objects [3] to Hilgratner's „risk objects" [4] or Fortino's and Trunfio's „intelligent objects" [5].

Objectual message is complex. It presents both centripetal aspects of simple objects and centrifugal aspects of gift. As such, it must be understood not only as a significant construction based on one or more objects but also as a nucleus of a gift.

The problem of the gift and the problem of the message meet in the problem of the objectual message. The theme of the gift and the theme of the message each enjoyed significant scientific attention. In the literature, the gift is mainly seen from the anthropological perspective [6, 7], from a sociological perspective [8, 9], from an economic perspective [10], from a retelling perspective [11]. A broader perspective opens the book coordinated by Mark Osteen [12].

The various aspects of the message were the topics of study for reputed specialists: the structure of the message [13], the message production [14, 15], the message processing [16], the flow of messages [17], message planning [18, 19, 20, 21], message construction [22, 23].

The gift has been examined so far as anthropological, sociological, economic, religious theme. We propose to see the reality that the gift is a message. When the gift consists of objects, it becomes an objectual message. In essence, the problem of the message is a communication theory problem. Our study issues the thesis of the existence of this special message type, the

objectual message, with a specific profile. At the same time, we develop a communication perspective on the gift as a message.

In the taxonomy of the message made in 1991 by P. S. Speck [24] there is no objectual message spoken. The closest to the idea of an objectual message is Corrado Maltese [3]: in a work on the relationship between the message and the artistic object, it allows the possibility of some of the artistic objects being mobilized by the objectual messages. These are objectual-oriented messages in the aesthetic area. In our opinion, the objectual message is universal; it can appear in any type of inter-ethnic, intergroup, interstate relations.

3. Message - term, notion or concept

Whoever knows today what that message is. But even if what someone thinks a message is not really a message, it does not mean that it does not give or cannot give, receive or, more precisely, not send messages. This only means that its conceptual apparatus is deficient. Moreover, as far as the message is concerned, practice exceeds almost insignificant the theory [25, 26]. As can be seen, everyday communication can take place outside any epistemological device and outside any theoretical commitment: the message can live without the concept of "message." The hemeneutical messages always survives. Every man is a "poet" in the message. He produces and especially consumes messages, often without realizing, without realizing, without tempting it. Messages help us, stimulate us when we do not know it. An involuntary act or intentional act, a communication event in a word, the message is one of the few scholarly and essential practices that do not necessarily require epistemological training or a theoretical effort investment.

As existence precedes pre-concept and production precedes concept, and in the field of messages: practice precedes the theory. The level of messages is the fundamental social level [27, 28].

The message, like the native language, teaches theoretically after we already know it. "The message" is a neologism whose semantic content seems to have been definitively stabilized, and the vocabulary seems to be within the reach of everyone, it enters the lexical horizon of anyone. The level of common sense, a mechanical technology of using language, keeps, without consciousness of preservation, As a term, as an item in the instrumentation stock of automatisms.

Common sense retains the "message" as a term. The notion of concept as well as of the concept remain in an unspent horizon and, anyway, distant, to the limit of the unknown imaginable.

It was argued that the message would be a notion. The message appears to us as a coherent, cohesive and unitary meaningful meaningful set of states, situations, objects, phenomena, facts, problems, events or people. It is not a simple notion. Innocence sometimes pulls down even schnacious minds.

Thus, in Umberto Eco's opinion, "the message term would have two meanings" [29]. Consideration of the message as a notion of this fundamental logical form that reflects the necessary and general characteristics of a class of Objects, what it is not. The notion has a content and a sphere - something that does not match any message. If notions are essential then they are concepts.

See the message, on the other hand, as a simple term, as a primary element of building a structure, is again improper [30]. The message itself is a construction. By "message" we are thinking about a reality, thinking about something, thinking about something: in Latin "conceptum" means "already thought".

In our opinion, the "message" is not a simple "term", it is not a "notion" of any kind, but a concept. Knowledge without a concept is inexorably subject to error. The idea is found in Immanuel Kant: "Any knowledge requires a concept, however uncertain" [31].

In a broad sense, the message is everything that emits in the vague, imprecise idea of a reception (reception). In a narrow sense, we mean by the message the "set" of meanings that are transmitted in the idea of realizing the reception (understanding). In its specialized sense, the message is the concept that designates an "ensemble" of meaning transferred to produce an effect designed by the enterprise itself [32, 33]. On this ideological itinerary, the objectual message is an ensemble of meanings induced by an object and aiming at producing a meditative, reflexive, contemplative or practical effect.

4. Objectual message: pre-concept and concept

Historical discourse is the closest discourse to practical reality. In the history books, verbal production appears and configures reality. History describes, presents, reports, and explains reality. In this type of language production, facts are historical facts, that is, actual facts illustrated by a historian. These facts have more authenticity, reality, more than any other facts illustrated by language. History puts reality into reality. As such, in general, historical facts can be treated, studied and exploited as real facts.

In our approach to conceptualizing the objectual message we will ponder from historical facts, we will compare them, we will separate a pre-

concept of the objectual message, and then we will reinforce this pre-concept in other facts.

The first historical fact of communication is drawn from Histories of the Father of History, Herodotus [34]:

„130. The Scythians, when they perceived signs that Persians were becoming alarmed, took steps to induce them not to quit Scythia, in the hope, if they stayed, of inflicting on them greater inquiry, when their supplies should altogether fail. To effect this, they would leave some of their cattle exposed with the herdsmen, while they themselves moved away to a distance: the Persians would make a foray, and take the beasts, whereupon they would be highly elated.

131. This they did several times, until at last Darius was at his wits' end; hereon the Scythian princes, understanding how matters stood, despatched a herald to the Persian camp with presents for the king: these were, a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows. The Persians asked the bearer to tell them what these gifts might mean, but he made answer that he had no orders except to deliver them, and return again with all speed. If the Persians were wise, he added, they would find out the meaning for themselves. So, when they heard this, they held a council to consider the matter.

132. Darius gave it as his opinion, that the Scyths intended a surrender of themselves and their country, both land and water, into his hands (...) To the explanation of Darius, Gobryas (...) opposed another which was as follows: 'Unless, Persians, ye can turn into birds and fly up into the sky, or become mice and burrow under the ground, or make yourselves frogs, and take refuge in the fens, ye will never make escape from this land, but die pierced by our arrows.' Such were the meanings which Persians assigned to the gifts."

It ensues as following: King of Persia Darius attacked Scythia; Scythian kings send him through a herald (not through a messenger!) a "gift" composed of "a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows." This object-based construction is perceived by Darius and his staff as a message. In fact, the Scythian kings disguise the message as a gift; they send a gift that is irrepressibly perceived as a message. No moment the Persians take the set of objects as a gift; they treat the gift as a message. Any message requires an interpretation, much more a message made up of objects. An objectual message is ambiguous in a particularly high degree. More than words that speak themselves, objects are what they are and signifies, denotes, symbolizes something else. The object is what it is plus its symbolic connotations, it is something plus something else. Objects are both linguistic semiotic words and signs in the objects' system. Therefore, the Persians cleanse the gift of the meaning of "gift" and proceeded to interpret the

message. Hermeneutics admits three types of interpretation: decoding, deciphering and decryption. Interpretation of Persians is of the type of decryption, in the sense that they identify in the message what the Scythians might actually have said through the words of a herald, but they did not want it. Through the objectual message, the Scythians oblige and ambiguous what they have to communicate. Herodotus notes the interpretation of King Darius and that of Gobryas. In semiotic order, both are valid. In truth order, however, the valid interpretation seems to be that of Gobryas. For us, these interpretations are, above all, confirmations of understanding the gift as an objectual message. On the other hand, it is to be noted that a historian like G. De Sanctis [35] considers this message to be a "messaggio figurato" (Engl. figurative message). No, no, it is an objectual, not a figurative message.

The second historical fact to be drawn from Dio Cassius's „Roman History" [36]:

„When Trajan, in the course of his campaign against the Dacians, had come near Tapai, where the barbarians were encamping, a large mushroom was brought to him, on which it said in Latin characters that the Buri and other allies advised Trajan to turn back and make peace." This time, what is delivered is no longer presented as a gift. If we had a purely objectual message in the first case, this time we have to deal with an objectual message modulated by a verbal message. The mushroom is an object. This object is engraved with a verbal message. The first impression is that the mushroom is just the writing letter for the verbal message. Cassius Dio (164-229 BC) does not explain how understood, how Trajan interpreted the objectual message. He gives us the detail necessary to understand how Trajan's message has been interpreted. In this regard, Cassius Dio states that Nero "declared mushrooms to be the food of the gods, because Claudius was a god." Emperor Nero reigns between 54 and 68 years. Trajan (which reigns between 98 and 117 BC) reaches the Danube in the year 101 BC. Cassius Dio suggests that Trajan decodes the mushroom not as a poison, but as a confirmation as a god. In any case, it turns out that the mushroom is the support of a message and that, on the other hand, it also carries its own symbolic message.

From these two facts comes a pre-concept of an objectual message: that message made up of objects, that carry significance beyond their meaning as objects, that message that says something through the ambiguity of objects and, moreover, something other than the objects themselves.

In these two cases, the objectual message brings meaning that it introduces into the circuit of verbal communication [37]. A third communicative fact illustrating the objectual message is drawn from Roland

Barthes' "The Novel of Writing" (1987), which states that "the object is interpretable" and that it gives an object like "a scarf" is communicated in the alternative and in plus and haptically (through the language of touch, through the language of contact): thus, "the gift is a contact", that is, an element of the vocabulary of the haptic domain [38].

5. Conclusions

The objectual message presents the following identity features:

a) objectual message is built from objects;

b) in the objectual message, the object's language is, in the alternative, strengthened, supplemented, explained, developed by related languages, such as verbal language, haptic language, proxemic language, chronome language, body language etc.;

c) in the objectual message, the objects are loaded with connotative meanings;

d) the objectual message is deeply ambiguous and fullest extent interpretable.

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