

# Book reviews

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## Book Reviews

Sbisà, Marina (2007). *Detto non detto. Le forme della comunicazione implicita*. Roma-Bari: Laterza.

Marina Sbisà's *Detto non detto. Le forme della comunicazione implicita* explores the issue of implicit communication, more specifically the issue of implicit meaning that, albeit presupposed or implicated, is nonetheless present in the text and, as such, is part and parcel of the message communicated by it.

Implicit meaning is investigated using the multifaceted theoretical perspective provided by pragmatics in which implicit meaning has been analyzed within the studies regarding both "presupposition" and "implicature." The author analyzes these in text understanding. Implicit communication is investigated through a linguistic and textual approach, that is explicitation of implicit meaning must be grounded *in* the text, namely motivated and justified by the linguistic signals that manifest themselves in it. Recovery of implicitly conveyed meaning is aimed at better understanding the text. Such a recovery must, however, be legitimated, which is to say that it has to be rationally based.

The rationality Sbisà refers to is the "argumentative rationality" which she has thoroughly discussed in, among other writings, an interesting paper on Grice's theory of implicature (cf. Sbisà

2006). In that paper the qualification "argumentative" refers to the fact that attribution of an implicature to a speaker who has made a certain utterance must be supported by argument. Such a type of rationality is contrasted with "instrumental rationality," i.e. the means-ends reasoning interpretation of rationality typical of post-Gricean and neo-Gricean theories of implicature. Indeed, in her view, since argumentative rationality is a contingent property of human beings *qua* persons, the assignment of an "overt" meaning to what is implicitly conveyed, can and must be anchored by supporting arguments. In the book these arguments take the seemingly humble, workaday form of paraphrases, or the practice of expressing the implicit information in a different way than it had originally been couched in the text, approximating the same sense of the text but explicitly conveying at least some of its implicit information. However, throughout the book, Sbisà cogently shows that far from being a simple issue, the analysis of implicit meaning and, consequently, the production of explicating paraphrases belies easy generalizations on communication. Furthermore, through the rich tapestry of examples with which she presents her claims, she demonstrates the social (in addition to the obvious scholarly) import of that tools for optimizing and controlling text comprehension.

In the Introduction the author sets out from the definition of the problem space: What does it mean to comprehend a text? What is the relationship between implicit information and what is said? And what is the relationship between implicit information and what is unsaid? These questions raise problems that have often plagued both philosophical and linguistic research (cf. Ariel 2008). In Sbisà's view, heuristically, the distinction between implicit information and what is said is not an either-or issue, but more one which is gradual in nature. Consistently, by "said" is intended what is available to the receiver on the surface of the text; what can be objected to or negated; and, finally, what, in the form of that which is objected to or negated, minimally departs from the proffered words. On the contrary, the relationship between implicit information and what is unsaid is much more clear-cut. Although implicit information is something not explicitly stated, it is part of the sense of the text, whereas what is unsaid is without any doubt not part of it.

As is well known, implicit meaning has traditionally been investigated within pragmatics through the notions of presupposition and implicature. The core chapters of the book are dedicated to these notions. Presupposition and implicature are thoroughly treated and the distinction between them rigorously demonstrated by arguing that presupposition and implicature play different roles with respect to text understanding.

In Chapter 1 the author surveys research on presupposition both within philosophy of language and linguistics

from the first definition given by G. Frege at the end of the nineteenth century, to the somehow "loaded" meaning it seems to have nowadays. In fact, as is well known, presupposition has been treated somewhat differently in the two fields of inquiry: in philosophy of language the debate around presupposition has mainly focused around the nature of reference and referring expressions, whereas in linguistics, the investigation of presupposition has been concerned with a much wider range of phenomena, mostly focused around the debate about the division of labor between semantics and pragmatics. Such a survey is necessary to Sbisà (i) to show that far from being a single phenomenon with a unitary explanation, presupposition phenomena must be analyzed by integrating both semantic and pragmatic information, and (ii) to finally arrive at a working definition of presupposition that bridges both of them and that may account for the contribution presupposition gives to text understanding. According to Sbisà, presupposition is not an additional inference licensed on the basis of certain words. It has a normative character in that it is a *sine qua non* precondition for the appropriate use of an utterance. It is therefore an assumption whose truth *ought to* be taken for granted by *both* speaker and hearer to accept the utterance as appropriate. At the same time it is different from logical implication in that it is an inference whose validity changes according to the context. But it is also different from pragmatic presupposition conceived as shared assumptions which, being such, do not need to be associated to any specific

utterance (cf. Stalnaker 1973). Presuppositions are instead assumptions that ought to be shared.

In her characterization of presupposition Sbisà embraces a discourse perspective which centers on the role it plays in the evaluation and interpretation of discourses rather than single utterances, enriching it by including the fundamentals of accommodation analysis (cf. Lewis 1979; Heim 1983). Presupposition is engendered by certain lexical and structural triggers – and is thus a bottom-up phenomenon – but the meaning of the presupposition of a sentence is its context changing potential, or its capacity, within the process of text understanding, to contribute to the representation of the context. In discourse, we witness a dynamic process of repair whereby co-operative interlocutors accommodate unfulfilled presuppositions by updating, locally or globally, the context. This way, presuppositions are added to the context as if they had been there all along, always conveying that a certain content has to belong to the representation of the context.

Chapter 2 shows how these features of presupposition can be applied to the analysis of texts. Consistently with her preceding analysis, Sbisà follows a procedure whereby (1) a text segment – drawn from an authentic database of Italian newspapers and school books – containing presupposition phenomena is identified; (2) one or more explicating paraphrases are formulated to show what the text takes for granted; and, (3) very importantly, the validity and the precision with which each paraphrase captures the presupposition in focus is

argued against and grounded in both the linguistic markers that trigger the presupposition and the capacity that a specific explicating paraphrase has to accommodate the propositional content of the presupposition to a specific context. The task is not an easy one as the skilled dis- and re-assembling of text segments clearly shows. Nevertheless, this chapter (together with chapter 4) forms one of the most interesting and original parts of the book. The richness of examples covering a wide and diversified gamut of presuppositional triggers, the step-by-step disassembling and reassembling of text segments (in which sometimes presupposition and implicature are intertwined) accompanied by comments that explain in a thorough and cogent way why the explicating paraphrase holds, the diversity and complexity of information that each explicating paraphrase – and its corresponding presupposition – uncovers, all contribute to showing the complexity of the communication processes we are immersed in and the necessity to develop adequate tools to be able to “handle” it *critically* (p. 91).

In Chapter 3 Sbisà brings the discussion back to the second type of implicit meaning under analysis: implicature. Consistently with the Gricean rationality approach she follows in the book, the research she surveys gives a lot of space to the well-known formulation of the notion by the philosopher P. Grice (cf. Grice 1975). This would apparently seem anachronistic given the bulk of studies produced by post- and neo-Gricean theories. However, the author’s main critique of the above



mentioned theories focuses on the fact that their reading of Grice is too rigid and tend to overlook the fact that the Cooperative Principle and the maxims have to be adapted to the situation and, above all, are not constitutive rules but “consigli di perfezione” (advice for perfection) (p. 194).

Sbisa's characterization of the role of implicature in text understanding retains Grice's original definition of implicature as a special type of implicit meaning which pertains to what the speaker intends to communicate but whose truth value has no consequences on the truth value of the proposition – i.e., if what is implicated is false, the falsity of what is implicated has no consequences on the truth value of the proposition. She also endorses the Gricean distinction between conventional and conversational implicature. Both are invited inferences and both cannot be computed at the sub-locutionary level. However, whereas conventional implicatures are invited by linguistic items and thus belong to the micropragmatic level of the utterance, conversational implicatures arise from the presumption that the Cooperative Principle is observed and as such belong to the macropragmatic level of the utterance. In neither case however – and this is one of the differences with presupposition – is the content of an implicature linguistically encoded to such an extent as to make the inference unnecessary (Sbisa 1999). Grice's implicatures are grouped by Sbisa (p. 99) into “implicature di prevenzione” (prevention implicatures) and “implicature di riparazione” (repair implicatures), the first corresponding to

“Logic and Conversation” Group A examples, and the second to the philosopher's opting out and flouting cases. Although both are seen as cooperative moves in the conversation, they play specific roles in text understanding: the first type provides supplementary information to the asserted content of an utterance, the second – through proper adjustments – invites a re-reading of the utterance.

Therefore, unlike presuppositions, implicatures are not assumptions that ought to be taken for granted by interlocutors. They are best characterized as supplementary information to the asserted content or as adjustments of it which are made available by the text. It is possible that interlocutors assume they are assumptions that are taken for granted but, according to the author, they can be objected against as much as what is explicitly conveyed can be objected against. What they share with presuppositions is that that they also have a normative nature. Indeed, the definition according to which implicatures in text understanding are to be understood as meaning made available to the receiver means that the receiver is *authorized* to attribute to the speaker the intention to communicate *that* meaning. And the recovery of an intention on the part of the speaker to communicate that meaning has to be rationally based, namely it has to be possible to provide a rational path, inspired by Grice and the (actual or possible) violation of one of the maxims, which provides motivation for the attribution of the specific meaning which goes beyond the linguistic material contained in the text.

This is the task she sets out to accomplish in Chapter 4, using the same corpus of data. But before proceeding, a specification is necessary: unlike Grice who discusses the meaning conveyed by implicature as what the speaker means, Sbisà analyzes it independently of the speaker. Therefore the explicating paraphrases she works out do not result from what a speaker thinks, but from the facts contained in the text. The inferences invited by textual facts are in any case to be legitimated through argumentative reasoning. It goes without saying that the issue of working out explicating paraphrases corresponding completely to the implicated meaning conveyed by implicature presents problems which the author acknowledges but cannot avoid. She recognizes that no explicating paraphrase can ever be considered optimal and every paraphrase is open to discussion. What makes a certain paraphrase satisfactory is however the fact that in each case arguments can be given to support it. The chapter analyzes both conventional and conversational implicatures. As for the second type, a recurrence of *implicature di prevenzione* emerges from the texts under scrutiny, and the maxims involved are mostly Quantity and Relation, although cases of Manner and Relation are also presented.

Chapter 5 discusses the issue of how people can learn to produce explicating paraphrases which can help them extract implicit information and verify text understanding. The issues at stake here are far from simple. Explicating paraphrases are not easy to produce, as has been shown through-

out the whole book. Therefore, by making reference to an experimental study she carried out during the school year 1999–2000 in a school in Trieste, Sbisà devotes this chapter to explaining and exemplifying how to give rise to explicating paraphrases – from the preliminary analysis of implicit information contained in text segments to the type of questions that should be avoided in the explicating process –, and to discussing the skills – textual, syntactical, lexical, logical, pragmatic, concerning shared knowledge or the ability to recognize subjectivity – required to produce explicating paraphrases. The author recognizes that some of the skills involved in making explicit implicit information – for example the ability to recognize others' subjectivity – are actually complex and go beyond training students to stick to what is coded by the linguistic signals present in the text. However, most of the skills involved can and should be taught given that the process of extracting implicit information from the text is unavoidably necessary to the proper use of the text and to learn from it.

The last chapter offers an integrated perspective on the research reviewed throughout the book and returns to the main questions raised in the previous chapters. Thus, the textual – more than psychological – reality of implicit meaning and the normative character of presupposition and implicature are restated and their relationship with objective context foregrounded. All this is again anchored in the fundamental, underlying premise on which the whole book rests, namely that implicit

meanings belong to the realm of argumentative rationality.

The book opens a host of avenues for further research. From the philosophical point of view its against-the-stream view of Grice's rationality calls for a reconsideration of the prevailing instrumental interpretation given to it by Relevance Theory. From the linguistic point of view, the book opens up a veritable Pandora's box of research challenges having mainly to do with cross-linguistic/cross-cultural issues. For example: do presupposition and implicature show language-specific features in addition to their universal ones? Are certain types of presuppositions associated with the same or with different text types in different languages and cultures? Do instructional and non-instructional uses of language (the two cases taken into consideration in the book) in different cultures differ in their uses of implicit meanings? Results of such research would not only be interesting from the strictly linguistic point of view but, if shared, would have beneficial consequences from the instructional point of view as well. It would help L2 instructors and students develop an attention to the foreign language text that goes beyond surface features – despite being anchored in them – but that is certainly necessary if L2 learners want to actively participate in any process of communication in an L2. It is therefore vital to alert scholars and students to them and Sbisà's book, the latest of her invaluable contributions to philosophy of language and communication, has, without any doubt, already done a lot in this direction.

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Spencer, Graham (2005). *The Media and Peace. From Vietnam to the "War on Terror"*. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

Graham Spencer est professeur en études des médias à l'Université de Ports-

mouth (UK). Il a largement écrit sur les médias et le processus de paix en Irlande du Nord. Il a publié récemment un ouvrage davantage ancré dans le champ de la science-politique intitulé *The State of Loyalism in Northern Ireland* (2008, Palgrave MacMillan).

Dès l'introduction de *The Media and Peace. From Vietnam to the "War on Terror"*, Graham Spencer annonce que les médias d'information ne sont pas prédisposés à la paix. C'est sur cette controverse que s'engage l'ouvrage du chercheur britannique sur la relation entre les médias et la thématique de la paix. Objet trop rarement étudié en comparaison au nombre de recherches existantes sur le lien entre les médias et la guerre, cette perspective est pourtant centrale puisqu'elle remet en cause à plus d'un titre l'objectivité du journalisme. En effet, l'auteur souhaite démontrer que sans tolérance et compréhension de «l'autre», le journaliste est incapable de proposer une information objectivée et équilibrée sur les conflits.

Suivant une vision historique de la problématique, par l'examen de la couverture de différents conflits internationaux aux paramètres protéiformes, l'auteur propose des analyses variées sur la relation des médias avec la paix et son discours. *L'ouvrage se réduit toutefois à une focalisation sur la télévision (états-uniennes et britanniques particulièrement) au détriment des autres médias.* Graham Spencer justifie cette limitation par la fonction plus importante de la télévision sur les représentations des conflits armés. Le lecteur regrettera toutefois, tout au long du livre, une extension aux médias écrits

pour leurs facultés d'observation et d'analyse critique.

La multiplication des cas d'études proposés au lecteur tendent à démontrer la prédominance d'un caractère antagoniste dans le traitement médiatique des conflits, avec davantage de positions émotives et sensationnelles que d'analyses détaillées de l'information. Selon Spencer, ce traitement médiatique partiel a comme conséquence une mauvaise compréhension de «l'autre» (à comprendre «autre partie») et donc de la définition des termes du conflit.

Cet ouvrage est pourtant bien plus complet que ce que peut laisser supposer cette première conclusion. Reposant sur un socle théorique articulé autour du champ journalistique, de l'économie des médias et de la communication politique, l'auteur nous présente les travaux sur la télévision, sur l'image et sur l'espace public de nombreux chercheurs tels que Bourdieu, Epstein, Boorstins, Schudson, Gans, Bennet, Paterson, Bagdikian, McChesney, Hall, McNair, Wolsfeld, Elderman, Dayan et Katz.

Parmi les théories à retenir, Spencer met en avant l'effet CNN pour souligner l'impact de l'information sur la politique étrangère. L'effet CNN résume le processus par lequel, l'information en continu sur des crises ou des conflits, peut avoir une capacité d'influence sur les prises de décisions politiques. Même si les changements dans les conflits sont avant tout politiques, aujourd'hui, les médias ont un certain pouvoir de pression contraignant les agents des conflits à répondre à de multiples sollicitations. Dans ce contexte d'échanges permanents entre



les médias et les politiques, Spencer s'inscrit dans la droite ligne des travaux de Cohen et Goffman sur le pouvoir des messages visuels et de la communication non-verbale en définissant les médias en tant que « théâtre du pouvoir » à partir duquel les leaders politiques peuvent s'adresser à une audience internationale.

L'auteur fait une distinction entre les *conflits négatifs* et les *conflits positifs*, en soulignant pour les premiers, la prédominance d'échanges à somme nulle entre les parties et pour les seconds, une dynamique de débat avec une diversité des points de vue. Pour faire cette différence, il parcourt divers conflits internationaux reposant sur des approches singulières. Le cas de la guerre du Vietnam permet de comprendre la capacité des médias à caractériser les mouvements pour la paix comme une menace pour la société. Le génocide du Rwanda montre que l'indifférence à une intervention internationale a été facilitée par une couverture médiatique simplifiée, usant des représentations stéréotypées des victimes africaines. L'auteur explique que l'absence de prévention du génocide a été masquée par la suite par une réponse humanitaire. La question de l'information dans les processus de paix est traitée depuis les situations du Moyen-Orient et de l'Irlande du Nord. Une attention particulière est portée sur la relation complexe entre les besoins de confidentialité et de publication des positions des acteurs dans les médias. La communication dans les processus de paix se révèle être de cette manière un exercice d'équilibre dans le cadre de sociétés essayant de passer d'une situation de conflit à

celle d'une paix fragile. Le dernier cas examiné dans cet ouvrage est le rôle des médias dans la première guerre du Golfe, la « Guerre contre la terreur » et la guerre d'Irak en 2003. Les conclusions de l'auteur sont sans appel. Les médias états-uniens et anglais n'ont pas tenu leur rôle d'observateurs. Les médias ont été incapables de critiquer les positions agressives de la politique étrangère des Etats-Unis et de l'Angleterre. Il y eu ainsi une complicité notable avec l'agenda politique.

Suite à cette brillante présentation de différents exemples de traitement médiatique de conflits, l'ouvrage se clôt sur un retour à la théorie controversée du journalisme pour la paix. Faisant office de morale, ce dernier chapitre fait la promotion d'une pratique plus responsable du journalisme. La théorie du journalisme pour la paix inscrit comme postulat de départ l'absence d'objectivité dans l'information médiatique. Cette théorie peut être définie comme un programme de cadrage journalistique de l'information qui contribue à des processus favorisant la paix et la résolution non-violente des conflits. L'un de ses principaux promoteurs est l'universitaire et spécialiste de la résolution des conflits Johan Galtung. Une vision prospective se dégage de cette théorie, ayant davantage tendance à encourager une nouvelle pratique du journalisme qu'à analyser les paramètres du champ journalistique. Les principales critiques du journalisme pour la paix soulignent précisément ce point. Le choix de Graham Spencer de terminer son ouvrage sur cet appel à un journalisme plus pondéré montre la croyance de l'auteur dans la capacité d'influence

des journalistes dans les conflits afin de dépasser le jeu à somme nulle entre les parties antagonistes. Une plus grande précision dans l'analyse journalistique pourrait ainsi faciliter l'apaisement des conflits. Complexifier au lieu de simplifier pour favoriser la paix ? Mais n'est-ce pas aller à contre-courant de ce qui est demandé aux journalistes d'information dans les médias actuels ? En dépit de ses détracteurs, cette théorie par laquelle se conclut l'ouvrage a, néanmoins, le mérite de créer un débat majeur sur le rôle des journalistes dans les conflits.

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Colin B. Grant (ed.) (2003). *Rethinking Communicative Interaction. New interdisciplinary horizons.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Repenser l'interaction communicative est le titre de l'ouvrage écrit sous la direction de Colin B. Grant, Professeur à la *University of Surrey*. A partir de son constat que l'interaction est une communication instable et complexe, et en même temps socialement nécessaire, l'auteur a l'ambition de proposer un nouveau paradigme pour expliquer l'interaction communicationnelle dans un environnement où le changement s'impose rapidement. Le pari nous semble réussi. On est évidemment d'accord avec l'auteur lorsqu'il affirme que l'intersubjectivité ne peut plus rendre compte de l'espionnage gouverne-

mental, de l'utilisation d'Internet par les terroristes, de la télé-réalité ou de la communication médiatisée par ordinateur. Cet ouvrage met en lumière les contingences et les complexités de la communication aujourd'hui, que ce soit au niveau de l'évolution de l'interaction entre les différentes formes du moi ou du flou de la limite entre le réel et le virtuel. L'auteur explique en détail ces contingences qui se manifestent principalement à travers les éléments essentiels de l'interaction communicationnelle que constituent la compréhension, la signification et la connaissance partagée dans l'interaction. La compréhension est un processus interne de construction cognitive réalisée de manière autonome par le sujet. La signification est instable, car la forme des déclarations et les intentions de l'interlocuteur sont inconnues. Enfin, la connaissance dans l'interaction n'est pas partagée parmi les participants à la communication, car on ne peut pas avoir la garantie d'échanger les mêmes signes dans la communication. En effet, l'auteur considère la connaissance partagée – *shared knowledge* –, comme une fiction, qui, en terme social, est fonctionnelle ou opérative pour atteindre un consensus social. Selon Grant, le significat social est construit à travers la communication entre les acteurs qui ont une autonomie cognitive dans un environnement social où le monde objectif n'existe pas. Ainsi, l'auteur croit que la communication est contingente de deux façons : d'une part, les constructions sont subjectives, d'autre part, les communications sont des appels ouverts, sans compter que l'autonomie cognitive et la construc-



tion sociale sont complémentaires. Grant ne cherche pas le compromis. Le lecteur peut être étonné de lire une critique forte des théories de l'intersubjectivité, mais Grant propose aussi une alternative originelle. C'est avec un certain courage qu'il déclare que ces contingences ne forment pas une aliénation, au contraire elles sont un élément inévitable de nos expériences qui nous aident à interpréter la réalité sociale comme un appel ouvert sur les différentes sélections communicatives. Il reconnaît les complexités de la communication en décrivant en détail les flux des discours, les différentes formes du moi, les formes de réception et les contextes. Pour lui, de nouveaux horizons peuvent s'ouvrir à condition qu'on puisse insérer l'interaction dans la théorie de la communication des incertitudes.

C'est de cette évolution que l'auteur de ce volume rend compte en proposant non seulement une solide base théorique – Niklas Luhmann, Jürgen Habermas et Siegfried J. Schmidt –, mais aussi des études de cas ainsi que des exemples de recherche empirique. L'ouvrage présente un programme interdisciplinaire avec des textes répartis en trois sections: la communication de soi, la construction de la communication et enfin l'environnement de la communication.

Dans la section réservée à la construction de la communication, Siegfried J. Schmidt décrit les fictions opératives au niveau cognitif, culturel, technologique ainsi qu'au niveau de la communication et des médias, en les insérant dans sa théorie des histoires et des discours. Ensuite, Bernd

Porr et Florentin Wörgötter présentent une expérience concernant le comportement d'un robot vis-à-vis de son environnement dans le domaine de la science neurologique. Ils démontrent que l'autonomie cognitive s'explique par la nécessité de réduire les contingences de l'environnement à cause de l'imprévisibilité. En outre, quelques recherches empiriques sont illustrées dans la section dédiée à l'environnement de la communication; Austin S. Babrow et Mohan J. Dutta-Bergman analysent la construction sociale des incertitudes créée par les médias dans le cas de bio-terrorisme (attaque à l'anthrax aux USA en automne 2001), selon une analyse qualitative des informations divulguées dans la presse d'élite américaine. Les résultats de la recherche révèlent que les journalistes ont construit les incertitudes par rapport au bio-terrorisme en amplifiant dans un sens épistémologique les informations qui sont à la source des incertitudes, la qualité et la validité des informations disponibles sur les dangers de l'anthrax. En revanche, ils n'ont pas prêté beaucoup d'attention aux informations de nature ontologique. En effet, selon les auteurs, la considération de l'incertitude comme un aspect de l'être aurait pu défier la rationalité technologique et scientifique des USA. Dans un autre texte, Avgerinakou Anti décrit la communication conflictuelle – *flaming* – dans un forum sur Internet entre étudiants et professeurs, où l'absence des dimensions de l'espace et du temps crée une situation de re-interprétation permanente et de re-négociation des enjeux de pouvoir et des attentes entre les acteurs.

Tous ces résultats constituent une importante contribution théorique et aussi empirique qui met en évidence le rôle de l'incertitude dans la communication. Le lecteur perçoit aussi rapidement que l'ouvrage lance un pavé dans la mare des théories de la communication. Ce livre pourrait avoir des conséquences importantes dans tous les domaines scientifiques touchés par les sciences de la communication et des médias. En fait, il s'agit de l'attribution d'une connotation positive à l'incertitude dans la communication qui pousse vers la connaissance de zones inexplorées. Par ailleurs, l'application de la théorie des incertitudes, non seulement dans les médias, mais aussi dans des domaines spécifiques de la communication comme la santé, les organisations, l'interculturalité, le management du risque peut ouvrir de nouveaux horizons interdisciplinaires, comme l'indique le sous-titre de l'ouvrage. On pourrait ainsi observer que même les crises financières actuelles peuvent s'expliquer à travers la théorie des incertitudes dans la communication en utilisant le concept de l'imprévisibilité du comportement de l'environnement, qui métaphoriquement représente l'interaction entre les interlocuteurs cognitivement autonomes. Ils échangent des signes flous – *fuzzy* –, en suivant le mot de Grant. Ne pas partager les signes dans la communication signifie sans doute l'impossibilité de prévoir le comportement de l'interlocuteur dans l'interaction. C'est une incitation pour repenser le concept de planification des événements futurs dans tous les domaines de la communication.

L'intérêt majeur de ce livre est donc la mise en place d'un panorama interdisciplinaire dans le domaine de la communication qui a été possible grâce à des apports anglo-saxons et allemands. Un seul regret: aucune des contributions de cet ouvrage ne mentionne une seule référence en langue française. Pourtant, l'intérêt de la lecture de cet ouvrage est évident: l'originalité théorique et la variété argumentative des cas et des recherches empiriques présentés constituent un challenge pour la recherche à venir.

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**M**orresi, Enrico (2008). *L'onore della cronaca. Diritto all'informazione e rispetto delle persone*. Bellinzona: Edizione Casagrande.

«Sulla base di che cosa un giornalista decide se dare o meno una notizia di cronaca?»

«Quali sono i criteri per cui sceglie di fare un nome o di pubblicare una foto?»

«È giusto che i media soddisfino sempre la curiosità dell'opinione pubblica – in particolare violando la privacy di qualcuno?»

Queste le principali domande che Enrico Morresi – presidente della Fondazione del Consiglio della Stampa Svizzera e già autore di «Etica della notizia» – pone e indaga nel suo libro, adottando la visione poliedrica di chi

dà la notizia, di chi ne è al centro e di chi la legge. Lo fa partendo dalla considerazione di fondo per cui, nella società dell'informazione e della comunicazione in cui viviamo, in continuo mutamento, nulla può essere ritenuto acquisito in modo definitivo, neanche le regole deontologiche e i principi fondativi del diritto all'informazione che certamente costituiscono dei punti di riferimento fondamentali e imprescindibili per la professione giornalistica ma, che in taluni casi, non bastano per un agire coscienzioso e corretto all'interno di un tessuto democratico. «La legge è solo il penultimo orizzonte oltre al quale esiste un rimando ad un orizzonte ulteriore (quello della coscienza morale)» – afferma Morresi.

Così in un momento in cui la sensazione diffusa è quella che i mass media hanno la tendenza ad essere invasivi e spesso poco rispettosi della privacy e dei diritti del pubblico, il libro rivendica e sottolinea la possibilità di fare del giornalismo serio e corretto portando all'onore della cronaca i fatti e le persone che interessano l'opinione pubblica senza ferirle o lèderle. Come? Ricordandosi che alla base dei diritti e dei doveri di un giornalista dovrebbe esserci la delega della società civile e che la libertà di stampa non può prescindere dal diritto alla privacy del cittadino. È l'interesse pubblico che legittima il ruolo di chi informa. Per dirla con le parole di Enzo Biagi, che Morresi stesso riprende, «e quando scrivete di qualcuno ricordatevi che potrebbe essere vostro padre, vostra madre, vostra sorella...».

Il percorso che l'autore svolge, nell'ambizioso progetto di consegnare al

pubblico e ai colleghi delle argomentazioni di natura giuridica ed etica, ha il merito di coinvolgere e confrontare tra di loro le realtà storico-sociali e le tradizioni giornalistiche di paesi europei come la Francia, l'Inghilterra, la Germania, l'Italia e la Svizzera e degli Stati Uniti.

Esso parte con un quadro approfondito e dettagliato delle origini della cronaca, nel quale spicca uno dei sagaci esempi di cui l'opera è disseminata, e che è utile riportare perché segna l'inizio della contaminazione tra due tipi di giornalismo che fino a quel momento erano distinti: quello alto, dunque politico e divulgatore dell'alta cultura, e quello basso, di cronaca, che pone una nuova cultura della notizia, sottolineandone il carattere di valore di scambio e di merce di pronto consumo. «Nel febbraio del 1878, il corrispondente da Washington del «New York Tribune» riferì che ogni giorno, alla Camera, il rappresentante dello Stato dell'Ohio, William Sawyer, si alzava dal proprio seggio, si metteva nel vano della finestra, e, tirato fuori un cartoccio con pane e salame, cominciava a mangiarne usando un coltello a serramanico come stuzzicadenti e le maniche della giacca come tovagliolo, infine appallottolava il cartoccio e lo buttava dalla finestra.» La Camera – come proseguì l'aneddoto – reagì sdegnata e da quel momento escluse tutti i cronisti della «Tribune» dall'assistere alle sedute.

Segue una rassegna delle più importanti innovazioni tecnologiche dei media fino alla nascita della penny press, alla stampa di massa e all'affermazione consolidata della stampa popolare alla svolta del terzo millennio.

## Qualifier des lieux de détention et de massacre

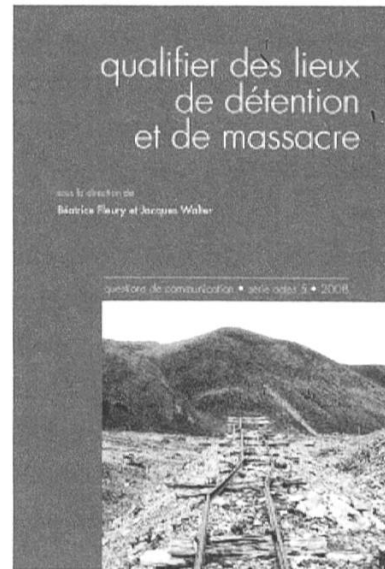
sous la direction de Béatrice Fleury et Jacques Walter

Presses universitaires de Nancy, 2008, 341 p., 20 euros

Par processus social de qualification, on entend le sens premier et le geste fondateur par lesquels des acteurs de la mémoire font d'un lieu un emblème d'une histoire dont ils décident de commémorer un aspect. Quant aux processus de disqualification et de requalification, ils sont envisagés selon les infléchissements de sens dont un lieu peut être désinvesti et réinvesti.

Pour traiter de ceux-ci à propos des lieux de détention, de concentration et d'extermination, dix-neuf chercheurs et/ou acteurs engagés dans des milieux de mémoire sont mis à contribution. Issus de champs disciplinaires différents (histoire, études littéraires, sciences de l'information et de la communication) et originaires de divers pays (Allemagne, Argentine, Belgique, Canada, Espagne, France, Pologne), ils éclairent un phénomène complexe en même temps que récurrent.

C'est donc à une compréhension de processus mémoriels en lien avec des histoires répressives et violentes que *Qualifier des lieux de détention et de massacre* s'applique. Plutôt centré sur le moment fondateur d'un geste de qualification, il est le premier volume d'une série d'ouvrages dont la publication s'étalera sur quatre ans dans le cadre d'un programme de recherche de la Maison des sciences de l'homme Lorraine.



*Béatrice Fleury, Jacques Walter:*

Qualifier des lieux de détention et de massacre

### Histoire et mémoires

#### du camp de la Neue Bremm

*Cédric Neveu:* La Neue Bremm et la répression en Moselle annexée (juin 1943-décembre 1944)

*Thomas Fontaine:* Les rôles du camp de Sarrebruck Neue Bremm dans les déportations depuis la France occupée (été 1943-été 1944)

*Béatrice Fleury:* Quand des victimes sortent de l'oubli. Mobilisation franco-allemande à la Neue Bremm (1978-1997)

*Jacques Walter:* Nouvelle testimoniale et inter-dit. Arthur Conte et la Neue Bremm

*Claude Nosal:* Déminer le silence : une archéologie de la trace généalogique. Fils de... Hélène Cuny, déportée

*Horst Bernard:* Action personnelle, action associative

### Parcours dans les camps

#### de la Seconde Guerre mondiale

*François Cochet:* 1945-2007 : Stalags, Oflag et Frontstalags. De la confusion à la déqualification

*Thomas Fontaine:* Fonctions et mémoires d'un camp allemand. Les « Forts de Romainville »

*Cédric Neveu:* Le système carcéral en Moselle annexée (1940-1944)

*Daniel Weyssow:* Le siège de la Gestapo à Bruxelles. Un non-lieu de mémoire

*Laurent Thiéry:* Les centres de détention allemands de Belgique. Antichambres de la déportation pour les résistants et politiques du Nord de la France (1940-1944)

### Des lieux de répression aux controverses mémorielles

*Yannis Thanassekos:* Les processus de qualification, de disqualification et de requalification des lieux de mémoires (1950-2000)

*Thomas Weber:* Les victimes de l'Histoire.

Préalables à un programme de recherche

*Estrella Israël-Garzón:* Gants blancs, mains sales. Hommage à Esther Srul

*Joanna Teklik, Philippe Mesnard:* D'Auschwitz aux « camps polonais » : la circulation d'un cliché

*Luba Jurgenson:* Les espaces concentrationnaires de la Kolyma et leurs représentations

*Claudia Feld:* Lieu du souvenir ou symbole de la dictature ? Les représentations médiatiques de l'ESMA en Argentine

*Luciana Messina:* Les polémiques autour de l'ancien centre de détention clandestine « El Olimpo » (Buenos Aires)

*Joceline Chabot:* Débats et controverses au sujet d'un monument commémoratif. La Réparation (Montréal, 1995-1998)

*Olivier Dard:* L'internement des militants et sympathisants de l'OAS. Des camps d'Algérie aux pénitenciers de métropole (1961-1968)

### Questions de communication

Revue semestrielle à comité de lecture, publiée avec le soutien du Centre de recherche sur les médiations (Université Paul Verlaine-Metz/Nancy-Université/Université de Haute-Alsace) et avec le concours du Conseil Régional de Lorraine, du CNL et du CNRS

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<http://www.lcdpu.fr/collections/questionsdecommunication> Site : <http://www.ques2com.fr>  
Rédaction : [crem@univ-metz.fr](mailto:crem@univ-metz.fr)



Dati alla mano, Morresi dimostra come agli inizi del nuovo millennio nell'Occidente industrializzato le tirature più alte sono ottenute dai giornali che assegnano alla cronaca uno spazio preponderante. I tabloid – e dunque la stampa popolare – si confermano in vetta alla classifica delle tirature in Inghilterra (il «Sun» con 3,07 milioni di copie, il «Daily Mail» con 2,2 milioni, e il «Daily Mirror» con 1,5 milioni); in Germania (la «Bild» con 3,7 milioni); in Austria (la «KronenZeitung» con 891 mila) e in Francia, dove «Ouest France», giornale regionale di taglio popolare, con 782 mila copie precede nettamente i quotidiani nazionali come lo sportivo «L'Equipe» (354 mila) «Le Parisien» (343 mila), «Le Figaro» (328 mila) e «Le Monde» (317 mila). Anche negli Stati Uniti la musica non cambia, «USA Today» è in testa con 2,2 milioni di copie.

Conclude precisando che non si vuole dare nessun giudizio di merito sul giornalismo di massa o alla cosiddetta «people press» che oggi maggiormente caratterizza la cronaca dei tabloid, quanto piuttosto rendere evidente la difficoltà di rivendicare degli spazi di privacy in un contesto del genere: «Se tutto vorrebbe poter vedere l'osservatore, tutto vorrebbe sottrarre alla vista l'osservato; tutto è tentato di dichiarare d'interesse pubblico l'osservatore, tutto vorrebbe dichiarare «privato» l'osservato.» Quale criterio può aiutare a tracciare un confine? La risposta non è semplice e soprattutto non è univoca come dimostra la seconda parte del libro in cui l'autore descrive in modo approfondito le legislazioni che nei diversi paesi europei e negli Stati Uniti

regolano il diritto all'informazione e il diritto alla tutela della sfera privata del cittadino. E alla fine della quale, citando Gianluca Gardini – professore straordinario di diritto amministrativo e di diritto dell'informazione presso l'università di Bologna – l'autore lascia intendere che «la riservatezza ha la peculiarità di essere uno tra i diritti più difficili da definire» per cui, come a sua volta riflette il penalista ginevrino Charles Poncet, prima o poi il giornalista inevitabilmente si troverà a decidere se violare una legge penale per rispettare il suo dovere di informare il pubblico.

Come sciogliere il bandolo della matassa?

Enrico Morresi lo spiega con le parole di Nicolò Lipari, giurista e politico italiano: «Se il diritto alla notizia trova un limite nella tutela dell'altrui riserbo, non lo trova in astratto ma in funzione del contenuto della notizia trasmessa e quindi nella misura complessiva degli interessi della medesima implicati.» In altre parole, nella valutazione di liceità di una violazione della privacy non è il diritto di cronaca del giornalista a prevalere, e neppure un diritto assoluto del cittadino alla riservatezza, ma il grado di interesse generale che assume il contenuto della specifica notizia.

Ma che cos'è l'interesse pubblico della notizia e in base a quali criteri farlo valere? Secondo la nuova Costituzione svizzera «L'interesse pubblico sarà la misura della proporzionalità (si potrebbe dire della «sostenibilità») di ogni intervento restrittivo dei diritti fondamentali, tra cui la libertà d'opinione e di informazione (art.16) e la libertà dei media (art.17)». Ogni

intervento restrittivo avrà una sua individuale giustificazione.

Inoltre – sottolinea l'autore – non bisogna equiparare interesse pubblico e notiziabilità, confondere opinione pubblica e sfera politica, e assumere che la curiosità del pubblico sia l'equivalente dell'interesse pubblico.

L'argomentazione entra nel vivo chiarendo come una notizia possa toccare una persona a vari livelli di profondità ma, soprattutto, facendo riferimento a tre particolari parametri che un giornalista di cronaca e i professionisti dei media dovrebbe osservare: quello dell'indice di riservatezza, dell'indice di notorietà e quello della rilevanza sociale.

Secondo il parametro della riservatezza, quanto più l'oggetto della notizia tocca la sfera pubblica, tanto più può essere legittimamente pubblicizzato. Quanto più invece appartiene alla sfera intima tanto più il diritto di cronaca è limitato.

Secondo l'indice di notorietà, invece, quanto più l'autore di un fatto è una persona pubblica, tanto più esso interessa il pubblico, ma solo se il fatto di cui si dà notizia è in rapporto con la funzione pubblica che la persona esercita.

Secondo l'indice della rilevanza sociale, il grado di interesse pubblico aumenta con la contiguità dell'avvenimento (o delle persone) e l'informazione tanto più ci interessa quanto più ci tocca da vicino.

Gettate le fondamenta storiche, dati gli strumenti cognitivi, i riferimenti legislativi e giuridici e soprattutto definiti ambiti, concetti e sfumature di «diritto di cronaca» e di «interesse pubblico», l'autore si avvia verso la fine

del percorso portando casi concreti di giornalismo di cronaca e illustrandone le dinamiche giuridiche e deontologiche sino nel dettaglio. Così ad esempio spiega quando si possono fare i nomi in cronaca nera, come condurre e riportare un'intervista in modo corretto, quando osservare il segreto istruttorio, l'uso e il significato di certe immagini, ecc.

Il merito evidente di quest'opera è di porre una problematica più che mai attuale nell'era dell'informazione e dei mass media di nuova generazione – fornendo, da un lato, ricchi e dotti rimandi che spaziano dalla materia del diritto, a quella della comunicazione, fino alla sociologia e alla filosofia e, dall'altro, sollevando molteplici spunti di riflessione utili per chi informa, e dunque deve rispettare i codici deontologici e le norme giuridiche senza però dimenticare di fare appello alla propria coscienza morale, per chi si trova al centro della notizia – nella prospettiva di Morresi un soggetto portatore di diritti –, e per chi legge e dunque rappresenta l'interesse pubblico e il diritto ad essere informato.

Inoltre – come sottolinea Stefano Rodotà nella prefazione – la peculiarità del lavoro sta nel restituire alla cronaca il suo onore e la sua forza come strumento di costruzione pubblica, consapevole e rispettosa di legami sociali.

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**B**oisot, Max; MacMillan, Ian & Keyong Seok Han (2007). *Explorations in Information Space: Knowledge, Actors, and Firms*. Oxford: University Press.

Much has been written about knowledge management and value creation. But a real theoretical framework for the creation and the sharing of knowledge is lacking in much of the work done so far.

In fact, with the rise of the knowledge economy, economic value is increasingly seen as relying on intangible assets rather than physical assets. Strategies for managing knowledge thus become of central concern. This is one of the reasons why "knowledge" has been so crucial for economic and management fields over the last two decades. But since "knowledge" is not only bare data, or information, but rather the result of a process involving space and time, the nature of knowledge takes on a strategic dimension. Across disciplines and functional boundaries, philosophers, economists, sociologists, organisation theorists as well as managers have debated the nature of knowledge without a real theoretical consensus.

This book is precisely concerned with this issue. It aims at providing a theoretical framework to explore the nature of relevant organisational knowledge within and between firms, and in any other social system. The authors stress the fact that current knowledge management approaches are mainly Information and Communication Technology driven, focusing on the application of tools, and con-

sidering knowledge as a stand-alone resource: something that can be commercialised, stocked, manipulated and defined with clear perimeters. In this book, the authors conceive knowledge as a value creating process, demonstrating that the knowledge management field lacks a founding theory focused on the nature of knowledge and knowledge flows. It is, consequently, not possible to have a credible theory about how to manage knowledge in a firm without first developing a knowledge-based-theory of the firm.

The two main goals of the book can be summarized as follows: Firstly, to build up the foundations of a theory for a conceptual framework centred on knowledge flows, which the authors call the Information Space or I-Space. Secondly, to connect the I-Space framework to the actual world by exposing the managerial implications deriving from the heterogeneous institutional structures that emerge from data processing strategies.

The book is an anthology of articles that have been published in various journals and that are sorted in a coherent order. There are, of course, advantages and disadvantages of publishing an anthology, a fact that the authors acknowledge themselves: on the one hand, each chapter can stand alone, but, on the other hand, the reader will notice redundancies between the different chapters, as well as the fact that the chapters are very different in nature: the perspective and the level of analysis change from one chapter to another.

The structure of the book is quite clear: the five first chapters are dedicated to building the theory for a conceptual

framework (the I-Space) and to focusing on knowledge flows. The sixth chapter demonstrates how and for what type of research studies the I-Space can be applied. A seventh chapter concludes proposing a research agenda.

In what can be called an introductory theoretical chapter, Max Boisot sets up the scene for his theory by highlighting the main issues linked to the knowledge society and the evolution of the different approaches to knowledge according to various disciplines and to historical and economical contexts. It is well written and offers accurate definitions. In fact, knowledge management is a field in which most definitions are abstract and to some extent unclear. Thus, the first chapter is dedicated to the conceptualisation of knowledge and clarifies how it is related to data and information. The authors claim that the distinction between data, information and knowledge has to be revisited, and that light should be shed on how these three concepts relate to each other. In fact, they conclude, these concepts are weakly grounded in theory, although understanding knowledge requires understanding their conceptual foundations. Without this elucidation it would be difficult to understand the data-processing strategies that emerge.

Information can be used, it is argued, to mediate the relationship between the stimuli of the world that reach an actor and the actor's prior knowledge. Knowledge is viewed as a set of expectations that filters incoming stimuli and makes the actor behave in a particular way. One may fear that this approach reduces knowledge to a

subjective experience, as argued by the radical constructivists. But it actually adopts an evolutionary perspective, affirming that even if knowledge differs across individuals, some objective knowledge will gradually emerge thanks to the overlaps in the respective situations and data-processing strategies of the different actors.

In the two following chapters (chapter 2 and 3), the different strategies when using knowledge are examined. This analysis takes place first at the individual level and second at the organisational level. At the individual level, two distinct and yet complementary paths (or mindsets) to the development of knowledge are identified: the entrepreneurial mindset and the managerial mindset. They operate with different epistemologies and therefore have profound implications for knowledge management. An epistemic strategy of an entrepreneurial mindset is more appropriate under conditions of uncertainty and novelty, while the managerial mindset is more appropriate where accumulated and objectively verifiable experience is available. The entrepreneur or manager will not act the same way according to his or her level of justification rigour and beliefs. Two patterns derive: the plausible pattern (entrepreneurs) and the probable pattern (managers).

At the organizational level, chapter 3 focuses on how knowledge is used by organisations in order to give rise to an identifiable competitive advantage. Following the knowledge-based-view perspective, it is argued that organisational differences come from the way resources are accumulated as time

passes, and that, by exploiting and maintaining such resource differences, firms are able to build up a sustainable competitive advantage. This heterogeneity of resources can result from the way organisations' cognitive activities of codification and abstraction. These two processes on which Boisot's I-Space framework is built, are defined as follows: *codification* is the process of giving form to phenomena or experiences by extracting relevant information from them, and by exploiting them in order to retain regularities, moving from intangible knowledge into manageable processes. Codification involves categorisation. *Abstraction* is the process of reducing the number of categories needed by identifying categories that are redundant or irrelevant for the purpose for which codification is undertaken. Abstraction can thus be seen as the compact representation of phenomena (as an efficient coding). Thus, codification facilitates abstraction by giving an edge to categories, which make them more discernible. Abstraction, in turn, stimulates codification by reducing the number of categories whose boundaries need to be refined. Both, working together, they have the effect of producing more articulated knowledge and therefore more shareable knowledge. The epistemic differences that can arise between firms from the way their respective codification and abstraction strategies operate can be a powerful source of competitive advantage.

Chapter 4 explores the strategic assumptions underlying the current knowledge-based theory of the firm. The I-Space is used as the conceptual

framework that relates the articulation of knowledge (through codification and abstraction) to the sharing of knowledge (diffusion). The I-Space framework enables the identification of distinct information environments whose codification, abstraction and diffusion dynamics give rise to different social behaviours (cultures). Thus, according to these information and characteristics, four types of cultures emerge: *markets, bureaucracies, clans and fiefs*.

Chapter 6 finally demonstrates the I-Space's benefit by presenting an agent-based simulation model. This last chapter shows this model applied to concrete empirical problems found in intellectual property rights.

By the end of chapter 6, several issues and questions still remain to be addressed. How is it possible to empirically identify an organisation's critical knowledge assets by measuring its level of codification, abstraction and diffusion? How are they linked to each other? What are the implications of these interaction structures on knowledge creation? The last chapter proposes a rather exhaustive agenda that should attempt to answer these and other questions.

In conclusion, this book takes on the great challenge of articulating a theoretical approach to creation and dissemination of knowledge. Thanks to the relevance of examples (historical examples, biological and physical metaphors as well as specific examples such as the launch of the Walkman by Sony or the problem of intellectual property) and because of the accuracy of definitions, the book remains accessible

to the reader. Furthermore, the repositioning of state-of-the-art knowledge management approaches, according to various disciplines and historical contexts, helps to understand the gap that the authors want to fill. This quality makes the book unexpectedly readable, considering the complexity of the goals. However, the reader is left with a range of thoughts about the applications of the framework. As the authors also confess, the framework is built upon multiple interconnected theories rather than one single theory, making it rather difficult to devise how to apply it to empirical testing. For some readers the content may seem overly dense and difficult to understand in its entirety.

Overall however, the book is worthwhile and recommendable. It succeeds in clarifying most of the unclear definitions linked to knowledge management, as well as explaining their dynamics and interrelationships. It also sheds light on how the development, codification and diffusion of knowledge work at different phases. Knowledge is deeply rooted in history, context, and action, and this book gives a robust framework to analyse it with the underlying idea of building competitive advantage from the robustness of a theorisation.

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Norman, Donald A. (2002 edition, first published 1988). *The Design of Everyday Things*. New York, Basic Books.

Everyone's everyday life comprises the use of everyday things. Day by day we open doors, flip switches, use water faucets, operate alarm clocks, coffee machines, and radio tuners, use telephones, and also operate vehicles or other machinery. Normally, we don't ponder over whether all the things we interact with were designed in an intelligent way, in the sense that it is obvious how to use them. Donald A. Norman, however, began contemplating on these everyday things, and – funnily enough – after some months of getting frustrated by the workings of buildings and transportation systems during his sabbatical stay in England, took action and wrote this book.

Norman worked as a cognitive scientist, interested in how the mind works in general and human error in particular, when he was called in to determine why the operators of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant made such terrible mistakes that led to the big accident in 1979. After it was concluded that not the operators were to blame, but the faulty design of the control room and its controls, Norman realized the huge influence of the design of everyday things on human errors. After writing this very successful book, he co-founded the Nielsen Norman Group, an executive consulting group that helps companies produce human-centered products and services. He is Professor of Computer Science at Northwestern University and Professor

Emeritus of Cognitive Science at the University of California, San Diego. He has also served as Vice President of Apple Computer's Advanced Technology Group.

This book addresses not only designers and manufacturers, but is equally worth reading for just everybody, giving intriguing insights to the psychology of everyday things and everyday actions, as well as an introduction to models of human thought and erring, and an analysis of how everyday knowledge can be (or could be better) managed. The author manages to put all these aspects of everyday life into relation while showing on several occasions that the particular findings 'finally boil down' to some principles of good design, which reappear consistently throughout the book. These principles, along with the discovery that faulty use is more likely to be due to poor design than to personal incapability, and making the reader sensible to everyday things, are the three main take-home contributions of the book.

With supposedly simple things like doors the author introduces his first design principle: use *affordances*. Well-designed things communicate how they are to be operated by suggesting appropriate actions and hiding inappropriate ones. For example, plates on doors indicate that they should be pushed to be opened, while knobs and vertical bars afford pulling. *Constraints* can also be applied to limit the possible actions. Using a fridge control as a next example for frustrating design, the principle of providing *a good conceptual model* is explained: for the user to understand the controls, it helps to understand

how the system works, that is, to develop a conceptual model. In order to ensure that it is the correct mental model (that it matches the designer's model), enough information has to be *made visible*. Otherwise, the human mind in its explanatory nature will create a false model, which will lead to misuse. Further, an investigation of modern phone systems show that giving appropriate *feedback* is an important principle to let the user know in what state the system is. And last, a *natural mapping* between controls and controlled objects makes it obvious for the user which action yields to what result.

After this first part of the book, focusing on everyday things and the perceptions they should desirably cause, a major part of the book concentrates on human behavior and their interplay with the world. From a discussion of the different stages of an action, an approximate theoretical model is derived, the *Seven Stages of Action*, including the forming of a goal, stages of action execution, and stages of evaluating the outcomes of the executed action.

An excursus into the field of knowledge and memory peculiarities is initiated by the argument that precise human behavior can emerge from imprecise knowledge for these reasons: parts of the information required for a task is in the world instead of only in the head, enough information is present for the grade of precision that is required, or constraints are present. Constraints limit the number of alternatives and can be of physical nature, strictly constraining possible operations, of semantic nature, requiring a meaning, of cultural nature, requiring



the alignment with conventions or standards, or of logical nature, demanding a valid logic to be applicable. Memory does not have to be all in the head; it can partly be outsourced into the world instead, by adding reminders to things. In describing everyday things equipped with microprocessors that act as reminders for people, i.e. providing signaling to get attention and messages for information exchange, Norman adumbrates the concept of Ubiquitous Computing, before Mark Weiser, widely considered to be the father of that very concept, published about it years later.

Starting with one of the recurrent calls to design everyday things, devices and systems more human-centered, meaning less prone to human errors, the author devotes an entire chapter to human erring. He explains different types of errors, i.e. slips and mistakes, introduces traditional and connectionist models of human thought, and goes into detail of structures of tasks, by means of decision trees. Guidelines are provided to help design for errors, which result once more in the book's overall design principles contribution. The last main chapter describes challenges designers have to face and explains the complexity of the design process, before the concluding chapter summarizes the main principles again, discusses some implications and offers suggestions for the design of everyday things.

Through the constant use of intriguing and amusing everyday examples, the book is a good read for everyone that likes to look behind the surface of everyday life and learn more about the backgrounds of our

daily struggling. Although the book is imperfectly structured and contains seemingly unintended repetitions, it has become mandatory literature in many design firms, according to the new preface. However, old pictures showing (from a today's view) almost antiquarian devices let the desire for a new version of this book arise, with new examples and contemporary everyday things and devices – it would be highly interesting to see if and how the design of everyday things changed in the past 20 years.

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