

Ingormation

Giancarlo Livraghi – September 2012

This little play with orthography may be silly, but the subject is quite serious. I am not trying to invent a shabby neologism. But when, a few months ago, I happened to make this typo, while I corrected it I was left with the feeling that it might be useful to define in one, deliberately unpleasant, word an awful problem – that is going from bad to worse.

A not particularly popular slang word, *gorm* (or *gormless*) means stupid. In so-called information, stupidity is rampant. In the foolishness of those who write or speak, as well as in their assumption that readers or listeners are stupid. Leading to an ever-multiplying spiral of mutual stupidizing, as explained in *The vicious circle of stupidity* (<http://gandalf.it/stupid/chap18.pdf>).

This typo can happen easily, because the “F” and “G” keys are side-by-side in the keyboard. But it it’s surprising to find how often it isn’t corrected. A quick online search finds lots of “ingormation” in English and French, “ingormazione” in Italian, “ingormación” in Spanish – and so also in other languages. A peculiar case is an “ingormation.com” domain, registered in Australia by someone who is unsuccessfully trying to sell it. I haven’t found any examples of deliberate misspelling. As far as I can see, wherever it appears (except here) it is simply an uncorrected typing error. Anyhow... it, sort of, “sounds right”. Ugly enough to be distasteful.

Can it be related to Star Trek’s Gowron? Maybe – he was a user of ingormation. And maybe also to the hideous Gormogon in the “Bones” television serial? Or the sinister Gorm in “Galidor” science fiction?

We could assume that ingormation is deliberate misinformation, meant to deceive. To some extent, it is. Even where there is real freedom of information and opinion, some have the leverage to decide which (accurate or manipulated) “news” are broadcast – and also when, where and how. Quite often it isn’t even easy to understand who and why is pulling the strings, nor which plays (and with which intentions) are staged in the mixed and overlapping puppet shows.

There is also a disease called *tittytainment* (<http://gandalf.it/arianna/titty.pdf>). This is how it’s explained, in his *Panfleto contra la estupidez contemporánea*, by a Spanish writer, Gabriel Sala.

«“Tittytainment” is a mixture of mediocre and trivial entertainment, intellectual garbage, propaganda, psychological and physically nourishing elements, with the purpose of satisfying human beings and keeping them conveniently tranquillized, perennially anxious, submitted and servile to the will of the oligarchy that decides their destiny without allowing them any opinion on the subject.»

And he comments even more sharply in another paragraph.

«*Tittytainment*” is the best alibi provider that has ever existed, the prism through which we can observe the world without feeling guilty or obliged to take responsibility for our actions.»

So Gabriel Sala wrote in 2007. While, just at that time, ingormation was beginning to find another treacherous route.

Tittytainment continues – we are still lulled and confused with gossip, superficiality, puerility, irrelevant digressions. To make things worse, now we are also haunted and obsessed with fear, anguish, depression, by the obscure and mysterious threat of the “economic crisis”.

At all times in human history, fear has always been a tool for the most wicked and mean power. It still is in the (too many) regimes in which there is no free communication. But the *estupidez contemporánea* works also in ways of which we had no previous experience, because we are still in the early stages of understanding the increasingly abundant tools and environments where ingormation multiplies.

So we all run the risk of being, unawarely, purveyors of ingormation. Even well-meaning criticisms and protests are often pointless, confused, disoriented, poorly aimed or misunderstood – with several of these mishaps occurring together. As a result, sinking into the same quicksands as the opinions and behaviors that they are trying to oppose.

Of course power systems, cliques and a variety of people or groups who are somehow “influential” can deliberately exploit the confusion. And often they do. But there isn’t a plot by any single mischievous sorcerer managing ingormation worldwide. There can be many (and conflicting) origins, but nobody is in control of “everything”. This makes the awful mess even more confusing. It also means, however, that ingormation is like stupidity: it can’t be totally defeated, but there is a lot that we can do to reduce its power.

In the case of the so-called “economic crisis”, there is a specific origin. An obvious (while generally ignored) fact is that the whole shenanigan is run by a bunch of financial gamblers. Ingormation helps them, but it isn’t their objective. They have only one purpose: to make lots of quick-and-easy money and hide it far removed from the risks and commitments or real economy.

The resulting awful suffering of all the rest of humanity is “collateral damage”. Irrelevant for a wretched clique of maniacs afflicted by a precisely diagnosed pathology. They are *«psychopaths who have a biochemical condition that prevents them from feeling normal human empathy»*.

As explained in a “supplement” at the end of *Once upon a time there was the market* (pages 8-9 in <http://gandalf.it/stupid/market.pdf> – November 2011).

This is an alarmingly extended, and dangerously growing, manifestation of the power of stupidity and the stupidity of power.

It's a tricky situation in which also the ingormers are ingormed. And so are governments all over the world, and all sorts of national and international "authorities", who are supposed to cure the disease but don't have a clue about how to get to the roots of the problem.

Is this evil complicity? Sometimes, it can be. But it's mostly inexcusable ignorance or superficial neglect of basic facts, that are much less complicated (and much more courrupt) than they are generally made to appear.

I don't intend to repeat here what I have already written in other articles (there is a list in page 5). But a few things need to be added.

The general state of ingormation remains basically the same. But nothing is ever "totally unchanged". There are a few evolutions, here and there, that may not be irrelevant.

Confusion continues in the obsessive discussion of the "crisis". Now the funeral litany of catastrophism is occasionally interrupted by some glimpse of less negative thinking – though it's still imprisoned in the demented framework of financial gambling.

The "economic crisis" appeared to be mainly a European problem (with dismal forecasting of the death of the euro currency or a dismemberment of the European Union – none of which, so far, has happened.) It isn't so.

What will actually happen, and how, is unpredictable. But the whole world must come to grips with the fact that nobody, nowhere, is immune. Including the so-called "emerging economies", that are beginning to get hurt. By the unavoidable spreading of the "crisis" contagion, but more importantly by their own structural diseases that they haven't even started to solve.

People around the world are scared, baffled and frustrated. They don't understand why they should be worried and upset about things that nobody is explaining clearly. And they are very confused about the real reasons why unpleasant (or dreadful) things are happening in their neighborhood.

Bad politics is a frequent user of ingormation, but the disease is working also the other way round: ingormation is often the nourishment, if not the origin, of confusing politics and all sorts of lies. There is no lack of evidence of this particularly disgusting (and dangerous) vicious circle of stupidity.

Another repetitive phenomenon is the "scoop syndrome". Sudden attention to "news" that makes headlines for a few days, then is totally forgotten. It disappears before anyone has a chance to understand if it had any worthwhile meaning. The haste mania picks anything that may appear "newsworthy", ignoring the risk that it can be false or poorly understood. Missing the opportunity of reporting and explaining something more interesting, while rushing in pursuit of the next irrelevant nonsense.

A remarkable and recent example, concerning the "economic crisis", is the reporting, on July 22, 2012, of a very relevant analysis on tax havens. (See *Hidden heaven and growing hell* <http://gandalf.it/offline/paradise.pdf> – and also *The unexplored size of growing poverty* <http://gandalf.it/offline/poverty.pdf>).

That this is awful isn't a discovery. It has been obvious for many years. But now there is some truly important news. For the first time, a methodical, reliable evaluation of the amount of hidden money. The result is staggering. The numbers are enormous. Dozens of trillion (thousand billion) dollars.

Enough money to effectively reverse the tide of the "economic crisis" could be provided by recovering tax evasion (in many cases, the entire hidden amount, because obviously a lot of "dirty money" belongs to organized crime, terrorists, corrupt dictators or oligarchs – and all sorts of other thieves.)

The new study was reported, by a few newspapers, in the following two days. Then it faded into oblivion. There were no further explanations or comments. And, so far, there is no indication that any government or other authority anywhere is doing anything to unearth these huge hidden assets.

Here again – is there complicity? In some places, it's obviously likely. But it's hard to believe that all the people in power everywhere in the world are involved in financial skulduggery.

The glory of "going down in history" as the shining hero who found the hidden treasures, recovered many trillions and saved the world's economy should be, for some leaders, worth much more than fiddling their taxes.

That (as far as we can tell) nobody, so far, has decided to do anything can be only a case of (unforgivable) absentmindedness.

Or maybe secret agents, with the help of accountants and technology hackers, are silently working to find the treasure maps and open the hidden coffers? If so, we should expect that, after the results are obtained, the outcome be publicly known – and also how the immense recovered resources would be used. Though I have a creeping feeling that, unfortunately, this is only a dream.

It is also unlikely that all ingormation is due to deliberate deception and corruption. It's unfortunately true that some journalists (and so-called experts) are "bought" – or influenced and conditioned by other forms of warping control. But this is only part of the problem. Ingormation is enormously more widespread, far beyond the limits of intentional distortion. Nourished by superficiality, haste, approximation and stupidity.

Ingormation is a contagious disease. It generates misunderstandings that confuse people who are not personally infected, but by receiving and spreading warped information become involuntary "carriers".

Accurate, thoughtful and reliable information exists. But it risks being overlooked or misunderstood because of the polluting contiguity with ingormation. On the other hand, preconceived and generalized distrust can be just as harmful as naïve gullibility.

Most people aren't fully aware of how confusingly they are informed (by acquaintance chitchat as badly as by mainstream media). But even the less observant have a vague perception that they are being deceived. Leading to an embarrassing, painful feeling that they can't trust anybody.

While fake “good news” has often been (and may become again) a tool for deception, the now dominating “bad news” (especially on the economy) is even more harmful. The encouraging perception that there *is* a way out and things *can* get better would need, of course, to be based on fact, not myth. But it would be an actively effective part of the solution.

If and when a realistic opportunity is found to spread hope instead of despair, constructive action instead of passive resignation, trust and cooperation instead of selfish exploitation or running for shelter, the change in the information environment would be an engine of improvement.

As things stand now, the mess is disconcerting. It happens very often that even the best information is infected with errors, approximation, ambiguity and distortion. Haste leads to superficiality, ramblings, blurring, obscurity. When someone explains something clearly, someone else gets busy confusing the issue. And the power of stupidity is lurking everywhere.

It can also happen (though less frequently) that shreds of good sense are hiding in the folds of information. A well trained mind may be able to find some useful hints. But it isn't easy to “separate the wheat from the chaff.”

Anyhow, the three resources to avoid being overwhelmed by information are the same as the basic tools for knowledge have always been. Listening. Deliberate, obstinate cultivation of doubt. And insatiable curiosity.

Eight recent articles on “related subjects”
(including four mentioned in the text)

Tyttytainment – December 2010
<http://gandalf.it/arianna/titty.pdf>

Once upon a time there was the market – November 2011
<http://gandalf.it/stupid/market.pdf>

Of mice and men – December 2011
<http://gandalf.it/offline/rats.pdf>

The treacherous art of whining – January 2012
<http://gandalf.it/stupid/whining.pdf>

Stupidocracy – January 2012
<http://gandalf.it/stupid/stupocr.pdf>

How stupidity can be useful – June 2012
<http://gandalf.it/stupid/useful.pdf>

Hidden heaven and growing hell – August 2012
<http://gandalf.it/offline/paradise.pdf>

The unexplored size of growing poverty – August 2012
<http://gandalf.it/offline/poverty.pdf>

And the whole book *The Power of Stupidity*
<http://gandalf.it/stupid/book.htm>
Especially, but not only, chapter 10 *The Stupidity of Power*
<http://gandalf.it/stupid/chap10.pdf>
and 18 *The Vicious Circle of Stupidity*
<http://gandalf.it/stupid/chap18.pdf>