
EDITORIAL

Looking on the Internet as if through the “peephole”

The 25 years from the 1989 Revolution have passed so quickly and, at this hour of reflection, I ask myself what has changed in the inter-human communication all this time. If I ask this question to the younger people (15-22 years old), they would certainly require more time to answer, not because they would not find a quick answer, but because they were already born in a different world. This generation which is connected to all sorts of systems involving technological means of communication would hardly understand how it was possible that, at the same time when people in America and other countries in Europe had widespread access to the technology which allowed them to communicate between them at any time, in the mean time we would not indulge ourselves in having a landline at home or, even further, a black and white TV set. Anyway those who had a landline at home were terrified most of the time whenever they would hear the ringing. Because at the same time other neighbours who had access to the landline would hear the “private” conversation and in any circumstances there would have been somebody to report something to the security services of the totalitarian regime and this only because the person called would find out from a relative from the countryside that “the old folks would come with goodies from the garden” for the winter holidays. And the TV-based communication would mean the implementation of the message from the supreme leaders through video technology.

Therefore, television was a propaganda tool and intended to (in)form the citizens, while the landline would be the “peephole” for the neighbours. The young people of the past 25 years would hardly understand these data, they would see them as stories written by the fiction writer Dan Lungu. But, after all, they represent the reality of those times and, even more, they

reveal a stage of the inter-human communication, rather dominated by hatred and fear.

If we were to learn something after these 25 years following the Revolution (variously commented and justified by historians and politicians), I think that we should take into consideration what was gained then, even with bloodshed, which is Freedom. Freedom in all its forms. Freedom to choose your dressing style, eating habits, means of communication and access to cutting-edge technologies.

Today we are connected to modern technology and we can communicate any time and no matter how much. We find advertisements of mobile technology companies all over the street (lately even landline companies) drawing our attention with “generous” offers including hundreds of “free” minutes (as if someone would know that we have the necessary time to speak so many minutes in the age of speed), while, on the other hand, there is a recent development in the new media communication, especially the Internet. Furthermore, after all these 25 years, we can speak of a large offer on the television market, with dozens of TV stations and media trusts. Have a look at the explosion of the inter-human communication (with the help of the mobile technology and the new media) in the Romanian space all these years.

However, the presence of an abundant offer and this wide range of channels proves once more the particular features of the being who becomes more technological by the day or, even more, it freezes, becomes blocked in the virtual space, space which sometimes brings alienation from the concrete, from the human aspect.

In the beginning we all saw this wave of technological offers as an inherited right, a right blocked in time for so many years. After the Revolution many Romanians bought for their

homes not only a TV set, but two or even three, all in colours, with hundreds of TV channels; likewise, many of us have today at least a mobile phone (or even two), connected to the Internet as well (through mobile or landlines). It is certain that along with the freedom we took back, we desired to accumulate more devices which would help us communicate more, anything, no matter how much and no matter when, just because this was not possible before. But there is a big difference between using a device like that as a tool and means of communication and identifying it as vital necessity (with a narcotic effect). I ask myself what would happen if just for several hours all mobile networks, the Internet and transmission networks of the TV channels would be down. Would we be back in the parks or in the tea rooms and cafés in order to communicate? Would we see the nature? How would we communicate? Would we join a revolution? It is obvious that today's world is dependent on server connections, on communication networks. This is characteristic not only to the ordinary man, but also to the governments as well as the other administrative bodies of the "civilised and modern" countries.

However, I notice that the Romanian space sees the new media communication preserving some data of the particularities of the communist neighbour-connected communication, in the sense that the pages on the social networks, blogs and personal websites have become a sort of public "peephole" watch... Everyone is interested in knowing about the others, about their clothes, about their friends, about their trips, thoughts, moods, "statuses" etc. The difference is that before 1989 people were afraid of revealing themselves, especially afraid of being judged by the system as being anti-system, while today no one is afraid of being revealed not just through the "peephole", but through the "wide open door". It matters less whether we expose or not our private details! In these 25 years following the Revolution we have learned to perspire on the social networks, meaning we have learned to enjoy the freedom of communicating even more. And on the occasion of the end of the year, in a traditional manner, I wish you all a "Happy (and inspired) New Year" and I wish you to enjoy as much inter-human communication as you can bear, because, after all, communication is life.

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