

THE COORDINATES OF AGGRESSIVENESS IN COMMUNICATION

Maria FLOREA¹

¹Assist. Prof., PhD., "Apollonia" University of Iași, Romania
Corresponding author: Maria Florea; e-mail: maria.florea@tvr.ro

Abstract

Aggressiveness and violence are part of the human nature and they have often represented an inspiration subject for artists. No matter if we confront ourselves with acts of violence in everyday life or that we follow them represented in a fictional form, they have always drawn the attention of the ordinary individual, both terrified and fascinated, and of the specialist who tried to explain the mechanisms that trigger either aggressiveness or its extreme form, violence.

Keywords: *aggressiveness, violence, communication, interhuman relations, technology, audio-visual.*

Violence was analysed starting from the oldest times. It lies in the centre of the Ancient Greek tragedy and the drama *Antigone* written by Sophocles isn't anything else but a symbolic demonstration of the tight connections between violence, power and psychology.

It is necessary to make a clear distinction between aggressiveness and violence since the two concepts are not similar but they are often confused and used in an improper manner. Moreover, aggressiveness and violence are two completely different behaviours which do not always complete each other. Many people who are considered to be aggressive did not cross the border towards violence. However, when they do this, these individuals, either children, teenagers or adults, are pushed towards violence by an impulse difficult to control and explain.

Nowadays, violence occupies an important place in the society, being present under different forms: from intra and interethnic conflicts to the simple existence of a diverse fact. This old practice related to the human condition has now become omnipresent and it lies at the centre of the political challenges and mass media does not cease to enlarge our fears and violent fantasies. Violence insinuates itself in the power relations within organisations or institutions and it

circulates in a physical or symbolic form from one individual to the next.

The contemporary society has gradually become amnesic and it does no longer have time to honestly recognise that at the basis of its own construction dynamic lies violence. History memory is slowly eliminated and memories spread (DORNA, 2006). The consequence of such deeds is well-known: forgetting we will repeat our own mistakes, sometimes in a much more aggressive manner. Such an attitude can be explained by the fact that the trauma triggered by acts of violence are silenced in order to be forgotten, the only way in which they can become bearable.

Armed conflicts, all forms of terrorism, delinquency, crimes, rapes, harassment, the lack of freedom or domestic violence are only some of the forms that violence can take. They are accompanied by the violence of psychological expression and that of the symbolic expression. In the case of the latter, a significant role is played by the political system which influences the institutional teaching system and the means of mass communication, the ideal instruments in order to broadcast symbolic messages.

The impact of the media and especially that of the audio-visual on the press consumer's aggressive behaviour represents a highly controversial area, both in research and in theory. The relationship between the mass means of communication and aggressiveness, especially the one presented on TV, represented a favourite sociological research topic in the '60s, a period marked by the recrudescence and the proliferation of some virulent forms of violence: assaults on policemen, the violence of the street or the riots of students and pupils towards the teaching and social system. Television was at that time considered responsible for young peoples'

aggressiveness and for the spread of riots in the entire society and this triggered a new analysis regarding the effects and the social functions of the audio-visual.

Research regarding the consequences of television aggression and violence led to an increase in the feeling of isolation the great TV programme consumers, the strengthening of the reality withdrawal tendencies and an increase in the community alienation phenomena to those heavily dependent on the media (ȘOITU & HĂVÂRNEANU, 2001; HACKER, 1971). At the basis of this research there were three premises: the cathartic effect thesis, violence arousing thesis and the strengthening effect.

The aggression and violence present in entertainment shows are the most criticised ones, since here various civilisation models are promoted, in which the violent act appears as a justifiable, normal component.

Other studies draw attention to the fact that staged violence is more unfavourable as it repetitively appears in shows or articles. Therefore, the influence of the violence present in the mass media broadcasted products represents an insidious, gradual and cumulative process, whose effects cannot be immediately or directly visible.

Aggressiveness represents a complex phenomenon, comprised of a series of different behaviours, but also a concept which assumes numerous definitions. It is difficult to establish the point to which aggression manifests, and the moment when violence occurs.

Aggressiveness is a form of behaviours, conduct, intentional orientation towards a certain individual, object or towards the self, with the clear intention of causing harm, injury or damage.

Aggression represents, on the one side, the tendency to attack the physical or mental integrity of a person, and on the other side, it is related to the personality of the individual and to his capacity to adapt. But this double definition, far from explaining the concept, emphasizes its ambiguity.

When speaking about the attempt to impose themselves, to build certain meanings, we notice that professors are a separate category from that of the ordinary individuals. Psychologists Șoitu and Hăvârneanu consider that: "the system in

which school fulfils its functions is dominated by the economic, by the money - commodity - money flow which aims to be as quickly and profitably as possible, ignoring the negative effects on the social relationships, including in democracy. This is a war in which everybody is against everybody and in which the economic violence takes the symbolic form of stigmatisation" (ȘOITU & HĂVÂRNEANU, 2001).

But the whole power of symbolic violence, for example, all the social relationships that lead to the strengthening of the forces among groups or classes within a process of inoculation of legitimate meanings, assumes some elementary conditions.

In the case of the symbolic violence of pedagogical type we deal with the following conditions (BARBIER, 1973):

- a) a transmitter with a certain amount of autonomy;
- b) a receiver;
- c) the two elements are united through a pedagogical communication report which presents the following characteristics:
 - it is logically imposed by a pedagogical action, itself imposed by a legitimate imposing right following the existence of a pedagogical authority;
 - it allows a pedagogical exercise whose productivity is measured through the durability, transferability and exhaustivity of the final habitus, attestor of the failure internalized by the set of procedures;
- d) the final habitus is the result of the internalisation of a limited and legitimate set of meanings, in other words a legitimate set of norms, values, rules, signs and symbols which accompany us in the social practice;
- e) the set of phenomena may work thanks to the necessary dissimulation process and completely internalised through and towards the habitus, due to the imposing and functioning power of the imposed significance.

Sociologist René Barbier, an emeritus professor at University 8 from Paris, establishes the mechanism through which the process of ignoring important information is institutionalised within the teaching process (BARBIER, 1973):

- an issuing pedagogical instance does not have the power to impose something: this authority comes from a group or a class which inoculates the cultural arbitrariness; this power delegation objectively delimits the relative autonomy of the issuing instance without which the double arbitrary dissimulation would never take place;
- the pedagogical instance presents an imposing power only to a small extent; using the legal inoculation and imposing methods it imposes and inoculates the legitimate addressees with the cultural arbitrariness that it was mandated to reproduce;
- this limited power delegation allows on the one side the acquirement of a legitimate right to impose a forum in the pedagogical field and, on the other side, the hiding of:
 - a) the origin of its legitimate power;
 - b) the relationship between the inoculated cultural arbitrariness and the power relationships inside the group or among corresponding classes.

The element that unites action, authority and pedagogical work can be discovered and closely followed within the institutionalised teaching system in which the pedagogical work and authority manifests itself in the form of school authority legitimised by the institution itself. This offers the agents of the issuing pedagogical instance, homogenised inside the system, the chance to prove the good intentions of the school authority, guaranteeing a relative autonomy, necessary in the process of ignoring essential information.

In conclusion, René Barbier considers that in a determined social formation, a dominated institutionalised teaching system can transform the pedagogical activity into an inoculation activity of the cultural arbitrariness. And this process takes place without those who carry out the pedagogical activity, as well as those who are directly affected by these activities, to be aware of the dependence to which they are subjected by the force relations formed within the formation. This force relation produces and reproduces, through the institution's own means, the necessary conditions for the practice of the internal inoculation function.

These conditions are at the same time sufficient for the fulfilment of its external function, that of

reproducing legitimate culture, but also to contribute to the establishment of the power ratio. Also, the fact that it exists as a pedagogical institution it also implies the ignoring conditions of the symbolic violence that it exerts, an aspect possible using the institutional means at its disposal (WOLTON, 1997).

In modern society, violence becomes synonymous with the technology which develops in a culture whose stake is the ability to dominate others. Technology has the tendency of being totalitarian, putting in motion a mechanism through which the man is permanently linked to the machine. The French psychologist Alexandre Dorna asks himself to what extent does the instrumental, technological domination affect the authenticity of human relationships and whether or not this authenticity is nothing more than a niche for all forms of violence (DORNA, 2010). If, in his opinion, culture represents a process which regulates social relationships and forms models, when mass media represents the spine of this process. But, at the same time, mass media represents the ideal tool to broadcast violence, especially symbolic violence, which plays an essential role in the development of a terror society based on the culture of violence and nihilism.

We are therefore the witnesses of a television monopoly in which the individuals exposed to audio-visual messages reconstruct reality as in a game of mirrors, give up their own privacy and ask for access to notoriety as a right they are entitled to.

References

- BARBIER, R. (1973) *Violence symbolique et pedagogie institutionnelle, l'homme et la societe*, 31/32-16, pp. 239-255.
- DORNA, A. (2006) *De la violence physique a la parole: un point de vue psych-politique*, Cahiers de Psychologie politique. Available from: <http://lodel.irevues.inist.fr/cahierspsychologiepolitique/index.php?id=1071> [25 October 2019].
- HACKER, F. (1971) *Agression. The Brutalisierung of the Modern World*, Molden Publishing House, Vienna.
- ȘOITU, L. & HĂVĂRNEANU, C. (2001) *Aggression in school* [in Romanian], European Institute Publishing House, Iași.
- WOLTON, D. (1997) *Penser la communication*, Emmanuel Publishing House, Paris