PERSONALIZATION OF MESSAGE: THE DANGER OF DISINFORMATION

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The post-modern audience is looking for its identity in front of the small screen, and identity becomes a common factor for those who watch the same audio-visual products. Thus, media has the power to create the social identity. The person of present days is the victim of stress, of a busy and strained life and that is why he tries to find relaxation, entertainment to forget his daily worries for a couple of hours. Television takes great advantage of this and offers its public the entertainment it requires. But, behind these things there are hidden the real intentions of those who guide and impose constraints by means of mass media: manipulation and misinformation.

A first step towards being listened to is exordium, defined[1] as the first part of a discourse which, by statement, tries to get the attention and good will of the audience. Trying to convince, when there is some distance between the speaker and the audience, implies to shape your argumentation to be able to create a linking bridge. Philippe Breton, university professor at the Centre for Journalism of the University in Strasbourg, is of the opinion that quite often to be convinced is not an answer to an initial request. «Exordium is, to an equal extent, a means to create such a request, to make it seem legitimate. In this way, the public is given good reasons to expect the sequel»[2]

Once attention is caught, the intention of manipulation could have a greater chance to be successful. According to *Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, published at Oxford University Press in 2009, manipulation is influencing a person, a group of people or a situation in order to obtain some advantage or changing an opinion or belief in an indirect, incorrect, dishonest way, it could be made in an intelligent and scrupulously way.

This often implies propaganda especially when it has in view more than one person. A manipulator will use arguments in which he does not believe, he denies or distort relevant information or "plays" with the mind of a person by means of emotions.

In *the Dictionary of Sociology,* coordinated by Cătălin Zamfir and Lazăr Vlăsceanu, edited by Babel publishing house in Bucharest in 1998, manipulation is defined as an action in which a social actor is made to think and act according to the initiator's own interests and not according to his interests by persuasion techniques which distort deliberately the truth, giving the impression of freedom of thinking and freedom of taking a decision.

Unlike the influence exerted by rational conviction, manipulation does not intend to create a correct and profound understanding of a situation; it aims at breaking a convenient understanding. Thus, misleading occurs by using false arguments making use of emotional non-rational elements. In all this time, the real intentions of the person transmitting the message remain undetected by the receiver of the message.

Herman Parret, PhD in phylosophy at the Lueven University in Belgium, in the book *Prolegomenes a la theorie de l'enonciationa. De Husserl a la pragmatique,* published in Berne in 1987, introduces six primary forms of manipulation action:
1. Manipulation caused by the contact between the world of objects and manual action, representing the initial sense of the manipulation act.
2. Manipulation resulting from the interaction between the physical action and the world of beliefs, the physical constraint to change an option or a belief.

3. Manipulation determined by the interaction between the physical action and the world of actions, a change of action imposed by a physical action.

4. Manipulation resulting from the impact between the discursive action and the world of objects, when ideas about nature, works of art could be changed.

5. Manipulation resulting from the interaction between the discursive action and the world of beliefs – the media discourse or that of preachers can change beliefs.

6. Manipulation as a result of the relationship between the discursive action and the world of actions – e.g., the discursive interference of electoral communication can lead to a change in the electoral options.

Out of these forms of manipulations, professor Constantin Sălăvastru points out that only the last three are recognized in this sense. Sălăvastru makes also the distinction between the immediate or direct manipulation and the mediated or indirect manipulations. In the first case, there is the transformation of the states of fact, of beliefs by means of the physical action of the agent of action. In the case of mediated manipulations, the transformation of objects, beliefs and actions are realised by means of discursive interventions[3].

To these forms of manipulation the positive and negative ones should be added. Constantin Sălăvastru is of the opinion that the positive manipulation is characterised by the fact that the means by which we induce beliefs, ideas or actions are in agreement with the norms of rationality and in consensus with the norms of morality, acting in favour of the common good, in the spirit of the general interest[4].

In the case of the negative manipulation, if this is unintentional, we are confronted with the lie.

The sociologists Vasile Tran and Irina Stanciugelu in their book *Pathologies and Communicational Therapies* are of the opinion that the manipulator transfers his will to the manipulated one, deprives the latter of his free will, by giving him false foundations for a decision, seemingly free or by exploiting the fundamental necessities (of information, integration or affirmation) and the social reflexes, by including emotions and involving the individual and collective subconscious.

The two sociologists assert that there are types of communication with an exclusive pathological character, and in this category we include the manipulations consisting of propaganda, disinformation, intoxication, imposition. At the same time, there are types of communication which have the tendency to get a pathological character: the lie, rumour, polemics, negotiation and publicity.

The evolution of the manipulation techniques implies the development of precise codes that can be identified only by professionals, being totally inaccessible to the laymen in the domain[5]. In fact, one of the fundamental aims of communication is to convince the receiver of the message regarding a certain opinion and to strengthen or modify his attitudes in this way. First, there should be identified the factors of the communication process which can cause this change.

The message that is meant to cause a change of attitude in the receptor is called persuasive message. The research in the domain has shown that the reaction to the message depends on the characteristics of the persons who tries to convince, without having any connection with the value of the message. Thus, three characteristics that influence the public in such a situation have been identified: the credibility of the communicator, his physical characteristics, his charm or charisma. In the *Sociology of the Public Opinion*, Ştefan Buzărnescu asserts that manipulation means surreptitious persuasion. Quite often, the manipulated person is not aware that he is subjected to a persuasive influence, being even less aware of the purposes the source of messages might have. "The intention to convince, to make other people borrow a different point of view or to prevent them from adopting another opinion is proper to the process of communication"[6], is of the opinion Stefan Buzărnescu, professor of Social Sciences at the University of West in Timişoara.

Persuasion is efficient when the three levels are involved: cognitive, affective, and behavioural.

When we speak about manipulation by communication, we cannot avoid the concept of sophism with reference mainly to the televised

discourse. According to the same *Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, sophism is a false argumentation deliberately made.

Constantin Sălăvastru in his work *The Art of Public Debate,* admits that there not a few cases in which the participants to the relationship of communication make use consciously and deliberately of an incorrect reasoning, hoping the interlocutor will not discover this and will accept the conclusion, statements of maximum ambiguity and obscurity will be used hoping that, not understanding the meaning, the interlocutor will accept his point of view, he will make use of chicanes or patronizing attitudes, hoping to calm down the critical impetus of the interlocutor or his desire to have different opinions regarding the topic under discussion. In his opinion, these are deliberate communication errors, the basis for the phenomenon known as manipulation[7].

Making use of communication errors in public debates, and also in other cases, has a very simple explanation. Sălăvastru thinks that each participant in a relationship of communication, when he evaluates his chances of winning, tries to take advantage by the others' ignorance. It is an ignorance based on the fact that some more complicated elements of semantics, as meaning, significance, reference of terms, are not known. Ignorance can be also generated by the lack of knowledge regarding the complexity of the paralanguage which makes reference to tonality, phrasing and intonation, and also regarding the nonverbal language, that is gestures or posture. All these are very well described by Plato in the *Sophist.*" Could we not suspect that in argumentation there exists the skill of making use of verbal images for all things to create the impression that he utters the truth and he, the speaker, is the most competent person in all domains and thus being able to deceive the young people and those still unaware of the truth of things?"[8]

There is also an opinion supporting the idea that television is acting more by the logic of seduction than by manipulation. Martine Joly, emeritus professor at the University in Bordeaux, France, claims that the televised discourse, which addresses an emotional and numerous audience, belongs more to the myth than to the logic, that

is, it responds to a logic of seduction imposed by the market logic. In other words, „television is neither a lying nor manipulating, it is simply devastating because it is a seducer" [9].

To influence the public opinion by means of mass communication to obtain a profit – this is the aim of the political power which under the veil of democracy manipulates at large. But, here, we have to give some indications to understand how the instruments of democracy can be used against masses of people in a free society with their agreement and encouragement.

First, the concept of public opinion is a disputed one which implies several interpretations. On the one hand, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu says that the public opinion does not exist. The democratic creation of a public opinion exists in the centre of the public space, but the massive practice of polls and mass-media have led to the crisis of the system of representativity. In this moment, the opinion poll has, according to Bourdieu, the role to impose the illusion that there is a public opinion as a result of the sum of individual opinions. On the other hand, the French sociologist Dominique Wolton[10] claims that the public opinion represents the relatively correct different trends of opinion, existing in the present day society, being the most democratic means of regularizing the choice of the citizen.

A brief history regarding the notion of public opinion shows that it has three states. The first state existed from the French revolution until the middle of the 19th century presenting the opinion of the social elite in a certain domain, the one of the open political struggle of the electoral competition. In that period of time, the public opinion is the opinion of the members of parliament, of the persons elected by the people, being characterised by the fact that it was not the opinion of the common people.

Such a vision will be gradually modified. First, there appears the universal male vote by which people, not only the elites, are directly involved in the political game, a fact taking place in the second half of the 19th century. At the same time, there is noticed an impetus of the popular press which will create the conditions for a new character to play an important role in defining the second state of the public opinion.

"This political character is the journalist, who by means of his articles and editorials, contributes to imposing the topics for discussion and to creating the public opinion by the simple fact of defining what it should have been"[11], remarks Patrick Champagne, a member of the European Centre of Sociological Studies in Paris.

The development of radio, in the first half of the 20th century, will follow the same track, contributing even more to the creation of the opinion proper to the popular mass-media.

From the second half of the 20th century, we can speak of the third state of the public opinion, a complex and uncertain product of the struggle of three distinct actors: the politician, the journalist, the voter.

Once a real industry of polling has been created, the notion of public opinion undergoes a new transformation. The institutions of polling, which pretend only to measure the opinion, in fact, impose their conception upon the public opinion, a conception demanded by the political field.

The media communication belongs to a global situation, where there is a technological support (scripto-visual for the press, audio for the radio and audio-visual for the television), placed on a secondary channel of transmission between two instances of emission and reception. There is a meeting point of the processes of emission-production and reception-interpretation on which the social significance is built.

Patrick Charaudeau, professor of the Science of language at University III in Paris, in his book *Les medias et l'information:l'impossible transparence du discourse*[12], focuses on the means of mass communication pointing out that these do not represent instances of power. Even if we cannot deny that media is not a stranger in various games of social power, it cannot be the supreme power, because power can never depend on a single individual, as the context, the status where the individual manifests himself can give him power.

Charaudeau says that, in the case of media communication, finality should be the information. In this context, the media contract makes the connection between a state of production, which is made up of media professionals, generically called journalists, and a state of reception, made up of receptors represented by readers, listeners, TV viewers.

Therefore, we have a journalistic instance and a receptor instance. In the case of the journalistic instance, whose social role is to transmit information, it should be made clear that it itself is not always a creator of events, it is only gathering them. There is another peculiarity of the journalistic identity, that of foreseeing information, but, here, the journalist is confronted with three problems. If the events which could become information might be transmitted, is one of the problems: journalists in their activity are limited in their activity either by the number of pieces of information they can provide, or by the technological constraints of space and time. Another difficulty is the fact that a journalist cannot be present in all places in the world where something takes place, so that he should resort to various sources which, theoretically, should be confronted and checked. The third difficulty is related to the socio-economic competition in which the press may find itself, which obliges it to delimit itself from a situation in relation to other situations.

These three types of difficulties make the journalist select facts, a selection which is mainly determined by time: it is always the information of topical interest that will be the most important. This role of selecting events involves a number of incidents regarding the communicational aspect of the contract of information.

On the other hand, as we have already mentioned, we have a receptor instance, which has the social role of a reader, listener or TV spectator looking for information. The sociological investigations try to define the profile of readers, listeners, TV spectators, some targets are established according to their political, professional, social class, age, but these prove to be heterogeneous and unstable.

As a conclusion, we can say that the journalist transmits information to an undefined audience, whose level of interest, its ignorance, wishes, its beliefs he underappreciates. Under these conditions and observing the economic competition in mass media, the journalist has as his media finality the tendency to address to a numerous public, to capture and get its attention. As a consequence, to define the media

communication of information, Patrick Chareaudau starts from two contracts[13]:

- A contract of information referring to the selection of facts according to the competition position and the endeavour to answer the question: "what is going on here and somewhere else?"
- A contract of capture referring to the manner in which the transmission will be made, according to the characteristics of the receptors.

The contract of capture is based on two principles:

- A principle of being serious – for the contract of information to be recognized by the receptor the information should be reliable. This principle of seriousness implies the given information to be checked.
- A principle of something "to induce pleasure", which can seduce the audience and for this aim it should create emotions. Hence, the practice to stage the information.

These two principles (seriousness-credibility/pleasure- spectacularity) and the double contract (information/capture) make this media communication of information to be placed on what is called a wonderful "machine of the science of rendering"[14], as it is presented in Table 1.1

_____ **The situation of media communication** _____

_____ **The Contract of Information** _____

Events	Production instance	Manner of approach	Reception instance	Action
mass of facts	journalists	credibility	readers	usage
various sources	selecting	spectacular	listeners	for
competition	and processing	seriousness/pleasure	TV audience	information

_____ **Collection contract** _____

Table. 1.1 The situation of media communication

The sociologist Patrick Champagne considers that the way in which the political opinion is produced today is the result of dominance within the social fields[15].

With the emergence of mass-media, of the surveys and of marketing, changes occurred in the communication field practices, of any kind. Developed almost half a century ago, surveys are designed primarily for the functioning of the political field, but at the same time they are up against constant criticism. The main allegation is the conscious manipulation of the public opinion. Discussions pertaining to the scientific validity of these surveys moved towards the political sphere, and the ones who were sceptical about surveys were accused, more than once, of being the enemies of democracy and of the universal vote.

In the current political context, surveys have become a business that often turns against the ones who blamed them. The best well-known example is that of the Romanian presidential elections on December 6, 2009, when the initial exist polls considered that the representative of the Social Democratic Party, Mircea Geoană, was the winner din 52% of the voters' options. Only a few hours later, once the counting of the votes took place, the situation changed completely in favour of the candidate Traian Băsescu who obtained the highest position in the state with 50,33% of the votes cast. Such surveys, not only push the politicians towards desperate gestures which disorient the voters, but are also very expensive. We came to a point in which the survey companies are no longer chosen on professional criteria, but on clientele.

And yet, coming back to the pioneering period of the public survey, actors of the political game had to admit that surveys express what the people think, in a very precise manner. Besides that, the practice of the opinion surveys is strongly linked to the political system and the idea of public opinion. Patrick Champagne claims that the specific strength of the ones who conduct surveys is political and not scientific, as some may argue. "More precisely, the strength lies in the fact that they use science to serve political and practical purposes. They play, if we can say so, in two different areas: they conduct their surveys in the so-called name of democracy, claiming that they allow all people to talk, but they conduct them in terms of ethnicity and therefore they can foreshadow the results of future elections."[16]

In conclusion, the so-called survey specialists serve the political system more than analyse it, as they claim. This may explain the strong manipulation exerted by opinion polls, which is more unconscious than conscious. Patrick

Champagne's studies show that the practice of surveys first unconsciously influences the ones who use them, political scientists, politicians and journalists, who consider that surveys are interesting, because they allow you to find out what the public opinion is thinking, without asking first what the public opinion is.

Apparently, manipulation begins with writing the questions and continues with the way in which the answers are interpreted. In reality, manipulation appears right before the writing of the questionnaire, simply because some groups of people are produced whose opinions are allegedly probed.

To question a group in order to find out what it does or thinks means to give a social existence to that group, meaning to transform it into a being endowed with personality and wit. Nothing is given, everything is built, said the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard.[17] And we ask ourselves what should we call public opinion: the crowds who work together for a cause or the silent majorities, meaning the opinions of people who do not speak and do not want to stand up in public? And why should we care about what the public opinion wants, as it is assumed that it should express the will of the people. We might as well admit that the public opinion is wrong, and before it is interrogated, it needs to be informed and even educated.

The journalistic field became the major strategic place where this symbolic new type of battle, whose results are recorded by the survey operators, is being fought. It is the place in which the public opinion is formed, as it is presented by the opinion survey. According to Patrick Champagne communication and public relations specialists, whose number is twice the number of journalists; prepare "the effects of the news" and "the media hits" of the politicians, aimed at shocking the press consumers and to offer them suggestions on one opinion or the other, which the pollsters will collect later.

Therefore, surveys do not record the opinion of the population on a particular topic of major interest but the opinion of the political class and putting it through the media scene, aiming at the people, making it say just like in a mirror exactly what the political class wanted it to say, in order to obtain some additional legitimacy.

In other words, opinion surveys consist of measuring the visibility of media actions and assess the degree of approval or disapproval of the proposed posts, with the purpose of adjusting – according to a logic belonging more to advertising than to democracy – a political message that may have nothing to do with reality.

Giovanni Sartori professor of philosophy and political sciences at the universities of Florence and Columbia, New York, wonders in the volume "*Homo videns, idiocy by means of television and post – thinking*", appeared at Humanitas Publishing House, in 2006, how the public opinion is really formed. If, on the one hand, we accept that the public opinion is a gathering of opinions inside a public, and it embraces the general interest, then we should also accept the idea that opinion doesn't mean knowledge and science, and that it is just a subjective representation of opinion, which does not require evidence, according to the German philosopher and sociologist Jurgen Habermas, in his work *Storia e critica dell'opinione publica,* appeared at Laterza Publishing House in Bari, in 1971. In other words, opinions are fragile and changing beliefs. And democracy represents the government of opinion.

Here the problem appears on the way in which an autonomous public opinion is formed, truly belonging to the public. This forming opinion should be opened to some exogenous flows of information which it receives from the political power or from the media tools. The risk for this opinion is to be "hetero-directed."[18] Giovanni Sartori considers that "as long as the public opinion was formed mainly by the newspapers, the balance between the autonomous and heteronomous opinions is guaranteed by the existence of a free and multiple press, on more than voice. The spreading of the radio has not substantially altered the balance. The problem arises with the television and to the extent to which sight replaces the word."[19]

As long as linguistic communication prevails, the processes of forming the public opinion do not occur directly from the top down, but in a "waterfall", more precisely in a succession of waterfalls interrupted by tanks in which opinions mix, as Sartori explains. Therefore, the opinions

of each of us refer to some reference groups and are not formed only from informational messages, but also from identifications.

The emergence of the television picture format breaks this balance, formed in time. Television basically replaces the so-called intermediary opinion leaders, says Sartori, and removes the multitude of "cognitive authorities", who establish for every one of us, who to believe in, who is trustworthy and who isn't.

Together with television image authority also appears. According to Giovanni Sartori, the eye believes in what it sees, and the most credible cognitive authority is the one that can be seen. Everything that can be seen seems real. Videocracy usually leads to a strong hetero-directed opinion, which apparently strengthens, but in reality empties the content of democracy seen as a government of opinion. Television makes a show of itself as the spokesperson of the public opinion, which in reality is the echo of its own voice.

Going forward with the same idea, Pierre Bourdieu explains that research institutes do not really measure the public opinion but create false images which they then deliver as an illegal scientific exercise. Bourdieu also reminds people that paradoxically research institutes forget to take into account a "public opinion" more real than the one created on paper by computer programs. This shows the "knowledge" of the interest groups, especially the political ones, who act through "pressure groups" or "lobbies" inside the press trusts.[20]

Bordieu brings into question a sociological theory of creating some public opinions subsequently aired in the press. In a series of articles appeared in the 80s[21], the French sociologist shows that starting from a secondary analysis of some surveys conducted by public polling institutes and this demonstrates that the probability of having a so-called "personal opinion" differs according to the researched social groups. The cultural capital of an individual is measured by the level of education and, in particular, the ability to respond to a political question.

In reality, the involvement of the one who agrees to complete the questionnaire depends on his recognition of the right to have a certain opinion on a particular subject which is present in the question. This interest has to be supported by a series of at least minimum information on the subject. However, in most cases, the respondent will not admit his lack of knowledge on the matter.

In order to demonstrate the lack of training of those who accept to complete survey questionnaires, Pierre Bourdieu analyses a political TV show, *Face à Face*, created by the producers Jean Faran and Igor Barrèr and broadcast between February 24 and October 3, 1996 on the French national TV channel. Later the *Face à Face* show was replaced by the program *En direct avec.*

This show presented an interview with a political personality conducted by a sample established by the research institute made out of 20 people, considered to be representative for the French population. Bourdieu notices the behavioural changes of these people, over half a year, because they felt like they were given a mission, and, as their notoriety grew, they expected to be treated as celebrities.

If, at first they seemed shy and relatively incompetent, they later gained more courage and confidence. They started preparing the questions before the show, and they took notes about the personality which was to be interviewed. In conclusion, these people tried to develop competencies according to the role that they were given or that they took by themselves.

This shows once again that the attempt to produce an opinion varies according to the cultural capital of each individual. Therefore, when individuals have to answer a survey, they express themselves differently, and this aspect is not taken into consideration by the survey conductors.

Survey conductors use the homogenized pre-coded questions technique and then they gather the results. The only problem is that these results which are identically formulated are different in reality, because they are the result of different logics.

The sociological analysis of the opinion survey practice, televised political debates and street protests presented by the media show that it is not really a breakthrough in the true sense but rather a kind of sophistication, the use of false

reasoning that distorts the truth, seeking to obtain credibility, using social technologies and trying to give the impression that this is what the people want.

Together with this so-called progress, the political field tends to close itself, the political game becomes more and more a business of the specialists, who use opinion surveys and claim that they present the opinion of the public. In reality, they use these surveys exactly like a ventriloquist who lends his voice to his puppet. Therefore, nowadays, according to Patrick Champagne, the democratic idea is less threatened by totalitarianism than this kind of scientific demagogy, equally dangerous, because it creates the appearance of democracy.

The Spanish writer and journalist Ignacio Ramonet, warns, in his volume *Propagandes silencieuses*, published at Galillée Publishing House in Paris in 2000, about the modern communicational mechanism which is used for the subtle worldwide manipulation. This happens while the illusion still exists that the media system has the fundamental role of presenting reality. Ramonet claims that in this perception the press consumer expects the journalist to return a copy of the lifestyle that he offers. However, today's media reality shows us the purpose of the information, and that is to build a reality.[22] This is no longer a neutral mirror of a fact or event, but a staging of numerous factors. The fundamental principles of journalism have changed. Now, information means not only offering, describing and checking a fact, but also a group of contextual partners who allow the reader or viewer to understand its hidden meaning. Under the influence of modern television, of its information ideology and live broadcast, to inform means now to show an on-going history.[23] Therefore, the illusion appeared that seeing means understanding. Hence, the fascination for live broadcast images appeared, the demand justifying the offer for false documents, reconstructions, manipulations and mystifications.

Because of the impact of the image, television is the one that chooses the significant event, restricting the audio and written media to follow. We come to the idea that the importance of the events is proportional to the multitude of images.

Therefore, an event that can be broadcast live is more important than the one that remains invisible and with an abstract importance.

At the same time, the emergence of the Internet reduces the time necessary for the transmission of information. The written press seems out of date and it presents a certain event with great of delay from the moment of its publication. That is why written newspapers are forced to limit themselves to presenting only local events and business topics.

On the other hand, an event comes to be considered true or false, not because it complies with some objective and rigorous criteria, confirmed by at least three sources, but for the simple reason that all the media repeat the same information. Therefore repetition replaces demonstration and information is replaced by confirmation.

In writing news or achieving a broadcast the reporter must be objective and he should not let himself be influenced by his own feeling. He must be fair towards all the people involved in the event, he has to be able to reply to allegations; he must not ruin other people's image without strong arguments. He must not make use of minors, reveal their identity and he must not try to obtain information by using threats, he has to call the relevant authorities to verify the information. The language used has to be simple and easy to understand by the general public. These rules belong to the journalism deontology. But these rules can be easily violated if there is no common sense, and if the audio-visual laws are not respected.

The lack of professionalism on behalf of the journalist and his subjective involvement in establishing an audio-video program, no matter if we speak about news bulletins, talk-shows or entertainment programs leads to the altering of the truth. When this happens on purpose we deal with an intentional manipulation. The manipulation technique has evolved a lot in recent years, with increased interest to obtain a high and quick profit by using unfair means.

Knowing the manipulation methods, the public categories that can be manipulated and, last but not least, the categories that contribute to the process of manipulation should represent major priorities for the management of the

television channels. Identifying the manipulation methods and knowing their mechanisms helps prevent informational fraud intention. This should be a major aim for public or commercial televisions, which have to be objective and balanced. These objectives are sometimes hard to accomplish when it comes to commercial televisions because they finance themselves and therefore are prone to compromise.

From this point of view the public television preservers its neutral status. The main sources of funding are the TV tax, the budget allocations whereas the advertising revenue occupies third place. However, the activities of the public television are under the control of the Parliament, according to the Law no. 41/1994. The Chairman of the Board of Directors is appointed by the Parliament for a period of 4 years. TVR's Board of Directors includes 13 people, appointed by the majority of deputies and senators. At the end of each year, the Parliament analyses TVR's progress report. If this report is denied, the Board of Directors falls. The person who runs the public television has a double quality, that of CEO at TVR and of Chairman of the Board of Directors at TVR. The appointment is made by the Committee on Culture of the Parliament. All these aspects lead to an editorial pressure on the TV producers, but also on the management team.

In order to fulfil its role as a public television, meaning to inform correctly, exactly and unbiased, the Romanian Television Society introduced the Statute of the Journalist at the Romanian Television Society. This is added the Law no. 41/1994, republished, amended and supplemented, and the Law 504/2002.

Despite these measures there are still many slips from the professional ethics. There are a lot of situations in which the ones who introduce manipulation elements in the TV programs have no idea about the negative effects of these kinds of procedures. Sometimes TV producers are manipulated and without realizing it they also manipulate the viewer by the way in which they present the information.

Knowing the negative effects of manipulation gives every journalist a choice: either to continue manipulating even though this harms somebody (and he does this because he is interested in earning money or gaining popularity, that would

otherwise be difficult to obtain) or he accepts his errors and the resulting punishment and moves forward on the path of professionalism and honesty.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle said that "ethical virtue represents a middle line between two vices, one generated by excess and the other one generated by insufficiency… it tends right towards the correct measure. That is why it is difficult to achieve perfection; for in everything it is difficult to reach the equilibrium point, just as the centre of a circle can only be determined by an expert."[24]

Studies show that mass media enters so strongly in our lives that we can associate it with a drug that our mind and body needs every day. It is an addiction that we painfully feel sometimes, but for now nobody wants to diagnose and treat it. If there were any cure it would surely be radical and would require acknowledging the fact that we are partakers of a cultural failure started and encouraged by mass media and also by everybody who consider themselves loyal viewers. In order to resist this type of media violence we should live far away from everything related to the media, in a sort of social autism, to take responsibility for our failures and accept that we are, in fact, victims of a sort of social violence which we supported and encouraged.

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