

MARTOR



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Author: Vlad Manoliu

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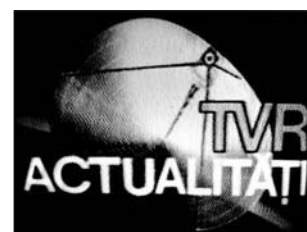
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Another type of television

Vlad Manoliu



We really enjoyed the moment when private televisions appeared. And that is because at the same time we could watch something different from the twin-brother-like news bulletins we were used to. A TV channel was saying one thing, while another was saying something different. The broadcasters were more or less clumsy at the beginning. But all in all, we could say that we had the possibility to watch pieces of news which weren't always respectful with those holding the power, thus sharing with us things which had been unconceivable until 1990. We were being told all sorts of things about cinema stars, about the opening of various shops in Paris or London or about gossips dealing with Romanian politicians. Even if, at the beginning, this type of news was pretty feeble (because Iliescu's adulation took a bit longer), yet, they gave us the possibility of gradually getting used to having our own opinions about the leaders of our country. If right after 1990 Iliescu was regarded as a necessary evil, by the end of the decade, the informed people would laugh at him, would signal and imitate him...

The multitude of news represented one of the first contacts with the freethinking. Those televisions proved helpful by presenting us the same man (or the same events) from various angles or points of view. In order to be able to do it, they started making use of the money provided by advertisements. When the first commercials had been broadcast, my wife and I would watch TV

while enjoying the show. Our daughter from Germany was laughing at us, saying: 'How can you be happy when somebody stops the movie three or four times to tell you nonsense?' We used to minutely watch them, sometimes paying attention to very bad commercials (because they used to be very bad). We would just sit there, not so much seeing the display of some more or less important products, but simply enjoying the freedom of having commercials, in other words, the independence that those commercials granted to the respective televisions. They didn't depend on the government finance anymore. They had their economic independence, hence the independence of saying something different from what those holding power really wanted them to. We were able to watch on our televisions, what, before 1990 we had been able to watch only when travelling abroad.

Of course that in the mean time we also learned how to get angry and, by the end of the decade, we used to change the channel while commercials were broadcast, but we used to watch them at the beginning. I think that this is another characteristic of the '90s. Bit by bit we got used to the freedom of the televisions, freedom which had also much to do with the money provided by commercials.

Translated by Raluca Vişniac