

Authors: Michał Wyrostkiewicz

Title: Manipulation and Communication –Manipulation as an Anti- Communicative Act

Source: Biuletyn Edukacji Medialnej

Year: 2014, number: 2(2014), pages: 21-32

Keywords: anti- communication, communication, development of the human person, false, manipulation, social development, true, truth, untruth

Discipline: MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

Language: ENGLISH

Document type: ARTICLE

Publication order reference (First author's office address): dr Michał Wyrostkiewicz, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II, Wydział Teologii, Al. Raławickie 14, 20-950 Lublin, Poland

Abstract

Oftentimes, it is believed that the manipulation is one of the activities involved in communication. It is not simply one among many competencies, but a kind of art; it is something one should learn in order to make remarkable achievements that will bring real benefits. However, in the humanities, philosophy and theology, the way of looking at manipulation is somewhat different. We must remember that it still means “a skillful hand grip”, we have to be aware that here we mean another person hold something. In other words, “to manipulate someone” is “to have something in one’s hand”, to have power over something, to treat something as an object, and to use something for one’s own needs. More specifically, manipulation is defined as the intentional, biased and secretive operation in to dictate to some man or group of people a false picture of reality in order to achieve their personal benefits; it is using people to achieve their own goals (according to the used neighbor). It is shaping the opinions and attitudes and directing behavior and human emotions, not only without a person’s consent, but also without their knowledge (in this sense, manipulation very clearly differs from formation, education and persuasion, which will be discussed later). However, we cannot be under the illusion that caring for our needs is always an action against another person, and demanding the implementation of legitimate needs is manipulation. Every person has the right to pursue their own legitimate needs. Of course, the limit that cannot be exceed is respect for the interlocutor. These reflections do not leave any doubt as to the fact that manipulation is seen as an unnatural (non-ecological) reality, and thus harmful to the human person. It is an evil that destroys a manipulated person as well as the manipulator and negatively affects the social order, impeding its proper maintenance. While the manipulator does not actually lie, a liar’s mentality and that of a manipulator’s are similar. They merely use different tools to obtain their undeserved and selfish interests. Both the manipulator and the manipulated person are responsible for the evil that appears in the world as a result of manipulation. The manipulated committed a mistake by showing too little concern for the truth and not sufficiently using their reason, allowing the manipulator to directly lead them into error. Manipulation cannot be considered to be communication. It is in fact a reality (action) that apparently resembles an act of communication. Due to its nature, meaning that it does not build the community (which belongs to the essence of communication), but is the achievement of self-serving purposes, it appears to be the action of anit-communication.