

FOREWORD

Communication in the Agora

In post-communist Romania, the interest in the phenomenon of communication has increased dramatically, not only in the social-political space but also in the cultural and civic one. Thus, schools in communication sciences have acquired a self-standing professional status, which has brought about the elimination of improvisation and of the dilettantism of those who believe that communicating is neither more nor less than speaking or saying something. Furthermore, another important phenomenon has occurred: the huge importance that the public space – which has its origins in the Greek agora – has acquired.

Dialogue and Argumentation in the Public Space is a meritorious epistemological study facing a largely hostile attitude towards professionalism in communication. Moreover, it confronts an uneven media space haunted by communication ailments among which, at the forefront, there is the pathological vacillation between *learned professionalism* and *versatile pragmatism*, i.e. between those who are willing and sometimes manage to do their job *by the book*, and those who behave chameleonicly in their profession, work on order on media barons' plantations, are mercenaries or automata, as the media itself has named them.

Since this is all about the media – which is not the fourth power in the state government but rather a superpower with devastating effects on the members of a community - we will argue that many of its structures consist of imported forms, or forms that lack substance. In these constructs, we find that *the informative discourse* – that Aniela Corlăteanu's attempt manifests an interest in - is often distorted by two other types of discourse that have taken over and dominated public space: *the discourse of advertising* and *the entertainment* as professionals in the field call the latter.

Including four substantial sections, which are convincing through the topics discussed in their subsections as well as through the variety of bibliographic sources to which they refer - some of which in languages other than Romanian - the author's approach brings forth an essential connection for the proper functioning of our present society: *dialogue*, on the one hand, and *argumentation*, on the other hand. These make up the two arms of a balance weighing up how much and how efficiently the members of a community really communicate based on mutual understanding and the justification of problems which become the bone-structure of dialogue.