

PROPAGANDA

THE IDEOLOGY IN ACTION

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Abstract

During their brief history, all political ideologies have been escorted by Propaganda and, hence, the Grand Public perceived them as mere symbolic products spread out of a propagandist kernel. Accordingly, the critical insights into the question of binding ideology and Propaganda enclosed a great deal of ethical issues. In spite of good intentions, the conceptual inaccuracy generated and lead to confusions. This is the reason why my endeavour shall clear away from any value judgements and strictly follow the dull realisation of two Cartesian conditions of knowledge: clarity and distinctness. In the first place, we need to determine what meanings of 'ideology' and 'Propaganda' can possibly allow an objective frame of analysis; up to the moment, the scholarly sources have negotiated and changed a legion of definitions. Thus, we intend to establish the scientific core of Propaganda messages, all related to the causes that lead to the rise and development of this phenomenon. Once settled the terms of our theoretical viewpoint, the proper definition for such a concept would be the following: Propaganda represents a communication technique, systematically decreed and sustained by an institutional structure which, through symbolic anchors, activates and manipulates the irrational dimension of group movements, seeking to trigger actions that aim to maintain or shift the power scheme, within the group or in the mutual relationships with other groups; the efficacy is quantified by the way Propaganda fulfils the Agent's aim, and not by its responsiveness to some moral ideal. Therefore, Propaganda represents a dynamics of ideology, the ideology in action, and conjoins both democracy and the technical society. I assume that ideology cannot exist without Propaganda, parties cannot exist without ideology, and democracy cannot exist without parties. All these anticipations prevail over the chief hypothesis of this paper: there is no democracy without Propaganda.

Keywords: communication, ideology, politics, policy, society

1. Introduction

In spite of its five-century history, Propaganda started to function during the French Revolution and, finally, has been brought to analysis within the context of the Fascist ascension. Its blast related thus with the rise of Totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, which also imposed a negative meaning, centred, as the nowadays dictionaries prove, on keywords such as 'manipulation',

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‘disinformation’, ‘brainwash’, ‘lie’, and so forth. To a similar extent, one might trace back the course of the various definitions ideology has acquired all along. Particularly, the Marxist interpretation of ‘ideology’ gained a great reputation during Totalitarian regimes and has preserved to present day its demonic connotations; in everyday language, ideology usually equates a bunch of bad things and therefore serves as an index for Propaganda.

However, this twining situation did not appear out of the blue. On the one hand, Propaganda used to attend all political ideologies; on the other, during their short career, the Great Public perceived ideologies throughout their symbolic outcome, namely the products distributed by Propaganda. As such, the analysis of binding ideology and Propaganda covered a large range of solutions; moreover, some authors understood it as a mere synonymy.

The ethical standpoints and the uncritical approaches of concepts generated and kindled confusion; thus, this paper dismisses any value-judgement and strictly relies on the two cardinal Cartesian conditions of knowledge: clarity and distinctness. In the first place, we have to determine what meaning of ‘ideology’ suits us best, bearing in mind the fact that the literature on the topic stemmed a pile of divergent definitions; the same procedure must be applied in studies on Propaganda, as this phenomenon has always comported a manifold reading. The present paper is devised as follows: the first part insists on determining the accuracy of Propaganda’s scientific status and its particular causes; the second sequence examines the strength of Propaganda’s binding with ideology.

2. A few meanings of ideology

At the end of 18th century, after he had received John Locke and Condillac’s influent ideas, Destutt de Tracy tries to frame a ‘theory of ideas’, that is, an ‘ideology’ [1], calibrated so as to grasp the way human sensations and judgements form. These are the terms of the thinker’s equation in 1804: “Unless its intellectual faculties are apprehended, no animal can be thoroughly known. Ideology is a part of Zoology.” [2] Furthermore, all knowledge on the origins of judgement, language and desire helps us find “the principles of education and laws” [2, p. xiv-xv]. In a few words, to know the causes of our judgements means to establish a knowledge-based government, whereas ideology should play the first violin as the new science of welfare.

However, the late-hour topic on the ideologists’ list rallied to a more general scheme, intended to hurl down Metaphysics. The anti-metaphysical view bolstered on the tremendous progress of Biology, which, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, would establish a scientific method of education. Counting himself among the great fans of the ideologists’ achievements, in short time Napoleon would change his mind and utter his uneasiness regarding ideology: paradoxically, the *ideologists* were the seeds of the old Metaphysicians, a pack of ‘dreamers’ and ‘theorists’. From then on, ideology gained a pejorative connotation, eventually rounded by Marx in his writings.

Now, each and every treatise on ideology introduces a precise report of former definitions, more or less concise, more or less sufficient. Here, I have to point at two of these instances, namely Terry Eagleton's comments, putting forward no less than 16 examples [3], and John Gerring's analysis, which gathers 13 meanings of ideology; the latter are derived during the second half of the 20th century [4]. All the same, Daniel Şandru's book (*Reinventarea ideologiei – The Re-shaping of Ideology*) peruses the various perspectives and definitions given to the ideological phenomena [5]. My personal investigation discovered 15 virtual solutions to the 'ideology' quiz [6]; yet, my aim hitherto does not hint at making any list, because no inventory could possibly cover the whole range of issues. Synthetically, the span of definitions (both mine, and others') boils down to the following dominant traits:

“1. Ideology is a coherent set of scientific and philosophical theories, beliefs and expressions, assumed in mass, through which individuals and communities perceive their identity, their relationships with the world and power relationships (all these realizations being the effect of socialisation and the binder of any community) in order to pursue their happiness (regardless of the name it could possibly bear: emancipation, wellbeing, comfort etc.);

2. Ideology is a tool of political domination (that may take the form of emancipation) whose usage may take on many shapes: either the imposition of a type of rationality (the technical one) or of a symbolic universe as the only valid and desirable one, or the creation of some measures of social engineering, or the explanation and arrangement of facts as the succession of a idea;

3. Ideology is a method of knowledge in social sciences.” [6, p. 223-224]

There is no time to argue whether the three dominant fields of ideology cover the entire conceptual area; nevertheless, when analysing how ideology and propaganda bind together, we have to rely only on the first two traits. Still, as I have announced in the introductory paragraphs, the matter shall be examined according to clarity and distinctness imperatives, which impels me to stick to the methodology issues.

3. Propaganda: from idea to action

As I have noted in other instances [7], theorists such as Herbert Marcuse [8] and Gh. Ionescu [9] consider that ideology is religion's legal dowager; I positively embraced the idea because I consider that, during the course of public life laicisation, ideology befits the human mind's need to believe in something. Besides all that, if we lay eyes on religion's inheritance, we might cross with a fundamental article of religion's bequeathal, namely Propaganda.

Until the 16th century, the word 'Propaganda' belonged to the language of natural sciences, and, still more specifically, indicated the action of reproduction for both plants and animals. In the aftermath of Reformation, Pope Gregory XIII (in office between 1572 and 1585) set up a commission of cardinals, whose objective was to spread Catholic faith beyond the area of influence and over the borders of Vatican. During the High Office of Pope Gregory XV (in 1622), this

commission acquires permanency. Its original entitlement preserves the Latin word 'Propaganda' (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide - The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith*), while its new name, bestowed by Pope John Paul II (in 1982), changes the perspective and the keyword: *Congregation pro Gentium Evangelizatione (The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples)* [10].

Actually, it is from Catholicism that politics takes over this effective tool of mass-communication. It will not take long to chisel and bring it to perfection. In French Revolution times, Propaganda does not collocate with Faith anymore; it is a shibboleth of revolutionary ideas. The dispersion of this phenomenon reaches unconceivable dimensions in the 20th century, which determined Alex Carey to estimate that "the twentieth century has been characterized by three developments of great political importance: the growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy" [11].

Arrived to our times, the concept of 'Propaganda' bears Joseph Goebbels' imprint, which derived into a marked pejorative reading; thus, there is always an implied understanding in-between the lines, a cross-reference to the hailed success of Nazi Propaganda, when it managed to move the entire German nation, to the mournful political catastrophe of Europe, or to the humanitarian cataclysm, brought about in the name of racist ideals. Let us not forget that the Communist Propaganda borrowed much from the Nazi practice, and the ensuing effects (on political and humanitarian dimensions) were cut after the original model. During both Totalitarianisms, Propaganda marched onwards (shoulder to shoulder to terror) as one of the most striking methods to deliver the 'New Man', according to the programmes, followed and promoted by the two ideologies (Fascism and Communism).

Considering the particular history of this phenomenon, added to a recent date interest for the dynamics of mass-communication, Propaganda whirled in a fuzz of guesses and presumptions. As aforementioned, the dominant meaning develops round the negative pole of connotation. In the same line, Jacques Ellul corralled a cluster of nay-sayings, such as 'psychological corrosion' (of our fellow citizens' opinions), 'psychological war' (waged by foreigners or enemies in order to destroy the moral state of a community), 're-education' and 'brain-wash' (as complex methods to turn adversaries into allies), and, last but not least, 'public and human relationships' (that follow to adapt the human individual to society). Briefly said, "Propaganda, *in its lax sense*, envelops the various actions mentioned before; *in its strict sense*, it is characterized by an institutional dimension. This evinces the way organisation and framing techniques combine in order to set into action." [12] Once we settled the particular aspects of a few definitions, perhaps the questions should become clearer.

When referring to Propaganda, Goebbels used to emphasize the following: "We do not talk to say something, but to obtain a certain effect" [12, p. 5]. He also used to discriminate between *Haltung* (behaviour) and *Stimmung* (morality),

by giving priority to the former. Goebbels' acceptance swerves to the definition provided by a Propaganda scholar such as Leonard Dobb: "the attempt at modifying the personalities and the behaviour of individuals, according to the purposes which, at a precise moment, the society considers as being non-scientific or unworthy" [13].

We presume that Goebbels did take something from Harold Dwight Lasswell's definition, launched in 1927: "Propaganda is the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols. The word attitude is taken to mean a tendency to act according to certain patterns of valuation. The existence of an attitude is not a direct datum of experience, but an inference from signs which have a conventionalized significance." [14] The collective attitudes represent direct reactions to the stimuli of certain signs, whose content, at the moment of Propaganda infusion, has already been acknowledged by the masses. Laswell insists on making the distinction between 'deliberative' and 'propagandist' attitudes: "Deliberation implies the search for the solution of a besetting problem with no desire to prejudice a particular solution in advance. The propagandist is very much concerned about how a specific solution is to be evoked and 'put over'." [14, p. 628]. The same idea – related to symbol manipulation – occurs in Daniel Lerner's theories that assume a type of 'alteration' during the act of spreading Propaganda messages. In other words, there is a shift of power schemes within the group through sheer handling of symbols [15].

The thought gains a still clearer form in J. Ellul's works, namely when he states as follows: "*the aim of modern Propaganda is not to modify ideas, but to set in action*. There is no matter of changing the adhesion to a political doctrine, but of engaging irrationally to an active process. There is no matter of determining a choice, but of triggering a response. There no matter of altering an opinion, but of obtaining an active and mythical belief". [12, p. 36-37]. It is obvious that these approaches encounter Gustave Le Bon's influent view on 'mass psychology' [16].

A post-bellum Italian scholar, Antonio Miotto, launches the idea to bind Propaganda to the massification process. His theory reads as follows; propaganda is "a social pressure technique that tends to form psychological or social groups with unified structures and to homogenize the members' emotional and mental states" [17]. Edward Bernays provides us with a similar hint about 'massification'; hence, "the modern Propaganda designates a coherent and ample effort to incite or to diminish events in order to influence the relationships of the Grand Public with an enterprise, an idea, or a group" [18].

Up to now, the definitions aforementioned do not rely explicitly on communication, even though, essentially, it is always implicated. The meaning restricts in Étienne F. Augé's approach, who presents Propaganda as a "strategy of mass-communication, aiming to influence the opinions and the actions of individuals and groups through partial information" [10, p. 12]. It is easy to notice that such definition throws over the board and refutes all 'propagandist' manifestations, on grounds that they simply pertain to despicable phenomena.

Phillipe Breton also presents Propaganda as “another type of manipulation technique by means of words, achieved consciously and systematically” [19].

However, in order to settle down things, we have to agree on the paradigm of truth deliverance; for instance, a consciousness that believes the Correspondence Theory of Truth, Propaganda represents an act of perversion, an alteration of communication. It is from this standpoint that, after World War II, the discourse on mass violation through means of political Propaganda proliferated [20]. F. d’Almeida enrols himself in the same line of understanding; for him, Propaganda covers the area of those actions carried out without the consent or even against masses, its proper definition being “to exercise an influence on fellow citizens without their knowledge. In Totalitarian regimes, this influence would go on being a moral and manipulative constraint.” [21]

On the contrary, there are other authors, who emphasize the neutrality of Propaganda instead. Augé provides us with an example from Lucy Lippard’s article (published in 1980), that comes up with the solution to rehabilitate and rebrand the word [10, p. 12-13]. Moreover, the General Assembly of UN appears to have acknowledged this reality. On November, the 3rd, 1947, they issued a document which does not decry Propaganda anymore; actually, it is not a menace to pacifist ideals, but it should be used by all the State Parties in order to promote the idea of peace among the peoples of the world.

In spite of suspicions and negative perceptions, there are some voices who allow the fact that, anyway, Propaganda might be a useful tool; the ‘good cause’ motif, the democracy ideal, or the ‘anti-war Propaganda’ recur as a *sine qua non* condition [20, p. 540]. Serge Tchakhotine upholds that “it is possible to make a dynamic, even violent, Propaganda, without any violation of moral principles, as the basis of the human community.” [20, p. 559]

In Ellul’s vision, the lack of certainty ensues “a moral or political *a priori*” [12, p. 6], which should be discarded if we want to make a judgement in all earnestness. By assuming this directive, he compares the following cases: “if the classical, rather outdated, vision resides essentially in defining Propaganda as the human being’s adhesion to a form of Orthodoxy, then the modern, and the real Propaganda, seeks to obtain an Orthopraxy, that is an action which, as such and not through the actors’ value judgements, sustains the preciseness and justness relating to a certain purpose” [12, p. 39].

On the canvas of varying assertions, we can identify the following characteristics of Propaganda:

1. Propaganda represents a management and communication technique within the context of public attitudes (*I use the word ‘technique’ in its large sense, as a sum of means and mechanisms required by any conscious and methodical activity. In our case, ‘technique’ refers to the way a group’s public attitudes are managed and dealt with.*);
2. Propaganda’s object is the human community, irrespectively of its dimension, whose cohesion or dissolution it seeks to obtain;
3. Propaganda’s agent is an institutional structure (from states or Super-state entities down to organisations of different levels and dimensions);

4. Propaganda's content is formed by all those symbolical products that are relevant for the community;
5. Propaganda produces and spreads crystal-clear messages, to everyone's understanding;
6. Propaganda implies knowing how to use all relevant information about the group;
7. Propaganda's aim is not to inform the group, but to generate an organic action among its members;
8. Propaganda does not make appeal to the group members' reason; it works on their irrational layers;
9. The justness of the cause which generated the propagandist action is decided by the Propaganda's agent;
10. Propaganda is morally neutral.

Bearing in mind the 'Decalogue' of constitutive characteristics, I shall try my best in advancing a synthetic definition. Propaganda represents a communication technique, systematically decreed and sustained by an institutional structure which, through symbolic anchors, activates and manipulates the irrational dimension of group movements, seeking to trigger actions that aim to maintain or to shift the power scheme, within the group or in the mutual relationships with other groups; the efficacy is quantified by the way Propaganda fulfils the Agent's aim, and not by its responsiveness to some moral ideal.

4. The status of Propaganda

In order to check the way Propaganda positioned within the greater picture of modern man's systematic pursuits, I consider it necessary to dwell on the top characteristic from the ten elements announced beforehand. Anyway, Propaganda has already been contained by a larger area, namely the communication field; it is enough, I should say, to mention the works published by Jean-Andre Legrand & Jean Boniface [22], Alex Mucchielli [23], and Dan D. Nimmo & Keith R. Sanders [24]. In the same terms of analysis, *Enciclopedia Universalis* enters an article signed by Jean-Marie Domenach, who defines the notion as a 'technique' dully lead by five rules of the thumb: simplicity (by creating a sole target, a sole enemy), emphasis (by grossly altering the facts), orchestration (by repeating on and on the simplified or emphasized information), transfusion (by adapting the message for various audiences), and contagion (by obtaining general consensus) [19, p. 71]. Among these rules, one might trace the two basic laws indicated by Fritz Hippler, a reputed film director during the Nazi regime: "simplicity and repetition. That is the secret of modern Propaganda." [10, p. 34]

Again, J. Ellul makes his point in upholding the technicality of Propaganda. Therefore, he presents it as "a set of 'tricks' and 'means', a set of practices, more or less serious" [12]. This approach builds on Wallace Albig's definition that goes as follows: "Propaganda cannot be considered a science as

such, because, within its application area, there is no place for generalisations and constant values” [25]. In any event, at least we might concede that Propaganda resembles and gets closer to the techniques employed by modern sciences.

In Ellul’s mind, the scientific inserts of Propaganda can be determined by tracing four main elements. First and foremost, related to and borrowing much from psychology and sociology, Propaganda forays the human existence in general. Secondly, it tends towards a set of rules and formulae, which have a practical applicability. In the third place, to identify the means of Propaganda implies a deep psychological and sociological analysis of those who will also become the recipients of its messages. Last, but not least, the results of Propaganda can be quantified with enough accuracy and precision [12, p. 15-17].

After he had analysed Goebbels’ Propaganda, Leonard W. Dobb identified 19 principles that govern it, from the conditions required for both the organising authority and its agents to the means and proper moment for launching propagandist attacks [13]. To the point, the mere identification of general principles does not turn Propaganda into a full-time science, as it still lacks two of the scientific basics, that is, ‘universality’ and ‘predictability’.

Nonetheless, it is obvious that, in spite of folklore wrapping and intuitive bedding, Propaganda functions as any other complex activity. Matter of factually, any propagandist action is introduced by a sum of scientific researches; nevertheless, these are not oriented and typified according to a specific, clean-cut methodology. Moreover, Propaganda appears to be more of an entailing technique, using all the results submitted by the scientific research from the fields of sociology, psychology, political sciences and communication. Its aim is to direct these results towards the production of a political action wished for by all the community.

5. The causes of modern Propaganda

A brand new way of making Propaganda did not occur as a decision taken by somebody in particular; on the contrary, it emerged from an array of phenomena which inhere in the very ground of modern society. Edward Bernays points at the conditions that ushered the industrial revolution, the three crucial discoveries, namely the boat engine, the conversion of press into an accessible tool, and public education; additionally, the universal suffrage robbed the kings of their former powers and transferred them to the people. Squarely speaking, “the minority discovered that it can influence the majority in order to pursue its aims ... Propaganda becomes the executive organ of an invisible government.” [18, p. 39] Is it the case to talk about conspiracy? Not at all. Likewise, Bernays enlarges his theoretic approach by using a common-sense finding; since we cannot judge thoroughly all data from the scientific fields we are concerned with, we cannot be always fully aware of their meanings. Briefly, we have to admit that “willingly, we have already passed the responsibility of information

sifting to an invisible government, apt to shed light on the main issues and to reduce down options to realist proportions.” [18, p. 32]

Subsequently, the theory on the virtual binding between Propaganda and modernity sparked in J. Ellul’s writings, which read as follows: Propaganda is “a necessity impossible to escape from” [12, p. 11]. The next lines detail the connection of propagandist products and modern technicality. “Propaganda should stay right into the core of State powers growth, right into the core of government and administration techniques ... right into the core of the mechanisms and instruments that engender all types of order, right into the core of management techniques; Propaganda is nothing else but the means to avoid the awareness of oppression and to determine the human being to obey of his free will.” [12, p. 13-14]

Accordingly, we stick to the main courses of modernity, that is, the great Industrial Revolution and the Universal Suffrage. The conjunction of the two phenomena opened the way for modern Propaganda, simply because they sent forth a character that had not existed previously. Strictly speaking, we have to refer to masses. Ellul also shows that “modern Propaganda refers to the individuals belonging to a mass and, reciprocally, points at the mass, provided that this mass is made of individuals” [12, p. 18].

As Le Bon states, not just any gathering of human individuals can be properly called a mass. The mass is primarily a psychological conglomerate, assembling a sum of individuals who bear the following characteristics: “the dissolution of conscious personality; orientation according to suggestion, and, likewise, the contagion of ideas and feelings; then, the tendency to enact immediately the suggested ideas” [16, p. 20].

The mass presents itself as the ideal target for Propaganda. This is the reason why allegations such as ‘brain-wash’ do not justify at all; brain does not seem to be the object of propagandist ‘bombings’. Actually, a part of the theorists aforementioned underlines the fact that Propaganda aims at setting in action, and not at triggering meditation. Here, a quotation from Le Bon’s seminal work would be enough: “Barely able to reason, the masses show their great disposition toward action” [16, p. 11]. It is, thus, pure nonsense to appeal to the thinking capacities of an assembly; launching invitations to meditation means everything else but making efficient Propaganda – the doubting mood does not turn a throng of people into a mass because perplexity kills action. Plainly speaking, it is not because someone seeks to dumb them down that the masses are not invited to public meditations; on the contrary, it is because of their genuine dumbness. Therefore, neither the laws nor the institutions move the masses or decide upon their nature; they “let themselves carried away only by the impressions that have been provoked and delivered within their bosom” [16, p. 13].

Notwithstanding its concreteness, the psychological mass does not last long and, hence, does not bear the depth of time acquirements. Contrariwise, we might argue that it is a precise time and a specific action that defines a mass. In *The Revolt of the Masses*, Ortega y Gasset manages to define ‘the mass-man’, or

‘the massified man’, in other words, “the man emptied of his personal history, without the bowels of past and, by this, able to listen to all the so-called ‘international’ subjects. This man is not a man anymore; he presents himself as a man’s carcass, formed by transparent *idola fori*; he has no ‘inner’, no inexorable and unalienable intimacy, no irrevocable self. This is the source of his permanent readiness to pretend he is one thing or the other. He has only cravings...: he is the ignoble man who obliges – *sine nobilitate* – the snobbish.” [26]

The mass-man prefers to let others think in his place. Moreover, let us consider the fact that not in the public squares the massified people are stamped; there are instances when propagandist discourses do not heat the temper of audiences to the height expected by the public speaker. The mass-man can be a home-entity as well, if this person has already commissioned the others to think and prioritize instead. His obligation restricts to be a yes-man at the callings commended by the directors of conscience.

The negative meaning of Propaganda springs from a diabolical equation, which matches it with an evil source, meant to forge reality and cheat on fellow people. The sub-textual – and, let us say, wrong – premise states that the mass does not form in order to action, but to grasp a meaning. Peculiarly, the social psychology teaches us that Propaganda cannot take lead in the emancipation process; yet, when already involved as a part of the mechanism, it could achieve astounding results.

Fabrice d’Almeida believes that there are two events which installed the synonymy between Propaganda and manipulation: the birth of social psychology through “a set of mass-leadership rules, applied without the consent of masses”, and the establishment of the universal suffrage [21, p. 81-82]. Nevertheless, I would tag on the idea that only a shallow understanding of mass-psychology coaxed the present situation; the experts stocked the general laws of Propaganda, but ignored the truth hid behind them, namely the fact that the masses cannot discern.

Consequently, the psychology of masses produced an explanation for propagandist manifestations, yet indulged the existence of full-time propagandists. They used dynamics and scientific laws in the management of general attitudes. At any rate, let us not put the blame on the social psychology because some of the propagandists sentenced to death their fellows.

6. Ideology and Propaganda

If we turn back to the conditions that favoured both ideology and political propaganda, we might notice that the instances overlap. Mainly, we shall speak about four cardinal issues: the Enlightenment and its inherent changes (the expansion of literacy; the system of public schools; the laicization of public life); the Industrial Revolution (championing the growth of large communities); the affordable written press (availing the access of masses to information); and, generally, the admittance of the universal suffrage. Now, one of the ideology

apparel is the way it translates the scientific and philosophical messages into the plain and dull language of the late-hour literate guy. As we noted above, the simplification of complex messages, their translation as common knowledge, enlists among the guidelines of Propaganda. We may properly affirm that propaganda is the ideology in action.

In like manner, we have already mentioned that Propaganda matches only the two of the three traits of analysis. The first trait relies on integration; ideology sums up a set of theories, beliefs, and customs that condensate the symbolical universe of a community. Accordingly, this type spreads within the national public education system, or is disseminated by other integration agents (namely, ministries or NGOs). Even though usually people make a point in severing education and Propaganda (because education encourages thinking and meditation, whereas Propaganda encourages action [10, p. 17]), we shall not ignore the way ‘patriotism’ is installed in the pupils’ minds, more precisely, as an induced attachment for their belonging community. The price paid for acquiring such high emotion means to deliver a trimmed and purged community history. Apparently, the method is as old as mountains; in its prime, Plato relied on patriotic accounts [27] and, from then on, every nook and corner of Europe bears the seeds of this philosophy. For exemplification, we bring here Ernst Renan’s words from his famous conference entitled *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?* (*What is Nation?*): “Oblivion or even historical error are essential factors in the constitution of a nation ... The essence of a nation is that all its members have a set of things in common and that they will forget some of these things.” [28] The same happens with the ‘national narrations’ written always by the winners, labelled as ‘authentic’ histories and taught to children: the historical figures correspond to heroic characters, the crimes unveil the real deeds of heroism, and some treasons might turn into sheer proofs of patriotism. Thus, I would say that the education act involves a propagandist dimension; the most apparent Propaganda occurs in the core of schoolbooks, that is, in their ‘nationalist’ spine and fibre. With or without a specialized ‘ministry for Propaganda’ or for ‘public relations’, any political regime sets to work its own propagandist machine.

Furthermore, one might draw the conclusion that everybody needs propaganda: both the masses (no matter of their identity, as ‘nation’, ‘local community’, or ‘ideological communities’ of various political biases), and the leaders. By Propaganda, the human being feeds his need of ‘belongingness’, which ensures him a certain comfort, and re-legitimizes the position of former leaders. Renan used to say that “the existence of a nation means ... a daily plebiscite, as the existence of the human individual means a perpetual ascertaining of life.” [28, p. 51] But in order to ensure the correct carriage of this ‘daily plebiscite’, any community needs Propaganda; eventually, it draws it into action and trains the feeling of belongingness.

The second trait if ideology was commonly associated to Propaganda because, once engaged into conflicts, ideology starts shooting propagandist ammunition. However, let us bear in mind that not only Fascism and Communism bit to the bone poor Europe’s body! Through its spokesmen, the

present-day democratic world also makes use of Propaganda campaigns in order to uphold the 'fair' and 'honest' causes. I assume that ideology cannot exist without Propaganda, parties cannot exist without ideology, and democracy cannot exist without parties. All these anticipations prevail over this paper's chief hypothesis: there is no democracy without Propaganda.

For both traits of ideology, Propaganda plays an essential role, coming to the fore whenever and wherever masses are implied. Anyhow, ideology represents a mass-targeted phenomenon. Propaganda solves a need to over simplify things if mass action should be required.

Finally, as neither ideology nor Propaganda is the worldly deposit of evil and fallacy, we can stick to an approach that underlines each one's 'technicality'. Essentially, I believe that it all comes down to a technique meant to stimulate an action, irrespectively of the *alethic* value embedded by the message or of its moral value. Propaganda neighbours neither the truth, nor the lie, neither the good, nor the evil. However, for some reason, all these values need it; a reasonable truth or a noble purpose might be publicly unattractive, this is why Propaganda strategies are required. The same goes for all values; Truth and False, Good and Evil do not inhere in propagandist messages. Actually, such values graph on and apply to the initiators' intentions and, in some cases, on the contents moved by Propaganda, so as to generate a supporting or a rejection action. Generally, the only commandment of Propaganda is to trigger action, whereas its truth resides on how it identifies meaningful symbols for a population and turns it into a 'psychological mass'. All the rest enters the scheme drawn by concepts such as 'simplification', 'repetition', 'emphasis', 'contagion', and so forth.

7. Conclusions

Propaganda places itself on the militant flank of ideology, functioning as the technical means by which the ideological truths (regardless of their original source, be it science, philosophy or religion) breeze in the masses and generate action. In terms of activation, ideologies have their share of reactivity; thence Propaganda usually has received an ideological definition: either as the adversary's discourse (with a fully pejorative meaning), or as the comrades' barricade shibboleth (this time, with a positive connotation). In a frame of mind that assigns Propaganda the status of neutrality, these definitions seem rather unsuitable and uninspired.

Moreover, we can state that any ideology exists through means of Propaganda; yet, the two realities do not bear comparison because, in its strict sense, ideology grounds on a theoretical layer, opened only to elites. Conversely, Propaganda shows only the trajectory of ideology, starting from an ideal core and realizing itself through and during action.

Propaganda is a phenomenon engendered by modernity and not someone's personal patent. Since its inception, it has eased the Democracy game and the act of governing. Additionally, the Propaganda's agents should not be

located exclusively among the political actors. Especially in the age of new pluralisms, while various organisations flag on various causes (a rage spanning from human to garden dwarf's rights), we might expect to meet an equal sum of propagandist actions.

Nowadays, society has discovered so many ways to melt individual consciousness within the treacle of different masses. On a permanent basis, the virtual society bombs up the human being with propagandist messages, so that, at first sight, we might infer that, pluralistically, there are plural ways to turn man into a mass-man. Paradoxically, the acceptance of pluralism opens the way for a new understanding of Propaganda. While looking back at Totalitarian regimes, we discover that the worst thing ever experienced by the human being is the lack of alternative. Under any circumstances, no one escapes from being a 'mass-man', because it is virtually impossible (physically, psychically, biologically, and so on) to analyse, in a critical manner, every information presented to our minds. Most of the times, we act according to partial information provided by various mechanisms of Propaganda. Moreover, from food to politics, we need to be provided with ready-made opinions. The market is supposed to meet our needs, giving us a compass to navigate into the deep seas of reality. In conclusion, the truth-value of instrumented information does not weigh much if the technical aid provided by propaganda ensures my guidance within the ocean of current challenges. Only the choice bears importance. Only my choice matters.

In the same Cartesian manner announced previously, I shall end up by quoting the same source. Descartes believed that, until the peremptory establishment of a '*mathesis universalis*' (that is, the science of all things, able to form a unique Ethics), the human being has to embrace a 'casual moral'. *Mutatis mutandis*, we can conclude that both ideology and Propaganda draw the lines of our 'casual universe' and give us the chance to take at least one important decision in a conscious state of mind.

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