Propaganda, Irrationality, and Group Agency

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Abstract: I argue that propaganda does not characteristically interfere with individual rationality, but instead with group agency. Whereas it is often claimed that propaganda involves some sort of incitement to irrationality, I show that this is neither necessary nor sufficient for a case's being one or propaganda. For instance, some propaganda constitutes evidence of the speaker's power, or else of the risk and futility of opposing them, and there is nothing irrational about taking such evidence seriously. I outline an alternative account of propaganda inspired by Hannah Arendt, on which propaganda characteristically creates or destroys group agency. One aspiring to control the public should have an interest in both creating and suppressing group agency, I argue, both because groups have capacities that individuals don't, and because participation in group action can have a transformative effect upon the individual. Finally, I suggest that my characterization of propaganda suggests a vision of resistance to propaganda quite unlike the one that emerges from irrational-belief accounts, on which propaganda cannot be resisted by oneself.

1 Introduction

Propaganda is an attempt to change the world. But to say this much is evidently not to have given a full theory– it remains to say what aspect of the world propaganda aims to change. The position I stake out in this chapter is that, contrary to a widespread view, propaganda does not characteristically target the individual's beliefs or rationality. Propaganda's characteristic effect is not at the level of the individual at all, but at the level of the *group agency landscape*.

2 Against the Belief Account

A natural first thought is this: the parts of the world that propaganda targets are agents, with all their associated faculties. But many thinkers have been keen to pinpoint some specific facet of the agent as propaganda's characteristic target. One tradition says (or can be reconstructed as saying) that it is the agent's needs and desires that propaganda targets, either by changing the desires the agents in fact has (Wimberly 2017; Wimberly 2020), or else by alienating the agent from their true ones (Marx and Engels 1972; Marcuse 1964; Horkheimer and Adorno 2002). Others identify propaganda as aiming to change the individual's ideology— but ideology has been specified variously as consisting of beliefs (Shelby 2016), material institutions (Althusser 2001), and practices (Haslanger 2017), among other things which may or may not collapse the propaganda-as-targeting-ideology view down to the targeting-desire or targeting-belief views. In any case, the position that will interest us is that propaganda aims at individuals' *beliefs*.

That beliefs and desires should be proposed as targets for propaganda is natural, given that these are often taken as the antecedents of action. Indeed, we will regard the idea that propaganda's function is to influence action as a core insight into its nature. This by itself might suggest a decentering of beliefs in the account. As Ellul notes, "Very frequently propaganda is described as a manipulation for the purpose of changing idea or opinions of making individuals 'believe' some idea or fact... This is a completely wrong line of thinking...The aim of modern propaganda is no longer to modify ideas, but to provoke action" (1973: 25). And as Wimberly judiciously adds, "Propagandists are not epistemologists and are not focused on a battle to prove things true or false; they are governors seeking to alter the conduct of the public" (2017: 115).

However, the need to center action in our account is not by itself a knock-down objection against belief accounts. While the production of (in-)action may be the end goal of the propagandist, this

doesn't rule out that some kind of belief change is the distinctive mechanism by which propaganda influences action.

My objection to the belief account is instead that it has no plausible precisification. A view on which every attempt to alter someone's beliefs counted as propagandistic would be both counterintuitive and theoretically useless, and so the question becomes which attempts at belief change a plausible version of the belief account should count as propagandistic. We will review two possible answers to this question: that propaganda creates false beliefs, and that it creates irrational beliefs. Neither of these accounts will be satisfying.

The first proposal is that propaganda seeks to create false beliefs. In rejecting this view, theorists often cite cases like "there are muslims among us," uttered by an islamophobic politician (Stanley 2015: 42) or "93 percent of blacks [in America] are killed by other blacks," uttered by one seeking to deflect inquiry into police violence against black Americans (Táíwò 2017: 1); such statements are strictly true, while also plausibly instances of propaganda. Notable about these cases is that, while not themselves false, their propagandistic effect seems dependent in some way on the audience's acceptance of further falsehoods, which they somehow bring along to supplement themselves: that there are muslims among us manages to stoke fear only supposing that muslims' being unusually prone to violence is already accepted. And the "black-on-black" crime deflection characteristically relies for the perception of its relevance upon the falsehood that intracommunal violence is unique to black Americans, whereas in fact the vast majority of all crime is intracommunal.

I offer a further counterexample to the false belief account, which is different from the above in that it doesn't seem to rely for its effect on some proximate proposition that *is* false. Consider a

workplace in which employees are attempting to unionize. Deeply opposed to this, management circulates pamphlets highlighting cases where attempts at unionization prompted similar workplaces to outsource, and the would-be unionizers lost their jobs.

I take this sort of messaging to be, intuitively, a case of propaganda. A few observations about it: we may stipulate that management's anecdotes about unsuccessful unionization attempts past are all true. We may even suppose that the inference they encourage employees to make on the basis of these anecdotes– that any unionization effort will be both difficult and high-stakes– is true. One might press that management isn't just saying that the unionization effort will *likely* fail but that it *will* fail– and it's not so clear that this is true. A response may seem to turn on the alethic status we take statements about the future to have. On the one hand, if we take it that there is some fact of the matter about the truth of such statements, we may stipulate that, in our case, management's statement is true, and it so happens that unionization efforts really will fail– but this does not, to my mind, change whether it counts as propaganda. On the other hand, if we take it that there is no fact of the matter about the truth value of statements about the future, then management's statements still aren't false, and so still amount to a counterexample.

The direction that most belief theorists actually head in is saying that propaganda encourages beliefs that are irrational, whether or not they're false. On such accounts, propaganda has been described as the "manipulation of the *rational will* to close off debate," as "speech that *irrationally closes off* certain options that should be considered" (Stanley 2015: 48, 49 on the 'classical' sense of propaganda, italics mines); as "the organized attempt through communication to affect belief or action or inculcate attitudes in a large audience in ways that *circumvent or suppress an individual's adequately formed, rational, reflective judgment*" (Marlin 2002: 22, italics mine); and as "an *epistemically defective message* used with the intention to persuade a

socially significant group of people" where epistemically defective persuasion stretches to cover falsehoods, instances of misleading and the use of "spurious" means, like emotional arousal, to persuade (Ross 2002: 24 *et passim,* italics mine).

The discussion in Stanley (2015) I take to be in the spirit of the irrationality account, if not strictly an endorsement of it, as Stanley does not claim to offer a fully general analysis of what propaganda is. But he regards it as possible that his conception of propaganda is a version of the 'classical' view articulated above (2015: 48) and, accordingly, inclines toward the view that "propaganda runs counter to rational principles", focusing on a variety of propaganda ("undermining demagoguery") which conspires to use liberal democratic ideals against themselves, with the contradiction here unnoticed by the audience (an obvious irrationality) because of their pre-existing flawed ideology (2015: 57-58 *et passim*).

I object to the class of belief-irrationality accounts of propaganda very generally, rather than to any one theorist's particular version. So I aim to formulate the irrationality condition quite loosely. Where x is a putative case of propaganda:

> **Irrationality Condition (IC)**: x incites the individual to form beliefs in an irrational manner.

I take it as obvious that IC could not be a sufficient condition on x's being a case of propaganda; it is a familiar observation that a huge range of conditions that seem to trigger cognitive biases, and where such biases are instances of genuine irrationality (*pace* e.g. Dorst 2020) then we see that this account would massively overgenerate.

What is left open to the irrationality theorist is to posit IC as necessary. But I don't think this version of the view fares any better, because I think there are instances of propaganda that don't clearly function by inducing irrationality. In fact, I think the anti-union pamphlets discussed above are such a case. We recall that what the pamphlets do is provide evidence in favor of a particular assessment of the likely outcome of labour organizing. And evidence that my intended plan is high risk with a low probability of success is clearly relevant to deliberations about whether to adopt that plan[1]—there is nothing irrational about being influenced by these considerations.

A remaining option to the irrationality theorist is to just deny that the anti-union pamphlet is an instance of propaganda. My response will involve marshaling a few further cases, any one of which individually, if regarded as propaganda, is a counterexample to the necessity of IC, and the collective exclusion of which from the category of propaganda dooms the concept to something near political irrelevance.

One class of propaganda that I want to draw attention to is brought out in Lisa Wedeen's ethnography of late 20th-century Syrian political life:

> In official Syrian political discourse, President Hafiz al-Asad is regularly depicted as omnipresent and omniscient...[But] no one in modern Syria, neither those who orchestrate official praise nor those who are forced to consume it, believes that Asad is the country's "premier pharmacist," that he "knows all things about all issues," or that he actually garners 99.2 percent of the vote in elections. (Wedeen 1999: 1)

Haifeng Huang, whose own work primarily concerns contemporary China, dubs the sort of propaganda that Wedeen draws our attention to "hard propaganda" (Huang 2015; Huang 2018).

Hard propaganda involves messages that are "crude, heavy-handed, or preposterous," which can be "seen through by citizens" and which therefore "do not induce persuasion" (2018: 1034). The puzzle that Huang raises is what could be gained through propaganda that persuades no one– must we just understand such cases as miscalculations, symptomatic of autocratic hubris? Huang says not. Instead, he argues that we must nuance our understanding of what such propaganda could be trying to persuade its audience *of*. While it might abjectly fail to persuade anyone of that which it strictly speaking *says*, that may be besides the point—it may function to *offer evidence* of the state's power, and with significant persuasive strength. Huang for instance argues that "Chinese citizens frequently dislike and ridicule the state's flagship TV news program *Xinwen Lianbo*, [but] the fact that the regime easily bombards the nation with the program daily at 7:00 p.m. manifests its power" (Huang 2018: 1034-1035). In other words, hard propaganda is a *flex*.

If Huang and Wedeen are right, the content of the belief that an instance of hard propaganda aims to create is not the same as the content of the propagandistic speech act itself, even given an expansive notion of speech act contents that includes implicata, not-at-issue content and other such phenomena. That the Chinese state has a strength and appetite for control such that one should think twice before publicly dissenting with its policies, for instance, needn't be among the propositions speaker-meant by the anchors on *Xinwen Lianbo* on a given evening[2]— but the broadcast may nonetheless *show this to be so,* and showing this may be part of its purpose.

It will pay later dividends to ask in passing what the hard propagandist gains via their demonstration of power. Not necessarily approval or admiration; Huang notes that "Chinese college students who are more familiar with the government's propaganda messages...are not more satisfied with the government, but they are more likely to believe that it has a strong

capacity in maintaining political order and are, hence, less willing to express dissent" (2015: 421 italics mine). And importantly, dissent should not be understood sheerly as a matter of individual expressions of disagreement, but of *joining with others in acts of protest*; hard propaganda targets the capacity for this collective action. As a result of state hard propaganda:

> "[individuals] may also be reminded that other citizens know the state is powerful too, given the prevalence of such propaganda and the lack of overt opposition in their daily lives. Since failed protest in an authoritarian setting would incur punishment by the regime, participation in such actions depends on not just individuals' opinions of the government but also their assessment of the state's power and the likely outcome of protest. Therefore ...it will also decrease their willingness to protest." (Huang 2018: 1035)

While Huang is concerned with authoritarian contexts, I leave it to the reader to decide whether propaganda purporting to demonstrate the futility and risk of, say, radical left social movements might not also be a salient presence in the legal and political lives of liberal democratic polities too. In any case, since many such polities fail to extend democratization to work places, either fully or at all, hard-propagandistic intimidation certainly remains a presence in the economic lives of many outside of authoritarian states.

In discerning that an instance of propaganda may *constitute* evidence of a fact, we can see that hard propaganda has a certain amount in common with a second class of propaganda relevant to our argument against the necessity of IC: so-called "propaganda of the deed." Propaganda of the deed is a notion which originated in 19th century anarchist thought, tracing its name to an 1877 article by Paul Brousse and Peter Kropotkin (Fleming 1980: 4). It involves acts of insurrection

against the state, including assassinations and bombings, where the accomplishment of such acts is comprehended not just as doing immediate damage to the state, but as an article of evidence concerning both the ruling class's fallibility and the power of the working class. Like hard propaganda, propaganda of the deed is a *demonstration* of power, not just an assertion of it.

Let's finally make clear why hard propaganda and propaganda of the deed are troublesome for accounts upholding the necessity of IC: the evidence such propaganda offers in favor of the propagandist's strength really does seem like evidence. That is, the Chinese state's ability to restrict dinner-hour television to a single jingoistic, self-consciously censored news program is a demonstration of power and there is nothing irrational about inclining toward the belief that the Chinese state is powerful on its basis. Likewise, there is nothing irrational about allowing a suitably elaborated-upon instance of spontaneous industrial sabotage to incline one toward the belief that working people would hold the power to threaten currently powerful institutions, should they choose to do so. It seems therefore that both hard propaganda and propaganda of the deed are excluded from the category of propaganda altogether if one maintains IC as a necessary condition.

To come full circle, let's consider what hard propaganda and propaganda of the deed have in common with the union-busting tactics cited as a counterexample to the necessity of IC above: all three cases concern the viability of a possible future political formation. Anti-labor management and an authoritarian state seek to demonstrate that political formations opposing them are futile and risky while the insurrectionary anarchist seeks to demonstrate that organizing against the state can be fruitful; these cases share an orientation toward the future and toward group-formation. One determined to hold onto the necessity of IC is forced to deny that the above cases are propaganda, and in doing so to shrink the ambit of their theoretical project. Here

we may recall the insight of Wimberly and Ellul: that the essential task of propaganda is to prime individuals for (in-)action, not just for belief. A theory of propaganda that systematically excludes the cases where this priming for (in-)action is most explicit parts ways with this insight. And this exclusion will indeed be somewhat systematic; one of the reasons that the above cases fall short of clear incitement to irrationality is that, when it comes to forming beliefs about what the future may bring, a huge range of facts about the past will be count as among the set of salient considerations, and so a huge range of messages, serving a huge range of political goals, will be compatible with rational reflection. But it would be an error to overlook all of these messages as possible instances of propaganda.

In what follows I present a characterization of propaganda that makes room for a wide variety of cases, including those explicitly oriented towards future group formation possibilities. On my view, propaganda may frequently incite people to irrationality and bias; it may also frequently act upon their desires. But none of these individual-agent-level effects is what is characteristic of propaganda. The effect which is characteristic of propaganda exists only at the level of the group, and more specifically what I will call the group-agency landscape.

3. An Arendtian Positive Account

In fleshing out a positive account of propaganda's characteristic, group-level effects, I'll be taking at least initial inspiration from Hannah Arendt's characterization of propaganda in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1994). While Arendt is concerned primarily with the totalitarian propaganda of Nazi Germany and a Stalinist USSR, I think that a view based on her observations applies to liberal democracies as well.

Arendt discerns a role for propaganda among other tools of political control, like physical coercion, the terror imposed by threat of this, and, indoctrination, which she sees as distinct from propaganda[3]. And she doesn't think that what is distinctive of propaganda is the power to incite beliefs of any kind; the "true goal of totalitarian propaganda is not persuasion," she asserts, "but organization of the polity" (1994:361).

Whereas indoctrination consists of the dissemination of "ideological doctrine for the initiated in the movement," propaganda is what organizes the "outside world" into a movement in the first place (1994: 343). Propaganda precedes indoctrination and is what makes it possible. And in the extreme case where a totalitarian movement takes total control of a polity "it replaces propaganda with indoctrination" (1994: 341). We may then think of propaganda, on the Arendtian account, as *group-forming speech*, whereas indoctrination is *group-addressing speech*.

What I take from Arendt is the idea that the characteristic effect of propaganda has to do with the formation of groups. In this respect I also draw from Wimberly's argument (2020: 31-50 *et passim*) that, since the profession's inception in the Progressive Era, the mission of public relations (i.e. professionalized propaganda production) has been to *produce the publics* needed to sustain corporate power. In addition to organizing people into groups, I emphasize that propaganda may also disorganize people, by destroying groups or pre-empting their formation.

So far I have said that propaganda creates or destroys groups. However, this isn't quite my fully refined view, since, if *any* collection of people counts as a group, then the mildest utterance might seem to have created a group—say, of people who were in hearing range of the utterance! Here I will be sidestepping some tricky questions around the metaphysics of groups[4], because my concern is in fact not with groups simpliciter but with group *agency.* My account of

propaganda can be understood as positing a message's creation or destruction of group agency, rather than of groups simpliciter, as a condition on that message counting as propaganda.

Now, accounts of group agency place differing requirements on which intentional states need be present at the level of the individual in order for an event involving many individuals to count as a group action. For instance, some theorists posit agents who each intend to make certain contribution to the joint action, and commonly know one another to have these intentions concerning their respective conducts (e.g. Tuomela and Miller 1988, Bratman 1993), whereas others insist that individuals' intentions to act as part of a collective are irreducible to any suite of beliefs and standard intentions (e.g. Searle 1990). Note, however, that a fully fleshed-out account of what it is to modify group agential capacities—per our account, the hallmark of propaganda— may be somewhat ecumenical concerning these debates, as our question is not what individual intentional states and actions taken together constitute group action, but rather what it looks like to cultivate, or extinguish, the *antecedents* to these states, as propaganda does. Some of these antecedents will be quite banal; one step towards being able to work together, for instance, is simply finding one another—no wonder, then, that propaganda frequently works just to make like-minded individuals identifiable by one another. By way of noting how the group-agency account brings discussion of propaganda into contact with other literatures, we can observe that other plausible candidates for these antecedents will include many robustly theorized epistemic and affective relations— relations, perhaps, like love, different varieties of trust, and solidarity, among others.

The group action account of propaganda deals well with those cases that troubled the irrational belief account. Union-busting pamphlets and Chinese state television attempt to disrupt the formation of groups capable of action (a union, capable of withholding labor and collective

bargaining; a pro-democracy movement capable of making authoritarian rule untenable); classical instances of propaganda of the deed aim to demonstrate the capacity of working people to disrupt the operations of capital, and to inspire the formation of groups that can accomplish this.

With the basics of my view now on the table, we should ask why would-be wielders of political power would sometimes reach into their toolbox and pull out propaganda, if propaganda is really as I characterize it. We start by once more recalling Wimberly and Ellul's idea that propaganda fundamentally aims to alter actions. That insight by itself leaves open the possibility that propaganda could be meant to cultivate the capacity for individual rather than group action, even if individual action at a mass scale. What's required is the additional insight that groups can do things that an individual can't— I alone can't instigate or prevent a political revolution, or make or break a corporation's third quarter earnings. And while non-group collections of individuals can also do things individuals can't (e.g. I can't make 500 phone calls in an hour, but for any given hour we could no doubt find 100 people whose collective number of phone calls adds up to 500), only group or joint action allow for coordination and control over what gets done– whether this control is exerted in a top-down manner, or determined and enforced by distributed processes of deliberation and accountability.

In addition to the insight that shaping group action is the only practical route to the large-scale effects they desire, the would-be propagandist functions also within the reality that people are often transformed by participation in group action. This contention has both negative and positive manifestations. It is an old idea (Marx and Engels 1972) that engaging in collective struggle allows for the achievement of insight into one's society, into oneself, and into one's relationships with others. And so propaganda, in its most salutary forms, may even be what

makes certain epistemic achievements possible. We are also well-acquainted with the profoundly negative alterations in individual conduct that group-participation can sometimes induce; Arendt, considering the transformative effects of totalitarian movements, noted that "without the force of the movement, its members cease at once to believe in the dogma for which yesterday they were willing to sacrifice their lives" (Arendt 1994: 363).

Techniques of political influence and control, like propaganda, are adapted to function in a world characterized by the realities of human sociality. A depiction of the propagandistic calculation is then as follows: If I aim to steer the public's actions, I must contend with the possibility that the individuals I want to reach will be deeply influenced, not only by me, and not only by their own material conditions, but also by the epistemic and emotional entanglements they have in virtue of their membership in their families, schools, workplaces, neighborhood associations, political parties, churches, sports teams, frequented subreddits, and so on. If I want to alter the conduct of large groups of people, I must decide how to make an ally out of the joint-action-enabling structures that already have a hold on them, or I must figure out a way to sever their ties to these competing relationships. If I opt for the latter, I must bear in mind that a totally atomized individual is highly volatile, and if my attention slips for a moment I may find that they have thrown themselves into the group least suited to my purposes. And so I may ultimately decide that it is better to invite my targets into a group whose influences upon the individual, and collective action as a group, will be acceptable for my purposes, than to try to sustain their isolation.

Propaganda is one of the tools that attempts to address this essential predicament of the would-be-moulder of mass action, and its group-destroying and group-creating declensions simply reflect different tactical choices at different moments.

I have posited it as a necessary condition on a case's being one of propaganda that it create or destroy group agency. At this point a misunderstanding might result in the following question: mustn't any attempt to shape group action proceed by influencing the beliefs of the individuals *in* the group? How then could propaganda be said not to aim at individual beliefs, even if the end goal is to affect group action? The short response is: of course propaganda alters the group by altering the intentional states of the individuals in the group—a rejection of the belief account of propaganda, as above, does not require denying this. Rather, the upshot of the previous section is that there is nothing *distinctive* about the beliefs that propaganda creates in order to influence group action; some of the individual beliefs that propaganda creates will be false and some won't; some will rest on a flawed ideology and some won't; some will be the consequence of brute unreasoned inculcation, and some will be the result of considering evidence. So propaganda has individual belief formation as one of its effects, but this is hardly distinctive of propaganda. Its characteristic effect is only discernible at the level of group action.

Strictly speaking then, I am open to the idea that a very generic belief condition is a necessary condition on a case's being one of propaganda—i.e. that all instances of propaganda must target individuals' beliefs somehow. But where two theories each offer only a necessary condition, and each seems true far as it goes, we can arbitrate between them by asking which has theoretical utility— a theory which posits only the necessity of the generic belief condition does not illuminate the nature of propaganda. The group agency account does.

One might attempt to construct a more precise, and therefore more theoretically useful belief account by saying that what is characteristic of propaganda is the creation of those individual beliefs which, when acted upon by the individual at the same time that certain other individuals engage in certain other actions, constitute the execution or absence of group action. I suppose I

am fine with this formulation, but that's because it reflects the fact that propaganda's characteristic effect on individual beliefs can be articulated only with prior reference to group action; group action is what is theoretically fundamental.

4. Conclusion

One consequence of regarding propaganda as operating fundamentally on the level of groups, rather than individuals, is that it suggests a new set of social operations as propaganda's next of kin: organization, mobilization, and polarization, rather than lying and manipulating[5] .

A further consequence of shifting from a view of propaganda within the irrational-belief class to one based on modification of group agency is a different picture of what it is to resist propaganda— and while, on my account, propaganda is not something that need always be resisted, it surely remains so sometimes. The vision of resistance that flows from at least some recent irrational-belief accounts centers the individual's attempts to purify their own reasoning by purging the flawed ideology that undergirds it as best they can. Coupling this with an understanding that ideologies are of, and propagated by, the ruling class, some critics have discerned in Stanley (2015) a tendency to focus on the capacity of educated elites to analytically dissect the flawed ideologies that function as apologetics for their unearned privileges, rather than on non-elites' achievement of insight into the systems that oppress them via lived experience and liberatory action (Srinivasan 2016; McKinnon 2018).

Certainly, the irrational-belief theorist's view of resistance does not require engagement with one's possible participation in social and political collectives. Their vision may require one to

have certain humane beliefs about others, or to engage in reflection that triangulates with others' hypothetical reasoning[6]. But it is compatible with the agent's never seriously deliberating about actually participating in joint action. Indeed, to the extent that there is a lingering inclination to regard the highly reflective isolated individual as a model of rationality, and the epistemic and affective entanglements of group memberships only as threats to proper reasoning, some forms of this view of what it is to resist propaganda may be actively hostile to wholehearted participation in a group.

An alternative vision of resistance, and the one that I endorse, involves an individual meeting instances of group-agency-forming propaganda with an eye to whether the group they are being invited into has a structural insensitivity, or even hostility, to their questions, priorities and opinions, or else whether it draws them into a collective deliberative process. Resistance of group-agency-destroying propaganda may look somewhat different: particularly in those cases where the audience's membership in a group is pre-empted, and where the negative propaganda in question seems to provide evidence of the danger or futility of joining, I don't think that the task of resistance can be an individual matter at all. I think it requires an infusion of optimism that can only come from evidence that the group in questions can successfully organize after all– which is to say, it requires group-agency-forming propaganda. The most effective type of such propaganda will be evidence that the group already has successfully organized, even if for a transient moment. And naturally, this successful instance of organizing requires many agents beyond the one whose resistance to negative propaganda was in question, to execute it. We see then that propaganda often cannot be resisted alone.

Notes

[1]Discussion of the rationality of plan adoption suggests that the notion of rationality relevant here is practical rationality. I am, however, trying to be ecumenical about the sort of irrationality which might be invoked by the IC, and I take it that the same point can be put in terms of theoretical rationality.

[2] This observation relies on some familiar discussion in the philosophy of language about where or whether to draw the line between actions that speaker-mean that p, and actions that show that p. Classically, see Grice (1957); but for dissenting views see e.g. Schiffer (1972); Récanati (1986); Neale (1992); Sperber and Wilson (1986, 2015). Insofar as the propagandistic effect will not, on my account, be traceable to some expressed content, I am on the same page as Táíwò (2017) who discerns a class of "trojan horse" propaganda. However, unlike Táíwò, nor do I think that such cases' status as propaganda is based in their undermining a standard of reasonableness.

[3]For more discussion on the relation between these tools , see e.g. Hyska (2018).

[4] See e.g. Ritchie (2013), Ritchie (2015), Ritchie (2018) for a discussion of the groups-as-realized-social-structures account, designed to rein in this overgeneration.

[5]That propaganda needn't involve manipulation will follow most clearly from my arguments against the necessity of IC in combination views on which manipulation itself requires some incitement to irrationality (see e.g. Baron 2003; Greenspan 2003; Cave 2007), though not everyone holds this view (see e.g. Gorin 2014).

[6] See Stanley's discussion (2015: chapter 3) on how propaganda undermines public reason.

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