Persuasion and Propaganda

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One or two processes?

Persuasion, propaganda and rhetoric

Both in daily language and in the social sciences, terms like 'persuasion', 'propaganda' and 'rhetoric' are used interchangeably. They are considered, in one way or other, to be forms of communication the aim of which is to influence and change the mind of others with respect to the issue in question. Such forms of communication encompass manifold means ranging from linguistic ones, e.g. syntax and semantics, to argumentation, word order and phonetics, among others. These means also include body language, displays of images, symbols, insinuations and suggestions. They can strategically involve manipulation of messages and raising addressees' emotions, and may be accompanied by ceremonies and rituals. They may express direct and explicit meanings and, equally, they can play with implicitness, they may disguise meanings and leave the addressee in uncertainty, doubt or even facing moral dilemmas.

A casual inspection of social psychology and media studies textbooks shows that propaganda is usually referred to within the context of persuasion and is considered to be a subcategory of persuasion (Jowett and O'Donnell, 2006: 7). The notion for persuasion has often been 'rhetoric' (Burke, 1969) and, in turn, rhetoric has been defined in terms of 'persuasion' (Billig, 1996). Persuasion, Burke points out, 'ranges from the bluntest quest of advantage, as sales promotion or propaganda, through courtship, social etiquette, education and the sermon, to a "pure" form that delights in the process of appeal for itself alone, without ulterior purpose' (Burke, 1969: xiv). 'Pure' forms of persuasion, Burke maintains, are difficult to specify. According to him, an example of such pure forms could be participants' suggestions which they make in a dialogue accompanying their interactions when solving a puzzle.

If propaganda and persuasion share so many communication characteristics, and if definitions of both include references to intentional attempts to change the

addressees' perspective over some issues in question, we may ask: does it make sense to differentiate between these two forms of communication? Or are they indeed underlain by the same process to which researchers and practitioners choose to give, occasionally, different names?

Turning to history, there were a number of psychologists who studied propaganda during and after the First World War and during the Second World War (e.g. Lasswell, 1927; Bartlett, 1940; Bruner, 1941; Stouffer et al. 1949). Nevertheless, propaganda did not become part of mainstream social psychology when the discipline established itself during the Second World War. Social psychology, from its beginnings, defined itself largely as a part of psychology rather than of the social sciences (Moscovici and Marková, 2006). Since propaganda is commonly understood as dissemination to the general public of a doctrine or an ideology, whether religious or political, it implies that it has a sociological or political rather than a psychological meaning, because its impact is on crowds rather than on single individuals. In American and West European social psychological research, the word 'propaganda' obtained a negative connotation due to the propagation of the Nazi and Soviet ideologies. As a result, social psychologists largely stopped using the term and replaced it instead by 'persuasion'. However, the point of view that attributes to propaganda a negative meaning in the present western sense does not hold universally. As Li Liu (this volume) shows, analysing historical and social conditions in China, propaganda there is viewed in a positive way. And as Nascimento-Schulze (also in this volume) shows, propaganda and public education are mixed up together in Brazil and it is hard to distinguish between what is 'good' and what is 'bad'. Equally, in his textbook on social psychology in the United States, Myers (2005), who ponders on the sometimes diabolical and sometimes beneficial aspects of persuasion, finally concludes:

> Persuasion is neither inherently good nor bad. It is a message's purpose and content that elicits judgements of good or bad. The bad we call 'propaganda'. The good we call 'education'. Education is more factually based and less coercive than propaganda. Yet generally we call it 'education' when we believe it, 'propaganda' when we don't. (Myers, 2005: 247)

Propaganda and persuasion in and out of context

It is an established feature of general psychology that, in order to study phenomena pertaining to the mind and the brain, it tends to conceive of them in terms of individual faculties like memory, perception, cognition and language, and so on. This is underlined by the belief that such faculties can be captured more adequately in their 'pure' forms, that is, if they are separated from other faculties of the complex systems of mind or brain. Likewise, social psychology, in its effort to understand complex phenomena, attempts to study their individual aspects in a decontextualized manner despite the fact that, for example, attitudes are always attitudes towards something, or persuasion is an intention to change the mind of someone with respect to something. On the one hand, it is well recognized that individual aspects of global social phenomena are no more than researchers' constructs, i.e. particular ways of

constructing social phenomena, and that they correspond to researchers' specific perspectives. These constructs do not have lives of their own, but only within the networks of social phenomena of which they are part. On the other hand, chapters in social psychology textbooks have traditionally used in their titles 'attitudes', 'persuasion', 'influence processes', and so on, as if such constructs could be captured in a general sense and in a decontextualized manner.

Yet neither propaganda nor persuasion is an isolated phenomenon. If we first consider propaganda, an enormous body of literature in which propaganda plays the major role shows that it is not just a form of communication whose goal is to change people's minds. Rather, propaganda is part of the whole structure and process of institutions. Institutions have much broader aims than changing people's minds. As Moscovici (Moscovici and Marková, 2000) argues, institutions have their goals, and propaganda contributes to the achievement of such goals. For example, propaganda may help the institution to maintain the existing status quo, e.g. by prayers or ceremonies, or to establish a new order, a new ideology or a social representation. It would therefore make little sense to try and understand propaganda on its own, outside goals that the institution is trying to achieve.

Let us consider, as an example, a prototype of such broader aims by a specific institution in the early part of the 20th century. The Third Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in 1921 adopted various theses concerning the organization and structure of the international communist parties, and 'Propaganda and Agitation' became one of its main articles. The theses stated that propaganda must be of a revolutionary character; the principal tasks of communist propaganda were to include individual verbal propaganda, participation in the industrial and political labour movements, propaganda via the Party press and the distribution of literature. Every member of a legal or illegal Communist Party was to participate regularly in one or another of these forms of propaganda. But these particular features of propaganda make sense only within the framework of the Comintern.

If we turn to persuasion, here again it cannot be understood in isolation from the communication of which it forms a part. Although persuasion is not always the goal of communication, social influence, changing people's minds and intentionality (see below) are essential characteristics of any communication. For example, the media messages, psychotherapy, a friendly conversation, a heated debate, a doctor–patient discourse, and so on, all change people's mental states, opinions or representations, although the goals of such encounters are not necessarily to persuade the addressee.

Monological and dialogical communication

During and after the Second World War, the Hovlandian model of persuasion (see Jesuino, Nascimento-Schulze, Petty and Briñol, this volume) dominated the well-known Yale Communication Program. Subsequent insights gained from studies of propaganda by psychologists during the Second World War were transformed into micro-approaches that could be examined in laboratories using approaches that were considered to be a scientifically sound. The Hovlandian model later became embodied in social psychological theories of cognitive consistency, social judgement,

the resistance to persuasion and inoculation, through to more recent theories like the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion (ELM) and the theory of observational learning, among others (for details see Jowett and O'Donnell, 2006). In this way the study of persuasion, conceived as a flow of messages from the Ego to the Alter (or, using the terminology of these approaches, 'from the source to the recipient') has penetrated the main body of social psychology. We shall call the flow of information from the source to the recipient (or from the Ego to the Alter), a monological model. Let us emphasize, however, that we are talking here about a monological model of communication, i.e. about a model that is based on theoretical presuppositions of one-way flows of information. We are not talking about the reality or a possibility of monological communication as such.

Although this monological model of communication has dominated the field of social psychology, it has not been the only one. Since the late 1960s, persuasion has been studied as part of influence processes and of communication as a dialogical rather than a monological process. The dialogical approach to persuasion originates from the research on minority/majority interaction and influence (Moscovici, 1979). Epistemologically, according to this latter approach, influence is based on the inter-dependence between the Ego and the Alter, which mutually affect one another, and persuasion means monitoring the Ego–Alter interaction. Moscovici (in Moscovici and Marková, 2000) explains that, for him, the theory of innovation of minorities that he has developed is 'a deepening of the theory of communication'.

> Many of the psychologists I know separate the phenomenon of communication from the phenomenon of influence . . . I consider the distinction between these two phenomena as artificial. Every message, every linguistic emission is based on a persuasive intention . . . My theory is a theory of influence; but by the same token it is a theory of the communicative process that normally takes place between the partisans and the opponents of different points of view. (Moscovici and Marková, 2000: 276)

From what has been said so far, it is implied that although propaganda and persuasion are often used interchangeably, we can identify two underlying processes of communication: one which largely aims at a monologue and is more typical of propaganda; and the other which, in order to be effective, relies on a dialogue, and is more typical of persuasion. Each of these two processes rests on different conceptual presuppositions but these are not often discussed reflectively in social psychology.

In the remainder of this article I shall discuss these two forms of communication, one seeking its effectiveness in a monologue and the other aiming at a dialogue. Of course, both propaganda and persuasion involve different forms of communication and we cannot be rigid about naming a communication process as being either this or that. While such issues are generally well known, my purpose in this article is to give them a theoretical perspective. This could contribute to a better understanding of the broad range of phenomena to which social psychology refers sometimes as persuasion and sometimes as propaganda. With this proviso, the two forms of communication will be discussed in terms of three dimensions: the Ego–Alter interaction, the nature of conflict and the unconscious.

Propaganda

The Ego–Alter interaction

Propaganda, i.e. 'the systematic dissemination of doctrine, rumour or selected communication to propagate or promote a particular doctrine, view, practice, etc.' (Oxford English Dictionary), just like any form of communication, involves interaction between the Ego and the Alter. But since propaganda is a part of the ideological or educational programmes of institutions or organizations, and its nature is determined by their political, economic, religious or other interests, the Ego–Alter interaction has specific communicative features. Above all, it is a form of communication that is directed at masses and its aim is to influence them on some controversial or not yet established issues. To that extent, all multifaceted means, through which propaganda is displayed, have the same goal: to transform the heterogeneous thoughts of individuals into those of a homogeneous 'collective mind' of masses, and to lead those masses to a specific action. This particular goal determines the nature of the interaction between the Ego and the Alter. The propagandist(s) or educator(s) (the Ego) representing the institution, organization or movement, transmits the message to the recipient (the Alter). This form of communication has been given various names, ranging from the dissemination of knowledge and education on the one hand, to persuasion or propaganda on the other. In order to perform an effective monologue, propaganda either needs a strong Ego, i.e. a leader, or it must make the object of the message credible, and of course, it may combine both.

If we first consider the strong Ego, in political or religious life propaganda speaks through the leader. It can be therefore tied to the theory of leadership and, in particular, to a charismatic leader (Moscovici, 1988, 1993). The leader engages masses by her/his personality, by authority and rhetoric, transforming a world of reason into a world of imagination. The eras of Nazism and of Soviet communism both supply numerous examples in which collective aims have been transformed into exalting images. We are reminded here of utopian visions of the transition to communism during the Kruschev years, or the image of a technological superiority of the Soviet Union over the United States during the government of Kruschev's predecessors and successors.

In his theory of leadership Moscovici emphasizes three strategies of propaganda. The first one, which he calls a representational strategy, refers to the spatial arrangements creating the atmosphere for assemblies of large crowds, like cathedrals, big squares, open spaces or stadiums. Such spaces fashion the conditions for the second strategy: ceremonies that include displays of weaponry, of the physical and sporting fitness of various categories of citizens, and gatherings of the faithful. All this has prepared the stage for the leader and the dramatic use of strongly persuasive language.

Yet we may notice a paradoxical relationship between the charismatic Ego and the masses (Alter). In one way the Ego is trying to reduce the distance from the Alter by emphasizing the common fate and the common goal of the leader and the masses. For example, the politician may talk to a crowd of the unemployed stating: 'I too was unemployed' or 'I also have an experience of poverty'. This strategy encourages an

affective closeness between the Ego and the Alter, and turns masses into a homogeneous crowd identifying with the leader. Emulating and mirroring the leader's actions leads to the emotional fusion between the Ego and the Alter. At the same time, as Weber (1924/1947) pointed out, in order to maintain the position of the charismatic or the godlike leader, the Ego attempts to remain distant from the Alter by setting himself apart and by inspiring admiration and awe. It is his authority and confidence, and the cloud of mysticism and magnetism, that maintain the leader's influence. Thus we see the dialectic that involves the fusion between the Ego and the Alter on the one hand and the maintenance of distance between them on the other. We can speculate that this dialectic precludes the possibility of negotiation of alternative approaches or criticism of the leader by the Alter and, consequently, of propaganda that he or she delivers. Nevertheless, while propaganda aims at a one-way flow, the leader, to maintain his/her influence, must monitor the kind of effect he/she brings upon others. In that sense, although the Ego–Alter interdependence may be ignored for theoretical purposes and treated as a one-way flow, in reality, the interdependence between the Ego and the Alter is an essential feature of humanity that cannot be destroyed (see below).

But propaganda does not always rely upon a charismatic leader, and therefore the theory of leadership is not always applicable. The propagator or educator may simply represent the institution (the Ego) and all he or she does is to transmit the doctrine or the message. In this case, the institution must make the object of education or of propaganda credible in order to be acceptable to the masses. This may not always be an easy task. For example, during the Aids epidemic in the 1980s governments were delivering messages urging everybody to protect themselves from catching HIV/Aids. Yet some addressees, to whom this message was directed, became suspicious of the ulterior motive of institutions or the State. For example, the slogan: 'AIDS: you are as safe as you want to be' reminded the public that it is everybody's responsibility to protect themselves against the virus. The slogan was presented as part of the campaign in the United Kingdom called 'Don't die of ignorance', in the attempt to stop the spread of Aids during the 1980s when the epidemic was at its peak. However, some people viewed this slogan as part of an official propaganda that implicitly emphasized traditional societal and moral values, insinuating that homosexuals were responsible for the spread of Aids. Such discrimination against homosexuals, in Watney's (1990) view, was based on 'the typically individualistic approach of the work of the Health Education Authority, whose adverts shared a common by-line, 'AIDS: You're as safe as you want to be' (Watney, 1990: 171).

The nature of conflict

There would be hardly any reason to communicate if there were no tensions, asymmetries or conflicts between interacting parties. Both propaganda and persuasion involve conflict between the Ego and the Alter which they aim to reduce or eliminate. But it is the manner in which the conflict is resolved or transformed that separates the two forms of communication.

We have already argued that, in propaganda, the flow of information from the

Ego to the Alter aims at a monologue. The propagandist or the leader attempts to reduce the internal conflict between the Ego and the Alter and to merge them into one actor. The Ego–Alter conflict is diminished or annihilated and transformed into a conflict with 'the third party'. The propagandist will emphasize the advantages of the perspective that he or she advocates and will distance that perspective from others and unwanted positions of 'the third party' whose ideas and actions are harmful for the fused Ego–Alter. Whether we take western propaganda during the Second World War, Nazi propaganda or Soviet propaganda, all of them emphasize the superiority of their own common values, their own economic power, ethics and morality and reject the alternative of the third party.

The unconscious

The idea of fusing, merging or identifying with the other has been implicitly assumed in interaction since the beginnings of humankind. This idea that has been viewed as coming from the search for oneness, from the search for unity with nature, with the cosmos and with gods, has been part of many myths. For example, the search for oneness was already found in Etruscan culture in the 5th century before Christ (Anderson, 1990). It is also part of the mystic transformation in religions; it is rooted in emotions, activities and the primordial human experience of the world; in yet other forms it is also embodied in philosophies. We can view it as an extreme form of the Ego–Alter interaction, universalizing through the other in identification and merging. Merging with the significant Alter is realized through mass culture, music, dance and rhythm. It is propaganda that awakens such collective dreams of becoming one with the spirit or object of your admiration. This desire is promoted by representations, ceremonies and rhetoric which, as already pointed out, are strategies of propaganda. This primordial and unconscious search for belonging, since the 17th century, has become incorporated into theories of the unconscious mind (Whyte, 1960). At the beginning of the 20th century such theories have been more explicitly developed, and they have acquired different names in the history of psychology and social science. So we have the 'group mind' of McDougal, the 'collective unconscious' of Jung, the 'mental unity' of Le Bon; and one may add to these the 'super-ego' of Freud and the 'generalized other' of George Herbert Mead. The modern expression of merging is to be found not only in the search for identity, but also in processes of social compliance, mass culture, deindividuation and collective norms (Moscovici, 1993). Propaganda, by merging the Ego–Alter and transforming the conflict between the Ego and the Alter into the Ego–Alter versus the 'third party' leads the crowd to believe that oneness promotes their security. It makes heterogeneous and unique individuals succumb easily to the power that arises from being part of the crowd.

Persuasion

Ego–Alter relationships

According to the perspective of dialogicality, persuasion, in contrast to propaganda, is a feature of any communication. Let us explain. By dialogicality (Marková, 2003) I mean the capacity of the human mind (the Ego) to conceive, create and communicate about social realities in terms of others (the Alter), including other people, their ideas or symbols. We can say that the Ego and the Alter are in a dialogical interdependence and that this interdependence forms the existential or ontological relation in the sense that there can be no Ego without the Alter. However, to adopt the perspective that the Ego and the Alter are in an existential relationship means far more than that individuals talk to, or interact with, one another. By being in ontological relationship, the Ego and the Alter cannot exist independently as two elements, but they form an indissociable setup; they transform one another in and through communication and social thinking.

Social-psychological interdependence between the Ego and the Alter manifests itself in two opposite but complementary ways. On the one hand, the Ego and the Alter desire to belong to one another, to reach towards the other and to intersubjectively share experiences. This tendency has been documented not only as a primordial experience of humankind, as discussed above, but it has been well described in developmental psychology, for example, as a basic or ontological trust of the interdependence between baby and carer. It has also been conceptualized as a psychosocial feeling of primordial solidarity holding society together (Simmel, 1950), as well as being involved in studies of conformity, social norms and moral rules, among others. On the other hand, the Ego and the Alter have a desire to be mutually acknowledged as agents and to be recognized as agents. Here, again, social psychology has explored the search for social recognition in and through social influence studies. These two aspects of the Ego–Alter interaction manifest themselves, for example, as a dialogical opposition between conformity and innovation, or as a contradiction resulting from the Ego's desire for identification with the Alter while simultaneously confirming own agency. In and through these two complementary dialogical processes the Ego and the Alter influence and transform one another. Their mutual influence may be unintentional and can take place implicitly without awareness; alternatively, it can be intentional and explicit. In the latter case it is usually called persuasion.

But language is intentional in different ways and with at least triple meanings (Bühler, 1982). First, a person expresses what he/she has in mind, whether it is content, ideas, feelings, and so on. At the same time, the speaker addresses someone and attempts to direct the other's attention to him/herself as the speaker. And, finally, the speaker refers to certain objects or contents by name. Graumann (1990), building on Bühler's conception of intentionality, recognizes a triple intentionality of the speech act. First, the speaker has the intention to utter his/her thoughts to an addressee and this intention is not necessarily conscious. Second, the speaker has the intention to communicate with another. Finally, the speaker has the intention to refer to specific things or events. Yet the speech act necessarily involves other kinds of

intentionality. People intend to create history of a particular kind, but it may turn into something different from what they originally envisaged. Since every act of communication is intentional in its different meanings (rather than just a spread of messages), persuasion is by definition part of any communication. We can, nevertheless, distinguish between a weak form of persuasion with reference to Graumann's first and second meanings of intentionality, and the strong meaning of persuasion with reference to an explicit persuasive intention with reference to specific things or events. Nevertheless, since these different meanings of intentionality are present simultaneously in any act of communication, any rigid attempts to separate them could lead to a mechanistic reduction.

Just like other forms of dialogical communication, persuasion can involve different kinds of the Ego and the Alter which, in specific social environments, reveal their particularities. For example, persuasion can take place between individuals at an interpersonal level; between individuals and groups; between minorities and majorities; between the media and the audience; and so on. Moreover, persuasion also occurs within the mind of the Ego as an inner dialogue (see below); simultaneously, the Ego may be involved in an external dialogue with the Alter. The speaker persuades both through silences and verbalizations, such as rhetoric and authentic statements, as well as through deception and secrecy, and by expressing direct and indirect meanings. Persuasive communication can display diverse and even opposite ways of thinking which are suited to, and articulated in, different contexts. We may persuade by flattering, by creating nuances of meaning, we may appeal to a third party, and so on. In other words, like any form of communication, persuasion is heterogeneous. For great novelists and writers heterogeneous forms of persuasion are taken for granted; dialogue provides infinite resources for exploring the creative nature of conversation, dialogical cognition, emotions and, we can say, for exploring the human drama in its entirety. Consider the novel of that title by the 18th-century English novelist, Jane Austen. *Persuasion*, for Jane Austen, is a study in codes of communication which need to be deciphered. In the conversations and narratives she presents, arguments are subtle and the persuaded individual is trapped in a world that erects barriers to explicit meanings. He or she is condemned to suppressed speech, to indirect codes and 'must negotiate [a] way through equivocal signals and oblique formal rituals, all of which impede transmission' (Simons, 1997).

The nature of conflict

Like propaganda, persuasion is underlain by conflict between the Ego and the Alter and the aim of communication is to diminish or to solve the conflict. However, in contrast to propaganda where the Ego and the Alter solve the differences between them by fusing their mutual positions, to persuade means to convince the other party of one's own case and of the superiority of one's own idea or belief over that of the Alter. Fusing the own and the other's position would contradict the very purpose of the persuader; he or she desires to be acknowledged as an agent. Let us consider, for example, the case of people with an intellectual disability such as Down's syndrome (the Ego) and the general public (the Alter). If we look at the

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history of the last 50 years, we can observe two opposing tendencies in the attempts of people with Down's syndrome, and those who speak on their behalf, to change the attitudes of the general public. One tendency, which prevailed in the period during the 1960s up to the late 1980s, was based on 'normalization'. This meant improving the image of the competencies of the disabled and so reducing their apparent visibility as people with a mental handicap. It was thought that people with disabilities should conform to the norms of society, e.g. that they should be taught to 'dress like others', 'speak like others' and 'behave like others' (e.g. Wolfensberger, 1972, 1983, 1990). The tendency to fuse with the majority, to 'normalize' and pretend that the disability does not exist was later abandoned, however, and was considered as dehumanizing the individuals concerned. Instead, an alternative persuasive strategy was adopted and its goal was to change the general public's social representations of disability. This new strategy emphasized that people with disability are agents and that society must recognize them as such. This included, for example, changing the name of the disability and substituting the term 'mental handicap' with 'learning difficulty', and by changing the manner in which people with Down's syndrome were referred to. For instance, terms like 'low-grades', 'boys and girls', 'mentally retarded', and so on, are now considered degrading and have been eliminated (Jahoda, 1995). Instead, it has been argued that society must create conditions in which people with disabilities can express their capabilities and competencies more fully. This persuasive strategy takes the form of a struggle for social recognition. It uses a consistent, repetitive and rigid behavioural style that facilitates visibility of the disabled as agents. This strategy sharply contrasts to that of a monological communication in propaganda, where the leader or the institution is visible from the very beginning; indeed, visibility and credibility of the influential source contributes to the effect of propaganda. In the case of persuasion, visibility is to be gained. The struggle for social recognition necessarily takes place in and through mutual influence of the Ego and the Alter, argumentation and negotiation between them, rather than through control and censorship of information. More research into rhetoric in propaganda and in persuasion could reveal differences in style between these two forms of communication, e.g. in the reconstruction of meaning, the use of diplomacy and the presentation of their respective positions.

The unconscious

The dialogical perspective of a minority struggling for social recognition presupposes that the minority is in an interdependent relationship with its respective majority. In other words, a minority and a majority co-constitute and mutually influence one another. However, their influence is based on different kinds of processes; the influence of the majority leads to conformity while the influence of the minority is persuasion (Moscovici, 1980). The former manifests itself publicly; the individual succumbs to the majority point of view without necessarily changing his/her perspective privately. By contrast, the influence of minorities may not show itself publicly but could be a private matter, often latent or unconscious.

If we take a closer look at this phenomenon, we find that social psychological

experiments, studying the effect of persuasion by minorities, usually use the following paradigm. The experimenter lets respondents express their opinion about the subject matter in question individually; subsequently they are subjected to persuasive messages as a group; finally, they are retested individually. The retested individuals may or may not overtly show change in their attitudes, i.e. they may or may not manifest the effect of persuasion. Yet, Moscovici argues, even if the persuasive effect does not show up, it does not mean that there has been no effect at all. Latent, i.e. unconscious, effect, which is often ignored in social psychology, is equally important. Using subtle techniques, one can show the work of inner tension, conflict and unconscious change in opinions and attitudes. Moscovici refers to the latent effect as conversion:

> The conversion produced by a minority implies a real change of judgements of opinions, not just an individual's assuming in private a response he has given in public. This is why we are often unaware of the profound modification in our perceptions or our ideas from contact with deviants. (Moscovici, 1980: 217)

A number of ingenious laboratory studies, based on the concept of conversion, have shown the depth of changes in perception and judgement, and that these modifications can reveal themselves as responses to new stimuli over the course of time (e.g. Moscovici et al., 1969; Moscovici and Personnaz, 1980, 1991). These studies have shown that although no change in attitudes, perceptions or the content of responses were manifested in experiments directly, they were found indirectly in the apparently 'unrelated' experiments. This effect arguably results from conflict in the minds of respondents. As Moscovici (1993) explains, conversion is a suppressive process and it shows the transformation of a conscious conflict into an unconscious conflict. An individual suppresses his/her judgement through fear of being disapproved of by one's own group, which could lead to an external conflict between the Ego and the Alter. Instead, by suppressing the public conflict, the Ego develops an inner conflict, which can be resolved when the individual adopts, indirectly and without awareness, the solution that he/she previously suppressed.

Mikhail Bakhtin, whose dialogism (e.g. 1986, 1981) is conceptually also based on the interdependence of communicative partners and their mutual influence, interestingly avoided any references to the unconscious (see in particular Bakhtin, 1984). For him, references to the unconscious implied references to Freud's unconscious, which he interpreted as individualistic and mechanistic psychology. He was critical not only of unconscious in psychology but also of the psychologist's preoccupation with the analysis of a monological, i.e. a single and sole consciousness. He particularly expresses this view in his analysis of Dostoyevsky's novels, drawing attention to the fact that Dostoyevsky had no sympathy for psychology, and least of all for its 'physiological line, which reduced psychology to physiology' (Bakhtin, 1984: 61). Bakhtin quotes from Dostoyevsky: 'They call me a psychologist; this is not true. I am merely a realist in the higher sense that is, I portray all the depths of the human soul' (1984: 60). Bakhtin argued that consciousness cannot be explained psychologically, but dialogically. And this is, Bakhtin thought, what Dostoyevsky was doing through the 'dialogic intuition' that penetrates his literary characters. Through this analysis

of dialogic intuition Dostoyevsky moves his aesthetic visualization into the depth of consciousness 'but not into the depth of unconscious . . . Consciousness is much more terrifying than any unconscious complexes' (Bakhtin, 1984: 288). Instead of speaking about the unconscious, Bakhtin referred to inner speech, habits, memories and hidden and implicit aspects of communication. Dialogues, whether external or internal, are always open towards the past and the future, there is nothing finalized; to take part in dialogue requires accepting this openness in order to penetrate the deepest levels of consciousness.

The depth of consciousness or the unconscious?

In order to make sense of what seems to be a conceptual conflict between 'the unconscious' and 'the depth of consciousness' let us turn to Arne Naess (1953) who, in his studies of empirical semantics, preoccupied himself with the idea of the preciseness of meaning. In a simplified way we can interpret him as saying that two speakers may use the same term or the same sentence but differ with respect to the meaning they attach to the term; or in contrast, they may use a different term but share its underlying meaning. These similarities and differences can be revealed in and through communication by each speaker attempting to arrive at a precise interpretation. For example, the speakers may both agree with the claim that 'All people are equal'. However, through making more precise the meaning of the term 'equal' they may discover their underlying disagreement. For one 'equal' could mean 'equal in capacities to think' and for the other it might mean 'equal in their biological make-up', and they would, through further clarification, discover that their positions are incommensurable. In other words, from the original agreement they could arrive at a disagreement. In contrast, speakers could start from apparently diverse positions, where for one 'democracy means freedom' while for the other 'democracy means equal opportunities'. In discussing their disagreement they could arrive at underlying agreement: equal opportunities actually mean freedom for all.

I have shown in the previous section that Mikhail Bakhtin argued against the notion of the single consciousness and against the notion of the unconscious. We can even hypothesize that Bakhtin chose to analyse Dostoyevsky's novels in order to expose his own views of dialogicality. He had already rejected the idea of empathy, which implies merging of one consciousness with the other, in his 'Philosophy of the Act' (Bakhtin, 1993). In his analysis of Dostoyevsky, he exposes this idea even more strongly. Consciousness must be in interaction with another consciousness in order to achieve its proper existence: 'justification cannot be *self*-justification, recognition cannot be *self*-recognition. I receive my name from others, and it exists for others (self-nomination is imposture)' (Bakhtin, 1984: 287–8). Dostoyevsky was hostile to world views that see the final goal as a merging, a dissolution of consciousnesses into one consciousness and the removal of individuation: 'No Nirvana is possible for a single consciousness. A single consciousness is *contradiction in adjecto*' (Bakhtin, 1984: 288). Consciousness is only collective. One consciousness always stands in relation to one other. Even looking at oneself in the mirror is not a solo activity: 'I look at myself simultaneously with the eyes of myself and of the others, so we have here

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an intersection of different world views, an intersection of two consciousnesses. Human life is an open-ended dialogue' (1984: 293), in which a reified model of the world is being replaced by a dialogical one. Here we come to understand that for Bakhtin, as for Dostoyevsky, consciousness can become deeper but it does not fall into unconsciousness.

Using different terminology than Bakhtin's, and a different view of Freud's unconscious, and also referring to MacDougal, Le Bon and Durkheim, Moscovici states:

> 'All that is unconscious is collective and all that is collective is unconscious.' It is memory in which the unfamiliar is made familiar and which associates unconsciously what was consciously distinct . . . Language is powerful when it gives an unconscious past access to the present, when it invests today's ideas with the flesh of inherited meanings . . . memory endows representations and words with an affective tonality which is familiar to culture and religion alike . . . memory is not only a faculty of our conscious state, but also and much more of our unconscious states. (Moscovici, 1993: 74–5)

The unconscious is also part of common-sense knowledge and of historically and culturally established oppositional dichotomies, e.g. 'we' and 'they', 'moral' and 'immoral'. Such culturally established oppositions or communicative 'themata' (Moscovici and Vignaux, 1994) are brought out from unconscious thought only when conflicts in society bring them to the surface. Then they become consciously thematized and start generating new social representations. In this sense, the unconscious is something that, in and through tension and conflict, can be brought to awareness from the depth of consciousness. Although I am not saying that Bakhtin's dialogism and Moscovici's influence processes differ only in terminology, one cannot avoid noticing a considerable convergence of their underlying presuppositions with respect to the Ego–Alter interdependence as well as the collective nature of conscious and unconscious processes.

Some final observations

I have tried to show that propaganda and persuasion are underlined by two forms of communication, one aiming at a monologue, the other aiming at a dialogue. Although I have argued that propaganda aims at the former and persuasion at the latter form of communication, in practice, they often coexist, with one or the other prevailing at any one time. In order to understand propaganda or persuasion, we need to study them as part of the systems (e.g. institutions, organizations, communication) to which they belong, rather than treat them as decontextualized phenomena. Both propaganda and persuasion involve conscious and unconscious communicative processes yet social psychology shies away from the unconscious (or from the 'depth of consciousness'). Although theories of the unconscious have been emerging in European scholarship since the 17th century, it has been the pre-eminence of consciousness, as Whyte (1960) observed, and in particular the consciousness of the individual, that has taken a dominant position since the rise of Cartesian thought.

'The return of the unconscious' (Moscovici, 1993) at the beginning of the 20th century created disconcertion inside psychology. It hesitated on how to cope with a phenomenon that could not be easily subsumed within rational thought and the scientific ambitions of psychology. The return of the unconscious made it necessary to abolish the separation between normal and abnormal phenomena and between the individual and collective. Nevertheless, social psychology has found implicit and unconscious thought disturbing, and even today the majority of social psychology experiments still assume that the experimenter should deal with phenomena only at a conscious level. Our discipline presupposes that subjects are cognizant of their mental phenomena and that their responses, whether verbal or otherwise, are transparent and can be taken at face value. For example, the experimental research into persuasion, which is based on attitude change, presupposes that attitudes can be examined solely as conscious processes. In dialogical communication, however, latent and unconscious thought, inner dialogue and 'depth of consciousness' are presupposedly unavoidable aspects of communication, whether it is concerned with influence processes, persuasion or social representations. They are all established in and through cultural-historical processes and they determine the symbolic meanings of social communication in the present and future.

Throughout this paper I have been concerned with two opposing but complementary processes, one aimed at belonging to the Alter, and the other at the manifestation of agency. They have appeared in various guises. They have been discussed as the tendency to identify with the propagator or the leader in propaganda and as the tendency towards social recognition in persuasion. However, in another form we have encountered them, on the one hand, in attempts to conform to social norms in the struggle of the disabled to be accepted by society and, on the other, as persuading society to accept difference. They also appear as different processes of influence by minorities and majorities. Thus it appears that the two processes of communication, the one aiming at a monologue and the other aiming at a dialogue, are not only related to propaganda and persuasion but also to more basic, historically and culturally embedded themata, from which various social psychological processes are generated.

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