presented with great clarity and lively and masterful prose. It is an important book, both for the light it sheds on this rich philosophical period and for the significance the school's ideas have for continuing debates today. I could not recommend it more highly.

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Stanley, Jason. *How Propaganda Works.*
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015. Pp. 376. $29.95 (cloth); $19.95 (paper).

How Propaganda Works is an ambitious book that covers a lot of ground, invoking arguments and concepts from a wide variety of political theorists, philosophers of language, epistemologists, sociologists, psychologists, and of course ethicists. It's written for a general audience, but the sheer range of the book makes it difficult for readers to be familiar and comfortable with all the various theoretical resources Jason Stanley draws on. This doubles as one of its greatest virtues, independently of the success of the arguments: the book is dense with summaries of research from a wide variety of fields put into conversation in ways that highlight the contributions each can make to central questions in political philosophy. Stanley's discussion focuses exclusively on the problem propaganda poses for liberal democracies, namely, "whether the most central expression of its value, liberty (realized as the freedom of speech), makes liberal democracy fundamentally unstable" (29). The book doesn't ultimately answer this question, except to say that the combination of material inequality and free speech is likely unstable.

The master argument of the book is that propaganda threatens liberal democracies by undermining *reasonableness*: their characteristic commitment that policies must be justifiable to every member of the society on grounds they cannot reasonably reject. It does this by either obscuring the nature of a policy (thus undermining rational deliberation) or eroding citizens' empathy for—and thus the respect necessary to take oneself to be rationally accountable to—a targeted group, all in the name of promoting reasonableness. Propaganda succeeds when citizens do not detect these effects, because they are committed to ideologies that deprive them of evidence of the erosion of reasonableness, often by undermining the testimony and epistemic position of those who are suffering the exclusion. As liberal democracies lose their commitment to reasonableness, they grow unstable and fall prey to demagoguery. Stanley describes the book as an extended argument against material inequality, since (he argues in chap. 6) undeserved inequality in material holdings predictably gives rise to the democratically problematic ideologies that make propaganda effective.

Importantly, Stanley is not working with the ordinary concept of propaganda; he denies that it in general need be insincere or false and takes coded language and terms like 'welfare', 'inner-city', and 'fiscal cliff' as central cases. For Stanley the signature feature of propaganda is that it employs "intentionally or unintentionally,

flawed ideologies to cut off rational deliberation and discussion" (53). He gives two structurally distinct and jointly exhaustive characterizations of propaganda:

> *Supporting Propaganda*: A contribution to public discourse that is presented as an embodiment of certain ideals, yet is of a kind that tends to increase the realization of those very ideals by either emotional or non-rational means.

> *Undermining Propaganda*: A contribution to public discourse that is presented as an embodiment of certain ideals, yet is of a kind that tends to erode those very ideals. (73)

While it is sometimes necessary for propaganda to be used in service of worthy ideals, messages, or goals (a project Stanley dubs 'civic rhetoric'), Stanley focuses on undermining propaganda that tends to erode a worthy ideal (which he calls 'undermining demagoguery') as the most insidious subtype.

In a liberal democracy, we can expect demagogic propaganda primarily to appeal to and undermine the "normative ideals governing public political speech" (81), specifically impartiality of public discourse. Erosion of this ideal is particularly problematic for a liberal democracy, since impartiality is crucial to the legitimacy of the laws (88). Stanley notes that his account is consistent with a variety of interpretations of the ideal but focuses on *reasonableness*, requiring that all citizens participate in the formation of the laws, lawmakers take into account the reasonable perspectives of all citizens, and lawmakers have empathy for the situations of those subject to the laws (101). Hence, the paradigm cases of propaganda in a liberal democracy will appear to legitimately contribute to the rational resolution of a debate but "have as part of their communicative content that *a group in society is not worthy of our respect*" (127) and "represent it to be reasonable not to take certain perspectives into account" (108).

Code words are one of the central types of propaganda Stanley discusses in depth, although he notes that it may also take the form of implicit (and illicit) quantifier domain restriction to coerce an illiberally narrow reinterpretation of cherished ideals (161–65). On his picture, while the at-issue content of code words contributes to debate in a reasonable way, the not-at-issue content imposes epistemic and evaluative preference orderings that undermine respect for some targeted group. This occurs in every context of utterance, even if the at-issue content of a propagandistic assertion is rejected (137, 139). The at-issue content is what it contributes to the propositional content an assertion proposes to add to the common ground, while the not-at-issue content is typically accommodated by being added directly to the common ground. Although many take presuppositions to be one kind of not-at-issue content, Stanley rejects this as a model for code words since presuppositions can be 'filtered' by embeddings under conditionals and belief reports. He instead takes epistemic 'must' as a paradigm: an assertive utterance of "it must be raining" asserts the at-issue content that it is raining and conveys the not-at-issue content that the agent did not witness the event herself (137). This latter content, that the speaker is only inferring that it is raining, is accepted and added to the common ground even if the speaker's assertion is rejected, and while

one can deny that it is raining by replying "that's false," it is more difficult to resist accommodating the not-at-issue content.

Stanley glosses the term 'welfare' as having the not-at-issue content that *blacks are lazy*, imposing an epistemic ordering on which possible worlds in which blacks are lazy are more likely than those in which they are industrious and a preference ordering ranking worlds in which one does not associate with them as better than those in which one does (144). To substantiate the claim that using code words like 'super-predator' and 'welfare' can affect hearers' evaluations of a targeted group in a way that undermines reasonableness, Stanley appeals to Tali Mendelberg's research in *The Race Card* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). She ran a series of studies on the relationship between racial resentment and racial appeals, finding that when prompted with coded language, high racial resentment scores were strongly predictive of support for the policy, but this effect disappeared if the appeal in the prompt was explicitly racial.

While Mendelberg's data support some of Stanley's worries about the effects of code words on public discourse, they also highlight a puzzling inversion of causal structures in Stanley's argument. He invokes Mendelberg's work to explain how code words can directly decrease empathy for a targeted group, but (as he acknowledges in chap. 4 n. 31) she only found that coded language increased racially biased policy preferences among groups who antecedently scored highly in a racial resentment test; she did not observe similar priming effects among those with moderate or low scores. The priming effects are only documented as activating an already held racial resentment, not introducing new ones. This provides no evidence that code words pose a special stability problem for democracies that start with a genuinely thoroughgoing commitment to liberal ideals, where there is no resentment to activate. We can instead understand Stanley's project as an analysis of how propaganda works to undermine liberal ideals in states which are nominally democratic but which are far from just. But it seems that the problem posed by propaganda for societies like these is importantly distinct from the stability problem. Even in the core cases (e.g., appeals in the antebellum United States to freedom and equality to justify policies that denied both to African Americans), it's not that we began with a better approximation of liberal ideals, which suffered erosion through propaganda; we began with illiberal ideals.

It's not obvious that the appeals involve an ideal being used against itself, either. Plausibly the ideal of freedom used to justify persistent slavery was a strategically underspecified ideal with implicitly restricted scope; freedom for white males. Interpretations with varying scope restrictions seem to be distinct ideals, in the way that interpretations with varying implicit metrics are distinct. When someone appeals to equality (of treatment) to justify a tax policy that will erode equality (of resources), we can say that the ideal of equality is being appealed to in an undermining way, but only if we're speaking loosely. It doesn't seem that there is a single unitary ideal being both appealed to and undermined in such cases. A flawed ideology might prevent agents from seeing that their cherished ideal, restricted-scope freedom, has precious little to recommend it against a competing, unrestricted ideal of freedom. But the propaganda here functions to disguise persistent illiberal goals and ideals in order to escape notice, and resist replacement with more liberal reinterpretation of the ideals, rather than to introduce

commitments to destabilizing ideals. Similarly, although Stanley at times casts the role of propaganda as eroding empathy for groups, this inverts the problem facing nonideal democracies. It takes work to build up empathy for other groups; all it takes for citizens to fail to include another group's perspective among the reasonable is for them to lack a positive reason and motivation to treat the group as "one of us." The more pressing question for nonideal political philosophy would seem to be how to motivate empathy for underprivileged groups necessary to adequately expand the scope of the reasonable.

Stanley is not blind to this; his discussion of the need for civic rhetoric (111–17) notes the United States' historically illiberal notion of whose perspectives were relevant to political deliberation and the accompanying narrow interpretations of the scope of ideals like equality. Nevertheless, he follows this with a discussion strongly suggesting that he takes the contemporary effect of demagogic propaganda to be a new narrowing, rather than merely an attempt to retain the old narrow interpretation of political ideals: "In many cases of undermining propaganda, the attempt of the contribution will be to make it the case, by the very act of making the contribution, that the political ideal should be *reinterpreted* to be consistent with the desired goal. . . . The characterization I have given explains why propaganda of the indirect sort is often in the service of an attempt to alter the meaning of a political ideal. That is because the *original* meaning of the political ideal is rationally inconsistent with the goal it is being invoked to motivate" (71; emphasis mine). If this is how propaganda works, it poses a serious stability problem. But if (as I am suggesting) it primarily functions to disguise preexisting commitments to illiberal ideals, (*a*) it poses no stability problem for democracies without preexisting illiberal commitments, and (*b*) it is at most a secondary problem for those that do. It is an impediment to reform, a symptom, rather than a contributing cause, of inadequate reasonableness.

Setting this concern aside, I'm quite sympathetic to Stanley's analysis of code words as being similar to slurs in that they convey rich associated content that is active in the context of utterance, and I agree with his observation that in fact many words have this feature. Often, especially for nonslurring terms, this sort of associated content is cancelable: speakers can felicitously avoid conveying it by following their use of the term with an explicit "but I don't mean that . . . ," or it is possible for there to be some specialized contexts in which the term is used without conveying the associated content. However, Stanley contends that for code words, "mere use of the expression is enough to have the effect of eroding reasonableness. So the effect on reasonableness occurs just by virtue of using the expression, in whatever linguistic context" (130). It is uncancelable, communicated always, in any context of use: "not only politics, but also everyday discourse involve apparently innocent words that have the feature of slurs, namely, that whenever the words occur in a sentence, they convey the problematic content. The word 'welfare', in the American context, is not on any list of prohibited words. Yet the word 'welfare' always conveys a problematic social meaning, whenever it is used" (151–52).

He attributes the efficacy of code words largely to the impossibility of canceling the problematic meanings and leverages this toward explaining why the oppressed would accept the ideology of the privileged. Since the problematic

content cannot be insulated or blocked, "merely engaging in debate requires accepting certain claims about their own inferiority. Members of subordinate groups may not believe the not-at-issue content, but to communicate with the chosen words they must act like they believe it" (162). This strong noncancelability is not consistent with the apparent behavior of words like 'welfare'. When the term is used in counterstereotypical ways—perhaps in recounting the astounding work ethic of a black single mother who relied on welfare to make ends meet while she raised her children out of poverty, as part of a political speech to extend and strengthen public welfare programs—it does not seem to convey that blacks are lazy. Nor do uses of code words display racialized priming effects when paired with counterstereotypical images or contents (for an extended discussion of this point, see Jennifer Saul, "Dogwhistles, Political Manipulation, and the Philosophy of Language" [unpublished manuscript, University of Sheffield, 2015]).

Happily, strong noncancelability can be abandoned without severe consequences for Stanley's overall picture, if replaced with the weaker claim that the problematic social meaning is raised to salience on any use but can be insulated from having its typical effects if the context is set up carefully enough. The problematic social meaning is still recoverable, made available by the use of the word; this fact is central to strategic uses of slurs in social critique (e.g., in the utterance "I am no one's nigger"). The weaker claim does not entail that engaging in debate via code words coerces speakers to accept problematic social meanings, but that's no great loss. Stanley offers a collection of independent arguments in the final chapters that appeal to social power dynamics, rather than semantics, that yield a more compelling explanation of the oppressed's acceptance of privileged ideology.

Stanley contends that in the presence of significant material inequality, privileged groups develop self-justifying ideologies in the form of beliefs that the inequalities are just, reflecting the greater social value of the well-off and the inferiority of the less well-off. An ideology in this sense is a social 'script' governing one's normative and practical expectations (200); ideological beliefs are resistant to rational revision and difficult to abandon because they are constitutive of one's social identity. Beliefs of this kind are 'epistemically disabling', leading one to discount or be insensitive to counterevidence, and are democratically problematic when they undermine sensitivity to political injustices (182). False beliefs in the greater merit of the well-off are democratically problematic flawed ideologies, since they appear to justify counting the complaints of the oppressed as unreasonable and lead agents to dismiss testimony about the injustice of the distributions from those who are not well-off.

Oppressed groups accept the ideology of the privileged group because the material inequalities disproportionately deprive them of epistemic power, in part by raising the stakes of being wrong with respect to political propositions (and thus making it more difficult for the oppressed to know the propositions). The ultimate consequence is that "negatively privileged groups face significant additional disadvantages in the purely epistemic part of the democratic political process. In conditions of injustice, joint deliberation about how to distribute the goods of society rarely takes place on an equal rational footing between all participants" (262). Many of the suggestions in these last chapters raise interesting questions about the epistemic problems of material inequalities for democracy, which will hopefully be taken up in future discussions.

Stanley at several points describes his book as providing "an argument for equality by showing that one central cause of effective propaganda is inequalities, both material and political" (180). Much in these later chapters militates against significant material inequalities, but it seems that propaganda is ultimately a freely spinning wheel: once the ideological conviction that some group's perspective need not be taken into account has taken hold, the stability of the democracy is threatened—and the ideal of reasonableness undermined—whether or not anyone uses code words or appeals to strategically underspecified ideals. If ideologies that illegitimately constrict the domain of reasonableness are already widely endorsed, demagogues need not disguise unreasonable policies as if they were fully legitimate: the polity has already abandoned their commitment to public reason. If Stanley's argument that material inequality leads to the propagation of democratically problematic ideology holds, then he has given a much more direct argument against inequality than he presents himself as having given; the ideology is immediately problematic. Of course this does not imply that propaganda is democratically unproblematic. It tends to exacerbate underlying unreasonableness and generate an illusion of progress that impedes the realization of genuinely liberal ideals. But the reason to avoid significant material inequalities is not, ultimately, that they render propaganda effective; it is that they threaten democratic stability by leading the citizens to embrace illiberal ideals.

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Star, Daniel. *Knowing Better: Virtue, Deliberation, and Normative Ethics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. xvii+147. $60.00 (cloth).

Our virtuous heroes need not be moral philosophers. I may, for instance, admire a mariner who quit his job to spend his days pulling refugees out of the Mediterranean even though he never thought through highly sophisticated ethical theories, as I do for a living. But how do the virtuous master ethical challenges without sophisticated reflection on the right ethical theory, given that such reflection potentially reveals normative reasons for action and urges us to take on new commitments?

This puzzle is the starting point of Daniel Star's insightful inquiry into the nature of reasons and virtue, as well as into knowledge's role in acting well. Star aims to bridge the abyss between the ordinary deliberation of the virtuous and the highly sophisticated ethical theories that are relentlessly fine-tuned by philosophers in the Ivory Tower. In a refreshingly broad-minded manner, he highlights how normative ethics, metaethics, moral psychology, and epistemology are intertwined. Thereby, he reveals that philosophy is in dire need of a unifying story about the role(s) that normative reasons play in all these domains. Even though its significance might have been reinforced by evaluating more rivals to Star's view, this thought-provoking book deserves to be widely noticed by philosophers, and it is to be hoped that it will do philosophy a great service by contributing to a better integration of various fields of research.