

Emmalon Davis:

Procreative Justice Reconceived:

*Undermining Propaganda
& Averting the Moral Gaze*



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Davis specializes in ethics, social and political philosophy, and epistemology, especially where these areas intersect with philosophy of race and feminist philosophy.

5:30 pm

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A two part critical analysis of Tommie Shelby's account of procreative responsibility in his 2016 book, *Dark Ghettos*. First, using Jason Stanley's (2015) notion of undermining propaganda, I articulate two ways in which undermining propaganda, a rhetorical strategy employed by Shelby, risks undermining itself. As I show, the ideals of public reason (namely, reasonableness, rationality, and impartiality) are insufficient to guard against the risks inherent in employing the strategy. I argue that public reason must be guided by a practice of descriptive and conceptual accountability. This practice precedes deliberation about responses to social problems; it requires that descriptions and conceptual framings of the problems themselves be informed by and acceptable to those whose experiences are centrally deliberated upon. Second, I argue that moral evaluation of the oppressed is neither politically nor ethically neutral. I argue that in the absence of descriptive and conceptual accountability, the "moral gaze" of the philosopher is more likely to be a source of than a solution to oppression. I apply these observations to Shelby's account and offer tools for reconceiving procreative justice for the oppressed.