Introduction

The Mythology of Aidōs

> I would die of shame to face the men of Troy and the Trojan women … if I would shirk from battle now, a coward.
>
> – Hector, *Iliad*, Book VI

> A death of shame! Ah woe on woe! A treacherous hand, a cleaving Blow.
>
> – Chorus, *Agamamenon*

> *Aidōs* … was hallowed in tradition as a necessary mark of civilized life.
>
> – Anthony Long

"You'll hang your head in shame [*aidōs*] – every day of your life – if the Argives strip my armor here at the anchored ships where I have gone down fighting. Hold on, full force – spur all our men to battle!" So says king of Lycia, Zeus's son Sarpedon, on his deathbed to motivate his comrade Glaucus to keep fighting in the name of Troy.[1] The cry of *Aidōs*! *Aidōs*! appears and reappears in the *Iliad* to prompt Homer's armies on to the battlefield. Its message is clear: Be courageous, do what you must to protect the honor of yourself, your family, your city, and your manhood. Spurred by the threat of shame to put aside fear, Homer's men are commanded to do what is agreed-upon to be right, and consider the disgrace that would come to one's city, wife, children, and reputation were they to lose this war. Homer's heroes soldier on – often to death and self-destruction.[2] Even in the face of bodily harm, the heroes and their families take comfort in knowing that they have fought honorably to preserve their city

[1] Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), Book XVI, lines 588–591.
[2] Douglas L. Cairns, *Aidōs: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 68.

and their family's reputation. *Aidōs* linked Homer's men and women to each other, the city, and divine forces beyond themselves.

The ancient Greek emotion of *aidōs* – translated as shame, although generally understood to encompass more emotions than the modern English term – clarifies the individual's sense of him or herself and what he or she must do in relation to others. It connotes a sense of obligation – a sense that I cannot live with who I am unless I act in a particular way. *Aidōs* is therefore an ethical code of conduct that relates the individual to others, an emotion that grounds one's identity and links correct action to it, and a prescription that instructs people about the contextual elements of that action, specifically how they should act with respect to the particularities of identity and place.[3] *Aidōs* makes different demands in the city than on the battlefield. The consistency across these places derives from who the subject is. This "agency" of the *aidōs*-heeding subject is both enabled and constrained by its demands, but *aidōs* is generally theorized as an inhibitory brake: "*Aidōs* … involves a check of some kind; it modifies the conduct of those affected."[4] *Aidōs* is universal in the sense that all of Homer's characters have the capacity to feel it, but its directions and obligations vary based upon the social location and standing of the particular actor. That is, *aidōs* motivates differently depending on one's city, gender, social class, family of origin. This is part of its appeal, as it serves the work of providing social order without requiring everyone to act in the same way. In the gloss of recent work on the concept, *aidōs* operates as an ethical emotion that both grounds one's particular identity and allows one to be true to him or herself as understood through difference (from others) and deference to the gods and forces beyond the self.[5] Whereas in the modern and contemporary landscape people often think of escaping social identities in order to be true to real, authentic selves, the Homeric world has no conception of the "authentic" self beyond one's particular station and the obligations that come with it.

Homer's people, by and large, appear to understand what is required by the social codes of their time, and draw strength from respecting these codes and their broader cultural authority. This does not mean that Homer's characters implement the demands of *aidōs* automatically. They agonize and weigh

[3] Ibid., 48.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Cairns, *Aidōs*. My use of "difference and deference" as essential to the regulative work of *aidōs* that many political theorists, philosophers, lawmakers, and ordinary citizens long for is not the same conjunction of "difference and deference" located in Jacques Derrida's concept of *différance*. I am using the ordinary meanings of the terms: difference as relational segmentation and differentiation (which is consistent with Derrida's use) and deference as reverence and obeisance to some higher force, which may be mortal or immortal in character. (Derrida's use of deference refers to the deferring – as in delaying – of linguistic meaning.) See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

outcomes before they act, sometimes choosing to resist *aidōs*. And even when Homer's characters are negatively affected by *aidōs* – for example, when potential disgrace prevents Odysseus, traveling as a beggar, from asking for help, its power remains strong as an emotional experience and threat with which the subject must reckon.[6] That is, Homer's characters understand *aidōs* to be "disadvantageous on certain occasions" and to be overcome in particular situations, yet they nonetheless remain aware of its requirements.[7] In spite of the agony and equivocation that respect for *aidōs* involves and the occasional refusal of its dictates, the power and consistent presence of *aidōs* in Homer's world remains intact. In the *Iliad*, when "Agamemnon urges Diomedes to ignore any feelings of *aidōs* which may lead him to consider status before merit in 'choosing an accomplice,' " the decision to overcome *aidōs* confirms its force.[8] To be shameless is to reject the code of *aidōs* on its face. To decide to be unashamed in a particular moment because other factors outweigh the value of *aidōs* still acknowledges its legitimacy.

The people in Homer's world appear never to have grappled with the problem or threat of widespread shamelessness. By way of contrast, lamentations about the death of shame, calls for "more shame" or a "return to shame," typologies of "good" and "bad" shame that will resolve our problems, shaming punishments and debates about their effectiveness, and so on mark the modern and late-modern eras. These cries about the death and decline of shame and how it might be revitalized appear in popular magazines as well as in political theory, moral philosophy, and the discourse of criminal justice. Each reflects an often well-intentioned effort to shame the polity back into a just moral and political order by identifying both individual practices and collective attitudes that have prioritized the self against the public good. In his work on the moral complexity of *aidōs*, Bernard Williams has argued that the ancient conception of shame is not as far gone as we imagine. His point, therefore, is not that we ought to *revive* something we have *lost*, but rather see how something like *aidōs* still operates today.[9] But much of the Western tradition of political theory and philosophy, extending into the contemporary landscape, has explicitly and implicitly wrung its hands over the putative fact that "shame is dead."

Political theorists have worried that the democratic promise of self-determination and popular sovereignty has disregarded an ancient ethic of shame as a brake against individuals rewriting social codes in keeping with their particular desires or self-expression. Many look with nostalgia for the civilizing morals of the ancients, most specifically the virtue of shame.[10]

[6] Cairns, *Aidōs*, 48.
[7] Ibid., 48–49.
[8] Ibid., 49.
[9] Williams, *Shame and Necessity*, 7.
[10] Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Democracy on Trial* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Arlene W. Saxonhouse, *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

"I readily concede that shame has few defenders as we near the end of the twentieth century in the West," begins one political theorist's account that asks readers to recall the insights (of Tocqueville and Arendt) that "democracy is about not only constitutions, rules, public accountability, and deliberation but also everyday life, habits, and dispositions," and instructs us "to think about shame and shamelessness" as we confront contemporary democratic crises.[11] The refrain is similar in popular media where pundits and public intellectuals lament the death of shame and catalogue the myriad ways in which shame has died and needs resurrection. The refrain goes something like the following: There's is too much personal information in the public square; people are rude and uncivil; no one respects personal space; everybody is expected to share their own personal information; people and corporations are mean-spirited.[12] These lamentations indict both moral and spatial confusion.

Philosophers have also worried about spatial confusion and its moral implications. One account offers the media portrayal of the Lewinsky scandal of the Clinton presidency as evidence that we need the brakes of shame and restraint – "selective reticence" – to check the culture of public confession.[13] The media, in this account, disrespectfully forced confessions from the president of the United States. Another philosopher fears that the postwar Western conception of "self-fulfillment" and "authenticity" is in danger of drifting too far and must be constrained and recalibrated.[14] In each case, the shameless subject is figured as an *invader* who indecorously and uncivilly bombards unsuspecting citizens, (who would otherwise either mind their own business or pursue a legitimate common good), with highly personalized confessions and testimonies of "private" or otherwise "nonpolitical" ideas and activity. Liberals, conservatives, republicans, and communitarians alike have constituted a chorus of "civilitarianism" as they meld together their laments about the death of shame and civility, the decline of the public/private distinction, the loss of privacy, the preponderance of ethically outrageous behavior, and the general rise of selfish individualism and self-fulfillment against a lost tradition of respect for authority, borders, boundaries, humility, and shame.[15] Anxieties of contamination and loss abound.

[11] Elshtain, *Democracy on Trial*, 55.
[12] Christopher Hitchens, "The Death of Shame," *Vanity Fair* (March 1996) 68–72; Mark Shields, "Does Wall Street Know No Shame?," 2009, http://www.creators.com/opinion/mark-shields/-does-wall-street-know-no-shame.html; "Shields, Brooks on Gates' Legacy, Gingrich Campaign 'Meltdown,' Weiner Fallout, PBS NewsHour, June 10, 2011." http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/politics/jan-june11/sandb_06-10.html.
[13] Thomas Nagel, "Concealment and Exposure," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 27, no. 1 (1998): 3–30.
[14] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
[15] Randall Kennedy, "State of the Debate: The Case against 'Civility'," *The American Prospect* 9, no. 41 (1998), http://prospect.org/article/state-debate-case-against-civility.

The targets of these late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century jeremiads?[16] Feminism, liberalism, identity politics, multiculturalism, gay liberation, and the "therapeutic turn" toward a culture of self-esteem. Although the birth of social media amplifies concerns about the death of shame and the rise of a culture of shamelessness, these concerns predate its arrival. As I will go on to show, earlier lamentations involve similar concerns about ideologies, movements, and the actors attached to them charting their own way against a receding status quo.

This chorus of nostalgic complaints has emerged alongside a rise in shaming punishments that are motivated by similar anxieties. These new, "alternative," and creative forms of punishment force criminals to publicly announce their crime and their shame. A Texas judge, who has since become a Congressman, became nationally known in the 1990s for his public punishments, such as requiring shoplifters to carry signs and asking abusive men to apologize in front of their partners on the courthouse steps while television cameras broadcast their apologies. He explained his rationale as follows: "The people I see have too good of self-esteem. I want them to feel guilty about what they've done."[17] Shaming punishments are highly specific to the individual and the act: "I have been convicted twice for shoplifting at J.C. Penney. I am truly sorry for what I did" was on the placard a North Carolina judge required of a twenty-one-year-old woman who pled guilty to stealing a $38 pair of jeans.[18] All of this has been part of a broader cultural trend in crime and punishment that turns on narratives of personal responsibility that romanticize bad feelings like shame – both for their punitive and for their potentially reintegrative power.[19] The punishments and their popularity have drawn scrutiny from legal scholars, but nonetheless persist today. One Ohio judge recently sentenced a man who harassed his neighbors and their children with disabilities to hold a sign on the corner of their neighborhood. The sign read, "I AM A BULLY I PICK ON CHILDREN THAT ARE DISABLED AND I AM INTOLERANT OF THOSE THAT ARE DIFFERENT FROM MYSELF MY ACTIONS DO

[16] The Lament fits squarely in the jeremiad tradition so keenly analyzed by Sacvan Berkovitch, David Gutterman, and George Shulman. Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); David S. Gutterman, *Prophetic Politics: Christian Social Movements and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); George Shulman, *American Prophecy: Race and Redemption in American Political Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

[17] Kate Shatzkin, "Judges Hope Public Humiliation Succeeds Where Jail Fails," *Toronto Star*, April 30, 1998: D9.

[18] Cory Reiss, "Shoplifter Must Sign Her Regrets," *Wilmington Morning Star*, Saturday, October 30, 1999: B1.

[19] This is not to say that shame's relationship to punishment is new, rather that there has been a resurgence of preoccupation with shaming punishments in the past twenty years. Martha Nussbaum notes that shame has been a part of punishment throughout history because it is a way of measuring an individual against a norm. Martha Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 174.

NOT REFLECT AN APPRECIATION OF THE DIVERSE SOUTH EUCLID NEIGHBORHOOD THAT I LIVE IN."[20] The idea behind shaming punishments is that shame does not denigrate but "*requires* self-regard as its essential backdrop."[21] That is to say, the defense of shaming punishments – by legal scholars, judges, and legislators – turns on the idea that the experience of shame is not an affront to dignity, but essential to it. Self-respect in this view requires that one has the capacity to feel ashamed when one has failed to live up to some necessary and agreed-upon social standard. If one does not feel appropriately ashamed of unethical behavior (bullying or stealing) or "immoral" nonnormative "sexual" behavior (public displays of gay liberation, gender nonconformism, nonmonogamy), one is *asking* to be humiliated and shamed.[22] In this account, the shameless subject always "fired the first shot" and therefore *deserves* – even invites – whatever public humiliation she or he receives. The state or the shaming party within civil society can behave in ways that are as unchecked, immoderate, and "shameless" as they wish.

Thus even as most political theorists, philosophers, and legal scholars of various orientations have rejected (or would reject) shaming punishments per se and the more draconian variants of the politics of shame, they nonetheless continue to theorize felicitous connections among shame, self-respect, and respect for others.[23] These works defend the ethical character of certain forms of shame and shaming, argue that shame is a suitable emotion to cultivate in a democracy, and hold some faith that shaming might have a progressive quality to it by which the politically weak may shame the strong.[24] Not all of these

[20] "Ohio Man Ordered to Hold Sign Saying He Is a Bully," *USATODAY*, accessed January 25, 2015, http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/04/12/ohio-bully-sign/7635449/.

[21] Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity*, 184. Emphasis added.

[22] Jean Bethke Elshtain's defense of shame supports this point: "When one's intimate life is put on display on television or the streets or in other public spaces, *one not only invites but actively seeks the exploitation of one's body* to a variety of ends not fully under one's control. For one has then withdrawn the body's intimacy from interpersonal relations and exposed it to an unknown audience. Thus one may become an occasion for scandal or abuse or *even violence toward others* through one's relentless self-exposure." Elshtain, *Democracy on Trial*, 55. Emphasis added.

[23] In addition to works already mentioned, see Jennifer C. Manion, "The Moral Relevance of Shame," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2002): 73–90; Jennifer C. Manion, "Girls Blush, Sometimes: Gender, Moral Agency, and the Problem of Shame," *Hypatia* 18, no. 3 (August 1, 2003): 21–41; Gabriele Taylor, *Pride, Shame, and Guilt: Emotions of Self-Assessment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Christopher J. Lebron, *The Color of Our Shame: Race and Justice in Our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Farid Abdel-Nour, "National Responsibility," *Political Theory* 31, no. 5 (October 1, 2003): 693–719; Christina H. Tarnopolsky, *Prudes, Perverts, and Tyrants: Plato's Gorgias and the Politics of Shame* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Jennifer Jacquet, *Is Shame Necessary?: New Uses for an Old Tool* (New York: Pantheon, 2015).

[24] On this point, Nussbaum notes that liberal defenders of shaming tactics and punishments seem to dwell on "examples in which the humiliated person is a powerful person" rather than acknowledge the social status of those most likely to be on the receiving end of the political and legal programs designed to incite shame. Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity*, 175.

accounts are necessarily nostalgic in the sense of looking to resurrect a past conception of shame that has historically regulated and lubricated social and political life, but each in its own way suggests that contemporary ethical and democratic life would benefit from an invigoration of healthy and respectful forms of shame and that our valuing of shame has regrettably diminished over time. One model for democratic deliberation is "respectful shaming," which is a form of ethical instruction designed to trigger reflection and self-awareness in one's interlocutors.[25] Another argues that Socrates' shamelessness – his flagrant disregard for the social norms and values of Athens – rendered him incompatible with the city and democracy, in general. Socrates, by this account, died because of his failure to feel shame in the face of Athens's elders and institutions, refusing to pay his respects to the institution of the jury, which made it possible for him to speak freely in his own defense. That is, democracies promote shamelessness and therefore *need* shame as a check.[26] Another study acknowledges the ways in which some forms of shame can be stultifying and self-negating, but calls for a feminist ethics of shame that reorients the experience of shame in favor of feminist principles: "Shame can play an important positive role for the ashamed person despite its negative and potentially debilitating effects."[27] The task, the author continues, is to weight our reasons for shame correctly.[28] Others call for collective shame as a response to national crises of state power, racial inequality, and environmental devastation.[29]

In *Democracy and the Death of Shame: Political Equality and Social Disturbance*, I argue that much of Western political thought can be read as a lamentation for a fantasy of what we believe *aidōs* secured: social regulation and lubrication across difference(s). The clear-eyed Homeric representation of shame – the sense of right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, the relationship to oneself as a particular individual and one's relationship to both specific and generalized others – has tremendous appeal. The mythology of *aidōs* speaks to conservatives who fear the death of moral standards; liberals committed to individual responsibility; democratic theorists attuned to the emotions; and poststructuralist and perspectivist accounts of ethics and politics as antiuniversalist and always embedded in particular social locations. Homeric shame presents a picture of a subject who finds both agency and humility in the demands of *aidōs*; and so it provides an ethical framework for intersubjective relations in both the personal and collective or public relationships. As it empowers people to act in these relationships, it also cements – rather than provides grounds to transcend – the particular social locations that the gods or other larger forces have dealt them.

[25] Tarnopolsky, *Prudes, Perverts, and Tyrants*. See especially Chapters 3 and 4.
[26] Saxonhouse, *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens*, 116–117.
[27] Manion, "The Moral Relevance of Shame," 73.
[28] Manion, "Girls Blush, Sometimes," 33.
[29] Abdel-Nour, "National Responsibility"; Lebron, *The Color of Our Shame*; Jacquet, *Is Shame Necessary?*

The alleged death or lack of *aidōs* as a governing ideal has direct relevance for discussions of democratic citizenship. To put it in Tocquevillean terms, most democratic theorists would agree that democratic citizenship requires specific mores and manners that connect citizens to one another, the polity, and something greater than themselves. Part of the Tocquevillean "ongoing, extremely arduous 'apprenticeship in liberty' " that prepares citizens for self-governance involves cultivating moral habits and sensibilities that will prepare them for democratic governance.[30] This is the allure of civil society, the mediating sphere between public and private in which citizens-in-the-making learn to deal with others different from themselves and orient themselves around common goals. In this Tocquevillean frame, shame has an essential role to play. Citizens need restraints, prods, and ethical commitments with respect to themselves and others.

But democratic citizens also – and Tocqueville appears to have understood this – orient themselves in the world in direct opposition to what they perceive to be the requirements of shame. Against the dictates of *aidōs*, the *people* rule themselves. Who constitutes this people and how it comes into being is a longstanding question in political theory, one far beyond the scope of this study.[31] But even if we bracket the question of who comprises the people, we can still say with confidence that part of the power of the democratic commitment to popular rule is the turn away from aristocratic deference to claims of religion, identity, and tradition. As Athens became democratic, for example, the prescriptions of *aidōs* lost their salience and significance. Compared with anger, desire, and pity, *aidōs* is conspicuously absent from Athenians' deliberations about obligation and punishment. To the extent that it *is* present, as seen, for example, in Socrates' dialogues, *aidōs* and its requirements are up for public contestation. Socrates' *parrhesia* takes up the question of whether shame ought to be heeded, what it requires, and what ends it serves.[32] This contrasts sharply with how Homer's characters perform the *internal* (rather than publicly debated) agonizing about whether or not to heed *aidōs* in particular circumstances. Homer presents *aidōs* as a force that prods people to do what they are meant to do, yet it also presumes, prescribes, and reinforces particular social identities that are in turn justified in the name of some higher order that must be heeded. Once both the value of *aidōs* and the activity it prescribes

[30] Benjamin R. Barber, *A Place for Us: How to Make Society Civil and Democracy Strong* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 58.

[31] For two excellent recent treatments of this question, see Paulina Ochoa Espejo, *The Time of Popular Sovereignty: Process and the Democratic State* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); Jason A. Frank, *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

[32] See, for example, Socrates' dialogue *Crito*, which reflects Socrates' general skepticism about *aidōs* as a guide to action. *Aidōs* is also largely absent from Danielle Allen's discussion of the emotions in Athenian punishment. Danielle S. Allen, *The World of Prometheus: The Politics of Punishing in Democratic Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

and proscribes are up for discussion, *aidōs'* force has already been diminished. Early democratic citizens, speaking frankly in the Assembly and on the street as they forged a polis ruled by the people, understood the tension between *aidōs* as a governing emotion and political equality and democratic rule.[33]

Indeed, as I will go on to argue in the chapters that follow, much of the fear about shame's death and the desire to restore or recuperate its regulative characteristics reflects a fear about ordinary, nonelite democratic citizens fashioning themselves and the world without regard for the anchoring and governing traditions and institutions of the past. I do not mean to diminish the significance of the exclusionary character of Athenian citizenship. As has been well documented, women, enslaved people, and foreigners were debarred from the category of citizen and the "equality" on which it rested. But the extension of political equality to poor and unpropertied men marked a radical break with the rule by elites in the predemocratic eras. This tension between popular rule and traditional forms of authority like *aidōs* lingers on and intensifies in modernity. As Charles Taylor has noted, modern democracies and democratic ideas are entangled with the ideal of "authenticity," the late-eighteenth-century Romantic view "that each one of us has his/her own way of realizing our humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one's own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed on us from outside, by society, or the previous generation, or religious or political authority."[34] Democratic Athenians did not have a concept of "authenticity," per se, but they expressed something like it in their skepticism about the religious and traditional customs, debts, and reverence required in the past. And this relationship between democracy and the calling into question of past hierarchies and the ideas that legitimate them produces a fair amount of anxiety, even among defenders of the authentic ideal, like Taylor himself.

Intervening in this conversation about shame, authenticity, ethics, and politics, this book offers an extended analysis and discussion of a phenomenon I term *The Lament That Shame Is Dead*. *The Lament*, I argue, is a nostalgic story about the ways in which shame used to regulate or at least soften the more difficult aspects of life in the world together. It emerges as a way of figuring changes in the social order as threats to civilization in need of restraint. So fixated on the salutary and essential work of shame, The Lament obscures and pathologizes radically democratic political activity that challenges the virtue and value of shame and calls for "authentic" and unashamed ways of being in the world. I want to recuperate this radical activity by way of theorizing a form of democratic action that I call "unashamed citizenship." Unashamed

[33] Alex Gottesman has written an excellent account of the Athenian "street" and the democratic negotiations therein. Alex Gottesman, *Politics and the Street in Democratic Athens* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[34] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 475.

citizenship is the work of courageous and unapologetic people who may or may not have the status of formal citizen.[35] These unashamed citizens interrogate and denaturalize the terms of shame and shaming, dethrone the arbiters of what counts as officially political, claim space for themselves in the world by whatever means available, and fight for a reconstituted social order that gives real meaning to democratic commitments. They refuse to hide their bodies and their objections to the social, economic, and political regimes that shame and blame them. To be sure, there are other ways to theorize and practice radically democratic citizenship. Much of this involves the work of activists whose identities and lives may not be so directly linked to the practices and regimes they strategically oppose. But I focus on "unashamed citizens" and the political work they perform because I fear they are both misunderstood and undertheorized in contemporary political theory. The force of The Lament blinds us to their democratic legitimacy.

The Approach

Democracy and the Death of Shame is best understood as a genealogical effort to understand the context in which The Lament That Shame Is Dead emerges and the phenomena to which it responds. The late-twentieth and early-twenty-first-century anxieties about "gay liberation," the obliteration of public and private, feminism, the "Me Generation," moral relativism, the "therapeutic turn," and the rise of shaming punishments are typically framed in terms of a loss of shame, reticence, concealment, and civility. As I have considered these late-modern anxieties, I have been struck by how familiar they seemed. Digging deeper, I confirmed my sense that the death of shame as it was so confidently pronounced by liberals, communitarians, and in a related way the "tragic" political theorist who also resists the discourse of "authenticity," was not an especially new phenomenon. The chapters that follow tell part of this reiterative story and its significance. Taking a historical tack, I look at moments of democratic expansion in the modern West with respect to how ideas of political equality open up doors for social transformation, specifically with respect to class, gender, race, and age. These social transformations, often authorized through the language if authenticity and "being true," seem to be a natural development in a democratic moment, yet they are met with cries about civilizational decline, taking things *too far*, needing brakes and containment, and triggering a cataclysmic death of shame.

To this end, paying attention to the inter-relationships among sexuality, gender, race, and class, I work through ancient, modern, and contemporary democratic texts and contexts to look at how subjects and citizens seek to expand

[35] On the significance of people who are legally noncitizens making political claims in the name of the citizen, see Melvin L. Rogers, "David Walker and the Political Power of the Appeal," *Political Theory* 43, no. 2 (April 1, 2015): 208–233.