

POLITICAL THEORY | CULTURAL STUDIES

*“Worldly Shame intervenes in debates about politics and ethics and the burgeoning literature on shame’s place in democratic politics. Through the original concept of ‘worldly shame,’ Manu Samnotra offers a generous way of reckoning with collective responsibility for the harms engendered by market inequalities, colonialism, and other world-destroying projects. *Worldly Shame* avoids the trappings of stigmatizing and humiliating one’s political enemies, and instead generates an affective politics of responsibility and world-building. I highly recommend it.”*

—JILL LOCKE, Gustavus Adolphus College

Does shame have any role in politics? Far too often, shame is used as a weapon to dominate those who lack social power. For which reason, it is often regarded with skepticism by its many critics. But in an era where lying in order to get ahead in political contests seems to go unpunished by voters, where the sale of life-saving drugs is increased to astronomical proportions in the pursuit of profits, and where daily infractions against the dignity of individuals is both widespread and quickly forgotten, the seeming lack of shame threatens to undermine the shared values on which a democratic world depends. Drawing on the political thought of Hannah Arendt, especially her writings on Jewish and world politics, *Worldly Shame* constructs a political category of shame that can help us respond to the crises of the present moment. “Worldly shame” can return to us our sense of judgment, can be an inducement to action, and is a panacea for a world torn apart by horrors that diminish humanity. By developing a capacity for “worldly shame,” we can create political spaces that are hospitable to a plurality of voices and viewpoints, and which can thus be a bulwark against the world-destroying trends that engulf our world every day.

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WORLDLY SHAME



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ETHOS
IN ACTION

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