

A DEMOCRATIC BEARING

Admirable Citizens, Uneven Injustice,
and Critical Theory

STEPHEN K. WHITE



A Democratic Bearing

*Admirable Citizens, Uneven Injustice,
and Critical Theory*

STEPHEN K. WHITE

University of Virginia



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107168473
DOI: 10.1017/9781316717394

© Stephen K. White 2017

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2017

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-107-16847-3 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-316-61644-4 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of
URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication
and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain,
accurate or appropriate.

A Democratic Bearing

In this rich analysis of the changing ideals of citizenship, Stephen K. White offers a path for the renewal of democratic life in the twenty-first century. Looking beyond passive notions of citizenship defined in terms of voting or passport possession, White seeks a more aspirational portrait, both participatory and inclusive, that challenges citizens, especially in the middle class, to confront power structures to achieve greater justice. Using the Tea Party and followers of Donald Trump as foils, he shows how that group's resentful and exclusivist conception of active citizenship undermines democratic aspirations. White explores how such deleterious influence might be effectively engaged by a robust counter-conception on the democratic left. The book makes this aspirational ideal conceptually clear, normatively compelling, and aesthetically attractive.

Stephen K. White is the James Hart Professor of Politics at the University of Virginia. He is a former editor of *Political Theory*. He has written widely on critical social and democratic theory.

I dedicate this book to my past and present graduate students

Preface

Many years ago, the idea of citizenship was perhaps the dullest, least interesting topic in the domain of political theory. Democratic citizens were considered first and foremost rights bearers; beyond that, they were just supposed to listen to political debate and vote in elections. Otherwise, citizenship was pretty much a status concept. Either you had a passport giving you the status of a citizen with a full plate of rights, or you didn't. In the last couple decades, everything about citizenship has become more complex and contested. I want to contribute to this shift in the specific sense of suggesting that we think of citizenship not just in terms of status but also in terms of aspiration, that is, as a commitment to a certain "bearing" of ourselves that we might aspire to manifest, as we look out onto the many threats there are to the further realization of democratic values in the twenty-first century, especially in affluent liberal democracies characterized by uneven injustice. This attempt to provide a richer conception of citizenship might be thought of as a companion to the increasing tendency of political theorists to think of democracy not so much as a settled structure of government but rather as a perpetual leavening of social relations and a creating of angles of pressure on political structures.

My conviction about the need to think along these lines has been spurred by the emergence in recent years of a particular manifestation of aspirational citizenship; it is, however, one that I find to be deeply problematic for the core values of democracy. This variant roots itself in the traditional status conception of a rights bearer, but it gives that conception an activist edge of a particular sort, one that revels in the resonance that bearing rights has with bearing arms. In the United States, this emergent notion of citizenship is vividly represented in the stance of

groups like the Tea Party, in the popularity of so-called Stand Your Ground laws, and in the presidential candidacy of Donald Trump. Within this political world, the rights of middle-class – predominantly white – Americans stand in mortal danger comparable to that faced by colonial Americans when their liberties were threatened by their British masters in the 1770s. In the face of such a threat, a patriotic citizen is told to spring into action in the cause of what one might call *republican self-protection*,¹ a goal that today involves everything from proactively impeding actions of the federal government to blocking border crossings of undocumented aliens, to standing your ground armed in the face of “suspicious” people who seem to threaten your space. This cause is suffused with rich images of self-righteous patriots, walls, fences, and weapons.

The Tea Party has been the largest and most prominent exemplar (at least in the United States) of this mode of citizenship, and it will be the focus of substantial attention in what follows. Its relation to the main goal of the book is as a foil. It will help highlight the distinctive character of my alternative aspirational notion of how a middle-class citizen should bear herself today. Despite the emphasis I will place on the Tea Party, it is nevertheless important to stress that this group represents a broader syndrome of perception and affect whose attractiveness has waxed in recent years and will likely outlive the demise of any specific collective manifestation. Aspects of this syndrome can be traced back at least to the “silent majority” first invoked by President Nixon in the 1960s and 1970s.² The middle segments of liberal democratic societies, especially in the United States, seem continually receptive to such an orientation.

What the Tea Party helps us comprehend today is that the space of choice regarding one’s self-conception as a citizen should be seen as being less between a simple, passive, status-grounded stance, on the one hand, and an ideal of activity, on the other, but rather as between two exemplary ideals of citizen activity. The one represented by groups like the Tea Party has become quite prominent. My concern is that this movement of republican self-protection implies an unsettling deflation of the spirit of democracy. The main aim of this book is to resist this deflation and argue, rather, for an ideal of citizenship more attuned to the idea of democracy as

¹ “Republican” here is not meant to refer to the political party, but rather to classical republicanism, as I will make clear later.

² As I indicate in Chapter 2, the roots of this syndrome actually go back further than this; see note 5 in that chapter.

inclusive self-governing. We animate such an ideal only to the extent that we choose to reimagine what is involved in being a citizen who exhibits a democratic “bearing.” What follows is my attempt to flesh out this compound idea of citizen and public life, making it conceptually distinctive, normatively compelling, and aesthetically attractive.

Any such attempt to sketch a portrait of citizen bearing for the middle class will initially evoke a couple of significant concerns. First, it seems to take the focus of democratic theory off of the most numerous, disadvantaged category of citizens – in short, off of the *demos* in something like its original sense. Should we not be determinately focused in democratic theory on the bearing of the *demos* toward elites? I am certainly not denying that this is a central task of democratic theory. And yet I do want to argue for an additional focus, the intent of which is less to change the main thrust of democratic theory than it is an effort to broaden it. The notion of a democratic bearing will have different inflections depending on whether one is speaking of the most disadvantaged segments of liberal democracies or the middle segments. Just as the political right has embraced a cultural politics and citizen ideal of the middle, exemplified by the Tea Party, so also should the democratic left work toward an engaging portrait of an ideal of citizenship for this category of society.

Democratic thought on the left has tended to be relatively inattentive to the middle of society. It has operated with an implicit two-entity social ontology: elites and *demos*. Thus, to think theoretically from a left perspective has primarily meant conceptualizing the consciousness and action of the *demos*, as it resists domination and challenges elites. My point is not to reject this focus of attention so much as it is to argue that we should broaden it to better include how the middle segments of society might figure into this realm of contestation in more democratically admirable ways. This is the broad claim I want to make in relation to affluent, late-modern liberal democracies. Here I am speaking primarily of the United States, Western Europe, Canada, Australia, and Japan. For my purposes, what is distinctive about such societies is that severe economic disadvantage is not a shared status among a majority of the people, as it still tended to be in many such societies in earlier centuries, and as it is in other, less affluent societies around the world today. In the affluent societies, injustice and oppression are unevenly distributed across the middle and bottom of the population. There is no *demos* in the sense of a block of those who are both severely disadvantaged and most numerous. Thus, the goal of addressing injustice and expanding democratic inclusion must involve more complex strategies than simply critiquing domination

and raising the political self-consciousness of the classic demos, because such a category does not really exist.

In such societies, a crucial question will involve how the broad middle segments perceive and interact with those who are oppressed or less advantaged, economically, racially, and culturally. Groups like the Tea Party give one sort of answer with their idea of a citizen bearing of republican self-protection. I will be trying to flesh out a rather different alternative.

A second reservation about my project, especially in the case of the United States, involves the way in which the syndrome of the middle I am analyzing is entangled with the issue of race. A moment ago I spoke about the “predominantly white” middle class. It is certainly true that the Tea Party, for example, counts almost no African-Americans among its adherents. And when the Tea Party emerged in 2009 there were certainly statements about President Obama and signs at rallies that had a distinctly racist edge to them. But the leadership was quite effective in eliminating such public displays. The question remains, however, whether a movement that is so hostile to latino/a immigration, so adamantly opposes Obamacare and Medicaid expansion (while heartily supporting Medicare), and so continually rails against the “undeserving” in American society can claim to be free of racism, at least when it comes to the actual or potential effects of its policy positions.

My book will not be centered on this tangle of issues, not because it is unimportant, but rather because there is another tangle (related of course) that is also significant and deserves investigation. This topic has less to do with exposing how a resilient middle-class syndrome of perception, normativity, and affect is implicated in racist outcomes and more with how it draws upon sources of motivation and traditional ideals that are at least partially admirable and perhaps somewhat excusable, even if not ultimately justifiable. These sources are powerful, and if we expect to understand the continuing attractiveness of this syndrome as well as delineate what an admirable and effective democratic counter-bearing might look like, then we need to explore the syndrome’s power more carefully. Another way to put this is, if there is willful blindness to the race-structured effects of the policy preferences of the Tea Party, why is this will so strong, so proudly affirmed, and so resolutely defended? The sources of this syndrome are, first, traditional small “r” republican ideals rooted in the era of the American Revolution, and, second, the growing sense of precariousness that the middle segments feel in relation to the increasing tension between the rich promise of the American Dream

and the threats posed by the impact of globalization with its seemingly overwhelming inflow of immigrants, terror, and financial shocks, as well as the outflow of jobs and security.

In short, the point of my analysis is not to deny that race is a crucial dimension when we think about the ethos and political disposition of republican self-protection in the United States but rather to highlight why this orientation may remain so resistant to modification. One implication of this may be having to acknowledge one more sense in which the struggle against racism will remain a very hard one. Willful blindness rooted in strong affirmations can be quite resistant to head-on critique. If so, perhaps another possible implication becomes worth exploring, and it is the one I want to unpack in this book. This involves trying to imagine an affirmative, competing bearing for the middle class, something with a positive power to draw individuals away from exclusive attachments to resentment, resistance, and hostility to all those “others” that lurk in what is essentially a virtual world suffused with threats to the core of their identity.

My efforts to draw out the idea of an admirable democratic bearing proceed along two paths. One involves specifying the substantive character of the “ethos” and “political tack” that constitute such a bearing – in effect, the virtues and commitments such a democratic citizen needs to embody. The other involves clarifying the normative and philosophical perspective within which such an ideal of citizenship gains its sense and from which the critique of the alternative, less admirable ideal – the one associated with movements like the Tea Party and Donald Trump – derives its force.

Chapter 1 begins the task of elaborating this theoretical perspective. I draw primarily on the paradigm or research program of communicative action developed originally by Jürgen Habermas, the most well-known contemporary adherent of the Frankfurt School of critical theory. That paradigm’s continuing attractiveness resides, first, in the distinctive normative perspective that emerges from the idea of “communicative rationality” and opens into a deliberative ideal of democracy, and, second, in the perceptive interpretation it offers of the process of societal rationalization in contemporary capitalist liberal democracies. This interpretation holds in productive tension an affirmation of admirable normative qualities associated with Western modernity and a critique of that contemporary mode of dominating rationalization Habermas has called “colonization of the lifeworld.”³ It provides, in short, not only a *critical* perspective on the

³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. 1 Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. T. McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), pp. 1–42.

domination furthered by capitalist rationalization but also an *affirmative* perspective rooted in its account of communicative rationality. In doing so, it offers a better approach to the complex mix of injustice and benefits associated with affluent liberal democracies than efforts constructed exclusively around the more familiar critical concept of “neoliberalism” that typically offer an analysis of capitalist rationalization in a relatively one-sided, negative sense.

The notion of colonization of the lifeworld as a model of domination was introduced by Habermas in the 1980s; it refers to an invasive process propelled by the expanding logics of both capital and the state. By including the latter, this notion provides access to the self-understanding of movements like the Tea Party that envision themselves as suffering under what they feel to be a colonizing domination of political masters. From this Habermasian perspective, one can appreciate the reality of this perception as rooted in a lived experience while also retaining a basis for raising questions about whether this complaint is really persuasive only for those in a relatively privileged, middle-class economic position, and whether it also implies a willed blindness to considering the possible harms of that other rationalization process arising from the logic of capital.

Further, when Habermas reflected on sites of possible opposition to colonization, he refocused the attention of critical theory, turning it not just to traditionally disadvantaged segments of the population but also to middle-class ones. He spoke of “new social movements” whose self-conception came into focus not exclusively around the struggle of labor and capital, but more broadly around resistance to a variety of aspects of colonization. His primary examples in the 1980s were the environmental and women’s movements. However, he noted as well, almost parenthetically, that some movements of this sort could have a more “defensive” character.⁴ For my purposes, what he saw then as marginal warrants far greater attention today. The form of citizen bearing that I find in movements like the Tea Party fits Habermas’ criteria disturbingly well.

My elucidation in Chapter 1 of the communicative paradigm’s normative core and conception of societal rationalization thus helps us understand both the various pressures that give shape to that persistent

Hereafter cited as *TCA*, Vol. 1; and *The Theory of Communicative Action* Vol. 2, *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. T. McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), pp. 304–373. Hereafter cited as *TCA*, Vol. 2.

⁴ *TCA*, Vol. 2, pp. 393–394.

syndrome of citizenship that I see as such a deep threat to democratic prospects and the possible outlines of a more affirmative democratic way of imagining the bearing of a citizen. But my positive assessment of the value residing in the communicative paradigm has to confront the rather heavy barrage of criticism that it has faced in recent years. Hence, my effort to make use of this approach has to go hand in hand with a systematic attempt to, first, defend some of its key components and, second, carry out significant revisions of others – especially Habermas’ one-sided focus on consensus and the associated foundationalist claim that an orientation to consensus is built into the very structure of language. My overall aim is to show that a revised framing for communicative action can constitute the basis of a normative and empirical research program that is more fruitful than the original one.

Chapter 1 begins this task, but several aspects of my proposed revision of the communicative paradigm require more elucidation than I accord them there. My strategy here is to temporarily hold off on that additional work and instead turn next to the kind of specific interpretive insights regarding contemporary political life that this paradigm makes possible. Toward this end, in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, I first examine that contemporary syndrome of middle-class bearing that I find exemplified in those who identify with groups like the Tea Party, and then try to flesh out a more democratic and attractive model of citizen bearing. If my efforts in these chapters are sufficiently interesting, then I hope the reader will be motivated enough to follow me when I circle back, in Chapters 5 and 6, to reengage some of the fundamental questions about the frame of a revised critical theory. Then, in Chapters 6 and 7, I try to show how the revised communicative action perspective opens up fruitful avenues both for thinking generally about power and domination today, and for understanding the specific claim to legitimacy of a deliberative conception of democracy.

In accordance with this overall organizational strategy, my preliminary exploration of fundamental questions in Chapter 1 is followed in Chapter 2 by a detailed foray into the more concrete terrain of contemporary social movements in the United States. There I examine the syndrome of middle-class bearing that I find exemplified in those who identify with the Tea Party. Although my treatment of this movement is critical, the line of interpretation that is generated by the paradigm I deploy allows for a serious appreciation of the persistent social phenomena that both give rise to this syndrome and enhance the likelihood that it will have a continuing presence in the political life of affluent liberal democracies.

Although the focus of my analysis here is the United States, its implications are relevant, as I noted a moment ago, to other similar societies.

The portrait I paint in Chapter 2 aims to do two things. First, it shows that a distinctive variant of what I call an ideal of “citizen bearing” – a coherent cognitive, normative, and aesthetic-affective orientation to public life – already occupies the contemporary political landscape; thus, my speaking of a different, more democratic sort of bearing should become more vividly imaginable than it would be if I were to have to construct it in a more purely abstract fashion. And, second, my effort to portray a problematic citizen bearing should help me hone in on exactly what sorts of substantive qualities should be embodied in a more admirably democratic one.

Chapter 3 takes up the task of thickening the image of the latter bearing, as well as explaining in detail how its character is animated by the normative core of the communicative action paradigm. I elucidate the two main dimensions of such a bearing – its underlying “ethos” or spirit and its “political tack” or trajectory – and lay out my nonfoundational or “weak ontological” interpretation of its legitimacy.⁵ The latter task constitutes an effort to clarify what I find to be the most persuasive way to develop a convincing take today on our most basic values and commitments. Toward that end, I argue that we best understand the notion of a democratic bearing as animated and justified by a constellation of basic moral-ontological “sources” that infuse an orienting “picture” or “exemplary scene” of linguistic intersubjectivity.

The citizen bearing exemplified by Tea Partiers is rooted in religion and a natural law-derived notion of individual rights as the invariable trumps of political life. In short, it draws upon traditional, deep sources of normative certainty, what I would call “strong ontological” sources. In my effort to draw out the idea of a counter-bearing that does not rest on this sort of foundationalist claim, it is necessary to face the fact that such foundations have a serious advantage in political life when it comes to their power to motivate and generate resilience of will. Is there any way in which this stark asymmetry can be lessened? Are there sources to which my sort of nonfoundational or weak ontologically based democratic bearing could appeal that might offer some even partially comparable strength? In Chapter 4, I investigate the possibility of a democratic bearing’s drawing more methodically upon what I will call “democratic faith”

⁵ For the concept of “weak ontology,” see my *Sustaining Affirmation: The Strengths of Weak Ontology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

and “depth experiences of fullness and dearth.” Walt Whitman will prove to be a valuable companion in the exploration of this domain.

After having given greater shape to my idea of citizen bearing in Chapters 3 and 4, in Chapters 5 and 6 I return to issues of theoretical grounding. My analysis here shows more systematically how a reconstructed version of the communicative action paradigm provides the conceptual and normative resources necessary to conceptualizing that bearing. In Chapter 5, I turn to two salient characteristics of critical theory: its markedly speculative nature and its theses regarding “malig-nancies” that are embedded in the rationalization processes of modern societies. These presumptions constitute part of the distinctive value of this stream of political thought; but, importantly, they also give rise to concerns that this sort of theory involves theoretical and normative over-reaching. In Chapter 5, I consider the charge of theoretical overreaching directed at the communicative action framework’s positing of the malignancy of a “colonization of the lifeworld.”

Chapter 6 addresses the other danger, normative overreaching. Here I return to two closely related problems broached initially in Chapter 1. The first involves the way in which Habermas’ original variant of the communicative paradigm embodies a strong ontological claim about consensus, namely, that all natural languages have a consensual essence. This famous contention is just as famously rejected by most scholars. I attempt to delineate a possible defensible sense that Habermas’ concept of normativity and communication might have if we rework it in a weak ontological fashion. The second problem embedded in the orthodox understanding of communicative action is how the role of consensus in its exemplary scene seems to crowd out other values that deserve greater attention. An adequate treatment of this difficulty requires a twofold strategy. The first involves a careful reexamination and reconstruction of the paradigm’s exemplary scene, the surprising upshot of which is that it actually contains – even in its orthodox, Habermasian version – a neglected dimension of negativity or “no-saying” that is just as fundamental to its coherence as is the dimension of consensus or “yes-saying.” My second strategy involves proposing a more outright revision of Habermas’ original comprehension of the scene. I argue that our envisioning of communicative action must accord its actors cognitive and affective qualities that are reflective of the fact that humans always have *particular* identities that exist in constitutive contrast to the identities of specific others. This dynamic of identity and difference has been central to much of political theory and social science for the last quarter century, but the

exemplary scene of communicative action, as originally conceived, is essentially blind to it. The linguistic interaction it pictures occurs among what are essentially *generic* human beings who differ only in their interests. This means that it erases from the start a powerful source of agonism that critics of the communicative model correctly see as crucial components of ethical and political life. My aim is to show how that model can be reconceived in such a fashion that the dynamic of identity/difference, along with the renewed emphasis on “no-saying,” offers us an exemplary scene that no longer continually renders itself into a machine for producing consensus, but rather constitutes an adequate prefiguring of the centrality of both contestation and consensuality. It is this portrait that, in turn, can give the best sense and animation to a democratic mode of citizen bearing.

In sum, a key practical benefit of such reconstruction efforts is that they offer the possibility of simultaneously accommodating the insights of critics who have faulted the associated notions of communicative rationality and deliberative democracy for being too one-dimensionally oriented toward agreement, without thereby also leaving one bereft of any positive orientation. Some of those who have criticized Habermas – with some legitimacy – for being insufficiently agonistic are surprisingly uninterested in clarifying the character of the affirmative normativity they are implicitly relying upon.⁶

As I touched upon a moment ago, a similar problem seems to me to continually haunt left democratic invocations of the term “neoliberalism” today. This concept carries the idea that the expansion of the rationality of capitalism has deeply and consistently undemocratic implications. I share this substantive worry. But all too frequently the critiques offered within this frame rest implicitly on positive normative commitments that need to be articulated more carefully. I take up this issue in detail at the end of Chapter 6 and try to show why the communicative paradigm, with its rich normative core and allied conception of societal rationalization, offers the best critical approach to the phenomena associated with neoliberalism.

In Chapter 7, I conclude this discussion of the way in which my revised account of critical theory intertwines its critique of injustice with its projection of a positive normative source for affluent liberal democracies. This involves, first, a fuller explanation of the character of this critique as a set of suspicious conjectures about not just the harm of domination

⁶ See especially Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), pp. 80–107.

driven forward by colonization of the lifeworld but also the other forms of harm that theory identifies, especially modes of actively or passively denigrating or excluding political “others.” The harm of exclusion is especially significant in the present context, because of the mandate contained within the deliberative ideal that democratic discourse should include all those who are affected by the norms whose potential injustice is being scrutinized. What does this “all affected” criterion actually mean, and what does the harm of exclusion amount to exactly, and, finally, how is it to be addressed?

In the concluding chapter, I first return to a question broached in Chapter 3, namely, the relation of the two components of a democratic bearing: ethos and political tack. Critics have often suggested that an attention to ethos harbors an aversion to politics or a turn away from politics. Although this critique may be valid for some philosophical conceptions that highlight the role of an ethos, it fails in relation to the idea of a democratic bearing that draws its sustenance from the ethical-ontological sources and exemplary scene of a revised communicative action perspective. After highlighting the distinctively political dimension of my project, I turn to the way in which this notion of citizenship opens out onto an ideal of democratic life as inclusive self-governing. This ideal focuses attention less on the structure of institutions and constitutions and more on the spirit and character of the pressures we bring to bear on those entities, both as citizens and critical theorists.

ADDENDUM AFTER THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Given the similarities between the Tea Party and the Trump movement that I note briefly at different points in the book, one might wonder why I have not attended even more closely to the latter. The reason is that the manuscript was completed in spring 2016, in the midst of the U.S. presidential primaries. The Trump movement was emerging as potentially important, but he had not yet become the Republican Party’s candidate and conducted one of the most remarkable and deeply disturbing campaigns in American history. As I write this Addendum in mid-November 2016, he has just won the general election.

Given this turn of events, it seems worthwhile to pause for a moment and point out that the core claims of my book, although they hopefully help to illuminate something about the character of the Trump movement, are not crucially impacted by the fact of his election, any more than they would have been by his defeat. Rather, my assertions are related to the fact

that the Trump movement, like a number of others, including the Tea Party, has tapped into and amplified a certain persistent tendency in segments of the U.S. population. It is this tendency itself – and not whether it engendered a particular electoral victory or defeat – that is the key issue for me; and my contention is simply that we should not expect it to disappear soon from the American political landscape. The vicissitudes of such movements at any given time are not as important as the persistence of the underlying phenomenon. As I have indicated, my attention especially in Chapter 2 is focused on characterizing this phenomenon and investigating how it has manifested itself over the last few years in the Tea Party. But just as my core interest is not in the Tea Party *per se*, so I am not interested in Trump's victory *per se*. If this book generates any insight, it is tied less to the elucidation of the particulars of either movement and more to the clarification of how such movements exemplify what I see as an unsettling, emergent ideal of citizen bearing. My elaboration of the character of this ideal then functions as a clear foil for my attempt in the remainder of the book to vivify a counter-ideal.

In relation to my concerns, there is not a great deal of difference between the bearing of the Tea Party and that of the Trump movement. It is true, of course, that Trump diverges from the Tea Party on some issues, with the latter, for example, generally affirming free trade, while he is opposed to it.⁷ It is important, however, to be clear about the nature of this opposition, as well as of his frequent attacks on “elites” who have ruined the country through their manipulation, because his stances on such topics powerfully boosted his appeal to many within the white working class. Trump succeeded in attracting voters further down the economic scale than traditional Tea Party adherents. Many of the former feel they have been hurt by the effects of free trade and other economic policies associated with globalization. But Trump's positions here seem to have had little to do with any sustained, principled concern for oppressed workers in America or with any critical thinking about rationalization and the challenges of global capitalism. His claims have up to now not been accompanied by any serious policy plans, rather only vague boasts about how he would, through the sheer force of his will, compel other countries to accede to trade relations that more systematically favor the United States. In short, his differences with the Tea

⁷ Another area where Trump the candidate differed somewhat from the Tea Party is in his failure to clearly distance himself from white supremacist messages and groups. At this time, it is not clear whether he will continue in that orientation as president.