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Introduction

Finding the Heart of the Sectional Conflict

Early in his classic memoir of soldiering in the Confederate Army of Tennessee, Sam Watkins reflected on the pre–Civil War development of sectional political identities. He recalled how white Southerners, led by William L. Yancey and other extremists, began to think in sectional rather than national terms:

> Yanc[e]y . . . took a strange and peculiar notion that the sun rose in the east and set in the west, and that the compass pointed north and south. Now, everybody knew at the time that it was but the idiosyncrasy of an unbalanced mind, and that the United States of America had no north, no south, no east, no west. Well, he began to preach the strange doctrine of there being such a thing. He began to have followers. As you know, it matters not how absurd, ridiculous, and preposterous doctrines may be preached, there will be some followers.

These preposterous doctrines spread until "whole heaps of people began to say that they thought there was a north and a south; and after a while hundreds and thousands and millions said there was a south." Northern objections only inflamed the situation. Southerners "raised their bristles"; Northerners in turn "c[a]me out furiously mad" and attempted to "coerce" the South. The whole country "went to gouging and biting, to pulling and scratching at a furious rate." Ultimately, however, Union victory reaffirmed that "America has no north, no south, no east, no west; the sun rises over the hills and sets over the mountains, the compass just points up and down, and we can laugh now at the absurd notion of there being a north and a south."[1]

Though distorted by bitter memories of the demagogues he blamed for the carnage of Chickamauga and Franklin, Watkins's analysis is instructive. He recognized two preconditions for the outbreak of war in 1861: Americans

[1] Sam R. Watkins, "Co. *Aytch*": *A Side Show of the Big Show* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 17–19.

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had to identify with mutually hostile sections, and to believe that the issues implicated in the conflict between them were worth dying for – and gouging, biting, and killing for, as well. Hindsight makes it easy to take the fulfillment of these prerequisites for granted. But, as Edward Ayers has argued, we should question the notion that the Civil War "t[ore] the nation in two along a natural, almost perforated line."[2] Every stage of the sectional rupture must be explained. Through folksy allusions to raised bristles and furiously mad Yankees, Watkins's account suggests that emotions amplified hostility between North and South, forging sectional identities and fomenting sectional conflict.

Building on flourishing multidisciplinary scholarship, this book analyzes the politics of emotion from a historical perspective to elucidate how the widely shared experience, expression, and interpretation of specific emotions made the Civil War possible. The purpose is not to uncover new "causes" of the Civil War, a conflict inextricably linked to the multifaceted debate over slavery in the American republic. Rather, it seeks to explain how sectional identities crystallized and why the conflict over slavery culminated precisely as it did, in disunion and warfare. As an act of organized violence, war requires both a willingness to kill and at least two reasonably united collectivities to engage in battle. Broadly shared emotional norms and publicly articulated emotional experiences cultivated powerful feelings of sectional solidarity that steeled self-identified Northerners and Southerners to wage the nineteenth century's second-largest war. Intensely personal and yet inevitably influenced by pervasive cultural norms, emotions shaped how participants perceived the politics of slavery and encouraged budding sectionalists to align with one of the increasingly hostile sectional coalitions. The boundaries between "North" and "South" were never impermeable, but emotional discourses and lived emotional experiences fostered the sectionalization of Americans' political allegiances.

This study also addresses why sectionalists marched to war in 1861. As Eugene Genovese observed, "Not every material interest is worth defending to the death, and it is not obvious that any should be."[3] The same is true of social status, ideological devotion, or any of the other interests at stake in the Civil War. Because antebellum Americans scrutinized their feelings when confronted with weighty decisions, understanding how they interpreted specific emotions casts light on why war made sense to so many decent people. For nineteenth-century Americans, certain emotions were intimately tied to moral judgment. The prevalence of these emotions – including indignation and jealousy – in antebellum political discourse suggests that emotional responses to political events primed Americans to think in uncompromising terms of good versus evil.

[2] Edward L. Ayers, "What We Talk About When We Talk About the South," in Ayers, *What Caused the Civil War? Reflections on the South and Southern History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 52.

[3] Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 9.

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This Manichean outlook, coupled with sectional political affiliation, made war possible. Emotionality, however, should not be equated with demagoguery. Watkins's account tends toward this view, as did most early scholarly studies of emotion in the sectional conflict. But emotions did not lead to an "unnecessary" war by supplanting or obscuring "real" issues. In fact, emotions were so central in nineteenth-century political life that moderates and conciliators appealed to the passions as often as radicals did. Emotions can create communities as well as divide them, and to associate "emotionalism" with extremism is to understate emotions' political salience. Emotions did not displace other causes of the war; rather, they amplified economic, political, and cultural conflicts and fostered the development of self-aware "northern" and "southern" polities whose constituents believed that armed conflict was justified.

Even as this book rejects interpretations of the Civil War as a needless tragedy caused by impassioned political blundering, it does argue that historical analysis of emotion is essential for understanding why and how the sectional conflict culminated in disunion and war. Emotion shaped multiple dimensions of political activity, including the construction of identities, the crystallization of ideologies, and the mobilization of citizens. As physiological and cognitive phenomena shaped by historically contingent cultural norms, emotions directly affected Americans' perceptions of themselves, their friends and foes, and their interests and ideals. Shared emotional norms and experiences forged the antagonistic sectional identities that by 1861 had separated Americans into warring camps. As emotional divergence demarcated sectional difference, Americans aligned themselves with the "North" and "South." These communities were never monolithic, but critics of prevailing emotional standards tended also to dissent from aggressively sectional political movements, revealing how deeply intertwined emotion and ideology had become. At the same time, emotional experiences informed Americans about how political developments impinged on their interests and thus provoked political behaviors – from partisan realignment to organized violence – that were consistent with their goals and convictions. The communal cultivation and expression of such morally and ideologically salient emotions as indignation, jealousy, and grief pushed Americans to construe political events in Manichean terms, to feel intrasectional solidarity, and to view their rivals as perfidious and threatening. By defining boundaries between the sections, by shaping perceptions of political ideals and events, and by encouraging actions that exacerbated sectional tensions, emotions fostered a political climate in which disunion and armed conflict over slavery were likely.

Any interpretation of Civil War causation that foregrounds emotion must confront the legacy of the so-called revisionist interpretation of the war.[4] Prior

[4] For more detailed studies of the vast literature on Civil War causation, see: Howard K. Beale, "What Historians Have Said About the Causes of the Civil War," *Social Science Research*

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to World War I, most scholars accepted that the Civil War was inevitable, either because it was a clash between antagonistic civilizations or because the moral problem of slavery was irrepressible. Following the Great War, however, historians began to question this assumption. Especially during the 1930s and 1940s, revisionists rejected their predecessors' propensity for moralizing and materialism and fashioned a more cynical account of the war's origins. Led by Avery Craven and James G. Randall, revisionists downplayed sectional differences and concluded that the war grew from a *repressible* conflict aggravated by what they imprecisely deemed the "emotionalism" of antebellum politics.[5] According to Randall, sectional differences were merely the "amazingly thin" seeds from which "antagonistic emotions" sprouted.[6] Craven concurred, maintaining that political disputes "were but the materials with which passions worked." "The problem of why these sections went to war lies deeper [than economic, political, or social differences]," he concluded. "It is one of emotions, cultivated hostilities, and ultimately of hatred between sections."[7] Had reason prevailed, war would have been averted. Tragically, emotionalism interfered with peaceful problem solving.

Whence did these disruptive emotions come? The revisionists ignored the cultural construction of emotion and failed to contextualize the significance of

Bulletin 54 (1946), 53–102; Thomas J. Pressly, *Americans Interpret Their Civil War* (New York: The Free Press, 1962); David M. Potter, "The Literature on the Background of the Civil War," in *The South and the Sectional Conflict* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 87–150; Eric Foner, "The Causes of the American Civil War: Recent Interpretations and New Directions," *Civil War History* 20, no. 3 (September 1974), 197–214; Lacy K. Ford, ed., *A Companion to the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pt. 1; Edward L. Ayers, "Worrying About the Civil War" and "What Caused the Civil War?" in *What Caused the Civil War*, 103–130, 131–144; Frank Towers, "Partisans, New History, and Modernization: The Historiography of the Civil War's Causes, 1861–2011," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1, no. 2 (June 2011), 237–264; and Michael E. Woods, "What Twenty-First-Century Historians Have Said About the Causes of Disunion: A Civil War Sesquicentennial Review of the Recent Literature," *Journal of American History* 99, no. 2 (September 2012), 415–439.

[5] Key revisionist studies include: Avery Craven, "Coming of the War Between the States: An Interpretation," *Journal of Southern History* 2, no. 3 (August 1936), 303–322; Charles W. Ramsdell, "The Changing Interpretation of the Civil War," *Journal of Southern History* 3, no. 1 (February 1937), 3–27; J.G. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1953); J.G. Randall, "The Blundering Generation," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 27, no. 1 (June 1940), 3–28; J.G. Randall, "The Civil War Restudied," *Journal of Southern History* 6, no. 4 (November 1940), 439–457; and Avery Craven, *The Coming of the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957). On revisionism and inevitability, see: Pieter Geyl, "The American Civil War and the Problem of Inevitability," *New England Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (June 1951), 147–168; Thomas N. Bonner, "Civil War Historians and the 'Needless War' Doctrine," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 17, no. 2 (April 1956), 193–216; Kenneth M. Stampp, "The Irrepressible Conflict," in *The Imperiled Union: Essays on the Background of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 191–245; and Ayers, "What Caused the Civil War," 132–133.

[6] Randall, "Civil War Restudied," 446.

[7] Craven, "Coming of the War Between the States," 304–305.

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specific feelings, but they readily answered this question. Scheming politicians, hypocritical abolitionists, and ambitious journalists had selfishly stoked the fires of popular passion. Deliberate manipulation of popular emotion thus lay at the heart of the sectional conflict. With Great War jingoism fresh in his memory and the contemporary political horizon darkened by fascism, Randall equated political emotionality with demagoguery and emphasized propaganda's role in unleashing the bloodbath of the 1860s. Politicians hungry for power and partisan advantage willfully appealed to the worst human passions and labored to agitate, rather than resolve, sectional problems, thus pushing the nation toward war.[8] North and South marched to battle bristling with anger and fear, emotional (over)reactions to a resolvable quarrel. Thus a horrific war, made doubly tragic by its evitability, befell a "generation misled in its unctuous fury."[9]

Disillusionment with war after the slaughter of the Western Front, Depression-era frustration with industrial capitalism, and aversion to the impassioned extremism of interwar European politics deeply shaped revisionist scholarship. Because of its jaundiced view of politics and war, the revisionist interpretation faded after World War II. Since 1945, historians have assailed the revisionists by demonstrating that the North and South differed profoundly in terms of interests, identities, and ideologies. Scattered calls for a revisionist renaissance have failed to revive the interpretation in its purest form.[10] Despite their flawed assumptions about political psychology and their cavalier treatment of slavery's injustice, however, revisionists' key insight – that emotions mattered a great deal in antebellum sectional politics – should not be thrown out with the revisionist bathwater. There are at least three reasons to reassess revisionists' emphasis on emotion within the context of a theoretically informed and empirically robust study of Civil War causation.

First, the revisionists' earliest and fiercest critics refuted the morality of their assumptions more thoroughly than the validity of their arguments. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s 1949 indictment of revisionism is a case in point. Attacking their pro-southern bias and obliviousness to slavery's iniquity, Schlesinger accused revisionists of disguising amorality as objectivity. "Because the revisionists feel no moral urgency [over slavery] themselves, they deplored as fanatics those who did feel it, or brushed aside their feelings as the artificial product of emotion and propaganda."[11] This was an apt critique, but Schlesinger had

[8] Randall, "Civil War Restudied," 447, 452–453; Randall, *Civil War and Reconstruction*, 158–159.

[9] Randall, "Blundering Generation," 8.

[10] See: John S. Rosenberg, "Toward a New Civil War Revisionism," *American Scholar* 38, no. 2 (Spring 1969), 250–272. For a nuanced discussion of how antiwar sentiments have nurtured elements of the revisionist interpretation in the early twenty-first century, see: Yael A. Sterhnell, "Revisionism Reinvented? The Antiwar Turn in Civil War Scholarship," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3, no. 2 (June 2013), 239–256.

[11] Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "The Causes of the Civil War: A Note on Historical Sentimentalism," *Partisan Review* 16, no. 10 (October 1949), 969–981 (quotation on pp. 977–978).

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more on his mind than Civil War causation. The trauma of World War I had convinced revisionists of war's wickedness, but the triumph of World War II and the logic of the Cold War persuaded Schlesinger of the virtues of emancipatory conflict. He saw shades of Munich in antebellum compromise measures and equated negotiation with appeasement, reading the moral clarity of struggles against fascism and Communism back into the Civil War era. Few modern scholars, of course, would deny the justice of abolition. The problem with Schlesinger's moral certitude was that it transformed historical inquiry into a philosophical discussion about just wars, turning debate over *why* the Civil War happened into polemical confrontation over whether it *should* have happened. The revisionists' strict differentiation between emotion and "real issues" compounded the problem by precluding any synthesis of their arguments with those of their critics. Accepting the debate on these terms, Schlesinger rejected an emotions-oriented approach because it was tainted by revisionists' moral obtuseness. A modern study of emotion and Civil War causation, however, can rescue emotions from the revisionists, separating what was useful in their scholarship from what was not.

This approach facilitates a synthesis of the revisionists' contributions with the perspective of the opposing fundamentalist school. Since 1945, most scholars have sought and found deep-seated issues underpinning the sectional conflict. Social and economic historians have emphasized structural differences between northern free society and the slave society of the South, while scholars of culture and ideology have traced how this divergence produced a clash of worldviews. Many historians have made passing reference to the role of emotions in the sectional crisis, but emotions have not received the detailed analysis afforded to political economy, ideology, or voter behavior. A study that builds on the key insights of the fundamentalists (that real issues divided the sections) *and* the revisionists (that emotions shaped antebellum political identity and behavior) can productively blend these once-irreconcilable schools.[12] Such a perspective on Civil War causation can trace how emotions, at once so personal and yet shaped by social norms and cultural expectations, braided identity with ideology and linked individuals to mass movements.

Finally, recent scholarship on emotion and politics has advanced to the point that it is possible to build on the revisionists' contributions without accepting their faulty assumptions and flawed reasoning. Indeed, this book challenges at least as many revisionist arguments as it supports. A critique of revisionism grounded in emotions research thus offers more insight than the polemical attacks leveled by Schlesinger and other early critics, who actually shared many of the revisionists' unsound theories about political emotionality. By drawing on innovative recent scholarship, this study avoids the revisionists' three gravest analytical pitfalls. First, they naïvely assumed that democratic

[12] Edward Ayers has called for precisely such a synthesis in Ayers, "What Caused the Civil War," 133.

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politics are normally untouched by emotion and reflexively rebuked political emotionality. Theoretical and empirical work by social scientists and humanists has roundly rejected this presumption and the stigma attached to political affect has begun to fade. Second, the revisionists implied counterintuitively that the prevalence of emotion in antebellum politics meant that there were precious few real issues at stake. Avoiding the false distinction between emotionalism and genuine conflict, this study maintains that sectional politics were intensely emotional precisely because the relevant issues impinged so deeply on the welfare and values of the participants. Finally, the revisionists failed to situate expressions of emotion in historical context, thus forfeiting an opportunity to understand why certain emotions – from indignation to jealousy – featured so conspicuously in antebellum political discourse. For the revisionists, emotions mattered in history but lacked a history of their own. But because emotions are shaped by cultural norms and practices that change over time, it is essential to study them from a historical perspective.

This study draws on multidisciplinary scholarship unavailable to interwar historians who wrote in the revisionist tradition. But it does so selectively, using findings from other disciplines to formulate fresh questions about emotions and politics rather than to answer them; the answers come from research in antebellum sources. In order to contextualize expressions of emotion, I read political documents, including correspondence, speeches, pamphlets, and newspaper editorials, alongside sources more familiar to cultural historians, such as novels, sermons, and advice manuals. This methodology reflects and reaffirms several key themes in recent emotions research.

The most basic theme is that political activity is inescapably emotional. In the antebellum United States, emotions were embedded in political theory, rhetoric, and ideology, and naturally shaped political identity and behavior. An ongoing "emotional turn" in the social sciences and humanities has encouraged scholars to rethink the relationship between emotion and politics and consider the diverse ways in which emotions influence political theory, ideology, and activity.[13] Unlike the revisionists, these scholars do not view emotions as intruders into an ideally passionless political realm. They recognize that emotions are inextricably linked to personal and collective identities, to judgments of weal and woe, to mass mobilization, and to rational decision making, making them an inherent element of political activity. This insight, unavailable to revisionists who depended on the now-antiquated crowd psychology of Gustave Le Bon and others, has reshaped the study of political theory and behavior.[14]

[13] On this turn, see: Jan Plamper, "Emotional Turn? Feelings in Russian History and Culture," *Slavic Review* 68, no. 2 (Summer 2009), 229.

[14] On the revisionists and crowd psychology, see: Charles G. Sellers, Jr., "Comment on 'Why the Southern States Seceded,'" in *The Crisis of the Union, 1860–1861*, ed. George Harmon Knoles (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 81. Interestingly, Sellers worried that

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Now attuned to the issue, scholars have revisited canonical texts to discover how political philosophers, ancient and modern, have treated the passions.[15] Others have called for more theoretical and empirical research on emotion in contemporary politics, and their labors have already borne fruit.[16] As the study of emotions in politics, especially in political psychology, has matured, it has also sparked healthy controversy. There is little consensus on the precise relationship between specific emotions and political behavior, but models such as "Affective Intelligence Theory" have inspired debate and discussion. Championed by George Marcus and other scholars, the theory suggests that emotions such as anxiety facilitate reasoned, informed political judgment by triggering the brain to shift from reliance on old habits and prejudices to more active and rational information gathering and cognition.[17] Other researchers have challenged, revised, or rejected the theory, but the field as a whole has benefitted from productive disagreement.[18]

revisionists' key insight about emotion and Civil War causation might be obscured by valid but overzealous criticism.

[15] Emery G. Lee III, "Representation, Virtue, and Political Jealousy in the Brutus-Publius Debate," *Journal of Politics* 59, no. 4 (November 1997), 1073–1095; Barbara Koziak, "Homeric *Thumos*: The Early History of Gender, Emotion, and Politics," *Journal of Politics* 61, no. 4 (November 1999), 1068–1091; Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Victoria Kahn, Neil Saccamano, and Daniela Coli, eds., *Politics and the Passions, 1500–1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Marlene K. Sokolon, *Political Emotions: Aristotle and the Symphony of Reason and Emotion* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006); and Rebecca Kingston and Leonard Ferry, eds. *Bringing the Passions Back In: The Emotions in Political Philosophy* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008).

[16] Donald R. Kinder, "Reason and Emotion in American Political Life," in *Beliefs, Reasoning, and Decision Making: Psycho-Logic in Honor of Bob Abelson*, eds. Roger C. Schank and Ellen Langer (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), 277–314; Gail Holst-Warhaft, *The Cue for Passion: Grief and Its Political Uses* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Simon Clarke, Paul Hoggett, and Simon Thompson, eds., *Emotion, Politics, and Society* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); W. Russel Neuman et al., eds., *The Affect Effect: Dynamics of Emotion in Political Thinking and Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Perri 6 et al., eds., *Public Emotions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). An early review of empirical research on emotion and political psychology is: G.E. Marcus, "Emotions in Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3 (2000), 221–250. Too numerous to enumerate here are the studies of emotion and cognition in political behavior published in the journal *Political Psychology*.

[17] George E. Marcus, W. Russell Neuman, and Michael MacKuen, *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); George E. Marcus, *The Sentimental Citizen: Emotion in Democratic Politics* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002); Michael Mackuen et al., "The Third Way: The Theory of Affective Intelligence and American Democracy," in Neuman et al., *Affect Effect*, 124–151.

[18] For partial revisions of the theory, see: David P. Redlawsk, Andrew J.W. Civettini, and Richard R. Lau, "Affective Intelligence and Voting: Information Processing and Learning in a Campaign," in Neuman et al., *Affect Effect*, 316–334; Nicholas A. Valentino et al., "Is a Worried Citizen a Good Citizen? Emotions, Political Information Seeking, and Learning via the Internet," *Political Psychology* 29, no. 2 (April 2008), 247–273; and Andrew J.W. Civettini and

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This research has changed the tone with which scholars discuss emotion in politics. Some balk at the frankly celebratory terms with which proponents of Affective Intelligence Theory appraise emotions' impact on political judgment. But this enthusiasm reflects a broad dissatisfaction with the old view of emotions as antithetical to reason and harmful to rational political activity. Since the 1980s, psychologists have rejected the dichotomy of reason and emotion, and a remarkable consensus has emerged around the conclusion that "emotions and cognition are inextricably intertwined," with some scholars using the term "cogmotion" to illustrate the "interactive and inseparable nature of cognition and emotion."[19] This has encouraged scholars to stop denouncing emotions' "intrusion" into politics, with Affective Intelligence Theory representing the strongest reaction against the outdated urge to banish the emotional from the political. By joining the effort to understand rather than condemn the emotional foundations of political behavior, I seek to purge from antebellum political history the rationalist bias that once equated emotionalism with demagoguery, extremism, and folly. This book therefore rejects a core tenet of revisionist doctrine, even though it shares revisionists' awareness of the political significance of emotion.

The second key theme is that individuals actively participate in the cultural construction of emotion and that the discourses in which emotional norms are defined, modified, or contested are inherently political. Political actors are not passive victims of passion or deluded dupes of manipulative demagogues. The pioneering work of historian William Reddy, who subtly braids cultural and political history in the study of emotions, provides an excellent starting point for understanding how individuals actively engage in emotional politics. Reddy uses the concept of the emotive to explore the relationship between individual emotional experience and political power.[20] *Emotives* are first-person expressions of emotion. They are intensely personal, of course, but they are also necessarily shaped by culture: the words used to translate a subjective state

David P. Redlawsk, "Voters, Emotions, and Memory," *Political Psychology* 30, no. 1 (February 2009), 125–151. For a pointed critique, see: Jonathan McDonald Ladd and Gabriel S. Lenz, "Reassessing the Role of Anxiety in Vote Choice," *Political Psychology* 29, no. 2 (April 2008), 275–296.

[19] Quoted in William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 15. See also: Stanley Schachter and Jerome E. Singer, "Cognitive, Social, and Physiological Determinants of Emotional State," *Psychological Review* 69, no. 5 (September 1962), 379–399; Craig A. Smith and Phoebe C. Ellsworth, "Patterns of Cognitive Appraisal in Emotion," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 48, no. 4 (April 1985), 813–838; Ronald De Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987); Douglas S. Massey, "A Brief History of Human Society: The Origin and Role of Emotion in Social Life," *American Sociological Review* 67, no. 1 (February 2002), 1–29; and Luiz Pessoa, "On the Relationship between Cognition and Emotion," *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 9 (February 2008), 148–158.

[20] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*. I explore the cultural politics of slaveholders' emotives in Chapter 2.

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into language, the meanings that the subject draws from the emotion, and the ways in which observers respond to the emotive claim can be understood only within a specific cultural context. In making these claims, individual actors "navigate" their feelings by using, modifying, or challenging the emotional values they have learned since infancy.

Emotions therefore represent a site where culture impinges directly on the body and mind, but not without the subject's active participation. The two-way process of articulating and interpreting emotional experience is inherently political because it shapes the subject's identity, perceptions, and relationships with other individuals who might share or reject, praise or condemn, the subject's emotional claims. If instructed in the virtues of political jealousy, for example, a white man in the Old South might, when his jealous suspicions were aroused, align with others who felt the same, criticize those who did not, and engage in political behaviors prescribed by the political culture that taught him to value jealous watchfulness. Because the experience of jealousy affirmed his sense of personal virtue, alerted him to a potential threat, and encouraged specific responses, the emotion at once strengthened his identity, influenced his decision making, and molded his behavior. As a noun, the emotion underwrote a political ideology which celebrated Southerners' proverbial "jealousy of any invasion of their rights, either individually or politically."[21] As an adjective, it promoted solidarity among those who identified themselves as "Southern men" who were "jealous of the honor and resolute to maintain the equality of the South in our Federal Union."[22] As an adverb, it defined an appropriate response to pervasive perils, as inscribed in the proposed slogan for a proslavery newspaper: "'Danger to our Institutions can only be averted by jealously watching our rights under the Constitution.'"[23] Every time they expressed emotion in any of these registers, antebellum Americans participated in a dynamic discussion about emotional propriety and political virtue. Cultural norms shaped the contours of this conversation but did not mechanically determine individual behavior. Subjects navigate emotions – and politics – according to culturally specific maps, but they chart their own courses. No one understood this better than those southern Unionists who feared and denounced political jealousy's potentially secessionist implications.

A third theme is that the diverse, often disparate, political repercussions of discrete emotions make generalizations about emotionalism meaningless. Revisionists implied that emotions exerted a homogeneous influence on political

[21] *Richmond Enquirer*, August 26, 1825, quoted in Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 309.

[22] Undated resolution adopted by "a portion of the people of Benton County [Alabama]," ca. 1850, Lewis E. Parsons Papers, ADAH.

[23] Printed circular letter to unnamed recipient [probably John Glass], August 2, 1847, Glass Family Papers, SCL.

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