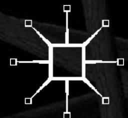
Angry Abolitionists and the Rhetoric of Slavery

Moral Emotions in Social Movements

Benjamin Lamb-Books



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Moral Emotions in Social Movements

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To the healers in society:
dedicated doctors,
discerning counselors,
inspiring ministers,
eloquent entertainers,
and persistent protesters…

Series Editor's Foreword

After having been contained within the margins of small religious communities like the Quakers, abolitionism entered the wider American political discourse in the 1830s and, as a social movement, became a powerful force in putting an end to slavery in the USA. Slavery was formally abolished in 1863 in the midst of the Civil War. Anger, violence, and bloodshed played not a small role in this struggle; the emancipation of slaves required military force. The 'anger' of the Abolitionists studied by Benjamin Lamb-Books was not expressed through violence, but through rhetorical force. His concern is with the micro-sociological processes that turn moral emotion into political action. This calls for focus on the performance of opposition, with how social movements move from rhetoric to action, to doing things with words and phrases. In a theoretically sophisticated analysis, Lamb-Books richly details the rhetorical strategies employed by American abolitionists, black and white.

Angry Abolitionists and the Rhetoric of Slavery deepens existing historical accounts of American abolitionism at the same time as it enhances the growing literature on the role of emotions in political and cultural mobilization.

Acknowledgments

The publication of this book feels like a small miracle. Moral emotions overwhelm me now after benefiting from the extravagant contributions that others have made. I thank Danielle Lamb-Books first and foremost for being there, calmly and happily, in the midst of it all and for being my main source of emotional energy. I am not sure what I did in a past life to earn the friendship of Brian Hamilton, but I do know I would be socially and intellectually adrift without him. I also want to pay tribute to the constant, many-times multimodal, support from members of both Lamb and Books families.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Making It Stick

The constellation of causes of the American civil war, by now a story well told, has been mapped out to the satisfaction of prior specialists. The primary driver of the nation's polarization and radicalization was *racial slavery* as mediated by fundamental disagreements over its legitimacy and humanity, its profitability and perpetuity. Though historians will continue to write nuanced narratives of the abolition of US slavery and its passage through destructions of war, a range of acceptable macrostructural interpretations has been established. Extensively charted likewise are the antislavery ideas behind those disagreements, their historical origins and cultural *logos*. Seeds of antislavery thought have been traced with fine precision through millennia-deep philosophical and religious traditions.

Questions remain though concerning antislavery as process rather than outcome, as *pathos* rather than *logos*. How did the antislavery impulse spread and stir the imagination of antebellum folk? How did the grassroots movement for abolition maintain its crescive momentum? How did protest rhetoric and its rituals enflame both missionary proponents and reactionary opponents? It appears that an important strip of the story of American slavery's abolition has yet to be told.

One remaining piece of the puzzle then is *microsociological* in nature, having to do with less-understood temporal and collective processes, the intriguing qualities of momentum that social movements develop. For the microsociological project, finding answers to the questions listed

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before you would be the very same as providing an account of what made abolitionist discourse stick in the USA, of how antislavery meanings successfully acquired their affective attachments and default status. The term ‘microsociology’ contains a double reference to both the interactional level of society and to a method of social–scientific inquiry based upon close observations of the social encounters between people. It is an analytical approach to social life that hinges our attention to the face-to-face level of interaction, both for the inherent interest of learning about social psychology and also to contribute to our explanation of social happenings on a larger scale. Microsociologists are in the business of studying situational encounters and socioemotional dynamics, the flows and patterns of communicative interactions as they unfold in time (Collins 1987, 2004; Ermakoff 2008; Jasper 1997; Summers Effler 2010).[1]

With the abolition of slavery, the American abolitionists achieved a great victory. It was certainly celebrated as such, stark though the tolls of war. The present work, instead of another examination of the origins or outcomes of the antislavery movement, directs our attention to a different part of the story, another crucial piece of the *long arc of the moral universe in which history bends toward justice*.[2] I am referring to the day-to-day rhythms and ritual successes of abolitionism *en route* to emancipation. Just as important to the spread of antislavery thoughts and preferences—the structure of preferences and attitudes that constitutes a ‘social movement’ (McCarthy and Zald 1977)—is the process of maintaining movement momentum, sustaining and accelerating a collective moral campaign as well as achieving member commitment and persistence in protest (Summers Effler 2010). A microsociological view of the temporal processes of social movements directs our inquiry toward the affective dynamics of the contentious gatherings of which a social movement is composed (Eyerman 2005). What sort of communicative interaction is protest rhetoric? What skills of interpersonal persuasion did the abolitionists possess? What ingredients in abolitionism’s repertoires of contention were most effective? Why did they sometimes choose to provoke rather than persuade? How was such a highly unpopular movement so successful in the long run?[3]

The idea that antislavery abolitionism was a hugely successful social movement should not come as a surprise. If it does so, it is because in the last century of historical writing about American abolition either the abolitionists were blamed for causing a needless civil war or they were dismissed as a mostly useless crew of utopian absolutists, holding no sway over the

real power politics of slavery. Until recently, the abolitionist movement was in the main considered a failure given the devolution of deliberation into a war that no one initially counted on as being necessary for emancipation.

The tide has fully turned in contemporary abolitionism studies. A less biased appraisal of the social movement now notes its immense national impact through political realignments and civil disobedience—the 'disruptive power' that Frances Fox Piven (2006) identifies in her brief but insightful analysis of the antebellum activists. Immediate abolition was not an impossibly ignorant demand. It merely meant that the inevitably gradual process of emancipation should be begun immediately by banning slavery in federally owned lands, the District of Columbia and the territories, and by not permitting any more slave states into the Union. Historians today recognize that early abolitionist thought of the 1830s and the later Republican politics of slavery were continuous, not discontinuous, phenomena (for a recent summary, see Oakes 2014). The illegal defiant actions of black and white northerners in hosting fugitive 'property'—'stealing' under federal law southerners claimed—and in resisting slave bounty hunters—'kidnappers' northerners replied—utterly infuriated southern politicians, much as federal law enforcement of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law outraged common northerners. The fugitive slave issue and the question of the criminality of harboring fugitive property tore the republic apart like no other issue (see Davis 2014 for a recent overview).

That the abolition of slavery was incredibly violent in the USA is well known. Mass emancipation through military force, almost all would agree, ranks among the most significant transformative events of US history. Yet, there is a dearth of investigation into the specific microsociological processes cumulatively leading up to this monumental event. The conflict over slavery did not appear overnight. It grew, widened, and deepened by public rhetoric in town halls and on the streets, through mass-communication technologies and civil-society organizations. Strictly speaking, there was no conflict over slavery apart from the rhetoric of slavery.

By the phrase *rhetoric of slavery,* I mean to highlight the actual communicative processes of slavery's problematization and what made antislavery discourse endure, or at least more sticky in American culture than proslavery ideology. Most examples of the rhetoric of slavery in this study are of formal abolitionist public address, instances of what I shall call *oratorical rhetoric* as a subspecies of rhetoric in general. Oratorical rhetoric in this book includes the events and actions surrounding public speaking at the

sites of protest. But I have also come to identify and include even partly sub-linguistic human emotions and actions as part of the broader *anthropological rhetoric* of slavery for contributing to slavery's delegitimization.[4]

Microsociologically speaking, abolitionism was the process of generating and disseminating a compelling rhetoric of slavery to discredit the institution. Abolitionism as microdynamic process was the *anti*-rhetoric of slavery, which is to say, creative public rhetorics against slavery are what made abolitionism 'move.' In the next chapter, I will argue that all social movements *are rhetorics* in the deeper anthropological sense of seeking to remake social reality through communicative action according to their own imaginaries. Social movement persistence and expansion involves the situational exercise of multiple modes of communication, in addition to the activities of framing and bargaining that previous social movements' scholars have privileged. The day-to-day rhythms and successes of abolitionism occurred on the ground and in the streets through rhetorical performances aiming to persuade and provoke. Extension of the antislavery reference group, on one side, and intensification of emotional bonds among conscience constituents, on the other, were practical accomplishments temporally and emotionally achieved through the unfolding rhetoric of slavery.

A common distinction is made in rhetorical criticism, following Aristotle, between the three 'means of persuasion' internal to a speech: logos, ethos, and pathos. Previous historical and sociological accounts of abolition have primarily focused on the *logos* of antislavery thought and political debate over slavery. They prioritize the propositional argumentation about slavery and its legal justifications. These accounts emphasize the cultural, religious sources of antislavery thought and the evolution of policy proposals for abolition. But logos by itself does not take us very far in understanding what made antislavery discourse stick *in situ*.

Logocentric histories fall short when explaining the actual processes of social change, how movements publicly appeal to spectators, expand their conscience constituencies, and intensify their emotional hold over participants. As most social psychologists will tell you, logos by itself usually fails to persuade. Persuasive effects, if attained by a rational argument, a big *if*, are more likely due to what psychologists refer to as priming associations, halo effects, or affect balance. The relevant microdynamic processes are social, emotional, and performative. Reason by itself does not inspire, energize, and convert people. Emotion does that much better (Appiah 2006 has a beautiful exposition of these points). As a growing number

of sociologists have found, emotion is fundamental to the social movement processes of social change (for a recent overview, see Jasper 2014; also Flam and King 2005). The better question, then, is how are specific *moral emotions* that are closely associated with collective problem solving and struggle aroused? And how is the emotional reframing of reality (Flam 2005b), not unlike a conversion experience, accomplished through movement culture and rhetoric?

Now we have fully entered the affective terrain of ethos and pathos, the two means of persuasion that are more useful for understanding the political and performative potency of protest rhetoric. *Ethos* refers to impressions of virtue or vice made by a speaker. *Pathos* to how rhetorical appeals stir strong emotional experiences in audiences. The Roman orator Cicero tended to associate ethos with positive affects in the presentation of self, namely, appearances of honesty and trustworthiness. Pathos he associated more with provocation, the incitement of violent negative emotions such as shame, anger, or hatred. Incorporating ethos and pathos into the sociological lexicon of social movement studies comes not without a certain bending of their classical usage though. I shall use them as dramaturgical tools for extracting the social status implicatures of protest rhetoric (loosely corresponding to ethos) and the emotional effects of these status implicatures (loosely corresponding to pathos). In a microsociological analysis of records of protest rhetoric, ethos–pathos configurations of status implicatures are what makes discourse sticky and, as was often the case, *get stuck* bitterly and unpleasantly in unsympathetic spectators who found them hard to swallow. Positive and negative types of affect, both 'ethos' and 'pathos' as I develop the terms, were crucial to the power and persistence of abolitionist protest rhetoric.[5]

In a nutshell, the US antislavery movement was successfully sustained from the ground up through rhetorical performances of ethos and pathos. Ethos and pathos are species of affect experienceable by protest audiences whether composed of like-minded constituents, casual onlookers, or detractors averse to the reform cause. The ratio-composition of these three classes of auditors matters greatly for how protest rhetoric is delivered, adjusted, and received. The social movement audience (the *reception field* as theorized in Chap. 7) exerts a strong influence over what emotional configuration of ethos–pathos is delivered by protest leaders. By reexamining vivid and moving case studies of abolitionist orators and their audiences, we will see how the emotionally intense, performative powers

of protest rhetoric emerge relationally from within the transpersonal social exchanges occurring at contentious gatherings.

This relates to a larger topic in sociology of *charisma* and its peculiar mobilizatory, inherently social nature. Charisma is a social movement phenomenon par excellence: social movements make charisma, and charisma makes social movements (Collins 2001). While the microdynamics of charisma fell out of favor for a while in social movement studies during its long detour through various forms of macrostructural theory, they have finally reentered the spotlight. Yet, the examination of how charisma works social-psychologically, and moral-emotionally, has hardly begun. Filling in this picture is one of the major aims of the present study. Sociologists so far have correctly come to view charisma not as an individual property but as a highly unequal privilege. But it is also an outcome of the movement's strategic adaptability to the 'rhetorical situation' (Bitzer 1968; Jasper 2006, 2010). Part of the problem has been the enduring theoretical influence of Weberian studies, in which charisma is a type of legitimate domination not having much to do with the dramaturgical qualities of contentious performances. Hence I must suggest that Weber's ideal types have become a tired terministic screen in the analysis of charisma in social movements. They have in practice taken our focus away from the affective mechanics of rhetorical performances, for instance, the emotional pathways and effects of status implicatures. We will see that one of the special performative properties of charismatic protest rhetoric comes from dramaturgical attunement to and adjustments of *status* dynamics present in movement audiences. This brings me to one more minor point before we begin: since I shall discuss theories of status in more depth in Chap. 2, it must suffice for now to note that 'status' here refers to quite general feelings of respect or disrespect between people, according or withholding deference in the interactionist sense, not to be confused with 'status groups' as theorized by Max Weber and Randall Collins (see Collins 2000; cf. Sauder 2005).[6]

The Multimodal Style of History

In the nineteenth-century USA, racial slavery was a controversial 'social problem.' Recent sociologists who study social problems have usefully drawn upon rhetorical theory to examine the role of communication and framing in motivating collective action. The social-constructivist lens they tend to share does not deny the structural reality of things like inequality and deprivation. It does focus attention on how these things are perceived

through language, prototypes, and attitudes that only acquire cultural resonance in certain social contexts. For example, even the problematization of slavery, the now so pejorative 'property in man' was a gradual and arduous rhetorical labor of a vast number of people. Surprising though it may be, if American slavery was not problematized over time through frames that struck a chord in its historical context, it would still be around today, and necessarily so. Intriguingly, the chords that struck the imaginations of antebellum folk are not the ones that tend to ring in our ears today in association with modern-day slavery. Abolitionist frames varyingly and metaphorically equated slavery with sin, tyranny, and cruelty—the three dually cognitive–affective *pathos-oriented problematizations* I analyze in detail in Chap. 4. About this, social problems constructivists are right: it is hard to imagine what the antebellum 'conflict over slavery' looked like apart from these culturally specific words and ideas that made up the rhetoric of slavery.

Several difficulties begin to arise though when approaching the abolitionist view of slavery in this light as a constructed social problem. In a strict constructivist interpretation, all dynamism is lost: discourse or frame analysis by itself fails to explain the abolitionist conversion experience, deepening or weakening levels of commitment, decreasing or heightening intensity in the slavery debate. Dissecting frames and symbols alone does not take us very far in understanding those affective processes of intension and extension in abolitionism. Why not? For one, the deep structures and implicit rules of discourse are notoriously slow to change and resilient to institutional changes. While relatively autonomous, discursive transformation often 'lags behind,' or possesses incongruous dynamic relations with, changes in other social domains.

Additionally, a major limitation is encountered when relying solely upon discursive structure to account for the crescive dynamics and pathways of abolitionism, a social movement, we should note, that took off at the exact time as the discourse of slavery was becoming more static and essentialist. For instance, according to historian James Oakes, 'For a quarter of a century, from the late 1830s until Congress finally abolished slavery in Washington, D.C., in 1862, the terms of the debate never really changed…At stake was the legitimacy of slavery itself, the right versus the wrong of "property in man"' (2014:68). This would suggest that the abolitionist social *movement* cannot be understood fully within the parameters of the cultural turn in historical sociology (among academic sociologists, the latter trend is also known as the 'third wave of historical sociology,' see Stamatov 2011). Instead, the primary historical agency of abolitionism

as a temporal process can be better located in the microdynamics of the rhetoric of slavery, in the continuing active operation of its affective mechanisms while the discursive binaries at stake were relatively static. It is creative rhetoric and communicative interactions that move movements and trigger transformative events, not culture considered abstractly.[7]

Discourse analysis by itself is *logo*centric. It contains no account of the actual emotional pathways of persuasion and provocation that energize the extrainstitutional collective action of social movements. And if any social practice paradigmatically exceeds language by traversing multiple modalities of communicative interaction, it is emotion. This is especially relevant to understanding the variable stickiness of antislavery thought having as it did a millennia-deep pedigree in Christian and republican traditions. The historical life of the relevant frames long preceded the effective problematization of slavery. Not much was novel in the ideas of immediatist abolitionism in the mid-1830s except perhaps the emotions, their speakers, and their disruptive effects. But in the main these are rhetorical differences in ethos and pathos, *not logos*.[8]

Something fishy occurs then when certain symbolic patterns are analytically consolidated into the label of 'frame' without any reference to the affective dimension. Surely these symbolic patterns are characterized by more than their resemblance to the pregiven beliefs and attitudes of audiences. Most of the cultural content we label 'frames' are in fact new ways of expressing unoriginal ideas so as to give them extra *umph* in their public delivery (as psychologist Sylvan Tomkins would say). Every frame is a set of ideas packaged so as to increase their affective appeal. Frames are like a collective form of trance work operating through associations and suggestions, experimenting with people's affective attachments. Their ability to hold audiences captive does not come purely from within the semantic content of a frame. Much of the performative power, I would venture, instead derive from the social relationship in which a frame is proposed, the socioemotional attachments reinforced or torn asunder, and the emotionally loaded status implicatures sown into the package. Such emotional microprocesses increase the power capabilities of a social movement, but in protest rhetoric this is a civil-society sort of power produced not by force but by status claimsmaking.

For these reasons, conventional sociological constructivism of the *mono-modal* type fails to explain the temporal dynamics of immediatist abolitionism. Many of the core antislavery movement 'frames' were not original to it, yet their scalar emotional intensity was undergoing change

of a different kind in the 1830s through 1850s. Novel performances of ethos and pathos were scaling higher plateaus altogether, for example, in dignified argumentative public addresses by black abolitionists, or in the subversive appearance of women orators before 'mixed' audiences, or in the provocative eloquence of abuse which caustically violated gentry norms of deference. The affective dimension of these new forms of protest rhetoric mattered greatly for the expanding reach of the antislavery movement. Historians skeptical toward abolitionism's successes fail to appreciate these shifts in emotional tone and style, a short-sight not unrelated to the microsociological point that the processes of social change cannot be observed by looking at culture nor social structure alone (Summers Effler 2002, 2005; Turner 2007).

For this project I define affect as a type of communicative action uniquely based on psychophysiological arousals of the body that engender a subjective state of *qualia* or tone.[9] Affect is also the umbrella term for feelings of all kinds, moods, short-term emotions, and longer-lasting emotions as well (cf. Jasper 1998). This definition situates affect in the same general class as language with respect to their common ability to become meaningful modes of communication (though both seem to have potentially useless, playful properties as well). Affective experiences are not necessarily linguistic though. Babies can cry. Adults can be depressed without knowing it. While not linguistic in itself, affective experiences are 'semiotic'—they make meanings by *marking* the body. A blush signifies unwanted attention and embarrassment. Feelings can be recognized and shared through bodily cues, facial countenances, rhythm, postures, vocal pitch and tone, and so on. My definition thus recognizes that affect can potentially be an autonomous mode or media of social communication (autonomous from language, we should say, not power).

As two analytically distinct but constantly overlapping modes of communication, language and affect are socially oriented and thus intrinsically meaningful. If compared directly, affect is often a more automatic or even subliminal form of intersubjective communication than language, present just as much in how things are said, the nonverbal, and what is not said. Even when accompanying speech utterances, affect at its core has a constitutive nonlinguistic kernel. Its media are those psychophysiological arousals experienced qualitatively and often communicated to others without our conscious permission. The main nonlinguistic medium available to affective communication is social–psychological expression and suggestion (perhaps 'mimesis' is the term some would prefer) occurring through

embodied nonverbal cues and gestures (Blackmann 2012; Summers Effler et al. 2015). Even when emotion is culturally and cognitively regulated, the affective dimension sneaks through under our radar.[10]

In summary, the specific qualities and powers of affect include: (1) unconscious automaticity and associative tendencies, (2) psychophysiological coherence, (3) embodied nonverbal communicative capabilities, and (4) strong socially oriented dispositional tendencies.[11] The affect theory I am articulating here is admittedly anthropocentric though other animals undoubtedly have affective experiences as well. The important theoretical implication of my approach is that *human emotionality* is reciprocally interconnected with culture and structure.[12] The psychological and affective capabilities of humans—our complex palette of socioemotional 'instincts'—are not completely passive in these relationships. Such socioemotional proclivities are *drivers* of both social order and cultural change.[13]

This conception of affect as a semiotic modality of communicative action has radical implications for the way we study culture and emotion in social movements. Scholars in the field are right to note that collective emotion frequently operates to reinforce and to counter efforts at change (Flam 2005b; Jasper 2014). The challenge involves specifying which sort of affective experiences in particular tend to motivate and energize protest rhetoric. In the next chapter, I point to the formative role of anger and threats mixed with optimism and creativity (as does Flam 2000). Until these affective-experiential conditions are theorized more systematically—until grounded in the socioemotional needs and capabilities of humans—studies of social movements and emotions will continue to be an ad hoc hyphenated affair. By incorporating the latest empirical research into the human psychology of status-oriented emotion, the microsociological perspective can revolutionize our understanding of the peculiar extrainstitutional events and endurances that compose social movements.

The project has already begun in recent, exciting sociological theorizing by Randall Collins, Helena Flam, James Jasper, Erika Summers Effler, Jonathan H. Turner, among others. This inquiry gets a head start only thanks to their formative contributions. Specifically, my starting line is the dramaturgical linkages that have been uncovered between status claims-making on one hand and affective experience on the other. In the next chapter, I propose that protest rhetoric orients speakers and audiences through implicit social implicatures that tend to arouse a set of affective experiences that psychologists refer to as the moral emotions—anger,

shame, contempt, reciprocity, and so on. Analytically, my approach identifies, clarifies, and explains the many interlinkages between rhetorical performances of status and moral–emotional experiences of both speakers and their audiences.

The chapters that follow all specify various social–psychological microdynamics through which affect drives, mediates, and sustains protest. The core thesis of this book is that the moral emotions, derived from group-oriented socioemotional instincts, are stimulated through the implicit status claimsmaking of protest rhetoric. Why is this significant? Mainly because the moral–emotional arousal achieved and shared through rhetorical action at contentious performances then animates and enlivens the 'hot cognitions' of injustice that protest speakers and audiences together focus their attention on (Gamson 1992). Joint attention and shared mood at protest meetings, as described by interaction ritual theory (Collins 2004), are social conditions primed for the emergence of symbols, values, and sacred objects. In the context of social movements, this socioemotional pathway ensures the efficacy and stickiness of discursive problematizations. Status claimsmaking in protest rhetoric activates and channels moral–emotional capabilities toward historically specific objects of representation, in the case of abolitionism, slave owners and those enslaved by them.

Overview of the Chapters

Historians of abolitionism are likely to be wary of my characterization of the abolitionists as 'angry' and as highly concerned with 'status.' Similar concepts in the functionalist collective-behavior tradition were used to dismiss the abolitionists as irrational apolitical fanatics in mid twentieth-century scholarship. In the second chapter, I explicate my theory of status rhetoric and emotion, contrasting my proposal to these previous reductionist accounts. The final section telescopes outward to introduce a *big rhetoric* perspective on the sociology of social movements and emotion.[14] Drawing upon affect theory, rhetoric, and the pragmatist theory of creative action, I sketch a new approach to the sociological analysis of extrainstitutional collective action.

While the abolition of slavery is a neglected topic in sociology, it has received scores of attention from historians, exponentially so in recent years. Chapter 3 delves into several historiographical issues in the study of American abolitionism. I provide an overview of the most current

historical data on the abolitionist movement, including what social groups were more likely to be attracted to it and participate in it. I pay particular attention to the religious nature of the antislavery movement and how evangelical Christianity shaped the social movement's style of mobilization and persistence. The goal of this chapter is to both contextualize abolitionism historically and offer a more accurate conception of the movement's scope.

In Chap. 4, we see that the problematization of slavery through abolitionist discourse was as much an affective process as a cognitive one. Through rhetorical performances of pathos, slavery was imagined intermittently as a national sin, a corruption of power, and a form of cruelty violating human sentiments. Abolitionist leaders drew upon these historically available emotional frames to construct slavery as a moral outrage (on the role of moral shock in mobilization, see Jasper 1997, 2014). Successful frame-alignment produced experiences of moral pathos in the audience, for example, horror over the nature of slavery and guilt at one's personal complicity with it. The three chapters of Part I together provide us with a systematic overview of abolitionist discourse, the forms of and participants in antislavery protest, as well as of how prior scholarship has failed to do justice to antislavery rhetoric and emotion.

Part II of the book interrogates how status stratification altered the emotional expressions and experiences of protest rhetoric. The deeply segmented structure of the abolitionist movement presents us with a chance to analyze status inequalities internal to social movements and their emotional effects. How do forms of charisma vary? What combination of ethos, pathos, and logos is most empowering to the most subordinated? How is the emotional energy of charismatic rhetoric constrained and enabled by social inequalities like race and gender? In the theory I develop, social positions of status subordination sharply limit public speaking possibilities for a variety of reasons. In reaction to rhetorical disadvantages by race and gender, the microdynamic pathways tend to feature similarities across cases because of the nature of status as a kind of emotional resource. Status subordination cutting across and within movements gives rise to emotional inequalities that constrain opportunities for public speaking and persistence in protest. However, many status-subordinated actors find round about ways of seizing the stage, surmounting the status binds and inventing distinctive forms of charisma in the process. How do they do it? I examine two exemplary pathways, two types of rhetorical responses to the status subordination internal to social movements: feminist ethos work

in Chap. 5 and the rhetoric of recognition in black abolitionist discourse in Chap. 6. Both were innovative strategies for generating emotional energy when it was in scarce supply (ex nihilo, I shall suggest, from heterodoxic status imaginaries). Interestingly, those abolitionists subordinated by racial and/or gender status within the movement tended to share a cautious reluctance to performing the pathos-oriented modes of protest rhetoric so prevalent among white/male abolitionists like Phillips. Pathos was considered too deviant and provocative when coming from nonwhite/nonmale orators and thus was too prone to backlash. Part II thus examines various instances of emotional inequality and emotional privilege within abolitionism, for example, public meetings tolerating white abolitionist expressions of anger but requiring black abolitionists to suppress such intense affect, or risk violent backlash (and incidents of physical assault on black public speakers are numerous).

One reason abolitionism has attracted so much historical attention in the USA is because, by most accounts, from it originated the early women's rights movement. Chapter 5 analyzes status binds and emotional inequalities in public speaking emerging because of gender status subordination, especially given the imminent threat of backlash against the gender deviances of women abolitionist rhetors. What motivated some abolitionist women to take extreme rhetorical risks in the face of enormous social opposition? This leads me to compare two patterns of 'feminist-abolitionism.' Comparing ethos work across the two types sheds light on how emotional inequalities get translated into protest rhetoric and its status implicatures. *Patrician-feminists* were able to overcome public speaking status binds through a habitus of formal education and social privilege. Relatively deprived, the *prophetic-feminists* resorted more to a religious habitus and theological vision to overcome those same gender binds. I theorize this practice of spiritual coping as a creative status summoning that enabled a risk-immune style of public speaking 'inspired by the spirit.' Status summoning refers to the rhetorical extraction of emotional energy from culturally autonomous religious formations and their alternative status imaginaries.

Chapter 6 then investigates the dynamics and dilemmas of black abolitionism. As public speakers, black abolitionists were racialized and marginalized by predominantly white antislavery organizations. Black abolitionist discourse developed distinctive *indexical* properties out of greater personal, familial, and historical experience with slavery as well as from a higher vulnerability to the violence and disrespects of systemic racism. As

in the anteceding chapter, many black abolitionists focused on doing ethos work through testimonial speech. This entailed performing respectability on stage while being tokenized as a representative of the 'sable' race. Additionally though, black abolitionists also formulated a more logos-oriented rhetoric consisting of arguments for interracial social *recognition* in response to the racial blindness of their white colleagues. As I envision it, the *rhetoric of recognition* takes a more indirect approach in appealing to the moral emotions through rational arguments about the nature of humanity and human flourishing than *status rhetoric*, though the two overlap quite a bit.

Lastly, in Part III we engage more substantively with the social–historical consequences of abolitionist status claimsmaking and moral emotions. Along these lines, the objective of Chap. 7 is to examine protest rhetoric from the point of view of the audience. Analytically, I construct a theory of the reception fields of protest rhetoric to get at how charisma emerges relationally through interactive status dynamics between speakers and listeners. For this query, empirically, I reconstructed elements of audience affective experience using nineteenth-century newspaper transcriptions of antislavery meetings. Through textual traces of audience actions and interruptions we can observe the intense emotional effects of status rhetoric upon audiences. We also can see why rhetorical 'success' in abolitionism was not equivalent necessarily to achieving persuasion through positive affects. In the abolitionist tactic of agitation, heightening dissensus was often just as effective in bringing about emancipation over the long run (Piven 2006). Many audiences were especially enraged by the abolitionist performance of alternative racial and gender status imaginaries.

Chapter 8 ponders the broader historical significance of the abolitionist movement and the role of antislavery emotion in pushing forward the longer sequence of mass emancipation in the USA. To supplement the macrohistorical account, I argue that the microdynamics of status rhetoric and emotion were mediating factors. Why was the abolition of slavery in the USA so violent, is the right question to ask here. Evidence is not hard to find on how infuriating abolitionist rhetoric and actions were to Southern political elites. As in a previous chapter on gender deviance in rhetoric, I incorporate *moral panic* theory to take a new angle on the old question of civil war causation. I propose that abolitionist experimentations with antebellum status imaginaries, especially the dominant imaginaries of race and gender, were not only provocative but also a pivotal wedge in the escalation of conflict. The specter of citizenship, white-male ethnic

supremacy *versus* the formal-legal equalization of status, was the point of contention where no compromise could be imagined. Hence the third and final part of the book is aptly entitled, 'Affect Matters.' Antislavery emotions were not mere epiphenomenal effects of more real institutions and mechanisms, for they played a pivotal role in the termination of America's peculiar institution.

Notes

1. Note that the basic unit in sociological microdynamics is not the individual but rather relational interactional processes, that is, the social situation or conversational encounter (Collins 1987; Turner 2012). In interaction ritual chain theory, Randall Collins embraces a 'situational reductionism' but not an individualistic one (Collins 1987). With regard to cultural and historical sociology, a pertinent question for microsociology is whether it insists upon downward reduction or if it can recognize *emergent* macrodynamics in both social structures and structures of meaning. I take the latter complementary approach in this book, leaning heavily on cultural sociology theories of discourse and social imaginaries (cf. Chap. 4).
2. To allude to the famous line by abolitionist preacher Theodore Parker: 'I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divide it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends toward justice,' and later made famous by Martin Luther King Jr.
3. I reject skeptical arguments that claim abolitionism as a social movement was mostly a failure rather than mostly a success (for a recent skeptic, see Grinspan's recent piece in *The New York Times*, 'Was Abolitionism a Failure?' Feb. 1, 2015). By most any contemporary measure, the abolitionists were in fact very successful. I think the fallacy here is insisting only on the immediate sequence enacted by political agents of war exclusively in explaining abolition, rather than incorporating both indirect and unintentional consequences in the wider sequence of abolition. Another prevalent fallacy is limiting conceptions of success to persuasion rather than including provocation and what Piven (2006) theorizes as defiance or disruptive power. Seeing the abolitionist social movement as successful though is not the same thing as asserting that everybody in free states back then was an abolitionist, a clearly comforting but false myth. Abolitionists were indeed a despised unpopular minority even in the North into the 1860s and beyond.