



# Wounded Hearts: Masculinity, Law, and Literature in American Culture

*Jennifer Travis*

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## **Wounded Hearts: Masculinity, Law, and Literature in American Culture** Jennifer Travis

The literary study of emotion is part of an important revisionary movement among scholars eager to recast emotional politics for the twenty-first century. Looking beyond the traditional categories of sentiment, sensibility, and sympathy, Jennifer Travis suggests a new approach to reading emotionalism among men. She argues that the vocabulary of injury, with its evaluations of victimhood and its assessments of harm, has deeply influenced the cultural history of emotions.

From the Civil War to the early twentieth century, Travis traces the history of male emotionalism in American discourse. She argues that injury became a comfortable vocabulary--particularly among white middle-class men--through which to articulate and to claim a range of emotional wounds. The debates about injury that flourished in the cultural arenas of medicine, psychology, and the law spilled over into the realm of fiction, as Travis demonstrates through readings of works by Stephen Crane, William Dean Howells, Willa Cather, Henry James, and Edith Wharton. Travis concludes by linking this history to twenty-first-century preoccupations with "pain-centered politics," which, she cautions, too often focuses only on women and racial minorities.

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