

# STATISTICAL PANIC

Cultural Politics and Poetics of the Emotions

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the Arts and Humanities, who generously arranged for me to devote the winter quarter of 2006 to this book. I am exceedingly grateful to Miriam Bartha, the assistant director of the Simpson Center, who with aplomb assumed my responsibilities during that period. To Kristy Leissle and Linda Wagner, research assistants at the Simpson Center, I cannot begin to express my appreciation for their creativity, conceptual astuteness, and can-do spirit as well as for their impeccable attention to detail, a quality I treasure.

I have been inspired by Feel Tank, founded by Lauren Berlant (among other scholars and activists), which is devoted to the study of feeling as it relates to political life. The Feel Tank conference, organized by Berlant and sponsored by the University of Chicago in October 2007, afforded me the opportunity to meet new colleagues in the study of the emotions, including Heather Love and Kathleen Stewart, as well as to acquire a T-shirt I have already worn to great effect. It is black (of course), with the single-word question "DEPRESSED?" inscribed across the front in red block letters. On the back we find the answer to this pertinent question: "IT MIGHT BE POLITICAL." I also treasure the tongue-in-cheek T-shirt given to me by Jane Gallop and Lynne Joyrich. The word "EMOTIONS" is inscribed on it, along with Paul Ekman-like emotion faces.

Much of the material in this book took shape in various journals and edited collections, and I am grateful to Justine Coupland, Marilyn Hacker, Gordon Hutner, Rob Mitchell, Liubava Moreva, John O'Neill, and Phillip Thurtle for their support of my work.

Perhaps my greatest debt is to the world of literature itself—to literature as an evocative object, in the psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas's sense, and to literature that makes us feel more alive, as Lisa Ruddick has put it. A few weeks ago I read Annie Dillard's luminous novel *The Maytrees*, a story of a man and a woman and how the love between them changes over the course of their long life both together and apart, together and apart. In inhabiting the world created by reading Dillard's words, reading in the dark on the plane from Washington, D.C. back to Seattle, I resolved to be a better wife, although I was under no illusion that under the pressure of everyday life this feeling or even the resolution would last. I dedicate my own book with love to Herbert Blau, who knows how to tease me, whose fierce devotion to blooded thought has been an inspiration, and who long ago promised me that he would never die.

introduction

## THINKING FEELING, FEELING THINKING

It's rare nowadays to hear words which, belonging to no one in particular, can be the property of anyone, words that are solid and inexhaustible like "grief" or "hatred."

—J.-B. Pontalis, *Love of Beginnings*

Critical reflection on emotion is not a self-indulgent substitute for political analysis and political action. It is itself a kind of political theory and political practice, indispensable for an adequate social theory and social transformation.

—Alison Jaggar, "Love and Knowledge"

Stories are much bigger than ideologies. In that is our hope.

—Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*

*The Year of Magical Thinking*. I picked up Joan Didion's book by chance one night (I couldn't sleep, no surprise there) and didn't put it down until I was finished. The next day I realized it offered me a perfect prism with which to open this book. For Didion's narrative uncannily echoes many of my own concerns in the pages to follow, not least of which is the signal importance of understanding our emotional experience through literature. For those who haven't read the book, Didion writes about her devastating grief in the wake of the altogether unexpected death of her husband of forty years. At first she turns to reading—a form of research for her, as it is for me—to help her understand what she was feeling and why. There is Freud's seminal essay "Mourning and Melancholia," poetry and fiction and journals, self-help books and professional literature. But precious little makes a difference to her. The professional literature in particular seems peculiarly inapt—*unfeeling*. It is poetry with its distinctive vocabulary and rhythm that provides something illuminating to grasp and hold close. Surprisingly perhaps, the advice she finds in the redoubtable Emily Post's book of etiquette, published in 1922, also provides comfort through

its delineation of protocols. Why is she moved by *Etiquette in Society, in Business, in Politics, and at Home*? Because at that point in American culture, Didion realizes, death had not yet been rendered unspeakable. The perspective of history offers her understanding and thus consolation. An important truth.

As I read *The Year of Magical Thinking* I thought of my own experience years earlier. I too had lost my partner to an altogether unexpected death. It was as if my own life—half of my body—had been ripped from me. I too did what others would find demented but to me seemed quite sensible at the time. I asked his doctor if it were possible to extract sperm from his body (we hadn't had children together). I became obsessed with his identical twin brother (this did not prove to be a good idea). I went to see my first husband (we had divorced some seven years earlier and had intermittently kept in touch) in an effort to establish a sense of continuity in my life in the wake of the gaping wound that had appeared. I too turned to reading and research about grief, and it seemed to me too that virtually nothing clarified my extreme confusion.

But isn't loss a common experience? Why was there no department at my university devoted to the study of the emotions? Why did the department of philosophy focus only on the history of thought, on logic and rationality, on the forms of analytic and dispassionate reason? Why didn't it dedicate attention to the forms of feeling?<sup>1</sup> How could such an important dimension of life receive so little consideration from the academy?<sup>2</sup> I didn't understand then what now seems so self-evident that it doesn't even require elaboration: that reason and emotion have long been constructed as antinomies in western culture, with reason exalted as the preferred term, figured as masculine, and emotion denigrated as feminine.<sup>3</sup> I consider myself a reader by profession as well as by temperament, and I don't remember anything I read being especially enlightening or consoling. But then it's also true that I remember very little from that year. So I wasn't surprised to see that Didion, remarking on the large gaps in her memory, devotes much of her book to simply trying to *remember* what happened in the year after her husband died.

Thus the genesis of this book—a collection of essays on the emotions written over the course of several years—can be found in my desire to comprehend the turmoil I felt as well as my bewilderment at the reactions of some people (they were my friends) to my state of grief. "It's been three months now since his death," I heard someone say at a party. "Why isn't

she over it?" To which I silently returned these questions: Why didn't they understand? And more to the point, why was my experience considered *inadmissible* in what seemed a social court of emotion law? Later I found myself studying the emotions—academically.

I read Freud's essay "Mourning and Melancholia" and found myself wishing from Freud something that wasn't in his temperament or professional passion to give—a description of the phenomenology of grief (indeed we don't even find the word "grief" in his essay). But his theoretical explanation of the process of mourning I found spellbinding. Freud insists we must call up all of our memories binding us to the person we have lost and "test" them in order to come to understand that the person is in fact no longer *there*. It is excruciating. Perhaps even more daunting, we must also detach ourselves from the memories of the prospects and plans—all of them—we had imagined for the future together. *Each memory* of the past *and* of the future. It is a painful process, this cutting off of our very selves from those to whom we have been intimately bound. It is anguishing work and it takes time. For as Freud so profoundly understood, we never willingly give up what means everything to us and has given our life its very shape and meaning.<sup>4</sup> Didion quotes the very passage from Freud that so fascinates me: "Every single one of the memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the object is brought up and hypercathected, and detachment of the libido is accomplished in respect of it" (*SE* 14: 245).<sup>5</sup> She also tells us how she tried to short-circuit this process by avoiding places of memory—where they had lived, eaten, shopped, taken their daughter Quintana. "There were many such traps," she writes. Falling into what she calls the vortex means experiencing "a sudden rush of memories" (118). They are overwhelming.

I wrote about "Mourning and Melancholia" in my last book, where I reproached Freud for not offering us (*me*) a more expressive vocabulary for grief. I still wish he had, but I understand it now as a self-interested wish on my part. I can look elsewhere in the psychoanalytic literature—to Julia Kristeva, for example, who combines both expressive and analytical modes in her work, and to J.-B. Pontalis, whose work as he has grown older has become increasingly autobiographical and poetic.<sup>6</sup> For Freud is not interested in offering a poetics of the emotions but rather in theorizing our psychic processes. Furthermore his focus is on the investigation of pathologies, most famously of repressed desire.

In *Studies on Hysteria* Freud formulates a theory of affect that rests on

the notion of repressed desire, resonating with the dominant tradition in western culture of the emotions as negative: the emotions are associated with women—hysterical women—and the emotions are something to be purged. Affect, unable to speak in its own language, is transcribed into another language, the bodily symptoms of hysteria that Freud describes later in *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis* as “precipitates” of emotional experience (SE 11: 14). It is as if affect, located deep inside, is so strong that it has to push against the body, forcing itself out into the performative gestures of hysteria. Freud understands affect as “cut off” from the memory to which it is attached, as “strangled” (SE 2: xviii). Affect is often “paralyzing” (SE 2: 11). It is something that needs to be discharged or, in that strange Freudian word, *abreacted* through the work of analysis. The goal of psychoanalysis in Freud’s hands is not so much to give affect voice as to rid ourselves of it once it has been remembered. Freud’s basic model of the functioning of the mental apparatus—not the *emotional* apparatus—is thus homeostatic, quietistic, and economic: the mental apparatus works to free itself from excitation and disturbance, both of which are associated with scenes of emotional trauma.

Given Freud’s theory of the emotions, it might not come as a surprise that I also judged him to be acutely insensitive to the fact that it might be preeminently “reasonable” to hold onto one’s grief.<sup>7</sup> If we still feel the pain of grief intensely, then perhaps the person we have lost will somehow return through the force of our refusal of the irreversibility of time. (This was my fervent wish.) Here is Didion on the ritual of disposing of her late husband’s clothes:

I was not yet prepared to address the suits and shirts and jackets but I thought I could handle what remained of the shoes, a start.

I stopped at the door to the room.

I could not give away the rest of his shoes.

I stood there for a moment, then realized why: he would need shoes if he was to return.

The recognition of this thought by no means eradicated the thought.

I have still not tried to determine (say, by giving away the shoes) if the thought has lost its power. (36–37)

As she lives through the year following his death, Didion doesn’t want to come to the end of her book, for the writing itself keeps her memories sharp and alive. If her magical thinking exposes the “shallowness of san-

ity,” at the same time her writing—she began *The Year of Magical Thinking* nine months into that year—gives her the perspective to understand her deranged experience (7). (I understand this. Remember, I wanted to follow the identical twin brother of the man I had lost.) Paul Monette remarks in *Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir*, to which I turn later in this book, that mourning is a form of self-compassion. In contrast Didion is hard, very hard on herself, insisting on judging herself severely for the self-pity that at times overtakes her.

It is a truth undeniable that what we once dismissed when younger we may understand—indeed value—when we are older. This is a good thing. Our place in the world in terms of age and experience powerfully shapes our views of everything, including the emotions, and hopefully growing older will give rise to both conviction and humility. In *The Year of Magical Thinking* Didion acknowledges exactly this: “I remember despising the book Dylan Thomas’s widow Caitlin wrote after her husband’s death, *Leftover Life to Kill*. I remember being dismissive of, even censorious about, her ‘self-pity,’ her ‘whining,’ her ‘dwelling on it.’ *Leftover Life to Kill* was published in 1957. I was twenty-two years old. Time is the school in which we learn” (198). She understands, now, the need to apologize for judging far too harshly the sentiments of the widow of Dylan Thomas. In the end Didion concludes that “if we are to live ourselves there comes a point at which we must relinquish the dead, let them go, keep them dead” (225–26). She is wiser than I was, it seems to me now. But she is also older than I was when my partner died. And if personally (of course) and theoretically (this may be more difficult to understand) I wanted to hold onto the pain of his loss, I also married within two years of his death. My husband—we have been married for twenty-eight years—*promised me* before we married that he will never die, and at some level I find myself reassured by this, magically so.

Although this is not a book about psychoanalysis and the emotions, Freud casts a large shadow over it because he provided me with my first sustained reading about what is called affect in psychoanalysis.<sup>8</sup> “Affect” names a crucial theoretical category in psychoanalytic theory and, more recently, in cultural studies.<sup>9</sup> I will generally not use the term in this book; I want instead to focus on specific emotions and to offer more texture to our emotional experience. (I will sometimes use the term “affective,” as in

“affective experience,” because the analogous phrase “emotional experience” can carry the unfortunate connotation of being overwrought.) I engage Freud at length in my chapter on anger, and I return to grief, psychoanalytically, at the end. I draw on psychoanalytic theory at various points, and I adopt a view of the structuring of the emotions that could be said to be Freudian (I will comment on this in a moment). Freud has also provided me with an important path to approaching the emotions, and that is the study of autobiography. Famously he turned to self-analysis in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, a book that can be understood as autobiography, plumbing his own experience, narrating it, and reading his dreams as keys to repressed desires and anxieties. Didion does this too, in fact, although not in as monumental a register. In *The Year of Magical Thinking* she turns to her dreams as a form of knowledge, albeit with a decided difference. She had, she tells us, a long-standing habit of telling her dreams to her husband. But after he died, she stopped dreaming completely. I find it fascinating that in the absence of her own night-time dreams she remembers a dream she had given to a character—Elena—in one of her novels, *The Last Thing He Wanted*. In her moment of intense need Didion turns to her own consciously-crafted dream from a decade earlier, one that had come uncannily to speak to her own anxieties in the present:

Elena’s dreams were about dying.

Elena’s dreams were about getting old.

Nobody here has not had (will not have) Elena’s dreams.

We all know that.

The point is that Elena didn’t.

The point is that Elena remained remote most of all to herself, a clandestine agent. (159–60)

With a shock of recognition Didion understands that Elena’s dream is her own, it belongs to her. Her husband’s life had protected her against the threat of her own mortality, and with his death she grows old in her own eyes, stunned into fear of frailty and into frailty itself. “I realize,” she writes, “that Elena’s situation is my own” (160). (This is chilling.) If her dream was created deliberately, it has waited for her, stored in her own fiction, safeguarded in what we might call her *writing unconscious* until she was ready to hear its message. “Elena’s dreams were about getting old. Nobody here has not had (will not have) Elena’s dreams.” Didion understands this now with the force of feeling. The death of her husband,

combined with her own gaunt fragility, transforms her into an old woman who has at that point no palpable sense of a foreseeable future.

Thus particularly important to me is the elaboration and analysis of autobiographical experience understood in an expanded field. This is one of the ways we learn not only about the emotions but also about the world, for the two are of course intimately related. We consult our emotions—they may be literary emotions as in Joan Didion’s case—as a way of disclosing our relation to the world around us. My primary textual touchstone in this book is a marvelous scene in Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* where the narrator attends to the emotional experience of her own spontaneous anger, which is—and this is where she and Freud definitively part company—transparently available to her. (This scene, which is in and of itself a short story, surfaces in three of the chapters to follow.) Woolf, moreover, honors her narrator’s experience. She doesn’t consider her anger “hysterical” or a screen for something else but rather values it and seeks to understand the reasons for it. Her anger has an epistemological edge, one that the philosopher Alison Jaggar calls attention to in her seminal essay “Love and Knowledge: Emotion and Knowledge in Feminist Epistemology.”<sup>10</sup> Anger is both a “personal” and a “political” emotion, one that discloses the unequal relations of power in which Woolf’s character is enmeshed. At stake is a cultural politics of the emotions.

My concern overall in this book is the cultural politics of the emotions in America since the 1950s, with an emphasis on texts from the late 1960s to the late 1990s. By cultural politics I mean to suggest two overlapping areas of inquiry that correspond to the two major parts of the book. Part 1, which contains four chapters, is titled “Cultural Politics, Communities of Feeling.” I focus on the cultural politics of the emotions with gender, age, and race as my primary interests, and I place under analysis the psychological emotions of anger, shame, and compassion. Indeed anger, it turns out, is the emotion of choice in this book, although grief receives pride of place. But a cultural politics of the emotions is not limited to identity politics or the politics of difference. Part 2, composed of three chapters, is called “Structures of Feeling, ‘New’ Feelings.” Here I place more pressure on feelings as sensitive and telling sensors that register emerging shifts in social and cultural formations. I turn to three “new” feelings (or categories of feeling) associated with changes in the culture of

postmodernity—an increasing sympathy for nonhuman cyborgs; what I call bureaucratic rage; and the potent feeling I call statistical panic. Underwriting part 2, then, is technological and institutional change—the emergence of robo sapiens, the mammoth medical bureaucracies that characterize the consumer society in which we are all considered potential patients, and the social technology that is statistics. It is not a coincidence that in all three chapters in this section I consider narratives of illness, most of them autobiographical.

Also underwriting this book is the conviction that we live in a time of the rapid circulation of the emotions. Indeed a new economy of the psychological emotions has been emerging in terms of gender. Receiving its impulse in great part from the youthful energy of the 1960s, the possibilities of an individual's emotional repertoire are expanding even as a culture of intensities, or sensations, is increasing. If anger is the feminist emotion of choice from the 1960s onward (and if in recent years anger is being embraced by older women too), we are also witnessing the emergence of the man of sentiment, as I observe in my chapter "Liberal Compassion, Compassionate Conservatism." The display of the emotion of grief, long considered unmanly, has been embraced by many men. As I suggest in my chapter on nonhuman cyborgs, the notion of sympathy, long understood to have the potential to knit together the human body politic (in particular across sites of bodily suffering), is being extended in our cultural imagination to nonhuman beings made in our own image, thereby bridging a divide between the organic human world and the technological lifeworld. We live in a time of the vertiginous emergence of new sensations. The panic that many of us feel, for example, at the pronouncement of a certain statistic (it may feel ominously like a verdict—I will turn to this in a moment) was simply not a possibility before the invention of the science, practice, and omnipresent deployment of statistics themselves. As this so clearly reveals, emotions and feelings have histories. Thus if my overall focus is on the latter part of the twentieth century, three chapters in this volume offer larger temporal frames by counterpointing texts from the first part of the twentieth century with texts from the latter part of the twentieth century.

One of my major points is this: we all have experience of the emotions and shouldn't hesitate to draw on it—reflecting on it, turning it over in our

minds, watching when a certain emotion subsides and is replaced by another, and placing it in perspective in the arc of our own personal lives and in the context of social constraints, commands, and controls as well as larger historical change. As Jaggar has written, "Time spent in analyzing emotions and uncovering their sources should be viewed . . . neither as irrelevant to theoretical investigation nor even as a prerequisite for it" (164). This is one of the reasons why quite a few of the texts discussed in this work are memoirs. Some are long and some are short, but all are telling reflections on emotional experience that makes a difference. For that is what a memoir is—a reflection on experience and a shaping of that experience into a narrative, a discovery of meaning and a creating of meaning that can rise to a poetics of expression and understanding through the plot of a story and the texture of words, yielding thought inextricably intertwined with feeling. In my chapter on the cultural politics of anger and aging, for example, I turn to *Look Me in the Eye* by the lesbian activist Barbara Macdonald. In the important tradition of *A Room of One's Own*, Macdonald interrogates the flaring rage she felt as an older woman at the unintended ageist gesture of a younger woman. This method—the reading of emotional experience—mirrors an assignment I gave in a recent graduate seminar on the cultural politics and poetics of the emotions. I asked the participants each to choose an emotion to research, with the further request that rather than bracketing their own affective experience of the emotion they should consult it. My point was not to solicit confessional material but to refuse the firewall that has been erected between what is erroneously understood to be only "personal" experience (for of course it is socially inflected and shaped) and "impersonal" or "objective" academic research on the emotions. It is correctly considered an academic virtue to interrogate our thinking. Self-reflexive thought is honored. Analogously we should do so as well with our feelings.

I have also attended to my own experience. But for the most part the traces are invisible except for here and there a few small stories cast predominantly in a lighthearted vein or observations offered in a more solemn register. This choice is no doubt a matter of temperament. While I am a serious person given to reading books in solitude (*anywhere*—at home, on the bus and airplanes, in airports, you name it) and have also had my own singular share of experience, in the company of others I tend to be high-spirited and sociable, expressing a comic view of life.

Still, here it seems important to explain that the chapter entitled "Statis-

tical Panic" began to take shape as I puzzled over the fast-moving sequence of feelings I had while reading the draft of a chapter about Social Security in a book manuscript by one of our country's most distinguished and beloved gerontologists. In an alternately galvanizing, numbing, and reassuring enumeration of national statistics about the increasing proportion of the population in the United States that is sixty-five and older and the concomitant necessity to strengthen Social Security (with which I heartily agree), I suddenly found myself in a panic when I read a sentence describing how much money "one" would need in retirement. In today's financial terms the sentence would go something like this: "If one needs \$80,000 per year from savings (not counting social security or a pension), has \$100,000 in investments, saves \$5,000 a year, and plans to retire in five years at the age of sixty-five, one would need \$1,655,220 in *after-tax* dollars on the last day of work; this amount would have to earn eight percent, but about 3.5 percent would disappear with inflation . . ." WHAT? I remember instantly snapping alert. In a split second "one" turned into "I." I was singled out. I would need *what* in personal savings if I were to *retire* (what does that mean anyway?) and wanted to generate \$80,000 a year in constant dollars? How, if I were sixty, could I possibly save \$1,555,220 in *five* years? What possibly—impossibly—could that mean I would need fifteen years from now? I felt myself targeted as a reader, impaled on what seemed to me to be an astronomical figure, panicked at my financial future (and in the United States women live on the average five and a half years longer than men—that's the good news and the bad news).<sup>11</sup> What I would call my *economic* panic had infinitely more to do with an anxiety about the future than it did the avidity of greed. It signaled the financialization of everyday life that the cultural critic Randy Martin has so astutely identified. (How did I allay that anxiety? Among other things I formulated, mordantly, a "rational" response to these financial figures, calculating against my self-interest that I could save a lot of money by simply dying earlier!)

I conceived my notion of statistical panic as I reflected on this telling experience of financial panic in tandem with reading the historian Alice Wexler's book *Mapping Fate* and seeing the independent filmmaker Yvonne Rainer's film *MURDER and murder*, both of which deal with statistics about disease. Thus, methodologically, at certain starting points in this book I draw on what might be called a critical phenomenology of the

emotions and feelings, attending to them and placing them in social and historical contexts, much as did Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*.

1

This book takes its title from the chapter "Statistical Panic," crucial to which is Raymond Williams's elastic notion of "structures of feeling," a conceptual lever that also informs the other chapters in part 2. I thus turn here to elaborating the ways in which I understand "structures of feeling" through the prism of that chapter. Notoriously difficult to define, Williams's notion of "structures of feeling"—indeed the very phrase itself—insists on the vital interpenetration of social structures and subjectivity, one mediated by forms of culture.<sup>12</sup> In the seven-page section devoted to "Structures of Feeling" in *Marxism and Literature*, Williams's concern is to find a way to feel the pulse of social change, to grasp what is emerging, to reveal it in its "generative immediacy," to preserve it, and above all, not to reduce it (133). For Williams, literature and art offer openings onto our always emerging world. They are themselves structures that embody forms of feeling—in tone and rhythm, color and diction, nuance and detail. At stake is a cultural poetics as well as a politics of the emotions. Literature and art serve as witness, as it were, to the ongoing process of social change. What is altogether important to Williams is to find a way to hold onto the intangible texture and force—the *presence*, which is for him a form of life itself. In using an analogy familiar from high school chemistry, Williams explains that "structures of feeling can be defined as social experiences in solution" as opposed to social experiences that have been struck into their "precipitants" or catalogued according to their separate components. In these forms of apprehension, feeling and thought are not divided from each other but are interrelated. What is at issue, Williams insists, is "specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating continuity" (132). "Methodologically, then, a 'structure of feeling' is a cultural hypothesis," he proposes, "actually derived from attempts to understand such elements and their connections in a generation or period" (132–33).

If some fifteen years ago it could be said that the concept of "structures of feeling" had not been taken up by others, this is assuredly not the case

in recent years where it has enabled much work on the emotions in literary, cultural, and performance studies.<sup>13</sup> It is perhaps because of its very ambiguity that it has proven so suggestive, albeit in different ways. For some it provides a crucial theoretical lever for taking up the general project of the cultural politics of the emotions. For others it offers an understanding of experience as simultaneously cultural, discursive, and embodied, with feeling a site for insight into social control. For still others it articulates the connection between a particular genre or mode of performance and the politics of emotions in a certain historical moment or period.

There are three overlapping ways in which the notion of “structures of feeling” underwrites “Statistical Panic.” The first is epistemological and returns us to Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* and Alison Jaggar’s essay “Love and Knowledge.” For in retrospect it’s clear to me that I have read Williams’s notion of “structures of feeling” through Woolf’s dramatic scene in which the writer questions the anger she felt as the target of male anger—and vice versa. Woolf’s important piece, cast in a mode that is both narrative and analytical, merges the two such that feeling is the ground of thought and thought is profoundly felt, thereby providing us with a sense of the lived experience of the emergence of feminism at that particular point in history and offering us the model that thinking originates in a subjectivity that is embodied. Indeed Woolf also refers in *A Room of One’s Own* to what I have called “new” feelings in a way that would have pleased, I think, Raymond Williams. In articulating a sense of social history as expressed through comparative poetics, Woolf compares poetry that is altogether familiar and conveys “old” feelings (she is thinking of Tennyson and Christina Rossetti) with the modern poetry of her place and time: “The living poets express a feeling that is actually being made and torn out of us at the moment,” she writes. “One does not recognize it in the first place; often for some reason one fears it; one watches it with keenness and compares it jealously and suspiciously with the old feeling that one knew” (14). Williams has been severely criticized for his “literary exceptionalism,” for elevating literature to this position of privilege.<sup>14</sup> But it is certainly worth repeating that Williams’s emphasis is on a certain form or way of knowing, one that brings together feeling and thought and does not separate them; there is thus an implicit epistemology of feeling at stake in his very idea of literature and art.

It’s also evident to me that I have read Woolf’s literary piece through

Jaggar’s philosophical essay, further underscoring the epistemological edge of emotion that, in a dialectical relation to thought, can serve to disclose the structures of the world in which we are situated. As Jaggar writes, “Rather than repressing emotion in epistemology it is necessary to rethink the relation between knowledge and emotion and construct conceptual models that demonstrate the mutually constitutive rather than oppositional relation between reason and emotion” (157). Jaggar’s excellent essay is complex and I can’t address the many issues that it raises here. But central to it is her notion of “outlaw” emotions: “People who experience conventionally unacceptable, or what I call ‘outlaw,’ emotions often are subordinated individuals who pay a disproportionately high price for maintaining the status quo. The social situation of such people makes them unable to experience the conventionally prescribed emotions: for instance, people of color are more likely to experience anger than amusement when a racist joke is recounted, and women subjected to male sexual banter are less likely to be flattered than uncomfortable or even afraid” (160). Jaggar concludes that being in a subordinate position offers the possibility of epistemological privilege and that therefore we would do well to consult our feelings, reflecting critically on them, to reveal these imbalances of power. As she writes, “Only when we reflect on our initially puzzling irritability, revulsion, anger, or fear may we bring to consciousness our ‘gut-level’ awareness that we are in a situation of coercion, cruelty, injustice, or danger” (161). The extent to which this is possible—and when—I take up in my chapters on anger and shame in particular.

Jaggar is concerned with the politics of difference, as am I in several of the chapters of this book. But we can enlarge her analysis beyond the intersecting politics of difference. Indeed situations of coercion or danger may prove more intangible and difficult to identify when they are more diffuse or distributed seemingly innocuously in virtually every dimension of everyday life to the point of disappearance. Thus in my chapter on statistical panic I attend to the feelings of fear voiced in Rainer’s film about breast cancer, including her own contraction of the disease and her mastectomy. I also attend to the feelings of confusion that Wexler reports in her book about Huntington’s disease. Both Rainer and Wexler were haunted, if not stalked, by statistics of disease, and both women provide us with the palpable sense of the lived experience of statistical panic, as well as offer reflections upon it. They thus call our attention in striking ways to



the dominating hold this experience can have on us. For statistical panic is not limited or confined to a particular class or age group, gender or race. It is an equal-opportunity experience.

The second way in which the notion of “structures of feeling” underwrites statistical panic is as an intimation of new and emerging social formations. As Williams provocatively suggests, “Methodologically, then, a ‘structure of feeling’ is a cultural hypothesis, actually derived from attempts to understand such elements and their connections in a generation or period” (132–33). Our generation or period? Statistical panic discloses the society of the statistic, one underwritten by the sense of omnipresent risk. In my chapter on statistical panic the focus is on risks to the body from disease, the ground of which is the medicalized, mediatized, and marketized world in which we live. But this is just one sign of what we might call the statistical hegemony in which we find ourselves in the twenty-first century, where statistical probabilities—about the effects of global warming, of avian flu, or the probability of hurricanes hitting our coasts—bombard our everyday life. Of course it goes without saying that since September 11, 2001, risk has taken on another altogether potent dimension by adding the politics of the everyday fear of terrorism to the volatile mix. Moreover the society of the statistic is but one “element,” to use Williams’s word, of postmodernity: a world increasingly characterized by a pervasive sense of precariousness—of insecurity, uncertainty, and what the critical sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has called “unsafety.”<sup>15</sup>

Finally, I also understand “structure of feeling” in the sense suggested by an example Williams offers in *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review*, in which he describes the dominant middle-class structure of feeling in the British 1840s as “an anxious oscillation between sympathy for the oppressed and fear of their violence” (166). What interests me here is the idea of an emotional spectrum anchored by two related—and opposite—feelings about something. These feelings are themselves embedded in a structure; in this sense a “structure of feeling” does not have one emotion or feeling at stake, but fundamentally two that are inter-related. In the instance mentioned by Williams, fear and sympathy are involved. In “Statistical Panic” I suggest that the “structure of feeling” is characterized by statistical panic at one extreme and statistical boredom at the other (or alternatively, in another scenario, I could imagine statistical panic and statistical hope). Further, I contrast the shock and boredom linked with modernity at the turn of the twentieth century with the statisti-

cal panic and statistical boredom I associate with the postmodern consumer society at the turn of the twenty-first century. In so doing I historicize feelings of panic and boredom by relating them to the emergence of different kinds of technologies. Given my debt to Freud, it is not surprising that this view of the emotions is itself profoundly Freudian, with feelings understood as related in terms of opposites or in terms of their “logical” sequence.<sup>16</sup> Thus at certain points in this book my aim is to trace linked sequences of the emotions.

I understand statistical panic not as a psychological emotion (anger, jealousy, and grief are notable examples of psychological emotions), but rather as a sensation or intensity, one that is at base a charged anxiety. At the other pole of this structure of feeling is statistical boredom, a state characterized by *lack* of emotion—one *devoid* of sensation or intensity. Enter Fredric Jameson’s essay “Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” which appeared in 1984 and is still resonant today. In this seminal essay he suggests that postmodern culture is characterized by “the waning of affect.” By this Jameson means that the psychological depth that distinguished the culture of modernism (the deep anxiety of alienation is an example) has been succeeded in postmodern culture by an insistence on flatness and on surfaces, an insistence that is reinforced by the extreme penetration of commodification in our everyday lives. Jameson calls our attention to the postmodern aesthetic of surfaces and fragments found in the work of Andy Warhol and John Cage, Samuel Beckett and Robert Wilson, Nam June Paik and William Gibson, work I would argue is characterized by intensities on the one hand and boredom on the other, a structure of feeling endemic—if not epidemic—to postmodern culture. “As for expression and feelings or emotions, the liberation, in contemporary society, from the older *anomie* of the centered subject may also mean not merely a liberation from anxiety but a liberation from every other kind of feeling as well” (15), Jameson writes, with such psychological emotions being replaced by “intensities” (16).<sup>17</sup>

This passage has been often quoted and commented upon. But we should remember that in this essay Jameson doesn’t engage at any length the question of the emotional styles or experience of actual people. In referring to postmodern culture as marked by the “waning of affect,” Jameson doesn’t mean of course that we no longer experience feelings of

love and hate, jealousy and shame: emotions that bind us to others. His concern is to identify the culturally dominant aesthetic of postmodernism related to the emergence of global capitalism. Indeed he deplors what he refers to as “culture-and-personality diagnosis” of society and art (26). I do not think, however, it is a mere accident that Jameson’s periodizing distinction between modernism and postmodernism in terms of the emotions, with his emphasis on *affectlessness* in contemporary culture, resonates with work that appeared in the late 1980s and mid-1990s in such disparate fields as history, psychoanalysis, and neurology, work to which I now briefly turn.

In *American Cool: Constructing a Twentieth-Century Emotional Style*, the historian Peter Stearns argues that between 1920 and 1950 a cultural preference for “coolness” emerged in the United States. The strength of the emotions so prized in American Victorian culture became suspect in and of itself, and psychological emotions (Stearns devotes attention in particular to grief, jealousy, and anger) came to be perceived—and experienced—not only as “bad” but at the extreme as pathogenic. Over the three decades he examines Stearns shows that a progressive diminution—or cooling—of the emotions took place and that ultimately this kind of psychological emotional intensity itself came to be seen as “a barrier rather than a bond” in the maintenance of relationships between people (199); “It was often the emotional individual,” he concludes, “not the object of his or her emotion, who was seen as requiring remediation” (230). While Stearns attributes this development to multiple forces, he insists that our expanding consumer culture required the suppression of the emotions and the cultivation of impersonality, and he rues the loss of what he calls the intensity of the psychological emotions associated with Victorian culture, a kind of intensity so unlike the “intensities” Jameson identifies as key to postmodern culture.

If Stearns regrets our culture’s devaluation of strong feelings that connect us both to others and to ideals, then Christopher Bollas in his book *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known* has given this cultural phenomenon a name—“normotic illness.” As a psychoanalyst he is primarily concerned with the childhood roots of normotic illness. But Bollas also connects the emergence of this disorder to the demands of today’s commodity culture. He describes a person who suffers from normotic illness as betraying a *lack of subjectivity*—in particular, a lack of self-regarding feelings. A normotic person is one who is “abnormally normal”

(136), who “lives contentedly among material objects and phenomena” but doesn’t experience subjective states within the self (137). A normotic is a person whose life is organized in terms of activity and routines, who seems consistently stable and outgoing, who is surrounded by material objects sought not for symbolic purposes—they hold no subjective or symbolic meaning—but for purely functional reasons. There is a sense in which normotic illness can be described in terms of interior emptiness. But as understood by Bollas, the anguish and stupor associated with depression as theorized by Julia Kristeva in *Black Sun* and described by Andrew Solomon in *Noonday Demon* are not at all at stake. Indeed in a very real sense, *there is no interior*. In normotic illness we see the incarnation of the emotional style required by society that Stearns has called “American cool.” It is not just that a person psychologically invests more in material objects than in relationships with other people. Rather, it is that *the self is conceived of as an object*, a material object, or, as Bollas puts it, as “an object with no subject” (156).

What would be the extreme manifestation of this emotionless individual? The neurologist Antonio Damasio offers an answer. In *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, Damasio recounts the case history of his patient Elliot, a former businessman who undergoes surgery to remove a frontal lobe brain tumor. He emerges retaining his mental abilities and memory, but he displays no emotions whatsoever and is no longer able to make any decisions regarding anything, himself included.<sup>18</sup> I imagine Elliot as a computer complete with every conceivable variable but with no program for reaching a conclusion, calculating endlessly in terms of contemporary culture’s hyper values of costs and benefits, taking into account every possible factor but remaining paralyzed until he does what someone else tells him to do or blurts into action. His “process” of making a decision is a tragic parody of economic rationality, one that does not involve his own interests at all. As Damasio writes, “The cold-bloodedness of Elliot’s reasoning prevented him from assigning different values to different options, and made his decision-making landscape hopelessly flat,” as flat as his emotions (51). A person like Elliot will report that he feels fine and yet experiences no emotional life whatsoever. His ability to identify even with his own suffering has been destroyed. We could put it this way: he is no longer capable of telling his own story or, in psychoanalytic terms, of speaking his own desire, for it no longer exists. Unlike Virginia Woolf’s writer in *A Room of One’s Own*, his disastrous

standpoint on his own life is that of “a dispassionate, uninvolved spectator” (44). Elliot thus serves Damasio as a parable of the potential tragic consequences of our culture’s devaluation of the emotions, in particular of our lack of understanding of the interaction of emotion and reason as grounded in the body.

Thus if at the turn of the twentieth century Freud theorized the emotions as negative, as something to be gotten rid of, we might say that at the end of the twentieth century attention has turned to the *lack* of what I have been calling the psychological emotions as something seriously to regret. What we call mental or emotional illness has a cultural history, with different kinds of illnesses dominant in certain periods. We identify the hysteric with the Victorian repression of sexuality and with turn-of-the-century Freudian psychoanalysis. We associate what is called the borderline personality with a person in whom a lack of feeling and a feeling of nothingness predominates; dissociation is one of the symptoms.<sup>19</sup> The midcentury appearance of the category of the borderline patient, Stearns argues in *American Cool*, is connected to the growing emphasis in the United States on the negative value of the strong emotions and the corresponding injunction to control them—to ventilate them, as he puts it. (Lest we think this is an exaggeration and no longer characteristic of our moment we need only consider the medicalization of the emotions in the pamphlet *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: A Real Illness* issued in 2005 by the National Institutes of Mental Health; here we learn that everyday anger and fear can be read as symptoms of the omnipresent disorder of PTSD, one virtually *everyone* seems to be suffering from, and that these emotions need to be excised.)<sup>20</sup> As Nancy K. Miller and Jason Tougaw insist in *Extremities: Trauma, Testimony, and Community*, “If every age has its symptoms, ours appears to be the age of trauma” (1). In a lighter vein, consider a cartoon that appeared in 2007 in the *New Yorker*: a man lying on the therapeutic couch says to the analyst behind him, “Could we up the dosage? I still have feelings.”<sup>21</sup>

What disease could be said to characterize the first decade of the twenty-first century? It is, I would suggest, the phenomenon of autism that has taken our cultural imagination by storm. An illness commonly understood as characterized by the tragic inability to read the emotions of others and to establish affective bonds, autism is a disorder that confines people to a world of intensities, uncannily resonating with our media-crazed culture of sensation.<sup>22</sup>

In *New Maladies of the Soul*, Julia Kristeva insists that “the end of the possibility of *telling a story*” is characteristic of contemporary culture, dominated as it is by a market-and-image economy (43). I too am concerned about the psychic impoverishment that our media-saturated culture underwrites by promoting high-speed intense sensation at the expense of the psychological dimension of our lives. Thus in this book a cultural poetics of the emotions is also at stake for me. This is one of the reasons I have adopted a more literary and less argumentative mode at the outset of this introductory chapter. This is why I have been threading passages from Didion’s *The Year of Magical Thinking* throughout these opening pages, understanding that my own thought and feeling is an irresistible collaboration between other lives and other texts.<sup>23</sup> This explains my admiration in the pages that follow for the expressive and reflective force of literary work in different modes, including (to give just three examples) Toni Morrison’s evocative prose in her short novel *The Bluest Eye*, Michael Cunningham’s science fiction novella *Like Beauty* in his eloquent book *Specimen Days*, and the moving autobiographical prose poem entitled “At the End of the Line” by the French psychoanalyst J.-B. Pontalis.

A potent antidote to the hectoring intensity of statistical panic is the *story*, a narrative that both expresses that feeling and reflects upon it or, to refer once again to Raymond Williams, a narrative in which a “practical consciousness” is involved, “not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought” (132). I am a person who loves literature, and so it may not come as a surprise that here I understand one genre as providing commentary on another genre. One kind of narrative—here an autobiographical one—serves as a self-reflexive commentary on another kind of narrative, what in the chapter on bureaucratic rage I call the “information-story”—that is, a narrative that has been reduced to an unfeeling fragment. Thus countering a fragment, or providing nuanced context for an information-story, is a more ample narrative—a *story*.<sup>24</sup> I also agree with Donna Haraway, in her comments in *The Companion Species Manifesto*, that “stories are much bigger than ideologies. In that is our hope” (17).

As Michelle Rosaldo, one of the founding figures of the anthropology of the emotions, wrote in a landmark essay, “Affects, whatever their similarities, are no more similar than the societies in which we live”; “the life of

feeling is an aspect of the social world" (145). Her research was on the Ilongot people of the Philippines, specifically how they experienced and practiced anger (many would find it a surprising challenge to the western notion that we should not "repress" our anger lest it escape in explosion). Rosaldo's concern was to underscore the ways in which cultures shape our emotional lives. "Feelings are not substances to be discovered in our blood," she insisted, "but social practices organized by stories we both enact and tell" (143).<sup>25</sup> Although she was referring to large cultural narratives about the emotions, I want to take her at her literal word and place the emphasis on the word "stories." For as many people have pointed out, we learn emotions through the medium of stories. The kinds of stories I am privileging here—many of them are book length, others are stories so short they might be called anecdotes—embody for me feeling as thought and thought as feeling.<sup>26</sup> In part 1 many of these stories rewrite dominant cultural scenarios of the emotions; in part 2 many draw attention to what I am calling "new" feelings—sympathy for nonhuman cyborgs, bureaucratic rage, and statistical panic.

As I write this I realize how much I have missed the very telling of stories in cultural studies and literary criticism. I miss the life that a story brings to discussion and analysis. I miss the intertwining of the two. What might be termed professional affect has a dominant style at any given point in time.<sup>27</sup> Notwithstanding the practice of what came to be called personal criticism in feminist literary studies during the 1980s and 1990s, the prevailing tone in cultural and literary studies is what I would call *professional cool*. The expository argument has assumed center stage, and I have come to feel an emptiness and insufficiency and colorlessness in the reduction of our work to argument. I suspect in fact that one of the reasons so much research on the emotions has appeared in the academy over the past twenty years is that it has served as compensation for the anesthetization of the emotions in academic life, a profession saturated with stringent rules of emotionless rationality in relation to research itself and to writing. Thus it is that I am interested in the literary emotions.<sup>28</sup>

In lieu of strict definitions I offer these thoughts about my "emotional" vocabulary. Research by anthropologists, historians, and literary critics over the past twenty years has shown us that the emotions have fascinating histories and that emotional experience varies in remarkable ways across

cultures.<sup>29</sup> I have been referring to what I call the psychological emotions as binding emotions—those that connect us to other people (either positively or negatively), with anger, shame, and compassion (or sympathy) as the prime instances that I take up in the chapters to follow. Thus for me these psychological emotions are social emotions. They may attach us to members of the nonhuman world as well, as I suggest in "Sympathy for Nonhuman Cyborgs."

I am, of course, well aware that histories have been written of the emergence of the very category of the "psychological" emotions. Indeed in *Marxism and Literature* Williams himself calls attention to the "psychological" as one the "great modern ideological systems" in the West (129).<sup>30</sup> One of many points of departure is Freud's own conceptualization of affect as profoundly private and often so deeply hidden in our interior spaces that it is unknown even to ourselves. In response feminists, among others, have shown how the emotions, shaped by cultural norms and practices, can be collective as well as personal, thus underscoring the mutually constitutive nature of subjectivity and sociality. An important case in point is the sociologist Arlie Hochschild's pioneering work in *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, her classic study of the commodification of the emotions that, in a service economy populated predominantly by women, are themselves for sale and performed as part of the job, thereby creating the possibility of alienation from one's "own" feelings. Focusing on flight attendants (most of them women), Hochschild coined the important term "emotional labor," arguing that feelings "are not stored 'inside us,' and they are not independent of acts of management" (17).<sup>31</sup> (What does it tell about me that for years now I have been consistently mistaken in airports and on airplanes for a flight attendant?)

Similarly, poststructuralist theorists have insisted on the decisive role that language plays in shaping our world, a role in which we are spoken by language and not the other way around. Literary and rhetorical critics of earlier historical periods as well as historians have discovered other forms of feeling at work. Adela Pinch in her book *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen*, for example, asks of her period and place, where do feelings come from? What she finds is that in England in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth, feelings were often understood as extravagantly wayward—transpersonal and seemingly autonomous in and of themselves, coming from other people and, wonder-

fully, from books. This is a strong view of the emotions at odds with that of the psychological view of the emotions as originating in a deep interior.<sup>32</sup> In *How Novels Think: The Limits of Individualism from 1719–1900*, Nancy Armstrong basically picks up where Pinch leaves off, arguing that the very form of the British novel provides the ground for the emergence of the self-possessed individual, one whose interiority offers a way of exceeding the constraints that characterized their social position.<sup>33</sup> Armstrong provocatively suggests that the strategies adopted by the novel at various points in time—ambivalence, repetition, and displacement, among them—were transformed by Freud into the theoretical figures by which unconscious desire expresses itself. The rhetorician Susan Miller, drawing on the long tradition of commonplace books, traces across nineteenth-century America the emergence of the discourse of the privatized and interiorized emotions—what we can call the aesthetic of psychological realism.<sup>34</sup> Accounts of our experience are never transparent. They are always shaped by cultural values and codes. I understand the contingency and critique of the psychological self. But I do not therefore wish to give up the psychological emotions.

That we must choose one view over the other—either the emotions arise within us or they come from outside of us—has characterized recent research, with an emphasis on the latter view. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, for example, Sara Ahmed rejects the Freudian model. “Rather than emotions being understood as coming from within and moving outwards, emotions are assumed to *come from without and move inward*,” she explains. “An ‘outside in’ model is also evident in approaches to ‘crowd psychology,’ where it is assumed that the crowd *has feelings*, and that the individual gets drawn into the crowd by feeling the crowd’s feelings as its own” (9).<sup>35</sup> Emile Durkheim’s book *The Rules of Sociological Method*, published in 1895, is for Ahmed a key paradigm of the generation of affect from within a crowd and not the individual; contagion is the metaphor at work. The late Teresa Brennan also challenges the Freudian notion of the bounded individual as the source of the affects and drives. “My theory,” she writes, “is an alternative to psychoanalytic theory or metapsychology in that it postulates an origin for affects that is independent of the individual experiencing them. These affects come from the other, but we deny them” (13).<sup>36</sup> Like Ahmed, she too draws on theories of the crowd, although her reference points are the French social psychologist Gustave Le Bon, whose book on the psychology of the crowd also appeared in 1895,

and the British psychoanalyst Winfred Bion whose work on groups appeared at midcentury.

It can be no coincidence that both Freudian depth psychology and the psychology of crowds took shape at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>37</sup> These two paradigms of the emotions that emerged in modernity—the psychological and the sociological—are two sides of the same coin. Accepting the category of the psychological emotions is not incompatible with the view that emotions can also originate outside the self. As we see in the case of feminist anger, emotions that have their origins in social experiences *become* psychological emotions. Such social emotions can be strategic, as I have already mentioned. In referring to Durkheim, among other thinkers, Mette Hjort in *The Strategy of Letters* also takes up the question of the strategic value of the emotions. “The main point is that social emotions,” she concludes, “tend to produce a very particular form of interdependence, namely *reciprocal interdependence*” (185–86). Notwithstanding her debt to Durkheim, Hjort associates the social emotions with the strategic generation of positive feeling and with what she calls “positive freedom” (186).<sup>38</sup> Thus in the chapters that follow I admit no necessary contradiction between the psychological emotions that have their origin in the self (grief would be such an example) and the social emotions that have their origin in a group (feminist anger would be an example).<sup>39</sup>

At the same time I understand, in the spirit of Brennan’s *The Transmission of Affect*, that unwanted emotions can circulate far and wide. It can be a heavy burden to carry other people’s psychological emotions for them, as Brennan explains, in stressing the cultural division of emotional labor according to gender (women, for example, as unfortunate repositories of men’s anger, a dynamic in Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*). But it is my temperament to accentuate the positive, not the negative, and I admit to being partial to the psychological emotions. It need hardly be said that they lend depth and tone and nuance to our lives. They are expressions of what is meaningful to us. Indeed it may very well be that today’s suspicion in cultural studies of the very notion of the psychological emotions—the view that the belief in a meaningful interior life is a telltale symptom of the neoliberal conception of the autonomous individual whose emotions are a fetishized form of private property—is itself a *symptom* of the expanding global capitalism of media culture. I’m reminded of the heart-rending words of one of the psychoanalyst Marion Milner’s patients who longed for the experience of interiority. Diagnosed with schizophrenia, she was

twenty-two years old when she experienced *for the first time* the feeling of being in the world and in her body. For the first time she felt—this is how she expressed it—that her emotions were “inside her,” endowing her with a sense of vibrancy and coherence between the inside world and the outside world (this feeling tragically disappeared in the wake of shock therapy, which left her empty, with no inner world or inner perceptions).<sup>40</sup> To repeat my epigraph from Pontalis, “It’s rare nowadays to hear words which, belonging to no one in particular, can be the property of anyone, words that are solid and inexhaustible like ‘grief’ or ‘hatred’” (103). What a shame that today a psychoanalyst, of all people, finds these words in short supply. Grief. Anger. Compassion. We need to hear these words and claim them as our own. As Didion writes, “Grief turns out to be a place none of us know until we reach it” (188). She is right.

My project thus departs from—but at certain points also joins—that of Brian Massumi who in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* theorizes a philosophy of “affect,” where affect is similar to what Jameson calls intensities, not a signifying practice. Massumi is following Deleuze (who was following Spinoza). “There seems to be a growing feeling within media, literary, and art theory that affect is central to an understanding of our information- and image-based late capitalist culture,” Massumi writes, but “emotion and affect—if affect is intensity—follow different logics and pertain to different orders” (27). As he explains: “An emotion is a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal. Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized” (28). I agree that affect is key to understanding our information and image culture. I agree that intensities and psychological emotions follow different logics. Indeed that is an assumption in this book. But I do not dismiss the psychological emotions as, in Massumi’s words, “owned emotions” that are “old surprises to which we have become more or less accustomed” (220–21). In my chapters on bureaucratic rage and statistical panic (both of which name what I would call affects or intensities), my point is that reflecting feelingly on our experience helps us *recognize*—I borrow Massumi’s word here—the assault to which we are

being submitted.<sup>41</sup> We live in a mixed economy of feelings, one characterized by both the psychological emotions and intensities, and my point is that they often stand in *dialectical relationship* to each other, with the narration of our experience a crucial capacity. *Emotion* can be *intensity* recognized, redescribed, and owned, understood as if for the first time.

We have witnessed a waning of the psychological emotions and are subjected to an increase in sensations, or intensities, in postmodernity, characterized as it is by a rampant consumer culture of manufactured and simulated excitement (one that is also boring), ever-expanding channels of mass-mediated information, exploding networks of digital communication, and new and multiple forms of visual entertainment. In fact it could certainly be said that the affect of the crowd at the turn of the twentieth century has been succeeded by the affect of media culture at the turn of the twenty-first century. The media could be said to abet affective epidemics, where anger is one of the emotions of choice.<sup>42</sup> The film critic David Denby, writing in the *New Yorker* about Quentin Tarantino’s *Kill Bill Vol. 2*, describes the film’s “anger” as a “mock” emotion (he uses scare quotes around anger to make sure it is understood as a flat version of in-depth, intense emotion). Television, radio, and the Internet present us with what my colleague Nikhil Singh, referring to the likes of Ann Coulter, Bill O’Reilly, Nancy Grace, and Howard Stern, has called “talk show affect,” where, in pelletlike quotas of angry affect, anger is distributed scattershot as intensities.

Grief too can be stunted by the media, with the critical dimension of duration foreshortened to virtually zero. In the wake of the deadly attack by a student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in April 2007 in which thirty-two people were killed by gunshot, media anchors and news reporters began talking about beginning the healing process even *before* the number of the dead had been determined. I call this tv grief. In the crosshairs of the media the depth of shame can be turned inside out, twisted into a hollow and preening exhibitionism presenting us with reality-tv feelings. Conversely, the paparazzi voyeurism of multiple screens may target ordinary individuals with mock feelings igniting murderous rage, an example of which I take up in my chapter on shame. At the same time we are urged to get over our feelings.

Video games hardwire us to seek ever-increasing violent thrills, and commercials—compressed to seconds—are downloaded on our cell phones. In postmodern culture the large-scale narrative has been compressed to an

image fragment.<sup>43</sup> Sound bites and image fragments are *affect bites*. I take up these issues in my chapter on statistical panic where I identify intensities as short-lived feelings that attach us not to *people* but rather suture us to the task—it is a form of work—of avoiding risk in our society of ever-increasing risk.<sup>44</sup> Here the affect bite that is statistical panic is countered by the psychological emotion of anger—or better, outrage—an anger that is analytical. It has a cognitive edge.

Didion too articulates this phenomenon in *The Year of Magical Thinking*. In the aftermath of her husband's death she finds herself worrying, worrying about medication statistics:

I fretted for example over a Bayer commercial for a low-dose aspirin that was said to “significantly reduce” the risk of heart attack. I knew perfectly well how aspirin reduces the risk of heart attack: it keeps the blood from clotting. I also knew that John was taking Coumadin, a far more powerful anticoagulant. Yet I was seized nonetheless by the possible folly of having overlooked low-dose aspirin. I fretted similarly over a study done by UC-San Diego and Tufts showing a 4.65 percent increase in cardiac death over the fourteen-day period of Christmas and New Year's. I fretted over a study from Vanderbilt demonstrating that erythromycin quintupled the risk of cardiac arrest if taken in conjunction with common heart medications. I fretted over a study on statins, and the 30 to 40 percent jump in the risk of heart attack for patients who stopped taking them.

As I recall this I realize how open we are to the persistent message that we can avert death. (205–6)

In order to avoid death, the unmistakable message is that we must reduce our risk by consuming these products. If we don't, the result is what I call statistical guilt, and it is one that Didion counters—she has come to understand how it works—by embedding it in her larger story.

Finally, throughout this book at times I also use the word “feelings,” as we do in everyday life, to refer either to the psychological emotions or to intensities (such as the sensations—and lack thereof—that can be said to characterize modernity and postmodernity). The matter of mood I take up in my last chapter, where I focus on the poetic power of a literary mood. As Lawrence Grossberg has explained, if desire is focused on an object and is goal-oriented, then mood arises out of a situation and gives to it a distinctive tone or atmosphere. A mood is an affective space, a state of body and

mind, one in which thought and feeling can be indistinguishable from each other.<sup>45</sup> Christopher Bollas theorizes the generative power of moods as a psychic process akin to dreaming. In my discussion of the piece by Pontalis with which I close this book, it is the process of writing that is akin to dreaming. It is writing that creates for us an evocative object in and of itself, one that speaks of an elegiac hope and in its small and treasured way may help to reshape our culture's politics of the emotions through a poetics of the emotions.<sup>46</sup>

Thus to the Coda I give the subtitle “Inexhaustible Grief” in homage to the sentiments of Pontalis. If my first chapter focuses on Freud and takes an analytic approach to his own analysis of anger over an almost forty-year period, my last words embrace this poetic piece of prose by Pontalis that offers us what Freud could not in “Mourning and Melancholia”—the feeling of the grief to come and the moving impulse to repair broken bonds in a fragile world.<sup>47</sup> This book concludes on the note of feeling, albeit one marked by analysis, reflecting my honoring of analysis that is literary but also my growing sense of its increasing lack of connection to our lives—my conviction that much of it, like the professional literature that Didion read in her search for understanding her grief, is *unfeeling*.

altogether remarkable for its vitality and range and its immediacy and deeply felt intelligence, Sandra Gilbert considers the elegy through the converging prisms of literary and cultural studies as well as her own experience. If Paul de Man's words on the rhetorical figure of prosopopoeia in "Autobiography as De-facement" are to me opaque and lifeless, Gilbert captures the enigmatic force of believing, *really believing*, that the person grieved for is speaking from beyond the borders of life. In the desperation of grief there can be an undeniable impulse to follow the dead, who are still somehow so much alive. "How could I not have wanted, in those early days of grief, to follow my husband through that door, to warm him, to comfort him, to 'be dead with' him?" she writes (19). In "At the End of the Line" Pontalis magically reverses the vector of death, imagining that he forestalls his mother's death until long after his own so they can together go through death's door, "go through a succession of rooms, of rooms whose double-locked doors would open one by one at the sound of their voices" (171).

Joan Didion's husband died on December 30, 2003. Toward the end of *The Year of Magical Thinking*, she writes: "I realized that since the last morning of 2003, the morning after he died, I had been trying to reverse time, run the film backward. It was now eight months later, August 30, 2004, and I still was" (183–84). After the death of his mother Pontalis was sick, so sick that he needed to be hospitalized. As he suggests in "Taking Care of Yourself" in *Windows*, he split himself into two in the wake of his mother's death. It is important to him—and to me—that his insight comes from a novel he had been reading. "It often happens, said Thérèse," a character in the novel, "that one invents sicknesses for oneself after a death. It's a way of feeling less alone. You split in half if you will. You take care of yourself as if you were an other. You are two again: myself and the one I'm taking care of" (82). How far this is from the contemporary notion of *managing* one's grief as if one were managing money. Of just getting over it in a matter of weeks and moving forward with one's life, as we are routinely advised.

In the introduction to *Love of Beginnings* Pontalis writes that for him the importance of the primal psychoanalytic question—Where do babies come from?—has faded with time. Now for him the meaningful question is "Where do our thoughts come from?" (xvi). We can provide one answer. If feeling comes from thought, thought also comes from feelings.

## NOTES

### introduction

#### THINKING FEELING, FEELING THINKING

- 1 In the past twenty years there has been much important work on the emotions done by philosophers. Among those whose work I have found particularly formative to my own thought are Sandra Bartky, Alison Jaggar, Martha Nussbaum, Naomi Scheman, and Elizabeth Spelman.
- 2 In *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*, Megan Boler tells a story uncannily similar to mine in terms of the inception of her book: it was the *absence* of the study of emotion in recent theories of knowledge that prompted her research, an absence that "was not a coincidence" (xv); she focuses on "pedagogies that invoke emotions in an historicized sense" (20). In the past twenty years there has been a veritable explosion of work in the academy on the emotions—not only in philosophy but in anthropology, sociology, history, literary studies, cultural studies, and media studies. I will refer to some of this work throughout my book, but here let me mention Catherine Lutz's *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory*, a book that has circulated far beyond the discipline of anthropology and offers an extremely cogent discussion of the cultural construction of the emotions, in particular of the dominant discourses of the emotions in the West.
- 3 The theological historian Thomas Dixon cautions that this is too sweeping a generalization, and he argues in *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Psychological Category* that the emotions as a psychological category emerged in the nineteenth century, thereby encompassing what had previously been understood as the passions, the affections, and the sentiments. My interest, however, is precisely in the politics of the emotions as represented in a dominant narrative.
- 4 We may feel grief not just at the loss of a person we loved but also—Freud offers this as an example—for the loss of an ideal. Grief, or the inability to mourn, may be collective as well as private. See, for example, Alexander Mitscherlich and Margarete Mitscherlich's *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of*



*Collective Behavior*, which deals with post-World War Two Germany where the inability to mourn is at the national level. In contemporary culture, as Saidiya Hartman has written, "grief is a central term in the political vocabulary of the diaspora" (758). If grief here is interminable, it can be understood as, in the words of David Eng and Shinhee Han, "racial melancholia," another form of the inability to mourn. In such cases grief could be said to be what I would call a "diasporic emotion." Psychoanalytic theory, largely dormant for a decade if not longer in the U.S. academy, has resurfaced in large part through the interest in mourning and melancholia in postcolonial theory. In terms of the cultural politics of mourning and melancholia in the United States, see also Anne Cheng's *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief*.

- 5 SE indicates *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. I use this abbreviation throughout this book.
- 6 See my essay "Grief-Work in Contemporary American Cultural Criticism," where I call attention to cultural criticism on grief by men (Mitchell Breitwieser, Douglas Crimp, Philip Fisher, Renato Rosaldo, and Eric Santner) that appeared in the United States between 1989 and 1991.
- 7 See my essay "Late Theory, Late Style: Loss and Renewal in Freud and Barthes."
- 8 As Joseph Smith shows in "On the Structural View of Affect," Freud's understanding of affect shifted over time. See the chapter "Affect in Freud's Work" in André Green's *The Fabric of Affect in the Psychoanalytic Discourse*, which first appeared in French in 1973. See also his chapter "Conceptions of Affect" in *On Private Madness*, which is a shorter account of the previous chapter and first appeared in 1977. For Freud the sentiments of tenderness and friendship are distinct from states of pleasure and pain, which are the prototypes of affect.
- 9 For Freud affect is understood as associated with a bodily drive and the psychological. Affect as a theoretical category is emerging as a keyword in cultural studies. This is not the place to offer a genealogy of affect in cultural studies, but I do want to point to a few key figures and to some recent work. In *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism* Ann Cvetkovich pioneered the study of affect in cultural studies with a focus on literature, understanding affect through the prism of Foucauldian, Marxist, and feminist thought, as well as psychoanalysis; she argues that affect—by which she often means emotions of the psychological kind—are constructed by mass culture. The late feminist philosopher Teresa Brennan formulated a theory of affect that is psychoanalytic in nature but powerfully associated with the social. In *Shame and Its Sisters* Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, along with her coauthor and coeditor Adam Frank, introduces the work of the psychologist Silvan Tomkins who theorizes affect in terms of an innate bodily system, drawing on multiple theories (including cybernetics, systems theory, and ethology) and understanding shame—and affects related to it—as basic (he postulates eight other affects). The thinker who has perhaps most influenced

cultural studies of affect is the philosopher Gilles Deleuze, who draws on Spinoza's categories of "affect" and "affection" (neither of which have anything to do with the "personal") and theorizes affect in terms of ontology, that is, with becoming. For recent work influenced by Deleuze and Brian Massumi, see Clare Hemmings, "Invoking Affect: Cultural Theory and the Ontological Turn," in *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, edited by Patricia Ticineto Clough; and "The Affect of Nanoterror" by Luciana Parisi and Steve Goodman. A range of approaches to "affect" from the perspective of cultural studies may be seen in the special issue of *Angelaki* titled "Subalternity and Affect," edited by Jon Beasley-Murray and Alberto Moreiras.

- 10 Although I privilege the work of feminist philosophers on the emotions, I do not want to be misunderstood as suggesting that other philosophers have not contributed to theorizing the relation of the emotions to cognition. Taking a different tack, Ronald de Sousa is one of them; see *The Rationality of Emotion* in which he argues that "the cognitive may turn out to be more like the emotional than we had assumed emotion could be like cognition" (69).
- 11 A variant of this figure—one's net worth—has been popularly referred to as "the Number." See Lee Eisenberg's *The Number: A Completely Different Way to Think About the Rest of Your Life*, a book intended for the educated general public. See also the late Myrna Lewis's *A Proactive Approach to Women's Concerns: Women's Longevity Groups and Funds*; Lewis cites the statistic that in the United States women live 5.3 years longer than do men.
- 12 In "Raymond Williams: Feeling for Structures, Voicing 'History,'" David Simpson masterfully lays out the development of what he calls Williams's "famously personal concept" (19) of "structures of feeling" over the course of his career, objecting in particular to the "vitalist-empathic" element in Williams's thinking, one Simpson opposes to the "more familiar theoretical-analytical paradigms of the European tradition" (24). The very structure of Simpson's essay betrays his devaluation of the emotions as a subject in their own right. Written in the aftermath of Williams's death, the first part singles out the individuality of Williams's voice and focuses on what we might call the personal, while the bulk of the essay sets to the "real" work of tracing what Simpson sees as the woefully misguided and theoretically soft notion of "structures of feeling." Tellingly, toward the end of the essay Simpson notes that in *The City and the Country* Williams offers moving invocations of personal memories as well as of unknown agricultural workers, and he concludes on this hand-slapping note: "All too often these affirmations and identifications work to head off any reflection of the sort that is now widely held to be obligatory for a fuller historical argument conducted at the level of theory" (22). See also Paul Filmer's "Structures of Feeling and Socio-Cultural Formations: The Significance of Literature and Experience to Raymond Williams's Sociology of Culture."
- 13 If in 1992 Simpson could make the point that the notion of structures of feeling "has not proved to be an exportable concept" (15), this is decidedly no

longer the case. Jennifer Harding and E. Deidre Pribram make the case for the cultural studies of the emotions, drawing on the work of Raymond Williams and Larry Grossberg. Glenn Hendler employs the notion of a structure of feeling to understand the connection between a genre—sentimental sympathy in narrative form—and the politics of the emotions in nineteenth-century American culture at large. “Structures of feeling name the simultaneously cultural and discursive dimension of our experience,” writes Boler in *Feeling Power*, “but do not neglect that these experiences are embodied and felt” (28). See also Heather Love’s *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* and José Muñoz’s “Feeling Brown: Ethnicity and Affect in Ricardo Bracho’s *The Sweetest Hangover (and Other STDS)*.” See Tara McPherson’s *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South*; and Jeffrey Santa Ana’s essays “Affect-Identity: The Emotions of Assimilation, Multiraciality, and Asian American Subjectivity” and “Feeling Ancestral: The Emotions of Mixed Race and Memory in Asian American Cultural Production.” See as well Milette Shamir and Jennifer Travis’s introduction to their edited collection *Boys Don’t Cry: Rethinking Narratives of Masculinity and Emotion in the U.S.* See too the essay by Fred Pfeil where, drawing on the work of Laurie Anderson and Philip Glass, he argues that the postmodern structure of feeling is characterized by “an unstable play between a primal delight and a primal fear” (386), one far more complicated—in part by the emergence of materialist feminism, which he takes up—than this excerpt suggests. See as well Marianne DeKoven’s *Utopia Limited: The Sixties and the Emergence of the Postmodern* in which she argues that “the sixties encompassed the shift in structure of feeling from dominant modernity to dominant postmodernity” (8).

- 14 David Simpson, “Raymond Williams: Feeling for Structures, Voicing ‘History,’” 23.
- 15 Referring to Bourdieu’s 1997 short essay entitled “Le précarité est aujourd’hui partout” (translated as “Job Insecurity Is Everywhere Now”), Zygmunt Bauman in *Liquid Modernity* enlarges on Bourdieu’s theme: “Precariousness, instability, vulnerability is the most widespread (as well as the most painfully felt) feature of contemporary life conditions. . . . The phenomenon . . . is the combined experience of *insecurity* (of position, entitlements and livelihood), of *uncertainty* (as to their continuation and future stability) and of *unsafety* (of one’s body, one’s self and their extensions: possessions, neighbourhood, community)” (161).
- 16 In *The Vehement Passions* Philip Fisher astutely considers what he calls “paths among the passions,” arguing that some passions are regarded as opposites (love and hate is one such pair), but that others—anger, fear, and grief are his prime examples—do “not seem inherently to be half of some imagined pair” (31). While they may not be considered to have opposites, they do often appear together in what I am calling “sequences” (thus I consider the conversion of shame into anger in my chapter on shame). Drawing on Aristotle, Fisher understands instead that a passion may “block” another passion (anger block-

ing fear, for example). “Blocking,” he writes, “is the single most important feature of the dynamic of the passions” (34). There is an important difference between blocking and sequencing. In the example of shame yielding to anger, it may be said that shame vanishes, yielding to anger. In the example of fear being blocked by anger, I would suggest that the fear remains. Fisher would disagree; he would define a passion as “being in one and only one state” (47). Fisher also counts pleasure and pain as a pair of passions that are opposites. Pleasure and pain are elemental Freudian categories of affect and have much in common with Jameson’s notion of intensities; this provides us with a conceptual link for understanding intensities as “structures of feeling” characterized by opposites.

- 17 Jameson stresses the euphoric character of these “intensities,” while in my chapters on statistical panic and bureaucratic rage I stress their negative valence. A dominant “intensity” today would be the addictive euphoria associated with playing video games. I am quoting from the essay as it appeared under the title “The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* in 1991.
- 18 Damasio distinguishes between the emotions and what he calls “background feelings,” which he believes preceded the development of the emotions over the long course of evolution. Background feelings originate not in emotion states but in states of the body. They are inseparable from bodily states but are not moods, although they are related to moods. A background feeling is “our image of the body landscape when it is not shaken by emotion” (150–51). It is precisely an image of their lived body landscape—an image that is coeval with a background body feeling—to which a person such as Elliot does not have access. Disassociated from their body, they can have no integrated sense of self, if they can be said to have a self at all.
- 19 In *On Private Madness* André Green notes that “Freud’s logic is a logic of hope because it counts on wish fulfillment. Borderline cases open up the horizons of the logic of despair (negative therapeutic reaction) or that of non-commitment (splitting)” (241).
- 20 See the National Institutes of Mental Health, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: A Real Illness*.
- 21 Alex Gregory, *New Yorker*, 22 January 2007.
- 22 In an excellent essay entitled “Obsessional Modernity: The Institutionalization of Doubt,” Jennifer Fleissner explores the contemporary fascination with the figure of the obsessional in the context of modernity and offers it as an alternative dialectic of the Enlightenment.
- 23 My reference here is to Nancy K. Miller’s *But Enough About Me: Why We Read Other People’s Lives*, where she observes that she has come to understand her life “as an unwitting but irresistible collaboration between other texts and other lives” (xiii).
- 24 Such an antidote works only at the level of the individual and doesn’t address the question of structural change. Zygmunt Bauman understands the om-

nipresent telling of first-person stories on talk shows as a symptom of our contemporary moment in which individual stories serve only as examples of how an individual copes with his or her private problems; see his chapter "Individuality" in *Liquid Modernity* (53–90). I would argue that the kinds of narratives I am privileging are much more than mere symptoms of the retailing of emotion stories. Although the lines have certainly blurred dramatically, daytime TV and nighttime TV continue to be gendered, with daytime soaps still devoted to melodramatic wounds of passion and the family romance and daytime talk shows devoted in great part to pop therapy.

- 25 In what I hear as an echo to Raymond Williams, Michelle Rosaldo writes, "Feeling is forever given shape through thought and that thought is laden with emotional meaning" (143). See Nancy Chodorow's *The Power of Feelings: Personal Meaning in Psychoanalysis, Gender, and Culture* for an astute commentary on the work of Rosaldo and Lutz.
- 26 Jane Gallop, in her wonderfully titled *Anecdotal Theory*, draws on the feminist epistemological value "of revealing the concrete conditions that produce knowledge" (52), but both the methodology and effect are quite different from what I have been suggesting here. In *Anecdotal Theory*, theory is associated predominantly with a form of thought that is not literary in an expressive sense, although it is embodied. See also Meaghan Morris's *Too Soon, Too Late: History in Popular Culture*, where she theorizes the critical and creative practice of elaborating on specific cases that have the potential to become "a parable of practice," which "converts them into models with a past and a potential for reuse, thus aspiring to invest them with a future" (3). Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is a perfect example of this notion. See as well Morris's *Identity Anecdotes: Translation and Media Culture*.
- 27 With regard to professional affect, I cannot resist referring to Carolyn Steedman's marvelous book *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* in which she observes that in Britain in the first part of the nineteenth century the category of occupational disease appeared, which was associated from 1820 to 1850 with the work of the scholar itself. She hilariously identifies this as a form of archive fever (alluding to Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever*), a professional anxiety linked both with the enormity of conjuring "a social system from a nutmeg grater" and the banality of the constraints of travel schedules and closing times of the archives themselves (18). See also Marjorie Garber's characteristically brilliant and witty essay "Discipline Envy" in *Academic Instincts*, 53–96. See as well Melissa Gregg's welcome *Cultural Studies' Affective Voices* in which she calls for affective writing that expresses our political investments and herself devotes attention to the "register and cadence" of five important voices in cultural studies—Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall, Larry Grossberg, Andrew Ross, and Meaghan Morris (14).
- 28 What is understood as knowledge in postindustrial society may no longer be "principally narrative," as Jean-François Lyotard points out in *The Postmodern Condition*, but I privilege it here (26). The phrase "narrative emotions" is

also used by the philosopher Martha Nussbaum whose chapter "Narrative Emotions: Beckett's Genealogy of Love" in *Love's Knowledge* takes up in sophisticated and impassioned ways many of these questions, including that of the cognitive power of the emotions: "Narratives are essential to the process of practical reflection: not just because they happen to represent and also evoke emotional activity, but also because their very forms are themselves the sources of emotional structure, the paradigms of what, for us, emotion is. . . . For the whole story of an emotion, in its connections with other emotions and forms of life, requires narrative form for its full development" (296). In a related vein Margaret Urban Walker identifies the story as "the basic form of representation for moral problems" (67); see her essay "Picking Up the Pieces: Lives, Stories, and Integrity."

- 29 See, for example, Svetlana Boym's superb book *The Future of Nostalgia* in which she argues that nostalgia as a historical emotion emerged decisively in tandem with mass culture and nineteenth-century romanticism; her method—the alternation between the telling of stories and critical reflection—is particularly attractive to me. See William Ian Miller's impressive book *Humiliation: And Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence* in which he traces the devolution of the grander emotion of shame that belonged to Icelandic heroic culture to the lesser fear of experiencing humiliation in contemporary culture within the context of cultural expectations and regulations of gift giving and violence. See also Joan DeJean's wonderful chapter "A Short History of the Human Heart" in *Ancients Against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle* in which she traces a large historical shift in affective culture in France, showing how in the second half of the seventeenth century the emotions were reinvented, a fertile period that was famously succeeded by the Enlightenment. In the field of history, for example, see William M. Reddy's *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* in which his concern is to find a way to narrate changes in what he calls the navigation of the emotions, without recourse to the notion of the construction of the emotions or categories of race, class, or gender. "We need a conceptual frame that acknowledges the importance of management (as opposed to construction) of emotion," he writes, "that allows political distinctions among different management styles on the basis of a concept of emotional liberty, and that permits the narration of significant historical shifts in such management" (118); his period is France from 1700–1850.
- 30 I am indebted to Joel Pfister for pointing out this passage in "Structures of Feeling." See his essay "On Conceptualizing the Cultural History of Emotional and Psychological Life in America" in *Inventing the Psychological: Toward a Cultural History of Emotional Life in America*, as well as the other essays in this welcome volume.
- 31 In *Multitude* Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri briefly discuss what they call "affective labor" in their account of the erosion of the hegemony of industrial labor and the emergence of immaterial labor that creates immaterial products

- such as knowledge. Affective labor “is labor that produces or manipulates affects such as a feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion. One can recognize affective labor, for example, in the work of legal assistants, flight attendants, and fast food workers (service with a smile)” (108). Hardt and Negri underscore, as does Arlie Hochschild before them, the importance of class in their analysis of affective labor, stressing that “it is still most often performed by women in subordinate positions” (111). The shift in vocabulary from “emotional labor” to “affective labor” signals an increasing use of the term “affect” in cultural studies.
- 32 Pinch’s notion of epistemology in relation to the emotions differs significantly from that of Jaggar. For Pinch, the epistemological question inheres in asking where feelings come from “in a period generally characterized as one in which feelings were coming to be considered as characteristic of the individual” (3). For Jaggar the question of epistemology has to do with the ways in which (and under what circumstances) the emotions themselves may have a cognitive dimension. See also Philip Fisher’s provocative essay “Thinking about Killing: Hamlet and the Path among the Passions” in which he suggests that *Hamlet* dramatizes the historical shift from a kingly economy of the passions characterized by grand public drama to a bourgeois economy largely devoid of the passions and characterized by the sexual and commercial interests of the nuclear family; grief in the figure of Hamlet is privatized and *Hamlet* is “a mourning for the passions themselves” (77).
- 33 In *Inventing Human Rights: A History*, the historian Lynn Hunt echoes Armstrong’s account by arguing that new feelings—understood collectively as “imagined empathy” for ordinary people—emerged in response in particular to the reading of the epistolary novel in the eighteenth century, a genre that, like autobiography itself, adopts the first person as its point of view, thus elaborating a subjectivity of interiority (32). As Hunt writes, “New kinds of reading (and viewing and listening) created individual experiences (empathy), which in turn made possible new social and political concepts (human rights)” (34).
- 34 See Susan Miller’s brilliant chapter “Coda: Fundamentals of Authorship” in her *Assuming the Positions: Cultural Pedagogy and the Politics of Commonplace Writing*. Miller discusses three texts, one each from 1824, 1854, and 1897; the first is a legal petition for divorce written in the third person, and the third is a memoir written by a daughter about her father, where emotions are “now cast as interior realities . . . imagined to be divorced from official discursive sites, which become the ‘impersonal’ political exteriority of dominant public statements” (256).
- 35 In “Affective Economies,” Ahmed refers to such feelings as “binding” emotions, using the term in precisely the opposite way that I do.
- 36 While Teresa Brennan provides a strong critique of the western modern notion of the self-contained individual, she does not deny that affects also come from within. In calling attention to the “physical toxicity and stress of daily life in the West” (22), Brennan also suggests that there has been an increase in negative affects in contemporary culture, one that leads us to “calculate more and feel less” (23). This calls to mind Damasio’s diagnosis of Elliot, the man without feelings.
- 37 Freud was of course aware of the work of Gustave Le Bon. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* he takes up Le Bon’s work, among others. As Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen has argued, for Freud the emotional tie that binds individuals to the group is based on “love for the leader” and not on vague suggestibility or the power of words and images (72). “Far from being a mass affective contagion,” Borch-Jacobsen concludes, “the social tie indirectly expresses the affects of individuals” (72). Thus ultimately in *Group Psychology* Freud is more interested in the psychology of the individual than that of the group. See Ahmed’s excellent chapter “The Organization of Hate” in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.
- 38 Hjort offers an exceedingly intelligent example of the strategic use of the emotions in the setting of the academic department, where a positive emotion emerges over time as an effect of purposive behavior that is not initially in fact felt (168–69).
- 39 At the same time I understand that in focusing on what the philosopher Sue Campbell has called the classic or traditional emotions (anger, shame, grief, and compassion or sympathy)—emotions that are, she writes, “conceptually well behaved” (6)—I am also focusing on emotions in which social norms are likely to be highly implicated; the psychological and the social are closely aligned, even when what Alison Jaggar has called outlaw emotions are at stake. What Campbell calls “idiosyncratic” feelings (10), unusual feelings specific to a particular person, are for the most part not taken up in this book.
- 40 I am indebted to Mary Jacobus for this reference. See *The Poetics of Psychoanalysis: In the Wake of Klein*, 136.
- 41 Another concern of Massumi in his brilliant *Parables for the Virtual* is to imbricate thought with feeling, but the feeling at stake has more to do with sensation than emotion. Regarding the process of a form of “thinking” itself, he writes: “Imagination is felt thought, thought only-felt, felt as only thought can be: insensibly unstill. Outside any given thing, outside any given sense, outside actuality. Outside coming in. The mutual envelopment of thought and sensation, as they arrive together, pre-what they will have become, just beginning to unfold from the unfelt and unthinkable outside: of process, transformation in itself” (134).
- 42 Anna Gibbs, in “Contagious Feelings: Pauline Hanson and the Epidemiology of Affect,” argues that “the media act as vectors in affective epidemics in which something else is smuggled along: the attitudes and even the specific ideas which tend to accompany affect in any given situation” (1).
- 43 See Jameson’s essay “Culture and Finance Capitalism.”
- 44 In *Parables for the Virtual* Massumi accents the process of becoming and affirmative, inventive methods of thinking—and being. But he has long been

concerned with the cultural politics of fear. See the collection he edited under the title *The Cultural Politics of Fear*. In Massumi's more recent work his emphasis has been on what Gibbs calls "the epidemiology of affect" in relation to the management in the West—in particular on the part of the George W. Bush administration—of the affect of threat. Massumi's analysis of threat in relation to terrorist attack is similar to my analysis of statistical panic. See his essays "Fear (the Spectrum Said)" and "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact."

- 45 I am employing mood in a psychological and psychoanalytic sense, not in the sense of the mood of a historical period, as we find in Thomas Pfau's formidable book *Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma, and Melancholy, 1790–1840*. "When approached as a latent principle bestowing enigmatic coherence on all social and discursive practice at a given moment," he writes, "'mood' opens up a new type of historical understanding: no longer referential, thematic, or accumulatively contextual. Rather, in its rhetorical and formal-aesthetic sedimentation, mood speaks—if only circumstantially—to the deep-structural situatedness of individuals within history as something never actually intelligible to them in fully coherent, timely, and definitive form" (7). Pfau's understanding of mood thus has much in common with Raymond Williams's notion of "structures of feeling," although it does not share the latter's fundamental materialist base.
- 46 See Gabriele Schwab's important essay "Words and Moods: The Transference of Literary Knowledge" in which, drawing upon Bollas as well as Kristeva, she insists "that the transformational processes facilitated by literature also reflect upon and critically intervene in the ways in which cultures value certain moods over others, or, more generally, pursue a certain politics of emotions" (124).
- 47 I am here alluding to Elizabeth Spelman's *Repair: The Impulse to Restore in a Fragile World*.

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#### CONTAINING ANGER, ADVOCATING ANGER

An earlier version of this chapter appeared as "Anger . . . and Anger: From Freud to Feminism" in *Freud and the Passions*, edited by John O'Neill (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 73–95.

- 1 I borrow the term "expansive emotions" from Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (118).
- 2 As Freud states in "Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*," "We remain on the surface so long as we are dealing only with memories and ideas. What is alone of value in mental life is rather the feelings. No mental forces are significant unless they possess the characteristic of arousing feelings" (SE 9: 48–49).
- 3 See Michael Franz Basch, "The Concept of Affect: A Reexamination."

- 4 Anthropologists have also taken anger as a focal point. See the work of Michelle Rosaldo who, with Renato Rosaldo, studied the Ilongots of the Philippines. The Ilongots conceptualize anger in altogether different ways from Freud. Although anger can be hidden, it is not a disturbing energy that can be repressed or buried in the unconscious. In addition the Ilongots can be "paid" for "anger" or can simply "forget" an anger (144). The work of the Rosaldos appeared in the 1980s; the anthropologist Jean Briggs's book on anger in an Eskimo family appeared in 1970.
- 5 The literature on anger is extensive. I have already mentioned some of the work in anthropology that appeared in the 1970s and 1980s. Important work that historicizes anger includes *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History* by the historians Carol Stearns and Peter Stearns. For work by literary critics, see Gwynne Kennedy's *Just Anger: Representing Women's Anger in Early Modern England* and Andrew Stauffer's *Anger, Revolution, and Romanticism*. In terms of the psychology of anger, see Silvan Tomkins, who identifies anger-rage as one of nine innate affects, or what I call affect clusters. See also the educational psychologist Sandra Thomas's edited volume *Women and Anger*, "the first large-scale descriptive study of women's anger" in everyday life (11).
- 6 As Elizabeth Spelman observes in the collection published in 1989, in women "anything resembling anger is likely to be redescribed as hysteria or rage instead" (264). Lest we think that the sexist trope of the irrationally angry woman has disappeared from view, the rhetorician Barbara Tomlinson has some news for us. See her essay "Tough Babies or Anger in the Superior Position," which focuses on the textual violence delivered to academic feminists by unreconstructed men. In terms of senatorial and presidential politics in the United States, this phenomenon persists, with Hillary Clinton being branded as "an angry woman" by the chairman of the New York GOP in 2000 when she was running for the U.S. Senate (Maureen Dowd, "A Man and a Woman," *New York Times*, 20 September 2000, A31). In 2006 Clinton was labeled by the chairman of the National Republican Committee as "a Democrat brimming with anger and a representative of the far left wing of her party," when talk was swirling about her possible presidential candidacy (Adam Nagourney, "Calling Clinton 'Angry,' G.O.P. Chairman Goes on the Attack," *New York Times*, 6 February 2006, A16). The strategy here is the reification of the emotion of anger; a woman is said to have an angry temperament, thus occluding the context in which her anger has arisen.
- 7 I take a dream that Freud reports earlier in *The Interpretation of Dreams* as an elementary version of the "Non Vixit" dream. The text of the dream runs as follows: "His father was scolding him for coming home so late." What the dream conceals through the reversal of affect is that the son is angry at the father. The dynamic of the Oedipus complex is at its familiar work: "The original wording must have been that he was angry with his father, and that in his view his father always came home too early (i.e. too soon). He would have preferred it if