

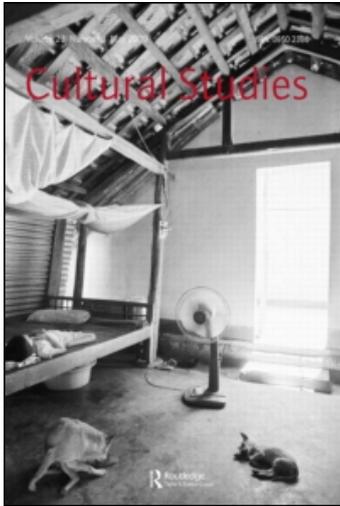
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Carrie A. Rentschler

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TRAUMA TRAINING AND THE REPARATIVE WORK OF JOURNALISM

This article examines discourses of trauma and affective labor in the emergence of trauma training in US journalism. In a body of training texts and films used in US journalism schools, crime and disaster journalism are being refigured as affective encounters between reporters and victims; in the process, training builds a language of trauma that describes and models the news making process as potentially reparative: as an epistemological meeting point between existing knowledge of social traumas and a training apparatus that enables constructs of trauma to do the cultural production of news differently. Rather than treat the emergence of trauma training initiatives as further evidence of the hegemony of therapeutic politics, I draw from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's calls for reparative critique, in which transformations in the process of news production may reveal the work of affective labor and its emotional intensities as key, but often unacknowledged, features of cultural production. Analysis of training films and manuals in these curricula, on the one hand, shows their attachments to a medical discourse of trauma that borrows language and constructs from the trauma science literature, replicating forms of referentiality between wounded bodies and traumatized psyches. However, their translation into representational practices and modes of conduct for reporters – as witnesses to others' testimonies – also pose ways of understanding the burdens and affective responsibilities professions like journalism increasingly bear for displaying and interpreting social change and political upheaval.

Keywords trauma; journalism; affective labor; reparative criticism; training

In a recent training film for journalism students called *Covering Columbine* (2001), a male reporter says to the camera, with a look of serious resignation, 'I'd rather cover a war than a school shooting.' It is an interesting statement to hear a reporter make in a time of war and US militarized occupation, when the daily news contains regular reports on reporters and news cameramen who have been shot, assaulted and killed in war zones around the world. His statement signals a shift in some reportorial representations of danger, victimization and grief in journalism and its professional training. Recent films

like *Covering Columbine* and another, *The Languages of Emotional Injury* (2002), connect discourses of trauma and danger typically associated with the subculture of war correspondence to that of the journalism of school shootings and other domestic acts of mass violence. Even more than this, these films vividly and didactically make the case that its student viewers ought to see the cultural production of news as an essentially affective, traumatizing form of labor. The dramatic documentary-style video *Covering Columbine* details the tragedy of the Columbine High School shootings on April 20, 1999 from the perspective of several distraught local reporters who covered the event. Several of them cry openly in the video as they report from the suburban streets of Littleton, CO. In one scene, a local television reporter stands in the spring rain on the day after the shootings, her face marked with red splotchy streaks from the tears she cannot hold back. She weeps so powerfully that she is unable to continue speaking. Another admits, 'I don't know how much longer I can do this. I might open a bait shop.'

Such displays of overwhelming emotion by reporters in *Covering Columbine* suggest that journalists bear an affective and psychological relation to the scenes and people they cover, counter to the professional ideologies of detachment and distanced observation. According to recent training texts, news workers not only feel things on the job, but express those feelings in times of crisis, presenting a different view of news labor around the suffering of others that looks different than the detached labors interpreted off of the cold, commoditized reality of news atrocity. Recent training films overwhelmingly depict news workers as psychologically connected to their work, whether they choose to be or not. Like other trauma texts, training films portray the traumatic realities of reporting as non-voluntary responses to overwhelming events – events that occur outside of the ordinary and routine happenings of the (presumably) otherwise normal daily lives of those involved. Trauma training tells us not only about the current state of journalism's cultural labors, but also about the place and value of affect being refigured into its labor.

The emergence of trauma-based training within US journalism is part of a larger discussion about the affective dimensions of professionalized cultural labor. It demonstrates how trauma has become not only a feature of human life to be portrayed in the daily news of the nation, its cities and small towns, but also a rubric for organizing the labors of its production. In trauma training's model of journalistic work, media workers are encouraged to express their feelings related to the job, to talk about the emotional burdens of their work lives and most importantly, to turn this awareness into procedures for making news of others' victimization and suffering. It is the latter, the practice that emerges from this awareness, that I analyze here. And while the specificity of news media production matters greatly to the analysis, there is also a larger story implied here about the cultivation of trauma-oriented social consciousness within the contexts of worker training. In her analysis of health

care worker re-education programs, Ariel Ducey argues that there are ‘unanticipated and less visible flows of value in the training and education industry,’ including attempts to ‘mak[e] affect a valuable resource in the shifting economy’ (2007, pp. 190 and 192). Something similar is at stake in current journalism training, where reporters-in-training learn to interpret the affective dimensions of crisis and catastrophe for themselves as workers, as well as those they cover, the victims of crime and catastrophe. Through trauma training, journalists learn to see affect as a valuable news commodity and a different orientation to their jobs.

I reveal here some of the broader implications for thinking about trauma as both a cultivated news value and practice within the processes of news media production. I examine trauma’s translation into news production through site-specific training texts at key schools where it is being developed. In the process, I illustrate the significance of the forms of instructional and affective labor that go into the building of trauma cultures more generally, which, like other cultural and technological infrastructures, ‘have the tendency to disappear’ from sight and analysis (Bowker & Starr 1999, p. 34). As Shoshana Felman (1992) asserts, there is a relationship between trauma and pedagogy; journalistic trauma training transfigures this relation ‘between crisis and the very enterprise of education’ (p. 1).

Trauma training and reparative criticism: What can knowledge of trauma *do*?

The emergence of trauma training in journalism may on the surface appear like another pointed example of pained politics or a turn to redemptive and therapeutic practices that privatize problems of social structure and public life. While it may participate in these practices, my interest lies in how trauma training cultivates potentially reparative practices of journalistic labor and training (see e.g. Sedgwick 2003). The purpose of conducting reparative criticism is not to evaluate whether ‘a particular piece of knowledge is true, and how we can know,’ but to ask instead ‘what does knowledge *do* – the pursuit of it, the having and exposing of it, the receiving again of knowledge of what one already knows? *How*, in short, is knowledge performative, and how best does one move among its causes and effects?’ (Sedgwick 2003, p. 124, original emphasis).

According to Sedgwick, some of the most productive questions about knowledge have to do with what it catalyzes: what knowledge enables people to do, and how people perform differently under its various regimes. Many political critiques of trauma discourse do not ask those questions but instead ask whether traumas are true or not; they often conclude that trauma discourse is a sign of the privatization, individualization and medicalization of phenomenon that ought

instead to be recognized as social problems (see Rapping 1996, Cloud 1998), or reduced to inconsequential 'life disappointments,' in the words of British sociologist Frank Furedi. For Furedi, 'a language of emotionalism' and a 'vocabulary of therapeutics' so pervades social life that traumas, stresses, anxieties and addictions now represent 'the normal episodes of daily life' rather than unusual and extraordinary dimensions to it, misrecognizing the appearance of trauma discourse in media texts for the far more complicated and nuanced realities of its incidence (2004, p. 1). For others still, talk of trauma represents a de-materializing shift from physical realities to mental ones (e.g. Hacking 1996). Each of these constructions of trauma and its therapeutic grammars rest upon the assumption that traumas are over-represented, depicted out of proportion to reality or are in essence *un-real*, following a logic and assertion associated with that of the moral panic framework of cultural criticism (see e.g. Cohen 2004, see also Stabile's critique from 1995).

Drawing from these interpretations of trauma, journalism's trauma training would constitute what Lauren Berlant (2000) calls a 'place of painful feeling,' a form of politicized encounter in which social oppressions are transformed into emotional forms of injury and reduced to pain and the politics of its alleviation. In this framing, trauma talk signifies politics turned into a kind of therapeutic practice – a place for talking cures and medical treatments but not strategies for collective action and social mobilization. This perspective, while a socially and politically significant one I often agree with, still tends to dismiss the affective and psychological registers of trauma and their potentially social, collective forms. It does so in favor of a strong political critique that seeks to draw hard distinctions between real social harms and unreal psychological injuries.

This article asks the question of what trauma training can do – and plans to do – without presuming that the politics of it are already guaranteed along the lines discussed earlier. For trauma training might cultivate a news orientation that could enable, in some small ways perhaps, 'a deliberate engagement with the twentieth century's histories of suffering.' Such engagement seeks to 'furnish resources for the peaceful accommodation of otherness in relation to fundamental commonality' while simultaneously drawing from the wells of post-colonial melancholia Paul Gilroy addressees (2005, p. 4). While the stated goals of trauma training are not presented in the same terms of cosmopolitan interconnectedness and planetary humanism of which Gilroy speaks, journalism is one of the key sites through which we communicate transnationally and encounter, in albeit commoditized and often imperialist form, difference, power and social struggle. James Carey described journalism as 'a science of the complex relations among humans struggling to create a common life within conflict and division, a science deeply democratic, pluralistic, humanistic and imaginative in its impulses' (2000, p. 23). Some journalists occupy the position of witness to many of the world's conflicts,

whether as international correspondents for the world's major news organizations, or local journalists, who often bear the brunt of violence committed against the press in war and hazardous reporting zones, in deeply sexed and raced ways (see Rentschler 2007). By virtue of their jobs, they are in position to see, document and participate in global conflicts as international and local witnesses to them; some have even started to adopt the language of 'first responder.' Trauma training articulates this position of witness around the work of encountering others' suffering.

If, as sociologist Ariel Ducey argues, there are 'unanticipated and less visible flows of value in the training and education industry,' (2007, p. 190) this piece is an attempt to recognize 'the real force of such discoveries' (Sedgwick 2003, p. 124). The point of critique, as Berlant herself suggests, is 'not to destroy its object but to explain the dynamics of its optimism and exclusions' (2000, p. 5). To do this, I attempt to 'disentangle the question of truth value from the question of performative effect' (Sedgwick 2003, p. 129) in journalistic trauma training. I account for how it seeks to change the practice of how journalists create news of crime and disaster through the perspective of victims, and creates opportunities for reporters to articulate anti-oppression frameworks linked to their recognition of historical and systemic traumas. Trauma training has the potential to shift the politics of victimization away from law-and-order frameworks and toward civil rights movements, as director Bruce Shapiro of the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, the key US site for journalistic trauma training, suggests.

Shapiro: The Right has been very successful in drawing a circle that puts victims of crime and law and order in a circle, like this. But I think you could make a pretty good argument that, whether it's in terms of social services, community safety, political empowerment, however you want to put it, people who have been traumatized should have a circle drawn around them and social justice and civil rights. Civil rights is a victims' rights movement.

Author: Because both movements address oppression?

Shapiro: Well, deprivation of power. Also, [it is] specifically about the profoundly traumatic story of slavery, the profoundly traumatic story of lynching, the profoundly traumatic story of segregation, the profoundly traumatic story of police brutality. This is what people are demanding of civil rights in an American context – what Martin Luther King, Jr. is demanding, what Rosa Parks is demanding, what the Black Power Movement is demanding is redress of traumatic wounds. So it's a civil rights issue as far as I'm concerned. You have to draw the circle in that way, which I think the Left has not been very successful at doing. Feminism has tried up to a point.

(interview with author, February 10, 2008, London, ON)

For Shapiro, trauma training is part of a larger political vision that interrupts the attachments of law-and-order politics to victims' issues, with their emphases on social control, punishment and containment (see e.g. Garland 2001, Dubber 2002). By framing movements for the rights of victims in terms of civil rights activism rather than the punitive, retributive politics they so often reflect, Shapiro sees trauma training as an avenue for re-politicizing crime and violence as issues of social oppression rather than criminal volition (see Shapiro 1995, 1997).

When I asked Shapiro how he thinks about trauma as a political state of being, his reply was instructive:

In a journalistic sense I tend not to talk about politics and the Dart Center in the same breath in your usual journalism way, but I actually regard the work we do there as a deeply political project for that reason. I can't think of anything more political than how a society understands the worst things that people do to each other.

(interview February 10, 2008)

In Shapiro's vision, trauma training can link talk of psychological damage from trauma to that of social conflicts and their inter-connections (see e.g. Eng & Han 2003, p. 354). For reporters, 'genuine empathy for the traumatized – whether it's a victim of sexual assault or Holocaust survivors or whatever – actually requires a huge leap of imagination and huge leap of social connection, and I think that's a pretty radical project' (Shapiro interview).

Shapiro's is a politically prescriptive vision of journalistic labor and trauma. It sees journalism as 'democratizing work; when you're talking about really listening to survivors of trauma, really listening to the story of trauma, you can't do that and keep accumulating power' as a reporter (author interview, February 10, 2008). In these emergent grammars of traumatic harm within journalism, we see an attempt to articulate the experiential, psychological and affective dimensions of oppression and social marginalization in terms that are directly linked to journalism as a form of cultural labor. The materials of trauma training reveal the connections between the formation of trauma-based interpretive frameworks and a broader social vision for talking about and representing trauma in the contexts of cultural production and anti-oppression struggles. It is to their materials that I now turn.

The training artifacts of trauma

Journalistic trauma training films and manuals are part of a recent set of curricular initiatives in US journalism education that articulate a discourse of trauma to the particular cultures of US news making. This discourse of trauma refers to the representational frameworks that make it possible to iterate the

reality of extra-ordinary and overwhelming physical and psychic damage (be it from crime, accident, psychological abuse, or histories of oppression and colonial violence) as trauma, including the formal rules and informal guidelines through which it can be represented, the social positions through which different subjects can and do articulate it, and the institutional contexts that create the conditions of its representation (see, e.g. Foucault 1972). The discourse is strategic because it applies the concept of trauma to the news production process in order to tactically redefine the journalism of crime and disaster as the journalism of collective social traumas, even when such traumas must be portrayed through injuries to particular *individual* victims. Admittedly for the news business, trauma training materials reinvest the value of crime news in terms that might enable more victim participation in news making, thereby increasing the value of crime news, and at the same time creating less psychologically harmful work environments for news workers. Trauma training, then, has several functions, some of which explicitly serve the news industry investment in news as a commodity form, and others that simultaneously seek to articulate other social values to news making. While trauma training materials reveal the news media orientation to amplify victims' voices 'from a shadowy . . . role in crime narratives to a pivotal position' (Reiner 2002, p. 392; see also Zedner 2002), they are also attempts by reporters and educators to bring more conscious and socially connective practices of care into the cultural production of news and its workplaces.

As E. Ann Kaplan has recently argued, trauma is increasingly an issue of 'translation . . . of finding ways to make meaning out of, and to communicate, catastrophes that happen to others as well as to oneself' (2005, p. 19). Training materials are both the means or mechanism, and the site, for trauma's translation between victim advocacy, trauma science (where trauma has been codified and studied) and journalism education. Training artifacts provide a unique vantage point from which to analyze how discourses of trauma are being used to create different reportorial techniques for representing victims and giving them new meaning by shifting from a crime framework to a trauma framework. *Covering Columbine* and other DVDs, training manuals, online curricular modules, tip sheets and textbooks translate trauma from a medical discourse of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to a more victim-centered news discourse on the experiential dimensions of crime and violence.

From an industry perspective, trauma training seeks to prioritize two things at once: the needs of local television news industries for dramatic crime and accident news and victim advocates' calls for more active victim participation within news based storytelling on crime. In the process, it seeks to develop more reparative and less antagonistic modes of practice within print and television journalism's cultures of representation and their encounters with victimized news sources. Trauma training also draws from the political

imagination of some victims' rights rhetoric – where victim advocates claim victims ought to have a cultural prerogative in telling the story of crime. Training texts re-textualize the discourse of trauma and the political discourse of victims' rights into ready-to-use patterns of journalistic conduct (see e.g. Gal 2003), revealing what Michel Foucault called the 'explicit programmes; . . . calculated, reasoned prescriptions in terms of which institutions are meant to be reorganized, spaces arranged, behaviors regulated' (1990, p. 80).

The texts examined here include the training film *The Languages of Emotional Injury*, the print manuals *Tragedies and Journalists* and *Crisis Journalism*, the Dart Center's online curricular modules 'Journalism and Traumatic Stress' and 'Covering Terrorism,' and the textbook *Covering Violence*. I briefly analyze media training manuals produced by national victims' rights advocacy organizations, in which victim advocates define news making as an injurious practice for victims and their families and assert that victims have a right to representation in the media. I discuss this latter set of texts before turning to the training documents of journalism education, to establish the movement-based context in which trauma training first emerged.

Victims' rights to representation in the news

Journalistic trauma training developed in part out of interactions between victims' rights organizations and journalism educators, the first formal meeting of which occurred in 1986 at a national symposium on crime victims and the media held at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, TX, also the location of the Sunny von Bulow National Victim Center (now called the National Center for Victims of Crime and headquartered in Washington, DC, see Thomason & Babbili 1986).¹ Victims' rights activists criticized reporters for their insensitive treatment of crime victims and their families during the news interview and for news stories that sometimes portray victims in an inaccurate and sensational light (Thomason & Babbili 1986, Levin 1995, Roper 1996, Viano 1992). In particular, advocates identified the news interview as a site of re-victimization; when newsmakers fail to treat victims and their families with respect, dignity and privacy, advocates argued that the news creates its own victims, and its own unique traumas. Some advocates have developed their own training manuals in which these critiques are articulated alongside practical training suggestions, explaining how the political claim for victims' rights – that victims deserve rights to representation as victims – can be translated into prescriptive and practical victim-oriented media practices. In so doing, victims' rights advocates inject their own definitions of crime, criminals and victims into media and policy debates as part of a larger strategy of media activism: turning news into contested terrain about the meaning of crime from a victim perspective (see Ryan 1991, p. 4).

Organizations like the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC), the National Organization for Victim's Assistance (NOVA) and the National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) assert that victims have a right to represent crime from the perspective of victims' experience, against what they perceive to be an offender-based portrayal of police and court news. Victims represent crime both as its storytellers (e.g. as those who give testimony about crime) and its referential proxies, as subjects produced by crime (see Young 1996). In 1990, victims' rights activist Anne Seymour published the booklet *Crime Victims in the Media* through the National Center for Victims of Crime. This booklet, along with NCVC's *Privacy and Dignity: Crime Victims and the Media* (2000), NOVA's *The Victim Advocate's Guide to the Media* (published after 1995), and NVAA's annual educational manual and their 1999 video *The News Media's Coverage of Crime and Victimization*, teach victim advocates and service providers to define victims' rights to representation as the right to tell a more victim-centric story of crime that focuses on the experiential dimensions of crime and its effects on victims and their families. They highlight particular victim experiences of the news that prevent them from controlling what many survivors of violent crime and their families deem their story-telling prerogative in crime news, such as the loss of families' privacy to mourn and grieve, inaccurate news portrayals of the crime and biographical information on the victim's life, judgmental or inappropriate questions asked by news interviewers, and other journalistic behaviors seen as victim-blaming and victim-producing. As a whole, these texts and video tell individual survivors and families to claim a right to represent themselves in the news media as victims of crime and potential victims of the news, arguing that if the news media can hurt the people they cover while also claiming to give them voice, then journalists must alter their conduct to create a better platform for victims to claim their rights, and access, to representation.

Journalism schools began to turn to trauma curricula in the early 1990s in order to address these criticisms by advocates about the news media and its conduct toward crime victims. At the time, they started to initiate professional training protocols in how to cover and manage major catastrophic news events. In this training, the industrial imperative to insure that news workers understand the significance of disaster and crime as commodities within the news business is partly spoken through the languages of trauma and victims' rights to representation. While victim advocates' media training texts sought to teach advocates how to court news media attention and frame the news interview as a matter of victims' rights to representation, trauma training translates these claims into specific modes of conduct and knowledge about victim experience through the framework of trauma. The latter adopt some aspects of victim advocates' claims that the news production process is harmful to victims while also creating the possibility to differently articulate what constitutes victim perspectives on crime. Trauma training goes an additional

step further and recognizes that the news production process is also potentially traumatizing to news workers as those who bear the emotional and political burden of bearing others' testimonies of suffering. Trauma then becomes a way of talking about the work of journalism that recognizes its participation, and potential solidarity, in the social contexts of violence.

US university journalism programs with trauma training in their curricula represent an emergent rather than dominant set of ideas in the field.² Some schools have created stand-alone programs, such as the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma associated with the Department of Communication at the University of Washington-Seattle. Others incorporate training exercises into their existing curricula without separate programs, such as Indiana-Purdue University's journalism program in Indianapolis and the University of Colorado-Boulder. Additionally, some programs establish formal relationships with academic experts in traumatic stress and psychiatry in addition to individual victim advocates and advocacy organizations, such as the Victims in the Media Program at Michigan State University and their collaboration with the Michigan Victim Alliance. Their work together also explains why trauma training depicts the context of the news interview as a dialogic place of painful feeling: because survivors, their families and victims' rights advocates have identified the interactions between reporters and news sources as particularly troubling if not traumatic, while the profession of journalism continues to see the news interview as one of the most significant sites for news production (see Gans 1979, Schudson 1995, Clayman & Hermitage 2002).

In addition to these programs, trauma training is growing in momentum within the field, and significantly beyond it. The annual conference of the Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication includes panels on trauma and journalism education. It has become a key topic of discussion in key trade journals within the profession, such as the *American Journalism Review*, the *Columbia Journalism Review*, and *Nieman Reports*, among others. The Society for Professional Journalists also publicizes trauma training, its educators (they gave Professor Roger Simpson a teaching award in 2001), and other resources for reporters seeking information and training opportunities on the topic; they also cover trauma training in several of their newsletters, the *SPJ News* and *Quill*. Additionally, the Committee to Protect Journalists, the International Federation of Journalists, and Reporters without Borders have all published their own reporting guides for journalists preparing to cover war, conflict zones, riots, protests and other contexts deemed to be potentially hostile to news workers. These texts are primarily geared toward teaching risk management strategies and safety tips, but they too address the psychological and potentially traumatizing dimensions of reporting (see Rentschler 2007). Beyond the professional organizations of journalists, the most visible evidence of trauma training's ascendancy can be found at the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, whose annual conferences

are scheduled with several panels on journalism's training initiatives in this area. They too publish reports on trauma and the media that include advice to reporters.³

Trauma training, then, is both an effect of social movement organizing on behalf of crime victims that sought to publicize victim traumas through the news media and a professional movement to reorient and remake the work of journalism. The next section discusses the medical and movement-based model of trauma embodied in PTSD and why it has achieved such visibility and mobility in journalistic trauma training, and with what effects.

Articulating trauma to journalism

Much of the taken-for-granted knowledge on trauma's status as both a subjective/corporeal state and a cultural condition is constructed and codified through the symptomology of PTSD and its description of traumatized subjectivity, on which the models of trauma in journalistic training are based. Through its particular classification schemes, 'The medical wound, trauma, became the psychic wound' (Hacking 1996, p. 85). PTSD is the main source of medical classification for trauma, and in turn it is used as diagnostic proof of victimized subjectivity. What constitutes trauma within the PTSD diagnostic is an internalized neurobiological reality, a traumatized psyche. According to feminist rhetorician Jennifer Wood, medical discourses of trauma like PTSD tend to locate the effects and solutions to social violence "in" individuals rather than the social conditions in which they live' (2003, p. 298).

In cultural theories of trauma (which also draw upon neurobiological theories of trauma, e.g. Leys, 2000), the divided psyche of PTSD also signifies a fractured episteme. Neurobiological theorists such as Bessel van der Kolk, on whom literary theorist Cathy Caruth borrows for her definition of trauma as unclaimed experience, define trauma as a 'literal imprint . . . that gets lodged in the brain in a special traumatic memory system that defies all possibility of representation' (Leys 2000, p. 6; see also Caruth 1996). In this conception, the physiological mechanisms for processing trauma capture traumatic bodily traces in a repeating loop in the brain that disable its subjects from processing it in narrative form – a 'shattering break or cesura in experience that has belated effects' in the form of nightmares, quick startle responses and overwhelming sensory cues that signal the traumatic event (LaCapra 2001, p. 186; see also Caruth 1995, Leys 2000, p. 229). Traumas appear not as 'recollected representations – the usual understanding of the term "memories" – but as literal icons and sensations' that lack narrative frameworks of expression but are deeply embodied realities of traumatic injury (Leys 2000, p. 250). In this construction of trauma, its sufferers cannot narrate it to others but instead involuntarily and compulsively display its symptoms over and over

again in the form of nightmares, quick startle responses and acute sensory experiences (Leys 2000, p. 252). The therapeutic cure to traumas defined in this way, as an inability to narrate, represent or even directly reference past injury, involves the imposition of narrative frameworks onto the repetitive bodily memories of the trauma victim.

As a medical condition, PTSD accounts for an array of experiences that cause emotional and psychological trauma in ways that normalize social conditions previously viewed as moral or character failures of its victims, such as sexual abuse victims or combat veterans (see Shay 1994, Young 1995, Turner 2001, Davis 2005, p. 118). The medical diagnosis of PTSD constructs its victims as not at fault for their traumas, which in the case of soldiering and combat stress has meant defining the causes of traumatic stress away from soldiers' participation in the violence of war (see e.g. Turner 2001). PTSD is a construction of political and social subjectivity (Scott 1990). While the diagnostic category of PTSD avoids blaming victims for their assaults and their psychological troubles, it can also make it more difficult to analyze the social conditions in which violence occurs, and in some cases erase the participation of trauma sufferers in violence, as in the case of war. It also provides little in the way of distinguishing why and how violence can be traumatizing for some, while not for others. By shifting emphasis away from the event that caused trauma and by extension the agent(s) responsible, PTSD focuses almost exclusively on the victims' experience and their bodies' attempts to re-integrate their fragmented and otherwise broken subjectivities. The diagnostic category of PTSD, then, avoids placing blame upon the victim for his or her traumatic experience by placing the trauma inside the body of the one who suffers it, disarticulating the sources of trauma from the agency of its victims (Finkelhor 1988, cited in Davis 2005, p. 117).

The syndrome's model of traumatized subjectivity was formed in part through the activism of social movements and medical institutions, whose own accounts of victimization and victim harm enabled the shift in moral frameworks from victim responsibility and culpability – a cornerstone of 1940s victimology and 1950s child abuse research (e.g. Von Hentig 1948) – to one of victim innocence (e.g. Jenkins 1998, Davis 2005). What Joseph Davis calls the 'trauma model of victim harm' (2005, pp. 109–139) signifies the importation of social movement and medical scripts about the moral innocence of victims and the guilt of offenders into the public sphere, a claim feminist trauma researcher Judith Herman also makes in her landmark book *Trauma and Recovery* (1992). According to Herman, traumas only come to public consciousness through the activism of political movements, whether through the activism of Vietnam veterans (e.g. Young 1995, Shay 1994, Turner 2001) or of feminists and child sexual abuse survivors (see Davis 2005). 'The study of psychological trauma,' Herman argues, 'must constantly contend with [the] tendency to discredit the victim or render her invisible To hold traumatic

reality in consciousness requires a social context that affirms and protects the victim and that joins victim and witness in a common alliance' (1992, pp. 8–9) – a perfect description of trauma training's attempts to bring reporter and victim into common alliance through the production of victim-centered news on crime. Thus, trauma as a medical construct of PTSD and trauma as a cultural construct of the emotional, psychological and physical injuries of systemic violence come into conflict. The former seeks therapeutic fixes to traumatized patients based on an interiorized reality of divided subjectivity separated from social conditions in which that reality occurred, while the latter seeks to politicize the lasting and debilitating harms of state violence and institutionalized oppression by externalizing trauma onto the conditions of its social production.

Journalism education seeks to bring these two constructions of trauma together through trauma training – one as a medical reality requiring treatment, the other a state of collective being requiring networks of movement activism. Its linkages between the medical and movement models of trauma, however, are themselves unevenly developed and sometimes contradictory, as the training texts themselves demonstrate. The 2003 training DVD *The Languages of Emotional Injury* produced by the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma illustrates Judith Herman's assertion that public consciousness of trauma emerges from the collective contexts of anti-war and feminist activism. The video presents highlights from a special symposium held by the Dart Center in which psychiatrist Frank Ochberg, journalism educator Roger Simpson from the University of Washington-Seattle, and a group of poets and journalists speak to a university audience on the topics of writing about war, racial and sexual oppression, rape and incest – forms of violence whose very meaning and language have been powerfully defined by social activism. Across these performances, the film asserts that emotional injury can be caused by different kinds of structural violence that nonetheless share the same traumatizing effects. At the end of the film, Dr. Ochberg tells his viewers that psychiatrists, poets and journalists all learn how to listen to other's unspoken words of traumatic experience. According to Wendy Chun, analyzing the public debates after Marc Lepine's self-professed 1989 feminist-cide of 14 female engineering students at the École Polytechnique in Montreal, 'a politics and practice of listening is a necessary complement to a politics of testifying.'

I am suggesting a politics that does not valorize the act of speaking in and of itself: a politics that listens to a person's speech or silence and then grapples with the question of how to respond to it. In other words, I am suggesting a politics that begins, rather than ends with, the speaking subject, that begins with the other who addresses us with her speech or silence.

(Chun 1999, p. 138)

As a starting point, listening to others' testimonials of harm requires a kind of vigilance to attend to the specificity of individual experiences of injury. Rather than knowing the story in advance, as Stuart Hall (1984) described journalism's narrative construction of reality, the journalism of trauma training must avoid 'reducing the personal to the impersonal and the unique drama to a human interest story,' the kind of passive listening that enables interviewers to, in the words of Bourdieu, 'economize on thought, on emotion, in short on understanding' (1999, p. 614). As he further warns,

Even when one mobilizes all the resources of professional vigilance and personal sympathy, it is [still] difficult to shake off the inattentive drowsiness induced by the illusion that we've already seen and heard it all, and to enter into the distinctive personal history to attempt to gain an understanding – at once unique and general – of each life story.

(Bourdieu 1999, p. 614)

Without such vigilance at the level of listening and a 'grasp of the conditions, inseparably psychological and social, associated with a given position or trajectory in social space,' victims, their families and witnesses becomes just another news source, rather than the starting point for more fully social attempts to tell stories of violence that recognize the people whose lives are cut through with it.

Trauma training seeks to cultivate practices of listening that in effect might upset the typical practices of account production that news making requires, and the referentiality between violent cause and traumatic effect on which its event orientation to crime and disaster is based. In *The Languages of Emotional Injury*, Ochberg instructs viewers to go forth and listen to victims' stories of injury and the signs of their wounded bodies and psyches as a collective practice of account giving, in ways we can interpret along the lines of Chun and Bourdieu. Such listening might serve as a supplement if not a challenge to the fact-finding practices of journalism, and law, and the ways they can foreclose possibilities for and of listening, where 'an absorbing interest in the factual details of the account ... serve to circumvent the human experience' of suffering (Felman & Laub 1992, p. 73 quoted in Chun 1999, p. 137).

The Languages of Emotional Injury (2002) is perhaps the most explicit of all the training materials in its representation of an epistemic model of journalistic labor figured through trauma. While its explicit message lies in the spoken words of the poets, journalists and educators it features, its audio-visual strategies for portraying trauma bears a greater burden of meaning in the film. The DVD moves through scenes with a combination of jarring edits and at other times sentimental music and straightforward lecture-based address. Divided into short interludes linked by transitions that range from spoken

pieces of poetry and soothing music to sharp screams and gun shots, the film depicts the conditions and experiential dimensions of psychological and physical injury as unnerving and almost hostile in its disorienting effects. Just seconds after the video's opening, loud crackling gun shots aurally interrupt pans of still photographic shots of nature scenes, coupled with glitchy video cuts to black and white photographs of physically injured victims.⁴ The significance of the video's verbal, visual and aural components are confirmed not only through the hosts' and performers' narration, but also through the disorienting spectator position in which the film places its viewers. This video upsets the typical talking head and teacher-centered training format, creating a viewing experience that is more experimental in approach.

While the film's title suggests that it offers a *language* of emotional injury, the combination of sonic cues and the stark visual contrasts between colorful photographs of nature scenes and grim, high contrast black-and-white photographs of physically traumatized people carries the film's primary message: that trauma's representation may lie less in the construction of a new language to describe social harms and individual traumas than it does in the aural and visual depiction of the injured body. Through different strategies, the video portrays the injured and affect-laden body as the most trusted medium through which trauma can be expressed and then turned into news. Through its stills of news photographs of disaster victims and the performing bodies of journalists and poets who bear the burden of others' testimonials to histories of incest and civil war, the video posits trauma as a reality grounded in the bodies of post-traumatic subjects and their witnesses. In this way, the film 'anchor[s] in the conviction that special truths can manifest themselves in traumatized bodies' (Douglass & Vogler 2003, p. 12). All through the film, video of performers is interrupted by more pans across still photographs of victims' bodies and families' stunned expressions of incomprehension and grief. Many are news photographs of witnesses and family members that have also been re-published in other training documents, such as the Dart Center's pocket-sized training manual *Tragedies and Journalists: A Guide for More Effective Coverage* (Hight & Smyth 2002).

One photograph displays a police officer and a paramedic who help a stunned woman leave a site that has been leveled by either a bomb, perhaps from the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995, or a weather disaster. Her face runs with blood (Hight & Smyth 2002, p. 5). Co-author Joe Hight is an editor for *The Oklahoman*, the daily Oklahoma City paper that first codified many of the strategies local reporters are now being trained to use to commemorate the lives of local victims of mass violence. While it is impossible to tell exactly what has happened to the bloodied woman in the photograph, her body offers forensic visual evidence of *some* event's violence. Without referent to its source, however, it is the trauma on the woman's body that becomes visible – 'the speaking and crying wound' as Dominick LaCapra puts

it (2001, p. 182) – not the violence that created it, mirroring the thesis of trauma’s non-referentiality.

Unlike forensic television programming such as the *CSI* franchise, where the ‘spectacle of crime digitized’ disappears the subject by surgically traveling through exterior wounds into the body’s insides to make them visible, *The Languages of Emotional Injury* relies on a forensic framework that pictures the whole human body inscribed – scarred, cut, bloodied – with violence (Gever 2005, p. 447; see also Grosz 1995, pp. 33–36). In portraying the wounded body, it places the burdens for understanding the social dimensions of trauma onto a set of reading practices in how to interpret the social causes of the physical markings of violence inscribed into bodies. Without a clear sense of referentiality to the event that caused the woman’s bleeding, the photograph serves as material evidence of journalism’s own troubled relation to trauma discourse and the challenge of its non-referentiality. If journalism *requires* referentiality between what sources look like, say and do and the events being reported on, then trauma training’s own use of photographs of traumatized victims *without* clear reference to a violent event indicates the very possibility that another *kind of* news that references not violent events but the traumatized subject, may be part of what is on offer in trauma training.

Perhaps journalism starts to play more explicitly with the distinction between writing trauma and writing about trauma that Dominick LaCapra asserts within the context of historiography. Writing about trauma seeks to reconstruct the past while placing the historian into relation with the story. Writing trauma, for LaCapra, is metaphorical. It posits the impossibility of representing trauma as something ‘related to particular events.’ Traumas ‘cannot be localized in terms of a discrete, dated experience. Trauma indicates a shattering break of cesura in experience *which has belated effects*’ (2001, p. 186, emphasis added), a delayed temporality without clear progression or end point. The distinction between writing about trauma and writing trauma rests in the difference between recounting the past and reliving it. LaCapra criticizes the film *Shoah*, for instance, for its exclusion of testimonials from figures who, according to trauma theorist Shoshana Felman, could recount past traumas without having to relive them (1992, p. 187). In other words, the trauma of the Holocaust codified in *Shoah* portrayed traumatized subjectivity through its inability to represent the past, caught in the cycles of post-traumatic reality. The point is that journalism figured through trauma training could also overly codify traumatized subjectivity and ‘write trauma’ in ways that only appear through the symptomology of PTSD. Journalism, like history, inevitably relies upon the ‘aboutness’ of particular events and their timeliness. Through trauma training, journalism replaces one form of referentiality, that of the event, with another, the traumatized subject and her or his body. Trauma training begins to articulate the limits to journalism’s insistence on referentiality to timely events by shifting focus to the level of experience.

Perhaps ‘this inevitable ‘aboutness’ or referentiality . . . is a principal limit in the field when compared with art and literature (especially fiction) or even philosophy – fields in which the imagination or speculation may have freer reign.’ Like history again, journalism ‘is always about something specific, and it necessarily and constitutively involves referential truth claims’ (LaCapra 2001, p. 203). Trauma upsets the very system of referentiality on which journalism works. This is why *The Languages of Emotional Injury* portrays journalism as one kind of other like writing practices, such as poetry and fiction, that ‘write trauma’ by serving as translation machines, infrastructural carriers of traumatic experience. It makes the case to viewers through juxtaposition that journalism shares a likeness with both forms of writing in that it can serve as a carrier of traumatic experience, redefining journalistic practice as one mode of representation among many that can gain access to the hidden depths and sometimes ‘pathological secrets’ of trauma’s victims (e.g. Leys 2000, pp. 2–3).

The film follows similar assertions made by cultural studies scholars, about the links between journalists as cultural producers and others such as filmmakers and novelists, ‘all similarly involved in diverse modes of cultural argumentation, expression, representation, and production.’ Cultural analysis of journalism, in other words, ‘views journalists not only as conveyors of information but as producers of culture.’ Yet unlike novels and fictional films, ‘journalism remains constrained by its somewhat reified but nonetheless instrumental respect for facts, truth and reality.’ ‘Were it to loosen its adherence to these foundational tenets,’ according to Barbie Zelizer, ‘journalism would lose its distinctiveness from other modes of cultural expression, argumentation, representation, and production’ (2004, pp. 102–104). Even as journalism functions as another mode of representation like novels and popular films, it is still invested in the veracity of facts and the referentiality of reality that make reporting on traumas particularly troubling. Based on reports by victims and their families, the *harms* of journalistic practice result from failures of factual accuracy: spelling victims’ names incorrectly, publishing incorrect information about their jobs, printing the wrong birth date, and so on. The problem of trauma understood in this light might suggest that journalism must be read ‘against its own grain while giving that grain extended attention’ (Zelizer 2004, p. 101), just as historical documents, according to LaCapra, ‘requires that one begin by not treating it simply as a source for facts or as an ink blot one protectively reprocesses but as a complex artifact that may indeed have a grain or variety of grains with their own dynamic and force of resistance’ (2001, p. 204). In other words, trauma training does not argue against the God-terms of facts, truth and reality on which journalism relies, but it redefines their value in terms of their significance to, for example, families looking to the news for reports on their dead family members’ lives, as an official memorial record.

The manual *Tragedies and Journalists*, unlike the film *The Languages of Emotional Injury*, explicitly tells its readers how to translate seeing the bodies of

injured victims into writing stories of social or collective trauma. In the caption that accompanies the photograph described earlier, readers are told to ‘focus on describing the victim’s life,’ (Hight & Smyth 2002, p. 6). That is, the encounter with the wounded body and the faces of victims ought to be approached as ‘a kind of *hinge* or threshold’ between the exteriority and interiority of traumatized subjectivity: ‘it is placed between a psychic or lived interiority and a more sociopolitical exterior that produces interiority through the *inscription* of the body’s outer surface’ (Grosz 1995, p. 33, original emphasis). In inscriptive models of reading the body, the interpreter is ‘more concerned with the processes by which the subject is marked, scarred, transformed, and written upon or constructed by the various regimes of institutional, discursive and nondiscursive power as a particular kind of body’ (p. 33).

The call to ‘describe the victim’s life’ through the interpretive encounter with the bloodied body is a call to see the injured body as an expression of an externalized trauma internalized to create a traumatized subjectivity. The admonition to make the injured body speak life rather than death means that reporters should interpret the traces of injury as signs of life. Much like Walter Benjamin’s description of Edgar Allen Poe’s detective as a ‘physiognomist of the interior,’ in trauma training, journalists see the signs of trauma as the traces of life. In this view, ‘to live means to leave traces’ (see Werner 2001, p. 7, quoting Benjamin’s ‘Paris, Capital of the 19th Century,’ p. 155). If the detective ‘must consider this flexible relation between interiority and exteriority when reading the physiognomy of a room’s interior to solve a crime,’ the journalist in trauma training must consider the flexible relation between wounded bodies, the struggle to survive, and the position of witnesses – as observers and translators – within this struggle.

The point here is that trauma training texts like *The Languages of Emotional Injury* teach their students to use the external signs of the body to articulate a discourse of life post-trauma. In ‘Tips for Interviewing Victims’ in *Tragedies and Journalists*, for instance, reporters learn how to ask questions about the lives of victims who have been killed to elicit life anecdotes that make-up news commemorations of the dead, first codified in *The Oklahoman’s* 1995 special feature ‘Those who Died’ after the federal building bombing. Questions such as ‘Can you tell me about Jerry’s life?’ and ‘What did Jerry like to do? What were his favorite hobbies?’ define the content of news features on dead victims through the mundane aspects of everyday life (2002, pp. 6–7). Students should, according to authors Hight and Smyth, ‘try to clarify [when interviewing survivors] that you seek to profile their lives . . . not to write their obituaries’ (2002, p. 3). In the Michigan State University training video *Reporting on Victims of Violence & Catastrophe* (1999), Professor Sue Carter advises her student viewers to explain to families of dead victims how important it is to celebrate their life through the news portrayal of private family photographs, where the smiling face references the life once-lived as

a happy one. Even when trauma here is codified through the deaths of victims, it is the grief of familial loss and the call to remember the lives of the dead that re-orient trauma from an exterior reality of wounded bodies to one of testimonial speech and photographic depiction. Instead of sensationalizing other people's injuries and loss, *Tragedies and Journalists* suggests that reporters and photographers provide a more empathic relationship to the dead, the wounded and their families by initiating talk of life around photographs of the physical signs of trauma in its living victims and survivors' bodies.

In similar terms, *The Languages of Emotional Injury* teaches the viewer to construct news of trauma, not through the dead bodies of victims, but through the injured bodies and minds of its living victims – where trauma signifies survival and the struggles of survivors living in grief. When dead victims are reported on, in the case of news coverage of catastrophic events such as 9/11, reporters are advised to focus on the significance of their lives, rather than the details of their deaths, a discursive injunction against talking about death as anything but the absence of a once-lived life, what feminist literary critic Nancy Miller refers to as 'the happiness that was' the victim's life before they were killed (2003, p. 126). Documentation of the lives of the dead functions less as a record of events and more as an 'archive of feeling,' where the news serves as 'repositories of feeling and emotion.' Importantly, these repositories of feeling are not only 'encoded . . . in the content of the texts themselves but in the practices that surround their production and reception' in the work of journalism and news audiencing (Cvetkovich 2003, p. 7). Trauma 'puts pressure on conventional forms of documentation, representation and commemoration, giving rise to new genres of expression, such as testimony, and new forms of monuments, rituals and performances that . . . call into being collective witnesses and publics' (2003, p. 7). Through trauma training, news is being refigured as one of these testimonial performances that also calls upon reporters to serve as witnesses to others' traumas.

From event to affect: The labor of journalism

As *The Languages of Emotional Injury* and *Tragedies and Journalists* illustrates, trauma training teaches reporters to construct news of crime, disaster and war by displaying their effects on the lives and living bodies of its victims, rather than on the dead. The major shift for news of trauma is from coverage of death to coverage of the survivors and witnesses left in catastrophe's and crime's wake. At many schools, the adoption of trauma training marks the first time any formal curriculum has openly discussed and addressed the social and psychological dimensions of doing crime, accident and fire news. In most instances, reporters have not been taught how to cover crime scenes and deadly crashes; they are instead sent to the scene completely unprepared to

cover them. Crime and accident reporting is, essentially, not taught; its curriculum is experience. Trauma training intervenes directly into this aporia, in part in response to victim advocates, who have heard their clients talk about their experiences dealing with poorly trained or just plain insensitive crime, general assignment and local television reporters, and in response to reporters' own experiences of being sent to scenes unprepared to cover them – that is, with a sense of the human costs and suffering they will witness and about which they will come to bear others' testimony. Trauma training attempts to make crime and violence reporting into a trainable practice that contains some semblance of understanding about the injurious experiences of victimization, shifting the emphasis on reporting not only from that of the event to that of the trauma victim, but also to the experience of news making for journalists.

The manual *Crisis Journalism: A Handbook for Media Response* published online by the American Press Institute in the days just after September 11, 2001, for instance advised feature reporters to 'look not at the events themselves, but how we react to them,' to explain the plane attacks in New York City from the level of personal experience (Greenlee 2001, p. 40). *Crisis Journalism* signifies a shift from causes to effects, and a shift from forensic news, with its overwhelming focus on crime scenes, dead bodies and weapons to news reporting that delves into the social and personal testimonies of loss, harm, and grief (Websdale & Alvarez 2001). In it, press reporters are told that their readers might better understand the attack's effects through the lens of social traumas, rather than the architecture of destruction left in its wake, echoing Susan Sontag's (2003) point in *Regarding the Pain of Others* that understanding often does not emerge from photographs of atrocity, but from a social context in which an ethical relationship to knowledge of atrocity becomes possible. While *Crisis Journalism* does not focus on trauma *per se*, its suggestions for news behavior and planning are premised on the idea that the overwhelming nature of the 9/11 terrorist attacks requires a different kind of preparation that tunes reporters and other news workers into the affective dimensions of the terrorist acts on the victims and witnesses it creates.

The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma's online self-study guide 'Journalism & Trauma' demonstrates the centrality of PTSD and other stress disorders' codification to training curricula. As the first of four online tutorials, 'Journalism & Trauma' makes clear that students must understand the medical construction of trauma, and in particular the delayed temporalities of trauma, in order to better report on crime and disasters' victims as traumatized news subjects. One of its chapters tells readers that people suffering from trauma are necessary and 'important sources of news for their community – people who, despite their pain, can help tell the story of a tragedy as it is unfolding.' Traumatized people make valuable news sources because they improve the news commodity. But they also constitute crime victims as socially significant speaking agents, for trauma training is geared toward the

comportment of non-violent forms of communication between reporters and victims (see e.g. Bourdieu 1999). Rather than depict dead or mute injured bodies, ideally trauma training teaches reporters how to enable trauma sufferers to speak. Despite training texts own use of photographs of injured bodies, the lesson is to teach about trauma as an affective dimension of news making itself.

By directly incorporating the constructions of trauma as stress disordered subjectivity, the first section, 'Introduction: Beyond the Job,' tells its readers that the fairness and accuracy of news writing on traumatic events requires that reporters recognize the symptoms of traumatic stress disorders. Chapter Two, 'Effects of Traumatic Stress' cites Ochberg, who links knowledge of PTSD with reporters' ability to prevent other kinds of trauma associated with the news-making process itself, such as asking victims to talk about how they feel to nameless and faceless news audiences, a theme repeated throughout the first self-study guide.

Whenever a reporter meets a survivor of traumatic events, there is a chance that the journalist will witness – and may even precipitate – posttraumatic stress disorder. Therefore it is important that working journalists (including grizzled veterans) anticipate PTSD, recognize it and report it, while earning the respect of the public and those interviewed.
(*'Journalism & Trauma'*)

The chapter proceeds to explain the typical symptoms of normal stress reactions before detailing the medical symptoms of post-traumatic and related stress disorders. Material from Stanford neuroscientist Robert Sapolsky's book on the physiology of trauma, *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers* (1994), closes the chapter with a description of trauma's physical signs on the body. After Chapter Two, the training guide focuses more specifically on journalists' own potential experiences of traumatic stress from interviewing and photographing crime and disaster victims. Chapter Three draws heavily on the existing grammars of trauma and therapy, naming conditions such as 'burn-out,' 'compassion fatigue,' 'vicarious traumatization,' and 'secondary traumatic stress' in terms generally used to describe the psychological responses of emergency service personnel and therapists in their repeated dealings with physically injured and emotionally distraught people.

My point in describing this material is to remark on the ways journalists and their working conditions are being constructed less in terms of procedures for documenting the facts and more in terms of what it feels like to encounter traumatized people. While the commoditized value of crime news may be trauma training's most valuable asset to the news industry, there is still the question of what trauma training can *do*, what it can produce in the way of knowledge about social violence and different ways of reporting (see Sedgwick 2003, p. 129). '*Journalism & Trauma*,' for instance, redefines the work of

journalism in affective as well as procedural terms. Trauma training links the procedures of the job to a different way of thinking about journalism as a practice of commemoration for the dead and a space of recognition for those whose lives have been victimized.

According to one textbook, Coté and Simpson's *Covering Violence*:

Humane reporting . . . requires a new set of assumptions about the person who suffers trauma and new thinking about how to apply those ideas to the basic work of journalism If news practices take trauma into account, reporting their stories can help victims.

(2000, p. 8)

Coté and Simpson's (2000) call for a new set of assumptions within journalism defines victim-oriented news practice as part of the larger process of victims' recovery from trauma, where news and potentially other media practice become part of the social infrastructure of reparation for trauma sufferers. According to Simpson, reporters have an obligation to play this role (author interview, February 22, 2007, Seattle, WA).

Other training manuals suggest that the news creates spaces of recovery for news audiences, victims and journalists through the display of, and collective interaction with, the wounded subjects of major disasters and violent events. According to *Crisis Journalism*:

Americans want to talk about the crisis; they need to talk about it. Provide the forum, even if it means stealing space from other sections. Run e-mail and letters and phone-call transcripts in the news columns; get as much diversity of opinion as possible. Let readers vent, but make it constructive. Keep a firm handle on hatred.

(Hazlett 2001, p. 4)

Crisis Journalism portrays 9/11 as an extraordinarily catastrophic event that defies conventional practices of news representation, a claim other theorists of trauma echo in relation to practices for representing the traumas of sexual abuse and the Holocaust (e.g. Caruth 1996, LaCapra 2001, Cvetkovich 2003). The claim that events such as 9/11 or the shootings at Columbine High School in *Covering Columbine* require different forms of news representation signals a particular moral and political prescription for journalism: that the news media bear representational responsibility for the depiction of news subjects and news readers' potential traumas and their practices of recovery. The news is asked not simply to cover its community, but to enable the community to define the experience of catastrophe in its own terms. News audiences are depicted as seeking solace through the news portrayal of its own struggles for meaning and its desire to commemorate the dead, where news becomes a kind of 'post-traumatic space' (e.g. Zelizer 2002).

Trauma training promises the ability to cut through the noise of commoditized human suffering in the news via a reportorial perspective cultivated to see the news encounter as potentially reparative. Trauma ‘demands an unusual archive’ (Cvetkovich 2003, p. 7) against what one journalist calls the ‘white noise’ and ‘banality of trauma’ in the ‘crowded marketplace of human suffering’ (Nina Bernstein, quoted in *The Languages of Emotional Injury*). This would require different codes of journalistic labor that can still work the procedures of professional practice but re-signifies their meaning in more humane, affective terms, if not less competitive. To fulfill this obligation, reporters are taught to navigate the ‘available cultural and national scripts and truth-telling conventions’ (Hesford 2004, p. 108) for representing various forms and causes of human suffering, ones that are deeply indebted to the medical language of PTSD and its social construction as a pathology of wounded subjectivity not normally accessible through conventional means of documentation.

Covering Violence also articulates the burden to represent trauma as a social obligation to which reporters are bound. It describes news as front-line preparation for audiences to think about and respond to traumatic events.

The journalist’s obligation to represent the public means, above all, going where human beings are most at-risk. For better or worse violence is an important part of the report we want journalists to bring back to us [C]itizens in a democracy *must* know about violence if they are to make responsible decisions about how to protect themselves, their families and their communities. The job of the media is to tell them, accurately, fairly, and comprehensively.

(2000, p. 223, original emphasis)

This point is echoed by Bonnie Bucqueroux, coordinator of the Victims and the Media Program at Michigan State University, who argues for the significance of disaster news from a ‘public service’ perspective, in which news audiences need to see images of nightclub fires and the Oklahoma City bombing in order to commence community-based processes of recovery (Schwanbeck 2004).

The textbook’s and Bucqueroux’s prescriptive visions of the profession describe journalism as a moral, pedagogic agent responsible for teaching news readers and viewers how to be safe in an uncertain and potentially traumatizing world. ‘Better reporting about trauma,’ say Coté and Simpson, ‘can help readers and viewers gain empathy for the suffering of victims and enrich our awareness of the powerful role trauma plays in our collective lives’ (2000, p. 8). Their approach to covering victims in the news repeats the position of some victim advocates, like Anne Seymour, author of the National Center for Victims of Crime’s 1990 booklet *Crime Victims in the Media*: ‘to give a face and voice to victims, who are traditionally faceless and voiceless. To show the devastating consequences crime has on individuals and communities To

educate people on how people are victimized and stress ways people can deal with being victims themselves' (phone interview, November 1, 2000).

Conclusion

I have not argued against these constructions of news work as an affective and potentially reparative space of encounter. Most talk of 'trauma culture' does not attend to the labors of cultural workers who are tasked with covering others' traumas. Trauma training makes the affective dimensions and professional procedures of this labor part of the education process. My own critique recognizes that the dominant professional ideologies of the field – of psychological detachment and objectivity – deny the psychic and emotional dimensions to journalistic work, and the labor that builds public cultures to address trauma. To be sure, while trauma training emerged in part out of the interventions victim advocates made into the production contexts of crime news, this training would have never developed if the profession, and news business, did not see that there were things to gain from its ability to increase the value of crime and disaster news through better access to their victims (e.g. Chermak 1995). Learning to better report on trauma is the profession's response to the economic and affective conditions created by a news business dependent upon dramatic news of crime and disaster victims for profitability.

It is possible that the value of reporting on crime and violence might itself come into question through trauma training, as part of a larger vision of journalism and new social movements. For as Ariel Ducey warns, 'the outcomes commonly attributed to education and training – a new job, better pay, knowledge – [do] not follow in an immediate or straightforward manner' (2007, p. 198). While the outcomes of trauma training are not yet fully known, it will likely create effects in ways its trainers and educational institutions have not yet imagined or even possibly intended. In helping student reporters understand the affective dimensions of their jobs and the emotional labor associated with trauma's testimonial imperative, trauma training, like the booming training and education industry in the health care field Ducey analyzes, will have equally unexpected consequences. In some small way, trauma training might give news workers, through one definition of affect, the 'power to act' differently (2007, p. 192).

Following Bourdieu's statement on method in *The Weight of the World*, at its best, trauma training sees that 'understanding and explaining are one;' that 'understanding cannot be reduced to a sympathetic predisposition' alone, but requires an empathic relationship to others and a fuller understanding of the social conditions in which they live (1999, p. 613). Trauma training constructs, deploys and uses the concept of trauma to redefine the cultural practice of journalists as one that produces, just possibly, better conditions for

reaching such understanding. So while the training translates trauma into a broader media discourse of PTSD, it also revalues the job of reporting and its potential testimonial burdens. And as Eve Sedgwick (2003) and Shoshana Felman (1992) have both argued, trauma brings new pedagogical burdens and possibilities to the work of education and the contingencies of its encounters. Trauma training defines journalism as practices 'that do not simply *report facts* but, in different ways, encounter – and make us encounter – *strangeness*' (Felman 1992, p. 7, original emphasis). News then is not simply a means of transmitting traumas in the present, or between the past and the present. It also might have, as Felman puts it, 'clinical dimensions' (1992, p. 9), or as Sedgwick asserts, 'reparative work' to do.

Such is the hope of victim advocates who seek to intervene in the news production process on behalf of crime victims who have felt re-victimized by the news. While this article has focused on the cultural labors of journalism articulated in trauma training, the larger story is one of the uneven and far more contentious and contingent interface between journalism and victims' rights advocacy, to which I have only been able to gesture here. The reparative work it can do does not occur in a political vacuum, but too often we are encouraged to overlook the genuine attempts to change practice by reducing such attempts through a prefigured evaluation of its politics. Trauma training is a site of struggle – often unacknowledged – between different philosophies of how to address and represent others' suffering and what the work of its cultural labors ought to be. Journalism's trauma culture at the moment downplays journalism education's interface with the victims' rights movement (interview with Roger Simpson, Seattle, WA, February 22, 2007). This lack of attribution to the movement has consequences, for trauma training's unacknowledged relationship might mask the movement's own investments in getting victims into the news, and speaking, ostensibly, for themselves within the politics of crime.

The struggle trauma training will continue to face is how coverage of others' suffering does or does not enable news audiences to understand it, not as individual traumas, but as the bodily and psychological evidence of social violence that demands even more reparative, and socially just, responses than new tools for their depiction can suggest. If trauma training continues to depict traumas through the wounded bodies of victims in its own media, its own attempt to repair the psychologically harmful conditions of news production of crime will replicate the forensic conventions of crime news, with its dead bodies and bloody crime and crash scenes, said to be so harmful in the first place. In the process, it eschews the critique of referentiality in the representation of trauma so central to cultural theories of trauma, reinvesting in the notion that the news gets to the truth of trauma through its reference in the body. The descriptive language of trauma it offers, then, is easily undercut by its own reliance on photos of injured and bloody people and survivors caught in the throes of grief – their pain and anguish made public in ways that

do not enable them to speak, but which reproduce the politics of forensic display in crime and disaster news. This dependence on video and photographs of the injured, or worse, the dead, may proffer certain collective identifications with their loss and wounding, but toward what political ends?

We ought to be cautious, then, in our conclusions about what trauma training can accomplish in refiguring the news commodities of crime and disaster and their dependence on victims. It has reparative work to do, and it is doing it. But it cannot offer victims' advocates any such guarantee that news work will not continue to harm victims and create its own, even among some news workers. Furthermore, its attention to victims' traumas, while an avenue for rethinking the work of journalism, still tends to avoid critical talk of its industrial imperatives – not to avoid harm, but to help insure the survival of the dying traditional news business. The next step for trauma training, if it is to address its latent politics as part of making reparations to those news harms, ought to be figuring out ways to discuss the affective dimensions of news work along with the news business investment in crime and disaster news *and* the political stakes of amplifying victims' voices within the contexts of US criminal justice and militarism.

Notes

- 1 Sunny von Bulow was the diabetic social heiress who was found comatose after her husband Claus von Bulow apparently gave her an overdose of insulin; her children then later used their trust fund to open a national victim advocacy center whose mission was to offer assistance to victims whose high profile cases brought them unwanted media attention. For Sunny von Bulow's adult children, their mother's portrayal as a overbearing, pill popping socialite felt like an additional harm being committed against her, especially since her husband appeared in *Vanity Fair* magazine on his motorcycle with his mistress clad in black leather while Sunny lay in hospital (see Rose 1989, Weed 1995).
- 2 Trauma curricula are generally integrated into existing courses or are taught as stand-alone outreach seminars for working journalists. The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma at the University of Washington-Seattle School of Journalism offers four–six hour workshops where working journalists and journalism students learn how to sensitively conduct interviews with victims by learning the best ways to approach victims post-trauma, if at all (they are told to avoid interviewing child victims or those too traumatized to be able to knowingly consent to being interviewed). In the course 'Advanced Reporting,' journalism students at the University of Washington's Department of Communication receive training in a special three-part orientation session devoted to trauma science called 'Covering Traumatic Incidents: A Curriculum for Training Student Reporters' (Cane n.d.). Students are also required to enroll in an ethics course and can take an additional course on crisis

- communication. Dr Sherry Ricchiardi, a professor at Indiana University, Roger Simpson at University of Washington-Seattle and the news-editorial faculty at University of Colorado-Boulder have all incorporated trauma studies into media ethics and news-editorial courses. Indiana University also recently organized a statewide conference on the social and personal effects of crime coverage for journalists, journalism educators, deans of journalism schools, and journalism students. The University of Central Oklahoma's Center for People and the Media offers training to Oklahoma's newspaper industry to prepare journalists for how to deal with disasters and violence. Three of their faculty, Dr Terry Clark (head of the Journalism program), Dr William Hickman and Dr Kole Kleeman conduct statewide seminars to assist newspaper staff. Dr Kleeman also teaches an entire course, "Victims and the Media," on the issue of trauma, news representation of violence, and journalistic practice (author communication with Kleeman, August 28, 2001).
- 3 One of these pieces is authored by Terry Clark, professor of journalism at the University of Central Oklahoma: 'Victims' Guide to the Media Helps Victims of Trauma Deal with Media Questions', *Traumatic StressPoints*, vol.17, no. 3, 2003, [online] Available at <http://www.istss.org/publications/TS/Summer03/index.htm> (accessed March 8, 2009).
 - 4 Shocked by its unexpected sonic assault within the opening seconds of the video, I inadvertently spilled scalding coffee down my body, physically burning myself in the process of watching a film on trauma.

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