

Up in Arms: Gun Imaginaries in Texas

Edited by

Benita Heiskanen, Albion M. Butters, and
Pekka M. Kolehmainen



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Contents

Acknowledgements VII
List of Figures IX
Notes on Contributors XI

- 1 Loaded with the Past, Coloring the Present: The Power of Gun Imaginaries 1
Benita Heiskanen, Albion M. Butters, and Pekka M. Kolehmainen
- 2 We are Texas Because of Guns: Firearms in Texan and “American” Imaginaries 16
Laura Hernández-Ehrisman
- 3 The Founding Fathers in the Temporal Imaginaries of Texas Gun Politics 52
Pekka M. Kolehmainen
- 4 “I Forgive Him, Yes”: Gendered Trauma Narratives of the Texas Tower Shooting 83
Lotta Kähkönen
- 5 Triggered: The Imaginary Realities of Campus Carry in Texas 109
Benita Heiskanen
- 6 Radical Political Imagination and Generational Utopias: Gun Control as a Site of Youth Activism 134
Mila Seppälä
- 7 Pro-Campus Carry Video Imaginaries at The University of Texas Austin 164
Juha A. Vuori
- 8 Firearms Fetishism in Texas: Entanglements of Gun Imaginaries and Belief 191
Albion M. Butters
- 9 Imaging Texas Gun Culture: A Photo Essay 221
Albion M. Butters, Benita Heiskanen, and Lotta Kähkönen

- 10 The Explanatory, Social, and Performative Power of Gun
Imaginaries 239
Benita Heiskanen and Pekka M. Kolehmainen
- Index 247

“I Forgive Him, Yes”: Gendered Trauma Narratives of the Texas Tower Shooting

Lotta Kähkönen

She heard shouting, sirens in the distance, and continual gunfire, and thought she still heard the song playing—*Every other day, every other day / Every other day of the week is fine, yeah*—but then realized this was only in her mind.

ELIZABETH CROOK, *Monday, Monday*¹



1 Introduction

Elizabeth Crook’s novel *Monday, Monday* (2014) opens with a massacre on the first Monday of August in 1966, with a gunman shooting pedestrians from the observation deck of the Main Building Tower at The University of Texas at Austin. The recounted shooting is based on one of the first and most notorious mass shootings by a single individual in U.S. history because of its wide media coverage.² The perpetrator Charles Whitman, a former Marine and a student at UT, killed 14 people and wounded 32 others in a 96-minute shooting spree.³ The character in the epigraph is the novel’s protagonist, Shelly Maddox, who has been hit by a bullet. She has been lying on the concrete in a puddle of her own blood, terrified by the prospect that the sniper might be looking at her through his scope. Just as she stops hoping for rescue, two young men heroically come to her aid. The song playing in her head is “Monday, Monday” by

1 Elizabeth Crook, *Monday, Monday* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), 15.

2 Philip Jankowski, “Unimaginable in ‘66, Attacks Have Become Routine in U.S.,” *Austin-American Statesman*, July 31, 2016, D3.

3 In addition to the public massacre, Whitman committed familicide. Earlier that day, he had killed his mother and wife in their homes.

The Mamas & the Papas, which hit the top of the charts in 1966.⁴ The reference to this particular song is connected to an actual memory by a witness who recalls the song playing on the radio at the time Whitman began shooting from the Tower, and gives an example of how the novel is shaped in relation to memories and imagery of the mass shooting.⁵

I learned about the novel's role as an ameliorative narrative for the community in coming to terms with this cultural trauma during my visits to Austin in 2018 and 2019.⁶ I was struck by the abiding aftershocks of the Tower shooting in the everyday lives of Austinites. I met various people who told stories about how the shooting affected the community—people who had friends or neighbors living in town when the shooting happened, or who knew people whose relatives had witnessed the actual massacre. Whenever something happens that reminds of the event, stories about the past resurface. For some, just seeing the visible landmark, the 307-foot UT Tower, may trigger memories, not to mention hearing the news that Campus Carry law would come into effect on the very day of the 50th year anniversary of the shooting. The chronic recollections and stories display a return of traumatic knowledge, which Marianne Hirsch characterizes as postmemory.⁷ The notion of postmemory refers to constituted memories by those who did not experience the actual traumatic event. Thus, postmemory expands beyond descendants or family members, involving affiliated contemporaries and generations who recall the past trauma by means of stories, images, and observations. The connection to the past is mediated by “imaginative investment, projection, and creation.”⁸ The need for memories of the Tower shooting qualifies it as a cultural trauma, as it involves a contested process relating to its interpretation as an outcome of a particular kind of gun culture and, ultimately, of U.S. society.⁹ The mass shooting

4 See Music ID, <http://impact.musicid.academicrightspress.com/music/pyf6zu.htm>, accessed May 30, 2021.

5 The memory story is included in Pamela Colloff's article, for which she tracked down three dozen survivors and witnesses and recorded their stories. Pamela Colloff, “96 Minutes,” *Texas Monthly*, August 2, 2006. <https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/96-minutes/>, accessed June 3, 2020.

6 I was on a fieldwork trip with my colleagues to collect data for a research project studying the implications of the Texas-state “Campus Carry” gun legislation (SB 11) that came into effect on August 1, 2016.

7 Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

8 Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 5.

9 For discussion on how to qualify historical events as cultural trauma, see Neil J. Smelser, “Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma,” in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 31–59.

was quickly entangled with debates and imaginaries of guns in U.S. society. A day after Whitman's killing spree, President Lyndon B. Johnson stated that one reason for the tragic incident was easy access to firearms, and he used the shooting as a rationale to push for gun control legislation.¹⁰ Fifty years later, the Tower shooting was used in arguments both for and against SB 11, the Texas Campus Carry law.¹¹

Drawing from theorization of cultural trauma and trauma cultures after World War II, I will explore the mediatization and narrativization of the Texas Tower shooting as a cultural trauma.¹² In this framing, trauma is seen as a product of history and politics, and subject to reinterpretation. I will take a closer look at the KTBC special news report aired immediately after the shooting, Crook's novel *Monday, Monday*, and Keith Maitland's documentary film *Tower* (2016) by focusing on the persistent narrative of heroes, victims, and survivors in constituting the collective trauma that emerges as a result of a cultural crisis.¹³ I am especially interested in what the imagery reveals regarding cultural values and concerns relating to mass shootings as traumatizing experiences. My analysis pays attention to heroes, victims, and survivors as gendered, bringing perspectives to the pervasive cultural mode in which the collective trauma of a mass shooting is processed within U.S. gun culture.¹⁴

10 Glenn Utter, ed., *The Gun Debate: An Encyclopedia of Gun Rights and Gun Control in the United States* (Amenia, NY: Grey House, 2016), 308–309; Peter Stearns, "Texas and Virginia: A Bloodied Window into Changes in American Public Life," *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 2 (2008): 308.

11 The Tower shooting was mentioned in viewpoints in public forum meetings organized by The University of Texas at Austin prior to the implementation of the law on September 30, 2015 and October 5, 2015. The events were taped and transcribed. Transcriptions in possession of author. See also Laura Hernández-Ehrisman (in this volume), who brings out how the Tower shooting provided a justification for widening access to firearms.

12 Ann E. Kaplan, *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005); Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Anne Rothe, *Popular Trauma Culture: Selling the Pain of Others in the Mass Media* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011); Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*.

13 Keith Maitland, dir., *Tower* (Kino Lorber, 2016).

14 For discussions on how in particular narratives of victims and heroes become a pervasive cultural mode that has cultural and social resonance, see Scott Loren and Jörg Metelman, "Introduction," in *Melodrama After the Tears: New Perspectives on the Politics of Victimhood*, eds. Scott Loren and Jörg Metelman (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016); Elizabeth Anker, "Villains, Victims and Heroes: Melodrama, Media, and September 11," *Journal of Communication* 55, no. 1 (2005): 22–37. While these researchers draw on melodrama studies, my approach utilizes theorization of cultural trauma in considering how sense-making of a culturally specific trauma of mass shooting depends on narratives of heroes, victims, and survivors.

The earliest creative works, such as a poem by John Berryman and a ballad by Kinky Friedman, recalled the Texas sniper Charles Whitman.¹⁵ More comprehensive narratives about the amplifying effects of the tragic event began emerging only after several decades as a response to a collective need to understand the long-term effects of the Tower shooting on the community. The need for collective commemoration arose in Texas in the 1990s as individual memories by witnesses were articulated in public and reached a peak when Pamela Colloff's magazine article "96 minutes" in *Texas Monthly* was published in August 2006.¹⁶ This article comprises stories by people who "got shot, fired back, lost loved ones, saved lives by risking their own, and otherwise witnessed" the shooting.¹⁷ The vivid memory stories worked as an impetus for both Crook's novel and Maitland's documentary film, which combines animated scenes recounting moment-by-moment events of the shooting, archival footage, and interviews conducted with survivors. Both narratives include depictions of individual experiences of the shooting.

Maitland, a graduate of UT Austin, elaborates on an interview that there was a "complete vacuum" about the shooting on UT campus, which "did not make sense."¹⁸ He first learned about the Tower shooting in his seventh-grade history class from a teacher who had witnessed it.¹⁹ In the documentary film, Maitland's aim was to focus on "the victims, witnesses, heroes, and survivors' stories to connect with audiences and to offer healing and catharsis."²⁰ The comment points out the desire to create an ameliorative narrative for the community as well as to maintain the representations in collective awareness, both characteristic needs for the processing of collective trauma.²¹ Crook, who specializes in

15 Berryman's poem "I heard said 'Cats that walk by their wild lone'" is included in his Pulitzer Prize-winning collection *77 Dream Songs* (1965) and Friedman's "The Charles Whitman Ballad" on his first album *Sold American* (1973).

16 One of the first occasions of expressing individual recollections is when a local radio talk show encouraged listeners to call and tell their memories of that day. For more on this, see Rosa A. Eberly, "Everywhere You Go, It's There': Forgetting and Remembering the University of Texas Tower Shooting," in *Framing Public Memory*, ed. Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 65–88.

17 Colloff, "96 Minutes."

18 Craig Phillips, "Keith Maitland Goes Back to 1966 to Tell Story of Victims and Heroes of Texas Shootings," *Independent Lens*, February 13, 2017, <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/keith-maitland-tells-story-of-victims-heroes-of-texas-shooting/>, accessed October 27, 2019.

19 Phillips.

20 Phillips.

21 JoAnn Ponder, "From the Tower Shootings in 1966 to Campus Carry in 2016: Collective Trauma at the University of Texas at Austin," *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytical Studies* 15, no. 4 (2018): 239–52.

historical fiction situated in Texas, was interested in depicting how the Tower shooting "affected the people in the story in the course of their lives, how it will have an effect on them on several decades; how memories will play over time."²²

2 Campus as an "Open Battlefield": Constituting Imagery of Mass Shooting

The Texas Tower shooting was traumatic not only for the hundreds of people who witnessed the actual event and local community, but the entire society. Whitman obviously aimed to kill as many people in the campus environs as possible, which resulted in a high death toll. It seems that nothing quite like this had happened before. There was no frame of reference for the collective shock prompted by what was depicted as one of the worst mass shootings in the history of the United States. The news headlines and television reports failed to recall previous mass shootings, which created a perception that the Tower shooting was the first in the country.²³ Ranked as the second most important story of 1966 after the war in Vietnam, the shooting has left a profound legacy for the national audience.²⁴ For example, it was covered in *LIFE* magazine the following week with an abundance of on-scene color photographs.²⁵ The media had an essential role in fueling the cultural memory and collective trauma, which continue to disrupt a sense of security and involve an ongoing negotiation of collective self.²⁶

22 Elizabeth Crook, "The Harry Middleton Lectureship Presents Elizabeth Crook," YouTube, September 10, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_l7-Y4dUx1s, accessed September 15, 2018.

23 See Maria Ester Hammack, "A Brief History of Mass Shootings," <http://behindthetower.org/a-brief-history-of-mass-shootings>, accessed October 27, 2019. On the history of public mass shootings in the U.S., see Jaclyn Schildkraut and H. Jaymi Elsass, *Mass Shootings: Media, Myths, and Realities* (Crime, Media, and Popular Culture), chapter 3 (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2016); Grant Duwe, *Mass Murder in the United States: A History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007).

24 See Colloff, "96 minutes."

25 "The Texas Sniper," *LIFE*, August 12, 1966. On the coverage by local newspapers, see Alejandra Garza, "'The Eyes of the World Are upon You Texas': How the Austin Newspapers Covered the UT Tower Shooting," *Behind the Tower: New Histories of the UT Tower Shooting 2016*, <http://behindthetower.org/how-austin-newspapers-covered-the-shooting>, accessed December 28, 2020.

26 For discussion on how collective trauma becomes an epicenter of group identity, see Gilad Hirschberger, "Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning," *Frontiers of Psychology* 9, no. 1441 (August 2018), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6095989/>, accessed November 30, 2020.

The powerful way in which the Tower shooting was imprinted in cultural memory was driven by news reports by local radio and the TV station KTCB. News director Neale Spelce was on the scene during the Tower shooting, broadcasting live on the radio what was happening. He was accompanied by KTCB reporters Phil Miller and Charles Ward, photographer Joe Lee, and cameraman Gary Pickle, who filmed the events and interviews done on location. Television newscasts and a special report on the Tower shooting included excerpts of devastating film footage displaying, for example, victims lying on the ground, people carrying corpses, and the dead body of the perpetrator, who had been taken down by two Austin policemen, Ramiro Martinez and Houston McCoy. The KTCB television special program broadcast later on that day is among the most influential media texts to embody the cultural memory of the shooting, and it has had a central role in constituting imagery relating to the event.²⁷

The KTCB news report on the mass murder opens with Neal Spelce's short account of the shooting and the number of victims. Spelce is followed by Charles Ward, who witnessed the shooting on site. His report has an engaging effect with edited onsite film footage, which shows people hiding behind cars, trees, and stone walls, men running with rifles in their hands, victims lying on sidewalks, and individuals running toward the victims and trying to save them. Ward's voice-over description lists "victims" and "actors," highlighting dramatic opposition between passive and active groups of people: those who tried to find safety and those who acted by responding to "the battle."²⁸ The narrative repeats phrasings such as "men risked their lives to try to save others," and includes an interview with "one such man," Brehan Ellison, a Vietnam Veteran.²⁹ In the footage, Ellison is carrying a body away from the campus mall area, and in the interview, he gives short replies to the reporter's questions, stating the facts instead of explaining things. The edited film footage, accompanied by Ward's narration highlighting heroic action, sets the tone for the rest of the program.

Spelce next portrays the perpetrator, whose motives remain hidden, and then moves on to the story of the men "who ended the 90 minutes of terror."³⁰ These are two policemen and an Austin local, Allen Crum, an assistant manager of the University Co-Op bookstore, who was deputized and followed the police

27 The program later became part of a collective digital archive via YouTube. In my analysis, I have used the KTCB special news program available in the Texas Archive of the Moving Image. Texas Archive of the Moving Image video, 25:34. https://texasarchive.org/2009_01055, accessed September 12, 2019.

28 *Spelce Collection*, "No. 1 – UT Tower Shooting."

29 *Spelce Collection*.

30 *Spelce Collection*.

officers all the way up to the observation deck, where the sniper was carrying out his massacre. Later interviewed in the news studio, Crum offers a detailed account of how he ended up in the Tower building and worked his way up to the top floor with Officer Ramiro Martinez, where they entered the observation deck covering each other, "using our old infantry-style tactics."³¹

There is also a report on the press conference hosted by UT officials. The reporter conveys how Chancellor Harry Ransom read a prepared statement and then gave his personal view "on the heroism shown by the students."³² In a film excerpt, Ransom is reading the official statement, in which he expresses his sympathy to those families and relatives of the injured and deceased, and extols the heroism of the students, police officers, and staff who tried to rescue those who were in peril. After his statement, Ransom, who himself witnessed the shooting from the main building, adds a personal note, declaring "I have never seen, nor have I ever imagined, anything like it," referring to how young students hurried to rescue and take care of the people who were hurt.³³ The heroic students are not gendered, and Ransom's comments about heroism offer an uplifting perspective in the aftermath of the mass shooting.

Metonyms and references to war and military-style action appear throughout the program. Ward's narration over the film footage describes the campus area as an "open battlefield," associating it with a war zone.³⁴ With the rising number of deaths in Vietnam and a significant change in news coverage, this was the most relevant point of reference.³⁵ Accordingly, the images and narration follow the trend set by TV programs on the Vietnam War, which utilized onsite reports and horrifying film footage from the battlefield, including close-ups of dead bodies.³⁶

Compared to war correspondence, reporting about the Tower shooting presented unique challenges. The situation differed from that of war, because drawing clear boundaries—such as between those who belonged to the community and others, victims and perpetrators, good and evil—was difficult. The perpetrator was a student and member of the UT community. Moreover, he was an ex-Marine who had served his country. Similar to a crisis caused by a war, there was a strong need to reinforce a sense of particular collective identity. This was done through the figure of the hero, as it offered a way for

31 *Spelce Collection.*

32 *Spelce Collection.*

33 *Spelce Collection.*

34 *Spelce Collection.*

35 The number of U.S. deaths in the Vietnam War tripled in 1966.

36 For a discussion on war reporting on TV, see Tony Maniaty, "From Vietnam to Iraq: Negative Trends in Television War Reporting," *Pacific Journalism Review* 14, no. 2 (2008): 81–101.

the audience to take a specific position in relation to the shooting. The imagery of heroism not only expressed a cultural foundation of community, but also epitomized a desired collective identity.³⁷ In the special program, it is the civilian heroes that are highlighted. They were chosen to foster certain values and attitudes with which the audience could identify: a capacity to act (for the community), determination, and selflessness, including risking one's life for others.

Although those who acted to help and rescue others consisted of both men and women, men and masculine bodies are visually highlighted as heroes through interviews and images. Representing male heroism is a common convention reinforced by gendered stereotypes in mainstream films, TV, and print media.³⁸ The hero story here was closely linked to the U.S. war reporting, with patriotic imagery of men as the protectors of the nation and representations of hypermasculinity. Moreover, the reports that considered the reasons for action in Vietnam used a particular narrative of "protectors," "aggressors," and "victims," and the gendering of national identities, whereby the masculine protector identity defined the actions of the United States.³⁹ Ramiro Martinez, the police officer who shot Whitman, is not interviewed in the program. His story is conveyed by the reporter, who tells how Ramirez was "at home cooking a steak when he heard reports of the shooting on the radio," hurried to the campus, and then rushed to the Tower deck with others and took Whitman down.⁴⁰ The narrative gives the impression of a man who is willing to act even when he is off-duty, and in so doing it emphasizes the idea of *voluntary* heroic action by a member of the community.

The triad of heroes, victims, and the perpetrator portrayed in the KTCB special program reinforces an interpretation that adopts heroic men as protectors of the community in a moment of crisis. References to the war—as well as the emphasis on the heroes, victims, and perpetrator—give a frame related to the need to respond to the crisis. In particular, the hero narrative aims to reassure the audience that everything is under control, conveying a message that although the situation is difficult and incomprehensible, the community

37 Bernhard Giesen, *Triumph and Trauma* (London: Routledge, 2004), 16.

38 It should be noted that women are less visible, both as news subjects and as news producers in general. The underrepresentation of women in the news has been studied since the 1970s.

39 Madeleine Corcoran, "Bodily Visions of the War in Vietnam," in *Mythologizing the Vietnam War: Visual Culture and Mediated Memory*, eds. Jennifer Good, Paul Lowe, Brigitte Lardinois, and Val Williams, (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 110–12.

40 *Spelce Collection*, "No. 1 – UT Tower Shooting."

will prevail over it. The ways in which the special program focuses on male heroic figures can be seen as part of a larger discourse that uses this type of narrative trope to reassert national identity.⁴¹ Emphasis on the heroic figures and acts helped the community to deal with the unexpected threat that profoundly shook its sense of security. To use Dominic LaCapra's term, the program constructs a "redemptive narrative" in which good overcomes evil.⁴² The mass shooting in Texas was connected to national security the next day, when President Johnson urged Congress to press forward with the gun control legislation that had been under consideration there, in order to prevent "all such tragedies" in the future.⁴³

3 Decades-Long Silence before Public Commemoration

The Tower shooting was followed by a long period of institutional suppression and silence.⁴⁴ This appears unusual from today's perspective, as memory culture now is significantly different from that of the late 1960s. Also, in the twenty-first century, public expressions and reactions to mass shootings and their victims have intensified. This is due to accumulating experiences of vicarious trauma—encountering trauma through stories and images—of mass shootings with a high number of victims, such as the Luby's Restaurant shooting in Killeen (Texas, 1991), Columbine High School massacre (Colorado, 1999), Virginia Tech shooting (Virginia, 2007), and Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting (Connecticut, 2012).⁴⁵

Although the mid-1960s witnessed an unprecedented flood of violence—crime rates were peaking and the war in Vietnam was ongoing—a mass

41 Roger D. Launius, "American Memory, Culture Wars, and the Challenge of Presenting Science and Technology in a National Museum," *The Public Historian* 29, no. 1 (2007): 13–30.

42 Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2001), 67.

43 "Statement by the President on the Need for Firearms Control," August 2, 1966, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1967), 795–96.

44 See Eberly, "Everywhere You Go, It's There"; Ponder, "From the Tower Shootings," 244–45; Benita Heiskanen, "Un/Seeing Campus Carry: Experiencing Gun Culture in Texas," *European Journal of American Studies* 15, no. 2 (2020): 1–23.

45 The notion of vicarious (or secondary) trauma has been developed by trauma therapists, referring to therapists' reactions and distress to their patients' accounts of their traumas. Kaplan expands the concept to analyze viewer responses to visual or narrative mediations of trauma in the era of globalization. See Kaplan, *Trauma Culture*, 39–41 and chapter 4 ("Vicarious Trauma and 'Empty' Empathy").

shooting was not understood as a type of trauma or having enduring effects on individual or collective levels. As Cathy Caruth argues in her pioneering study of trauma, the unexpectedness and intensity of a traumatic incident prevents the mind from fully cognizing the event; it is not known in the first instance.⁴⁶ There was no awareness of how the Tower shooting damaged social life or sense of communality. Jeffrey Alexander points out that an event is only recognized as traumatic if it is believed to have “harmfully affected collective identity.”⁴⁷ To some extent, the institutional silence tells about the inability to consciously deal with the tragic event after stating the fact that it had happened. The denial set limits on processing the suffering and rebuilding a sense of unity within the community.

Cultural trauma and public memory involve a strong need for social unity and existence. As such, public memory is rooted in the cultural contradictions of local and national cultures as well as vernacular and official interests.⁴⁸ After the incident in 1966, the University wanted to get back to normal as quickly as possible, and it avoided any reminders of the Tower shooting. In Texas, the desire to avoid attention on how the shooting affected the community was partially linked to fear of a bad reputation, especially after President Kennedy’s assassination in Dallas in 1963.⁴⁹ The discussion in Texan print media stressed that this had been a rare and random act that should not be overblown.⁵⁰ These comments can be seen as a balancing act in contrast to the media spectacle of the Tower shooting in print media published outside of Texas. They also reveal how discussion about the massacre was deliberately suppressed.

The tendency to circumvent dialogue in Texas affected individual survivors, leaving them alone with their loss and grief. Claire Wilson, who lost her boyfriend and unborn child in the Tower shooting, recalls how the taboo against talking about what had happened was so strong that she started second-guessing what she remembered, and she felt isolated.⁵¹ A trauma survivor may not be able to remember the exact course of events, and even if they do,

46 Cathy Caruth, “Introduction,” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 3–12.

47 Jeffrey C. Alexander, “Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 10.

48 John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in The Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 14.

49 Stearns, “Texas and Virginia,” 305.

50 Stearns, 305.

51 Pamela Colloff, “The Reckoning,” *Texas Monthly*, March 25, 2016, <https://features.texasmonthly.com/editorial/the-reckoning/>, accessed June 3, 2020.

they may not want to communicate their thoughts or painful memories. In this case, however, the collective silence offered no space for contemplation of individual views, and it shaped the framework for expressing and understanding what had happened. Furthermore, being extended over a long period, it delayed the collective process of meaning-making and coming to terms with the multiple effects of the shooting. The first time Wilson publicly spoke about the event happened ten years later, when a journalist from the *Austin American-Statesman*, Brenda Bell, who had herself witnessed the Tower shooting from the window of the English building, interviewed survivors for an article.⁵²

The struggle for shared remembrance began gradually emerging with individual memory stories of the Tower shooting. The local community had developed vernacular narratives, which nevertheless lacked details of what had actually happened on campus. The personal memory stories fortified the need for public commemoration and efforts to share not only the stories of what had taken place but the multiple facets of suffering that had been experienced. This kind of process essentially contributed to the creation of collective trauma.⁵³ The constitution of collective trauma and the ways to deal with it develop with shifting memory culture, which stresses the importance of finding ways to dismantle silence and express emotions of fear, sadness, and loss.

Despite the pressure by the victims' families for memorialization, it took 33 years before the Turtle Pond located on the north side of the UT Main Building was dedicated as a memorial site in 1999.⁵⁴ A proper memorial was to be unveiled in the same place in 2004, but it was never completed. Finally, on August 1, 2016, on the fiftieth anniversary of the massacre, the memorial—comprising a granite stone with the victim's names, a cypress tree, and a bench—was placed at the head of the lower pond. The memorial's primary purpose is to commemorate the individual victims. Cultural representations, such as Crook's novel and Maitland's documentary film, contribute to the same public discourse. If compared to the memorial, however, they have the capacity to engage the audience more effectively because of their multiple ways of interacting with the imagery of a mass shooting. Moreover, they offer transformative potential, as they are able to reflect the process of generating knowledge of the traumatic event. Both stories combine and connect existing memories and imagery to new material in order to create a collective memory for the sake of the present. Reimaging the past in greater detail by using storytelling helps

52 Brenda Bell wrote about the shooting several times on various decades' anniversaries.

53 Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma."

54 Colloff, "96 Minutes."

to develop a variable understanding of what happened that day, how people reacted to the event, and why coming to terms with the collective trauma has been such a challenging process.

4 Reconstruction of Collective Trauma through Narratives

The *Tower* documentary and *Monday, Monday* novel can be seen as highly mediated narratives. In their manner of remediating and recollecting memories by configuring intermedial relations to the archive of sources, they offer examples of the dynamic process of memory in the digital age.⁵⁵ Moreover, they not only recollect memories but actively reshape and produce them, reconstructing collective trauma linked to the broader discourse of mass shooting and gun culture in the United States.⁵⁶ This enables a critical engagement or *witnessing position*, as postulated by Ann Kaplan. Drawing on Dori Laub's formulation of the witnessing position, Kaplan develops the notion of describing a level of witnessing in artwork, in particular in documentary films dealing with traumatic experiences.⁵⁷ In her view, a witnessing position involves a certain degree of distance and ethical consciousness. This ensues when a film deliberately aims to produce a witnessing position for the spectator, which enables attention to the traumatic situation instead of merely identifying or feeling empathy for the individual victims. This kind of witnessing, Kaplan argues, opens the cultural "text out to larger social and political meanings."⁵⁸ Presenting the Tower shooting in stories in a more comprehensive way than ever before not only responds to a need for collective meaning-making, however. Maitland's documentary and Crook's novel instead have to be seen as imaginative narratives that provoke larger public recognition and invite the audience to engage in critical contemplation.

As technologies of cultural memory,⁵⁹ *Tower* and *Monday, Monday* display how cultural trauma takes different forms and involves multiple levels.

55 For theorization of the dynamic model of cultural memory, see Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, eds., *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

56 For discussion on how media—and digital media, in particular—mediate memories, see Jose van Dijck, *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

57 Kaplan, *Trauma Culture*, 123–25. See also Dori Laub, "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle," in Caruth, *Trauma*, 61–75.

58 Kaplan, 125.

59 The term "technologies of memory" refers to objects, images, and representations "through which memories are shared, produced and given meaning." See Marita Sturken,

They share a haunting quality, distinctive of trauma narratives, that enmeshes the silenced traumatic past in the present. Maitland’s documentary comprises animated scenes, excerpts from the film footage from 1966, and interviews with survivors. Using rotoscoped animation style—a technique that draws over live-action film footage—the documentary recreates the unfolding of the events on August 1, 1966. The aesthetic effect of the animation has been described as “dreamlike” and “surreal.”⁶⁰ Yet, this dreamlike appearance is knowingly constructed. Maitland aimed to capture “the fussy visual quality of memory.”⁶¹ The overall composition underlines the constructed, dynamic, and contagious nature of memory, merging individual memories and cultural memory. The haunting quality arises from repetitive and affective imagery, music, and sounds from the archives—such as gunshots and fragments of Neil Spelce’s radio broadcast and the KTCB special program.

Crook’s novel exhibits the return of the trauma through “objects of return,” in particular in the form of paintings.⁶² The return of paintings sustains a narrative movement that signals the return of trauma and its transmission to the subsequent generations. This kind of *transgenerational haunting* is typical of trauma fiction.⁶³ The most significant painting is a portrait painted by Wyatt, one of the two men who rescue Shelly from bleeding to death after being shot by Whitman. The painting is a waist-up portrait of naked Shelly, showing the bullet scars across her arm and breast. Later, Wyatt paints over the upper body, covering it with a blue blouse, and sends it to Shelly. The portrait is hidden in a closet for years, but it keeps reappearing in key moments in a decades-long process in which she and her family come to terms with the multiple direct and secondary traumas. When Shelly is about to throw it away, her daughter takes it. Finally, when the secrets of the past start to unravel and the repressed

Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 9.

60 See Chris O’Falt, “How ‘Tower’ Demonstrates the Possibilities of Art and Healing in Non-fiction Filmmaking,” *IndieWire*, December 16, 2016, <https://www.indiewire.com/2016/12/keith-maitland-tower-best-documentary-oscar-nomination-1201759487/>; David Edelstein, “Documentary Offers a Wrenching Look at America’s First Modern Gun Massacre,” *NPR*, October 14, 2016, <https://www.npr.org/2016/10/14/497943220/documentary-offers-a-wrenching-look-at-americas-first-modern-gun-massacre>, accessed October 10, 2019.

61 O’Falt, “How ‘Tower’ Demonstrates the Possibilities of Art.”

62 The term “object of return” is borrowed from Marianne Hirsch, who uses it in her analysis of return narratives in the genre of Holocaust narrative. See Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, chapter 8 (“Objects of Return”).

63 On transgenerational haunting in fiction, see Anne Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), chapter 1 (“The past as revenant: trauma and haunting in Pat Barker’s *Another World*”).

emotions relating to a chain of past traumas recur one more time, the painting starts disintegrating: the blue paint cracks, revealing the naked breast. The reappearing painting highlights the persistence of trauma and carries a burden of painful memories that are not only linked to the painful events, but to the accruing of family secrets and repressed emotions resulting from experiences of loss. The returning objects highlight the layered and shifting nature of trauma.

As trauma narratives, the novel and the film produce a diverse array of trauma imagery, suggesting different responses and ways of remembering and dealing with a culturally specific trauma. They strive to capture the many levels of memories and knowledge production, revealing also the partiality and incompleteness of differing views. In addition, they focus on the question of how individuals survive the trauma.

5 Postmemorial Imagery of Heroes, Victims, and Survivors

The cultural imagery of heroes and victims motivates both works but is reflected profoundly, and even dismantled. As narratives produced by the postmemorial generation—those who have learned about the shooting through stories, imagery, and selected silences—they do not simply repeat the imagery but have the capacity to recontextualize it, offering ways of working through the trauma, as Hirsch suggests in her discussion of repetitive use of images relating to inconceivable violence.⁶⁴ Postmemorial narrating and the inclusion of familiar imagery work to connect the postmemorial generation to the generation that experienced the shooting. The recontextualization in *Tower* and *Monday, Monday* provides a multifaceted interpretation of heroes and victims.

Maitland's film features both men and women as heroes, and it includes viewpoints of witnesses who were not able to perform heroic actions. For example, the film comprises a story of a young woman, Rita, whose bravery differs from that of the men who rush to the Tower to shoot Whitman or carry victims off the mall. Rita runs from cover to go comfort Claire Wilson, who is wounded and bleeding on the hot, sun-baked concrete. She lies down close to Claire and keeps her talking so that she will not lose consciousness, until two young men, James and "Artly" (John Fox), run to carry her to safety. In contrast, the documentary also presents a woman who, witnessing the shooting from a window and seeing Claire laying on her back on the mall, states that not

64 Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 108.

being able to "help the people who were suffering" was a "defining moment because I realized I was a coward."⁶⁵ Crook's novel includes a bystander who has an identical experience. In the novel, however, this character is a man, who is too afraid to risk his life. His story complicates the binary imagery of men as actors and heroes and women as passive victims. Overall, the documentary film and the novel revise the gendered narrative of heroic men in the KTCB news program.

The central focus in both narratives is on the figure of a female survivor—Claire Wilson in *Tower* and Shelly Maddock in *Monday, Monday*—injured by Whitman's bullets and rescued by two young men. The symbolic connotations attached to these women survivors are multilayered, yet still tied to the imagery of (women as) victims within the history of the shooting. They are not represented simply as passive victims saved by heroes, but more as survivors who go through a complex process after their traumatic experience. The prominence of the women in the narratives affirms their symbolic role in the processing of collective trauma. Their symbolic power is intertwined with their role as mothers: Wilson loses her unborn child but later adopts a boy, while Shelly has two daughters, the first of which is given up to adoption. While they represent the vulnerability of the community and society, most of all, however, their stories draw attention to the collective process of coming to terms with and the healing of trauma. In relation to the healing process, the most significant aspect of these gendered figures is their capacity to reckon with their painful memories and past.

The day after the Tower shooting, the first representation of a victim appeared in print news. The front page of the *San Antonio Express* covered the story of the shooting with photos of the Tower, Whitman, and Officer Martinez, but the centerpiece is an image of an anonymous woman crouching behind a flagpole (see Figure 4.1).⁶⁶ The woman is frozen in an uneasy position, leaning her head against the massive base. This photo became one of the most circulated images of the shooting. According to Gary Lavergne, the woman in the photo became "a symbol of unfolding tragedy" as "pictures and news reel footage of a helpless woman frozen in terror ... were immediately beamed around the world."⁶⁷ A viewer who does not know the story behind the photo indeed sees a woman "frozen in terror," a passive victim waiting to be rescued. The image

65 Maitland, *Tower*.

66 "Student Slays 15 From Tower Perch." *San Antonio Express*, August 2, 1966.

67 Gary Lavergne, *Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1997), 125.

works as a counterpart to the KTCB special program's male heroes, who protect vulnerable victims of the community.



FIGURE 4.1 Charlotte Darehshori hiding behind flagpole

Lavergne offers more details on the image of the victim by telling the story of how “an attractive young brunette named Charlotte Darehshori” ended up behind the flagpole, where she kept still until the shooting was over.⁶⁸ Darehshori was working inside a campus building when she saw three people fall on the pavement through her office windows. She rushed outside and headed to the closest body. She then heard “strange noises,” which she soon realized were the sound of gunshots aimed at her.⁶⁹ She leaped to the nearest cover, the flagpole. Lavergne juxtaposes Darehshori’s symbolic importance to that of the shooter: “While Charles Whitman became a symbol of evil, Charlotte Darehshori epitomized innocence and reassuring heroism in the midst of terror.”⁷⁰ Lavergne seems to suggest that Darehshori was both a victim and a hero, but emphasizes the gendered features and the role of victim especially when describing the photo image. Darehshori is “a helpless young woman” and, like victims in general, “epitomized innocence.”⁷¹ This association explains why the photo assumed such a strong symbolic power. It evokes a discourse of

68 Lavergne, 125.

69 Lavergne, 125.

70 Lavergne, 125.

71 Lavergne, 125.

victimhood that is intertwined with moral questions. The very definition of victim presumes some type of human action that is understood to be wrong.⁷² As Bernhard Giesen argues, talking about victims raises questions of accountability and responsibility, and entails a social construction in which victimhood is recognized and attributed by varying institutional arenas.⁷³ In Texas, the institutional denial that followed the shooting delayed discussion about the victims, and in doing so it also stifled discussions of accountability.

By the 1990s, however, there had already emerged a noteworthy shift from the unambiguous figure of helpless victim to survivor, also discernible in Lavergne's way of discussing Darehshori's story. In the United States, this shift arose in conjunction with the expansion of studies on trauma, which relates to broader cultural development. As Donald Downs argues, as the knowledge on various trauma gained currency, "America began to define itself, at least in part, as a nation of 'survivors.'"⁷⁴ Anne Rothe elaborates how the wider cultural climate in the United States changed and adopted a survival trope in the 1960s at the time of the Eichmann trials, which gradually expanded to popular culture so that by the new millennium, representations of survivors would be highly diverse.⁷⁵ In the widening "popular trauma culture," a survivor designates "someone who has overcome post-traumatic suffering," replacing traditional notions of heroism.⁷⁶

Claire and Shelly are depicted more as survivors than passive victims, and the narratives focus on *how they survive* after the shooting and find ways to let go of the past. They represent survivors in different ways, but they both clearly respond to the idea of a survivor as someone who is able to overcome suffering. If compared to male survivors in the narratives, these two women are more successful in the process of facing their difficult emotions, understanding the different responses and reactions to the traumatic incident, and exonerating equally all the people involved or affected by the mass shooting of blame. In doing so, in the discourse of mass shootings the narratives seem to suggest the role of the survivor as a gendered figure.

The plot of *Monday, Monday* has several twists that connect the central characters to the events on the UT campus in 1966. The novel includes a variety

72 Giesen, *Triumph and Trauma*, 46.

73 Giesen, 48.

74 Donald Alexander Downs, *More Than Victims: Battered Women, the Syndrome of Society, and the Law* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 48.

75 Anne Rothe, *Popular Trauma Culture: Selling the Pain of Others in the Mass Media* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), chapter 3 ("American Survivors").

76 Rothe, 33.

of intertextual and intermedial relations to vernacular stories and imagery attached to the Tower shooting. At the same time, it challenges the imagery, in particular that of heroes and victims. At the onset, the characters seem to occupy those familiar roles, but as the story evolves, the simplifying cultural imagery is problematized. As already mentioned, Shelly is rescued by two young men, Jack and Wyatt, who are cousins. Jack—a Vietnam veteran, like Brehan Ellison interviewed in the onsite film footage—is hit by a bullet while trying to rescue Shelly, thus embodying both a hero and a suffering victim. The event marks the beginning of an extraordinary relationship between the three, who become friends in the hospital where Shelly and Jack are being treated. She realizes how Wyatt and Jack “were the only people who could ever understand what it was like out on the plaza.”⁷⁷ Although the main protagonist is able to discuss what had happened and even revisits the place where she was injured with Wyatt, the relationship between the three survivors works only as a first phase in coming to terms with the trauma. Overall, the novel resists the discourse of heroes and victims by focusing on the intricate process of surviving trauma, which affects the central characters’ families and relationships. Yet, after the turning point, as the quandaries and guilt caused by layered family secrets are finally disclosed, Shelly is able to face the past with its grievances in a way that suggests a new orientation to the present and future, thus “overcoming the post-traumatic suffering” of the survivor discourse, as defined by Rothe.⁷⁸ The moment of disclosure compels the protagonist to realize how the past traumas affect her family network. Moreover, the recuperation from trauma is highlighted as a collective process.

The animated scenes of *Tower* deliberately linger on the stories of heroes and victims, yet offer a polyphony of viewpoints that call attention to the differences of individual experiences. Similar to *Monday, Monday*, heroes suffer from anxiety, fear, and guilt. For example, Artly, the man who saved Claire Wilson, asserts that he had “never been more scared in his life,” and describes how he can still feel a “cold spot” in his back where he expected the sniper’s bullet.⁷⁹ In addition, he discloses how he “feels strange guilt” about how he acted that day.⁸⁰ Several witnesses comment on how they have not talked about their memories of witnessing the shooting. According to Maitland, the process of getting to know these people, hearing their stories and connecting them with

77 Crook, *Monday, Monday*, 41.

78 Rothe, 33.

79 Maitland, *Tower*.

80 Maitland, *Tower*.

each other, was "very cathartic."⁸¹ When cousins Lee Zamora and Alec Hernandez, Jr., finally meet each other after almost fifty years, Zamora tells that he has "never talked about this to anyone before."⁸² Likewise, Claire Wilson only recently met Artly for the first time. In the scene where they are talking together, Artly ponders how he had hidden the memories inside. The final words on the significance of revisiting memories, part of the healing process that is typical of survivor discourse, are given to Wilson, who states that "what's painful is to just not have any sense of the whole thing and not have other people that knew about it. And they could talk about it what happened that day. That's what was painful."⁸³ The film underlines the importance of talking about and sharing the memories of the shooting, in order to make sense of what happened in the past for the sake of the present and the future.

6 Women Survivors as Reconciliatory Figures

Tower and *Monday, Monday* are momentous in their gestures toward working through trauma. *Tower* engages the audience in a witnessing position, as theorized by Ann Kaplan, drawing their attention to the traumatic situation that continues in the present by linking it to the school shootings that have come after the Tower shooting, and to larger social and political struggles relating to gun violence in the United States. Claire Wilson works here as the *reconciliatory figure* that guides the audience. In *Monday, Monday*, in turn, the significant moment of reconciliation happens when Shelly returns to the UT campus at the end of the story. Revisiting the scene works as a kind of closure and prompts a process of looking backward, enabling her to free herself from the haunting guilt and shame entangled with the past.

In *Tower*, the performing of the "working through" is highlighted as interviews with real-life survivors appear in the narration. The first half of the film utilizes archival footage and animated scenes with actors accounting the events of the Tower shooting. The storytelling is based on vernacular stories and Maitland's interviews with surviving witnesses, and it builds a visceral effect of witnessing the event, as if being there. But at the point in the film when the shooting is over, the animation is interrupted by footage from actual interviews with survivors in the present, in which they recall the events and their feelings after the

81 Phillips, "Keith Maitland goes back to 1966."

82 Maitland, *Tower*.

83 Maitland, *Tower*.

shooting, and depict their sentiments about it in the present. The movement to the present day is dramatic, a moment of overturning.

Similar to the animated narration in which the storytelling revolves around Claire, the first to fall under Whitman's bullets, the scenes with real-life Claire reminiscing on her life after the shooting are given more emphasis. This is done especially by stressing her role as a mother. She tells, for example, how she felt after losing her baby in the shooting and how she was able to adopt an Ethiopian boy later in life. After this, she elaborates on her feelings about the perpetrator, Charles Whitman, who has stayed "kind of wooden" in her mind through the years.⁸⁴ She parallels Whitman to "these precious little children who grow up and do sometimes horrible things," implicitly referring to the school shooters that followed in Whitman's footsteps.⁸⁵ She has come to think of Whitman as a "very confused, very damaged young man."⁸⁶ Next, we see her browsing an issue of *LIFE* magazine from 1966 featuring the story of "The Texas Sniper." She comments on a photo of Whitman as a toddler, standing on a beach and holding two rifles. It makes Claire think of the shooter as that three-year-old, "who would have been sitting on my lap."⁸⁷ She continues: "I love that age. So much promise, so much hope. How can I hate someone like that? I can't hate him in spite of the incredible damage that he's done."⁸⁸ The narrative succession, from her telling about her own children (one lost in the shooting and one adopted) to her imagining of Whitman as a child sitting on her lap, highlights Claire as a maternal figure. After the detailed presentation of the massacre on campus through a combination of animated scenes and onsite footage, this scene conveys a sense of comfort. The emphasis on Claire's empathy toward the perpetrator fosters sentiments of reconciliation and collective healing.

After Claire has affirmed that she cannot hate Whitman, the interviewer (Maitland) asks: "Do you forgive him?" She smiles and replies without hesitation: "I forgive him, yes. How can I not forgive? I've been forgiven so much."⁸⁹ Claire's manner of speaking and facial expressions signal that she has not only found forgiveness but also been able to overcome negative emotions relating to what happened to her in the past. This act, juxtaposing perpetrator and victim, is a powerful moment that has the potential to resonate with a larger

84 Maitland, *Tower*.

85 Maitland, *Tower*.

86 Maitland, *Tower*.

87 Maitland, *Tower*.

88 Maitland, *Tower*.

89 Maitland, *Tower*.

audience. After Claire's words, there is a jump cut to imagery in the past; we hear the distant sound of gunshots as young, pregnant Claire is lying on the South mall, next to her boyfriend's corpse. She turns her head to look upward at the Tower. We hear a man's voice, obviously a recording from the past in the familiar voice of famed *CBS News* anchorman Walter Cronkite, saying: "The horror of these, the sick among us..."⁹⁰ Another jump cut moves to an archival film clip, where Cronkite continues his commentary on "our hyper civilization" and "a disrespect for life fostered by government which, in pursuit of self-defense, teach their youth to kill and to maim."⁹¹ He concludes that "Whitman's crime was society's crime."⁹² Toward the end of his remarks, we see film footage of special reports which a U.S. audience will recognize as relating to the shootings at Columbine High School, Virginia Tech, and Umpqua Community College. The images thus link the individual trauma of the Tower shooting to a wider collective and national trauma of mass shootings. By presenting the survivors in terms of values of collective identity—in this case especially selflessness, compassion, and empathy—and attributing the responsibility to society, the documentary persuades the larger audience to contemplate collective trauma as causing a crisis, and invites them to participate in change.⁹³ The film ends with Claire affirming how it has been healing to talk with others, and how "a big thing like this" makes a huge difference, referring to the revisiting of the past and the commemoration made possible by the film project.⁹⁴

Monday, Monday also offers a form of reconciliatory closure with the protagonist when she returns to the campus to visit an exhibition of Wyatt's paintings at the Blanton Museum of Art. The central "returning object," the portrait of the protagonist, no longer haunts the narrative. The exhibition includes a painting of the UT Tower titled "1966," which Shelly has seen in a book before. She is surprised that she "did not feel the same pang of emotions, or recognition, that she had felt when she came across the image years ago."⁹⁵ Yet, one painting really confounds her, a large image of a window that reflects tree branches, blue sky, and a man's face in the window: "Looking out. Ghostly features. ... A look of horror more vivid than the features themselves, in conspicuous eyes."⁹⁶ Shelly recognizes the window as the middle window of the third floor of the English building, overlooking the plaza of the South Mall,

90 Maitland, *Tower*.

91 Maitland, *Tower*.

92 Maitland, *Tower*.

93 See Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Trauma," 13–15.

94 Maitland, *Tower*.

95 Crook, *Monday, Monday*, 326.

96 Crook, 327.

where she was shot. She understands that this was a defining moment for the rest of her life. It makes her think of her adopted child, and all the emotions of regret, atonement, and loss that this scene of terror had generated for her and her family.

Shelly next heads to the Tower, enters the main building, and decides to buy a ticket to go up to the observation deck. The Tower functions in the narrative as a place that helps Shelly organize her memories and related emotions. Similar to Walter Cronkite's commentary and footage of the mass shooting in *Tower*, visiting the actual site of the shooting in *Monday, Monday* situates Shelly's individual's history within the larger cultural context, which shapes the meaning of trauma as culturally specific. On her way up, she cannot help but picture Whitman's journey through the building on the day of the massacre. Shelly follows his steps to the spot where he had settled his scope on her, and goes through the significant life events that followed the shooting. At some point, as she walks around the observation deck, she realizes that "there was nothing up here she needed to see or wanted to find."⁹⁷ When she looks down to the place where she had laid suffering, she has another epiphany: "She remembered lying there and playing dead, but couldn't remember the pain—not because she had somehow risen above it by standing up here—but because she wasn't that girl any longer."⁹⁸ This marks the moment of letting go of the past, precisely because she is not the same person anymore; she has reformed her identity. The realization is accentuated through a heightened sense of the present, the here and now. Shelly understands that everything she needed to see up in the Tower "just happened to be down there," meaning her life in the present, everything she has become.⁹⁹ The novel ends as she turns to look at the huge clock and sees "that the bells were about to ring."¹⁰⁰

7 Conclusion

Tower and *Monday, Monday* reveal needs and emotions connected to mass shootings as a culturally specific form of imagery and trauma. Moreover, they demonstrate a multilayered aesthetic that emerges from the mediations of postmemory and engages the audience emotionally and ethically. Their ways of connecting to past trauma evoke multiple meanings and functions, such

97 Crook, 335.

98 Crook, 336.

99 Crook, 336.

100 Crook, 336.

as commemoration, making sense of a chaotic event, and giving voice to the vernacular. Both participate in constituting an imaginary of community experiences and provide means for mourning in their manner of deliberating on emotions of fear, guilt, and shame. Discussing and dealing with these complex and persistent emotions works as a kind of release, which opens a path to a new orientation in the present. This opening happens through the central mediating or reconciliatory woman survivor. The new orientation signifies, in particular, the narratives' potential to encourage a process of mourning. Dominick LaCapra has outlined mourning as involving a different inflection of performativity that happens through recognizing the difference between the past and the present. This is a moment when the past is simultaneously remembered and actively forgotten, thereby "allowing for critical judgement and a reinvestment in life."¹⁰¹

Perhaps the most significant feature of *Tower* and *Monday, Monday* is their way of mobilizing an ethical consciousness. They do not aim to offer conclusive truth-telling or a cure for a complex issue. Rather, they are to be seen as imaginative and ameliorating narratives that invite the audience to critical contemplation. To use Ann Kaplan's notion, they propose a witnessing position through which the audience can participate in the experience of the Tower shooting and a new sense of community. This kind of ethics of witnessing opens the narratives toward a perspective on the broader phenomenon of gun violence in U.S. gun culture. In this sense, *Tower* and *Monday, Monday* are narratives about the present, whereby imaginaries of culturally specific trauma work as a frame for explaining the present cultural crisis of gun violence.¹⁰²

In his theory of cultural trauma, Jeffrey Alexander conceptualizes trauma as a *process* that involves phases of defining how a traumatic and painful event affects community, recognizing the victims and attributing responsibility. As he argues, trauma is the result of "discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity."¹⁰³ By including and recognizing multiple viewpoints and previously unexpressed emotions of the survivors, and contemplating questions of accountability, Crooks's novel and Maitland's documentary film are not just narratives haunted by a return of trauma but reflect on the trauma process itself, thereby offering views on how imaginaries of trauma may participate in reforming collective identity.

101 Dominick LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss," *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (1999): 716.

102 For the idea of trauma as a frame for understanding culture and social changes, see Kirby Farrell, *Post-Traumatic Culture: Injury and Interpretation in the Nineties* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

103 Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma," 10.

Bibliography

- Alexander, Jeffrey C. "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma." In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Jeffrey Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka, 1–30. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Alexander, Jeffrey, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Anker, Elizabeth. "Villains, Victims and Heroes: Melodrama, Media, and September 11." *Journal of Communication* 55, no. 1 (2005): 22–37. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2005.tb02656.x>.
- Bodnar, John. *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Caruth, Cathy. "Introduction." In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, edited by Cathy Caruth, 3–12. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- Colloff, Pamela. "96 Minutes." *Texas Monthly*, August 2, 2006. <https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/96-minutes/>, accessed June 3, 2020.
- Colloff, Pamela. "The Reckoning." *Texas Monthly*, March 25, 2016. <https://features.texasmonthly.com/editorial/the-reckoning/>, accessed June 3, 2020.
- Corcoran, Madeleine. "Bodily Visions of the War in Vietnam." In *Mythologizing the Vietnam War: Visual Culture and Mediated Memory*, edited by Jennifer Good, Paul Lowe, Brigitte Lardinois, and Val Williams, 109–26. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.
- Crook, Elizabeth. *Monday, Monday*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014.
- Crook, Elizabeth. "The Harry Middleton Lectureship Presents Elizabeth Crook." YouTube, September 10, 2014. <http://www.lbjlibrary.org/events/the-harry-middleton-lectureship-presents-elizabeth-crook>, accessed September 15, 2018.
- van Dijck, Jose. *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
- Downs, Donald Alexander. *More than Victims: Battered Women, the Syndrome of Society, and the Law*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Duwe, Grant. *Mass Murder in the United States: A History*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007.
- Eberly, Rosa A. "'Everywhere You Go, It's There': Forgetting and Remembering the University of Texas Tower Shooting." In *Framing Public Memory*, edited by Kendall R. Phillips, 65–88. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004.
- Edelstein, David. "Documentary Offers a Wrenching Look at America's First Modern Gun Massacre." NPR, October 14, 2016. <https://www.npr.org/2016/10/14/497943220/documentary-offers-a-wrenching-look-at-americas-first-modern-gun-massacre>, accessed October 10, 2019.

- Erl, Astrid, and Ann Rigney, eds. *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory (Media and Cultural Memory – Medien und Kulturelle Erinnerung 10)*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009.
- Farrell, Kirby. *Post-Traumatic Culture: Injury and Interpretation in the Nineties*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Garza, Alejandra. "The Eyes of the World Are Upon You Texas': How the Austin Newspapers Covered the UT Tower Shooting." *Behind the Tower: New Histories of the UT Tower Shooting 2016*, <http://behindthetower.org/how-austin-newspapers-covered-the-shooting>, accessed December 28, 2020.
- Giesen, Bernhard. *Triumph and Trauma*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- Hammack, Maria Ester. "A Brief History of Mass Shootings." *Behind the Tower: New Histories of the UT Tower Shooting 2016*, <http://behindthetower.org/a-brief-history-of-mass-shootings>, accessed October 27, 2019.
- Heiskanen, Benita. "Un/Seeing Campus Carry: Experiencing Gun Culture in Texas." *European Journal of American Studies* 15, no. 2 (2020): 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.15817>.
- Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Hirsch, Marianne. *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.
- Hirschberger, Gilad. "Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning." *Frontiers of Psychology* 9, no. 1441 (August 2018). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6095989/>, accessed November 30, 2020.
- Jankowski, Philip. "Unimaginable in '66, attacks have become routine in U.S." *Austin-American Statesman*, July 31, 2016: D3.
- Kaplan, Ann E. *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.
- LaCapra, Dominick. "Trauma, Absence, Loss." *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (1999): 696–727. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448943>.
- LaCapra, Dominick. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2001.
- Laub, Dori. "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle." In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, edited by Cathy Caruth, 61–75. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- Launius, Roger D. "American Memory, Culture Wars, and the Challenge of Presenting Science and Technology in a National Museum." *The Public Historian* 29, no. 1 (2007): 13–30. <https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2007.29.1.13>.
- Lavergne, Gary. *Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1997.
- Maitland, Keith, dir. *Tower*. Kino Lorber, 2016.

- Maniaty, Tony. "From Vietnam to Iraq: Negative Trends in Television War Reporting." *Pacific Journalism Review* 14, no. 2 (2008): 81–101. <https://doi.org/10.24135/pjr.v14i2.946>.
- Metelman, Jörg, and Scott Loren. "Introduction." In *Melodrama after the Tears: New Perspectives on the Politics of Victimhood*, edited by Scott Loren and Jörg Metelman, 9–32. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2016.
- O'Falt, Chris. "How 'Tower' Demonstrates the Possibilities of Art and Healing in Non-fiction Filmmaking." *IndieWire*, December 16, 2016. <https://www.indiewire.com/2016/12/keith-maitland-tower-best-documentary-oscar-nomination-1201759487/>, accessed October 10, 2019.
- Phillips, Craig. "Keith Maitland Goes Back to 1966 to Tell Story of Victims and Heroes of Texas Shootings." *Independent Lens*, February 13, 2017. <https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/keith-maitland-tells-story-of-victims-heroes-of-texas-shooting/>, accessed October 27, 2019.
- Ponder, JoAnn. "From the Tower Shootings in 1966 to Campus Carry in 2016: Collective Trauma at the University of Texas at Austin." *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytical Studies* 15, no. 4 (2018): 239–52. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aps.1558>.
- Rothe, Anne. *Popular Trauma Culture: Selling the Pain of Others in the Mass Media*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011.
- Schildkraut, Jaclyn, and H. Jaymi Elsass. *Mass Shootings: Media, Myths, and Realities (Crime, Media, and Popular Culture)*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2016.
- Smelser, Neil J. "Psychological Trauma and Cultural Trauma." In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka, 31–59. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- "Statement by the President on the Need for Firearms Control." August 2, 1966. In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson*, 795–96. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1967.
- Stearns, Peter. "Texas and Virginia: A Bloodied Window into Changes in American Public Life." *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 2 (2008): 299–318. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsh.0.0130>.
- "Student Slays 15 From Tower Perch." *San Antonio Express*, August 2, 1966, 1.
- Sturken, Marita. *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- The Neale Spelce Collection*. "No. 1 – UT Tower Shooting." Texas Archive of the Moving Image video. https://texasarchive.org/2009_01055, accessed September 12, 2019.
- "The Texas Sniper." *LIFE*, August 12, 1966.
- Utter, Glenn, ed. *The Gun Debate: An Encyclopedia of Gun Rights and Gun Control in the United States*. Amenia, NY: Grey House, 2016.
- Whitehead, Anne. *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004.
- WikiCommons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Charlotte_Darehshori_Hiding_Behind_Flagpole.jpg, accessed May 4, 2021.