Naming Names: Identifying and Memorializing the Jonestown Dead

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On the first anniversary of the collapse of the World Trade Center towers, the names of the more than 2600 people who died there were read out loud, and they have been read each and every year since then. On the thirtieth anniversary of the deaths in Jonestown, Guyana, the names of all 918 people who died on November 18, 1978, were spoken aloud for the first time ever.

What accounts for the difference in recognition? Why did it take three decades for families and friends of the Jonestown dead to speak the names of their loved ones? After briefly discussing the precipitating events in Jonestown, this paper considers four factors to answer these questions. First, it examines the immediate reaction to the murders and suicides that occurred in Guyana, South America. It looks at the shock, revulsion, and horror expressed both by individuals and government officials, and by mainstream media. Second, it discusses the phenomenon of disenfranchised grief experienced by survivors and relatives. The scandalous and shameful deaths made ordinary mourning impossible for most involved. Third, the paper reflects on the role the informational website "Alternative Considerations of Jonestown and Peoples Temple" has played in changing the climate of bereavement for the mourners of the Jonestown dead. By providing a complete listing of the names and photographs of those who died that November, the site has become the locus of commemoration for families who experienced disenfranchised grief. Finally, the paper investigates the practice of "naming names" as a contemporary form of memorialization that seems to help people after traumatic or stigmatized deaths. It concludes by observing the ways that names have replaced the bodies decaying in the jungle as signifiers of the events in Jonestown. Coupled with photographs, the names individualize the vastness of the numbers, personalizing the loss and legitimizing nontraditional relationships. As a result, grief can be expressed.

The Deaths in Jonestown

Most people today who use the expression "Drink the Kool-Aid" do not know that its origins are found in the 1978 mass murders-suicides that occurred in a utopian communal experiment (Moore, 2003). Peoples Temple began in Indianapolis in the 1950s under the charismatic leadership of a Pentecostal preacher named Jim Jones. The Disciples of Christ, a progressive mainline Protestant denomination, accepted the Temple into its fold in 1960 and ordained Jones in 1964. Prophesying a nuclear attack, however, Jones moved the congregation to a rural community in Northern California, where he believed it would be safe. From the relative isolation of Redwood Valley, Temple members eventually established two urban churches: one in San Francisco and one in Los Angeles.

Jones continued to preach a message of Social Gospel Christianity, and the Temple actively served the poor. Many members were social activists, and the church dominated progressive politics in the San Francisco Bay Area in the mid-1970s. At the same time, however, some members experienced high levels of coercion, so much so that a few left and became apostates,

that is, public opponents of Peoples Temple and Jim Jones. An Internal Revenue Service investigation in 1977, coupled with negative publicity, drove hundreds of members to an agricultural project that the group had established in Guyana, South America.

For a time, Jonestown—as the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project came to be known—seemed to offer a haven from persecution from the Temple's enemies. But in 1978, a number of internal and external factors conspired to create so much fear in the community that its leadership introduced more and more oppressive measures to deal with dissent and unhappiness (Robbins and Anthony, 1995). Residents of Jonestown began to rehearse group suicide just as the leaders had done in San Francisco for several years. Audiotapes as well as notes written to Jones indicate the frequency of the rehearsals. A narrative of martyrdom pervaded the community (Moore, 2009).

When Leo J. Ryan, a California member of Congress, visited the commune in November 1978, bringing critical reporters and relatives with him, violence erupted. After Congressman Ryan escorted fifteen defectors from the community to an airstrip six miles away, some young men from Jonestown shot and killed him, three of the reporters, and one Jonestown resident. Meanwhile, Jim Jones gathered his followers together and initiated the plan which had been rehearsed. Parents killed their children, and then a galvanized metal tub of fruit punch—Fla-Vor-Aid, a British imitation of Kool-Aid—laced with painkillers and potassium cyanide was brought forward for the adults. Accounts of the deaths by the handful of eyewitnesses are conflicting, but it seems clear that once the children were dead, parents more or less willingly chose to die. In the Temple's headquarters in Georgetown, Guyana, when another Temple member learned of the deaths in Jonestown, she gathered her three children into the bathroom where she slit their throats before cutting her own.

By nightfall on November 18, 918 people had died in Guyana: five were shot and killed at the Port Kaituma airstrip; four died in the Georgetown headquarters of knife wounds; and 909 died in Jonestown by ingesting potassium cyanide. (For complete histories see: Reiterman and Jacobs, 1982; Hall, 1987, 2004; Maaga, 1998; and Moore, 2009.)

Rituals of Exclusion

Smith (1982) described the initial scholarly reaction to the deaths in Jonestown. "For the academy, it was as if Jonestown had never happened." He noted the language that distanced clergy and scholars from the "religion" of Jonestown. Clerics like Billy Graham attacked false messiahs and supernatural satanic forces; scholars, on the other hand, either dismissed the Peoples Temple movement as Marxist—and therefore not religious—or ignored the implications of illiberal, or dangerous, religion, segregating "bad religion" into the group known as cults.

Since that time, of course, dozens of books and articles have analyzed Peoples Temple and Jonestown from a number of scholarly perspectives—psychological, sociological, theological, political. In *Salvation and Suicide* (1988a, 2003), David Chidester responded most directly to Smith's challenge to humanize those who died by investigating the mythology, ideology, soteriology, and sociology of Peoples Temple and Jonestown. He identified rituals of exclusion that tended to segregate the Jonestown dead from ordinary humanity.

It is necessary to point out that the magnitude of the number of deaths in Jonestown emerged slowly over the course of a week in 1978. The bodies of children had lain under those of adults, and so Guyana soldiers first arriving on the scene grossly underestimated the initial body count.

A U.S. Army Graves Registration team sent by the United States had a gruesome task. Decomposition was advanced, and bodies fell apart as military personnel attempted to put them into body bags. Initially the U.S. government wanted to the bodies in a mass grave in Guyana, but when the Guyana government protested, the bodies were shipped to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware for processing. This governmental decision to send the deceased to Delaware, rather than California—where most relatives lived—was just one of many ways that the Jonestown dead were stigmatized, as Chidester critically discusses.

Chidester's research reveals three types of fears over contagion and pollution that permeated news coverage and comments about the dead (Chidester, 1988b). Residents of Dover, Delaware feared that any bodies being processed at the Air Force base would contaminate the ground if they were interred there. A second fear stemmed from the concern that "the Jonestown dead might violate the purity of Delaware social space" (p. 687). Other cults or fringe groups might attempt to locate shrines in Delaware, and thereby invade the sanctity or purity of Delaware. The final anxiety dealt with the spiritual menace of demonic spirits or other supernatural fiends that might harm state residents. Thus, "perceived dangers of defilement presented by the bodies of Jonestown—hygienic, social, and ultimately spiritual dangers—were all viewed as violations of the sacred space of the state of Delaware" (p. 689).

The horror and dread of contamination was not limited to inhabitants of Delaware. News articles and columns, as well as television and magazine images that repeatedly showed piles of corpses—what Smith called "the pornography of Jonestown" (1982, p. 109)—all created distance between the living and the dead. "These bodies were not 'ours,' they were not part of 'us,' they were classified as 'them,' and as 'other,' and as fundamentally 'subhuman'" (Chidester, 1988b, p. 20). This attitude led to the failure to conduct meaningful autopsies upon the bodies. Writing thirty years after the events in Guyana, Dr. Cyril Wecht, Past President of the American College of Forensic Sciences, analyzed the reasons for the lack of appropriate medico-legal examinations at Dover. He concluded that the deaths in Jonestown "failed to arouse the sensitive interests and pragmatic concerns of the people in charge because the victims were perceived as 'cultists.' The unspoken attitude was something like: 'what did you expect from such lunatics?' 'they got what they deserved'" (Wecht, 2008). The horrifying deaths, and the sensationalistic responses they elicited, created a climate that disenfranchised those who might be mourning the loss of their relatives in Jonestown.

Disenfranchised Grief and Stigmatized Deaths

Doka uses the term "disenfranchised grief" to describe the circumstances "in which a person experiences a sense of loss but does not have a socially recognized right, role, or capacity to grieve" (1989, p. 3). As a result, "the person suffers a loss but has little or no opportunity to mourn publicly." While Doka focuses on relationships that lead to disenfranchised grief, he also observes that certain kinds of death may create feelings of shame, guilt, or embarrassment because of the circumstances of the demise. These types of deaths may include homicide, suicide, AIDS, drug- or alcohol-related deaths, or any other deaths to which a stigma is attached. Doka calls these "disenfranchising deaths" in a footnote.

In an updated edition of *Disenfranchised Grief* (2002), Doka elaborates upon the ways that stigmatized deaths disenfranchise grief. He turns to Goffman to analyze the phenomenon of stigma, observing that "the cause of death discredits survivors—affecting and influencing their identity and marring interaction with others—thereby limiting their support" (p. 325). He

discusses the ways that suicide, homicide and other disenfranchising deaths isolate the bereaved. Other contributors to Doka's revised volume note the ways that society is repelled by certain types of death. Corr briefly describes the problem of social stigma that characterize some forms of death. Kauffman analyzes the role that shame plays in disenfranchisement, writing that, "When an exposure-shame threat emerges, shame seeks protection by hiding" (p. 68). Kuhn discusses the problem of silence that surrounds disenfranchised grief. Other studies show apparent lack of social support in cases of suicide (e.g., Calhoun, Selby, and Faulstich, 1980; Range, Bright, and Ginn, 1985; Rudestam, 1977; Thornton, Whittemore, and Robertson, 1989). Thornton, Robertson, and Mlecko (1991) demonstrate that college student support for a griever is reduced in some situations of disenfranchised grief. In all of these cases, the nature of the death either shapes attitudes toward the bereaved or attitudes of the bereaved.

The deaths in Jonestown were clearly stigmatized, given the fact that parents killed their children before killing themselves. The survivors of Jonestown who returned to the United States from Guyana lacked social support for their many losses—both personal and material (they lost everything they had)—and thus experienced disenfranchised grief. They faced unimaginable difficulties. They encountered problems in finding work if they admitted their connection to Peoples Temple; and once employers discovered their history, they were terminated. "Some members, unable to find jobs, had been turned away by welfare agencies that refused to deal with 'baby killers'" (Hatcher, 1989, p. 135). Survivors learned not to bring up their pasts until people got to know them. Even then, it was risky. One survivor reported that:

One thing I quickly learned was not to just blurt out at a party or at work that I had lived in Jonestown and survived. People treated me differently after they found out, and usually—okay, always—relationships were affected, colored, tainted by my Jonestown connection. So I adapted and became more selective when sharing my background (Carter, 2003).

Relatives of those who died in Jonestown were also disenfranchised and not allowed to mourn in public. Many felt shame, especially in the African American community. Black church leaders attending the "Consultation on the Implications of Jonestown for the Black Church and the Nation"—co-sponsored by Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the National Conference of Black Churchmen and held in San Francisco in February 1979—blamed the tragedy "perpetrated upon the Black masses [on] unscrupulous and unprincipled White leadership" (Moore, 2009, p. 115). Dr. Kelly Miller Smith's opening statement made it clear from the outset that, "In no way is People's [sic] Temple being thought of as a 'Black Church'" (Smith, quoted in Moore, 2009, p. 115). Once again African Americans had been duped by white people.

When the Emergency Relief Committee (ERC)—an ad hoc inter-religious group in San Francisco—coordinated efforts to bring the bodies of the Jonestown dead from Dover, Delaware to San Francisco in 1979, they were met by a wall of silence in the community. Although the Receiver of Peoples Temple assets had persuaded the court to use Temple funds to reimburse family members up to $500 per body for the costs of transportation and interment, few took up the offer. In addition, the ERC also had difficulty finding a cemetery in the San Francisco Bay Area that would bury the remaining unclaimed and unidentified bodies. Eventually, more than 500 persons were buried in a mass grave at Evergreen Cemetery in Oakland, California. An annual memorial service in honor of those who died in Jonestown drew few survivors or relatives for the first decade it was held. Organized by the Rev. Jynona Norwood—whose mother died in Jonestown—the service at Evergreen Cemetery tended to serve as a platform for speaking

about the danger of cults, and thus was shunned for many years by those who felt alienated or criticized by that discourse.

Survivors and relatives alike reported experiencing a disturbing mix of emotions. They felt shame that they or their family members had followed an apparent charlatan; they felt guilty that they had survived, and that they had not done enough to prevent the mass deaths; they were angry at Jim Jones, at the parents who killed their children, and at the relatives who either provoked the incident or did little to stop it; they feared hit squads and reprisals; and they lived in denial of responsibility or of the horror. A number of conspiracy theories arose, which blamed various government agencies, such as the CIA or the FBI, for the deaths. Even after a number of years had passed, Americans inadvertently denied or suppressed the possibility of grief by adopting the expression "drinking the Kool-Aid" to indicate either whole-hearted support or blind loyalty (Moore, 2003). Mike Carter described what it felt like as a survivor of Jonestown to hear people talk about Kool-Aid:

When I first heard someone speaking about "drinking the Kool-Aid," I was deeply offended. I thought, "How can these people trivialize such a horrific event such as the mass suicide/murder of over 900 people?" I thought it, but I didn't say it. Over the past 25 years, I have learned it is much easier to keep quiet (Carter, 2003).

A Locus for Grief

In 1998, coinciding with the twentieth anniversary of the deaths in Jonestown, I inaugurated the website *Alternative Considerations of Jonestown and Peoples Temple* at the University of North Dakota, where I was teaching in the Department of Philosophy and Religion. Rando (1988), Pollock (1989), and Rosenblatt (1996) note increased feelings of bereavement around anniversaries, and this is especially true regarding the Jonestown deaths because of the intense media interest and coverage that occurs when significant time has elapsed: one year, five years, ten years, twenty years, and most recently, thirty years. Initially the site was intended to "focus on the people who belonged to Peoples Temple… [and to] raise questions about the treatment of Peoples Temple—both in life and in death—by various governmental agencies…" In 2000, however, when I had transferred to the Department of Religious Studies at San Diego State University, the primary purpose of the site became: "Memorialization of those who died and those who survived the tragedy of 18 November 1978 in order to remember their lives and humanize their deaths." One of the goals of the site was to provide a complete listing of everyone who died in Jonestown. (My interest in Jonestown is both personal—my two sisters and a nephew died in Jonestown—and professional, as a historian of new religious movements.)

Because the deaths occurred outside the United States, repatriation of the bodies required the involvement of a number of different government entities. The federal agencies that comprised a Joint Humanitarian Task Force each had separate responsibilities: the State Department notified families and released bodies; the Defense Department handled the logistics of body removal, clean-up and storage; the Justice Department investigated Leo Ryan's death, and the FBI worked on identification; and the Office of Management and Budget monitored costs. No agency assumed responsibility for compiling a comprehensive record of all who died, although the State Department did provide the U.S. Congress approximately 600 names of the deceased whose relatives it had notified (U.S. House of Representatives, 1979, pp. 112-126).

Working from the initial State Department list, we expanded it to include unidentified

children who presumably had died. If a parent survived Jonestown, we presumed that the child was alive; if the parent died, the child was presumed dead. A list of "Who Died?" was included when the site first went online. Relatives began to contact us to provide more information for the catalog: spelling of names, corrections on relationships, and preferences for listing, since many of those living in Jonestown had names by which they were known other than their legal names. In 2002, Fielding McGehee—the website list manager—created a database of all Jonestown residents, both living and dead, which included family information, date of birth, place of birth, jobs held, and other demographic and personal information. The database was uploaded in 2004, and passport and membership photographs in the California Historical Society collection accompanied each individual posted (McGehee, 2008).

In 2005, we added a place to write memorials for each of those who died. This generated great interest from relatives. One young person wrote, "Rhonda was my beautiful aunt… I had never [before] seen a picture of any of my relatives that died in Jonestown." A son wrote to his mother: "I miss you, love you, and [am] sorry you left our life so soon. Love you always, your son Barry." A bereaved father wrote: "My name is Lowell F. McCoy Sr. and I'm the birth father of Leanndra Renae McCoy. If you have any memories of my daughter, I would love to hear from you. Thank You." Mr. McCoy wrote this message for each of his four children who died in Jonestown. Several people who had known his children wrote remembrances for him.

Finally, in 2007 Fielding McGehee, together with two Temple survivors—Laura Kohl and Don Beck—and Denice Stephenson, who had been an archivist at the California Historical Society, embarked on an ambitious project to accurately identify all who died in Guyana on 18 November 1978: those in Jonestown, those at the Port Kaituma airstrip, and those in Georgetown. No official catalog of the Jonestown dead existed. After months of work—compiling Jonestown census records, reviewing lists made by Jonestown survivors in 1978 to help the FBI in identification, incorporating dozens of corrections requested by relatives—the most accurate list of those "Who Died?" went online in August 2008. According to McGehee, many survivors and family members wept upon seeing the comprehensive catalog of names and faces (McGehee, 2008).

The "Who Died?" section of the *Alternative Considerations* website joins the burgeoning number of and online memorial websites. The important studies by Roberts and Vidal (2000) and by de Vries and Rutherford (2004) examined web cemeteries in their infancy, in 1996-97 and 1999 respectively. At least two of the websites Roberts and Vidal noted seem to have gone offline (Dearly Departed and Garden of Remembrance), while The Virtual Memorial Garden and the World Wide Cemetery have no memorials after 2008. These sites seem to have been superseded by many others, such as Virtual Memorials (www.virtual-memorials.com/), Remembered Forever (www.remembered-forever.org), Remembrance Online (www.remembranceonline.co.uk), and Memory Of (www.memory-of.com/Public/). A big site is Legacy.com (www.legacy.com), which memorializes both celebrities and ordinary people, as well as American soldiers who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are also specialty sites, such as Christian Memorials (www.christianmemorials.com) and Memorial2U (www.memorial2u.com/), which appears to cater to a Jewish clientele. More online memorials charge a fee for a "permanent" monument, another change from the mid-1990s, when memorial websites were first categorized.

Nevertheless, some findings from the earlier studies remain relevant despite the years that have elapsed. Roberts and Vidal note four advantages that online memorials seem to have, which

the "Who Died?" list also has: flexible timing, access, visiting, and sharing (Roberts and Vidal, 2000, p. 522-523). They reported that "all manner of relationships are represented in the memorials"—and this is very true of the memorials written on "Who Died?"—although almost half of those writing memorials were younger than the deceased, and appeared to be children or grandchildren (p. 538-539). De Vries and Rutherford also noted that younger authors tended to write memorials, finding that the vast majority of authors were children of the deceased (De Vries and Rutherford, 2004, p. 13). These two scholars also mention the inclusivity and accessibility of web cemeteries, adding that they are providing new rituals and outlets for grief that ameliorate socially-imposed limitations." Many individuals have turned to cyberspace to seek new opportunities to express their grief, commemorate the deceased, create and find community," they observe (p. 8). The listing on "Who Died?" serves all of these purposes. Finally, both studies found a relative absence of religious sentiment expressed in the memorials, and this too is true of the comments on the Jonestown website.

Still, the list of the Jonestown dead differs from other online memorials in several significant ways. First, more than twenty-five years passed before the bereaved could write a memorial, in contrast to the short length of time identified by Roberts and Vidal. Second, few children survived the deaths, and so it is parents, and more frequently, siblings and extended family—aunts and uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews—who have posted tributes. Third, number of writers are seeking information about other relatives, as noted above, and for some, the site introduces them to relatives for the first time, as in this tribute to Searcy Lewellyn Darnes:

Searcy was my handsome uncle. I am so grateful for this website and to see this picture. I had never seen a picture of any of my relatives that died in Jonestown. I was too young to remember them because I was born in 1972. Searcy's oldest brother, Roy Page, is my father. He did not go to Jonestown and he does not have any pictures of his relatives that died there. — Keela Page

Finally, unlike other cyber graves, there are quite a few anonymous posts, especially for children on the Jonestown website. "The world would be brighter with you in it today," says one; "Every child should be remembered. You had no choice. You're loved and missed," says another. Casual visitors also write memorials, moved by the photos of infants, or, in this case, by the name:

I did not know this child, but we share a name, very rare. I pray that God holds her gently and peacefully in his arms. I remember this horrific event clearly and send my deepest sympathy to the family of this beautiful soul who never knew this world. Sincerely, Marchelle

Thus, the Jonestown inventory of those who died reflects the uniqueness of the event and is not easily classifiable. It shares more characteristics with other event-specific memorials, than with more web monuments, and these types of focused websites need further investigation.

Naming Names

Kamerman (1993) suggests enlarging the circle of "legitimate" grievers to include the disenfranchised in order to alleviate the problem of disenfranchised grief. He notes the problem of "grievers who have no social legitimacy because they are in nontraditional relationships" (p. 282). It is fair to say that everyone who died in Jonestown was in a "nontraditional relationship" because Peoples Temple redefined family, and extended the boundaries of kinship across racial lines. In addition to dealing with the trauma of violent death, those left behind confronted a tangled web of connections that further complicated the grieving process. Only a few individuals

were allowed to grieve openly, e.g., the family of Congressman Leo Ryan. The publication of names, photographs, and biographical data online, however, served to disentangle the knots and to legitimize the grief: faces were given to the corpses that lay face-down in the mud. The circle of grievers was enlarged by providing individuality to those who died. The process began with naming names.

Although recording the names of those who have died—on the Jonestown website, as well as on the AIDS Quilt and on the Vietnam Veterans' memorial—may seem like recent phenomena, the listing of names on memorials dates back at least to the post-World War I period. Because so many soldiers died in France and were buried where they had fallen, or were unknown or incomplete, the French began to "inscribe memory in names," according to Daniel J. Sherman (1993). Names became "signs of absent bodies" in mourning rituals and served to create public narratives about heroism and patriotism. A paradoxical effect was to make the loss both communal (the large list of names), and personal (the name of an individual). In France, "the practice of naming had its own role to play in the commemorative struggle over meaning" (p. 462). In other words, the listing of names was not merely a funerary practice, but comprised a debate over the value of the war and the losses it provoked. Was the war "great" and a noble undertaking? or was it a waste of lives and treasure? Thus, naming names supplements the traditional writing of history. As Sherman concludes, "commemoration always involves a contest over power" (p. 466).

Certainly the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial designed by Maya Ying Lin suggests this type of power struggle, in which "the content purposefully omitted[—]the brooding presence of absence—was readily grasped and thoroughly understood" (Marling and Silberman, 1987, p. 13). Lin says that her idea for the memorial "was shaped by her meditations on the peculiar eloquence of the World War I cemeteries" (Hawkins, 1993, p. 753), and she mentions in particular Sir Edwin Lutyens' memorial to the Missing of the Somme at Thiepval (Sherman, 1993, p. 444), a large structure upon which the names of more than 73,000 British soldiers who died at Somme—and who have no known grave—are inscribed on white panels. Names alone seemed to be insufficient in the case of the Vietnam wall, however; they did not seem to capture the sense of individuality the way Rick Hart's statue of three Vietnam G.I.'s personalizes the names over which they gaze. The wall of names indicates the extent of loss; the statue humanizes that loss, in much the same way that Anne Frank's diary and photograph individualize the enormity of the Holocaust's six million. In a similar fashion, the AIDS Quilt both personalizes those who have succumbed to AIDS, and demonstrates the sheer numbers who have died.

The Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, the AIDS Quilt, and the Jonestown website grew out of the desire to create memorials where none existed. They have several other things in common as well. First, they are not government-sponsored projects. Instead, grassroots organizations and individuals raised the funding and developed the memorials. Second, the names themselves act as the memorial for the absent bodies; the names represent the bodies. Third, the names "also serve as surrogate graveyards, consecrated ground where the living can come to pay respects to the dead" (Hawkins, 1993, p. 760). In general this is true of all online memorials, but is particularly true of the Jonestown website, given the fact that more than half of the victims are buried in a mass grave, while half of those interred are unidentified. The actual locus of the Jonestown bodies has become the Jonestown website and its listing of those who died.

The addition of photographs to the list of names dramatically changed the nature of the inventory. Like Hart's statue and Anne Frank's photo, they amplify the loss as we consider the

faces of hundreds of children and young adults, old people and babies, black and white, who died in Jonestown. If naming the names replaces the iconic images of the bodies decaying in the tropical sun, then the photographs, in some measure, re-animate the dead, or at least re-humanize them. They are no longer corpses but have become individuals, with histories, stories, and pasts that transcend the last day of their lives. Family and friends can discuss them and bring them into the world of memory, saving them from the forgetfulness desired at the outset by U.S. society. "To forget a name is in effect to allow death to have the last word," writes Hawkins (1993, p. 752). The list of those who died in Jonestown gives relatives a place to grieve and to remember. Grief has been enfranchised.

Internet memorials will continue to play a role in helping the bereaved come to terms with their losses, particularly those who have experienced stigmatizing deaths. A new development since early studies into Internet memorialization has been the rise of event-specific websites dedicated to honoring victims of a particular trauma, such as those killed in the mass shooting at Virginia Technical Institute in 2008, the World Trade Center victims of 2001, or those who died in Jonestown in 1978. Creating a place online to visit, and providing names and photos of the deceased, enfranchises the grief of those prevented from grieving by their lack of a socially-recognized role or right to experience loss. These include friends, business associates, concerned citizens, and others peripherally connected to particularly public deaths, where mass mourning occurs. We can expect to see more and more online memorials in the future, especially in connection with stigmatized deaths, because they offer a public venue for private grief.

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