



Journalism in a Culture of Grief

Carolyn Kitch, Janice Hume

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This book considers the cultural meanings of death in American journalism and the role of journalism in interpretations and enactments of public grief, which has returned to an almost Victorian level. A number of researchers have begun to address this growing collective preoccupation with death in modern life; few scholars, however, have studied the central forum for the conveyance and construction of public grief today: news media. News reports about death have a powerful impact and cultural authority because they bring emotional immediacy to matters of fact, telling stories of real people who die in real circumstances and real people who mourn them. Moreover, through news media, a broader audience mourns along with the central characters in those stories, and, in turn, news media cover the extended rituals. *Journalism in a Culture of Grief* examines this process through a range of types of death and types of news media. It discusses the reporting of horrific events such as September 11 and Hurricane Katrina; it considers the cultural role of obituaries and the instructive work of coverage of teens killed due to their own risky behaviors; and it assesses the role of news media in conducting national, patriotic memorial rituals.

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