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2 The Structure of Grief

To appreciate the phenomenology of grief, we need to step back from a certain way of thinking about emotional experience. As noted in chapter 1, there is a widespread tendency in philosophy and other disciplines to construe emotions as brief episodes with specific objects, such as being afraid of the dog or happy that it is a sunny morning. Emotional experiences like these are contrasted with moods, which endure for longer periods and have either very general objects or no objects at all. But grief does not fit into either category. First of all, it does not respect the distinction between having a specific object and having a very general object. It certainly appears that grief is directed at the death of a particular person or the loss of a relationship with that person. At the same time, however, it can envelop all aspects of one's relationship with the world. In addition, although grief may last for a long time, it varies considerably during that time, distinguishing it from both brief emotional episodes and stable moods.

This chapter will develop a phenomenological account of what I have called the *two-sidedness* of grief: how it can be about something specific and yet, at the same time, encompass everything. First of all, I will make clear how the intelligibility of one's experiential world can come to depend upon a particular person, who is both an entity within the world and a condition of possibility for that same world. Then, I will show how this two-sidedness is inextricable from grief's process structure. Grief is neither an episodic emotion nor an assortment of disparate episodes spread out over time. It is a process, the unity of which derives from the unity of the life disturbance that it navigates. A range of emotional experiences share this two-sided, temporally extended structure. Hence, thinking of human emotions as brief episodes, abstracted from the context of a human life,

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risks oversimplification and misunderstanding. Our emotional lives look very different when we take grief as our starting point, rather than a brief, decontextualized episode of anger, joy, or fear.

My account in this chapter will place particular emphasis on how a grief process involves negotiating tensions between the explicit acknowledgment that someone has died and an experiential world that continues to implicate the person. I will suggest that established distinctions, such as that between propositional belief and unthinking habit, fail to capture the relevant experiences. This sets the scene for chapter 3, which addresses how the bodily phenomenology of grief contributes to its two-sidedness and process structure.

2.1 The Unity of Emotion

Grief is often said to be an “emotion,” but this does not tell us much unless we have a good grasp of what emotions are. In addressing the nature of emotion, one of the problems we face is that of specifying how various candidate ingredients of emotion together constitute a unified whole. Why is there an “emotion,” rather than just an assortment of other things that happen to coincide spatially and temporally? Suppose we start with two well-known and seemingly conflicting theories of emotion: William James (1884) proposes that emotions are feelings of bodily changes, while Robert Solomon (1976/1993) instead maintains that they are evaluative judgments. There is at least something to be said for both views, as it seems that emotions are both felt and directed at states of affairs that concern us. So, it is tempting to accept that they incorporate judgments, feelings, and perhaps other ingredients as well (such as perceptions, patterns of attention, and action tendencies). However, in virtue of what do these ingredients together comprise a distinctive type of psychological state? When addressing this question, there is a risk of vacillating between what Jesse Prinz calls the “problem of plenty” and the “problem of parts.” The problem of plenty arises when we attempt to accommodate all the different features of emotion but, in so doing, fail to account for how they “hang together” and lose sight of the overall phenomenon. The problem of parts then surfaces when we try to tidy things up by identifying which ingredients are essential. The most plausible answer seems to be “all of them,” taking us back to the problem of plenty (Prinz 2004, 18).[1]

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The situation is further complicated by the need to specify what it is for things to "hang together" in the right way (Dancy 2014). The players in a football team, the two sides of a coin, the Earth and the Moon, the morning star and the evening star, and the numbers 1 and 2 all relate to each other in importantly different ways. Likewise, there are many ways in which the constituents of an emotion might be said to "hang together." The task is to show not only *that they do* but also *how they do*.

The motivation for accepting that emotions involve multiple components stems at least partly from the recognition that (a) emotions are intentional states (one is afraid *of* the dog, happy *about* getting the job, and hopeful *about* the situation) and (b) emotions incorporate feelings as essential constituents. If feelings are taken either to lack intentionality altogether or to be intentional states that can have only one's own body, bodily parts, bodily properties, and bodily states as their objects, then the acceptance of multiple components is inevitable. If emotion includes feeling, and if feeling cannot account for the world-directed intentionality of emotion, then emotion has to include something more.

One way of deflating the problem is to maintain that some emotional feelings do, after all, have world-directed intentionality, a position I will support in chapter 3. This leaves open the possibility that certain emotions have a singular, essential ingredient—they are intentional feelings, felt evaluations, or forms of affective intentionality. However, even if such an approach can accommodate some episodic emotions, it does not help us in the case of grief. Various different experiences, thoughts, and activities, including other types of emotions, *do* seem to contribute to grief, regardless of whether or not its constituent feelings have world-directed intentionality. For example, a former student of mine described grieving over the death of her grandfather and, in so doing, feeling anger toward the chair he used to sit on. Now, it seems plausible to suggest that someone who is not grieving could experience anger of a similar quality, directed at one or another object. Given this, we could deny that the anger is part of the grief. Indeed, we could subtract all of the contingent accompaniments of grief, including other types of emotions associated with it, and see what is left over. But then we would end up losing sight of the phenomenon altogether. During the course of grief, a person might feel hope, despair, sadness, anger, fear, love, gratitude, guilt, jealousy, and regret, where all of these feelings relate in one or another way

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to the fact that someone has died. There are also wider-ranging feelings of being lonely, lost, confused, abandoned, adrift, cut off from the world, or somehow lacking in ways that are hard to pin down and describe. If all of these were excluded from our account of grief, we would not be left with a purified grief experience but, most likely, nothing at all.

We could instead maintain that grief is a "complex emotion" (Price 2010, 30). More specifically, it is a complex emotion that incorporates other types of emotion. However, the problem we face is not merely that of specifying how various constituents, which occur at around the same time, interrelate. There is also the more challenging *problem of temporal parts*. Even if it is accepted that grief incorporates other kinds of emotions, such as anger, a person does not stop grieving when she stops feeling angry. So, grief is not only more encompassing than its emotional constituents; it also outlasts most or all of them. It somehow extends over time, despite being punctuated by periods when the bereaved person is unconscious or not preoccupied in any way with the deceased. This is consistent with the widespread view that grief is not a state or episode but a *process* of some kind.[2] But how does a gappy sequence of phenomenologically diverse episodes together amount to a singular experience of grief? The answer, I suggest, can be found by solving a related problem. It is not merely the case that grief *can be* something that lasts for a prolonged period, an observation that applies equally to certain episodic emotions, but also that grief *must* do so. In his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein (1953, 174) offers the following well-known remark: "'For a second he felt violent pain.'—Why does it sound queer to say: 'For a second he felt deep grief'? Only because it so seldom happens?" He adds that feeling grief now is somehow analogous to "playing chess *now*." Hence, while it makes sense to say that someone felt angry or jealous for a very short time, the very idea of episodic grief is somehow peculiar. What seems strange, even incoherent, is a scenario where someone grieves genuinely and intensely but then abruptly stops; the grief is not suppressed or delayed but altogether gone—it is back to business as usual.

Why, then, might grief be necessarily rather than contingently extended? To answer this question, I will turn to a neglected but important aspect of the structure of emotional experience: its *two-sidedness*. With this, it becomes clear why certain emotions have to take the form of temporally extended processes.

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2.2 Two Sides of Emotion

There is general consensus among philosophers that, in responding to something emotionally, we register its value, significance, practical meaning, or importance to us. It is often stated or implied that such properties are *experienced* as inherent in the objects of emotion: the rampaging bull *looks* frightening; the film *appears* exciting. This kind of talk might give the impression that emotional ways of experiencing things are phenomenologically localized: a particular object of emotion is associated with evaluative properties that are consistent with the type of emotion in question. For instance, where someone is afraid of *p*, and where *p* is perceptually present, it is usually the case that *p* looks frightening to them. However, the structure of emotional experience is a lot more complicated than this. Whether or not we experience something as mattering in one or another way ordinarily reflects our various cares and concerns or *values* (into which we have differing degrees of explicit insight). To offer a straightforward example, my being afraid of the rampaging bull reflects the fact that I care about my survival. These values are not to be thought of in an atomistic way, with each of them contributing to our emotional responses independently of the others. Rather, they hang together to a large extent, as do the associated emotions.

In the philosophical literature, one of the most developed accounts of how concrete objects of emotion relate to what we care about is that of Bennett Helm (2009a, 2009b). He distinguishes between the target (or concrete object) of an emotion, the formal object, and what he calls the "focus."[3] Where the target is a raging bull charging in one's direction, the formal object would be threat. But what about the focus? Helm (2009a, 249) suggests that emotions consist in "intentional feelings of import." By import, he means the way in which the target of an emotion impacts (potentially or actually) on one's preestablished values. It is only in light of those values that the target is taken to possess one or another evaluative property. In the case of the bull, I value my life, my bodily integrity, and the avoidance of pain. Consistent with this, the bull appears threatening. The presupposed value is what Helm calls the "focus" of the emotion. In his words, the focus is "a background object having import that is related to the target in such a way as to make intelligible the target's having the evaluative property defined by the formal object" (Helm 2009a, 251). Helm adds that the

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relationship between emotions and their foci is holistic in nature. A given focus, such as valuing my life, *implies* a much wider range of emotional responses to events, which knit together in rational patterns: if one values *p*, then one ought to fear *q*, experience relief at *r*, and so forth. The foci around which emotional responses cluster are likewise holistically organized. This "rational structure of values" is, according to Helm (2009b, 48), "constitutive of one's identity."[4] In summary, then, the focus of an emotion can be conceived of as a web of interconnected values, relative to which things appear significant to us in the ways that they do. To the extent that these values hang together, our lives have coherence, consistency, and distinctiveness, as do our emotional responses to events.

Others have made complementary points, often by appealing to the notion of "concern." For instance, Frijda (2007/2013) maintains that emotions are responses to events that impact on our concerns, and Roberts (1988) takes emotions to be "concern-based construals" of objects and situations. Nussbaum (2001, 19) also emphasizes this aspect of emotion, in observing that emotions reveal the manner in which things are "salient" to our "well-being," while Ben-Ze'ev (2000, 19) observes that registering something as significant involves relating it to "*a certain background framework*." Complementing Helm's view that this "background" can be thought of in terms of our "identity," Glas (2017, 144) refers to the "double intentionality" of emotions: how they are directed at concrete objects and simultaneously at the self. Emotions, he says, reflect a concern for the survival and integrity of the self. They are "self-referential," in ways that we do not always have explicit insight into. In other words, they do, or at least can, tell us something about ourselves—what we care about and how coherent our concerns are. It can be added that this self-referential side of emotion is often less phenomenologically salient than the concrete object and its evaluative properties. There is thus a tendency to neglect it and to focus instead on how an object of emotion appears to a subject.

It should be added that this "focus" or "self-referential" aspect of emotion is not just partly responsible for generating emotion; it is also an important *constituent* of emotional experience. As we will see, it is experienced neither as an internal state of the subject nor as an evaluative property attached to a particular entity or situation. Rather, for the most part, it is integrated into the phenomenological *world* that operates as a backdrop to our various experiences, thoughts, and activities. In turning to this, another feature of

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emotional experience becomes apparent—its sophisticated, *dynamic* structure. As Nussbaum (2001, 45) suggests, an emotion is an intelligent process, one that "moves, embraces, refuses."[5] We can identify what is distinctive about emotional experience by bringing together the themes of *world* and *dynamism*. What makes an episode or process *emotional* in nature is not the inclusion of one or more core components, such as feelings, perceptions, or judgments. Instead, it is the dynamic relationship between focus and concrete object or target. The object of emotion is experienced *through* an evaluative framework that is integral to the structure of one's experiential world. However, it destabilizes that same framework, in ways that can be subtle and localized or profound and wide-ranging. So, there is a circular process of varying subtlety, complexity, and duration, whereby an object of emotion affects the very structure through which it is evaluated, in a manner that then feeds into ongoing experience of that object.[6] Emotional episodes and processes are thus distinctive, in putting into question what might otherwise be taken for granted as a backdrop to activity and thought.

This feature of emotional experience has not gone entirely unnoticed. Pugmire (2005, 42) remarks on how an emotion can "reconstitute its prevailing setting," while Ben-Ze'ev (2000, 33) writes, "Emotions indicate a transition in which the preceding context has changed, but no new context has yet stabilized." Brady (2013) addresses one aspect of the dynamic, by emphasizing how emotions influence patterns of attention in ways that then motivate us to reflect upon and better understand our values. This, he observes, can lead to revision of the very values that motivated our initial emotional response. However, the emphasis of Brady's account is specifically on how emotional experiences can elicit *explicit reflection*, through which we seek reasons or evidence for our emotions. Although this has a part to play, it does not capture the manner in which tensions between an object of emotion and an evaluative framework are experienced and negotiated over time. That requires a detailed consideration of how we experience the surrounding world, our bodies, our thoughts, time, and other people. To my knowledge, nobody has addressed the dynamic in any detail.[7] And, if we are to understand the phenomenology of grief, we need to do so. Conversely, by studying grief, we can come to better appreciate a structure that it shares with various other kinds of emotional experience (those that take the form of episodes or longer-term processes directed at entities, events, or situations), but that is not always so apparent.

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2.3 A World Undermined

An event or situation can be experienced as impinging on the structure of one's world in either of two ways—by potentially or actually occurring. Whichever the case, the impact can be minor or major, localized or wide-ranging, and ephemeral or long-lasting. For example, finding that the café is closed and that a morning coffee must be acquired elsewhere usually involves a disappointment that is superficial and short-lived. In contrast, living for a sustained period with the prospect of losing one's job or receiving a diagnosis of serious illness is likely to unsettle one's world in ways that are both wide-ranging and prolonged. Other emotions involve events that are highly significant at a particular time but have little or no lasting effect on one's world, as when avoiding a fast-moving car.[8] Grief over a death involves responding to something that has actually happened, where this can profoundly affect the structure of one's world over a considerable period of time. The extent to which bereavement impacts upon one's world reflects the degree to which and the manner in which the deceased was integrated into one's life. Consider our goal-directed projects. For the most part, these are not pursued in complete isolation from one another. There is also a degree of consistency between them. For example, it would be odd to invest much of one's time campaigning for nuclear disarmament, while spending the rest of it working on the development of higher-yield nuclear weapons. In addition, our projects depend on one another in various ways, with many being hierarchically organized. Some projects are also, of necessity, temporally ordered. One has to achieve *p* in order to then achieve *q*, followed by *r*.

A network of projects can come to depend upon an interpersonal relationship in various ways. Certain projects may only be intelligible in light of that relationship. This applies to all those cases where we do *p* for the other person or in order to further their interests, goals, or well-being. It also applies when *p* is done in order to achieve a shared goal, at least where that goal cannot be pursued alone, as when *p* is done in order to enhance *our* relationship. Other projects may continue to make sense without the deceased, but they become contingently more difficult or even impossible to pursue due to the absence of that person's contribution—it still makes sense to do *p* and I still want to do it, but I cannot do it without you. So, with the death, various projects become either unintelligible or at least practically unsustainable. They therefore need to be abandoned or revised and sometimes replaced with alternatives. Other projects, which do not depend

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on the deceased to the extent that they either lose their intelligibility or become practically sustainable, may no longer seem worthwhile. What mattered in light of one's relationship with the person does not matter to the same extent or in the same way without them. But the disruption does not end there. Numerous other projects are likely to depend indirectly on the relationship, insofar as they relate to projects that involved the person directly and have consequently collapsed. So, a whole network of projects, spanning much of one's life, may be rendered unsustainable.

However, the impact of bereavement on life structure is not limited to networks of goal-directed projects and the values that sustain them. A wider range of habitual activities and expectations can also come to implicate a particular person, as when expecting to see them upon returning home in the evening or when *we* go for *our* evening walks together. The same applies to other pastimes that are irregular and less frequent: it is *we* who enjoy going to the cinema or to a restaurant together. Bereavement thus disrupts the interconnected values that hold a life together, where "value" is to be understood in a broad way, so as to include everything that a person cares about in one or another manner. Some values are embedded in specific projects or contexts of practice, as when one cares about completing articles by deadlines or being punctual for work meetings. Others are less fine-grained and presupposed by large parts of one's life, as when caring about the well-being of a child or partner. Bereavement undermines projects and pastimes by disrupting underlying values. In so doing, it also disrupts more specific values that depend on those projects and pastimes. Overall, this can profoundly affect the structure of one's life, as illustrated by remarks such as the following:

> It has impacted every aspect of my life. Socially, financially, emotionally, physically, practically, everything has changed and new norms created. The world has shifted on its axis and I feel I am a stranger in the current world, feeling my way. (#35)

> My previous world disappeared because the person I did everything (and nothing) with was no longer there. (#38)

> It's a complete and total impact. Every aspect of your life is changed. (#14)

> I feel like everything about the world that I have known is completely foreign now. The world seems like a different place. (#17)

> Totally shattered my whole life. (#86)

> Initially, it felt a bit like a foundational piece of the universe was missing. (#194)

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As mentioned in section 2.2, a stable network of projects, cares, and concerns can also be conceived of in terms of a sense of "self" or "identity" (although it is certainly not the only referent of those two terms). Thus, profound grief is sometimes said to involve a disturbance or loss of self. It is not uncommon for people to offer remarks along the lines of "part of me has died," "I died with her," "I'm incomplete without him," and "I don't know who I am anymore." Although such talk may appear clichéd on occasion, it remains informative. In an important way, profound grief does impact on self-experience, on a sense of *who* one is. The way in which one's life structure can come to depend on another person encompasses various *categories* with which one identifies, each of which attaches to norms, expected patterns of activity, and ways of interacting with other people. These categories partly specify *who one is*, in relation to particular people and also wider society: I am a wife, husband, mother, father, daughter, son, teacher, business partner, religious practitioner, political party member, and so on. With bereavement, one can cease to belong to certain categories that were previously central to one's life: "you no longer feel part of a couple" (#65); "I have been a daughter all my life; I am no longer a daughter; life is forever changed" (#11).

However, the relevant sense of identity is not limited to category memberships of the form "I am an *x*." It also extends to projects, commitments, pastimes, and habits, expressed as "I am someone who believes, does, strives to do, enjoys doing, or is committed to doing *x*." We could think of all this in terms of what Christine Korsgaard (1996, 101) calls *practical identity*: "a description under which you find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking." For Korsgaard, practical identity includes the likes of profession and religion, along with statuses such as being a parent, spouse, or friend. Together, they comprise a sense of who one is, which regulates activities by specifying reasons for action, prohibitions, and obligations. Korsgaard (1996, 102) refers to this as a "conception" of oneself, but what I have in mind here is broader in scope. With the inclusion of much that falls under "I am someone who does *x*," it is evident that not all aspects of practical identity are explicitly conceptualized, at least not unless or until they are disrupted by life events.[9]

Thus, a profoundly altered life structure or experiential world can equally be described as a loss of or change in oneself. For example, when asked "How did the person's death affect you during the hours, days, and

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weeks that followed?" one survey participant (who appears to have some philosophical training) responded by criticizing the question for implicitly assuming that bereavement leaves one's identity intact over time. Contrary to this, the respondent emphasizes how bereavement does not simply affect "me"; it can also alter the "me" that is being affected:

> I find I go rather blank when looking at this question, and I think this is because there's a sense in which it is not a "good" question in extreme bereavement circumstances. Somewhat as if someone had asked, say, "How did life itself ending affect you?" (Or as if, say, existence were thought to be a predicate after all.) Now of course, my life didn't end! But my point is that the "me" who was "affected" was itself radically ruptured by the massive jolt in the fabric of my existence. "In what ways did life go on?"—this somehow makes more sense; I remember how perverse it seemed that my organic life coursed on with its own imperative—that I ate and slept and so on. (#171)

It has been said that bereavement, in disrupting a taken-for-granted life structure, challenges or repudiates one's *assumptions*. For instance, Parkes (1998, 90) describes how, with the death, "a whole set of assumptions about the world that relied upon the other person for their validity are suddenly invalidated." However, to understand the two-sided process structure of grief, it is important to make clear what the relevant "assumptions" consist of. One possibility is that they are propositional attitudes of the form "Person B believes that *p*." It could be added that what distinguishes these from occurrent, momentary, and inconsequential beliefs, such as "B believes that there is a seagull overhead," is that they are consistently presupposed by B's various other beliefs, as well as by projects and associated activities. Hence, although they may be only infrequent objects of explicit reflection, they remain central to B's life. That being so, we might wonder why acknowledgment of a person's death does not lead to the swift, unequivocal rejection of all those propositional beliefs that depend for their truth on that person's being alive. One response is that it is simply a contingent fact about human psychology that extensive networks of beliefs take time to update. But that does not suffice to account for the sorts of *tensions* that are experienced during grief, which involve conflict between the explicit, propositional recognition that someone is dead and something different in kind, which runs counter to that recognition.

What needs to be acknowledged is how the relevant "assumptions" are integral to a person's *experiential world*, something that operates as a phenomenological backdrop to more localized experiences, thoughts, and activities,

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including propositional beliefs concerning the death. How, though, could the structure of a life or a sense of one's practical identity also amount to an experiential *world*? The answer is fairly straightforward: in light of our projects, pastimes, and habits, which presuppose and sustain networks of cares and concerns (or "values"), entities, situations, and events are experienced as *significant* or as *mattering* in interconnected, organized ways.[10] These ways of mattering track—to some extent at least—different emotion categories and their formal objects. In light of our cares and concerns, something might appear to us as exciting, threatening, disappointing, annoying, worrying, and so forth. Some types of significance relate to the impact of what has already happened, while others are concerned with what might have happened or what is anticipated to happen. Regardless of which, the relevant events can be experienced as significant for me, for us, for them, or for you. Where an experience involves anticipating something, this might be something imminent, something that could happen at any time, or something that will happen at a later time. There are also varying degrees of confidence and doubt over whether it will happen: p is inevitable; p is likely; p might happen; p is doubtful; it could be either p or q. In addition, what is anticipated has varying degrees of determinacy. An experience can involve the arrival of something quite specific or, alternatively, a much vaguer sense that something with a certain type of significance is coming. Experiences of mattering can implicate one's own agency and that of others in a number of ways: it is urgent; I have to do it; I have to avoid it; there is nothing I can do; there is nothing I could have done; those people can help; nobody can help; this is what I need to do; this is what ought to be done. The relevant aspect of experience thus has an intricate, multifaceted structure (Ratcliffe 2015, chap. 2).

To some extent, how things appear significant to us reflects established norms, roles, and artifact functions, giving stability to experience. A cup is for drinking from, regardless of who one is; a police officer matters in light of an established role; and the signs at the airport tell us where to go. However, the kinds of significance attached to many things also reflect the idiosyncratic structure of one's life. For instance, how I experience the arrangement of books, papers, pens, and IT equipment in my study relates to my current projects and associated concerns. So too do the ways in which I experience numerous other things as mattering during the course of daily life. Whether, when, and how something appears significant varies in light of my situation and priorities at the time. Nevertheless, insofar as

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my projects and values remain fairly stable, my changing experiences of significance will be organized in light of them.

Now, regardless of where a philosopher might take the limits of specifically *perceptual* content to lie, our immediate experiences of things often involve a sense of how they matter to us. We encounter significance as inherent in our surroundings, rather than first experiencing things and only afterward assigning one or another form of significance by means of inference. That applies regardless of whether or not the relevant experiences are labeled as perceptual or as nonperceptual. As I have suggested elsewhere, this aspect of experience can be analyzed in terms of possibilities (Ratcliffe 2008, 2015, 2017). How our experience is saturated with a sense of the possible is a consistent theme in the phenomenological tradition of philosophy. For instance, we can appeal to what Edmund Husserl calls the "horizonal" structure of experience. Our appreciation of what something is and our sense of its being perceptually present both depend, according to Husserl, not only on what is currently accessible to perception but also on an associated system of perceptual possibilities. This is inextricable from a nonconceptual, bodily appreciation of what to do in order to actualize those possibilities. An object might appear *as* something one could turn around so as to reveal a hidden side or *as* something that could be touched in order to experience a texture. The relevant possibilities are variably determinate. For instance, they could involve encountering a smooth surface or, alternatively, one or another kind of texture (Husserl 1948/1973, 1952/1989, 2001).

The analysis can be supplemented by acknowledging that experience includes not only possibilities for ongoing perceptual access but also practically significant possibilities relating to goal-directed activities. Things show up as mattering and as relating to potential activities in ways that reflect the structure of our lives—our projects, cares, and concerns. As Husserl also recognizes, many experiences of possibility take the more specific form of *anticipation*. For instance, in seeing a glass fall from a table toward a hard surface, my current experience incorporates a sense of what will happen next—the inevitable sight and sound of breaking glass. This anticipatory structure is illustrated by moments of surprise. I do not need to formulate the propositional belief "the glass will smash" in order to be immediately, prereflectively surprised by the sight of it bouncing off the floor like a rubber ball. Active engagement with our surroundings and passive expectation are both imbued with a sense of how unfolding events matter.

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For the most part, interactions with our practically meaningful surroundings take the form of confident anticipation. As I reach to pick up a pen, I am not usually faced with a host of conflicting possibilities such as its falling to pieces, rolling away, or dripping ink all over me. Only one possibility appears salient: that of my picking it up effortlessly and proceeding to write with it. The same applies more widely. What we ordinarily experience is a cohesive arrangement of confidently anticipated eventualities, which unfold in ways that are broadly in line with expectations and reflect our life structure. Granted, deviations do occur, in the guise of uncertainty, doubt, and surprise. But they tend to be minor and occasional perturbations of a confidence that continues to apply more widely.

This is how the structure of a life takes on the guise of an experiential world. The *world* (in the relevant sense of the term) is not an object of passive experience but a context in which we are actively immersed. It consists in a cohesive, unfolding arrangement of significant possibilities, which are experienced and acted upon in ways that reflect projects, cares, and concerns (Ratcliffe 2017). How other people are integrated into our lives can be understood in these terms. The ways in which things matter to us and the cohesive patterns of unfolding events into which they are integrated reflect a life structure that depends on relationships with particular individuals.

Given this phenomenological structure, there is potential for tension between what we explicitly take to be the case and the world within which we do so. As the practical meanings attached to various things do not change immediately, the experiential world can remain at odds with our explicit acceptance of something. The bereaved person may thus continue to experience *our* home, the sofa where *we* sit together, the room *we* are decorating, *our* holiday documents, the park where *we* walk.[11] The full realization that someone has died involves not only updating a system of propositional beliefs but also coming to experience and relate to the world as a whole in a different way.[12] Thomas Attig (2011, xxxix) calls this "relearning the world," something that involves "a multi-dimensional process of learning *how* to live meaningfully again after loss."[13] Similarly, Gillies and Neimeyer (2006, 36) refer to the task of constructing a "new reality."

With a distinction in place between a world that presupposes a particular person and the experiences and thoughts that arise *within* that world, we can better understand grief's two-sidedness. To be more specific, we can see

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how something experienced or acknowledged within the world can also imply the impossibility of that very world. An initial emotional evaluation undermines, to varying degrees, the backdrop against which it arises. As Sonali Deraniyagala (2013, 34) writes in her memoir, *Wave*, “They are my world. How do I make them dead? My mind toppled.” The fact of someone’s death is often described as incomprehensible, unfathomable, unreal, impossible. One knows full well what has happened, continues to inhabit a world that runs contrary to it, and experiences a tension between the two:

> The sense of unreality and disbelief. Like it hadn’t really happened and was all a dream. (#34)

> In the last few weeks I have been bewildered at my inability to reconcile my absolute knowledge of his death with the utter disbelief that he is no longer here, that our life together has vanished into the past. (#192)

Writing of her own experience, the philosopher Susan Dunston (2010, 165) distinguishes two kinds of *knowing*: “I know certainly that my brother is dead, that he killed himself, and at the same time such a thing is inconceivable, inexplicable, and unknowable to me (in the clear and distinct way that Descartes sought anyway).” It is tempting to think of this tension in terms of a distinction between propositional cognition and unthinking habit. However, if we are to appeal to “habit” here, then it should not be construed as something nonconceptual and thoughtless. Those who are bereaved often retain a host of habitual expectations: “at the beginning, when I came into the house, I expected to see him there” (#59). But it is not only patterns of unthinking, practical, bodily expectation that persist despite one’s knowing that the person has died. Habitual patterns of thought involving the deceased may also remain:

> Initially I was overwhelmed with grief. I found it hard to believe that she was gone. She was in my thoughts so often that it felt as though she was still with me. Sometimes when the house phone rang I forgot that she had died and expected to hear her voice. (#144)

Such experiences could be interpreted in terms of repeatedly forgetting something and then remembering it. Perhaps that is plausible in some instances. However, it does not account for others, which involve an ongoing experience of conflict between the reality of the death and enduring patterns of experience and thought. One acknowledges the death and *at the*

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same time continues to feel that it does not make sense, that this is somehow impossible, that it cannot be happening:

> Now, from time to time, there unexpectedly rises within me, like a bursting bubble: the realization that *she no longer exists*, *she no longer exists*, totally and forever. This is a flat contradiction, utterly unadjectival—dizzying because *meaningless* (without any possible interpretation). (Barthes 2009/2010, 78)

During the course of grief, some parts of one's life may come to integrate the reality of the death while others still do not. Conflicts thus arise only at certain times or in certain situations. There are also moments of revelation, which involve explicitly recognizing that one has been holding onto certain habitual patterns that no longer apply:

> And it wasn't until we were standing on Queenstown Road station, on an unfamiliar platform under a white wooden canopy, wasn't until we were walking towards the exit, that I realised, for the first time, that I would never see my father again. (Macdonald 2014, 106)

I am not aware of any established terms in philosophy that serve to mark—in quite the right way—the distinction between explicit, unwavering acknowledgment of *p* and a world that, in whole or in part, consistently or periodically, comprises the competing conviction that *not p*. It is not a straightforward matter of cognition, thought, or propositional belief versus thoughtless habit, feeling, or perception, given that patterns of linguistic thought are also integrated into the habitual world (a point to which I will return in chapter 4). It is also unclear where to locate "belief" in all of this. It could be maintained that propositional acceptance is both necessary and sufficient for belief. However, in the case of conscious, occurrent belief (in contrast to dispositional belief and belief conceived of as an enduring "state"), it seems plausible to maintain that belief also incorporates the sense or feeling of conviction. And, when explicit propositional assent conflicts with an experiential world, the sense of conviction remains with the latter: "I knew what had happened, yet I couldn't believe it" (#114). One endorses *p* but has an enveloping sense of *not p*. In cases of conflict, there is no straightforward relationship between the linguistic endorsement of a proposition and how one behaves, which might allow us to discern a consistent functional role associated exclusively with propositional "belief." We could adopt a permissive conception of belief, according to which it includes a range of dispositions, no unique combination being necessary or sufficient for counting as a belief (Schwitzgebel 2002). This would enable us

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to maintain that the relevant experiences involve two conflicting beliefs with different characteristics. One believes (in one way) that *p*, while believing (in another way) that *not p*. However, by endorsing a permissive conception of "belief," we only postpone the problem of clarifying what the relevant "beliefs" actually consist of and how they conflict with one another. We also risk rendering belief ascription uninformative, given the admission that a person can believe (in different ways) both *p* and *not p* at the same time. To understand the phenomenology of grief, and of emotion more generally, clarification is required of the differences between these types of conviction and of the tensions between them.

One candidate for marking the distinction is the term "alief," introduced by Gendler (2008) to identify a type of affective attitude that is ordinarily consistent with propositional belief but can also conflict with it. For example, one might *believe* that the rollercoaster ride is completely safe, while having a concurrent alief with the content "really high and fast; dangerous; stay away." However, postulating an additional attitude type does not capture the way in which propositional beliefs are ordinarily embedded in a much *larger* phenomenological context. In the case of grief, one does not simply *believe* that someone is dead while *alieving* something else. What competes with the propositional attitude is not another type of attitude with a circumscribed content but something much more diffuse and wide-ranging, something that one's various attitudes presuppose.

For now, I will settle simply for a distinction between propositional belief (albeit lacking in a certain kind of conviction) and world experience. This enables us to acknowledge that, while believing that *p*, perceiving *q*, remembering *r*, and various other intentional attitudes ordinarily operate *within* a preestablished experiential world, emotional intentionality (at least of the kind that characterizes emotional episodes and longer-term, dynamic processes) has a distinctive, two-sided structure. The world within which we encounter the object of emotion is itself in a state of flux, in a manner inseparable from how the object of emotion is experienced. There is a dynamic between evaluative experiences of concrete objects and the contexts that those evaluations both presuppose and undermine. Where mundane, everyday emotional episodes are concerned, this dynamic is more subtle; disruption is ordinarily localized and short-lived. However, with that qualification, the relevant phenomenology is common to a range of emotional experiences. The effects of positive life events can be conceived

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of in these terms as well. For example, joy at a major lottery win similarly involves evaluating something relative to a context of projects and concerns that may no longer apply. There is a distinction to be drawn between potential and actual perturbations of one's world. Whereas grief concerns something that has actually happened and cannot be reversed, dreading some event involves something that has not yet occurred, which will or might disrupt one's world in a certain way. Nevertheless, *potential* disruptions are also *actual* disruptions. Even the possibility of some event may throw actual habitual routines into question; one no longer takes things for granted in ways that one did. For instance, the prospect of having an airport runway built next to one's house would suffice to erode a sense of comfort and security. Other emotions involve relief from actual or potential disturbances. But here too, there are tensions between the localized content of an experience and its wider context—I still can't believe I don't have to worry about it anymore; I keep pinching myself to make sure it's not a dream. Hence, I suggest that what distinguishes a specifically *emotional* episode or process is its two-sidedness: the significance attached to an experienced object destabilizes the backdrop through which it is encountered as significant. It can be added that, in the majority of instances, it is not the emotion itself that disrupts. Rather, it is through the emotion that a disturbance of the habitual world is recognized and, importantly, negotiated.

2.4 Grief as a Process

By acknowledging the two-sidedness of grief and the tensions it involves, we can better see how grief amounts to a process, in a way that an assortment of experiences scattered over time does not. The two-sided structure of grief is essentially dynamic; it involves encountering something as significant in light of its potential and actual implications for the structure of one's life. However, it can take a considerable amount of time to appreciate the full extent of those implications and reorganize one's world accordingly. Recognition and response are inextricable; a sense of unreality, disbelief, or impossibility can only be overcome by changing how one experiences and relates to a practically meaningful world. Grief therefore has a direction, involving—at least typically—a movement toward reconciling the reality of one's current situation with the structure of one's life. Where the concrete object of an emotion has profound implications for one's world, the two

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sides of emotion can only be reconciled, if they are ever to be reconciled, over a lengthy period of time. So, grief *has to* involve a process.[14] However, we still face the question of how a grief process is unified. To address that question, I will first consider an answer suggested by Peter Goldie (2011, 2012) and identify where it falls short.

According to Goldie, grief is a process that involves "a complex pattern of activity and passivity, inner and outer, that unfolds over time." Furthermore, this temporal pattern is "explanatorily prior to what is the case at any particular time." So, it is not merely that grief involves lots of different things happening over time; a constituent of grief *is what it is* only in virtue of its participation in the larger process. The temporal whole is "ontologically and epistemically prior to the parts" (Goldie 2012, 56, 61). What makes a grief process more than the sum of its parts and also distinguishes it from other kinds of processes is, according to Goldie, its narrative structure. The ingredients of grief are held together by the "coherence of a narrative of the process—a narrative of a grieving." Grief is a type of process called a "pattern," where a pattern is identified by a "characteristic shape" that narrative provides (Goldie 2012, 61–62). For Goldie, central to grief's pattern is a type of autobiographical remembering that resembles free indirect style in literature—a style of writing that blends at least two different perspectives, usually that of a character and a narrator. Similarly in grief, when past events involving the deceased are recalled, one remembers how things were back then but in a way that is infused with a current perspective that includes acknowledgment of the person's subsequent death: "We relate to our past in a special way, realizing that things as they used to be, and as we remember them, can never be the same again" (Goldie 2012, 56).[15]

One problem with this account is its lack of specificity. When are the relevant narratives formed? Presumably, narration of an emotional episode need not occur at exactly the same time as the episode in question, as that would rule out any emotional experiences that are narrated afterward as potential ingredients of grief. But the alternative is equally problematic. Consider a scenario where the bereaved person experiences *p*, but *p* is not integrated into the right kind of narrative until twenty years later, leaving its status indeterminate until then. Conversely, a narrative that does integrate *p* into a larger pattern might be swiftly or gradually replaced by another narrative that does not. However, it is counterintuitive, at best, to claim that emotional episode *p*, occurring at time 1, was part of a grief

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process at time 2 but was written out at time 3, when it consequently ceased to be part of the process at time 2 as well. Hence, principled constraints need to be imposed on the timing of narration.

Without further refinement, a narrative approach also appears too accommodating. Bereavement narratives are not ordinarily the products of socially isolated individuals. As we will see in chapter 7, they draw on the resources of a society and culture. Moreover, they tend to be co-constructed with others, through dialogue and the exchange of memories and reflections. So, a token narrative can be partly mine and partly ours. And, if narratives are what unify grief, this applies to shared narratives as well. We thus end up with a single, token experience of grief, shared between two or more people. Perhaps experiences of grief can be *shared* in this strong sense, but the conclusion is reached too easily. More generally, where two or more people co-construct a single narrative concerning their experiences of something, this does not suffice to constitute a token experience that they share between them.

Narrative also gives us temporal unity too easily. One advantage of a process approach is its compatibility with grief having temporal gaps. Even if it is accepted that one ceases to *experience* grief during dreamless sleep, it seems wrong to insist that one grieves at times 1, 3, and 5 but not at times 2, 4, and 6. Conceiving of grief as a process is consistent with that intuition. By analogy, we might say that someone is in the process of writing a book, even when they are not currently typing something. But if narrative is the source of unity, then it could equally be said to unify any number of disparate experiences and events. A narrative can weave two sequences together into a meaningful whole, even where they occur at different times and are causally unconnected. Independent of the narrative itself, they bear no relationship at all to each other.

It is also unclear how a narrative approach might pin down the boundaries of a grief process, at least in a way that is nonarbitrary. I do not want to suggest that grief has a clear-cut endpoint, or to assume any particular account of what its endpoint might involve.[16] Even so, there is a larger problem, that of identifying grief at all, of singling it out from the larger patterns of a life. Solomon (2004b, 90) regards grief as a “continuation of love” for the person who has died, and Higgins (2013) notes various parallels between the transitions into married life and into widowhood, of a kind that indicate a longer-term pattern. Of course, one unified pattern can be part of another unified pattern, but there remains the question of how

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it stands out as a distinctive part. Even if it does, there is the further task of specifying what makes it a pattern of one type rather than another. Free indirect style, for instance, will not suffice to individuate personal grief. A similar fusion of contrasting perspectives occurs when reflecting on one's past in the light of any significant life event, such as remembering how one never used to worry about money, having since lost one's job.

Perhaps some or all of these concerns could be satisfactorily addressed by elaborating and fine-tuning the approach. However, there is a further objection, which leads me to look elsewhere for grief's unity: narrative coherence is not *necessary* for grief. We have seen that Goldie describes grief as a pattern with a "characteristic shape." But what is that shape? Consider the kinds of experiences associated with supposedly *pathological* grief (which I will discuss further in chapter 8). It has been suggested that what distinguishes at least some forms of pathological grief is a "struggle to integrate the loss into autobiographical memory," along with a wider "crisis in meaning" (Neimeyer 2006, 141, 143). Characterizations of pathological grief therefore emphasize, among other things, a *lack* of narrative coherence. Indeed, some experiences of grief may even erode the *capacity* to construct a coherent narrative (Riley 2012).

More generally, there is an emphasis in first-person accounts of grief on disruption, discontinuity, and lack of coherence. According to Barthes (2009/2010, 67), what is "utterly terrifying is mourning's *discontinuous* character," while Macdonald (2014, 14) writes, "I can't, even now, arrange it in the right order. The memories are like heavy blocks of glass. I can put them down in different places but they don't make a story." Hence, it seems that grief need not involve a distinctive and coherent narrative pattern. In fact, it can involve a rupture in life's pattern, a temporally extended loss of coherence. As we will see in chapter 7, narrative can contribute to the attempt—willful or otherwise—to comprehend what is happening and restore some degree of coherence.[17] So, it is plausible to maintain that narrative has some role to play in how many of us respond to bereavement.[18] Nevertheless, successful restoration of coherence through narrative is not essential to grief and neither is the attempt to restore coherence. Furthermore, narratives that are formed during profound grief often fail to hang together; they lack a cohesive shape that a narrated life more usually has, given multiple tensions between what has happened and the world in which it has happened.

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If narrative is not what unifies a grief process, then what, if anything, does? Let us return to Wittgenstein's observation that there is something "queer" about feeling profound grief for only a second. Having considered the two-sided structure of grief, we can spell out what this amounts to. Importantly, the temporal parts of a grief process are not just related to one another in a contingent, causal way. There are numerous relationships of implication between them. Consider the following two scenarios: (a) someone grieves over an unexpected death for fifteen minutes and then dies too; (b) someone grieves over an unexpected death for fifteen minutes and then ceases altogether to grieve. In the first case, we could maintain that there is a very short period of grief. Alternatively, we might deny that the person experiences grief at all, given that fifteen minutes is insufficient time for an emotional reaction to qualify as grief. However, it is more plausible, I suggest, to maintain that the person *starts to grieve*, in a manner comparable to starting to fall in love, and that the process is cut short. What about the second case? Suppose that the experiences in the two cases are identical for those first fifteen minutes. Should we then say that, here too, the person starts to grieve but stops abruptly? Let us emphasize that, after those fifteen minutes, they really do cease altogether to grieve; there is no delayed reaction, no repressed grief, no refusal to accept the death, and no further emotional disturbance of any kind. The experience lasts for fifteen minutes and that is it—over. Such a scenario is not merely unusual but incoherent. Scenario (a) is unproblematic because a counterfactual claim remains unchallenged: had the bereaved person lived, then that person *would have had* further experiences of a kind consistent with a grief process. In the absence of exceptional circumstances (such as discovering that someone is not dead after all or suffering a brain injury that impairs one's capacity to experience emotion), it seems that an emotional experience *must* be followed by other experiences at later times, in order for it to qualify as part of a grief process. This is not to suggest that only a certain, specific kind of experience can follow it. My claim is more modest than that: some experiences that follow it are consistent with grief, while others are not.

In case (a), the counterfactual points not only to how things would have gone had the bereaved person lived but also to how they *ought to go* in a case of grief. It has been observed that grief and mourning often involve having a sense of moral obligation toward the deceased (Solomon 2004b; McCracken 2005). For instance, one might feel that seeking to sever one's

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connection with the deceased would be disrespectful and wrong (Higgins 2013). However, the contrast between cases (a) and (b) points to something different: implication rather than obligation. In case (b), it is not just that the person grieves or starts to grieve and then behaves in a morally questionable way. Were that so, their subsequent conduct would remain compatible with the possibility of a grief process that started but did not get very far. Instead, the initial experience *implies* something about subsequent experiences. If we are to think of the person as grieving or starting to grieve, then we have to assume that this experience will be followed by experiences that are consistent with it.[19]

By appealing to grief's two-sidedness, we can identify why case (b) is incoherent. Grief involves recognizing and responding to a disturbance of one's world, something that takes time. Where grief simply stops, so does the process of recognition and response; one continues to experience and engage with the world in a manner that is incompatible with the reality of the death. So, it *cannot* be a matter of getting back to business as usual. Grief is not a feeling or a sequence of feelings that can be halted without consequence. In Helm's terms, it involves relating the target of the emotion to its focus and, with this, coming to *recognize* over time the actual and potential implications of a death for one's life structure (Helm 2009a). Where these implications are far-reaching and wide-ranging, the match between target and focus cannot be accomplished quickly. Instead of swift recognition, there is a gradual process of "sinking in" (to be further discussed in chapter 3), where comprehension, emotional response, and adaptation to loss are inextricable.

The unity of grief, I propose, is inherited from the unity of the disturbance that it recognizes and navigates. We have seen how cares, concerns, projects, pastimes, and habits are to a substantial degree integrated. Some of the relationships between them are causal, but there are also intricate patterns of implication. Although these can, in principle, be articulated in propositional terms, they do not themselves take that form. Rather, they are experienced in the guise of relationships between significant entities, events, and situations that are integral to a world *within* which propositional thoughts are entertained. The manner in which a death impacts upon one's world therefore has a structure; there are implications for certain projects, which relate to other projects, and so on. If a human life were utterly fragmented, such that the various effects of a bereavement did not relate to one another, then the associated grief would be equally fragmented. However,

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most human lives are not like that. Instead, the implications of a death are, to a large degree, integrated. Grief, conceived of as a dynamic engagement with these implications, is similarly unified. It involves recognizing and working through patterns of implication, engaging with and transforming a phenomenological disturbance in ways that reflect the structure of the disturbance itself. Paths are followed; possibilities point to further possibilities; loss of one thing points to further unraveling. This involves experiences of unreality, tension, conflict, presence, absence, negation, and revelation, which arise as discrepancies between explicit acceptance of the death and world experience are navigated. In most cases, the tensions diminish in intensity and frequency over time, as the reality of the death is integrated into one's world. Consider, for example, these passages from Juliet Rosenfeld's memoir, *The State of Disbelief*:

> I remember waking up early one Sunday weeks later in our house in the country, and looking out at the fields beyond our garden wall and, suddenly, catastrophically knowing he was not there, would never ever be there again. . . . I began to *know*, without thinking, that he was gone, in the same way that you know that your hand is attached to your wrist or that water comes out of the tap when you turn it on. (2020, 26, 35)

The incoherence of experiencing profound grief for a very short time thus stems from the involvement of numerous relationships of implication that are negotiated over time. Consistent with this, Rupert Read suggests that there is a distinctive "logic" to grief, where what might seem like "denial" contributes to a process that ordinarily leads to eventual acceptance in the guise of a changed world. It is, he says, a logic of "process and paradox," which can involve believing something, explicitly assenting to that belief, and still not accepting what has happened (Read 2018, 176–181). I have suggested that what gives this process its distinctive "logic" is the dynamic, tension-riddled interaction between what is experienced as having happened *within* a world and its implications *for* that world. In contrast, when we think through relationships between propositions, we do so from *within* a stable, presupposed world. But thoughts and experiences that arise within a world need to be supplemented by another kind of intentionality, which facilitates the revision of a life structure that they presuppose.

It should be added, though, that grief's direction is not attributable *exclusively* to the reshaping over time of one's *current* projects and pastimes. Sometimes, a bereavement does not require us to make significant

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practical adjustments, as when we grieve over the death of a friend or family member who has lived far away for some time. Nevertheless, grief still involves negotiating tensions between the reality of that person's death and the significance attaching to memories of them, as suggested by Goldie's account. Habitual patterns of thought involving the deceased will also require reorganization, as will any associated expectations and dependencies, such as calling on them (or being called upon by them) for support in certain circumstances, seeing them on specific occasions, or hearing from them periodically. Thus, a temporally extended process of reorientation is still required. It is also important to distinguish the task of engaging with bereavement's impact on one's *own* life structure (which I have emphasized in this chapter) from the distinctively *interpersonal* aspects of grief—experiencing, thinking about, and relating to the deceased. Nevertheless, as we will see in chapters 5–8, those aspects of grief are inextricable from the process I have described. For instance, how one reorganizes and reinterprets one's relationship with the deceased will depend on the manner in which one's world is altered and vice versa. Furthermore, I will suggest that whether and how one continues to experience and relate to the deceased contributes to the ability to navigate a disturbance of one's world over time.[20]

Should we go so far as to insist that grief *must* be temporally extended if it is to involve full acknowledgment of the death? Alternatively, it could be maintained that grief's process structure is attributable to the contingent limitations of human psychology. For instance, Moller (2007, 313) asks us to imagine super-resilient beings who comprehend the fact of loss but do not experience any grief. But does it really make sense to postulate such beings? On the face of it, yes. We can assent to the proposition that they are possible without apparent contradiction or incoherence. On reflection, though, matters are not so clear. Presumably, these beings also share their lives with others; their projects, pastimes, and habits depend similarly on relationships with others. So, they also suffer losses that impact on life structure. And, as they do not end up in a state of enduring denial, their lives must be reorganized in a way that does not involve a lengthy grief process. However, this is to contemplate the possibility of a phenomenology radically different from our own, one that does not involve finding oneself immersed in a habitually organized, practically meaningful world that one's thoughts, perceptual experiences, and activities presuppose. What might

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that look like? Unless we have some idea of the answer, it is not clear what, if anything, is being envisaged.

It can be added that working through the implications of bereavement involves making substantial changes to the structure of one's life. Previously taken-for-granted patterns are lost, while new patterns take shape. Without interacting with the world over a prolonged period, it is not clear how one's life could be reorganized in a coherent way. How are new projects, pastimes, habits, expectations, and ways of relating to other people formed? Instantaneous, complete recognition of loss would involve losing a life structure and having nothing to replace it with. The only way of adjusting to a significant loss without coming to experience and interact with one's surroundings in new ways over time would be for a new world to appear by magic or by means of some far-fetched scenario involving mind-altering technology. But the scenario in question does not involve recourse to such interventions. It is therefore doubtful that we can conceive of such beings at all, at least from a phenomenological perspective. To avoid navigating the kind of life disruption I have described, one would need to care for someone who has died but without that person being integrated into one's life in any significant way. Even if such a situation could be described without incoherence, it clearly differs from the vast majority of situations in which people experience grief and does not approximate anything that might be described as "deep grief." So, in response to Wittgenstein's remark, we can see why the prospect of someone experiencing deep grief for a second seems peculiar, even incoherent. Aside from enduring denial, the only alternative to a temporally extended process would be a new world materializing instantaneously and miraculously.

Something that remains unclear is whether the relevant process should be conceived of as most centrally a matter of *feeling* or, alternatively, some form of *cognition*. In the next two chapters, I will reject both of these options and argue that grief cannot be conceptualized adequately in terms of such oppositions. Chapter 3 will turn to the bodily phenomenology of grief, in order to show how bodily experience is implicated through and through. Then, in chapter 4, I will suggest that this same phenomenology equally involves linguistic thought and normativity. To understand the phenomenology of grief, especially those features of grief that people find strange, disorienting, and difficult to comprehend, it is crucial to acknowledge an aspect of experience that is common to "feeling" and "thought," something that does not respect distinctions between them.

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Grief Worlds

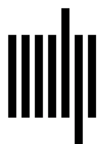
A Study of Emotional Experience

By: Matthew Ratcliffe

Citation:

Grief Worlds: A Study of Emotional Experience
By: Matthew Ratcliffe
DOI: 10.7551/mitpress/13987.001.0001
ISBN (electronic): 9780262372619
Publisher: The MIT Press
Published: 2023

The open access edition of this book was made possible by generous funding and support from MIT Press Direct to Open



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The MIT Press would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers who provided comments on drafts of this book. The generous work of academic experts is essential for establishing the authority and quality of our publications. We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of these otherwise uncredited readers.

This book was set in Stone Serif and Stone Sans by Westchester Publishing Services.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Ratcliffe, Matthew, 1973– author.
Title: Grief worlds : a study of emotional experience / Matthew Ratcliffe.
Description: Cambridge, Massachusetts : The MIT Press, [2022] | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2022004533 (print) | LCCN 2022004534 (ebook) | ISBN 9780262544801 (paperback) | ISBN 9780262372602 (epub) | ISBN 9780262372619 (pdf)
Subjects: LCSH: Grief. | Bereavement.
Classification: LCC BF575.G7 R38 2023 (print) | LCC BF575.G7 (ebook) | DDC 152.4—dc23/eng/20220621
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022004533
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022004534

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