

Grief and Mourning

(#2)

Purushottama Bilimoria

(draft)

Part A. Grief vs Mourning

‘This shackle is merely temporary and transient;
it too must be relinquished, for the *atman* to move on...
Like worn-out clothes, this body is discarded at death,
and a new one is acquired in another abode or life’.

The Bhagavad-Gita in the Mahabharata
(recited at the Service)

‘Your pulse very low’ a, like stop-ped; no qi;
kidney-liver shut down, not good
brayn overloading, too much worry, ‘why she die..’
you exhausted, tension, tension, everywhere in body
Need a help...ackpuncture, massage, relaxacing.’

(Chinese medicinal carers)

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone.
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come....

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one.
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun.
Throw away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

W. H Auden (“Funeral Blues”)

‘It is natural (for one) in the physical state to mourn,
but grief is for oneself not for the departed’

(A voice in the dream)

Recalling Ginsberg’s Kaddish for his mother

‘Strange now to think of you, gone
without corsets & eyes, while I
walk on the sunny pavement of
Greenwich Village.

Downtown Manhattan, clear

Winter noon, and I’ve been up
All night, talking, talking,
reading the Kaddish aloud,
listening to Ray Charles blues
shout blind on the phonograph

the rhythm the rhythm – and your

memory in my head three
years after – And read
Adonais’ last triumphant
stanza aloud – wept, realizing
how we suffer –

And how Death is that remedy all

Singers dream of, sing,
Remember, prophesy as in the
Hebrew Anthem, or the
Buddhist Nook of Answers –
And my own imagination of a

withered leaf – at dawn –
Dreaming back thru life, Your
Time – and mine accelerating
Toward Apocalypse,
the final moment – the flower
burning in the Day – and what
comes after...
(Allen Ginsberg, 'Kaddish' 1956)

Since time began
the dead alone know peace
Life is but melting snow
(Haiku by Nandai)

Months later, someone whispers...
'You getting over the sorrow ok?
Seeing a counselor, getting professional help?'

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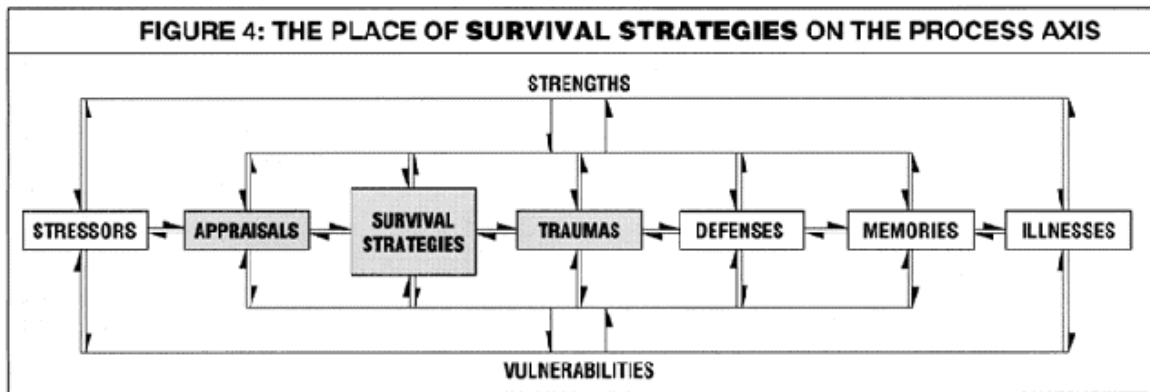
It seemed almost obligatory, a grid-like pattern to follow,
Set stages one supposedly goes through:
You must be on stage three now... displaced anger, irritability,
Open to a few possible goals, testosterone count coming up...
And will proceed to prescribe anti-depressants.

As the bizarre formulaic regime in a psychologist/psychiatrist's typology,
who more than philosophers buy into the 'natural kind' misconception and make a trade –
a second death as it were - out of this essentialization of an ill-defined symptomology,
wavering between a psychical to a basic biological disposition, inexorably and
indefeasibly.

TABLE 2: SURVIVAL STRATEGY COMPONENTS

APPRAISAL OF MEANS OF SURVIVAL	SURVIVAL STRATEGIES	SUCCESSFUL / ADAPTIVE RESPONSES				UNSUCCESSFUL / MALADAPTIVE RESPONSES				TRAUMA RESPONSES
		BIOLOGICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	SOCIAL	JUDGEMENTS	BIOLOGICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	SOCIAL	JUDGEMENTS	
MUST SAVE OTHERS	RESCUING PROTECT PROVIDE	↑ ESTROGEN ↑ CORTICOST ↑ OPIOIDS	CARE EMPATHY MOURNING	RESPONSIBILITY MUTURE EXPERIMENTATION	RESPONSIBLE GIVING ALTRUISTIC	SYMPATHETIC & PARASYMP AROUSAL	BURDEN DEPLETION SELF-CONCERN	RESENTMENT NEGLECT REJECTION	IRRESPONSIBLE NEGLECTFUL EGOTISTIC	AMBUSH COMPASS FATIGUE CAUSED DEATH
MUST BE SAVED BY OTHERS	ATTACHING PROTECTED PROVIDED	? ↑ OPIOIDS	HELLED, CARED FOR NURTURED LOOKED AFTER	CLOSE SECURE CONTENT UNION	VICTIM DESCRIBING LEARNER	LOPHOIDS	YEARNING NEED CRAVE ACCOMMODMENT	CRY INSECURE DEPRIVED SEPARATION	UNWORTHY ENCONGRANCE REJECTABLE	HELPLESSNESS CAST OUT LEFT TO DIE
MUST ACHIEVE GOAL	ASSERTING COMBAT WORK	↑E, ↑NE ↑CORTISOL ↑THAMUNOCOMP	STRENGTH CONTROL PERSISTENCY	WILL HIGH MORALE SUPPORT	STRONG CAPABLE GUARDESBILL	↑↑E, ↑NE DEPLETION E, NE ↑ BP, ↑CHD	FRUSTRATION LOSS OF CONTROL IMPOTENCE	WILLFULNESS LOW MORALE FAILURE	INADEQUATE INCOMPETENT FAILURE	EXHAUSTION "BURN-OUT" POWERLESSNESS
MUST SURRENDER GOAL	ADAPTING ACCEPT GRIEVE	PARASYMP AROUSAL ↑CORTISOL	ACCEPTANCE SADNESS GRIEF LOSS	YIELDING MOURNING THINK TO BEW	VICTIM DESCRIBING THROWER	↑ CORTISOL ↓ THAMUNOCOMP ↑ REJECTION, ↑↑CA	OVERWHELMED DEPRESSION DESPAIR	COLLAPSED WITHDRAWAL LOSS OF LIFE	SHAME PATHEOS DESPERATE	DAMAGED GIVEN IN SUCCUMING
MUST REMOVE DANGER	FRIGHTEN DEFEND FID	SYMP AROUSAL ↑E, ↑NE ↑BP	THREAT REVENGE EMPHATIC	DETERRENCE WOUNDING INDICANCE	BOVIE MORAL MORAL	↑↑SYMP AROUSAL ↑ CORTISOL	HATRED PERSECUTION KILLING	ATTACK ERADICATION DESTRUCTION	VICTIM WOUNDED MURDERER	HORROR EVIL MURDER
MUST REMOVE ONESELF FROM DANGER	FLEEING RUN, HIDE SAVE ONESELF	SYMPATHETIC & PARASYMP AROUSAL	FEAR TERROR DELIVERANCE	RETREAT FLIGHT ESCAPE	PITIFUL VULNERABLE REFUGEE	NE DEPLETION ↑E & CORTISOL	PHOBIA PARANOIA ENGULFMENT	AVOIDANCE PANIC ANNIHILATION	TRAP PARANOID DOWNWARD	"INESCAPABLE SHOCK", BEING HUNTED, KILLED
MUST OBTAIN SCARCER ESSENTIALS	COMPETING POWER ACQUISITION	↑TESTOSTERONE SYMP AROUSAL	WINNING STATUS DOMINANCE	CONTEST HIERARCHY CONCERNANCE	SUPERIOR RESPECTED YOUNG	↓TESTOSTERONE ↓ FEMALE HORMONS ↑ CORTISOL	DEFEAT GREED, ENVY EXCLUSION	OPPRESSION STRUGGLE ELIMINATION	WITNESS UNDETECTABLE MURKINATED	TERRORIZATION MARGINALIZATION ELIMINATION
MUST CREATE MORE ESSENTIALS	COOPERATING TRUST MUTUAL GAIN	↑OPIATES ↓BP, E, NE	MUTUALITY GENEROUSITY LOVE	INTEGRATION RECIPROCALITY CREDIBILITY	TENDER GENUINE BEAUTIFUL	↓OPIATES ↑↑PARASYMP AROUSAL	BETRAYAL SELFBISHNESS ABUSE	DISCONNECTION CHEATING DISINTEGRATION	DECEIVER ROBBED PERPETRATOR, UNLU	FRAGMENTATION ALIENATION DECAY

Elizabeth Kübler-Ross is famous advocate of this in popular culture, and repeated in different ways in clinical literature¹, e.g. Dr Paul Valent, a well-known Melbourne psychiatrist who worked on traumatized holocaust survivors and developed as part of a 'Survival Strategy' grids that supposedly mark the stages and phases, responses and traumatic reactions one undergoes in the face of grief, worked through biological (adaptive) to social-psychological (maladaptive) components (as he calls them).²



¹ See her, **On Death and Dying**, N.Y.:Touchstone, 1997.

² Paul Valent (1998), **From Survival to Fulfillment: a framework for the life-trauma dialectic**, Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel, pp. 115-123.

And yet modern medicine and psychiatry are not able to explain or account for the sudden chest-pain that arises and sporadically accompanies periods of grief, even when it is ascertained that there is no invisible cardiac problems, pre-existing or current.³

A spiritually-mired neighbour might be less strajghjacketing:

‘It’s a matter of time.. takes a long long time...2 years, 5 years.. have faith.

And you must get on with life;

Your partner wouldn’t have wanted it otherwise...she was too wise to see suffer on like this.’

To which one (the grieved) felt like responding, ‘Eternity might be running out of time, mate...; or as C S Lewis reflected on his own loss:

‘From the rational point of view what grounds has Helen's death given me for doubting all that I believe? Should it, for a sane man, make quite such a difference as this? No. And it wouldn't for a man whose faith had been real faith. The case is too plain. If my house has collapsed at one blow it is because it was a house of cards. Indeed, it's likely enough that what I shall call, if it happens, a 'restoration of faith', will turn out to be only one more house of cards.’⁴

Trying to piece his life together, C S Lewis consoles himself, but only for a moment before the torrent unleashes itself again, and again:

‘People get over these things. Come, I shan’t do so badly.

...Then comes a sudden jab of red-hot memory and all

“commonsense” vanishes like an ant in the mouth of a furnace...

At times it feels like being mildly drunk, or concussed.

³ In my own case, on the fatal morning I was at a hospital getting a second investigation performed on my heart as the chest pain I had started to experience in the past two or so months that become a worry both to me and my spouse (a medical person herself, who had her own heart problems as a result of the gradual decay of the cells in the blood). While waiting for the results, a phone call came from the other hospital and the head sister or nurse wanted me to come over right away. At 11.50 a.m. the heart specialist called me to tell me that there was nothing the matter with my heart, it was all clear, perhaps it was the stress; and I had to break the sad news to him – that confirmed for him the cause of it, but there was no further diagnosis offered. The pain remained intermittently for some two years. Yoga deep breathing, CQ-10 and the occasional aspirin helped.

⁴ C.S. Lewis: A Grief Observed, Bantam Books, 1976, Faber & Faber, Seabury Press, 1963.

There is a sort of invisible blanket between the world and me.
I find it hard to take in what anyone says.
Or perhaps hard to want to take it in.

No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear.
I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid.
The same fluttering in the stomach, the same restlessness,
The yawning. I keep swallowing...'⁵

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'And there is anger... why did you die on me?
Couldn't you have lived on, like everyone else we know?
Is that you David? The cat is fine...
What is it like being dead?'

(Stephanie Lewis on David Lewis - conversation in Princeton)

And the pain and agony: but whose pain, what is the object of the pain; the griever or the grieved? The questions to be asked, imagined, can be as perplexing with myriad modal possibilities internally suggesting themselves as is the emotion itself. Hence, it is not surprising that among analytic philosophers who have turned their gaze on grief and mourning, we find this admission and an attempt to capture all the many and varying features of this enigmatic emotional experience: we'll come to this discussion later; meanwhile, a few, personal reflections and folk anecdotes.

See also, a skit, www.pbs.org/wgbh/questionofgod/transcript/grief.htm

⁵ Ibid, pages 1-3

Commenting on the ambiguity of a departure without return, of a passing away, but also non-response facing the survivor, that Emmanuel Levinas had this highlighted in his *Totality and Infinity*⁶, Derrida notes:

‘Death: not, first of all, annihilation, non-being, or nothingness, but a certain experience for the survivor of the “without-response”. Already *Totality and Infinity* called into question the traditional “philosophical and religious” interpretation of death as either “a passage to nothingness” or “a passage to some other existence”. It is the murderer who would like to identify death with nothingness; Cain, for example, says Emmanuel Levinas, “must have possessed such a knowledge of death.” But even this nothingness presents itself as a “sort of impossibility” or, more precisely, an interdiction.’⁷

But more than the non-response, it is the transcendentalism of death that concerns Levinas more than its ‘empirical facticity’ (‘death as an empirical fact whose induction alone could suggest its universality, it is not exhausted in such an appearance’); ‘death of the other’ is the ‘first death’, and ‘I am responsible for the other insofar as he is mortal’. Levinas, as Derrida notes, is speaking of the ‘survivor’s guilt’: but equally, ‘it is a guilt without fault and without debt; it is, in truth, an *entrusted responsibility*, entrusted in a moment of unparalleled emotion, at the moment when death remains the absolute exception’.⁸ Some years later, in his tribute to Jean-François Lyotard upon his death in April, 1998, Derrida, ponders how the survivor can even speak of another without a “we” intruding into the discourse, when there is no presence of the other to reciprocate, to join in, to as it were complete the “we”: there is only one ‘I’, the survivors, for death has consumed the ‘I’ of the other in the eye of the hurricane, or in the sacrificial fire; the assumed universality of consciousness in our attempt to express one’s debt to the other, even one’s love for the other, perpetuates the plural identification – an insight that possibly led Lyotard to commend, ‘There shall be no mourning’.⁹

⁶ trans. Alphonso Lingis, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969, pp. 232; hereafter *TI*

⁷ *The Work of Mourning*, p. 203-4.

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ ‘Lyotard and Us’, *Ibid*, pp. 216-7

In that vein, taking upon oneself the responsibility of the pain of the other even as they are passing, C S Lewis, the chronicler of war journals, perspicuously compares his pain with that of the deceased while she struggled through her illness, being stricken down by cancer:

‘It is harder when I think of hers.

What is grief compared

With physical pain? Whatever fools may say,

the body can suffer twenty times

More than the mind.

The mind has always some power of evasion.

At worst the unbearable thought only comes back and back, but the physical pain can be absolutely continuous... Grief is like a bomber circling around and dropping its bombs each time the circle brings it over head; physical pain is like a steady barrage on a trench in W W I...’

It comes in waves... and it goes in waves.. Lewis goes on to describe an experience he later had, as he puts, it inside his mind, and one of immense intensity, but absent in any intentionality or motivation or trigger for action... he valued it not for the probabilistic evidence or any quantification of the lessening pain it might provide, but for its intellectual *quality* and unemotional character; he noted: ‘Just the impression of her *mind* momentarily facing my own. Mind, not ‘soul’ as we tend to think of soul..... just intelligence and attention.. Certainly the reverse of what is called ‘soulful’.’¹⁰

Discounting the presence of any voice, message, re-union.., , rather ‘un-love’. ‘I had never in any mood imagined the dead as being so –well, so business-like. Yet there was an extreme and cheerful intimacy. An intimacy that had not passed through the sense or the emotions at all.’ [His reflection is intriguing:] ‘If this was a throw-up from my unconscious, then my unconscious must be a far more interesting region than the depth psychologists have led me to expect. .. Wherever it came from, it has made a sort of spring cleaning in my mind. The dead could be like that; sheer intellects. A Greek

¹⁰ Ibid., p.62

philosopher wouldn't have been surprised at an experience like mine. He would have expected that if anything of us remained after death it would be just that.' The chilling idea that emotion could be absent had repelled him.. but now he is at peace with it.. with the ghost of his own mind *as the other mind*, his will is back, he is a rational man again. So it is.

I am though not so sure, or sanguine, about reference to the Greek philosopher, but a Buddhist monk and Indian sadhu might well identify with this sentiment or *vedana*; and so couple more anecdotes and then to analysis; moving cross-culturally.

The Sanskrit term (*dukhka* Pali *dukkha*) is not specific enough to cover the deep sense of loss, *kampAva* and pain of mind (*sanvegaya*), and sorrow, *kalakirima* –from *kala* and *kriya* ('termination of time', that is death.¹¹ Here folk psychology proceeds through legends or parables, a famous one of which is that of the mustard seed, thus: Kisa Gotami's first and only child died in infancy. Distraught with pain and grief, she went from place to place seeking some medicine to resurrect her child. She eventually came to the Buddha and asked the sage whether he could revive the dead child. The Buddha said that he could if only she would bring a mustard seed from a house in which death had not occurred. Elated, Kisa went from one house to another seeking the impossible mustard seed. She soon came to the realization that her own personal grief is simply a part of a larger universal problem of suffering... in this recognition lay her redemption.

Meanwhile in Ladakh¹² a Tibetan rinpoche is attempting to return the *nam she* to Wangchuck Chosphel's body (which had escaped in the eastern direction following his death, so that it can be re-directed into the western realms, the Pure Land of Joy. By ritual enactments in the presence of the grieved wife, Pema, and their daughter the lama

¹¹ Ganantha Obeyesekere, in Klienman(1985) ed *Culture and Depression Studies in Anthropology and Cross-Cultural Psychiatry of Affect and Disorder (Culture & Depression)*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p 144.

¹² Gielen, Parkes, Laungani, Young in eds. *Death & Breavement Across Cultures*, DU-BJ].[and from Laungani's essay in the volume:]

summons the consciousness from wherever it may have been wandering. He symbolically creates an opening in the deceased's head, shouting three times, *hik*, and *phaT!* This lonely, friendless spirit has to be helped to make the difficult migration across the gloomy wilderness of the *bardo* in its myriad stages. 'Protect him who is unprotected! Be his ally', the SANGHA (gathering) prays to the compassionate ones, buddhas and bodhisattvas.. 'save him from being dragged down into the netherworld by the messengers of Shinje (Yama), the Lord of Death. Turn him away from the red storms of *karma* ; catch hold of him with the hook of your compassion [grace?]' .. more rituals and chants and community gatherings; this helps ease the pain of loss suffered by the Pema and the child... Seven weeks go past in anguish over the fate of their beloved.. but now they can step outside the family home, and above them a flower-galaxy of brilliant stars cross the darkly translucent sky, reminding her that Wangchuck's spirit might still be lost somewhere in this immense emptiness. Where might he be now, she asks her daughter. Has he found a new home in a human womb, or must he suffer rebirth among the lower beings... Pema steps back into her home, the total annihilating power of death slowly drifting to the fringes of her consciousness. Just then her daughter breaks this news to her: she has become pregnant. Spring is bound to arrive soon and life will blossom again! Pema fingers her prayer beads;
Om! Mani padme hum!

Near to home, Banaras-by-the-Ganga, the morning after, amidst the crying and wailing, sounds of bhajans and kirtans, three brothers gather to receive mourners and finalize funeral arrangements. The family priest, Mr Sharma, has brought with him all the ingredients required for the ensuing last rites: ghee, cotton-wool, camphor, vermilion paste, coconuts, rice, incense sticks, nutmeg, cinnamon, garlands, flowers, perfume, and other accouterments... The body is brought downstairs, and all the women, including the inconsolable widow, gather for their last darshan, glimpse of the deceased. They cry, they weep, they wail; they are unwilling to be parted from their loved one.¹³

¹³ Ibid

A Jewish survivor of a father's death, recalls that when their 'father's body had been taken away by the men of the burial society to be prepared for his funeral, we who remained behind found ourselves in a fog of bewilderment. In those first moments of our bereavement, we did not want to follow, the way our lives would change. That would come when the fog started to lift. In these initial moments when death could no longer be denied, we simply sought some consolation in our sorrow. And for that comfort we turned to one another; trying somehow to assure ourselves that this man who had meant so much to each of us had a good death'.¹⁴ Then follows the rather austere withdrawal from public life and a defined – though not rigidly formalized - sharing of the grief with the living, for which a certain number of days are set aside, as an observance known as Shivah. The principal mourners stay indoors and turn the home almost into a sanctuary, maintaining self-restraint and an almost ascetic existence, refraining from washing, cooking, wearing clean clothes, cutting hair, and pleasures of the body and mind. Hours and hours are spent on one's own, so that this time could be reflective: 'To remain incommunicado is to express grief over the disruption of communication with someone we loved. At certain times every person has a right, even an obligation to be alone'.¹⁵ It is almost as if an absolute identification with the deceased is being established *in their space*, or rather bringing the dead to the little he/she might still remain for continuing the identification with the living. The mourners receive friends, relatives and visitors without the fan-fare of the normal gestures of welcome, or even rising from their seat on the floor, or offering of drinks or food, or engaging in 'little talk'. Rather, they are already there, together, in that moment of the deep emotions that surface when living eyes meet, albeit in some awareness that the deceased's own emotions hold court as it were in that empty space the gathered stare into. Certain other observances, recitation of the Kaddish, lightening of candles, and sharing of food brought by family and visitors, Heilman comments here that the Shivah ritual is primitive and anachronistic in modern secular culture. 'Jewish tradition retains a powerful belief in the continued humanity of the newly dead; even though they have lost their human bodies, they retain their human emotions.

¹⁴ Samuel C Heilman, *When a Jew Dies, The Ethnography of a Bereaved Son*, University of California Press, 2001. p. 21

And these emotions, no longer regulated by the constraints of civilization or the realities of face-to face behavior, are now more difficult to control.’ (p 140).

A tribe in the wild highlands of Papua New Guinea gather in a ceremony following a death; in a veritable theatre of performance that lasts all night in which costumed male dancers sing songs composed for the occasion that make reference to their lands, which reminds the audience of loved ones, now dead or far away, who once lived there. As they listen, the audience gradually shed tears, feel remorseful, nostalgic, moody, but also become angry at the anguish they have been made to feel; they leap up, grab a flaming torch and stamp it out on the back of the dancer’s bare shoulder. A pandemonium breaks out.. more dancers follow, and more people are enraged, more shoulders are scarred, until the performance breaks up at dawn. The dancers curiously pay compensation to those whom they caused weeping, in exchange or reciprocity for sharing the anguish and representing the deceased.¹⁶

The anthropologist who reported on this ceremony made a poignant observation, picking out on how anger and especially grief is integral to the patterns of culturally constituted expressive order. Certain emotional reactions are expected and are part of the meaning of the complex social construction of the situation. Emotions represent more than reactions to situations or stimulus, they are interactional postures with rhetorical force which create situations and make claims on them. The ceremonies, with their real grief, real violence, and real compensation are themselves real emotional transactions as well as models of Kaluli emotional economy in regard to grief and loss, anger and retaliation.

Interesting as these anecdotes and case studies are, they say more on the economy of the aftermath of the onset of grief, in its healing or treatment prognosis (where this is seen as obsequious, or a pathological or aberrant condition -- hence the need for its control and containment), and as with much in folk psychology they actually tell us very little if

¹⁵ Lamm, p109

¹⁶ *ibid* (in Kleinman C & D)

anything about grief: yet there seems to be a lot of it around, in terms of experience, as the parable of the mustard seed serves to illustrate, than say the cultivated aesthetic emotions of *rasa*, *shantarasa*, *ragadhvani*, or the sublime, and so on. Nevertheless this backdrop is important as I return to the images in the phenomenological (analytical and psychoanalytical) reflections I wish to sketch here. I will not attempt a theory as there are already too many and none is very convincing; though I do wish to deconstruct a few on the way.

But I will make some theoretical reflections as we move along each section.¹⁷ Following the painful or unacceptable loss of a loved and/or esteemed one, both grief and mourning are undergone. While grief is the more immediate response, an episodic act or experience; mourning, it is noted, is a state, whether a state of mind or state of collectivity. The feeling of grief is experienced as ‘acute emotionality that is insistently conscious; while mourning need not be conscious at all: hence its many vicissitudes, including those of hating the lost one’, being angry with them, or identifying with him or her intensely. There may be no conscious recognition of this state as mourning until a close friend or an analyst points this out; thus the variety of ritualistic enactments as we have encountered in the anecdotes, almost underscoring the difficulty of mourning – or as Derrida would say, ‘the impossible mourning that nonetheless remains at work’¹⁸ and thus its tendency to be unconscious, which makes way for its public performance with others, or by their intervention in the mourning process.

Lindemann, in *Death, Grief and Mourning*, describes the more general symptomology of grief, thus:

‘The picture shown by persons in acute grief is remarkably uniform. Common to all is the following syndrome: sensations of somatic distress occurring in waves lasting from 20 minutes to an hour at a time, a feeling of tightness in the throat, choking with shortness of

¹⁷ Here I have been greatly assisted (indeed guided) by very helpful and poignant responses (virtual summaries) to the read draft version by Edward S Casey, to whom I am most grateful. Some of the paragraphs in the theoretical reflections are cited verbatim, in places without quotation marks, if in a talking-paper of this nature one can assume and exercise this indiscretion.

breadth, need for sighting, and an intense subjective distress described as tension of mental pain. The patient soon learns that these waves of discomfort can be precipitated by visits, by mention of the deceased, and by receiving sympathy.... Another strong preoccupation is with feeling of guilt. The bereaved searches the time before the death for evidence of failure to do right by the lost one. He accuses himself of negligence and exaggerates minor omissions. In addition there is often a disconcerting loss of warmth in relationship to other people, a tendency to respond with irritation and anger, a wish not to be bothered by others at a time when friends and relatives make special effort to keep up friendly relationship. These feelings of hostility, surprising and quite inexplicable to the patients, disturbed them and were again often taken as signs of approaching insanity. Great efforts are made to handle them, and the result is often a formalized, stiff manner of social interaction.' Lindermann summarizes the five major symptoms: '1) somatic distress, 2) preoccupation with the image of the deceased, 3) hostile reactions, and 5) loss of patterns of conduct, seem to be pathognomic of grief'. A sixth is symptom is added in the borderline of pathological reactions, namely, 'the appearance of traits of the deceased in the behavior of the bereaved'.¹⁹

Mourning, although somewhat formalized in modern cultures, nevertheless, seeks to extend the grief to a more shared burden of feeling in the larger community or collectivity; the role of narration in mourning ineluctably takes us into the intersubjective sphere as well. Hence there is *both* the personal and collective locations, especially of mourning, if not of grief itself. 'Indeed', notes, Casey, we cannot keep them apart, especially in mourning, given that virtually *every* state of mourning is at least interpersonal – minimally, between the lost one and three survivor – but also ramifies into larger social and political groupings.' Even more concrete transition is made when there are expressive gestures is mediated between affect and law, and the 'empathic projective identification' encircles the outlying world of indefinite pluralities right up to

¹⁸ 'Letter to Francine Loreau', in Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, p 95

¹⁹ Cited in Maurice Lamm, *The Jewish Way of Death and Mourning*. N Y : Jonathan David Publishers, 1969, pp. 142-3.

the level of the state or the nation (thus: ‘A National Day, or a Week, or Month of Mourning’, ‘The World Mourns Today...’).²⁰

The quick theoretical reflection here is that there are both the cognitive and affective aspects to mourning, just about throughout the process; however, there is differential emphases on the two dimensions in any given or particular case, as the anecdotes well bring out. Thus, when I mourn, I must believe certain minimal things: “that someone or something has departed forever, that there is no possible or adequate replacement for this loss; that my life has become that much more empty, etc.”²¹ By the same token, however’, as Casey drawn out well the implication here, ‘I *feel* the loss within; I not only notice it, I react to it emotionally.’ I will say a little more on the distinguishable but inseparable status of these two dimensions as the epicenters of mourning, in Part C. Meanwhile, the appearance of the loaded negativity associated with this emotion may have escaped us. So the question this raises is important to pause for.

PART B

Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves...

Pack up the moon, and dismantle the sun...[Auden, ‘Funeral Blues’]),

Why is grief so often looked upon as ‘negative’ and undesirable emotion? Why is the colour black, darkness and two-dimensional shades of colourless surrounds so overwhelmingly associated with mourning and the funeral rites. The *Mahabharata*’s list of negative emotions includes grief, alongside anger and sorrow. But why is grief looked upon as suffering in the way that sorrow is? Most approaches in folk psychology are all too readily disposed to deal with grief, heal one speedily of the malaise, ‘the shocking blow’, the physical pain and mental burden, and among the most concentrated package of *duhkha* or suffering in a time-slice, etc., as our anecdotes well illustrate.

²⁰ See papers by José and Marisa in this volume.

²¹ Edward Casey in response

Yet philosophers have vexed ambivalent on its nature and especially its relation to other emotions and affects, and to morality, and indeed to the cooler rationality or *primacy of intellectualization* [rephrasing Stocker²²]. Thus, Bob Solomon in a recent paper (read last year in Melbourne), argues that ‘Grief is a moral emotion... It is for this reason that grief is not only expected, as the *appropriate* reaction to the loss of a loved one, but in a strong sense *obligatory*, and much more.’ (p 1) Far from being simply negative reaction to a loss, or even a physical condition that .. fits the definition of a mental disorder, a medical illness, this would be incomprehensible. .. But grief is not merely “normal” or “natural”, it would pass the test for a “duty” in the Kantian scheme of things. *Some feelings are obligatory*, and this is because they are deeply embedded into the fabric of our moral lives.

How does it follow? If it will rain, x is expected to carry an umbrella with her but is it obligatory that she do so? And how crucially: as a matter of principle, a rule, an imperative (whether categorical or prudential), a commandment; and what if x displays no such reaction, has no such ostensible reaction? Must a mother love the child she gives birth too (consider the surrogacy case)? Or a spouse love the partner he/she marries (consider arranged marriages)? Are the Aristotelean quasi-virtues of moral indignation and shame obligatory on the part of one who is faced with unjust behaviour or has acted badly? Ought one mourn (inwardly, regardless of the theatrics and dramaticity?) Must Hamlet muster up tears, and shed tears uncontrollably?

Yet Hamlet was not able to mourn, because he was not forewarned of the death of his father who was struck down by poison; there was a failure of symbolization; ‘remember me’ says the ghost of his father; ‘Yea’, replies Hamlet, ‘from the very table of my memory... And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain (1.v.)

²² in *Thinking About Feeling, Philosophers on the Emotions*, (Robert C Solomon ed.) N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2003: p144.

But the King is not impressed at his pious obligatoriness:

‘Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet.
To give these mourning duties to your father,
But you must know that your father lost a father,
That father lost, lost his, and he survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term.. But to persevere
In obstinate condolment is a course
Of impious stubbornness. ‘This unmanly grief.
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschooled.

Hamlet Act I, scene ii.²³

We may press on the notion of moral obligation for a while, but ask: whose obligation is it? How far does the circle stretch out as it were? Shall we assume also that it is a ‘right’ reciprocally demanded by the deceased, or by the social milieu; but so also in the sense of a ‘rite’ entailing the entitlement to be able to perform or trump a claim to that privilege? And whose right? Whose grief counts? Why not Hamlet’s mother, Gertrude, who too made no effort to symbolize the death of her husband? Indeed cultures vary as to who has the obligation or right to grieve, ‘who is defined as the principal mourner, and who is seen as experiencing the most loss with a given death’. Did Martha [Nussbaum] have an obligation or a right over her other siblings or survivors related to the mother in other ways? As Rosenblatt (who observed small scale societies reports): ‘One cannot, for example, assume that a new widow or widower feels the rights, obligations or feelings of a principal mourner for a deceased spouse. One cannot assume that the person wailing most loudly or supported most attentively by others from her or his culture is a close relative of the deceased.’ In some cultures, wailers are paid to do this; the dancers and

²³ I owe this citation in this context to Solomon, Ibid p 2.

some members of the audience in the Kaluli example, may have no direct relation with the deceased, but closer perhaps to the survivors. As Solomon notes himself, such a position confuses grief with mourning, which is an expression of grief and is often embedded in a complex social structure (as anthropologists have keenly observed everywhere). Where mourning is minimal and institutionalized (i.e. cut short to a few hours and attendance at service is more or less by ‘invitation’) a sense of obligation marks the occasion; but in cultures, such as the Maori or Aboriginal Australian, where funerary ceremonies can go on for three or more days, it is woven into every-day as part of the communal affective-fare. Even so, a distinction has to be made between a gesture *expected* or considered to be *appropriate*, and an act done as a matter of *duty* or sense of its *obligatoriness*. The latter might reflect a deeply social genealogy of these emotions, which carry out social mandates as it were.²⁴

But let us dwell a little longer on the larger moral claim: the test of “duty” (*Pflicht*) or the categorical imperative. There is a lot at stake here: first is to suggest that, grief is not simply a set of primitive physiological sensations, raw feelings, pain; nor is it like anger, sorrow, depression; even that happening is in the brain (as with mental disorders, pathologies), but it has a different, albeit a propositional structure.

If there was an argument for this different claim, it would look something like this (although there are a couple of premises missing, but these are – one might be inclined to claim – embedded in the last few premises), about the state one is in when one deeply experiences grief or bereavement.

1. “Cognitively penetrable” (can understand, intellectualize, ‘that p’)
2. Maybe not straightforwardly logical (definitional; analytical; if q then p)
3. Overvaluation (ghosh!, horror!, awful, senseless; x, or p, or the violence of q, or all, cause of my/our pain)
4. Judgment based (x is absent; q happened, consequences follow, explanatory test)
5. Embeds beliefs: usually focused on fulfillment of desire

²⁴ Casey (response)

(now albeit belief-contrary desire: x can't be no more; she must be around)

6. Perhaps also goals and motivations (bring back x; how will I remember her/find her?

There is hope...)

7. Apperception of indiscriminate injustice or the non-justice done (maybe by x, the object, or via x as trigger; but why me?),

8. This situation has driven the griever to a moral condition: the breaking point of a dilemma of the survivor's role in the death and the moves left to them: 'what am I to do, how to express, how to gesture?'

8. Therefore the grief state is defined primarily as Moral

I wish to draw caution to this position, by questioning some of the presuppositions underpinning the premises, in respect of their universalism or essentialism/realism, and coherence overall, and draw from psychoanalytical and cross-cultural ruminations for my skepticism. I wish rather to move the analysis towards the completely affective state, and bring into the picture melancholia, unconscious processes and bodily impact to draw or trace out the in-expressive a little further.

It was, again, Bob Solomon was among the early proponents of a Pure Cognitive Theory in which emotions were analyzed solely in terms of beliefs, desires and other intentional states, claiming that emotion is an 'evaluative (or normative) judgment, an judgment about my situation and /or about all other people.'²⁵ The intense evaluative judgment however would include increasing references to an agent's desires and goals – or their frustration. Since then philosophers like William Lycan, Alston, Roland Alan Nash, and Nussbaum to an extent, among others have insisted on the bodily disturbances – 'unthinking energies' -- and perturbations of non-intellectual mentation processes in the agent (consider, vagueness), so that experiences such as trembling, blushing, perspiring, pangs, throbs, tingles, burning and other sensations, adrenalin secretions increase in heart and respiratory rates, alterations of blood flow.. changes in blood pressure, and digestive processes and other neurological symptoms are not excluded: indeed, these would be fundamental structural markers of emotional response. As I have also argued in my

²⁵ Solomon, *Passions*, 1976 *Passions*, p 186. Cf. Nash discussing this, p 482 *Nous* paper],

seminal paper ²⁶in Indian theories, ‘The body is the *locus classicus* of feelings, sentiments, and affects, .. Arjuna gives a first-hand report on his state-of-being on the battlefield as he encounters the prospect of impending death of his kith and kin: his body is overwhelmed with sensations of feelings described as quivering, shivering, giddiness, nervousness, heaviness or breathing, weakness of his limbs, hair standing in end, swallowing...

As Wittgenstein would put it ‘Grief shows in the face’.

Martha (the narrator in Nussbaum), is told in one of the phone calls to the hospital that her ailing mother was succumbing to various medical complications: developed a rupture of the surgical incision between her esophagus and stomach, massive internal infection and fever, and that her life was in jeopardy. ‘The news’, she wrote, ‘felt like a nail suddenly driven into in my stomach.’ She boarded a transatlantic flight, but her blood, she reports, wanted to move after than the plane: ‘With shaking hands I typed out paragraphs of a lecture on mercy... And I felt all the while, a vague and powerful anger – at the doctors, for allowing this crisis to occur, at the flight attendants for smiling as if everything were normal, and above all, at myself for not having been able to stop this event from happening, or for not having been there with her when it did. She arrived, alas, a little too late.. Her mother’s hands were yellow: ‘My body felt as if pierced by so many slivers of glass, fragmented, as if it had exploded and scattered in pieces around the room. I wept uncontrollably. And paragraph follows that is very poignantly expressed, reminiscent of the kind of ruminations that emerges in the dialogue (touched on above) between Arjuna and Krishna on the terrible tumultuousness of feelings and evocations of unthinking energies, and it is worth citing in full here:²⁷

‘This story embodies several features of the emotions which it is my endeavour to explain here: their urgency and heat; their tendency to take over the personality and move one to

²⁶ ‘Perturbations’, in *Thinking About Feeling*, Solomon edited 2003,

²⁷ This essay was first published in P Bilimoria and J N Mohanty (eds.) *Relativism, Suffering and Beyond, Essays in Memory of Bimal K Matilal* (Delhi: Oxford University Press); reprinted in Solomon (ed.) *Thinking*

action with overwhelming force; their connection with important attachments, in terms of which one defines one's life; one's sense of passivity before them; their apparently adversarial relation to "rationality" in terms of cool calculation or cost-benefit analysis, or their occasionally adversarial relation to reasoning of any sort; their close connections with one another, as hope alternates uneasily with fear, as a single event transforms hope into grief, looking for a cause, expresses itself as anger, as all of these can be the vehicles of an underlying love'.

Despite these features and yet, Nussbaum, like the early pre-repentant Solomon, and Gustafson (more below) considers the emotion of grief to be a form of judgment – about important things, judgments in which we acknowledge our neediness and, lack of self-sufficiency or incompleteness before those elements that we do not fully control, which by her own account is a modified Stoic or neo-Stoic position, wherein the "unthinking bodily movements", powerful and constitutive as they are, are not considered sufficient to render them an emotion, which the more intelligent cognitive component provides better. How Nussbaum re-inscribes judgment into this decapitating state is by bringing in features or markers of intentionality (object-directness with or without a defined causal relation to the unthinking-perturbations), beliefs (ways of seeing that or very complex objects), and *value* [emphasis is hers, p 189): valued for their importance, of concern, hence their welfare, and significance – which at the perception of death signaled permanent loss, frustrating desire and goals, eudemonistic one's as well, in terms of the agent's flourishing and happiness. So what are the *necessary* and *sufficient conditions* for emotion (although not identical) are relevant beliefs and perceptions; the rest of the features – the non-belief, non-thinking ones as she calls them, or the objectless wandering feelings of pain and /or pleasure, are relegated to the *constitutive parts* – while wondering aloud; 'What are they like if they are not *about* anything?' (In parenthesis: Well, I wish Husserl or was it Brentano had never given such a push or pull to the pervasiveness of intentionality! And so the jab in the stomach and ripped by slivers of glass sensations at the news of her mother's impending death – as were Arjuna's inner tear/s – recastable in

About Feeling; and in her large book, *The Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

plain-language propositional terms: “My mother has died. It strikes me, it appears to me, that a person of enormous value, who was central to my life, is no longer there. It feels as if a nail has entered my insides; as if life has suddenly a large rip or tear in it, a gaping hole. I see, as well, her wonderful face – both as tremendously loved and as forever lost to me. The appearance [and this is the crux of her argument] in however many ways we picture it, is propositional: it combines the thought of importance with the thought of loss, its content is that this importance is lost. And, as I have said, it is evaluative: it does not just assert, “Betty Craven is dead” [Nussbaum is not the family néé, incidentally, it is a middle-American Protestant, not a Stoic pedigree.]. Central to the propositional content is my mother’s enormous importance, both to herself as well as to me as an element in my life”. (p 192). According to this view, then, the judgment is the grieving (it does not just precede or follow it): this *is* the upheaval. Encounters with death, and the attachments to the dying or deceased (the intentional object) come in a variety of forms – even in kind, from death of a pet animal, to a spouse one identifies strongly with – perhaps more deeply than with a parent – and the passing of bodhisattvas and gods; the rawness and intensity of the responses, the amorphous involuntary and pre-linguistic sense of *lack*, the dissonance and ambivalences of the *will*, indeed vary also in proportion to the attachment schemata and the ill-disposition, or unpreparedness, or the absence of symbolization in the moment, as the case of Hamlet well illustrated. I think it not unfair to quip that ‘if emotion of grief is judgment-laden, then Nussbaum’s account itself is heavily theory-laden.’ In other words, the judgment-laddenness of emotions had already prefigured as fore-structure/fore-grounding in her general theory of emotions, which she imports into her account of grief after the initial shock and the characteristic New England-stockings wear off. Hence she is able to set aside all those troubling, disturbing, physiological, neurological, ‘the insufferable animal’ or demonic bodily sensations and biological symptoms that psychologists, healers, acupuncturists, folk counselors of various persuasions, worry about particularly if these are not recognized and acknowledged for their significance as necessary constituents of the affect or whatever category they slot grief into: it is curious that none of them think of treating the symptomology in terms just of beliefs and judgments [perhaps belief –contrary is excepted but as a dis-affective signifier of denial, of ego-corruption, which is also there in melancholy and sorrow];

perhaps too they do think with Nussbaum's adversaries [*purvapaksins*] that the unthinking markers are indeed the sufficient elements of grief and that the belief-propositional ingredients are constitutive or supplementary. The massive ramblings of her tome apart, what Nussbaum has ended up with is rather close to the Hybrid Cognitive Theory has been around since the late 1980s (e.g. of Don Gustafson, Ronald Alan Nash of characteristically of the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center), in which perception and belief-state still maintain a hegemony or are called the 'paradigm case', but which does not exclude nonpropositional contents, and that is the 'messier' side of emotion, linked to its own specific evaluative continuum and affective contents.

Here is an example from Donald Gustafson of Cincinnati (one of the few detailed essays in analytical philosophy on 'Grief')²⁸, in

list had anything deep in common. Perhaps it will not be remarkable if grief, then, proves to have unusual features in comparison to other emotions.

These data can be summarized as follows:

- D1. Emotion has a component of a cognitive sort, in addition to its affective elements.**
- D2. Emotions are cognitively penetrable, unlike some other 'passions of the soul', such as sensations, pains, and so on.**
- D3. Emotion is, generally, hypercognized feeling.**
- D4. Emotion evidently has a biological basis and an adaptive role.**
- D5. Emotions feature intentionality or 'aboutness.'**
- D6. Emotions feature subjectivity; they are feelings.**
- D7. Emotions are epistemically special states or conditions.**
- D8. Emotions are typically rationally assessable, with logical room for reasons and grounds.**
- D9. Emotions are apt for producing motives, goals, immediate intentions and, then, actions.**
- D10. Emotions are associated with physiological conditions and changes, and they have typical manifestations.**
- D11. Emotions form a diverse collection, individual members of which have a variety of features.**

In light of characteristics D1-D10, D11 seems required, since not all of D1-D10 seem consistent. More on this below.

²⁸ 'Grief', *Noûs*, Sept 1989, Vol 23, no 4, pp. 457-479).

But like the extant analytical accounts, this too is less sophisticated than, say, De Sousa's cognitive alternative account, in which *context* is given more importance than contents of emotion, weighing it heavily on the body's responses in a behavioral (not physiological) mode in a participatory social environment, in which others are co-conspirators in the cultivation of our emotions (see Solomon's essay in *Feeling*). But where was there the context for cultivation of grief in the cases I have cited and in the numerous folk accounts where people find themselves boldered over, such as life's movements are, unannounced or in a state of utter unpreparedness and confusion by a meteor- or steamroller-like inexplicable, indeed ineffable, phenomenon? The unrepresentable is not unlike Kant's 'free-standing' aesthetic of the sublime; only that here the spiral turns downwards on the reverse and is a little like the unthought and entangled *discours* in Lyotard, the de-sublime reflecting a profound emptiness in the dark mirror of the unconscious – the one left behind, as in the image of the mother holding a child whose breath is surrendered to the winds.²⁹

Beliefs too are in that sense matters of cultivation, and are conditionally satisfied within a reflective *intellectus* (i.e. cognitivist) frame of reference (with its intentionality, satisfaction and self-sufficiency conditions, and categories of understanding, cognitive, moral and amoral judgments, etc). Occasionally vociferous charges are directed at the pathologically dissociative "cognitive" theory of emotion for excluding *affect* as an essential element of emotional experience which satisfy conditions of reciprocity, reparation, empathy, compassion, and *sorge* than mere primary rational or intellectual movement. This charge has been led by Michael Stocker and Peter Goldie, but which has been a central tenet of psychoanalytical theories since Freud. Some argue for the middle way view that cognitive theory can and ought to include *affect* -- not an implausible and unreasonable compromise, but its coherency has yet to persuasively argued for and tested. This is where Solomon has more or less ended up also with his dehistoricized, prudential affective phenomenology of grief. Not much is new here at all. Nevertheless, the battlelines remain drawn along these sharp cleavages and it is quite plausible that

²⁹ The moving image from Marissa's presentation

further empirical research – cross-cultural anthropology, psychology and psychoanalysis with its forays into the unconscious – an aspect of consciousness not much theorized in analytical philosophy --- will veer closer to the so-called adversarial position, or somehow severe this false disjunctive theory-choice. There are some serious considerations for thinking this.

Nevertheless, something in the tussle as it were, between the emergent ‘Evaluative versus Devaluative’ divide on the theoretic plane, might be resolved if we condescend to acknowledge that surely grief and mourning involve a quite peculiar sense of evaluation to the extent that the bereaved wishes to honour the missing person by saying in effect that the person now all but lost to their world is *worth* this very emotional response. This is Casey’s concession here, with the qualification that this valuation of ‘the degree or kind of worth is here conditioned by circumambient social structures, e.g. family hierarchies and other forms of collective units, including ideologies and entire social imaginaries’. The point is well taken. However, the issue really is whether the evaluation is already part of that emotional response or is it a supplement to it, or indeed a *response* to this precursive response?

PART D. The Melancholia of Mourning.

No wonder u so tired... Ur *mind* has taken over,
U place no limits on it.
I have never known anyone to be so chaotic,
I mean emotionally chaotic,
seething in angst, anger, rage;
raving and ranting over the minutest of things;
U are overdramatising my friend,
Don’t do this to yourself anymore.
‘tis time u pulled yourself together,
W’ve got to dr’aw some boundaries here, mate,

Y've got to learn to t'ake some responsibility
for what you do and sa'y, and wh're you want to be;
or y'are exactly where you destined y'self to be.
breathe and allow it to be;
or go work it out with your analyst,
I want to have no part of it...(become) your
punching-bag and *unconscious* dark mirror,
and all that fancy self-indulgent *jouissnonsense*.

(Text message, phone call, circa second anniversary)

In his essay on 'Mourning and Melancholia', Freud begins by talking about the 'affect of mourning'³⁰ [and I am here citing Charlie Shepherdson for a more succinct summary³¹:] 'In the face of a death, the work of mourning brings with it a certain affective state... grief that accompanies it. While Freud is really interested in melancholy for which grief serves as a contrasting foil for his theory, and much philosophical and psychoanalytic literature has been around on melancholy as a depressive syndrome (from Aristotle to Kristeva, 2000); consider

Shakespeare *As You Like it* (iv.I)

I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician's, which is fantastical; nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's, which is politic; nor the lady's which is nice; nor the lover's, which is all of these; but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects.

³⁰ *Selected Essays*, vol XIV, p 243

³¹ 'Emotion, Affect, Drive: For Teresa Brennan' Conference in Memory of Teresa Brennan, SUNY Stony Brook Manhattan Campus, September 2003. (courtesy of author).

In the lover's mourning, the loss of a loved results in the loss of capacity to adopt any new object of love; while in a lover's melancholy (as in the range of wider range that Shakespeare samples out, rather playfully), the *source* of the condition eludes the depressive sufferer. In its structural behavioral contexts there is expression of the same elements of guilt, exhaustion, absentee love-object or lack, or exhibiting Sartre's nauseating absence, abyss of nothingness, the Heideggerian thrownness in death and a kaleidoscopic folding in of the (Humean) regularity of sight, of time, if not of space also, all associations, causally marked and free. Indeed the Cartesian extensions of the senses and of the Nyaya mind recede and become grossly *in-tensions*, in-turned, there is occlusion of the eyes and vision to, and a rather palely hued two-dimensional world-space and a sense of vaguely meaningless existence lingering on – like an inflected and now dead bit of skin that refuses to fall off the old soar – with no real sense of continuity, futurity. After much that is screened out by this flatness, what hovers around in ghostly perturbations is this uncanny, unmythical irreality, disturbingly ('why doesn't the world stop, can't they see my life and vision just have?', "Stop all the clocks"); if one has never had a 'mystical experience' this condition would serve as neat counterfactual: contradict this state and imagine the totally contrary in all possible worlds save this one, and one would sense what the mystic claim to experience as her mind, sense and intellect and 'soul' – which too is bereft in the state in question - soar outwards into seemingly multiple or expanding dimensions.

However, in melancholy, by contrast, the ego is said to have been split, and there is self-reproach and self-loathing (one part turning on the other), symptoms of neurosis, sometimes over-excitement followed by macabre and chilling withdrawal (the social context of grieving or mourning has been elided), and the agent causally links the source of the debilitating will, the pain and free-floating anxiety, to external conditions of dissatisfactions, *duhkha* indeed. There is desire to continue the relationship of love, but the love-object has vanished; in melancholy, again, the relationship so much desired is evasive in the absence of a clear grasp on that desire, let alone the love-object. And this compounds the *duhkha*, as one fails to register what one is attached, and yet the pervasive sense – the 'feeling' – of attachment is not worked its way through, and even less so

when there is a collective melancholia, in which the already detached-attachment is passed on from one generation to another – as in the case of the horrors of the Partition of British India into two nation-states, or the Holocaust.

I think it instructive to set out this contrast, but then also ask at what point does grief fray into melancholia, as surely the intentional object of loss, the lack of absence, that makes its presence felt more in dreams and day-dream memories, in mirrors of time, gradually vanishes, leaving the unfocussed, restless ego not much to clutch onto but its own disesteemed subjectivity; the once reconciliatory voice of the other turns into slashing commands; the persisting amorous phantasies are interrupted by alien/unidentified hosts vying for the agent's love, unleashing symptomatic jouissance of pain/pleasure in a sadistic mix (intoxicant addicts satisfy that condition all too well) ; a hitherto morally neutral disposition turns into moral masochism, self-reproach of a more damaging, even self-castrating kind, and so on. (Abraham following Freud's work concluded that the agent succeeds in establishing the lost loved person in his ego, while the melancholic has failed to.³² That the two conditions are not vastly different from each other in kind, even though melancholy – other than perhaps the scholar's *a la* Shakespeare – is often diagnosed as a pathological condition, and grief not so, or not so frequently, unless it seems excessive (as in the case of the Italian woman returning to the hospital ward where her husband had died days-on-end well after the funeral and the wake were held), melancholy is a paradigm case of affective states.

It is also I believe instructive to look closely at the therapeutic context, what in some cultural contexts would be called the rituals surrounding mourning and healing, to discern the imaginary of grief as affect, for hardly any folk culture is hide-bound by an excessively cognitivist approach to the phenomenon of grief – not even behavioural and Skinnerean psychologists; if anything, the complexity of this affect is acknowledged and just how ignorant, occluded human beings in general remain about this most enigmatic and pervasive of emotional experiences (only that unlike love or *eros* it does not set in at a more or less calculated or expected time-line): it is unanticipated, by and large.

³² *The Nature of Melancholy*, 'The Depressive Position', p 307.

Some cognitivist work on depression is more likely to shed light on grief than abstract philosophical analysis, it would seem; although called cognitivism, medical psychologists have worked around depression following loss to describe associated emotions. A sequential schemata is used although it is not always causally linear but more associative. Beck shows that first there is the precipitating event, in some form of “loss” experience; the awareness of this experience causes cognitive states; these states, in turn, effect negative mood states; eventually, physiological reactions ensue. The awareness part is the belief state that initiates the psychological causes of other aspects of depression. “Beck differs from philosophical “cognitivists” who posit that the belief involved in emotions like depression are not causes but *constituents* of those conditions. Whereas the adversarial position says that it is *affects*, not beliefs, that are intrinsic constituents, and are not just the cause or the consequence of belief-state dissonances experienced by the sufferer. A person’s feeling of sadness is not merely *because of* but also *over or about* his or her loss, they insist. The belief states are intrinsic to the experience of depression, and part of how we identify it as an experience of that kind.³³

The separation of belief states from affect is a very poignant contention here and one that I think must go through if the empirical data Beck draws on and the growing psychoanalytic arguments are anything to go by. To be sure, the belief state, and especially distorted evaluations, overvaluations, hasty and inaccurate conclusions, logical errors, and indeed belief contrary at the onset of grief, etc., are not undermined or marginalized: denials and negative view on the world, oneself, the future, and futility of motivating oneself indeed form the *cognitive triad* (which itself is a way of suggesting that at the theoretical level we need to go beyond the usual dyads or binaries we have become so accustomed to: “Ok, if you are not feeling well and dejected, you must be depressed. Is your blood-pressure alright?”). To that end their causal – trigger - role is underscored and as it were moved out of the way just when nonintelligent energies begin to move and swamp the agent’s psychic, neuro-physical and physiological constitution. It is hard to see how numbness could possibly embed belief state, except perhaps in some dormant or distorted sense. Disbelief might be reported, as often is, but this is mistakenly translated or interpreted by certain cognitivists as belief contrary states that persists as

³³ (Griffiths, 1989 is cited by Beck, p 317-3, *Melancholy* book).

constituent of grief. Proposition makes way for affect to do its work, might be a better adage.

Following Freud, Kristeva brings out something of this in commenting on the difference between melancholy and mourning, thus: ‘If temporary sadness of mourning on the one hand, and melancholy stupor on the other are clinically and nosologically different, they are nevertheless supported by *intolerance for object loss* and *the signifier’s failure* to insure a compensating way out of the states of withdrawal in which the subject takes refuge to the point of inaction (pretending to be dead) or even suicide.’³⁴ The concealed aggressiveness or anger toward the lost object, revealing the ambivalence with respect to the object of mourning... it rejects, dejects, becomes nothing and in becoming nothing causes a fall in/as the other into a wasteland of pathos, anguish, violence... these feelings are not reducible to primary intellectual determinants, they are not perceptions or even on a par with perceptions; but, rather like drives and desire with which these are metonymically connected as the dis-satisfying conditions, are better understood as being part of affect rather than propositionally or rationally. One can do something rationally about weakening of will, correct it or prop it up again, use a walking stick, but that is not invariably available for even mildly depressive states. Imagine a gun shot received by the agent: this will evoke startling response – a sudden jerk of the body. Amplification of the immediacy of the discreet affects evoked in an encounter with death of loved one is felt across the body by means of correlated sets of facial-muscle, blood-flow, visceral, respiratory, vocal, and skeletal response. The immediate behavioral response is also imprinted with this analog.

Virginia Demos, rightly I believe, comments on this analog: ‘The biological importance of this amplification through affect is to make the organism care about quite different kinds of events in different ways.’³⁵ The affective resonance in similarly presented stimulus (e.g. memory and items of the object lost around the house) evoke more of the same affect in a feedback loop. Affective resonance is a prominent element in empathy, what Hume called sympathy (the arousal of similar emotive state in one observing signs of sadness or sorrow in another), and what in Buddhism is refined as

³⁴ *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholy*, 1987.

³⁵ (First essay in *Empathy II* RS lib).

compassion. In grief, the structuration is expanded somewhat diffusedly to encompass a sense of loss (the feeling of shock and horror) with belief contrary or the cognitive trigger, to constitute a rite of reciprocation: an offering, an exchange, a gift, so that the pain of the severance of the agent from the love object is felt, acknowledged and fully experienced while also letting go of the love object in the recognition that its return is impossible, that the loss is forever, and that time which trundles along indiscriminately will both remind one and cover over the dreadful effect. That sort of wisdom underpins the rites ceremonies We saw this process worked through in the anecdotes earlier, especially in the Kaluli and Buddhist performatives of mourning. A baby cow-seal sheds a tear when its mother is suddenly trapped and snatched away by New Guinean sea-hunters for their next communal meal. Of course this is a built-in biological or mammalian code-response in animate creatures as a survival-evolutionary strategy; but it is also an emotional experience, an affect, where its expression comes with certain signifiers, cognitive, bodily, physiological, and unconscious (manifest in dreams and aggressiveness and depression).

This, it seems, is only part of the story of the enigma, and it embellishes more than clinches anything very novel to the stories we do have in philosophical literature. Philosophers too are not immune from the need for therapy at some point or other in their social or worldly life – it catches up with us all, as Socrates reminded Celebes, even the wisest are moved to grieve (in *Phaedo* 61) but the philosopher is less troubled at the prospect of facing his own dying and death if they ‘apply themselves in the right way to philosophy’, whatever that might be. Then truly and only can one proclaim, ‘There shall be no mourning’, again, as Lyotard reminded his audience in anticipation of his death bed, and Derrida en-acted out this *self* deconstructing affect (as he, I believe, see it) as he too passed beyond by disallowing the social-collegial (not to say, the State-sponsored, as in Sartre’s case) final performative of mourning (or at least a gesture toward that, for mourning there was, rather wide-spread).³⁶ I have not withheld myself in that way, for

³⁶ A Letter to the Editor *The New York Times*, signed by over 300 professors et al complaining about the malice in the *Times*’ Obituary.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/13/opinion/113derrida.html?n=Top%2fOpinion%2fEditorials%20and%20Op%2dEd%2fLetters>

because of the different cultural ambience, and the phenomenological *angst* to fathom the shock, tear- and fear-fully.

End