



International Society
for Research on Emotion

Emotion Researcher

ISRE's Sourcebook for Research on Emotion and Affect
<https://www.isre.org/>

December 2024 Issue

Editor-in-Chief:
Rebecca Dickason
IGR-IAE Graduate School of Management
Centre for Research in Economics and Management (CREM, UMR CNRS 6211)
University of Rennes (France)
rebecca.dickason@univ-rennes.fr

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Editor's Column

Signing off: A Message from the Outgoing Editors

Cain Todd and Eric A. Walle

This marks our final contribution as the Editors of **Emotion Researcher**. We have both had the privilege to serve in this capacity for the past several years (Eric since 2017; Cain since 2019). Our position has connected us with countless scholars of emotion and helped to round our professional perspectives of our science.

Emotion Researcher is unique in its ability to bring together affective scientists from diverse backgrounds and fields of study. We are thankful for the numerous thematic contributions made to each of the issues, covering topics such as anger, empathy, evolution, and feeling. Moreover, this outlet has allowed us to share the research of rising stars in the field of emotion, informed our junior scholars about the efforts of the Early Career Researchers Section, and spread the word about 4 ISRE Meetings.

We are excited by the energy and ideas that new Editor, Rebecca Dickason, brings with her to **Emotion Researcher**. This publication has evolved over the decades of ISRE, from a brief newsletter to a veritable sourcebook of emotion. During the transition process, Rebecca has shared with us her vision for the years of content to come and how they will meet the needs and interests of the growth and diversity represented in ISRE. We look forward to the new **Emotion Researcher** content to come under her stewardship.

Warmly and with many thanks,

Eric & Cain



Cain Todd is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Lancaster University (UK). His research covers a wide range of issues centring on emotions and evaluative experience,

most recently the phenomenology and objectivity of emotional experience and the role of attention and imagination therein. His co-edited collection *Emotion and Value* (OUP) was published in 2010, and his new monograph *Aesthetics and Emotion* (Bloomsbury) is due to appear in 2024.



Eric Walle is Associate Professor of Psychological Sciences at the University of California, Merced. His theoretical writings emphasize the functions of

emotions, particularly in interpersonal contexts. His empirical work examines emotional development, principally in infancy and early childhood, as well as how individuals perceive and respond to others' emotional communication. He is also a Co-Editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Emotional Development* (2022) and is an Associate Editor for *Emotion Review*, *Affective Science*, and *Infancy*.

A Message from the New Editor



I am thankful to Cain and Eric for facilitating the changeover (to use a running metaphor). Becoming the new **Emotion Researcher** Editor is a humbling

experience and I will endeavour to contribute creatively to ISRE's Sourcebook for Research on Emotion and Affect.

The current issue honours a previously invited contribution (on grief), acknowledges recent ISRE events and news (words from past and present presidents, a presentation of the new board, updates from the ECRS and from the Editors of *Emotion Review*, a retrospective of the 2024 Conference and a tribute to Tim Averill) and also marks a transition towards a new format.

Indeed, **Emotion Researcher** will continue to showcase the diversity represented within ISRE but will depart from its traditional publication mode (i.e. issues). Instead, new content will be added online all year round, alternating between a variety of sourcebook items: interviews, spotlights, essays, point and counterpoint discussions, provocations, opinion pieces, short articles, insights, narrative summaries of original research, etc. I am open to suggestions, so feel free to send me your proposals, ideas, texts at rebecca.dickason@univ-rennes.fr.

One element that is guiding the evolution of **Emotion Researcher** is the migration from its [current website](#) to another website, possibly the [main ISRE website](#). I am grateful to Disa, Manny and Alessio for joining me in a committee tasked with exploring various options to make the **Emotion Researcher** content easily available from the main ISRE website, and also to Teerawat for his insights on social media communication. In the coming weeks and months, we will continue working on this and present our ideas to the rest of the board to see what is technically realistic, aesthetically pleasing, strategically desirable, and what trade-offs we will have to make.

After this current issue, I will turn my focus to ensuring that all the previous **Emotion Researcher** content finds its rightful place on its new website. As Alessio is still investigating the main ISRE website's potential and limits, I cannot yet give details on the final outline. However, I can share my guiding principle: honouring the contributions from the past and giving a space for new conversations on emotions to blossom within Academia. I am looking forward to adding new content on the website once the new structure is finalized.

ISRE's Sourcebook for Research on Emotion and Affect offers a plurality of perspectives (themes, disciplinary fields, etc.) which makes it a unique platform for researchers (and even for a wider audience). I am a firm believer in the relevance of multi-/inter-disciplinary dialogues in order to advance knowledge and I hope **Emotion Researcher** can continue to share alternative views on the ever-expanding field of emotions.

Thank you for putting your trust in me to bring this outlet to the next stage of its ongoing development... and thank you for your patience while the new version of **Emotion Researcher** is brought to life from behind the scenes!

Best,

Rebecca

News

A Few Words from Ursula Hess, ISRE Past President

Dear ISRE members,

I am honored to write this message to you as past president of ISRE. I took on the role of president in 2019 and, in the years since, the board and I have made changes to make the Society more attractive.

The first step was the introduction of a new website started under the previous president Chris Harris. This website has made it easier for members to stay in contact with the society. It also allowed us to provide a space for the Early Career Researchers (ECRS) on the ISRE website to facilitate communication.

The section is very active with many valuable initiatives open to all ISRE members. More recently, we have amended our by-laws to provide more modern voting options and a framework for more transparent and democratic elections to the board.

These changes aim to make ISRE a home for many of you and to foster more active participation in the Society. The new president is leading forward in ISRE's efforts to grow a strong community of emotion researchers.

Your past president,

Ursula



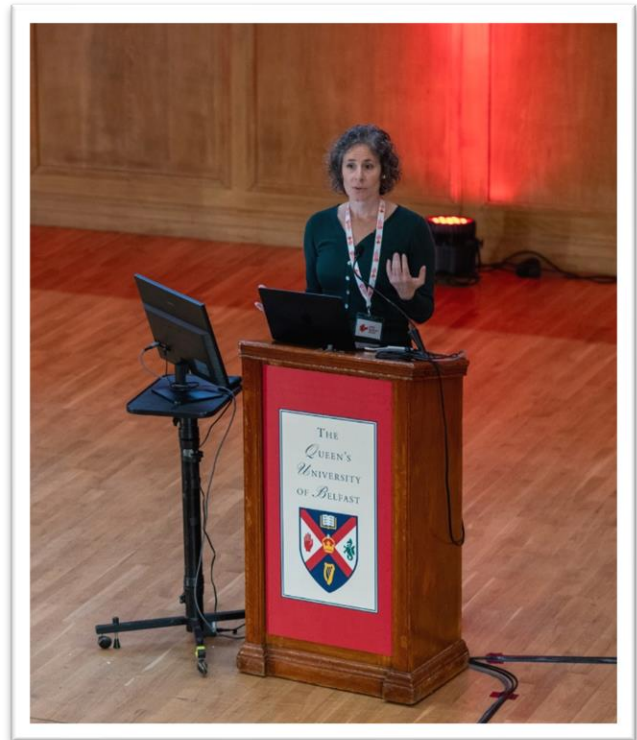
A Few Words from Disa Sauter, ISRE President

Dear ISRE members,

It is an honour to write this message to you as the new president of ISRE. This is particularly humbling because ISRE has been my intellectual home ever since I attended my first ISRE conference in Leuven 2009. I was blown away by the wealth of fascinating interdisciplinary presentations, the lively disagreements, and the friendly atmosphere. Since then, I've attended many ISRE conferences – including co-organising the one in Amsterdam in 2019 – and continue to enjoy the stimulating exchanges of this vibrant community.

Of course, ISRE does much more than hold conferences. Another flagship activity is our society journal, *Emotion Review*, which publishes theoretical work on emotion from any and all disciplines. I have been fortunate to be associate editor at *Emotion Review* since 2014, and have learned a great deal from the excellent papers we receive. If you have theoretical work relating to emotion in the pipeline, do consider submitting it to *Emotion Review*. It is essential for our society to continue to provide a platform for interdisciplinary scholarly exchange and to offer a top outlet for theorising.

Another key part of ISRE is our young scholars. In recent years, the dedicated group for early career researchers has grown into a thriving community that has created many great initiatives. Among other things, ISRE's Early Career Researcher Section (ECRS) has hosted several webinar series with leading scholars in the field, set up a mentoring program, and initiated the ISRE PhD dissertation award, which is given out every two years. If you're an early career researcher, go ahead and connect to ISRE's Early Career Researchers Section – you can find out more on the dedicated [early career section](#) of our [website](#).



Looking ahead, the new board is already in the early planning stages of the 2026 conference as well as a number of other initiatives. I look forward to sharing more with you in due course as these plans come together. But perhaps most importantly, I would like to hear from you: what would you like ISRE to do or to offer? Are there things you've encountered through other groups, institutions, or societies that we could learn from? I'd be very interested to hear any thoughts you have. Two domains particularly close to my heart are issues relating to diversity, equity and inclusion and sustainability. Are there ways in which we can better reach and integrate scholars from underprivileged groups and locations? What can we do to facilitate a transition to a just, sustainable world? Please send me your reflections and suggestions at d.a.sauter@uva.nl.

I look forward to working together with you all to strengthen and grow our community.

Your president,

Disa

Meet the New ISRE Board Members

ELECTED OFFICERS

President



Disa Sauter is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Amsterdam (the Netherlands). She did her BSc in Psychology and Cognitive Science at University College London (2002), followed by a PhD in the same department (2006). She then worked as a post-doctoral researcher at King's College London and Birkbeck College London, before moving to the Netherlands to take up a staff researcher position at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics. Since 2011, she has been based at the University of Amsterdam. Sauter's research examines emotion with a particular focus on non-verbal expressions, especially vocalisations like laughs, sighs, and screams. She is interested in how factors such

as preparedness, culture, and learning shape our emotions and how they are communicated. Her work makes use of a wide range of methods from psychology and other disciplines, including cross-cultural comparisons and computational analyses. In recent years, she has also been studying emotions in relation to sustainability and pro-environmental behaviour.

Past President



Ursula Hess has been president of ISRE from 2019 to 2024. She is Professor of Social and Organizational Psychology at the Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany). Hess earned her Diploma in Psychology from Justus-Liebig University in 1986 and her Ph.D. in Social Psychology from Dartmouth College in 1989. After a post-doc at the University of Geneva, she spent 17 years at the University of Quebec at Montreal. Her research primarily focuses on the communication of emotions, exploring how social factors like gender and intergroup relations influence this process. Currently her work focuses on facial mimicry and the social signal value of emotions, which has significant implications for understanding

person perception and cross-cultural communication. In her research she uses a variety of approaches including psychophysiology. She has published over 200 papers as well as several edited books.

Treasurer



Eric Walle is Associate Professor in the Department of Psychological Science at the University of California, Merced (the United States of America). He is the Director of the Interpersonal Development Lab, where he conducts research examining emotion, socio-emotional development, and developmental transitions. He is particularly interested in the functions of emotions in interpersonal contexts, such as emotion responding, emotion regulation, and empathy. He conducts empirical research with infants, children, and adults, examining topics including behavioral responding to others' discrete emotions, perceiving others' emotions, and the role of social cognition in the development of emotion

understanding. Additionally, his recent work has examined how children and adolescents serve as emotion brokers by translating cross-cultural differences in emotion norms, particularly when the family has recently immigrated to a new culture. He also conducts research examining how developmental transitions (e.g., the onset of walking) impact infant language, cognition, emotion, and social interactions. He was a Co-editor of the Oxford Handbook of Emotional

Development and serves as an Associate Editor for *Infancy*, *Emotion Review*, and *Affective Science*.

Secretary



Milica Nikolić is Assistant Professor of Developmental Psychopathology at the Research Institute of Child Development and Education, University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands). Her research focuses on the development of self-conscious emotions in young children and how these emotions contribute to their daily functioning. She uses naturalistic tasks to evoke genuine emotions and employs precise micro-codings of behaviours and neuro-physiological measures to capture emotions. Her work integrates developmental psychology approaches with insights and methods from other disciplines, including cognitive and affective science.

Currently, she is the PI of a project examining the development of self-conscious shyness in infancy, supported by a Veni grant from the Netherlands Research Council. She is also the founder of [Becoming Social](#), a popular science website that translates scientific insights on child social development into stories and tools for caregivers and educators.

Membership Secretary



Tanja S. H. Wingenbach is Lecturer in Psychology at the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences, University of Reading (the United Kingdom). After completing her PhD at the University of Bath in 2016, she held postdoctoral positions at the Social and Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory, Mackenzie Presbyterian University in São Paulo, Brazil, and the Department of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry and Psychosomatic Medicine at University Hospital Zurich and the University of Zurich, Switzerland. She took up her first lectureship in 2022 at the University of Greenwich, UK, in the School of Human Sciences. She has been a member of ISRE since 2013 and became actively involved in 2015 when she volunteered

for the Early Career Researcher Section (ECRS). Over the course of seven years, she contributed to ECRS in various capacities, including serving as Chair from 2019 to 2022. Her research focuses on emotions with an emphasis on facial expressions, in both typical and clinical populations, including autism. By combining experimental methods with biological measures, such as facial electromyography (EMG), she explores the embodiment of emotion, facial mimicry, and emotion judgments. Her work aims to enhance existing methodologies and deepen our theoretical understanding of emotional processes. Her greater research goals are to advance emotion theory by integrating biological and behavioural mechanisms; and to inform interventions for individuals with clinical conditions.

ISRE Early Career Researcher Group Liaison



Manuel (Manny) Gonzalez is Assistant Professor in Industrial-Organizational Psychology at Montclair State University (New Jersey, the United States of America). Much of Manny's research revolves around two broad topics: (1) the influences of emotions (felt or expressed) in the workplace on personal, interpersonal, and organizational outcomes, and (2) justice-related and ethical issues in the workplace, with a recent focus on fairness issues that emerge when implementing organizational tools that utilize artificial intelligence. In his research, he attempts to push back against various assumptions made by researchers and laypersons alike regarding what is "good" and what is "bad". For example, he has

found that (a) people can react to envy constructively, despite it being an unpleasant emotion to experience, (b) distractions can sometimes improve task performance, particularly when the task is simple, and (c) social support from coworkers can make highly cynical people less satisfied with their jobs. Through his research, Manny seeks to promote a more nuanced

understanding of the work context, and to contribute to organizational interventions that foster a psychologically healthy and productive work environment. Within ISRE, Manny is the chair of the Early Career Researchers Section (ECRS) where he oversees initiatives that provide professional development and community-building opportunities to ISRE's junior members.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD



Jonathan Gratch is Research Full Professor of Computer Science and Psychology at the University of Southern California (USC, the United States of America) and Director for Virtual Human Research at USC's Institute for Creative Technologies. He completed his Ph.D. in Computer Science at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign in 1995. Dr. Gratch's research focuses on computational models of human cognitive and social processes, especially emotion, and explores these models' potential to advance psychological theory and shape human-machine interaction. He is the founding Editor-in-Chief (retired) of IEEE's *Transactions on Affective Computing*, and Associate Editor for *Emotion Review* and *Affective Science*. He is former President of the Association for the Advancement of Affective Computing (AAAC) and a Fellow of AAAI, AAAC, and the Cognitive Science Society.



Olivier Luminet is Research Director at the Belgian Fund for Scientific Research (FRS-FNRS), full professor at the University of Louvain (UCLouvain) and associate professor at the Free University of Brussels (ULB). He is the past president of the Belgian Association for Psychological Sciences (BAPS). One part of his research activity is dedicated to the interactions between emotion, personality and health. He has published widely on alexithymia since 1999, including two books and more than 40 papers in international journals. He co-edited a special issue of *Cognition and Emotion* in 2021, including a review paper, and he is lead author on one that will be published in *Annual Review of Psychology* (2025). Another part of his research activity is dedicated to the links between emotion, identity and memories (both at the individual and at the collective levels). He has conducted several studies on cognitive and emotional determinants of flashbulb memories and their impact on collective memory. He was also involved in several interdisciplinary projects related to emotions and collective memory. Since 2020, he has been involved in research examining the impact of the covid pandemic on health behaviors and well-being, being principal investigator (PI) of a project on "Taking stock to foster health and trust for an inclusive post-covid society" (THRIVE) (2024-2027).



Magdalena Rychlowska is Lecturer in Experimental Social Psychology at Queen's University Belfast (the United Kingdom). She completed her PhD in 2014 at the University of Clermont Auvergne in France and worked at Cardiff University before moving to the rainy lands of Northern Ireland. Prior to studying psychology, she earned an MSc in French studies, where she focused on the concept of friendship in the 18th century. Her current research explores facial expressions of emotion, particularly how altering or blocking facial movements can influence emotional processing. One way she approaches this is by examining how the use of pacifiers impacts interactions between mothers and infants, as well as the development of social competence later in life. She spends a lot of time studying smiles and laughter, which are complex social signals – not all smiles are happy, and not all laughs are friendly. These days, she also studies how spending time with friends differs across cultures and whether these differences affect how we look at faces.



Mikko Salmela is Associate Professor at the Center for Subjectivity Research at the University of Copenhagen (Denmark – until the end of 2024) and Docent and Senior Researcher (from 2025 onwards) in Practical Philosophy at the University of Helsinki (Finland). His doctoral thesis (University of Helsinki, 1998) was on the history of Finnish philosophy, and he has studied emotions since his postdoc years. He first worked on normative issues relating to the nature, authenticity and appropriateness of individual emotions, then focused on collective emotions and their functions in the dynamics of social groups, and, in recent years, has turned towards the emotional dynamics of anti- and pro-democratic political

movements. In his current research, he actively collaborates with scholars from various social sciences and humanities disciplines; especially in the context of the Horizon Europe consortium Politics of Grievance and Democratic Governance (PLEDGE, 2024--2027) that he will coordinate at the University of Helsinki from 2025 onwards. His first ISRE conference was Quebec City 2000, and he was a member of ISRE board (2011-2013).



Eric Vanman is Professor of Psychology at the University of Queensland (Australia), specializing in social neuroscience and the psychology of technology. His work combines multiple methodologies, focusing on understanding people's responses to technology. Recently, his research has focused on studying the mechanisms of empathy using a social neuroscience approach. He has investigated factors that may contribute to a lack of empathy for individuals who are different from us but has also extended this to human-robot interaction. He leads a laboratory that includes PhD and undergraduate students, focusing on the use of AI, robotics, and social media in psychological research. Eric

is also interested in studying emotions and facial expressions, using facial EMG technology to investigate these areas. He is primarily known for his studies on racial prejudice. His research has indicated that the activation of facial muscles, specifically those that create frowning and smiling expressions, is linked to prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, even in the absence of detectable facial displays of emotion. His early work on unconscious bias and its connection to psychophysiological measures laid the foundation for research on implicit measures that have been prominent in this research area for the last three decades.

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Editor-in-Chief of *Emotion Review*



Brian Parkinson is Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Oxford (the United Kingdom). His research focuses on the social psychology of emotion, facial expression, interpersonal emotion regulation and interpersonal affect transfer. His work is guided by the idea that emotions align people's orientations towards each other and to the objects and events in their shared environment. His first-authored books include *Ideas and Realities of Emotion* (1995), *Changing Moods* (1996), and *Emotion in Social Relations* (2005). His latest book, *Heart to Heart: How Your Emotions Affect Other People*, was selected as one of the Outstanding Academic Titles of 2020 by *Choice*, the magazine of the American Library

Association. He has served as Chief Editor of the *British Journal of Social Psychology*, and Associate Editor of *Cognition and Emotion* and *Transactions in Affective Computing*. He is currently Co-Editor of the book series *Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction* (Cambridge University Press), and Co-Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Emotion Review*.

Editor-in-Chief of *Emotion Researcher*



Rebecca Dickason is Associate Professor at the IGR-IAE Graduate School of Management and at the Centre for Research in Economics and Management (CREM, University of Rennes, France). A member of EMONET, she envisages emotions from the angle of work and organizations and joined ISRE because she sees in it a unique interdisciplinary agora to further understand emotions, from individual and collective perspectives. She has recently published a narrative review of the literature on emotional labour in the *Revue Française de Gestion*, examining the filiations and evolutions of the concept across various disciplinary fields. As a keen observer of healthcare settings for

many years, she has explored the emotional labour of hospital healthcare professionals diversely, through the prisms of time, space, and rules, and how they intertwine. She has also delved into the topic of the deteriorated mental health, trauma and pathological grief of physicians in the face of end of life and death, creating "[Emotion4care](#)", a scientific blog, in 2022, coordinating an issue of the nursing journal *Soins* (Elsevier Masson), in 2023, and participating in a Symposium on grief at the US Academy of Management, in 2024. Her other ongoing projects include researching the history of emotional intelligence and exploring the links between the corporeal and emotional experiences at work.

Webmaster



Alessio Giarrizzo is Doctoral Assistant at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Geneva (Switzerland). He pursues his doctoral training in the field of adult education under the supervision of Professor Nathalie Delobbe, who leads the research team "[Apprentissage et compétences au travail, en formation et dans les organisations \(ACT'FOR\)](#)" [Learning and competence at work, in training, and in organizations]. He serves the International Society for Research on Emotion as webmaster. He obtained his master's degrees in neuroscience and cognitive and affective psychology in 2019. During his basic academic training, he worked on the influence of stress on reward-

seeking behaviors with a computational approach at the [Laboratory for the study of Emotion Elicitation and Expression](#) of the [Swiss Center for Affective Sciences](#). In parallel, he also worked on interindividual differences in motivation in the [Geneva Motivation Lab](#) of the Psychology Section. With a variety of teaching experience in the university environment, from undergraduate students to professionals seeking continuing education at the University, he is particularly interested in the affective determinants of learning. His doctoral thesis explores the interaction of motivation, emotion, and learning in adults engaged in continuing education.

Content Manager



Teerawat Monnor, approaching the end of his PhD (University of Geneva, Switzerland), conducts research on interpersonal-affective motivation, with a special interest in how these motivations shape prosocial behaviors. He has a background in computational physics and neuroscience and values interdisciplinary collaboration with the aim of creating real impact through partnerships across various fields. His recent interests include the psychological constructs of AI (if they exist) and how these might shape or mediate human-to-human interactions. As ISRE's Communication Manager, Teerawat leverages his experience in science communication and community

management to keep the society's members informed and engaged. Ideas and suggestions on fostering a dynamic network where researchers at all career stages (and possibly across sectors) can openly connect and collaborate are warmly welcomed at info@isre.org.

Early Career Researchers Section (ECRS) Updates

ISRE's Early Career Researchers Section (ECRS) is a group of volunteers that develops programming and initiatives designed to benefit junior members of ISRE, including students, postdocs, and junior faculty.

At this year's conference in Belfast, the ECRS hosted a social for early career attendees and sponsored this year's poster award, which recognizes outstanding poster presentations from early career scholars.

We are currently planning initiatives for 2025, including the biannual webinar series which enables ISRE members to learn the latest advancements in emotion research from established scholars in various areas of affective science. We will share more about these initiatives over the coming year, so stay tuned!

The ECRS is also excited to welcome our newest volunteers:

- . Rachele Lievore, Ph.D. (University of Padua),
- . Riya Mishra (Indian Institute of Technology – Kanpur),
- . and Chris Riddell (University of Leiden)!

Interested in Learning More or Getting Involved?

You can learn more about the ECRS and its initiatives by visiting our page on ISRE's website: <https://www.isre.org/page/isre-ecrs-about-us>.

We are always happy for the help of new volunteers!

The ECRS is a great opportunity to connect with other emotion researchers and have an impact on the future of affective science.

If you are an ISRE Associate Member and are interested in volunteering or would like to learn more, please contact Manny Gonzalez at gonzalezma@montclair.edu.

Please note that volunteer commitments typically last at least 1 year and require continuous involvement.

Meet the ECRS Team



Manuel Gonzalez, Ph.D.
ECRS Chair
(Montclair State University, USA)



Soohyun (Ashley) Lee, Ph.D.
(William Paterson University, USA)



Rachele Lievore, Ph.D.
(University of Padua, Italy)



Riya Mishra
(Indian Institute of Technology – Kanpur)



Chris Riddell
(University of Leiden, The Netherlands)

Update from the Editors of *Emotion Review*

Giovanna Colombetti, Bradley J. Irish and Brian Parkinson

Emotion Review has been at the forefront of academic thinking about emotion and stimulated many productive theoretical debates since the first issue appeared in 2009. Its success is due in large part to the hard work and insightful leadership of an impressive succession of previous editors-in-chief.

The new editors took over in 2022. They are Giovanna Colombetti (philosophy), Bradley J. Irish (humanities), and Brian Parkinson (psychology). This is the first time that non-psychologists have overseen *Emotion Review* and we hope that this sends an important message about the journal's interdisciplinary mission.

Interdisciplinarity is often touted as a project's selling point without clear plans for putting it into practice. Our knowledge of intersections between different domains of scholarship will enable us to foster genuine dialogue between them. Where appropriate, we will cultivate debate across the usual disciplinary boundaries by inviting commentaries from experts in relevant research areas.

We continue to encourage submissions that propose new theoretical approaches, provide novel integrations of existing

knowledge, advance understanding of existing emotional phenomena or identify new topics for research. We are also happy to consider commentaries on papers published in this and other journals. This is in addition to the invited commentaries we will solicit on articles prior to publication.

Special Sections will also continue to be a key feature of our publication plans. *Emotion Review* has been highly successful in setting out the state of the art in current theoretical thinking and pointing the way forward throughout its history and we hope to extend this tradition by addressing emergent topics and revisiting recurrent ones. We welcome proposals for Special Sections from readers and are happy to support prospective editors in compiling them.

In sum, we seek to publish rigorous and systematic theoretical contributions that bring conceptual clarity to a variety of emotionally relevant topics – especially if they allow readers from different disciplines to appreciate the implications for their own research areas. Our overall aim is to encourage theoretically and empirically informed dialogue about issues that potentially benefit from a multidisciplinary perspective.

ISRE 2024 in Northern Ireland: A Retrospective

Text credits: Bronagh Allison, Gary McKeown, & Magda Rychlowska

Photo credits: Bart Duriez & Kristina Šparemblek

Just when you thought Belfast and Northern Ireland had had enough fireworks with the traditional July bonfires, ISRE2024 rolled in to keep the sparks flying—this time with 450 emotion researchers from 44 countries!

From 16 to 20 July, Queen's University Belfast and its historic campus became the Global Emotion Headquarters.

The event kicked off with six pre-conferences and a very serious workshop on Laughter (and other non-verbal vocalisations) setting the stage. The pre-conferences covered almost everything from affective computing, emotional development and regulation to cross-species emotion research.

Attendees of several pre-conferences, including “Engaging with Other People's Suffering,” experienced their own emotional rollercoaster as the coffee break didn't offer enough caffeine to handle the heavy emotional and social lifting that was needed.

The pre-conference day on 17 July ended with the start of the main ISRE conference and the Welcome Reception held at Parliament Buildings, home of the Northern Ireland Assembly. After the excitement of registration, boarding, and security checks, ISRE2024 attendees could finally relax, sip a wine or two with colleagues, and enjoy live traditional Irish music.

The impressive surroundings of the Stormont estate, with views of Belfast's green hills, were perfect for conference selfies.

By the time the main conference sessions started on 18 July, there was plenty to look forward to. The keynote talks by Phoebe Ellsworth, Terry Maroney, and Yuri Miyamoto filled Whitla Hall with the same passion, if not sound, as Jimi Hendrix's concerts in 1967.

With 418 submissions, 19 symposia, 161 individual talks, and 133 posters, ISRE2024 showcased a variety of cutting-edge work from psychology, neuroscience, anthropology, law, linguistics, and beyond. The Industry Salon, presented by Michel Valstar, explored the joys and challenges of launching a start-up in affective computing and emotion science.

But it wasn't all talks and theories—the conference dinner on 19 July took place at Titanic Belfast, the iconic museum dedicated to the ill-fated ship, which was fine when it left Belfast! The evening of live music and dancing led to the emergence of a new scientific society, IDB. If you're intrigued by the acronym or want to join, please contact ISRE2024 chairs.

Emotion researchers needing a break from academia could take guided walks to discover Belfast city centre and the landmarks of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Many explored the Entries—Belfast's oldest streets—and informal conferences took place in the Duke of York pub and Ulster Sports Club. Disruptions in flight traffic prevented many attendees from leaving Belfast, resulting in even more scientific activities, but we hope that everyone left with new ideas, fresh collaborations, and some new dance moves.

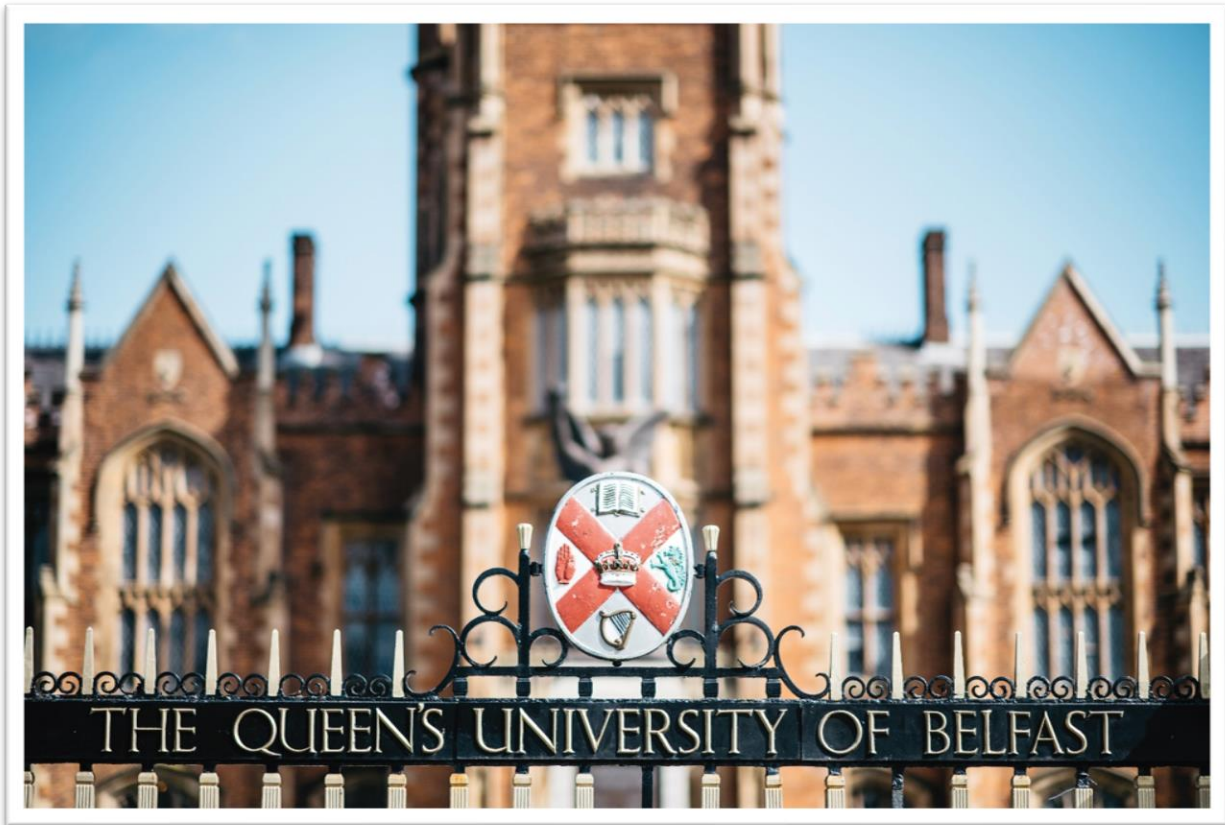


Figure 1. Emotion Headquarters

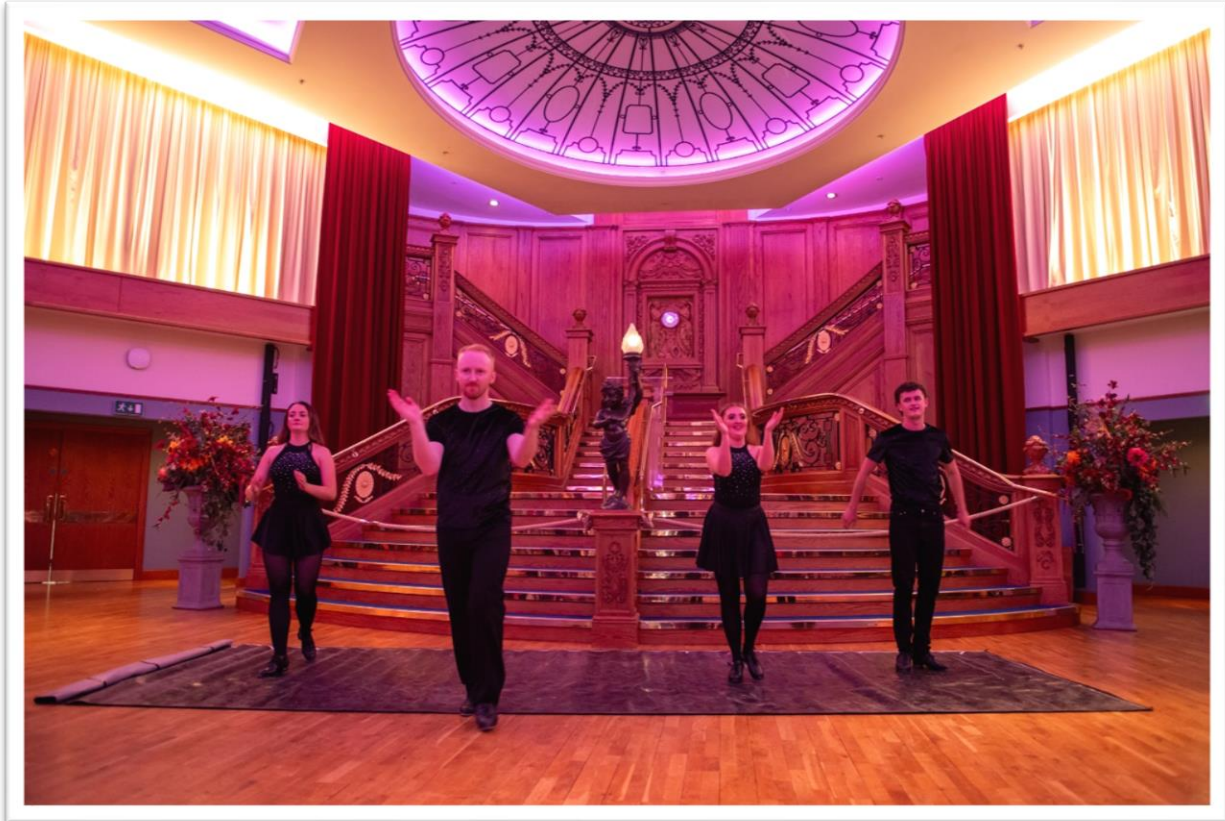


Figure 2. Irish dancing and the iconic Titanic staircase



Figure 3. Gary McKeown conducting the crowd



Figure 4. Crowd finally assembled



Figure 5. Past and current ISRE Presidents exchanging top secret information. Stay tuned for future ISRE conferences!

Honoring Members of the Academia

A Tribute to Jim Averill, with Fond Memories

Louise Sundararajan

James R. Averill passed away in his sleep on the 19th of August 2024. See obituary by his daughters [here](#).

Being privileged to be the last person he spoke to before he went into sleep from which he never awoke, I would like to share an account of Jim's last day (the 18th), with the help of his daughter Laurie who gave the following details in her correspondence with me:

He spoke to his best friend of decades from UMASS, Icek Aizen, and they made plans to get together after his trip to Boston. He had a nice dinner at Rockridge and according to staff, he and a friend named Hank (I believe that's his name) had a spirited discussion in the dining room about the upcoming election. He went for a short walk after dinner with another friend, observing birds in the yard. Afterwards, they played a game of cribbage. I called my dad that evening shortly before 10 pm and we talked for about 30 minutes. He was in a good mood and we had a good discussion about the upcoming election and other topics. Then you talked with him later that evening. He was a night owl, and it appears he didn't go to bed until around 4 am. I suspect his kitty, Murphy, was curled up against him as he slept, as he often did.

I spoke with Jim on the phone at 11:00 pm. He told me about a NY Times article he just read (by Patti Davis, the daughter of Ronald Reagan), and how he was concerned about the epidemic of loneliness and drug addiction so vividly depicted by the author. As a countermeasure, Jim suggested that we co-author a book for the general public on relationship, creativity, and spirituality. Forty-five minutes into our discussion, his

phone died. He left a message around 12:30 am to say that his phone was up and running again, and that he would call the next day to continue the conversation.

It strikes me that this is not the usual death-bed scenario. There were no signs of sagging intellectual energy, for one thing. In sharp contrast to the Asian ideal of detachment and renunciation as hallmarks of a good death (Permanadeli & Sundararajan, 2020), Averill was engaged with the world throughout and always eager and ready to make a contribution intellectually to improve the human condition. I believe that what I have witnessed is an art of dying which approximates to the Western ideal of a life that drinks from its overflowing goblet with passion to the last drop. For an analysis of the differences between the Western notion of passion and its Chinese counterpart *qing*, see Averill and Sundararajan (2006).

Jim did not call the next day, but the conversation he initiated is likely to be continued by anyone, myself included, who has been inspired by his trail-blazing work on emotion, creativity, and spirituality, and especially by his insight into how all three can roll up into one.

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Invited Contribution

Grief and the Significance of Loss

Louise Richardson

Department of Philosophy, University of York, UK, louise.richardson@york.ac.uk

Introduction

Grief is an emotional response to loss. But of course, not all emotional response to loss is grief. Most obviously, our emotional responses to minor or insignificant losses are not typically grief. I will begin this contribution by sketching an account of the kind of significance that makes a loss sufficient for grief. Furthermore, what makes a loss significant also explains the relation we stand in to grief's object: a temporally extended relation of acknowledgement and accommodation. That is why the emotion, grief, is a temporally extended process.

In the rest of the piece, I will explore the role of relatively *insignificant* loss in grief, drawing on work done with colleagues as part of the AHRC-funded project 'Grief: A Study of Human Emotional Experience'.¹ I will argue that whilst such losses do not themselves appropriately occasion grief, it is important not to ignore them altogether. Firstly, many minor losses may, cumulatively, constitute an object of genuine grief over non-death loss. Hence, ignoring losses that are in isolation minor can render some grief over non-death loss invisible. Secondly, even if we confine our attention to the grief that is felt over bereavement, 'minor' losses cannot be ignored. Specifically, they cannot be ignored if we are to understand grief's processual nature—in particular, its heterogeneity.

Grief as an emotion

Grief is often described as a process: something which occurs rather than obtains, and which has successive temporal parts. However, when philosophers talk about grief, they sometimes suggest that in a context in which 'grief' picks out a process, grief is not

an emotion. For instance, Varga and Gallagher take Kristjánsson's advice to 'accept that the term 'grief' can serviceably be used to label two distinct things, one an emotion and the other a complex process' (Kristjánsson 2018, p. 129, quoted in Varga and Gallagher 2020, p. 179). Price, on the other hand, seems to eschew the idea of grief as an emotion altogether, taking it to be 'a complex emotional process, involving a number of emotions' (Price 2010, p. 25), and Cholbi agrees: 'grief is...less an emotion than an emotional pattern or process' (Cholbi 2021, p. 41). One way or another then, according to these authors, grief is either a process or an emotion, and not, or not in the same sense of the word, both. In this contribution, I will side with those who take this to be a false dichotomy. For instance, Goldie acknowledges that on some philosophical theories of emotion, an emotion is a particular kind of mental state or event. Grief however, and in contradiction to these philosophical theories, is 'an emotion' (2012, p. 56) that is also 'to be understood as a particular kind of process' (2012 p. 61).

One reason to consider grief an emotion is that like other paradigm emotions, it has a *formal object*, namely significant loss.² The qualification 'significant' is needed to distinguish grief's object from that other emotional responses to losing things such as frustration when losing a race or the brief sadness that follows breaking a favourite mug.³ 'Significance' can be spelled out in a number of ways that are not in competition. For instance, some have appealed to Korsgaard's notion of practical identity to pick out those losses significant enough to occasion grief. Your practical identity is 'a description under which you value yourself, a description under which you find your life to be worth living and your actions to be

¹ Grant ref. AH/T000066/1. See griefyork.com for more information.

² For a discussion of differing accounts of role of formal objects in understanding emotion see Teroni 2007.

³ Prinz (2004, p. 63) proposes that loss, 'the elimination of something valued by an organism' is the formal object of sadness. If Prinz is right, then grief might be considered a specific form of sadness.

worth undertaking' (1996, p. 101). According to Cholbi, we grieve the deaths of those in whom we have invested our practical identities, thus understood (2021, p. 32). These losses are the ones significant enough for grief.

Ratcliffe also makes use of the notion of practical identity in singling out the losses for which we grieve, including non-bereavement losses. In his view, losses significant enough for grief are those which disrupt the 'structure of one's life, or a sense of one's practical identity' (2022, p. 28). According to Ratcliffe, this also amounts to a profound disruption to one's 'experiential world': a network of assumptions, habits and expectations that form the typically unrecognised backdrop to our experiences and actions. The idea of grievable losses as those that impact such a network can be found elsewhere, too. For instance, Parkes takes grief to disrupt the grieving person's 'assumptive world', something 'which contains everything that we assume to be true on the basis of our previous experience' (1998, p. 56). Marris (1986) proposes that we grieve those losses that disturb our 'construction of reality', an otherwise quite stable, learned interpretation in the context of which individual events are given meaning.

Grief then, has a formal object, significant loss, which justifies thinking of it as an emotion. Furthermore, the processual nature of grief can be understood by appeal to this object. Grief, we have said, takes as its object a loss that is significant in that—for example—it disrupts the subject's assumptive world. The subject's relation to this object in grief is not however one of immediate awareness as, in a typical episode of fear, one immediately feels that the bear is threatening. Rather, the fact of the loss takes time to acknowledge as its implications ripple destructively through one's assumptive world, which must then be rebuilt in a way that accommodates the loss, at least to some degree. As Parkes puts it, grief

...requires us to revise a great number of assumptions about the world, but most of these assumptions have become

habits of thought and behaviour that are now virtually automatic. (p. 57)

So, the relation we stand in to the object of grief—significant loss—is one of gradual acknowledgement and accommodation, as we lose assumptions and habits, and develop new ones. This process of acknowledgement and accommodation is the emotion, grief.

Insignificant loss and invisible grief

Given that significant loss is the formal object of grief, grief over *insignificant* loss would be unfitting: it would be grief that—over time, in the way characteristic of grief—represented the presence of significant loss in its absence.⁴ However, this does not mean that losses that are insignificant are irrelevant for understanding grief. In this section I will focus on their role in understanding some grief over non-death losses.⁵

Take as our central exemplar a kind of grief occurring during the Covid-19 pandemic. The kind of case I am interested in does not involve an obviously significant non-death loss such as the loss of a home, job or relationship. Neither do I want to focus on losses that in more normal circumstances may have been minor but which, due in part to restrictions introduced to curb the spread of the SARS-CoV-2, were elevated in significance: more central to someone's assumptive world than they might otherwise have been. Instead, I have in mind a grief without any easily identifiable significant loss. You may at this point be uncertain about whether there is any such grief, or if such grief could be fitting. My hope is that in the rest of this section you will see that it is plausible that it can be, and that we need to take into account insignificant losses in order to render it visible.

In what I will call 'pandemic grief' any easily-identifiable losses incurred by the subject are each minor or insignificant. For instance, in surveys of experiences during the pandemic people reported feeling a sense of loss over cancelled events—such as weddings, holidays, graduations—and

⁴ Like other emotions, grief can also be *normatively* inappropriate even in the presence of its formal object. See for example Ratcliffe and Richardson 2023, fn. 13.

⁵ Philosophers of grief have typically allowed for grief over certain non-death losses, whilst, until recently, failing to substantiate the idea with an account of grief's object suited to non-bereavement grief. (Richardson and Millar 2022 §2).

prohibited activities, including shopping, attending church, swimming, hugging, visiting family. (Froese *et al.*, 2021; Statz *et al.*, 2022) Articles in the popular media identified further potential losses such as the assumption that 'there will be eggs and toilet paper on supermarket shelves, that we can safely touch a door knob with our bare hands, that we can get a haircut and our teeth cleaned or spend a Saturday afternoon at the movies.' (Gottlieb 2020) None of these losses, taken alone, is likely to be sufficient for grief since it is unlikely that they will be significant in the relevant way. That is, it is unlikely that, for instance, taking a particular holiday or going swimming, or assuming one can buy eggs from the supermarket is so central to one's sense of identity, assumptive world or construction of reality that its loss leads to a prolonged process of acknowledgement and accommodation.

But during the pandemic, some individuals will have experienced numerous losses of this kind: losses which, taken alone, are not significant enough for grief. Furthermore, the accumulation of such individually-insignificant losses could well amount to an extensive disruption to one's sense of identity, assumptive world, or construction of reality. And such an extensive disruption is of course what we are taking to characterise a loss that is significant and thus grievable. Such an accumulation then could amount to significant loss, even though each individual loss does not. Hence if, in our attempt to understand grief, we ignore each individually insignificant loss, some forms of grief will be rendered invisible.⁶

Now, it might be allowed that an accumulation of minor losses can disrupt one's sense of identity, assumptive world or construction of reality without this amounting to grief since (a) this might be an experience of profound *change* rather than loss, and (b) the process of acknowledging and accommodating the disruption will lack the unity required for grief. On (a), I think we had better say, as Marris does, that some very disruptive

change is loss. As he puts it, 'different kinds of change can be discriminated in terms of...[the] balance between continuity, growth and loss' (1986, p. 20). Some changes affect our construction of reality 'incrementally'. Other changes which also 'leave the continuity of life unbroken' constitute *growth*: our existing purposes and expectations are incorporated into a broader understanding' (p. 21). There is *loss*, on the other hand, whenever the change is such that the thread of continuity in the interpretation of life becomes attenuated' or broken (p. 21).⁷

What about (b), the lack of unity in pandemic grief? In the case of grief following a bereavement, the disruption to one's sense of identity or assumptive world can be traced back to the death of a person. But the unity of the grief process in such a case is not simply to be pinned on the causal relation between the death and the disruption. One might understand this in Ratcliffe's way. That is, we might think of a significant loss as the loss of a set of *possibilities*. This set of possibilities and hence the disturbance to the assumptive world characteristic of grief has a *structure*: the possibilities stand to one another in intricate relations of implication. Hence, when a person who matters to us dies, 'there are implications for certain projects, which relate to other projects, and so on' (2022, p. 39). This structure in what is lost gives, in turn, unity to the process by means of which the loss is acknowledged and accommodated. The worry about pandemic grief is that an accumulation of minor losses will have no such unity, and, hence, that there will be no unitary grief process in such a case either.

However, why should we assume that the object of pandemic grief is an accumulation without structure? We can imagine, for instance, a narrative in which the accumulated losses are related and not merely listed.⁸ A fragment of such a narrative might, for example, reveal how finding no eggs on the shelf after queuing to enter the supermarket meant that S couldn't bake a cake, which she'd

⁶ Hence, ignoring the role of insignificant loss can be a source of disenfranchised grief (Doka 1999).

⁷ Cholbi has proposed that the object of grief following a bereavement can be thought of as a change: a 'forced transition, shift or modification in

how we can and should relate to the deceased' (2019, p. 497)

⁸ This is not to commit to Goldie's view that the unity of a grief process is the unity of a narrative (Goldie 2012), nor that grief is necessarily narratable by its subject (see Ratcliffe 2022, p. 37).

intended to do to occupy her time and cheer herself up given that she could neither go to work nor meet up with friend. Suitably expanded upon, the narrative might also make manifest that the overarching object of a subject's grief could be characterised as a loss of, for example, 'predictability'; 'normality'; 'how my life might have been'; 'the timeline I was on'; 'my old self'; 'missing out on what life I have left'.⁹ None of this is to say that a loss of (say) normality—and thus the process of accommodating and acknowledging it—is as unitary as a typical bereavement-grief process. But it is hard to see why greater unity would be necessary. Furthermore, the vagueness in question reflects the elusive phenomenology of the experience of pandemic grief, as well as analogous forms of grief that might be experienced outside of pandemic conditions.

Insignificant loss and bereavement grief

I have suggested that there can be a kind of grief in which significant loss is constituted by an accumulation of interrelated, but individually insignificant losses. Such grief is elusive, precisely in that it is hard (for the sufferer, and for the theorist) to identify a loss significant enough to occasion it. Hence, though the formal object of grief is significant loss, we cannot ignore individually insignificant losses in an attempt to understand this emotion. It might be thought, however, that there is no role for such losses in bereavement grief. I end by suggesting, briefly, otherwise. In particular, losses that are insignificant when considered in isolation play a role in explaining why grief is not only a process but a heterogenous one.

Grief is a heterogenous process in that, unlike, say, water running from a tap (a homogenous process), its temporal parts are qualitatively varied. As Goldie puts it, 'not everything that happens in the process is happening at any one time' (2012 p. 62). Now, it is important not to confuse this with a 'stage-conception' of grief, according to which grief involves a predictable pattern of reactions such as—on Kübler-Ross's model—denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance (Kübler-Ross,

2005). Such a conception, though still highly influential, is justly criticised as both lacking empirical support and potentially harmful (Stroebe *et al.* 2017). Grief's heterogeneity lies not in the validity of any stage conception but rather in two other facts. First, the ways in which we acknowledge and accommodate significant loss involves a range of mental items, including 'thoughts, judgements, feelings, actions, expressive actions, habitual actions, and much else besides'. (Goldie 2012 p. 62) The second reason for grief's heterogeneity lies in the complexity of significant loss, which is where insignificant loss again takes the stage.

Where a death constitutes a loss that is significant in disrupting our sense of identity, or assumptive world, or construction of reality it will involve many subsidiary losses. Some of these may on their own be sufficient for grief, but many will not. For example, when a loved one dies you may lose the possibility of talking to them about a TV programme you'd been watching together. Or, you may lose the possibility of being reminded of family birthdays, or their contribution to household bills or tasks. Each subsidiary loss is a candidate for acknowledgement and accommodation. Hence, the heterogeneity of the grief process is partly due to the heterogeneity of the loss itself. Cholbi captures some of the heterogeneity of loss in observing that bereavement involves the loss of various aspects of one's relationship with the deceased (2021, p. 60). However, not all subsidiary losses can be understood in this way. For instance, some subsidiary losses will be losses for the person who has died: *they* will not be able to send the card that they bought or see the bulbs that they planted bloom (Ratcliffe *et al.* 2022, p. 14).

Attention to such individually insignificant losses—for the bereaved and the deceased—also allows us to recognise that a significant loss represented by someone's unfolding grief, can itself unfold over time. After a death, additional losses can keep on emerging: the loss of the clothes that are taken to the charity shop; the fading away of the scent of the person; the erosion of a memory. Such losses are

⁹ These are all descriptions found either in surveys, or popular media discussions of grief during the pandemic. See Richardson and Millar 2002 for more.

unlikely to be individually sufficient for grief. Hence, their painfulness might be overlooked unless we recognise the 'instability' of the object of grief even in the case of bereavement (Ratcliffe and Richardson 2023). And to do that, we must, again, attend to the role of insignificant loss in grief.

Conclusion

Grief, I have suggested, is an emotion that is a complex process. The formal object of this emotion is loss that is *significant* in being disruptive of what can be described in terms of one's sense of identity, assumptive world, or structure of reality. What makes a loss significant also means that it is something that we cannot take in or adjust to all at once: a sense of identity or assumptive world or construction of reality is a slow-moving beast. Hence, the relation we stand in to losses significant enough to grieve for is a temporally extended one of acknowledgement and accommodation.

Nevertheless, we shouldn't ignore losses that are in isolation insignificant in our attempt to understand grief. Such losses play a role in constituting the object of diffuse and hard-to-describe forms of non-bereavement grief, such as the grief that some felt during the Covid-19 pandemic. And, in the case of the grief that follows a bereavement, attention to individually-insignificant loss helps us to properly understand the heterogeneity of the grief process.

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