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### Exploring The Metaphysics Of Grief

Carolyn Garland

*Syracuse University*, carolynegarland@gmail.com

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## Abstract

The goal of this dissertation is to develop an understanding of *grief utterances*: expressions of grief that in losing a loved one, the bereaved lost a part of herself. Grief utterances are commonplace, and their accompanying phenomenology suggests they are true. That gives us reason to think they are true. But if they are, what makes them true? I establish two potential answers to this question, ultimately favoring one according to which when a loved one dies we lose parts of our practical identities.

Chapter One introduces and sets up this topic. It then focuses on the extent to which emotional attachment may account for the truth of grief utterances. Though attachment may explain the phenomenology prompting and accompanying these utterances, it is not sufficient for their truth. Nor are care, attachment and care, and mutual attachment and care. From these observations I introduce the Intimacy Constraint: An account of grief utterances must distinguish between how  $P_1$ , who is in a mutual intimate relationship with  $P_2$ , and  $P_3$  who is not, loses a part of herself upon the death of  $P_2$ .

Chapter Two shows how a variety of theories of parthood and persons fail to explain grief utterances' truth. Classical mereology cannot provide an account of grief utterances without forsaking its core axioms. Accounts of grief utterances that appeal to an individual's temporal or modal parts will violate the Intimacy Constraint. An appeal to the extended mind is more fruitful, but makes our loved ones fungible, and fails to capture all paradigmatic cases. The answer to what makes grief utterances true lies beyond these resources.

In Chapter Three I introduce the notion of plural persons to take the place of mutual intimate relationships. On one characterization of plural persons, two individuals form a plural person when, in addition to each individual's personal conception of a life worth living, the two have a joint conception of a life worth *their living together*. I modify the characterization of a plural person just given to account for the possibility that one can form a plural person with an individual who may not (yet) count as an individual person, due to their cognitive abilities. I then

clarify the existence, individuation, and persistence conditions of plural persons, and their relation to other social groups. One implication of the resulting view is that moral personhood is (partly) constituted by convention. I defend this result from several objections.

In Chapter Four I engage with an overlooked version of composition as identity, a view according to which a composite object is identical to each of its parts. This view has promise in accounting for the grief utterances: the bereaved lost a part of herself when her loved one died because some whole, of which her and her beloved were parts, and to which she is identical, lost a part. However, I demonstrate that for this proposal to succeed we must adopt a novel version of Leibniz's Law. I develop the requisite version, drawing out its requirements and restrictions. The result is a new variety of composition as identity on which grief utterances are true. In evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of this view, I construct a list of desiderata for further accounts of grief utterances.

Chapter Five focuses on one's social and practical self. One's social self consists of the network individuals to whom one is psychologically connected. The death of a loved one destroys one node of this network. So, one loses a part of one's social self. I argue that this account is also unsatisfactory. I instead propose that we endorse a broad, practical identity based account of grief utterances. On this proposal, one's practical identity consists of a structure of *all* of the conceptions of a life worth living that she has access to. These include her individual conception as well as one's joint conceptions. In the death of a loved one, one loses a joint conception of a life worth living that she previously had access to, and as a result, her practical identity loses a defining part. A promising feature of this account is its ability to explain both the loss of a beloved friend or family member, and the loss of a public figure, while accommodating the judgment that these losses are of a different sort.

# **EXPLORING THE METAPHYSICS OF GRIEF**

by

Carolyn Garland

B.A. (Hons.), University of Manitoba, 2012

M.A., University of Victoria, 2014

Dissertation

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Michael Cholbi dedicated his book on grief to his father, who “taught [him] about grief without ever saying its name.” In that same vein, I dedicate my dissertation to my sister, Sarah Garland (1991-2010), and my dad, Edward Garland (1960-2020).

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# Chapter One: Getting Started

*Let us not pretend to doubt in philosophy what we do not doubt in our hearts.*

- Charles Sanders Peirce<sup>1</sup>

## 1.0. Introduction

A common expression of grief is that in losing a loved one, the bereaved lost a part of herself. Call such expressions ‘grief utterances’. The purpose of my dissertation is to determine what, if anything, accounts for the truth of grief utterances. At least that is the ambitious goal. The less ambitious goal is to narrow down and evaluate the options for such an account. This chapter is an introduction to that project. In §1.1 I motivate the project, appealing to both the ubiquity of grief utterances as well as their accompanying phenomenology. In §1.2, I consider the related utterances that one’s loved one is a part of her, and that they will *always* be a part of her. While these claims, especially the lattermost, might seem incompatible with the idea that one loses a part of herself in the death of her loved one, I show we need not understand them this way. In §1.3, I discuss the extent to which psychological and recent philosophical work on *attachment* may help provide an account of grief utterances and their phenomenology. I argue that appealing to attachment fails to account for an apparent difference in loss across a pair of cases, and so cannot provide the correct answer. I also consider mutual attachment, and a combination of care and attachment, and reject these for similar reasons. In §1.4 I introduce the idea of a mutual intimate relationship, and point out that the paradigmatic cases of loss are found in such relationships. I use this observation to set a scope and constraint on the project.

## 1.1 Motivation

When I was twenty-one my younger sister passed away suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of nineteen. The world as I knew it was torn apart and destroyed, and I could not help but feel that I too was torn apart. I really felt that I had lost a part of myself. The thought that I had lost a part of myself did not seem metaphorical to me. In the death of my sister I found myself

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Baker (2014).

experiencing a loss to *myself*. I felt that, somehow, I was no longer whole. A part of me was gone forever.

I doubt that I was alone in feeling this way. Surely my parents felt the same way, surely my surviving sister did, and surely my dead sister's friends did as well. The phenomenology that I experienced seems to be ubiquitous. I would guess that almost anyone who has lost someone dear to them has experienced it, and anyone who has not yet experienced it likely will. "I've lost a part of myself", commonly uttered following the death of a loved one *sounds* figurative. But the loss *feels* real. The fabric of the world, the structure of the reality that the bereaved finds herself in seems to be such that in losing a loved one the bereaved lost a part of herself too.

Despite the philosophical work on parthood and persons, little philosophical attention has been given to the question of what, if anything, accounts for the truth of grief utterances. Perhaps it is thought that they *must* be figurative and cannot be literally true. Perhaps that will turn out to be the case. But given the ubiquity of such utterances, in combination with the phenomenology accompanying them, the feeling that they reflect reality, I don't think this is an assumption that should be so easily accepted.

There are philosophers, mereological nihilists, who doubt the existence of everyday, common objects such as tables and chairs.<sup>2</sup> Presumably, at one point such philosophers believed that there were such things. The world they lived in and interacted with seemed to contain tables, and that gave them a *prima facie* reason to believe in tables. They came to doubt the existence of tables only after an effort to understand tables as composite objects, and only after coming to believe that there is no good reason to believe in tables.

Similarly, I think that the fact the world as we experience it is one in which in the death of our loved ones, we lose parts of ourselves, gives us *prima facie* reason to think that grief utterances are *not* merely figurative. And I think that the next move from there is to try to

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<sup>2</sup> For examples see: Merricks (2003) and van Inwagen (1995)

understand *how* we might come to lose parts of ourselves, the same way that mereological nihilists, after observing material objects, first tried to understand composite objects. If we cannot offer a satisfying, literal account of their truth, then we have reason to think that they are only figurative. But, we cannot know whether there is such an account until we determine the candidates.

I view my project as in the spirit of what Baker (2007, 2014) calls “Practical Realism”:

Practical Realism takes from Pragmatism the insight that philosophy should concern the world that we interact with and not with some hidden made-up world; and it takes from Realism the idea that philosophy should deliver an account of what is ontologically significant in its own right... (2014, p. 299).

The world we interact with is one in which it feels as though we lose a parts of ourselves when someone dear to us dies. It is a world populated with persons, objects that I, like Baker, take to be ontologically significant, though I will not argue for that here. Understanding how grief utterances could be true, how one person could lose part of herself when another dies, will also help us better understand persons.

This project also exhibits qualities of what P.F. Strawson has called *descriptive*, as opposed to *revisionary*, metaphysics. In *Individuals* P.F. Strawson wrote “Descriptive metaphysics is content to describe the actual content of our thought about the world, revisionary metaphysics is concerned to produce a better structure” (p.9). The actual content of our thoughts when one dear to us dies is that we lost a part of ourselves. And the goal of this project is to take this claim at face value, and try to determine how it could be so. In doing so, perhaps philosophers can come to a greater understanding of other concepts dear to them, like persons, parthood, and identity.

It is important to keep in mind that the philosopher’s use of ‘part’ is typically different from the ordinary, everyday notion of ‘part’. The philosophical use of part is often governed by

the axioms of mereology, and it is unclear that the everyday usage of ‘part’ is so governed. The everyday usage of ‘part’ is a little more loose than the philosopher’s use of the term. As grief utterances come from both philosophers and non-philosophers alike, I will aim, for now, to assume as little as possible about how we should understand the use of “part” in grief utterances.<sup>3</sup>

There are other common sayings that, like grief utterances, appeal to the intimacy of parthood to describe one’s relation to another. We sometimes say that our loved ones are parts of us, and we sometimes even say that they will *always* be parts of us. I turn to this in the next section. While apparently in tension with the target utterance, in the next section I suggest a way to understand them so that they are consistent.

## 1.2. Additional Utterances

While the aim of this dissertation is to an account of grief utterances, there are other utterances that seem closely related. One of these is the utterance that one’s loved ones are parts of them. Another utterance seems to come as something like a vow to the deceased: “She will always be a part of me”, the survivor might say. Like grief utterances, these expressions are also ubiquitous. So, we have three utterances: following the death of a loved one, “I have lost a part of myself”; said to a loved one “You are a part of me”; finally, said either while the loved one is alive, or following their death “She will always be a part of me”. These three utterances suggest the three following claims:

1. I lose a part of myself when I lose a loved one.
2. My loved ones are parts of me.
3. My loved ones, once parts of me, are parts of me forever.

On one fairly natural reading, (1) is true *because* (2) is true. I lose a part of myself in the death of a loved one *because* my loved one, when alive, was a part of me. The death of my beloved

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<sup>3</sup> I discuss the classic, mereological concept of parthood, and its bearing on our question, in Chapter 2.

eliminated that part, and so I lost a part of myself. However, this reading forces us to deny that (3) is true. If my loved ones are *always* a part of me, even after death, as (3) would have it, then it can't be the case that death destroys that part. So, the claim that (1) is true *because* (2) is true is incompatible with the claim that (3) is true.

But, (1) can be true regardless of whether (2) and (3) are true. For instance, the death of a loved one might *cause* the survivor to lose a part of herself, but it need not be the case that the loved one was once that very part. If that is so, then (1), (2), and (3) are compatible. My loved ones might be parts of me, and once a part, are always a part, so both (2) and (3) could be true. And (1) would be true because the death of my beloved causes the me, the survivor, to lose a different part. For now I will remain neutral regarding the connection between (1) and (2). Whether (1) is true because one's loved ones *are* a part of her, or because the death of a loved one causes her to lose a different part is something that will vary according to the different accounts of grief utterances we look at. I want only to point out that it is at least possible for all of (1) through (3) to be true, and so we need not give up on any particular claim right at the outset.<sup>4</sup>

One may think that there is good, independent reason to doubt the truth of (3), if one takes for granted that in the death of any individual she ceases to exist.<sup>5</sup> Parthood, in its broadest, not just philosophical sense, seems to be such that if  $x$  is a part of  $y$  then  $x$  is in some way constitutive of  $y$ . By that I mean that some aspect of  $x$ 's being is tied up in some aspect of  $y$ 's being. But, if  $x$  does not exist, then  $x$  has no being, and so  $x$  cannot be constitutive of  $y$ , and so  $x$  cannot be part of  $y$ . And so it seems that insofar as the death of an individual results in the non-existence of that individual, any sort of parthood relation that the individual once bore to

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<sup>4</sup> This is one way that the three claims may be compatible. There are other ways as well. For instance, if one's loved ones are a part of her in two distinct ways, then (2) would be ambiguous, and, once disambiguated and both (1) and (3) could be true as long as one part was lost, and one part remained, each using a different notion of 'part'.

<sup>5</sup> This follows a common assumption in the philosophy of death that once you are dead, you no longer exist.

anything else would be severed. So, (3), the claim that one's loved ones, once a part of her, are always a part of her, is false.

Of course, one could push back against this argument by questioning the assumption that if  $x$  does not exist, then  $x$  has no being. Consider the case of fictional characters like Harry Potter. Harry Potter does not exist. That seems true enough, but what could make it true if there is no Harry Potter at all? So, there must be a Harry Potter, albeit one that does not exist, but has being (in some form or other) instead.<sup>6</sup> So, even if an object does not exist, it still may have *being*, and so its being may be tied up with the being of something else.

The case of fictional characters also demonstrates that it is *not obvious* that a non-existent person could *not* be a part of another. For instance, if someone were to identify strongly with, or be influenced strongly by a fictional character, why not think that that character is a part of that person, in the sense relevant for (2) and (3)? If so, then one thing can be part of another, in the sense found in (2), without existing. So, perhaps we do not have good reason to think that nonexistence, and so death, would destroy that relation, and thus (3) could be true as well. Even without the assumption that being and existence come apart, the example of strongly relating to a fictional character might demonstrate a sense in which a nonexistent individual can be part of an existent individual.

So, while there may be reason to doubt that (3) is true, I will not assume that it is false. This may be for the best. Healthy grief often ends with what psychologists have called *continuing bonds* with the deceased.<sup>7</sup> According to psychologists, the death of the deceased need not sever entirely one's relationship with the deceased. Rather, one can maintain a relationship with the deceased through things like remembering them, performing actions in their name, keeping the deceased's possessions, and identifying with the deceased.<sup>8</sup> Others feel the presence of the

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<sup>6</sup> For further motivation that there can be things that do not exist see Parsons (1980), Routley (1980), and Priest (2005).

<sup>7</sup> For a summary of different psychological accounts of grief see Gross (2016) Chapter 3.

<sup>8</sup> See Field et al (2003) for more information on how we continue bonds with the deceased.

deceased around them. Yet, in philosophy, it's typically assumed that for there to be a relation between two things, each must have being of some kind. So, to make sense of the continuing bonds theory of grief, we may need to allow for the possibility that the deceased, though they may not exist, continue to *be*, or that even in the absence of their being we can establish meaningful, part-like, relations with them.<sup>9</sup> I take this up in the following sub-section.

### *1.2.1. Overlapping Values*

Putting fictional characters aside for the moment, here is something that seems uncontroversially true: the people we encounter shape us in myriad ways. Many of my beliefs, values, and desires were formed in response to and/or under the influence of my loved ones and their beliefs, values, and desires. The sense of self I have that encompasses my beliefs, values, and desires is not independent of my interactions with my loved ones. When my loved ones' values, etc., shaped my mine, they partially determined the person that I am. Since our core preferences, values, and desires seem to define, in some, sense, who we are, had my loved ones been different, I would have been different too.<sup>10</sup> This connection between my loved ones' and myself provides a sense in which my loved ones *do* constitute the person I am, and this kind of constitution can remain even after their deaths.<sup>11</sup> I explain how this is so below.

One's values, desires, etc., may survive more or less unaffected in the death of a loved one. Suppose that Sam inherited her passion for martial arts from her father, Daniel, who taught her karate. While her father was alive, there was an overlap between their defining values and preferences, as each included a love of martial arts. This overlap was determined by Sam's interactions with Daniel. The interactions between Sam and Daniel caused Sam's passion for martial arts. Following her father's death, Sam continues to love martial arts. Martial arts remain

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<sup>9</sup> See Norlock (2017) for a philosophical account of how we may maintain relationships with the deceased.

<sup>10</sup> For the moment I remain neutral as to whether I would be numerically different, or only qualitatively different. I will return to the sense in which our loved ones "make us who we are" in Chapter 5.

<sup>11</sup> Here I use 'constitute' and 'constitution' in a non-technical sense.

a defining part of her. There remains an overlap between Sam's current values, and those her father had while he was alive.

Of course, this doesn't entail that Daniel is a part of Sam, but only that something that is/was a part of Daniel is part of her. This overlap may be closest we can get to establishing a sense in which our loved ones are parts of us, even following their death.<sup>12</sup> Recall earlier I said that the most general sense of parthood is one in which the being of one thing is tied up with the being of another. In the case described above, one of Sam's core characteristics, her love for martial arts, is tied up with one of her father's, his love for the same. Then we may understand "He will always be a part of me" as "Part of him will always be part of me". This doesn't require the existence of our loved ones in order for it to be true that they are "part of us". Instead it requires overlap between one's own defining values, beliefs, preferences, etc, and those that the deceased had while they were alive.<sup>13</sup>

However, such overlap does not provide the whole story. Sam likely shares her passion for karate with a great number of individuals whom she has never met. Her core values will then overlap with a great number of complete strangers. In addition to there being an overlap between core beliefs, values, preferences, etc., I think it ought also be the case that there is an appropriate connection between the bereaved's defining values, etc., and those of the deceased. The bereaved must have that value *because* the deceased did and *because* of her interactions with the deceased. The deceased will "always be a part" of the survivor insofar as there was overlap, caused by their interactions, between their core beliefs, values, and desires, some of which will remain a core value, etc., of the survivor following the death of the deceased. Such overlap allows us to understand one way we can establish continuing bonds with the deceased: we

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<sup>12</sup> However, the account given in Chapter 5 will provide another way to understand this

<sup>13</sup> It might seem odd to the philosophically trained ear that part of Daniel can be part of Sam even while Daniel doesn't exist. But, our everyday usage of part seems to allow for this. I have a friend who had a pencil thrown at her in elementary school, and retains a permanent grey mark where the pencil's graphite lead punctured her skin. Suppose that a tiny piece of the lead was embedded in my friend's skin. Though that pencil is long gone, she still might say "part of that pencil will always be a part of me," and we would be able to make sense of what she means easily enough, namely, that something that *was* part of that pencil will always be a part of her.

continue to identify with them insofar as a defining part of their identity remains a part of our identity.

However, recall that another reason we were seeking to provide an account of the claim that one's loved one may (always) be a part of her was to accommodate bonds formed with fictional characters. It seems that fictional characters need not exist in order for a fictional character to be part of a living individual in much the same way that an existent individual is. Yet, one might worry that because the suggestion above requires that some of the bereaved's core values, etc., are *caused* by the deceased's, and since we do not causally interact with fictional characters (as they don't exist), I am unable to explain one of the phenomena that motivated this suggestion in the first place.<sup>14</sup>

I agree, fictional characters need not exist in order for the values they are written to have to influence us. What I would suggest, though, is that in such cases one is interacting with the fictional characters, mediated through the work in which the characters appear. Insofar as a character is written to exhibit great patience, one can come to admire and value patience through their interactions with tokens of *work* in which the character appears. Fictional characters may not have causal efficacy, but token novels, movies, etc, do. Unfortunately, exactly *how* interactions with fictional works mediates interactions between persons and characters is a topic for another time. Still, inasmuch as one insists that fictional characters can be parts of us, one should be willing to allow for at least some kind of interaction between the character and the individual. To maintain that (part of a) fictional character can be part of a living individual, but there is never *any* interaction between the two, mediated or otherwise, seems mistaken. If (parts of) fictional characters can be parts of us, then we must be able to interact with them in some way that makes them so, despite their non-existence or lack of causal efficacy.

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<sup>14</sup> One may also worry that insofar as certain celebrities can be part of another (ex. "John Lennon will always be a part of me") even if they passed away long ago, the causation requirement rules that out as well. However, in those cases it is easier to track a causal chain back from one person's core values to facts about the deceased.

To recap, the claim that you lose a part of yourself in the death of a loved one is not the only expression found in grief that uses the language of parthood. “You are a part of me” and “You will always be a part of me”, like the grief utterances, are commonly uttered to express certain bonds between individuals. For the present, I suggest that we understand the claim that “ $x$  is part of  $y$ ” as elliptical for “(a current or former) part of  $x$  is part of  $y$ ”. This is true when (a) there is overlap between  $x$ ’s defining passions, values, etc and  $y$ ’s defining passions, values, etc, and (b) the overlap was determined through appropriate causal connections between  $x$  and  $y$ . “ $x$  will always be a part of  $y$ ” is true when that overlap lasts forever.<sup>15</sup> But, this still has not settled how to understand the claim that you lose a part of yourself in the death of a loved one. That will be the focus of Chapters 2, 4, and 5. In Chapter 2, I discuss several ways we should *not* understand grief utterances, one which relies on an alternate understanding of the claim that one’s loved ones are parts of them than is presented here. In Chapters 4 and 5 I develop two positive proposals, ultimately preferring that of Chapter 5.

In the discussion above I spoke briefly of the continuing bonds theory of grief. Insofar as grief is a psychological phenomenon, one may wonder about the extent to which work in psychology can help us make sense of grief utterances. In the next section I discuss the bearing that psychological, and recent philosophical, work on attachment, has on our attempt to offer an account of grief utterances.

### **1.3. Attachment and its Limitations**

One might object to this project from the start on the grounds that (a) one’s emotional responses to the death of a loved one, and their significance, are matters for psychologists to study, and (b) psychologists are already well-suited to explain the utterances found in grief. What prompts such utterances and their accompanying phenomenology, one might argue, is the loss of an object we are *attached* to. In what follows I highlight the key features of attachment as

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<sup>15</sup> “Forever” is likely too strong here. “She will always be a part of me” is likely intended as “For as long as I live, she will be a part of me”. In which case replace ‘forever’ with ‘as long as the survivor lives’.

understood by psychologists and philosophers alike. I then explain how the notion of attachment may be used to explain what makes true the utterance “I have lost a part of myself”. However, I ultimately reject that proposal on the basis that attachment is either not sufficient for the utterance to come out true, or it is unable to distinguish between objective differences in loss — differences that we seem to recognize intuitively.<sup>16</sup>

According to psychologists attachment is a motivational system that functions to regulate an infant’s proximity to its caregiver, which serves as the attachment figure (Gross, 2016, p. 22). Infants experience felt security when their attachment figure is judged to be sufficiently available, and anxiety when the attachment figure is judged to be inaccessible or unresponsive (ibid, p. 23). Young children, teens, and adults also exhibit attachment toward other individuals. From a philosophical perspective, Wonderly (2016) argues that attachment is a normatively significant mode of mattering, distinct from caring. Integral to attachment is a felt need for our attachment objects. Characteristic of attachment is a desire for engagement with our attachment objects. Individuals suffer in the absence of their attachment objects, and experience greater security when in their presence. We view our attachment objects as non-substitutable, so that only *that particular object* has these effects on us. According to Wonderly our attachments make us vulnerable to a certain kind of harm. We suffer the absence of our attachment objects by experiencing a decreased sense of security, ability, and well-being.

Because the loss of our attachment objects prompts us to feel less secure and capable, we might be able to explain the phenomenology that you someone has lost a part of herself by appealing to that felt loss. Suppose that after Daniel passes away, Sam feels she cannot do karate anymore. That might not actually be true, but still she feels it is so. The attachment proposal goes on to maintain that Sam feels she lost a part of herself because she feels she lost her

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<sup>16</sup> Cholbi (*ms*, Chapter 1) independently argues that attachment is not necessary for grief.

capacity for karate. Since karate played a defining part of Sam's sense of self, she perceives herself as incomplete. So, she feels that she lost a part of herself.

The attachment proposal, then, is that: it is true that  $y$  lost a part of herself in the death of  $x$  just in case (a)  $y$  was attached to  $x$ , and, as a result, (b) upon the death of  $x$ ,  $y$  feels that she has lost an important, self-defining capacity. This account is objective in that there is an objective matter of fact about whether conditions (a) and (b) are met, However, it exhibits a degree of subjectivity as condition (b) depends entirely on  $y$ 's perception, and not on matters of fact. Whether  $y$  truly has lost a capacity is not what is relevant, instead it is whether  $y$  feels that she did.

However, there are cases that do not fit this mold. First, consider a case in which one person is attached to another, but experiences no decreased sense of her own capacities following the latter's death. Psychologists recognize a variety of attachment styles and those with a secure attachment style are less likely to experience "anger, social isolation, death anxiety, somatic symptoms, despair, depersonalization" than those with insecure attachment styles (Gross 2016, p. 35). So, it seems that it is possible for one individual to be attached to another without experiencing any drastic change in their sense of their capacities. They may feel *less* capable, but they may not feel they have lost any capacity altogether. Even so, in such cases the survivor may feel that she has lost a part of herself in the loss of her beloved. If only those without a secure attachment style feel they lose a part themselves when one they are attached to dies, then given the ubiquity of grief utterances we should expect that very few individuals exhibit secure attachment styles. But this does not seem to be the case. In a 1987 study regarding attachment and romantic relationships, Hazan and Shaver found that 56 percent of adults described themselves as exhibiting behaviours and attitudes best characterized by a secure

attachment style. I take it then, that while attachment may be necessary for it to *feel* one has lost a part of oneself, one need not feel one has lost any particular capacity as a result.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, attachment and the perceived loss of capacity does not seem sufficient either. Or, if it is sufficient, to end the account there would fail to capture various subtleties found in loss. To see what I mean, consider Wonderly's case of Tim and Olivia:

Olivia works for the local grocer, along with her co-worker, Tim. Though they've only spoken briefly, Olivia often fantasizes about lengthier interactions with Tim. She watches him while working, invents reasons to be nearer to him, and even hangs around the store on her days off just to be close by. Olivia covertly took a picture of Tim, explaining that when she doesn't see him for a while, she becomes depressed, but looking at his photo helps her get through the day. Upon learning of his intent to apply to an out-of-state college, she sabotaged his application claiming that she "needs him around" as he's the only thing that can keep her going. (p. 226)

... when denied the opportunity to interact with Tim, Olivia feels impaired, unmotivated, and depressed... by engaging with [Tim] Olivia [experiences] a sense of increased confidence in his or her well-being and in his or her ability to navigate the world—in other words, an increased sense of security... when engaging with Tim, Olivia feels more capable—as though she is "better equipped" to face her daily activities. (p. 232)

Olivia is clearly attached to Tim. Were Tim to die we would expect Olivia to feel depression, despair, and a decreased sense of confidence and capability. Suppose Olivia attends Tim's funeral, and following the funeral stops to give her condolences to Tim's twin brother and best friend, Tom. Tom thanks her, and tells her he has not been doing well. "I lost a part of

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<sup>17</sup> One might wonder whether it would be more fruitful to appeal to an *actual* loss of a capacity rather than a merely apparent one. Given that those with secure attachment styles seem less likely to lose a capacity, I think we would run into a similar problem. Yet it seems that such individuals might still truthfully claim that they have lost a part of themselves.

myself when Tim died” he says. Olivia replies “Yes, I am just like you in that respect.” Knowing what we do about Olivia, I am inclined think that she is wrong. She is *not* just like Tom in the respect in which he has lost a part of himself. Olivia is mistaken and either she has not lost a part of herself, or she has, but in a different way than Tom has. If she hasn’t lost part of herself, then being attached to someone is *not* sufficient for the loss of a part in the death of the attachment figure. If she has lost a part of herself, then merely appealing to attachment cannot account for the apparent difference between Tom’s loss and hers.

I would like to emphasize that even if Olivia did not lose part of herself in the death of Tim, or not in the same way that Tom did, this is not to say that Olivia’s *grief* is unwarranted. Olivia may be a disenfranchised griever. The grief of such individuals is not “recognized and accepted by other people as valid, justified, appropriate, or ‘fitting’” (Gross, p. 85). However, Cholbi’s (2016, *ms*) work helps show that although Olivia’s relationship to Tim might be unusual her grief response may still be justified. Cholbi (2016) argues that grief is rational when it is (a) based on true beliefs (for instance, the one being grieved must be deceased), and (b) an appropriate response to the loss of the relationship, *qua* the value it had to the survivor. Cholbi (*ms*) argues that “a grief episode is rational if the various emotions and attitudes that comprise it properly reflect the significance of the bereaved person’s loss of the relationship they had with the deceased” (p. 135). If this is correct then Olivia’s grief is warranted to the extent that it is based on true beliefs, proportionate to the value her relationship with Tim had to her, and its component emotion and attitudes reflect the significance of her relationship with Tim. Given Olivia’s attachment to Tim, her relationship with Tim likely of great value to her. So, her grief would be warranted as far as it accurately reflects this value.

Still, even though Olivia’s grief may be warranted, or largely warranted, her loss is not *just like* Tom’s loss. When comparing Olivia and Tom, one may make one of three judgments:

- I. Olivia is correct, she has lost a part of herself in just the way Tom has.

- II. Olivia is incorrect, Tom has lost a part of himself, but she has not.
- III. Olivia is incorrect, though both her and Tom have lost a part, the loss to Tom is different from the loss she experienced.<sup>18</sup>

My inclination is that (I) is mistaken. Olivia is wrong. There is something importantly different about her loss (if any) and Tom's loss. I expect that my reader will share this judgment, and will not argue for it here. A point against (II) is that Olivia still has the phenomenological experience that she has lost a part. While she may be wrong about how similar her loss is to Tim, as this project is partially motivated by the thought that we should take the phenomenology of loss at face value, we should take Olivia's phenomenology at face value too. I do not think the phenomenology will always perfectly track loss of part, and it may at times mislead us, however, at the moment I cannot see a reason to prefer (II) over (III), or to think that Olivia's phenomenology is misleading her. So, for now, I will look for the most defensible way to understand what it is to lose a part of oneself when another dies that can account for there being *some* difference in loss between Olivia and Tom.

While attachment alone does not provide a satisfactory account of grief utterances, perhaps we can add to it. In what follows I will press a bit harder on behalf of attachment proposal. I will consider the cases of mutual attachment, attachment and care, and mutual attachment and care. I end by suggesting that one thing required for one to lose a part of oneself, in the way that Tim does and Olivia does not, is for the relationship with the bereaved to be a *mutual intimate relationship*. Each of the rejected cases fail to be a relationship of this sort.

### 1.3.1. *Mutual Attachment*

One may try to fix the attachment proposal by adding that each individual is attached to the other. After all, since they were best friends, we would expect that Tim and Tom were attached to

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<sup>18</sup> One might think that the difference in loss to each is not a difference in *kind*, but rather a difference in degree. I discuss this further in Chapter 5.

each other, and perhaps that is what is driving the intuition that Olivia's loss was unlike Tom's, as Tim was not attached to her. However, I think we can quickly reject this modification.

Suppose that unbeknownst to Olivia, Tim was equally obsessed with her as she was with him. Olivia was attached to Tim, and Tim attached to Olivia. Then on the mutual attachment proposal, Olivia would have lost a part of herself just as Tom did. But that does not seem right. Though Tim may have been attached to Olivia, nothing about Olivia has changed, so it is unclear why this mutual attachment would account for any difference in Olivia. For now, I will set this suggestion aside. I cannot see how mere mutual attachment, can account for or explain the truth of the utterance that in the death of the attachment object, the survivor has lost a part of herself.

### *1.3.2. Attachment and Care*

The next proposal observes that something else that distinguishes Tom from Olivia is that Tom cared for Tim, while Olivia apparently did not. So, perhaps the difference between the two can be explained by that. What an account of grief utterances needs, this proposal goes, is that the bereaved both cared for and was attached to the deceased.

To assess this proposal it will help to distinguish between attachment and caring. The key difference between them is that in being attached to an object one is concerned with that object for one's own sake. However, caring is "typically viewed as an other-regarding attitude... [and]... seems to focus of the good of the cared for object for that object's own sake" (Wonderly, p. 234). Olivia is attached to Tim, but she doesn't care about him, as she is not focused on the good of Tim for Tim's sake, but rather for her own, as she demonstrates by meddling with Tim's work schedule and destroying his college application.

However, I think this proposal fails as well. Suppose that Rocky Rockstar is a well-known musician and Fanny Fanboy his biggest fan. Although the two of them have never interacted, Fanny has watched countless interviews with Rocky and through them learned of

Rocky's dreams and desire. One day Fanny is watching T.V. and Rocky appears on the screen, telling his fans that he is no longer happy making music, and has decided to retire and start an alpaca farm instead. Fanny is disappointed, as he loves Rocky's music and will miss it. But, Fanny is happy for Rocky, knowing from previous interviews that Rocky has long dreamed of having an alpaca. So, Fanny cares for Rocky, as in this case he is focused on what is good for Rocky, for Rocky's sake.

Suppose that in addition to caring about Rocky, Fanny is also attached to him. Rocky's presence in the world makes Fanny feel like a more well-formed, capable, secure individual. Rocky's words and songs make Fanny feel understood, and like the world is a slightly better place than he originally thought. One day, Rocky Rockstar dies. Fanny tells his friend that he feels he has lost a part of himself.

What Fanny is feeling is understandable. But, just as we compared Olivia to Tom, we can compare Fanny to Mary, Rocky's life-long companion. Just as Olivia's loss following Tim's death seems different than that of Tom's, Fanny's loss following Rocky's death seems different than that of Mary's. Were Fanny to meet Mary, and were Mary to tell him that in losing Rocky she lost a part of herself, there seems something wrong about Fanny replying that he is *just like* Mary in that regard.

We cannot appeal to mutual care and attachment, either. Imagine the case of Fanny and Rocky differently, so that Fanny Fanboy is a famous wrestler, whom Rocky Rockstar is a huge fan of, cares about, and is attached to, just as Fanny cares about and is attached to Rocky. Again, it is difficult for me to see how these additional facts about *Rocky* would provide a compelling account of why *Fanny* lost a part. Of course, in the paradigmatic cases, like the loss of a sibling (as in the case of Tim and Tom), or the loss of a long-time companion (as in the case of Rocky and Marianne), we would expect there to be mutual attachment and caring. However, as in the case of attachment, this too is either not sufficient for the loss of a part, or it is, but not in a way

that can account for the intuitive differences between cases. Even if mutual care and attachment is required to be a paradigmatic instance of loss, it offers no explanation as to why it is that Tim loses a part of himself in a way Olivia does not.

#### **1.4. Mutual Intimate Relationships**

The comparisons between Tom and Olivia, and Mary and Fanny demonstrate that there is a difference in the loss of part between the paradigmatic cases and other cases. The paradigmatic cases are often exemplified by close friendships, sibling bonds, and long-term romantic relationships. But what distinguishes these paradigmatic relationships from the unusual cases?

The paradigmatic cases all seem to be instances of what I will call *mutual intimate relationships*. The relationships between Tim and Olivia, and Rocky and Fanny, are not. Intimate mutual relationships are often, but not always, and not only, characterized by the sorts of relationships one might expect to see between immediate family members, close friends, and lovers. Unlike the relationship between Tim and Olivia, the relationship between Tim and Tom was *mutual*. By this I mean that Tim and Tom have both agreed to the terms of the relationship. Such agreement, and what the terms are, may or may not be explicit. A relationship between a new employee and her employer is mutual, and the terms likely made explicit through the signing of a document. But, the terms of many mutual relationships are implicit. For instance, the terms accompanying a friendship are typically not explicit terms. Rather, the terms of the friendship seem to evolve as the relationship evolves, coming into existence at the start of the friendship and developing as the friendship develops. These terms include things such as the sort of relationship it is and will be, what behaviour is appropriate between those in the relationship, etc. Implicit or explicit, relationships are mutual when each party has some understanding of these terms, and agrees to them.

The relationship between Tim and Olivia is *not* mutual. Aside from being related as coworkers (which may be a mutual relationship), it is unclear that there is a set of terms each has

agreed to which will govern their relationship. The terms that Tim believes governs their relationship are terms that Olivia willingly violates (sabotaging his college applications, keeping secret photos of him). They are not “on the same page” regarding their relationship. Nor is the relationship between Rocky and Fanny mutual. The terms of the relationship were not agreed upon by either party, either implicitly or explicitly.<sup>19</sup>

The relationship between Tim and Tom is unlike the relationship between Tim and Olivia in that in addition to being a mutual relationship, it is also intimate. Not all mutual relationships are intimate relationships. For instance, the relationship between an employer and her employee is mutual, but not typically intimate. In an intimate relationship each has an understanding of the other as the particular person she is, including knowledge and understanding of her core values and desires. The sort of relationship often found between a therapist and her client typically has only one-directional intimacy: the therapist has an understanding of the person that her client is, but not vice versa. This does not count as an intimate relationship in my sense. In my sense, the intimacy must be bi-directional.

The relationship between Olivia and Tim is not intimate. Neither Tim nor Olivia seems to have the proper understanding of the other. Similarly, even in cases of mutual care and attachment, there is a kind of intimacy missing, as with Fanny and Rocky. While Fanny cares for Rocky as a rockstar, and Rocky for Fanny as a professional wrestler, neither seems to have an in depth understanding of the other as the particular person each is. Each knows the other only under a certain guise: *qua* musician or *qua* wrestler.

What the cases of Olivia and Tim, and Fanny and Rocky show is that the loss of a part in mutual intimate relationships is different, in some way, from the loss of a part in these unusual cases. This helps set the scope of the project, and provides a working constraint on possible

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<sup>19</sup> There might be a sense in which the terms *are* agreed upon, insofar as there is some understanding between Rocky and his fanbase. However, the particular relationship that holds between Rocky and Fanny *as the particular individual each is* is not a mutual relationship.

answers. As for scope, I will be satisfied if we can offer an account of grief utterances that accommodates even only the paradigmatic cases. Ideally, understanding the paradigmatic cases will also help us understand the more unusual classes, however, it may also be the case that the best account of the paradigmatic instances will fail to explain the unusual cases.

The first constraint on possible answers I will call the Intimacy Constraint:

**The Intimacy Constraint:** An account of grief utterances must distinguish between how  $P_1$ , who is in a mutual intimate relationship with  $P_2$ , and  $P_3$  who is not, loses a part of herself upon the death of  $P_2$ .

There is some sense of losing a part that is present in only mutual intimate relationships, and a satisfying account of grief utterances, in the paradigmatic cases, will respect that. We seem to recognize, however inchoately, something importantly different about mutual intimate relationships that makes the loss to one in such a relationship different from the loss to one outside such a relationship. A satisfying account of grief utterances for the paradigmatic cases will leave room for us to identify and explain this difference.

One might think that this difference — that the unusual cases fail to be cases of mutual intimate relationships — already provides an account of grief utterances. What makes it true that Tom has lost a part of himself is that Tom was in a mutual intimate relationship with Tim. Because Olivia was *not* in a such a relationship with Tim, she does not lose a part of herself in the way that Tom does. But, that account is not at all satisfying. We are still left with the question of what it is about mutual intimate relationships that makes it the case that Tim loses a part of himself. That one was in a mutual intimate relationship with the departed does not tell us anything about *how* one comes to lose a part of oneself. It does not identify what part is lost. It does not explain why, when one is in a mutual intimate relationship, this loss of part is of a different kind than those in other kinds of relationships.

So, the rest of this dissertation will be devoted to understanding how being in a mutual intimate relationship with another person structures us in such a way that upon their death, we lose a part of ourselves. In the following chapter I will survey a variety of options available from the literature on metaphysics. However, each one of these will fail to meet the Intimacy Constraint. In Chapter 3 I discuss the notion of a plural person. Despite what I have said here about mutual intimate relationships, I argue that plural personhood more accurately represents the truly paradigmatic cases. Chapters 4 and 5 consider positive proposals.

## Chapter Two: Parts that Don't Work

### 2.0. Introduction

The philosophical literature discusses a variety of alleged kinds of parts: mereological parts, temporal parts, modal parts. So, this seems a natural place to start looking to develop an account of grief utterances. In this chapter I review, evaluate, and ultimately reject several such accounts.

I begin with a straightforward account of the grief utterances, one that invokes the strict, mereological sense of 'part' (§2.1). I first show that on this proposal it is, surprisingly, possible to maintain that one person is part of another while respecting the intuition that *personhood* is a maximal property. However I ultimately reject the proposal as defining elements of classical mereology are at odds with our intuitions about grief.

In §2.2.1, I discuss temporal parts and introduce the *dynamic worm view* of material objects. On this view, persons are four-dimensional, branching, space-time worms with temporal parts located in the past, present, and future. Each branch of the worm corresponds to a potential future for that person, with parts located along the branch. The potential futures "fall off" the main trunk as our possibilities for the future are closed. Since our loved ones are caught up in our potential futures, on this view, when a loved one dies, we lose a potential future, and so lose a part. In §2.2.2, I introduce a view according to which persons are modally extended, and have modal parts located at each possibility. When our loved ones die, we lose a possibility, and so lose a modal part. I reject both the dynamic worm proposal and the modal parts proposal as each fails to meet the Intimacy Constraint (see §1.4).

In §2.3, I review a proposal based on the extended mind hypothesis, according to which our mental states can extend outside our heads and into other people. If we are located where our mental states are, then we, too, extend into other people. Then as long as one of our mental states is located in the bounds of another, when that person dies, we lose a part. Again, I argue that this

fails to meet the Intimacy Constraint. But, it also seems to violate the intuition that whatever part we lose when we lose a loved one, it is not easily replaced. I end with remarks on a limitation of my use of mutual intimate relationships in the Intimacy Constraint.

## 2.1. Classical Mereology

### 2.1.1. Parthood and persons who are parts of persons

Perhaps the best proposal is the most straightforward one. When Anne claims to have lost a part of herself when Barbara died, what she says is true if and only if, and because, at some time prior to and up to Barbara's death, Barbara was a part of Anne, in the classical mereological sense of *proper part*. At the time of Barbara's death, she stops being a part of Anne, and so Anne loses a part. Recall the three related expressions from Chapter 1 (§1.2):

1. One loses a part of herself when she loses a loved one.
2. One's loved ones are a part of her.
3. One's loved ones, once part of her, are a part of her forever.

On this proposal, the mereological part proposal, (1) is true *because* (2) is true.<sup>20</sup> Your loved ones are mereological parts of you. When your loved one dies, you lose a mereological part.

Classical mereology typically takes parthood as primitive, but defines proper parthood between  $x$  and  $y$  as:

**Proper Parthood:**  $x$  is a *proper part* of  $y$  if and only if  $x$  is a part of  $y$  and  $x$  and  $y$  are non-identical.

If one person is ever part of another distinct person, then he must be a proper part of that person. From here on in, I will use 'part' for 'proper part' and 'improper part' for those parts of an object that *are* identical to it.

One might object that the mereological part proposal simply cannot work because *being a person* is a maximal property, with maximality defined as:

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<sup>20</sup> And, as was noted in Ch. 1.2, if (3) is understood as invoking the mereological sense of parthood, then (3) cannot be true while (1) and (2) are.

**Maximality 1:** A property,  $F$ , is *maximal* if and only if, necessarily, if (i)  $x$  is  $F$ , and (ii)  $y$  is a large proper part of  $x$ , then  $y$  is not  $F$ .<sup>21</sup>

We have good reason to think that *being a person* is a maximal property. Consider the large part of Anne that includes every part of her human body except those occupying the region of her pinkie finger. Call this ‘Anne’s pinkie complement’. This part of Anne is incredibly similar to Anne in many ways. It seems to have all of the features that make Anne a person. But if that is the case, then there are two persons within the borders of Anne’s body. If there are two persons occupying the borders of Anne’s body, then there are two persons using Anne’s brain to think thoughts, feel feelings, etc. But, that obviously is not the case. Maximality 1 explains why: Anne’s pinkie complement is a large part of Anne, and so cannot be a person.<sup>22</sup>

Now, however, consider the case of Barbara, Anne’s dear loved one, and suppose that Barbara is a proper part of Anne. Anne is a person, and as both Anne and Barbara are grown human adults, Barbara is clearly a *large* proper part of Anne. So, if personhood is a maximal property, then according to Maximality 1, Barbara is not a person. But, obviously Barbara is a person. So, the mereological part proposal cannot be correct.

One could reply that what counts as a *large* proper part of a person varies from context to context. While Barbara counts as a large part of Anne in some contexts, perhaps she doesn’t count as large in others. But this won’t work either. Suppose for a moment that, in the context relevant for grief utterances, Barbara is a large part of Anne just in case she encompasses more than fifty per cent of Anne’s area. Then the version of maximality we should use for the sake of understanding grief utterances is:

**Maximality 2:** A property,  $F$ , is *maximal* if and only if, necessarily, if (i)  $x$  is  $F$ , and (ii)  $y$  is a proper part of  $x$  that encompasses  $>50\%$  of the area of  $x$ , then  $y$  is not  $F$ .

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<sup>21</sup> This follows the characterization of maximal properties from Sider (2001) .

<sup>22</sup> For discussions and uses of such a solution see Sider (2003), Merricks (2003), Bailey (2014), and Sutton (2014). These discussions are done in terms of consciousness, but the same problem will arise for persons as well as long as one permits that persons are conscious.

All that follows from Maximality 2 is that *if* Barbara is both a person and a proper part of Anne then she encompasses less than or equal to fifty per cent of Anne's area. This is compatible with Barbara being a part of Anne, as long as she takes up no more space than 50% of Anne's area.

But, any response of this sort strikes me as implausible. It makes the matter of whether one person is part of another, and so whether a particular grief utterance is true, depend on the relative sizes of those involved. Suppose that, before Barbara becomes part of Anne, Anne and Barbara's are exactly the same size. Once Barbara becomes a proper part of Anne, Anne's size doubles, and Barbara encompasses exactly 50% of Anne's area. In this case, Maximality 2 is consistent with the idea that Barbara is a person, Anne is a person, and Barbara is a part of Anne.

However, suppose that Barbara is larger than Anne. Then, Barbara encompasses >50% of the area of Anne. If Maximality 2 is correct, then Barbara is either not a person, or not a proper part of Anne. Clearly, Barbara's personhood does not depend on how large she is in comparison to Anne. So, she must not be a proper part of Anne after all. She can only be a proper part of Anne if she is the same size as, or smaller than, Anne (or, more accurately, Anne minus the Barbara part). Since Maximality 2 makes proper parthood contingent on the relative sizes of two persons, when combined with the mereological part proposal it will yield the result that one loses a part of oneself in the death of another only if the deceased and the survivor have the right respective sizes. That just cannot be correct. The relative sizes of those involved seem absolutely *irrelevant* to the truth of grief utterances. Many children grow larger than their parents, but we wouldn't expect that to make a difference to whether or not the parents would lose a part were their adult child to pass away.

Let's return to the motivation for the maximality of personhood. If personhood is maximal, we can maintain the commonsensical view that there are no colocated persons using the same brain to share the same thought, feel the same feeling, etc. The maximality of personhood is motivated by cases where one person is part of another, but the former is *not* located outside the

boundaries of the latter's human body — outside the boundaries of her skin. We wanted reason to think that such large parts, like Anne's pinkie complement, were not also persons. But in the case of Barbara and Anne, we already *know* that both are persons, and we want to keep it that way. Barbara differs from Anne's pinkie complement however, in that Barbara *is* located outside the boundaries of Anne's skin. It was not the grief utterances motivating the introduction of maximality, and they weren't considered when thinking about Anne's pinkie complement. If they had been, perhaps maximality would have been formulated in such a way that while Anne's pinkie complement is not a part of Anne, Barbara is. Since Barbara, and her skin, are located outside Anne's skin, but Anne's pinkie complement is located within Anne's skin, perhaps the maximality principle we are looking for is:

**Maximality 3:** A property, *F*, is *maximal*, if and only if, necessarily, if (i) *x* is *F*, and (ii) *y* is a large proper part of *x* and (iii) *y* is located within (up to and including) *x*'s skin, then *y* is not *F*.

A downside to this formulation of maximality is that it is not easy to see how it might generalize to properties other than *person*. Recall that we are understanding '*x*'s skin' to mean something like 'the boundaries of *x*'s human body'. Consider *house*. Intuitively, *house* is also a maximal property. No large parts of a house are houses. But, houses don't have human bodies, and so don't have skins. It's then *vacuously* true that no parts of a house contained in the boundaries of its skin (which it lacks) are also houses. But, we should hope if *house* is not a maximal property, this is so for substantive reasons. Moreover, even if Maximality 3 gets the right result in the case of houses, it will get us the wrong result other cases. Take any material object, *m*, that does not have a skin. Consider the sortal *material object*. Since *m* doesn't have a skin, no large parts of *m* located in the boundaries of its skin are material objects. But if that is so, then *material object* is a maximal property. But that can't be right. Both a stool and its leg are material objects, and the leg is part of the stool.

The more general notion of *skin*, however, may be captured by talk of *natural boundaries*, as found in this version of maximality introduced in Korman (2015, p. 219):

**Maximality 4:** A property, *F*, is *maximal* if and only if, necessarily, for any objects *x* and *y*, if (i) *x* is *F*, (ii) *y* is a large proper part of *x*, and (iii) *y* has no natural boundary within *x*, then *y* is not *F*.

If we use Maximality 4, then as long as once Barbara becomes part of Anne she has a natural boundary within Anne (who has now grown to include Barbara), Barbara can remain a person, and *person* can remain a maximal property.

The challenge for advocates of Maximality 4, as Korman notes, is to offer an informative, generalizable account of what a natural boundary is. Though that is beyond the scope of this chapter, the natural boundary of a human being, and of any mammal, does seem to be its skin.<sup>23</sup> Once Barbara becomes a part of Anne, Anne extends beyond her skin. Barbara's skin *is* located within Anne (though, not within Anne's skin). So, Barbara has a natural boundary within Anne. So, Maximality 4 permits that Barbara can be a large part of Anne *and* a person.

However, not only must Maximality 4 permit that Barbara is both part of Anne, and a person, it must also rule out the possibility that Anne's pinkie complement, a large part of Anne, is a person. So, we must show that Anne's pinkie complement does *not* have a natural boundary within Anne.

Whatever the right account of natural boundaries is, here is an intuition it should respect: something's natural boundary distinguishes the stuff inside of it from the stuff of its surroundings, and does not do so by fiat. Imagine a two layer cake. I bet that you imagined a cake made by stacking two smaller cakes on top of each other (maybe with some filling between them). Though neither of us might be able to say what it is, I think we can agree that the layers have *something* that

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<sup>23</sup> This demarcation, though not put explicitly in terms of natural boundaries, is present also in Olson (2011). The more general notion, of which skin is an instance, and which even those organisms that do not, technically, have skins, is *cuticle*. So, while this won't capture the natural boundary of *every* object, it could be generalized to cover an important class of objects.

distinguishes the stuff inside that layer from the stuff outside that layer, and not just by fiat. There is what Smith and Varzi (2000) refer to as a *bona fide* boundary between two objects as a “boundar[y] involving spatial discontinuity (holes, fissures, slits) or qualitative heterogeneity (of material constitution, texture, electric charge)”.<sup>24</sup>

Making layered cakes that way is time consuming. Here’s an easier way I could make a two layer cake. I could use one pan to bake a single cake. I can then look at the cake and say “The bottom half of this cake is the first layer. The top half of this cake is the second layer.” Boom! A two-layer cake! The layers of that cake also have something that distinguishes what is inside of them from what is outside of them: the distance of various parts of the cake from the top and bottom. But, that isn’t a *bona fide* boundary between them.<sup>25</sup> Rather, the boundary between the layers of this cake is a *fiat* boundary.<sup>26</sup> The boundaries of a country are fiat boundaries, the boundaries of an island are not. While I cannot argue for it here, I assume that no fiat boundary is a natural boundary.<sup>27</sup>

Now, I will explain why Anne’s pinkie complement has no natural boundary within Anne, and so is not a person. Since Anne’s pinkie complement is composed of all mereological parts of Anne, except Anne’s pinkie finger, most of its boundary is not *within* Anne, for most of it is coincident with Anne’s boundary. Only a small bit of the pinkie complement’s boundary is located within Anne, right along Anne’s pinkie. But this is not a bona fide boundary. It involves no spatial discontinuity or heterogeneity, just a smooth transition of flesh and bone. So, it is a fiat boundary. In which case, it is not a natural boundary. So, Anne’s pinkie complement has no natural boundary within Anne. So, it is not a person.

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<sup>24</sup> Smith and Varzi note that the term ‘bona fide boundary’ first appears in Smith (1994).

<sup>25</sup> Sometimes restaurants serve items like “disassembled club sandwich”, it’s all the ingredients of a club sandwich, but presented as if the sandwich had been taken apart. This, kind of cake, with some whipped cream on the side, might be sold as an “unassembled layer cake.”: all the ingredients of a layer cake, presented prior to it’s assembly.

<sup>26</sup> Like ‘bona fide boundary’, ‘fiat boundary’ is from Smith and Varzi (2000).

<sup>27</sup> Though, something’s fiat boundary and its natural boundary may coincide. Consider an island that is also a country. Qua island, its (bona fide) boundaries might be the surface of its above-water land, and this may coincide with its (fiat) boundaries qua country as well.

Thus, the mereological proposal need not violate the intuition that *person* is a maximal property. The mereological proposal allows us to understand the grief utterances while also respecting the intuition motivating the maximality of personhood. However, further challenges remain.

Suppose that Barbara is part of Anne. Suppose next that Barbara dies. If Barbara goes out of existence when she dies, then Anne lost a part, since that part no longer exists. If you think that when Barbara dies, she continues to persist (though as a corpse), then the story becomes a bit more complex. If Barbara continues to exist beyond her death, then we need facts beyond her death to explain why she is no longer a part of Anne. I think a promising approach is to maintain that in order for one person to be part of another, there must be some requisite relationship holding between them. Death might be the sort of thing that severs that relation, if, for instance, it is not the kind of relation that can hold between a living person and a corpse. A fully developed version of the mereological part proposal will tell us more about what that relation is. What is *required* for those in mutual intimate relationships to be parts of each other? In order to meet the Intimacy Constraint, the mereological part proposal must tell us what it is about those in mutual intimate relationships such that that they are parts of each other in the way that those not in such relationships aren't. However, I will not do that here, as there are several independent reasons to reject the mereological part proposal.

### 2.1.2. *People would be really unruly parts*

The classical mereological proposal, it turns out, will require us to violate a number of principles thought central to, if not defining of, classical mereology.

First, if we want to make use of this proposal, then it seems we have to give up on the asymmetry of parthood:

**Asymmetry:** If  $x$  is a proper part of  $y$ , then  $y$  is not a proper part of  $x$ .

In order to account for the grief utterances in the proposed manner, we *must* give up on Asymmetry. For Asymmetry tells us that if your loved one is part of you, then you are not part of your loved one. Then, if you were to die, and your loved one were to say “I’ve lost a part of myself” she would be wrong. Whatever sort of parthood is being invoked in the grief utterances, it must allow that two people can be part of each other.

Then, once we give up on Asymmetry, we must also give up on the extensionality of proper parthood:

**Extensionality:** For any composite objects  $x$  and  $y$ ,  $x$  is identical to  $y$  if and only if, for all

$z$   $z$  is a proper part of  $x$  if and only if  $z$  is a proper part of  $y$ .

I.e. Composite objects  $x$  and  $y$  are the same thing if and only if they have all of the same proper parts.<sup>28</sup> Suppose that, in the sense of ‘part’ found in the grief utterances, Anne is part of Barbara, and Barbara is part of Anne. If this is a mereological sense of part, then all of Anne’s parts are parts of Barbara (via transitivity), and vice versa. So, Extensionality would tell us that Anne and Barbara must be the same thing. But they are clearly different people with different lives. So, to make there mereological part proposal work we need also give up Extensionality.<sup>29</sup>

The same case shows we must give up the Weak Supplementation Principle:

**Weak Supplementation:** If  $x$  is a proper part of  $y$ , then there is some  $z$  such that (i)  $z$  is a proper part of  $y$ , and (ii)  $z$  and  $x$  do not have any proper parts in common.

Barbara is a proper part of Anne, but they have all the same parts, so, every proper part of Anne has parts in common with Barbara.

For independent reasons we may also have to deny the transitivity of parthood:

**Transitivity:** if  $x$  is a proper part of  $y$  and  $y$  is a proper part of  $z$ ,  $x$  is a proper part of  $z$ .

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<sup>28</sup> Extensionality must be restricted to composite objects, as without this restriction it will imply there can be at most one mereological simple. We could also reformulate it to say “ $x=y$  iff they have all the same parts” but this would be uninformative, since everything has a part that is identical to itself (see Varzi (2008)).

<sup>29</sup> Even if we are willing to deny Asymmetry and Extensionality, this case would still be puzzling. Anne and Barbara would be distinct, but perfectly coincident persons, with completely different lives from each other. This might not be the end of the world. Coincident objects are nothing new in philosophy, and there is an full, rich literature on how best to deal with them. But to deny Asymmetry and Extensionality, just to have to accept coincident persons, might to too much for some folks.

Suppose Barbara is a part of Anne, in the sense of part found in the grief utterances. Suppose that Connie is part of Barbara in that same sense. The transitivity of parthood tells us that Connie is a part of Anne. Suppose that Connie and Anne have never met. Each knows nothing of the other's existence. Connie dies. Barbara reports this to Anne telling her "I lost a part of myself". Anne, knowing that Barbara is a part of her, and full of classical mereological wisdom, says, "So have I". If parthood is transitive, then Connie *was* part of Anne, and Anne did lose a part. That appears to violate the Intimacy Constraint, if we assume Barbara and Connie were in a mutual intimate relationship, and that Anne and Connie were not. So, perhaps Transitivity should go as well.<sup>30</sup>

There are people who deny each of Asymmetry, Extensionality, Weak Supplementation, and Transitivity.<sup>31</sup> But it is much less popular to deny *all* of them. Moreover, the approach behind the mereological part proposal was to keep things simple, straightforward, and to rely on the classical mereological notion of proper parthood. Insofar as these principles are definitional of classical mereology, the fact that we must give them up to account for the grief utterances shows that we cannot use the classical mereological conception of parthood.

Or, perhaps we can still rely on the notion of mereological parts, we just need to reconsider how we think about persons and parts of persons. In the next section, we will look at two views according to which persons have more parts than just those that are here and now, and we will see how these views allow us to understand the grief utterances.

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<sup>30</sup> I say *perhaps* as there is some wiggle room here. The Intimacy Constraint requires Anne and Barbara did not lose a part *in the same way* as each other. Each lost a mereological part of herself, but there is *some* difference between the loss to each. Barbara lost an *immediate* part of herself, a part of her that was not part of any of her other parts, but Anne lost only a mediate part, a part of a part.

<sup>31</sup> See Sanford (1993, 222), Thomson (1998), s'Tillman and Fowler (2012) for other examples that purport to show that parthood need not be asymmetric. See Rosen and Dorr (2007) and Wiggins (1968) for counterexamples to Extensionality. See Smith (2009) for an argument against Weak Supplementation. See Gilmore (2014) for a counterexample to transitivity.

## 2.2. Temporal Parts and Modal Parts

### 2.2.1. *Dynamic Worms: Perdurantism, Eternalism, and Branching Spacetime*

Perdurantism is the view that just as material objects extend across space, and have spatial parts, they also extend across time, and have temporal parts.<sup>32</sup> That is, ordinary material objects are four-dimensional, composed both of spatial parts and temporal parts. What accounts for the truth of temporal facts, such as, “I used to be a child” is the fact that a temporal part of the spatial-temporal sum that I am *is* a child. What grounds future facts, for instance, that I will be bald, is the fact that I have a temporal part that is bald.

Perdurantism is often paired with a certain view about the existence of past and future times objects: Eternalism. On Eternalism, past and future objects exist just as much and in the exact same way as present objects. The pairing of Perdurantism with Eternalism results in the view that material objects are four-dimensional spatiotemporal worms, with parts located in the past and future that exist just as much and in the same way that their present parts do.<sup>33</sup> Just as we interact with our loved ones presently, we have interacted with them in the past, and we will interact with them in the future. That is, we have temporal parts interacting with them at those times.

When we think about future events, our gut reaction seems to be that they are contingent. Suppose I flip a fair coin. It may land on heads or on tails, and both events seem equally likely to occur. So, at the time of the coin flip, it seems that the coin had two futures. There is the future in which it lands on heads, and the future in which it lands on tails. If one accepts that Eternalism is true, and so accepts that the future exists just as much as the present and past does, then one may commit themselves to a *branching* spacetime in order to accommodate that at  $t_j$ , the time of the coin flip, the coin has two futures.

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<sup>32</sup> See for instance Heller (1990), Lewis (1986)

<sup>33</sup> The view I am about to suggest works just as well with *burning fuse* theories of time according to which the present and future exist, but the past does not. However, I am going to formulate the view in terms of Eternalism.

At  $t_f$  it is not yet settled whether the coin lands on heads or tails. On this eternalist picture of branching spacetime, the coin's past and present both exist, as do each of the coin's futures: the future in which it lands on heads, and the future in which it lands on tails. Call the segment of spacetime that consists of the coin's past, present, and each of its futures 'the coin's history'.<sup>34</sup>

Consider  $t_b$ , the point at the coin's history in which it comes to be the case that the coin now has only one future: the one in which the coin lands on heads. Prior to  $t_b$ , the coin's history looked like this (where the left-branch is the future in which the coin lands on tails, and the right branch is the future in which the coin lands on heads):

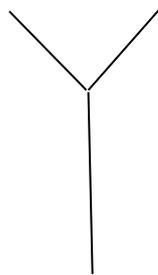


Figure 1:  
Coin's history prior to  $t_H$ .

After  $t_H$ , the coin's history looks like this:



Figure 2:  
Coin's history after  $t_H$ .

At  $t_b$ , the left-most branch drops from the coin's history. Suppose that that is enough for that branch to go out of existence. Then the coin's history is dynamic in that its branches are consistently falling off and going out of existence.

Take the view that is the combination of perdurantism, eternalism, and the view that the future is open. On this view it may make sense to identify material objects, like the coin, with the

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<sup>34</sup> Storrs McCall (1994) argues for and discusses a theory of time much like this one. He also discusses it in McCall (ms). It is from this unpublished manuscript that from which I have adopted the use of 'history', though McCall uses it to mean something different than I do.

sum of their past, present, and future stages: with their histories. After all, on perdurantism material objects are four-dimensional sums, with parts located in the past, present, and on eternalism parts in the past and future exist just as much as those in the present. If the coin is this sum, then perdurantism can capture the idea that at  $t_j$  the coin has multiple futures because at  $t_j$  the coin has multiple future parts: those parts found on both the left branch and the right branch of the coin's history. At  $t_b$  the left branch ceases to be a part of the coin's history, and so all the parts on that branch cease to be part of the coin. Call this version of perdurantism the *dynamic worm* view. Objects are four-dimensional worms with parts located in the past, present, and future, and these worms are dynamic: as the future unfolds, parts of the worm are constantly "falling off".

Human persons are more complicated than coins, but it is clear that our loved ones can, and do, heavily influence our futures. When we lose a loved one, our prospects for the future change. Options once accessible to us are suddenly closed forever. Since in the death of a loved one we lose those potential futures, on the dynamic worm view, we lose our future parts. If we are dynamic worms with parts that exist in the past, present, and future, then we can explain why it is that in the death of our loved ones we lose parts of ourselves. We lose future parts. This is the dynamic worm proposal.

The dynamic worm proposal is a lot to take on. Perdurantism is not, after all, very commonsensical. Surely, I am *wholly* located right here. If perdurantism is true, that isn't the case, I have parts located elsewhere, at other times. It also is not very commonsensical to think that past and future objects exist as much as the ones right here and now do. For the moment however, I am going to put that aside and change course to discuss alleged parts of a different kind: modal parts. As I ultimately reject the dynamic worm proposal and the modal part proposal for the same reason — though not any of the reasons just mentioned — I'd like to discuss modal parts before I explain where I think these proposals go wrong.

### 2.2.2 Modal Parts

Most everyone agrees that we extend through space. As we have seen, some think we extend through time. Others think that we extend through *modal space*.<sup>35</sup> Modal space is the space of possibilities, including those that are actual, and those that are not. For us to extend through modal space is for us to have parts located at more than one possibility. Let's say that each possibility is a possible world so that modal space is the space of all possible worlds. A *modal part* is a part located at one of these worlds, and to be modally extended is to have modal parts located at more than one possible world.<sup>36</sup>

Positing a plurality of possible worlds allows us to account for modal facts. Here is one: my dog actually has four toes, but it is possible that could have been a polydactyl and had five toes. What makes this latter fact true? Some might say that it is true because my dog exists in some non-actual, possible world, and in that world she has five toes.<sup>37</sup> Others say it is because my dog bears a counterpart relation to a numerically distinct, but similar, dog in a non-actual, possible world.<sup>38</sup> On the modal parts view, what makes this true is that my dog has a modal part located at a non-actual, possible world, and that part has five toes.

While our loved ones are alive, there are many things that we might do with them. We can go on picnics together, get a coffee together, bake a cake together... Even if we don't actually do any of these things, each of these is a possibility. Thus, on the modal parts view, we have modal parts that go on picnics with our loved ones, go for coffee with our loved ones, and bake cakes with our loved ones. But when our loved ones die we can no longer do any of these things with them. These are no longer possibilities for us, and so, on the modal parts view, we have lost a modal part. This is the modal parts proposal.

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<sup>35</sup> See Yagisawa (2010).

<sup>36</sup> For ease of exposition, I am not going to go into much more detail than this, but see Yagisawa (2010) for a much more in-depth discussion.

<sup>37</sup> Lewis (1986, p. 198 - 209) argues against such a view, but McDaniel (2004) defends it.

<sup>38</sup> See Lewis (1986).

One may object that all those things remain possibilities. Afterall, your loved one didn't have to die, so there remains a possible world in which you and her go on a picnic. Or, perhaps you find a way to resurrect your loved one from the dead, or you find a time machine... I agree, everything just described is a possibility. Thus, the modal parts proposal must be working with a restricted sense of possibility. Perhaps the possibilities relevant to the truth of the grief utterances are just the nomological possibilities that arise when we keep the existence facts fixed. Keeping fixed that you exist, but your loved one does not, nor does a time machine, nor a method of resurrecting the dead, it is nomologically impossible for you to go on a picnic with your loved one. To determine what modal parts are lost when your loved one dies, we look for the differences in what was nomologically possible, given the existence facts, prior to your loved ones death, and what what is nomologically possible, given the existence facts, following your loved one's death.

One may counter that unless the modal parts proposal is willing to claim that the *only* possibilities are these particular nomological possibilities, this does not adequately capture the loss of the part. For the possibilities described above do not go out of existence, they simply fall out of the sphere of the nomologically possible. But since *all* of my possibilities are my modal parts, this isn't the loss of a part, it's just a rearranging.

I wouldn't recommend putting such an *ad hoc* restriction on possibility, just to provide an account of the grief utterances. But, as a restriction on which possibilities are relevant to the grief utterances, I don't think it is *too* ad hoc. Consider an analogy: when I think about my body I don't care much about the parts on my peripheries. I am not upset when I trim my split ends, or when a skin cell falls off. I am concerned about those parts of me that allow me to live my life the way I would like. In a similar way, people tend to be concerned about those possibilities regarding what they can do here and now, rather than what they could do were things different. Few people are concerned with the purely metaphysical possibilities lying in their modal peripheries. Even if it is true that one's modal parts are rearranged, rather than lost, this rearranging moves a part of us

from the portions we care about, to our peripheries. It's a loss to one's nomologically possible modal body, if not one's entire modal body. But that seems enough for the grief utterances. When it comes to grief, it is the nomological possibilities that are relevant. It would be cold comfort to tell a grieving friend not to be sad, for there is a possible world in which they and the deceased are enjoying a picnic.

However, I won't press this point further. Like the dynamic worm proposal, the modal parts proposal may be met with a variety of metaphysical objections. But, my current task is not to evaluate the all-things-considered merits of their underlying metaphysics. My current task is to see how well these proposals fit with our pre-theoretical thinking about grief and grief utterances. And as it turns out, both the dynamic worm proposal and the modal parts proposal fail to meet the Intimacy Constraint.

There are billions of people in this world, and thus, there are billions of people that I can interact with. Whenever one of those individuals die, that is no longer a possibility for me. On the modal parts proposal, then, I lose parts of myself at the death of nearly any individual: those parts of myself located at those worlds in which I interact with that individual. This is so whether the deceased is a best friend, or a total stranger. Even if we restrict the relevant possibilities to not just what is nomologically possible given the current existence facts, but to what is nomologically possible *for you and those important to you*, we still wouldn't be able to distinguish between the case of Olivia and Tim, and the case of Tom a Tim. Each would lose a modal part in the same way.

The dynamic worm proposal has a similar problem. At the moment, I have many futures where I interact with any number of people. Whenever one of those individuals dies, that is no longer a future for me. So, a branch falls off my history. So, I lose a part of myself. This is so whether the deceased is a best friend, or a total stranger.

So, it seems that neither the dynamic worm proposal nor the modal parts proposal can meet the Intimacy Constraint. In the next section I evaluate the final contender: the extended mind.

### **2.3. The Extended Mind and the Extended Self**

An appeal to the extended mind might help us capture the sense that in the loss of a loved one, we lose a part of ourselves. Let's say that a person's mind is extended just in case certain of its mental states, such as beliefs, occur or are "stored" outside of the physical skin of that person, say, in another person, or another device, like a computer.<sup>39</sup> In such a case, her mind extends beyond her the boundaries of her human body — beyond her skin.<sup>40</sup>

Chalmers and Clark (1998) suggest that the extended mind hypothesis entails that there is an extended self. If my mental states extend into other people, and if my self extends where my mental states do, then my self extends into other people. Then I am located (partially) in some region also occupied by these people. If one accepts that I have a part wherever I am (partially) located, it follows that I have a part in the region occupied by the other person.

Not all of our beliefs are occurrent — we can believe something without it being at the forefront of our mind. In such cases, these beliefs are stored somewhere under our skin, to be accessed when we need them. The beliefs extending beyond our skin and stored in other individuals and devices are also often occurrent. Still, we know what we need to do to access them. Suppose I am trying to remember my aunt's mailing address. To access my beliefs about my aunt's address I need to ask my mom. Now suppose that my mom were to die. With her would go my belief about my aunt's mailing address. Then, as long as my mental states are part of me, I have lost a part of myself. This is the extended mind proposal.

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<sup>39</sup> See Clark and Chalmers (1998) for an exposition of this view.

<sup>40</sup> I follow Olson (2011) in referring to the bounds of one's body as one's 'skin'. See this article also for a criticism of the extended mind.

The extended mind proposal also struggles with the Intimacy Constraint. While Clark and Chalmers require that for someone to serve as the repository of my beliefs there must be “a high degree of trust, reliance, and accessibility”, they also note that this can be found in a number of different relationships, to different extents. It is not just our nearest and dearest that serve as repositories for our beliefs. The waiter at a restaurant where I’m a regular might recall the name of my favourite dish when I cannot, or my bus driver might remember what stop I need to get off at to arrive at the dentist. Then when my waiter or bus driver dies, I lose a part of myself. I lose a part of myself in just the same way I do when one of my nearest and dearest dies. But, as we have seen, that cannot be correct.

Second, the extended mind proposal makes it seem that these losses are easily avoidable in a way the dynamic worm proposal and the modal part proposal did not. On either of those proposals, when my loved one dies I lose futures and possibilities that *require* them. But, I cannot think of many of my beliefs that *require a particular* person to serve as its repository. Suppose that while my mother is on her deathbed I beg her to tell my father my aunt’s mailing address, so that I do not lose that bit of my extended mind. My mother passes away the exact moment my father commits it to memory (for me). Well, I am very lucky, then, because I almost lost a part of my extended mind, but it was instead conveniently re-located.<sup>41</sup>

That cannot be correct. Whatever *part* it is we lose when a loved one dies, that loss is not so easily prevented. We cannot simply “move” the part from one location to another to avoid the loss. In addition, if it is just the loss of the belief we are concerned about, then this seems to make our loved ones fungible. To avoid the loss their death would cause, we can simply have someone else play the repository role they used to play.

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<sup>41</sup> This, assumes that the beliefs constituting my extended mind are *not* individuated by where they are “stored”. This seems reasonable to me as we don’t seem to individuate beliefs on that basis. If we did, it would become difficult to see how you and I could believe the same thing, since my belief would be stored in me and yours in you.

I wrote above that I could not think of *many* of my beliefs that require a particular person to serve as their repository. But, there are certain kinds of beliefs that it seems those with whom I am in a mutual intimate relationship are uniquely situated to store for me. These are beliefs about *who I am*: beliefs about my defining values and character traits. Recall from Chapter 1.4 that mutual intimate relationships require that each party has an understanding of the other *as the particular person she is*, including knowledge and understand of her core values and desires. Not many people outside one's closest friends and family have this kind of knowledge. So, perhaps the extended mind proposal could be restricted to beliefs about *who I am*, and could then meet the Intimacy Constraint.<sup>42</sup>

There may be a way to avoid the second problem as well. For, though the relationships with our nearest and dearest may all be mutual intimate relationships, they are not all the same. No two of your friends, not even your closest friends, know you in just the same way. So, it seems possible that each is a unique repository for certain beliefs about *who you are*. In addition, these sorts of beliefs often take time to develop, and are tacit rather than explicit. They are not so easily transferred from one repository to another as beliefs about things like addresses and menu items. If that is so, perhaps the extended mind proposal can avoid the charges that it makes the loss associated with the grief utterances easily prevented, and our loved ones fungible (qua repository) with respect to that loss.

This version of the extended mind proposal, though incomplete, is an improvement over the original. But, the broader concern I have with the extended mind proposal is that not all paradigmatic instances of loss seem to be instances of loss to our extended mind. Small infants and individuals with severe intellectual disabilities may entirely lack the cognitive resources required to act as a repository of beliefs. In which case, the extended mind proposal entails that

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<sup>42</sup> I don't think it could meet the Intimacy Constraint perfectly, as one's therapist may also store beliefs about *who one is* as well, and that would not be an *mutual* intimate relationship. However, were there no other options, perhaps that would be the closest we could get.

when they die, their loved ones do not lose parts of themselves, for they had no beliefs stored in the deceased. Their grief utterances would not be true.

My reliance on mutual intimate relationships in the Intimacy Constraint faces a similar criticism. For as mutual intimate relationships require that each has knowledge and understanding of the other's core values, etc, it seems we cannot be in mutual intimate relationships with those lacking the cognitive capacities to have this rich form of knowledge. In which case, the Intimacy Constraint would require an account of grief utterances to distinguish between losses of these individuals and paradigmatic instances of loss. But that would be a mistake. Unlike the Olivia case, these strike us as paradigmatic instances of loss. This is the topic of the next chapter.

#### **2.4. Conclusion**

Thus far I have shown that none of the mereological part proposal, dynamic worm proposal, modal part proposal, or extended mind proposal can provide a satisfying account of the grief utterances. The mereological part proposal, with classical mereology's commitment to *Asymmetry*, *Extensionality*, *Weak Supplementation*, and *Transitivity* puts it at odd with our pre-theoretic beliefs about our personal relationships and the grief utterances. Both the temporal parts proposal and the modal parts proposal violate the Intimacy Constraint because we have temporal parts and modal parts that interact with strangers just as much as we do our loved ones. The extended mind proposal also struggles to meet the Intimacy Constraint and suggests that the losses we experience when a loved one dies are often easily avoided. Worse, it entails that unless your loved one has sufficient cognitive capacity to serve as a repository of your beliefs, you won't lose a part of yourself when they die. However, my reliance on mutual intimate relationships in the Intimacy Constraint faces a similar problem. In the next chapter, I demonstrate a further limitation of mutual intimate relationships. I suggest we rely instead on the concept of a plural person, and show how this concept can be modified to extend to individuals lacking the cognitive capacities of a typical adult.

## Chapter Three: Plural Persons, Moral Persons

### 3.0 Introduction

When I introduced the Intimacy Constraint in Chapter One, I stated it using notion of a mutual intimate relationship. I ended the previous chapter with a criticism of that statement. Not all of us have sophisticated enough cognitive capacities to have the particular kind of knowledge or understanding required to be in a mutual intimate relationship with someone: knowledge of who they are as a person. I intended the concept of mutual intimate relationships to capture *all* relationships such that the death of one member of the relationship results in a paradigmatic instance of loss of part to the other. However, a parent who loses an adult child with profound intellectual disabilities loses a part, it seems, in the same way a parent who loses a typical adult child does. But the Intimacy Constraint, with its use of mutual intimate relationships, tells us that the correct account of the grief utterances is one on which these losses are not the same.

In this chapter I suggest that rather than using mutual intimate relationships to characterize paradigmatic instances of grief, we focus on *plural persons*: things with person-like features made up of more than one human being. I start in §3.1 by providing another reason to think that mutual intimate relationships are not the relationships we should be talking about. In §3.2 I present two views from the literature according to which there can be persons that are larger than human sized.<sup>43</sup> One is Carol Rovane's (1998) account of group persons, the other Bennett Helm's (2010) account of plural persons. In §3.3 I explain why I think plural persons, rather than group persons, should be used in the Intimacy Constraint. I then turn to the metaphysics of plural persons. In §3.4 I argue that plural persons share several important features with social groups, and thus, if we believe that social groups like certain teams and committees exist, we should believe that plural persons exist. The switch from mutual intimate relationships to plural persons avoids the concerns raised in §3.1, but not the one raised at the

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<sup>43</sup> This handy turn of phrase is borrowed from Rovane (1998).

end of Chapter 2 and beginning of this chapter. So, in §3.5 I describe how we may form plural persons with those lacking in (apparently) requisite cognitive capacities. Taking these modifications into account, in §3.6 I give a statement of the existence and persistence conditions of plural persons. Finally, in §3.7 I defend the resulting account of plural personhood from the objection that it makes moral personhood a matter of convention.

### 3.1 More on Mutual Intimate Relationships

You may recall that I ended Chapter One with the Intimacy Constraint:

**The Intimacy Constraint:** An account of grief utterances must distinguish between how  $P_1$ , who is in a mutual intimate relationship with  $P_2$ , and  $P_3$  who is not, loses a part of herself upon the death of  $P_2$ .

This constraint was motivated by considering cases like Tim and Olivia, and Rocky Rockstar and Fanny Fanboy. In the case of Tim and Olivia, Olivia was attached to Tim, but did not care about him. In that case we judged that if Olivia lost a part of herself upon Tim's death, it was unlike the way in which Tim's close friends and family did. The case of Rocky and Fanny showed that a combination of care and attachment, even when mutual, was not sufficiently like the paradigmatic cases either. If a part is lost in these cases, it is different from the way it is lost in the cases we tend to think are paradigmatic instances of a true grief utterance. The difference, I said, seemed to be that the cases just described are not cases of mutual intimate relationships, but the paradigmatic cases are.

However, there are other cases of loss that I am also inclined to think are different from paradigmatic cases, but which *will* count as mutual intimate relationships. I have in mind the trope of arch enemies.<sup>44</sup> Typically, in the stories, one of these is a hero, one is a villain, and often each sees the other as their worthy opponent. Depending on how the details of the case are fleshed out, such relationships may come to fit the description of a mutual intimate relationship.

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<sup>44</sup> Rowan Bell, Isaiah Lin, and Hille Paakkunainen each pressed me to consider cases of arch enemies as limiting cases to the Intimacy Constraint.

Consider the case of Dumbledore and Voldemort. In the *Harry Potter* series each is a powerful wizard committed to thwarting the other's plans. They have a shared understanding of the terms of their relationship insofar as there is a shared understanding about the terms governing the relationship, and what it would take for this relationship to end. There is even a sense in which each of the two have agreed to the terms of the relationship. While one or the other might wish that there were no such relationship (each probably wishes that the other did not exist or had a significantly different personality such that this relationship was not necessary), each understands the conditions under which the relationship would terminate (one or the other dies, or joins the other's side). Moreover, each character has an in-depth understanding of the person the other wizard is insofar as each understands the other's values, goals, and desires. So, this relationship seems to be an instance of a mutual intimate relationship.

However, if they are in a mutual intimate relationship, then the Intimacy Constraint permits that when Dumbledore dies, Voldemort loses a part of himself in the same way that Tom does when his best friend and brother Tim dies. But, as I see it, there is still something different about the case of Dumbledore and Voldemort and the paradigmatic cases. As their ultimate goals and driving motivations are wildly incompatible, the relationship between Dumbledore and Voldemort lacks a certain kind of unity present in the paradigmatic instances. I think it would be misguided if an account of grief utterances were to treat these two losses as the same. So, we need to look for something beyond mutual intimate relationships to characterize the paradigmatic instances of loss. In the next section I present two views according to which a collection of individual human beings can form a person. In §3.3 I demonstrate how one of these views may be used in the Intimacy Constraint to avoid the problem of arch enemies and explain why I believe this view is superior to the other for the purposes of making sense of the grief utterances.

### 3.2. Persons that are not Human Sized

Both Helm (2010) and Rovane (1998) argue for the possibility of persons that extend beyond the bounds of a single human body. Rovane calls such larger-than-human-sized persons ‘group persons’, Helm calls them ‘plural persons’.<sup>45</sup> However, the two authors differ in more than their terminological usage. Each provides a different answer to *Qualities*:

*Qualities*: What distinguishes persons from other entities? What qualities are essential or fundamental features of persons?<sup>46</sup>

According to Rovane, persons are marked by their capacity to engage in mutual agency regarding relationships. According to Helm, persons are marked by their capacity to have a conception of the kind of life worth their living. In what follows I expand first on Rovane’s account of individual and group persons, then Helm’s account of individual and plural persons. Following a discussion of how these views differ, I argue that plural persons are better suited for the present purposes.

#### 3.2.1. Rovane on Group Persons

Rovane’s answer to *Qualities* — questions about the essential or fundamental features of persons which distinguish them from non-persons — ultimately stems from what she deems the *ethical criterion of personhood*. According to this criterion, a person is an agent capable of engaging in *mutual agency regarding relationships* (1998, pps. 5, 72). Put loosely, two (or more) parties engage in agency regarding relationships with each other to the extent that, in their interactions with one another, each aims not to impede the other’s autonomous choices and decisions. Put more precisely, they engage in agency regarding relationships to the extent that each aims not to hinder the dictates of the other’s *rational point of view*: the set of intentional episodes through which she deliberates to arrive at and act upon all things considered judgments (ibid, p.75). Without a

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<sup>45</sup> For reasons that I will make clear in §3.3, Helm’s conception of plural persons works best for our purposes, and so it is his terminology that I will ultimately adopt.

<sup>46</sup> This is borrowed from a division of questions pertaining to personal identity from Mackenzie (2008). I discuss other questions in §3.4.

rational point of view, one cannot engage in mutual agency regarding relationships, and so, every person has a rational point of view (ibid, p. 48).

A rational point of view is constituted by a set of intentional episodes. Included in that set are practical commitments to *unifying projects*: projects requiring sustained coordinated activity. As sustained coordinated activity itself requires a high degree of rational unity amongst the various intentional episodes in the set, commitments to unifying projects thereby commit persons to achieving a high degree of rational unity within that set (ibid, pp. 163-4). Whenever there is a set of intentional episodes with a commitment to achieving overall rational unity within the set — wherever there is a rational point of view — there is a person.<sup>47</sup> There is something that is capable of engaging in agency regarding relationships.

Nothing in Rovane's analysis of persons requires that the intentional episodes constituting a rational point of view occur within a single human body or are generated by a single human brain. Thus, on her view, it is possible for a group of distinct human beings to constitute a person. Were a group of human beings committed to a unifying project which required them to achieve overall rational unity amongst their intentional episodes, that set of intentional episodes could suffice to form a group person (ibid, pp. 160-4).

Helm's account of plural persons also requires a kind of coordination between a collection of individuals. We will take a look at that next.

### 3.2.2. *Helm on Plural Persons*

Rovane's answer to *Qualities* is that a person is an agent capable of participating in agency regarding relations. Helm's answer is that a distinguishing feature of persons is that they can define the kind of lives worth their living (2010, p. 97).

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<sup>47</sup> This is, of course, a simplification of Rovane's view. She provides a full statement of the necessary and sufficient conditions for there being a person. However, to fully explain and Rovane's analysis of persons, and her defense of that analysis, would require far more space than prudence allows. It is the same with Helm's conception of persons in Section 3.2.2.

For Helm, a person's identity is determined by her conception of the kind of life worth her living. Such a conception is implicit in her *personal values* (2010, p. 98). Her personal values are those things that she takes to have a particular kind of worth: the kind of worth that serves to define the kind of life worth her living.<sup>48</sup> Her conception of the kind of life worth her living in turn provides her with her identity as *this* particular person — the particular person she is (ibid).

Let's call the act of valuing one's personal values 'first-personal valuing'. When a person values something first-personally — when she takes it to define the kind of life worth her living, and thus her identity — she experiences emotions like pride (when she lives up to her values, and so succeeds in living the kind of life she sees as worth her living) and shame (when she fails to live up to her values, and so strays from the kind of life worth her living) (ibid, p. 99). Her pride and shame target and are focused on herself, as it is her identity that is at stake in living up to her values, but they are sub-focused on her values as it is those values that give intelligibility to the pride and shame she feels focused on herself (ibid, pps. 57-8,107-8, 111).

There are other modes of valuing as well. According to Helm "to love another is to find her to have import for *her* sake as the person she is and so to be committed ... to her well-being as *this person*" (Helm 2010, p.146, emphasis added). When one person loves another in this way, she comes to have a special concern for who he is as this particular person — his identity as this person — which is provided by *his* conception of the kind of life worth his living, and so *his* values.<sup>49</sup> With this concern for her beloved's identity, she comes to value what he values. However, in this case, the focus of her valuing, her experiences of pride and shame, is *him* and the sub-focus is the things *he* values. In this way, she values what he values *for his sake* (p. 157-8). This is *second-personal valuing*. Second-personal valuing provides a sense in which one shares her

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<sup>48</sup> One's personal values can thus come away from universal values, or even those things that one sees as having universal value, insofar as they are not including in one's conception of the kind of life worth her living. In addition, this understanding of one's personal values should be understood in a way consistent with the fact that we often find things personally *intrinsically* valuable. It may even be because we find them so intrinsically valuable that we include them within our conceptions of lives worth our living.

<sup>49</sup> Here I say "When one loves another *in this way*..." for although Helm intends his account to be an account of love in general, all I require is that there is this particular form of love. Though I will write using the generic 'love', I intend to be understood as 'this certain form of love'.

beloved's values. She values what he values, though she does so second-personally, not for her sake, but for his, and he does so first-personally, for his own sake.<sup>50</sup>

In cases of reciprocal love, a set of shared values emerges. Suppose A and B love each other. Since A loves B, A values what B values for B's sake. Similarly, B loves A, and so B values what A values for A's sake. This constitutes a shared set of values from which each can deliberate about how to interact with the other. While each has access to this set of shared values, each deliberates as the individual person she is.

However, in cases of reciprocal love two (or more) individuals can transform their shared values into *joint* values. Shared values differ from joint values in that shared values are those that each has non-accidentally, through loving each other, but joint values are ones that belong to the plurality: to *us* (2010, p. 266, fn. 28). We transform our shared values into joint values when each of us comes to love *us*, with the understanding that she is *one of us*, and each, as one of us, values certain things *for our sake*. These joint values in turn define a *joint* conception of a life worth *our* living *together*.<sup>51</sup> As with an individual person, this joint conception provides us with *our* identity.<sup>52</sup> Since Helm believes that the mark of personhood is to be the kind of thing that has a conception of a life worth its living, *we* now count as a *plural* person, with our identity defined by our joint values and conception of life worth living together.

At this point we have seen two accounts of personhood on which there can be persons larger than human sized. In the next section, I explain how we may use Helm's idea of plural persons to avoid the problem of arch enemies from §3.1. After I explain why I think Helm's

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<sup>50</sup> In addition, Helm writes that when one person loves another, she comes to value the place that loving him has within her conception of a life worth her living. Thus, insofar as her identity is constituted by her values, which include her love for who he is as this person, his identity also comes to partially constitute hers (p. 162).

<sup>51</sup> In addition, as a plural person we value those things that define our joint conception of a life worth our living together *as one of us*. That is, we will experience person-focused felt evaluations like pride and shame focused *on us* and sub-focused on the things we value.

<sup>52</sup> Helm does not give as detailed an account of when a plural person comes to be as he does when a plural agent comes to be. For that reason, I have taken some liberty here and superimposed comments he makes about plural personhood over the framework he provides for plural agency. For his discussion on plural agency, see pps. 274-82, and for his discussion of plural personhood see pages 285-94.

plural persons, rather than Rovane's group persons, does a better job of that, in §3.4 I provide further, metaphysical, reasons one may find Helm's account preferable.

### 3.3 Plural Persons and the Intimacy Constraint

In §3.1 I demonstrated that the Intimacy Constraint, as formulated, would allow an account of the grief utterances to maintain that the loss suffered in cases of arch enemies is like the loss suffered in the paradigmatic cases. As we recognize something different about those losses, I do not find that satisfactory. But now suppose that we modify the Intimacy Constraint as follows:

**The Intimacy Constraint:** An account of grief utterances must distinguish between how  $P_1$ , who forms a plural person with  $P_2$ , and  $P_3$  who does not, loses a part of herself upon the death of  $P_2$ .

Because Dumbledore and Voldemort lack a conception of the kind of life worth their living together, they do not form a plural person. Thus, this version of the Intimacy Constraint requires an account of grief utterances to distinguish Voldemort's loss when Dumbledore dies from Tom's loss when Tim dies, capturing our judgments that these losses are different.

Here one may object that Voldemort and Dumbledore *do* have a conception of a life worth their living together. After all, couldn't each of them have an idea of something like "this is what we do" and "this is who we are"? Yes, they could, but this would *not* count as a conception of the kind of life worth their living together in the sense relevant for plural personhood. *That* kind of conception requires reciprocal love between individuals, and that the individuals "transform their shared cares and values into joint cares and values" (Helm 2010, p. 285). Voldemort and Dumbledore have neither.

The reason given for why Voldemort and Dumbledore fail to form a plural person — the lack of a conception of a life worth their living together — also accounts for the lack of unity that I initially said distinguished them from other paradigmatic cases. The lives of Dumbledore and Voldemort are fundamentally at odds with each other insofar as each has significantly

different, if not incompatible values. If the truly paradigmatic cases of a loss of part in grief are those that are plural persons, then because plural persons have a joint conception of a life worth living together that Voldemort and Dumbledore do not, they lack this degree of unity.

I have chosen to use Helm's account of plural persons rather than Rovane's account of group persons because I am less certain that group persons will distinguish the truly paradigmatic instances of the loss of a part from other cases. Suppose that, as co-workers, Olivia and Tim are on a committee with a particular goal: they wish to build a chicken coop so they can raise chickens and have brunch with fresh eggs together every Sunday. This is a long-term project and requires coordination amongst intentional episodes, and thus fits the description of a unifying project. Were the members of the committee able to achieve a sufficient degree of overall rational unity, they would count as a group person. But this would not affect my judgment about whether or not Olivia's loss is like Tim's twin brother Tom's loss. To me, they seem entirely different. The difference, I now say, is that Tim and Tom constitute a plural person, but Tim and Olivia do not.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.4 Concepts of Personhood and Plural Persons as Groups

We have seen that Rovane and Helm differ on their answer to *Qualities*. However, they also differ on what concept of *personhood* their answer is describing. Recall *Qualities* asks:

*Qualities*: What distinguishes persons from other kinds of entities? What qualities are essential or fundamental features of persons?

The term 'persons' in those questions is left ambiguous between the metaphysical sense of personhood, and the moral sense of personhood. Roughly, moral personhood is a feature of an object by which it counts as either a moral agent (something that can be held responsible for its actions, of which it makes sense to ask questions of praise and blame), or a patient (something that can be the subject of moral wrong or harm) (University of Missouri School of Medicine

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<sup>53</sup> As Rovane is not arguing that there *are* any actual group persons, just that they are possible, she herself may doubt the likelihood that Tim and Olivia could form a group person in this manner.

Center for Health Ethics, “Concept of Personhood”). Anything that is a moral person “is a member of the moral community and qualifies for its benefits, burdens, protections, and punishments” (Beauchamp 1999, p. 314).

Metaphysical personhood, however, indicates membership in a particular ontological category. To be a metaphysical person is to be a member of a certain kind (University of Missouri School of Medicine Center for Health Ethics, “Concept of Personhood”). As it is membership in a certain kind that determines an entity’s persistence conditions (Baker 2007), metaphysical accounts of personhood are often concerned with answering questions of

*(Re)Identification:*

*(Re)Identification:* What criteria determine whether one individual is the same as, or a different person from, another individual with whom she may or may not be extremely similar?

Many theories of personhood take themselves to be providing an account of *both* metaphysical and moral personhood. Rovane’s is one such theory. She intends her analysis of persons to provide both their existence and their persistence conditions, thus she is addressing questions of *(Re)identification*. We identify a person (group or otherwise) at a time, or across time, by identifying a set(s) of properly coordinated intentional episodes (1998, pps. 164-166, 239). This analysis also provides her with a criterion of moral personhood: to be a person is to have a rational point of view such that *one is capable of engaging in mutual agency regarding relations*.

However, while some may hope or expect that an account of metaphysical personhood will entail an account of moral personhood (or vice-versa), it is in principle possible for a particular entity to satisfy all the conditions for one kind of personhood and not the other. Thus, there are philosophers who provide only an account of one form of personhood, and not the other. Helm is one such philosopher. His account of persons is best interpreted as answering not questions of *(Re)Identification*, but rather *Characterization*:

*Characterization*: Which character traits, values, dispositions, desires, preferences, capacities, etc., make one the particular person that she is? When does a change in these traits warrant the judgment that one is no longer the same person she was, even if she remains numerically identical?<sup>54</sup>

The wording in *Characterization* makes explicit that there are identity-based concerns that may come apart from questions of numerical identity. Helm's account is largely concerned with how one's values shape one's identity *as this particular person*. Thus, his account seems best suited to address the questions of identity that arise in *Characterization*, rather than *(Re)Identification*.<sup>55</sup> These are questions we might ask when undergoing an identity-crisis, or the concerns a member of a parole committee has when attempting to decide whether a former violent offender has been sufficiently rehabilitated.

That Helm's account of personhood is an account of *moral* personhood gives it a little more theoretical leverage, for our purposes, than Rovane's does. For insofar as Rovane is offering an analysis of metaphysical personhood, she is committed to saying that individual persons and group persons belong to the same ontological category. They are the same kind of entity. I expect that this would strike many (at least the non-theoretically committed) as strange. Whatever kind of thing *I* am is vastly unlike whatever kind of thing even the most rationally unified plurality of people is. That thought might bring one to doubt the existence of group persons.<sup>56</sup> If Helm's account of personhood were a metaphysical account of personhood, it might bring one to doubt the existence of plural persons. But if plural persons don't exist, they are not very useful for my project.

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<sup>54</sup> This division of questions (Qualities, (Re)Identification, and Characterization) is borrowed from Mackenzie (2008).

<sup>55</sup> Helm (2010, p. 135, fn. 52) writes explicitly that "[i]t should be clear [that his] understanding of a person's identity is a technical notion that has *little directly to do with questions that arise in the literature on diachronic personal identity*. For such questions typically concern the locus of personal agency, which is *not at all what the notion of a person's identity as defined here is intended to address*." (emphasis added).

<sup>56</sup> Again, Rovane is clear that she is arguing only for the possibility of group persons, so this need not count against her analysis on its own. Still, were we to use her notion of group persons to make sense of the Intimacy Constraint and the grief utterances, we would need to assume their actual existence as substantial, metaphysical, persons.

As Helm's is *not* an account of metaphysical personhood, it is consistent to maintain that while both individual persons and plural persons are *moral* persons, they are still different kinds of entities. And I think that is correct. For, I am about to suggest that plural persons are a distinct kind of *social group*. This provides additional reason to believe in the existence of plural persons, for as I will show, if we believe that social groups like teams and committees exist, we should believe that plural persons exist as well.

### 3.4.1. *Plural Persons as Social Groups*

Like social groups, plural persons are appropriately characterized as “at a given time, nothing over and above some individuals as they exemplify a certain complex condition” (Uzquiano 2018, p. 425). At a given time, a plural person is some individuals that have a joint conception of a life worth their living together. Like other groups, they are also “thing[s] constituted by and only by individual people” (Epstein 2015, p. 133). If that is so, then plural persons may very well be a special kind of social group. And social groups most definitely exist. While the phrases “nothing over and above” and “constituted by and only by individual people” may be understood in an eliminativist sense, such that there are no groups, and just individual people, a perusal of the literature on social groups shows this is *not* the sense in which these phrases are used. A primary question in the literature is what *kind* of entity a group is, and answers to that question are guided by observations regarding the persistence and individuation conditions of groups.<sup>57</sup> Persistence and individuation conditions are conditions of *entities*, thus, the current thinking on social groups is that they are entities of some kind. And if plural persons can be understood as a kind of social group, then they are entities too, regardless of whether or not they are persons in the metaphysical sense.

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<sup>57</sup> Answers to the former question include: groups are sets (see Effingham (2010)), groups are mereological composites (see Hawley (2017)), groups are realizations of abstract structures (see Ritchie (2013, 2015, 2020)). Observations regarding the modal and temporal persistence conditions of groups include: groups may survive changes in membership across time and worlds, and it is possible for there to be coincident groups.

*However*, unlike terms for other groups — ‘mob’, ‘team’, ‘committee’, ‘book club’, ‘white women’ — ‘plural person’ does not appear in our everyday vernacular. It’s commonsensical to believe in teams, committees, and clubs — if you aren’t on one, you probably know someone who is, or you can name one — and our cultural milieu is one in which people are sorted into racial and gender groups, even if imperfectly. Support for the existence of particular kinds of groups comes from the fact that they are embedded in our social practices. Given that ‘plural person’ is a technical term, and not one that appears in our everyday thought and talk, we cannot appeal to our commonplace usage and acceptance of such terms to demonstrate their existence. Still, while the fact that society has a term for something may be some evidence that that thing exists, it is not conclusive evidence, and the fact that we are without a shared term for something does not count as evidence that that thing does not exist.

Further evidence for the existence of groups comes from the normative structure they add to our lives (Thomasson 2019). There are three types of norms that a social group may generate: shared internal norms, structuring norms, and public external norms (ibid). Plural persons generate each of these, and that provides additional reason to believe they exist.

Shared internal norms govern how the members of a group are to behave towards and regard themselves. Membership within a plural person brings along shared internal norms because of the joint conception of the kind of life worth living together. Recall that that conception is defined by a joint set of values. These values provide a particular kind of normative force. For instance, if a conception of a life worth living is defined by a value of sustainable living, then each member may reasonably expect the other to behave in certain ways: to refrain from unnecessary purchases, to minimize use of plastic, etc. If one member fails to live up to these values, they are subject to *person-specific* forms of praise and blame.

Person-specific forms of praise and blame are person specific in two ways. First, these forms of praise and blame target only those that, like persons, have a conception of the kind of

life worth living. Second, these forms of praise and blame are specific *to that very person*, in that she is subject to them because of what the values that define her conception of a life worth living, and so her identity, are. While we may hold a person accountable for *what her values are* (if, for instance, we think they include something they shouldn't), the *person-specific* forms of praise and blame I have in mind arise when we hold her accountable for acting in accordance with her personal values, whatever they may be.

Suppose you find me throwing great works of literature into a fire, just for the fun of it. You may find me blameworthy in two ways. First, if you think that literature is universally valuable, you might find me blameworthy for failing to recognize that value, having had ample opportunity to do so. However, suppose that you don't find literature universally valuable. Then you won't find me blameworthy in that way. But suppose you know that *I* first-personally value literature. You may then criticize me, and indeed I am blameworthy for, failing to live up to my personal values.<sup>58</sup> That is a person-specific form of blame.<sup>59</sup>

Members of plural persons are also subject to these person-specific forms of praise and blame. Just as an individual person is criticisable for failing to act in accordance with her values, those in plural persons are criticisable for failing to act in accordance with *their* values. In such cases, the proper object of the criticism may be either a single member of the plural person, or the plural person itself.

In the first case, a single member of the plural person is the proper object of the criticism. This may be so when just that individual fails to live up to *their (plural)* standards for *themselves*. Consider the plural person with a joint conception of a life worth living that includes a value of sustainable living. Suppose that one member, in a moment of laziness, throws all his plastic

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<sup>58</sup> I think this is different from the general charge of hypocrisy. One can be a hypocrite in (at least) three ways: in telling others to do or value something that they personally do not do or value; in acting as if they value something when they actually do not; and in valuing something yet failing to act in accordance with those values. It is only hypocrisy in the lattermost sense that gives rise to these person-specific forms of praise and blame.

<sup>59</sup> This person-specific form of praise and blame might arise even when we *disagree* with the person's set of values. For instance, we might find someone blameworthy for valuing the wrong things to begin with, but praise them for consistently living up to their values.

recyclables in the trash can. His partner criticizes him, “You know that *we* don’t do that.” She has a point. Given that their conception of a life worth living together includes a commitment to a certain lifestyle, as one of *us*, he has failed to live up to *our* standards, and so is subject to that person-specific form of criticism.<sup>60</sup>

In the case above, one member of the plural person is the proper object of criticism for failing to live up to *their* standards because he, individually, failed to do so. Yet there are also instances in which they *together* may fail to live up to *their* standards. Suppose that the same couple values not letting the little things “get to them” in a way that affects their communication. Yet recently both have been stressed at work, with little down time to unwind, and money has been tight. They begin to be more snappy with each other. While road tripping together, their friend watches them bicker about where to stop for lunch. Their friend says, “How can you go on like this? This isn’t like *you two* at all”. Again, it seems that their friend is right. This is not like *them*, and they *together* are criticisable for failing to live up to their conception of a life worth living together. So, the joint conception adds shared internal norms.

In addition to shared internal norms, members of groups are also subject to structuring norms. Structuring norms govern how members of a group are to behave based on their particular roles within the group. These norms are most salient in groups like teams or committees. For instance, the goalie on a hockey team is subject to norms like “guard your team’s net”, while the center is subject to the norm “move the puck towards the opposing team’s net”. In many cases, the saliency of such norms stems from the fact that they are specified in rule books, written procedures and policy, etc. However, in other groups roles and the norms accompanying them may be established through custom and habituation, even if they remain implicit. For instance, in a plural person, governed by a conception of a life worth living

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<sup>60</sup> The guilty partner will also likely feel the sense of shame that accompanies a failure to live up to those values. *However* the guilty partner need *not* feel this sense of shame as *the individual* he is. If he is the sort of person that cares little about sustainability as an individual, then any shame he does feel will be only shame *as one of us*, rather than *as the particular individual person he is*. As the particular individual person he is, he would not even be subject to this person specific form of blame, since as an individual he does not value sustainable living at all.

together, one may play the role of financial organizer, while the other plays the role of chef.

There may be a tacit understanding that these are the roles one plays, and with these roles the norms accompanying them.<sup>61</sup>

Public external norms are those governing how members of a group are to be treated by those who are not members. Again, because we are without a shared concept of a plural person, it is not obvious what the public external norms are. However, our society has norms regarding how people in *some* paradigmatically close relationships are to be governed. Some of these norms are perhaps clearest when it comes to married couples. For instance, married couples are often given joint gifts for the holidays, something that would be bizarre in other, less close, relationships. There are also norms of non-interference in the relationship: except for extreme circumstances, we shouldn't meddle in a married couple's private affairs. This is not the only kind of relationship where such norms can be found. Even young school children seem to have norms surrounding "best friends" and how being best friends with someone governs how they should be treated. For example, a child might cry "How can you invite my best friend to your birthday party and not me?". While we lack a concept of a plural person, we do have concepts of married couples and best friends. These are two sorts of relationships in which we may expect to find that those involved form a plural person.

What exactly the public external norms governing a particular plural person are may vary in light of the kind of relationship the members are in.<sup>62</sup> However, central to all of them is a duty of non-interference in the "life" of a plural person. When it comes to an individual person, we *prima facie* ought to let her pursue the life of her choice without interference, perhaps out of

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<sup>61</sup> Of course, it is possible for roles and norms that one or the other does not endorse to develop. In such cases, these norms may be illegitimate because being subject to them is in tension with the conception of a life worth living together.

<sup>62</sup> None of this is to say that all married couples and all best friends form plural persons. And indeed the fact that another recognizes these external norms may stem from the fact that they recognize norms surrounding "best friend" and "married couple" rather than norms surrounding "plural person". Still, what this shows is that we recognize certain relationships as being of a kind that generates particular norms even to those outside the relationship, particularly when the relationships are viewed as especially close. Insofar as those in a plural person are viewed as in a particularly close relationship, we may expect that others will understand there are certain norms regarding how they are to be treated.

respect for her autonomy. Similarly, in the case of a plural person, we *prima facie* ought to let *them* pursue the life of *their* choice without interference. We ought to respect their conception of a life worth their living together, just as we ought to respect an individual person's conception.

So, plural persons, if they exist, are like other social groups in that they are “at a given time, nothing over and above some individuals as they exemplify a certain complex condition” and are “constituted by and only by individual people”. This is one reason to think they are some kind of social group. Like other groups, we can glean evidence of their existence from the normative structure they add to our lives. So, I think that plural persons exist, and are a unique kind of social group.<sup>63</sup> Further evidence for the existence of plural persons may come from their use in our theorizing. It is my hope that in demonstrating how plural persons can be used to provide a satisfying account of the grief utterances, I will also demonstrate further evidence of their existence.

However, like mutual intimate relationships, plural persons will only be useful for explaining the grief utterances if they can capture *all* paradigmatic instances of losing a part. And such instances include the loss of an infant, and the loss of those without the cognitive capacities required to form a conception of a life worth their living. In the following section, I discuss how to modify the current description of plural persons to account for this.

### **3.5 Plural Persons and Cognitive Capacities**

A problem with relying on plural persons to understand the grief utterances is that to be a member of a plural person, one must have rich enough cognitive resources to form first personal-values, second-personal values, and a conception of a kind of life worth living, be it joint or individual. Not all of us can do that. A small infant, or an adult with a profound mental intellectual disability just cannot form such a conception, but the loss to their parents would be

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<sup>63</sup> Of course, plural persons and other social groups may *reduce* to something else, but I don't take that to show that they do not exist. Just as a table may be reduced to a set of molecules arranged table-wise and still exist, a group may be reduced to a set of persons meeting certain conditions, and still exist.

like the loss to any other parent losing a child. And the Intimacy Constraint, as it relies on the notion of a *plural person*, requires an account of grief utterances to maintain that that is not so. So, how can we adapt the notion of plural personhood to allow all of us to be members of plural persons, even if we lack the cognitive capacity to value?

The answer starts with love. Recall from §3.2.2 that a certain form of love — where one cares about someone’s well-being as this particular person — plays a central role in the formation of plural persons. In the case of a typical human adult, his well-being as this particular person is determined by his values. However, not all of us have the capacity to form values in the rich way that Helm describes: to see something as having the kind of worth that defines the kind of life worth one’s living. But surely all of us can be objects of love. What does it mean, then, to love someone as *this particular person* when he has not (yet) defined who that person is?

In the case of typical human adults, when we love them as *this particular person* we do not love them for the person we think they are or want them to be. We love them *as they are*. You cannot love someone in this particular way, as this particular person, if you hope or wish that they drastically change so as to be unrecognizable. This form of love requires “meeting someone where they are”. This is the same with our love for infants and the profoundly intellectually disabled.

But how do we know *who* these individuals are when, unlike typical adults, they cannot tell us? Let’s start with the case of an infant who will grow into a perfectly average adult human being. One difference between paternal love and love between two typical adults is that “in loving [a young child] paternalistically I do not simply *track*, other things being equal, *her sense of her well-being* but rather *come to take responsibility for her well-being more directly* through my caring that she become a certain kind of person and so *valuing certain things for her sake that she does not yet value*” (Helm 2010, p. 228, emphasis added). Here there are two things to note, and these are enough to get us started. First, in paternal love we still recognize that even the very young have some sense

of their well-being, which we track, and second, we take responsibility for their well-being both in terms of “tracking” their sense of their well-being, as well “valuing certain things for [their] sake[s] that they do not yet value”.

While an infant may not have a set of values, he has some sense of his well-being, of which he can provide physical and behavioural indicators. A loving caregiver attends to these and recognizes them as expressing his well-being, and thus “tracks” his sense of well-being both at a time and over time. She takes responsibility for his well-being in terms of “tracking” it, and tracking it accurately. That is the first point. The second point is that a loving caregiver can and does take responsibility for the child’s well-being another way: by valuing certain things for the child’s sake that the child does not (yet) value.

In valuing certain things for the child’s sake, things he does not (yet) value, the caregiver can come to value certain things that she does not value first-personally, second-personally. For example, her son may fall asleep more quickly and with less upset if there is classical music playing. Recognizing how classical music contributes to her son’s well-being, she may come to value it for her son’s sake, while not finding it to play a particularly important role in her individual conception of a life worth her living, outside of her love for her son. Even if his caregiver cannot stand classical music herself, she meets her child where he is, and allows classical music to play.

Another way the caregiver takes responsibility for her child’s well-being, and can come to value things for the child’s sake, is through an effort to instil values in the child. Suppose that, try as she might, the caregiver cannot bring herself to value competitive sports. She wishes that she did, for she appreciates the value they have for others, but she cannot do it herself. However, she works very hard to instil this value in her child. She buys him children’s books about soccer players and shows him YouTube videos of epic moments in sports. She may come to value sports *for his sake*, hoping that his identity will include something that hers lacks. Of course, there

are limitations on what sorts of values the caregiver can come to have for her child's sake. If the child cries inconsolably at the sight of a soccer ball, perhaps she ought to give up valuing sports for his sake, at least for the time being. This is part of attending to the child's well-being and meeting him where he is.

In both examples, the caregiver comes to value something for her son's sake that she does not value first-personally. The caregiver can also value something both first-personally *and* for her child's sake. Suppose the caregiver values caring for animals. She may wish for her son to have that value, and so starts valuing it for his sake as well. She works to instil this value in his own sense of his well-being by buying him stuffed animals and demonstrating to him, through her own behaviour, the joy of interacting with the family dog.

At this point the caregiver values some things for her sake, and some for her son's sake. At the same time, recognizing how her son responds to her behaviour, indicating his well-being as she interacts with him, she may come to identify a set of values that *they* share. As she comes to value classical music, competitive sports, and caring for animals for *his sake* she may also come to think of her and her child as a *we* and come to form a set of values for *their sake*, holding these values not for her sake or for her son's, but as one of *us*. This latter sort of valuing, as one of us, can lead to a conception of the kind of life worth her living *together with the child*. The caregiver may be able to see herself and the child each as an individual, as well as a component of a *we*.

Consider the point from Paul (2014, 2015) that having a child can be personally transformative in that "it may change your personal phenomenology in deep and far-reaching ways. A personally transformative experience radically changes what it is like to be you, perhaps by replacing your core preferences with very different ones" (2015, p. 156). Paul's description of a personally transformative experience seems to be of something that occurs *within* one's individual conception of the kind of life worth one's living: one's core preferences and values that define her identity undergo a drastic change. In contrast, I am not suggesting that one's first-

personal values change in response to having a child (though I agree that they may), rather I am advocating that one may come to have a *new*, independent set of values alongside her personal ones. These are not values and preferences the caregiver has as the individual person she is, but ones she has as *one of us*. These are the values that form a conception of the kind of life worth living *together* with the child.<sup>64</sup>

Suppose the caregiver has such a conception. The caregiver is normatively bound by this conception in terms of both shared internal norms and structuring norms (§3.4.1). The caregiver is bound by shared internal norms in that she is subject to the same kind of person-specific forms of praise and blame that any member of a plural person is. She is praiseworthy (and should feel proud) *as one of us* when she upholds the values found within the conception of a life worth living together with her child. She is blameworthy (and should feel shame) *as one of us* when she fails to do so. For instance, if, as one of us, she values listening to classical music, but in a moment of frustration at hearing Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* for the hundredth time that week snaps the C.D. in two, she is rightly criticized for failing to live up to that value.

She is also bound by certain structured norms. Given the imbalance of abilities between her and her child, her role requires her to be attentive to her child's behaviour so that she can recognize how it expresses his sense of his well-being. She is required to be responsive to these behaviours *as* expressions of well-being and adjust the values within the conception of a life worth living together with her child accordingly.

The extent to which the child is bound by this conception will largely be a function of the child's current cognitive capacities. If the child is unable to understand or appropriately respond to the values constituting the conception of a life worth their living together, then he will not be held to the same level of criticism, and not subject to the same person-specific forms of blame, as his caregiver. However, even the very young may be bound by this conception in

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<sup>64</sup> Of course, the values found in this conception must be formed appropriately in response to the infant's own sense of well-being. I discuss this further in the next section (§3.6).

another way. Earlier I described how the child's behaviour can influence the set of values his caregiver adopts for the child's sake and incorporates into the set of values within the conception of a life worth living together with her child. Let's stick with the example of classical music. Typically, her son responds happily to classical music. However, more recently her son has started to display an entirely different set of behaviours. When classical music is playing, he instead acts agitated. This behaviour is in tension with his past behaviour that led his caregiver to incorporate a value for classical music into her conception of a life worth living together with her son. As a result, it calls out for explanation, in a similar way a grown adult acting inconsistently with their values calls out for explanation. In the case of an adult, we may wonder whether they are just having an "off" day, or whether they no longer value that thing. The answer to this question helps determine how blameworthy we find them. In the case of the infant, the caregiver will also seek an explanation for this "out of character" behaviour. Is the child having an "off" day, or does his new behaviour demonstrate that classical music no longer positively contributes to his sense of his well-being, and so may no longer belong in the conception of a life worth their living together. The fact that we seek *some* explanation demonstrates an expectation that the child's pattern of behaviour, interpreted as expressing his sense of his well-being, will continue into the future. This is one sense in which the child is bound by the joint conception.

In addition, while the child may not be subject to such person-specific forms of blame, there are ways in which he is subject to a diminished form of person-specific praise. Part of raising a child is cultivating in them a certain kind of character, and part of the way we do this is to praise them when they act in ways consistent with the values a person of that character would have. That is, parents often praise their children for acting in accordance with the values they hold for their child's sake. For instance, if they want him to value generosity, they clap and say encouraging things when he tries to share his toys with them (even if the toys are all covered in drool and they don't really want them). Cases of praising a child for acting consistently with a

value the caregiver has as part of the conception of a life worth living together with her child, and so has for *their* sake, are difficult to distinguish between praise just for those she has for his sake alone. There will often be significant overlap in what a loving caregiver sees a good for the child and what she sees as good for *us*. So, I will try to describe a case where the two come apart.

Suppose the caregiver believes it is good *for them* to share in extra-curriculars, so that they have a stronger bond together, but has no beliefs about how bonding with a parent affects a child's overall well-being. Then this is a value she has for *their sake*. She signs them up for “Bonding with Baby Bubble Time”. At first the child demonstrates indifference and suspicion to the activities around him. However, after a few classes the child soon begins to interact and join in with his caregiver as she plays with the bubbles. Whereas before the caregiver did not blame the child for failing to appreciate this bonding time, she now praises him for acting consistently with the particular value she held *for their sake*. Whether the caregiver is praising the child for acting consistently with a value she holds for *his* sake or a value she holds for *their* sake, each act of praise is intended to have the child come to interpret these activities as connected to his well-being and later incorporated into his identity — whether as an individual, or as one of us.

Such a joint conception can also generate external norms and duties that others have — not to the caregiver, not to the child, but to *them*. Suppose you live in town in which it is known that while each caregiver personally hates classical music, she thinks with respect to her and her child “we enjoy classical music” and has a conception of a life worth living together with her child that includes classical music. Suppose also that all the children are too young to have anything that we might identify as values. An orchestra is expected to come to town, and it is up to you to decide whether to go ahead with or to cancel the performance. The children are too young to understand that an orchestra is coming, and so they will not be disappointed. Since the caregivers personally hate classical music, no caregiver, as the individual she is, will be disappointed. The former doesn't seem to provide a reason to decide one way or another, and

the latter seems to provide a reason to cancel. But, if those are all the reasons you consider, you are missing one. There is a reason not to cancel the orchestra, not because anybody, considered as an individual, would miss it, but because each caregiver understood as *one of us*, as one of those individuals bound by a conception of a life worth living together with her child, would miss it. The reason to bring in the orchestra is not one stemming from any child, nor any caregiver taken as an individual, but one that stems from what is good for *them*. To decide to cancel the orchestra without giving what is good for *them* its due consideration would be a mistake.

The caregiver in the case described has a conception of a life worth living together with her child which is normatively binding over both her and the child. The child contributes to this conception through his behaviour, as expressions of his well-being for his caregiver to interpret and respond to. I maintain that in this case, the caregiver and child form a plural person. In a similar manner we can form plural persons with those of us who are unable to form values or hold a conception of a life worth living. What is required is that at least one individual has this capacity, and that she is appropriately attentive to the behavioural responses the other has to his environment and social interactions. However, I do not take this to be a sufficient condition.

What it takes to form a plural person with another is largely dependent on the capacities and preferences of the other. In the next section I turn to a more precise formulation of the conditions under which a plural person comes into existence and continues to be. This more precise formulation should serve to clarify remarks made in this section and in §3.2.2. In addition, understanding the existence and persistence of plural persons better helps us understand their nature. Before moving on, it will help to introduce a bit of new terminology. So far, I have been referring to *joint* conceptions of a life worth living together. These are conceptions that *each* member of a plural person holds *as one of us*. Since I want to expand the notion of a plural person to allow for us to form plural persons with individuals lacking the capacity to hold such a conception themselves, I am also going to speak of conceptions of lives

worth living that *bind* an individual. By this I mean that the individual is subject to either the shared internal norms or the structured norms that the conception generates. That conception may also generate duties on others outside the conception, in the form of external norms, though in the sense I am using the term ‘bind’, those others would not be bound by that conception.

### 3.6 The Metaphysics of Plural Persons: A Humble Proposal

In the previous section I described how we may form plural persons with those who lack typical adult cognitive capacities. However, I have yet to give a precise statement of the conditions under which a plural person comes into existence and continues to exist. That is my task for this section. While I intend the remarks made in this section to help unite and clarify the discussion of plural persons from sections 3.2 and 3.5, I am aware that there are aspects of what I say that are unfortunately vague. These are not issues I attempt to resolve here, though I indicate them in the footnotes.

First, let’s begin with the conditions under which a plural person comes to exist at a time,  $t$ , and world,  $w$ .<sup>65</sup> A plural person comes to exist at  $t, w$  if and only if at  $t, w$  there are some individuals  $i_1, \dots, i_n$ , such that...

- (a) at least one of  $i_1, \dots, i_n$  has a conception of a life worth living together with the other(s), and
- (b) each of  $i_1, \dots, i_n$  is bound by that conception, and
- (c) that conception came to be formed in a manner that is rooted in facts regarding the relevant abilities, activities, beliefs, values, and mental states of the other(s), and
- (d) if any of  $i_1, \dots, i_n$  are capable of forming such a conception, then that conception is *joint* in that each of  $i_1, \dots, i_n$  that are so capable has access to and identifies as one of *us* (one of those individuals bound by that conception).

Condition (a) reflects what was argued for in the previous section, that it need not be the case that *every* member of the plural person has a conception of a life worth living with the others. If plural persons are to play a role in understanding what it is to paradigmatically lose a part of

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<sup>65</sup> This way of formulating the existence and persistence conditions comes from Epstein (2019).

oneself in the loss of a loved one, then we must be able to form plural persons with those who lack a conception of a kind of life worth living.

The second condition, (b), is that each of  $i_1, \dots, i_n$  is bound by that conception. Recall that to be bound by a conception is to be subject to either the shared internal norms or the structured norms that the conception generates, and that the conception may generate duties, via external norms, that others outside the conception have to the individual in virtue of that conception. This condition is to ensure that all and only the members of  $i_1, \dots, i_n$  are members of the plural person.

Condition (c) is a *rooted in reality* condition. It is not enough that just one  $i_1, \dots, i_n$  has a conception of a life worth living together with the other(s) for them to form a plural person. For she may have false beliefs about the relevant abilities, activities, beliefs, values, and mental states of the others with whom they *believe* they have a joint conception of a life worth living together with. Consider again the case of Tim and Olivia. Suppose that upon close observation of Tim, Olivia comes to form beliefs about his values, and suppose that through misinterpreting Tim's actions towards and conversations with her, Olivia comes to form a conception of a life worth *their* living together, and believes that Tom has this conception too. Despite this conception of Olivia's, her and Tim fail to form a plural person.

Why? In this case Olivia has been mis-interpreting Tim's behaviours, conversations, and other actions towards her. It is because of her misinterpreting these cues that she comes to form the conception of a life worth their living together, and had she interpreted them the way Tom intended, she would not have formed such a conception. The way this conception was formed was not appropriately "rooted in reality".

The rooted in reality condition also prevents caregivers from forming a plural person with a young child just by projecting a set of values she has "for their sake" onto him. Just as Olivia can misinterpret Tim's cues, a caregiver can misinterpret a child's cues. This is why I emphasized the importance of a caregiver's love for and attentiveness to her child when building a conception of

a life worth their living together. Such love and attentiveness help her interpret how her child's behaviours best reflect his own sense of his well-being.<sup>66</sup> In addition, for one's conception of a life worth living together with someone else to be rooted in facts, one's beliefs about the abilities, activities, beliefs, values, and mental states of the other(s) must not just be true, but it must also be justified. Lucky guesses, and beliefs that fail to be based on, or are unresponsive to, the evidence will not count as those that are rooted in fact. Forming a plural person with another requires that one be accurately attuned to the other's thoughts, beliefs, values, her own self-conception, and her conception of a life worth their living together (with you), if she is capable of one.<sup>67</sup>

Condition (d) is perhaps a special application of (c). When one believes that they have a conception of a life worth living together with another person, and identifies as *one of us*, and the other person is capable of having such a conception, it *must* be the case that each individual is aware of the conception, and each *identifies* with that conception insofar as they have a sense of who *we* are and what kind of life is worth *our* living together. Recall again, Olivia, who believes she has such a conception with Tim, but, sadly for her, is mistaken. A reason she is mistaken is that Tim does not hold this conception alongside her, and does not identify as one of *us*.<sup>68</sup>

Plural persons are not instantaneous entities. Once they come into existence, they continue to exist for some time. So, what are their persistence conditions?

My answer is, given that a plural person,  $p$ , came into existence at  $t_0$  in  $w$ , then for any time  $t > t_0$  in  $w$ ,  $p$  exists at  $t$  if and only if:

- (a)  $p$  has neither lost nor gained any members, and

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<sup>66</sup> This is largely inspired by how Lindemann (2002, 2014), in developing her narrative account of moral personhood, observes that it is possible for others to misidentify the narrative that constitutes and distinguishes the person that one is. Individuals can also misidentify their own narrative. In developing a narrative for both oneself and for others, not just anything goes. The behaviours of oneself and those around one provide constraints on which narratives are legitimate. Similarly, the beliefs, etc, of those around you provide constraint on whether you can form a plural person with them.

<sup>67</sup> This is the first instance of unfortunate vagueness. I do not think that the beliefs about the other must be 100% accurate. If that were required, it would be near impossible to form a plural person with anyone. Surely you must know the other "well enough". Picking any particular degree of "enough" though, would be extremely arbitrary.

<sup>68</sup> Though here I speak of individuals *believing* that they have such-and-such a conception, and being aware of that conception, this is perhaps not the best choice of words. For, it sounds as if the belief and knowledge must be explicit. Sometimes it is, but often times it is more subtle or tacit. What may be more explicit is the idea that the individuals are a *we* and that at times they will identify as *one of us*.

(b) the members of  $p$  at  $t$  are bound by a conception of a life worth their living together that is appropriately causally connected to the conception of a life worth living together that bound them at  $t_0$ .

According to condition (a), plural persons can neither gain nor lose members.<sup>69</sup> A plural person cannot lose members, because at the loss of a member the conception of a life worth *our* living together is extinguished. One of the individuals constituting who *we* are, is gone. At the loss of one member of a plural person, the survivors are left to determine a new conception of a life worth their living together, without the other. For similar reasons a plural person cannot gain members. In gaining a member the individuals constituting who *we* are is different, and so the conception of a life worth *our* living together is different.

Still, it is tempting to think that a plural person *can* gain members. After all, friend groups and families grow, and this does not stop the original members from continuing their friendship and love for each other, nor prevent them from loving the new members as strongly as they do the originals. However, all this can be done while the original members maintain a conception of a life worth their living together that is not binding over the new addition. To be a member of a plural person is, to repurpose a phrase, to be *caught up in the life* of a plural person.<sup>70</sup> To be caught up in the life of a plural person is to be bound by a particular conception of a life worth living together with the other members. Yet, parents might have a conception of a life worth *their* living together, which binds only them, and retain this after having a child. Then the child is not a member of that plural person. Rather, there is *another* conception that binds them and their child into a distinct plural person. So, the fact that friend groups and families can expand does not, I think, entail that plural persons can gain members. This is also in line with how we conceive of an

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<sup>69</sup> This makes plural unlike many other social groups such as teams, clubs, and committees, which can surely lose some members, and gain some new ones, yet still persist. Plural persons are also unlike teams, committees and book clubs in that while there may be two distinct book clubs, at the same time, with all the same members, there cannot be two distinct plural persons, at the same time, with all the same members. However, as with teams, committees, clubs, a plural person may be coincident with other social groups.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. van Inwagen (1990, esp. pages 92-94)

individual person when she forms a new conception of a life worth living *together* with someone else. In such a case, we do not think that the individual conception expanded to include someone else, but rather that the individual came to have a conception of a life worth her living together with another person, one that can run in tandem with her individual conception of a life worth living.

The second condition, (b), says that the conception of a life worth their living together at  $t$  is appropriately causally connected to the conception of a life worth living that bound the members of  $p$  at  $t_0$ . This condition is to ensure that plural persons persist through changes in the conception of a life worth *their* living, so long as those changes are appropriately causally connected to the conception of a life worth *their* living at  $t_0$ . Just as we think an individual person can survive changes in the values that constitute her conception of a life worth living, so can a plural person, granted that those connections are formed in the right way.<sup>71</sup>

Thus far I have largely focused on the ontological issues surrounding plural persons: the kinds of entities they are (social groups), and their existence and persistence conditions. Yet there are ethical issues surrounding the existence of plural persons as well, and these are ones that I turn to in the next section.

### **3.7 Plural Persons and Moral Personhood**

In §3.4 I wrote that the type of personhood plural persons exhibit is *moral* personhood.

However, one may object that if plural persons are moral persons, then moral personhood becomes intolerably conventional. For, moral personhood should not depend on social factors. However, if plural persons are moral persons, then moral personhood does, at least at times, depend on social factors (such as whether two individuals love each other).

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<sup>71</sup> This is another point of vagueness. What counts as an appropriate causal connection is well-beyond the scope of this paper. I am inclined to think that any appropriate causal connection is one that preserves a majority of the values constituting a conception of a life worth living from instant to instant. For a related discussion, see Parfit's (1984) account of the psychological continuity of persons, and reliance on the "right form" of causal connection, especially pps. 207-209. I should also flag that here I am relying on a version of psychological continuity for plural persons as moral persons. I do not mean to suggest that this is the correct metaphysical analysis of personal identity.

There are several different versions of this objection. I will take some time to go through each. The first version comes from the thought that *what it is to be a moral person* cannot depend on our conventions. If it did, then if our conventions were to drastically change so that we considered rocks to be moral persons, then rocks would be moral persons. However, I do not think my use of plural persons has this entailment. For one, while it is true that I've relied on Helm's account of persons, I don't have to maintain that his description of persons as things that have conceptions of the kind of life worth living provides an account of moral personhood (even if he does). I do think that having such a conception is *sufficient* for being a moral person, but I think that should be relatively uncontroversial. Anything that has a conception of the kind of life worth living seems a very good candidate for being a moral person, regardless of one's preferred analysis of moral personhood. For another, even if I were to commit to Helm's account of persons, this would not entail that moral personhood is a matter of convention. If what it is *to be* a moral person *just is* to have a conception of a life worth living, that would be a matter of fact, and we could not change it, no matter our conventions. So, this version of the objection is mistaken in its assumption that if plural persons are moral persons, then the analysis of what it is to be a plural person is a matter of convention.

However, my use of plural personhood *does* imply that whether or not a particular thing, in this instance a collection of individuals, meets the conditions for moral personhood is a matter of convention. It is a matter of convention insofar as whether that collection is a plural person (and thus a moral person), depends on whether the members are bound by a conception of a life worth their living together. Such a conception relies on conventions between the members, such as shared values, accepted behaviours, in addition to other social factors. My use of plural persons thus makes moral personhood conventional in the sense that whether something meets the conditions for moral personhood (whatever those are) is conventional. For this reason I don't think my use of plural persons entails that moral personhood is wholly conventional, but

rather quasi-conventional. The second version of the objection targets this quasi-conventionalism, and says that whether some particular thing is a moral person cannot depend on *any* social factors like conventions, but only on the intrinsic features of that thing. No moral person is “socially constructed”.

Following Haslanger (2012, p. 87) let’s distinguish between something’s being *causally* socially constructed and something’s being *constitutively* socially constructed. “Something is causally socially constructed [if and only if] social factors play a causal role in bringing it into existence or, to some substantial extent, it being the way it is.” In contrast, something is constitutively socially constructed just in case “in defining it we must make reference to social factors”. I will follow Ritchie (2020, p. 3) in characterizing social factors by example. Social factors include “social behaviour, patterns of action, habits, beliefs, intentions, processes, practices, activities, rules, laws, norms, and arrangements.”

The objection is untenable if it insists that something’s moral personhood cannot be causally socially constructed. For it would have to deny that social factors play *any* causal role in making a moral person. But that is surely too strong. Social behaviours, patterns of actions, intentions, beliefs, etc. often play a causal role in something’s moral personhood. These are part of the causal chain that brings a human being, which will become a moral person, into existence. So, moral persons *must* be causally socially constructed, at least to some degree.

Thus, the objection must be that something’s moral personhood cannot be constitutively socially constructed. That is, the analysis of what it is to be a moral person — even if the definition itself is not a matter of convention — cannot include ineliminable reference to social factors. My interlocutor must think that any definition of moral personhood that allows for plural persons to be moral persons *must* be one that contains ineliminable reference to social features. I agree that it most likely will, but I also think it would be a mistake to maintain otherwise. My own inclination is to think that moral personhood *must* be constitutively socially

constructed. For it is often viewed as a condition by which one becomes a member of the moral *community*, and has rights and responsibilities as either a moral agent or patient. These things make the most sense within a social context. What it is to be a moral person seems to involve being a social thing, one way or another. Thus, I do not want to argue that moral personhood is not constitutively socially constructed. So, it looks as if my interlocutor and I have reached an impasse.

However, there is yet another version of the objection. According to this version, moral personhood is an intrinsic feature of an object, and if we allow plural persons to be moral persons, then moral personhood may *not* be an intrinsic feature of an object.<sup>72</sup>

There is a rich literature on how to understand the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic properties, and how to test whether or not something is an intrinsic or an extrinsic property. I will focus on just two: the lonely object test, and the duplication test.

According to the lonely object test, a property is intrinsic to an object just in case it could be had by that object in a world where nothing else exists except it and its parts. But a plural person's moral personhood passes this test. If we imagine that *a* and *b* are a plural person, then they will be a plural person regardless of whether anything else but them and their parts exists. And if plural personhood is sufficient for moral personhood, then they will be a moral person as well. So, plural personhood passes the lonely object test.

The second test is the duplication test. According to this test a property, *p*, is intrinsic to an object, *x*, just in case were you to duplicate *x* in any other world, its duplicate would also be *p*.<sup>73</sup> My interlocutor must be imagining that although *a* and *b* are a plural person in *this* world,

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<sup>72</sup> The argument in Johnston (2017) may be taken to show that the intrinsicity of moral personhood — he discusses moral status, but presumably moral persons have moral status — is incompatible with the assumption that the “only being with a moral status that can be found within a [metaphysical] person's spatio-temporal envelope is that [metaphysical] person”. However, this argument is broader than, and distinct from, the issue at hand, and so I will not be addressing it.

<sup>73</sup> This follows the Lewis (1983, 1986)/Sider (1996) definition that a property, *P* is intrinsic iff for any possible objects *x* and *y*, if *x* and *y* are duplicates then *x* has *P* iff *y* has *P*. Here I leave out the task of what it is for *x* and *y* to be duplicates. However, insofar as duplicate is defined in terms of natural properties, which themselves would need to be defined, the lonely object analysis makes exposition easier.

were we to take them from this world and in another world duplicate *a*, and then duplicate *b*, they would not form a plural person. And so, they conclude, they will not form a moral person either. And so, moral personhood is not an intrinsic feature.

However, we shouldn't think of duplication like that. We shouldn't duplicate *a* and then duplicate *b*, we need to duplicate *them* in the way that they are together. Suppose *being a material object* is an intrinsic property. Were we to take some material object, say, a table, and duplicate it the way my interlocutor is imagining: one part at a time, ignoring the relations between them, we might end up imagining a world in which there is no table at all, just many little particles. Then we might conclude that since the table does not exist in that world, it is not a material object in that world, and so *material objecthood* is not an intrinsic property. But that would be a mistake in how we have "duplicated" the table. We need to duplicate the table as a whole, paying attention to the relation between its parts. And when we do that, we end up with a material object. Similarly, in duplicating a plural person we don't merely duplicate its members, we duplicate its members paying attention to the ways in which they are related to each other. And when we duplicate them that way, we should find that they are a plural person (and thus, a moral person) in any other world as well.

While both the duplication analysis and the lonely object analysis of intrinsicity are subject to counterexamples — see Marshall and Weatherson (2018) for an overview — either "working definition" should suffice for the present purposes. As Merricks (1998, p.3) notes of the lonely object test, "excluding cases which rely on other objects' failing to exist or on what the object in question did in the past or will do in the future, [this test] seems to get things right and so it is useful." Similar remarks hold for the duplication test. Since plural personhood passes both tests, I think it is safe to say that plural personhood does not entail that moral personhood is not intrinsic.

Concerns about intrinsicity aside, there is another objection lurking. This objection comes in two parts. First, is the claim that *if* we can form plural persons with those lacking certain cognitive abilities, then we should be able to form plural persons with nonhuman animals that lack those abilities to the same extent. Second, the objection continues, *if* we can form plural persons with nonhuman animals, and *if* being a member of a plural person is sufficient for an individual to have moral personhood, then nonhuman animals too will have moral personhood.

There are a lot of ‘ifs’ there. Of them, the only claim I have explicitly committed to is that we can form plural persons with individuals lacking in certain cognitive capacities. I have not argued that we can do so with nonhuman animals, nor have I argued that being a member of a plural person is sufficient for that member (as an individual) to have moral personhood.

The latter claim I will not argue against. I do not have an argument in favour of it, but I think that there is something fruitful about it. Kittay (2005) argues against the assumption that it is only one’s intrinsic cognitive capacities that determine her moral personhood. In the case of an individual lacking the requisite cognitive capacities to have concern for her own sake, Kittay suggests that the appropriate concern of a third party, concern had *for the individual’s sake*, may serve as a surrogate for that individual’s concern. Similarly, Lindemann (2002, 2014), who endorses a narrative account of moral personhood, suggests that those who care for an individual lacking the cognitive capacities to construct her own narrative are able to construct a narrative for her, and thereby “hold her in moral personhood”. Too often those of us without the full range of cognitive capacities are thought to be lacking something required to count as moral persons, despite objections from their friends and families that that is not the case. If my account *could* be extended in a way that would demonstrate their moral personhood, I would be glad of it.<sup>74</sup>

So, to resist the conclusion that it is possible for nonhuman animals to have moral personhood (do we really want to though? I love my dog!), it seems to me that the best way to do

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<sup>74</sup> This is something I intend to work on in the future.

so is to argue that we cannot form plural persons with nonhuman animals.<sup>75</sup> Yet, this is not a possibility that I would like to entirely rule out either. In the off chance that some other sentient creatures, much like us, though with different DNA, were to arrive on Earth, and we were able to communicate effectively with them, I see no reason why we shouldn't be able to form plural persons with them. So, rather than take the firm stance we can *only* form plural persons with our fellow humans, I will argue that doing so with non-human animals is much more difficult.

Recall from §3.6 that a plural person comes to exist at a time,  $t$ , and world,  $w$ , if and only if at  $t, w$  there are some individuals  $i_1, \dots, i_n$ , such that...

- (a) at least one of  $i_1, \dots, i_n$  has a conception of a life worth living together with the other(s), and
- (b) each of  $i_1, \dots, i_n$  is bound by that conception, and
- (c) that conception came to be formed in a manner that is rooted in facts regarding the relevant abilities, activities, beliefs, values, and mental states of the other(s), and
- (d) if any of  $i_1, \dots, i_n$  are capable of forming such a conception, then that conception is *joint* in that each of  $i_1, \dots, i_n$  that are so capable has access to and identifies as one of  $w$  (one of those individuals bound by that conception).

To show the difficulty in forming plural persons with nonhuman animals, I'll focus on condition (c), the condition that the conception of a life worth their living together must be rooted in facts.

Recall that for one's conception of a life worth living together with someone else to be rooted in facts, one's beliefs about the other's abilities, activities, beliefs, values, and mental states must not just be true, but must also be justified. This justification is harder to come by for non-human animals than it is for other human beings for two reasons: (i) our inability to communicate with them, which itself seems due largely, but not necessarily, to (ii) their deeply different embodiment from ours. The first condition is true, admittedly, of some human beings, but unlike nonhuman animals, it is not true because of (ii).<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Here I am *not* arguing that non-human animals are not members of the moral community, such that their interests do not matter in our moral reasoning. They just have a slightly different status from moral persons. Perhaps someone pushing this objection wishes to deny that animals belong to the moral community, but to me that seems like a mistake.

<sup>76</sup> Here my appeal to the different embodiment of humans and nonhumans is inspired by and largely follows the strategies of Lindemann (2002, esp. pages 35-36; 2014, esp. Ch. 2), and Schechtman (2014).

When, due to a language barrier, we are unable to communicate through spoken, written, or official signed language with another human being, we are often able to do so through other means — gestures and charades. That these gestures and charades communicate information seems to be made possible, in part, by the fact that as human beings we share a similar set of experiences, and these similar experiences are due largely to our similar embodiment *as humans*.

Of course, there are humans with whom we cannot communicate in this way, and we cannot rely on these methods to justifiably gather information about their mental states and the like. In such cases our beliefs stem from observing their behaviour and responses to their environment. But it is also more than that. These beliefs also stem from the fact that we know what it is like to experience joy, anger, warmth, and cold as a human being. We are aware of the way emotions and feelings are expressed through behaviour. All humans share a similar embodiment and through this shared embodiment we experience emotions and mental states, and we use our bodies to express our emotions and mental states in similar ways. This, it seems, allows us to justifiably infer from facts about their patterns of behaviour and actions, facts about their mental states and mental lives.

We do not share that same embodiment with nonhuman animals. Thus, claims to have justified beliefs about the mental lives of nonhuman animals are more specious. I often observe my dog jumping in the air and spinning in circles when friends come to visit, and through this I form the belief that my dog is happy to have friends over. However, that belief is less justified than my beliefs about other humans. I am not a dog and I have a different embodiment than my dog. Because of this I do not know what it is like for a dog to be happy. Nor do I even know that dogs experience an emotion similar to or as rich as human happiness, as opposed to something that is positively valenced, but more coarse grained. For this reason, it seems that my beliefs about my dog's mental states are less justified than my beliefs regarding the mental state of an infant.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Cf. to Nagel (1974).

Finally, as Lindemann (2002) and Schechtman (2014) observe, because of our shared embodiment we automatically, unreflectively, take up the attitude that other human beings are persons, and so typically treat them in accordance with the usual norms — both moral and cultural — surrounding persons. We must be told in instances when those norms don't apply. This is not the case for animals. For example, I don't hold my dog accountable the same way I would a human being — even one I hadn't met — when she chews on the couch. I would indeed hold a human being accountable for doing so, and would need to be given a reason before I suspend that judgment in the way I automatically do for my dog. Our cultural norms surrounding human beings are different from the ones we have surrounding other animals as well. Seeing a naked human being in the streets invokes an entirely different set of concerns than seeing a naked dog does. We even expect infants to behave like persons in many ways we do not expect animals to. For example, when their newborn does not enjoy snuggling, parents worry that this indicates something about her well-being. This is not something we expect of animals.<sup>78</sup> The fact that we automatically judge another human being to be a person makes it easier to form a conception of a life worth living together with them than it is with another kind of animal. It is something we do unreflectively, simply in virtue of their humanity and our relationship to them.

At this point one may object that while “rooted in reality” beliefs about my dog's well-being may be more difficult to form than those about other human beings, it may actually be *easier* to form such beliefs about simpler life forms. Consider a goldfish.<sup>79</sup> While it may not have as sophisticated a mental life as a human, or as a dog, it has some mental life. Goldfish swim to the sides of their tank when they see their owner approach, expecting to be fed. This surely indicates something about their well-being. When left too long in dirty water they swim to the top, gasping for air. That surely indicates something about their well-being. Insofar as their mental lives are

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<sup>78</sup> The fact that we automatically judge another human being to be a person may also make it easier to form a conception of a life worth living together with them, qua *persons*, than it is with another kind of animal.

<sup>79</sup> Mark Heller is the one who asked me about goldfish.

relatively simple, perhaps we can *easily* have the right kind of justified beliefs about their well-being. In fact, this may be even easier than having those kinds of justified beliefs about human beings, whose behaviour often does not reflect how they are feeling or what they are thinking. So, perhaps we could more easily form plural persons with goldfish than with dogs, or maybe even with other human beings.

Of course, we do not just form plural persons with others in virtue of them being human beings. It requires that we have a sense of their well-being *as the particular individual they are*. For human adults that requires some knowledge of their values and their identities as *this particular person*. Such knowledge often makes it easy for us to tell when someone is feigning joy or happiness, so we are not left with a strictly behaviourist interpretation of their well-being. For those human beings without the capacity to value, forming a plural person with them still requires knowledge of their sense of their well-being. I have said that we can get this knowledge through observing their behaviour, that is true. But their sense of their well-being is still a *human* sense of their well-being. It is of a well-being experienced and expressed through a human body. We are better able to understand this on a phenomenal level than we are able to understand the goldfish's sense of its well-being, and this provides us with beliefs about human beings more deeply “rooted in reality” than our beliefs about goldfish — even if we are less likely to be wrong about the fish.

So, I think there is a case to be made that we do not form plural persons with nonhuman animals due to both our inability to communicate with them, and our different embodiment. Because of these things, our beliefs about their mental states, activities, and the like fail to be justified in the manner required to form a conception of a life worth living with them that is rooted in reality. I recognize that this leaves open the possibility that we *could* form plural persons with nonhuman animals, but that is not a possibility that I wish to rule out. Who knows what sorts of creatures we might come across in the future.

### 3.8 Conclusion

We have seen that the Intimacy Constraint, when it relied on mutual intimate relationships, did not provide us with the right result when it came to cases of arch enemies. To come up with a version of the Intimacy Constraint that can do so, I introduced Helm's notion of plural persons, and explained why I thought it was preferable to Rovane's account of group persons. I then explained that while plural persons may not count as persons in a metaphysical sense, they should be taken to exist as much as any social group does. However, plural persons, even if they exist, will be useful for explaining the grief utterances only if they can capture *all* paradigmatic instances of losing a part. And such instances seem to include the loss of an infant, as well as the loss of those who may lack the cognitive capacities required to form their own individual conception of a life worth their living together. So, I explained how to modify Helm's account to allow us to form plural persons with those lacking the apparently requisite cognitive capacities. After finally presenting an account of the persistence and existence conditions of plural persons, I turned to defending the resulting account from the objection that it makes moral personhood intolerably conventional.

Yet, "the proof is in the pudding", as they say. In the next two chapters I demonstrate how the concept of plural persons can be implemented to help provide an account of what it is, in the paradigmatic instances, to lose a part of oneself in the loss of a loved one.

## Chapter Four: Grief and Composition as Identity

### 4.0. Introduction

In Chapter Two I discussed the mereological part proposal according to which grief utterances are true because (a) our loved ones are mereological parts of us, and (b) when they die we lose that part. However, I observed that to endorse this proposal, we would either have to give up some of the main tenets of classical mereology, or give up some of our pre-theoretic beliefs about grief and loss. In this chapter I turn to a different proposal, one that says I lose a part of myself when a loved one dies because some whole, of which both my loved one and I are parts, and to which each of us is identical, loses a part (Baxter 2005). This proposal requires endorsing a thesis called Composition as Identity ('CAI'), one of a family of views (indicated by lower case 'composition as identity') according to which the parts are identical to the whole.

As this version of composition as identity differs significantly from more well-known versions according to which the parts are collectively identical, or almost identical, to the whole, §4.1 is devoted to familiarizing the reader with the details of the view.<sup>80</sup> In §4.2, I explain how, given these details, we should understand Baxter's (2005) suggestion that CAI makes grief utterances true. In doing so, I highlight a crucial gap in CAI — it is currently missing a version of Leibniz's Law required (a) to make the grief utterances true, and (b) to vindicate the claim that the parts are *identical* to the whole. In §4.3, I develop the requisite version of Leibniz's Law. In §4.4, I explain how this updated version of CAI makes the grief utterances true, and better vindicates the claim that there is *identity* between part and whole. In §4.5 I consider the strengths and weaknesses of the resulting view. I use these to build a list of additional desiderata for a satisfying account of the grief utterances.

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<sup>80</sup> See Lewis (1991: 81-87).

#### 4.1. Baxter's Composition as Identity

Baxter's CAI is *not* the more familiar version according to which the parts are collectively identical (or almost identical) to the whole.<sup>81</sup> Baxter's CAI may be better described as the view that each individual part is identical to the whole. But, even that is misleading. According to Baxter, parts and wholes do not even exist together, at least not in the same count. Counts are the first part of the machinery of CAI. On CAI, reality is multi-faceted.<sup>82</sup> Each facet corresponds to a count. Objects exist in counts. An object exists in a count just in case it is counted in that count.<sup>83</sup> Wholes and their parts never exist in the same count. Were they to exist in the same count, the number of objects in that count would be greater than common sense suggests. Imagine standing in a checkout aisle restricted to six items. You want to buy a six-pack. There are six cans in the six-pack, and there is the six-pack. If you counted each can *and* the six-pack, then you would find that you have seven items and need to leave the aisle. Clearly, this would be a mistake in counting. However, since parts and wholes exist in distinct counts, we do not count them together. There is no count in which each of the six cans is counted alongside the six-pack. You need not leave the restricted aisle.

Although parts don't exist in the same count as the whole, *aspects* do. We can think of aspects as individuals as they are a certain way. Consider Eustace: he is an honest friend but at his job as a used car salesman Eustace is dishonest. This does not entail that Eustace is both honest and dishonest. Rather, Eustace has differing aspects: Eustace-as-a-friend, and Eustace-as-a-salesman. One is honest, one is dishonest. Let's use Turner's (2014) notation for aspects: where ' $\mathbf{x}$ ' denotes either an individual or an aspect, ' $\mathbf{x}_y[\mathbf{F}]$ ' denotes the aspect  $\mathbf{x}$ -as-it-is-F.<sup>84</sup> So,

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<sup>81</sup> In this chapter, I discuss Baxter's Composition as Identity described in his (1988a), (1988b), (1989), and (2018b), and consider elements of his theory of aspects found in his (2018a).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Baxter (1988a: 581), and Baxter (1988b: 201)

<sup>83</sup> Baxter (1988a: 576; 1988b: 200). These counts are not merely conventions for how and what we want to count, but are literally different facets of reality. Turner (2014) suggests Baxter's view is a version of ontological pluralism: some things exist in different ways (qua existing in different counts) than others. For discussions of ontological pluralism see Turner (2010) and McDaniel (2017).

<sup>84</sup> Throughout the paper I rely on the notational conventions and interpretation of Baxter from Turner (2014). This particular notation is also used in Baxter (2018b).

we have Eustace[friend *y*] and Eustace[salesman *y*]. Eustace[friend *y*] and Eustace[salesman *y*] are the very same individual: Eustace. Since they exist in the same count as Eustace, say that they are *intra-count* identical to Eustace, a relation designated with ‘=’.

However, since both Eustace[friend *y*] and Eustace[salesman *y*] are identical to Eustace, and one is honest and the other is dishonest, we seem to face the same problem: Eustace is both honest and dishonest. This is only an *apparent* contradiction as intra-count Leibniz's Law ranges *only* over individuals, not aspects. Let's use quantifiers bound to **boldface** variables to range over both aspects and the individuals they are aspects of. Quantifiers bound to *italicized* variables range only over individuals and are restricted to ignore aspects.<sup>85</sup> The resulting version of Leibniz's Law is:

**Intra-Count Leibniz's Law (ILL):**  $\forall_{c_1} x \forall_{c_1} y (x=y \rightarrow (\Phi_x \leftrightarrow \Phi_y))$

Note that the quantifiers are subscripted with alphanumeric characters. These index the quantifiers to counts. ILL thus tells us that, for any individuals, *x* and *y*, in the same count, if they are intra-count identical, then anything true of one is true of the other.

Although parts do not exist in the same count as the whole, there is another relation of identity, *cross-count identity*, indicated by ‘≈’, which holds between the parts in one count, and aspects of the whole in another. The parts are cross-count identical to *locational* aspects of the whole: the whole as it occupies a particular region.<sup>86</sup> Namely, the region the part *exactly* occupies, or is located. For the purposes of illustrating how CAI makes the grief utterances true, I will take the relevant whole to be entirely composed of two individuals: Barbara and Anne. Call the whole ‘Barbara-Anne’. Take region  $R_B$ , in which Barbara is located. Let ‘ $C_1$ ’ designate the count in which the parts, Barbara and Anne, but not the whole, Barbara-Anne, exist. In  $C_1$ , Barbara *exactly occupies*  $R_B$ . That is, Barbara fills all and only  $R_B$ 's sub-regions. Let ‘ $C_2$ ’ designate the count in

<sup>85</sup> This notation is from Turner (2014). To help remember: ‘bold’ and ‘both’ each start with a ‘b’, ‘italics’ and ‘individual’ each start with an ‘i’. The convention of using ‘=’ for intra-count identity and ‘≈’ for cross-count identity is also from Turner.

<sup>86</sup> Baxter (1988b). The following is a quick summary of how Turner (2014) understands the relation between parts and locational aspects given CAI.

which Barbara-Anne exists, but its parts do not. In  $C_2$ , it is Barbara-Anne that fills all of  $R_B$ 's sub-regions. But, Barbara-Anne does not *exactly* occupy  $R_B$ , as it also fills regions beyond  $R_B$ .

However,  $R_B$  is exactly occupied by Barbara-Anne<sub>*y*</sub>[located at  $R_B$  *y*]. Barbara-Anne<sub>*y*</sub>[located at  $R_B$  *y*] fills all and only  $R_B$ 's sub-regions. Regardless of counts, the stuff that fills all and only  $R_B$ 's sub-regions is the same. Barbara and Barbara-Anne<sub>*y*</sub>[located at  $R_B$  *y*] are stuff-identical. Cross-count identity is stuff-identity.<sup>87</sup>

Since cross-count identity is an *identity* relation, we should expect it to have all identity's formal features (reflexivity, transitivity, symmetry) as well as an analog of Leibniz's Law.<sup>88</sup> Of course, this version of Leibniz's Law must be consistent with the idea that parts and their wholes do not exist in the same count, and so must have certain restrictions placed on it. The Cross-Count version of Leibniz's Law is thus:

**Cross-Count Leibniz Law (CCLL):** When  $\Phi_x$  does not entail that  $x$  and  $y$  exist in the same count or are identical to the same things:  $\forall_{c_1x}\forall_{c_2y}(x \approx y \rightarrow (\Phi_x \leftrightarrow \Phi_y))$ .<sup>89</sup>

In other words, if individual  $x$ , in one count, is cross-count identical to aspect or individual  $y$ , in another count, then every feature of  $x$  is a feature of  $y$  (and vice versa), *except* for those features that entail that the two exist in the same count, or are identical to the same thing.<sup>90</sup>

Such is the current machinery of CAI. In the next section I present Baxter's suggestion CAI makes the grief utterances true. In doing so, I argue that to realize this proposal, CAI's machinery must be updated to include yet another version of Leibniz's Law.

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<sup>87</sup> The understanding of cross-count identity as stuff identity is also from Turner (2014)

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Sider (2007: 56): "Whatever else one thinks about identity, Leibniz's Law must play a central role."

<sup>89</sup> Jason Turner (2014) goes into some detail explaining just what those  $\Phi_x$  that are not permitted would be. He restricts Cross-Count Leibniz's Law to purely qualitative  $\Phi_x$ .  $\Phi_x$  is purely qualitative iff it is (i) open only in  $x$ ; (ii) contains neither '=' nor ' $\approx$ '; (iii) contains no count relativized quantifiers; and (iv) is with  $x$  both nominally and descriptively bare in it.  $x$  is nominally bare in  $\Phi_x$  iff  $x$  fails to occur in the name position of an aspectival term. For instance, in 'Aristotle<sub>*y*</sub>[like Socrates *y*]', 'Aristotle' occurs in the name position of the aspectival term.  $x$  is descriptively bare in  $\Phi_x$  iff  $x$  fails to occur in the descriptive position of an aspectival term. For instance, 'Aristotle<sub>*y*</sub>[like Socrates *y*]', 'Socrates' occurs in the descriptive position of the aspectival term.

<sup>90</sup> This is in accordance with Baxter's (1988b: 208) claim that each "[aspect of the whole] must exactly resemble [the part of the whole it is cross-count identical to] in every way that does not entail that the [whole] and [its parts] exist in the same count, or are identical to the same things."

## 4.2. Baxter's Argument

Baxter writes "...parts are literally identical to the whole in one [count]... Thus, if the whole loses another part, the first part has lost that part..."<sup>91</sup> Consider Barbara-Anne. Suppose Barbara were to pass away. Anne is the survivor. Baxter's argument starts with:

- (a) Anne is literally identical to Barbara-Anne in one count.

And ends with:

- (b) If Barbara-Anne loses a part, Anne loses that part.

Since wholes and parts exist in distinct counts, although (a) tells us that Anne is literally identical to Barbara-Anne in one count, this cannot be quite right. What *is* literally identical to Barbara-Anne in one count is a certain aspect of her: Barbara-Anne as located at  $R_A$ , the region Anne exactly occupies in a different count. Let's understand (a) as (1), and we will take this as the first premise of Baxter's argument:

- (1) Barbara-Anne = Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A$ ]

When Barbara passes away, Barbara-Anne loses a part.<sup>92</sup> However, because Barbara-Anne exists in a different count from her parts, we should understand this as saying that Barbara-Anne loses a locational aspect: Barbara-Anne as located at  $R_B$ , where  $R_B$  is the region Barbara was located. So, let's take this particular instance of the antecedent of (b) as our second premise:

- (2) Barbara-Anne loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_B$ ].

Together, (1) and (2) are to lead us to the conclusion:

- (3) So, Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A$ ] loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_B$ ].

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<sup>91</sup> Baxter (2005: 380)

<sup>92</sup> How Barbara-Anne loses a part is a matter to be resolved. Insofar as Barbara's body remains intact, all of her stuff is still there. So, one may wonder whether we *should* think of cross-count identity as stuff-identity. (Thanks to Ned Markosian for bringing this to my attention). But oftentimes we don't take the mere existence of the parts to entail the existence of the whole. We also tend to think that in order for  $x$  to be part of  $y$ ,  $x$  has to be related to  $y$  in the right way. When it comes to social wholes like Barbara-Anne, it may very well be the case that Barbara cannot be related to Barbara-Anne in the right way if she is not alive.

One may worry that (3) only goes as far as saying that an aspect of Barbara-Anne has lost an aspect, yet we want to conclude that *Anne* has experienced a loss. But remember, Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>A</sub>y] is cross-count identical to Anne, so CCLL allows us to move from (3) and (4):

(4) Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>A</sub>y]  $\approx$  Anne

to

(5) So, Anne loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub>y].

Since on CAI losing a locational aspect is losing a part, this is the desired result.

However, while CCLL licenses the inference from (3) and (4) to (5), neither ILL nor CCLL license the inference from (1) and (2) to (3). ILL does not, as it is restricted to range only over individuals and the identity claim in (1) is an identity between an individual and an aspect. CCLL does not, as (1) makes use of intra-count identity and CCLL governs only cross-count identity. Thus, as it stands, the machinery of Baxter's CAI does not allow us to infer that because the whole is some way, the parts are that way as well. Not only does this prevent CAI from offering an account of grief utterances, it also casts doubt on the very idea underlying CAI: that the parts are *identical* to the whole. In the following section, I introduce and develop a restricted version of Leibniz's Law that licenses such an inference. When combined with the machinery of CAI from the previous section, the result, discussed in §4, is an updated, workable theory of CAI that makes the grief utterances true, and better vindicates the claim that there is *identity* between part and whole.

### 4.3. Leibniz's Laws and Category Mistakes

In order for CAI to make the grief utterances true it must account for the following inference:

(1) Barbara-Anne = Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>A</sub>y]

(2) Barbara-Anne loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub>y]

(3) So, Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>A</sub>y] loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub>y]

It looks like what is required is:

**Individual to Aspect Leibniz's Law (I2ALL):**  $\forall_{e1}x\forall_{e1}y(x=y \rightarrow (\Phi x \rightarrow \Phi y))$ <sup>93</sup>

Not only will such a principle license the inference in (1)-(3), but it will also help to vindicate the claim that on this version of composition as identity, the parts are *identical* to the whole. The fact that there is currently no principle that allows us to move from a claim that the whole is some way, to the claim that the parts are that way, casts doubt on the claim that there is *identity*, even in a loose sense, between the whole and its parts. The addition of I2ALL helps bridge that gap.

Like CCLL, I2ALL requires restrictions on which predicates it holds for. For the first, consider the following: Eustace[salesman *y*] is dishonest. Eustace[friend *y*] is honest. Given that Eustace = Eustace[friend *y*], might we substitute 'Eustace[friend *y*]' for 'Eustace' in 'Eustace[salesman *y*] is dishonest'? I don't think we should. The result would be: 'Eustace<sub>*y*</sub>[friend *y*][salesman *y*] is dishonest': Eustace as he is a friend as he is a salesman is dishonest. But that might not be so. Eustace as he is a friend as he is a salesman might, in an effort to help his friends get the best deal possible, be very honest. Notice that in 'Eustace[salesman *y*] is dishonest', 'Eustace' occurs in the *nominal* position of the aspect term: 'Eustace[salesman *y*]'.<sup>94</sup> That is, 'Eustace' occurs in the position that names the individual of which Eustace[salesman *y*] is an aspect: the position outside the square brackets. So, let our first restriction be that I2ALL does not permit substitution of identicals into the nominal position of an aspect term.

Next, consider predicates like 'has *x* as an aspect' — call these 'aspectival predicates'. Eustace has both Eustace[salesman<sub>*y*</sub>] as an aspect, and Eustace[friend<sub>*y*</sub>] as an aspect. Given the identity between an individual and its aspects, if I2ALL permitted aspectival properties, then

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<sup>93</sup> Note that in I2ALL we may infer from the identity of an aspect and its individual, and the claim that the individual is F, to the claim that the aspect is F, but not vice-versa. This is because, were the latter entailment permitted, we would end up with individuals, such as Eustace, having incompatible properties. Moreover, as Baxter (2018b: 912) notes, it may also be the case that an aspect of an individual is some way without the individual being that way. For instance, Eustace<sub>*y*</sub>[salesman *y*] may be dishonest, but we have already seen that this does not entail that Eustace is dishonest

<sup>94</sup> See Turner (2014) for a discussion of similar restrictions that might hold for CCLL and what I have dubbed ILL.

Eustace[friend *y*] would be an aspect of Eustace[salesman *y*]. This inference seems to hold for individuals.<sup>95</sup> Clark Kent and Superman are identical, so any aspect of one is an aspect of the other. However, it is less plausible to think that Eustace<sub>*y*</sub>[salesman *y*] has Eustace[friend *y*] as an aspect. If it did then Eustace<sub>*y*</sub>[salesman *y*] would have an aspect in which Eustace[salesman *y*] is honest. But in the way it is presented, Eustace[salesman *y*] is entirely dishonest: there is no aspect of Eustace[salesman *y*] in which he is honest. So, I2ALL does not hold for aspectival properties.<sup>96</sup>

The final restriction is that only those predicates referring to *unqualified* properties of an individual may be used in I2ALL. I am about to sharpen up just what that amounts to, but for now think of an individual's unqualified properties as those that, when predicated of it, are *not* elliptical for a predication of an aspect of an individual. For instance, Eustace's customer's might say 'Eustace is dishonest!' but we should understand this as elliptical for 'Eustace as a car salesman is dishonest'. To see why this is required, suppose this restriction were not in place. Then insofar as what Eustace's customer's say of Eustace is true (though misleading), Eustace is dishonest. But Eustace = Eustace[friend *y*], and Eustace<sub>*y*</sub>[friend *y*] is honest. Without this restriction I2ALL would allow us to say that Eustace[friend *y*] is honest and dishonest. But we don't want that. To help us think about what unqualified properties of an individual are, consider the following passage from Baxter:

A king [must] jail his own daughter. As law-enforcing king he supports the sentence. As a loving father he does not support it ... He as father, and he considered unqualifiedly, are the same person ... But it does not follow that he, considered unqualifiedly, did not support the sentence. ... *To say that he, considered unqualifiedly, did not support the sentence is equivalent to saying: Not as anything did he support the sentence.* But from the fact that as

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<sup>95</sup> Baxter (2018b: 911) is explicit that this holds for individuals.

<sup>96</sup> It might be the case that Eustace<sub>*y*</sub>[salesman *y*] has Eustace<sub>*x*</sub>[friend *x*] as an aspect, but we cannot infer this from the identity between Eustace[salesman *y*] and Eustace.

something he did not support the sentence, it does not follow that not as anything did he support the sentence. (1989, p. 30, emphasis added)

In the italicized portion of this passage Baxter suggests the following analysis of what it is to have a property unqualifiedly:

For any individual,  $x$ , and any property,  $F$ ,  $x$  is *unqualifiedly*  $F$  just in case there is no aspect of  $x$  that is *not- $F$* , and  $x$  is  $F$ .

This analysis, however, fails to account for category mistakes. Consider Baxter's king as he is flat footed: king,[flat-footed  $y$ ]. Does king,[flat-footed  $y$ ] support the sentence? I am inclined to say no. I am also inclined to say that king,[flat-footed  $y$ ] does not oppose the sentence either. Rather, king,[flat-footed  $y$ ] is the wrong sort of thing to have an opinion on the matter. But, if that's the case, then, since king,[flat-footed  $y$ ] is an aspect of the king that does not support the sentence, it would be impossible for the king to unqualifiedly support the sentence (if he were to). The king might sincerely say "With all my heart I support my daughter's sentence", yet it would remain the case that, because of his feet, the king does *not* unqualifiedly support the sentence. But, the fact that king,[flat-footed  $y$ ] fails to support the sentence shouldn't lead us to think that the king fails to support the sentence. In Baxter's original case the reason that the king did not unqualifiedly support the sentence was not because some aspect of him failed to support the sentence, but because some aspect of him had a property incompatible with supporting the sentence: opposing the sentence.

*Supporting the sentence* and *opposing the sentence* stand in a specification relation to the property *having an opinion on the sentence*. The class of specification relations includes the determinate-determinable relation, like the one between *being red* and *being scarlet*. It also includes the genus-species relation, like the one between *being a dog* and *being a chihuahua*, and the conjunct-conjunction relation between *being a dog* and *being a red dog*.<sup>97</sup> In each example the latter property is

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<sup>97</sup> The terminology of 'specification relation' and 'conjunct-conjunction relation' comes from Wilson (2017).

more specific than the former. Call each of these more specific properties a *specifier property* of the more general one. Some specifier properties are incompatible with each other. *being red* is a specifier property incompatible with *being blue*, *being married* is a specifier property incompatible with *being a bachelor* (given that *being a bachelor* is the conjunctive property *being unmarried and being a man*). *Supporting the sentence* is a specifier property incompatible with *opposing the sentence*.

While it is true that *king<sub>y</sub>[flat-footed]* does not support the sentence, this is not because it possesses a specifier property incompatible with supporting the sentence. Instead, it is because *king<sub>y</sub>[flat-footed]* is not the sort of thing that has an opinion on the matter. We can now distinguish two ways to be *not-F*. One is to possess a specifier property incompatible with *F-ness*. Another is to fail to be the sort of thing to which *F-ness* applies, as in the case of category mistakes. This is the case with *king<sub>y</sub>[flat-footed]*'s failure to support the sentence.

When considering unqualified properties, the condition that there is no aspect of **x** that is *not-F* should be understood as: there is no aspect of **x** that has a specifier property incompatible with being-*F*. Thus, we may still say that the king unqualifiedly supports the sentence, despite *king<sub>y</sub>[flat-footed]*'s failure to do so. That being so, let's use the following definition of what it is to be unqualifiedly *F*:

For any individual, *x*, and any property, *F*, *x* is *unqualifiedly F* just in case there is no aspect of *x* that has a specifier property incompatible with being *F*, and *x* is *F*.

So, let's understand I2ALL as:

**I2ALL:** For  $\Phi x$  such that (a) '*y*' is not substituted into the nominal position of an aspectival term of ' $\Phi x$ ', (b) ' $\Phi$ ' is not an aspectival predicate, and (c) ' $\Phi$ ' refers to an unqualified property of *x*:  $\forall_{e1} x \forall_{e1} y (x=y \rightarrow (\Phi x \rightarrow \Phi y))$

Note that a feature of I2ALL is that it licenses the claim that *King<sub>y</sub>[flat-footed]* *does* support the sentence, despite the fact that this is a category mistake. While this might sound odd, it is this feature that allows us to say that *Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>A</sub>]* loses *Barbara-*

Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>By</sub>]. Well, it will only if *loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>By</sub>]* is an unqualified property of Barbara-Anne. I turn to this issue in the next section.

#### 4.4. Losing a part unqualifiedly

I2ALL permits the inference in (1)-(3) only if *loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>By</sub>]* is an unqualified property of Barbara-Anne. One may object that it is not. The surviving locational aspect, Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>A</sub> y], *remains entire*, where this is understood as diachronically maintaining its locational aspects.<sup>98</sup> Surely *remains entire* is incompatible with *loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub> y]*. So, *loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub> y]* is not an unqualified property of Barbara-Anne. So, I2ALL will not license the needed inference.

However, I don't think that Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>A</sub> y]'s remaining entire *is* a matter of her possessing a specifier property incompatible with *loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub> y]*. In order to lose something, one needs to first have it. One needs to be the sort of thing that *can* lose it. Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>A</sub> y] is not the sort of thing that *can* lose Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub> y], because Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub> y] was never an aspect of Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>A</sub> y].<sup>99</sup> Moreover, insofar as we are talking about persons, one might think it impossible for one person to ever be a locational aspect of the other. Despite the argument from Chapter 2.1.1., one may insist that human persons are not the sorts of things that have other human persons as parts. I maintain that there is no direct incompatibility here. Instead, since Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>A</sub> y] never had and never could have Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub> y] as an aspect, it is like a category mistake to say that Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>A</sub> y] loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub> y]. But, as is the case with the king and king<sub>y</sub>[flat-footed y], I2ALL permits such category mistakes. So, it looks as though the property *loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub> y]* is an unqualified property of Barbara-Anne.

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<sup>98</sup> At least this seems so for those aspects that correspond to the parts in a different count.

<sup>99</sup> Compare this to how my sofa is not the sort of thing that is a fast runner precisely because it is not the sort of thing that can run at all.

However, one might think that that was too quick. We have been making use of I2ALL in which ‘ $\Phi x$ ’ is ‘ $x$  loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_B$   $y$ ]’ But, since Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_B$   $y$ ] is a locational aspect, ‘ $x$  loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_B$   $y$ ]’ entails ‘ $x$  loses a locational aspect’. This is surely incompatible with ‘ $x$  remains entire’, which is true of Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A$   $y$ ] — all of its locational aspects are still there.<sup>100</sup>

I suggest two responses. Each points to an ambiguity in ‘ $x$  loses a locational aspect’. The matter of which is more promising is left to the reader. The first response appeals to the intrinsic/extrinsic property distinction. ‘loses a locational aspect’ refers to the property *loses an aspect*, which may be had intrinsically or extrinsically. Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A$   $y$ ] *loses an aspect* extrinsically, for it has this property only because of its relation to Barbara-Anne. Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A$   $y$ ] has *remains entire* intrinsically, for it is in virtue of how it is itself that it remains entire — all of *its* sub-regions, and so *its* locational aspects, are still there. When we read ‘Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A$   $y$ ] loses a locational aspect’ we should understand this as ‘Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A$   $y$ ] (extrinsically) loses a locational aspect’. When we read ‘Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A$   $y$ ] remains entire’, we should understand this as ‘Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A$   $y$ ] (intrinsically) remains entire’. According to this response, the troubling kinds of incompatibility are those that manifest themselves either both intrinsically or both extrinsically. Because Anne has one property intrinsically and the other extrinsically, there is no troubling contradiction here.<sup>101</sup>

The second response locates the ambiguity in whose or what’s aspect was lost. Consider the phrase ‘loses a set of keys’. ‘Marcus loses a set of keys’ is true regardless of whether he loses his own keys, or someone else’s. This response maintains that ‘loses a locational aspect’ is like

<sup>100</sup> We can understand locational aspects of a locational aspect as sub-regions of the latter.

<sup>101</sup> With the addition of aspects how we should understand the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction becomes a bit more tricky. I think that when it comes to *unqualified* properties of individuals, we should understand the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction as usual. But not all properties of individuals are unqualified properties. Again, consider Eustace[salesman  $y$ ]. It is inaccurate to say that Eustace is dishonest, but correct to say that Eustace[salesman  $y$ ] is dishonest. Being dishonest is a qualified property of Eustace. Suppose that Eustace is only dishonest as a salesman. Then in this case I think that what the correct thing to say about the case is that we should say that while *being dishonest* is an intrinsic property of Eustace[salesman  $y$ ], it is not a feature of Eustace, the individual, at all.

that as well. ‘ $x$  loses a locational aspect’ is true regardless of whether  $x$  loses its own locational aspect, or something else’s. In the case of Barbara-Anne, Barbara-Anne loses its own locational aspect. However, Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A y$ ] has *not* lost one of its own aspects, it loses one of Barbara-Anne’s. This is perfectly compatible with Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A y$ ] having the property of *maintaining all of its own locational aspects*. So, once properly disambiguated, Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A y$ ]’s remaining entire is perfectly compatible with her losing a locational aspect.

Even if Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A y$ ] does remain entire, we need not understand this as possessing a specifier property incompatible with *loses Barbara-Anne<sub>y</sub>[located at  $R_A y$ ]*. While truly demonstrating that *no* aspect of Barbara-Anne has a specifier property incompatible with this property requires further argumentation, what has been said here undermines the strongest motivation to think that this is not the case, namely, that some surviving aspect remains entire.

Thus far, I have extended the machinery of CAI to include I2ALL, which has resulted in a view distinct from the one found in Baxter. However, my intention was not to cast doubt on Baxter’s insights. Rather, it was to “take the spirit of Baxter’s account past the letter of it”<sup>102</sup> in a manner that can account for the truth of the grief utterances, and better make good on the claim that there is *identity* between part and whole.<sup>103</sup> Recall that the identity between a whole and its aspects is intended to be *literal* identity. In which case, it should be symmetric, transitive, and reflexive, but also governed by *some* principle like Leibniz’s Law. It is this latter feature of identity

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<sup>102</sup> I thank an anonymous referee for this turn of phrase.

<sup>103</sup> In an article on the neo-Confucian view that identity holds between the universe and everything in it, Baxter distinguishes between one’s broader self (the universe) and one’s narrow self (as a single, independent individual) (2018a). The narrow self, Baxter argues, can be understood as an aspect of broader self. Applying this to the loss of the loved one, it is one’s broader self, the universe, that loses a part. One’s narrow self may not have, for, although identical to the broader self, as an aspect of the latter, it may differ from it. The addition of I2ALL allows us to say that the narrow self also loses a part. Yet, if we put aside the goal of explaining the neo-Confucian view, we need not appeal to notions like the broader self and the narrow self in order to account for the truth of the grief utterances. We are able to do so even if we are construed just as our narrow selves. We need only note that we can form complexes with other individuals. When we do, we are parts of that complex, with the individuals that make it up in one count, and the complex in another. As parts of the complex, we are cross-count identical to locational aspects of it, which in turn, are intra-count identical to the complex. Given I2ALL, if the complex loses a part, the remaining aspects lose a part. Given CCLL, if the aspects lose a part, the surviving individuals, in a different count, lose that part. Thank you to an anonymous referee for encouraging me to discuss this component of Baxter’s view, and for pointing out to me that that this view seems committed to a “mystical” distinction between the broader self and the narrow self in a way that the view I have developed is not.

that sets it apart from other equivalence relations. Thus, the addition of Individual to Aspect Leibniz's Law supports the claim that there is literal identity between an individual and its aspects. Once we are able to infer that because the whole is some way, the aspect is that way as well, we can then use Cross-Count Leibniz Law to infer that the part, in a different count, is that way too (when licensed to do so). This in turn helps bolster the claim that on CAI, the whole is identical to its parts. CAI's ability to provide an account of the grief utterances provides extra evidence in favour of its utility and truth. Yet, the CAI account is not without its challenges. It is these I turn to in the next section, where plural personhood is finally put to work.

#### **4.5. Challenges for the Composition as Identity Account**

I have argued that, with the addition of I2ALL, CAI makes the grief utterances true. Recall that the argument from §4.2 concludes that Anne loses Barbara-Anne<sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub>]</sub>. If *losing Barbara-Anne<sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub>]</sub>* is an unqualified property of Anne, then, with the addition of I2ALL, analogous arguments will allow us to conclude that *each and every aspect* of Anne loses Barbara-Anne Barbara-Anne<sub>[located at R<sub>B</sub>]</sub>. This is in accordance with the survivor's profound sense that the loss of her beloved affects every remaining element of her life. So, not only does CAI make the grief utterances true, it does so in a manner that captures the extent to which losing a loved one can affect. However, despite this success, there are three objections I would like to briefly address. Two of these bring into focus two new desiderata for accounts of the grief utterances.

The first objection is that because CAI requires taking on the commitments of counts, aspects, two kinds of identity, and multiple versions of Leibniz's law, if adopting this system is required to account for the truth of the grief utterances, then it is better to understand the grief utterances metaphorically. However, the world we live in and experience is one in which the grief utterances *seem true* in a non-metaphorical sense. The grief utterances are ubiquitous, and the sense of loss prompting them deeply felt. To give up on accounting for the grief utterances is to

give up on accounting for the world as it appears to us. I don't think we should forego that project until we have a better sense of what alternatives to CAI there might be. What this objection does point to is one desiderata for an account of the grief utterances: a compelling account of the grief utterances will require us to take on as few substantial metaphysical commitments as possible.

The next objection should be familiar by now. A satisfying account of grief utterances must meet the Intimacy Constraint:

**The Intimacy Constraint:** An account of grief utterances must distinguish between how  $P_1$ , who forms a plural person with  $P_2$ , and  $P_3$  who does not, loses a part of herself upon the death of  $P_2$ .

However, CAI is consistent with the assumption that *any* collection of persons, like the collection of people wearing a red t-shirt today, composes some whole.<sup>104</sup> When combined, the result is that whenever one member of the collection dies, each survivor loses a part.<sup>105</sup> Suppose that today Olivia, Tim, and Tom are each wearing a red shirt, and so each is part of a social complex: people wearing a red shirt. Tim dies, the whole loses a part, and so each of Tom and Olivia lose a part. Moreover, the death of a complete stranger who also happens to be wearing a red shirt, will result in the loss of a part to each one. Baxter takes this to be a virtue of CAI, as it captures Donne's sentiment that "any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind".<sup>106</sup> But we want to say that Olivia's loss was distinct from Tom's in some way (Chapter 1.3), and surely the death of a total stranger results in a much different sort of loss as well, if any.

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<sup>104</sup> This is consistent with compositional universalism, according to which any collection of any things composes some whole. It is also Epstein's (2017) view of social groups.

<sup>105</sup> It is often assumed that composition as identity entails compositional universalism, the view that any collection of objects compose some further objects. McDaniel (2010) argues that this assumption is false. What I claim is that CAI is consistent with at least a restricted form of universalism according to which any collection of *people* forms some whole.

<sup>106</sup> Baxter (2005: 365) citing "Devotions upon Emergent Occasions," in Charles Coffin, ed., *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne* (New York: Modern Library)

In the previous chapter I introduced plural persons as a way to distinguish the paradigmatic from the non-paradigmatic cases. One difference between Tom's relationship with Tim and Olivia's relationship with Tim is that Tom, but not Olivia, formed a plural person with Tim. One way to avoid the result that Tim and Olivia lose a part in the same way may be to restrict CAI to only plural persons, and not other social complexes. While any collection of individuals may form a social complex of some sort, it is only in plural persons that the parts are identical to the whole, and so of which CAI holds.

I don't think this is as *ad hoc* as it looks. The only social complexes in which the members have a joint conception of a life worth living together, and so an identity as *us* is a plural person. When I reason *as one of us*, I am reasoning from the identity of *this* plural person with *this* conception of a life worth living. This is distinct from when I reason about what I would do in your shoes, as even then I am not reasoning from *within* your conception of a life worth your living. It is also distinct from how I might reason as a member of a different sort of group, say, a member of a team. Though when I do so I might think about what I should do as a member of this group, I still do so from within my own individual conception of a life worth living. It is only when I am a member of a plural person that I have an additional conception of a life worth living from within which I can reason. This conception may help establish the claim that there is *identity* between the members of the plural person, and the plural person itself, even as each member remains distinct. The conception of a life worth living together provides the identity of the plural person. As each member can reason from within this conception, they have a claim to being identical to the plural person. As the norms binding individual members of the plural person stem from the identity of the plural person, they have a claim to being identical with the plural person. And, as each retains her individual conception of a life worth living, they also remain distinct. Conceptions of lives worth living together are unique to plural persons, and so

perhaps it is *only* the members of plural persons, as opposed to members of other social complexes, that are identical with the whole of which they are part.

I worry, though, that this may be too strong. The Intimacy Constraint does not require that there is *no* sense in which Olivia loses a part of herself in a manner that would make her grief utterances true, just that there is *some* difference in how she loses a part of herself and how Tim loses a part of herself. But, if the CAI account just described is correct, then one loses a part of oneself in the death of another *only if* one forms a plural person with the other. So either, (a) Olivia didn't lose a part of herself *at all*, or (b) Olivia did lose a part of herself, but we lack an account of her loss. Option (a) seems too strong, especially if we are taking the phenomenology of grief seriously. Olivia may feel she lost a part of herself, and she may be correct that she did. She is just mistaken to think that her loss was of the same kind as Tom's. With respect to (b), while it's nice to have an account of the paradigmatic cases, it would be nicer if this account could also shed light on the non-paradigmatic cases, too.

A more subtle approach might try to distinguish between different types of loss based on different types of social complexes. CAI is true of all social complexes, but Olivia's loss was different from Tom's because she and Tim were parts of a different social complex than Tom and Tim were. Tom lost a part of a plural person, and Olivia lost a part of some other social complex, say, a pair of coworkers.

However, on this proposal each of Tim and Olivia lose a part because they are identical to some whole that loses a part. Tom loses part of a plural person because he was part of a plural person, and so identical to it. Olivia loses a part of a pair of coworkers because she is part of a pair of coworkers, and so identical to that pair. This proposal maintains that the loss between Tom and Olivia is a different kind of loss because they lost parts of different social complexes. But it is not obvious that the loss to the plural person and the loss to the pair of coworkers were different kinds of loss. Since Tom and Olivia inherit their loss from the wholes of which they are

parts, if there is no difference in the kind of loss to the whole, then it seems there is no difference in the kind of loss to the parts.

One apparent difference may be that the loss to the plural person is irreparable. Plural persons have their members necessarily, and so not only does the plural person lose a part when a member dies, it goes out of existence. So, Tim lost a *point of identity* with the plural person. This would capture the idea that our loved ones are non-fungible, and that the loss we accrue at their deaths cannot be mended. However, plural persons may not be the *only* social complex that have (some of) their members necessarily. Perhaps a club has had it in its rules since conception that when the club president passes away, the club ends for good. Then the president's membership is necessary for the club's existence. So, when the president dies, the club goes out of existence and each club member loses a point of identity. And their loss would be just the same as Tom's when Tim died, as it would result in the loss of a point of identity.

How else might we distinguish between different losses to the *whole*, which would result in different losses to the *part*? Perhaps there is a matter of difference in how the parts of plural persons are "embedded" in the whole, which would result in a different kind of loss. Losing a button from your cardigan is different from wearing a hole in your sock, and it is different because of how the parts that are lost were embedded in the greater whole. Or, perhaps there is a kind of compositional pluralism involved as well, and the *kind* of part is different in different kinds of social complexes.<sup>107</sup>

The CAI account is not without options. However, rather than pursue them I would like to return to a point I made a few paragraphs above. That was that on the CAI proposal we lose a part of ourselves when a loved one dies because some whole to which we are identical, and of which our loved one was a part (up to the time of their death), loses a part. But, the bereaved's phenomenology is that she herself is a primary bearer of the loss. This is the final objection to

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<sup>107</sup> See Wallace (2019) for arguments in favour of compositional pluralism. However, I suspect even a compositional pluralist might balk at the suggestion that distinct kinds of social complexes have distinct kinds of parts.

the CAI proposal. According to the CAI proposal, the survivor's loss stems from the fact that some whole, of which she was a part, lost a part. This makes the loss to oneself derivative, and the whole being the primary bearer of that loss. But, the loss that the survivor experiences is not like that. The loss one feels is that one's own self is no longer complete, regardless of what wholes one is part of. This points to a further desideratum when accounting for the grief utterances: a literal understanding of the utterances should account, in some way, for the phenomenological experience that one is a primary bearer of that loss. While CAI may be able to provide a literal understanding of why it is true that one loses a part of oneself, it does not do so in a way that resonates with the felt experience of grief.

Still, as I mentioned at the beginning of this section, CAI has the resources to capture the extent to which the loss of a loved one affects us. On CAI, every aspect of oneself suffers that same loss. This points to a final desideratum for a competing account of the grief utterances: it ought to do just as well at capturing the sense that the loss of a loved one affects every detail of the survivor's life.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

The CAI account required an additional version of Leibniz's in order to make good on its promise to account for the truth of the grief utterances. We have just seen that even with this requisite principle, CAI is limited in its ability to fully capture the sense in which we lose a part of ourselves in the death of a loved one. Still, considering CAI's strengths and weaknesses provides us guidance for further accounts of grief utterances. Moving into the next chapter we will aim to develop an account of the grief utterances that meets the Intimacy Constraint, resonates with the experience that one is a *primary* bearer of the loss, requires few metaphysical commitments, and, like the CAI proposal, captures the idea that in losing a loved one may affect every aspect of one's life.

However, just as the considerations regarding CAI's limited success in fully accounting for grief utterances sheds light on what a fully satisfactory account will look like, the question of what, if anything, accounts for the truth of the grief utterances, has allowed us to make headway on understanding CAI. Even if CAI does not offer a fully satisfactory account of the grief utterances, the work accomplished in this paper contributes to the larger project of understanding composition as a form of distributive identity, an important view in the metaphysics of composition. The addition of I2ALL, made in an attempt to account for the grief utterances, allows us to better understand the claim that each part is identical to the whole. As a result, the idea that there is distributive identity between a whole and its parts has been made a stronger contender as an account of composition as identity.

## Chapter 5: Practical Parts: Grief, the Social Self, and (a Broader) Practical Identity

### 5.0. Introduction

In the previous chapter we saw one account, the Composition as Identity account, of what could make grief utterances true. Considering its strengths and limitations allowed us to identify further desiderata for an account of grief utterances. We want the account to meet the Intimacy Constraint, resonate with the experience that the survivor is a primary bearer of the loss, capture the phenomenology that losing a loved can affect everyone aspect of the survivor's life, and not commit us to any heavy-duty metaphysical commitments, if possible. Insofar as we desire an account of grief utterances, we should not reject the CAI account unless there is an alternative that does as well as or better at each of these. Nor, if we find the CAI account unsatisfying, should we give up the project of accounting for the grief utterances, until we have seen our other options.

In this chapter, I discuss two further proposals, and in the end settle on a practical identity based account of grief utterances. In §5.1 I consider the proposal that when a loved one dies, you lose part of your social self. In §5.2 I argue this proposal, the social self proposal, will struggle to meet the Intimacy Constraint and to capture the experience that the survivor is a primary bearer of the loss. In §5.3 consider the practical identity proposal, the proposal that you lose a part of your practical identity when a loved one dies. The practical identity proposal captures the experience that it is the survivor who is a primary bearer of the loss, but it struggles to meet the Intimacy Constraint. However, in §5.4 I demonstrate how we can broaden our concept of practical identity to include not just the practical identity one has as the individual person she is, but also the ones of the plural persons of which she is a member. I call this the 'total practical identity proposal'. The total practical identity proposal allows us to meet the Intimacy Constraint. However, it also makes it look like I can be part of a plural person which itself is a part of me. In §5.5 I argue that that is an illusion. But there is another concern. Your

practical identity, it seems, can be part of mine, and mine can also be part of yours. I show how once we clarify what someone's practical identity is, we do not have to worry about the possibility of mutual parthood. Finally, in §5.6 I review how well the total practical identity proposal does with respect to the desiderata. It meets each of them, and even has some additional benefits.

### 5.1. The Social Self Proposal

David Shoemaker (2014), following Lori Gruen's (2014) proposal that death is a social harm, suggests that the loss of a loved one is a loss to one's social self. Taking for granted Solomon's (2004) insight that "the self is a web of relationships", Shoemaker suggests that "the social harms of death of someone in our group consist in (a) the loss of that relationship to we-the-survivors, and (b) alterations (for the worse?) to our *selves*, which partially constituted that relationship-web". His goal is to "see if we can add some metaphysical meat to this metaphorical bone" (2014, p. 69).

To do this, Shoemaker begins with the observation that an individual can be psychologically continuous with past and future individuals distinct from herself. Following Parfit, we may characterize psychological continuity as the "holding of overlapping chains of strong psychological *connectedness*" (1984, p. 206). Consider a case of fission in which one individual— "Fizz"—seems to split into two. Fizz is psychologically connected to each fission product through a number of ties including (1) connections of memory — each fission product has Fizz's memories; (2) connections of intentions — each fission product recalls Fizz's intentions and may or may not decide to carry out the act; (3) persistent beliefs, goals, and desires and; (4) persistent personality traits.<sup>108</sup> In virtue of these psychological ties, Fizz is psychologically continuous with both fission products. Given that identity is transitive, however, Fizz cannot be identical to both fission products, as they are distinct from each other, and on

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<sup>108</sup>See Shoemaker (2014) and Parfit (1984, p. 205).

pain of arbitrariness, Fizz cannot be identical to one but not the other either. Thus, Fizz is identical to neither. So, psychological connectedness can hold diachronically between numerically distinct individuals.

Shoemaker (2014) further suggests that psychological connectedness between distinct individuals can hold *synchronically* as well.<sup>109</sup> In the fission case, Fizz's mental life causally shaped the mental life of each fission product. Your mental life can also causally shape the mental life of those currently around you. You may remember some event and recount it to me, and in doing so cause me to remember it as well. So, we would have a connection of memory. If I am aware that you intend something, this may influence how I intend to act, and so we have connections of intent. Your persistent beliefs, desires, and goals may affect my persistent beliefs, desires, and goals; and your persistent personality traits may affect mine. Call the phenomenon of such connections between distinct persons 'interpersonal connectedness'.<sup>110</sup>

Shoemaker uses interpersonal connectedness to construct an understanding of the social self:

... [T]he tendrils of psychological connectedness (and thus psychological continuity) may shoot not only forward but outward, creating webs of interconnected, simultaneously-existing selves, such that various of our practical concerns target multiple people who together constitute one [social] self, united in varying degrees. Consequently, when my long-time partner dies and I say that it seems a part of me has died, the statement is literally true — where once I was part of a [social] self constituted by strong psychological connectedness between distinct persons, the death of my partner has torn

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<sup>109</sup> Shoemaker (2000) and (2008) suggest this as well.

<sup>110</sup> I discuss interpersonal connectedness in terms of this Parfit based understanding of psychological continuity mostly out of convenience, and because it is familiar to many. If the reader believes there is some important relationship that psychological continuity includes or excludes erroneously, they should feel free to understand the relations of interpersonal connectedness in that manner.

this web asunder, leaving these strands dangling and me connected to no one but my future self (2014, p. 72).

Shoemaker's suggestion seems to be that if we allow that, through psychological connectedness, we can form a social self with others, then we can explain why the grief utterances are true.<sup>111</sup> The death of our loved ones severs these relations of psychological connectedness, and in doing so, the social self loses a part.

Consider Shoemaker's statement that I lose a part of myself when a loved one dies because "where once I was part of a [social] self constituted by strong psychological connectedness between distinct persons, the death of my partner has torn this web asunder..." On one understanding this echoes the Composition as Identity account of grief utterances (Ch. 4). From the observations that "I was once part of a [social] self", and that that [social] self lost a part ("the death of my partner has torn this web asunder"), Shoemaker concludes that *I* have lost a part. This inference succeeds if we assume that I am *identical* with the social self. If this is how we are to understand Shoemaker's proposal, then many of the arguments and remarks from the previous chapter hold, with the exception of one.

One weakness of the CAI account was that it required a means to distinguish between various social complexes in order to differentiate between the loss (if any) that occurs at the death of a stranger, and the loss that occurs at the death of someone to whom we were much closer. The social self proposal contains some resources to do so, for not every collection of persons will form a social self. When it comes to composing a social self, the parts must exhibit interpersonal connectedness. So, perhaps the CAI account could be combined with the social self to avoid that concern.<sup>112</sup> It would not, however, address the concern that the CAI account is

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<sup>111</sup> Shoemaker uses the language of both "plural selves" and "social selves". As I introduced a distinct notion, *plural personhood* in Ch.3, and will be making use of it later in this chapter, I will use the term "social self" to discuss Shoemaker's proposal in an effort to keep these two notions separate.

<sup>112</sup> It is also worth noticing that Shoemaker (2014, 72) offers an interpretation of Gruen (2014) according to which our shared human animality is an additional source of interpersonal connectedness: "Thus, there may be very plural selves, consisting of (nearly) all of us, constructed out of our shared anthropological nature, such that when just one of us humans dies, the rest of us may have reason to mourn the loss of some (however minimal) tendril of our interpersonal connectedness." This echoes the

less preferable than an account requiring fewer heavy duty metaphysical commitments than those of CAI, if available. As the purpose of this chapter is to look for such an account, I suggest that we understand the social self another way.

The simpler way to understand the social self denies that there is identity between you and your social self. Suppose your social self is the network of all persons to whom you are psychologically connected. We can think of your social self as a structure in which each person is a node, and the “tendrils of psychological connectedness” the edges — lines — between them.<sup>113</sup> As one is psychologically connected to oneself, one is a node in this structure. Thus, insofar as nodes are part of a structure, one is part of one’s social self. But, one need not be identical to one’s social self. The social self is something beyond the individual node — it is the structure.

But, if one is not identical with one’s social self, what is ‘I have lost a part of myself’ expressing? It is expressing a loss to one’s social self. Perhaps in ‘I have lost a part of myself’ the referents of ‘I’, and ‘myself’, shift from *me* to my social self. Then we can understand the grief utterance as ‘My social self lost a part of itself’. Or, perhaps just referent of ‘self’ in ‘myself’ shifts to refer to my social self. Then we can express the grief utterance as ‘I lost a part of my social self’. Either way, if we allow there is a shift in reference, grief utterances will be made true because the social self lost a part.<sup>114</sup> This will allow us to give an account of grief utterances without committing to the metaphysical framework CAI requires. However, as we will see in the following section, the social self proposal is not entirely satisfactory, either.

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Composition as Identity account that Baxter (2005) advocates for as it vindicates Donne’s sentiment that ‘any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind’. This, however, would fail to meet the Intimacy Constraint.

<sup>113</sup> I do not intend to commit myself, nor Shoemaker, to the claim that the social self is a structure, if structures are taken to be anything over and above their nodes and the relations between them. The analogy simply makes for a convenient way to think about one’s social self.

<sup>114</sup> This is not to say that those making these utterances are aware that there is any shift in reference, that they think of themselves as their social selves, etc. We may conceive of ourselves in many different and nuanced ways, and our uses of ‘I’ and ‘myself’ have different referents, even if we are not aware of it.

## 5.2. Limitations of the Social Self

As Shoemaker notes, interpersonal connectedness comes in degrees.<sup>115</sup> There are some individuals to whom I am strongly psychologically connected, and others to whom I am only weakly psychologically connected. The stronger the degree of psychological connectedness between two individuals, the more edges there are between their nodes. But, as long as there is psychological connectedness, each individual occupies a node of my social self. Thus, while Shoemaker's example of losing a partner is one in which "where once I was part of a plural self constituted by *strong* psychological connectedness between distinct persons, the death of my partner has torn this web asunder...", even the deaths of those I was weakly psychological connected to will "tear the web".<sup>116</sup>

As mentioned in the previous section, the social self proposal will not entail that I lose a part of myself at the death of a complete stranger. I must be psychologically connected with another for them to be part of my social self. However, it *does* entail that I can lose a part of myself at the death of mere acquaintances. For example, my mail carrier often listens to a particular song, and I often hear it coming from his mail truck. From hearing the song so often, I have developed a fondness for it. So, my mail carrier's musical tastes have shaped my own. So, I am at least *weakly* psychologically connected with my mail carrier. So, he occupies a node in my social self. Yet, I don't have any kind of special relationship with my mail carrier, beyond exchanging pleasantries when we bump into each other at the mailbox.

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<sup>115</sup> It is worth noting that according to some theories of composition, parthood also comes in degrees. For example, according to van Inwagen (1990, 218) "x is a proper part of y if and only if y is an organism and x is caught up in the life of y" (p. 94). Van Inwagen notes that "there are moments such that there is no right answer to the question whether [the simples of a carbon atom] were parts of Alice at those moments. If I am right about parthood and composition, there is no way round this. Being caught up in the life of an organism is, like being rich or being tall, a matter of degree, and is in that sense a vague condition." Perhaps what it is for someone to be a part of your social self may also be a matter of degree.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Shoemaker (2014, 72) "...this interpersonal connectedness is a matter of degree, so while it obtains most strongly in these two-headed units [those who have had significant causal impact on each other's mental lives], it also occurs to a lesser extent between many other friends and even casual acquaintances.

In this way might we construct a picture of an interpersonal, social self: the tendrils of psychological connectedness (and thus psychological continuity) may shoot not only forward but outward, creating webs of interconnected, simultaneously-existing selves..."

Still, since he occupies a node of my social self, were my mail carrier to pass away, my social self would lose a part. On this proposal, were I to say, “I lost a part of myself when he died”, my grief utterance would be true. It is just as true as it would have been had my best friend, with whom I am strongly psychologically connected, passed away instead. This will not meet the Intimacy Constraint. Suppose I were to go to my mail carrier’s funeral. I stop to speak to his best friend. His best friend says, “I lost a part of myself when he died”, I reply “I understand, I suffered that loss as well”. There is something off about what I have just said. Whatever the loss to myself was, it seems much different from the loss of a best friend.<sup>117</sup>

Proponents of the social self proposal may try to explain this judgment away. After all, the tendrils of psychological connectedness vary in strength and degree from one person to another. I am weakly connected to my mail carrier, and strongly connected to my best friend. However, my social self is altered at the death of either, so it is true that I lose a part in each case. But it is only because we rely so much more heavily on those to whom we are strongly connected that we think there is a difference. Compare this to the difference between losing an eyelash, and losing a limb. We generally don’t equate the two because our limbs tend to play a much greater role in the way we navigate the world. So, there is a difference between the two in that regard. However, *strictly speaking*, you lose a part in both instances. While it might be inappropriate to say the two are the same, it isn’t false. Similarly, *strictly speaking*, I do lose a part of myself when my mail carrier, with whom I was weakly psychologically connected, dies, just as I lose a part of myself when my best friend, with whom I was strongly connected, dies. But we generally don’t equate the two because, due to the stronger psychological connections between me and my best friend, my best friend plays a larger role in my life than my mail carrier.

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<sup>117</sup> This is not an argument against the existence of a social self, or against the claim that the social self loses a part in the death of another. My point is just that the social self proposal cannot capture our judgements regarding the grief utterances, and so cannot be what accounts for their truth.

However, even if this response can capture the mail carrier case, it will struggle to handle the case of Tim and Olivia, and so will struggle to meet the Intimacy Constraint. Olivia is deeply attached to Tim. Perhaps that alone is sufficient for strong interpersonal connectedness. But, in case it is not, let's add to Wonderly's case that much of Tim's psychological life has influenced Olivia's: Tim prefers The Beatles to The Stones, Olivia prefers The Beatles to The Stones; Tim wears army pants and flip flops, Olivia wears army pants and flip flops. In such a case, Olivia could be connected to Tim through many tendrils of psychological connectedness, and so the degree of connectedness could be quite strong, as strong as any between himself and his nearest and dearest. Then, were Tim's dear twin brother Tom to say, upon the death of Tim, that he lost a part of himself, and were Olivia to say "Yes, I am *just like you* in that respect", she would be correct. And that does not seem quite right, there seems to be a difference between the loss to Tom, and the loss to Olivia.

Perhaps the social self proposal can explain what is going on in this case. For one, Olivia's psychological life may be influenced by Tim's, but Tim's may not be influenced by Olivia's. Perhaps the tendrils of psychological connectedness need to run in both directions. Then, while Olivia would be like Tim's brother in losing a part of herself, she wouldn't be *just like* him, as the connections between Tim and his brother ran both ways. Or, perhaps while there may be many such connections, they are not of the right kind. Perhaps the tendrils of psychological connectedness that count are ones that are less superficial, things like core preferences and desires. I am inclined to think that for each of these suggestions, the Tim and Olivia case could be elaborated on in such a way that it would still pose a problem. However, rather than running through a series of counterexamples to each, I will move on to a second weakness of the social self proposal.

We want an account of grief utterances to resonate with the phenomenological experience of grief, the experience that one's own self is no longer complete, that one is a

primary bear of the loss. The social self proposal maintains that it is one's social self which is a primary bearer of the loss, rather than merely some whole of which one is a part. That may allow the social self proposal to capture the idea that it is the bereaved *herself* that is the primary bearer of the loss. It is, after all, still a *self* that is the primary bearer of the loss.

But, I do not find this entirely convincing. If I am not identical to my social self, and it is my social self, and not me, that is the primary bearer of the loss, why is it that I experience *myself* as a primary bearer of the loss? Many people have no (explicit, maybe even implicit) conception of their social selves, and many claim to lose a part of themselves when a loved one dies. Ideally we would have some explanation for this. What is it about my social self, or the way I am related to it, that accounts for my experience that *I* lost a part when a loved one died?

I will not pursue an answer to that question here. Instead, in the next section, I turn to a recent discussion on the connection between grief and practical identity. I show that an appeal to practical identity *can* explain the phenomenology mentioned above. Like the social self proposal, our relationships with others will play an important role in making us “who we are”, but there is a more natural restriction on which relationships count.<sup>118</sup>

### **5.3. The Practical Identity Proposal**

Another form of identity to consider is practical identity. Christine Korsgaard characterizes your practical identity as “a description under which you value yourself, a description under which you find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking” (1996, p. 101). Now, one may, as many of us do, value oneself under a number of descriptions: a teacher, a student, a daughter, so-and-so's friend, etc. Korsgaard calls these one's particular practical identities. They are “the *parts* from which our overall practical identity is constructed” (Korsgaard 2009, p. 199 emphasis added). One's overall practical identity then seems to be the totality of the descriptions

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<sup>118</sup> I don't mean anything fancy by my use of 'natural' here, just that the result is one that will seem less ad-hoc than any restriction placed on the social self view.

under which one values herself, finds her life to be worth living, and her actions to be worth undertaking.

Practical identity plays a central role in Michael Cholbi's (*ms. for forthcoming 2021*) work on the nature of grief. To understand the nature of grief, we must understand for whom it is we grieve.<sup>119</sup> Cholbi argues that "[a]nother's death causes us to grieve when that person occupies an identifiable place within how we understand our concerns, our lives, and ourselves... what unites all those for whom we grieve is what I will call *practical identity investment*" (*ms*: 31).<sup>120</sup> Our practical identities are often invested in others, "[f]or many of the [components] of our practical identities are commitments, values, and concerns that necessarily involve others and their practical identities" (*ibid*, 32).<sup>121</sup> When one in whom we have invested our practical identities passes away, Cholbi observes that "our self-conceptions are shaken, sometimes dramatically".

Cholbi's account of for *whom* we grieve neatly lends itself to the suggestion that when someone in whom you have invested your practical identity passes away, you lose a component of your overall practical identity.<sup>122</sup> On what I will call 'the practical identity proposal' you lose a part of yourself when a loved one dies because you lose some component of your overall practical identity.

Your overall practical identity is the totality of the descriptions under which you value yourself, find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking. While you may not have perfect knowledge about what entirely your overall practical identity consists in, we tend to have *at least* an implicit understanding of a significant portion of our values and the like. Thus, as Cholbi observes, when someone in whom we have invested our practical identity passes

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<sup>119</sup> Cholbi, restricts his discussion to grief at the loss of another person. However, for reasons I will explain shortly, his account of grief also allows us to account for a wide variety of losses.

<sup>120</sup> In an earlier work, Cholbi (2017a) argues we grieve for those with whom we were in *an identity-constituting relationship*. While the two are quite similar, I believe his more recent suggestion that we grieve for those in whom we had invested our practical identities allows for a more nuanced discussion of how our practical identities are "built" out of others.

<sup>121</sup> Here and throughout I replace Cholbi's use of 'element' with 'component', to avoid 'element' being read in a set-theoretic sense. This will be important later.

<sup>122</sup> As Cholbi (*ms*) is silent on the matter, I do not wish to attribute to him this view. However, I also do not wish to divorce him from this view if it is one he endorses

away , and we lose a component of our practical identities “our self-conceptions are shaken, sometimes dramatically...It is thus unsurprising that the loss registered by grief often feels like a loss of self” (*ibid*, p. 33). Unlike the social self proposal, the practical identity proposal *is* able to explain the phenomenological experience of grief that it is *oneself* that is a primary bearer of the loss.

However, like both the social self proposal and the CAI account, the practical identity proposal struggles to meet the Intimacy Constraint. In the case of Tim and Olivia, Olivia seems to have a significant practical identity investment in Tim. She claims that “she ‘needs him around’ as he’s the only thing that can keep her going” (Wonderly 2016, 226). She “feels impaired, unmotivated, and depressed” when denied the opportunity to engage with him, and experiences “ a set of increased confidence in... her well-being and... her ability to navigate the world” when she has that opportunity” (*ibid*, 232). Yet, there is still something different about her loss, and the loss to Tim’s best friend and twin brother, Tom. The answer cannot just be that it is a matter of *degree*, for we may suppose that Olivia’s practical identity is ninety per cent invested in Tim, and Tom, being more well-rounded, with more interests and more practical identity investments elsewhere, is only fifty per cent invested. Yet, we would still find it odd were Olivia to say that her loss was just like Tom’s, and not because her loss is now *bigger* than his. Similarly, I think I probably had some of my practical identity invested in Leonard Cohen, but the loss I experienced when he passed away was different from those I experienced when people to whom I was closer passed away. So, what is the difference?

We can answer this question, and keep the aforementioned benefit of the practical identity proposal, if we broaden our notion of practical identity. I explain how in the next section.

#### 5.4. Broadening One's Practical Identity

In Chapter 3 I introduced the notion of a conception of a life worth living, and plural personhood. A conception of a life worth living has a lot in common with an overall practical identity. Recall that one's *overall* practical identity is a unified description under which one values herself, finds her life to be worth living, and her actions to be worth undertaking. A conception of a life worth living is defined by one's personal values, and provides her with her identity as *this* particular person. Your personal values may include *anything*, all that is required is that you find them to have a particular kind of worth: the kind that serves to define the kind of life worth your living (Helm 2010, 98). You may value being a teacher, a daughter, so-and-so's friend... Just as these particular practical identities (teacher, daughter, friend) can be unified into an overall practical identity, these particular values can be unified into a conception of a life worth living.

I suggest that we understand an individual conception of a life worth living as an overall practical identity of an individual person. If we do that, then we can understand a *joint* conception of a life worth *our* living together as the overall practical identity of a *plural* person. Then, just as an individual may be subject to multiple conceptions of a life worth living, she may also have multiple overall practical identities. This will help us provide a satisfactory account of the grief utterances. However, it will help to first distinguish between one's narrow, broad, and total practical identity.<sup>123</sup>

Someone's *narrow* practical identity is what I have been calling her individual conception of a life worth her living. I have my individual conception of the kind of life worth my living, this provides me with my narrow practical identity, what Korsgaard would call my overall practical identity. However, my best friend and I have a conception of the kind of life worth *our* living *together*, which is *our* overall practical identity. My partner and I have another conception, etc.. Let's call the set of *only* my joint conceptions of a life worth living my *broad* practical identity. My

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<sup>123</sup> From here on out my use of 'practical identity' will refer only to one's *overall* practical identity, rather than the *particular* practical identities from which it is constituted. If I need to speak these particular identities, I will qualify them that way.

practical identity, simpliciter, then, is constituted by my narrow practical identity, plus my broad practical identity. To distinguish this notion of one's practical identity from the one in the previous section, let's call this one's *total* practical identity.<sup>124</sup>

From my narrow overall practical identity I can reason about what *I*, as *this* individual person, should do as so-and-so's friend. There I might think about what is good for me, my friend, and our friendship. This is different from how I can reason from within my broad practical identity. When my friend and I have a conception of a life worth our living together, an overall practical identity as *us*, I can reason within this conception, *as one of us*, about what is good *for us*. However, once a broad practical identity is established, it need not be the case that any conception of a life worth living within one's total practical identity has rational priority over the other. I can reason about what I should do *as the individual I am* from the perspective of *us*, and similarly, I can reason about what *we* should do *as we are* (or what *I* should do *as one of us*) from my individual perspective.

The distinction between one's broad, narrow, and total practical identity provides us with another proposal for what makes grief utterances true. In all cases, one loses a part of oneself when another dies because one loses a part of one's *total* practical identity. Call this 'the total practical identity proposal'. Because one's total practical identity includes one's narrow practical identity, and then some, the total practical identical proposal, like the original practical identity proposal, will be able to account for the experience that it is *oneself* that is a primary bearer of the loss.

However, unlike the original practical identity proposal, with the total practical identity proposal we can meet the Intimacy Constraint:

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<sup>124</sup> Some people may not have a broad practical identity. They may not have any joint conceptions of a life worth living. Others may have only a broad practical identity. They may have no conception of a life worth their living as an individual, but only as one of us. This may be what people speak of when they worry that their friend has "lost themselves" in a relationship: they have no narrow practical identity whatsoever, only the broad practical identity as a member of that couple, with those joint values. This is different from a case in which your friend's personal values, within her narrow identity, change drastically to align with those of her partner.

**The Intimacy Constraint:** An account of grief utterances must distinguish between how P<sub>1</sub>, who forms a plural person with P<sub>2</sub>, and P<sub>3</sub> who does not, loses a part of herself upon the death of P<sub>2</sub>.

Tim and his twin brother Tom formed a plural person. When Tim died, Tom lost a part of his broad practical identity. For, he lost the entire practical identity he had together with his brother. When a loved one with whom I form a plural person passes away, that conception of a life worth our living together is no longer available to me. I lose that entire conception, and not merely components of it, as there is no longer a *life* worth *our* living together.<sup>125</sup> As my broad practical identity is constituted by these various conceptions of a life worth living together, I lose a part of my broad practical identity. On the other hand, Olivia's loss at the death Tim, and my loss at the death of Cohen, were losses to our narrow practical identities. I did not form a plural person with Leonard Cohen, and Olivia did not form one with Tim. We each lost components of our narrow practical identities, but not our broad ones.

But didn't Tom also have aspects of his narrow practical identity invested in Tim, and so wouldn't he also lose components of his narrow practical identity when Tim passes away? Of course. Wouldn't that mean that there is also a sense in which his loss is the same as Olivia's, as each loses components of their narrow practical identity? Of course. Doesn't this violate the Intimacy Constraint? I don't think so. For, the Intimacy Constraint doesn't require that there is *no* sense in which the two suffer the same loss, just that there must be a sense in which the losses are different. The loss is different because Tom loses a part of his broad practical identity *and* his narrow practical identity, but Olivia loses a part of only her narrow practical identity. This may

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<sup>125</sup> This should not be interpreted as the claim that we maintain *no* relationship with the deceased following their death. While the conception of a life worth our *living together* cannot persist when one member is no longer living, we may still continue to reason *as if we were one of us* for some time following their death. This is to be expected, as when a loved one dies we do not immediately *forget* what it was like to be *one of us*, and for many individuals this way of reasoning is quite natural. What we cannot do is return to reasoning *as one of us* where *we* have a life to live together. But, there still may be many other ways to continue to relate to the deceased once they have passed away. See Norlock (2017) for a description of how we can, through imaginal means, continue real relationships with the deceased.

explain why some would think that the loss to Tom is somehow *greater* than the loss to Olivia — he has been subject to the same kind of loss as her, plus another.

Perhaps one is inclined to deny that Olivia has suffered *any* loss, as she did not form a plural person with Tim. But, I don't think we should do that. First, it seems clear to me she has lost something: she has lost Tim, who was dearly important to her. In Chapter 1.3 we noticed that Olivia still experiences the sensation of loss, and while this sensation may not infallibly track the loss of part, it gives us a *prima facie* reason to think there is *some* loss. If we maintain that we only lose parts of ourselves when one with whom we form a plural person passes away, then nobody with only a narrow practical identity would ever lose a part of themselves. That just seems wrong. In addition, allowing that Olivia loses some component(s) of her practical identity will let us accommodate the thought that although Olivia's loss was *different* from Tom's, she still suffered a great loss, for much of her practical identity was invested in Tim.

Now, however, one may raise the following objection. In Chapter 3 I wrote that plural persons are social groups. So, we are members of the plural persons to which we belong. But, if we are members of the plural person, then we are parts of the plural person. But in this chapter I've said that a plural person is part of me. So, I am part of the plural person, and the plural person is part of me. But, there cannot be mutual parts! That is, two things distinct things cannot each be parts of the other, for that would violate the asymmetry of parthood. Something is wrong. I take this up in the next section.

### **5.5. Mutual Parts and a Model of Practical Identity**

The objection just raised highlights an inconsistency between three claims:

- 1 I am a proper part of the plural persons of which I am a member.
2. The plural persons of which I am a member are proper parts of me.
3. Two things cannot be proper parts of each other.

Implicit in this objection is also the assumption that ‘proper part’ is univocal in each of (1)-(3). To start to address this, if I am correct that plural persons are social groups (Chapter 3.4.1), then if the use of ‘part’ in (1) is intended to refer to mereological parthood, (1) is not obviously true. For, it is not obvious that group membership is mereological parthood. For instance, Sonia Sotomayor is a member of the Supreme Court. If membership is parthood, then since Sotomayor’s arm is part of Sonia, it is part of the Supreme Court. But it isn’t. Similarly, if I am part of the plural person, then so is my ponytail. That is strange.<sup>126</sup> However, even if we take for granted that the members of plural persons are mereological parts of plural persons, (2) is not accurate.

Recall (2) is the assumption that any plural person of which I am a member is part of me. That is not right. The *plural person* is *not* part of *me*. Rather, the plural person’s practical identity, or its conception of a life worth living, call it ‘*c*’, is a part of my *total* practical identity, ‘*a*’. *c* is a part of *a*. So, the objection as stated will work only if “I am part of the plural person” is taken to mean “My total practical identity is part of the plural person’s conception of its life worth living”. Maybe it is. For one (plural or individual) person’s practical identity can be invested in another’s.<sup>127</sup> I can have my practical identity invested in the practical identity of someone else. For instance, it is important to *me* that someone who I love stays exactly as she is, with *this* practical identity. Her practical identity is then a part of my practical identity. She may have her practical identity invested in me in just the same way, then my practical identity is a part of hers. This too leads to what looks like a case of mutual parthood. Suppose that my practical identity is invested in Arturo’s and vice versa. The objection is now that this entails the following pair of claims:

1\*. Arturo’s practical identity is a proper part of my practical identity.

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<sup>126</sup> See Uzquiano (2004) for this argument. See Hawley (2017) for a defense of the view that members of a group are parts of the group.

<sup>127</sup> You can invest your practical identity in other practical identities, but, unfortunately, you can’t invest your practical identity in all and only those practical identities that are not invested in themselves, even if you really want to.

2\*. My practical identity is a proper part of Arturo's practical identity.

But, two things cannot be proper parts of each other. To address this, I think we should get clear on what a person's (individual or plural) practical identity *is*. For, until we understand what exactly a practical identity *is*, it is difficult to understand what it is for anything to be part of a practical identity, let alone for one practical identity to be part of another. Not only will doing so help us address this objection, it will also help us better understand what makes grief utterances true.

### 5.5.1. Identity Investment as a Propositional Attitude

I think the first step towards getting clear on what a practical identity is to get clear on what it is we invest our practical identities in. To keep things simple, for now, let's start just by thinking about someone's narrow practical identity. Recall Korsgaard's characterization of a particular practical identity: "a description under which you value yourself ... under which you find your life to be worth living and your actions to be worth undertaking" (1996, 101). This sounds as though I invest in *myself* as a teacher, *as a daughter*...

But, our narrow, practical identities can be invested in more than just descriptions of *ourselves*. For, it seems possible for someone to have a practical identity not invested in any description of herself at all. Let's start with Virginia Woolf's "angel of the house" who was "so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others."<sup>128</sup> We can modify this case just a bit, and describe the angel of the house as one who "never had a practical identity investment in herself, but only in the minds and wishes of others". She invests her practical identity in, say, only the well-being of those in the same household as her, but not her own. This *investment* in their well-being provides a description under which she may find her life to be worth living ("as long as they are thriving, my life is worth my living"), and her actions to be worth undertaking ("were I to perform this

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<sup>128</sup> I take this case from Driver (2000). Driver's discussion of the angel of the house begins on page 187.

action, it would improve their life, so I will do it”). Regardless of whether anyone *ought* to have a practical identity like this, it seems possible that someone could.<sup>129</sup> So, we can invest in descriptions of not just ourselves, but of anything we take to make our lives worth living and our actions worth undertaking.

As described, identity investment seems to take descriptions of oneself and others as its object. I conjecture that these descriptions are propositions. So, identity investment it seems, is a propositional attitude. From here on out, I will refer to it as ‘the investment attitude’.<sup>130</sup> We take the investment attitude toward propositions.

One may disagree here. After all, our surface grammar and ways of talking do not always reflect that investment is a propositional attitude. Oftentimes we speak of being invested in objects (or, well, objects that are not propositions). For instance, I might say I invest my practical identity in dogs. But, what about dogs? Owning a dog? Playing with a dog? Suppose I just mean that it is very important to me that there are dogs. It doesn’t matter to me which particular dog there is, there just needs to be some dog. What object am I invested in, then?

The world, maybe. But, that doesn’t seem correct. Suppose you invest their practical identity in elephants the same way I invest mine in dogs. But then the object of your investment attitudes is the same as mine: the world. But, intuitively, our investments have different objects. We could try to capture this by claiming that I invest in the world *as it contains dogs*, and you invest yours in the world *as it contains elephants*. But, then we need to say that the world as it contains dogs differs from the world as it contains elephants. Although both are the world, the world would have to differ from itself.<sup>131</sup> The previous chapter presented a metaphysical framework

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<sup>129</sup>On this account, what Korsgaard calls “particular practical identities” (“descriptions under which we value ourselves...”) are really just a species of practical identity investments, the ones that are descriptions of ourselves.

<sup>130</sup> In Chapter 3, when I introduced plural personhood, and even earlier in this chapter, I wrote as if *valuing* was *the* investment attitude. For the remainder of this dissertation, I am instead going to switch to from talk of valuing something to talk of taking the investment attitude towards it. This is so for a couple of reasons. First, ‘value’ is an equivocal term, and uses of it come laden with other associations that can make value talk confusing. (2) The stipulative use of ‘value’ (which I took from Helm 2009) stood in for something like ‘that attitude that we take towards something when we take it to have a place in our conception of a life worth our living’.

<sup>131</sup> Thanks to Arturo Javier for helping me get clear on this argument. One might call an argument with this kind of origin an appeal to Arturoty.

that would allow us to make sense of this, but recall we are looking for a less metaphysically committed account of the grief utterances than the one found there. Taking on that framework would undermine part of the motivation for moving to a different proposal. So, to really reflect this attitude, it seems we should say that I invest in the proposition <There is at least one dog>. <sup>132</sup> As long as this is distinct from the proposition <There are elephants>, we can accommodate the intuition that I invest in something different than you do.

Most generally, to say that my identity is invested in something is to say that I take the investment attitude towards propositions involving that thing. I might say I invest my practical identity in *you*. That's speaking loosely. What about you do I invest in? Your well-being? Your sense of humour? Your very existence? Each of these seem to need to be fleshed out. To say that my practical identity is invested in you is to say that I take the investment attitude towards propositions involving you, like, <You are cool>. To be invested in another's practical identity is to take the investing attitude towards propositions involving her practical identity.

If the investment attitude takes propositions as its objects, then to me it seems natural to identify an (individual or plural) person's narrow practical identity with the set of all of the propositions towards which she takes the investment attitude. <sup>133</sup> This allows us to avoid the worries about mutual identity investments entailing mutual parthood. Recall the objection is that if I invest in Arturo's practical identity, and he invests in mine, then we get the following two claims, which together are inconsistent with the asymmetry of proper parthood:

- 1\*. Arturo's practical identity is a proper part of my practical identity.
- 2\*. My practical identity is a proper part of Arturo's practical identity.

First, we should note that if this objection is successful, it is a problem for not just the investment attitude, but other propositional attitudes as well. Take belief. It is a propositional

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<sup>132</sup> Here and throughout I use the convention of indicating a proposition by containing a sentence within angle brackets.

<sup>133</sup> A more fleshed-out version account would identify it with an ordered set, where the order would indicate priority between the elements of our practical identities, as we can be more or less invested in something. I also considered the option that our practical identities are the *conjunction* of all of the propositions in which we are invested, but that seemed less attractive to me because, amongst other things, it wasn't clear how to incorporate an ordering relation between the conjuncts.

attitude. Suppose I believe <Arturo's belief is funky> and Arturo believes <Carolyn's belief is goofy>. Then, through the same reasoning present in the objection, Arturo's belief is part of mine, and my belief is part of his. Similarly, if desire is a propositional attitude, and if I can have desires about your total desire state, and you can have desires about mine, then the objector would conclude that my desires are part of yours and yours are part of mine.<sup>134</sup>

But, I don't think this objection is successful. To say I am invested in Arturo's practical identity is to say that I take the investment attitude towards a proposition involving Arturo's practical identity, say <Arturo's practical identity is funky>. For the objection to succeed it must be the case that the relationship between my practical identity and <Arturo's practical identity is funky>, and <Arturo's practical identity is funky> and Arturo's practical identity, are the same relation, namely, mereological parthood. That is not at all obvious, there is a prima facie case against both.

My practical identity is the set of propositions I take the investment attitude towards: {..., <Arturo's practical identity is funky>, ...}. <Arturo's practical identity is funky> is an *element* of my practical identity, not a mereological part. The relationship between the two is set membership, not mereological parthood. These are distinct relations. Parthood is transitive, set membership is not. (1\*) does not follow from the fact I invest in Arturo's practical identity.<sup>135</sup>

It is not obvious the relation between Arturo's practical identity and <Arturo's practical identity is funky>, call it 'constituency', is mereological parthood, either. Consider the following argument: Socrates is a constituent of <Socrates is sitting>, Socrates' nose is part of Socrates, but Socrates' nose is not part of <Socrates is sitting>. So, constituency is not parthood.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> I take it that most contemporary philosophers think belief is a propositional attitude, for instance Gettier (1963) assumes this is so, as does much of the literature his paper spawned. There also seems to be some consensus that desire is a propositional attitude – McDaniel and Bradley (2008) call this the "received wisdom" about desire – though Thagard (2006) argues the received wisdom is wrong.

<sup>135</sup> Nor will (2\*) follow from the fact that Arturo invests in my practical identity.

<sup>136</sup> The original version of this argument can be found in Frege (1980, p. 79). Others have maintained that constituency is parthood, for instance, Tillman and Fowler (2012). However, they argue that *because* constituency is proper parthood, proper parthood is neither asymmetric nor transitive. If they are correct, then once again, this objection won't get off the ground.

So, the fact that two persons (be they plural or individual) can mutually invest in each other's practical identities, does not entail that there can be mutual parthood. And, we have cleared up what it is to invest one's practical identity in something, and what a person's, plural or otherwise, narrow practical identity is. Many authors assume we have practical identities, but few give an account of what those are.<sup>137</sup> So, though the objection was misguided, addressing it ended up being quite fruitful. With this model of one's narrow practical identity in place, I will briefly explain how to conceive of one's *total* practical identity.

### 5.5.2. *A Model of Total Practical Identity and Loss*

A person's *narrow* practical identity is the set of all propositions she takes the investment attitude toward *as the individual person she is*. In §5.4 I wrote that a person's *total* practical identity is constituted by her narrow practical identity, plus her broad practical identity. Her broad practical identity, I said, is the set of *only* her joint conceptions of a life worth living. Each one of these is the practical identity of a plural person of which she is a member, which itself is a set. Now I will say that one's total practical identity is a set of sets. Each set corresponds to a practical identity that someone has either *as this particular person* (her narrow practical identity), or as *one of us* (the practical identity of a plural person to which she belongs).

With this framework in place, let's briefly review how to understand that loss. On the total practical identity proposal, you lose a part of yourself when a loved one dies because you lose a component of your total practical identity. What exactly does that mean, given the model of total practical identity just presented? Most broadly, it means that at least one of the sets of propositions constituting your total practical identity loses an element.<sup>138</sup> Which set? Which elements? This will depend on whether you formed a plural person with the deceased. When you do *not* form a plural person with the deceased, you lose those propositions, elements of your

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<sup>137</sup> Or at least I have not been able to find one.

<sup>138</sup> This is a slightly misleading way to put it, for, as sets are individuated by their members, you technically have a brand-new practical identity, and so nothing lost anything. But *you* are still stuck with a practical identity that contains less than your former one did.

narrow practical identity, that are true only if your loved one is alive. This also occurs when you *did* form a plural person with the deceased, too, as long as your narrow practical identity was invested in propositions of that sort.

But while the existence, or life, of your loved one may be required for the truth of these propositions, it is not just the death of your loved one alone that causes you to lose this part. For we can take the investment attitude toward false propositions. And, on the account I have given, as long as you maintain an investment attitude toward a proposition, it is part of your practical identity. So, it is not merely the death of someone in whom we were invested that causes these propositions to “drop” from our practical identity. It must be also that, upon learning of their death, we are compelled to *let them drop*. Something about learning that a loved one has died almost forces us to recognize that some of our identity investments no longer serve us.<sup>139</sup> Something that I know is *not* and *cannot* be, cannot be something that serves to define who I am, that makes my life worth living. I can no longer invest in it, or at least I cannot do so rationally.

Now, if I formed a plural person with the deceased, then I am also forced to recognize that an entire practical identity, one I had as *one of us* must be dropped. For, if my partner is not alive, there is no life worth our living together, there is no *us*... At least not as we were together on earth. That plural person is gone, and so I must give up that practical identity.<sup>140</sup> So, when someone with whom you form a plural person dies, you lose an entire *set* that itself was a practical identity (of a plural person) and an element of your broad practical identity.

It might seem strange that, because our attitudes play a role here, it is not just the *deaths* of our loved ones that force us to lose these parts of our identities. However, insofar as the sensation of loss prompting the grief utterances is part of the experience of grief, I don't think

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<sup>139</sup> I say “almost” forces us, as someone who is in extreme denial regarding the death of a loved one may refuse to recognize this. However, as Cholbi (*ms*, p. 81) notes, “unless the bereaved is delusional or in extreme denial, some choices will have to be made regarding what life looks like in the world without the deceased.” Some of these choices regard how to re-arrange or reconfigure our practical identity in light of the absence of the deceased.

<sup>140</sup> By way of “continuing bonds” with the deceased, I may incorporate some elements of the plural person’s practical identity into my own narrow practical identity.

we should find it so surprising. With the exception of anticipatory grief, grief requires the belief (or something belief like) that our loved ones are deceased. Even anticipatory grief requires the belief that they will be deceased soon. In cases of anticipatory grief, we might even experience an anticipatory sensation of loss much like the kind that prompts the grief utterances, the realization that, in a short time, we will be forced to forgo some aspect of our practical identity.

### **5.6. Conclusion: The Benefits of the Practical Identity Proposal**

Thus ends my presentation of the total practical identity proposal. Now let's see how well it fares with respect to the various desiderata. As I mentioned in §5.4, the total practical identity proposal, like the original practical identity, can account for phenomenology of loss, that it is oneself who is a primary bearer of the loss. It is also able to capture the apparent difference between the loss that occurs at the death of one with whom we formed a plural person, and the death of one with whom we did not, and thus meets the Intimacy Constraint.

The two remaining desiderata are that the view can capture the phenomenology that losing a loved one can affect every aspect of the survivor's life, and that it does not require commitment to any heavy-duty metaphysics. The practical identity proposal, both the total version and the original version from §5.3, *predicts* the survivor's sense that the loss of her beloved affects every aspect of her life. In the loss of a joint conception of a life worth living, the survivor loses a lens through which she could interact with and approach the world, forcing her to re-adjust the way she navigates the spaces around her. It also predicts that this can occur when the loss is just to one's narrow practical identity, depending on the degree to which one had their identity invested in another person. For instance, Olivia, whose narrow practical identity was significantly invested in Tim, would, upon his death, lose many aspects of her identity. Thus, we should expect that she would be significantly affected by Tim's death. In saying some losses are *only* to one's narrow practical identity, this need not minimize the effect or experience of that

loss. It is just a different kind of loss than a loss to one's broad practical identity. Recognizing that is what allows us to provide an account of grief utterances.

As for its metaphysical commitments, the total practical identity proposal requires a commitment to persons, propositions, and sets. None of these are controversial entities. And so, I believe the total practical identity proposal meets each of the four desiderata. But, it also has three additional, attractive features.

First, the practical identity proposal can account not only for the claim that in the death of a loved one, the bereaved lost a part of oneself, also for the claim that our loved one's will "always be parts of us". All that requires is that we continue to invest in propositions involving them. Of course, some propositions we cannot continue to invest in *rationally*, if the truth of them requires our loved ones to be alive, but others we can. For instance, I can continue to rationally invest in the proposition <I am a Leonard Cohen fan>, even if Leonard Cohen is no longer alive.

Second, the practical identity proposal has the resources to accommodate a wide variety of loss. We grieve not only when someone dies, but also after breaking up with someone, losing a job, or moving to a new town, amongst many other things. And during these times one may also have the experience of loss to oneself. The practical identity proposal explains this easily. We invest in not only propositions involving our loved ones, but involving our romantic relationships, careers, and hometowns. The social self proposal cannot explain this, for it requires relations of psychological connectedness, which, plausibly, cannot hold between a person and an inanimate object like a relationship, job, or town. The CAI account *could* explain this, were there some whole of which both my job and I, or my hometown and I were a part. But again, that would require taking on the metaphysical commitments of CAI, as well as something that begins to look a lot like a form of compositional universalism: any collection of objects composes some object.

Finally, the practical identity proposal can help explain why the loss we suffer when a loved one dies is the loss of something irreplaceable. There are some propositions I invest in rationally *only if* you are alive, for some propositions I invest in are true only if you are alive. No other person or object can take your place in this proposition, and so they cannot take that place in my practical identity.

So, if we expand our account of practical identity to include those we have as members of a plural person, we can offer an account of grief utterances with several desirable features. It does not entail that we lose a part of ourselves in the loss of a stranger or mere acquaintance, for our practical identities are seldom invested in such individuals. It explains why we experience the loss as a loss to ourselves. It requires few (if any) substantial metaphysical commitments. Unlike the Composition as Identity account and the social self proposal, it has the resources to explain the sense of loss caused not by the death of someone dear to us, but by the loss of a job, a breakup, or a move. Finally, unlike the social self proposal and the narrow practical identity proposal, it is able to distinguish between losses that we find intuitively different, it meets the Intimacy Constraint. Thus, by expanding our account of practical identity, we can make headway on understanding the grief utterances. And, as the experience of grief gives us a *prima facie* reason to think the grief utterances are true, then we also have reason to think that the total practical identity proposal is correct, for it seems to provide the best explanation.

Considering the grief utterances in the context of practical identity forced us to consider how we might need to revise our concept of one's practical identity. This is like how considering grief in the context of CAI allowed us to develop a more fleshed out version of Composition as Identity (Ch. 4), and how thinking about paradigmatic instances of grief encouraged us to consider, modify, and clarify the concept of plural personhood (Ch. 3), we've also seen how it could be possible for one person to be a mereological part of another (Ch. 2), even though that account ultimately failed. Even if the total practical identity proposal is ultimately unsuccessful,

studying the experience of grief has not only helped us understand the experience, but it has also helped us clarify and develop pre-existing concepts. Grief is philosophically rich both in what we can learn about it, and what we can learn from it. I think there are few human emotional experiences as visceral as the experience of grief and loss, but for those that are, we might expect the same.

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## Curriculum Vitae

# CAROLYN ELIZABETH GARLAND

Recent as of 3/24/2021

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### Areas of Specialization

Metaphysics (including Social Metaphysics), Value Theory

### Areas of Competence

Logic, Applied Ethics

### Education

**SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY** (2014 - )

PhD in Philosophy *expected* Spring 2021

Dissertation Title: *Exploring the Metaphysics of Grief*

Committee: Kris McDaniel (chair), Ben Bradley, Hille Paakkunainen

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA** (2014)

M.A. in Philosophy

**UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA** (2012)

B.A. Honours in Philosophy

### Publications

“Grief and Composition as Identity.” *Philosophical Quarterly* 70.280 (2020): 464-479.

### Presentations

#### REFEREED

“Grief and Composition as Identity”

Pacific APA, Vancouver, April 2019

“Substance Prioritism”

Canadian Philosophical Association, Montreal, June 2018

“Constituent Priority Monism”

Graduate Women in Metaphysics Workshop, Northampton, May 2016.

“Against Superinternalism”

Western Canadian Philosophical Association, Winnipeg, October 2013.

#### IN-HOUSE

“Plural Persons, Practical Persons”

Syracuse University ABD Talks series, Fall 2019

“Plural Persons and Composition as Identity”

Syracuse University ABD Talks series, Spring 2017

“Constituent Priority Monism”

Syracuse University Working Papers, Spring 2016

“Stipulating Haecceitist Differences”

Syracuse University Women’s Working Papers, Fall 2015

### Commentaries

On Michael Cholbi’s *Grief: A Philosophical Guide*

Society for the Philosophy of Emotion: Book Symposium, February 2021

On Sam Kampa’s (Fordham) “Imaginative Transport”

Creighton Club Meeting, Syracuse, October 2017

On Rebecca Mason’s (USF) “Grounding, Transitivity, and Unity”

Canadian Philosophical Association, Calgary, May 2016

### Awards and Distinctions

Syracuse University Humanities Center Dissertation Fellowship (2020-2021)

Syracuse University Summer Dissertation Fellowship (Summer 2020)  
Syracuse University Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award (2019)  
SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship Award (2014 - 2018)  
Syracuse University Graduate Fellowship (Fall 2017, 2016)  
Syracuse University Philosophy Summer Research Grant (Summer 2016, 2018, 2019)  
Syracuse University Graduate Fellowship (2014 - 2015)  
University of Victoria Graduate Award (2012 - 2014 )  
Outstanding Graduate Entrance Award University of Victoria Fellowship (2012-2013)

## Teaching Experience

### AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

#### AS PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR

*Human Nature* – Spring 2018, Spring 2020  
*Introduction to Philosophy (Honors)* — Fall 2019  
*Introduction to Moral Theory (online)* — Summer 2019  
*Theories of Knowledge and Reality* — Spring 2019  
*Formal Logic* — Fall 2018

#### AS TEACHING ASSISTANT (with Recitation Sections)

*Introduction to Moral Theory* — D. Sobel, Spring 2017  
*Theories of Knowledge and Reality* — K. Edwards, Spring 2016  
*Medical Ethics* — S. Gorovitz, Fall 2015

#### GRADING AND TUTORING ONLY

*Engineering Ethics* — D. Radcliffe, Fall 2017, 2016

### AT UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

#### GRADING AND TUTORING ONLY

*Elementary Formal Logic* — C. Klatt, Winter, Summer, Fall 2013; Summer 2014; A. Yap, Fall 2012  
*Critical Thinking* — C. Klatt, Summer, Fall 2013; Winter 2014  
*Introduction to Metaphysics* — M. Raven, Fall 2013  
*Philosophy of Religion* — A. Barnes, Spring 2014

## Graduate Coursework(\* - audit)

### METAPHYSICS

\**Essence and Potentiality* — K. McDaniel, Fall 2016 (SU)  
*Properties* — M. Heller, Winter 2016 (SU)  
*Independent Study: Metaphysics of Identity* — A. Gallois, Fall 2015 (SU)  
*Ontology of Material Objects* — M. Heller, Spring 2015 (SU)  
*Questions About Determination Relations* — K. Bennett, Spring 2015 (Cornell via Graduate Scholar Exchange Program)  
\**Reference and Existence* — M. Raven, Winter 2014 (UVic)  
*Directed Study: Contemporary Neo-Aristotelian Metaphysics* — M. Raven, Winter 2013 (UVic)

### LOGIC AND PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

*Properties and Predication* — M. Rieppel, Spring 2016 (SU)  
*Concepts and Mental Content* — K. Edwards, Fall 2014 (SU)  
*Logic and Language* — T. McKay, Fall 2014 (SU)  
*Directed Study: Epistemic Logic* — A. Yap, Fall 2012 (UVic)

### OTHER LLEMM

\**Language, Epistemology, Metaphysics, Mind Proseminar* — K. Edwards, K. McDaniel, Fall 2017 (SU)  
*A Priori Knowledge and Philosophical Intuitions* — A. Gallois, Fall 2014 (SU)  
*Cognitivist Philosophies of Mind* — J. Foss, Fall 2012 (UVic)

### VALUE THEORY

\**Metaphysics of Ethics* — B. Bradley and K. McDaniel, Fall 2018 (SU)  
*Ethics Proseminar* — D. Sobel, Fall 2015 (SU)  
*Population Ethics* — B. Bradley, Fall 2015 (SU)  
*Topics in Philosophy of Music* — J. Young, Winter 2013 (UVic)

### HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

*Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* — K. McDaniel, Fall 2015 (SU)  
*History of Philosophy Proseminar* — K. Richardson, Winter 2015 (SU)  
*Descartes* — K. McDaniel and K. Richardson, Fall 2014 (SU)

*The Metaphysics of Rationalism: Spinoza and Leibniz* — D. Scott, Winter 2013 (UVic)

**OTHER EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES (\* - competitive selection)**

\*Metaphysical Mayhem, Rutgers University, May 2018

\*CEU summer program on Ontology and Meta-Ontology, July 2017

**Professional and Departmental Service**

SU Minorities and Philosophy Chapter Co-Organizer (2019-2020; 2020-2021)

SU Philosophy Graduate Student Organization President (2018-2019)

SU Philosophy Graduate Conference Co-Organizer (2017-2018)

SU Philosophy Women's Group Co-organizer (2017-2018, 2016-2017, 2015-2016)

Volunteer Philosophy Instructor, Southside Academy (Fall 2015, 2014)

**References**

Kris McDaniel  
(kmcDani1@nd.edu)

Ben Bradley  
(wbradley@syr.edu)

Hille Paakkunainen  
(hpaakkun@syr.edu)

Mark Heller  
(Teaching)  
(heller@syr.edu)