

ECOLOGICAL SORROW:

Types of grief and loss in ecological grief

DISENFRANCHISED GRIEF



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Grief which is not given validation and/or public recognition. Ecological grief has often been disenfranchised, and grief theory helps to see various forms of this:

- 1) the loss is not acknowledged,
- 2) the griever is excluded, or
- 3) the relationship or kinship is not recognized.

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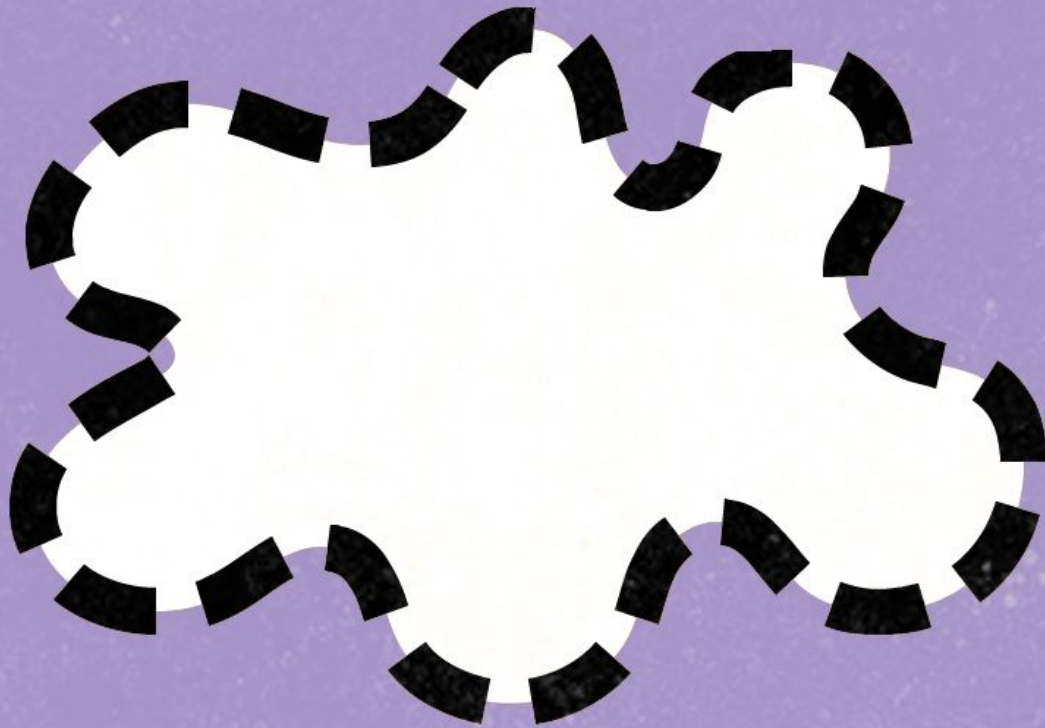


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AMBIGUOUS LOSS



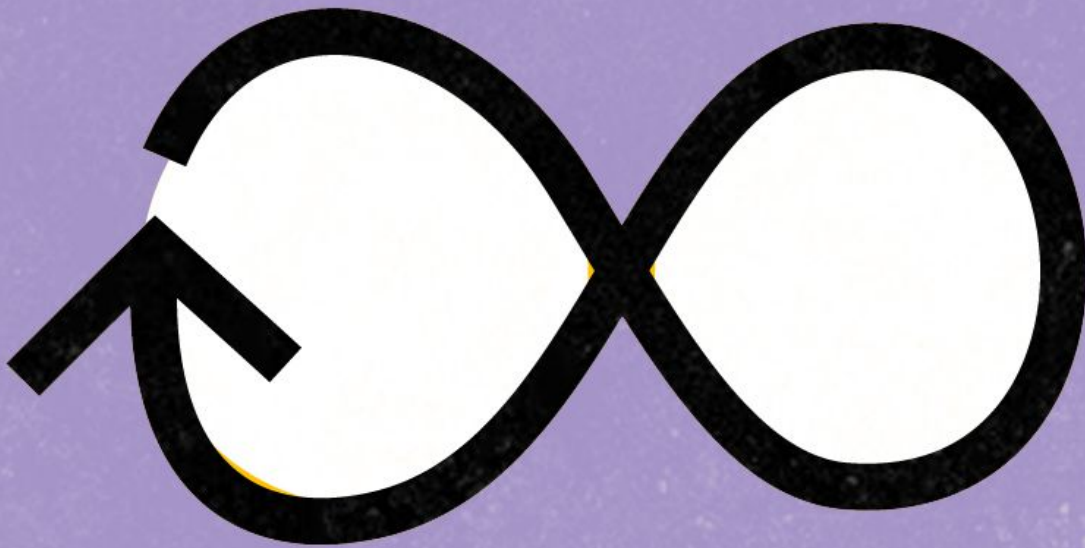
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Losses which have uncertainty and ambivalence, such as grieving soldiers missing in action. Many ecological losses have ambiguous elements: either psychological presence but psychological absence, or vice versa (e.g. snowy winters partly lost).

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NONFINITE LOSS



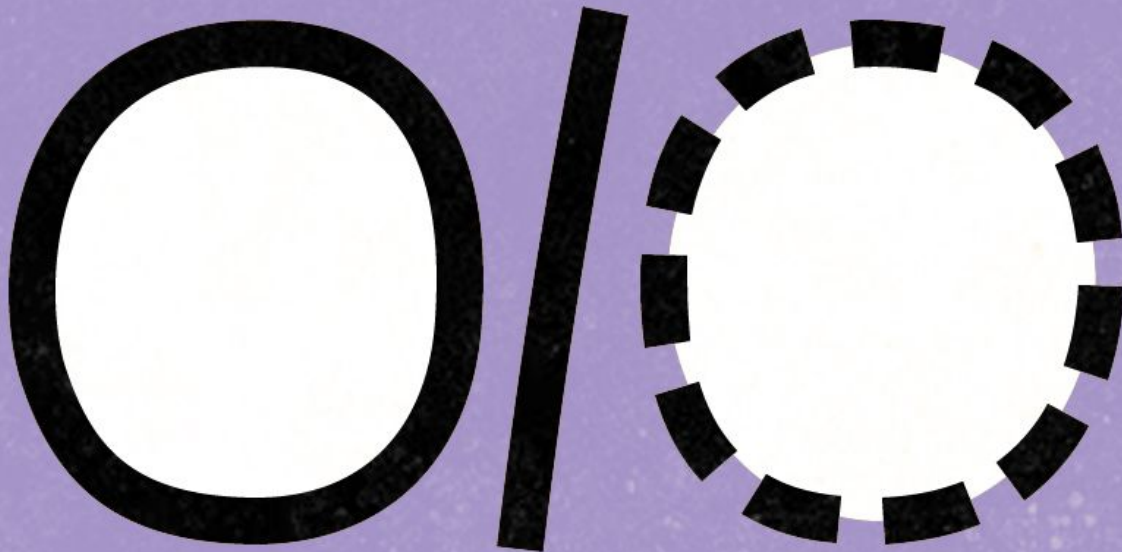
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This scholarship about ongoing losses can help to make sense of ecological losses. Nonfinite losses easily generate anxiety and there is social tension around them, often resulting in disenfranchisement. There is often a lack of rituals for nonfinite, ongoing losses.

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TANGIBLE / INTANGIBLE LOSS



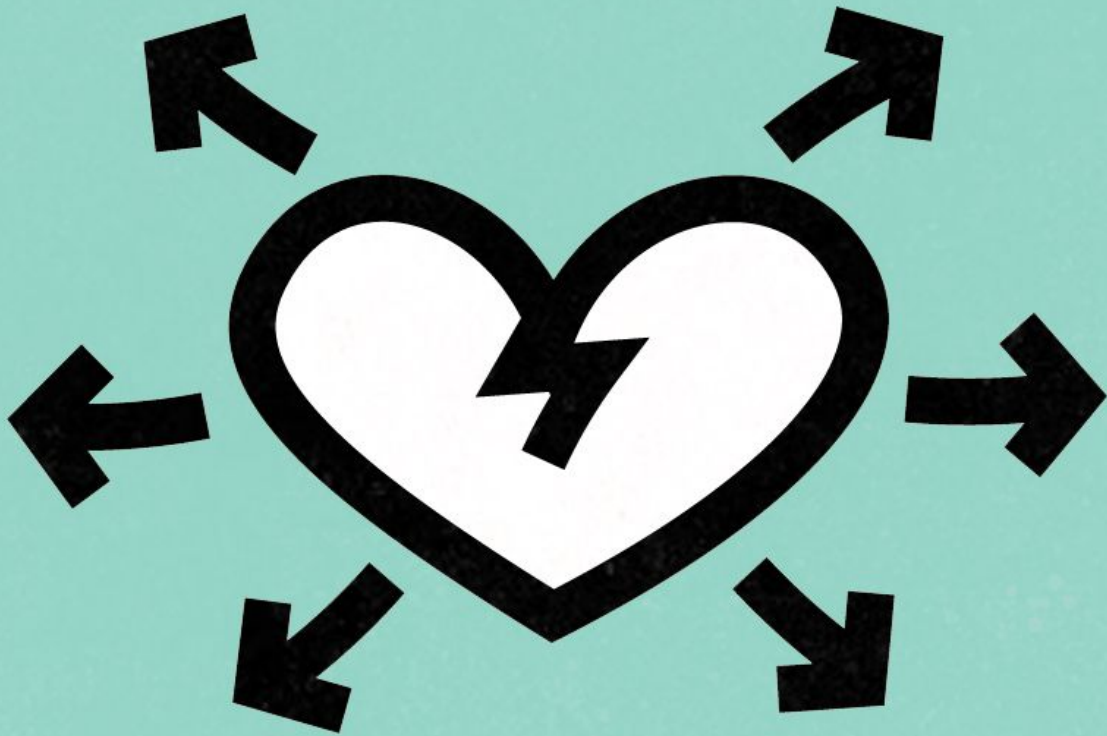
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This distinction can help to discern various forms of ecological loss. Intangible losses can be difficult to notice and are often disenfranchised. A single loss can include both tangible and intangible elements (e.g. loss of identity because of ecological loss).

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COMPLICATED GRIEF



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As applied to ecological grief:

- A) Clearly prolonged and very intense grief reactions to a particular ecological loss.
- B) Long-standing and debilitating grief reactions to global ecological loss.
- C) Overly strong forms of anticipatory grief/mourning.
- D) Cases where inhibited ecological grief can clearly be noticed.

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TRANSITIONAL LOSS AND GRIEF



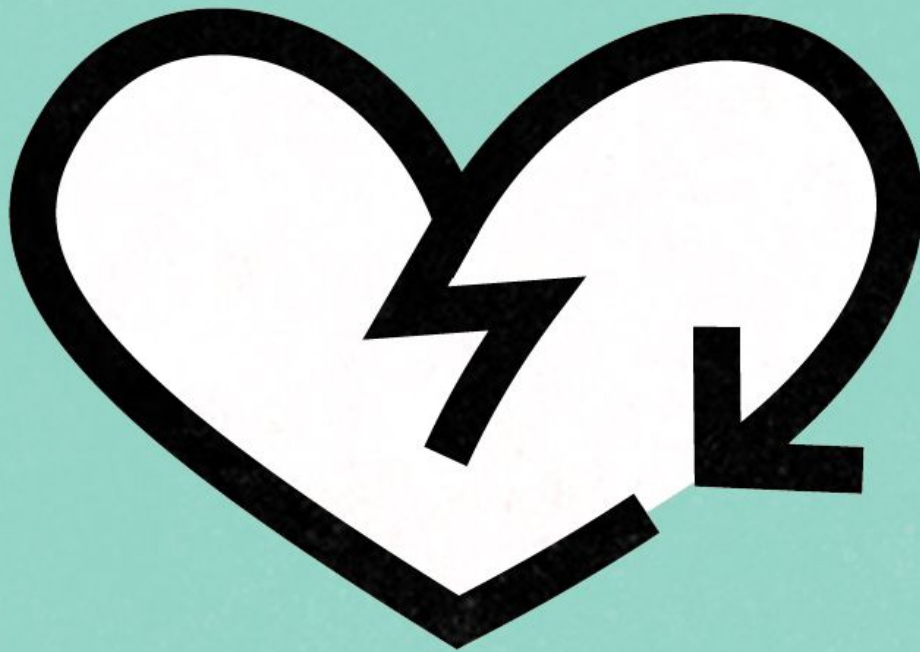
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Ongoing changes can evoke sadness (think of aging, for example). Adjustment is required: coming to terms with what is happening, and letting feelings flow. Many ecological changes produce these kinds of loss and grief.

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ANTICIPATORY GRIEF



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Some scholars define this as mourning in advance, before the losses have happened, but anticipatory grief can also be seen as part of grieving ongoing changes which are estimated to gain stronger forms in the future. A major aspect of ecological grief and related to continuing emotional bonds.

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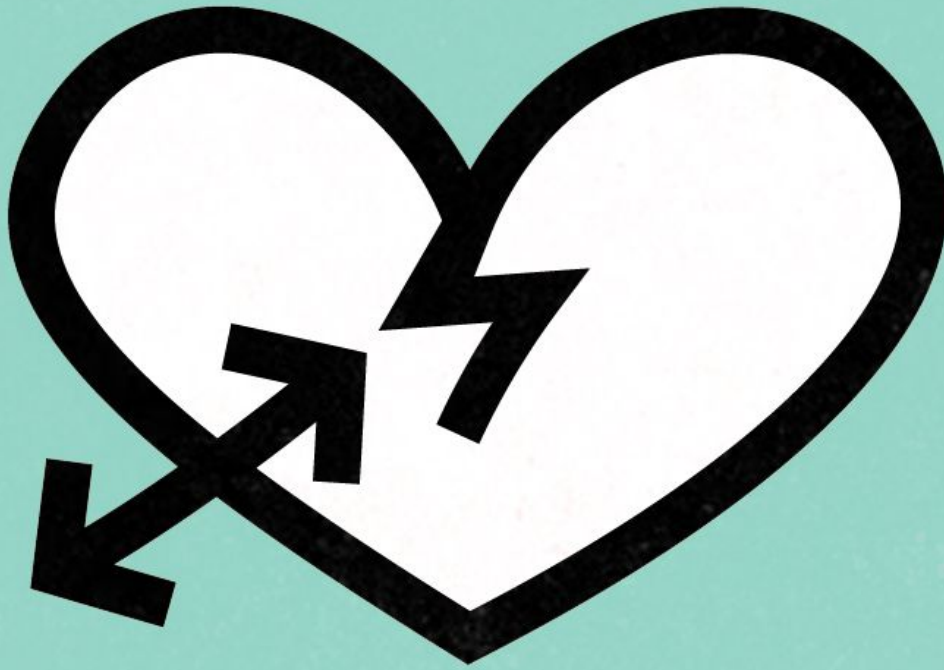


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CHRONIC SORROW



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Non-pathological but persistent form of grief (not the same as “chronic grief”!). Its descriptions fit ecological grief very precisely: e.g. “constant reminders or triggers”, “unavoidable, periodic resurgences of intensity”, and “predictable and unpredictable stress points” (Susan Roos).

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SHATTERED ASSUMPTIONS



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Some losses are so profound that they impact basic assumptions about the world and self. People then have to engage in meaning reconstruction. The ecological crisis can profoundly challenge people's meaning systems and cause spiritual grief.

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SHATTERED DREAMS



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These are profound intangible losses. The ecological crisis has affected many kinds of dreams and future plans. Some dreams have been broken, some stolen, some frozen. These losses and the resulting grief are often disenfranchised.

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LIFEWORLD LOSS



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Some losses are so holistic that they affect whole ways of living and all kinds of relations. These can be called lifeworld losses. They may happen on various scales: individual, cultural, and multi-species lifeworlds may be damaged or lost. Indigenous peoples have often suffered this due to colonization.