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Biography and Emotion

– Different Approaches in Dealing with
the Life Story of Natalia

&

70th Jubilee of Professor Fritz Schütze

by

Kaja Kaźmierska

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Analyzing Biographical Data – Different Approaches of Doing Biographical Research

Introductory Remarks

In 1998, as some other researchers having interests in biographical material, I was invited to participate in the session called “Doing biographical research,” organized by Gerhard Riemann in frames of the 38 Research Committee “Biography and Society” during the 14th Congress of the International Sociology Association in Montreal. Riemann asked us to show how we approach and understand the same text of autobiographical narrative interview with a Turkish migrant woman called Hülya (Riemann 2006:8-9). The novelty of his idea was related to the fact that the typical scenario of paper presentations

on a congress session was changed into a workshop-resembled meeting; although, still limited by time constraints, yet, giving a chance to show and see the process of working on the text. The presentations were supported by vivid discussions and Riemann’s encouragement to work on the material and analyze it with students. This suggestion could successfully spread and develop some time later when the volume of *Forum Qualitative Social Research* entitled *Doing Biographical Research* was edited by Gerhard Riemann in 2003 (published on the Internet), and three years later it also appeared in the paper version in *Historical Social Research* (2006). Both editions contain articles based on Montreal sessions, texts of other authors, and the interview transcript. From the perspective of about ten years, we can see that the interview with Hülya, translated by Gerhard Riemann into English, has become one of the so-called core or “portrait”¹ interviews showing the natural history² of various biographical and social

¹ I use this expression alluding to “portrait chapters” where a researcher selects a few interviews for presentation and discussion of the master cases which are the milestone of exhaustive analysis. They exemplify key biographical and social processes of a problem under study.

² I refer to one of the fundamental terms of the Chicago School of sociology. Natural history means certain series of events which, especially, from the point of view of the social actor, were impetuous and uncontrollable, but – at the same time – especially, from the researcher’s point of view – predictable and governed by certain regularities (Szacki 1981:649).

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processes presented in the frames of autobiographical narrative. The transcript has also an instructive character due to dividing it into paragraphs that are most of the time narrative segments. It helps to do structural description and present the sequential links of segments, for example, to students during workshops or seminars.

Following Riemann’s idea, two years ago, I proposed a similar data session, this time, devoted to the analysis of an interview conducted with a woman called Natalia, who spent some of her adolescence time in a children’s residential care home. The material was discussed in the session entitled *Biography and Emotion – different approaches in dealing with the life story of Natalia* during the conference “Emotion, Ethics & Performative Praxis” organized in Lodz in 2012.³ This special issue of *Qualitative Sociology Review* contains the results of this session.

In my introductory remarks, I would like to stress the role that working sessions, workshops, seminars – when common work on material evolves – play due to their methodological, epistemological, and also formative (mainly for a researcher involved in a given project) power released by joint process of interpretation. This frame of reference introducing the first part of this volume also corresponds with the volume’s second part devoted to the 70th jubilee of Professor Fritz Schütze – the founder of autobiographical narrative interview and one of the scholars promoting collective style of work on (auto)biographical data.

³ The conference was organized in September 2012 in Lodz by the Department of Sociology of Culture, University of Lodz, and Durham University (UK) as the Midterm Conference of ESA (European Sociology Association) Research Network 03 Biographical Perspectives on European Societies.

Some Dilemmas Related to Biographical Research Proceedings

The analysis of biographical material is based on the process of its interpretation supported by elaborated analytical tools, as well as contextual knowledge needed to understand specific social, cultural, or interactional contexts. Although this statement seems to point to evident assumptions, in practice, when regarding widespread applications of biographical method, it loses its obviousness. Thus, I would like to refer to some critical arguments pertaining to biographical research, formulated from different perspectives. In the end, this criticism should lead to reflection on the significance of collective work on materials.

Firstly, we can point to a few elements constituting the stereotypical image of biographical approach: biographical research is easy to be done, though strenuous; its results are blurred, subjective, and not representative; it is not easy to estimate its accuracy and reliability; one does not need special skills in order to do biographical research and to analyze empirical data thus, everybody can do it.⁴ The stereotype constructed in such a way influences both “inner” (some scholars using biographical methods) and “outer” (those who criticize biographical approach) perspectives.

Considering the outer point of view, the contrast that is, first of all, built between qualitative and quantitative methods in terms of their reliability, is based on the false conviction that within biographical research analytical procedures, if there are any, cannot

⁴ I also dwell on this topic in another text where I discuss the problem of teaching biographical methods within the university context (Kaźmierska 2010).

be recognized as really scientific. Whereas, as Marek Czyżewski noticed (2013:22), elaborated analytical tools can be considered the real epistemological achievement of biographical approach. Analytical tools, based on sociolinguistic knowledge, as well as theoretical assumptions rooted in interpretative sociology, enable undertaking a subtle analysis of biographical constraints influenced by social barriers. In contrast to quite typical social explanations pointing at schematic circumstances (i.e., social class belonging, pathology, poverty) as the source of various social behaviors, biographical analysis based on circumstantial reconstruction of processual sequences of biographical experiences shows how and in what ways they might have happened (Czyżewski 2013:15). In this context, when showing achievements of biographical method, Czyżewski accuses biographical research of losing analytical and epistemological power due to inflation of biographical studies and incorporation of the biographical method into mainstream sociology. To some extent it is true, the presupposition of easiness often leads to a situation when biographical research is trivialized. If, sometimes even in the eyes of a person using biographical approach, it does not require any specific skills (e.g., knowledge of statistics and/or sophisticated computer programs), it means that no particular methodological education is necessary. As a result, we are confronted with research where the analysis stops at intuitive, commonsense, self taught explanations, which can be defined as a “homemade” sociology, yet alluding to the repertoire of notions well attached to biographical approach.

This attitude may be contrasted with theoretically grounded interpretative approaches where different

ways of doing biographical analysis have been developed.⁵ So, on the one hand, we have lots of projects resembling a biographical method, and, on the other, elaborated studies based on theoretically grounded procedures. Thus, we may pose a question whether each study that is called, by a researcher, a biographical one really belongs to biographical analysis. Nowadays, such questions should be put forth more often because, I would risk a statement, biographical research is one of the most “disordered” fields in social sciences – in terms of methodological reflection – although its *raison d’être* is data analysis. By disorder I do not mean the absence of methodological thinking as such but the lack of common stock of knowledge that would be recognized as a sort of basic biographical research input which those who do biographical research should be familiar with. As a consequence, the diversity of approaches and schools within biographical approach is not supported by acquainted input of possible analytical frames and theories that lay behind them. The lack of shared stock of knowledge (being both the reason and the result of the mentioned disorder) leads sometimes to misunderstandings or, even worse – trivializes the discourse among users of the biographical method. The concept of trajectory of suffering may serve here as an example. The theory of the biographical and collective trajectories, developed by Fritz Schütze and Gerhard Riemann (1991), deriving from Anselm Strauss’ work on interactions between institutional processes and terminally ill patients (Strauss 1991), can be considered as one of the best elaborated theoretical concepts based on biographical analysis. However, it is not known, especially, in the context of

⁵ Just to mention the biography-oriented sociology of Fritz Schütze, structural-realist approach of Daniel Bertaux, objective hermeneutics of Ulrich Oevermann.

American sociology.⁶ This type of ignorance can be the source of attitude described by Ursula Apitzsch and Lena Inowlocki (2000:53): “while biographical research has become of interest to a number of sociologists, a certain impatience with methodological aspects of biographical analysis, as well as a seemingly weak theoretical benefits from such efforts, have led to some critical judgments” which are supported by the picture of strenuousness of biographical proceedings, including the stage of collecting material, as well as what critics would call subjectivity and what – from the perspective of qualitative analysis – is the process of interpretation.

When commenting on the tension between the fascination and the widespread use of biographical materials and quality of biographical researches, Gerhard Riemann (2003; 2006) focuses on a slightly different aspect, still, in my opinion, also related to the discussed issues. He exposes the process of presenting findings based on biographical analysis when the text is being introduced to the readers: “[they] are at loss for further specifications about how the authors really work on the data, how they gain substantive insights, and arrive at theoretical conclusions” (Riemann 2006:8). This difficulty related to veiling the analytical cuisine may be rooted in two different reasons. Firstly, presenting the data and analytical proceedings in biographical research is a real problem. Accurate descriptions, explanations, interpretations based on references to the very material require long, elaborated text analysis that does not meet, as Riemann fairly noticed, “the conventional requirements of publications” (2006:8). But, this veiling may also be caused by various kinds of methodological concerns, especially, if a so-called

⁶ See the interview with Fritz Schütze in this volume of QSR.

analysis is based on commonsense knowledge, or is reduced to descriptive and idiographic perspective or just social psychology assumptions. In such a case, it is not the author’s story but his/her psychosocial profile that counts (Czyżewski 2013:24).

By expressing these remarks I would like to pay attention to the paradox of contemporary biographical research. The biographical boom apparently changed the position of the biographical method, which is, at least sometimes, placed within the mainstream of sociology. This is the criticism expressed by Marek Czyżewski (2013) in his paper “Interpretative Sociology and Biographical Method: Change of Function, Anti-Essentialist Reservations and the Problem of Critique,” where he states that the more popular (influential), for instance, the more mainstream biographical method is, the more it is endangered by being trivialized and/or instrumentalized. When accepting this criticism, I would say that it is directed towards this kind of methodological (not)thinking which, actually, should not be considered as biographical research. In other words, the paradox refers to the fact that gaining more influence, thanks to its popularity, biographical research has lost its epistemological and methodological power being flooded by “the outcomes of patient, yet, talentless erudition” (Chałasiński 1979:40 [trans. KK]).⁷

⁷ I allude to the following quotation of Józef Chałasiński (1979:39-40 [trans. KK]): “[c]omplex personal, social experience and the ability to conduct its interpretative analysis, as well as the construction that is built upon it, constitute the basic precondition for sociological aptitude. Without this aptitude, a sociologist remains no one but a skilled technician who gathers the external facts of the collective life. Therefore, sociology is not merely a science and partially a philosophy but also an art of a kind. This is why so much of sociology can often be learnt from outstanding novelists, and just as much can be found repelling due to the outcomes of patient, yet, talentless erudition. And verily there is no other written source that would broaden and enrich our personal social experience equally to the autobiography.”

Nevertheless, theoretically grounded, systematic analytical tools of biographical method exist, after all, and they are still positioned in a niche stream of biographical research, although they play pivotal roles for its development, scientific status, and real input to social sciences.⁸ One of the means of this kind of proceedings is joint work based on discussion and interpretation.

What Are Workshops and Data Sessions Needed for

So-called “data sessions,” in which researchers jointly analyze primary materials, like interview transcriptions, field notes, and other data, have turned out to be very valuable events in many conferences in biographical research and other approaches to qualitative analysis – valuable because colleagues make their specific ways of looking at things visible to each of them and thereby, reveal a lot of the analytical processes of discovery, which usually stay hidden in standard presentations of results. The atmosphere of such working sessions is often surprisingly cooperative; people often forgo the habitual tendency to celebrate the putative strengths of their own approach while creating a simplified or even stereotypical image of the other persons’ pitiable ways of understanding their data. (Riemann 2014:20)

I start this paragraph with the quotation of Gerhard Riemann’s first words in the article that is published in this volume of QSR because he perfectly describes the idea and spirit of data sessions. In his text, he exposes the meaning of conference data sessions, yet, his remark can be extended to other types of meetings devoted to the analysis of empirical material, like student seminars and workshops, project

⁸ Work of Fritz Schütze and his achievements in this field may serve as good examples, see the second part of this volume, especially, Marek Czyżewski’s text.

workshops of research teams, seminars/workshops for scholars presenting their data to others.

For me, as a sociologist doing biographical research and being “brought up” in the style of work introduced to me by Fritz Schütze and Gerhard Riemann (thanks to their publications, joint data sessions, and work in the projects), common work on material is a pivotal element of each qualitative research. In texts devoted mainly to students’ education (e.g., Riemann and Schütze 1987; Riemann 2005; 2010), especially, in the field of social work and sociology, we may find not only the description of such practices but also realize that it is not easy to convince students to undertake the effort of joint interpretation, reflecting and self reflecting, “making one’s own practice strange” (Riemann 2010:79). Also Fritz Schütze – in the interview presented in this volume – underlines the meaning of such workshops:

[a]nyway, I think it is an extremely important feature of a productive university setting to let students undergo open and cooperative research experiences. Such a social arrangement is not restricted to interpretative or qualitative sociology proper; it can be a productive arrangement within all types of social and cultural sciences. It is a very Humboldtian idea: that you would have a social arrangement for a joint research action schema that the students would freely embark on, that it is totally open regarding the results searched for, that the students as research partners would be principally equal to the docents, although they are much more inexperienced, they have lots of fresh ideas, and that all the participants would work together cooperatively (p. 317)

and points that it was not easy to put them to student curriculum.

As I noticed, the published texts mainly refer to the situation of students’ education. But, as we know, the process of data interpretation should be undertaken not only with the help of certain procedures but also treated as a communicative activity (Riemann and Schütze 1987). Therefore, this type of analysis requires collective work in all research contexts. Exchanging interpretations, which are results of biography analysis, discussing meanings given to a biographer’s experiences is aimed at exchanging different perspectives and frames of references. This activity is supported by assumptions of interpretative approach underlining social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann 1991), as well as the conviction that interpretations are negotiable and the very process should be open according to the thought that “reality over and again surpass our expectations. Whereas we are sometimes so attached to our ideas that we miss reality”⁹ [trans. KK].

In this context, I would like to share my experiences gained thanks to the cooperation with German colleagues.¹⁰ Apart from numerous students workshops¹¹ and small seminars, especially, at the beginning of my work, I have recently taken part in two projects based on autobiographical narrative interviews. The first one was a big international project engaging teams from seven countries, called “EuroIdentities: The Evolution of European Identity: Using biographical methods to study the development of European

⁹ The quotation comes from “Vademecum of the general” of one of the monastic orders. It is addressed to newly chosen superiors and it is subtitled “What to do and not to do when power is in your hands” (*Tygodnik Powszechny* 2009 [see Kaźmierska 2010]).

¹⁰ Apart from Fritz Schütze and Gerhard Riemann, I should mention Ulrike Nagel, Anja (Schreder) Wildhagen, Lena Inowlocki, Bärbel Treichel.

¹¹ Andrzej Piotrowski writes about it in the second part of this volume.

identity (2008-2011).”¹² Working in such an extended (about 20 people during each seminar) and varied team was very challenging. Although we agreed to use analytical procedures of autobiographical narrative interview, the teams had various methodological and theoretical backgrounds, different knowledge about qualitative research and biographical method, in particular. In addition, we came from different cultural contexts, lived in different societies, and had either Western or Eastern European roots. All these made the situation of data sessions very demanding. The process of data analysis was accompanied by the process of cultural learning, exchanging perspectives, patient interpretations of various contexts.¹³ The project lasted for three years and, apart from the very research results, I think that one of its main achievements was the dynamic of collective work, sometimes difficult or even emotional, nevertheless, in the end, showing the value of joint interpretations and the meaning of reciprocity of perspectives.

In another, still ongoing, project *The People’s Republic of Poland and the German Democratic Republic in memory and biographical experiences of people born between 1945-55. Sociological comparison based on biographical comparison*, only Polish and German teams¹⁴ are engaged.

¹² Seven teams took part in the project, scholars coming from universities in Germany, Poland, Italy, Bulgaria, Estonia, Northern Ireland, and Wales. In the Polish team there were: Andrzej Piotrowski (in charge of research), Katarzyna Waniek, and Kaja Kaźmierska; in German team: Fritz Schütze, Gerhard Riemann, Ulrike Nagel, Anja (Schreder) Wildhagen, Lena Inowlocki, Bärbel Treichel.

¹³ The results of the project were published in *Przegląd Socjologiczny* (Kaźmierska 2011) and *The Evolution of European Identities. Biographical Approaches* (Miller and Day 2012).

¹⁴ The project is conducted by the Department of Sociology of Culture at the University of Lodz (Kaja Kaźmierska, Katarzyna Waniek, Joanna Wygnańska) in cooperation with the University of Magdeburg (Fritz Schütze, Ulrike Nagel, Anja Wildhagen, Carsten Detka) and History Meeting House – Warsaw (Piotr Filikowski, Maciej Melon) – funded by the Polish-German Foundation for Science (2012-2014).

This time, there is no need to negotiate common fields for methodological procedures. Having long, about twenty years, experiences of cooperation, we can appreciate joint work on the material. Yet, it appeared that during each meeting we are confronted with the situation of posing naive questions resulting from the lack of contextual knowledge enabling understanding subtle allusions in narratives. Interactive frames of the workshop activate opportunities for the perspective comparison that creates a chance for understanding obvious and partly unconscious mechanisms of inter-action in Harold Garfinkel's (1967) sense of "seen but unnoticed." Joint work on material helps us to extend the analytical context, already elaborated during the previous project, and enrich the process of the ongoing analysis thanks to the collaborative interpretation. This strengthens the analytical process by giving an opportunity to point to other basic relationships between the biographical identity and the society and its collective representations. Thus, thanks to activating reciprocity of perspectives, the reflection on one's own society may be enriched. The assumption that the process of the joint interpretation is accompanied by the process of mutual learning in the case of this project is not wishful thinking but one of real added values of analytical procedures.

At the end, I would like to refer to the workshop called "Biographical Research" which has been organized once a month by myself and Katarzyna Waniek since autumn 2011.¹⁵ Usually, each workshop lasts from 1.15 p.m. until 6 p.m. Anybody

(M.A., PhD students or scholars) who does any kind of biographical research is welcome to present all sorts of biographical material (mostly, these are narrative interviews or autobiographical narrative interviews, memoirs, expert interviews, etc.). It is sent to participants in advance and discussed during the workshop. We start with the researcher's introduction into the investigated problem; then, we ask him/her questions since the researcher, being an expert in the studied field, can share with us the specific knowledge. This phase is very instructive for participants since they have a chance to learn about social problems, processes, phenomena, and social worlds to which they usually do not have access if not working in the field.¹⁶ At the same time, it is also educative for the researcher who, being an expert in the studied problem, has to face, sometimes, simple, naive questions, which help to realize what is, or has become, "seen but unnoticed" due to the researcher's familiarity with the studied topic. Here, the participants put themselves in the position of a Schützian stranger by "placing in question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable" (Schütz 1944:502). Then we start exchanging comments inspired by different analytical perspectives. The floor is given to everybody by turn. Each participant, if one wishes to, is welcome to share first comments focused on main impressions coming from reading the transcripts, on specific methodological and theoretical problems, on the particular part of the interview that seems especially interesting in terms of text analysis or theoretical questions which we could

¹⁶ So far, researchers presented interviews which were conducted with, e.g., artists, prisoners, managers, refugees, transsexuals, workers, inhabitants of residential child care, etc.

carefully analyze. This phase, after Schütze and Riemann, is called "the round table." Sometimes, we manage to concentrate on a specific excerpt of the text and analyze it, but quite often, due to the lack of time, we stop at this phase, not reaching the text analysis. In such case, the researcher is encouraged to organize another seminar, in a smaller group,¹⁷ to undertake the analysis.

The main goal of the workshop may be described when referring to Riemann's remark:

[i]t would be much better if colleagues who do not share your presuppositions and routine ways of looking at things could help you – just by watching you at work, by wondering aloud, and by asking supposedly naive questions – to look at yourself and to find out what you are really doing and what you are up to. (2006:8)

Observing researchers' reactions and listening to their comments, I may say that the workshops really bring the described results. Very often the researcher is confronted with different analytical perspectives or different approaches to the data, influenced by other theoretical backgrounds or the lack of routine ways of looking at things due to the lack of knowledge about the topic under study. What is more important, people do not define this situation as "degrading" their way of interpretation but rather as enriching their analytical perspective. In such contexts we also discussed the interview with Natalia.

¹⁷ Usually, from ten to twenty people, approximately, take part in the workshop. If the researcher presents the project from a field that is empirically unknown to the audience, the phase of questions is quite long. Again, the more participants take part in the workshop, the longer the "round table" phase is.

The Case of Natalia

Like in the case of Hülya and the role of Gerhard Riemann in promoting the idea of analyzing it, the interview with Natalia was neither conducted by me nor has it been related to my research. It belongs to the collection of my institute colleague, and a very good friend of mine – Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas – who did the interview for her habilitation project entitled *Institutionalized identity? The process of identity development on the basis of biographies rendered by adults raised in residential child care homes*. She proposed the interview with Natalia, as well as some other material to be analyzed, during one of our Biographical Research workshops in winter 2012. The very topic appeared to be extremely interesting let alone the presented interviews which impressed all the participants very much. Agnieszka's field knowledge deconstructed our vague and stereotypical image of residential child care homes. Additionally, Agnieszka, as the interviewer, described the situation of the interview as the most difficult and emotionally demanding in her research experience.¹⁸ A part of our discussion was devoted to the question of emotions and methodological issues related to the interview with Natalia. Since we were organizing the conference focused on problems of emotions and ethics, I thought it would be good to propose the data session on this case. The interview was translated from Polish into English and sent to the colleagues who accepted the invitation, what I am

¹⁸ Detailed description of the interview situation, Natalia's behavior, the interviewer reactions, and dilemmas are presented in introductory remarks in the text by A. Golczyńska-Grondas in this volume, as well as discussed in G. Riemann's text.

still very grateful for.¹⁹ The presented articles are the results of both the conference session and the Biographical Research meeting.

The first part of the volume consists of five articles and the interview transcript, both in Polish and English. Although *Qualitative Sociology Review* is the periodical publishing in English, I assume that it will also be read by the Polish social scientists and in such case, it is worth reading the original Polish transcription also because, as we know, the translation is not always able to transfer all subtle cultural, social, and linguistic contexts and meanings. The articles are presented in the following order. The first is Gerhard Riemann's text: "A Situation, a Narrative, and a Life History. The Case of Natalia." It contains crucial methodological commentaries of the narrative situation, especially, in respect to Agnieszka's behavior as an interviewer and her methodological decisions regarding the very process of interviewing. It also contains a piece of analysis concentrated on identifying background constructions and interpreting their meaning in the narrative. It is not only an example of text analysis but it also shows the possibility of applications of this type of formal analysis to empirical data, which are not methodologically "pure" (the interview with Natalia is a mixture of a narrative interview and an in-depth interview). The second paper is written by Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas:

¹⁹ Unfortunately, one voice is missing here. We also invited David Divine from Durham University whose PhD dissertation is devoted to inhabitants of one of child care home in Scotland. He tried to reach the eldest inhabitants of this institution and to reconstruct their history. Additionally, he himself was inhabitant of such home. His analysis, "triangulated" by research and biography perspective, might have been very interesting. Due to health problems caused by accident he was not able to prepare the text.

"Badges of Social Valuing and the Biography. Natalia's Interview in the Perspective of Sociologist of Poverty and Social Exclusion." Apart from her interpretation, she presents Natalia's case in a wider context of the research project, as well as she describes the very situation of the interview.²⁰ The next two papers by Katarzyna Waniek "Reversed 'Betrayal Funnel.' A Case of a Children's Home Inmate who Suffers from Being Disloyal to Her Alcoholic Family" and by Sylwia Urbańska "Is Apostasy from a Family Possible? The Apostasy from an Alcoholic-Abusive Family as a Variant of (Un) Becoming a Daughter – the Case of Natalia" are examples of sociological analysis undertaken from different analytical perspectives, though framed by interpretative approach. The last text by Johanna Björkenheim, "A Social Work Perspective on the Biographical Research Interview with Natalia," is the reflection expressed in the field of social work, the discipline in which biographies similar to Natalia's case usually constitute "the arc of work" (to use a term of Anselm Strauss) for social workers both in practical and theoretical dimensions. I would like to thank all the authors for their contributions and accepting the invitation for the joint analysis of the Natalia interview.

Following, once again, the idea expressed by Gerhard Riemann when he was publishing the volume on Hülya, I would like to encourage the readers for further methodological and epistemological discussion. The presented papers prove that the process of joint interpretation helps to build some common

²⁰ A good supplement of A. Golczyńska-Grondas voice is her other text on differences between the situation of autobiographical narrative interview and therapeutic meeting (Golczyńska-Grondas and Grondas 2013).

field of discourse but it is also a mosaic of voices influenced by scientific, social, and ideological *habitus* of the authors. It was quite clear on the stage of revising the articles and vivid discussion I had at the backstage with authors and reviewers as the volume editor. So, from my perspective, I can say that the discussion has already started, and I hope it will be continued.

A Few Comments on the Second Part of the Volume: A Tribute to Professor Fritz Schütze on His 70th Jubilee

I would like to start from some personal comments connected with my research experiences. I remember the first lectures and workshops conducted by Fritz Schütze invited to the University of Lodz and my fascination with the method. I guess it must have been 1986, I was still a student looking for the topic of M.A. thesis and the method to be used. Actually, I cannot remember why I got so interested in those lectures, the difficulty to explain the reason from the present perspective lies, perhaps, in the fact that I was "raised" by this approach and I got acquainted with it in quite a "natural" way – it was neither a conversion nor the passage from one methodological perspective to the other; from the very beginning of my work, I have tried to apply the biographical method in my research. From the very beginning I have had two sources of intellectual inspirations – one coming from my colleagues from the Department of Sociology of Culture at the University of Lodz, the other coming from Fritz Schütze and some German colleagues. Although I have known Fritz Schütze for so many years, first as a student, then a young scholar participating in

his workshops, then co-organizer of student workshops and co-worker in research projects, from the very beginning our relationship has been the same since Fritz Schütze always treats co-participants of workshops and seminars, co-workers as equals. As he said in the interview:

[i]t was always done for students in order that they would get first experiences in research steps and we, in reverse, would learn from their new materials brought in and from their fresh thinking about it. We had always this "research *colleague*" relationship to our students; they would be treated as members of our research community on equal footing with participating scientific assistants (and later, even with participating professors). I kept doing this up to the end of my work time as professor. Sometimes, you get into some difficulties with it, for sure, when you have participants who were not socialized into the habit of taking the perspectives of the others participants involved. And the workshop arrangement is not something that you could do with big masses of students. Treating the students as equals. (p. 316)

This research *colleague* relationship is less related to fraternization more to having respect and a humble attitude towards others, even if they are not *equals* in terms of their knowledge and research experience.

I would like to thank Fritz Schütze for all the intellectual inspirations I have got and for showing how to be a social researcher not only in terms of professionalism but also in terms of specific, always personally oriented attitude towards those with whom we meet on our way.

I, and other Polish colleagues, have had a great pleasure to prepare and edit this part of the volume, which is devoted to the jubilee of the 70th birthday

of Fritz Schütze's. It consists of the following texts: first, in the short passage "Professor Fritz Schütze – Work and Output" we present basic information about Fritz Schütze's professional career and a complete (as we assume) list of his published and unpublished texts – the information was collected and edited by Katarzyna Waniek. Next is the article by Fritz Schütze, "Autobiographical Accounts of War Experiences. An Outline for the Analysis of Topically Focused Auto-Biographical texts – Using the Example of the 'Robert Rasmus' Account in Studs Terkel's book, *'The Good War.'*" This paper has never been published before, though, it was written in the mid 1980s. It was circulated among those who wanted to get acquainted with methodology of the biographical narrative interview. The article was originally written in English that gave the chance to be read not only by those who do not speak German but also by those who know it, yet, find it difficult to get through German texts by Fritz Schütze (he explains some reasons for his difficult style in the interview). The next chapter contains the interview that I conducted with Fritz Schütze in May 2013. My short introduction to the interview is placed at its beginning, here, I just would like to thank Fritz Schütze for giving his

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time and sharing the story consisting not only of his biography but also constituting a rich part of (German) sociology.

The last part of this volume is completed by short statements about Fritz Schütze written by Polish colleagues working in the Institute of Sociology at the University of Lodz. Marek Czyżewski presents a general outline of Fritz Schütze's input in sociology and his specific, unique style of teaching, as well as formulating ideas. Andrzej Piotrowski presents the history of cooperation of the Polish team with Fritz Schütze and other German colleagues. Katarzyna Waniek (Fritz Schütze's PhD student) and Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas (co-worker in one of the projects) present personal statements.

The book review placed at the end can be seen as a very good supplement of both parts of this issue since the idea of the book is based on joint analysis of written autobiography and it also includes a chapter written by Fritz Schütze.

I would like to thank all my colleagues for contributing to this part of the volume and their help to construct it.

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Biography and Emotion
– *Different Approaches in Dealing*
with the Life Story of Natalia

by
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**A Situation, a Narrative, and a Life History.
The Case of Natalia**

Abstract I will first focus on problems which might emerge in narrative interviews with people who have experienced long-term trajectories of suffering, before discussing the researcher’s specific style of doing this particular biographical interview – a style which is marked by sensibility and considerateness, but might contain some problems nevertheless. Afterwards, I will deal with two formal features of the interviewee’s introductory narrative – a complicated background construction and an extended pre-coda commentary – in order to reveal the analytical significance of these features for a deeper understanding of the interviewee’s life history and her way of making sense of her experiences. The article ends with a discussion of some topics which are relevant for an analytical abstraction.

Keywords Biographical Analysis; Autobiographical Narrative; Trajectories of Suffering; Background Construction; Pre-coda Commentary

The Idea

So-called “data sessions,” in which researchers jointly analyze primary materials, like interview transcriptions, field notes, and other data, have turned out to be very valuable events in many conferences in biographical research and other approaches to

qualitative analysis – valuable because colleagues make their specific ways of looking at things visible to each of them and thereby reveal a lot of the analytical processes of discovery, which usually stay hidden in standard presentations of results. The atmosphere of such working sessions is often surprisingly cooperative; people often forgo the habitual tendency to celebrate the putative strengths of their own approach while creating a simplified or even stereotypical image of the other persons’ pitiable ways of understanding their data. Sometimes, such “data sessions” lead to publications which invite readers to critically assess the articles on the basis of their own reading of the data which are accessible to them. Two examples are the collection of analyses of an autobiographi-

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cal narrative interview with a female Turkish migrant laborer in Germany (see: Riemann 2003) and (recently) the collection of analyses of the written life history of an Apache Indian (see: Bartelt and Treichel 2012).

When Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas¹ made the English translation of the transcription of one of her interviews from her research project² available, she joined this series of “data sessions” and subsequent publications. I welcome the chance to share with readers some of my observations and ideas about this impressive interview with a Polish woman who the researcher calls Natalia. I also appreciate Agnieszka’s extraordinary openness to make an interview available, which she describes as *the most difficult biographical interview I have ever conducted due to the narrator’s very strong emotions and symptoms of suffering*.³

I would like to show how I understand the interview situation, how I go about analyzing the text, and what I hope to have learned about Natalia. I will also allude to some insights which go beyond the particularities of the specific data. My own approach of doing biographical research and of analyzing narrative interviews – both autobiographical interviews and interviews on the development of relationships between professionals and clients (Riemann 1987; 2000) – has been shaped by the

¹ Hereafter, I refer to her as “Agnieszka,” “the researcher,” or “the interviewer.”
² The title of the project is *Institutionalized identity? The processes of identity development on the basis of biographies rendered by adults raised in residential child care homes*.
³ All quotations in italics are derived from the introduction to the interview with Natalia, which Kaja Kazmierska and Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas sent to the authors of the articles who are included in this special issue of *Qualitative Sociology Review*.

work of Fritz Schütze (1987; 2008a; 2008b; Schröder-Wildhagen and Schütze 2011) and my long-term collaboration with him.⁴

**Putting the Interview with Natalia
in Perspective**

Agnieszka wrote in her first commentary on the interview which she had conducted with Natalia:

[o]ne of the basic intentions in face to face contact with the interviewees was to establish the narrator’s sense of comfort and security in telling the life story abundant in traumatic memories from childhood, adolescence (and sometimes adulthood) – I purposely made a methodological assumption that in the project I would obtain two types of data – the narrative interviews and the in-depth biographical interviews. Thus, at the beginning of every interview, I asked all interviewees if they preferred to tell their life story or if they preferred to be asked questions.

I want to use this remark for a first reflection about the data.

Many qualitative researchers have been doing biographical studies on people who have presumably experienced deep and long-term trajectories of suffering (Riemann and Schütze 1991; Schütze 1992; 1995) – vulnerable people or even survivors of something which is difficult to survive. “Survivors” is an ambiguous term and is often used indiscriminately. If one thinks of biographical research, quite diverse studies come to mind. An extreme example is, of course, the experience of surviving collective man-made disasters, like wars and genocides (Rosenthal 1997; Kazmierska

⁴ A recent publication based on this approach to analysis is Miller and Day (2012).

2002; 2012). In planning such studies, researchers often have to ask themselves if such a project might entail too many risks: Do people, who have experienced traumatic events of loss, betrayal, and deep physical and mental harm, and are asked to tell their lives, run the risk that such experiences are reawakened in the process of autobiographical story telling? Could they be overwhelmed by certain memories which had been “faded out” of awareness (Schütze 1992)? What about a situation which cannot be handled by the researcher anymore? But, researchers have also learned that people who have experienced long-term trajectories of suffering might be open, and even eager, to tell their story to a stranger who is genuinely interested. There might be no other people around with whom they could share their experiences: family members or friends might have numbed themselves to “these same old stories,” or it could appear too risky to reveal shameful secrets to a spouse or child who might be shocked (one finds an example in the interview with Natalia) or to confide something to a friend who might start gossiping about “me.”

People who do biographical research on people who they assume to have experienced deep trouble and long-lasting trajectories of suffering deal with such problems in different ways, but in any case, they need to make sensible decisions – whether or not it is responsible to conduct a narrative interview at all and who should do the interviewing – when, how, and where. All of this becomes important: the biographical phase of the prospective interviewee, the features of the interview situation, the biography and sensibilities of the interviewer/researcher, and the style of the interviewing. Of

course, such considerations are necessary for any kind of narrative interview but they appear especially urgent when thinking about people who are presumably especially vulnerable in specific ways.

Thinking about my own biographical research experience and the experience of students of social work whose research (based on autobiographical narrative interviews) I have supervised, I have found it helpful to keep the following points in mind:

- People might be reluctant to be interviewed and might allude to experiences which they don't want to talk about. Researchers should abstain from any kind of pressure or manipulation in securing prospective interviewees' cooperation – like making empty promises that it would be beneficial for them to look back and tell their life history. Autobiographical story telling is indeed often experienced as a relief or even as liberating (something which I discovered in my research on mental patients' biographies [Riemann 1987]), but social scientists should not predict and promise such “effects.” During the interview, researchers have to respect interviewees' self-censorship and their allusions that they want to avoid certain topics.
- Researchers need to think carefully about features of the interview situation in order to secure a genuinely safe space for the interviewee – a space in which she or he can talk openly without risking damaging consequences. When thinking about a safe space, I have in mind, for example, that it is also necessary to keep a sufficient distance from possible spokespersons or

gatekeepers who control the access to presumably “vulnerable” people who they want – or claim – to protect against outsiders and troublemakers (like researchers). Researchers might also run the risk of stirring up too much, for example, when interviewing members of the same group or family for the purpose of triangulating data and perspectives – thereby, arousing the curiosity of single interviewees in “What did she/he (my family member/friend, etc.) say about me?” [Therefore, I feel uneasy with certain types of biographical family research.]

- Researchers must not reduce the prospective interviewee to her or his membership in a certain (possibly stigmatized) category. People who have had a long career as patients or clients of powerful institutions have often learned to refer to – and think of – themselves by adopting the diagnoses and categories as a matter of course which have been ascribed to them by professionals and institutions of people processing. Oftentimes, they find it difficult to imagine that something else than “it” (“my” membership in a certain category: “my” being “psychotic,” an “ex-prisoner,” a “chronic patient,” etc.) might interest a researcher. Researchers need to communicate that they are interested in much more than “it,” for instance, that they want to learn about the whole life history – “how everything developed step by step.”
- I find it important to keep a distance between the communicative style of doing narrative interviews in the world of research and the

communicative style of doing therapy⁵ without overlooking the many practical uses of narrative interviewing, for example, in biographical counseling (Betts et al. 2008). During my research on mental patients' biographies (Riemann 1987), I conducted narrative interviews with them by refraining from any incorporation of therapeutic elements, like “mirroring.” I assumed – and I still do – that such elements might lead to a confusion about the relationships and expectations which are difficult to fulfill in a research relationship – we are talking to our interviewees, who do us a favor by cooperating in a research project, and not our clients or patients.

People who had agreed to be interviewed in a narrative interview sometimes still hesitate in the situation when they are asked to tell their life history and express a preference for being asked a series of questions. Telling one's full life history is not the most common thing in the world. [When sitting together with other people in a pub or in a train, persons usually share bits and pieces but not their complete life history.] If interviewees are reluctant in the beginning, I tell them that I would help them along if things get difficult – trusting in the constraints of storytelling (Schütze 2008a; 2008b) as soon as they have started their narration, a trust which is usually justified. I prefer coherent narrations – or (depending on the research problem) other data which are dominated by a single scheme of communication (narration, description, argumentation) which can freely unfold (Kallmeyer and Schütze 1977) since the sequential analysis of

⁵ I am aware that there are other colleagues in biographical research who do not share this position (Rosenthal 2005:150-152). This issue should become a topic of further discourse.

such a text can proceed on a firmer ground than the analysis of a text in which different schemes of communication confound each other (something which Fritz Schütze refers to as “schema salad” [1987:256]).

Agnieszka decided to follow a different path, and, of course, there are good reasons for her to do so. She told the interviewee (Natalia) that she could choose between an in-depth biographical interview (consisting of a series of questions) and a narrative interview. As she wrote: *Natalia opted to follow my questions*. I will turn to her style of interviewing and the dynamics of the interview in a moment.

Just a short additional comment about the way of getting in touch with the interviewee: When Agnieszka wrote that *Natalia was the one of few (6) persons who established contact with me this way* (i.e., by responding to a letter), I was reminded of research situations of students of mine in which interviewees were recruited via newspaper ads, that means, they responded to advertisements. [During the last years quite a few also got in touch with possible interviewees via Facebook.] Of course, this is somewhat different from responding to a letter – a letter of a social scientist who “I” do not know. The letter is addressed specifically to “me,” whereas an ad (“I am looking for former inhabitants of children’s homes”) turns to an anonymous audience, but both situations have something in common – it is not too difficult to avoid a response (Natalia was one of the few who responded to the letter). Natalia’s response reveals an interest in participating in this research. Thinking of the research of students of mine, I had the idea (when reading the researcher’s

comment and before getting familiar with the transcription) that she might either have a special need for someone who she could talk to (e.g., because she is lonely and there is no one to turn to), or that she might have a special message or commitment and wants to make a contribution to research. As Agnieszka writes: *the narrator herself contacted the Institute by telephone and volunteered for the interview – she wanted to show the fate of a person brought up in a children’s home*.

Some Remarks on the Researcher’s Style of Interviewing

I think it is rather trivial to observe that the request at the beginning of the interview – “Natalia I would like to, so to start this story, that you’d say a few words about your family, about your origins” (see: “Transcript of Biographical Interview with Natalia” in this issue of QSR, p. 117, lines 1-2) – is not a formulation which is likely to elicit an elaborated and spontaneous presentation. After a short sequence of clarification, Natalia talks rather shortly about her family and ends quite soon: “[w]ell, what am I to say now?” (p. 117, line 15) – a coda of perplexity. The observation about the lack of a “generative force” of the opening request also applies to questions in many guided interviews regardless of the specific research topic. Such interviews often contain a series of open questions leading to very short responses or leaving it open (“a few words about your family”) for the interviewee if she or he is expected to narrate, argue, or describe something. This is a very general observation on many interviews; it also partially applies to the interview with Natalia.

But, I would like to focus on something which is more interesting with regard to the specific topic of the interview and which reveals something of the researcher’s attitude towards her interaction partner. The interviewer is extraordinarily circumspect, polite, and conscious of the fact that she might violate borders which should not be violated. This is already visible in the very beginning of the interview when she addresses Natalia, the interviewee: “Natalia I would like to, so to start this story, that you’d just say a few words about your family, about your origins” (p. 117, lines 1-2). When Natalia asks for clarification and orientation: “[f]rom the very beginning?” (p. 117, line 3), Agnieszka specifies: “[m]hmm. I mean about your parents, well about...” (p. 117, line 4). Natalia hesitates and marks this topic as problematic: “[a]bout my parents... well this will be a little difficult but sometimes/” (p. 117, line 5), whereupon the interviewer steps back: “[i]f not about than/just about childhood” (p. 117, line 6), that means she expresses a concern that talking about one’s biographical origin might be unpleasant and should not be forced upon the other person. In this phase of negotiation, she shows her willingness to reduce the topic. But, how can one talk about one’s childhood by leaving out one’s parents? The researcher’s anxiety that her kind of asking questions might be obtrusive and risky for the interviewee is visible at different points, for example, when she, more or less, apologizes and announces her wish “to shut these family threads” of the difficult topic of the fate of her siblings (p. 129, lines 10-11), or when she offers to take a break in situations when the interviewee loses her composure.

Agnieszka made an interesting remark in her introductory commentary about this interview:

[t]he interview with Natalia was the most difficult biographical interview I have ever conducted due to the narrator’s very strong emotions and symptoms of suffering. These emotions were evoked by the stories of sibling and parents; (the) narrator’s weeping appeared frequently when she talked about her younger brother. So, I decided to first close up the threads concerning the siblings’ fates, after the story about the childhood, and only then continue the story of her own life.

I find this remark sums up very well the interview strategy which emerged in this situation. In the first part of the interview, Natalia gets intensely drawn into painful memories and assessments of her siblings (and of their life together), she often loses her composure. The interviewer has a keen sense of this momentum of pain, expresses her sympathy, for example, when she suggests taking a break several times, or repeatedly announces her wish “to close these threads.” She picks up the tone of the interviewee when talking about her lost siblings, something like a joint construction of the image of siblings who are essentially unlike “me” emerges. It is interesting that these announcements “to close these threads” also serve as apologies for continuing to explore and deepen this thematic line for a while. The researcher and the interviewee jointly focus on the fates of Natalia’s siblings – their history of multiple forms of deviance, their moral character and demoralization, educational non-achievements, broken relationships and whereabouts – before focusing on what Agnieszka calls “the story of her own life.” This is marked by a clear announcement introducing a major new part of the interview: “[w]ell Natalia we are coming back to you/” (p. 137, line 15), in which she turns to a special phase in Natalia’s life – her five years in the children’s home.

The prior narrative and argumentative sequences had also dealt with Natalia's life – "her own life" in the context of her family of origin and her attempts to gain autonomy. We learn a lot about:

- the history of her family trajectory due to her parents alcoholism,
- her early and untimely obligations of having to take care for her younger siblings,
- the temporary dissolution of the family after her father's imprisonment and her mother's loss of control, which leads to a sharp intervention of control agencies (initiated by her maternal grandmother),
- her experience of a new life with her paternal grandmother (both grandmothers provide some background stability),
- her shock when returning home to the reunited family after her father's release from prison,
- her suicide attempt as a desperate action scheme of escape,
- her being committed to the children's home and her regaining control over her life in the new surroundings, which she experiences as a real "home" ("[a]nd at that, from the moment I came to this children's home I pulled myself together..." [p. 122, lines 28-29]),
- her biographical action schemes in the educational and occupational spheres after leaving the children's home, and
- the early development of a stable love relationship with her future husband and becoming part of his family.

When the interviewer directs the interviewee's attention to "the story of her own life," she has in mind Natalia's life outside of her family. The researcher provides an outside order – the "threads" of the fates of Natalia's siblings versus her very own life, but one could also ask if this imposed order runs the risk to obscure the inner form or gestalt of her life which has been deeply intertwined with her family and her siblings (till the present day). I think that the interviewer tries to make a sensible decision in the light of the development of the interview when she starts to explore the thematic potential of the fates of Natalia's siblings (it is something like "let's get over this unpleasant topic together as quickly as possible, even though it takes some time") before turning to the subject matter, which is of major interest to her research: the life in the children's home and its consequences. I think, though, that the development of Natalia's structural processes of her life course (Schütze 1981), her own history within and outside of her family of origin, and her history of gaining autonomy and self-confidence would have become even more clearly visible in the narrative segments of a coherent autobiographical narrative interview. Later on in the interview, a spontaneous narrative about the emergence of autonomy after leaving the children's home evolves, when the interviewer asks her, "[h]ow did the matter of your becoming independent, later, how did it look like, this entering the adult/" (p. 142, lines 3-4).

Despite the fact that the researcher tries to avoid the format of a narrative interview, Natalia turns to off-the-cuff story telling about personal experiences herself and is thereby exposed to narrative constraints. This happens already quite early in the interview. I would like to focus on some interesting formal fea-

tures of Natalia's introductory narrative, which are of substantive interest for the analysis as well.

Some Features of the Introductory Narrative

As already mentioned, there is a short statement of the interviewee at the beginning in which she introduces her family in response to the researcher's question: the points of origin of her parents, their meeting each other (the interviewee is insecure in this regard and assumes that it has to do with her father's deployment as a soldier in Lodz, her mother's birth place), their moving to Lodz together in 1979 or 1980, her siblings (which she lists according to their age and with regard to her position in the sequence; she also remarks in the end, "I got the sequence wrong, anyway there are six of us, of which one child uhm... died at the age of two in 1983 uhm... Well, what am I to say now?" [p. 117, lines 13-15]). [I will return to the death of a sibling, which she refers to here, somewhat later.]

After this short initial presentation of her family, the interviewer asks another question: "[m]aybe you will say just a little about your story, just about your childhood. That is, when were you born, where, what did your childhood look like?" (p. 117, lines 16-18). The transcription does not reveal if the pronunciation of "your story" already stresses "your" in contrast to "your family's" story. In any case, a spontaneous introductory autobiographical narrative unfolds (from p. 117, line 19 to p. 125, line 15) which encompasses the time between Natalia's birth in 1975 and her admission to the children's home when she is fourteen. [She stays in this home until she is 19 years old and moves into her own flat afterwards.] The story ends

with a coda: "I don't know what else I am to say..." (p. 125, line 15). Afterwards, the interview continues with a long sequence of questions and answers which are divided into distinct parts. [One part on "shutting these family threads" (p. 129, line 10 to p. 137, line 14) was already discussed in the last section.]

When I turn to Natalia's introductory narrative, I will not go into details with regard to the unfolding of experiences and events, I assume that readers have the chance to read the transcription themselves. I would like to focus on two formal features of this narrative which help us to gain a deeper understanding of Natalia's trajectory of suffering and her attempts to make sense of and evaluate her life: (a) the features of a difficult background construction⁶ and

⁶ The phenomenon of background construction as a feature of spontaneous narratives of self-lived experiences has been analyzed by Fritz Schütze in several publications (see, e.g., 1987:207-235; 1992:352-353; 1995; 2008b:27-33). It has turned out to be a central symptomatic textual indicator of such narratives for the discovery and deeper understanding of trajectories of suffering and losing control. As Schütze (2008b:27-28) writes, "[e]specially background constructions...demonstrate that extempore autobiographical narrations express even personal experiences that the narrator tended to fade out of her or his awareness since they were so difficult, hurting, or shameful. Background constructions are self-corrections of the narrator regarding the course of her or his narrative rendering at points of its implausibility. They are quite often initiated by the narrator her- or himself, when during her or his permanent self-monitoring she or he realizes that the course of presentation becomes questionable, inconsistent, discrepant or even contradictory, enigmatic, phony, etc. Then the narrator is driven by the narrative constraint of going into details. The narrator understands that something is missing between the rendering of event A and a following rendering of event B... Background constructions react to chaotic phases in the extempore recollection of personal experiences; in a certain sense their repair mechanism should bring back order into the chaotic phases of narrative rendering and the connected recollections of sedimented biographical experiences. But they normally accomplish this without any polishing, refurbishing, and euphemistic reinterpretation of the recollected experiences, if and when they can fully unfold and carry through their repair job. Insofar, the insertion of background constructions is the diametrical contrast to fading out, rationalization, and legitimizing, on the level of the dominant line of narrative rendering. The order that is introduced by the fully accomplished background construction is much more complicated than the original order of the narrative rendering. Therefore, background constructions are an important means for creative biographical work."

(b) an extended pre-coda commentary (Schütze 1981:183).

(a) The Background Construction (p. 118, line 11 to p. 120, line 10)

A new narrative segment starts in p. 118, line 3 when the interviewee mentions, “[m]y dad... uhm... in 88 or 89 went to prison for two years because...” After providing an account for her father’s conviction for illegal trading of alcohol (an explanatory and partially exonerating commentary: “due to that I mean I don’t want to justify anybody here but” [p. 118, line 4]), she repeats the sentence about her father’s imprisonment and continues with a statement which marks a dramatic deterioration in the family trajectory: “[a]nd then it all began, it all began to fall apart” (p. 118, lines 10-11).

At this point (p. 118, line 11), she corrects herself and introduces a background construction:

although earlier there were such situations, that if perhaps social care had been more often interested uhm, in depth and probably earlier, everybody would have ended up in children’s home and this may have been better for us. Because of all the family, to be honest, that’s the only real home I have ((cries))... (p. 118, lines 11-14)

The interviewer empathetically offers to take a break and hands tissues to the interviewee. After regaining her composure, Natalia goes on by describing how her mother had neglected them (“somehow my mother didn’t pay attention to look after us so that we had clean neat things” [p. 118, lines 18-19]), which created some embarrassment

in her school environment,⁷ even though the interviewee emphasizes that she avoided outright stigmatization by her own effort: “and one always made up for this with one’s character and I don’t know, somehow it.... it was okay” (p. 118, lines 24-25). She mentions the disadvantages in school which they experienced due to their home – “[b]ut it never was so that we had time to learn super-extra so that we would be among the school class leaders” (p. 118, lines 25-26); “[s]ometimes there was no lunch” (p. 118, line 26-27) – but she also tries to balance this picture by taking into account: “although my mother cooked quite well... when everything was okay it was okay” (p. 118, line 28). At this point, she picks up the commentary again, which had appeared quite early in the background construction – “[h]owever/ well I just started to talk about my/ about my brothers and sisters, so well... only just me... as the only one of these six” (p. 118, lines 28-30) – before she corrects herself again (“five actually cause one child we lost” [p. 118, line 30]) and is drawn into a background construction of second degree or second order (Schütze 1987; 2008b:32-33; Riemann and Schütze 1991:346-347), that means, an (additional) background construction within a comprehensive or overriding background construction (of first order), which I will focus on shortly: the dramatic story of having to witness the death of her two-year-old sister Gosia (p. 118, line 30 to p. 119, line 15). After ending this background construction of second degree (on p. 119, line 15) and answering a few short questions of the researcher

⁷ The topic of the youthful experience of shame and the undermining of self-confidence because of having to wear shabby clothes already appeared in the first (classical) written German autobiography *Anton Reiser* by Karl Philipp Moritz (1977 [1785]). This theme also emerges in different autobiographical narrative interviews that come to my mind.

(on the year of Gosia’s death and her age when she died), she loses the thread (p. 119, line 21): “[w]ell, well and... I don’t know what I started to say I lost track.” The researcher directs her attention to her commentary on her siblings (“[y]ou started talking about your siblings” [p. 119, line 22]), and Natalia picks up this line again: “[s]o, well, among the siblings actually just I, I do live, say, not for today, but just so normally as a normal person” (p. 119, lines 23-24). Her commentary is mainly an elaboration of a contrast-set between her “normalcy” and the depressing fate and demoralization of her siblings but also (in the end) an affirmation of her ties with her family (p. 120, lines 8-10):

[a]lthough I would not want to identify with my/ that is, I will never renounce my family and I will always help anyone if there is such a need. But I can’t live like them. I just cannot and that is, it seems to me, that is the reason why I found myself in the children’s home. Because uhm...

I assume that the background construction ends at this point (p. 120, line 10), and the narrator returns to the main story line – the time when her father was imprisoned and her mother lost total control: “like my dad... in the 80s uhm... 90, just a moment, 89 it was I guess when he was sent to prison, so my mom completely lost it, uhm... lost probably... a sense that she is a mother” (p. 120, lines 10-12).

My discussion of the formal features of this extended background construction might have seemed like a sterile finger exercise but the point is, that by looking closely at these features, we learn a lot about Natalia’s trajectory of suffering and her difficulties in remembering painful experiences which she had

“faded out” of her awareness (Schütze 1992). When she mentions that “it all began to fall apart” (p. 118, line 11) during her father’s imprisonment, she corrects herself and reveals some more of the turmoil, neglect, and shame, for example, the shame because of having to wear shabby clothes, which she and her siblings had experienced even before her father was sent to jail. Even though she had shortly referred to “alcohol binges” (p. 117, line 34) and their increase before (“and it got worse and worse” [p. 118, lines 2-3]), she had not gone into details.

When Natalia starts her background construction, she alludes to dramatic situations in her family, which public welfare authorities should have responded to. [She develops a global theory at this point: If the siblings had been placed in children’s homes, their lives would not have deteriorated. She was the only one who had been spared this fate.] At the beginning of the background construction, she does not mention specific situations yet, but an especially dramatic event (“Gosia’s death”) is introduced when she has to correct herself again – this time with regard to the number of siblings who are still alive. This is the first situation in her narrative which is told in a detailed way – the situation of having to witness her little sister’s death, without being able to do anything for her, while her parents had gone out and had locked them up in their home. This experience must have been traumatizing for her (as an eight-year-old girl) and her somewhat older and somewhat younger brothers. The sequential and comparative analysis of spontaneous narratives of personal experiences has led to the insight that such background constructions of second order contain especially troubling or painful

memories. Even though the first order background construction had already been introduced as a corrective device in order to rectify a presentation, which had been too “smooth,” it is only by way of another self-correction – that means, the insertion of a background construction of second order – that especially troubling experiences “squeeze” into her story. Gosia’s death appears to belong to the most painful experiences of Natalia’s life – an experience which somehow resists a straightforward narrative recapitulation, but unintentionally comes up in her story nevertheless.

At the beginning of the story of Gosia’s death, we find the commentary “although I just don’t want to blame anybody” [p. 118, line 30]. And the story ends with another commentary:

[s]o it seems to me that if, if anybody had had an interest in this child earlier, she wouldn’t have died. Cause this meningitis purulent uhm... certainly had been developing much, much earlier, and in my opinion, this child was neglected. I can state that now, though at the time I was a little kid and well - and besides, it’s difficult to judge uhm... parents, isn’t it?” (p. 119, lines 11-15)

These commentaries show Natalia’s moral problems in ascribing responsibility for her sister’s death in an unambiguous way. She sees how her parents were implicated in the sick child’s “neglect,” but she is still hesitant in explicitly condemning them. [She had made peace with her father before his death and has also somehow made peace with her mother, too, who she regards as a good grandmother for her daughter.] When she uses the passive form (“this child was neglected”), also others (“social care”) appear implicated. She

seems to assume that public authorities should have stepped in in time in order to save a life – and to prevent the long-term misery of her siblings, too. Natalia’s reluctance, as far as the outright condemnation of others is concerned, also gleams in her evaluation of her siblings’ character (in many parts of the interview). Even though she talks harshly about their present situation and states of mind, she has many (often loving) memories of them as children and youths, and she has a clear notion of wasted opportunities.

(b) The Extended Pre-Coda Commentary (p. 123, line 23 to p. 125, line 15)

The communicative scheme of narration stays dominant in Natalia’s introductory narrative but a number of theoretical and evaluative commentaries are also embedded within – commentaries which have to be understood as activities in the scheme of argumentation (Riemann 1987; Schütze 1987; 2008a; 2008b). I have already alluded to some of these (subordinated) commentaries in my discussion of the background construction. In many parts of her narrative, Natalia is provoked to argue, for example, when she mentions how her paternal grandmother had often unfairly criticized her (“that I am like my mother” [p. 121, line 16]) when she lived with her during her father’s imprisonment. The interviewee’s present response to this criticism of many years ago – “I don’t think that... only my mother is to blame....” (p. 121, lines 17-18), et cetera – reveals something of Natalia’s entanglement in her family and her difficulties of making sense of and coming to terms with what has happened.

Fritz Schütze (1987:183) has discussed one type of commentary in a detailed way, the one which appears at the end of off-the-cuff storytelling of personal experiences. He refers to it as “pre-coda commentary” – an extended commentary in which narrators try to arrive at general evaluations of their experiences and of themselves but often find this difficult. Painful issues come up. Oftentimes, they develop conflicting propositions, give reasons, and try to back them up with evidence without discovering an easy way out of this spiraling discussion with themselves.

Something like this can be observed in Natalia’s introductory narrative, too. There is one extended commentary which appears before the coda (p. 125, line 15) of Natalia’s introductory narrative. It starts after her evaluation of how the order and support which she had experienced in the children’s home had positively affected her life in the long run (p. 123, lines 23-25):

[a]nd the fact that, well, these five years at this children’s home really helped me a lot. Because - in retrospect I now see that, I don’t know, I don’t want to judge anyone here somehow super-positively, but I think I am a good mother...

She goes on to depict her qualities of a mother and the trust in her home – in contrast to her own plight as a girl (p. 123, lines 29-32):

I didn’t have that, didn’t have such understanding, I had no such love. This children’s home gave me the direction, the fact that I completed a lot of different schools, and that in the end I am a fairly educated person, maybe not so super-extra, but I did the ba/ Bachelor degree.

She says that “I regret that I couldn’t do anything for my family, my brothers and sisters so that they would be in the sa/ the same situation as me” (p. 123, lines 34-35) and continues to portray the conditions and social milieu (“neighborhood,” etc.) in which her brothers grew up, so that they got in trouble and ended up in prison. It is interesting to see that the way in which she talks about her brothers as children has a tender quality (“a sensitive kid” [p. 124, line 15]). She invokes a we-community of her and her two brothers (who are somewhat older and somewhat younger than her): “we had such such, such children dreams actually” (p. 124, line 20). When remembering an especially moving story, she loses her composure (p. 124, lines 21-26):

we walked the streets when we saw there were such... ((cries, long pause))... these stray dogs. Poor, hungry ((cries)) we took them home. And I don’t know, maybe we found five such dogs, we fed them we gave them water. And once we, once we just - we told each other so, that when we grow up ((cries)) we will open a shelter for these poor, homeless dogs ((cries))...

This episode serves her to emphasize the essential moral qualities of her brothers during their childhood and their potential, which could have unfolded under different circumstances. She contrasts her younger brother’s early qualities with his present state of mind (“now he doesn’t think rationally” [p. 124, line 30]) and his situation – his being drawn deeper and deeper into “a criminal world” (p. 124, line 32) (also because of his imprisonments). In lamenting their fate, she reveals that she has developed a kind of critical milieu theory with regard to her brothers’ fate: If her brothers had been given the opportunities, which she had

benefited from, they wouldn't have ended where they are now.⁸

At the same time, she affirms the continuing bond between herself and her siblings (p. 125, lines 6-9):

[a]nd - I still keep in touch with all them, although I don't - I don't go to these prisons because, well, I have my life, I have a grandma who is already/ who according to/ to whom I'm responsible to help, cause when I needed this help she helped me too.

That means, she invokes a sense of reciprocity in her relationship with her grandmother who needs her support now. It is interesting to see that she also draws a line with regard to her brothers and justifies her decision to keep some distance (p. 125, lines 9-11): "so I don't go somehow, so terribly often over to these prisons simply because I'd have to spend every free weekend to go somewhere all over Poland and visit brothers who really, well, they made a choice." This justification for her attempt to keep a distance – "they made a choice" – contrasts with her prior theorizing which stresses their downward drift or trajectories of suffering due to the fact that they had been robbed of their chances.

⁸ One could also speak of a "folk sociological theory." She does not refer to "bad family genes" or other medical explanations in order to make sense of their fate, even though she uses the language of psychopathology to describe some of her siblings' present state of mind ("he doesn't think rationally, doesn't think normally" [p. 124, lines 30-31]). In a later part of the interview, she mentions "alcoholic genes" (p. 151, line 16), when talking of her maternal grandfather: "my mother's father, such alcoholic genes, just so (((ironic laughter))) from generation to generation" (p. 151, lines 18-19), but this kind of theorising does not appear dominant in thinking about her family. She also has the conception of her family of origin as a "pathological family" (p. 117, line 23) and subsumes her own sense of loyalty under this psychiatric expert category: "I once watched a film that the... children from such pathological families... will never say a bad word about their parents and love them so much" (p. 128, lines 16-17).

Right at the end of her introductory narrative, she draws a strong contrast-set between her brothers and herself by affirming their "choice" versus her own decision to strive for autonomy – a decision which led to suffering and loneliness (p. 125, lines 11-15):

I rebelled, it cost me a lot, because I don't know, perhaps only God knows how many nights I cried the whole night through... cause I felt rejected and when there is/ I don't know, whatever this grandma would be, whatever this father would be, one loves them and wants such uh... such acceptance from them so that... whatever, they would stick to us... I don't know what else I am to say...

This impressive sequence conveys both her affirmation of her individuation and striving for autonomy, and her keen sense of what she lost when her rebellion was regarded as an act of betrayal. Her words express a deep sadness about a lack of reciprocity in her relationship with her family of origin.⁹

This lack of reciprocity and her attempts to restore reciprocity are a recurring topic in the interview, for example, when she talks about her later conciliation with her father and the fact that he entrusted the organization of his funeral to her: "[a]nd in fact he loaded me with ((cries)) the duty of burying him, organizing the funeral" (p. 128, line 7). Even though she remembers quite clearly that her father and mother did not function as responsible parents

⁹ She refers to painful experiences in this context on page 141, lines 22-25 when she talks about events during holidays at home while she was in the children's home: "I had a choice to either/ simply spend them in company of drunk parents, with fights. And usually when my parents drank then I always had... I was always reproached that... that... What was I there for, that I'd moved out, that I didn't want be there and so on and so on."

(during her childhood and youth), she insists on always having fulfilled her obligation (p. 128, lines 26-29): a moral basic position.

Concluding Notes: Topics of an Analytical Abstraction

The interview is a remarkable piece of data, which makes it possible to learn a lot about one person's particular fate and outlook on life. But beyond that, it is possible to arrive at first general insights which need to be further differentiated by way of contrastive comparative analyses (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

I have tried to show in the preceding chapter how a careful consideration of formal features of the text can help us to arrive at a deeper understanding of "what is the case." Such an outlook belongs to the step of a formal-substantive structural description, which always precedes an analytical abstraction (Schütze 2008a; 2008b). I could only demonstrate this step by focusing on certain phenomena. It is always important to engage in a careful sequential structural description of the whole data before doing an analytical abstraction. I would just like to allude to some topics which should be considered in an analytical abstraction.

Despite the fact that Agnieszka did not use the format of an autobiographical narrative interview, it is possible to reconstruct the interplay of a family trajectory and individual biographies, especially, the biography of Natalia, the interviewee, who freely tells about what has happened to her and tries to make sense of it. [What we learn about her parents'

and siblings' biographies is just based on her testimony and outlook.] The structural processes of her own life course become clearly visible: the expectation patterns, which she is exposed to as the oldest daughter of a family who is often in deep trouble because of her parents' alcohol addiction – her prematurely becoming the caretaker of her siblings; her trajectory of suffering in the family turmoil (remember her having to witness her little sister's death); a more quiet phase in her life during her father's imprisonment when she lives with her paternal grandmother and somehow learns to make comparisons and to distance herself from the chaos of her family of origin; after her return: her biographical action schemes of escape when she tries to take her life¹⁰ and (after she is discovered and saved) to choose the life in a children's home over the life with her family; her learning to appreciate the quality and care of a milieu which she regards as "home," while also suffering from the parents' reproaches of her lack of loyalty; the emergence of successful biographical action schemes (in the spheres of education and occupational life) after her release from the children's home, and the early bond with her future husband with whom she has a daughter and has built a stable home.

It is also possible to detect a disposition of vulnerability which derives from (a) her early sense of communion with her brothers and her very early (untimely) entanglement in family duties when she has to take care of her younger siblings and (b) her decision to retreat from the family when she attempts to take her life and (when this suicide

¹⁰ I have dealt with this topic (of suicide as a biographical action scheme of escape) elsewhere, when analysing the diary of a young man who took his life (Riemann 2007).

attempt fails) to live outside of her family. She still feels ashamed of what she did, when she tried to commit suicide, and she keeps this a secret from her daughter – something which contrasts with her commitment to the value of openness and honesty in family relationships. It would be helpful for her if she developed a different attitude to this shameful secret and could accept it as an act of rebellion and as an – admittedly self-destructive – biographical action scheme.¹¹ Her retreat from the family does not diminish her strong bond with her siblings (as is visible in her unsuccessful attempt to accomplish her sister's admission to her children's home when she takes refuge with her), but she feels that there is a lasting gap between them because of this. She feels marginalized among her siblings but also does not want to belong to them (as a category of people who are unlike her). The tensions in her autobiographical theorizing, because of the complexity and biographical costs of her rebellion and retreat from her family, can be observed throughout the interview (cf., the end of the pre-coda commentary). At the same time, she evaluates this retreat positively because it created the condition for gaining autonomy and acquiring a sense of direction in her life.

Natalia's theorizing in the interview is dominated by theories of global evaluation (Schütze 1987:183-185) – attempts to make sense of sad and puzzling events in her family, to deal with the moral character of her next-of-relations, to assess the development and quality of relationships (e.g., the con-

ciliation with her father), and to compare her fate with the fates of her siblings. The interview is also an occasion for her to relieve herself and to reflect upon painful experiences, it goes far beyond what she had announced when contacting the university (according to Agnieszka): *the narrator herself contacted the Institute by telephone and volunteered for the interview – she wanted to show the fate of a person brought up in a children's home.*

Natalia does not romanticize the life in her children's home or in such residential institutions in general (she is also aware that such homes did not help her siblings during their father's imprisonment), but she describes and evaluates the features of this particular milieu and its biographical significance for herself very positively (p. 138, line 17 to p. 140, line 14). Her analytical description focuses on (what she experiences as) the order of everyday life, duties which children and youths had to fulfill (e.g., having to take care of younger children), the trust between them and members of the staff as "true caregivers" (p. 138, line 18), their being invited to staff members' homes (and thereby, being exposed to another "normalcy"), the solidarity with a severely impaired child as a matter of course, etc.¹² It is also interesting to discover how she makes use of informal advice given to her by a staff member in order to find her way in the outside world: "to best assess uhm... my future husband by judging the relationships at his home, and what relationships uhm... the father has uhm... with the... with the mother...

¹² I was wondering if the text contains references to the fact that Natalia entered the children's home in 1989, a phase of revolutionary change in Poland. In any case, living in the children's home also meant that her world became larger. She mentions the contact with Dutch people who visited the home and stayed in touch by mail.

((laughter)))" (p. 145, lines 18-20). That means that this staff member provides her with some orientation in a biographically significant situation when she has to figure out the trustworthiness of the man who she has fallen in love with. Natalia's analytical descriptions of the children's home and her casual references to the biographical marks which care-

takers have left on her (like the one just mentioned) can be important data for professional discourse, and self-reflection on such institutions and the relationships with young clients – just like the detailed sequences about her suffering from her family's accusations that she betrayed them (which were also voiced during her stay in the children's home).

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Badges of Social Valuing and the Biography. Natalia's Interview in the Perspective of Sociologist of Poverty and Social Exclusion

Abstract The paper presents an attempt to analyze the interview with Natalia within the framework of sociology of poverty and from a social exclusion perspective. The information about the origins of Natalia's interview is delineated. In the main part of the text, the author refers to the concept of *the badge of ability*, described by Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, as a tool of social categorizing and valuing and introduces the corresponding notion of *the badge of inability*, ascribed to the unprivileged group members. Furthermore, the influence of both kinds of badges on the situation of Natalia's family of origin, on her life course, and self-description are indicated with some remarks on the narrator's biographical and identity work. The last part of the paper presents the narrator's understanding of the world of poverty and social exclusion, its mechanisms, and conditionings.

Keywords Biography; Poverty; Marginalization; Social Valuing; Stigmatization; Badge of Ability; Badge of Inability

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Introduction – Natalia's Interview Origin

The interview with Natalia comes from my project entitled *Institutionalized identity? The processes of identity development on the basis of biographies rendered by adults raised in residential child care homes*.¹ The project planned to be conducted from 2011 to 2014 has been aimed at the analysis of life stories and identity

¹ The project funded by the Polish National Science Centre, grant no. 6716/B/H03/2011/40.

development processes of adults living in residential care institutions in their childhood and/or adolescence, as well as their identity work in adult life. I have also been interested in the social world of children's residential care homes. The triangulated data sources constituted the empirical basis of the project: 46 narrative / biographical interviews were collected. The narrators – presently adults in their 30s and 40s – were institutionalized in residential children's institutions² located in one of the large Polish cities and its area during the period from 1970-1990. Considering the fact the narrators are in the traumatized group bracket, due to traumatic memories from childhood and/or from institutionalization period, two types of interviews were applied³ – the classical narrative interview (in the form elaborated by Fritz Schütze and his co-workers [e.g., Schütze 2009]) and the in-depth biographical interview. It was the narrator who decided on the form of interview applied. Interviewees were also asked to fulfill a Twenty Statement Test in the starting phase of the interview. Furthermore, accessible interviewees' data files stored in the archives of children's residential care homes were scrutinized. The final results of the project are presented in the book *"We were brought up by the State." About the identity of the adult leavers of children's residential care institutions* (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014).

Getting in touch with potential narrators occurred to be a very complicated task. At the beginning, I followed the snowball strategy, which shortly appeared to be inefficient due to the limited network of mutual relationships of institutional leavers.

² The narrators were institutionalized mainly in state children's institutions, six interviewees were placed in family-based small group homes.

³ In order to ensure the maximal sense of comfort and safety to the narrator.

Thus, I decided to ask collaborating children residential care institutions under study for the list of the leavers born in 1960-1975. The official university invitation letters were sent from the Institute of Sociology to the individuals from the list. Natalia was one of 8 persons who reacted directly to the invitation letter – she called the Institute office and said that she was willing to tell me her story. We met in August 2011 at my office. In the starting phase, I supplied Natalia with the most important information about the research, its aims, and forms of results dissemination. Because of the narrator's interest, I also presented some details of my own life story. Natalia preferred to be questioned according to the in-depth biographical interview scheme. In the ending phase, we had a short conversation about institutional leavers' fates. At the very end of the meeting, I obtained Natalia's consent to analyze her files at the disposal of the children's group home she was placed in, thus, this paper also contains some information additional to the main interview.

What was the researcher's reason for selecting the interview with Natalia from the rest of the collected interviews to be discussed and analyzed with other social scientists?⁴ First and foremost, the interview with Natalia is the most difficult interview I have ever conducted due to narrator's deep suffering while she was talking about her family of origin and her childhood experiences. Even though I consider myself a good listener – empathic and supportive

⁴ I would like to express my profound gratitude to Professor Kaja Kaźmierska who is an initiator of the idea of conjoint work on Natalia's interview, the organizer of "Natalia's session" at ESA RN03 Midterm conference in Lodz, September 2012 and the editor of our collective work presented in this journal. I would also like to thank all colleagues, the authors of the papers on Natalia's interview – Johanna Björkenheim, Gerhard Riemann, Sylwia Urbańska, and Katarzyna Waniek.

– there were moments in Natalia's story that were extremely strenuous for me – in some parts of the interview the level of stress resulted in my spontaneous and unconsidered interventions.⁵ Observing Natalia's behavior and emotions, I made the deliberative decision to break the planned interview scenario and close the threads regarding Natalia's family of origin⁶ before questioning about the main elements studied within the project – for instance, the narrators' own life history. Secondly, Natalia is an extremely insightful narrator with a reflective attitude towards her own biography, its fundamental conditionings and processes, taking up biographical and identity work. Thirdly, Natalia's case representing the success story in the project contradicts the stereotype of a "typical" life course of an institutional leaver (perceived as a person with limited abilities to live an independent adult life, liable to suffer defeat) existing in professional discourse (see: Sajkowska 1999; EUROCHILD WORKING PAPER 2012), popular literature, and mass-media.⁷ There-

⁵ For example, the question about the exact year of the little sister's death.

⁶ As the member of the sociological team researching poverty and social exclusion I am interested in the intergenerational transmission of these phenomena. In this very project the questions about family of origin members, especially siblings, were designed to gain the additional, comparative data on institutional leavers life courses.

⁷ There are many works in the area of popular literature and film presenting former orphanages and modern children's residential care institutions, and the individuals placed there (e.g., Charles Dickens' *Olivier Twist*, with several screen versions; *The Magdalene Sisters*, drama by Peter Mullan; horrors, like *El Espinazo del Diablo* by Guillermo del Toro, *El Orfanato* by Juan Antonio Bayona). Although the writers and directors focus on depicting rather power relationships and/or individual and collective functioning in the institutions, there are also some books and films in which we can follow the portraits of children's homes leavers. For example, in Agatha Christie's novels some of the characters involved in criminal activities were raised in residential care institutions. In the last decade in ITV (UK), such characters were presented in one of the episodes ("Little Lazarus") of criminal drama series *Vera* based on Ann Cleeves' books. Both the victim of the murder, the single mother who was not able to adapt to the society, and her killer were placed in their childhood in the group home.

fore, the group work on this interview not only gives an opportunity to conduct analysis both within the social sciences framework, and in the area of helping professions but also to reflect upon the methodological and ethical issues of biographical interviewing.

The Possible Analytical Directions of Natalia's Interview – The Standpoint of the Social Exclusion Researcher. In-lead in the Subject Area of the Paper

The possibility of conducting multidimensional analysis of the data is one of the most important and unquestionable advantages of the biographical method. When we approach Natalia's biography as the main research *topic* (Helling 1990), we can consider, for example, the narrator's life course and life strategies, her biographical and identity work, the interplay between personal identity and significant others, or Natalia's self-description contrasted with the characteristics of the narrator's siblings. However, in the area of the research on social exclusion – the main field of my sociological interest – Natalia's life history can be treated rather as a *means* (Helling 1990). On the basis of the interview supplied with the documents from Natalia's files, a researcher can be tempted to describe such phenomena as the portrait of the family living in an impoverished neighborhood in a big city, deprived of institutional support, and the family structure and functions. A scientist can also dwell on the problems of child neglect, of interrelations between poverty and gender, for example, female and male roles in the social world of poverty, or consider other important phenomena, like stereo-

typing, labeling, and stigmatization, manifesting in everyday reality of marginalized individuals and groups. Taking into account not only cognitive but also utilitarian dimensions of social research, the recognition of factors crucial to the process of breaking through the vicious circles of poverty, social exclusion, and stigmatization is one of the central problems here.

The collectivity of children's residential care institution-leavers is recognized as strongly endangered by marginalization processes due to high statistics of school dropouts, risk of unemployment, homelessness, criminal behavior, and limitations in playing social roles of key importance in adult life (EUROCHILD WORKING PAPER 2012:9). Accordingly, the individuals raised in institutions – likewise members of other marginalized groups – become susceptible to both informal and institutionalized stigmatizing, in this very case evinced in multiplied tribal stigma (Goffman 1981). For centuries "dysfunctional" families members have been perceived as members of the lowest social stratum collectively affected by blemishes of character; this phenomenon was also observed in the Polish society in the years of Natalia's institutionalization:

[i]n socialist regimes from Central and Eastern Europe, "dysfunctional" families and individuals were often perceived as not willing to be integrated into society. Parents' difficulty to care for their children was seen as an individual failure to be solved through State intervention, with public authorities openly encouraging parents to place their children in the institution and even as using it as a measure to sanction dissenting behavior. (EUROCHILD WORKING PAPER 2012:6)

During childhood and adolescence, the negative labeling of children brought up in multi-problem families results from the characteristics ascribed to their parents and other family of origin members by the *normals* participating in the mainstream society, particularly employees of institutions constituted for exercising social control. The primordial stigma interlinked with beliefs referring to the mechanism of genetic or social inheriting is intensified by placement in residential care settings. The claim that "institutions often put a label of stigma on children – regardless of their age or circumstances" and reduce their chances of successful future integration (EUROCHILD WORKING PAPER:8; see also: Sajkowska 1999) relates not only to the impact of institutionalization, formative for individual biography, personality, and identity, but also to the acts of social classifying, stereotyping, labeling, and valuing.⁸ The limited social, cultural, symbolic, economic, and emotional capital of de-institutionalized individuals can also provoke the acts of stigmatizing at the beginning of institutional leavers' adult life. At the level of mezzo and macro structure, collective acts of categorizing, especially the ones performed by formal institutions (agencies of the State and local governments), legitimize the spectrum of individual participation in different spheres of social life and influence social actors' life chances (Strauss 1969). Therefore, my study of Natalia's case pertains to the concepts of

⁸ The narrators share the opinion about specific attitudes of others towards individuals who grew up in the institutions. The informants mostly mentioned negative stereotypes, but some of them also referred to some kind of "interactionally experienced" empathy or mercy. In the individual narrations, one can also find descriptions of the acts of self-stigmatizing. Self-stigmatizing had sometimes been used as a kind of "currency" in difficult situations, i.e., in job applications or in the search for the proper flat.

the badge of ability and *the badge of inability*⁹ related to the phenomena of social categorizing and valuing, significant for the analysis of institutional leavers' biographies and their identity construction. I will refer to the influence of socially ascribed badges on life course and status of Natalia and the members of her family of origin, on the narrator's self-description, and perception of her relationships with intimate significant others. As Natalia's case constitutes the pattern of a biography of a person who – by undertaking biographical and identity work – has managed to “overcome” the vicious circle of poverty, marginalization, and stigmatization, but is still rooted in two social worlds, in the last part of the text, I will also relate to Natalia's subjective perspective and present her as an interpreter theorizing on the conditionings and factors of poverty and social exclusion.

The badge of ability and the badge of inability

While considering the interlinks between social exclusion and social categorizing and valuing, the researcher can address a few theories and concepts. Some of them, like labeling “theory”¹⁰ or Goffman's stigma, are deeply grounded in sociological and psychological traditions, still, in the very text, I will recall the concept which does not seem

⁹ The notion of *the badge of inability* and its interconnections with the social classification processes are presented in a more developed way in my work on adult institutional leavers' identity (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014).

¹⁰ In the “Introduction to Polish Edition” of Becker's *Outsiders. Studies in Sociology of Deviance* Elżbieta Zakrzewska-Manterys writes: “[l]abeling theory is not a theory. However, not due to the reasons enumerated by representatives of conventional sociology but for the characteristic traits of symbolic interactionism that is to say “non-theoretism” [“nieteoretyczność”] of theories providing the sensitizing concepts...” (2009:XV [trans. AGG]).

to be broadly discussed within the framework of social science. In 1972, two American sociologists, Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, published the book entitled *The Hidden Injuries of Class*¹¹ in which they introduced the concept of *the badge of ability*.¹² Whereas within the framework of the labeling “theory” the authors consider the impact of the social response to violation of social norms, and whilst stigma is defined as a kind of attribute ascribed by the *normals* discrediting an individual or a group (Becker 1966; Goffman 1981), *the badge of ability* concept focuses on acts of classifying and valuing others, which refer to the domain of social inequalities and are based on institutionalized procedures both influenced by and influencing the perception of a social actor. *The badges of ability* are ascribed to the individuals with particular talents, “standing out from the mass,” mostly within the systems of education and professional certification. Assigning *the badges of ability* is rooted in a class order, predominantly this marker becomes the attribute of the individuals from upper social strata. For example, in educational and professional settings students and employees from middle and upper classes are classified by teachers as more talented, more intellectually developed, with better cognitive skills than their peers from the lower social strata. According to Sennett and Cobb, *the badges of ability* confirm the social value of upper classes members, constitute the basis of their personal dignity and others' respect, and delimit the area of person-

¹¹ I would like to thank my colleague, sociologist Magdalena Rek-Woźniak, who recommended this book to me.

¹² I have not found any papers discussing *the badge of ability* concept within social sciences although the term of badge is used in educational sciences (“educational badges” as a tool of alternative assessment [see, e.g., Abramovich, Schunn, and Higashi 2013]) and in behavioral ecology (“badge of status” [see, e.g., Nakagawa et al. 2007]).

al freedom. Furthermore, *the badges of ability* are converted into the tool of power legitimatization. A person who “wears” a *badge of ability* can fulfill the role of an expert entitled to categorizing and valuing others, thus, the attribution of this badge gives the power to assess the abilities of the lowest social strata members to participate in mainstream society and to control them. However, in the cases of individual upward social mobility badges of ability ascribed to a person coming from an underprivileged group, the badges become a source of individual feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and/or powerlessness. Such feelings can result either from the perception of upgrading individual treated as an usurper encroaching a new social world or from the individual sense of guilt and betrayal towards old friends, acquaintances, or relatives, or from the sense of disappointment of upper class members' image and activities (Sennett, Cobb 1972).

Following Sennett and Cobb's considerations, it is possible to introduce the notion of *the badge of inability* as a term opposite to *the badge of ability*. The authors of *The Hidden Injuries of Class* apply the term *the signs of unequal ability* (Sennett and Cobb 1972:68) in the description of school teacher categorizing children from working class as individuals with worse adaptation abilities, lower aspirations, and limited willingness to task fulfillment. The expectations towards children coming from lower social strata can release the mechanism of self-fulfilling prophecy – thus, in the adulthood, the children from underprivileged groups (with minor exceptions) turn into invisible mass, the backdrop for possessors of *the badge of ability* (Sennett Cobb 1972; see also: Burnham and Hartsough 1968, Rosenthal

and Jacobson 1968, Good and Brophy 1972 as cited in Meighan 1993; Jacyno 1997).

The badge of inability can be therefore defined as a kind of negative marker attributed to marginalized individuals and families – via institutional rituals of degradation (Garfinkel 1956) – by institutions and organizations of social policy system. Social workers, probation officers, health visitors, teachers, and other institutional experts perform the evaluation of the individuals and families who ask for intervention themselves or who have been reported to the authorities by others. Such an assessment can be founded on professional expertise and knowledge but also on arbitrary perception rooted in cultural values and norms or even in stereotypes, personal beliefs, and prejudices. For example, sociologists analyzing Polish social work institutions point that relatively often clients' assessment is made on a basis of observation of the living conditions. The attention of an expert is paid especially to the level of hygiene and tidiness of the household and its inhabitants, which seems to be treated as the main premises in the generalized assessment of a person or a family:

[f]or many social workers, the ability to keep a flat in order and neatness becomes a synonym of the ability to cope, despite very low income...then, a dirty, neglected flat with old, devastated furniture happens to be proof of idleness, and waste of funds, still, more often it is an indicator of problems different from poverty – depending on the interpretation – helplessness, apathy, particular value hierarchy, or a problem of alcohol addiction in a family. (Kalbarczyk 2013:243 [trans. AGG]; see also: Golczyńska-Grondas 2014)

Another indicator, important in the process of assessment in social work, can be the functioning of a diagnosed individual, his/her family members' behaviors, or even the behavior of other persons living or temporarily staying with the family. The negative results of the observation and assessment supported by institutional experts' opinions legitimize *the badge of inability* assignment. Obviously, without thorough, multidisciplinary complex analysis of a particular case, it is not possible to decide whether the assignment of *the badge of inability* results from the professional knowledge, is a kind of malpractice, or even professional mistake, however, it is worth noticing that differentiated connotations and ideologies are ascribed to *the badges of inability* inbuilt in the explanatory theories and narratives within the area of poverty and social exclusion. Within conservative, moralizing discourse, the scientists and practitioners indicate the interlinks between social exclusion and personal deficiencies or faults of character (supporter of this discourse will assess individuals or families as "pathological" or dysfunctional"), whereas the adherents of structure narrative or social change model underline the influence of macro-social factors (the adjectives such as "shiftless," "inefficient," or "not capable" can be used in this case) (Golczyńska-Grondas 1998; Kalbarczyk 2013; Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin 2010 as cited in Tarkowska 2013; Tarkowska 2013). Putting aside the issue of assessment reliability and accuracy, since the interest of the institutions concentrates on individuals negatively perceived and valued in their environment due to their being "destructive" or "anti-social," the basic sense of *the badge of inability* is the statement that an individual is not able

to "properly" fulfill social roles, functions, and tasks (Golczyńska-Grondas 1998). Consequently, *the badge of inability* attribution legitimizes institutional activities, entitles professionals to intervene in marginalized individuals' and families' life, and into their privacy.¹³ *The badge of inability* also causes that personal traits and activities are subordinated to social classifying and re-classifying based on stereotyping and retrospective reinterpretation of social roles, which strengthen the power of this badge.

To conclude: With references to "classical" sociological theories, *badges of ability* and *badges of inability* can be described as the tools triggering off the acts of labeling and stigmatizing within the framework of social scheme of values and – at the same time – they are the important social markers and factors influencing individual lives in processes of social exclusion and inclusion.¹⁴ Both kinds of badges are grounded in formal regulations but also in informal process of assessing and valuing individuals and groups who "wear" them; these badges strongly influence their everyday reality and life course in any type of society or group.

¹³ Obviously, the strategies applied by the employees of helping and correctional institutions differ, beginning from far reaching interference, like punitive regulation of poverty (Wacquant 2001), through depersonalizing treatment, to empowerment settled on mutual partnership.

¹⁴ In the class society *the badge of ability* is the source of individual value: "in this society, rich and poor, plumber and professor, is subject to a scheme of values that tells him he must validate the self in order to win others' respect and his own" (Sennett and Cobb 1972:75). Sennett and Cobb applied the term of *badge of ability* in the analysis of American society in 70s, but it seems that the concepts of *badge of ability* and *inability* can be deployed in a much more universal dimension.

Badges of Inability and Ability in Natalia's Interview

Natalia's Family of Origin Story – The Way to Social Exclusion and the Badge of Inability

The authors of *The Hidden Injuries of Class* state that in the 20th century the extender family becomes the source of personal humiliation rather than of collective strength (Sennett and Cobb 1972:107). In Natalia's life story her family of origin turned into the source of jeopardy for all its members. We do not know much about Natalia's ancestors' history, but it is possible that in Natalia's maternal lineage we face the case of intergenerational transmission of poverty and social problems:

[m]y grandmother worked hard throughout her whole life, uhm... she had four children, one child actually died shortly after birth somehow... my grandmother uhm... became a widow at a young age since her first husband simply drank himself to death, such are the alcoholic genes. ...just so (((ironic laughter))) from generation to generation, already so deep so... my mother's father drank himself to death, my grandmother was left alone she brought up two children it was not easy for her she worked her whole life in [name of the workplace] plant. ...she got married and gave birth to a son who at the age of 24 was killed and uhm... then her second husband also died and she was actually alone. (see: "Transcript of Biographical Interview with Natalia" in this issue of QSR, p. 151, lines 13-24)

Natalia was born in a small village – her father's place of origin. Presumably, the narrator's family living in a rented room in poor conditions differed from the village community and from the father's relatives. The father's mother – a local farmer – did

not accept her son's marriage, she suspected that Natalia's older brother was born out of wedlock. When Natalia was 5 or 6 years old, the family moved to a big industrial city and settled down in one of the poor quarters. Natalia's mother "broke into some squat" (p. 127, line 2), and the family obtained the administrative permission to occupy a 30 m² apartment placed in the so-called "commune flat."¹⁵ The flat was situated in an old, devastated tenement house:

for many, many years, there was only one room, there was no toilet. The toilet was in the street/ in the yard, so the conditions were hardly any. There was no bathroom, just an old dirty sink and uhm... and a pot for children to piss in... at night or in the evening. Generally, one went there to the end of the yard to the toilet and so it really looked like to the end this uhm... this is our home. (p. 152, line 34 to p. 153, line 3)

Such lodgings have been relatively often domiciled by inhabitants living at the margins of mainstream society. The neighbor next door was an alcohol-addicted man, for this man Natalia and her siblings used to collect cigarette butts in the streets. After the neighbor's death, the family took over his room, expanding their living space, extremely needful for parents and their six children. Natalia's family entered into a scheme of socially excluded family units from impoverished neighborhoods, becoming one of the typical representatives of the social world of poverty. In material dimensions, poor, overcrowded, cramped housing,

¹⁵ "Commune flats" were popular in socialistic countries – separate rooms in previously large-sized flats situated in tenement houses were allocated, on the basis of administrative decision, to non-related persons/families who shared a hall, a kitchen, and a bathroom. This solution is still popular in Polish cities, especially, in the old, impoverished areas.

lack of separate space for adults and children, and insufficient income could be observed. Malnourishment and low hygienic standards influenced the family members' health; the level of deprivation was significant, worsened by both parents' harmful use of alcohol. The family lived under day-to-day pressure, time was structured by the phases of parents' constant drinking. Natalia's closest relatives lacked the competencies indispensable for effective social functioning (Potoczna 1998; Jankowski and Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2010).

The interview mirrors the deepening process of child neglect. In Natalia's early childhood: "in the 80s...the conditions were good enough that this care was... and the money... it was enough. I remember we used to go to the cinema and for ice cream and... and generally it was, it was okay" (p. 117, lines 27-30), but in the following years the parents were gradually withdrawing from satisfying the children's basic material and emotional needs. In particular, in the "jag" periods untended children used to organize their daily activities:

I remember once there was this situation that my mother locked us up...and went out. This, she was out for like two or three days. People gave us food through the window... well it wasn't any fun. In any case, we had stupid ideas because the age difference was, I don't know, say from 13 to 5 or 4 years. We organized a cool party at home... of course, with the house locked up. Our friends, boys and girls came in through the window/ and we had such a large tin bath... and decided to melt in all the plastic things that come to our mind, so we would have also probably burnt the house uhm... ... [w]e set fire to plastic stuff and so it flowed nicely, flowed into that bowl. There was terrible smoke, the police arrived, fire bri-

gade and all, so there all the crackpot you can imagine uhm... (p. 120, line 30 to p. 121, line 6)

Children suffered from domestic violence – the rules of upbringing were based on corporal punishment, the drunk father maltreated his spouse and children, mostly boys, but there is evidence in Natalia's file that the narrator was also a victim of her father's aggressive behavior. Finally, the family's flat turned into a place of alcohol illegal trading: "both the district [name of the impoverished neighborhood in the city] and the conditions were friendly to that mm... to start such illegal alcohol trading, commonly it is called a den" (p. 118, lines 4-6). It seems that Natalia's parents perfectly adapted to the environment and its norms, moreover, the family could have achieved relatively high status in the neighborhood:

there was a den at home and forever some uhm... men came, older or younger, came for the alcohol, so well super (((with irony))) in particular that we often served the ((laughs)) the client, yes. So, so the contacts were such, let's say that we all were known in the streets and uhm... okay, no one touched us there ((laughter)). (p. 130, lines 16-19)

Natalia's interview also gives the evidence of the special role of the oldest generation in socially excluded families – another phenomenon typical of the social world of poverty (e.g., Potoczna and Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2009). For many years Natalia's grandmother was the only person who was supporting the family – supplying them with food, giving children a shelter, and trying to influence her daughter:

[m]y grandma tried to intervene a little bit, because my grandmother is a very much of an okay person,

that is, my mother's mother. It was also all very hard for her. She brought us food, but unfortunately, she failed to bring up mom and – she didn't have any influence on her, although she sometimes she hit her on the head with an umbrella, but it didn't restore her reason. (p. 120, lines 26-30)

The father's mother did not participate in her son's and grandchildren's everyday life but she supported Natalia in critical situations, temporarily taking care of the narrator in her early adolescence.

At the beginning, the family malfunctioning did not provoke any institutional reaction, in Natalia's opinion, this lack of interest in family situation contributed to her little sister's death: "it seems to me that if, if anybody had had an interest in this child earlier, she wouldn't have died. Cause this meningitis purulent uhm... certainly had been developing much, much earlier, and in my opinion, this child was neglected" (p. 119, lines 11-13). The first tracks of institutional attention, which can be the evidence of *the badge of inability* attribution, are related to the narrator's early educational career. School certificates in the narrator's file prove that in the first years of primary school Natalia had quite good school results but in the 4th grade she began to skip classes, the problem deepened the next year when she missed almost 300 hours. Because of poverty and physical neglect Natalia and her siblings might have been stigmatized by schoolmates and teachers:

my mother didn't pay attention to look after us so that we had clean neat things. It was all washed but it was washed in such a way that it was thrown into one washing machine, so these things were so, well, uncool. Generally, always, I don't know, maybe it wasn't lice but there were always some scabies uhm...

And being at school, there it was a bit uncool, cause there were such uhm... nursing controls and so on so it didn't belong to cool things, cause in class one may have not uhm... not been someone, that is been some kind of person rejected from the group, and one always made up for this with one's character and I don't know, somehow it.... it was okay. But it never was so that we had time to learn super-extra so that we would be among the school class leaders – there were just such different trappings. Sometimes there was no lunch but there were organized some kind of school lunches, free of charge. (p. 118, lines 18-27)

Broad-based process of the institutional assessment of the family began as a result of the grandmother's (the mother's mother) intervention, when Natalia's father was sentenced for two years in prison for illegal alcohol trading and her mother "went partying hard" (p. 120, line 25). The professional evaluation effected in parental rights limitation and children's institutionalization, Natalia's sisters and brothers were placed in different children's group homes, 12-year-old Natalia, as the only one, was put into her grandmother's custody and she spent two years in her house in the father's home village.

The next phase of *the badge of inability* attribution was interlinked with Natalia's suicidal attempt after her homecoming.¹⁶ In 1990 – the critical year for Natalia's life course – the family situation became an object of formal assessment by the school staff. The flat was described as a dirty and messy place equipped with only basic furniture. Parents "overusing alcohol, do not tend to the children. Natalia takes care of her siblings. She often does

¹⁶ "[M]y dad left this prison and came home... he came for me... and said that everything will be okay and everything and I... I came back here, to [the name of city]" (p. 121, lines 27-29).

the cleaning and cooking. The material situation of the family is difficult, the family remains constantly under the school supervision"¹⁷ [trans. AGG]. The hospital psychologist concluded that the suicidal attempt was caused by difficult family situations, quarrels, the girl's unsatisfied emotional needs, and her sense of being rejected by the parents. In the psychologist's opinion, the return to family home could have resulted in subsequent suicidal behaviors – Natalia was afraid of "the rejection and punishment for her suicidal act"¹⁸ [trans. AGG].

Natalia preferred to be placed in a children's group home; during her institutionalization the progressive process of family members' malfunctioning became a deciding factor for *the badge of inability* assignment. Since Natalia's leaving home all her siblings have been diagnosed by experts within social welfare and/or jurisdictional system and temporarily placed in residential care or correctional institutions, nowadays, all of them are *the badge of inability* possessors. Their negative markers have been sealed by the certified professionals – experts holding *the badges of ability*. It is difficult to find out if the negative evaluation of Natalia's relatives was followed by any attempts of professional social work (besides institutionalization) or any other kind of help, or if such probable efforts were ineffective, but all Natalia's siblings reproduced the life strategy of their parents. Sennett and Cobb states: "[h]ow, when you feel vulnerable in relation to people who are 'respectable,' do you protect yourself? There is the old way

to do this, which is to withdraw into an enclave" (1972:113). Indeed, Natalia's brothers and sisters living in the impoverished neighborhoods, supported by social welfare, and/or making their profits from criminal behavior are now trapped in vicious circles of social exclusion, but as the individuals who do not belong to society, they are in a sense "protected" from the society members who cannot hurt them by the acts of labeling and stigmatizing (Sennett and Cobb 1972). Natalia has been the only child in the family who has succeeded in the battle for "normalization," but she pays the price for her victory.

Natalia's Story – The Way to Normalization and the Badge of Ability

At the beginning of the interview Natalia says: "[g]enerally I come from a pathological family, which is why, uhm... I ended up in the children's home" (p. 117, lines 23-24). It seems that the narrator began to perceive a counter-normality of her family everyday reality and the distinctness from peers' situation when she was an adolescent girl:

[a]t the time when uhm... my dad went to prison I was at sixth grade primary school, that is, I was already such a big girl and thinking. I took care of the younger siblings I had... though I didn't always like it, because I was already at an age that, I don't know, well, it would be nice to run somewhere to the park with the girls, with the girls play after... whatever, and not all the time ask "Mom, can I go?," "Take, you know, your brother, sister with you," and so on. So I was, let's say, a nanny for the younger siblings, which I did not like because... (p. 120, lines 14-19)

Two years spent with the father's mother strengthened the negative picture of family home: "[a]fter

those two years when I lived at this grandmother I got very unused to dirt, to these alcohol benders, whatever" (p. 121, lines 30-31). Although the grandmother was tough, demanding caretaker, possibly classifying her granddaughter as the possessor of tribal stigma or *the family badge of inability*¹⁹: "my grandma more than once reproached me on my room, that I am like my mother. Once I even got it on the face for, stuff like that" (p. 121, lines 16-17), Natalia could live a relatively "normal" life. It is possible that she happened to be a smart, good pupil – in the narrator's file there is a note from the primary school in a big city, written at the time of Natalia's institutionalization, in which the grade master stated that Natalia had good notes, was talented and ambitious. The teacher also wrote:

[s]he wanted to achieve the best results in her education, but she is too overwhelmed with obligations at her home. She must take care of her younger siblings, do time-consuming housework ... she emphasized many times that she wants to learn more but she does not have good conditions for this.²⁰ [trans. AGG]

"Stabilized" situation at home – constant alcohol overuse, conflicts and domestic violence, father's failures to keep promises, Natalia's hopes for a proper home and "normal" reality, and the narra-

¹⁹ Let me recall Natalia's description of the paternal grandmother's negative attitude towards her son's marriage: "[a]nd when [my father] married my mother, which my grandmother didn't like much, I don't know why, but looking back, maybe she had some reasons. Then he was generally in such a... in the background completely, and they wanted to move out from there. Grandma uhm... often said there... that the first child, that is, my older brother is a bastard, that he's not, uhm, the child of uhm... my dad's, and stuff like that. So I think that he didn't have such an easy life there with his mother" (p. 126, lines 15-20).

²⁰ Notes from Natalia's institutional file made available to the researcher.

tor's sense of otherness were the decisive factors for Natalia's desperate suicidal attempt:

I hoped that when I get back it would all be well and at last this family of mine/ but I already, uh, I could see I couldn't live like this. I freed/ I/ for two years I was gone and I just stopped to accept things, it was very very difficult for me... and I remember that (((with hesitation in her voice))) no, I don't remember at this point yet, so I don't remember for sure, but it all got one thing on top of another.... and... and these quarrels... such fights, it's probably, I mean adolescent age also played a role, I mean once, umm... enough of this all... enough of this life here in this house of drunkards (((strong emotions))). And... well I didn't want, uhm... again these lice, this dirt and and generally such old habits of the family that, uhm... I don't know. Once I don't really remember the reason yet, that was the last straw and I had swallowed the some pills that I found in the cabinet and decided to poison myself. (p. 121, line 33 to p. 122, line 7)

As we already know, Natalia did not want to come back home: "I can't live like them. I just cannot and that is, it seems to me, that is the reason why I found myself in the children's home" (p. 120, lines 9-10). She was placed in one of the best "children's group homes" in the city. Although the narrator appreciated very much this very institution as good, calm place, the beginnings of her staying there were difficult – Natalia underlines her longing for the family, especially siblings. We also read in the interview that the family reacted negatively to the narrator's decision. In a few months after Natalia's placement in the institution her father did not accept the daughter, documents in the file state that during Natalia's visits at home he was aggressive and violent, orally abused the narrator. Such behavior can possibly be interpreted as the result of Natalia's "betrayal,"

¹⁷ Notes from Natalia's institutional file made available to the researcher.

¹⁸ Notes from Natalia's institutional file made available to the researcher.

the perceived “otherness” of the daughter but also of Natalia's intervention in family life undertaken for the sake of her siblings. Parental rejection caused deep suffering of the narrator strongly connected to her relatives, hoping for their love, understanding, and acceptance:

I rebelled, it cost me a lot, because I don't know, perhaps only God knows how many nights I cried the whole night through... cause I felt rejected and when there is/ I don't know, whatever this grandma would be, whatever this father would be, one loves them and wants such uh... such acceptance from them. (p. 125 lines 11-14)

In the first year of institutionalization Natalia was at risk of obtaining *the badge of inability*. She stated herself that she was not a very disciplined resident:

I also had silly ideas too... There were various flip-outs, the girl from there, from this children's home, we came from different families, so we bought some wine too, we drank in parks, then we threw up till we dropped well... [A: ((laughter))] I also don't know, I learned to smoke cigarettes on a park bench. (p. 123, lines 14-18)

There are notes in Natalia's file about her late returns to the institution, short desertion without official permission, and alcohol drinking. The narrator made an attempt of taking up the education in a secondary school but she failed and decided to continue education in the vocational school. The children's home headmaster wrote in her opinion for the family court:

in the first semester [Natalia] got mostly failing grades. She attends the high school very reluctantly, she purposefully does not want to work. Next year

she wants to change the school for the vocational one with our full support.²¹ [trans. and underlining AGG]

With the reference to *the badge of inability* concept, the potential interpretation of quoted assessment is that the headmaster and institution staff perceived Natalia's learning difficulties as “normal” and opted for the educational path typical of institutionalized adolescents those times.²² There is also a possibility that Natalia did not want to differ from other children in the institution. In the 80s and early 90s, adolescents placed in residential children's homes graduated from primary schools followed the path of a vocational education career, the few forerunners were mobbed by peers.²³

Presumably, in the last two years of Natalia's institutionalization the narrator's relationship with the relatives become more stabilized, she was often visiting parents and siblings. The institutional assessment of Natalia's behavior also changed in the first year of her education in the vocational school – the narrator worked hard, both in the children's home and the school she was given an opinion of the “right-minded, very sensitive, and helpful girl”²⁴

²¹ Notes from Natalia's institutional file made available to the researcher.

²² In the 80s, 99% of children placed in residential care graduated from vocational schools (Raczkowska 1983). Secondary schools were regarded as the institutions appropriate for adolescents from upper social strata, the graduates were supposed to continue their education at the university level.

²³ “The child try to win respect from a figure of power, alienating his peers but confirming to the judge that here is an individual who is going to make something of himself in life, i.e., move up socially. The child can try to win respect from his peers, but in that case he feels that he has not developed the abilities within himself that would earn him the respect of the powerful person in higher class” (Sennett and Cobb 1972:88).

²⁴ Notes from Natalia's institutional file made available to the researcher.

[trans. AGG]. When three years later Natalia was graduating from the vocational school, she was awarded for good school results. Anyhow, as early as in the adolescence period, in the interactions with her relatives and peers in the institution, Natalia had to cope with feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness, which, according to Sennett and Cobb (1972), are the common experience of individuals moving upward in their relationships with the social world of origin.

Five years of institutionalization founded the background of the narrator's life course normalization. In the children's home Natalia experienced a “completely different life” (p. 122, line 35), she had “a nice room” (p. 122, line 34), there was a canteen serving “normal food” (p. 122, line 35), children could do their homework and play. The narrator met there the “true caregivers” (p. 138, line 18), who become *constructive, institutional significant others* (Golczyńska-Grondas 2009), trustful “warm persons” interested in her problems, supportive, and offering “some kind of love, friendship” (p. 140, lines 10-11). It seems that the caregivers in this very children's group home were able to establish the partnership with, at least, some of their pupils – Natalia mentioned that they taught her independence and responsibility. Some of the staff members invited the pupils to their private flats – “[they] showed us what a normal home looks like, how life should be...they showed us what was missing in a family home” (p. 140, lines 8-10). Thus, in Natalia's case, the institution turned into a model of “such a normal home” (p. 123, line 20) where she could “normally function” (p. 123, line 3), find inner peace, and where she was given the patterns to

follow in her adult life: “[they] showed me, uhm... how to live”²⁵ (p. 123, line 23).

As a 19-year-old person the narrator got a flat in the same house where her parents lived and started the independent existence. Following the interview text, we can observe how Natalia was building, step-by-step, her life – by occupational work, by gaining subsequent levels of education within the framework of part-time studies, by partnership with her future spouse coming from “the normal family,” by parenthood, by forgiveness and re-establishing relationships with her parents. In adulthood, Natalia achieved the standard of normality²⁶ defined by her in the interview course:

I do live, say, not for today, but just so normally as a normal person. I have a regular job, I have a husband, I have a home, I have bills that I have to pay, which is not cool but, but that's the way life is (p. 119, lines 23-25). [S]ometimes it happens that it's a weekend we go to a barbecue and also drink some alcohol, but, but then comes Sunday, then Monday and one comes back to normal reality and goes to work, has some responsibilities. (p. 132, lines 28-30)

Natalia's present-day lifestyle is typical for middle class representatives – in the mornings, jogging in the park with the dog, buying fresh bread in a local bakery, coffee with the husband, everyday work,

²⁵ Natalia's institutionalization experience is unique in the project. Most narrators describe residential care institutions for children in the scheme of Goffman's total institutions, their assessment of the children's homes and the staff is either ambivalent or negative.

²⁶ The notion of normality is very important for the narrator (and other narrators representing in the project the cases of “relative biographical success”). The word “normal” appears very often in the interview in different lexical and grammar forms (42 indications), especially, in the parts in which Natalia opposes the reflection on her biography and identity with the consideration about her family of origin.

books, and TV in free time, meeting friends at the same age, with similar interests, weekends and holidays in the countryside, previously – before the decision to build a house – holidays abroad. We can assume that Natalia played an important role in motivating her husband to take up the effort of graduating from secondary school; thus, as his significant other, she contributed to upgrading the status of her own family.

Due to the normalization of the narrator's biography in the private sphere and her educational career Natalia managed to obtain *the badge of ability* – the marker confirming the narrator's value in the processes of social categorization. Natalia's intellectual potential and abilities have already been diagnosed by the group home staff who initially supported the narrator in the decision of taking up education in the secondary school. The next person who appreciated Natalia's abilities was her mother-in-law who patronized the narrator in her own business. Later on, Natalia was defined by the manager of the company she was working in as a talented person who was worth being supported financially in her educational career; the university bachelor diploma contributed to her professional advancement and upgraded the narrator's social status:

[a]nd I went to the studies due to my work really, because my former manager motivated me “Natalia go, go because you're wasting yourself here, go study, come on, I'll help you here, maybe the company will sponsor something” and indeed in the first year I got some money to go to the studies...and pay for them. I went to extramural studies... and then I started to, uhm, and then changed my position for a little bit higher, then even a little higher, and now I'm actually an office employee. It's an engineering position,

but, well/ we reached this current point. (p. 150, lines 11-17)

Natalia is a person who highly esteems the idea of life-long learning – she continuously develops her abilities and competencies:

[n]ormally during the school year I go twice a week, I go to the English language course because I forever study ((laughter)), well say for three years I've been continuing all the time, it's not like I rest on my laurels, I don't lie down. (p. 154, line 35 to p. 155, line 3)

The badge of ability protects Natalia from stigmatizing potentially resulting from the *badge of inability* and the tribal stigma incumbent upon her parents and siblings, although early interaction with her husband's family showed the narrator its potential influence on the way others might perceive her:

maybe there were some problems with my current mother-in-law at the beginning uhm... meaning ((laughs)) she didn't want her son to date a girl from a children's home, and maybe she just had a different future in mind, but we dealt with her ((laughs))... (p. 144, lines 17-20).

[I]t was such a normal family there wasn't anything missing, they lived in a block of flats, three rooms with a kitchen, nicely furnished, well I absolutely didn't fit into this family because I was just a poor orphan from a children's home ((laughter)), with such a past with some round-the-bend family, and sometimes it was a horror to meet one of my brothers in a dark street. But... but my husband's family was normal. (p. 145, lines 11-16)

At the same time however, in terms of the relationships with her family of origin, Natalia's normality and abilities are the source of emotional burden and

specific self-description. The bonds connecting Natalia with her parents and siblings are very strong but in a sense “one-sided,” it is the narrator who loves her family very much. The closest relatives' destructive lifestyle, serious differentiated troubles and problems experienced by the partners and children, their inability to follow mainstream society patterns, the situation of advanced marginality which Natalia's family has been durably trapped in cause the narrator's deep suffering. Moreover, Natalia's position in the family is of a double nature. On the one hand, the narrator's mother (in the past the late father also) and siblings, due to Natalia's *badge of ability*, expect from and oblige her to far reaching support and services:

now uhm... because of that I am, let's say, an educated person, normal, very much is required from me, more than from them all because I have to deal with - because I have to do, I don't know what, I have to organize, I have to go make an appointment, I don't know, I have to do everything. (p. 128, lines 26-29)

On the other hand, Natalia, who “will never renounce [her] family” (p. 120, line 8) and is constantly ready to help them, defines herself as “a bit of an outcast in the family” (p. 120, line 7) and “such uhm... perhaps the black sheep of the family of mine” (p. 128, lines 24-25), a person who does everything in “the opposite way than everyone would want, would wish” (p. 128, lines 25-26). She does not feel well with the fact that, in her opinion, she is categorized as someone who patronizes her relatives:

I was so normal... and they always think that I look down on them because I work, because I have a normal house ((with an ironic laughter)), because I want

to achieve something and I don't roam the streets with them. (p. 132, lines 25-28)

Thus, in Natalia's biography the price for normality is the sense of inadequacy and inequality in relationships with her relatives, although the split began many years ago, at the moment of Natalia's suicidal attempt and institutionalization. For the socially moving up individuals, who – like Natalia – as the only ones from the family manage to break the vicious circle of poverty and social problems, de-marginalization is equalized with marginalization in their primordial social world.

Natalia, as it was stated previously, represents the “success story.” On the basis of all data collected within this project framework it is possible to conclude that the probability of overcoming previous generation's biographical patterns and of achieving biographical success depends on the possibilities of contesting the trajectorial potential handed over by preceding generation(s). According to the scheme of biography analysis, the change of biographical process structures (Schütze 2009)²⁷ of adults grown up in the institutions results from the narrators' biographical work and identity work. The concepts of biographical and identity work, originally elaborated by Anselm L. Strauss and colleagues (1985), are particularly explored in the studies conducted with the use of autobiographical narrative interviews. Biographical work can be understood as

²⁷ There are four elementary biographical process structures identified by Fritz Schütze: 1) biographical action schemes (an individual actively shapes the course of his/her life), 2) trajectories of suffering (an individual can only react to overwhelming traumatic events), 3) institutional expectation patterns (an individual follows institutionally shaped and normatively defined courses), and 4) biographical metamorphosis (an individual faces unexpected events or new opportunities triggering off inner development) (e.g., Schütze 2009).

autobiographical recollection, reflection about alternative interpretations of one's life course, tendencies, self-critical attempts of understanding one's misconceptions of oneself, self-chosen and self-erected impediments, assessment of impediments superimposed by others and structural conditions, imaging future courses of life...deciding on the next steps of that unfolding, and permanently evaluating the outcomes in terms of the overall distinguished gestalt worked out by recollection, analysis, and imagination. (Schütze 2009:160; see also: Corbin and Strauss 1988)

On the basis of the interview we can follow Natalia's efforts of biographical work undertaken during her life course, starting from the traumatic turning point after the suicidal behavior when she decided to leave her relatives and – in a sense – started a biographical action scheme which was continued in the next years, mainly at the beginnings of her adult life. Protecting oneself from *the badge of inability* heritage was a demanding task. Natalia had to plan and invest into her educational career and to consider the possible direction of her vocational development. While constituting the intimate relationship with her spouse and her daughter, she must have faced some emotional difficulties resulting from her childhood trauma. In her adult life, the narrator constantly copes with her mother, brothers, and sisters who attempt to involve her, again, in the family of origin system.

Since adolescence Natalia has been constantly working on her identity, as well. Again, following Schütze's definition (2009) of identity work, we observe how the narrator shapes her self-concept by understanding herself as a positively developing, unfolding, unique identity (self-description vs. description

of her parents and siblings, the presentation of herself in her basic social roles – as loving partner and mother, good employee); how she discovers potentials, mechanisms, impediments, and dead ends of this unfolding (the impossibility to overcome the self-concept of an outcast and black sheep in the family, the uncertainty regarding her identity as an alumni of the institution: “[i]n fact, I don't, uh, boast that I am from a children's home. [p. 159, lines 22-23] I don't want anyone to know anyone judged me in some way, that here this poor girl... or that someone said, maybe don't hang out with her or something” [p. 160, lines 7-8]); how she decides the next steps for accomplishing development (presentation of self as “an eternal student” [p. 146, line 21] who does not want to “rest on my laurels” [p. 155, line 2-3]). Concurrently, the narrators representing the cases of “biographical defeat,” identified in the project, rarely commence biographical and identity work. Like Natalia's intimate significant others, they are trapped in the biographical trajectories of poverty and stigmatization.

Natalia's Interpretation of the Conditioning Typical of Social Worlds of Poverty and Social Exclusion

The analyses and references to the subjective perspective of the research participant are one of the imperatives of interpretative sociology. Therefore, let me address this issue in the last part of the text and consider Natalia's understanding of the phenomena typical of poverty and social exclusion. Natalia is a person who has been functioning in her life course in two social settings – the social world of marginalization and the mainstream society. De-

spite the narrator's emotional involvement in her family relationships, she is the competent informant, additionally – due to her *ability badge* – she becomes the reliable and plausible interpreter for the listeners. As a discerning observer she notices much more than an average participant of this world, moreover, she is also able to keep the distance towards the depicted reality. While comparing her own life course with the siblings' lives, Natalia:

- characterizes her siblings, especially her brothers as sensitive kids, deprived of parental love and support, dreaming about the decent life: “these were really...good boys” (p. 124, lines 28-29), “he was such a sensitive kid” (p. 124, line 15), “we had such...children dreams ... that when we grow up...we will open a shelter for poor, homeless dogs” (p. 124, lines 20-26);
- is aware of the influence of parents' neglect and maltreatment of her siblings' development: “the boys suffered terribly” (p. 124, line 9), “he suffered such terrible harm ... and now unfortunately... it is as it is... And really my younger brother, who wanted to help animals so much when he was little, now he doesn't think rationally, doesn't think normally” (p. 124, lines 19-31);
- shows us the importance of environmental conditionings in the socialization process in the impoverished neighborhoods:

I think very differently from my parents now and I regret that I couldn't do anything for my family, my brothers and sisters so that they would be in the same situation as me. Cause I don't/ I mean it is

difficult to raise boys, especially in the neighborhood where uhm... at the time when parents are drinking and do not pay attention to anything it is obvious that kids get different ideas coming to their mind, and when they get into some bad company they try to dominate or show, hey, I'm cool too and good, and this isn't directed toward any real good, but unfortunately toward... toward the evil and... Well so they ended up in prisons and it seems to me that it was due to the fact that they hadn't experienced this love in the family. No one was specifically interested and if uhm... and if any of us, I don't know, didn't do homework or got b/ bad marks at school, or if, I don't know, if they caused any trouble, there was no such understanding, there was no question Why?” there was just some punishment or something. (p. 123, line 34 to p. 124, line 9);

- highlights that the lack of any (institutional or informal) intervention intensified the environmental impact on her siblings' life course: “I think to myself now that if really ((cries)), if someone had guided this these kids, if there had been just a little bit of love in this family, none of them would be in prison now for sure” (p. 124, lines 26-28) and contributed to the deepening of her family malfunctioning: “earlier there were such situations, that if perhaps social care had been more often interested uhm, in depth and probably earlier, everybody would have ended up in children's home and this may have been better for us” (p. 118, lines 11-13);
- points to the inefficiency of penitentiary system:

each such stay in penitentiary...assures him [the brother] that there is no other life than life in such a criminal world. It is untrue that... that prison resocializes. ... when you fall into one hole, then the more such sentences you have the more you are important

in this criminal world. He has plenty of friends, colleagues, but these these are all so I don't know... a little bit different-minded people and for sure ... ((sniffs)) and certainly don't want to uhm... to return to a righteous life. (p. 124, line 31 to p. 125, line 2).

Natalia demonstrates why no one from her closest relatives had any chances for biography normalization:

when the boys grew up and had as if their own life, they went away from home, anywhere because no one provided them with a normal home, and as I was growing up, they just wandered somewhere. Or when...my brother...returned from the detention home...he lived a bit in their house, but he, they, no one was very happy with this, so he – they looked for something on their own. And it was obvious to them that... from such nor/ normal work and normal functioning there would not be anything, so you must steal, you must have contacts, you need to stay at somebody's place somewhere out there in some uncool, uhm... area. And...also with rather with uncool people, because nobody normal would agree to have some stranger from the detention home living with him, her, and all. Also... let's say they coped on their own, from which, from which emerged that this is how they ended up in prisons. (p. 130, line 28 to p. 131, line 3)

In her way of argumentation and explanation of the sources of social exclusion Natalia thus acts as an adherent of environmental strands. In my interpretation, the narrator's art to reflect upon the social exclusion phenomenon and to build the argumentation explaining problems of her family of origin, besides her intellectual, cognitive skills, has its origins in the narrator's two special attributes – the empathy and the ability to forgive (let us recall the fact that the narrator did not disclose to her daugh-

ter the reasons for institutionalization, knowing it might affect the emotional ties and good relationship between the narrator's mother and daughter). Natalia really loves her multi-problem family, but she is absolutely aware of her relatives' negative attributes, she indicates this in the last sentences of the interview:

I think that such a summary of the whole story of mine would be that, despite the fact that uhm... some harms were done to me in my life I have not experienced such a full family and and I forever was (xx) I really love my parents. And I think that probably, just probably, we all are this way. It's there where love is not actually shown that someone becomes so committed, I don't know, well, that's my feeling that now when one can do more, when one is competent, has the power, although sometimes one shouldn't because, because if one looked at it and took a piece of paper to summarize the pluses and what my mother gave me, except that she gave birth to me there would be probably more minuses. But we still forget about it and, uhm... we think only of the positive things, and this strengthens us and gives us the power to help these parents and love them. (p. 161, line 31 to p. 162, line 5)

Conclusion

The badges of ability and *the badges of inability* seem to be the powerful tools in the processes of social categorizing and valuing. *The badges of inability* resulting from the negatively perceived and assessed attributes of individual/family functioning sustain the negative mechanisms of their possessors life courses and force individuals into biographical traps. Natalia's example depicts that the children (and also adults) from the underprivileged groups who want to change the patterns transmitted in their families

for some generations and to adapt to the models of mainstream society have to make an enormous effort to do it. The "normalization" of biography and attribution of *the badge of ability* require social re-classification. The individual doing biographical and identity work needs the support of the informal and institutional environment, empowerment to resist the power of tribal stigma, to get rid of prejudices and beliefs, and to be ready to notice and re-assess his/her talents and potential. Besides cognitive value, the notions of both badges have also some

practical implications. Although the classical work on labeling and stigma by Edwin Lemert, Howard S. Becker, or especially – Erving Goffman, are transmitted within different educational settings, and it seems that experts and adepts of helping professions and education are familiar with them, it appears, at the same time, that the tendency to arbitral ascribing of both badges is very strong. Perhaps the awareness and further development of Sennett and Cobb's concept will have some impact also on the more practical dimension of social reality.

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Reversed “Betrayal Funnel.” A Case of a Children’s Home Inmate Who Suffers from Being Disloyal to Her Alcoholic Family

Abstract This paper attempts to examine biographical consequences and costs of growing up in an alcoholic home and to scrutinize the development of biographical identity of an adult woman (Natalia) who lives with conviction that as a teenager she “dared” to bring into question the “normality” of her own family when escaping the collective alcoholic trajectory of her family through attempting suicide and entering a children’s home. Consequently, she is still guilt-ridden since she feels responsible for destroying the facade of a (false and illusionary) positive family image and for being the one who managed to get out of the collective trajectory of suffering. On the basis of the concept of “betrayal funnel,” as described by Erving Goffman, it is shown that Natalia was sort of “framed” in “reversed betrayal funnel” by a school psychologist – who probably intended to help but her activities turned out badly in the long run. Furthermore, it is argued that her subjective definition of the course of events in her life results not only in a (subliminal) nagging sense of guilt (strengthened by a negative “me” image created by her family) and her obsessive responsibility for her parents and siblings but – in spite of a fulfilling and meaningful life – it still impedes all her attempts to work the trajectory potential through. This has a strong influence on her current world of everyday existence, her personal identity, and biographical orientation.

Keywords Autobiographical Narrative Interview; Trajectory of Suffering; Alcoholic Family; Children’s Home; Guilt Feelings; Biographical Work

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When contrasting “an idealized picture of an American family” with an alcoholic family, Norman K. Denzin claims that:

it is not a haven of rest, a harbor of love, a place where holidays are celebrated with feasting and days gone by remembered with fondness. The alcoholic’s family is a nightmare of confusion, terror, pain, guilt, anger, and ugliness. There may have been good days in the past, but that past has long since been forgotten. (1993:230)

This miserable and disastrous image is also (re)created in the autobiographical rendering of Natalia –

a thirty-six, well-educated woman, an adult child of alcoholic parents, a sister of two brothers (both alcoholics and criminals), and a mentally unstable sister.¹ Although nowadays she claims to live a normal life with her husband and a teenage daughter, it seems that her past experiences still cast long shadows on her everyday life existence and biographical orientation. It is remarkable that Natalia voluntarily responded to a letter of a researcher asking former foster children to tell the story of their life.² An analysis of her autobiographical narrative interview is the main goal in this paper.

However, before scrutinizing Natalia’s biographical narration, the meaning of a “single study” (Becker 1966:xviii) should be emphasized here. Howard S. Becker in his “Introduction” to Clifford S. Shaw’s *Jack Roller* highlights the value of personal documents within the field of sociology by saying that

[i]t describes to people the way of life of segments of their society with which they would never otherwise come in contact. The life history, because it is the actor’s “own story,” is a live and vibrant message from “down there,” telling us what it means to be a kind of a person we have never met face to face. (1966:xiv)

Moreover, he claims that among other advantages “the life history more than any other technique... can give meaning to the overlooked notion of process” (Becker 1966:viii). Clifford R. Shaw adds that one’s own story reflects one’s own “personal attitudes and interpretations, for it is just these personal factors which are so important in the study and treatment of the case” (Shaw 1966:3). Thus, the find-

¹ We learn later in her narration that there was another sister who died at the age of two.

² See: Golczyńska-Grondas (2014).

ings to be presented in this paper are based on the theoretical and methodological background rooted in the tradition of Chicago School of sociology and are combined with the linguistic knowledge concerning the production of talk and narration, that is, on the research method developed by Fritz Schütze (Kallmeyer and Schütze 1977; Schütze 1981; 1983; 1984; 2004; 2008a; 2008b; Prawda 1989; Rokuszewska-Pawelek 1996; Kaźmierska 1996; Riemann 2006). He argues that:

[i]n the autobiographical narrative interview method the researcher relies on the informant’s accounts, his or her own presentation of the flux of events and their interpretation; nonetheless, very restricted ways of data collection and narrative constraints (naturally occurring obligations to condense, to go into detail, to close the narrative form), as well as carefully worked out rules and stages of data analysis enable the “quality” control. (Schütze 2008a:16, see also Kallmeyer and Schütze 1977)

An Unfolding Trajectory of Suffering – From a “Normal”³ to Alcoholic Family

Undoubtedly, the dominant process structure⁴ in Natalia’s biography is that of a “trajectory of suffering.” Primarily, the very concept draws from Anselm L. Strauss and Barney G. Glaser’s research on

³ In this paper, the definition of being “normal” draws on Goffman’s distinction between those who bear certain stigma and normals, i.e., between individuals who “possess an undesired differentness” and those who “do not depart negatively from the particular expectations.” This means: abominations of the body, blemishes of individual character (e.g., alcoholic addiction), or tribal stigma (Goffman 1990a:5).

⁴ Process structures of a life course (or structural processes) are specific modes of experiencing one’s life rendered in characteristic verbal forms. Schütze identifies four of them: 1) biographical action schemes, 2) institutional patterns of the life course (phenomena of life and family cycles, career patterns, etc.), 3) metamorphoses – unexpected and surprising development of creativity, and 4) biographical trajectories (discussed in the main text) (Schütze 1981; 1983; 1984; 2008a).

dying patients (Glaser and Strauss 1964; 1968; 1980; see also: Strauss et. al. 1985). Following this line of thought, Riemann and Schütze underline the “night side”⁵ of the social reality usually neglected within the field of sociology and carefully examine disordered and painful experiences that hinder control over one’s life. They explain further:

we have in mind social processes structured by conditional chains of events that one cannot avoid without high costs, constant breaks of expectations, and a growing and irritating sense of loss of control over one’s life circumstances. One feels that one is driven, that one can only react to “outer forces,” that one does not understand anymore. (Riemann and Schütze 1991:337)

Ursula Apitzsch and Lena Inowlocki emphasize that in the process of trajectory: “the deepest suffering within such disorder arises from the removal of the basis of co-operation, solidarity and reciprocity in interaction” (2000:60). This ordinarily implies chaos of expectation, orientation, and relationship both to one’s world and one’s identity but also feelings of despair, self-alienation, and estrangement. While exposed to long-term suffering, an afflicted individual loses the capacity to act intentionally and passively reacts to overwhelming outer conditions. Interestingly enough, in spite of the chaotic nature of the trajectory process, it has its inner dynamics and sequential organization (Riemann and Schütze 1991; Schütze 1996).

Natalia in a very clear and distinct way describes in her narration the dynamics of the (collective)⁶ trajec-

⁵ The very notion of the “night side” of human life comes from Berger and Luckmann’s book: *The Social Construction of Reality* (1991).

⁶ I use the term “collective trajectory” while talking about suffering that affects all members of the family, disorganizes their life, and leads to amoralization (i.e., lack of moral order in social interaction, cf. Garfinkel 2002).

tory process of her family powered by a developing addiction to alcohol that progressively creeps into her family life, takes control over their everyday experiences, and destroys moral foundations of their existence (cf. Garfinkel 2002:35-38). Her rendering markedly shows disorderliness of expectations, a loss of sense of reality, and a breakdown of their relationship that intensifies and spreads over various realms of life.

Already in the very beginning of the story line, that is, in a narrative preamble, Natalia summarizes her life and announces that she comes from a pathological family and therefore, ended up in a children’s home:

[g]enerally I come from a pathological family, which is why, uhm... I ended up⁷ in the children’s home. Though for five years, so it was not so terribly long. I was very lucky anyway cause, uh... I knew people who were in the children’s home almost since birth, so it wasn’t so bad... uhm... (see: “Transcript of Biographical Interview with Natalia” in this issue of QSR, p. 117, lines 23-26)

It is important to note that in the preamble the informant usually deals with an overall gestalt of his/her life (Schütze 2008a:16-17). In Natalia’s case, the overall shape of her biographical experiences is very much affected by being a child of “pathological” parents. She grew up in a typical working-class family (but was not from the very beginning affected by alcoholism) in a large Polish industrial city where the father was a breadwinner and the mother took care of the children. Potentially, her parents could

⁷ It is of key importance that Natalia is not saying that she was sent or forced to go there. Natalia’s linguistic choices seem to be very crucial for understanding the overall biographical gestalt.

live a “normal” life within the frame of the state socialism. Moreover, Natalia claims that her father was very skilled manually and was seen as a valued worker, he could always find a job. These foggy recollections of “normality” are very important frames of reference in her life history that are used as a pair-part of her constant comparison⁸ between her “dirty” and “sloppy” home and other “clean” and “well cared for” settings (see the discussion below).

Natalia’s description of the growing (collective) alcoholic trajectory potential seems to be almost a textbook example. At the beginning of her rendering, we find a portrait of a normal, ordinary, and modest family⁹ that she stored in her memory as a child:

[b]ack in the 80s it was rather uhm... the conditions were so, maybe, maybe there were not too much in the shops, but the conditions were good enough that this care was... and the money... it was enough. I remember we used to go to the cinema and for ice cream and... and generally it was, it was okay. (p. 117, lines 27-30)

Further, she focuses on the developing alcoholism of her parents and illustrates the downward spiral of the trajectory process in a very transparent way:

[h]owever, it **got worse a little**¹⁰ when my parents started to drink, started to abuse alcohol, my mom, my dad. Dad was a very skilled worker, so when they

⁸ We may find a lot of contrast sets in her extempore storytelling that help her reflect on and understand her biographical and identity development (i.e., to do – still unfinished and biographical work).

⁹ It is very intriguing to compare Natalia’s case with other cases collected by Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas in her research project. For instance, with the autobiographical rendering of Edyta who has no other frames of reference (nice past memories) that would enable her to build contrast sets and consequently, to start her biographical work.

¹⁰ All parts marked by the author in grey are then discussed and/or are especially important for the analysis.

fell into such uhm... alcohol benders, where normally nowadays a man would automatically lose a job, my father always came back. And s/ so he was welcomed with open arms because he really was a good worker and reliable uhm... well mm... Such, mm, alcohol binges, carousals, **were becoming heavier more and more often**, sometimes it used to be so that my parents kept drinking for three weeks uhm... sometimes it used to be that they were drinking for half a year let’s say, but well uhm... such uhm... the moment when uhm... this started - this alcohol appeared quite more often it used to, and **it got worse and worse** uhm... My dad... uhm... in 88 or 89 went to prison for two years. (p. 117, line 30 to p. 118, line 3)

A couple of lines later she adds:

[a]nd then it all began, it all began to fall apart, although earlier there were such situations, that if perhaps social care had been more often interested uhm, in depth and probably earlier, everybody would have ended up in children’s home and this may have been better for us. Because of all the family, to be honest, that’s the only real home I have ((cries))... (p. 118, lines 10-14)

It goes without saying that her parents go through different stages of alcohol addiction – consequently, their dependence on alcohol becomes stronger and stronger (the trajectory dynamics intensifies) and afflicts more and more spheres of their world of everyday existence (the trajectory spreads). Their daily routines seem to concentrate on uncontrollable heavy drinking leading to self-destructive practices. In the above-quoted passage there are many formulaic verbal expressions that are typical for the trajectory of suffering (Schütze 2008a:26). They render the trajectory dynamics and the growing disorder in their life (see: statements marked in grey). Natalia talks about the incapacity of her parents to handle everyday issues, to take care of their children,

and to control their life. This means not only financial deterioration, harsh life conditions but also emotional corrosion of her family, leading to a severe trajectory trap with its peak phases after her father is sentenced for 2 years in prison.¹¹ The informant says that then: *my mom completely lost it, uhm... lost probably... a sense that she is a mother, that she has a family, that she has children, and that these kids really have only her at the moment* and she became a nanny for the younger siblings while her mother went partying hard¹² (p. 120, lines 11-25). Once Natalia and her siblings were left alone for 2 or 3 days and were playing with their friends coming through the window. They set fire and the police came. Their grandma (mother’s mom who many times was doing her best to call her daughter to order) finally reported, either to the social security administration or to the police, that they had been left at home unattended. Accordingly, her siblings were placed in children’s homes for some time and Natalia was sent to her grandma (father’s mother) living in a village. This is one of these experiences that, in the long run, might weaken her ties with the family and deepen her sense of self-alienation associated with the feeling of “not fitting into” the family unit.

Although Natalia was treated unkindly by her grandma (as she puts it: *grandma needed someone to take care of the hens* [p. 121, line 12] and argues that she was “accused” of being very much like her mother) and missed her siblings very much, she *got very unused to dirt* (p. 121, line 30). [As we already know, this is a repeated motif in her rendering that occurs

¹¹ Natalia suggests that both parents were involved in the production and sale of bootleg alcohol and were caught red-handed but her father took the blame.

¹² Short literal quotations and expressions of the informant are written in italics.

in many contrast sets: dirty and run-down family home vs. clean and well-groomed grandma’s place or later children’s home. In the former place her everyday life is described as chaotic and unpredictable, while in the latter it seems to be ordered and stable.] Ironically, after her father had been released from prison and took her back home, her life was not back to normal but deteriorated significantly. It was extremely hard for her to stay again with her parents going on extended alcohol benders, to be exposed to the parent’s fights, to live in a devastated flat, to see her brothers “going off the rails” and descending into a life of crime. As a result, she came to a conclusion that she cannot live like this any longer. It might be because she has already tested the bitter-sweet fruit of a different way of life – the phenomenon that Alfred Schütz called “homecoming” (1990:106-119). This experience deepened her loneliness, self-alienation, and a sense of being relevant to nobody. Additionally, her stay in grandmother’s place equipped her with alternative, “better,” patterns of everyday routines. After a 2-year absence and separation from parents, Natalia returned home and contrary to her expectation that things would have got better, they had got even worse. She says:

I hoped that when I get back it would all be well and at last this family of mine/ but I already, uh, I could see I couldn’t live like this. I freed/ I/ for two years I was gone and I just stopped to accept things, it was very very difficult for me... (p. 121, lines 33-35)

Her intimate relationships with parents and siblings, in the meaning of being able to share the sense of common time and space, as well as to experience certain things in the same way and define them within the common horizon, had weakened

dramatically. Schütz claims that those who had left and those who had stayed do not share the same frame of relevance and cultural patterns any longer and adds that for an arriving individual: “the home to which he returns is by no means the home he left or the home which he recalled and longed for during his absence” (1990:115-116). However, during her stay with her grandma, and in spite of a negative relationship between them, Natalia could experience a “precarious new balance of everyday life” (Riemann and Schütze 1991:349-350; see also: Schütze 1997:25) and, at least for a while, was able to escape from the trajectory of suffering, get out of the family chaos, and live a relatively calm life, whereas her mother and siblings were progressively going the downward path. Consequently, their biographical experiences and orientations have become completely different. Additionally, her former experiences at home gained another meaning (Schütz 1990:115) and she learnt that other ways of everyday existence were possible. Her system of relevance and schemes of interpretation certainly changed, to some extent. Thus, Natalia felt that she was not the same person, neither for herself nor for those who stayed at home. Paradoxically, she came back into her family as a stranger and became a stranger to herself. This nagging feeling of not “belonging” to the family and painful estrangement unquestionably added to the trajectory power. Moreover, some further difficulties were piling up, being probably perceived in a more radical and dramatic way due to her adolescence. All of these painful experiences of being controlled by “outer” overwhelming forces (homecoming experience, deteriorating alcoholism of her parents, developing alcoholic and criminal careers of her siblings, as well as her puberty) cre-

ated a “cumulative mess” in her life (Strauss et. al 1985; Corbin and Strauss 1988).

What we learn about her childhood and the teenage years is that her home was dirty, mother did not take care of her children, she and her siblings were wearing filthy and ill-fitted clothes, had unwashed hair, et cetera. But then, after drawing the listener/researcher’s attention to the fact that she regrets that no social institution protected her siblings and did not put them in a children’s home [*b]ecause of all the family, to be honest, that’s the only real home I have ((cries))...* (p. 118, lines 13-14) and *only just me... as the only one of this six* (p. 118, lines 29-30), Natalia introduces the background construction (starting on page 118, line 28 and ending on page 119, line 21). Here, she deals with the death of her 2-year-old sister because of purulent meningitis.¹³ This happened when parents left their children unattended and were out for the whole day. Natalia (being 8 at that time) and her brothers were observing the little girl catching her breath and dying slowly. What might be puzzling is her statement that:

among the siblings actually just I, I do live, say, not for today, but just so normally as a normal person. I have a regular job, I have a husband, I have a home, I have bills that I have to pay, which is not cool but, but that’s the way life is. While my older brother is in prison, my younger brother is in prison, and my still younger brother is still in prison. My one sister is married but this is nothing good, and - certainly nobody would want to meet her at night because she is aggressive, causes trouble. (p. 119, lines 23-28)

¹³ The background construction was, to some extent, forced by the narrative constraint to go into details. Natalia mentions here for the first time that there were six children in her family and must explain to the listener what had happened with one of the kids.

The quoted passage in which Natalia evaluates her life and argues that it is “normal” and, furthermore, in which she juxtaposes her everyday existence with her siblings’ delinquent careers outlines an overall biographical structuring of the whole life history (and implicitly exposes certain sources of obstacles in her biographical work). The informant compares her brothers’ “bad,” morally degenerate, criminal careers to her “good,” neat home today. But, this contrast set may formally resemble (auto)biographies of many Holocaust survivors (see, e.g., Rosenthal 1998) and probably other life histories of people who were the only ones to get out of the collective trajectory trap, while others did not. Ordinarily, the awareness that *actually just I* (have survived or live a normal life) strongly influences their personal identity and shapes their biographical orientation. Thus, their life is soundly marked with (subliminal) deep guilt feelings and shattering pangs of conscience that they did not do enough to save or help the others. All of these struggles may be discerned in the above-quoted passage and in many other places of Natalia’s rendering.¹⁴ She still must grapple with the feeling of guilt for having a warm, normal home and a sense of self-blame and remorse that she failed to “rescue,” or at least protect, her siblings.

A Suicide Attempt – A Desperate Biographical Action Scheme to Escape the Trajectory Trap and to Find Out if Somebody Does Care

One of the most intriguing segments and one of the most traumatic episodes in Natalia’s extempore nar-

¹⁴ See, for instance, a passage quoted in concluding remarks (in the transcription it is p. 124, line 28 to p. 125, line 2).

ration is a recapitulation of her suicidal attempt at the age of 14.

However, before analyzing this passage, I would like to refer to Harvey Sacks’ works in which he meticulously analyzed phone conversations of suicidal persons with the Suicide Prevention Center. He opens one of his papers with a quotation in which after being asked to tell “Why you feel like committing suicide?” a suicide person sighs twice and answers: “Well, it is the same old childish reason that everybody wants to commit suicide.” But, the call-taker inquires further: “Why is that?” and the person searching for help says: “You want to find out if anybody really does care” (Sacks 1987:219). Sacks underlines that ordinary people really do not know how to “translate” their motives into the “professional” language of psychology. I believe that his considerations may throw some light upon Natalia’s predicament and her desperate attempt to confirm if she is still an important member of her family unit.

Now, let us return to the course of Natalia’s life history. When she returned home after her 2-year stay at her grandma’s place, she was a teenager (about 14 years old) and – what was already discussed above – she found herself in a position of a homecomer who could not accept the way her family lived any longer and who experienced the disruption of her family relationships since both her parents and siblings lived their own (respectively, alcoholic and alcoholic-delinquent) lives. Once more referring to Sack’s considerations, we may say that “essentially automatic ways of finding that others care” (Sacks 1987:224), or less dramatic devices for considering one’s relevance for the family (cf. Sacks 1987:221),

that is, the sense of being missed and awaited, do not work in her case. It seems that nobody even noticed that she was back home. Therefore, she went further and made a desperate attempt to make them take notice of her and decided to commit suicide. She recapitulates:

and I remember that (((with hesitation in her voice))) no, I don’t remember at this point yet, so I don’t remember for sure, but it all got one thing on top of another... and... and these quarrels... such fights, it’s probably, I mean adolescent age also played a role, I mean once, umm... enough of this all... enough of this life here in this house of drunkards (((strong emotions))). And... well I didn’t want, uhm... again these lice, this dirt and and generally such old habits of the family that, uhm... I don’t know. Once I don’t really remember the reason yet, that was the last straw and I had swallowed some pills that I found in the cabinet and decided to poison myself... which was not very reasonable but well... In any case, I decided to take my own life... I think my dad found me but I’m not sure... it could be so, I was probably only half-conscious ((grunts)). I, uh, was taken to hospital to [street name], and there I had gastric lavage but from this hospital, but I didn’t return home because I didn’t want to. (p. 121, line 35 to p. 122, line 11)

Let us have a closer look at Natalia’s account. First of all, she does not deal with the causes behind her suicidal attempt explicitly and in a detailed way. This enigmatic way of recapitulating events is characteristic of the trajectory process. We may only presume why Natalia had decided to kill herself. It was not only a multiplication and mutual intensification of traumatic and painful biographical experiences, growing self-alienation, fear, and anxiety in everyday life situations, or typical for the stage of adolescent times inner turmoil and distress (undoubtedly strengthening one’s disposition for getting hurt),

but there was probably something else – something Natalia wants to blur either because from her current perspective this seems to be trivial, footling, and meaningless (e.g., disappointed love), and now she might be ashamed of it (especially, in the eyes of the listener), or because this was something too painful to be recapitulated, something she still has not worked through (and therefore, may lack vocabulary for its description). We know for sure that in her adolescent years she felt alone and unattended. She was overwhelmed by duties and responsibilities and overburdened with the task of taking care of herself and her siblings. Consequently, Natalia could have been paralyzed by tiredness (Schütze 1996:124) and exhausted by permanent instability at home, both being the consequence of coping with problems which were beyond her horizon of understanding and which were out of her control. Besides, in the aftermath of her homecoming experience (after acquiring different patterns of dealing with everyday life), she underwent a dramatic change in her personal identity and biographical orientation that influenced her interactions with significant others and intensified her feeling of anomy and of being excluded from the daily life existence of her family. Natalia aimed to take her own life; being emotionally isolated, or even separated, from her parents and siblings and morally disoriented. At that time, the informant was not a fully rational and circumspect individual but a lost teenager standing on the edge of the precipice. She became strange to herself and could not believe any longer that things could be changed and could be normal again. While struggling with her unbearable inner turmoil, she had introduced a desperate and dangerous biographical action scheme to escape the trajectory trap and attempted to commit suicide.

Paradoxically, after trying to kill herself, Natalia noticed that – again using Sack's terminology – a unit, parent-child or brother-sister (cf. Sacks 1987), in which there are people who should provide help, support, and care does not work properly. The answer to her question "If I am still relevant to my family and if anybody really cares?" was in fact: "Nobody cares." It might also be argued that instead of giving an expected answer, Natalia's significant others (through their activities) posed another question "How dare you do it to us?" We must remember that her suicide attempt ruined an illusionary "good," or at least "adhering to the norm," picture of her family and therefore, they could not maintain some sort of "reality falsification" (i.e., "we are an ordinary family") any longer. Consequently, members of the family unit – those who were entitled to help her in an ordinary way (cf. Schütze 1997:41) – turned their backs on her and made her feel guilty. It seems that under these circumstances Natalia had no other choice than to go to a residential institution.

To sum up,, we must bear in mind that, in general terms, mutual trust in her family is breached and consequently, the constitutive order of events in her everyday life (Garfinkel 1963:209) is unsettled, for it is commonly believed and presupposed when in need, people (especially significant others: family members and friends) should support each other (cf. Schütze 1996:144). This "background expectation," ordinarily manifesting itself in the reciprocity of perspectives that constitute moral order (Garfinkel 2002:35-38), is not fulfilled and brings about chaos and uncertainty. This is usually a very painful experience that fuels and intensifies the unfolding trajectory process.

Taking the methodological and theoretical perspective of conversation analysis (especially, the concept of adjacency pairs and conditional relevance), we may treat Natalia's action as one item of the adjacency pair (an ordered set of two turns in conversation: e.g., question-answer, greeting-greeting, accusation-denial), that is, a question: "If somebody cares?" to which she does not receive a proper response (the second item of the adjacent pair should be a positive answer and an offer of help¹⁵ is absent), but instead another question is asked: "How dare you do it to us?" Consequently, the basic property of conditional relevance is violated, and this means that the social order is destroyed (see: Schegloff and Sacks 1973).

The (Unintended) Destructive Role of a Professional "Event Carrier"

After her suicidal attempt, Natalia comes to the children's home with the erroneous (probably imposed and supported by a school psychologist) belief that it would help her pass through adolescence to adulthood smoothly and reshape her complicated traumatic life situation. However, she is still too young to be able to act circumspectly and reasonably. More importantly, her trajectory process is in its peak phases: she feels totally strange to herself, knows that she cannot trust her capacities anymore, and does not understand her own strange reactions to outer events (Riemann and Schütze 1991:350). Besides, she feels abandoned by her family. Thus, she is not fully aware of her real life situation, cannot anticipate destructive "side-effects" and poten-

¹⁵ There is a background expectation (see: the main text above) that if the need arises, people should help each other (Schütze 1997:41).

tial consequences of her (own?) choice, as well as circumspectly plan her future. [Still, the question remains to what extent the school psychologist influenced her decision.] Her desperate attempts to regain control over the life course paradoxically turn into their reverse (cf. Schütze 1997:17).

A cursory look at her life history does not capture that she is still conscience-stricken for having chosen to live at a children's home of her own free will and for having left her family. While talking about the process of decision-making, she presents herself as a rational, active, able to bear responsibility adult individual, not as paralyzed by outer circumstances, affected with suffering and traumatic memories, disoriented, and lacking agency (in Margaret Archers' sense, see: Archer 2000) teenager. A detailed analysis of the quotation below reveals two significant features of her biographical identity and biographical orientation. Firstly, she defines herself as *an outcast in the family*. Secondly, she says: *I found myself in the children's home* – still, rather bringing to the forefront her active role in the process instead of saying, for instance, that "she was sent to children's home."

And... I don't know I am a bit of **an outcast in the family**, frankly speaking I don't feel very cool with that. Although I would not want to identify with my/ that is, I will never renounce my family and I will always help anyone if there is such a need. But I can't live like them. I just cannot and that is, it seems to me, that is the reason why **I found myself in the children's home**. (p. 120, lines 6-10)

It becomes apparent from the way her experiences are presented that from her subjective point of view she is greatly troubled by the knowledge of having

acted improperly, and excessively tormented by a sense of guilt. Again, she juxtaposes her "successful" life in the children's home (being looked after, being clean, having a place to do her homework) with the fate of her brothers engaging in delinquent behavior and being addicted to alcohol, as well as her sister being afflicted with mental health problems. It goes without saying that Natalia cannot come to terms with the fact that she managed to find her way out of the woods and her siblings did not. Her current life, to a large extent, is focused on compensating for being a "bad" daughter and sister, a "traitor" to the family. There are a lot of traces in her rendering that show how her self-image and self-awareness are negotiated in interactions with her significant others – Natalia takes their point of view into account and believes that she is seen and defined as *an outcast* (see the quotation above) or *the black sheep* (see the quotation below). Natalia says:

[w]ell, but I am such such uhm... perhaps the black sheep of the family of mine ((laughs)), because everything I do is the opposite way than everyone would want, would wish. (p. 128, lines 24-26)

When in the questioning part of the interview the researcher suggests that the way Natalia entered the children's home is rather unusual, the informant starts to recollect the role of a school psychologist:

N: Someone helped me... it was a school, uhm... psychologist, from this school here uhm...

A: The one you went to, mhm?

N: She, she took care of me. I don't know actually, to tell the truth, I wonder how she found herself this hospital. Perhaps I before made a contact, maybe she just saw that something was happening, honestly I don't remember. **I had then such a tough time** in

my life, **that some things I missed**. But that - I know that when I came to this hospital so from her uhm... I had such support and care. And she took care of everything, she helped me with everything and I found myself just then dir/ directly in the children’s home. (p. 137, lines 24-31)

In all probability, a committed school psychologist was putting her heart and soul into her work dealing with Natalia’s problems. In the informant’s own words, she was the one who *took care, helped, and supported* her. However, the school psychologist’s attempts to provide help seem to be of temporary character. Supposedly, she did not follow Natalia’s life course then and did not monitor the development of her career later on. This might have resulted both from a different ideology behind psychological counseling in communistic Poland (and implicit faith in state-socialistic education), as well as a status of school psychologists who – in those times – were mostly trained in pedagogy, not in psychology. Interestingly enough, in the above-quoted passage we may find the phenomenon of fading-out practices, that is, language mechanisms that allow informants not to recollect, not to remember, and/or not to focus on painful or hurting experiences (Schütze 1992:187-208; 2008a). There are typical markers (highlighted in grey) of disorder in her life and of the unfolding trajectory of suffering. It is noteworthy that we do not learn in detail about the causes of Natalia’s suicidal attempt and she does not make it clear in the interview. This might be another indicator that she is still not able to practically work upon the trajectory dynamics.

The role of the school psychologist as an “event carrier” should be explained in a more detailed way

here. In Schütze’s understanding, “events carriers” are other “dramatis personae beyond the story carrier” (Schütze 2008a:21) who have an influence on a person (informant), as well as effect a change in his or her life course and self-conception. They usually turn up in one’s life for a moment, yet, the consequences of their actions might be of great importance. Some of them may bring about a positive change in one’s world of everyday existence, some others may (at least in certain aspects) destroy one’s life attitude; still, others may do him or her a disservice. It is important, however, to distinguish between those who purposely wish to spoil one’s life (these might be called biographical destroyers) and those who intend to help but unintentionally or “in good faith” devastate one’s life (those who do an ill turn). The latter case is to be found in Natalia’s rendering. Her account gives us an illuminating insight into such a case. Although, in all probability, a school psychologist who talks to and takes care of Natalia after her failed suicide attempt acts in good faith and with every intention to provide support, her help turns out questionable.

Reversed Betrayal Funnel

An important question presents itself: Was 14-year-old Natalia really a person who could deliberately make a final decision on coming to a children’s home or was it already somehow institutionally fixed? The point here, however, is not to establish the objective truth but to examine Natalia’s understanding of her position and life situation in those days and its consequences from her own point of view. For this reason – guided by the well-known sentence of William I. Thomas: “[i]f men define situations

as real they are real in their consequences” (Thomas and Thomas 1928:572) – I wish to focus here on Natalia’s subjective point of view and its influence on her schemes of reference, everyday life attitude, biographical orientation, and personal identity. It would be claimed once more that Natalia considers her stay in the children’s home her own choice. She still feels blamed for everything that went wrong in her family. As a result, she constantly attempts to redeem her guilt and alleged “sins”: she takes care of her ill mother, tries to save her dying father by all means, or makes every effort to regularly visit her brothers in jails in remote parts of Poland. It is important to note what and how Natalia describes events following her admission to the hospital after a suicidal attempt:

I didn’t return home because I didn’t want to. Well, but this was very hard for me ((cries))..... **because my family absolutely turned away from me...** (p. 122, lines 10-12)

It becomes clear that in the eyes of her parents the decision to go to the children’s home was directed against them. Moreover, it seems that in their conviction, Natalia bears the blame for an eventual “confirmation” of the pathological and “abnormal” status of her family. The reason for this might be that they believe that their daughter in collusion with the school psychologist betrayed them and thus, questioned their arduously maintained (yet, illusive) image of a “normal” family.

In ordering and understanding the course of events and associated feelings in Natalia’s life course, the concept of “betrayal funnel,” as described by Erving Goffman in his illuminating book *Asylum* (1991),

seems to be of much help. Goffman analyzes a sequence of steps in the moral career¹⁶ of individuals that ends with their separation from the outer world in mental hospitals. Over the course of this process, so-called pre-patients pass through the “betrayal funnel” as people they usually trust (i.e., family members and friends) collude with professionals (usually psychologists and psychiatrists) and report their “abnormal” behaviors. Besides, they are never fully aware of potential consequences of their entering the mental hospital and practices which are meant to deprive them of their “old” identities (cf. Goffman 1991:128-132).

Generally speaking, whereas in the case of being drawn through the “betrayal funnel” it is a family member (pre-patient) who is deceived and seduced by his relatives (complainants) colluding with health professionals to place him or her in a mental hospital, and who is gradually stripped of his or her former identity and personal dignity (his or her “abnormal” status is fixed), in the case of being entangled in the “reversed betrayal funnel” (as illustrated in Natalia’s account), there are relatives who believe that they were betrayed by a young girl (daughter and sister) who supposedly cooperated with a school psychologist and “willingly” entered the total institution (the children’s’ home), and thus, unquestionably confirmed “pathological” character of her family. To get a more detailed insight into the process of being moved along the “reversed betrayal funnel,” the series of stages in the moral career of a mental patient constituting the “betrayal funnel”

¹⁶ Goffman defines moral career as “the regular sequence of changes that career entails in the person’s self and in his framework of imagery for judging himself and others” (1991:119).

(described below in points "a"¹⁷) and sequence of events in Natalia's life history (discussed in points "b") will be juxtaposed. Still, it should be emphasized here that in the "betrayal funnel" it is rather the person placed in the total institution who is stigmatized (Goffman 1990a), while, paradoxically, in the "reversed betrayal funnel" that are rather those who stayed outside the total institution who are seen as "abnormal."¹⁸

1. a) The betrayal funnel usually starts when the family notice worrying abnormal behavior of one of its members and observe recurrent symptoms of a mental disorder that are ignored by the afflicted person; b) Natalia grows up in an alcoholic home and during her formative years she is an eyewitness to the excessive drinking of her parents and sees how their lives go completely out of control, which is thoroughly ignored by them and "unnoticed" by social institutions. Her family's collective trajectory of suffering results in distortions of the normative life cycle. 2. a) Family members are more and more worried about the suffering individual's strange behavior and become exhausted while trying to live normally and/or get rid of an awkward family member; b) Natalia is extremely mentally tired and physically drained because of struggling with her alcoholic parents, mothering her siblings, and dealing with harsh reality while still being a child and then – a teenager. It becomes apparent that her

¹⁷ Points "a" are based on Goffman's book *Asylums. Essays on Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (1991: 128-132).

¹⁸ It must be remembered, however, that stigmatization may afflict both sides; in the case of "betrayal funnel," the family of a mental patient, and in the case of "reversed betrayal funnel" – the person who "has placed her- or himself" in the total institution may be deeply discredited by other members of a society.

everyday life is controlled by a conditional chain of outer (often terrifying) events. 3. a) Then, ordinarily, relatives or friends turn to professionals for help; b) Natalia tries to commit suicide that might be interpreted as "the search for help" (Sacks 1987, see also the discussion above). 4. a) Consequently, external agents step in, although a pre-patient is still not fully aware of real intentions of his or her relatives. All believe that they act in the suffering person's best interest; b) A third agent (a school psychologist) is involved in Natalia's case – again, a professional helper believes that she is able to save her from the influence of her alcoholic family. 5. a) Soon afterwards, relatives and health professionals "hatch a plot" against the afflicted individual to deprive him or her of decision-making rights and abilities. A so-called "alienating coalition" is established. This leads to a serious breach of trust and self-alienating processes; b) Natalia – probably being influenced much by the school psychologist – "conspires" against her parents in order to get out of the pathological milieu. In other words, Natalia is likely cast in the role of "a complainant." Therefore, she is cursed by her family and treated like a "betrayal." 6. a) The next step is the decision to place the afflicted person in the mental hospital for treatment – usually, without consent of the suffering individual; b) Natalia goes to the children's home – in all probability, against her parents' will. And finally, 7. a) one's "abnormality" and mental illness is confirmed. This, in turn, involves stigmatization and definition of an individual as "not quite human" (Goffman 1990a:6); b) An ultimate confirmation of "abnormality," that is, an uncontrollable addiction to alcohol and pathological behavior of her parents.

It might be assumed that Natalia came to the children's home "under misapprehension purposely induced by others" (Goffman 1991:125). Furthermore, it seems that she was not provided with a realistic picture of what her real situation was and how it might influence her future life (cf. Goffman 1991:130). There is little doubt that along with entering the children's home, Natalia loses the trust of her family. It is likely that taking the perspective of her relatives (i.e., "me" images in the sense of George H. Mead [1934]), she attributes the fault of the erosion of the family to herself and believes to be disloyal to her parents. Consequently, in Natalia's subjective understanding, she is (this issue was already discussed above) *an outcast in the family* and *the black sheep of the family*. It seems that this "looking-glass" effect (Colley 1922:184) – that is, the imagination of what others believe we are and think of us – continually shapes her life and constitutes her personal identity. Yet, it is intriguing that Natalia who so desperately wanted to break free from the family, even now, cares so much about their opinion and her image in their eyes. We must remember, however, that they still play the roles of "significant others" in her biography and therefore, as Berger and Luckmann put it: "occupy a central position in the economy of reality-maintenance and are particularly important for the ongoing confirmation of that crucial element of reality we call identity" (1991:170). Besides, an intriguing hypothesis put forward in this volume by Sylwia Urbańska saying that apostasy from one's family is not really possible seems to be right. Paradoxically, in the case of Natalia, the family is not a shelter but a sort of a biographical trap. Therefore, she is not able to work her trajectory through and see herself as "a positively developing, unfolding,

unique identity" (Schütze 2008a:6). To put it short, despite having a good life nowadays (beloved husband and daughter, bachelor degree, stable job, plans to build a house), she is not capable of shaping her life to a satisfying degree, yet.

Concluding Remarks: An Overall Biographical Evaluation and Unending Biographical Work

There are a lot of contrast sets in Natalia's rendering (mentioned a couple of times above) in which she constantly examines the differences between the course of her life and her siblings' unfolding trajectory, as well as her current "decent" life situation and her sibling's delinquent careers and a fateful logic of events in their lives. She believes it is because of her stay in the children's home that she managed to get back on the right track and constantly highlights its positive role in her life course. While talking about visiting her brothers in the prisons, she says: *they made a choice. Because I could also have chosen in fact...*¹⁹ (p. 125, line 11). One of the most impressive comparative evaluations may be found in a pre-coda part²⁰ (starting on page 123, line 25):

I think I am a good mother... I understand my daughter, I can get along with her - communicate with her, even though she may be now at such an age, so rebellious because she is now 13 years old. I love her very much and she loves us too, me and my husband.

¹⁹ This is probably a desperate endeavor to cope with one's enormous guilt-feelings by blaming the others and accusing them of being not circumspect enough.

²⁰ It is consistent with the grammar of the storytelling. Schütze says that in the (usually) extensive pre-coda part "we quite often find argumentative commentaries of balancing the pros and cons of one's life and biographical work in general, and therefore, they deal with the global story line and the overall biographical shape of the life history of the narrator" (2008a:20).

She is taught that there is a lot of love at our home, that she does not have to hide away any secrets, she is open, she tells us about everything and... I didn’t have that, didn’t have such understanding, I had no such love. This children’s home gave me the direction, the fact that I completed a lot of different schools, and that in the end I am a fairly educated person, maybe not so super-extra, but I did the ba/ Bachelor degree. I am somehow oriented at the future – we’re trying to build a house, we will see how it goes (((jokingly))) because bank loans are very expensive I don’t know, well, I think very differently from my parents now and I regret that I couldn’t do anything for my family, my brothers and sisters so that they would be in the sa/ the same situation as me. (p. 123, lines 25-35)

In this passage Natalia not only describes a close and loving relationship between her and her daughter (she had never had one with her mother) but also repeats how much she owes to the children’s home (new schemes of interpretation, system of relevance, patterns of behavior, biographical orientation, a general attitude and perspective of her life, good education, etc.). It is, however, intriguing that she always juxtaposes “positive” sides (being taken care of, living in a clean place, being helped with homework) and consequences of being a foster child with a “negative” picture of her parents’ life that, in her view, determined her siblings’ fate (no love, no understanding, no care, only punishment). This strong contrast, together with a marker of compunction (*I regret that I couldn’t do anything for my family*), might serve as an argumentative device to prove that allegedly her choice to enter the children’s home was reasonable and a right one (now, she lives a “normal” life, while all of her siblings fell by the wayside and began delinquent careers). This might also suggest that she still struggles with “not-yet-fully-worked-through” (Bartelt 2012:115) bi-

ographical trajectory of suffering, powered by her (subliminal) guilt-feelings that she was the one who was able to escape the predicament. These feelings are of key relevance for the understanding of the development of her personal identity and biographical orientation.

To illustrate her “bad-family” thesis (see the notion of *Belegerzählung* [Schütze 1983]) Natalia talks about her two-year younger brother (currently sentenced for felonies) who was wetting the bed because of, as she believes, anxiety as a child and *suffered such terrible harm* ((cries)) (p. 124, lines 19-20). Natalia wishes to prove that her brother was *a sensitive kid* (p. 124, line 15) but was raised by alcoholic parents and in a bad neighborhood, and tells the story how they, as kids, were taking care of stray dogs – feeding them, giving them water, and looking for shelter (in fact, their fate appears to be similar). But then she adds:

[a]nd really my younger brother, who wanted to help animals so much when he was little, now he doesn’t think rationally, doesn’t think normally, and each such stay in penitentiary ((sniffs)) assures him that there is no other life than life in such a criminal world. (p. 124, lines 29-32)

The informant illustrates here a dramatic downward spiral in the life course of her brother who being “pushed by outer forces” (alcoholic behavior of his parents and its consequences), lost his chance to lead a normal life and became a dangerous, unpredictable criminal. This is a sharp contrast to her own biographical unfolding.

Natalia ends the first narrative part of her interview with the following evaluation of her life history:

N: I really just, well, I am just a bit... some people say that I am such a mother hen because... because I’m really able to withstand a lot. **Only it hurts me the most that they were not given the chance** these, these sib/ these siblings of mine. It’s not cool. And - I still keep in touch with all them, although I don’t - I don’t go to these prisons because, well, I have my life, I have a grandma who is already/ who according to/ to whom I’m responsible to help, cause when I needed this help she helped me too. And I try as I can, so I don’t go somehow, so terribly often over to these prisons simply because I’d have to spend every free weekend to go somewhere all over Poland and visit brothers who really, well, they made a choice. Because I could also have chosen in fact... I rebelled, it cost me a lot, because I don’t know, perhaps only God knows how many nights I cried the whole night through... cause **I felt rejected** and when there is/ I don’t know, whatever this grandma would be, whatever this father would be, one loves them and wants such uh... such acceptance from them so that... whatever, they would stick to us... I don’t know what else I am to say... (p. 125, lines 4-15)

In this coda part, again, we may find empirical proof that Natalia still experiences a devastating feeling of “being driven” by fate, still suffers a lot, and has some difficulties in doing biographical work, for instance, in “re-evaluating, re-seeing, and re-judging” (cf. Strauss 1969:100) “one’s past and future in order to yield a sense of seamless continuity of identity” (Strauss 1993:99), or to put it in slightly different words: “to achieve a sense of biographical continuity and wholeness about one’s identity” (Corbin and Strauss 1990:366-367). Though Natalia puts a lot of effort into doing biographical work and into coming to terms with her past traumatic experiences, yet, she cannot fully understand the mechanisms of her trajectory dynamics. She is not aware, or does not want to admit to herself, that

the trajectory exerts its destructive power over these areas of everyday existence that seem to be ordered and stable. Furthermore, she cannot accept the fact that she was the only child who was able to get out of the alcoholic family trap (*it hurts me the most that they were not given the chance*) and therefore, had an opportunity to learn (in the residential institution) how a “normal life” looks. But, she cannot agree openly that she is still assailed by a feeling of guilt and therefore, she is incapable of doing successful biographical work that not only involves cognitive processes but also key changes in one’s attitude towards everyday life and certain actions aimed at the transformation of one’s life situation (Strauss et. al. 1985; Kaźmierska 2012). Moreover, her deep and careful reflection on her life course is hindered by the feeling of being disowned and rejected by her family just after her “betrayal” (a suicide attempt and entering the children’s home), by not being able to understand the mechanism of this process, and by certain misconceptions of her identity (cf. Schütze 2008a:6).²¹

To conclude, in spite of a lot of biographical work already done by Natalia, she is not capable of seeing herself as a complete individual and her self-image is still fragile. It is mainly because, subliminally, her painful experiences of being, on the one the hand, rejected and treated as a “traitor,” and, on the other, being the only child “drawn out of the alcoholic abyss,” still may exert its trajectory potential and may entail the risk of unexpected biographical disorganization.

²¹ One additional thing that may restrict her biographical work is her husband’s incomprehension of her will to support her parents and siblings all the time (probably, in his understanding, at the expense of their own family).

This may also explain why Natalia volunteered for the interview – in her case, this might have been additional desperate “search for help.” In the face of the listener she could, at least halfway, understand both the development and sources of her suffering, as well as evaluate and balance her life, to some extent. We may only hope that the very process of the storytelling, at least partially, performed its therapeutic function (see: Rosenthal 2003). It is, however, remarkable that (probably falling back on her hus-

band) Natalia is able to develop new biographical action schemes and develop some sort of balance in her life circumstances. Yet, I believe that turning to a biographical counselor or a professional psychologist might be of great help for her since there are several issues that are not worked through in her biography and may come to the forefront whenever additional biographical difficulties appear. This means that there is still some potential for setting the “arrested” trajectory dynamics in motion.

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Is Apostasy from a Family Possible? The Apostasy from an Alcoholic-Abusive Family as a Variant of (Un)Becoming a Daughter – the Case of Natalia¹

Abstract An analysis of the biography of Natalia, a former resident of a Polish children's home who, at the age of thirteen, voluntarily left her biological, dysfunctional family, aims to address a question which is fundamental, but rarely asked by the sociologists of family. Is it possible to completely quit a relation with one's family of origin? What identity and biographical consequences does such a decision imply? This article consists of two parts. In the first, theoretical one, I argue that the process of quitting one's family is a liminal, unstructured status passage, especially, for two categories of actors – adolescents and mothers who decide to pass taking care of children to fathers. I take into account the cultural and institutional basis of the liminal character of their experience. I also explain why, in order to comprehend those difficult instances, I propose using the metaphor of apostasy. The second, empirical part of the article, is devoted to studying the biographical and identity consequences and limitations of the process of apostasy. I analyze them on the basis of Natalia's autobiography, which provided inspiration for those reflections.

Keywords Apostasy; Agency of the Child; Family Studies; Status Passage; Liminality; Apostasy Narrative; Biographical Methods; Authoritarian Family; Working Class; Poland

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tional mothering in narrative biographical accounts of Polish women care workers in Brussels (1989-2009). Her doctoral project "Mothering in the process of social change in the contexts of global migrations of women. The Polish case" has also received national recognition: PM Awards for the best doctoral thesis (2012); and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Institute of Labor and Social Studies Award for the best doctoral thesis in the field of work and political sciences (2011).

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The notion of apostasy transplanted into the sociology of the family has the potential to provide valuable insight into the still unrecognized transgressional, or liminal, experiences of family life, such as quitting family relations. This article discusses the biographical consequences of leaving one's family, and, paradoxically, the impossibility of leaving it once and for all, on the basis of Natalia's² autobiography. Natalia is a former resident of a children's home who, between the ages of thirteen and fourteen, made a dramatic decision to leave her alcoholic and abusive family – a family that was neglectful and rejecting, as well as representing an authoritative model of children's upbringing.

Why does the metaphor of apostasy seem indispensable to comprehend the biographical consequences and the specificity of the exit processes? The answer lies in the observations of contemporary social phenomena in Poland which allow showing certain similarities between the status of a family member and a member of the Catholic Church. I shall discuss this analogy in greater detail later in this article.

The first Polish baby conceived in 1987 in a test-tube fertilization, Agnieszka Ziółkowska, announced in 2013, in an open letter in the media, her intent to apostatize from the Catholic Church (Pawłowska 2013). For the first time, in one of the most heated ideological debates of the last decade in Poland – the fight between the proponents of *in vitro* insemination and its Catholic opponents – a person born thanks to *in vitro* fertilization publicly revealed her stance. To Agnieszka, the decision to leave the

¹ Translation by Monika Żychlińska.

² I use the pseudonym given to the protagonist by the interviewer, Dr. Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas.

Church – announced in front of millions of Poles – and its formal finalization a couple of months later, was a form of symbolic protest against the Catholic priests' discourse saturated with hate speech against the *in vitro* babies and their families (Koziołek 2013; Ziółkowska 2013).

Agnieszka was not alone in her act of moral resistance coming from inside of the Catholic Church. The Church, clearly in a crisis, which has manifested itself in the wave of believers quitting the community, has been criticized for its negative attitude towards reforms and a patriarchal *modus operandi*. The apostates themselves have pointed to an interesting problem – the impossibility of leaving the Catholic Church community in both formal and symbolic dimensions.

What is interesting, and what I intend to demonstrate in this article, is that a similar impossibility can be noticed in the situation of quitting one's family community. That is why the process of status passages (*rites de status passage*, Glaser and Strauss 1971) from religious and family communities are best described by the metaphor of apostasy.

I decided to analyze the process of quitting one's family relations as seen through the lenses of apostasy for a number of reasons. From a broad perspective, this allows noticing the processual aspects of the transformation of social bonds. For a couple of decades in Europe we have observed a transformation, legally and ideologically supported, from various types of family relations with authoritarian or patriarchal characteristics towards more egalitarian

ones, based on partnership communication, mutual understanding, and respect for each other's needs; aspiring to become what Anthony Giddens would call a "pure relationship" (2007). Although it might seem that in the twentieth century everything had already been said about the models of a dysfunctional family – and thus, that the subject had been exhausted – it is worth noting that the existing studies are primarily focused on producing a description of relations in such families or on demonstrating its origins against the historical backdrop of social and ideological transformations, or its economic conditions. However, do we know what the process of quitting a dysfunctional, in different ways, family looks like from a biographical perspective? In other words, how do individuals who contest such a relationship – for example, adolescents – manage this situation? Are their efforts not bound to fail and, in consequence, lead to apostasy? Second, this problematization brings us to the fundamental question – is it possible for some categories of actors, joined by blood relationships, to quit their families? What identity consequences does an apostate have to face? I will try to answer these questions in the theoretical and empirical parts of this article based on an analysis of Natalia's biographical account.

Leaving a Family and Apostatizing from the Catholic Church – Is There Anything in Common?

First, let me consider the formal analogies between apostasy from the Catholic Church and apostasy from a family. The term apostasy, which comes from the Greek ἀποστασία (*apostasia*), means defection

and revolt.³ Contemporarily, it is used in two contexts. In the first, it designates the breaking of the formal bond – the disaffiliation – with the Church, the abandonment or renunciation of religion by the apostate. In the second, it serves as a metaphor used to describe the exit process from civic organizations and groups. Here, the meanings attributed to apostasy, seen as a specific role and career, are, according to philosopher Max Scheler, connected with a sense of resentment towards the exited group (Coser 1954). In this understanding, leaving usually takes the form of a contested and/or oppositional exit, and usually implies engaging in a public critique of these organizations. This often involves joining counter-organizations and opposing social movements (Bromley 1998:36). Apostasy is positioned on a continuum – it is the strongest form of a contested exit. Other forms are less engaged in critique, but are nevertheless entangled in negotiating the conditions of leaving with the members of the exited groups (e.g., defector – whistleblower – apostate [Broomley 1998:20]; defector – ordinary leave – taker – apostate [Introvigine 1999]).

The striking similarities between the exit process and apostasy from the Catholic Church make it worthwhile to consider the possibility of an act of becoming an apostate from one's family. Though it might seem that apostasy means the ultimate abandonment of the Catholic Church, it turns out that, according to the *Jus canonicum*, this is not possible. Apostasy does not imply the formal leaving of the Church because the doctrine holds an apostate remains a Catholic until the end of his or her life, ac-

³ See: "Apostasy" in *Wikipedia*. Retrieved September 10, 2013 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostasy>).

cording to the dictum *semel catholicus, semper catholicus* ("once a Catholic, always a Catholic"). Therefore, apostasy does not render one a non-Catholic, though, one is punished by the forfeiture of the right to participate in the life of the religious community and partake of sacraments – such as marriage or funeral – and any other Catholic activities, functions, or privileges. The canonical law defines apostasy as voluntary excommunication. Although church authorities, such as bishops, can, on request, restore one to the previous state, the full return to the community of the Catholic Church is difficult and conditional. It involves a complex ritual accompanied by punishments and penance, preceded by an act of public confession and repentance. Only this way can an apostate erase what has always accompanied excommunication – condemnation and social ostracism. Peculiarly, despite the act of leaving and excommunication, the apostate's data (against his or her will) still appears in the register of Catholics, though annotated with a comment about apostasy.⁴ Here, we can see the nature of the problem – the essentialist understanding of the apostate's status, and consequently, the impossibility of their complete leaving.

An attempt to quit one's family is strikingly similar to committing apostasy from the Catholic Church. As I shall demonstrate, it is similarly doomed to failure. The formal equivalent of apostasy from one's family would be a conscious renunciation of one's parental rights and custody – including contacts with the child in the future – something that is more often done by fathers as compared to

⁴ See: "Apostazja" *Wikipedia*. Retrieved September 10, 2013 (<http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostazja>).

mothers or other family members. However, it is worth pointing to less common situations which are nevertheless more and more often observed by the employees of Polish children's homes when – as in Natalia's case – adolescents actively seek and support the efforts of the courts to remove the parental rights from their parents (Gmiterek-Zabłocka 2013). Similarly to apostasy from Catholicism, the formal act of breaking a family relationship in Poland is associated with the reduction of numerous legal rights and privileges. However, an interesting similarity between these two acts can best be noticed in two other problems. First, in the impossibility of fully erasing one's formal status of belonging to a family, and therefore, exiting the community completely, and secondly, in the social consequences of leaving one's family, which are, in fact, similar to the social consequences of excommunication.

Similarly to institutional baptism, which, according to Catholic doctrine, makes one a member of the "Church community," being someone's genetic or biological child or parent is subject to an irrevocable status of belonging guaranteed by genes and/or blood. Furthermore, a number of initiatives in different European countries show an ever-increasing tendency to prohibit total erasure of one's parents' biological or genetic identities from the archives. A growing number of judicial decisions oblige various institutions and hospitals to allow children access to the personal information of their parents. In Germany and Sweden, for example, after famous court trials between directors of sperm banks and *in vitro* children, the latter were granted the right to know the identity of their fathers, anonymous sperm donors (Wielński 2013). In Poland, in

turn, the liquidation of the so-called “Windows of Life” is now being considered. These are points in hospitals and convents where one can anonymously leave a baby, at any time day or night, by putting it into a cradle or a special window in the wall. The proponents of the liquidation of the “Windows of Life,” similar to adult test-tube babies suing clinics, refer to the right to be informed about the identity of the parents as an indelible human right (acknowledged by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child), as well as information about such practical issues as health and genetic concerns, or the knowledge about possible siblings that could diminish the fear of accidentally entering an incestuous relationship.

Such mass institutional closings-off of the possibility of erasing one’s status took place when advanced reproductive technologies revolutionized kinship by separating legal, social, genetic, and biological aspects of parenting. Chaos in the ordering of classification systems is best illustrated by “the fragmentation of motherhood that becomes separated from the fact of being pregnant. One hitherto unquestionable category – that of the mother – is now replaced by a genetic mother, a gestational mother, and a social mother” (Radkowska-Walkowicz 2012:331). In practice, this means that for a baby conceived with the help of reproductive technologies, it is possible for one set of parents to be sperm and egg donors, for a different set of parents to initiate this process, and for the baby to be carried and borne by a gestational mother “renting out” her belly (Radkowska-Walkowicz 2012:332). And while highly naturalized cultural relations of kinship are – in the face of modern medical technologies – losing their ob-

viousness and becoming fuzzy, various types of initiatives in the area of legal regulations seek to organize them and to make it impossible to quit the status of a family relationship. In Poland, for example, the question of who a child’s mother is has quite recently been settled by the November 6, 2008 regulation which states that “the child’s mother is the woman who gave birth to them” (art. 61⁹ k.r.o. [*The Family and Guardianship Code*]).⁵

The most interesting analogy between apostasy from a family and apostasy from the Catholic Church, however, concerns the experiential consequences of the apostate’s decision for their identity and social relationships because bonds of kinship come with a number of cultural expectations, obligations, symbolic identifications, idealizations, imagery, myths, and taboos (Yanagisako and Collier 2007). Thus, even contemporarily, in the era of the growing popularity of postmodern relationships based on the reflective model of “pure relation,” as suggested by Giddens (2007), and the increasingly liberal and more inclusive categories of defining family, departing from any formal indicators (Mizielińska 2012:237), a person who leaves a family can experience equally strong condemnation and ostracism from their community as, in former times, a believer excommunicated from the Catholic Church would experience. The breaking of cooperation and the act of a deliberate decision to quit family relations are still treated as a violation of a sa-

⁵ Radkowska-Walkowicz has noted that “[i]n support of the project it has been argued that the regulation is a response to the possibilities of modern medicine which allow for fertilization and conception of a child without sexual intercourse of a human couple, in particular, fertilization that takes place outside of a woman’s organism and results in a pregnancy of a woman different than the donor of the gametes used in the medical fertilization process” (2012:331).

crum, and are socially stigmatized. However, little is known about such experiences as there is almost no research into them. It is, therefore, interesting to go further, beyond the analysis of the moment of apostasy. Since this moment of rapture is just the beginning of a long process of rebuilding one’s identity and re-defining existing relationships, it is necessary to ask: How is the apostate’s career taking shape? As it is impossible to leave the family completely, is it at least possible to do so in the dimension of interaction or identity? What is the nature of identity work when it is so hard to break family relations? In other words, whether, and how, is it possible to leave one’s family?

So Mothers and Children Leave!? **Familiarization of the Liminal Sphere**

First, let us consider what persons or categories of actors can leave a family, if social norms and expectations are taken into account. For whom is it easier, and for whom is it more difficult? And why?

Out of all categories of actors that compose a family in Poland, it is the father’s parting with the children, for example, after the parents’ divorce that is recognized as the norm. The degree to which this is an anticipated schema of events is supported by its social prevalence, and by the well-developed rules and phases (*structured status passage*, Glaser and Strauss 1971), confirmed by quantitative data. In Poland, in as many as 95%-98% of divorce cases, courts grant custody to mothers. According to the 2011 *Census* (Narodowy Spis Powszechny 2011), one in five families is headed by a single mother, in comparison with the 2% of families that are headed by single fathers.

Not surprisingly, almost every Pole knows at least a few fathers who have left their families,⁶ whereas instances of a voluntary and deliberate parting of mothers with their children and partner, or children with their parents, seem to be beyond the scope of social imagination. I would argue that such instances are located in the sphere of the strangeness, scarcely known, and that they thus represent an unstructured status passage. We do not know how many people realize such scripts in Poland,⁷ and little is known about the contexts in which they are set. There is no systematic research nor vocabulary to describe such experiences. Furthermore, in the symbolic universe, it is difficult to find symbols, which could help apostates to live and work through their experiences. Those experiences belong to the realm of taboo, which, due to its liminal character, generates strong social emotions and moral anxiety.

Children as Victims; Deviant vs. Hero Mothers: Missing Agency in Interpretative Repertoires

The first reaction to the subject of leaving in various debates is usually a mix of denial and puzzlement: “So children or mothers quit!?” A mother who left her family is, in the first place, suspected to be a deviant – for instance, a victim of an addiction or a mental illness. She is perceived in terms of a temporal emotional or sexual aberration, of incapacitation by a man in the patriarchal setting, or as

⁶ Obviously, the contexts in which fathers leave are complex, and judicial decisions in many cases do not reflect the fathers’ will.

⁷ Though it is possible to access the details of divorce cases and judicial decisions depriving parents of their parental rights, as well as census data, we have to remember that this type of information is biased by the context in which it was generated, which makes the question of agency difficult to interpret. The same rule applies to statistics from children’s homes.

being seduced by money or career rather than being seen as a “normal” person who deliberately and voluntarily decides to part with her children and live in a different household. This phenomenon was illustrated in the interactionist studies of women’s biographies, although scarce ethnographic research and biographical interviews were conducted in the English and American organizations of support for noncustodial mothers who were forced to leave, or who decided to leave, their families for various reasons (Gustafson 2005; Pagano 2006). Explanations of motivations to leave a family are therefore closed within the framework of a one-dimensional script of an ill woman and thus, the potential agency of this undoubtedly complex process is, by definition, completely obliterated.

This observation is also valid for another script in which acts of women leaving the family are presented – that of the woman as a heroic victim. It is best represented in the Polish confessional press, which is full of stories of women from lower social classes who, for example, gave their children up for adoption. Those accounts are always justified within the scope of the hegemonic, heavily exploited script of sacrifice (Stańczak-Wislicz 2012). Protagonists of these sad stories are always presented as subject to an extreme external coercion which forces them to give their children to other families, which is interpreted as an act of the highest concern for the children’s fate. According to the script, “there are no boundaries to the mother’s sacrifice and devotion” (Stańczak-Wislicz 2012:388).

Similarly, one-dimensional interpretative repertoires are used to explain acts of leaving by ado-

lescents. The circumstances surrounding such instances are more often interpreted as unfair random events that pull the children out of their parents’ hands by force, violence, or court judgment than seen as elements of the child’s agency. According to popular perceptions, children from abusive families boundlessly love their maladjusted parents, and this is why they never quit or put any conditions on them. Such interpretative schemas find their expression in the Polish language – descriptions of situations involving children are usually formulated in the passive voice, for example, *was taken away from his/her parents* or *was placed in an orphanage*. In any case, there is no acknowledgment of the child’s potential agency, which is taken to be completely insignificant in this process.

Social Work Ideologies in the Functionalist Trap

The denial of the causative element in such instances, which permeates popular interpretations, should not come as a surprise since identical black-and-white clichés can be found in Polish mainstream social research, which locates itself far from the critical paradigm. The contexts in which mothers’ and children’s leavings are situated are not treated as an alternative and legitimate variant in all their complexity but are placed within the sphere of dysfunctional and/or deviant behavior. In Poland, the more or less explicitly articulated paradigm of functionalism still prevails in the mainstream currents of sociology, applied pedagogy, and developmental psychology, which set the ideological foundations for the models of social work and pedagogical intervention. This normative model of a family is based on the tenets of the complementarily and non-

-interchangeability of the sexual, reproductive, educational, and economic roles of the mother and the father.⁸ In this model, the mother is granted universal competence to perform emotional care because of her allegedly natural and biologically rooted caring capabilities. Thus, the mother is always perceived in the context of the child’s needs (Budrowska 2000) as a heroic and devoted caretaker who, if necessary, is ready to sacrifice other areas of her life (Sikorska 2009; Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2012), or “a brave victim” who combines professional work with domestic care (Giza and Marody 2000). In its modern version, derived from therapeutic culture, a mother is also a manager who – though she can and should work – has to, simultaneously, manage investments in the “Child Project” (Urbańska 2009).

Beliefs about the natural care competence of women who permeate the institutional *modus operandi* are thus combined with a specifically understood framework of caretaking. It is identified with the private sphere and domesticity – a haven from

⁸ The opening of borders after 1989 only strengthened the position of functionalism, already prominent in social work practice during communism. It was thriving despite the declarations permeating communist ideologies that argued for gender egalitarianism in the spheres of work and family. Furthermore, after the transition, the intensification of postmodern transformations in the sphere of family life engendered strong resistance from the Catholic Church and other conservative political organizations, resulting in a multidimensional backlash. Women started to lose their hard-won rights, such as reproductive and abortion rights (Titkow 2001; Graff 2008). Functionalism guaranteed the protection of a conservative model of the family. It is worth noting that the functionalist family models are, in essence, convergent with Catholic patriarchal ideals of a family (Szlendak 2010). On the other hand, the influx of ideas developed in Western countries and the imported patterns of therapeutic culture (the development of self-help markets) strengthened, in practice, the functionalist vision of family roles (Urbańska 2009). Content analysis of various therapeutic programs reveals scripts identical with the functionalist ones, e.g., the belief that the first three years of a child’s life are crucial for the development of their personality and thus, during this time, they should have one permanent caretaker who is, not coincidentally, identified as the mother.

the heartless world (Lasch 1979) – and contrasted with the impersonal relationships that govern the public sphere and the capitalist labor market. Such an understanding of caretaking, as well as of the natural bond between the mother and the child, is associated with unconditional devotion, love, morality, and therefore, also, with indissolubility, which are placed in opposition to the temporality and conditionality of a business contract and the competitive behavior characteristic of business relationships (Collier, Rosaldo, Yanagisako 2007:70). This way, the mother-child dyad, ideologized in institutional practice and social consciousness, is difficult to imagine in alternative scenarios, such as the voluntary departure of the mother after divorce. It is even difficult to “loosen” it a bit in the sphere of the expectations of the norms of caretaking. In Poland, “where the cult of motherhood and the symbolic role of the mother are strong” (Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2012:10), researchers argue that “sanctions connected to improper performance or to a failure to perform a mother’s duties are incomparably greater than those of the father” (Hryciuk and Korolczuk 2012:7). In consequence, even if in the public discourse and in care handbooks new models of motherhood and fatherhood appear that would allow mothers to be “good enough mothers,” (cf. Sikorska 2009) in social work (intervention), the mother-child dyad is not subject to any significant subversion. Other models, such as a lesbian mother, a transnational mother, or a noncustodial mother, are forced to operate in the liminal sphere. A mother’s apostasy from family is therefore impossible without enormous social and legal, as well as biographical and identity, repercussions which bring to mind those related to excommunication.

The same applies to children. Supervisory institutions define them in terms of deficit and medicalization, due to developmental psychology, which sees children “as potential subjects who can only be understood along the child-to-adult continuum” (Buckingham 2000 as cited in Bass 2007:141); “as human becomings rather than human beings (Qvortrup 1994 as cited in Bass 2007:141). Children are thus seen, on the one hand, as objects of the actions and investments of others, as future adults, future members of the workforce, and future citizens who must be instructed accordingly. On the other hand, a child, through presenting their identity in terms of physical, psychological, or mental weakness, appears to be a vulnerable victim, susceptible to harm from adults (Wihstutz 2012:95-99). This becomes clear when we take a closer look at the most important publications about childhood, which have been published in Poland since the 90s. As pedagogue Wioletta Danilewicz observed, during this time the topic of childhood – captivated, endangered, harmed, isolated, and disturbed (2006:54) – gains a lot of popularity. Within these perspectives, it is hard to see the child as an active agent. It is even more difficult to see the child as a contesting apostate. Only critical sociology and anthropology of the family put forward alternative perspectives which frame children as subjects and experts in the area of their own thoughts and feelings, desires and needs; as possessing moral competences.⁹

⁹ The need for such approaches is related to the growing tendency to emphasize the agentive role children have, e.g., in intersectionist research (e.g., research on children as caretakers of adults) but also the growing emphasis on the need for adolescents’ representation and participation in the public sphere (Wihstutz 2012).

A Dramaturgy of Leaving: Lack of Control over the Conditions of Leaving

Thus, social expectations and ideologies that set the foundations of institutional practice demonstrate the lack of precedent for mothers’ and children’s leaving (in comparison to the possibilities that fathers have). Situating these practices outside the normative boundaries of culture results in apostasy taking place in secret, far from any witnesses, often realized through an escape and renouncement rather than negotiating the conditions and modes of leaving, due to the apostate’s perception of themselves as a taboo-violating traitors. Such intuitions are validated by a few existing scholarly studies and documents that reconstruct the dramaturgy of leaving as fraught with the acts of breaking, disappearing, feelings of guilt, and anticipation of family hostility.¹⁰

Leaving often involves moving to another city or country and therefore, a total change of the social milieu. One sometimes even conceals his or her previous identity for fear of ostracism (Gustafson 2005; Urbańska in press). It is interesting, however, that such acts of leaving are kept secret not only by the *passagee* but also the abandoned family members, as if breaking a taboo would equally stigmatize them (Gustafson 2005; Urbańska in press; see also: Itaka – Center for Missing People¹¹). The act of breaking family relations can also take the form of an escape – committing suicide and/or murdering family members, which can be understood as a spe-

¹⁰ A famous example of a mother’s leaving – a full-time housewife who flees her husband and son – is presented in the movie *The Hours*, on the basis of Michael Cunningham’s prose.

¹¹ See: <http://zaginieni.pl/>.

cific act of apostasy committed in a situation where there is a lack of socially accepted exit options. An example of such an apostasy from the institution of motherhood can be found in Adrienne Rich’s book *Of Woman Born. Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1986). It is the story of an American housewife – Joanne Michulski, a mother of eight – who stabbed two of her youngest children on the lawn in front of the house. In popular culture, there are more stories of child and/or husband murderesses who are presented according to the categories of emotional aberration than of women who voluntarily and deliberately left their families.

However, not much is known about the biographical and social dimensions of the leaving process.

Natalia’s Case – Apostasy from an Alcoholic-Abusive Family as a Variant of the Process of (Un)Becoming a Daughter

Natalia’s autobiography is an example of the apostasy of an adolescent girl from a working-class family where the style of caretaking and raising children, according to the typology put forward by Baumrind (Alwin 2007:50 as cited in Szlandak 2010:234), is a combination of authoritarianism (corporal punishments, insensitivity to children’s needs) and rejection connected with neglect (children are left on their own, lack of parental support and control).

Natalia was born in 1975 to a peasant-worker couple who lived in a flat in the countryside. Her father came from the country, but he didn’t own land. Her mother was the daughter of a poor woman worker from Lodz, twice widowed by her alcohol-

ic husbands. Soon after Natalia’s birth, her parents moved to Lodz – the mother’s native town. The mother broke into an abandoned tenement located in the town’s working-class district. The couple and their six children reside permanently (to this day) in a thirty-square-meter room given to them and another tenant as public housing. After their neighbor’s death, Natalia’s parents squatted in his room. We might say that the story of Natalia’s family is representative of some working-class families from Lodz as an example of social advancement – moving from rural to urban areas.

Natalia told the story of her apostasy and the ways of working it into her biography to the researcher in 2011. She volunteered to do the interview. She answered an advertisement sent by Dr. Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas to former residents of children’s homes from Lodz. Natalia is thirty-six years old. She has a high school education, a job, a husband, and a daughter. She lives a “normal” life in a flat that was provided by the town council after she left the orphanage. Her flat is located in the same building in which her parents live. As she explains, former residents of children’s homes usually get housing close to their families in the Lodz poverty ghettos.

Natalia’s account does not have the structure characteristic of an interview according to Fritz Schütze’s methodology (Kaźmierska 1996; Schütze 2012). Intense emotions released during the interview led the researcher to empathize with and emphatically support the narrator by suggesting pauses, changing subjects, and asking questions. Consequently, the structure of Natalia’s account resembles

a narrativized interview consisting of two separate parts. The first one is a type of “apostasy narrative” (Introvigne 1999) about the contexts of leaving with themes that need to be elaborated on, such as childhood and living with the family of origin. The second part, initiated by the researcher, concerns Natalia’s present life and her relationships with her parents and siblings. Transcription of both parts takes around fifty pages. The material is full of long narrative fragments, excellent for biographical analysis. It allows to reconstructing the process of apostatizing from a family before and after Natalia’s departure for the children’s home.

What, then, did make a fourteen-year-old Natalia “decide” to leave her family – first through a suicide attempt, then, after being hospitalized, through a refusal to return home and a move, instead, to a children’s home? I will now analyze the conditions which systematically build the conditional potentials of a suffering trajectory, leading to apostasy as a means of managing the problem of violence and negligent care in the family.

Filth, Stench, and Head Lice – Crossing Boundaries

An important part of the interview with Natalia consisted of an attempt to present and reconstruct the conditions of her family life that pushed her to make the critical biographical decisions. In the first place, she discussed the specificity of her relationship with her parents, tried to evaluate the care they provided, and recalled images of home and the atmosphere there.

The reconstructed images reveal the blurring of the boundary between home, understood as an intimate sphere, and everything else, represented by a poor and dangerous street in a city ghetto. When, after many years of regular drinking, Natalia’s parents turned the flat into a den that became popular in the neighborhood, the street with all its strangeness entered the intimate space of family life. “The guys were indeed not interested if there was a den at home and forever some uhm... men came, older or younger, came for the alcohol (“Transcript of Biographical Interview with Natalia” in this issue of QSR, p. 130, lines 15-16) “at the time when my dad went to prison my mom uhm... went partying hard. She met a company and I remember all sorts of people came, even some man without a leg uhm...” (p. 120, lines 24-26); “we often served the ((laughs)) the client” (p. 130, lines 17-18).

She recalled distortion of the day-night rhythm, chaos, and a sense of danger:

there’s never been any good in this family. There always was some kind of drinking, there have always been such quarrels, fights, brawls... these were not just one- or two-day things, but they lasted several weeks, up to maximum exhaustion of financial resources. (p. 133, lines 20-23)

Such, mm, alcohol binges, carousals, were becoming heavier more and more often, sometimes it used to be so that my parents kept drinking for three weeks uhm... sometimes it used to be that they were drinking for half a year let’s say. (p. 117, line 34 to p. 118, line 1)

Natalia discussed images of disorder, filth and stench: (“house of drunkards,” “urine,” “alcohol,” “cigarette butts”).

We might say that Natalia’s experience of home – portrayed as the neighborhood’s latrine – exemplifies everything that is bad and dangerous. Significant here is the total reversal of expectations, marked by the symbolic opposition of secure-home and dangerous-outside. Home is not a shelter and thus, everything that is normal, moral, and intimate is located outside of it. Particularly interesting is the depiction of the flat and the everyday objects. They are reconstructed through the opposition – the filth of the home versus the cleanliness of the outside world. This symbolism sharpens the critical moral assessment of Natalia’s drinking parents’ negligence in care. The first social contacts outside home, the interactions with peers and the nursing staff in primary school, made Natalia painfully realize the abnormality of her home. The stigma is related to, in the first place, the clothes that she and her siblings wore. She described them as dirty even when they were clean because – as she explained – they were grey and shabby from washing them together in one washing machine:

[m]aybe I will add that... in my family still earlier it was always, I don’t know, it was dirty uhm... somehow my mother didn’t pay attention to look after us so that we had clean neat things. It was all washed but it was washed in such a way that it was thrown into one washing machine, so these things were so, well, uncool. Generally, always, I don’t know, maybe it wasn’t lice but there were always some scabies uhm... (p. 118, lines 17-21)

The public head lice checks,¹² which usually ended up with the discovery of bugs in Natalia’s and her siblings’ hair, presented another humiliating experience.

¹² Until quite recently, lice checks in Poland took place in public, in classrooms. School nurses would check children’s hair, one by one, and then leave with the children who had bugs, which led to stigmatization of these children.

Furthermore, a couple of times she described her flat as infested with vermin. She also identified home with the smell of urine.

So, except that there was dirt in this house, lice, many - many times, uhm... one could feel this smell of urine... because it wasn’t like he had this bed linen changed every day, he peed himself, it was turned over to the other side and that’s enough, well that wasn’t too cool... (p. 124, lines 11-14)

A few objects that appear in the descriptions of home are marked with dirt: (“[t]here was no bathroom, just an old dirty sink and uhm... and a pot for children to piss in... at night or in the evening” [p. 152, line 35 to p. 153, line 1]¹³).

Hence, Natalia described her home experience in terms of physiologically and moral abhorrent filth, stench, and chaos which grew gradually over time. It became unbearable when, persuaded by her father, she returned home after two years of living with her grandmother (in the sixth and seventh grade of primary school), where she discovered different standards of normal life. It was soon after the period of time spent away from home that the strength of her psychological boundary broke. The descriptions of filth, stench, and bad habits symbolize the inability of the fourteen-year-old girl to maintain any mental or bodily integrity, or normality at home. They represent the impossibility of an intentional shaping of life and the loss of control. For Natalia, the inability to establish a barrier separating her mentally and physically from her parents’ amoral lifestyle became

¹³ It needs to be noted that in the flat – what was, and still is, typical for council houses – there was no bathroom or toilet. The inhabitants had to use a bathroom located in the courtyard (for more on the subject of poverty in the Lodz ghettos, see: Warzywoda-Kruszyńska and Jankowski 2010).

the source of a deep rebellion which found its apostatic expression in a failed suicide attempt and, afterwards, a deliberate departure for the children's home.

The Space of Death – Home as a Context of Risks to Life and Health

Another important dimension of Natalia's experience is the inability to intentionally shape her life, which became the source of the systematic growth of her suffering. In the narrative fragments, as well as those prepared from the perspective of the present day, the narrator tried to explain her decision to leave her family by referring to the lack of care provided by her parents. However, Natalia's evaluations go further, beyond the simple enumeration of parental negligences, such as the scarcity of food, hygiene, medical care, and love, as well as the violation of the right to bodily integrity (for example, corporal punishments and the instances of Natalia's father beating her brothers with a belt). More important is the fact that this type of "care" is presented as a fixed context of risks to health and life, and a danger to the children's future.

The essence of such "care" and "upbringing" (or, more accurately, lack thereof) led to the systematic loss of control over her life and the inability to live it in a normal way. According to Natalia, living in a place like her home was bound to end in self-annihilation, due to the devastating habits and criminal offences of its inhabitants. Living there was like rolling down an inclined plane, as illustrated by the fate of Natalia's siblings who did not have a chance to, or who did not dare to, escape from home during their childhood.

It is worth noting a few events of symbolic importance to which Natalia referred to in order to legitimize her perspective and thus, to work through the decision to leave her family before the researcher and herself (*identity work*). The most important event, which began her narration, was the death of her youngest sister. Two-year-old Gosia died at home from meningitis. Although Natalia is very cautious, and, at the same time, ambivalent in putting the blame for Gosia's death on her parents, her account suggests that they ignored the symptoms of the child's illness ("[a]nd in the morning she said that she had a headache, in the childish way, cause this child was just very little" [p. 118, lines 33-34]). They went out for the whole day, leaving the sick child with the other children in a locked flat. At that time, Natalia was eight years old and her oldest brother was nine. When the parents came back home, Gosia was already dead. Natalia recalled scenes when she and her siblings had anxiously observed their sister's dying ("[a]nd... and we were at home and observed this girl, in this bed as she uhm... caught breath, like a little fish" [p. 119, lines 3-4]).¹⁴ The pattern of ignoring health problems and avoiding any medical care, let alone preventive treatment, became apparent on other occasions, for example, when Natalia talked about the bed-wetting problems of her youngest brother.

She also recalled a few other events from her childhood that represent a constant sense of danger that permeated the atmosphere at home. The intrinsic motive of these stories is the lack of parents' interest in their children during their alcoholic binges,

¹⁴ It is worth mentioning that in communist Poland, in 1983, a telephone was a luxury that few people had. That is why the locked-in children, even if they had realized their situation, would not have been able to call for help.

such as in the situation when the mother locked all of the children in the flat and left for two or three days without warning. At that time, the father was in prison. If it had not been for the neighbors, who passed food through the window, Natalia and her brothers and sister would have starved. Probably at the same time, though the narration is not clear on this point, the kids, locked in the flat, started a fire so that the fire fighters and police would intervene.

In another scene, Natalia described how she and her siblings tried to *escape* their parents' drinking bouts and seek shelter with their grandmother who lived in a different part of town. However, they got lost. They were not able to return home so a passerby walked them to the police station where their identity and address were ascertained. Natalia recalled that after coming back home, she felt sorry to realize that her drunken parents had not even noticed that the children had gone missing for a whole day. In fact, all scenes reconstructed by the narrator show the lack of parents' interest in the children and portrayed types of risks the children had to manage, as well as their limited possibilities for growth and development. For instance, one of the siblings' favorite pastimes was collecting cigarette butts for their alcoholic housemate.

Also important is the perspective from which Natalia talks about those experiences that characterized her trajectory. Typically for children from alcoholic-abusive families who have to take responsibility for and care for their younger siblings, the relationship with their parents reflects not only their perspective but, to a great extent, the perspective of their brothers and sisters with whom they

feel a strong emotional bond. The analysis reveals that the siblings are the people with whom Natalia created a proper family community. They lived a separate life, isolated from the parents who were presented as engaged in endless binge drinking or who, as in the case of Natalia's father, were in prison. The feelings of loneliness and confusion – premature, since they were caused by the necessity to look after and take responsibility for younger sisters and brothers – were magnified by the empathic identification with the siblings' orphan experiences. One of the most significant scenes representing the sense of communally shared experiences was the story of the siblings taking in five stray dogs, feeding them, and dreaming about opening an animal shelter in the future.

It needs to be emphasized that the neglecting and rejecting style of upbringing, rendered in Natalia's autobiographical account, is congruent with an authoritative model of upbringing which manifested itself in corporal punishments and the father beating up Natalia's brothers for small offences. Such a patriarchal model of exercising control over children's lives is interpreted by Natalia as one of the most important contexts that led to her brothers becoming criminals, through its capacity to generate aggression rooted in the inability to learn how to be emphatic and understanding.

Apostasy as a Turning Point

What series of events made a fourteen-year-old girl decide to commit apostasy from her family – to try to commit suicide; then, to deliberately leave for a children's home? It is worth asking what scope

of agency can be construed in a teenager's struggle with the alcoholic trajectory of her family.

Although Natalia's parents had been drinking for a long time, in fact, since she remembers, the turning point which marked the beginning of the process of the family's degradation was the moment of turning the house into a den, which, in turn, led to Natalia's father's imprisonment for illegally selling alcohol:

[a]nd then it all began, it all began to fall apart, although earlier there were such situations, that if perhaps social care had been more often interested uhm, in depth and probably earlier, everybody would have ended up in children's home and this may have been better for us. (p. 118, lines 10-13)

Natalia presented the father's absence within the context of the mother's total loss of control over her life and the life of the family, due to her immersion in alcohol binges. The father's imprisonment was one of the most difficult moments in the biography of the eleven-year-old Natalia who felt extremely lonely and who had to take care of her siblings:

so my mom completely lost it, uhm... lost probably... a sense that she is a mother, that she has a family, that she has children, and that these kids really have only her at the moment, because dad was in prison and it was for two long years. (p. 120, lines 11-14)

A whole series of events led to Natalia's two-year stay away from home, initiated by outside actors. Since the mother often neglected the children, their grandmothers intervened. One of them (the maternal grandmother) brought food to the children, and the other (the paternal grandmother) reported the

parents' negligence to the appropriate institutions. It was probably at that time that the court limited the mother's parental rights, and the siblings were sent to different children's homes and shelters. However, this theme is unclear in the narration. Natalia was the only child to stay with her paternal grandmother who needed her help on the farm.

And generally my... my grandma once uhm... came, saw, I mean - many times she came and helped us, she brought us different things and and she came once and saw what was going on and she set the things right. As there was no normal contact with my mom... she called... uh... reported this in general I don't know where, to some care, anywhere, to the police, I don't know. Anyway, my brother was taken to the children's home... I mean my siblings went somewhere to children's homes, and I was sent to my other other grandma, my dad's mother. (p. 121, lines 6-11)

The two-year stay at the grandmother's in the countryside, two hundred kilometers from Lodz, was an ambivalent time in Natalia's experiences. On the one hand, she discovered what a normal life looked like (she described it in terms of cleanliness), which helped her to regain agency in everyday life. On the other hand, this was a time of enormous loneliness and suffering related to the loss of contact with her siblings. Natalia did not know how her brothers and sisters were doing. This scene also shows the dubious character of social care institutions, which do not ensure the continuity of contact between separated children.

Longing for her siblings was probably one of the reasons that made it so easy for Natalia's father to persuade her to return home. The father, after having served his two-year sentence, promised Natalia

a significant change in his lifestyle. But, Natalia was back home for just a short while. This event only preceded the key turning point in Natalia's biography – her deliberate and permanent departure from home. Natalia was back home, but the old problems, which returned with magnified force, were there, too. The girl came back with new outlooks and ways of life – she was a different person. It was difficult for her to accept the old habits, which, despite her father's promises, had not changed. Her defiance towards living in an alcoholic-abusive family grew systematically and led to the escalation of her aversion to the filth and amorality of the house. Hostility towards her parents, arguments with the mother, disappointment, alienation, and anomie were also accelerating. A total destabilization and the ultimate loss of life orientations found their expression in a suicide attempt.

A lot of things I didn't like. I didn't like my mom's behavior ever, there were conflicts with her forever. I just had the impression that there were constant clashes. Besides uhm... there was no/ relationships got very/ I hoped that when I get back it would all be well and at last this family of mine/ but I already, uh, I could see I couldn't live like this. I freed/ I/ for two years I was gone and I just stopped to accept things, it was very very difficult for me... and I remember that (((with hesitation in her voice))) no, I don't remember at this point yet, so I don't remember for sure, but it all got one thing on top of another... and... and these quarrels... such fights, it's probably, I mean adolescent age also played a role, I mean once, umm... enough of this all... enough of this life here in this house of drunkards (((strong emotions))). And... well I didn't want, uhm... again these lice, this dirt and and generally such old habits of the family that, uhm... (p. 121, line 31 to p. 122, line 5)

The fourteen-year-old Natalia did not see a solution to her problems other than committing suicide – she tried to poison herself. She overdosed on medications. In the context of a total lack of options or patterns of managing her life situation and a lack of institutional support, Natalia's decision to kill herself can be seen as an agentive solution¹⁵ to escape the family's alcoholic trajectory. On the one hand, Natalia was unable to live with her parents, and any attempt to communicate and initiate change failed. On the other hand, she did not see any alternative to escape from her home and family, which is symptomatic of a number of factors. Apart from the fear of breaking the taboo of unconditional obedience to her parents, typical for an authoritarian upbringing, this sense of lack of an alternative can reveal – at least in reference to that time period and the social group Natalia belonged to – a lack of knowledge and patterns, in the consciousness of children, of how to solve such situations.

This problem is rooted in systemic conditions. The lack of substantial support for children and families in need in the 80s and 90s in Poland¹⁶ undoubtedly contributed to strengthening the taboo of unconditional respect. It is telling that the police interventions at Natalia's home did not proceed with any

¹⁵ Conceptualizing a suicidal attempt as an agentive solution may seem a controversial interpretation. However, it is directly connected to two premises. A suicide may be treated as a means of escaping a total institution, as shown by Erving Goffman, and for a teenager, an alcoholic-abusive family is such an institution. Moreover, proponents of "new childhood studies" suggest viewing the acts of children in terms of their agency: "children are to be viewed as social actors in their own right, with 'competences' that are not restricted by biological age, with worthwhile views and contributions to make, and with rights over consent and confidentiality" (Scott 2006:24).

¹⁶ It is worth adding that introducing complex programs to fight violence against women and children has only just started in Poland.

care for the fate of the children. Only the ultimate drama – Natalia’s failed suicide attempt – made the school teacher interested in her situation. It is possible that the potential to depart for a social care institution, which has managed to become a pattern in the lives of Natalia’s siblings, was associated with power, punishment, and stigma rather than with a place a child can voluntarily go to. For we cannot forget about the criminal background of Natalia’s family, immersed in a social milieu marked by strong ethics which holds that any kind of cooperation with supervisory institutions is, by definition, an act of betrayal and informing. Perhaps this is why Natalia did not initially even consider departing for a children’s home or shelter as a means of escaping her family. Neither did Natalia say why she had not tried the solution that worked before – why she did not return to live with her grandmother in the countryside. However, in other parts of the interview, she seemed to suggest that the relationship with the grandmother, described as a reserved, rigid, and extremely thrifty person, did not work well. Natalia mentioned some quarrels.

The next causal steps in the apostasy process took place during her hospitalization after the suicide attempt. However, the part describing Natalia’s stay in the hospital, during which her formal departure for the children’s home was organized, is faded out in the narration (*Ausblendung* [Schütze 1997]). At this point, the apostasy was no longer taking place in solitude but in public – in the presence of supervisory institutions, the family, and some third parties.

We can only guess what the contexts of Natalia’s decision to leave home were from a few short eval-

uative fragments and from her answer to the question asked by the interviewer. We learn that it was the school teacher who helped her. However, Natalia openly admitted that she did not remember that period of time, what is symptomatic for the experience of anomie and trauma: “I don’t remember. I had then such a tough time in my life, that some things I missed” (p. 137, line 28). We might suspect that the amnesia or obliteration of this period is rooted in the liminal character of the experience of abandoning one’s family and to the related absence of an appropriate language – useful cultural categories which would enable her to describe that turning point easily, as well as to address the question of the apostate’s identity, which becomes central to her biography.

The fourteen-year-old Natalia did break one of the strongest taboos. Essentially, she had to publicly testify against her parents, renounce them, and leave them, which burdened her with a sense of guilt and – in the eyes of her family – the stigma of a betrayer. However, the detailed information concerning her cooperation with supervisory institutions or the court trial are faded out in her narration and thus, we do not know any details of these interactions. We do know, however, that though it was a traumatic moment for Natalia, she was not a passive participant of the process of leaving for the children’s home, as the following narrative and evaluative fragments suggest: “I, uh, was taken to hospital to [street name], and there I had gastric lavage but from this hospital, but I didn’t return home because I didn’t want to” (p. 122, lines 9-11 [emphasis by the author]; “I rebelled” (p. 125, line 11); “I turned away, that I said no and all. That I don’t want to live in,

such a family. Actually it was my decision” (p. 122, lines 21-22).

It thus becomes clear that Natalia had agency in taking the decision to commit apostasy. Through this act she regained control over her life, removing the destructive alcoholic and abusive elements from her everyday existence. Apostasy opened a new chapter in her biography. The apostate’s identity became the potential and central biographical problem of her trajectory.

The Apostate’s Trajectory – A Liminal State of In-Between-Ness

Natalia cannot come to terms with her identity as an apostate, either during five years spent in the children’s home or when – as an adult woman – she is educated and has a job and a family. The analysis shows that though Natalia has managed to establish a happy family, she still suffers from stigmatization by her parents and siblings – she is labeled a betrayer. “Well, but this was very hard for me ((cries)).... because my family absolutely turned away from me...” (p. 122, lines 11-12).

And usually when my parents drank then I always had... I was always reproached that... that... What was I there for, that I’d moved out, that I didn’t want be there and so on and so on. Well, this was very painful for me, I really was very emotional about it... (p. 141, lines 23-25)

She could not manage the feeling of extreme guilt for abandoning her family. Furthermore, despite the “excommunication,” she was unable to leave them once and for all. After a short period of suspend-

ing her relationships with her family, when Natalia is in the children’s home, she tried to re-establish contact with her family members with even greater eagerness. With the passing of time, she felt more and more responsible for their lives. She took care of them and intervened in crisis situations. She ensured that the essential details of their everyday lives were taken care of: shopping was done, bills were paid, and medical care was provided. Why is it, then, that Natalia, until this day and despite her intensive efforts at repair work, is unable to manage the apostate fracture in her biography?

First Trajectory Potential – The Norm of Unconditional Respect

One of the potentials of the continuous revival of Natalia’s suffering is related to the difficulty of working the conflicts of values. Such conflicts were not solved but only magnified by her decision to commit apostasy. All her life Natalia has been torn between the norm of unconditional loyalty towards family members and the moral imperative to rebel against individuals who break elementary social norms. Natalia’s drama might represent a typical dilemma that children from dysfunctional families have to deal with – is it possible to establish a relationship with a violent parent, for example, with one sentenced for mugging or murder? Is the norm to “respect thy parent” legitimate in such a situation?

Natalia has internalized the norm to respect her parents so deeply that she is not able to assess them in an unambiguous manner, though the images reconstructed from her narratives reveal a portrait of people who presented a danger to their children.

And though it might seem that the scale of violence experienced by the children should invalidate the normative pressures to respect one's parents, Natalia's account of her parents is strongly ambivalent. The fragments concerning Natalia's parents and siblings show a series of instances of repair work – rationalizations and justifications of their illegal behavior (e.g., theft, brawls, and alcoholism as the effect of living in a criminal environment, being battered by the father); the denial of non-normative elements of their identity (e.g., when she does not want to find out what her oldest brother was sentenced for); and idealizations (e.g., she believes that the “true” nature of her siblings is good and she idealizes her father). Natalia tries to “save” their identities by gathering scattered memories, and nourishes the belief that, in essence, under a hard shell, they are good people. She remembers that when her mother was sober, she was a good cook, and her father was a highly valued worker. To Natalia, her brother, who is portrayed as someone capable of killing other people, has a good heart since in the past he took care of stray dogs and dreamed of founding an animal shelter. Those memory scraps help her to reconstruct an idealization of an imagined family (Vuorela 2002).

However, the difficulty of subverting the norm of unconditional respect has permanently frozen the potential for suffering in Natalia's biography. Still, however, Natalia does not seem to fully acknowledge that in the past, to save her fourteen-year-old self, she really had no choice but to leave her family. Instead, she attempts to justify her leaving before the researcher (and herself), as if she still doubted her moral stance from that time. She does not stop

to dialogue or to negotiate with herself, as if, at that moment in time, she had any choice. The burdening of traditional norms is too strong, but the failure to redefine them disables the working through of Natalia's leaving her family, which creates the potential for significant identity tension (strain).

Trajectory Potential – Loved Ones as Strangers or Fictitious Relationships

Although Natalia points to the inability of managing the feeling of rejection by her family, it seems that there is one more issue – apart from the conflict of values – that needs to be worked through, which also builds the potential of her suffering. Although, after having committed apostasy, Natalia invests a great deal of effort to establish a relationship with her parents and siblings, their relationships are one-sided, to Natalia's disadvantage. Had Natalia realized the actual impossibility of establishing an authentic relationship with her family, and the inability to communicate with them or to be understood, it would have been easier for her to accept the apostate point in her biography. Perhaps, she would not experience the meetings with her family in such a dramatic way, as instances that always bring to the surface the normative conflict, making her suffer and feel guilty.

However, Natalia does seem to locate the source of her difficult relationship with her parents not in the biographical conditions but in her decision to quit the family, as if she could not realize that, in fact, she “had left” this particular social world a long time ago, before she attempted to commit suicide. To this world she is a total stranger. Her suffering resembles the suffering of people who successful-

ly climbed the social ladder. The price they pay for forsaking their social class is the necessity to scale the high wall dividing them from their relatives left on the other side (cf. Sennett and Cobb 1972; Ross 1995:338-350 as cited in Ferenc 2012:233). But, Natalia wants to be back, no matter what the costs.

In practice, Natalia's strategy to return to her family was to take on the caretaking role. The desire to rebuild the relationships with her family members prompted Natalia to live their lives for them, anticipating the moments when she could help each of them, and trying to re-socialize her brothers and sisters. Those efforts occupy a lot of space in Natalia's biography, however, as the analysis suggests, it is impossible for her to create stable relationships with them. The care she provides is of an intervention character only. The narrative fragments show that her contacts with her siblings and parents only took place in crisis situations when the drinking routine was broken by an illness, an imprisonment, or some other serious situation. Her father let her into his life when he fell ill with cancer. It is Natalia who organized medical care, a surgery, and finally, a funeral for him. The mother, with whom Natalia is unable to communicate to this day, allowed herself to be taken care of only when she was no longer able to live normally because of her advanced alcoholism. Natalia took care of her mother: she did the shopping, she cooked, and she spent weekends with her. She also created a positive image of her for her own daughter, hiding her grudges.

Furthermore, she took care of her siblings. When her alcohol-addicted brother suffered from regular epilepsy attacks, she called for medical help; she

gave shelter to her younger sister who could no longer stand living in the drunkards' home; she visited her brothers in prison; and she tried to take care of her siblings' children. Despite her efforts to establish a strong relationship with her family, the relationship broke easily. The bridge of care she wanted to build in order to return to her family turned out to be a shaky board since the interaction rules, usually taken for granted, had to be construed, from scratch, over and over again. We can observe Natalia's inability to return home and establish a relationship with her family. Natalia is situated in the liminal sphere of in-between-ness. The apostasy was not entirely successful since, in fact, it was not possible to accomplish from the normative point of view, just like it has been impossible for Natalia to establish a relationship with her family.

However, providing care remains the only opportunity for Natalia to do biographical work and manage the feeling of guilt, though it does not remove the potential conditions for her biographical trajectory – the conflict of values, the awareness of mutual strangeness, and, what is related, the impossibility of establishing a relationship. To reconstruct a positive image of herself as a daughter, she construes an identity of a missionary, of a prodigal daughter. In doing so, she refers to gender resources of sacrifice, strongly embedded in Polish culture – the schema of the Polish Mother. This enables her to cope with the feeling of guilt, but only partially, since the family has not forgiven her. The mother does not acknowledge the negative impact she has had on her children's lives. The father did not make a gesture of forgiveness before dying. Her brothers and sisters still see her as an outcast. Perhaps, the impossibility

to remove the interactionist stigma imposed on her by the relatives was what made Natalia answer the researcher's advertisement. She volunteered to present her biographical account because she wanted to explain or justify before the General Other, embodied by the researcher, her moral stance – something that she was not able to do in front of her parents and siblings. She is aware that she has never been, and never will be, understood by them.

Natalia's account consists of two separate stories put together. The first one is the story of the "bad" care provided by her parents and her subsequent leaving. Natalia is strongly ambivalent when it comes to judging her parents and to the moral justification of her decision to apostatize from family. The second story is that of Natalia's adult life and her new identity focused around her care-providing mission. Those two stories are not connected with each other, they are separated (cf. *twofold perspectives* [Gütelkin 2003 as cited in Gütelkin, Inowlocki and Lutz 2003]). Had the interviewer, Dr. Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas, not stopped the narration about apostasy with the question about Natalia's present life situation, she would not have started it by herself. The situation of being stuck in a biographical problem demonstrates that, paradoxically, apostasy only brings the apostate closer to their family. And the process of leaving a family is, in fact, a process of returning to it. Natalia's apostasy is indeed the process of (un)becoming a child, a daughter, a family member.

The metaphor of apostasy has thus far been used in the fields of sociology of the family and sociology

of organization. However, it would be valuable to apply this notion to the study of the processes and phenomena taking place in contemporary families.

The rise of popularity of family models based on partnership, as well as the growth in awareness of how violence manifests itself in family relationships are linked to the phenomenon, increasingly observed in Europe and the U.S., of mothers and – as in the case of Natalia – adolescents quitting their families. What is interesting is that those two categories of actors are identified in the popular consciousness with the exact opposite behavior. The metaphor of apostasy can reveal the agentive element of those instances of leaving which are usually perceived as improbable, unnatural, or victimized. And, at the same time, it can shed new light on the exit processes understood as acts of rebellion and disruption, as well as their biographical consequences.

Moreover, including the perspective of apostasy can prove to be valuable because thus far not much attention has been given to the biographical aspects of the exit processes. The analysis of the case of Natalia allows the theoretically differentiation between the two fundamentally different models of leaving. The first one is the path of an "agentive," though socially unstructured, passage of leaving a family by an adolescent. The second is a "normal" leaving considered a phase in the process of growing up – though it might sometimes take a turbulent course, bristled with acts of disruption, it represents a grounded and culturally desirable status passage into adulthood. The analysis of Natalia's autobiographical account is, therefore, an attempt to make comprehensible an instance of premature quitting of a parent-child re-

lationship. This process has become visible due to the notion of agency that children demonstrate in everyday life. Employing the perspective of apostasy made it possible to capture the essence of this process.

There might be many other possibilities of using the metaphor of apostasy. Whatever they are, however, Natalia's autobiography reminds us that being a child is an identity, which is very difficult to leave. Even an apostate has to work out some kind of defi-

nition of a relationship, a new image of a parent, and, as I have demonstrated, this effort is likely to make him or her bind with the abandoned parent even more.

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A Social Work Perspective on the Biographical Research Interview with Natalia

Abstract Biographical interviewing is used not only in research but also in clinical work such as social work practice. However, as social work settings differ from research settings, the ways of doing, analyzing, and using biographical interviews will differ. The differences arise from the reasons for and the purposes of the interview, the institutional context, the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, interviewees' capacity for storytelling and reflective work, time limits, the structure of the biographical interview, and follow-up interviewing. In social work, interviewees are in a more vulnerable position than in research, and there is a stronger power imbalance. The service users' expectations are essential for the work, and it is important that the users articulate their expectations because the purpose of social work is to change and improve the life situation of service users. This asks for ethical considerations that are partly different from those necessary in research.

The biographical interview with Natalia is here analyzed using the strengths perspective as the social work theoretical framework. The analysis shows that in her present life Natalia has many strengths and resources, which, in a social work situation, could be mobilized to support her in getting more control over her life. Her perceived strengths are: her capacity for storytelling and reflection; her emotional and cognitive capacities; her willpower; and her capacity for enjoying her present life and planning for her future. Resources identified are: her significant others; her economic situation; her satisfying job situation; her capacity to have dreams for the future; and her religion. Implications for social work, both in the past and in the present, are discussed.

Keywords Social Work; Biography; Strengths; Interaction; Ethics; Interview

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Biography and Social Work

The purpose of this article is to analyze a given biographical research interview from a "social work perspective," and there are a number of possible approaches to that. My own perspective is grounded in lengthy experience of social work practice in health care and rehabilitation, as well as in theoretical stud-

ies on biographical methods carried out largely within the EU Leonardo INVITE project¹ (Björkenheim and Karvinen-Niinikoski 2009a; Björkenheim and Karvinen-Niinikoski 2009b; Björkenheim, Levälahti, Karvinen-Niinikoski 2009) and subsequently (e.g., Björkenheim 2010). These experiences lead me to believe that biographical methods do have a place in social work practice, at least in certain contexts and with certain service users.

In addition to analyzing the empirical interview data, it is necessary to discuss some general differences between research and social work practice as settings for biographical interviewing. Biographical researchers have found that "unhampered autobiographical storytelling is basic biographical work" (Schütze 2009:23) and that it can have healing effects (Rosenthal 2003). However, some researchers have questioned the use of biographical methods for "informal therapy as a by-product" (Richard 2004:171) and the claims for empowerment through biographical research (Bornat and Walmsley 2004). In my view, practice and research are essentially different as settings for biographical interviewing, and this implies different considerations in the use of biographical interviewing (Schütze 2009). One of the main characteristics of social work practice is that it generally aims at change and improvement in the lives of the service users,² whereas the aim of qual-

¹ The project EU Leonardo INVITE 2003-2006 developed a curriculum for teaching "biographical counseling" to professionals working in vocational rehabilitation (*European Studies on Inequalities and Social Cohesion 1-2/2008 and 3-4/2008*). The participating universities were those of Magdeburg in Germany, Helsinki in Finland, Wales/Bangor in UK, and Lodz in Poland. Practice institutions in these countries, and in Austria and Italy participated as well.

² The definition of social work last adopted by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) states: "[t]he social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human

itative interviews for research – except for different types of action research – is generally not primarily to bring about change in an interviewee's situation.

Biographical interviewing may be used not only in social casework but also, for instance, in psychotherapy (Hornung 2010). It is important to note that, whilst social work practitioners may use biographical approaches and their work will often have therapeutic elements, social work is not psychotherapy. Psychotherapists generally focus exclusively on psychological and relationship issues, whereas social workers will typically be involved in practical matters as well (Wilson et al. 2011:347).

In many respects, the interview with Natalia resembles interviews I used to carry out as a social worker with service users in a rehab unit, where an inter-professional rehabilitation team assessed users' employment capacity and opportunities for rehabilitative interventions, and in collaboration with the users made plans for their future. A main difference here, of course, is that Natalia is not presenting the interviewer with any explicit problem she needs help with, particularly not a problem related to her work or employment capacity. But, the question remains: If Natalia was telling her story to a social worker, how might the worker listen and react? In what way would that be different from a researcher's way of listening and reacting?

In my analysis of the transcribed interview with Natalia I have focused on two aspects: first, the

relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work" (IFSW 2012).

interaction between interviewer and interviewee, including Natalia's possible motives for wanting to participate in the interview, and second, Natalia's story analyzed using a strengths perspective (Saleebey 1997) as the theoretical framework. In the conclusion, I discuss possible implications of Natalia's story for social work practice.

Social work intervening "at the points where people interact with their environments" (IFSW 2012) implies that social work is context-bound. My own context is Finland, a Northern country of 5 million people, where a welfare system was built up after World War II. During the past twenty years welfare services have been cut, resulting in growing socio-economic differences. The education required for qualified social workers in Finland is a Master's degree in social work, comprising five years of university studies. Most social workers in Finland are employed in the public welfare services, mostly in social services but also in public health care and in state schools.

There are some obvious risks in applying a social work perspective to a biographical interview performed in another national context. However, I believe that there are common features in the ways social workers, at least in Western countries, relate to their profession and to service users, and an outside perspective may, at best, generate some new thoughts on the subject.

Before going into the analysis of the interview, I will make some reflections on the differences between social work practice and research in regards to biographical interviewing.

How Do Social Work Interviews Differ from Research Interviews?

As mentioned before, I find it necessary to distinguish clearly between social work practice and research as settings for biographical interviewing. Comparing the two settings, at least seven main differences are identified:

First: The reason for and the purpose of the interview. In social work, the reason for an interview is usually the service user's problematic situation, and the purpose is to enable the service user to get some help with his or her situation and achieve change. In a research interview, the research itself is usually the reason for the interview, and the purpose is for the researcher to get a "good interview," for instance, good research data; the purpose is not to create change in the particular interviewee's life situation.

Second: The institutional context. Social workers generally work in institutions (public or private) which set the terms for what services they can offer to service users, and how. The institutional context probably also restricts the narrator's free storytelling in different ways, especially if the social worker can influence the provision of services (Schütze 2009). Researchers do not typically offer any services and the institutional frames are different, even if not necessarily less strict.

Third: The relationship between interviewer and interviewee. In social work practice, the interviewer is a professional who is educated to work with service users on improving their life situation. Service users usually see a social worker because they have

a problem. They are therefore generally in a more vulnerable position than research interviewees. They have to make their situation understood and convince the social worker of their needs. The social worker generally represents a public authority with power to influence the provision of services, which implies a considerable power imbalance in the relationship. In biographical research, the interviewing relationship is different, even though there is usually a power imbalance there, too (Kazmierska 2004). Research interviewees generally volunteer to be interviewed and, as a rule, are not dependent on the interviewer for any service they need. On the other hand, the relationship between researcher/interviewer and research subject/narrator may be more difficult in the sense that it is more unclear. The researcher becomes a character in the story of the research subject and thus changes it (Shaw 2008).

In biographical interviewing, the relationship between interviewer and interviewee is different from many other interviewing relationships also due to factors such as time and confidence required. Sometimes, this particular constellation may raise expectations of help that the interviewer, whether social worker or researcher, is not capable of meeting, especially when it comes to handling early traumatic experiences. On the other hand, professional social workers may be better equipped to deal with such expectations and have better knowledge of available services than do researchers.

Fourth: The interviewee's capacity for storytelling. Persons with little capacity for storytelling would hardly in this regard would hardly volunteer for a biographical research interview but they might well

be service users in social work. Biographical narrative interviewing is therefore not always possible in social work.

Fifth: Time limits. In a social work situation, there are generally quite strict time limits both for the interview and for the work to be done before and after the interview. A biographical researcher supposedly has more time to plan, perform, and analyze his or her interviews. The biographical research interview with Natalia took three hours. In the rehab unit, the social worker usually has two hours for an assessment interview including a dialogue on the user's expectations and on available rehabilitation services. In most other social work settings, there is not that much time available for one interview.

Sixth: The structure of the biographical interview. In research, an autobiographical narrative interview is generally as open as possible (Schütze 2009). Because of the specific characteristics of the social work setting, biographical interviews often have to be more structured along certain themes and include more verbal dialogue. There is also more direct questioning about facts, and certain issues have to be discussed, either they are brought up by the service user or not.

Seventh: Follow-up with the interviewee. In research, there is hardly much follow-up with interviewees for the sake of the interviewee as a person. In social work, a biographical interview used for assessment is often just the beginning of the work. This means that, if necessary, there will be opportunities later to deal with strong emotions and issues provoked by the narrator's biographical work.

The characteristics of social work practice have certain ethical implications. A social worker must consider for what purpose a service user is asked to tell his or her life story. And how will the story be interpreted and used? And by whom? How will the life-story telling contribute to the improvement of the user's life situation? In research, there is no obligation to improve the situation of the interviewee; ethical principles just state that you should avoid doing harm. Since life events and the autobiographical story are essentially meaningful only in the life of the narrator/service user, in social work, the user's own interpretation of the story should be given priority (Barker 2009). In research, life stories are interpreted mainly by the researcher.

In research, interviewees will be asked for informed consent. Service users of social work should also be asked, in one way or another, for (oral) consent to tell their life story (instead of just answering questions about biographical facts), and they should also be given the opportunity to refuse. The question of informed consent to life-story telling seems particularly crucial in settings where social work, in addition to a supportive role, also has a function of control, such as in child protection and social assistance services. The best way to inform a service user of the purpose and possible consequences of a biographical narrative interview has to be determined in each specific case. This difficulty is being discussed in qualitative research, too (Shaw 2008).

An important outcome of biographical interviews, intended or unintended and regardless of setting, is the biographical work done by the narrator (Rosenthal 2003; Schütze 2009). This can be quite hard

work and evoke strong emotions, as is evidently the case in the interview with Natalia. Persons seeking therapy are generally prepared in advance to work psychologically with their self and their life. Service users in social work (nor research interviewees) seldom know in advance what hard (biographical) work may be involved in a biographical interview. Should they, in some way, be told about this probable outcome of the interview in connection with being asked to consent to a biographical interview?

In biographical interviewing, where a lot of details are revealed, strict confidentiality is, of course, indispensable. Social workers need to consider how much of a users' biographical information actually has to be documented in the files. Confidentiality is obvious in supervision situations, but what about "informal" supervision between colleagues? Confidentiality is required in research as well, but is handled in partly different ways.

Interaction between Interviewer and Interviewee

Just as the interaction between interviewer and interviewee in research is seen to be an essential element in retrieving good interview data (Lillrank 2012), in most social work theory, the interaction and a trusting relationship between social worker and service user are considered essential elements in the helping process (Payne 2005; Wilson et al. 2012). In social work, the relationship can even be "the end in itself," not only a "means to an end" (Network for Psycho-Social Policy and Practice 2002 as cited in Wilson et al. 2011:9). That, of course, echoes the claims of classic "Rogerian" person-centered counseling, which has

been identified as having a particular affinity with the techniques and methodology of the biographical research interviewer (Barker 2009).

In the interview with Natalia, the interviewer very soon manages to build trust in the relationship and shows Natalia that she is actively and attentively listening to her story. As a result, Natalia very soon opens up about her traumatic childhood experiences. The interviewer gives short empathic comments to Natalia's emotionally strenuous story, but seems somewhat unprepared for, almost embarrassed at, the strong emotions evoked in Natalia recalling her life before entering the children's home at the age of 15. The interviewer interrupts Natalia at several points, trying to make her talk more about the time she spent in the children's home (which is the topic of the research).

In social work, too, for various reasons, the interviewer sometimes has to interrupt the narrator's storytelling and try to direct the interview towards issues seemingly more relevant to the purpose of the meeting. This is why social workers have to carefully consider when, why, and how biographical interviewing is proposed and introduced to a service user. In social work interviewing, strong emotions are not rare taken that service users often are in a difficult life situation and/or have traumatic experiences. If a user seems to need psychological services, the worker can discuss this with the person and explore the possibilities for such services. Social workers themselves should ideally, after critical interviews, have the opportunity to receive supervision or – at least – some kind of debriefing. Biographical research interviewers may not always

have this opportunity. The emotional labor research interviewers may endure is receiving increasing attention (Lillrank 2012).

Natalia's trusting relationship with the interviewer encourages her to talk more and more, almost as if her story had been there long before the interview, just waiting to be told. But, is it the story the researcher wants to hear? How does Natalia feel after the interview? These questions call for some reflections on Natalia's possible motives for wanting to be interviewed.

In the presentation of the interview with Natalia, we are told that she volunteered for the interview because "she wanted to demonstrate the fate of a person brought up in a children's home" (p. 116 in this issue of *Qualitative Sociology Review*). One can ponder on her possible deeper motives. Natalia may have had other, unarticulated, not even conscious, motives and expectations when volunteering to participate in the research interview.

In a social work situation, it would be natural to ask the service user directly about her motives and expectations. In this instance, however, we can only venture some guesses. At several instances, Natalia points out how lucky she was to be placed in a good children's home. Perhaps, by volunteering for the interview, she wanted to show her gratitude to those who made this possible, to repay, in some way, for having been "saved" to experience a "normal" adulthood? Natalia is emotionally very moved when she talks about her family of origin. Even if talking about her childhood is extremely strenuous, the telling seems to be very important for her. To

whom is she telling her story? Is she, perhaps, telling it to herself in order to better understand who she is and what actually happened to her and her family? Natalia expresses feelings of guilt for having been more fortunate than her siblings and shows grief and worry for them. Is she, perhaps, telling her story to someone who could confirm to her that she has done everything possible to help her sisters and brothers, and that she needs not feel any guilt?

Natalia tells the interviewer that she now has a good and “normal” life – that she is happy with her husband and her 13-year-old daughter. However, she is not able to fully enjoy her present life because of her worries about her relatives. Did Natalia, perhaps, volunteer for the interview hoping that somehow someone would give her the permission to finally enjoy her own life and take care of herself? Natalia talks in detail of her present worries about her relatives – she takes care of her mother, grandmother, and nieces and tries to help her siblings in any way she can think of. Is Natalia, perhaps, telling her story hoping to receive some practical advice to help her in her everyday life? A social worker could have confirmed Natalia’s right to take care of herself and helped her to find out what services, if any, might be available to ease her daily burden.

A Strengths Perspective on Natalia’s Story

The biographical interview with Natalia would enable a social work interviewer to get a better understanding of her past and present situation. However, in social work, understanding is seldom enough. Showing up in a rehab unit, for instance, Natalia would expect to receive some counseling and practi-

cal advice to help her deal with her vocational problem (if she had one). However, the biographical interview could well be the part of an assessment forming the base for making a rehabilitation plan for her.

Even though social workers sometimes work according to a selected theory, they have been found mostly to use theory in an eclectic way (Payne 2005). Any of the following theories would probably work fairly well with biographical interviewing: the psychodynamic theory, the postmodern (narrative) theory, the relationship-based theory, the humanistic theory, or the strengths perspective. For my analysis of the interview, I have chosen the strengths perspective, which has been fairly commonly used (in a selected or eclectic way) in social work practice in Finland. Dennis Saleebey, one of the main theoretical developers of the strengths perspective, makes a connection between strengths and narrative as follows: “one of the genuine strengths of people(s) lies in the fabric of narrative and story in the culture and in the family” (1997:243). The critique against the strengths perspective focuses on the risk of too much stressing self-help and self-responsibility and underestimating structural inequalities (Gray 2011). However, Saleebey sees the strengths perspective as “the work of helping clients and communities build something of lasting value from the materials and capital within and around them” (1997:233), not as denying individual and structural problems.

Even though the focus in the strengths perspective is mainly on the strengths of the service user, the guidelines suggest that at the beginning of an assessment, a brief summary of the identified problem situation be made and agreed upon (Cowger and

Snively 2002). In social work, dialogue is essential, and the difficulty here is that my analysis of the interview can only be based on the transcript without any chance of further interaction with Natalia. Therefore, I present Natalia’s problem situation as a summary of what appears to me to be her own understanding of her life and present life situation: Natalia has survived a hard life and is now able to live what she considers a “normal” life. Her survival is due partly to good luck but also to her own will and efforts. She feels guilt for her brothers and sisters not having been as lucky as she has been. All her five siblings have had, and still have, unstable lives being, or have been, involved in criminal acts and/or drug abuse accompanied by unemployment and economic misery. However, Natalia wants to think that the bad luck and unhappy fate of her siblings is not her fault. She wants to believe that she has done everything possible to help her siblings. She also implies that, possibly, her siblings could themselves have made a little more effort to get a better life. She does not judge her parents but tries to understand their situation. In addition to individual reasons, she also sees structural reasons for her family’s misery. Natalia has seen it as her responsibility to be the strong one and to take care of the other family members, and they, in turn, seem to have expected this from her. In this task, her suicide attempt at the age of 14 appears to her a big failure, an expression of her weakness. In her present situation, Natalia still feels responsible for her siblings and tries to help them and their children. However, some ambiguity can be sensed in her story: How much must she still sacrifice of her time and energy to help her relatives, and how much can she allow herself to enjoy her own life and devote her time on her own little family? Natalia

gives the impression that she is quite exhausted (she says that she is “worn out” [p. 155, line 17]), and she seems to long for a break in her continuous responsibility, worry, and grief over her relatives.

A social worker listening to Natalia’s story from a strengths perspective would try to identify personal strengths and external resources that could be supported and mobilized to help Natalia to get more control of her life. In a real social work situation, the assessment would be done in verbal dialogue with the service user. In the transcription of the interview with Natalia at least five essential strengths stand out:

First, Natalia is capable of telling her story and of reflecting on her past, on past events, on persons in her childhood, and on herself as a child and as an adult. This means that she is capable of doing biographical work, a prerequisite for a person to actively make changes in her life.

Second, Natalia’s emotional capacities seem to be strong and multidimensional; in spite of her very difficult childhood, she is able to appreciate positive things as well. She is not too embittered, but is able to forgive and still love her parents. She is able to feel grief and compassion for her brothers and sisters, and still takes responsibility for all her close relatives. She is also emotionally capable of maintaining a relationship with a partner and of mothering a child.

Third, Natalia has considerable cognitive capacities: she has wanted to study and learn new things; she has studied in several schools, and even taken a uni-

versity exam (Bachelors).

Fourth, Natalia has strong willpower and has made several important decisions in her life. One of her biggest decisions was after her suicide attempt, when she decided she wanted to go to a children's home instead of going home, even if that meant breaking with her family. On the other hand, the fact that the family turned their back on her may have enabled her to free herself from them and see herself as a separate person, someone who has to take responsibility for her own life.

Fifth, in spite of all her misfortunes, her unhappy childhood, grief, and worries, Natalia has the capacity to enjoy life and plan for her future. She has built herself a new life with a family of her own.

All these capacities of Natalia are essential strengths which a social worker could try to reinforce and draw upon to support Natalia to gain more control over her present life. In spite of the difficult circumstances during her childhood, Natalia also had some external resources to draw on. There seems to have been a few people who were crucial in leading her life in a more positive direction. There was her grandmother, who intervened at some critical moments, as when the children set a fire in the home. There was the school psychologist, who helped Natalia to get into the children's home, and there were the carers at the children's home, who showed her what a "normal" life and "normal" relationships can be.

In her present life, Natalia also has some external resources to draw upon. Her resource persons are, of course, her husband and daughter and her friends

but also her mother, who now serves as a resource to Natalia's daughter. Natalia's economic situation appears to be sound. She has had a fairly good career and likes her present job. The family has a plot for recreation and has been able to make some vacation trips. The family also has dreams for the future, such as building a house of their own. A resource for Natalia is definitely her religion, even though she seldom goes to church. In a social work situation, the worker would also be a resource to the service user, someone with whom to talk and discuss opportunities for help and support.

In a strengths-based social work assessment of Natalia's present situation, the biographical interview would be analyzed as a joint activity, and there would be a mutual agreement on the assessment as a base for planning further intervention. In future meetings, Natalia's strengths and resources could be further explored and supported, aiming at helping her to gain more control over her life situation.

To Conclude

As discussed above, there are both similarities and differences between research and social work practice as settings for biographical interviewing. The relationship and interaction between interviewer and interviewee are crucial in both settings, and many necessary ethical considerations are the same. The main differences pertain to the purpose of the interview, the institutional context, the quality of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, narrators' capacity for storytelling, time limits, the structure of the interview, and the follow-up. In social work, the focus is on the service user's wellbe-

ing, whereas in research, the focus is on the story itself and its content (the research data). In social casework, the interviewee is generally more vulnerable than in research.

The biographical interview with Natalia raises reflections on possible implications for social work interventions. Could social services have done more to help Natalia and her siblings during their childhood? Societal, judicial, and cultural differences, of course, make it difficult for a foreigner to judge this. Moreover, even with strict laws and good protective intentions, child protection is an extremely demanding field of social work. In retrospect, one might argue that child protection authorities probably should have intervened earlier in Natalia's family, as the children were badly neglected long before they were taken into care. But then, we do not actually know exactly how and to what extent family services had already been involved. Health care should probably have also been involved earlier, thus, maybe, saving the 2-year-old sister who died, due to lack of adequate health care, in front of her siblings who had been left alone at home. Natalia states that she made her suicide attempt because she did not know to whom to turn in despair, and perhaps social services would ideally have served as a secure haven for the children to turn to in times of extreme confusion and danger.

When the children finally were taken into care, they were placed in different children's homes. Why they could not be placed together in the same home remains unclear. Maybe it was just practically impossible to let them stay together, even if it appears rather cruel to separate them at such a critical mo-

ment. We do not know how much the school was involved in the case, but there evidently was some kind of involvement since the school psychologist intervened after Natalia's suicide attempt.

From a social work perspective, Natalia, in her present life, might benefit from social work support in finding out how she wants to live her life and how she can manage it without feeling that she is neglecting her relatives. Doing what is "right" seems very important to her. The possibility of getting any kind of help from her siblings or receiving help from social services in the care of the mother and grandmother could be discussed with Natalia. It seems that the child protection services and the counseling, drug clinic, and/or vocational services offered to the siblings of Natalia so far have proved rather fruitless. With her consent and that of her siblings perhaps Natalia's social worker could collaborate with their social workers to work jointly on the complex family situation. Finally, it seems that Natalia herself might benefit from some kind of psychotherapy or from further counseling with a social worker. Natalia does not mention so far having undergone any psychotherapy.

The biographical interview with Natalia seems to lend itself quite easily to an analysis from a social work perspective. Maybe one reason for this is that Natalia has actually been a client of social services and that stories of a traumatic childhood, like hers, are not rare in social work practice. Unlike many storytellers in social work, however, Natalia is extremely reflective and articulate, so that, even without the possibility of further dialogue with her, the reader of the transcribed interview gets a fair-

ly good picture of her earlier life, as well as of her present situation. A strengths-based analysis of the interview shows that Natalia has many strengths and resources. This is, of course, largely due to Natalia's fairly stable life situation at the time of the interview. The life stories of actual service users in social work can be much darker and more chaotic with possible strengths less visible. It would be interesting to read biographical interviews with Natalia's siblings as well, if that was feasible. They would probably be very different.

As mentioned earlier, this analysis of the interview with Natalia was made in a different social and cultural context than the one where the interview was done and the interviewee's life lived. This has, of course, influenced the analysis in certain ways. However, I think that one of the strengths of qualitative research is that there can be several perspectives on one phenomenon. Actually, it would be interesting to have social workers from different

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countries and contexts analyze the same interview and compare the results. Such a comparative study could give a broad spectrum of perspectives on social work practice and underlying academic theory in different countries.

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**Transcript of Biographical Interview No. WDD 24.AGG Natalia¹
(Translated by Anna Piaszczyńska)**

***Institutionalized Identity? The Processes of Identity
Development on The Basis of Biographies Rendered
by Adults Raised in Residential Care² Lodz, Poland 2011-2014***

Date and place of interview:

August 24, 2011, the Institute of Sociology,
University of Lodz, researcher’s room

Duration of interview:

17.15-20.20

Interview arrangement:

Interview from the mailing list. The narrator herself contacted the Institute by telephone and volunteered for the interview – she wanted to demonstrate the fate of a person brought up in a children’s home. The contact was established in July, and an interview was arranged for August due to vacations and a language course attended by the narrator.

¹ The transcription of interview with Natalia was intended to represent the exact manner of narrator’s speech and thus, it does not follow the rules of Polish spelling and punctuation (what is reflected in the translation).

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NATALIA’S TST

Who am I?

- 1. I am *a human being*
- 2. I am *a mother*
- 3. I am *an open person*
- 4. I am *communicative*
- 5. I am *self-dependent*
- 6. I am *a wife*
- 7. I am *a good friend*
- 8. I am *a woman*
- 9. I am *a good worker*
- 10. I am *a part of the family*
- 11. I am *a neighbor*
- 12. I am *stubborn*
- 13. I am *honest*
- 14. I am *an empathizing person*
- 15. I am
- 16. I am
- 17. I am
- 18. I am
- 19. I am
- 20. I am

- 1. A: Natalia I would like to, so to start this story, that you’d just say a few words about your family,
- 2. about your origins.
- 3. N: From the very beginning?
- 4. A: Mmhm. I mean about your parents, well about...
- 5. N: About my parents... well this will be a little difficult but sometimes/
- 6. A: If not about that/ just about childhood...
- 7. N: Well, so uhm... My father came from mm... the town [name of town]. It is such a small town
- 8. about 220 kilometers away from [name of city]. My mother is from [name of big city], she comes
- 9. from [name of big city, name of district]. I don’t know how they met but somehow they met.
- 10. Probably dad was here in the army and maybe that is how it was like uhm... in any case they moved
- 11. to [name of city] uhm... in seventy- probably seventy-nine or eighty... uhm... Then I had an older
- 12. brother, then there was me, my younger brother, there were three of us. Next there appeared my
- 13. sister, six years younger than me, than uhm... yet another brother, another sister and a brother. I got
- 14. the sequence wrong, anyway there are six of us, of which one child uhm... died at the age of two in
- 15. 1983 uhm... Well, what am I to say now?
- 16. A: Maybe you will say just a little about your story, just about your childhood.
- 17. N: (xx)
- 18. A: That is, when were you born, where, what did your childhood look like?
- 19. N: I was born in 74 in [name], somewhere in the forest uhm... That is in an ambulance mostly
- 20. ((laughter)). Cause it wasn’t like that I was some kind of a child dumped under a tree uhm... I think
- 21. that my childhood, this very early child/ childhood was rather uhm... pleasant, although I don’t
- 22. remember this early childhood uhm... Here, after my parents’ moving to [name of city], there used
- 23. to be some ups and downs uhm... Generally I come from a pathological family, which is why,
- 24. uhm... I ended up in the children’s home. Though for five years, so it was not so terribly long. I was
- 25. very lucky anyway cause, uh... I knew people who were in the children’s home almost since birth,
- 26. so it wasn’t so bad... uhm... Well my parents, generally, my mother has not ever worked, my dad
- 27. always worked. Back in the 80s it was rather uhm... the conditions were so, maybe, maybe there
- 28. were not too much in the shops, but the conditions were good enough that this care was... and the
- 29. money... it was enough. I remember we used to go to the cinema and for ice cream and... and
- 30. generally it was, it was okay. However, it got worse a little when my parents started to drink, started
- 31. to abuse alcohol, my mom, my dad. Dad was a very skilled worker, so when they fell into such
- 32. uhm... alcohol benders, where normally nowadays a man would automatically lose a job, my father
- 33. always came back. And s/ so he was welcomed with open arms because he really was a good
- 34. worker and reliable uhm... well mm... Such, mm, alcohol binges, carousals, were becoming heavier
- 35. more and more often, sometimes it used to be so that my parents kept drinking for three weeks

1. uhm... sometimes it used to be that they were drinking for half a year let's say, but well uhm... such
 2. uhm... the moment when uhm... this started - this alcohol appeared quite more often it used to, and
 3. it got worse and worse uhm... My dad... uhm... in 88 or 89 went to prison for two years because...
 4. due to that I mean I don't want to justify anybody here but both the district [name of the
 5. impoverished neighborhood in the city] and the conditions were friendly to that mm... to start such
 6. illegal alcohol trading, commonly it is called a den. Because my mother didn't work she took care
 7. of the children, then money got a bit short and since there were such alcohol binges, so clearly the
 8. money was uhm... was squandered to the last zloty [Polish currency] and then the money was gone.
 9. So... uhm, so uhm... my parents just started selling alcohol well - uh, there was such a den. And my
 10. father uhm... went to prison for/ for this illegal trade, he went for two years... And then it all began,
 11. it all began to fall apart, although earlier there were such situations, that if perhaps social care had
 12. been more often interested uhm, in depth and probably earlier, everybody would have ended up in
 13. children's home and this may have been better for us. Because of all the family, to be honest, that's
 14. the only real home I have ((cries))...

15. A: Natalia, we can take a break at any moment, take a break right now if you wish. I know it isn't
 16. an easy story ((longer pause)).... [A hands N tissues].

17. N: Thank you..... ((N cries)). Maybe I will add that... in my family still earlier it was always, I
 18. don't know, it was dirty uhm... somehow my mother didn't pay attention to look after us so that we
 19. had clean neat things. It was all washed but it was washed in such a way that it was thrown into one
 20. washing machine, so these things were so, well, uncool. Generally, always, I don't know, maybe it
 21. wasn't lice but there were always some scabies uhm... And being at school, there it was a bit
 22. uncool, cause there were such uhm... nursing controls and so on so it didn't belong to cool things,
 23. cause in class one may have not uhm... not been someone, that is been some kind of person rejected
 24. from the group, and one always made up for this with one's character and I don't know, somehow
 25. it.... it was okay. But it never was so that we had time to learn super-extra so that we would be
 26. among the school class leaders – there were just such different trappings. Sometimes there was no
 27. lunch but there were organized some kind of school lunches, free of charge. Thus it was not bad
 28. although my mother cooked quite well... when everything was okay it was okay. However/ well I
 29. just started to talk about my/ about my brothers and sisters, so well... only just me... as the only one
 30. of this six, five actually cause one child we lost, although I just don't want to blame anybody but I
 31. remember Gosia's death ((sighs))... I remember cause then I was five or six years, eight years old
 32. even, and I was a child who, well, remembers certain things. I remember that there was a little metal
 33. baby bed... and Gosia was lying in this bed. And in the morning she said that she had a headache, in
 34. the childish way, cause this child was just very little. And my parents went out somewhere, locked
 35. us up, that is if I was eight, I have one year older brother, that would have been nine-year-old

1. Radek, they left us three alone (((ponders))). There was another brother I ha/ I have a brother two
 2. years younger, that is there was 9-year-old, 8-year-old, and 2-year-old Gosia, who had a headache.
 3. And... and we were at home and observed this girl, in this bed as she uhm... caught breath, like a
 4. little fish. And my parents went out somewhere, I don't know some shopping, I don't remember
 5. then. But anyway when they ca/ when they came it was late in the afternoon, it was 3 or 4 pm and
 6. they left us alone in the morning. And... and I remember when uhm... when this child just caught
 7. breath with such a last ounce of strength. Then dad uhm... when they came home he called the
 8. ambulance. The ambulance came after 7 pm to state the child's death. Autopsy, I don't know if this
 9. was autopsy or/ I don't remember. In any case the doctor said that it was uhm... mening/ meningi/
 10. A: Meningitis, mhm.

11. N: Meningitis yes, purulent. So it seems to me that if, if anybody had had an interest in this child
 12. earlier, she wouldn't have died. Cause this meningitis purulent uhm... certainly had been
 13. developing much, much earlier, and in my opinion, this child was neglected. I can state that now,
 14. though at the time I was a little kid and well - and besides, it's difficult to judge uhm... parents,
 15. isn't it? So, uh, Gosia died as a result of this disease.

16. A: And this was in 83, yes?

17. N: Yes, 83.

18. A: How old was she?

19. N: Uhm... two years old.

20. A: Two years old, mhm.

21. N: She was two years old... Well, well and... I don't know what I started to say I lost track.

22. A: You started talking about your siblings.

23. N: So, well, among the siblings actually just I, I do live, say, not for today, but just so normally as a
 24. normal person. I have a regular job, I have a husband, I have a home, I have bills that I have to pay,
 25. which is not cool but, but that's the way life is. While my older brother is in prison, my younger
 26. brother is in prison, and my still younger brother is still in prison. My one sister is married but this
 27. is nothing good, and - certainly nobody would want to meet her at night because she is aggressive,
 28. causes trouble. Although I haven't ever seen her in such a situation but... but this is not a normal
 29. life. She lives in some squat, also abuses alcohol, also has a husband who habitually drinks and
 30. loses his job forever and all the time has epilepsy seizures now, at such a young age, so...

31. A: Due to alcoholism?

32. N: Due to alcohol. So I think that there won't be any good future in it... And of course also uhm...
 33. she was also in prison for half a year for... drug trafficking or something like that... And I also have
 34. the youngest sister... who for the time being lives quite normally. She has... a rather/ she does not
 35. live at home... ((sighs)) quite early she moved out of home, she lives, she is now 21 years old, she

1. lives with a younger boyfriend. But this guy is/ that is, for our conditions, because we all live here
 2. in the area, for our conditions he is not bad. She has a 9-month-old daughter, but already there she's
 3. had a little bit of problems with the law, so that it is not that super-extra, although it may be that she
 4. is still the most normal person in this family. I mean most normal in the sense that she pays
 5. attention to the fact that life is not, is not just one day, that you have to take care of something and
 6. that there is this child. This, of course, everyone here has children and no one seems to care. And... I
 7. don't know I am a bit of an outcast in the family, frankly speaking I don't feel very cool with that.
 8. Although I would not want to identify with my/ that is, I will never renounce my family and I will
 9. always help anyone if there is such a need. But I can't live like them. I just cannot and that is, it
 10. seems to me, that is the reason why I found myself in the children's home. Because uhm... like my
 11. dad... in the 80s uhm... 90, just a moment 89 it was I guess when he was sent to prison, so my mom
 12. completely lost it, uhm... lost probably... a sense that she is a mother, that she has a family, that she
 13. has children, and that these kids really have only her at the moment, because dad was in prison and
 14. it was for two long years. At the time when uhm... my dad went to prison I was at sixth grade
 15. primary school, that is, I was already such a big girl and thinking. I took care of the younger
 16. siblings I had... though I didn't always like it, because I was already at an age that, I don't know,
 17. well, it would be nice to run somewhere to the park with the girls, with the girls play after...
 18. whatever, and not all the time ask "Mom, can I go?," "Take, you know, your brother, sister with
 19. you," and so on. So I was, let's say, a nanny for the younger siblings, which I did not like because...
 20. I really didn't realize it and sometimes it was fun when the parents were drinking because we could
 21. do what we wanted. I didn't have to, I don't know, look after someone, even though it was on a
 22. short run, because when I returned home it turned out that one child or another was crying, hungry,
 23. or needs changing clothes and so on. Trouble came out even more than, than if I was to be with that
 24. child all the time. Well, uhm... I went to that children's home... because... at the time when my dad
 25. went to prison my mom uhm... went partying hard. She met a company and I remember all sorts of
 26. people came, even some man without a leg uhm... My grandma tried to intervene a little bit,
 27. because my grandmother is a very much of an okay person, that is, my mother's mother. It was also
 28. all very hard for her. She brought us food, but unfortunately, she failed to bring up mom and – she
 29. didn't have any influence on her, although she sometimes she hit her on the head with an umbrella,
 30. but it didn't restore her reason. And... and I remember once there was this situation that my mother
 31. locked us up, there was such an old huge door, and went out. This, she was out for like two or three
 32. days. People gave us food through the window... well it wasn't any fun. In any case, we had stupid
 33. ideas because the age difference was, I don't know, say from 13 to 5 or 4 years. We organized a cool
 34. party at home... of course, with the house locked up. Our friends, boys and girls came in through the
 35. window/ and we had such a large tin bath... and decided to melt in all the plastic things that come to

1. our mind, so we would have also probably burnt the house uhm... completely if not/
 2. A: To melt in the sense, in the sense of melting, not drowning in water, but melting? [Polish "to
 3. melt" is spelt the same as "to drown" – translator's note].
 4. N: No, no, we set fire to plastic stuff and so it flowed nicely, flowed into that bowl. There was
 5. terrible smoke, the police arrived, fire brigade and all, so there all the crackpot you can imagine
 6. uhm... And generally my... my grandma once uhm... came, saw, I mean - many times she came and
 7. helped us, she brought us different things and and she came once and saw what was going on and
 8. she set the things right. As there was no normal contact with my mom... she called... uh... reported
 9. this in general I don't know where, to some care, anywhere, to the police, I don't know. Anyway,
 10. my brother was taken to the children's home... I mean my siblings went somewhere to children's
 11. homes, and I was sent to my other other grandma, my dad's mother. I was sent there because it
 12. seems to me that umm... grandma needed someone to take care of the hens (((jokingly))) and so on.
 13. Well in any case well... anyway I ended up so, uh, pretty much well that during those two years, I
 14. didn't move around some children's homes. The grandma was as she was, but she was. Anyway, I
 15. missed my family very much then... I remember that... ((cries)).... ((longer pause)). I remember
 16. then that uhm... my grandma more than once reproached me on my room, that I am like my mother.
 17. Once I even got it on the face for, stuff like that - though to say the truth... ((cries)... ((sighs)).... I
 18. don't think that... only my mother is to blame....
 19. A: Would you like, Natalia, to take just a small break so, for example... If it is hard for you to talk,
 20. because I understand that these are really very difficult, these memories...
 21. N: I'm a bit of a crybaby ((longer pause))... Well, in any case it doesn't seem to me that only my
 22. mother was to blame for the situation. The fact that, well, dad devoted himself and went to this
 23. prison because really mom should have gone for this because it was her got caught in the act. But
 24. ((sniffs)) he decided that it would be better, but if my dad had led a different life, probably there just
 25. wouldn't have been such drinking, and it seems to me that the fault always lies in the middle, well
 26. so there's no point blaming anyone here more or less. In any case, I missed my brothers and sisters
 27. ((wipes nose)) and I very much wanted to come back here and the moment my dad left this prison
 28. and came home... he came for me... and said that everything will be okay and everything and I... I
 29. came back here, to [name of city]. I went to the eighth grade, I completed this primary school, but it
 30. wasn't/ such/ After those two years when I lived at this grandmother I got very unused to dirt, to
 31. these alcohol benders, whatever. A lot of things I didn't like. I didn't like my mom's behavior ever,
 32. there were conflicts with her forever. I just had the impression that there were constant clashes.
 33. Besides uhm... there was no/ relationships got very/ I hoped that when I get back it would all be
 34. well and at last this family of mine/ but I already, uh, I could see I couldn't live like this. I freed/ I/
 35. for two years I was gone and I just stopped to accept things, it was very very difficult for me... and I

1. remember that (((with hesitation in her voice))) no, I don't remember at this point yet, so I don't
 2. remember for sure, but it all got one thing on top of another... and... and these quarrels... such fights,
 3. it's probably, I mean adolescent age also played a role, I mean once, umm... enough of this all...
 4. enough of this life here in this house of drunkards (((strong emotions))). And... well I didn't want,
 5. uhm... again these lice, this dirt and and generally such old habits of the family that, uhm... I don't
 6. know. Once I don't really remember the reason yet, that was the last straw and I had swallowed
 7. some pills that I found in the cabinet and decided to poison myself... which was not very reasonable
 8. but well... In any case, I decided to take my own life... I think my dad found me but I'm not sure... it
 9. could be so, I was probably only half-conscious ((grunts)). I, uh, was taken to hospital to [street
 10. name], and there I had gastric lavage but from this hospital, but I didn't return home because I
 11. didn't want to. Well, but this was very hard for me ((cries)).... because my family absolutely turned
 12. away from me... and I was sent to this children's home.....

13. A: How old were you then?

14. N: 14.

15. A: 14, yes. So this was 8th grade, that is after completion of 8th grade?

16. N: 8th grade.

17. A: Mhm.

18. N: This was the 8th grade ((sniffs)) and I was sent to this children's home already as a teenager and
 19. generally of course ((sniffs)) after some time... uhm... I started less often, and then less and then a
 20. little more often to visit my parents at home. Somehow uhm they... tolerated me there despite the
 21. fact that I turned away, that I said no and all. That I don't want to live in, in such a family. Actually
 22. it was my decision but... now in retrospect from the perspective of time it seems right to me,
 23. although I don't know how at all... uhm... it could, uh, have been done to live normally and not to/
 24. to change one's life when one doesn't decide about oneself. Probably the attempt on my own life
 25. was not a go/ good idea, maybe a teacher, a psychologist I don't know anyone could have helped,
 26. but then I don't know, I didn't think then in such terms as now, and I don't... don't know, I just
 27. didn't think about where I could have uhm... looked for some help, but I just decided that it made
 28. no sense ((cries))... And at that, from the moment I came to this children's home I pulled myself
 29. together... so it seems to me that, perhaps, this is the way I am a little impossible to kill
 30. (((jokingly))). I pulled myself together, I began to function normally, I met my family, I met my
 31. siblings. And I remember there was a time when my six years younger sister ran away to me. Once I
 32. think, I don't know for sure. I took her from this house, from this drink/ from that drunkenness,
 33. there were fights there, well, this was not a home for normal child raising. And this sister of mine
 34. saw that I live in such a room with three girls, that I'm clean ((sniffs)) that I have a nice room... that
 35. there is a canteen, that there is normal food, that there is a completely different life, that children

1. can do their homework, that they can play, that there are different games, that sometimes one gets
 2. cool things at times, that a completely different life here simply... uhm... just such a normal life
 3. that.... that one can normally function. She wanted, I remember that she wanted to uhm... to come
 4. to me, and I wanted to take her and even I took her up for a night, I was be allowed by the
 5. caregiver, cause well, she stayed, but the moment I asked the principal to do something so that she
 6. stayed with us, there was no response, or I don't know, any such power to, uh/ any opportunity for
 7. doing so, so that she could in fact stay. And I think that it was a mistake because... because maybe
 8. she... if she'd met a little bit of a different life, it would have turned out differently. Now she is
 9. well... well she isn't on a good path and and who knows if one day they will not take away her child
 10. from her because she walks drunk in the streets, fusses about, steals, I don't know, whatever this,
 11. and this poor child, my sister's daughter, she isn't in any good situation with that mom, because...
 12. well, because she sees what... what we all saw once. Such a two-year-old child, well, actually she is
 13. three years old already [name], such a little girl should be a little bit/ but ok. Well, in any case I was
 14. sent to this children's home. There I was, but I also had silly ideas too... There were various flip-
 15. outs, the girl from there, from this children's home, we came from different families, so we bought
 16. some wine too, we drank in parks, then we threw up till we dropped well...

17. A: ((laughter))

18. N: I also don't know, I learned to smoke cigarettes on a park bench. Maybe somehow I wasn't such
 19. a great angel, but I had such uhm... peace assured, such inner peace I knew always, that when I go
 20. back, I would go back to such a normal home, the children's home I mean, that... that there was
 21. someone who was interested in me, there was someone who asked, "Did you do homework." There
 22. was someone who could support me, uhm... could have helped me, helped me choose the school,
 23. showed me, uhm... how to live. And the fact that, well, these five years at this children's home
 24. really helped me a lot. Because - in retrospect I now see that, I don't know, I don't want to judge
 25. anyone here somehow super-positively, but I think I am a good mother... I understand my daughter,
 26. I can get along with her - communicate with her, even though she may be now at such an age, so
 27. rebellious because she is now 13 years old. I love her very much and she loves us too, me and my
 28. husband. She is taught that there is a lot of love at our home, that she does not have to hide away
 29. any secrets, she is open, she tells us about everything and... I didn't have that, didn't have such
 30. understanding, I had no such love. This children's home gave me the direction, the fact that I
 31. completed a lot of different schools, and that in the end I am a fairly educated person, maybe not so
 32. super-extra, but I did the ba/ Bachelor degree. I am somehow oriented at the future - we're trying to
 33. build a house, we will see how it goes (((jokingly))) because bank loans are very expensive I don't
 34. know, well, I think very differently from my parents now and I regret that I couldn't do anything for
 35. my family, my brothers and sisters so that they would be in the sa/ the same situation as me. Cause I

1. don't/ I mean it is difficult to raise boys, especially in the neighborhood where uhm... at the time
 2. when parents are drinking and do not pay attention to anything it is obvious that kids get different
 3. ideas coming to their mind, and when they get into some bad company they try to dominate or
 4. show, hey, I'm cool too and good, and this isn't directed toward any real good, but unfortunately
 5. toward... toward the evil and... Well so they ended up in prisons and it seems to me that it was due
 6. to the fact that they hadn't experienced this love in the family. No one was specifically interested
 7. and if uhm... and if any of us, I don't know, didn't do homework or got b/ bad marks at school, or if,
 8. I don't know, if they caused any trouble, there was no such understanding, there was no question
 9. "Why?" there was just some punishment or something, and, well, the boys suffered terribly. Then
 10. my two-year-old brother, two years younger brother than me... from early childhood peed at night
 11. in bed. I think it was based on the nervous ground, of course there was no medical consultation. So,
 12. except that there was dirt in this house, lice, many - many times, uhm... one could feel this smell of
 13. urine... because it wasn't like he had this bed linen changed every day, he peed himself, it was
 14. turned over to the other side and that's enough, well that wasn't too cool... I think that, uhm... such a
 15. pissing at night, uhm... was due to the fact that he was such a sensitive kid. Now... well, in fact half
 16. of his life uhm... he's been in some kind of juvenile detention homes or children's homes, uh, in - in
 17. such prisons already. At the time when he uhm... turned 18 ((long pause)).... ((crying)). And I
 18. remember... when we were kids and our parents drank ((cries)), so we could really do what we
 19. wanted and then my brother ((cries)... I don't know what now, he was so... he suffered such terrible
 20. harm ((cries)) we had such such, such children dreams actually such let's say we were about 10, 11,
 21. 8 years old ((sniffs, sighs heavily)), we walked the streets when we saw there were such... ((cries,
 22. long pause))... these stray dogs.

23. A: Mhm.

24. N: Poor, hungry ((cries)) we took them home. And I don't know, maybe we found five such dogs,
 25. we fed them we gave them water. And once we, once we just - we told each other so, that when we
 26. grow up ((cries)) we will open a shelter for these poor, homeless dogs ((cries))... So I think to
 27. myself now that if really ((cries)), if someone had guided these kids, if there had been just a little bit
 28. of love in this family, none of them would be in prison now for sure. Because these were really
 29. ((sniffs)) good boys and now unfortunately... it is as it is ((softer)). And really my younger brother,
 30. who wanted to help animals so much when he was little, now he doesn't think rationally, doesn't
 31. think normally, and each such stay in penitentiary ((sniffs)) assures him that there is no other life
 32. than life in such a criminal world. It is untrue that... that prison resocializes.

33. A: Mhm.

34. N: This is simply so, when you fall into one hole, then the more such sentences you have the more
 35. you are important in this criminal world. He has plenty of friends, colleagues, but these these are all

1. so I don't know... a little bit different-minded people and for sure... ((sniffs)) and certainly don't
 2. want to uhm... to return to a righteous life. May I have a tissue?
 3. A: Yes, please.
 4. N: I really just, well, I am just a bit... some people say that I am such a mother hen because...
 5. because I'm really able to withstand a lot. Only it hurts me the most that they were not given the
 6. chance these, these sib/ these siblings of mine. It's not cool. And - I still keep in touch with all them,
 7. although I don't - I don't go to these prisons because, well, I have my life, I have a grandma who is
 8. already/ who according to/ to whom I'm responsible to help, cause when I needed this help she
 9. helped me too. And I try as I can, so I don't go somehow, so terribly often over to these prisons
 10. simply because I'd have to spend every free weekend to go somewhere all over Poland and visit
 11. brothers who really, well, they made a choice. Because I could also have chosen in fact... I rebelled,
 12. it cost me a lot, because I don't know, perhaps only God knows how many nights I cried the whole
 13. night through... cause I felt rejected and when there is/ I don't know, whatever this grandma would
 14. be, whatever this father would be, one loves them and wants such uh... such acceptance from them
 15. so that... whatever, they would stick to us... I don't know what else I am to say...

16. A: Natalia maybe we will close these threads that are the most difficult for you.

17. N: Yes, yes.

18. A: All right, because I understand that that this is really such a difficult story... well going back to
 19. the past still just a little bit more, you said that you lived in this [name of neighborhood]. And in
 20. which year more or less, did you leave and come to [name of city]? How old were you then?

21. N: I don't know, four or five.

22. A: Four or five, okay. And in what conditions do you remember you lived in this wilderness or was
 23. it a village?

24. N: It was a village [name]. In fact I was born in [name of village]. Because, um... ((grunts)) the
 25. times were such that, uhm... women didn't go to the hospital before pregnancy somehow before
 26. this delivery date, I don't know uhm... when the the due date came one called an ambulance, and
 27. considering that it was quite far from hospital I was born somewhere on the way in the forest. But
 28. generally it was such a small place called [name of village] and my parents uhm... I don't know...
 29. my/ my parents rented a room at someone's farm. Even a few years ago we drove by, sometimes I
 30. go there, to this grandma from the father's side. Yet when my dad was alive - my dad died two years
 31. ago uhm... so once we drove past and he showed me where we lived there. But this building wasn't
 32. there anymore. So it was, it was a rented room, that was maybe one room with a kitchen, or it was a
 33. kitchen, or it was a room that was divided uhm... it was a room divided uhm... with a sepa/ with a
 34. separated kitchen area, I don't remember exactly.

35. A: And what did the parents do for a living then, do you know or not?

1. N: My mother has never worked, that's for sure. While my dad well uhm... I don't remember but he
 2. certainly worked somewhere. He always worked, he was not afraid of working... always worked.
 3. He was a man who, I don't know, slaughtered a pig, repaired the car, went to the field, built
 4. something, in fact, actually just a jack of all trades.
 5. A: What was he by profession?
 6. N: ((sighs)) I don't know if my dad completed any vocational school or not, but he worked in a
 7. construction company. He also was an electrician, he was a plumber...
 8. A: Mhm.
 9. N: And from my father's life it is also interesting that... he had a sister, has/ well yes, he had,
 10. because she is already dead, had a sister younger than himself and my grandmother raised them
 11. two/ the two of these children alone, because... mm... my dad was maybe eight when his father died,
 12. A: Oh.
 13. N: and my grandmother was always fixed on her younger daughter, who was, I don't know, 8 or 10
 14. years younger than my dad, and my dad was always such, well worse, well such a boy, you know, a
 15. daughter is always closer to the mother. And when he married my mother, which my grandmother
 16. didn't like much, I don't know why, but looking back, maybe she had some reasons. Then he was
 17. generally in such a... in the background completely, and they wanted to move out from there.
 18. Grandma uhm... often said there... that the first child, that is, my older brother is a bastard, that he's
 19. not, uhm, the child of uhm... my dad's, and stuff like that. So I think that he didn't have such an
 20. easy life there with his mother, and that's probably why they moved away from there pretty quickly.
 21. A: And your grandmother, she had a farm there?
 22. N: She has a farm. I mean, now she's probably leased it all, sold it and given money to her daughter
 23. (((dismissively))). But we keep in touch with her, and with this aunt too.
 24. A: And, as you say, at this time you moved to [name of city]. You don't know why actually here,
 25. for/ oh well you've just said why, haven't you, just a moment ago.
 26. N: This was, among other things, this was one, one reason, and the other reason was that, uhm...
 27. that my/ that my mom had here uhm...
 28. A: Her mom, right?
 29. N: I'm sorry?
 30. A: She had her mother here?
 31. N: That she had her mother, yes. And grandma uhm... travelled there, from this [name of city]
 32. uhm... to this [village name]. And as she told us that when she once took me and we were walking
 33. naked so dirty, but in the country I think that's the way kids looked like in those days ((laughs)) that
 34. the child is happy when dirty and uhm... and I think my grandma took all the family to herself, she
 35. said. Because, first, first my parents lived for a short time at my grandma's... and then hired uhm...

1. a flat, or a room actually from such a family here in the area and we lived there... And then I don't
 2. know, my mom broke into some squat and got the decision for... for this flat.
 3. A: In a tenant house?
 4. N: In a tenant house, yeah.
 5. A: Here, somewhere in [name of district]?
 6. N: Yes, yes. We still live where we lived, and in fact I now have it actually now uhm... I am
 7. already... because I'm now 36. Yeah I know, but then/
 8. A: ((laughter))
 9. N: ((laughter))
 10. N: Times were different and, uhm... and it was so uncool, not always things were going nicely,
 11. never really. But now I live in the same tenant house as my mom, I go shopping with her. Actually,
 12. she has such a support, I get her various doctors, I go with her to doctors, I take her to the lot which
 13. I bought, and I take care of her. There really was a time that my mom/ uhm now maybe not because
 14. she is a very ailing person, but there was a time uhm... when my mum drank and drank quite a lot
 15. because this or that, that the kids, uhm, grew up and everyone went their own way so mm... I don't
 16. know, I don't know what I was saying, but okay. Anyway, I just wanted to say only that... since the
 17. time we were little not much changed, cause there were drinking binges, they were still drinking,
 18. still uhm... there was not a word to uhm... they, I mean my parents, they didn't grew super-extra
 19. wiser or anything after all these years. Although my dad in 2002... uhm... got very ill. He got so ill
 20. that being in [name of the village] somewhere fishing he was brought here by helicopter to uhm... a
 21. cardiology hospital because he had an aneurysm of the aorta. It was his first operation, he had a
 22. stent put in the thoracic section... it was not cool because he had it/ The operation was very
 23. difficult, in deep hypothermia and... and everyone kept fingers crossed that he would survive. But
 24. this uhm... this aneurysm went to another place, the aorta was delaminating, and then two years
 25. ago... my dad died... He died after a successful operation, but he could not survive it, it was just too
 26. late for him. And I will tell you that, despite the fact that it was different with those parents of mine
 27. and, and... they certainly didn't show me how to live... and they didn't give me all that the children
 28. from normal families may have... ((sighs)) I always... always I was there when I was needed, and it
 29. was enough to do this ((snaps fingers)) and I was already with these parents of mine. And yet, God
 30. forbid, when something was going on... something bad happened... I didn't look at it that they were
 31. bad, but they left us, did not care about us, then Oh My. One felt very sorry and emotional that
 32. something was happening, something was wrong. And my dad, two years ago/ mm... he heard on
 33. television that in [town in southern Poland] there is a hospital that does such different experiments
 34. and is doing just, uhm... heavy operations. I made contact with the doctor, I found some head of
 35. ward, sent the documentation to this hospital. The doctor said that he would take this operation that

1. he will order uhm... those spare parts, such stents from Munich from somewhere and... and that he
 2. will operate my dad. My dad lived with the thought that he will be operated on, but unfortunately
 3. uhm... the waiting time for this operation was extended since February. We went there to that [town
 4. in southern Poland] so that he would be initially examined, so radiologists there looked at him,
 5. uhm... photos and so on, do some own tests and the operation was rescheduled for June... And I
 6. went there with my dad... well well, well because he knew that uhm... that I will have to deal with
 7. it all. And in fact he loaded me with ((cries)) the duty of burying him, organizing the funeral. He
 8. was not a bad man because he knew that my mom is a person who can't deal with anything... and
 9. it's very sad ((cries)). As we drove to hospital, my dad... told me that if this operation was not
 10. successful then I had to bury him, to take care of everything... and I took care of everything ((cries))
 11. despite the fact that it was as it was. I was terribly affected by the death of my dad... and... it is
 12. generally strange that he died on his birthday,
 13. A: Mhm.
 14. N: the operation was successful but the patient did not survive. Well I just don't know/ I talk more
 15. about all my family than about myself ((slightly jokingly)) but I don't know, I just don't know
 16. perha/ it seems to me that sometimes... I once watched a film that the... children from such
 17. pathological families... will never say a bad word about their parents and love them so much,
 18. A: Mhm.
 19. N: that... that they think about... ah, he did harm, but just, just what counts is that well, they are.
 20. A: Mhm.
 21. N: ... Well so I also maint/ I go regularly to the cemetery, which actually only I take care of. My
 22. whole family doesn't ((sniffs)). And no one goes to this father's grave, it is very sad, really... I know
 23. that they didn't get too much good from my dad, but... I think that it was the father it's not worth
 24. ((sniffs)) but that it is worth remembering... Well, but I am such such uhm... perhaps the black
 25. sheep of the family of mine ((laughs)), because everything I do is the opposite way than everyone
 26. would want, would wish. Though ((sniffs)) now uhm... because of that I am, let's say, an educated
 27. person, normal, very much is required from me, more than from them all because I have to deal
 28. with - because I have to do, I don't know what, I have to organize, I have to go make an
 29. appointment, I don't know, I have to do everything.
 30. A: And, you said about your mother, that that she requires more from you, doesn't she?
 31. N: Yes.
 32. A: Do the siblings too?
 33. N: Uhm... my mom, brothers, sisters look at me a little, uhm... I don't really know how to define it
 34. because uhm... ((sighs))... as if they were jealous of... that I was successful, although never in my
 35. life, never have they said anything. The moment I got, I became independent in 94. I got a flat here,

1. at [street name], I got a flat and I live to this date in this flat. But I tried to help everyone, really
 2. helped, my sister who notoriously went truant, who in the end didn't complete school. But, mm...
 3. not to have this conflict, to show that one can live a normal life I, uh, first I took my sister to my
 4. home. I only asked "Listen, just go to school, it is the condition that you live here with me and my
 5. husband." Although, maybe my husband wasn't comfortable with tha/ that we but, no, no, there
 6. weren't any terribly strong glitches about that, because he knew that I, I was very much attached to
 7. my family and had pity... he sometimes reproaches me that again I got it on the ass and...
 8. A: Mhm.
 9. N: ((sighs))
 10. A: Natalia just to shut these family threads because I understand that this is the most painful and
 11. difficult to tell, because there are two sisters, right?
 12. N: Yes.
 13. A: There are two sisters and a, the one who, you uhm... bothers you so, and roams somewhere in the
 14. streets, is the older one?
 15. N: Yes, that's right.
 16. A: Because you're born in 74 [1974].
 17. N: Yes, she's uhm... oh/ uhm.. she is, God, born in 81.
 18. A: And she too was in an institution, or was she all the time with your parents?
 19. N: Uhm... she actually... was in an institution, but I don't know which because it was a very short
 20. time. She certainly was in the emergency center at [name of the emergency shelter for children] and
 21. what hap/ what happened next I don't know, because I was generally 200 kilometers from...
 22. A: This is the moment when you/
 23. N: Yes.
 24. A: Were taken, yes and you were divided?
 25. N: Yes, they divided us. And and I just, let's say, ended up in the most convenient way because I
 26. went to this grandmother. The rest were somewhere scattered, and really I didn't know what was
 27. going on at that point, we had no contact with each other. But... uhm... before, I don't know whether
 28. they were sent at once to this children's home or sometime after me because...uhm... after I went/
 29. but they were certainly in a facility uhm.
 30. A: Emergency?
 31. N: Emergency shelter, or, or something like that. My parents had their parental rights restricted as
 32. soon as my dad... probably when he came out of that prison... uhm... or... or perhaps even earlier in
 33. some way my mother didn't have... she arranged, I don't know, I don't know how this happened,
 34. but they returned home much quicker than I. It was a very short and transitional stage in their lives.
 35. Well, I.... I stayed/ lived in the children's home for five years and - so a much longer period in my

1. life than in theirs.

2. A: So, so as to close such a thread, the mo/ most painful, so as not to harass you with this too.

3. N: So...

4. A: The oldest brother. What year was he/

5. N: 73.

6. A: And what is his story, that is, you shared common childhood, so then he goes to a facility, then

7. he returns...

8. N: Uhm... it is more probably to the facility, then some institutions... uhm... like detention homes...

9. uhm, it wasn't cool with him, because wasn't a bad boy and... well, generally it was the alcohol.

10. A: He came back home, right?

11. N: He did.

12. A: He came back home when your dad returned from prison?

13. N: Yes, yes.

14. A: And is he at home?

15. N: We all came back home, yeah. But the boys were grow/ growing up, and uhm... The guys were

16. indeed not interested if there was a den at home and forever some uhm... men came, older or

17. younger, came for the alcohol, so well super (((with irony))) in particular that we often served the

18. ((laughs)) the client, yes. So, so the contacts were such, let's say that we all were known in the

19. streets and uhm... okay, no one touched us there ((laughter)). Well, but the guys messed around and

20. mess/ messed around good, and they were sent to correctional institutions, there were some actions

21. that I don't know when, they/ they fought with someone, they stole something, and there were

22. fights at home. When dad was sober he was quite a stern father uhm... and there was violence in the

23. fam/ at home uhm... The moment the boys messed around there were no arguments, uhm... hands up

24. and to the corner and if there were greater offences or, I don't know... broken glass or something,

25. there was already the belt, so, so the boys had such corporal punishment quite... quite often. They

26. were sent to the detention homes and then, there was only the treatment that he deserved it, that he's

27. bad, that he messed up, he knew what he was up for, what his problem was. And so it is really to

28. this day. So as if... my parents uhm... when the boys grew up and had as if their own life, they went

29. away from home, anywhere because no one provided them with a normal home, and as I was

30. growing up, they just wandered somewhere. Or when he, my brother that is, came from the

31. detention home to - as he returned from the dene/ detention home he lived a bit in their house, but

32. he, they, no one was very happy with this, so he - they looked for something on their own. And it

33. was obvious to them that... from such nor/ normal work and normal functioning there would not be

34. anything, so you must steal, you must have contacts, you need to stay at somebody's place

35. somewhere out there in some uncool, uhm... area. And also not with - and also with rather with

1. uncool people, because nobody normal would agree to have some stranger from the detention home

2. living with him, her, and all. Also... let's say they coped on their own, from which, from which

3. emerged that this is how they ended up in prisons, in different prisons, they got sentences year after

4. year and went out. A year, year and a half they stayed out on this freedom and here in the normal

5. world, and then they were sent back to prison for some other offences. I even honestly don't even

6. know for what, or maybe I even don't want to know.

7. A: Did the oldest brother complete any school at all?

8. N: Uhm... none of them completed, uhm... any school.

9. A: Not even primary school?

10. N: Primary, yes, and maybe they attended some vocational school. I know that they were having a

11. little bit further education in prison, but these were like, I don't know, a locksmith, caster, carpenter

12. such, such... I think these were such trainings... vocational, I don't know, adaptation maybe, some

13. special programs for prisoners.

14. A: Okay, I'm asking about the fate of the siblings now so as to have the clarity on how everything

15. proceeded, because we will come back to your fate in a moment.

16. N: Umhum.

17. A: Because, as I say, because it is so difficult. So what did the oldest brother complete, any

18. vocational school, or was primary school his last school?

19. N: I think he completed, in prison, uhm... some vocational... because he's got some papers, that's

20. for sure. Maybe as a turner, a caster, or a vocation like that.

21. A: Okay. And did he arrange his private life somehow, or not, in relationships or...

22. N: Well, my brother had a very strong attraction to alcohol, this older one, uhm... he tried to arrange

23. his life even... I don't know, after leaving prison once he organized himself some social housing

24. from the state. He got, he took care of this flat, he always painted, renovated, bought various

25. furniture. He really cared about it he didn't carry out anything from home as a typical habitual

26. drunkard, though he had such tendencies. He met uhm... a girl... this girl, at a disco, this girl came

27. from... she was a Gypsy... completely uneducated, perhaps even she couldn't sign her name. But he

28. had a child with her ((sighs)), this Gypsy had a difficult uhm... life with him because he started

29. drinking. She didn't work so dirt, that is, not actually dirt but rather just poverty. It was not too

30. good, in fact, for a small child. We thought he might change when the baby was born, because it is

31. such a breakthrough in the life of every person when a child is born, so I don't know, you just have

32. to finally stand on one's feet, grow up, become wiser. Unfortunately, my brother didn't succeed...

33. uhm... the Gypsy girl walked out on him, then he ended up, because he is quite a handsome guy,

34. although I don't know what girls see in him, that is, I don't see it ((laughs)). Anyway uhm... He had

35. some women in his life, but he generally he drank to an extreme, he started drinking hard. So all the

1. women walked away from him. In any case this was not... it was also a rather hard time for me
 2. because he drank so much that, I even once, I was with him in a private clinic somewhere to put
 3. disulfiram in, just to stop this well... well, because I felt sorry for him. Because my husband
 4. arranged work for him, and he worked too when he was sober, he worked cause he is a hard-
 5. working guy, he really/ But he wasn't up to something so much, he even has... I know he didn't
 6. have a skill for such different combinations, selling drugs or something, I don't know what, or theft
 7. or burglary and all. So he, (x), worked on construction, men earn, uhm... quite well if they want to
 8. work in such physical work. It may be hard, but if he was fit for this, then why not?... But my
 9. brother drank a lot and he had disulfiram put in. Later, this disulfiram, after some time it quit
 10. working, and again he drank and was aggressive. These were times when uhm... when the
 11. ambulance drove through [street name] cause he had such epilepsy seizures. I watched if they don't
 12. take my [name of the brother], no it wasn't cool. It was hard to help him... because, well, cause how
 13. much can you take? My husband he was also terribly bitching about me at this time. Once I even
 14. locked him up at home, that is my brother, so that he wouldn't go out because uhm... there was a
 15. time that he didn't drink for a single day, so I said: "Listen, so you don't drink" and I locked him
 16. just so he wouldn't go out, so he had no contact with these, with these, with these people uhm...
 17. Because you don't have to have money to become an alcoholic and drink. But I didn't manage to
 18. help him in the end, and now he is back in prison, which is so much safer because he doesn't drink
 19. this alcohol and he's not causing trouble in the streets, his organism... his body is regenerating, but
 20. no one knows for how long. Well, such is the story of my older brother.

21. A: And he had one child, yes?

22. N: Yes.

23. A: And he probably doesn't have any contact with this child?

24. N: We wanted to have contact, uhm... with that child, but this Gypsy girl turned away from us
 25. because I don't know, she really, uhm, she didn't come to me very often. Well, because I was so
 26. normal... and they always think that I look down on them because I work, because I have a normal
 27. house ((with an ironic laughter)), because I want to achieve something and I don't roam the streets
 28. with them. I don't know, sometimes it happens that it's a weekend we go to a barbecue and also
 29. drink some alcohol, but, but then comes Sunday, then Monday and one comes back to normal
 30. reality and goes to work, has some responsibilities, and, and, here, in my family, unfortunately it
 31. isn't so.

32. A: Natalia, then, later, there is this two years younger brother, because you are/

33. N: Yes.

34. A: Well, two years/

35. N: Yes, my two years younger brother, a sensitive boy.

1. A: Yes, you did say that/

2. N: Well, well, he, he, in turn, grew into such a real thug. Because this, uhm, my oldest, he was like,
 3. he went to normal work, at least sometimes. But this younger one, I don't know, but this one is, has,
 4. a very distorted psyche, I mean very distorted. And... he doesn't think rationally. He has a wife...
 5. who sleeps around ((laughter)). Well he has a daughter, she slept at my place yesterday, from
 6. yesterday to today, such a beautiful girl who is six years old and is raised by, uhm... her grandma,
 7. not my mother only, (xx) the parents-in-law in a foster family. Because mm... my younger brother's
 8. wife has no time, no job, no/ she is always poor, wronged, unhappy... and... and she has no time for
 9. the child. She visits her there once in a blue moon. And this, that is, my younger brother, he's in
 10. prison for fights but he isn't – like I said... he has a very distorted personality. He is the man who
 11. could kill. Well I guess he ma/ he's had a lot of bad experiences in his life really, and he's got hard.
 12. he's got such a hard shell! He really loves his daughter and would do everything for her but, but I
 13. know, that I know that some bodily harm came to other people, some violence, and for him... for
 14. him it comes very easily.

15. A: Did he manage to complete any school or not?

16. N: Mmm... no, I don't think that... ((sighs)) that he even completed the primary school, but uhm... I
 17. know he didn't go to any vocational school. Perhaps he had some sort of apprenticeship in the
 18. penitentiary, because in fact there wasn't even time for him to have completed a school, because
 19. immediately after the primary school, when this family began to fall apart, even after dad returned
 20. from the prison, no, there were no such/ anyway, there's never been any good in this family. There
 21. always was some kind of drinking, there have always been such quarrels, fights, brawls... these
 22. were not just one- or two-day things, but they lasted several weeks, up to maximum exhaustion of
 23. financial resources. And given that the parents ran this illegal trade, there were still resources made
 24. up of bottles of alcohol, so that it really took quite long, and there were carousals and, I don't
 25. know... and everything/

26. A: This brother, except for earning money by theft, did he earn in any other manner any money, did
 27. he work or not, or has it always been a/

28. N: I think that... maybe for half a year of his life he worked somewhere but it was... it was such a
 29. short-term job. I'll tell you that, uhm... if someone ever tried such a thing as stealing and easy gain,
 30. easy money, they will not go to normal work, cause - uhm, it is sometimes uhm... unpleasant for
 31. them. But sometimes, many times, I heard them say: "You're going to work? You earn next to
 32. nothing, I can make more in one night," for example. Well I can't have, I would not be able to, I
 33. don't know what would have to force me to, to, to such uhm... to do such acts. I'd have to be
 34. strongly desperate perhaps, but I don't know. To others in my family it comes quite, well, quite
 35. easily, these assaults. Here this district is so uncool, so different, sometimes something has

1. happened to someone and uhm... and they've been robbed in the streets. I don't know, this youngest
2. brother – I heard that he was able to tear a gold chain off a woman, so well...
3. A: There's a third one, a third brother, right?
4. N: Yes, he's so cool. Because it was the time when I - when I was even in this children's home, he
5. was, he was very little, he was five or six, and he's always been like that/ He's always been so sweet
6. and has always been such a kid, and, and really he got no love either. It is sad that that... sad that
7. that was the attitude of my uhm... mother, well my dad was like that too. They they didn't give,
8. maybe they gave a chance... to these siblings, but it was so that when there was any trouble, when
9. they caused trouble, then my parents always turned away from them. Well, it is their life, their
10. business, let them do what they want, and it really is to this day that/
11. A: In which year was he born, the youngest brother?
12. N: Uhm... in 84.
13. A: That is, cause dad was in prison, wait in 80-what?
14. N: 89.
15. A: 90, so he was sent to these facilities, right?
16. N: Yes, yes.
17. A: And what, and then also correctional institutions somehow, and so/
18. N: Yes.
19. A: Prison, right?
20. N: Correctional institutions, prison.
21. A: Any school, any personal life?
22. N: No, no personal life. That is, yes, he managed to, uhm... to give birth to a son, a boy who is now,
23. not yet one year old, but well, because he, my brother, he was a young boy when the baby was born.
24. Now he is uhm... 20/
25. A: Twenty-six, right?
26. N: Well.
27. A: Seven, twenty-seven.
28. N: So, so he is still such a young boy and and... and yet really actually... actually the guys haven't
29. had time to arrange their life. It was so hard because... usually it was either prison or a juvenile
30. detention institution.
31. A: Uhm, hum. And then a sister/ which year of birth, the older one I mean, that younger lady yes/
32. younger, older.
33. N: 80 - just a moment cause I am already confused. Uhm... 81.
34. A: And did she complete any schools?
35. N: No.

1. A: Not even primary school?
2. N: Only primary.
3. A: And does she generally have any source of income-living at the moment?
4. N: No by/ just social care.
5. A: Social care. Does she have a family? You said she has a daughter.
6. N: Yes, she has a 3-year-old daughter.
7. A: A 3-year-old?
8. N: She also has a husband, but she has no home. She lives in, actually uhm... lived in... I don't
9. know now. She lived in the flat of some guy who uhm... had been in prison, he was serving a
10. sentence, he was under some arrest and was about to be released. So she lived there at his place for,
11. during this guy's stay in prison. But now she moved to the floor below, but it is such a squat that,
12. uhm, they were evicted... uhm... people, and no one actually lives there, maybe one family
13. occasionally, but it is also some kind of pathological life there, and nobody else is living there.
14. There is no/ she doesn't pay rent, doesn't pay for electricity, doesn't pay for gas, this is all somehow
15. organized so that she has there some ((laughter)) illegal source of energy.
16. A: You mean she got connected illegally, right?
17. N: Yes.
18. A: And is she with this husband?
19. N: Uhm... now, at present, I don't think she is.
20. A: Because you said that she has, that she too/
21. N: But not her only, he has these epilepsy seizures too.
22. A: Epilepsy, right.
23. N: And I don't even know how many times the ambulance came here for him, took him for one day
24. they took him to hospital and later they uhm... let him go out uhm... He, uhm... he's always going
25. to work on Monday, but that Monday never comes, ((laughter)), unfortunately. So - even if he finds
26. a job, he will work for some time and then fall off the wagon. And then, well, recently, his body got
27. so exhausted, that he has these seizures, and it's not like that from one glass, that's for sure.
28. A: And this youngest sister, when was she born?
29. N: OK!
30. A: Or how old is she, yes.
31. N: (xx) 22.
32. A: 22, she... because you said even/
33. N: She's 14 years younger than me. The youngest sister, she stayed the most, well actually the
34. worst, in the family, because she was born actually when I uhm... lived in the children's home,
35. something like that.

1. A: That is, she wasn't, hasn't been in any institution. She's been with the parents, right?
2. N: No, no, she was not in any institution. No, she was all the time with the parents... she stayed with
3. the parents. She, uh, was born while the parents had limited parental rights and those kids just came
4. back, so she was just, uhm... born... but uhm... [sound of alarm from the outside]. And generally
5. she, well, stayed with the parents but, but my last sister well, I don't know uhm... my mother
6. during pregnancy drank a lot of alcohol. She didn't even know at first that she was pregnant, there
7. were some fights, kicking, beating so uhm... I cannot say that she was born quite mentally impaired,
8. but, but generally she doesn't belong, in terms of development, to such, uh, I don't know how to say
9. this, uhm... I don't know medical terminology, but uhm... for sure not/ She didn't complete a
10. normal primary school, but she went to - to a special school but she wasn't so, she isn't so
11. physically impaired, but...
12. A: Does she have learning problems?
13. N: A little, yes, something like that. Also, the girl is uhm... rebellious, and even when she was
14. pregnant with this child of hers... she worked. So uhm... she is well-organized, although she had
15. some trouble because some I don't know some uhm... some extorting mobile phones uhm... in
16. some stores. I mean enforcing simply signing strange contracts without coverage or something like
17. that and then selling these phones. So it seems to me that this was the most - the mildest offense in
18. comparison to the rest of my siblings. And somehow she got away with this, or I don't know, maybe
19. she got a suspended sentence. I don't even know to be honest, if she has something to pay off for
20. these fines or if someone is chasing her. She may have a probation officer who/
21. A: And is she working now?
22. N: Uhm... now she doesn't because she has this 9-month/
23. A: And how does she make for her living?
24. N: She's got a partner, such a boy, with whom she's got this child, so they are married. He's... two,
25. no three years, sorry, younger than her but the guy uhm... is so much all right that he works, uh,
26. com/ brings her the money home. Well she gets some money from the social care probably too, for
27. life, they rent a flat. And she is uhm... a clean girl, she takes care of her child. Maybe she's not so
28. bright (((amused))) and if someone says something to her so so so she may sometimes believe in it,
29. but when it comes to life she is a little bit more adapted than the rest.
30. A: And which of these sisters was at your home?
31. N: The one six years younger than me.
32. A: Mhm.
33. N: This six years younger than I am sister - I kept her because it was just that she later already
34. attended, not such a vocational school, but such a... mm...
35. A: With a lowered threshold of requirements, yes?

1. N: Yes and actually... she had a few months left to finish and she had some papers. Well and I, dad
2. was already so upset and in general lost patience with her and willingness uhm... trou/ I don't know
3. to quarrel or simply lost the willingness to take care of this daughter of his. So I took her to myself
4. cause forever there were some glitches, fights and and my dad had a hard character and I took her to
5. myself and the only condition for her to actually be with me well was that she would go to this
6. school, that she would complete this school. But she deceived us and and... and we let go, because...
7. well, because she was supposed to go to this school and, "Well you live here, so go to this school."
8. She stopped going to school, stopped living with us, I wanted to help her somehow but apparently
9. she didn't need such assistance. It was stupid of her because she would have had at least this
10. vocational [education] and now she has nothing.
11. A: Did she live with you for long?
12. N: She lived with us for several months. That was when my father no longer had the patience with
13. her and didn't want her there at that home, so to appease everyone I said, okay I will, she will live
14. with us so... because I felt sorry for her then.
15. A: Well Natalia we are coming back to you/
16. N: Good.
17. A: (x) that is because I also wanted to ask if - because this is a rather unusual way of coming to a
18. children's home.
19. N: Yes.
20. A: Did anyone help you then when you/ because you were there in this hospital and went straight,
21. didn't pass through any emergency [shelter for children] through nothing but straight/
22. N: Yes.
23. A: You went to the children's home.
24. N: Someone helped me... it was a school, uhm... psychologist, from this school here uhm...
25. A: The one you went to, mhm?
26. N: She, she took care of me. I don't know actually, to tell the truth, I wonder how she found herself
27. this hospital. Perhaps I before made a contact, maybe she just saw that something was happening,
28. honestly I don't remember. I had then such a tough time in my life, that some things I missed. But
29. that - I know that when I came to this hospital so from her uhm... I had such support and care. And
30. she took care of everything, she helped me with everything and I found myself just then dir/ directly
31. in the children's home. I was a little bit lucky because well, because I in fact didn't pass through
32. this transitional period and I heard that at this [emergency N], it isn't too cool there/
33. A: [Emergency N] is a difficult experience.
34. N: Well, that's it, there's a lot of different people there, and I'm soft maybe, (x), probably many
35. people with such problems, uhm... are mentally weak and that may be the reason that we are like

1. sponges, that we absorb all. And so maybe I just found myself in such a surrounding, that I had
 2. some role models to follow, and my siblings also found themselves in the surroundings in which
 3. they had role models to follow, only slightly different than me, so so that's how it came out.
 4. A: And which [children's] home were you sent to?
 5. N: To/ in [DDW]
 6. A: Ah, in [DDW]. Because you say that you liked it in this children's home.
 7. N: Yes.
 8. A: How then, how do you assess this house? Cause I understand that you were telling about your -
 9. how you were feeling there.
 10. N: Mhm.
 11. A: And in general, if you were to look at this house, what kind of place was it then, what
 12. relationships were there between the kids, what were the caregivers there?
 13. N: I can't compare with other children's homes because I was just in this one, but, uhm... in our
 14. children's home it really wasn't bad, relationships were good with the pupils. There weren't, there
 15. weren't such, uhm... such situations when... when/ there weren't such situations as we hear now
 16. that sometimes there are, I don't know... mm... such strange relationships between caregivers and
 17. children that uhm... uhm... There they really worked at least. Uhm... the people with whom it had
 18. contact were true caregivers. One could confide in many people, could talk with them. A lot of
 19. people helped, but there were also those who simply treated this as, uhm... just as work and that's it.
 20. Yes, but there really were a lot of great caregivers who, who uhm... sometimes were doing
 21. something for us even more than their jobs required. They would bring a cake to the children's
 22. home uhm... bring some candies, some games or some things after their children, there were many
 23. such people. Some even took us, uhm... home... just for a coffee for tea/ well, maybe not for coffee
 24. then, but for tea and a cake. It wasn't bad. We had a quite demanding lady principal and I never - I
 25. can't say that I didn't have good contact with her, but I didn't have such a (((with a smile)))
 26. common connection, although I didn't mind it too much because, uhm... because she was a good
 27. person. She established contact with some foreign foundations, can't remember. Very often Dutch
 28. people came to us, they brought us cool stuff, uhm... many, many children had such contacts with
 29. uhm... with these Dutch people, uhm... such as, mm... contact by mail, so they in a way took some
 30. children under their care, somehow so extra, so I don't know, they would send these kids packages.
 31. When they came uhm... from the Netherlands with these gifts, well it was cool because they always
 32. had some sweets for these kids, uhm... We also took care of younger children, older ones took care
 33. of younger ones. There always were such shifts in the canteens I remember. Now a lot has changed.
 34. Once I was there but no, not in five years time, but about five years ago. I may have seen that there
 35. uhm... is such uhm... such a room uhm... for independent living: a kitchen, a bathroom something

1. like that and a laundry. But back then we had some kind of shifts, everyone had their duties... We
 2. even had good relationships with the service uhm... with the cooks. The cooks gave (x) sometimes
 3. ((laughter)) some extra food if something was left over or with the cleaning ladies we also had a
 4. cool contact. There was a maintenance guy who, uhm, also was such a good uncle, we used to call
 5. everyone uncle and aunt so there were a lot of those aunts and uncles. There wasn't any harassment
 6. as one sometimes hears of. There wasn't any violence or beatings rather, uhm... rather... this
 7. children's home was quiet, although there were, well, people who messed around. Especially boys
 8. who somewhere/ Of course it was not allowed to smoke cigarettes, but we were at such an age that
 9. one smoked some kind of fags or came out through the window to the park because there was a
 10. park [name] to run around or meet with friends. But in general there was, there was a kind of order.
 11. Many times we did the cleaning and we had our duties as well, we took care of uhm... small kids.
 12. There were, there was such a group of small kids and I think that it also taught us such... such
 13. responsibility for someone because, uhm... we actually had in this children's home two or three
 14. persons who were disabled really severely. There was a [name of the girl] who had to bathe in
 15. special baths. She was really horribly disfigured and despite this, that this child was so ugly, there
 16. wa/ there wasn't any bad contact with her, no one picked on her. We all accepted her, accept/ and
 17. even, uhm... she was, I mean that [name of the girl], she was such that even it was disgusting to
 18. touch her, her hand, because she had these fingers fused, this skin was terrible but... but nobody
 19. really paid any attention to that. Everyone was keen to help her there was no, I don't remember,
 20. don't recall that there was any such abuse because she was different. She even felt very good in our
 21. atmosphere, although this was a very closed child and I think that later as she was/ the older she got
 22. the more, uhm... she was aware of the fact that she was, well, different from all the children. But
 23. the caregivers also did all they could to - to extract from her such beauty, to show see/ see [name of
 24. the girl] how pretty you are. Here is a clip, here is a nice piece of clothes to wear and all. She
 25. always was under a really special care. There was also a girl, she uhm... also in the kids group, that
 26. is these were five, six-year-old, four-year-old, two-year-old kids, all small children probably from
 27. two, the age of two there were little kids. So we also treated this girl as such, maybe not one
 28. hundred percent normal, cause it was obvious that we didn't require from her what we required
 29. from other children but... but it was okay. There were no, uh, I don't remember that there were any
 30. thefts in this children's home, although the rooms used to be locked up but... Anyway I think it was
 31. because, so that one would have at least a bit of privacy to feel, well, this is mine so, nobody would
 32. enter in my absence but, but it seems to me that absolutely this because of any theft, or something...
 33. A: Was there anybody on whom you could count during this period when you were at the children's
 34. home?
 35. N: Yes. I, I uhm... There were caregivers whom we could tell a lot to... you could confide in them,

1. you could talk... but not all. There was such uhm... a caregiver with whom you could really talk
 2. about various things, I had a very cool caregiver who also understood me... I don't know, I had
 3. friends there, girls and boys.
 4. A: Well, you also said that you learned responsibility there. And in general, despite responsibility,
 5. somehow these caregivers managed to prepare you for future life. Did they teach you anything else,
 6. did they convey anything?
 7. N: ((sighs)) Responsibility, independence, generally such real life it seems to me, cause uhm... first
 8. they took us home at times, showed us what a normal home looks like, how life should be like, they
 9. walked/ we went on various trips, they often went with us, we were together, they showed us...
 10. sometimes, uhm... they showed us what was missing in a family home, such good advice, some
 11. kind of love, friendship. Really, it meant a lot to have such a warm person (((moved)))... But of
 12. course it wasn't, wasn't all beautiful nice, and we were in frames. Of course, they were consistent
 13. and if we caused any trouble, well, there were some sort of penalties, I don't remember yet what to
 14. be honest, maybe a curfew, no going out (((jokingly))), or I don't know, additional some extra help
 15. in the kitchen, washing up pots or... wiping tables, I don't remember exactly what it was. I mean,
 16. uhm... they also showed us that that life is not only a bed of roses, everything will not always be
 17. beautiful, nice, and that you have to bear the consequences of what you are doing...
 18. A: On an average day, how your day looked like when you were at this children's home, when you
 19. were already a teenager?
 20. N: When I was a teenager?
 21. A: Well yes, because you went there as a teenager.
 22. N: Yes, yes. So there was waking up in the morning, brushing teeth, uhm... getting ready for school,
 23. going down to the canteen, breakfast, some sandwiches for school... and of course going out to go
 24. to school. Then, back from school, some lunch, then there was some time for uhm... doing
 25. homework, I don't know probably from 2 to 5 pm. And then there were such own activities, you
 26. could, I don't know, watch TV in the common room, you could read a book, there was a library
 27. uhm... you could talk to your peers... then dinner... I don't know, some laundry, some cleaning. Only
 28. those cleaning chores, these were always, let's say weekly cleaning, say general ones, that, that that
 29. all dust was wiped, floor washed, vacuumed. It's true that every day we had to tidy up but uhm...
 30. but generally uhm... on Saturdays, actually I think the whole house was cleaned. Then it wasn't that
 31. the caregiver came and told us to clean, but there was just such a principle, that we all were
 32. cleaning. Sometimes even one was walking around and looking how someone tidied up, clean or
 33. not, and in general if any changes were needed. But still another element of such daily life was that
 34. there always [was] a younger child in the room of whom we had to uhm... uhm... maybe not take
 35. care of exactly, but, uhm... have under our wings. That is, make sure that, I don't know, that this

1. child has the schoolbag packed, that is dressed properly, has teeth brushed, made the bed, that
 2. everything all right such, as though they were our younger siblings.
 3. A: Because there were four of you, you said you were in four-person room.
 4. N: Three, yes, in a four-room, but, but then it was quite usual there were three people lived there,
 5. three or sometimes four.
 6. A: And the younger ones, just one of them?
 7. N: There were two older persons and one or two younger persons, and it was so that we jus... just
 8. simply care/ that we took care of these kids, we controlled them like younger siblings we, well,
 9. showed them... that it should be tidy in the shelf, that the child should have their homework done.
 10. Of course, every - there was a time, uhm... after school and after dinner that we all met at our
 11. rooms, such uhm... group ones, and there the homework was done collectively and there was some,
 12. uh, a teacher with us to help. We always had, uhm... cool teachers because there were Polish
 13. teachers, there were teachers who specialized in science, so if there was a problem one could always
 14. go to someone and... we had such a professional help on the spot... I don't remember what else.
 15. A: Natalia and this/ with regard to, for example, holidays. Did you spend holidays at your family's
 16. home or in the children's home?
 17. N: There were ups and downs... Sometimes uhm... it was... I was at children's home, but it was, it
 18. was, it was very sad because there only stayed a handful of us and I possibly, uh, went out to uhm...
 19. to the parents say for one day, for a few hours. Then I had to register in such a special book the time
 20. when I went out and whe/ when I am back. But uhm... holidays were such a special time, people...
 21. well, as usual for holidays. They would buy a lot, drink a lot, there was debauchery, bashes and I
 22. just so often had, these holidays unfortunately... I had a choice to either/ simply spend them in
 23. company of drunk parents, with fights. And usually when my parents drank then I always had... I
 24. was always reproached that... that... What was I there for, that I'd moved out, that I didn't want be
 25. there and so on and so on. Well, this was very painful for me, I really was very emotional about it...
 26. and often when I was home my parents were quarrelling. And generally, when I, uhm, visited them,
 27. I only just checked to see if everything was all right, if they hadn't killed each other yet, and if
 28. everything was okay with my brothers and sisters. But these weren't such good times, I remember
 29. then that my brother already was at a juvenile detention home or in prison. I always got cards for
 30. Christmas that melted my heart so much, and I forever cried that we can't be together... well it
 31. wasn't a cool time ((softer)).
 32. A: And where did you spend summer holidays?
 33. N: Summer holidays... uhm... Usually there were camps organized... and usually I went to some
 34. camps here and there, uhm... somewhere to the lakes or to the mountains or to the seaside. Of
 35. course, everything from the children's home was organized, so holidays were spent quite

1. intensively because they were actually filled up for almost the two entire months. We weren't in
 2. [name of city], and when we were here it was already only the last days, end of holidays...

3. A: Natalia, and so now... How did the matter of your becoming independent, later, how did it look
 4. like, this entering the adult/ Perhaps you'd like some coffee or tea?

5. N: No, no thank you ((sighs)). Entering into adult life. Well, I in fact, I just uhm... could kick myself
 6. because after finishing primary school uhm... I went to a secondary school.

7. A: And that primary school, I'm sorry, you finished at the children's home?

8. N: Yes.

9. A: At the children's home?

10. N: Yes, yes, yes. It was the last year, such a difficult period but, but there even, it went not so bad at
 11. this school, so uhm... so I first submitted documents for the secondary school, I didn't go/ I didn't
 12. manage until the end of the year... probably because it wasn't a time for me to learn ((laughing))
 13. and unfortunately I resigned from that school. And then I went to a vocational school, so that I lost
 14. one year really, well, not really lost to the end, because I learnt... a little something there, but I was
 15. one year behind when it came to education. I went to the vocational school, I completed that
 16. vocational school, I turned 19, and the pedagogue from the children's home, uhm... managed to get
 17. me a flat. Besides, I guess all the kids that went out of the children's home got a flat from the City
 18. Council somewhere in the district, in the neighborhood of uhm... one's family homes, which I don't
 19. know if this is so good, uhm... cause one doesn't really change their environment - and sometimes...
 20. people just give up and it's not, it's not cool. Anyhow, I got a flat. I finished vocational school and I
 21. remember then that I still wanted to go to a secondary school or a technical secondary school, just
 22. continue my education at school, but the pedagogue said that no, no. So I did it myself on my own,
 23. and I wanted to do it somehow in the evening system, or even maybe not in the evening system, I
 24. don't know, I just wanted to go to a secondary economic school in [street name] I remember cause I
 25. went there, I completed the vocational school there.

26. A: An economic one too?

27. N: Yes, the economic school I first finished eve/ even with quite good results, uhm, because I
 28. remember I I received a book (((with a smile))) at the end of the year, at the end of this school year,
 29. and just this lady uhm... this caregiver from this school tried to persuade me to go to this secondary
 30. school, but the lady pedagogue said that it was too late and... and not necessarily, that they will give
 31. me the examination, they will apply for a flat for me now and let me go. And then I got some kind
 32. of a grant... I don't know, some amount of money that I could buy the most necessary things such
 33. that, I don't know, didn't know what things I needed, but this, this wasn't a lot of money. It was,
 34. well, actually if I went to the shop I could buy a bed for it, and maybe a table and that would be it.
 35. But I got some old bed from my godmother, and, I don't know, something else, because these were

1. such flats in the tenant houses which had toilets, well, good enough that the toilets were in the home
 2. because... besides I really needed nothing there so I had this showe/... to accommodate this flat to
 3. my own needs, to do this bathroom somehow and so on.

4. A: It was one room that you got?

5. N: This was a room with a kitchen.

6. A: Mhm.

7. N: It was lucky for me, because not everyone had such uhm... such poss/ such possibilities. I got a
 8. flat which was 37 meters, also quite big because, because one usually gets a social one 20 plus
 9. meters, but there was just such a flat free after such a couple that I knew personally, and it was
 10. vacant, and so I tried to get this flat and... and just as people looked a little bit - I don't know how it
 11. is now with the children from the children's home, that this City Council so fell in uhm... and
 12. helped me and I got the right to this flat... Well, so it happened that I was striking out on my own,
 13. that uhm... that I moved there, after this vocational school, of course I went straight to work and
 14. actually I got this job uhm... A woman came to our children's home and said that she needed people
 15. to work in a warehouse. And I then, and I then just got this job due to the fact that she turned up
 16. with this offer and immediately I was offered it, and I worked for this lady for some time and in the
 17. meantime/ well, and while I worked there, I met my present husband... Before I met him I lived
 18. with my friend from the children's home because uhm... somehow, somehow we became
 19. independent aro/ around the same time, and generally uhm... just before I left the hospital
 20. unfortunately, I was in a car accident and spent two months in a hospital.

21. A: Before going out of hospital or...?

22. N: I'm sorry from the children's home.

23. A: From the children's home, mhm.

24. N: These were the last holidays and so, uhm... and I spent them cool ((with a smile)) well but uhm...
 25. After I left the children's home the flat was already waiting for me, I was supposed to pick up the
 26. keys and I moved in this flat. I lived with a friend because I am probably a, uhm... I don't belong to
 27. loners. I just need to have someone around cause, uhm, I would simply go crazy if I was to live
 28. alone. Well, inch by inch I worked because I tried to furnish this poor flat of mine. My present
 29. husband went to the army and I lived with a girl from the children's home.

30. A: Another one, yes?

31. N: Another friend yes. And then, uhm... then my husband came back, the friend got her own flat,
 32. she came back - she went to her flat... I don't keep in contact with her now... Well then I went to,
 33. uhm... I left, I went to/ that is, I changed jobs. I undertook studies in an evening secondary school
 34. three times a week. I had a good, uhm... boss, because he went along with it and he sometimes let
 35. me leave work early, three times a week, so that I could continue education, so I finished this

1. secondary school easily, then I went to a college. In the meantime, my child was born and I got
 2. married... I have such a lovely sugar, a cool girl... Well, after this I took up another job. I in fact
 3. work all the time and... I feel sorry for my baby because, because when she was 9 months I put her
 4. in the nursery and I also worked, so poor girl. She was little, but survived, she is a strong big girl
 5. now... and I took up logistics studies. Now I'm working in quite a large company and I actually
 6. don't know ((smiling)), don't know what else I can say.

7. A: Natalia still going back to that, to this moment of young adulthood. At this moment, that is, once
 8. you began an independent life, did you have any problems... any trouble?

9. N: Oh, did I have trouble? It seems to me that I had no special trouble, but maybe... maybe I'm too
 10. emotionally connected to my family and, as usual something, had some contact with the parents. I
 11. had some failures uhm... watching this, because we lived in, in the same building, so I had
 12. difficulties watching some fights until, with the passage of time, I calmed down, until my dad got
 13. sick and stopped drinking, my mom got sick because and... and she stopped drinking, because now
 14. she is a more ailing person. Then I had... had such, I don't know, adventures like saving my brother
 15. because he has a seizure and his head is hitting the curb, so he doesn't kill himself. But generally I
 16. don't now recall any extreme problems. No, I don't think that... I generally came across really good
 17. people, both employers and the environment in which I functioned. Well, maybe there were some
 18. problems with my current mother-in-law at the beginning uhm... meaning ((laughs)) she didn't want
 19. her son to date a girl from a children's home, and maybe she just had a different future in mind, but
 20. we dealt with her ((laughs)) so well, well I don't, no, I don't think that had any big problems.

21. A: And your husband (x) in which year did you meet, more or less (x)?

22. N: I met my husband and I went out uhm... when I left the children's home, that is, in 94.

23. A: In what circumstances did you meet him?

24. N: Uhm... I met him through my friend with whom I was at the vocational school, so it was a little
 25. funny because, uhm... I was just at the same class with this friend who was friends with such a girl
 26. who, of course, uhm, three of us were in one class, and this friend of my colleague looked down on
 27. people terribly and all ((laughing)), and it happened that she had such a boyfriend and uhm... and I
 28. really don't know how it was but we wanted to tease her a little bit and we arranged with this
 29. [name] that she will introduce me to this boyfriend of this girl who had her nose in the air and I will
 30. pretend that there uhm... uhm, that this guy fancies me, to make her jealous and to bring her to heel
 31. a little. And so she introduced me ((laughs)) to my present husband.

32. A: So you brought her to heel for good.

33. N: Yes, yes. But I think this was such dating, uhm, actually at the beginning such dating that I think
 34. that I didn't hurt her ((laughs)), absolutely, because she probably wasn't very interested because she
 35. was just looking around for various boys and the one who had a car or a motorcycle then, then she

1. was (((with animation))) well, maybe a little bit of a materialist. I don't know, it's difficult for me to
 2. describe now, but so it began between me and my husband and then he began to come to me and
 3. and... well, here we are till now.

4. A: Would you say a few words about your husband, what family he comes from, how old he is,
 5. what he does?

6. N: Well, my husband is one year younger than I am, although not a whole year, in months it would
 7. be seven months, and he is always holding it over my head that I'm older than him ((laughs)) uhm...
 8. He also comes from a family with many children, actually two brothers uhm... from a full family,
 9. normal family, the father was... he served in the military professionally, his mother dealt with, uhm,
 10. she was an administrator of a market. Her job was just administering such a local bazaar that is, she
 11. worked... really she had her own business, but worked for the [public institution]. And, uhm, it was
 12. such a normal family there wasn't anything missing, they lived in a block of flats, three rooms with
 13. a kitchen, nicely furnished, well I absolutely didn't fit into this family because I was just a poor
 14. orphan from a children's home ((laughter)), with such a past with some round-the-bend family, and
 15. sometimes it was a horror to meet one of my brothers in a dark street. But... but my husband's
 16. family was normal and uhm... and in fact I think that I probably loved my husband from the
 17. beginning, but somebody, I don't know if it wasn't one of the caregivers said to me, I don't
 18. remember now, but still when I was at children's home, to best assess uhm... my future husband by
 19. judging the relationships at his home, and what relationships uhm... the father has uhm... with the...
 20. with the mother... ((laughter)) and I think, I think this really is true, because uhm... because as I
 21. went there to my husband's place... I never, I never heard my husband's father speak to his to his
 22. wife any other way than [diminutive name] that is, he wasn't uhm... maybe they had some sort of
 23. arguments or - because this is normal that this is healthy even for the relationship. Sometimes you
 24. need, maybe not to beat up each other up or to fight physically, but have some exchange of different
 25. views... maybe this was there in my husband's family, but it absolutely wasn't like at my parents'.
 26. There, there the life was normal, there nothing was missing.

27. A: What is your husband's education, what is his vocation?

28. N: My husband uhm... unfortunately, finished only/ I mean when I met him he only finished a
 29. primary school... actually there from that family there weren't any people so very much educated...
 30. Two brothers finished vocational schools, but he didn't finish a vocational school, because... I don't
 31. know, in general he has, uh, maybe not a difficult character but he is very firm and a little
 32. impulsive, and uhm... and sometimes you need to bite your tongue because it is better that way to
 33. say nothing. However, he couldn't... he had some conflicts at this school with some guys cause he
 34. came to the first class... and there was this so-called wave, someone said something, told him to do
 35. something... I don't know. If his mother had insisted more or his father had kept a better watch on

1. him, he perhaps would have completed this school. However uhm... however he did not finish it.
 2. He went to his mother, said openly that he would not go to this school anymore, but he'll go to
 3. work. And since 17 years of age this boy uhm... has been working... However uhm... a few years
 4. ago, because, uh... there appeared such cool schools for adults, that at my persuasion ((laughs)) and
 5. don't know whose else, perhaps also because of the child (x), because the child will go to school
 6. and there we would have to write in the documents that her father has only a primary education, so
 7. my husband went to the secondary school for adults. It gave him a lot, well, so he has contacts he's
 8. met people, he's... like as if he's come back on track all in all, and I don't hold it against him that he
 9. completed school late but he did. I also maneuvered from school to school incredibly and before I
 10. had the brains and I finished something, well, so some time has passed, and now my husband has
 11. secondary education and is proud of it ((laughs)).
 12. A: Where does he work?
 13. N: Uh he works now as a driver.
 14. A: Mhm. Natalia when you talk about maneuvering in these schools, was there anything else with
 15. these schools?
 16. N: Well I, well because I actually went a little bit, well, first I went a bit because first I started
 17. secondary school and I didn't complete this school. I went to the vocational school, then I went
 18. again to the secondary school that I finished, next I went to a two-year College of Law and
 19. Administration which I also finished, and then I decided that I will not go to any more studies
 20. because, first, I don't have time and second – it takes too long and so on, and then finally I finished
 21. these studies 1st degree studies, so I guess I'm just such an eternal student ((laughs)).
 22. A: Well, approximately how old were you or in which year did you finish this evening secondary
 23. school?
 24. N: I was 23 when I finished that school.
 25. A: This evening one, right?
 26. N: Yes, (x) in the evening because it was a vocational school.
 27. A: But primary education you went through, right/
 28. N: Yes, I did that without any failures.
 29. A: You went there when you were at your grandmother's, right?
 30. N: Yes, yes, yes, yes. I finished the primary education without any problem, then I went to the
 31. secondary school.
 32. A: (x).
 33. N: To [school number], well and as I was one year behind, and because I didn't finish this
 34. secondary school, I went to a vocational school, I finished the vocational school in three years at the
 35. age of 19 and I started to work.

1. A: And you were like, 20, 21 years old, you went to that/
 2. N: I was 20, because this school here - cause this secondary school was three years, it took place
 3. three times a week, it was such an evening system.
 4. A: And this college, in which year did you finish that, more or less?
 5. N: ((sighs)) I started the college uhm, let's see... how old was my child, she was a couple of years
 6. old... wait in ninety, wait... God, I don't know in 2000, either 2000 or maybe even 99.
 7. A: Okay, and now the studies.
 8. N: The studies I started in/ well, I graduated two years ago, so I started my studies five years ago,
 9. yes.
 10. A: Natalia, about your professional career, because you said that you work there, that you have
 11. actually worked all the time, haven't you?
 12. N: Yes.
 13. A: Were you ever unemployed at some time, or not?
 14. N: I was.
 15. A: How/
 16. N: For some time.
 17. A: What does your professional career look like?
 18. N: My career?
 19. A: In order to set this on a time scale, more or less.
 20. N: Am I to bring my CV ((laughter)).
 21. A: ((laughter)) This first/ the very first time that you earned money was in the warehouse, or did
 22. you earn any money earlier?
 23. N: Yes.
 24. A: Excluding selling alcohol.
 25. N: Yeah, I earned money because, uhm... I went - when I was still at the children's home I went
 26. picking strawberries somewhere in [name of the district at city outskirts], or the area don't know
 27. somewhere off [street name]. There were such strawberry plantations and in the summer I earned
 28. money picking strawberries when I was at my grandma's. My grandmother is so, well, she didn't
 29. belong to such exclusive people. In fact my, uh, godmother would send me in parcels after her
 30. daughter to wear so my grandmother really just bought me what, what was really necessary,
 31. because what would people say, well, because it is a small village and everyone knows each other
 32. so when I no longer had something then you see she had to buy it because it would be like, well, it
 33. would get everybody talking, so at my grandma's also in order to buy myself something I went to
 34. the surrounding forests collecting berries, for example, I know I helped someone in the field and
 35. then I earned mo/ some money, but this was just money for my expenses, so I could go to a bazaar

1. and buy myself some nice clothes. I mean, I never had any excess or other useful things.
2. A: Okay, and later career-wise, you first went to the warehouse, well and (xx).
3. N: Uhm... gosh, I didn't work long in the warehouse (x) just as I came out of this hospital this lady
4. was already waiting for me. It was August and I went out in the early, maybe mid August of this
5. hospital somehow so still uhm... I had very little recovery and I ended up in this warehouse, I
6. worked a little while, I think I worked there/
7. A: And you were hit by the car?
8. N: No, I was not hit by a car I... I uhm... was a passenger. We were driving to a disco, five people,
9. and the car crashed into another car, and uhm.. I ended up in this warehouse. I worked, I think about
10. a year and a half or two years. I had a very good relationship there with a lady [name] ((laughs)).
11. She was such a nice lady, it was her who just introduced me to the boss who who was in the place. I
12. don't know, she arranged various matters anyway in this warehouse, and it began to fall apart a little
13. bit there. It was a haberdashery wholesale, so well, there the profit won't be probably too much on
14. some threads and so on... it was worse and worse in the warehouse and I remember that my boss
15. sent me to uhm... a bazaar in [name of district] on such [common name for the bazaar], I don't
16. know such just a such a bazaar and there was a market...
17. A: There was something (x) mhm.
18. N: In a housing estate, and I remember... that, that I went there and complained a little because I
19. was cold and it was raining, or it was cold and it snowed, and I went with this haberdashery to this
20. market and for nothing, because there I think I earned on things sold. That is, she in fact changed
21. the contract because previously I had a fixed salary and then when I sell a snap then I get like 10
22. percent or something... and then my, uh, not my husband yet, but my current husband, uhm, he
23. didn't like it terribly and one day he came for me (xx) in a car and told me to call the boss to come
24. and stand there some time herself, because he saw that I was frozen to the skin and soaked and
25. that's how my career was over because she told me, you know, if you don't stand there then I
26. terminate the contract, so I left that company, left that company and then I was sent by the City
27. Council... I was sent I was sent to such a sho/... which was uhm... it specialized in such chemical
28. articles like painting things and some nails and screws and there they created a stationery position
29. for me, and it was close to school, so, uh, I was working in this position for a while in this chemical
30. story, and I worked a lot, and it was just the period when I went to school and just had the school
31. nearby, and then I left this company... I don't know how it happened, but I know I found a better job
32. offer, although the working conditions were very unattractive, and then I had already comple/ yes, I
33. had already finished this school.
34. A: Secondary school, right?
35. N: Yes, this secondary school and I went to uhm... [name of the workplace] there there uhm... was,

1. there was better money was/ there was better insurance in general, and generally there were
2. contributions transferred to ZUS [Social Security Fund – translator's note] for the amount that was
3. earned, and there in this the shop uhm... I worked there six months and then (x).
4. A: As a shop-assistant?
5. N: No, no, I worked in production.
6. A: I understand, in production.
7. N: [Chemical business] yes.
8. A: (xx) except that there this is work, my father worked in [name of the workplace].
9. N: Yeah... there the conditions uhm... were just terrible. Although I didn't mind, but I know that
10. uhm... uhm, I know that as we got on the bus, because it was probably the final stop, and before it
11. yet another company uhm... they used to get in, so as we were getting in there was such a
12. comment: "Hey [colloquial name of the workplace] are getting in." Because we smelled terribly,
13. even though there were uhm... some showers at work, one could wash oneself, but still our hair was
14. soaked with gasoline and these glues, these conditions uhm... even in those times the workplace
15. really left much to be desired and well conditions were poor and I got pregnant. As soon as I found
16. out I was pregnant then, well, I went on a sick leave because there were a lot of miscarriages due to
17. just these uhm... fumes and work with these harmful substances. And of course, my contract was
18. not renewed, only until the birth date, and then my child was born.
19. A: This was in 98.
20. N: Yes, in 98 I gave birth to my beloved sugar uhm... so I was there on maternity leave and then
21. uhm... at the age nin/ when my Wiera was little, I remember that in the meantime still uhm... I
22. earned some extra money as an interviewer at [company name] here at [street name] actually there
23. opposite and there uhm... some questionnaires uhm... I was running around with some
24. questionnaires somewhere in the vicinity and made some money. Maybe it was small, but at least I
25. earned something ((laughs))... so I always did something. Then, uhm... then after these
26. questionnaires... my mother-in-law helped me a little because at her bazaar she organized me a
27. stand and I sold vegetables. In the the meantime I got my driving license... and then I was my own
28. deliverer and I used to go to [street name] where I bought potatoes, cabbage, apples, tomatoes and
29. such things and I sold it at the bazaar, so even just worked at, uhm... the bazaar while my child went
30. to the nursery and so, well... there were ups and downs, one made a profit one didn't, one got cold,
31. it wasn't an easy work. I drove an old car, but somehow I managed and it was, it was okay and in
32. 2002 I don't know if I didn't miss anything on the way but... I don't know, I can't remember if I
33. worked anywhere else... oh yes... I distributed phone books for uhm... Polish telephone books when
34. they were still in demand, but it was so seasonal. So next, in 2002 I started working in the company
35. in which I work ti/ till now... well, and when I went it was a newly opened company with foreign

1. capital, it was a U.S. company, and I started working there in 2002, from July. Actually I was
 2. offered such work because in fact I didn't really know [name of the company], that I remember
 3. ((laughs)), and there were such working conditions and someone from the manufacturing plant
 4. asked me, and I thought... well ok, I'll work because they pay quite de/ decent wages. So I went, I
 5. went to this company, I was accepted, and at the same time I did some tests at the Institute of
 6. Medicine, because one had to have manual dexterity and so on, show a little uhm... and there as I
 7. came to this workplace it just dawned on me, because I hadn't imagined that the plant may look,
 8. really look like it was a really new factory, neat, it wasn't [name of the employer] working
 9. conditions at all. It was/ the hall was clean uhm... workplace, uh, job po/ positions really were very
 10. good and I started working there as an operator because it is optical fiber company and... and now I
 11. am, uhm, responsible for the operator's position after 8 years. And I went to the studies due to my
 12. work really, because my former manager motivated me "Natalia go, go because you're wasting
 13. yourself here, go study, come on, I'll help you here, maybe the company will sponsor something"
 14. and indeed in the first year I got some money to go to the studies, to go to the studies and pay for
 15. them. I went to extramural studies... and then I started to, uhm, and then changed my position for a
 16. little bit higher, then even a little higher, and now I'm actually an office employee. It's an
 17. engineering position, but, well/ we reached this current point.

18. A: You also said that there were some moments of unemployment. When were they?

19. N: ((sighs)) There were such brief moments of unemployment when I lost uhm mater/ when I
 20. finished my period of maternity leave and then my Wierusia was six months old so... I had nobody
 21. to leave her with and I was on unemployment benefits. These were such/ this wasn't a long period,
 22. these were such periods between one work and the other. I don't know uhm... like maybe when I
 23. left this warehouse where I was standing out there in some market then well, uhm, I was on some
 24. unemployment benefit, but this was a short period because the neighbor next door helped me get
 25. this work in [name of the workplace], ((laughs)), and I worked there, I don't know, I can't
 26. remember, in total maybe a year and a half at the maximum/ such a period.

27. A: To pull yourself together, right?

28. N: Yes, to get through this whole period.

29. A: Did you use the assistance of any institutions then or not?

30. N: No, not.

31. A: Mhm. Okay, we're in the current period, still, in order to go on to finish this, this story uhm...
 32. just, I still wanted to ask about some things that I missed somewhere. In which year were you
 33. married?

34. N: in 90 eig/ seven, in 97.

35. A: Did you live together earlier?

1. N: Yes.

2. A: Since which year, about?

3. N: Well, actually as I came out of this children's home, it actually was 1994, but in fact since, say,
 4. 95 or 96. Because my husband went to the army and that was such a time, when he went to the
 5. army uhm... like I said I don't much like to be alone and then there was one friend and then another
 6. lived with me.

7. A: And then your future husband returned to you.

8. N: Yes, right.

9. A: And also I wanted to ask you, because you mentioned your grandparents, and I wanted to ask
 10. about these grandparents from your mother's side/ did I understand correctly that both
 11. grandmothers are alive. This grandma from your mother's side, what did she work as, what did she
 12. do here in [name of city]?

13. N: My grandmother worked hard throughout her whole life, uhm... she had four children, one child
 14. actually died shortly after birth somehow, and there was my mother, uhm... her older brother, there
 15. was a son from her second marriage because/ in general my grandmother uhm... became a widow
 16. at a young age since her first husband simply drank himself to death, such are the alcoholic genes.

17. A: That is, the father of your mother, right?

18. N: Yes, my mother's father, such alcoholic genes, just so (((ironic laughter))) from generation to
 19. generation, already so deep so... my mother's father drank himself to death, my grandmother was
 20. left alone she brought up two children it was not easy for her she worked her whole life in [name of
 21. the workplace] plant. I think she was a seamstress or something, I don't know exactly what she did.

22. A: She was a worker at any rate?

23. N: Yes, an employee at the plant, and then she got married and gave birth to a son who at the age of
 24. 24 was killed and uhm... then her second husband also died and she was actually alone.

25. A: Did she live somewhere in the tenant house in the city center, or in a block of flats?

26. N: My grandmother lived in [name of district], in such nice old houses in [settlement name]. There
 27. is a a very nice neighborhood, a terrace, lots of greenery and that's why we very often escaped there
 28. to this grandmother, and I remember from my childhood a period when I was little, I was probably
 29. 7 or 6, and my younger brother, I mean the one 2 years younger, so he was about 4, and I remember
 30. that there was just such a situation that my parents were drinking and then I took my little brother
 31. by the hand and we went here to the tram stop and I knew that [the tram line number] goes to
 32. grandma's, so we often escaped to grandma's, but this was one of my first such trips when I really
 33. was so little and yet dim-witted. I didn't know at all I didn't know this, I mean [name of city] was
 34. also different - different and there was not so much traffic, not so intensive, but I know I confused
 35. the stops and instead in the direction of [name of housing estate] we went to [name of housing

1. estate] with this brother of mine, and some woman took us to the/ to the police station... and then I
 2. remember that we were sitting there for quite a while these police officers gave us sandwiches so
 3. that we had something to eat, such poor children, dirty, smeared, hungry, frightened were going to
 4. their grandma's but not in the right direction. Anyway, I don't know uhm... these days my child has
 5. recently really started to function alone and I let her travel, but it's also because there is a mobile
 6. phone and she calls me when she arrives uhm... when when she leaves, when she arrives, she's
 7. under full control, while then, in those times such phones did not exist, and besides my parents
 8. probably even weren't aware that we weren't at home, so we went to grandma's. Nobody there
 9. looked after us too much, so we spent some time at this police station until, uhm, they actually
 10. identified our place of residence, because I just couldn't quite remember where we lived. I only
 11. knew my name, so the police drove us back so... it was cool (((ironically))).
 12. A: And this flat, that squat to which your mother broke into, how - I mean I know that this is an old
 13. building, the old one also here in [name of district].
 14. N: Yes, yes.
 15. A: And how many rooms did you have there?
 16. N: ((sighs)) It was so... different, because going into uhm... this our flat we first had a common
 17. corridor, uhm, with the neighbor, with a Mr [name], such a sot ((smiles)), but we remember him
 18. somehow nicely ((smile)) just as Mr [name], uhm... when we were little kids (xx), one of o/ our
 19. games, among others, was walking uhm... along the street curbs and collecting cigarette butts for
 20. this Mr [name]. I remember we got a whacking when my dad saw what we were doing.
 21. A: ((laughs))
 22. N: So uhm... so this flat was, it was just a single flat with a common corridor.
 23. A: *Komunalka* [communal flat – translator's note], right?
 24. N: Pardon?
 25. A: A so-called *komunalka*?
 26. N: I think so uhm... and on the left there lived our, our neighbor, and in front there was a room, a
 27. huge single room, it had probably about 30 meters and it was there where my mother broke into and
 28. we got the flat when this Mr [name] died, so we smashed the wall there to this Mr [name]'s room
 29. and we had an extra room so then you could either go out through here or go out through there, and
 30. somehow and we had this room that was about 48 square meters.
 31. A: So there were two rooms?
 32. N: Yes.
 33. A: Any kitchen, bathroom?
 34. N: Mm... In the beginning, for many, many years, there was only one room, there was no toilet. The
 35. toilet was on the street/ in the yard, so the conditions were hardly any. There was no bathroom, just

1. an old dirty sink and uhm... and a pot for children to piss in... at night or in the evening. Generally,
 2. one went there to the end of the yard to the toilet and so it really looked like to the end this uhm...
 3. this is our home. After that, after that Mr [name], there was this uhm... second room of which a
 4. kitchen was made, and there was also some couch put inside, actually all in one/ And till/ only after
 5. many, many years when we moved out, already maybe this, my youngest sister still lived there,
 6. when my dad uhm... made a bathroom, such a bathroom that there was a toilet and a shower cabin,
 7. but it was not in my life/ It was maybe 10 years ago.
 8. A: Well Natalia now, such, such final questions about the current situation, because you live with
 9. your husband and daughter, right?
 10. N: And a cat and a dog.
 11. A: A cat and a dog, that is taking animals in ((laughter)).
 12. N: Yes, yes, a (xxx) weakness...
 13. A: Animals, I had the same idea, that someday I'll have a shelter.
 14. N: There's something in it.
 15. A: There's something in it, isn't there... Now you live in the flat that you were given after becoming
 16. independent?
 17. N: Yes. All the time I've lived in this flat. There have been ideas to move... to change flats with
 18. someone, but then somehow they always vanish. Always... uhm... somehow there's never been any
 19. occasion for doing so, uhm... but... 4 years ago we bought a worker's plot of land and... mm we stay
 20. at this plot a little bit in the/ the summer, for the weekends. We really enjoyed it there and decided
 21. to aim for something and/ say there was a moment to change flats but uhm... the cost of changing
 22. the flat was so high that we decided to buy a building plot after our worker's plot and we will be
 23. building a house there. This may ta/ this will take some time, I don't know, 10, 15 years, but such is
 24. a dream home. Well, and now we are just striving for that uhm... we sold this worker's plot, we
 25. added some money, took some loans, and we bought a building lot. Maybe not in such a great
 26. location but the land was cheap ((laughs)), so uhm, we bought there in the area, say less than 30
 27. kilometers from [name of city].
 28. A: Outside [name of city], right?
 29. N: Yes, the lot. And we have a plan that we want to take a bank loan and we'll build ourselves our
 30. own house.
 31. A: And there are still these 37 meters, as it was before?
 32. N: Yes.
 33. A: Still a room with a kitchen?
 34. N: Uhm... there are still 37metres, but uhm... it's not a room with a kitchen because it was always a
 35. flat with a corridor, and from the corridor such a long corridor on the left side there is a room say

1. less than 20 meters, and on the right side there was a large kitchen, and I divided this kitchen. And
2. now my child has a room. It's tight, but it's her own. And she has her place, a bunk bed, below she
3. has a desk, a window, some shelves, cabinets and so on, so she has some privacy. Well, and we have
4. ((grunts)) we have uhm... such a narrow kitchen, so this kitchen also serves us as a bathroom and
5. laundry room because in the end, in the corner there is a shower and uhm... a washing machine. And
6. this - so this is all very tight but ((grunts)) but ((coughs)) we don't mind I don't know, we don't
7. have any sense of embarrassment so we don't need to have such a private bathroom. And... and this
8. flat is/ well, and there is a separate toilet so this flat/
9. A: Within the flat?
10. N: Yes, yes.
11. A: It is a communal housing, isn't it?
12. N: ((grunts)) It was a communal flat when I got it. But now it turned out that there are un/
13. unregulated land registers, and there is a private owner, as though, so we are a private apartment
14. building under the administration's management.
15. A: But you are the tenants there?
16. N: Yes.
17. A: Natalia, what does your everyday life look like now?
18. N: My everyday life?
19. A: Mhm.
20. N: ((grunts, sighs)) It's like this. I get up at five thirty, because I have to walk the dog in the park.
21. A: ((laughs))
22. N: I try to run a little bit because, well, af/ after this vacation I am slightly overweight ((laughs))
23. some 3.5 kilograms, and I'm trying to just lose it by morning going out with the dog. I come home,
24. returning uhm... from this park I give a ring to my husband, then he puts the kettle on for coffee.
25. Before I reach home/ I visit a bakery, buy bread (((with humor))) . In the morning we drink coffee,
26. tell each other about uhm... well everything that's tiring us, that's bothering us. Since my husband
27. works in rather specific hours and works really very long hours, and comes back in the evening
28. very late in the evening, we often have no opportunity to talk to each other so normally, so it's such
29. a time in the morning that we'll chat a while. Alternatively, we'll phone up sometime during work
30. and we'll talk. Then there is, I don't know, half past seven there is going out to work because I work
31. in [town near big city, Natalia's place of residence], so I have to go to work a little bit earlier. I work
32. from 8 to about 4.30, around 5 o'clock I get home. There are holidays now so I'm about 5 o'clock
33. uhm... at home I meet my child, do some shopping, cook dinner I... do the cleaning, I wash dishes,
34. do some laundry, sometimes watch something on television. Although I must admit that I watch TV
35. quite rarely, I'd rather read a book if I have the time, although sometimes I watch TV too. Normally

1. during the school year I go twice a week, I go to the English language course because I forever
2. study ((laughter)), well say for three years I've been continuing all the time, it's not like I rest on
3. my laurels, I don't lie down ((grunts))... And actually like, uhm during the week every day is
4. similar. My daughter does homework, actually she is an independent child, and she spends a lot of
5. time on her own though uhm... she goes to her grandma's, with whom he has a very good contact. I
6. have never had such and probably will never have in my life. But my mom uhm... she really is with
7. this daughter of mine and they get along great. Now, she has no such problems as she had during
8. my, in my childhood, because she is a very ill person. She has a very advanced diabetes and she's
9. after a heart attack... There was a moment that she was in the hospital for two months last year,
10. after the heart attack, because she could not walk, had a very weak organism. And now even if she
11. really wanted she is simply too much afraid to drink alcohol, don't know, she also has some
12. problems with the thyroid, well, a lot of such different, uhm, diseases which, among other things,
13. are also due to destruction of the organism by this alcohol. So... so what else? Also I do some
14. shopping for my mom, a doctor maybe sometimes... grandma still/ But very often it used to be that
15. this, once in two weeks I went to/ even earlier before work, I went to the market to do shopping for
16. my grandma. I delivered her some shopping and went to work already ((laughs)). Sometimes I was
17. so worn out that/ well, but my grandma also used to help us when we needed someone the most.
18. Well, so we actually live for weekends, because then I pack the dog, the cat, the child, and various
19. stuff into the car and we drive to the lot, and then I wind down.
20. A: Well, do you have any free time in addition to these weekends or not?
21. N: Well, today I have some free time ((laughs)).
22. A: ((laughs)) from doing (x).
23. N: That I am spending with you.
24. A: This is what weekends look like, right? Weekends at the lot?
25. N: Yes.
26. A: So you're going to this, this/
27. N: We are going to the lot, take a rest.
28. A: Because your husband is home at the weekends, or does he work different (xx)?
29. N: My husband comes to me, uhm, most often, on Saturdays, after 2, 3 pm.
30. A: Do you have anything on this lot out there?
31. N: We have. We have a toilet, a garage, and two caravans.
32. A: Oh that is where one can/
33. N: One can sleep, yes.
34. A: And in the winter?
35. N: In the winter?

1. A: How do these weekends look like, also the lot, in the/
2. N: No, in the winter we have a little more time for ourselves. We are more, say lazy, though not
3. really, because there are constant walks with the dog and we always inve/ invent something.
4. Sometimes we'll make a trip to the mountains for 2, 3 days, if we can afford it. And we we are
5. rather active people, so we may go to the cinema sometimes... or we talk and just sit at home.
6. A: And how do you spend holidays?
7. N: ((sighs)) holidays uhm... we spend... together. But... usually it is so that mm... we spend mm...
8. just we actually must split cause uhm... we have two families and... mm. We go to my mom... we go
9. to my husband's parents, we just so one day here one day there, because uhm... my husband's
10. parents moved out, sold their block and moved out 100 kilometers away, so it's a little bit difficult
11. and, and I know that sometimes, uh... I turn a little, a little to my side because my husband would
12. also want to meet with his mother. All the more so now that, uhm... she also had a heart attack last
13. year, and this year she had a stroke, brain haemorrhage, so (x), well, he just would want to spend
14. more time with her and time is short, as you can see, because we are constantly at work, we are
15. always somewhere, in touch by phone, and uhm... I do a little force my husband to accept that my
16. mother was left alone, that my dad died, that one needs to help her, and so generally stretch a bit on
17. this side to stay with my mother because really, well, she needs help, something needs to be cooked,
18. some shopping has to be done. Although she loves to cook, but, but still well, on holidays,
19. something has to be prepared and to go somewhere, buy something, clean up, so we usually spend
20. this time at my mom's. But, well, I try to be a little fair and go with my husband to his parents too.
21. A: How old is your mother, because this/
22. N: My mother's 59.
23. A: And your dad, how old was he when he died?
24. N: My dad was 59 when he died, now he would be 61.
25. A: Natalia, so uhm... how do you spend holidays?
26. N: Now, no how. Since we bought the plot we (xxx) ((laughs)) we really spend uhm... these holiday
27. days on the plot this year. But generally, uhm, until we had such financial obligations and uhm...
28. and we had just a little money for such other things, then we - until we bought the land, we would
29. have gone to the mountains, to the sea, a little abroad, more on the Italian side ((grunts)). Also, it
30. was so that we always travelled on vacation somewhere we did not stay in [name of the city]. Well,
31. and it was fun and we had a great rest at that time. But now, well, even my child suffers because she
32. has to stay at the lot. Although she's met a lot of peers about her age there, so she doesn't cry
33. terribly for this reason.
34. A: Do you have any friends, acquaintances, some kind of a circle of friends, some kind of a circle of
35. people with whom you maintain contact?

1. N: Yes, we keep in touch with acquaint/ Although now... with... with friends from the children's
2. home, I don't keep in contact with them although there was a time that we in fact met with three,
3. four families from the children's home. But generally there is so little time that it stopped, although
4. sometimes we still meet, but, well, we/ I actually, we have uhm... uhm friends a little bit from the
5. side of my husband and a little from the the side of uhm... my work. A friend has just phoned... I
6. don't know what for, something I was to bring on the way and she is already on maternity leave and
7. I'm going to see her today. Anyway, we meet with friends and we, we mm... we have friends on the
8. plot, neighbors who are more or less our age, we are at the same stage of building and so on, we
9. have some common interests, and we actually spend this time now, uhm, to a greater extent
10. precisely with these people from the lot.
11. A: And is there someone who you can count on?
12. N: My husband.
13. A: Natalia so now, how would you in general look at this life of yours? Were there any such major
14. events that in your opinion affected this life?
15. N: Yes, well, there were, definitely. It was this that I went to this children's home and was/ was not
16. left here alone. And I uhm... think that this gave direction really to my life because I mm... I
17. learned such a good lesson and... ((clicks her tongue)) I had people who could, uhm, me just say,
18. uhm... direct me to such a good way. I think that if I had, uhm, like my siblings, gone to... I know
19. such... to such, such environments, I don't know... don't know... it's just hard for me to say. I'm not
20. in such a situation and I don't know how I would have behaved and where I'd find myself today
21. and what I'd look like now, and whether I'd be still alive. I just don't know.
22. A: Is there anything else, any such events which/... somehow arranged this life, somehow
23. influenced that it is the way it is?
24. N: No, I think that... probably not.
25. A: Is there anything that you consider a failure in your life, something that went wrong?
26. N: Hmm... ((sighs)) for sure uhm... for sure my failure was that at some point I gave up and
27. attempted to take my own life. My daughter does not know about it and I don't know if I'll ever tell
28. her that her mother was so stupid and did such things. Although there were/ this had some
29. consequences, but simply my failure was that, that I was too weak, that I was ashamed to talk about
30. this problem, I tried to cope on my own. Well, it came out as it came out and I was lucky that my
31. dad found me when I could still be rescued, because otherwise I wouldn't be here today. And, and it
32. was such a failure that I couldn't... reach out to someone with the problem, I couldn't open up, I
33. couldn't have it my own way. Although I actually couldn't really have it my own way too much, but
34. had to seek help from some people I don't know... there were some, I don't know, but you couldn't
35. say this, that it was my life failure... that, uhm... I don't know with the girls from this children's

1. home or with some girlfriends at the age of 13 or 14, some alcohol or cigarettes, or there was some
2. company that was so uncool, but - it was for a short time. I didn't probably like it and somehow I
3. didn't keep - somehow the connection was broken... and I don't know, no I guess I don't know.
4. Nothing else comes to my mind now, any such failure really. Maybe that, that I didn't pull this sister
5. of mine on my side when I could have. Then perhaps life would have turned out differently. Maybe
6. I would have an influence on... that now she wouldn't be the woman she's become... at this time.
7. A: How about the successes? What was successful?
8. N: My success is that I have uhm... maybe not this education, because this is - My success is that I
9. can live in such uhm... in such a way that I created a family really loving, that we're telling each
10. other about everything, and that uhm... that there didn't... didn't follow the shadow of this uhm...
11. this family of mine on this life of mine. That... I don't know, I'm not an alcoholic (((with
12. animation))) that I can get along with my own child, that we love each other very much that we tell
13. ourselves about this... and I guess, I guess that's all.
14. A: Who is the most important in your life?
15. N: Well, my child ((laughs)).
16. A: And did anyone influence your life, on who you are?
17. N: Well, certainly a lot of people, certainly, because, because I met many good souls over this time,
18. who were able to support me, who were able to show me, uhm... this ga/ good way. There really
19. were a lot of people.
20. A: Who the most, if you were to look at, I don't know, one, two, or three such persons?
21. N: For sure my grandmother, who helped me from the very beginning... certainly uhm... one of the
22. caregivers from the children's home... I don't know.
23. A: This lady teacher or this man from the group/
24. N: Yes, yes from the group.
25. A: What is the most important in your life?
26. N: I think that peace of home and hearth such uhm... such... ((sighs)) that we would be healthy, that
27. we would love each other, that we would be together. Forget the money because that/ sometimes,
28. even when it is so bad with this cash and my husband loses his job, or I don't know, it's hard then,
29. but there are never any arguments, no anger, but we just always say to each other (((moved))) - the
30. most important thing is that we love each other and that we are together ((cries)).
31. A: Except for building a house do you have, do you have any plans?
32. N: No, at the/ no, no. No, we want to build this house, we want to move out of here.
33. A: Natalia I still have this question because, because there will be a few such final questions. Very
34. short, but still I wanted to ask about such general things, something like that. Since I started doing
35. these interviews actually there some of you said some things, like that the people from children's

1. homes are sometimes ascribed some specific features. Did you come across such a situation, that
2. someone, due to the fact that you were in the facility, ascribed such specific characteristics to you?
3. N: Uhm... I don't understand the question too much, because the question is if the caregivers from
4. children's home ascribe any special features to me?
5. A: Not the caregivers, but just people in general so/
6. N: (xx)
7. A: The teachers too, yes, did you come across a kind of opinion that persons brought up in
8. institutions differ from the children that grew up in so-called "normal families," that were raised
9. outside of institutions.
10. N: ((sighs)) That there is a difference is sure, and certainly the people who know that we are from
11. the children's home look at us differently, I don't know whether with pity or... or compassion but/
12. A: Did you somehow experience this personally, that someone out there treated you with pity or
13. compassion?
14. N: Well.
15. A: For the reason that you were in an institution?
16. N: Uhm... I generally, I mean, uhm... for sure at schools, uhm... in this secondary school and these
17. vocational school teachers, teaching staff, they knew that I was from the children's home and for/
18. and probably this spread to uhm... to the group, to the class, but I didn't notice. I mean certainly no
19. one ever said to me that maybe somehow I'm a poor girl or something like that, that poor me.
20. People treated me normally, though I had - I had the impression as if behind my back uhm... as if
21. they knew that they did not say this so as not to hurt me or, I don't know, so as not to touch the topic
22. well, because it is such a, such a sensitive topic. In fact, I don't, uh, boast that I am from a
23. children's home. I know they once mooched a cinema [name], that we were from the children's
24. home and the cashier always (((amused))) would let us in to the cinema. So, so there were
25. advantages in that we were from the children's home, even just in, that is, that we were let in to the
26. cinema free of charge or somewhere, but... but I didn't abuse such things. I always tried to hide it a
27. little bit because - uhm... I didn't want to talk about it. I, I am such a sensitive person, I blubber later
28. on and I'm very emotional uhm... about all I say, but in fact I don't like to to talk too much about
29. myself and, and if someone knows this, this well this, it's not only that she is from the children's
30. home, well, but they always would want to know more so, because it is such a different life. It
31. would be: "And why, and what happened to you," because people are so curious, so I understand
32. this but, but I know/ Although uhm... my two friends, three in fact, uhm... found a job in such meat
33. plant [name] or something, because, because they are from the children's home, "Because we are
34. from the children's home" (((imitating pleading intonation))) and that's that. I know why that boss
35. hired them, of course [A: ((laughs))] these guys uhm... and despite the fact that one, for example,

1. came late to work/ or slept over often, he just treated him with a bit of tongue in cheek that... that he
 2. was such from the children's home, so poor unhappy and well no, you gotta help the boy, well, well
 3. that's it but, but generally I didn't flaunt so strongly - that, when I was in a group of people, because
 4. there were annual meetings with the kids from the children's home, so then we were all equal to
 5. each other. There was nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to hide, but uhm... Then I went indepen/
 6. independent, and I never somehow flaunted that I am from the children's home, because it's so... I
 7. don't know, I don't want anyone to know anyone judged me in some way, that here this poor girl...
 8. or that someone said, maybe don't hang out with her or something. So, so I rather tried to hide it, till
 9. now I've been trying to hide it, even though I've told my daughter about it. She did not - she's a
 10. smart and intelligent girl, so when I tell her what the reason was I don't want her to - she has very
 11. good contacts with grandma, so why would I denigrate this grandma, this grandpa... in the eyes of
 12. this child when it was all so long ago, it is the past, and in reality only we know between each other
 13. what really happened. My mom will never really understand that she made mistakes and and that
 14. partly the reason these kids are how they are is her fault. She does not realize this, even until now,
 15. and she believes that it is the fault of one, of another, or yet another, or that, that they just so
 16. directed their life... but I think it is not.

17. A: Natalia, do you generally, as you look at the people who grew up in the children's home, in your
 18. opinion are they different, do they differ in something, does this fact of growing up in an institution
 19. affect the features of character in any way, the way of functioning, personality?

20. N: Maybe... maybe they are so more self dependent. They can uhm... organize more things
 21. themselves, because, uh, in the children's home, despite the fact that we had everything, but it is not
 22. absolutely so that we had *everything*. Because – there's toothpaste and there's toothpaste, right,
 23. there's the cheap, bland ordinary one, and the better flavored one, right? And we always missed it,
 24. so we always had to somehow organize things, we were more self dependent in this regard. We had
 25. to rely more on/ learn such a reliance on oneself, but also we were in such, uhm... in such very cool
 26. contacts, that we knew that we were equal, that, that we can help each other, that uhm... that/ And
 27. that may have taught us uhm... I don't know, I have a very easy contact - I very easily make
 28. contacts with people I don't know/ I have no problem with talking to people even if they are people
 29. who who I see for the first time in my life. Perhaps this has taught me this openness, such openness
 30. in life, don't know, just as don't know I mentioned earlier I can't live alone, I must have - I
 31. probably got this out of the children's home that... I have to have also someone there ((laughs)).

32. A: Natalia, we're moving towards an absolute ending, something like that. How do you assess
 33. uhm... your financial situation, subjectively?

34. N: Well, yes I know material situation. I think that I am not, we do not have the lowest national
 35. wage, and we certainly don't earn, you know, big money. We don't have any assets despite our land

1. ((laughs)), one thousand and one meters.

2. A: ((laughs))

3. N: And uhm... we're not a wealthy family. We live, we have not actually any money put aside in our
 4. bank account, we live from month to month, a few pennies we put off... but we don't complain. We
 5. have something to eat, we have something to wear, we have a large dog that eats a lot [A:
 6. ((laughs))] we can afford it, and vets for the cat, and so on. My daughter, I don't know, maybe she
 7. would dream about some cool stuff, but this child is brought up so... actually I don't know where
 8. she got it from. She's never forced anything from us, didn't, didn't stamp her feet, didn't moan, and
 9. she's just understanding: "Yes I know we don't have the cash, okay, maybe some other ti/." And due
 10. to the fact that our daughter has taken such an attitude, we stand on your heads so that she has
 11. absolutely, say what is in our - within our possibilities, but no, I do not know... it's not bad. I work,
 12. my husband works.

13. A: Religion, you are a believer or not?

14. N: Yes, I believe in God.

15. A: Are you associated with any church?

16. N: I'm not connected with the church because uhm... we don't have time to go to church, to be
 17. honest. On Christmas I will go (((snort))), once in a blue moon on holidays, my child is baptized
 18. and has had her communion, but I don't force her to go to the church so much. There was a time
 19. when she went every Sunday, she began to freeze, she said: "Mom I'm not going" and she didn't
 20. go, I didn't force her. But, but yes, we believe in God, and uhm... we are pious people.

21. A: Politics, are you somehow interested in politics, do you take part in the elections?

22. N: Well, to be honest, I'm ashamed to admit it, but I don't take part in the elections. Uhm... I'm not
 23. very much interested in politics because, uhm, once I even watched the parliament session and what
 24. I saw [A: ((laughs))] it just made me laugh. It seemed to me like, I don't know, just simply a bunch
 25. of fools, and not civilized people so/ I mean such, such snapshots. Well I know ((laughs)) who the
 26. president is and uhm... I am in the picture, and but I'm absolutely not interested because I think that
 27. it probably won't change too much.

28. A: Well, okay, I've asked about everything. I just want to ask at the end if there is something that
 29. you think is important to this whole story, which I haven't asked about, something you would want
 30. to say.

31. N: I think I probably said it all, I wouldn't want to repeat myself... I think that such a summary of
 32. the whole story of mine would be that, despite the fact that uhm... some harms were done to me in
 33. my life I have not experienced such a full family and and I forever was (xx) I really love my
 34. parents. And I think that probably, just probably, we all are this way. It's there where love is not
 35. actually shown that someone becomes so committed, I don't know, well, that's my feeling that now

- 1. when one can do more, when one is competent, has the power, although sometimes one shouldn't
- 2. because, because if one looked at it and took a piece of paper to summarize the pluses and what my
- 3. mother gave me, except that she gave birth to me there would be probably more minuses. But we
- 4. still forget about it and, uhm... we think only of the positive things, and this strengthens us and
- 5. gives us the power to help these parents and love them.
- 6. A: Well, I thank you very much.

List of transcription symbols

Mark	Description	Examples in the text
(x)	Unclear fragments of the interview. The quantity of x-es corresponds with the quantity of unclear words	I have not experienced such a full family and and I forever was (xx)
(())	Non-verbal signals and sounds	((the phone ringing)), ((cries)), ((laughter))
((()))	The specific traits of the statements, supposed narrator's emotional states	((moved))), ((very softly))), ((long pause))), ((animated)))
...	Pauses (3 dots – short pause, 5 dots – longer pause)	you could read a book, there was a library uhm...
/	Falters, incomplete, unfinished words and sentences	However/ well I just started to talk about my/ about my brothers and sisters
-	Voice suspensions	although I don't - I don't go to these prisons because, well, I have my life
<u>underlines</u>	Sentences and words articulated with emphasis	I do live, say, not for today, but just so <u>normally</u> as a normal person
!	Exclamation marks according to Polish punctuation	he's got such a hard <u>shell</u> !

Golczyńska-Grondas, Agnieszka. 2014. "Transcript of Biographical Interview with Natalia." Translated by Anna Piaszczyńska. *Qualitative Sociology Review* 10(1):116-162. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php).

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Transkrypcja wywiadu biograficznego nr WDD24.AGG Natalia¹

Zinstytucjonalizowana tożsamość. Procesy formowania się tożsamości w świetle losów biograficznych dorosłych wychowanków placówek opiekuńczo-wychowawczych²
Łódź, 2011–2014

Data i miejsce przeprowadzenia wywiadu:

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Łódzkiego, pokój badaczki

Czas trwania wywiadu:

17.15–20.20

Aranżacja wywiadu:

Wywiad z listy adresowej. Narratorka – po otrzymaniu listu zapowiedniego – sama zgłosiła się telefonicznie do Instytutu – chciała pokazać, jak przebiegają losy osoby wychowanej w domu dziecka. Kontakt nawiązano w lipcu, wywiad umówiono na sierpień z powodu urlopów oraz kursu językowego, w którym uczestniczyła narratorka.

¹ Transkrypcja stanowi dokładne odzwierciedlenie wypowiedzi narratora, w związku z tym zapis nie jest zgodny z zasadami polskiej ortografii i interpunkcji.
² Projekt zrealizowany ze środków Narodowego Centrum Nauki, grant nr 6716/B/H03/2011/40 (zob. Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas [w tym numerze QSR]).

TST NATALII

Kim jestem?

- 1. Jestem *człowiekiem*
- 2. Jestem *matką*
- 3. Jestem *osobą otwartą*
- 4. Jestem *komunikatywna*
- 5. Jestem *samodzielna*
- 6. Jestem *żoną*
- 7. Jestem *dobrym przyjacielem*
- 8. Jestem *kobietą*
- 9. Jestem *dobrym pracownikiem*
- 10. Jestem *częścią rodziny*
- 11. Jestem *sąsiadem*
- 12. Jestem *uparta*
- 13. Jestem *szczerą*
- 14. Jestem *współczująca*
- 15. Jestem
- 16. Jestem
- 17. Jestem
- 18. Jestem
- 19. Jestem
- 20. Jestem

- 1. A: Pani Natalio to ja bym chciała, tak żeby zacząć tą właśnie historię trochę od tego żeby pani
- 2. powiedziała parę słów o swojej rodzinie, tak o swoim pochodzeniu.
- 3. N: Od samego początku?
- 4. A: Mhm. Znaczy o rodzicach tak, tak oo...
- 5. N: O rodzicach... no to będzie trochę trudne, ale czasami/
- 6. A: Jeśli nie o/ tak to o dzieciństwie...
- 7. N: No więc, tak yy... Mój tata pochodził mm... z miejscowości mm... [nazwa miejscowości] to jest
- 8. taka nieduża miejscowość oddalona od [nazwa dużego miasta] o około 220 kilometrów stąd. Moja
- 9. mama jest [określenie pochodzenia] – pochodzi z [nazwa dużego miasta] z [nazwa dzielnicy]. Nie
- 10. wiem w jaki sposób się poznali ale jakoś się poznali pewnie w tata był tutaj w wojsku i może tak to
- 11. wyglądało yy... w każdym razie do [nazwa dużego miasta] przeprowadzili się yy... w
- 12. siedemdziesiątym bodajże dziewią/ dziewiątym bądź osiemdziesiątym roku... yy... Wtedy miałam
- 13. starszego brata, byłam ja, był mój młodszy brat, było nas troje. Następnie pojawiła się moja siostra,
- 14. sześć lat młodsza ode mnie, później jeszcze yy... kolejny brat i kolejna siostra i brat. Pomyliłam
- 15. kolejności, w każdym bądź razie jest nas sześcioro, z czego jedno dziecko yy... zmarło w wieku
- 16. dwóch lat w 83. roku yy... No i cóż mam teraz powiedzieć?
- 17. A: Może niech pani powie trochę o tej swojej historii, o swoim dzieciństwie, tak.
- 18. N: (xx)
- 19. A: Czyli kiedy się pani urodziła, gdzie, tak, jak wyglądało pani dzieciństwo?
- 20. N: Ja urodziłam się w 74. roku w [nazwa] gdzieś w lesie yy... To znaczy w karetce pogotowia
- 21. głównie ((śmiej)). Bo nie było tak, że nie byłam jakimś takim dzieckiem rzuconym pod drzewem
- 22. yy... Myślę, że dzieciństwo, to bardzo wczesne dzieciń/ dzieciństwo miałam dość yy... przyjemne,
- 23. chociaż nie pamiętam tego wczesnego dzieciństwa yy... Tutaj po przeprowadzeniu się rodziców do
- 24. [nazwa miasta] było tak troszkę różnie yy... Generalnie pochodzę z rodziny patologicznej, co
- 25. wskazuje yy... na to, że m trafiłam do domu dziecka. Co prawda na pięć lat to nie było aż tak
- 26. strasznie dużo. Miałam i tak dużo szczęścia bo y... znałam osoby które były niemalże od urodzenia
- 27. w domu dziecka, tak że, tak że nie było tak źle... yy... No rodzice, generalnie, moja mama to chyba
- 28. nigdy nie pracowała, tata zawsze pracował. Jeszcze w latach 80. było dos/ dosyc yy... warunki były
- 29. takie, może, może nie było niczego za dużo w sklepach, ale warunki były na tyle dobre, że, że ta
- 30. opieka była i i te pieniądze starczały. Pamiętam chodziliśmy i do kina i na lody i... i ogólnie było,
- 31. było w porządku. Natomiast troszeczkę się popsulo w chwili kiedy rodzice zaczęli pić, zaczęli
- 32. nadużywać alkoholu, moja mama, mój tata. Tata był dobrym fachowcem, więc jak wpadali w takie
- 33. ciągi yy... alkoholowe, gdzie normalnie w dzisiejszych czasach człowiek by automatycznie tracił
- 34. pracę mój tata zawsze wracał. I o/ ot/ przyjmowano go z otwartymi rękoma ponieważ naprawdę był
- 35. dobrym pracownikiem i rzetelnym yy... no mm... Takie mm alkoholowe libacje nasilały się coraz

1. częściej, czasami było tak, że rodzice pili przez trzy tygodnie yy... Czasami było tak, że pili przez
 2. pół roku powiedzmy tak, ale no yy... takie yy... W chwili kiedy yy... zaczął/ ten, ten alkohol
 3. pojawiał się dosyć częściej bywało coraz gorzej yy... Mój tata ja/... yy... w 89. albo ósmym roku
 4. trafił do więzienia na dwa lata ponieważ... z racji tego, że znaczy nie chcę tutaj nikogo tłumaczyć
 5. ale i dzielnica i warunki sprzyjały ku temu żeby mm rozpocząć taki nielegalny handel alko/
 6. alkoholem, potocznie nazywa się to melina. Ponieważ moja mama nie pracowała zajmowała się
 7. dziećmi, potem troszkę tych pieniędzy brakowało a jeżeli były takie ciągi alkoholowe to wiadomo,
 8. że pieniądze yy... były roztrwonione w cały świat i nie było tych pieniędzy. Więc... yy, więc yy...
 9. no zaczęto/ właśnie rodzice zaczęli sprzedawać alkohol no taka melina była. I mój tata yy...
 10. poszedł do więzienia za/ za ten handel nielegalny na dwa lata... I wtedy wszystko się zaczęło,
 11. zaczęło się wszystko sypać, chociaż wcześniej no były takie sytuacje, że być może gdyby opieka
 12. społeczna się częściej zainteresował y do głębi i pewnie wcześniej wszyscy wylądowaliby w domu
 13. dziecka i może to byłoby lepsze dla nas. Ponieważ z całej rodziny tak naprawdę tylko ja mam taki
 14. prawdziwy dom ((płacz))...
 15. A: Możemy pani Natalio w każdym momencie zrobić przerwę tak, ja wiem, że to niełatwa historia
 16. ((dłuższa pauza)).... [A podaje chusteczki].
 17. N: Dziękuję..... ((płacz)). Może jeszcze powiem, że... w mojej rodzinie jeszcze wcześniej zawsze
 18. nie, nie wiem było brudno yy... y jakoś tak moja mama nie przywiązywała wagi do tego żeby
 19. zadbać o nas, żebyśmy mieli czyste zadbane rzeczy. Było to wszystko prane, ale to było prane tak,
 20. że to było wrzucone do jednej pralki więc te rzeczy były takie no nefajne. Generalnie zawsze,
 21. zawsze, nie wiem może nie świerzb ale zawsze jakaś wszawica yy... Chodząc do szkoły no to tam
 22. trochę było nefajnie bo, no bo były takie yy... yy... kontrole pielęgniarские i tak dalej więc to nie
 23. należało do fajnych rzeczy bo w klasie człowiek może nie yy... nie aż no tyle był jakimś takim,
 24. osobą odrzuconą z grona ponieważ zawsze charakterem i nie wiem jakoś tak się nadrabiało, że, że
 25. w sumie było okej. Ale nigdy nie było tak, że, że mieliśmy czas na to żeby się uczyć super ekstra
 26. żebyśmy byli nie wiem tak w takiej czołówce szkolnej klasowej, no były takie właśnie różne
 27. potknięcia. Czasem nie było kanapek, ale to tam były były organizowane jakieś takie obiady
 28. szkolne, darmowe. Tak że nie było źle chociaż moja mama dość dobrze gotowała, jak było
 29. wszystko w porządku to było okej. Natomiast/ no właśnie zaczęłam mówić o moich/ o moim
 30. rodzeństwie, no więc... tylko ja... jako jedna z tej szóstki, piątki właściwie bo jedno dziecko nam
 31. zmarło, chociaż też nie chcę tutaj nikogo y oskarżać, ale pamiętam śmierć y Gosi ((wzdycha))... Bo
 32. pamiętam wtedy pięć albo sześć lat, osiem lat miałam więc byłam takim dzieckiem no które już
 33. pamięta pewne rzeczy. I pamiętam, że było takie łóżeczko metalowe... i w tym łóżeczku leżała
 34. Gosia. I rano powiedziała, że ją boli główka, tak po dziecięcemu, bo to dziecko było no malutkie. I
 35. moi rodzice poszli gdzieś, zamknęli nas, czyli że jak ja miałam 8 lat, mam starszego brata o rok,

1. czyli Radek 9-letni, zostawili nas w trójkę samych (((zastanawia się))). Jeszcze mia/ mam dwa lata
 2. brata młodszego, czyli było 9-letnie dziecko, 8-letnie dziecko i 2-letnia Gosia którą bolała głowa.
 3. I... i my żeśmy w tym domu obserwowali tą dziewczynkę, w tym łóżeczku jak ona yy... łąpała
 4. oddech, jak rybka. A moi rodzice gdzieś pojechali, nie wiem czy na jakieś zakupy nie pamiętam
 5. wtedy. Ale w każdym bądź razie przy/ jak przyjechali, tak było już sporo po południu, była godzina
 6. 15-ta albo 16-ta a zostawili nas rano. I... i pamiętam jak yy... jak to dziecko właśnie łąpało oddech
 7. takimi resztkami sił. Po czym tata yy... jak przyjechali zadzwonił po pogotowie. Pogotowie
 8. przyjechało po godzinie 19-ej żeby stwierdzić zgon dziecka. Sekcja zwłok, nie wiem czy to była
 9. sekcja zwłok czy/ nie pamiętam. W każdym bądź razie lekarz orzekł, że było to yy... mózgowe
 10. zapalenie płu/ zapale/
 11. A: Opon mózgowych, mhm.
 12. N: Opon mózgowych tak, ropne. Więc wydaje mi się, że gdyby, gdyby ktoś zainteresował się tym
 13. dzieckiem wcześniej no to dziecko na pewno by nie umarło. Bo to zapalenie opon mózgowie ropne
 14. yy... na pewno rozwijało się dużo, dużo wcześniej i to dziecko było zaniedbane moim zdaniem. Ja
 15. teraz to mogę stwierdzić, wcześniej byłam małym dzieckiem i no/ a poza tym trudno jest osądzać
 16. yy... rodziców tak? Więc y Gosia zmarła w wyniku choroby.
 17. A: I to było w 83. roku, tak?
 18. N: Tak, 83. rok.
 19. A: Ile ona miała lat?
 20. N: yy... dwa lata.
 21. A: Dwa lata, mhm.
 22. N: Dwa lata miała... No i no i... nie wiem co ja zaczęłam mówić bo straciłam wątek.
 23. A: Zaczęła pani mówić o swoim rodzeństwie.
 24. N: Tak, no to spośród tego rodzeństwa właściwie tylko ja, tak żyję powiedzmy nie dniem
 25. dzisiejszym tylko tak normalnie jak normalny człowiek. Mam normalną pracę, mam męża, mam
 26. dom, mam rachunki, które muszę opłacać co nie jest fajne ale, ale takie jest życie. Natomiast mój
 27. starszy brat siedzi w więzieniu, mój młodszy brat siedzi w więzieniu, mój jeszcze młodszy brat
 28. siedzi w więzieniu. Moja siostra jedna jest mężatką, ale to nie jest nic dobrego i - na pewno nikt nie
 29. chciałby jej spotkać w nocy bo jest agresywna, rozrabia. Chociaż nie widziałam jej nigdy w takiej
 30. sytuacji ale... ale to nie jest normalne życie. Mieszka w jakimś pustostanie też nadużywa alkoholu,
 31. też ma męża który notorycznie pije i wiecznie traci pracę i wiecznie ma ataki padaczkowe już w
 32. takim młodym wieku, więc...
 33. A: Z powodu alkoholizmu?
 34. N: Alkoholu. Więc to myślę, że przyszłości dobrej z tego nie będzie... No i oczywiście też yy...
 35. siedziała w więzieniu przez pół roku czasu za... handel narkotykami albo coś takiego... No i mam

1. jeszcze najmłodszą siostrę... która póki co na razie w miarę normalnie żyje. Ma... dość/ nie
 2. mieszka w domu... ((wzdycha)) dość wcześniej wyprowadziła się z domu, mieszka, ma teraz 21 lat,
 3. mieszka z młodszym od siebie chłopakiem. Ale ten chłopak jest/ znaczy jak na te nasze warunki, bo
 4. my mieszkamy wszyscy tutaj w okolicy, jak na te nasze warunki nie jest źle. Ma 9-cio miesięczną
 5. córeczkę, ale też już tam mijala się tam troszeczkę z prawem więc to też nie jest taka super ekstra,
 6. chociaż być może, że ona jest taką najnormalniejszą osobą jeszcze w tej rodzinie. Znaczący
 7. najnormalniejszą w sensie takim, że zwraca uwagę na to, na to, że życie nie, nie jest tylko jednym
 8. dniem, że trzeba zadbać o coś, że, że jest to dziecko. To oczywiście wszyscy tutaj mają dzieci i nikt
 9. się tym nie przejmuje. I... no nie wiem ja jestem takim wyrzutkiem troszkę w rodzinie, szczerze
 10. mówiąc i nie jest mi za bardzo fajnie z tym. Co prawda nie chciałabym się utożsamiać z mo/
 11. znaczy, nigdy nie wyrzeknę się mojej rodziny i zawsze każdemu pomogę jeśli przyjdzie taka
 12. potrzeba. Natomiast ja nie potrafię żyć tak jak oni. Ja po prostu nie potrafię i to jest wydaje mi się,
 13. że to jest powiedzmy powód tego, że ja trafiłam do domu dziecka. Ponieważ yy jak mój tata... w
 14. latach 80. yy.. 90., zaraz 89. rok chyba to był jak trafił do więzienia to moja mama już zupełnie
 15. yy... straciła chyba nie wiem... poczucie tego, że jest matką, że ma rodzinę, że ma dzieci. I i tak
 16. naprawdę te dzieci mają tylko ją w tym momencie, bo tata był w więzieniu i to był przez dwa długie
 17. lata. W chwili kiedy yy... mój tata trafił do więzienia ja chodziłam do szóstej klasy podstawowej,
 18. czyli byłam taka już w miarę duża dziewczyna i myśląca. Zajmowałam się młodszym rodzeństwem
 19. które miałam... chociaż nie zawsze podobało mi się to, ponieważ no byłam już w takim wieku, że
 20. nie wiem, no fajnie byłoby z dziewczynkami gdzieś pobiec do parku, z dziewczynami pograć po/
 21. cokolwiek a nie cały czas „Mamo mogę wyjść?“, „To weź nie wiem brata, siostrę“ i tak dalej. Więc
 22. byłam taką powiedzmy nianką młodszego rodzeństwa co też mi się nie podobało bo... tak
 23. naprawdę też nie zdawałam sobie sprawy i czasami nawet było fajnie jak rodzice pili bo mogliśmy
 24. robić co chcieliśmy. Nie musiałam, nie wiem opiekować się kimś tam, chociaż to było na krótką
 25. me/metę bo jak się wracało do domu to okazywało się, że jakieś dziecko jest płaczące, głodne albo
 26. trzeba je przebrać i i tak dalej. Wychodziła jeszcze większa draka niż, niż gdybym miała być z tym
 27. dzieckiem cały czas. No więc yy... trafiłam do tego domu dziecka... ponieważ... w chwili kiedy
 28. mój tata poszedł do tego więzienia moja mama mm... balowała i to ostro. Poznała jakieś
 29. towarzystwo i pamiętam przychodzili różni ludzie, nawet jakiś pan bez nogi yy... Moja babcia
 30. trochę próbowała interweniować, bo moja babcia jest bardzo w porządku osobą, mojej mamy
 31. mama. Też bardzo ciężko przeżywała to wszystko. Przynosiła nam jedzenie, ale niestety nie, nie
 32. udało jej się wychować mamy i - nie miała na nią żadnego wpływu chociaż tam nieraz po głowie
 33. parasolką dostała, ale to raczej nie przywróciło jej rozumu. I... i kiedyś pamiętam była taka
 34. sytuacja, że mama nas zamknęła na kłódkę, takie były stare wielkie drzwi i poszła. Nie było jej
 35. chyba dwa albo trzy dni. Ludzie nam przez okno dawali jedzenie... no nie było fajnie. W każdym

1. bądź razie mieliśmy głupie pomysły bo różnica wieku była nie wiem, powiedzmy od 13-tu po 5 czy
 2. 4 lata. Zorganizowaliśmy sobie fajną imprezę w domu... oczywiście w domu zamkniętym. Przez
 3. okno nam koledzy, koledzy czy tam koleżanki wchodzili/ i mieliśmy taką dużą blaszaną wannę... i
 4. postanowiliśmy w takim korytarzu topić wszystkie plastikowe rzeczy które nam przyszły do głowy,
 5. tak że pewnie byśmy spalili ten dom yy... doszczętnie gdyby nie/
 6. A: Topić w sensie, w sensie stapania, nie w wodzie, tylko stapania?
 7. N: Nie, nie plastikowe rzeczy podpalaliśmy i nam to tak fajnie leciało do tej miski. Był straszny
 8. dym, przyjechała policja, straż pożarna i w ogóle, tak że były cuda na kiju yy... I generalnie moja
 9. babcia kiedyś yy... przyjechała, zobaczyła, znaczy - wielokrotnie przyjeżdżała i nam pomagała,
 10. przywoziła nam różne rzeczy i i przyjechała kiedyś i zobaczyła co się dzieje no i zarządziła.
 11. Ponieważ z moją mamą nie było żadnego normalnego kontaktu... to zadzwoniła po... y... zgłosiła
 12. w ogóle wszystko nie wiem gdzie, do jakiejś opieki, gdziekolwiek, na policję, nie wiem. W każdym
 13. bądź razie mojego brata zabrano do domu dziecka... znaczy moje rodzeństwo poszło gdzieś tam po
 14. domach dziecka a ja y trafiłam do mojej drugiej babci, taty mamy. Trafiłam tam wydaje mi się
 15. dlatego, że mm... że babcia potrzebowała kogoś kto jej będzie się zajmował kurami
 16. (((żartobliwie))) i tak dalej. No w każdym bądź razie no... i tak wyszłam o tyle dobrze, że przez te
 17. dwa lata nie włóczyłam się po jakiś domach dziecka. Była ta babcia, jaka była taka była ale była. W
 18. każdym bądź razie bardzo tęskniłam za rodziną wtedy... pamiętam, że... ((płacze))... ((dłuższa
 19. pauza)). Pamiętam wtedy, że yy... babcia nie raz wypominała mi dom, że jestem podobna do matki.
 20. Kiedyś nawet dostałam w twarz za to, takie tam/ chociaż tak naprawdę powiedziawszy...
 21. ((płacze))... ((wzdycha)).... nie wydaje mi się, że... tylko moja mama jest winna....
 22. A: Może pani Natalio małą przerwę na przykład zrobić też, tak... Jak pani trudno mówić, bo
 23. rozumiem, że to naprawdę trudne takie są wspomnienia bardzo...
 24. N: Ja jestem taki płaczek trochę ((dłuższa pauza))... No w każdym bądź razie nie wydaje mi się, że
 25. tylko moja mama była winna temu tej zaistniałej sytuacji. Fakt, że no tata się poświęcił i poszedł do
 26. tego więzienia bo tak naprawdę powinna iść za to mama bo to ją złapano na gorącym uczynku. Ale
 27. ((pociąga nosem)) stwierdził, że tak będzie lepiej, no ale gdyby mój tata inaczej się prowadził to
 28. pewnie też nie byłoby takiego pijaństwa i wydaje mi się, że wina zawsze leży pośrodku, no więc nie
 29. ma co tutaj kogoś winić bardziej lub mniej. W każdym bądź razie tęskniłam za rodzeństwem
 30. ((wyciera nos)) i bardzo chciałam tutaj wrócić i w momencie kiedy tata wyszedł z tego więzienia i
 31. przyjechał do mnie przyjechał po mnie... i mówił, że wszystko będzie okej i w ogóle i ja... wróciłam
 32. tutaj do, do [nazwa dużego miasta]. Poszłam do ósmej klasy, skończyłam tą szkołę ale nie było/
 33. takie/ Po tych dwu latach kiedy mieszkałam u tej babci ja się bardzo odzwyczaiłam od brudu, od
 34. tego, że no były te ciągi alkoholowe jednak. Dużo rzeczy mi się nie podobało nie podobało mi się
 35. zachowanie mojej mamy wiecznie były jakieś konflikty z nią wiecznie, po prostu miałam wrażenie,

1. że były jakieś zatargi. Poza tym yy... no nie było/ relacje bardzo się/ ja liczyłam, na to, że jak
 2. wrócę to będzie wszystko dobrze i wreszcie ta moja rodzina/ ale ja już chyba y nie potrafiłam tak
 3. żyć. Wyzwoliłam/ ja/ przez dwa lata mnie nie było i ja po prostu przestałam się godzić, było mi
 4. bardzo ciężko... I pamiętam, że (((z wahaniem w głosie))) nie, nie pamiętam już w tym momencie,
 5. to nie pamiętam, ale to było tak, że to wszystko się nawarstwiało, nawarstwiało i... i te kłótnie takie
 6. awantury, to chyba też wiek dojrzewania też zrobił swoje znaczy kiedyś mm... dosyć tego
 7. wszystkiego... dosyć tego życia tutaj w takim zapijaczonym domu (((silne emocje))). I... no nie
 8. chciałam yy... znowuż te wszy, taki ten brud i i ogólnie takie stare nawyki rodziny, że yy... nie
 9. wiem. Kiedyś nie pamiętam już tak naprawdę o co to poszło, po prostu przelała się szala goryczy i
 10. nałykałam się nie wiem jakiś tabletek których znalazłam w barku i postanowiłam się otruć... co nie
 11. było zbyt rozsądne, no ale... W każdym bądź razie postanowiłam targnąć się na własne życie...
 12. Chyba znalazł mnie tata ale nie jestem pewna... to może tak, taka już byłam chyba na wpół
 13. półprzytomna ((chrząka)). I y zostałam odwieziona do szpitala na ulicę [nazwa ulicy] tam miałam
 14. płukanie żołądka, ale z tego szpitala już y nie wróciłam do domu ponieważ nie chciałam. No ale to
 15. było bardzo ciężkie dla mnie ((płacz)).... ponieważ moja rodzina absolutnie się ode mnie
 16. odwróciła... i trafiłam właśnie do tego domu dziecka....

17. A: Ile pani wtedy lat miała?

18. N: 14-cie.

19. A: 14-cie, tak. Czyli to była ósma klasa, czyli już po skończeniu ósmej klasy?

20. N: Ósma klasa.

21. A: Mhm.

22. N: To była ósma klasa ((pociąga nosem)) i trafiłam do tego domu dziecka już taka jako taka
 23. nastolatka. I generalnie oczywiście ((pociąga nosem)) po jakimś czasie... yy... zaczęłam coraz
 24. rzadziej, potem coraz częściej odwiedzać moich rodziców w domu. Jakoś mnie tam yy... tolerowali
 25. pomimo tego, że się odwróciłam, że powiedziałam, że nie i w ogóle. Że nie chce się żyć w, w takiej
 26. rodzinie. Właściwie to była moja decyzja ale... teraz z perspektywy czasu wydaje mi się, że słuszna
 27. chociaż nie wiem, nie wiem jak w ogóle yy... można y zrobić tak żeby żyć normalnie i nie/ żeby
 28. zmienić swoje życie wtedy kiedy człowiek nie decyduje o sobie. Pewnie targnięcie się na własne
 29. życie to nie był do/ dobry pomysł, może jakiś pedagog, psycholog nie wiem ktokolwiek może by
 30. pomógł, ale ja wtedy nie wiem, nie myślałam takimi kategoriami jak teraz i nie... nie wiem po
 31. prostu nie myślałam o tym gdzie mogłabym yy... poszukać jakieś pomocy tylko po prostu
 32. stwierdziłam, że to nie ma sensu ((płacz))... A, że w momencie kiedy trafiłam do tego domu
 33. dziecka pozbierałam się... tak mi się wydaje, że chyba taka jestem nie do zabicia trochę
 34. (((zartobliwie))). Pozbierałam się, zaczęłam normalnie funkcjonować, spotykałam się z rodziną,
 35. spotykałam się z rodzeństwem. I pamiętam, że był taki czas kiedy moja 6 lat młodsza siostra ode

1. mnie, uciekła do mnie. Kiedyś ja ją chyba nawet nie wiem, zabrałam z tego domu z tej pij/ z tego
 2. pijaństwa, były awantury były, no nie, to nie był, to nie był dom sprzyjający normalnemu
 3. wychowaniu dzieciom. I ta moja siostra zobaczyła, że ja mieszkam w takim pokoju z trzema
 4. dziewczynami, że mam czysto ((pociąga nosem)) że mam ładnie w tym pokoju... że jest stołówka,
 5. że jest normalne jedzenie, że jest zupełnie inne życie, że tu dzieci mogą odrabiać lekcje, że mogą
 6. się bawić, że są różne gry, zabawy, że się jeszcze jakieś fajne rzeczy się dostaje czasami, że,
 7. zupełnie inne życie tutaj po prostu yy... takie normalne to życie, że.... że człowiek normalnie
 8. funkcjonuje. Ona chciała pamiętam, że ona chciała yy... przyjść do mnie i ja ją chciałam zabrać i
 9. nawet ją zabrałam na noc, to by mi jakiś wychowawca pozwolił bo no została, ale w chwili kiedy
 10. poprosiłam panią dyrektor żeby zrobiła coś, żeby ona z nami została no to chyba nie było żadnej
 11. żadnego odzewu albo jakiejs takiej nie wiem władzy ku/ i y sposobności, ku temu żeby ona jednak
 12. została. I myślę, że to błąd dlatego, że... dlatego, że może byś/ troszeczkę poznała innego życia i
 13. byłoby inaczej. Teraz jest no... no nie jest na dobrej drodze i i kto wie czy za jakiś czas nie zabiorą
 14. jej dziecka ponieważ chodzi pijana po ulicach, awanturuje się, kradnie, nie wiem, cokolwiek to, to
 15. biedne dziecko też nie ma zbyt dobrze z tą swoją mamą bo... no bo widzi to co, to co my
 16. widzieliśmy kiedyś tak. Takie dwuletnie dziecko no to, no właściwie trzy latka już ma [imię] to taka
 17. dziewczynka powinna troszkę/ ale okej. No w każdym bądź razie trafiłam w sumie do tego domu
 18. dziecka tam sobie byłam, też miałam głupie pomysły też... Były takie różne wyskoki, że nie wiem,
 19. dziewczyna tam z tego domu dziecka bo z różnych rodzin pochodziłyśmy, też kupowałyśmy jakieś
 20. wina, piłyśmy w parkach, potem zwracałyśmy dalej niż widziałyśmy no.

21. A: ((śmiech))

22. N: Też się nie wiem, uczyłam palić papierosy na ławce parkowej. Może też nie byłam jakoś taka
 23. super święta ale miałam taki yy... zapewniony spokój, taki wewnętrzny wiedziałam, że zawsze jak
 24. wrócę, to wrócę do takiego normalnego domu, chociaż to nie był normalny dom ale, ale... ale był
 25. ktoś kto się interesował mną, był ktoś kto się zapytał „Odrobiłaś lekcje?”. Był ktoś kto mógł mnie
 26. wesprzeć yy... mógł mi pomóc, pomógł wybrać szkołę, pokazał mi yy... jak się żyje mm... I to, że
 27. to pięć lat tego domu dziecka naprawdę pomogło mi bardzo dużo. Bo - z perspektywy czasu ja teraz
 28. widzę, że ja, nie wiem, nie chcę tutaj oceniać jakoś tam super pozytywnie, ale wydaje mi się, że
 29. jestem dobrą matką... rozumiem moją córkę, potrafię się z nią dogadać chociaż jest może w takim
 30. wieku taka zbuntowana bo teraz ma 13 lat ja ją bardzo kocham i ona nas też mnie i męża. Jest tak
 31. nauczona, że jest bardzo dużo miłości w tym naszym domu, że ona nie ukrywa żadnych tajemnic,
 32. ona jest otwarta, ona mówi nam o wszystkim i... Ja tego nie miałam, nie miałam takiego
 33. zrozumienia, nie miałam takiej miłości. Ten dom dziecka nakierował mnie, fakt, że kończyłam
 34. mnóstwo różnych szkół, ale w końcu jestem osobą dość wykształconą, może nie jakoś super ekstra,
 35. ale ten licenc/ licencjat zrobiłam. Myślę jakoś tak przyszłościowo, staram się zbudować dom,

1. zobaczymy jak to wyjdzie (((zartobliwie))) ponieważ no kredyty są strasznie drogie nie wiem no.
 2. Myślę zupełnie inaczej niż moi rodzice teraz i żałuję, że nie mogłam zrobić nic dla mojej rodziny,
 3. dla moich braci i siostr żeby oni byli tak/ tacy sami jak ja. Bo nie/ znaczy tak, chłopaków jest trudno
 4. wychować, jeszcze w takiej dzielnicy gdzie yy... w chwili kiedy rodzice piją i nie zwracają uwagi
 5. na nic to wiadomo, że dzieciakom różne pomysły przychodzą do głowy i jak trafiają w jakieś takie
 6. nieciekawe towarzystwo to starają się potem dominować albo pokazywać o ja też jestem fajny i
 7. dobry, i to wcale nie kieruje ku dobremu tylko niestety ku... ku złemu i... No i właśnie trafili po
 8. więzieniach i wydaje mi się, że to było przez to, że nie zaznali tej miłości w rodzinie nikt tam się
 9. specjalnie nie interesował a jeżeli yy... a jeżeli któreś z nas nie wiem nie odrobiło pracy domowej
 10. albo przyniosło jakąś jed/ jed/ dwójkę wtedy, czy nie wiem narozrabiało to nie było jakiegoś
 11. takiego, nie było takiej wyrozumiałości nie było zapytania „Dlaczego?” tylko było takie, albo jakaś
 12. kara albo coś tam no, że chłopaki cierpieli strasznie. Wtedy mój dwuletni, dwa lata młodszy brat
 13. ode mnie... od małości sikał w nocy w łóżko. Myślę, że to było na tle nerwowym, oczywiście
 14. konsultacji żadnych lekarskich nie było. Tak że oprócz tego, że był brud w tym domu, wszawica to
 15. jeszcze nie/ niejednokrotnie yy... odczuwało się taki odór tego moczu... ponieważ nie zawsze było
 16. tak, że miał tam zmienianą tą pościel codziennie, tylko zesikał się, to się odwróciło na drugą stronę
 17. i dobra, no to jeszcze i i tak nie było za fajnie... Myślę, że yy... takie sikanie nocne yy... było
 18. spowodowane tym, że on jednak był takim wrażliwym dzieciakiem. Teraz... właściwie przez
 19. połowę swojego życia yy... przesiedział w jakiś zakładach poprawczych albo w domach dziecka y
 20. w, w/ w więzieniach takich, już. W chwili kiedy on yy... ukończył 18 lat ((długa pauza))....
 21. ((płacze)). A pamiętam... jak byliśmy dziećmi i rodzice pili ((płacze)) więc mogliśmy robić tak
 22. naprawdę co chcieliśmy to wtedy mój brat, ((płacze))... nie wiem co teraz, takim... straszną krzywdę
 23. doznał ((płacze)) mieliśmy takie, takie marzenia dziecięce właściwie to już takie powiedzmy
 24. mieliśmy około 10, 11, 8 lat ((pociąga nosem, ciężko wzdycha)) chodziliśmy po ulicach jak
 25. widzieliśmy jakieś takie... ((płacze, długa pauza))... takie bezdomne psy.
 26. A: Mhm.
 27. N: Biedne głodne ((płacze)) to przyprowadzaliśmy je do domu. I nie wiem chyba znaleźliśmy z pięć
 28. takich psów, karmiliśmy je dawaliśmy im wodę. I kiedyś żeśmy tak, tak sobie kiedy/ tak sobie
 29. mówiliśmy, że jak dorośniemy ((płacze)) to otworzymy schronisko dla takich biednych,
 30. bezdomnych psów ((płacze))... Tak że myślę sobie teraz, że gdyby naprawdę ((płacze)) ktoś
 31. pokierował tymi dziećmi gdyby było chociaż trochę miłości w tej rodzinie to żaden z nich nie
 32. byłby w więzieniu na pewno. Bo to naprawdę ((pociąga nosem)) byli dobrzy chłopaki a teraz
 33. niestety... jest tak jak jest ((ciszej)). I tak naprawdę ten mój młodszy brat który tak chciał pomagać
 34. zwierzętom jak był mały to teraz nie myśli racjonalnie nie myśli normalnie i każdy taki pobyt w
 35. zakładzie karnym ((pociąga nosem)) uświadcza go w przekonaniu, że nie ma innego życia niż życie

1. w takim świecie przestępczym. To nieprawda, że, że to, że więzienie resocjalizuje.
 2. A: Mhm.
 3. N: To jest po prostu jak się wpadnie w jedną dziurę to im więcej się ma takich wyroków tym wtedy
 4. więcej w takim świecie przestępczym ten ktoś istnieje, ma mnóstwo przyjaciół, kolegów ale to to są
 5. wszyscy tacy troszkę nie wiem... troszkę inaczej myślący ludzie i na pewno... ((pociąga nosem)) i
 6. na pewno nie chcą yy... wracać na takie prawe życie, mogą chusteczkę?
 7. A: Tak, proszę.
 8. N: Mnie tak naprawdę, no właśnie ja to jestem taka trochę niektórzy mówią, że taka matka Polka ze
 9. mnie bo... Bo ja tak naprawdę jestem w stanie naprawdę dużo wytrzymać. Tylko najbardziej boli
 10. mnie to, że, że nie dano szansy tym, tym moim ro/ temu mojemu rodzeństwu niefajnie. I - ja
 11. utrzymuję cały czas kontakt ze wszystkimi chociaż nie wiem, nie jeżdżę po więzieniach bo - mam
 12. swoje życie, mam babcię która już jest/ która według/ wobec której mam też obowiązek pomocy, bo
 13. jak ja potrzebowałam tej pomocy to też mi pomagała. I staram się jak mogę, więc nie jeżdżę jakoś,
 14. tak strasznie mocno po tych więzieniach bo musiałabym po prostu spędzać każdy wolny weekend
 15. na to żeby gdzieś tam jeździć po Polsce i odwiedzać braci którzy tak naprawdę no wybrali. Bo ja
 16. też mogłam wybrać prawda... ja się zbuntowałam, kosztowało mnie to dużo, bo nie wiem, chyba
 17. tylko Bóg wie ile nocy przepłakałam... bo czułam się odrzucona a jak jest/ nie wiem jaka byłaby nie
 18. była ta babcia, jaki nie byłby ten ojciec to się ich kocha i człowiek chce takiego y... takiej akceptacji
 19. od nich więc to... co by nie robili to się lgnie do nich... Nie wiem co mam jeszcze powiedzieć...
 20. A: Pani Natalio może domkniemy taki, jakieś wątki, które są dla pani najtrudniejsze.
 21. N: Tak, tak.
 22. A: Dobrze, bo rozumiem, że to naprawdę jest no trudna taka historia... bo tak cofając się jeszcze
 23. trochę w przeszłość pani mówiła, że mieszkaliście w tej [okolicy]. I w którym roku żeście państwo
 24. mniej więcej wyjechali? Ile pani miała wtedy lat?
 25. N: Nie wiem, cztery albo pięć.
 26. A: Cztery albo pięć, tak. I w jakich warunkach pamięta pani żeście w tej puszczy mieszkali czy to
 27. była jakaś wieś?
 28. N: To była wieś [nazwa]. Ja w ogóle się urodziłam w [okolicy]. Ponieważ mm ((chrząka)) kiedyś to
 29. były takie czasy, że yy... kobiety nie szły do szpitala przed ciążą jakoś tam przed tym terminem
 30. porodu tylko chyba nie wiem yy... jak przychodził taki termin no to dzwoniło się po pogotowie a,
 31. że to było dosyć daleko od szpitala to ja się gdzieś tam po drodze urodziłam w lesie. Ale generalnie
 32. to była taka mała miejscowość o nazwie [nazwa miejscowości] i moi rodzice yy... nie wiem moją/
 33. moi rodzice wynajmowali jakiś pokój w gospodarstwie u kogoś. Nawet kilka lat temu
 34. przejeżdżaliśmy, czasami jeżdżę tam do tej babci od strony taty. Jeszcze jak tata żył, mój tata umarł
 35. dwa lata temu yy... to kiedyś żeśmy przejeżdżali tamtędy i pokazywał mi właśnie gdzie my tutaj

1. żeśmy mieszkali. Ale tego budynku już nie było. Więc to było, było to jakieś pomieszczenie
2. wynajmowane to był może jeden pokój z kuchnią albo to była kuchnia, albo to był pokój
3. przedzielony yy... to był pokój przedzielony yy... z wydzie/ z wydzielonym miejscem na kuchnię,
4. ja nie pamiętam tego.
5. A: Z czego się rodzice utrzymywali wie pani wtedy czy nie?
6. N: Moja mama nigdy nie pracowała to jest pewne. Natomiast no mój tata yy... nie pamiętam ale na
7. pewno gdzieś pracował. On zawsze pracował, on nie bał się pracy... zawsze pracował to był taki
8. człowiek który nie wiem, zabił świnie, naprawił samochód poszedł w pole, zbudował coś, taki
9. właściwie od wszystkiego.
10. A: A kim był z zawodu?
11. N: ((wzdycha)) Nie wiem czy mój tata skończył jakąś szkołę zawodową czy też nie, ale pracował w
12. firmie budowlanej, był również elektrykiem, był hydraulikiem.
13. A: Mhm.
14. N: I z życia mojego taty to jest ciekawe to, że... miał siostrę ma/ no tak, miał bo już nie żyje,
15. młodszą od siebie i babcia wychowywała dwój/ tą dwójkę dzieci sama ponieważ bardzo... mm...
16. mój tata miał może z 8 lat jak umarł jego ojciec,
17. A: Aha.
18. N: i moja babcia zawsze była zapatrzona w tą swoją młodszą córkę od nie wiem 8 czy 10 lat
19. młodszą od taty i mój tata był zawsze taki no taki gorszy no taki chłopak no to wiadomo, że córka
20. to zawsze taka bardziej przy matce. I jak yy jak się ożenił z moją mamą, co się babci bardzo nie
21. podobało, nie wiem dlaczego, no nie wiem może miała jakieś powody. To już w ogóle był na
22. takim... jak gdyby na takim drugim planie zupełnie i oni chcieli stamtąd się wyprowadzić. Babcia
23. yy... niejednokrotnie tam mówiła... że to pierwsze dziecko czyli mój starszy brat to jest bękart, że
24. to nie jest y dziecko yy... taty i w ogóle takie tam różne rzeczy. Więc myślę, że też nie miał tam
25. takiego dość łatwego życia z tą swoją matką no i się wyprowadzili stamtąd dość szybko.
26. A: A babcia, babcia miała gospodarstwo jakieś tam?
27. N: Ma gospodarstwo, znaczy teraz już wszystko chyba wydzierżawiła, sprzedała i przekazała
28. pieniądze swojej córce (((lekceważąco))). Ale utrzymujemy kontakt z nią, z tą ciocią też.
29. A: I jak pani mówi tutaj się żeście państwo do tego [nazwa miasta] przeprowadzili. Nie wie pani
30. czemu właściwie tutaj dla/ aha właściwie powiedziała pani czemu, nie, przed chwilą.
31. N: To był między innymi, to był jeden, jeden powód a drugi powód był taki, że yy... że moja te/ że
32. moja mama miała tutaj yy...
33. A: Mamę, tak?
34. N: Przepraszam?
35. A: Mamę miała?

1. N: Że miała mamę, tak. I babcia yy... jeździła tam, tutaj z tego [nazwa miasta] yy... do tego [nazwa
2. miejscowości]. I tak jak nam opowiadała, że kiedyś mnie zabrała to chodziliśmy na golasa tacy
3. brudni, ale na wsi to tak dzieciaki myślę, że chodziły w tamtych czasach ((śmiech)), że dziecko
4. brudne to szczęśliwe. I yy... i chyba babcia ściągnęła całą tą rodzinę, mówiła. Bo najpierw chyba
5. rodzice mieszkali przez krótki okres u babci... a potem wynajęli yy... mieszkanie, też taki pokój
6. właściwie u takiego państwa tutaj w okolicy i tam żeśmy mieszkali... I potem nie wiem, mama się
7. włamała do jakiegoś pustostanu i dostała decyzję na, na to mieszkanie.
8. A: W kamienicy?
9. N: W kamienicy.
10. A: Tutaj gdzieś właśnie w [nazwa dzielnicy]?
11. N: Tak, tak. My cały czas mieszkamy gdzie mieszkaliśmy a właściwie teraz mam to właściwie teraz
12. yy... już jestem taka trochę spora bo mam 36 lat. Tak wiem, ale wtedy/
13. A: ((śmiech))
14. N: ((śmiech))
15. N: Były inne czasy i yy... i tak niefajnie, nie zawsze fajnie nam się układało. Natomiast teraz
16. mieszkam w tej samej kamienicy co moja mama, jeżdżę z nią po zakupy. Właściwie ma taką
17. podporę załatwiam jej różnych lekarzy, jeżdżę z nią po lekarzach, zabieram ją na działkę którą
18. kupiłam i opiekuję się nią. Naprawdę był taki czas, że moja mama w ogóle/ yy... teraz może nie, bo
19. jest bardzo schorowaną osobą ale był taki czas yy... kiedy moja mama piła i to dość sporo bo to, że
20. tam dzieci, przepraszam, że dzieci yy wydorosłały i każdy poszedł w swoją stronę no to mm... nie
21. wiem, nie wiem co mówiłam, ale okej. W każdym bądź razie chciałam powiedzieć tylko to, że... od
22. tego czasu kiedy byliśmy mali tak dużo się nie zmieniło bo też były libacje alkoholowe, też pili, też
23. yy... też nie było yy... też super ekstra nie zmądrzeli po tylu latach. Chociaż mój tata w 2002...
24. roku... yy... zachorował ciężko. Zachorował na tyle, że będąc w [nazwa] tam na rybach gdzieś tam,
25. wieziono go tutaj helikopterem do yy... szpitala kardiologicznego bo miał tętniaka na aorcie. To
26. była jego pierwsza operacja, na odcinku piersiowym założyli mu stenta... nie było fajnie bo miał
27. to/ Operacja była bardzo ciężka w głębokiej hipotermii i... i każdy trzymał kciuki żeby przeżył. Ale
28. ten/ ta yy... ten tętniak przeszedł jak gdyby w inne miejsce, aorta się coraz bardziej rozwarstwiała i
29. dwa lata temu... mój tata umarł... Umarł po udanej operacji, ale pacjent nie wytrzymał, że było po
30. prostu za późno dla niego. I powiem pani, że pomimo tego, że różnie było z tymi moimi rodzicami i
31. i... na pewno nie pokazali mi jak żyć... i nie dali mi tego wszystkiego co mają może dzieci z
32. normalnych rodzin... ((wzdycha)) to ja zawsze... zawsze byłam kiedy byłam potrzebna i
33. wystarczyło zrobić tak ((pstryknięcie palcami)) i ja już byłam przy tych rodzicach moich. A jeszcze
34. nie daj Boże jak się coś działo... wydarzyło się coś niedobrego to ja nie patrzyłam na to, że oni byli
35. źli, że zostawiali nas, że nie dbali o nas, tylko po prostu już wtedy ojejku. Człowiek już bardzo

1. współczuł i i przeżywał to, że coś się dzieje, że coś jest nie tak. I mój tata dwa lata temu było o tym/
2. mm... dowiedział się w telewizji, że w [miasto w południowej Polsce] jest taki szpital który, który
3. robi różne takie eksperymenty i i robi właśnie yy... ciężkie operacje. Nawiązałam kontakt z
4. lekarzem, odszukałam jakiegoś ordynatora, przesyłałam dokumentację do tego szpitala. Pan doktor
5. powiedział, że on się podejmie tej operacji, że ściągnie yy... takie części zamiennne, takie stenty z
6. Monachium skąś tam i... i, że on zoperuje mojego tatę. Mój tata żył tą myślą, że będzie operowany,
7. ale niestety czas oczekiwania yy... na tą operację się wydłużał bo od lutego. Pojechaliśmy tam do
8. tego [miasto w południowej Polsce], żeby go wstępnie tam zbadano, żeby tam radiolodzy jeszcze
9. obejrzeni go yy... zdjęcia i tak dalej, porobić jeszcze takie własne badania i operacja była
10. wyznaczona na czerwca... I ja pojechałam z tatą... no no, no bo on wiedział, że yy... że ja będę
11. musiała sobie poradzić z tym wszystkim. I tak naprawdę zrzucił na mnie ((płacze)) obowiązek
12. pochowania, załatwienia pogrzebu. To nie był zły człowiek bo on wiedział, że moja mama to jest
13. taka osoba która nic nie potrafi załatwić... i to bardzo przykre ((płacze)). Jak jechaliśmy do szpitala
14. i mój tata... powiedział mi, że jakby ta operacja się nie udała to ja mam go pochować, wziąć się
15. zająć wszystkim... a ja się tym wszystkim zajęłam ((płacze)) pomimo tego, że było tak jak było.
16. Strasznie przeżyłam śmierć mojego taty... i... w ogóle dziwne jest też to, że on umarł w dniu swoich
17. urodzin,
18. A: mhm
19. N: operacja się udała, ale pacjent nie wytrzymał. No ja po prostu nie wiem/ więcej opowiadałam
20. chyba o całej mojej rodzinie niż o sobie ((lekko żartobliwie)) ale nie wiem, właśnie nie wiem chy/
21. wydaje mi się, że czasami/ Kiedyś oglądałam jakiś film, że... dzieci z takich patologicznych
22. rodzin... nigdy nie powiedzą złego słowa na swoich rodziców i tak bardzo ich kochają,
23. A: mhm
24. N: że... że myślą o tym a zrobić krzywdę tylko, tylko, tylko liczy się to, że no, że są.
25. A: mhm
26. N: ... No tak że utrzymuję jeżdżę regularnie na cmentarz gdzie właściwie tylko ja pracuję a cała moja
27. rodzina nie ((pociąga nosem)). I nikt nie jeździ do tego mojego ojca na ten cmentarz, to jest przykre
28. bardzo, naprawdę... Ja wiem, że może nie dostali zbyt dużo dobrego od tego mojego taty ale... ja
29. myślę, że to był ojciec nie warto ((pociąga nosem)) tylko warto pamiętać... No ale ja jestem taką
30. taką yy... chyba czarną owcą w tej rodzinie mojej ((śmiej)) ponieważ wszystko robię na opak,
31. odwrotnie niż każdy by chciał, sobie życzył. Chociaż ((pociąga nosem)) teraz yy... z racji tego, że
32. jestem powiedzmy osobą wykształconą, normalną to się ode mnie bardzo dużo wymaga, więcej niż
33. od tych wszystkich bo ja muszę załatwić, bo ja muszę zrobić nie wiem, muszę zorganizować, muszę
34. iść zamówić wizytę, nie wiem, cokolwiek.
35. A: A mówi pani o swojej mamie, tak, że, że więcej od pani wymaga, tak?

1. N: Tak.
2. A: Czy rodzeństwo też?
3. N: Yy... moja mama, rodzeństwo na mnie patrzy tak troszkę yy... właściwie nie wiem jak to
4. określić bo yy... ((wzdycha)). Tak jakby byli zazdrośni o to, że... mnie się powiodło, chociaż nigdy
5. w życiu mi nigdy nic nie powiedział. Ja w chwili kiedy dostałam, kiedy się usamodzielniałam w 94.
6. roku dostałam tutaj mieszkanie na [nazwa ulicy] i mieszkam do tej pory w tym mieszkaniu. Ale
7. każdemu starałam się pomóc, naprawdę pomagałam, mojej siostrze która notorycznie chodziła na
8. wagary, która w końcu nie skończyła szkoły. Ale mm... żeby nie mieć tego konfliktu, żeby pokazać,
9. że można żyć normalnie ja ich, najpierw moją siostrę wzięłam do siebie do domu. Tylko prosiłam
10. mówię „Słuchaj tylko chodź do szkoły, to jest warunek żebyś ze mną tutaj mieszkała i z moim
11. mężem”. Chociaż może też mojemu mężowi nie było to na rękę, że żeśm/ ale, nie, nie, nie było
12. chyba takich jakiś zgrzytów strasznie mocnych bo wiedział, że jestem bardzo mocno zżyta z moją
13. rodziną i i trudno, no... nieraz mi wypomina, że znowu dostałam po dupie i...
14. A: Mhm.
15. N: ((wzdycha))
16. A: Pani Natalio żeby właśnie domknąć te wątki tej rodziny bo rozumiem, że to jest najbardziej dla
17. pani takie bolesne i trudne do mówienia bo siostry są dwie, tak?
18. N: Tak.
19. A: Siostry są dwie i tam która tam pani yy... tak trapi je teraz tak i gdzieś tam się po tych ulicach
20. włóczy to jest starsza?
21. N: To jest tak.
22. A: Bo pani jest 74. [urodzona w 1974].
23. N: Tak, ona jest yy... o/ yy... ona jest Boże 81. rok.
24. A: 81. i ona też była w placówce czy ona była cały czas z rodzicami?
25. N: Yy... ona właściwie to... była w jakiejś placówce ale nie wiem w jakiej bo to był bardzo krótki
26. czas na pewno była w ośrodku na [pogotowie N] a co się dało/ działa dalej to nie wiem bo
27. ponieważ ja byłam w ogóle 200 kilometrów od...
28. A: To jest ten moment kiedy pani/
29. N: Tak.
30. A: Pojechała, tak i państwa rozdzielili?
31. N: Tak, rozdzielili nas. I i ja po prostu trafiłam powiedzmy najkorzystniej bo pojechałam do tej
32. babci. Natomiast reszta była gdzieś porozrzucana i tak naprawdę ja nie wiedziałam co się w tym
33. momencie dzieje nie mieliśmy ze sobą kontaktu. Ale... yy... zanim nie wiem czy oni trafili tak od
34. razu do tego domu dziecka czy tak jakoś tak po mnie bo... yy... po tym jak ja pojechałam/ ale byli
35. na pewno w jakimś ośrodku yy... takim.

1. A: Pogotowiu?
2. N: Pogotowiu opiekuńczym czy, czy coś takiego. Moi rodzice mieli ograniczone prawa
3. rodzicielskie więc jak tylko tata chyba wyszedł z tego yy... więzienia... albo... albo może jeszcze
4. wcześniej w jakiś sposób moja mama nie mieli coś załatwiać nie wiem, nie wiem jak to się stało,
5. ale oni szybciej wrócili do domu niż ja zdecydowanie. To był taki bardzo krótki etap i przejściowy
6. w ich życiu. No, ja..... siedziałam przeście/ przemieszkałam w tym domu dziecka przez pięć lat i –
7. tak dłuższy okres w moim życiu niż u nich.
8. A: Czyli tak, bo żeby domknąć takie te wątki, tak naj/ najbardziej bolesne żeby pani nie dręczyć
9. tym też,
10. N: o
11. A: najstarszy brat. Jaka jest/
12. N: 73. rok.
13. A: Jaka jest jego historia, czyli macie państwo to wspólne dzieciństwo, tak potem on trafia też do
14. jakiejś placówki, wraca...
15. N: Yy... on bardziej chyba do placówki, potem jakieś ośrodki yy... typu poprawczak... no z nim
16. mm też nie było fajnie bo - to nie był zły chłopak i... no i w sumie tak alkohol.
17. A: Wrócił do domu, tak?
18. N: Wrócił do domu.
19. A: Wrócił do domu, kiedy tata wrócił z więzienia?
20. N: Tak, tak.
21. A: I jest w domu?
22. N: Wszyscy wróciliśmy do domu mhm. Ale chłopaki byli dorastając/ dorastający yy...
23. Towarzystwo było nieciekawe zresztą jakie miało być towarzystwo skoro w domu była melina i
24. wiecznie przychodzili jacyś yy... mężczyźni, starsi lub młodszy po alkohol, więc no super (((z
25. ironią))) zwłaszcza, że jeszcze niejednokrotnie obsługiwaliśmy ((śmiech)) klienta, tak. Więc, więc
26. kontakty były takie powiedzmy, że nas wszyscy znali na ulicach i yy... okej, nikt nas tam nie ruszał
27. ((śmiech)). No ale chłopaki rozrabiali i to zdrowo rozra/ rozrabiali trafiali do poprawczaków, były
28. jakieś akcje, że nie wiem kogo/ z kimś się pobili, coś ukradli, no więc afery w domu. Jak tata był
29. trzeźwy to tam był dość surowym ojcem yy... i była przemoc w ro/ w domu yy... W chwili kiedy
30. chłopaki rozrabiali no to nie było żadnych argumentów yy... jak była taka mniejsza kara to były
31. yy... ręce w górę i do kąta a jak jakieś większe przewinienia czy tam nie wiem... wybili szybę czy
32. coś to już był pas, więc, więc chłopcy no mieli takie kary cielesne dość... dość często. Trafili do
33. poprawczaka no i potem to było tylko, że sam sobie zasłużył na to, że jest niedobry, że rozrabiał,
34. wiedział co go czeka, jego sprawa. I tak i jest tak naprawdę do tej pory. Więc tak jakby... moi
35. rodzice yy... jak chłopaki już dorośli i mieli jak gdyby swoje życie odeszli z domu, gdziekolwiek

1. bo przecież nikt nie zapewnił im jakiegoś tam mieszkania normalnego, tak jak ja dorastałam, tylko
2. po prostu włączyli się gdzieś tam. Albo z poprawczaka jak przyszedł do pora/ jak wrócił z tego
3. poprawczaka to mieszkał trochę w ich domu, ale nie bardzo mu, im odpowiadało to więc szukali na
4. własną rękę czegoś. A wiadomo, że... z takiej nor/ normalnej pracy i normalnego funkcjonowania
5. nic nie będzie, więc trzeba kraść, trzeba mieć kontakty, trzeba gdzieś tam u kogoś pomieszkać w
6. jakiejś no też niefajnej yy... okolicy. I też nie/ i też z niezbyt z niefajnymi ludźmi no bo nikt
7. normalny nie godziłby się na to żeby jakaś obca osoba jeszcze z poprawczaka mieszkała nie wiem z
8. kolegą, z koleżanką czy w ogóle. Tak że... powiedzmy, że radzili sobie na własną rękę z czego
9. wyszło to, że trafili do, do więzień, do więzień różnych dostawali wyroki rok po roku wychodzili na
10. wolność. Rok, półtora roku pobyli na tej wolności i tutaj w normalnym świecie i trafiali z powrotem
11. do więzienia za jakieś inne przewinienia. I nawet szczerze mówiąc to nawet nie wiem za co, tak do
12. końca albo może nawet nie chcę wiedzieć.
13. A: Ten najstarszy brat jakąś szkołę skończył w ogóle?
14. N: Yy... żaden z nich nie skończył yy... żadnej szkoły.
15. A: A podstawówka chociaż czy nie?
16. N: Podstawówka i część zawodówki. Wiem, że doksztalcali się troszeczkę w więzieniu, ale to były
17. takie, nie wiem ślusarz, odlewnik, stolarz takie różne, takie... myślę, że to były takie nauki...
18. zawodu, nie wiem przystosowanie nie wiem jakieś takie specjalne programy może dla takich
19. więźniów.
20. A: A też ja pytam o losy tego rodzeństwa, tak żeby mieć taką jasność jak to przebiegało bo zaraz do
21. pani losów wrócimy.
22. N: Mhm.
23. A: Bo jak mówię tak, ponieważ one są takie trudne. Czyli co ten najstarszy brat skończył w ogóle
24. jakąś zawodówkę czy właśnie na podstawówce się skończyło?
25. N: Myślę, że skończył w więzieniu yy... jakąś zawodówkę bo jakieś papiery ma na pewno. Może to
26. jest jakiś tokarz, odlewnik albo taki jakiś zawód.
27. A: Mhm. Czy on jakieś życie prywatne sobie trochę ułożył czy nie (x) w związku czy...
28. N: No więc mój brat miał bardzo duży pociąg do alkoholu ten starszy yy... próbował sobie ułożyć
29. życie nawet nie wiem po którymś razie wyjściu z więzienia zorganizował sobie mieszkanie socjalne
30. dostał od państwa nie on dbał o to mieszkanie zawsze tam malował, remontował, kupował różne
31. meble. Rzeczywiście zależało mu na tym nie wynosił nic z domu jak taki typowy pijak nałogowy,
32. chociaż miał takie ciągi. Poznał yy... dziewczynę... ta dziewczyna, na jakiejś dyskotecie, ta
33. dziewczyna pochodziła... była Cyganką... niewykształconą zupełnie, nawet chyba nie potrafiła się
34. podpisać. Ale z nią miał dziecko ((wzdycha)), ta Cyganka no miała tam trudne yy... życie z nim
35. ponieważ on zaczął pić. Ona nie pracowała więc też taki brud znaczy właściwie nie brud ale

1. bardziej ubóstwo. Nie było za dobrze, zresztą małe dziecko było. Myśleliśmy, że może się zmieni
 2. jak się dziecko urodzi tak, bo to jest taki, taki przełom w życiu każdego człowieka jak się rodzi
 3. dziecko to tak nie wiem wreszcie trzeba stanąć na nogi wydorosnąć, zmadrzeć. Niestety nie udało
 4. się to mojemu bratu... yy. Ta Cyganka od niego odeszła, potem trafił, ponieważ jest dosyć
 5. przystojnym facetem nie wiem co dziewczyny w nim widzą, ale znaczy mi się tak wydaje nie, ja
 6. tego nie widzę ((śmiej)). W każdym bądź razie tam yy... miał tam jakieś kobiety w swoim życiu,
 7. ale generalnie strasznie pił, bardzo się rozpił no. No i odchodziły od niego te kobiety które miał, nie
 8. ważne. W każdym bądź razie to też nie, to były też takie dosyć ciężkie czasy dla mnie bo on pił na
 9. tyle, że już - nawet kiedyś byłam z nim gdzieś prywatnie żeby go zaszyć, żeby po prostu no
 10. przystopować no... no bo szkoda mi go było. Bo mój mąż pracę mu załatwił, też pracował jak był
 11. trzeźwy to pracował bo też robotny chłopak, naprawdę ten/ Nie, nie kombinował jakoś tak bardzo,
 12. nawet zresztą ma/ wiem, nie miał głowy do takich kombinacji różnych, sprzedaży narkotyków czy
 13. coś takiego nie wiem czy kradzieży czy włamań i i w ogóle tam. Więc on (x) sobie tam pracował na
 14. budowie też całkiem nieźle nieźle yy... mężczyźni zarabiają jeżeli chcą pracować tak że praca
 15. fizyczna może ciężka ale, ale jeżeli nadawał się do tego to czemu nie... Ale mój brat pił dużo był
 16. zaszywany. Później już te wszywki po jakimś czasie nie działały, znowuż pił, był agresywny. To
 17. były takie czasy kiedy yy... jak przejeżdżała karetka pogotowia przez ulice [nazwa ulicy] bo miał
 18. już takie ataki padaczkowe to patrzyłam czy nie zabierają mojego [imię] no nie było fajnie. Ciężko
 19. było mu pomóc... bo, no bo ile można. Mój mąż też tam na mnie strasznie psioczył. Kiedyś go
 20. nawet zamknęłam go w domu, tego mojego brata żeby nie wychodził bo yy... był taki okres, że jakiś
 21. tam jeden dzień nie pił więc ja go „Słuchaj no to nie pij” to ja go zamknęłam żeby po prostu nie
 22. wychodził, żeby nie miał kontaktu z nimi, z tymi, z tymi ludźmi yy... Bo nie trzeba mieć pieniędzy,
 23. żeby stać się alkoholikiem i pić. Ale nie udało mi się mu pomóc, teraz siedzi w więzieniu, to jest o
 24. tyle bezpieczniej, że nie pije tego alkoholu nie rozrabia na ulicach, organizm mu się regeneruje nie
 25. wiadomo na jak długo, no taka historia mojego starszego brata.
 26. A: No i jedno dziecko, tak?
 27. N: Tak.
 28. A: To dziecko, nie ma kontaktu pewno, tak z tym dzieckiem?
 29. N: My chcieliśmy mieć kontakt yy... z tym dzieckiem ale ta Cyganka troszkę się od nas odwróciła
 30. bo nie wiem, tak naprawdę to yy ona do mnie tak często nie przychodziła. No bo ja to byłam taka
 31. normalna... i zawsze uważali, że nie wiem, że wszyscy, że ja to, że ja to się wywyższam bo ja
 32. pracuję, bo ja mam normalny dom ((z ironicznym śmiechem)), bo chcę coś osiągnąć nie łązę po
 33. ulicach z nimi. Nie wiem, czasami jest tak, że jest weekend jedziemy na, na jakiegoś grilla i też się
 34. pije jakiś alkohol ale, ale przychodzi niedziela, przychodzi poniedziałek i człowiek wraca do
 35. normalnej rzeczywistości i i idzie do pracy, ma jakieś obowiązki a, a tutaj w tej rodzinie niestety tak

1. nie ma.
 2. A: Pani Natalio a później, później jest ten dwa lata młodszy tak, brat bo jest pani/
 3. N: Tak.
 4. A: Ten, dwa lata/
 5. N: Tak, mój dwa lata młodszy brat, wrażliwy chłopak.
 6. A: Ten pani mówiła tak, że/
 7. N: No, no to on, on z kolei wyrósł na takiego naprawdę bandziora bo ten mój starszy to jeszcze był
 8. taki, że poszedł do takiej normalnej pracy no jak czasami pod wpływem alkoholu nie wiem ale, ale
 9. ten jest, ma bardzo skrzywioną psychikę bardzo. I... on nie myśli racjonalnie. Ma żonę... która się
 10. puszcza na prawo i lewo ((śmiej)). No ma córkę, ona spała u mnie wczoraj z wczoraj na dzisiaj
 11. taką śliczną dziewczynkę która ma sześć lat i wychowywana jest przez yy... babcię swoją nie moją
 12. mamę tylko (xx) przez teściów w rodzinie zastępczej. Ponieważ mm... mojego tego młodszego
 13. brata żona nie ma czasu, nie ma pracy, nie ma/ i zawsze jest biedna, pokrzywdzona, nieszczęśliwa...
 14. i... i nie ma czasu na dziecko. Odwiedza ją tam raz na jakiś czas od wielkiego święta. A ten mój
 15. młodszy brat siedzi w więzieniu za rozróby ale nie jest, ale on ma, on ma bardzo skrzywioną tą
 16. psychikę. To jest taki człowiek który mógłby zabić. No chyba wiele gru/ wiele w życiu go złego
 17. spotkało naprawdę, zrobił się twardy taki ma pancerz! Bardzo kocha swoją córkę i zrobiłby dla niej
 18. wszystko ale, ale wiem, że wiem, że jakieś tam krzywdy cielesne w stosunku do innych osób jakaś
 19. przemoc to jest dla niego, bardzo łatwo mu przychodzi.
 20. A: Udało mu się jakąkolwiek szkołę skończyć czy nie?
 21. N: Mm... nie, myślę, że... ((wzdycha)) że skończył szkołę podstawową ale yy... zawodówki, do
 22. zawodówki żadnej nie poszedł. Być może miał jakieś takie przyuczenie zwodu w zakładzie karnym
 23. ponieważ tak naprawdę to chyba nie było nawet czasu na to, żeby on skończył jakąś szkołę dlatego,
 24. że zaraz po tej szkole podstawowej jak ta rodzina zaczęła się sypać nawet jak już tata wrócił z tego
 25. więzienia to nie, nie było takich/ zresztą nigdy nie było dobrze w tej rodzinie. Zawsze były jakieś
 26. pijaństwa, zawsze były jakieś takie afery, awantury, bijatyki... to były takie nie jedno czy tam
 27. dwudniowe tylko to trwało kilka tygodni nawet do wyczerpania po prostu maksymalnie zasobów
 28. pieniężnych. A, że rodzice prowadzili ten nielegalny handel to jeszcze zasoby były w postaci
 29. butelek alkoholu no to naprawdę trwało dosyć długo, były libacje i nie wiem... i wszystko.
 30. A: Ten brat oprócz bandytki zarabiał, to zarabiał w jakiś inny sposób jakiegokolwiek pieniądze,
 31. pracował czy nie, czy to zawsze była jakaś/
 32. N: Myślę, że... może przez pół roku w swoim życiu przepracował gdzieś ale to była... to była taka
 33. praca na krótką metę. Ja pani powiem, że yy... jeżeli ktoś kiedyś spróbował czegoś takiego jak
 34. kradzież i łatwy zysk, pieniądze to nie pójdzie do normalnej pracy bo - mm mu czasami yy... jest to
 35. przykre. Ale czasami niejednokrotnie słyszałam „Idziesz do pracy”, „Za takie marne grosze, ja to

1. mogę mieć w jedną noc'' na przykład. No ja nie mogę mieć, ja bym nie mogła tak, nie wiem co by
2. musiałoby mnie zmusić do, do, do takiego yy... do takich czynów nie wiem. Musiałabym być
3. chyba mocno zdesperowana ale - nie wiem innym z mojej rodziny przychodzi no to dość łatwo
4. jakieś takie właśnie napady. Tutaj ta dzielnica taka dosyć niefajna więc różnie czasem kogoś coś
5. spotkało i yy... i o/ okradali na ulicach. Bo nie wiem, ten najmłodszy brat słyszałam, że potrafił
6. kobiecie zerwać łańcuszek złoty no to...
7. A: To jest trzeci, tak trzeci brat, mhm.
8. N: Tak, taki fajny. Bo to był taki okres kiedy ja jak nawet byłam w tym domu dziecka to on miał, to
9. on był malutki, on miał pięć latek, sześć latek i zawsze był taki/ Zresztą był taki kochany i zawsze
10. był taki dzieciak i i tak naprawdę to też nie dostał tej miłości. Przykre jest to, że... przykra jest
11. postawa mojej yy... mamy no mój tata też taki był, że nie dawali, no może dawali jakąś szansę...
12. temu rodzeństwu ale to było takie, że jak jakaś była wtopa jak coś narozrabiali to, to oni się
13. odwracali od nich. No to jest ich życie, ich sprawa, niech sobie robią co chcą i tak naprawdę jest tak
14. do tej pory, że/
15. A: A w którym roku on się urodził ten najmłodszy brat?
16. N: Yy... w 84. roku.
17. A: Czyli on, bo tata był w więzieniu, zaraz w 80. którym?
18. N: 89.
19. A: 90. ,czyli on ten poszedł, tak do tych placówek, tak?
20. N: Tak, tak.
21. A: I co i później jakoś też poprawczaki i tak/
22. N: Tak.
23. A: Więzienie, tak?
24. N: Poprawczaki, więzienie.
25. A: Jakaś szkoła, jakieś życie osobiste?
26. N: Nie, życie osobiste, tak zdążył yy... urodzić syna, chłopca, który ma teraz, nie ma roku, ale no
27. bo to jest młody chłopak, no on ma teraz yy... ma 20/
28. A: Sześć, tak?
29. N: No.
30. A: Siedem, 27 lat.
31. N: Więc, więc to jest taki młody chłopak i i... jeszcze tak naprawdę właściwie... właściwie to
32. chłopaki nie mieli czasu na to żeby sobie układać jakoś strasznie mocno życie bo... zwykle to był
33. albo więzień albo poprawczak.
34. A: Mhm. I później siostra, który rocznik, ta starsza, znaczy młodsza pani tak a/ młodsza, starsza.
35. N: 80. dziewią/ zaraz bo ja już myślę się yy... 81.

36. A: I ona też jakieś szkoły skończyła?
37. N: Żadnych.
38. A: Podstawówkę skończyła?
39. N: Tylko podstawówkę.
40. A: I ona w ogóle ma jakieś źródło utrzymania w tej chwili?
41. N: Nie z/ opieka społeczna.
42. A: Opieka społeczna mhm. Ma rodzinę? Mówiła pani, że ma tak córeczkę.
43. N: Tak, ma córeczkę 3-letnią.
44. A: 3-letnią.
45. N: Ma męża, nie ma domu, mieszka w takim, właściwie to yy... mieszkała... teraz nie wiem.
46. Mieszkała w mieszkaniu chłopaka który yy... odsiedział, on odsiadywał wyrok, odbywał jakiś
47. areszt, który miał teraz jakoś wyjść na wolność. Więc ona tam mieszkała u niego przez, na czas
48. pobytu tego chłopaka w więzieniu. Natomiast teraz przeprowadziła się piętro niżej ale to jest taki
49. pustostan, który, gdzie wysiedlają yy... ludzi i tam właściwie nikt nie mieszka tam może jakaś
50. jedna rodzina sporadycznie, ale to też taka jakaś patologiczna mieszka i nikt więcej tam nie, nie
51. mieszka. Nie ma tam/ nie płaci komornego, nie płaci za prąd, nie płaci za gaz, to jest wszystko
52. jakoś tak zorganizowane, że, że ona ma tam jakieś ((śmiech)) nielegalne źródło poboru energii.
53. A: Mhm, podłączyła się na lewo, tak?
54. N: Tak.
55. A: I jest z tym mężem swoim?
56. N: Yy... teraz obecnie chyba nie jest.
57. A: Bo to pani mówiła, że ona ta, też tak/
58. N: Ale ona też tylko, że on ma ataki padaczkowe.
59. A: Padaczkowe, mhm.
60. N: I nawet nie wiem niejednokrotnie go tutaj pogotowie, zabierało na jeden dzień go zabierali do
61. szpitala i potem yy... wypuszczali go w świat yy... On yy... zawsze w poniedziałek idzie do pracy
62. ale ten poniedziałek nie nadszedł ((śmiech)) niestety. Więc - a nawet jeżeli znajdzie jakąś pracę to
63. popracuje trochę i no popada w takie ciągi alkoholowe, no do tego ostatnio, że organizm był taki
64. wycieńczony, że ma te ataki padaczkowe więc to nie jest tak, że to nie jest od jednego kieliszka na
65. pewno.
66. A: Ta najmłodsza siostra tak, który jest rocznik?
67. N: Ok!
68. A: Albo ile ma lat, tak.
69. N: (x) 22 lata.
70. A: 22 lata a ona tak, bo mówiła pani nawet/

1. N: 14 lat ode mnie jest młodsza. Ta najmłodsza siostra przebywała najwięcej no najgorzej
2. właściwie w rodzinie bo ona się urodziła właściwie jak ja yy... przebywałam w domu dziecka jakoś
3. tak.
4. A: Czyli ona chyba nawet w placówce nie była prawda, z rodzicami, tak?
5. N: Nie, nie, nie była. Nie, ona była cały czas z rodzicami została przy rodzicach. Ona y urodziła się
6. w trakcie kiedy rodzice mieli ograniczone prawa i te dzieciaki powracały to ona akurat yy... się
7. urodziła... ale yy... [dźwięk alarmu z zewnątrz]. I generalnie no została przy rodzicach z tym, że z
8. tą, ta moja ostatnia siostra no nie, nie wiem yy... a moja mama w trakcie ciąży piła dużo alkoholu.
9. Nawet nie wiedziała na początku, że jest w ciąży tam były jakieś afery, kopania, bicia więc yy... nie
10. powiem, że urodziła się zupełnie jakaś upośledzona psychicznie ale, ale generalnie nie należy
11. rozwojowo do takich nie wiem jak to powiedzieć yy... nie znam terminologii medycznej ale yy...
12. na pewno nie po/ Szkoły podstawowej normalnej nie kończyła tylko chodziła na/ do takiej szkoły
13. specjalnej ale to nie była taka, ona nie jest jakaś nie wiem upośledzona tak fizycznie, ale...
14. A: Ma problemy edukacyjne?
15. N: Troszeczkę tak, no coś takiego. Tak że/ ale dziewczyna jest yy... zbuntowana, ale jest na tyle
16. spokojna, że ona nawet jak była w ciąży z tym dzieckiem swoim... to pracowała. Więc yy... taka
17. jest zorganizowana chociaż miała jakieś wtopy bo jakieś tam nie wiem yy... jakieś wymuszanie
18. telefonów komórkowych yy... w jakiś tam salonach. Znaczący wymuszanie po prostu podpisywanie
19. jakiś dziwnych umów bez pokrycia czy, czy coś takiego i potem sprzedawanie tych telefonów. No
20. więc wydaje mi się, że to takie było naj/ najłagodniejsze wykroczenie w porównaniu z tym moim
21. całym rodzeństwem. Jakoś jej się to tam upiekło, albo nie wiem, może dostała jakiś wyrok w
22. zawieszeniu nawet nie wiem szczerze mówiąc, czy ma coś do spłacenia za to jakieś kary czy coś ją
23. ściga. Być może ma jakiegoś kuratora i który tam/
24. A: A pracuje teraz?
25. N: Yy... teraz nie pracuje dlatego, że ma to 9-cio mies/
26. A: I z czego się utrzymuje?
27. N: Ma partnera takiego chłopaka z którym ma to dziecko, więc są po ślubie. Młodszy jest od niej
28. o... dwa lata, nie trzy lata przepraszam ale ten chłopak yy... jest na tyle w porządku, że pracuje
29. przycho/ przynosi jej pieniądze do domu. No dostaje jakieś pieniądze z opieki chyba też na, na
30. życie, wynajmują mieszkanie. I ona jest yy... czystą dziewczyną dba o to swoje dziecko może nie
31. jest taka rozgarnięta do końca (((rozbawiona))) i coś jej ktoś powie to, to, to może czasami w to
32. wierzy ale, ale jeśli chodzi o takie życie no to jest taka troszkę bardziej przystosowana niż cała
33. reszta.
34. A: Która z tych siostr była u pani w domu?
35. N: Ta sześć lat młodsza ode mnie.

1. A: Mhm.
2. N: Ta sześć lat młodsza ode mnie i ją trzymałam bo to właśnie było tak, że ona potem też już
3. chodziła do takiej szkoły też takiej zawodowej ale takiej... mm...
4. A: Z obniżonym progiem tak, wymagań?
5. N: Tak i właściwie to... zostało jej kilka miesięcy do tego żeby skończyła i żeby miała jakieś
6. papiery. No i ja ją, już tata był tak bardzo zdenerwowany i w ogóle już stracił cierpliwość do niej i
7. ochotę yy... kłó/ nie wiem czy kłócenia się czy po prostu ochotę opiekowania się tą swoją córką. To
8. ją wzięłam do siebie bo wiecznie były tam jakieś zgrzyty, awantury i i no mój tata miał ciężki
9. charakter i ja ją wzięłam do siebie i jedyny właściwie warunek tego żeby była u mnie no to, to żeby
10. chodziła do tej szkoły, żeby skończyła tą szkołę, ale oszukiwała nas i i... i odpuściliśmy sobie bo...
11. no, bo miała chodzić do tej szkoły i: „No mieszkasz to, to chodź do tej szkoły”. Przestała chodzić
12. do szkoły, przestała u nas mieszkać, chciałam jej jakoś pomóc ale widocznie nie potrzebowała
13. takiej pomocy głupio zrobiła bo miałyby chociaż tą zawodówkę teraz nie ma nic.
14. A: A długo u państwa mieszkała?
15. N: Ona mieszkała z nami kilka miesięcy. To było wtedy kiedy tata już nie miał cierpliwości do niej i
16. i nie chciał jej tam w tym domu, więc żeby załagodzić sprawę no dobrze to ja ją, to ona będzie u
17. nas mieszkać tak... bo mi jej było szkoda wtedy.
18. A: No dobrze pani Natalio to wracamy do pani/
19. N: Dobrze.
20. A: (x) czyli tak, bo chciałam jeszcze zapytać czy/ bo to jest taki dość nietypowy sposób trafienia do
21. tego domu dziecka.
22. N: Tak.
23. A: Czy ktoś pani pomógł wtedy jak pani/ bo była pani w tym szpitalu i prosto poszła pani, nie
24. przechodziła przez żadne pogotowie przez nic tylko prosto/
25. N: Tak.
26. A: Poszła pani do domu dziecka.
27. N: Pomógł mi ktoś muszę sobie/ to był pedagog yy... szkolny ze szkoły tutaj yy...
28. A: Do której pani chodziła, mhm.
29. N: Ona, ona się mną zaopiekowała. Nie wiem właściwie, tak prawdę powiedziawszy, tak
30. zastanawiam się skąd ona się wzięła w tym szpitalu. Być może ja z nią wcześniej jakiś kontakt
31. nawiązałam, być może widziała po prostu, że coś się dzieje, szczerze mówię nie pamiętam. Ja
32. miałam wtedy taki okres ciężki w tym życiu, że troszkę rzeczy mi umknęło. Ale, że - wiem, że jak
33. trafiłam do tego szpitala to w niej miałam yy... taką podporę i opiekę. I ona ona się wszystkim
34. zajęła ona mi we wszystkim pomogła i trafiłam właśnie wtedy bez/ bezpośrednio do domu dziecka.
35. Ja miałam takiego troszkę farta bo no, bo rzeczywiście nie przechodziłam przez ten okres

1. przejściowy a słyszałam, że na tej [pogotowie N] tak nie za fajnie jest, że tam/
2. A: [Pogotowie N] jest ciężkim doświadczeniem.
3. N: No właśnie, że tam dużo różnych osób a, a ja jestem miękka tak że może (x) zresztą chyba dużo
4. osób z takimi problemami yy... jest słabych psychicznie i to jest też może powód tego, że jesteśmy
5. tacy jak gąbka, że chłoniemy wszystko. I dlatego może ja trafiłam akurat w takie otoczenie, że
6. miałam jakieś wzorce do naśladowania no i moje rodzeństwo też trafiło w otoczenie w które miało
7. wzorce do naśladowania tylko nieco inne niż ja i i tak to wyszło.
8. A: A do którego domu [dziecka] pani trafiła?
9. N: Do/ na [DDW].
10. A: Na [DDW] mhm. Bo pani mówi, że pani dobrze w tym domu dziecka było tak.
11. N: Tak.
12. A: Jak w ogóle tam, jak pani ten dom ocenia? Bo rozumiem, że mówiła pani o takich swoich, tak
13. jakby swoim takim samopoczuciu tam.
14. N: Mhm.
15. A: A w ogóle, tak jakby pani popatrzyła na ten dom. Jakie to było miejsce wtedy, jakie tam były
16. relacje między dziećmi, jacy byli wychowawcy?
17. N: Nie mam porównania z innymi domami dziecka ponieważ byłam tylko w tym jednym ale yy...
18. W tym naszym domu dziecka naprawdę nie było źle, relacje były dobre z wychowankami. Nie było,
19. nie było takich yy... takich sytuacji kiedy... kiedy jak/ kiedy nie było takich sytuacji jak słyszy się
20. teraz, że czasami są nie wiem... mm... takie dziwne relacje między wychowawcami a yy... a a \
21. wychowankami, że yy... yy... Tam naprawdę pracowali przynajmniej yy... ludzie z którymi miałam
22. kontakt to byli tacy wychowawcy z prawdziwego zdarzenia. Wielu osobom można było się
23. zwierzyć, można było porozmawiać. Dużo osób pomogło chociaż były też takie które po prostu
24. traktowały to jako yy... tylko pracę i już. Tak, ale było naprawdę bardzo dużo świetnych
25. pedagogów którzy, którzy yy... czasami nawet ponad tą pracę robili coś dla nas. Przynosili ciasto
26. do, do domu dziecka yy... przynosili jakieś cukierki, jakieś gry albo jakieś rzeczy po, po jakiś tam
27. swoich dzieciach, było dużo takich właśnie osób. Niektórzy nawet brali nas yy... do domu... po
28. prostu na kawę na he/ może nie na kawę wtedy ale na jakąś herbatę czy na jakieś ciastko. Nie było
29. źle. Mielśmy panią dyrektora dość wymagającą i nigdy znaczy może nie to, że nie miałam dobrego
30. kontaktu z nią ale nie miałam takiego (((z uśmiechem))) wspólnego połączenia, chociaż mi to
31. zbytnio nie przeszkadzało bo yy... bo to była dobra osoba. Ona nawiązywała kontakt z jakimiś
32. fundacjami zagranicznymi, nie pamiętam. Bardzo często przyjeżdżali do nas Holendrzy, przywozili
33. nam fajne rzeczy yy... Wielu, wielu wychowanków miało taki kontakt yy... z tymi Holendrami
34. yy... taki jakby mm... taki listowny kontakt, że tak jakby brali niektórych wychowanków pod
35. swoją opiekę tak coś ekstra, że nie wiem przysyłali paczki tym dzieciakom. Jak przyjeżdżali yy... z

1. Holandii z tymi darami no to, no to było fajnie bo zawsze mieli jakieś mm smakołyki dla tych
2. dzieciaków yy... Opiekowaliśmy się też młodszymi yy... wychowankami, starsze osoby
3. młodszymi. Zawsze były jakieś takie dyżury na stołówkach pamiętam. Teraz się bardzo
4. pozmieniało kiedyś tam byłam ale nie, nie w przeciągu pięciu lat chyba raczej nie, tak z pięć lat
5. temu. Może to widziałam, że tam yy... jest takie... takie pomieszczenie yy... do samodzielnego
6. życia: jakaś kuchnia, łazienka coś tam takiego i jakaś pralnia. Natomiast wtedy żeśmy mieli takie
7. trochę dyżury jak gdyby, każdy miał swoje obowiązki... Nawet, nawet mieliśmy dobre kontakty z
8. taką obsługą yy... z kucharkami. Kucharki nam podrzucały (x) czasem ((śmiech)) jakieś jedzenie
9. dodatkowo jak coś zostało albo ze sprzątaczkami też mieliśmy, też fajny kontakt. Jakiś pan
10. konserwator był, który mm też był takim dobrym wujem, na wszystkich się mówiło wujek i ciocia
11. więc tych cioc i wujków było dużo. Nie było tam żadnego molestowania jak się słyszy czasami. Nie
12. było tam jakiejs przemocy czy bicia raczej yy... raczej y... ten dom dziecka był spokojny chociaż
13. no były też osoby takie które rozrabiały mm. Szczególnie chłopcy którzy gdzieś tam/ Oczywiście
14. był zakaz palenia papierosów ale był to taki wiek, że paliło się jakieś tam fajki czy wychodziło
15. przez okno do parku bo tam był park [nazwa] gdzieś tam żeby pobiegać albo spotkać się z kolegami
16. czy z koleżankami. Ale generalnie był, był jakiś porządek. Niejednokrotnie żeśmy sprząтали
17. mieliśmy też swoje obowiązki, opiekowaliśmy się yy... dziećmi małymi. Były, była taka grupa
18. maluchów i myślę, że to nas też nauczyło takiego... takiej odpowiedzialności za kogoś bo mm...
19. rzeczywiście mieliśmy w tym domu dziecka dwie albo trzy osoby zupełnie takie upośledzone
20. bardzo naprawdę. Była taka [imię] która musiała się kąpać w specjalnych kąpielach która naprawdę
21. była zdeformowana strasznie a mimo wszystko, że to dziecko było takie brzydkie nie by/ nie było z
22. nią żadnego kontaktu to jednak nikt jej nie dokuczał. Wszyscy żeśmy ją akcept/ akceptowali i nawet
23. yy... ona była ta [imię dziewczynki] taka, że nawet obrzydzenie było dotykać ją, jej ręki bo miała te
24. palce pozrastane, tą skórę miała straszną ale... ale nikt na to tak naprawdę nie zwracał uwagi. Każdy
25. chętnie jej pomagał nie było, nie pamiętam, nie kojarzę żeby tam były jakieś takie wyzwiska, że
26. ona jest inna. Ona się nawet bardzo dobrze czuła w tym naszym klimacie chociaż to było dziecko
27. bardzo zamknięte i myślę, że później jak już była/ im była starsza tym bardziej yy... zdawała sobie
28. sprawę z tego, że no jest inna od wszystkich dzieci. Ale wychowawcy też robili wszystko że/ żeby
29. wydobyć z niej takie piękno, żeby pokazać zob/ zobacz [imię dziewczynki] jaka ty jesteś ładna. Tu
30. jakąś spinę, tu jakieś ubranie fajne i w ogóle. Zawsze była pod taką naprawdę specjalną opieką.
31. Była też jedna dziewczyna, ona yy... też w grupie takich maluchów, czyli to były takie dzieciaki 5,
32. 6-letnie, 4-letnie, 2-letnie, małe dzieci chyba od dwu/ drugiego roku życia tam były dzieciaki. No to
33. też żeśmy tak traktowali tą dziewczynkę na taką, jak taką no może nie w stu procentach taką
34. normalną bo wiadomo, że nie wymagaliśmy od niej tego co się wymagało od innych
35. wychowanków ale... ale było okej. Nie było żadnych nie pamiętam żeby były jakieś kradzieże w

1. tym domu dziecka chociaż pokoje były zamykane na klucz ale... Każdy myślę, że to było przez to,
2. że żeby mieć taką chociaż, trochę swojej prywatności żeby czuć się, no to jest moje tak, nie wejdzie
3. mi tu każdy kto będzie chciał podczas mojej nieobecności ale, ale wydaje mi się absolutnie nie, nie
4. było to spowodowane kradzieżą, czy jakimś takim...
5. A: Czy był taki ktoś na kogo pani mogłaby liczyć w okresie takim kiedy pani w tym domu dziecka
6. była?
7. N: Tak. Miałam, miałam yy... Byli wychowawcy którym można było powiedzieć dużo... można
8. było się zwierzyć, można porozmawiać było... ale nie wszyscy. Była taka yy... jedna
9. wychowawczyni z którą naprawdę można było porozmawiać o różnych rzeczach, miałam bardzo
10. fajnego wychowawcę też który też mnie rozumiał... Nie wiem, miałam tam koleżanki, miałam tam
11. kolegów.
12. A: Mhm, też mówiła pani, że się pani tam nauczyła odpowiedzialności. I w ogóle oprócz
13. odpowiedzialności jakoś ci wychowawcy państwa przygotowali do dalszego życia, czy czegoś
14. jeszcze uczyli czy coś przekazywali?
15. N: ((wzdycha)) Odpowiedzialności, samodzielności, ogólnie takiego prawdziwego y życia wydaje
16. mi się. Bo yy... po pierwsze zabierali nas czasami do domu, pokazywali jak wygląda normalny
17. dom, jak powinno wyglądać życie, chodzili/ jeździliśmy na różne wycieczki, oni często jeździli
18. razem z nami, byliśmy razem, pokazywali nam... czasami yy... pokazywali to czego nie było w
19. rodzinnym domu taką dobrą, dobrą radę, jakąś taką miłość, przyjaźń, naprawdę to, to było bardzo
20. dużo mieć taką ciepłą osobę (((wzruszona)))... Ale oczywiście nie było tak, że było wszystko
21. pięknie ładnie i byliśmy w ramki. Oczywiście byli konsekwentni i jeżeli coś zbroiliśmy no to też
22. były jakieś tam kary, nie pamiętam już jakie szczerze mówiąc, może jakiś szlaban, zero wyjścia
23. (((żartobliwie))) albo nie wiem dodatkowy jakiś tam ekstra pomoc w kuchni, zmywanie garów czy
24. nie wiem, nie wiem czy ścieranie stolików nie pamiętam już co to było. Ale, ale pokazywali nam
25. również to, że, że życie nie jest usłane samymi różami nie będzie wszystko pięknie, ładnie ale
26. trzeba ponosić swoje konsekwencje tego co się robi...
27. A: Taki dzień codzienny. Jak pani wyglądał, jak pani była w tym domu dziecka, jak pani już była
28. nastolatką, prawda?
29. N: Jak byłam nastolatką?
30. A: No tak, bo poszła pani tam prawda jako nastolatka.
31. N: Tak, tak. Więc rano była pobudka, takie mycie zębów yy... szykowanie się do szkoły, zejście na
32. stołówkę, śniadanie, jakieś kanapki do, do szkoły... no i oczywiście wyjście do tej szkoły. Następnie
33. powrót ze szkoły, jakiś obiad, potem był czas na yy... odrabianie lekcji nie wiem chyba od 14-tej
34. do 17-tej. A potem były takie zajęcia własne, można było nie wiem w świetlicy pooglądać
35. telewizję, można było poczytać książkę, była biblioteka yy... można było porozmawiać z

1. rówieśnikami... potem kolacja... jakieś nie wiem pranie rzeczy, jakieś porządki. Tylko porządki te
2. sprzątania takie zawsze były, takie cotygodniowe porządki powiedzmy takie generalne, że, że, że
3. się wycierało wszystkie kurze, myło podłogi odkurzało. Co prawda codziennie też trzeba było
4. sprzątać ale yy... ale generalnie yy... w soboty, właściwie to chyba cały dom dziecka się sprzątał.
5. Wtedy nie było tak, że przychodził wychowawca i kazał sprzątać tylko po prostu taka była zasada,
6. że wszyscy sprząталиśmy. Czasami nawet się chodziło i patrzyło kto jak posprzątał czy czysto, czy
7. nie i w ogóle jakie tam zmiany. Ale jeszcze ważnym elementem w takim codziennym życiu było to,
8. że w pokoju zawsze było jakieś takie młodsze dziecko nad którym trzeba było yy... yy... może nie
9. opiekować się jakoś ale mm... mieć pod swoimi skrzydłami czyli dopilnować, że nie wiem, że to
10. dziecko ma spakowany tornister, że jest odpowiednio ubrane, że umyło zęby, że pościeliło łóżko
11. czy wszystko w porządku takie, takie młodsze rodzeństwo jak gdyby.
12. A: Bo panie byliście w czwórkę, mówiła pani była pani w czteroosobowym pokoju.
13. N: Trzy, tak w czteroosobowym pokoju, ale, ale potem chyba jakoś tak było, że był, że były trzy
14. osoby tam mieszkały cztery lub trzy.
15. A: I właśnie młodsze tak, jedna?
16. N: Były dwie osoby starsze i były dwie osoby młodsze i to było tak, że właśnie po prostu miałyśmy
17. taką, taką troszkę opie/ opiekowaliśmy się tymi dziećmi, kontrolowałyśmy jak młodsze
18. rodzeństwo też pokazywałyśmy, że... żeby porządek był w półce, żeby dziecko miało odrobione
19. lekcje. Oczywiście wszy/ był taki czas yy... po szkole i po obiedzie, że wszyscy spotykaliśmy się w
20. swoich pokojach takich yy... grupowych i tam były zbiorowo odrabiane lekcje i był tam z nami
21. wychowawca yy... jakiś tam do pomocy. Zawsze mieliśmy yy... fajnych wychowawców bo byli
22. poloniści, byli wychowawcy którzy się tam specjalizowali w przedmiotach ścisłych, więc jak był
23. jakiś problem to zawsze można było iść do kogoś i... mieliśmy na miejscu taką fachową pomoc...
24. no nie pamiętam co tam jeszcze.
25. A: Pani Natalio a ten/ a w takiej kwestii na przykład świąt. Czy pani święta spędzała w domu
26. rodzinnym czy spędzała pani święta w domu dziecka?
27. N: To było różnie... Czasem yy... było tak, że y byłam w domu dziecka ale to było to było bardzo
28. przykre bo zostawała nas taka mała garstka i ewentualnie y wychodziłam do yy... do rodziców tam
29. powiedzmy na dzień na, na kilka godzin tam wpisywałam się w taki specjalny zeszyt o której
30. wychodzę i o kt/ o której wracam. Ale yy... święta to był taki szczególny okres, ludzie... no jak to
31. na święta kupowali dużo, pili dużo, była rozpusta, balanga i ja po prostu bardzo często miałam tak,
32. że te święta niestety... miałam do wyboru al/ albo po prostu spędzić w towarzystwie pijanych
33. rodziców, awantur. I zwykle jak rodzice pili to zawsze miałam... y zawsze miałam wyrzucane, że,
34. że po co tu jestem, przecież ja się wyprowadziłam, że ja tu nie chce, że w ogóle i tak dalej. No to
35. było przykre bardzo dla mnie, ja bardzo to przeżywałam... no i często tam rodzice się kłócili. I

1. generalnie, jak chodziłam mm w odwiedziny to tylko sprawdzałam czy wszystko w porządku, czy
2. się jeszcze nie pozabijali, czy wszystko okej z rodzeństwem. Ale to nie były takie dobre czasy,
3. jeszcze wtedy pamiętam, że już ten mój brat albo w poprawczaku był, albo w więzieniu. Zawsze na
4. święta dostawałam kartki które mnie bardzo rozczulały i wiecznie wylałam, że nie możemy być
5. razem... no to nie był fajny okres ((ciszej)).
6. A: A wakacje gdzie pani spędzała?
7. N: A wakacje yy... Zwykle były organizowane jakieś takie kolonie... i zwykle jeździłam na jakieś
8. kolonie tutaj yy... gdzieś nad jeziora albo w góry albo nad morze. Oczywiście wszystko z domu
9. dziecka organizowane, więc wakacje były spędzane dość intensywnie ponieważ właściwie były
10. wypełnione prawie całe dwa miesiące, nas nie było w [nazwa miasta] a jak byliśmy to był taki już
11. taka końcówka, schyłek wakacji...
12. A: Pani Natalio i teraz tak... Jak wyglądała kwestia pani usamodzielnienia później, tak. Jak
13. wyglądało to wchodzenie w dorosłe/ Może jakąś kawę albo herbatę zrobić?
14. N: Nie, nie dziękuję ((wzdycha)). Wchodzenie w dorosłe życie. No więc, tak naprawdę to yy...
15. trochę sobie pluje w brodę ponieważ po skończeniu szkoły podstawowej yy... poszłam do liceum.
16. A: I tą podstawówkę przepraszam kończyła pani w domu dziecka?
17. N: Tak.
18. A: Już w domu dziecka?
19. N: Tak, tak, tak. To był ostatni rok, taki trudny okres ale, ale, nawet, nawet tak bardzo źle nie poszło
20. w tej szkole, więc yy... więc najpierw złożyłam dokumenty do liceum, nie prze/ nie dochodziłam
21. do końca roku bo... chyba to nie był czas dla mnie na naukę ((ze śmiechem)) niestety i
22. zrezygnowałam z tej szkoły. I potem poszłam do szkoły zawodowej czyli straciłam tak naprawdę
23. jeden rok, no nawet nie do końca straciłam bo... bo troszkę się tam czegoś nauczyłam, ale no do
24. tyłu byłam jeden rok jeśli chodzi o naukę. Poszłam do szkoły zawodowej, skończyłam tą szkołę
25. zawodową, skończyłam 19 lat pani pedagog z domu dziecka yy... postarała się dla mnie o
26. mieszkanie. Zresztą chyba wszystkie dzieciaki które wychodziły z domu dziecka dostawały z
27. Urzędu Miasta jakieś mieszkanie gdzieś tam w dzielnicy w okolicach yy... swoi/ swoich
28. rodzinnych domów co nie wiem czy to jest takie dobre. Bo naprawdę to nie zmienia się otoczenia –
29. i czasami... ludzie się poddają i nie, nie jest fajnie yy... i dostałam mieszkanie. Skończyłam szkołę
30. zawodową i pamiętam wtedy, że chciałam jeszcze iść do liceum czy do jakiegoś technikum po
31. prostu kontynuować naukę w szkole, ale pani pedagog stwierdziła, że nie, nie. Y żeby to sobie
32. robiła na własną rękę a chciałam jakoś nie wiem wieczorowo czy, czy jakoś tak może nawet może
33. nie wieczorowo/ nie wiem po prostu chciałam iść do liceum takiego handlowego na [nazwa ulicy]
34. pamiętam bo tam chodziłam kończyłam tam zawodówkę nawet.
35. A: Handlową też?

1. N: Tak, szkołę handlową kończyłam najpierw nawet do/ dosyć dobre wyniki yy uzyskałam bo
2. pamiętam, że dostałam książkę (((z uśmiechem))) na koniec roku na koniec tej szkoły i właśnie ta
3. pani yy... ta moja wychowawczyni z tej szkoły tak mnie namawiała żebym poszła do tego liceum
4. ale pani pedagog stwierdziła, że to jest już za późno i... i niekoniecznie, że oni mnie już tutaj na e/
5. egzamin będą się starać o mieszkanie niech ja sobie już idę. I wtedy dostałam jakąś wyprawkę nie
6. wiem jakąś kwotę pieniędzy na to żebym sobie kupiła najbardziej niezbędne rzeczy takie nie wiem,
7. nie wiem jakie te rzeczy ale to, to nie były duże pieniądze to były właściwie gdybym poszła do
8. sklepu to może bym kupiła łóżko i... i stół i to by było wszystko ale dostałam tam od mojej
9. chrzestnej jakieś stare łóżko nie wiem coś tam jeszcze porobiłam bo to były mieszkania takie w
10. kamienicy które miały, no i tak dobrze, że miały ubikacje w domu bo... poza tym nie było tak
11. naprawdę nic trzeba więc trzeba było tą kabinę prysz/ no troszkę przystosować to mieszkanie
12. jeszcze po swojemu tam łazienkę jakoś zrobić i tak dalej.
13. A: To był jeden pokój co pani dostała?
14. N: To był pokój z kuchnią.
15. A: Mhm.
16. N: Tak akurat się szczęśliwie złożyło bo nie wszyscy mieli takie yy... takie moż/ takie możliwości
17. ja dostałam mieszkanie które miało 37 metrów tak że całkiem niezłe bo, bo zwykle dostaje się takie
18. typu socjalne 20 kilka metrów ale akurat było wolne takie mieszkanie po takim państwie które
19. osobiście znałam i zwolniło się i tak starałam się o to mieszkanie a, że po prostu tak troszeczkę
20. jeszcze wtedy patrzono no nie wiem jak jest teraz na te dzieci z domu dziecka, że to, że to miasto
21. tak się przychyliło yy... i pomogło i ja dostałam prawa do tego mieszkania... No i to było takie moje
22. usamodzielnienie, że yy... że zamieszkałam tam po tej szkole zawodowej oczywiście poszłam od
23. razu do pracy i właściwie to tą pracę to dostałam yy... Zgłosiła się kobieta do naszego domu
24. dziecka i powiedziała, że potrzebuje osoby do pracy, do hurtowni. I ja wtedy, i ja dostałam właśnie
25. tą pracę przez to, że ona się zgłosiła i od razu mnie tam zaoferowano i ja tam pracowałam u tej pani
26. jakiś czas a w międzyczasie/ no i co no i pracowałam sobie, mieszkałam poznałam mojego męża...
27. obecnego. Zanim go poznałam to jeszcze mieszkałam z koleżanką z domu dziecka bo yy... jakoś
28. tak mnie/ mniej więcej w tym samym czasie żeśmy chyba się usamodzielniały a w ogóle to yy...
29. przed samym wyjściem ze szpitala niestety uległam wypadkowi samochodowemu i przez dwa
30. miesiące leżałam w szpitalu.
31. A: Przed wyjściem ze szpitala czy...?
32. N: Przepraszam z domu dziecka.
33. A: Z domu dziecka, mhm.
34. N: To były takie ostatnie wakacje i tak mm... i fajnie spędziłam ((z uśmiechem)) no ale yy... Po
35. wyjściu już mieszkanie na mnie czekało, miałam odebrać klucze i zamieszkałam sobie tam w tym

1. mieszkaniu. Mieszkalam z koleżanką ponieważ należę chyba do yy... nie należę do samotników. Ja
2. po prostu muszę mieć kogoś yy... wokół siebie bo y po prostu chyba bym zwariowała jakbym
3. miała mieszkać sama. No i pomalutku sobie yy... pracowałam bo jakoś tam starałam się meblować
4. to mieszkanie moje biedne. Mój obecny mąż poszedł do wojska mieszkalam z taką dziewczyną też
5. z domu dziecka.
6. A: Kolejna tak?
7. N: Kolejną koleżanką tak yy... potem mój mąż wrócił, koleżanka dostała swoje mieszkanie wróciła
8. do/ poszła do swojego mieszkania... nie utrzymuję z nią kontaktów teraz yy... No potem poszłam do
9. yy... wyszłam, poszłam do/ zmieniłam pracę. Podjęłam naukę w jakimś wieczorowym liceum trzy
10. razy w tygodniu, miałam dobrego yy... szefa bo poszedł mi na rękę i tam troszkę mnie czasami,
11. mnie zwalniał z pracy, trzy razy w tygodniu żebym ja mogła kontynuować naukę, więc skończyłam
12. sobie spokojnie to liceum potem poszłam do jakie/ do jakiegoś studium. W międzyczasie urodziło
13. się moje dziecko i wyszłam za mąż... mam takiego kochanego cukiera, fajna dziewczyna... No i po
14. tym podjęłam kolejną pracę właściwie pracuję cały czas i... szkoda mi trochę tego mojego dziecka
15. bo, bo jak miała 9 miesięcy to ja ją już do żłobka wypchnęłam a ja pracowałam tak że bidulka była
16. mała przeżyła, silna jest duża dziewczyna teraz... no i podjęłam jeszcze studia logistyczne teraz
17. pracuję w takiej dosyć dużej firmie i właściwie nie wiem ((z uśmiechem)) co jeszcze mogę
18. powiedzieć.
19. A: Pani Natalio jeszcze jakby, jakby bo tak wracając do tego, takiego momentu tej wczesnej
20. dorosłości w tym momencie takim kiedy już pani rozpoczyna samodzielne życie miała pani jakieś
21. problemy... jakieś kłopoty?
22. N: O o, czy ja miałam kłopoty, wydaje mi się, że raczej nie miałam kłopotów oprócz tego może, że
23. że może jestem zbyt emocjonalnie związana z rodziną i jak zwykle jakie, jakiś kontakt z rodzicami
24. jakieś porażki yy... oglądanie tego ponieważ mieszkaliśmy w, w tej samej kamienicy więc
25. oglądanie jakiś awantur dopóki się z biegiem czasu nie uspokoiło bo dopóki mój tata nie
26. zachorował i przestał pić moja mama nie zachorowała bo i i nie, nie przestała pić bo teraz jest
27. bardziej schorowaną osobą no to wtedy może miałam jakieś takie nie wiem przygody typu
28. ratowanie brata bo ma atak padaczki głowa mu uderza o krawężnik żeby się nie zabił ale generalnie
29. nie wiem nie kojarzę sobie żebym miała jakieś, jakieś mega problemy straszne. Nie myślę, że, że ja
30. w ogóle miałam ja w ogóle trafiłam na naprawdę dobrych ludzi bo i pracodawcy i otoczenie w
31. którym się obracałam może moja obecna teściowa miała na początku yy... jakieś problemy yy... w
32. sensie ((śmiej)) takim, że nie chciała żeby jej syn spotykał się z jakąś dziewuchą z domu dziecka i
33. może po prostu miała dla niego inną przyszłość ale poradziliśmy sobie z nią ((śmiej)) tak że, tak
34. że ja nie, nie, nie wydaje mi się żeby miała jakieś problemy.
35. A: A męża (x) w którym roku mniej więcej pani poznała (x)?

1. N: Męża poznałam jak wyszłam yy... z tego domu dziecka czyli w 94. roku.
2. A: W jakich okolicznościach go pani poznała?
3. N: Yyy... poznałam go poprzez moją koleżankę z którą chodziłam do szkoły zawodowej to było
4. takie trochę śmieszne dlatego, że yy... chodziłam właśnie do klasy właśnie z tą koleżanką, która
5. przyjaźniła się z taką dziewczyną która mm oczywiście mm wszystkie trzy byliśmy w jednej klasie
6. i ta przyjaciółka tej koleżanki mojej strasznie zadzierała nosa i i w ogóle ((ze śmiechem)) było tak,
7. że i miała takiego chłopaka yy... i tak naprawdę nie wiem jak to było ale chciałyśmy jej troszeczkę
8. zrobić na złość i umówiliśmy się z tą właśnie [imię] że, że ona mnie pozna z chłopakiem tej
9. dziewczyny która zadziera nosa i ja będę udawała, że tam yy... yy, że ten chłopak zaleca się do mnie
10. i że, żeby ona była zazdrosna i żeby jej trochę utrzeć nosa. No i tak poznała mnie ((śmiej)) z
11. moim obecnym mężem.
12. A: I tak utarła pani nosa na dobre.
13. N: Tak, tak. Ale myślę, że, że to były takie chodzenia mm właściwie na początku były takie nie
14. wiem... to były takie spotkania się i myślę, że nie zrobiłam jej krzywdy ((ze śmiechem))
15. absolutnie bo chyba nie była mocno zainteresowana bo ona tam właśnie oglądała się za różnymi
16. chłopcami i ten kto miał samochód albo motor no to wtedy, to wtedy ona była (((z ożywieniem)))
17. no może trochę materialistka nie wiem trudno jest mi teraz określić ale, ale tak się zaczęło między
18. mną a moim mężem tak że potem zaczął do mnie przychodzić i i... no i tak jesteśmy do tej pory.
19. A: Niech pani powie parę słów o swoim mężu, z jakiej rodziny pochodzi ile ma lat co robi?
20. N: Dobrze to tak mój mąż jest młodszy ode mnie o rok czasu chociaż nawet nie cały bo w sumie
21. miesiącami to siedem miesięcy a on ciągle mi wypomina, że jestem starsza od niego ((śmiej))
22. yy... Pochodzi z rodziny również wielodzietnej właściwie to dwóch braci yy... z pełnej rodziny,
23. normalnej rodziny, ojciec był, służył w wojsku zawodowo, matka zajmowała się, była
24. administratorem na rynku. Zajmowała się właśnie takim administrowaniem takiego rynku
25. osiedlowego czyli pracowała tak naprawdę miała działalność gospodarczą ale pracowała dla [nazwa
26. instytucji publicznej]. I mm to była taka normalna rodzina tam nie brakowało niczego, mieszkali w
27. blokach, trzy pokoje z kuchnią, ładnie umeblowane no ja nie pasowałam absolutnie do tej rodziny
28. bo ja taka biedna sierota z domu dziecka ((śmiej)) z jakąś przeszłością z jakąś porąbaną rodziną i
29. czasami aż strach spotkać kogoś z braci moich na ulicy ciemnej ale... ale rodzina była normalna i
30. yy... i tak naprawdę to nie, ja myślę, że ja od początku chyba kochałam mojego męża ale ktoś nie
31. wiem czy to nie było tak, że któryś z wychowawców mi powiedział już nie pamiętam ale właśnie
32. jeszcze jak byłam w domu dziecka, że najlepiej ocenić yy... męża przyszłego po tym jakie stosunki
33. panują u niego w domu i jakie relacje ma yy... ojciec yy... z żo/ z matką i yy... ((śmiej)) i chyba i
34. chyba to rzeczywiście jest prawda dlatego, że yy... dlatego, że jak chodziłam tam do tego mojego
35. męża to... to nigdy nie, ja nigdy nie usłyszałam żeby ojciec mojego męża powiedział do swojej

1. żony nie inaczej jak [zdrobniale_imię] to [imię] tamto, nie był tam yy... być może mieli jakieś
2. sprzeczki czy - bo to jest normalne, że to jest zdrowe nawet dla związku, że czasami trzeba może
3. nie, nie pobić się ale, nie jakoś pokłócić się ale jakaś wymiana zdań różna... może to było ale to nie
4. było takie absolutnie nie było takie jak u moich rodziców tam, tam życie było normalne po prostu
5. tam niczego nie brakowało.
6. A: Mąż kim jest z wykształcenia, kim jest z zawodu?
7. N: Mój mąż yy... niestety skończył tylko szkołę podst/ znaczy wtedy kiedy ja go znałam skończył
8. tylko szkołę podstawową... tam właściwie z tej rodziny nie było osób jakoś tam mocno
9. wykształconych... Dwóch braci skończyło szkoły zawodowe a on nie skończył szkoły zawodowej
10. ponieważ nie wiem. On w ogóle ma y może nie trudny charakter ale jest bardzo stanowczy i troszkę
11. wybuchowy yy... I czasem, czasem się trzeba ugryźć w język bo jest tak lepiej i nie powiedzieć nic.
12. Natomiast on czegoś takiego nie potrafił i miał jakieś konflikty w tej szkole z jakimiś chłopakami
13. zatargi bo poszedł do pierwszej klasy... i była tak zwana fala ktoś tam coś powiedział, kazał mu coś
14. zrobić nie wiem czy gdyby matka gdyby bardziej naciskała albo ojciec przypilnował to być może
15. skończyłby tą szkołę. Natomiast yy... natomiast nie skończył jej. Poszedł do matki powiedział
16. otwarcie, że on nie będzie chodził więcej do szkoły, ale pójdzie do pracy i od 17-go roku życia ten
17. chłopak yy... pracuje... Z tym, że yy... kilka lat temu ponieważ yy... pojawiły się takie fajne szkoły
18. dla dorosłych, za namową moją ((śmiej)) i może nie wiem kogo, może też i ze względu na
19. dziecko bo (x) i dziecko ma i idzie do szkoły a bę/ będzie i będziemy pisać w dokumentach, że tata
20. ma tylko podstawowe wykształcenie więc mój mąż y poszedł do szkoły dla dorosłych do liceum.
21. Bardzo dobrze mu to dało no więc ma kontakty poznał ludzi wrócił jak gdyby troszeczkę na ten tor
22. w sumie też nie mam mu za złe, że późno skończył szkołę ale mimo chęci skończył ja też
23. lawirowałam po tych szkołach niesamowicie i zanim przyszedł rozum do głowy i skończyłam coś
24. no to też trochę czasu minęło więc mój mąż obecnie ma średnie wykształcenie i jest z tego dumny
25. ((śmiej)).
26. A: Gdzie pracuje ?
27. N: Y teraz pracuje na stanowisku kierowcy.
28. A: Mhm. Pani Natalio jeszcze jak pani mówi o lawirowaniu w tych szkołach to coś jeszcze było z
29. tymi pani szkołami?
30. N: No ja, no bo ja naprawdę poszłam troszkę, no tak najpierw to poszłam troszkę no bo taki
31. najpierw zaczęłam liceum nie skończyłam tego liceum. Poszłam do szkoły zawodowej, potem
32. poszłam znowuż do liceum, które skończyłam, potem poszłam do takiego dwuletniego Studium
33. Prawa i Administracji, które też skończyłam bo stwierdziłam, że ja na studia to ja nie pójdę bo po
34. pierwsze nie mam czasu a po drugie za długo i tak dalej no i potem w końcu skończyłam te studia I-
35. szego stopnia tak że po prostu taki wieczny uczeń jestem ((śmiej)).

1. A: Czyli mniej więcej ile miała pani lat, albo w którym roku pani to liceum wieczorowe skończyła?
2. N: Miałam 23 lata jak skończyłam szkołę.
3. A: Tą wieczorową, tak?
4. N: Tak (x) wieczorowe bo to była szkoła zawodowa.
5. A: Bo podstawówkę pani przeszła bez żadnych/
6. N: Tak, tak bez żadnych potknięć.
7. A: Tam u babci też pani chodziła tak?
8. N: Tak, tak, tak, tak podstawówkę skończyłam bez problemu, potem poszłam do liceum.
9. A: (x)
10. N: Do [numer liceum] no i jak gdyby miałam rok do tyłu ponieważ nie skończyłam tego liceum
11. poszłam do szkoły zawodowej przez trzy lata skończyłam szkołę zawodową w wieku 19-stu lat
12. podjęłam pracę.
13. A: I później miała pani 20, 21 lat jak poszła pani do tej/
14. N: 20 lat bo ta szkoła tu/ bo to liceum było trzy lata, trwało trzy razy w tygodniu takie wieczorowo.
15. A: I to studium w którym roku skończyła pani mniej więcej?
16. N: ((wzdycha)) Studium yy... rozpoczęłam (xx) ile to moje dziecko miało, parę latek... zaraz w
17. dziewięćdzie/ zaraz... Boże nie wiem w 2000, może 2000 rok albo 99. jeszcze.
18. A: Mhm, i teraz te studia.
19. N: A studia rozpoczęłam w tam/ w tamtym, dwa lata temu się obroniłam czyli studia zaczęłam pięć
20. lat temu, no tak.
21. A: Pani Natalio a jeszcze ta pani kariera zawodowa tak bo pani mówiła, że tam w pracy pani, że
22. pani cały czas właściwie pracuje, tak?
23. N: Tak.
24. A: Była pani jakiś czas na bezrobociu czy nie?
25. N: Byłam.
26. A: Jak/
27. N: Jakiś czas.
28. A: Jak w ogóle wygląda pani kariera zawodowa?
29. N: Moja kariera.
30. A: Żeby tak osadzić w latach mniej więcej.
31. N: Mam przynieść CV swoje ((śmiej)).
32. A: ((śmiej)) Pierwsz/ w ogóle pierwszy raz zarabiała pani pieniądze w tej hurtowni czy, czy
33. wcześniej na przykład zarabiała jakieś pieniądze?
34. N: Tak.
35. A: Pomijając kwestię handlowania alkoholem.

1. N: Taaak, tak zarabiałam pieniądze bo yy... jeździ/ jak byłam jeszcze właśnie w domu dziecka to
2. jeździłam na zbiory tru/ truskawek gdzieś tam w Łagiewnikach czy tam okolica nie wiem jakoś od
3. [nazwa ulicy] odchodziły takie były plantacje truskawek i yy latem zarabiałam pieniądze na
4. zbieraniu truskawek jak byłam u mojej babci, moja babcia to taka no, no nie, nie należała do osób
5. takich wylewnych i tak naprawdę to co mi y moja chrzestna y przysyłała w paczkach po swojej
6. córce do ubrania to tak naprawdę to moja babcia po prostu kupowała mi to co, to co naprawdę już
7. było niezbędne no bo co ludzie powiedzą no tak, bo to jest mała wieś i wszyscy się znają więc jak
8. już nie miałam no to trzeba było kupić no bo byłoby by to, byłaby na językach to u babci właśnie
9. też żeby sobie coś kupić to chodziłam mm do okolicznych lasów zbierałam jagody na przykład nie
10. wiem pomagałam komuś w polu i zarabiałam wtedy pie/ jakieś pieniądze ale to były moje takie
11. pieniądze na moje wydatki wtedy jeździłam na jakiś targ kupowałam sobie jakieś fajne ciuchy
12. których nigdy w, w nadmiarze nie miałam czy tam jakieś potrzebne rzeczy.
13. A: Mhm i później zawodowo idzie pani najpierw do tej hurtowni tak i (xx).
14. N: Yy... kurcze w hurtowni za długo nie pracowałam (x) zaraz tak naprawdę jak wyszłam z tego
15. szpitala to ta pani tam już na mnie czekała to był sierpień jak wyszłam na pocz/ w połowie sierpnia
16. jakoś z tego szpitala więc jeszcze yy... troszeczkę takiej rekonwalescencji i i trafiłam do, do tej
17. hurtowni, popracowałam trochę ja myślę, że pracowałam tam/
18. A: I pod samochód Pani wpadła?
19. N: Nie, nie, nie ja nie wpadłam pod samochód ja yy... byłam yy... pasażerem jechaliśmy na
20. dyskotekę w pięć osób i ten samochód uderzył w inny samochód i i mieliśmy stłuczkę yy...
21. Trafiłam do tej hurtowni popracowałam trochę myślę, że jakieś półtora roku albo dwa lata miałam
22. bardzo dobry kontakt tam właśnie [z] taką panią [imię] ((śmiech)) taka fajna pani była która mnie
23. po prostu wdrażała i była też szefowa która która troszkę mniej przebywała na miejscu no bo
24. załatwiała tam nie wiem różne sprawy w każdym bądź razie w tej hurtowni zaczęło się tam
25. troszeczkę sypać, to była hurtownia pasmanteryjna więc właściwie za dużo tam chyba się nie zarobi
26. na jakiś nitkach i tak dalej... coraz gorzej było w tej hurtowni i pamiętam, że moja szefowa
27. wystawiała mnie na yy... na bazarze na [nazwa dzielnicy] na takim [potoczna nazwa bazaru] czy nie
28. wiem takim jakimś właśnie taki bazar tam był taki rynek...
29. A: Coś tam było (x) mhm.
30. N: Osiedlowy i pamiętam,... że, że ja, że no dobrze no to chodziłam tam trochę narzekałam bo
31. marzłam bo to był taki okres, że a to padał deszcz a to było zimno to śnieg padał a ja z tą
32. pasmanterią na tym rynku i za jakieś marne grosze bo jeszcze tam miałam chyba od sprzedanych y
33. rzeczy czyli zmieniła mi tak naprawdę tą umowę bo wcześniej miałam jakąś stałą pensję a tutaj jak
34. agrafkę sprzedam to mam tam jakieś 10 procent czy coś... i wtedy jeszcze, jeszcze nie mojemu
35. mężowi, ale obecnemu mężowi yy strasznie się to nie podobało i któregoś razu przyjechał po mnie

1. (xx) samochodem kazał mi dzwonić do szefowej żeby przyjechała żeby sobie stała bo widział, że
2. byłam, jestem przemarznięta do nitki suchej i przemoczona no i tak się skończyła kariera no bo ona
3. mi powiedziała no wiesz jak nie będziesz tu stała no to rozwiązujemy umowę, no i ja odeszłam z
4. tamtej firmy, odeszłam z tamtej firmy po czym trafiłam właśnie z Urzędu Miasta... trafiłam do
5. takiego do takiego sklepu... który się yy... który mm... specjalizował się w jakiś takich artykułach
6. chemicznych typy malar/ malarskie jakieś takie rzeczy jakieś gwoździe śrubki no i było stanowisko
7. papiernicze stworzone dla mnie potem niedaleko było do szkoły więc y pracowałam trochę na tym
8. stanowisku papierniczym troszkę na tym chemicznym i tam pracowałam też sporo, i to był właśnie
9. okres kiedy poszłam do szkoły i to właśnie miałam niedaleko tą szkołę y potem odeszłam z tej
10. firmy... nie wiem ile to było aha no już wiem po prostu zna/ znalazłam sobie lepszą ofertę pracy
11. chociaż warunki pracy były bardzo nieciekawe ja wtedy miałam już skończy/ tak ja wtedy
12. ukończyłam już tą szkołę.
13. A: Liceum, tak?
14. N: To liceum i trafiłam do yy... [nazwa zakładu pracy] tam yy... była, lepsze pieniądze było, był/
15. było lepsze ubezpieczenie i generalnie chyba były składki odprowadzane do ZUS-u za kwotę jaką
16. się zarabiało, natomiast tam w tym sklepie to niekoniecznie i yy... I tam pracowałam pół roku po
17. czym ze (x).
18. A: Jako sprzedawca?
19. N: Nie, nie ja tam pracowałam na produkcji.
20. A: A na produkcji rozumiem.
21. N: [Branża chemiczna] tak.
22. A: (xx) tylko, że tam ta praca/ mój ojciec pracował w [nazwa zakładu pracy].
23. N: Yy... tam warunki yy... warunki była, były po prostu straszne. Chociaż mi to nie przeszkadzało
24. ale wiem, że yy... yy wiem, że jak wsiadaliśmy do autobusu bo to był chyba taki końcowy
25. przystanek to tam wcześniej jeszcze jakaś tam firma yy... wsiadała to jak my wsiadaliśmy to tam
26. było takie hasło: „O o [potoczna nazwa zakładu pracy] wsiada”. Bo strasznie od nas śmierdziało
27. pomimo tego, że tam były jakieś w tym zakładzie yy... jakieś prysznice, że można było się umyć
28. ale to i tak tam włosy były przesiąknięte tą benzyną tymi klejami i no warunki pracy yy... na/
29. nawet na tamte czasy to zakład pracy naprawdę yy... pozostawiał wiele do życzenia i no i warunki
30. były nieciekawe ja zaszłam w ciążę jak tylko się dowiedziałam, że jestem w ciąży to, no to poszłam
31. na zwolnienie lekarskie bo tam bardzo dużo było poronień z racji właśnie tych yy... oparów i pracy
32. z tymi szkodliwymi substancjami. No i oczywiście umowy mi nie przedłużono tylko do czasu
33. porodu i potem mm jak urodziłam moje dziecko.
34. A: 98. tak to jest.
35. N: W 98-m roku urodziłam mojego cukiera kochanego to yy... y no to byłam tam na jakimś okresie

1. macierzyńskim i wtedy yy... w wieku dziwie/ a jak moja Wiera była malutka to ja pamiętam, że w
2. międzyczasie jeszcze yy... dorabiałam sobie yy będąc takim ankierem w [nazwa firmy] tutaj na
3. [nazwa ulicy] właściwie naprzeciwko i tam yy... jakieś ankiety yy... biegałam z jakimiś ankietami
4. gdzieś tam w okolicach i jakieś pieniądze może niewielkie ale coś tam zarabiałam ((śmiech))... więc
5. ja wiecznie coś robiłam yy potem po tych ankietach... teściowa pomogła mi troszkę ponieważ na
6. tym swoim rynku zorganizowała mi stanowisko i handlowałam warzywami w międzyczasie
7. zrobiłam prawo jazdy... i byłam takim własnym zaopatrzeniowcem jeździłam sobie na [nazwa
8. ulicy] kupowałam ziemniaki, kapustę, jabłka, pomidory i takie tam różne rzeczy i sprzedawałam to
9. na rynku, więc nawet pracowałam właśnie na, na, na yy... na rynku a moje dziecko chodziło do
10. żłobka i/ więc no... było różnie, raz się zarobiło raz się nie zarobiło raz się zmarzło, nie była to
11. lekka praca, jeździłam starym samochodem ale jakoś sobie radziłam i było, było okej i w, w 2002
12. roku, nie wiem czy czegoś nie pominęłam po drodze ale... nie wiem nie przypominam sobie czy ja
13. gdzieś jeszcze pracowałam... a jeszcze no tak roznosiłam książki telefoniczne dla yy... polskich
14. książek telefonicznych jak jeszcze były takie ale to było takie sezonowe, następnie w 2002 roku
15. mm zaczęłam pracować w firmie do której pracuję do tej/ w której pracuję do tej pory... no i aa tam,
16. poszłam też to był taki nowo otwarty zakład z kapitałem zagranicznym to była taka firma
17. amerykańska zaczęłam tam pracować w 2002 roku od lipca i... właściwie no zaproponowano mi
18. taką pracę bo tak naprawdę nie po tym [nazwa zakładu pracy] który pamiętam ((śmiech)) że tam
19. były takie warunki pracy i ktoś (xx) do zakładu produkcyjnego yy... no dobrze będę pracować bo
20. tam takie dosyć go/ godziwe płace były więc poszłam poszłam do tej firmy zostałam przyjęta, więc
21. jednocześnie jakieś tam testy jeszcze robiłam w instytucie medycyny pracy bo trzeba było mieć
22. zdolności manualne i tak dalej, wykazać się troszkę yy... i tam jak trafiłam do tego zakładu pracy to
23. mnie po prostu olśniło bo nie wyobrażałam sobie, że zakład produkcyjny może tak wyglądać bo
24. naprawdę była to nowa fabryka, zadbana to nie było to co [nazwa zakładu pracy] warunki pracy
25. naprawdę były, było/ hala była czysta yy... miejs/ stanowiska pracy naprawdę były bardzo dobre i
26. zaczęłam pracować tam na stanowisku operatora bo jest to firma yy... światłowodowa i... a teraz
27. jestem mm od stanowiska operatora po ośmiu latach poszłam na studia oczywiście dzięki tej mojej
28. pracy tak naprawdę bo to mój kierownik mój były mnie zmotywował „Natalia idź do, idź bo ty się
29. tutaj marnujesz, idź na jakieś studia, weź no, ja ci tu pomogę, może firma coś tam zasponsoruje,, i
30. rzeczywiście przez pierwszy rok dostałam jakieś tam pieniądze na to żeby, żeby iść na te studia, no
31. żeby iść na te studia i opłacać. I poszłam sobie zaocznie... i potem zaczęłam mm i potem zmieniłam
32. stanowisko na jakieś troszeczkę wyższe potem jeszcze troszkę wyższe, natomiast teraz jestem
33. pracownikiem biura właściwie co prawda jest to takie stanowisko inżynierskie ale - tak takie i no i
34. cóż i to/ doszliśmy do tego momentu dzisiejszego.
35. A: Jeszcze mówiła pani, że były jakieś momenty bezrobocia to kiedy?

1. N: ((wzdycha)) To były takie krótkie momenty bezrobocia wtedy kiedy ja straciłam yy... macie/
2. kiedy ja skończył mi się okres macierzyński i wtedy moja Wierusia miała sześć miesięcy więc... nie
3. miałam jej za bardzo z kim zostawić nie miałam co z tym dzieckiem zrobić więc byłam na zasiłku
4. dla bezrobotnych to były takie/ to nie były duże, długi okres to były takie okresy między jedną
5. pracą a drugą jak na przykład nie wiem yy... może wtedy jak yy... odeszłam... yy... odeszłam z tej
6. hurtowni gdzie stałam gdzieś tam na jakimś rynku no to wtedy mm to wtedy byłam na jakimś
7. zasiłku dla bezrobotnych ale to był krótki okres ponieważ sąsiadka z naprzeciwka yy... pomogła mi
8. zdobyć tą pracę w [nazwa zakładu pracy] ((śmiech)) tam pracowałam nie wiem, nie pamiętam w
9. sumie to niewielki okres może półtora roku to jest maksymalnie taki/ takiego okresu.
10. A: Pozbierać, tak?
11. N: Tak, żeby tak przez ten cały okres.
12. A: Czy z pomocy jakiś instytucji pani wtedy korzystała czy nie?
13. N: Nie.
14. A: Mhm. Jeszcze taki wyraz aktualnej takiej sytuacji przejdziemy [będziemy] już kończyć ta, tą
15. historię yy... tylko tak jeszcze chciałam zapytać o takie rzeczy które mi gdzieś umknęły w którym
16. roku państwo żeście się pobrali?
17. N: W dziewięćdziesiątym ósm/ siódmym, w 97.
18. A: Mieszkaliście wcześniej państwo razem?
19. N: Tak.
20. A: Od którego roku mniej więcej?
21. N: Właściwie jak ja wyszłam z tego domu dziecka to właściwie to był 94. rok ale właściwie to tak
22. no to od 95. powiedzmy albo 6. roku ponieważ mój mąż poszedł do wojska i to był taki okres jak
23. on poszedł do wojska ja yy... tak jak ja mówiłam, nie bardzo nie lubię być sama i wtedy była jedna
24. koleżanka potem druga ze mną mieszkała.
25. A: I potem przyszedł mąż wrócił tak do pani.
26. N: Tak, mhm.
27. A: Jeszcze chciałam zapytać tak bo mówiła pani o dziadkach i chciałam jeszcze zapytać o tych
28. dziadków ze strony mamy czy/ bo babcia rozumiem, obie babcie żyją. Ta babcia ze strony mamy
29. kim była zawodowo, co ona robiła tutaj w tej [nazwa miasta]?
30. N: Moja babcia przez całe życie ciężko pracowała yy... miała, miała yy... czworo dzieci, właściwie
31. jedno dziecko umarło zaraz jakoś tak po porodzie była moja mama mm... jej starszy brat, był syn z
32. drugiego małżeństwa bo pot/ w ogóle moja babcia yy... w młodym wieku została wdową ponieważ
33. jej, jej pierwszy mąż po prostu się zapił czyli to już takie geny alkoholowe.
34. A: Czyli ojciec, ojciec mamy, tak.
35. N: Tak ojciec mamy, takie geny alkoholiczne to już tak właśnie (((ironiczny śmiech))) z tamtego

1. pokolenia już tak dosyć głęboko więc yy... ojciec mojej mamy się zapił, moja babcia została sama
2. wychowywała dwójkę dzieci nie było jej łatwo pracowała całe życie w zakładzie [nazwa zakładu
3. pracy] ale chyba była tam szwaczką albo nie wiem coś robiła.
4. A: Robotnicą w każdym bądź razie?
5. N: Tak, takim pracownikiem w tym zakładzie potem wyszła za męża i urodziła syna który w wieku
6. 24-ech lat został zabity i i yy... ten drugi mąż też jej umarł i właściwie była sama.
7. A: Mieszkała gdzieś w kamienicy gdzieś w centrum czy w blokach?
8. N: Moja babcia mieszkała na [nazwa dzielnicy] mieszkała w takich fajnych domkach
9. ponemieckich takich [nazwa osiedla] tam taka bardzo fajna okolica, taras dużo zieleni i dlatego my
10. tam bardzo często uciekaliśmy do tej mojej babci i pamiętam właśnie jeszcze z dzieciństwa taki
11. okres kiedy byłam mała miałam chyba 7 lat albo 6 a mój ten młodszy brat był młodszy ode mnie
12. znaczy 2 lata czyli on miał jakieś 4 lata i pamiętam, że właśnie była taka sytuacja, że moi rodzice
13. pili wtedy i ja wzięłam tego mojego małego brata za rękę poszliśmy tutaj na przystanek
14. tramwajowy i wiedziałam, że do do babci jedzie się [numer linii tramwajowej], my żeśmy często
15. uciekali do tej babci ale to była taka jedna z pierwszych takich moich podróży kiedy ja naprawdę
16. byłam taka mała i jeszcze nierozgarnięta ja nie wiedziałam w ogóle nie znałam tego znaczy kiedyś
17. [nazwa miasta] była też inn/ inna nie było też takiego ruchu nie było natężenia takiego, ale wiem, że
18. pomyliłam przystanki i zamiast w stronę [nazwa osiedla mieszkaniowego] pojechaliśmy na [nazwa
19. osiedla mieszkaniowego] z tym moim bratem i jakaś kobita nas zaprowadziła nas na przy/ na
20. komisariat policji... i wtedy pamiętam, że siedzieliśmy tu dosyć długo w tym komisariacie ci
21. policjanci dawali nam kanapki żebyśmy sobie, zjedli takie dzieci biedne, brudne umorusane,
22. głodne, wystraszone do babci jechały ale nie w tą stronę zresztą no nie wiem yy... w dzisiejszych
23. czasach moje dziecko od niedawna tak naprawdę samodzielnie zaczęło funkcjonować i pozwalałam
24. jej jeździć ale to jest tak, że jest telefon komórkowy ona mi dzwoni kiedy przyjeżdża yy... kiedy,
25. kiedy wychodzi, kiedy jest na miejscu, jest pod taką pełną kontrolą, natomiast za/ były takie czasy,
26. że tych telefonów nie było poza tym moi rodzice chyba nawe/ nawet nie byli świadomi, że nas w
27. domu nie ma, że my poszliśmy do babci nikt się tam na/ nami zbytnio nie opiekował więc
28. spędziliśmy trochę czasu na tym komisariacie dopóki, mm dopóki nie ustalono naprawdę takiego
29. miejsca pobytu bo ja tak może nie do końca pamiętałam gdzie mieszkamy wiedziałam jak się
30. nazywam więc ta policja przywiozła nas z powrotem więc... fajnie było (((z przekazem))).
31. A: A to mieszkanie państwa ten pustostan do którego się mama włamała to jaki tam/ znaczy ja
32. wiem, że to stara kamienica tak, stara też tutaj w [nazwa dzielnicy].
33. N: Tak, tak.
34. A: I ile mieliście tam państwo tych pomieszczeń?
35. N: ((wzdycha)) To było tak yy... różnie ponieważ wchodząc do yy... do tego naszego mieszkania,

1. mieliśmy najpierw wspólny korytarz yy z sąsiadem, z takim panem [imię] taki yy pan pijus
2. ((uśmiech)) ale jakoś tak mile go wspominamy ((uśmiech)) właśnie ap ropo pana [imię] to yy... to
3. jak byliśmy dziećmi takimi małymi to (xx) taką jedną z na/ naszych zabaw było między innymi
4. było chodzenie yy... po ulicy wzdłuż krawężników i zbieranie petów dla tego pana [imię], to
5. pamiętam właśnie wtedy dostaliśmy lanie jak nas tata zobaczył co robimy
6. A: ((śmiech))
7. N: więc yy... więc to mieszkanie to był, to było takie jedno mieszkanie to był wspólny korytarz.
8. A: Komunałka, tak?
9. N: Słucham?
10. A: Komunałka tak zwana?
11. N: Chyba tak yy... i po lewej stronie mieszkał nas/ nasz sąsiad natomiast na wprost było takie
12. pomieszczenie to był taki olbrzymi jeden duży pokój on miał chyba ze 30 metrów i tam właśnie
13. mama się włamała i my dostaliśmy to mieszkanie w momencie gdy umarł ten pan [imię] to żeśmy
14. się przebili od tego pokoju do tego pana [imię] i mieliśmy dodatkowe pomieszczenie potem to było
15. tak, że można było albo stąd wychodzić albo stąd wychodzić jakoś tak i i potem właśnie mieliśmy
16. to pomieszczenie tak że tam było około czterdziestu siedmiu, dziewięciu metrów.
17. A: Czyli były dwa pomieszczenia?
18. N: Tak.
19. A: Jakaś kuchnia, łazienka?
20. N: Mm... Na początku przez wiele, wiele lat było jedno pomieszczenie, nie było ubikacji. Ubikacja
21. była na uli/ na podwórku, więc warunków właściwie nie było żadnych, nie było żadnej łazienki.
22. Tam był stary brudny zlew i i yy... i jakiś nocnik do sikania dla dzieci... w nocy lub wieczorem.
23. Generalnie chodziło się tam na koniec podwórka do ubikacji i tak wyglądało tak naprawdę do
24. końca to yy... to nasze mieszkanie. Po tym, po tym panu [imię] było to yy... drugie pomieszczenie
25. z czego była taka kuchnia zrobiona, ale tam była też jakaś wersalka wstawiona, właściwie wszystko
26. w jednym/ I do/ wie/ dopiero po wielu, wielu latach jak my chyba już żeśmy się wyprowadzili
27. może ta moja najmłodsza siostra jeszcze tam mieszkała kiedy tata yy... zrobił łazienkę, taką
28. łazienkę, że była i ubikacja i i jakaś tam kabina natryskowa, ale to już nie za moich/. To może z 10
29. lat temu po prostu.
30. A: Dobrze pani Natalio to teraz tak, już taka, takie końcowe właściwie pytania dotyczące aktualnej
31. sytuacji bo mieszka pani z mężem i z córką tak?
32. N: I z kotem i z psem.
33. A: Kotem i psem czyli jednak przygarnianie ((śmiech)) tak zostało zrealizowane.
34. N: Tak, tak (xxx) słabość.
35. A: Zwierząt, miałam identyczny pomysł na życie też będę miała schronisko, tak.

1. N: Coś w tym jest.
2. A: Coś w tym jest, nie... Mieszka pani w tym mieszkaniu do którego panią usamodzielniono?
3. N: Tak. Cały czas mieszkam w tym mieszkaniu. Były pomysły na to żeby się przeprowadzić... żeby
4. się zamienić z kimś, ale potem jakoś to się tak rozwiało. Zawsze... yy... jakoś nie było okazji ku
5. temu yy... ale... 4 lata temu kupiliśmy sobie działkę pracowniczą i... mm troszkę tam/ latem tam na
6. weekendy żeśmy zostawali na tej działce pracowniczej, bardzo nam się tam podobało i
7. postanowiliśmy dążyć do czegoś i/ znaczy był taki moment na to, na to żeby się zamienić na
8. mieszkania ale yy... koszty y zamiany tego mieszkania po prostu były tak wysokie, że
9. stwierdziliśmy, że chyba kupimy działkę jakąś budowlaną po tej naszej działce pracowniczej i
10. będziemy sobie budować jakiś tam dom. Może to trw/ będzie to trwać nie wiem jakieś 10, 15 lat ale
11. jakiś taki wymarzony dom. No i teraz właśnie dążymy do tego, że yy... sprzedaliśmy tą działkę
12. pracowniczą dołożyliśmy trochę pieniędzy, jakieś kredyty, kupiliśmy działkę budowlaną. Może nie
13. w jakiejś atrakcyjnej okolicy, ale tania ziemia była ((śmiech)) więc yy kupiliśmy sobie tam w
14. okolicy, powiedzmy też niecałych 30 kilometrów od [nazwa miasta].
15. A: Poza [nazwa miasta], tak?
16. N: Tak, taką działkę. I mamy taki plan, że chcemy wziąć kredyt i będziemy sobie budować sami
17. dom taki nasz.
18. A: Dalej tam jest te 37 metrów, tak jak było?
19. N: Tak, tak.
20. A: Dalej jest pokój z kuchnią?
21. N: Yy... dalej jest 37 metrów ale yy... nie jest pokój z kuchnią ponieważ zawsze to było
22. mieszkanie rozkładowe i z korytarza takiego podłużnego korytarza po lewej stronie jest pokój taki
23. powiedzmy niecałe 20 metrów a po prawej stronie była duża kuchnia i ja tą kuchnię podzieliłam. I
24. teraz moje dziecko ma swój pokój co prawda ciasny ale własny. I ma swój ką, ma tam łóżko
25. piętrowe, poniżej ma biurko, okno, jakieś półki, szafki i tak dalej, więc ma swoje ma takie trochę
26. swojej intymności. No i mamy ((chrząka)) mamy yy... taką wąską kuchnię, więc ta kuchnia służy
27. nam również jako łazienka i pralnia ponieważ w końcu w rogu jest kabina prysznicowa i yy...
28. pralka. I to tak, no ciasno jest, ale ((chrząka)) ale ((kaszle)) nie przeszkadza nam to nie wiem, nie
29. mamy jakiegoś tam skrępowania więc nie potrzebujemy mieć takiej własnej łazienki. I... i to
30. mieszkanie jest/ no i ubikacja osobno jest, tak że to mieszkanie/
31. A: W obrębie mieszkania?
32. N: Tak, tak, tak, tak.
33. A: Ono jest, to jest komunalne mieszkanie?
34. N: ((chrząka)) Było komunalne mieszkanie jak dostałam to mieszkanie. Natomiast teraz okazało
35. się, że niere/ nieuregulowane są księgi wieczyste i jest jakiś prywatny właściciel i jesteśmy

1. prywatną kamienicą pod zarządem administracji.
2. A: Ale jesteście państwo najemcami tam?
3. N: Tak.
4. A: Pani Natalio jak dzień codzienny teraz pani wygląda?
5. N: Mój dzień codzienny?
6. A: Mhm.
7. N: ((chrząka, wzdycha)) To jest tak. Wstaje o godzinie piątej trzydzieści ponieważ muszę wyjść z
8. psem do parku,
9. A: ((śmiech))
10. N: staram się trochę biegać ponieważ po/ po tym urlopie mam lekką nadwagę ((śmiech)) jakieś 3,5
11. kilograma i staram się to zrzucić właśnie wykorzystując wych/ poranne wyjście z psem.
12. Przychodzę do domu, wracając yy... już z tego parku puszczam sygnał mojemu mężowi, on wtedy
13. wstawia wodę na kawę. Zanim dochodzę do domu jeszcze odwiedzam piekarnię, kupuję pieczywo
14. (((z humorem))). Rano pijemy kawkę opowiadamy sobie o yy... o wszystkim właściwie co nas
15. męczy, co nas trapi. Ponieważ mój mąż pracuje w dość specyficznych godzinach i pracuje
16. naprawdę ba/ bardzo długo czasami, wraca wieczorem bardzo późnym wieczorem i czasem jest tak,
17. że no nie mamy okazji porozmawiać sobie tak normalnie, więc to taki czas rano, że tam chwilę
18. pogadamy. Ewentualnie no to zdzwonimy się gdzieś tam w trakcie pracy i i czasem sobie tam
19. porozmawiamy. Potem jest nie wiem pół do ósmej jest wyjście do pracy, ponieważ pracuję w [
20. podłódzka miejscowość] więc muszę troszeczkę wcześniej wyjść do pracy. Pracuje w godzinach 8-
21. ma – 16.30, ok/ w okolicach 17-ej wracam do domu. Teraz są wakacje więc jestem około 17-ej yy...
22. w domu spotykam się z moim dzieckiem robię jakieś zakupy, gotuję obiad i... sprzątam, myję gary,
23. wstawiam jakieś pranie, czasami coś w telewizji. Chociaż powiem szczerze, że dość rzadko, wolę
24. przeczytać jakąś książkę jeżeli mam na to czas, a czasem obejrzę też i telewizję. Normalnie w roku
25. szkolnym jeżdżę dwa razy w tygodniu, chodzę na język angielski ponieważ wiecznie się kształcę
26. ((śmiech)) no tam powiedzmy już 3 lata to, to ciągnę cały czas coś robię nie ma tak, że usiądę na
27. laurach, nie spoczywam ((chrząka))... I właściwie tydzień jest podobny yy... dzień jest podobny do,
28. do dnia. Moja córka odrabia lekcje, właściwie jest samodzielnym dzieckiem i dużo czasu spędza
29. sama chociaż yy... chodzi do babci z którą ma bardzo dobry kontakt. Ja takiego nie miałam nigdy i
30. pewnie nie będę miała nigdy w życiu. Natomiast moja mama yy... no naprawdę też jest z tą, z tą
31. moją córką i świetnie się dogadują. Teraz już nie ma takich problemów z czasów mojej, z czasów
32. mojego dzieciństwa ponieważ jest bardzo schorowaną osobą, ma cukrzycę bardzo zaawansowaną
33. ma/ jest po zawale serca yy... Był taki moment, że leżała na dwa miesiące w szpitalu, w ubiegłym
34. roku po tym zawale ponieważ nie mogła chodzić, miała bardzo osłabiony organizm i i tak naprawdę
35. już teraz nawet gdyby chciała to się boi po prostu pić alkohol, nie wiem jakoś tak i ma jakieś

1. problemy z tarczycą, no mnóstwo różnych takich mm chorób które między innymi i też są
2. wywołane zniszczenie organizmu tym alkoholem więc... więc co tam jeszcze. Jeszcze właśnie
3. jakieś zakupy mojej mamie, jakiś lekarz, może czasem... jeszcze babcia jakieś/ Ale bardzo często
4. bywało tak, że ten raz w tygodniu, raz na dwa tygodnie jeździłam do/ jeszcze wcześniej przed pracą
5. jechałam na rynek żeby robić babci zakupy. Podrzucałam jej jakieś zakupy i dopiero jechałam do
6. pracy ((śmiech)). Czasami byłam taka zmordowana, że/ no ale - cóż babcia też nam pomagała,
7. kiedy my najbardziej potrzebowaliśmy kogoś. No i właściwie to żyjemy weekendami bo wtedy
8. pakuję do samochodu psa, kota, dziecko, kłopoty i jedziemy sobie na działkę i wtedy odpoczywam.
9. A: Właśnie, czy ma pani jakiś czas wolny oprócz tych weekendów czy nie?
10. N: No dzisiaj mam trochę czasu wolnego ((śmiech)).
11. A: ((śmiech)) od robienia (x).
12. N: Który spędzam z panią.
13. A: Czyli co weekendy tak, czyli weekendy działkowe?
14. N: Tak.
15. A: Czyli jedziecie państwo na ta, tą/
16. N: Jedziemy na działkę, odpoczywamy.
17. A: Bo mąż jest w weekendy, czy mąż pracuje (xx) różnie?
18. N: Mąż mój, mąż dojeżdża do mnie w/ często naj/ najczę/ najczęściej w soboty, tak po godzinach
19. 14-ta, 15-ta.
20. A: Czy państwo coś na tej działce macie tam?
21. N: Mamy, mamy ubikacje, garaż i dwie przyczepy campingowe.
22. A: Aha czyli już można tam/
23. N: Można spać, tak.
24. A: A zimą?
25. N: A zimą?
26. A: Jak te weekendy wyglądają, też działka czy/
27. N: Nie zimą może tak, zimą mamy trochę więcej czasu dla siebie. Jesteśmy bardziej trochę
28. powiedzmy leniwi chociaż nie, bo wieczne spacery z psem zawsze sobie coś wymy/
29. wymyślamy. Czasem jakiś wypad w góry zrobimy na 2, 3 dni jeżeli nas stać na to. I raczej jesteśmy
30. takimi aktywnymi ludźmi, może do jakiegoś kina czasem pójdziemy... rozmawiamy, albo po prostu
31. siedzimy w domu.
32. A: Święta jak państwo spędzacie?
33. N: ((wzdycha)) Święta yy... spędzamy... razem. Ale... zwykle to jest tak, że mm... spędzamy mm...
34. właśnie musimy się dzielić bo yy... ponieważ mamy dwie rodziny i... mm. Chodzimy do mojej
35. mamy... jeździmy do rodziców mojego męża, tak się po prostu jeden dzień tu jeden dzień, tu,

1. ponieważ yy... rodzice mojego męża wyprowadzili się sprzedali te bloki wyprowadzili się 100
2. kilometrów stąd więc troszkę jest to utrudnione i i wiem, że czasami yy... przekręcam trochę,
3. trochę na moją stronę bo mój mąż też chciałby spotkać się z matką. Tym bardziej, że teraz yy... w
4. tamtym roku też przeszła zawał, w tym roku miała udar, wylew krwi do mózgu takie (x) i no i też
5. chciałby po prostu z nią spędzać więcej czasu a tego czasu tak jak widać nie ma bo jest, ciągle
6. pracujemy, ciągle jesteśmy gdzieś tam pod telefonem yy... Ja tak troszkę wymuszam na tym moim
7. mężu, że moja mama została sama, że umarł tata, że trzeba jej pomóc i tak zwykle naciagam trochę
8. na tą stronę żeby jednak zostać z tą matką bo tak naprawdę to - no trzeba jej pomóc, trzeba coś
9. ugotować, trzeba zrobić jakieś zakupy. Chociaż ona lubi gotować ale, ale mimo wszystko no mm
10. święta no trzeba coś przygotować i gdzieś pojechać, coś kupić, posprzątać, więc zwykle spędzamy
11. ten czas u mojej mamy. Ale no staram się być trochę sprawiedliwa i jeździć też z mężem do jego
12. rodziców również.
13. A: A mama ma ile lat, bo o to/
14. N: Moja mama, 59.
15. A: A tata ile miał lat jak zmarł?
16. N: Mój tata miał 59 jak zmarł, teraz by miał 61.
17. A: Pani Natalio jeszcze tak yy... wakacje jak państwo spędzacie?
18. N: Teraz to już nijak. Odkąd kupiliśmy działkę to (xxx) ((śmiech)) tak naprawdę spędzamy yy...
19. ten wakacyjny dzień na działce w tym roku. Ale generalnie mm dopóki nie mieliśmy takich właśnie
20. zobowiązań finansowych i i yy... i mieliśmy troszkę pieniędzy właśnie na takie inne rzeczy to
21. tak/ dopóki kiedy nie kupiliśmy tej działki to jeździliśmy sobie w góry, nad morze, troszkę
22. jeździliśmy za granicę bardziej na włoską stronę ((chrząka)). Tak że zawsze było tak, że na wakacje
23. gdzieś żeśmy jeździli nie siedzieliśmy w [nazwa miasta]. No i było bardzo fajnie wypoczywaliśmy
24. w tym czasie. Natomiast teraz no to te nawet moje dziecko ucierpiało, bo musi zostać na działce.
25. Chociaż ona tam poznała dużo rówieśników mniej więcej w swoim wieku więc nie płacze strasznie
26. z tego powodu.
27. A: Czy ma pani jakiś przyjaciół, znajomych, jakiś taki krąg znajomych, jakiś taki krąg ludzi z
28. którymi pani utrzymuje kontakty?
29. N: Tak, utrzymujemy kontakty ze znajo/ Chociaż teraz... z... ze znajomymi z domu dziecka nie
30. utrzymuję kontaktu chociaż był taki czas, że żeśmy się spotykali właściwie z trzema, z czterema
31. rodzinami no już teraz yy... z domu dziecka i tak w sumie nie ma tak trochę czasu ukroїło się ale
32. czasami się spotykamy, ale tak no my/ ja właściwie to mamy yy... yy znajomych troszkę od strony
33. mojego męża i troszkę od strony yy... mojej pracy. Właśnie koleżanka wydzwaniała... nie wiem
34. czemu, coś tam miałam jej przywieźć w drodze i już teraz jest na urlopie macierzyńskim jeszcze
35. muszę dzisiaj jechać do niej. W każdym bądź razie spotykamy się, ze znajomymi a my, my mm...

1. znajomych też na działce mamy takich sąsiadów którzy są mniej więcej w naszym wieku, jesteśmy
2. na tym samym etapie budowania i tak dalej, mamy jakieś tam wspólne zainteresowania y i
3. spędzamy właściwie ten czas teraz mm w większej mierze właśnie z tymi ludźmi z działki.
4. A: A czy jest ktoś na kogo może pani liczyć?
5. N: Mój mąż.
6. A: Pani Natalio teraz tak, a jakby pani w ogóle popatrzyła na to swoje życie czy były jakieś takie
7. wydarzenia w pani opinii które na to życie wpłynęły?
8. N: Tak, no były, zdecydowanie. Było to, że trafiłam do tego domu dziecka i zosta/ i nie zostałam
9. tutaj zostawiona na pastwę losu. I yy... i myślę, że to ukierunkowało tak naprawdę moje życie
10. dlatego, że mm... wyciągnęłam taką dobrą lekcję i... ((mlaska)) miałam osoby które mogły yy mną
11. no tak powiedzmy yy... w dobry/ naprowadzić mnie na taką dobra drogę. Myślę, że gdybym trafiła
12. tak jak yy... moje rodzeństwo do... wiem, do takich ośrodków do takich yy... do takich środowisk
13. to nie wiem czy, nie wiem po prostu trudno jest mi powiedzieć nie jestem w takiej sytuacji i i nie
14. wiem jak ja bym postąpiła i gdzie bym się znalazła i jak bym teraz wyglądała i czy bym jeszcze
15. może żyła, nie wiem.
16. A: Czy coś jeszcze jakieś wydarzenia takie które/... jakoś to życie ułożyły, tak wpłynęły na to, że
17. ono jest jakie jest?
18. N: Nie myślę, że... myślę, że chyba nie.
19. A: Czy jest coś co pani uważa za porażkę życiową, coś co się nie udało?
20. N: Hmm... ((wzdycha)) na pewno yy... na pewno moją porażką było to, że się w pewnym
21. momencie poddałam i targnęłam się na własne życie. O tym nie wie moja córka i nie wiem czy jej
22. kiedykolwiek powiem, że mama była taka głupia i robiła takie rzeczy. Chociaż były/ miało to jakieś
23. swoje następstwa ale po prostu moją porażką było to, że - że ja byłam za słaba, ja się wstydziłam
24. powiedzieć o tym problemie, próbowałam sobie radzić sama. No i - wyszło tak jak wyszło nie
25. poradziłam sobie i całe szczęście, że tata mnie chyba znalazł jeszcze wtedy kiedy można było mnie
26. uratować bo to, to wtedy, wtedy by nas wtedy by mnie tutaj nie było. I, i to była taka porażka, że ja
27. nie potrafiłam... wyjść do kogoś z problemem nie potrafiłam się otworzyć, nie potrafiłam postawić
28. na swoim. Chociaż właściwie nie mogłam za bardzo postawić na swoim, ale szukać pomocy u jakiś
29. ludzi nie wiem... były jakieś tam nie wiem ale nie można tego powiedzieć, że to była moja porażka
30. życiowa... to, że yy... nie wiem z dziewczynami nawet z tego domu dziecka czy tam z jakimiś
31. koleżankami w wieku tam 13-tu czy 14-tu lat jakiś tam alkohol czy papierosy czy jakieś też było
32. jakieś towarzystwo takie niefajne ale - to było krótko mi to nie pasowało chyba i jakoś tak nie
33. utrzymywałam jakoś tam kontakt się urwał... i nie wiem, nie ja chyba nie wiem, nie, nie umie/ nie
34. mogę nic innego nie przychodzi mi teraz do głowy, jakaś taka naprawdę porażka niechciana. Może
35. też to, że, że jednak nie przeciągnęłam tej mojej siostry na tą swoją stronę, wtedy kiedy mogłam,

1. być może los potoczyłby się inaczej. Może bym miała wpływ na to... że, że ona teraz nie byłaby
2. taką kobietą jaką jest... w tym czasie.
3. A: A sukces, co się udało?
4. N: Moim sukcesem jest to, że mam yy... może już nawet nie to wykształcenie, bo to jest/ Moim
5. sukcesem, jest to, że że potrafię żyć yy... w takiej że, że potrafię, że stworzyłam rodzinę naprawdę
6. kochającą się, że mówimy sobie o wszystkim, że yy... że nie, nie wiem, nie, nie poszedł cień tej
7. yy... tej mojej rodziny na to moje życie, że nie wiem, nie jestem jakimś alkoholikiem (((z
8. ożywieniem))) że, y, że potrafię się dogadać z własnym dzieckiem, że bardzo się kochamy, że
9. mówimy sobie o tym... i chyba, chyba to wszystko.
10. A: Kto jest najważniejszy w pani życiu?
11. N: No moje dziecko ((śmiech)).
12. A: A czy ktoś wpłynął na pani życie, na to kim pani jest?
13. N: No na pewno dużo ludzi, na pewno, bo, bo ja na przestrzeni tego czasu poznałam dużo dobrych
14. takich dusz które potrafiły mnie wesprzeć, które potrafiły mi pokazać yy... tą da/ dobrą drogę
15. naprawdę było sporo osób.
16. A: Kto najbardziej, jakby pani zobaczyła nie wiem jedna, dwie, trzy takie osoby?
17. N: Na pewno moja babcia, która mi pomogła od samego początku... na pewno yy... jeden z
18. wychowawców z domu dziecka... nie wiem.
19. A: Pani wychowawca ten z grupy czy jakiś/
20. N: Tak, tak z grupy.
21. A: Co jest dla pani najważniejsze w życiu?
22. N: Myślę, że taki spokój domowego ogniska taka yy... taka... ((wzdycha)) to żebyśmy byli zdrowi,
23. żebyśmy się kochali żebyśmy byli razem już tam nieważne są pieniądze bo to/ że czasami nawet jak
24. jest tak krucho z tą kasą no a bo mąż straci pracę albo no nie wiem, ciężko jest to wtedy zawsze nie
25. ma, nie ma awantur, jakieś takiej złości tylko zawsze tak sobie mówimy (((wzruszona))) –
26. najważniejsze, że się kochamy i że jesteśmy razem, no ((płacze)).
27. A: Oprócz budowy domu macie państwo, czy ma pani jakieś plany?
28. N: Nie nara/ nie, nie. Chcemy zbudować ten dom, chcemy się stąd wyprowadzić.
29. A: Pani Natalio ja mam jeszcze takie pytanie bo, bo jeszcze parę będzie takich końcowych ale już
30. bardzo, bardzo króciutkich natomiast jeszcze chciałam zapytać z takich rzeczy generalnych o coś
31. takiego. Jak zaczęłam robić te wywiady to właściwie tam część z państwa mówiła o czymś takim,
32. że wychowankom domów dziecka przypisuje się czasami jakieś szczególne cechy, czy pani się
33. spotkała z taką sytuacją, że ktoś z powodu tego, że pani była w placówce właśnie takie szczególne
34. cechy pani przypisywał?
35. N: Yy... ale ja chyba nie rozumiem za bardzo pytania, bo chodzi o to czy wychowawcy z domu

1. dziecka przypisują mi jakieś szczególne cechy?
2. A: Nie wychowawcy tylko ludzie w ogóle tak os/
3. N: (xx)
4. A: Wychowawcy też, tak, czy w ogóle spotkała się pani z jakąś taką opinią, że osoby wychowane w
5. placówkach różnią się od dzieci które wychowały się w tak zwanych normalnych bo to też różnie
6. bywa rodzinach, które się wychowały poza placówkami.
7. N: ((wzdycha)) To znaczy tak na pewno jest różnica i na pewno osoby które wiedzą o tym, że
8. jesteśmy z domu dziecka patrzą na nas inaczej, nie wiem czy z litością, czy... czy z współczuciem
9. ale/
10. A: Jakoś doświadczyła pani tego osobiście, że właśnie no ktoś tam panią traktował z litością czy ze
11. współczuciem?
12. N: No.
13. A: Z tego powodu, że była pani w placówce?
14. N: Yy... ja generalnie za/ znaczy tak: yy... na pewno w szkołach yy... w tym liceum i w tej szkole
15. zawodowej wychowawcy, grono pedagogiczne wiedziało, że jestem z domu dziecka i na/ i pewnie
16. to się przedostało do yy... do grupy, do klasy ale ja nie/ znaczy ja nie zauważyłam. Znaczy tak: na
17. pewno nikt nie, nie mówił do mnie do, może jakoś, że jestem bidulka czy coś takiego, że, że jestem
18. biedna. Ludzie traktowali mnie normalnie, chociaż miała/ odnosiłam wrażenie, że tak jakby za
19. moimi plecami yy... tak jakby oni wiedzieli ale nie mówią tego żeby mi nie zrobić przykrości, albo
20. nie wiem żeby nie poruszać tego tematu no bo to jest taki, no taki wrażliwy temat yy... Tak
21. naprawdę to ja y się nie chwale tym, że jestem z domu dziecka. Wiem, że kiedyś naciągali kino
22. [nazwa] na to, że jesteśmy z domu dziecka i pani kasjerka zawsze (((rozbawiona))) nas wpuszczała
23. do kina. Tak że, tak że były plusy tego, że byliśmy z domu dziecka chociażby właśnie tym, że ten,
24. że, że nas tak za darmo gdzieś tam do kina wpuszczali czy gdzieś tam, ale... ale ja takich rzeczy nie
25. nadużywałam. Zawsze starałam się trochę tego ukrywać bo - yy... ja nie chciałam opowiadać o
26. tym. Ja, ja jestem taką właśnie wrażliwą osobą, ja potem wyję i przeżywam strasznie yy... to
27. wszystko co mówię i tak naprawdę to może nie lubię tak, tak za bardzo gadać o sobie a, a zawsze
28. jak ktoś wie to, to no to, to nie jest tylko to, że ona jest z domu dziecka, no ale zawsze chciałby
29. wiedzieć więcej tak, bo to jest takie inne życie: „A dlaczego, a co ci się stało?”, bo ludzie są ciekawi
30. więc, więc wcale im się nie dziwie tego ale, ale ja wiem/ Chociaż yy... moich dwóch kolegów,
31. trzech właściwie yy... zorg/ znalazło sobie pracę w takich zakładach mięsnych [nazwa] czy coś
32. takiego bo, bo oni są z domu dziecka, „Bo my jesteśmy z domu dziecka” (((naśladuje proszącą
33. intonację))) i to tak właśnie. I oni pracowali pomimo tego/ wiem, że tamten szef zatrudnił ich
34. oczywiście [A: ((śmiej))] tych chłopaków yy... i pomimo tego, że tam jeden na przykład albo
35. spóźniał się do pracy/ albo zasnął to często tam właśnie go tak trochę traktował z przymrużeniem

1. oka że... że on taki z domu dziecka, że taki biedny nieszczęśliwy i no nie, no trzeba, trzeba
2. chłopakowi pomóc, no, no to tak, ale, ale generalnie ja się tam nie nie afiszowałam jakoś strasznie
3. mocno/ że jak byłam w grupie osób bo były takie zloty coroczne z dziećmi z domu dziecka no
4. to wszyscy byliśmy równi ze sobą. Tam nie było, nie było się czego wstydzić, nie było czego kryć,
5. ale tak yy... Potem się usamodziel/ usamodzielniałam to ja jakoś się nie afiszowałam specjalnie
6. tym, że ja jestem z domu dziecka bo to tak... nie wiem, nie chce żeby mnie ktoś tam nie wiem,
7. oceniał w jakiś sposób, że o biedna dziewczyna albo nie wiem, z jakiejś patologii to może
8. niekoniecznie zadawanie się z nią czy coś takiego. Więc, więc raczej starałam się to ukrywać, do tej
9. pory staram się to ukrywać, chociaż powiedziałam o tym mojemu dziecku. Ona nie, ona jest na tyle
10. mądrą i inteligentną dziewczyną, że jak ja jej mówię jaka była przyczyna nie chcę jej tam/ Ona ma
11. bardzo dobre kontakty z tą babcią więc dlaczego miałabym oczerniać tą babcię, tego dziadka... w
12. oczach tego dziecka kiedy to jest już dawno, to jest przeszłość i tak naprawdę to tylko my wiemy
13. między sobą co tak naprawdę się działo. Moja mama i tak naprawdę nigdy nie zrozumie, że
14. popełniała błędy w swoim życiu i i że po części to, że, że te dzieciaki są takie jakie są jest jej winą.
15. Ona sobie nie zdaje z tego sprawy do tej pory i ona uważa, że to jest wina jednego, drugiego czy
16. trzeciego, że, że po prostu tak pokierowali swoim życiem, ale ja uważam, że wcale nie.
17. A: Pani Natalio jeszcze takie/ Czy w ogóle jak pani popatrzy na osoby które wychowały się w
18. domu dziecka w pani opinii czy są inne, czy się czymś różnią, czy ten fakt wychowania w placówce
19. wpływa jakoś na cechy charakteru, na sposób funkcjonowania, na osobowość?
20. N: Może... może są takie, może bardziej samodzielne. Potrafią yy... więcej rzeczy sobie
21. zorganizować same, bo to e w tym domu dziecka pomimo tego, że my mieliśmy wszystko ale to, to
22. nie jest tak do końca, że mieliśmy wszystko. Bo - była pasta do zębów i pasta do zębów tak, była
23. taka zwykła i taka lepszejsza nie, zawsze nam tego brakowało, zawsze jakoś sobie organizowaliśmy,
24. byliśmy bardziej samodzielnii pod tym względem. Musieliśmy polegać bardziej na/ nauczyć się
25. takiego polegania na sobie samym, ale też byliśmy w takich yy... w takich bardzo fajnych
26. kontaktach, i, że widzieliśmy, że, że jesteśmy równi, że, że możemy sobie pomagać wzajemnie, że
27. yy... że/ I to nas może nauczyło takiej yy... nie wiem, ja mam bardzo łatwy kontakt mam/ bardzo
28. łatwo nawiązuje kontakty z ludźmi nie wie/ nie wiem, nie, nie mam problemu z rozmową z ludźmi
29. nawet jeśli są to, to o/ osoby które, które widzę po raz pierwszy w życiu. Być może to mnie
30. nauczyło takiego otwartości, takiej otwartości w życiu, nie wiem, tak po prostu, nie wiem, tak jak
31. nie wiem wcześniej wspominałam ja nie potrafię żyć sama, ja muszę mieć/ ja pewnie to wyniosłam
32. to z tego domu dziecka, że... muszę jeszcze kogoś tam mieć ((śmiej)).
33. A: Pani Natalio to jeszcze taka absolutna końcówka, to jest jeszcze taka. Jak pani ocenia yy...
34. sytuację materialną swoją subiektywnie?
35. N: No tak wiem materialną. Ja myślę, że nie jestem, nie mamy jakiejś tam najniższej krajowej, nie

1. zarabiamy też nie wiadomo jakich pieniędzy, nie mamy jakiegoś majątku oprócz tej naszej ziemi
2. ((śmiech)) tysiąc i jeden metrów.
3. A: ((śmiech))
4. N: I yy... nie jesteśmy jakąś zamożną rodziną. Żyjemy, właściwie nie mamy odłożonych pieniędzy
5. na koncie, żyjemy z miesiąca na miesiąc, jakieś tam parę groszy odkładamy ale... ale nie
6. narzekamy. Mamy co jeść, mamy w czym chodzić, mamy dużego psa który dużo je [A: ((śmiech))]
7. stać nas na niego i na weterynarzy dla kota i tak dalej. Moja córka nie wiem, może marzyłaby nie
8. wiem o jakiś super ekstra rzeczach, ale to dziecko jest tak wychowane, właściwie to nie wiem skąd
9. jej to się wzięło. Ona nigdy nie wymuszała ni/ nic od nas, nie, nie tupała, nie, nie stękała, tylko po
10. prostu była wyrozumiała „Tak wiem, nie mamy kasy, dobra może kiedyś in/”. I przez to, że ta nasza
11. córka taką przyjmuje postawę to my stajemy na głowie żeby ona miała absolutnie, no powiedzmy
12. to co jest w naszym, w zasięgu naszych możliwości, ale nie no, nie, nie wiem... nie, nie, nie jest źle,
13. ja pracuję, mąż pracuje.
14. A: Religia, czy pani jest osobą wierzącą, czy nie?
15. N: Tak, ja wierzę w Boga.
16. A: Jest pani związana z jakimś kościołem?
17. N: Nie jestem związana z kościołem ponieważ yy... nie mam czasu żeby chodzić do kościoła
18. szczerze mówiąc. Czy to święta pójde (((zachnięcie się))) od wielkiego święta, moje dziecko jest
19. chrzczone komuniowane ale nie zmuszam jej też również żeby chodziła jakoś tak mocno do
20. kościoła. Był okres kiedy chodziła co niedziele, zaczęła marznąć, powiedziała „Mamo nie będę
21. chodziła” i nie chodziła, nie zmuszałam jej. Ale, ale tak, my wierzymy w Boga i yy... jesteśmy
22. osobami bogobojnymi.
23. A: Polityka, czy pani jakoś interesuje się polityką, bierze udział w wyborach?
24. N: No szczerze mówiąc, wstyd mi się przyznać ale nie biorę udziału w wyborach yy... średnio
25. interesuję się polityką ponieważ yy kiedyś nawet oglądałam obrady sejmu i to co zobaczyłam [A:
26. ((śmiech))]
27. po prostu, a nie takich cywilizowanych ludzi więc/ znaczy tak, tak migawki. No wiem ((śmiech))
28. kto jest prezydentem i yyy... jestem w miarę [na] bieżąco/ i ale nie interesuję się absolutnie bo
29. uważam, że to chyba za wiele nie zmienia.
30. A: No dobrze to ja zapytałam o wszystko, to jeszcze chciałam na koniec zapytać, czy jest coś
31. takiego co pani się wydaje ważne z tej całej historii, co nie zapytałam tak, co by pani chciała
32. powiedzieć?
33. N: Myślę, że chyba powiedziałam już wszystko, nie chciałabym się powtarzać... Myślę, że chyba
34. takim podsumowaniem całej tej mojej historii jest to, że pomimo tego yy... że no trochę mi
35. wyrządzono krzywd w życiu nie zaznałam takiej pełnej rodziny i i wiecznie byłam (xx) to ja bardzo

1. kocham moich rodziców. I myślę, że to chyba tak chyba wszyscy tak mają, tak mi się wydaje. Że
2. tam gdzie właśnie nie jest okazywana ta miłość, to człowiek tak dąży, że nie wiem, no takie jest
3. moje odczucie, że teraz kiedy może zrobić więcej, kiedy jest władny, chociaż czasami nie powinien
4. bo, bo gdyby tak patrzeć zrobić sobie taką kartkę podsumować sobie plusy i co mi dała moja matka
5. oprócz tego, że mnie urodziła pewnie byłoby więcej tych minusów, to i tak zapominamy o tym i
6. yy... myślimy tylko o takich pozytywnych rzeczach, to nas umacnia i daje nam siłę do tego żeby
7. pomagać tym rodzicom i kochać ich.
8. A: Dobrze, to dziękuję pani.

Lista symboli transkrypcji

Znaki zapisu	Opis	Przykłady z tekstu wywiadu
(x)	Niezrozumiałe wyrazy, liczba x-ów odpowiada liczbie niezrozumiałych słów	nie zaznałam takiej pełnej rodziny i i wiecznie byłam (xx)
(())	Pozawerbalne sygnały i dźwięki	((dzwoni telefon)), ((płacze)), ((śmiech))
((()))	Szczególne cechy wypowiedzi, domniemane stany emocjonalne respondenta	((ze wzruszeniem))), ((bardzo cicho))), (((długa pauza))), (((ożywiona)))
...	Pauzy (3 kropki krótsze, 5 kropek dłuższe)	można było poczytać książkę, była biblioteka yy...
/	Zajknięcia, ucięte słowa i zdania	Natomiast/ no właśnie zaczęłam mówić o moich/ o moim rodzeństwie
-	Zawieszenie głosu	nie jeżdżę po więzieniach bo - mam swoje życie
<u>podkreślenie</u>	Zdania i słowa wypowiedane ze szczególnym naciskiem	Powiedzmy nie dniem dzisiejszym tylko tak <u>normalnie</u> jak normalny człowiek
!	Wykrzykniki zgodnie z regułami polskiej interpunkcji	taki ma <u>pancerz</u> !

Golczyńska-Grondas Agnieszka (2014) *Transkrypcja wywiadu biograficznego z Natalią*. „Qualitative Sociology Review”, t. 10, nr 1, s. 164–211. Dostępny w Internecie: <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php>.

*70th Jubilee of Professor
Fritz Schütze*

by
Kaja Kaźmierska

Carsten Detka
 Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg,
 Germany

Andrzej Piotrowski, Katarzyna Waniek
 Institute of Sociology
 Faculty of Economics and Sociology
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Professor Fritz Schütze – Work and Output



Fritz Schütze

(born in January 10, 1944) is a German sociologist. He is widely known for developing the autobiographical narrative interview research method. In the 70s, together with Joachim Matthes, Werner Meinefeld, Werner Springer, Ansgar Weymann, and Ralf Bohnsack (all belonging to so-called *Arbeitsgruppe Bielefelder Soziologen*), he has transplanted and disseminated symbolic interaction approach, ethnomethodology, and sociology of knowledge in Germany. Schütze is also very much interested in social work and so-called “modest” professions. He draws on the Chicago School tradition and promotes the grounded theory method elaborated by his mentor and friend – Anselm Strauss. Together with Gerhard Riemann he introduced the concept of trajectory to social sciences and has analysed the processes of suffering and self-alienation.

1964-1972: he studied sociology, philosophy, and general linguistics at the University of Münster.

1970-1972: he was a senior researcher at the University of Bielefeld.

In **1972** he received a PhD in the field of sociology from the University of Münster. His doctoral thesis was entitled: “Handeln in Sprache – Sprache im Handeln. Strategien des sprachbezogenen Denkens innerhalb und im Umkreis der Soziologie.”

1972-1980: he was an academic assistant at the University of Bielefeld.

1978-1979: he was granted a habilitation scholarship of Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and pursued his research in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco. Here, he cooperated with Anselm Strauss.

In **1980** he received the *venia legendi* (lat. permission for lecturing) in the field of sociology from the Department of Sociology at the University of Bielefeld.

1980-1993: University Professor of qualitative methods in social research in the field of social work at the Gesamthochschule Kassel; since **1987** also teaching in the field of social studies.

1984-1985: he conducted his research in the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ.

1993-2009: he was a Chair of General Sociology/Microsociology at the University of Magdeburg (now retired).

International Cooperation with Special Focus on Cooperation Between Professor Fritz Schütze and the University of Lodz

1986: 1st visit of Professor Fritz Schütze (the Professor at the Gesamthochschule-Universität in Kassel) at the University of Lodz with lectures on the biographical method and his own approach to the method.

Since **1989** participation of members of the Department of Sociology of Culture at the University of Lodz (Zbigniew Bokszański, Marek Czyżewski, Andrzej Piotrowski, Alicja Rokuszewska-Pawełek, and Kaja Kaźmierska) in many international conferences and research workshops organized or co-organized by Professor Fritz Schütze.

1992-1993: Marek Czyżewski – Visiting Professor (for one academic year) at the Gesamthochschule-Universität in Kassel.

1993: Andrzej Piotrowski – Visiting Professor (for one academic term) at the Gesamthochschule-Universität in Kassel.

1995-1999: close cooperation (research projects, teaching and lecturing, scholarships for pursuing his habilitation) that resulted in the successful completion of the habilitation procedure. The topic of the habilitation thesis: “Öffentliche Kommunikation und Rechtsextremismus.”

Since **1997** “Tri-National Research Platform: European Identity Work” – research workshops for researchers and students from Poland (University of

Lodz), German (Otto-von-Guericke University in Magdeburg), and Wales (Bangor University), then also from Bamberg (Germany) and Belfast (Northern Ireland).

2003-2006: Leonardo da Vinci (no. 2003-D/03/B/F/PP 146 087), “INVITE. New Ways of Biographical Counselling in Rehabilitative Vocational Training” (joined project run by four European universities in Finland, Germany, Poland, and Wales [Helsinki, Magdeburg, Lodz]).

2007: Katarzyna Waniek defended her doctoral thesis “Biographies and Identities of Young Polish Immigrants in Germany after 1989” written under the supervision of Professor Fritz Schütze.

2008-2011: Framework 7 Collaborative Project: “EUROIDENTITIES. The Evolution of European Identity: Using biographical methods to study the development of European Identity” (Grant Agreement no. 213998). Partners: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia; Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia; University of Magdeburg, Germany; Federico II University, Naples, Italy; University of Lodz, Poland; Bangor University, Wales; Queen’s University Belfast.

2012-2014: research project founded by the Polish-German Foundation for Science: “The People’s Republic of Poland and the German Democratic Republic in memory and biographical experiences of people born between 1945-55. Sociological comparison based on biographical comparison.” Partners: University of Lodz and Otto-von-Guericke University in Magdeburg.

Research Projects in Germany

2001-2002: “Prozessanalyse der Diabetes-Behandlung in Sachsen-Anhalt – eine qualitativ-sozialwissenschaftliche Untersuchung,” AOK-Bundesvorstand.

2003-2004: “Zur Bedeutung der Akupunktur für AOK-Versicherte und ihre Ärztinnen und Ärzte im Rahmen des Bundesausschuss-Modellvorhabens,” AOK-Bundesvorstand.

2009-2012: “Ärztliche Vermittlungs- und Beratungsmuster im Kontext lebensbedrohlicher Erkrankungen und ihre pädagogische Sensibilität. Die pädagogischen Komponenten der ärztlich-professionellen Informations-, Beratungs- und Betreuungsarbeit bei Herzinfarkt- und Brustkrebspatienten,” DFG.

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Autobiographical Accounts of War Experiences.

An Outline for the Analysis of Topically Focused Autobiographical Texts – Using the Example of the “Robert Rasmus” Account in Studs Terkel’s Book, “The Good War”

Abstract The paper demonstrates both: firstly, a research strategy for the social science analysis of autobiographical narrative interviews, and, secondly, a research strategy for the social science use of published oral history and/or autobiographical materials. It is an attempt to demonstrate a text-oriented procedure of biography analysis in the social sciences, especially – sociology. This allows the empirically grounded generation both of general theoretical concepts for socio-biographical processes, and of conceptual provisions for the uniqueness of the features and dynamics of biographical and historical single cases, their situations, and phases. The paper deals with the analysis of autobiographical accounts of *war* experiences and it shows the general mechanisms of collective, social, and biographical processes, on the one hand, and the uniqueness of historical, situational, and biographical developments, on the other, coexist during wars in an especially ironical, tragic, elating, depressive, dangerous, hurting, deadly combination.

Keywords Autobiographical Narrative Interview Analysis; Autobiographical Accounts; Communicative Schemes of Text; Structural Description; Analytical Abstraction; Macro-historical Processes; Second World War

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Preliminary Remark¹

The first draft of the following analytical text on Studs Terkel’s “Rasmus” interview is almost 30 years old. It was reworked several times until the year 2001 when Dr. Katja Mruck (Berlin) encouraged me to publish it in the electronic journal *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (FQS), which has been edited by her from the beginning. But then I was still very dissatisfied with its overall shape and, especially, with its quite awkward English language, although Katja Mruck had put a lot of additional, very thoughtful editing work into it. I am very indebted to Katja Mruck that she understood and accepted my decision at that time not to publish the “Rasmus” article in her FQS journal. I wanted to have more time to improve it later.

After Professor Kaja Kaźmierska (Lodz) had done an autobiographical narrative interview with me in the summer of 2013, and some further discussions with her about some of the topics which had emerged in the interview, I finally realized that in terms of my personal development as a sociologist the “Rasmus” paper had played a quite important role in my life: especially, for my perennial endeavor to get more insights into the mutually constitutive relationship between biographical identity development and the mental landscape of socio-cultural collectivities relevant for one’s individual life history (Kłoskowska 2001; Bertaux 2005). Therefore, I was finally convinced that it would now be legitimate and worthwhile to publish the “Rasmus” paper.

¹ I have to thank Kaja Kaźmierska (Lodz), Katja Mruck (Berlin), Gerhard Riemann (Nuremberg), and Anja Schröder-Wildhagen (Magdeburg) for many enlightening suggestions how to find an appropriate new “frame” (in form of preliminary remark and postscript) for the following unpublished contribution with its quite complicated “production and re-working” history. In addition, to all four of them, I am grateful for the last careful proofreading of the text.

I am especially grateful to Katja Mruck that she generously allowed me to entrust the “Rasmus” article now to the *Qualitative Sociology Review*. For almost thirty years I had worked together with my colleagues and good friends in Lodz on the impact of collective entities and processes on life histories, biographical processes, and biographical work, and vice versa. Therefore, it now made a special sense to me to publish the “Rasmus” article in Lodz. During my careful new proofreading of the “Rasmus” essay, I arrived at the conclusion that its statements are basically sound and that the way they are presented is sufficiently clear, although still some bit complicated. But, that might be unavoidable if one wants to fulfill several tasks at the same time (which, by the way, might be typical for pieces of intellectual work that are new and important for one’s own personal development), that is, the tasks of (a) documenting a single case analysis, (b) stating basic-theoretical insights both in the presentation work of extempore narratives for the expression of personal experiences, and of biographical process structures, (c) formulating the elementary steps of biography analysis, and (d) assessing (and showing methodically how this can principally be done) the epistemic power of published oral history documents containing wholesale autobiographical accounts as it is one of the special brands of Studs Terkel’s creative work of documenting and recreating the “mundane” historical experiences of ordinary people. In addition, I finally came to the understanding that the “Rasmus” essay drew first outlines for my later research on the mutual relationship between the development of individual identity, on the one hand, and the biographical work of shaping collective

phenomena of all kinds as relevant for one's life history (not just collective we-groups or collective identities but, in addition, collective mental spaces [see, i.e., Schütze and Schröder-Wildhagen 2012]), on the other.

Since my "Rasmus" essay still seems to be a solid piece of research, I did not change the wording of it throughout the whole text as it had been pre-finalized in 2001. I just eliminated some linguistic mistakes (lots of them will be still present), and I clarified some passages which now, in my present new proofreading, had looked strange to me. Throughout the essay, I also included some references to later studies of other authors and myself. I did not add any new paragraph, and I even kept all the old footnotes and bibliographical references. The only additions are (a) two analytical schemes – fitting exactly the "Rasmus" paper – on the structure of autobiographical narratives, which I had developed for a workshop in Lodz in order to prepare our joint European research project "INVITE" on biographical counseling in situations of vocational rehabilitation (Betts et al. 2007; this was the basis of a long article on biography analysis – Schütze 2008, actually, a sequel of two papers) and (b) a postscript dealing with two chapters of Studs Terkel's own (second) memoir (which is a very moving autobiography, too) published in 2007, when he was 95-year-old, on his oral history interviewing and text editing. Terkel had produced his autobiographical memoir partially via open interview sessions together with his journalist friend Sidney Lewis, plus editing the material produced by these sessions and partially via his own original writing "from the scratch."

I came across Terkel's (second²) autobiographical memoir in Chicago, Terkel's city, where he had lived and worked almost during his whole life (although he was born in New York City), in May 2009, when I saw it within the display windows of several bookstores. [Terkel had died on October 31 of 2008.] In 2009, I was in Chicago for the first time, although it is the city of many of my "significant others" in social science, especially, of George Herbert Mead, William Thomas, Florian Znaniecki, Robert Park, Clifford Shaw, Everett Hughes, Howard Becker and – last but not least – Anselm Strauss. Having been in a quite "sentimental" mood when roaming the streets of the Chicago Loop, I sometimes had the impression of coming across the spirit of Studs Terkel looking around and observing the several lively social sceneries there. In addition, I really had the feeling – that surmise might not have been very sound, but Studs Terkel probably would have liked it taking into regard my old age – that even today it would be still possible to outwit the barriers up on the staircases of the "Elevated" (that today is part of the Chicago-area underground-train systems; the older branches of it run on a steel construction

² In a certain sense, *Touch and Go* is just the second autobiographical memoir of Studs Terkel. Into one of his earlier books, he also put in more of his own personal experiences than he usually did working on his other documentary books: this first more autobiography-type or memoir-type publication is the magnificent volume *Talking to Myself. A Memoir of My Times* (1977). "In *Talking to Myself*, Terkel recounts some of the formative and entertaining incidents from his own life. ... As in his other books, he is often presenting other peoples stories, but in *Talking to Myself* they are perceived more directly through the eyes of the observer, Terkel himself" (Introduction to the Internet recording of Studs Terkel's own reading of *Talking to Myself. A Memoir of My Times*. See Terkel's Internet portal of the Chicago History Museum "Talking to America," gallery "Talking to Myself," para. 1). To my assessment, *Talking to Myself* is more of a memoir of Terkel's personal encounters with interesting social situations and persons in order to describe the atmosphere and life situation of American society in several historical periods, than talking directly about himself and his personal development in a strict autobiographical perspective. But, of course, as quoted above, in *Talking to Myself*, these other persons are very much described and assessed in Terkel's own personal terms. Typical for the style of this book is the colorful description of situations of interactive encounters; they are mostly rendered in present-tense language.

10 meters above the streets), to "sneak in" and ascend the upper platform; this is what the delinquent children and later producers of the documentaries of the Chicago Sociology had done for fun in the twenties of the last century (Shaw and Moore 1968:73, 70, 93). Of course, during those days the tape recorder and other, for instance, digital-electronic, voice-recording equipment was not around; "oral history" documentaries, or to be more exact: accounts of "mundane" historical experiences of ordinary people, were then still written accounts of personally experienced personal and collective history. But otherwise, the Chicago sociology documentaries and Terkel's oral history documentaries did not differ so much with regard to stylistic character and social expressiveness, although some of Terkel's renderings of ordinary people's "own stories" are usually aesthetically more refined than the Chicago sociology documentaries.

Introduction³

In wide fields of the social sciences, we generally do not pay enough attention how macro-historical

³ The first essay draft of my article on the Rasmus account was conceived and written while I was a visiting member of the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ. For discussions and suggestions regarding that draft, I would like to express my gratitude to the participants of the biography seminar which was held in the IAS during the academic year 1984-1985. To one of its members, Daniel Bertaux, Paris, I owe a special thank: she made me familiar with Terkel's volume on "The Good War." Later versions of the article were discussed with Ralf Bohnsack (Berlin), Rainer Hamel (Mexico City), Gerhard Riemann (Kassel), Gabriele Rosenthal (Berlin), Marcel Schilling (Bochum), Teresa Sierra (Mexico City), Anselm Strauss (San Francisco), and Bärbel Treichel (Kassel). They all made most valuable suggestions for improvement. In addition, Peggy Clarke (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton), Barbara Arlt (University of Kassel), and Anselm Strauss helped very much to find a format for the article version of the (much longer) first essay draft. I must express my special gratitude to Peggy Clarke, Anselm Strauss, Barbara Arlt, and Bärbel Treichel who – during different states of writing and reworking – underwent the cumbersome task to improve the language of my article considerably. Finally, I would like to mention: without the stimulation and encouragement of Anselm Strauss this and my other articles would never have been written.

processes and their involved social processes and mechanisms are personally experienced and interpreted by persons and groups involved in them (but see: Kłoskowska 2001; Bertaux 2006). The modes of experience and interpretation of the entangled persons play an important role in the overall shaping of these macro-historical processes. One way to improve the situation is to study extempore narrative accounts of persons engaged in social and historical processes (such as the World War II) as they tell what happened to them. But, these personal narrative accounts confront the social science analyst with awkward methodological and theoretical puzzles. She or he has to deal with autobiographical ramifications of the informants' experiences. Getting deeper into the riddles of autobiographical ramifications means studying the structural processes of life courses as such, and how the person attempts to come to terms with them. Empirically informed concepts of biographical structural processes and their respective methods of analysis – when used in interpretive minded social research projects – can help to add some realism to the study of socio-historical processes as experienced by their participants.

The question is, whether or not the structures of autobiographical narrative interviews – the "how" of off-the-cuff storytelling – show basic features which can lead to general theoretical concepts of structural processes of life courses and of biographically experienced collective phenomena (like rapid changes of social worlds and of symbolic universes of society – as encountered in periods of war). My paper is an attempt to demonstrate a text-oriented procedure of biography analysis in the social sciences, especially –

sociology. This allows the empirically grounded generation both of general theoretical concepts for socio-biographical processes and of conceptual provisions for the uniqueness of the features and dynamics of biographical, and historical single cases, their situations, and phases. The general mechanisms of collective, social, and biographical processes, on the one hand, and the uniqueness of historical, situational, and biographical developments, on the other, coexist during wars in an especially ironical, tragic, elating, depressive, dangerous, hurting, deadly combination. Hence, in substantive terms, my paper deals with the analysis of autobiographical accounts of *war* experiences.

To keep it transparent, the analysis will be confined to just one case of biographical experience of World War II. Also, it is likely to be easier for the reader to focus on a case which belongs to the published oral history culture of the United States, on the one hand, and which might be easily compared with topically similar cases in the oral history cultures of other countries, on the other. Studs Terkel's volume on "*The Good War*"⁴ offers biographical accounts on

⁴ Studs Terkel: "*The Good War.*" *An oral history of World War II* (1984). It is my intention to demonstrate how texts of published oral history and autobiography which abound today can be utilized as valuable empirical data in qualitative social research. Actually, this is an old question in sociology – especially, in the version of the Chicago tradition and in several versions of interpretive sociology – because sociologists sometimes did the same as Terkel does: produce "documentary literature." To give just four representative examples: the letter series and the Władek autobiography in Thomas and Znaniecki's volume *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1958), Clifford Shaw's *The Jack-Roller* (1930), Stanisław Kowalski's *Urke-Nachalnik* (1933), and Edward Rose's *A Story about Heroin told by Ali Baba* (1981). The in-depth discussion of the methodological criteria for utilizing this kind of oral literature as sociological data started with Herbert Blumer's *An Appraisal of Thomas and Znaniecki's The Polish Peasant* (1939). Modern versions of discussing the methodological problems and theoretical potentials involved in utilizing "documentary literature" in sociology are: Bohnsack (2005), Riemann (2007), Schütze (2012a).

war experience which are suitable as methodological examples.

An additional basic methodological reason for analyzing the Terkel case (or comparable pieces of published oral history) on biographical war experiences – or other biographical experiences – is to demonstrate a method for text critique, which is devoted to the question whether or not, in what parts, and to what extent a published oral history text exhibits the features of extempore storytelling of "self-experienced" events, that is, events that have been experienced by the narrator herself or himself. This type of narratives reveals features of social and biographical processes in an exceedingly clear and expressive mode. Extempore narratives of self-experienced events (or "personal experiences" not only in a "private" sense) express and represent past (passages of) social (including historical and biographical) processes in a primordial eyewitness perspective – subjective, on the one hand, and gestalt oriented, encompassing, on the other, in its character. Therefore, it makes sense to envision them as crucial empirical data of past socio-historical processes, to collect them judiciously and carefully, and to apply social science research strategies to them for their systematic textual study. Published oral history and/or autobiographical texts can be part of these crucial data corpora in the social sciences. But, it is not clear at face value how much they are edited, for instance, blurring the eye-witness perspective; and, hence, they have to undergo a rigorous text critique

Terkel's volumes are eminent representatives of the genre of "documentary literature," which is highly relevant for qualitative social research, especially, biography analysis. The Rasmus account is particularly suitable for demonstrating the method of textually based biography analysis since it explicates at least some of the biographical ramifications of war experiences, although, it exclusively is topically focused on the war itself.

using the criteria of extempore narration of personal experiences.

After it has been proven that the basic textual features of the published oral history text chosen from Terkel's volume are those of extempore storytelling of personal experiences, and after it has been specified which stretches of the text are heavily edited, it is feasible for its further analysis to apply the text-analytical research strategy which I developed for taped and transcribed autobiographical narrative interviews. Only then, when the delineation and analysis of the non-edited, authentic passages of the published narrative have already been pursued, can those stretches of the text that are heavily edited be adequately interpreted. [I call the non-edited passages "authentic" because they reveal the features of extempore narration of personal experiences, and because, in turn, by virtue of the explicatory mechanisms of extempore narrative rendering, later termed "narrative drives and constraints,"⁵ they express the experiences and

⁵ In my German mother tongue, I use the term *Zugzwänge*. With the steering power of "drives" the *Zugzwänge* propel the narrator (a) to go into details, (b) to close the gestalt, and (c) to assess the relevancies and to condense. *Zugzwänge* are non-intentional, although they co-condition the intentionality of narrative presentation activities. Through this conditioning impact they exert a certain "mental power" that is constituted by the systemic logic of framing constraints. Therefore, *Zugzwänge* have the quality of "constraints," too. But, by no means are they "restrictions" in a narrow sense of this term; instead, they propel certain presentation activities of the narrator beyond her or his own intention. "Constraints" in this sense mean prescribed tracks of mental activities. The term "drive," instead, has no instinct- or desire-psychological meaning or even a Freudian connotation what so ever. *Zugzwänge* is not equivalent with a psychic desire governed by the pleasure principle and fuelled by libido energy. The phenomenon of the narrative *Zugzwänge* is comparable with the guiding or steering power of the turn-taking machinery as described in conversation analysis (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974) and with the gestalt principles in cognitive psychology. I have to apologize that I did not find the proper word in the English language; the words "drive" and "constraint" used here mean an in itself identical, single phenomenon that shows two different aspects: that one of a propelling power, and that one of a guiding constraint. [Therefore, here *Zugzwänge* is awkwardly translated by means of the binomial utterance "drive and constraint."]

dynamics of the informant's socio-biographical processes without any preplanned concoction and censorship.] The method of text critique as administered to the Terkel's text uses basically the same analytical procedures for ascertaining the communicative schemes of extempore presentation of personal experiences as have been developed for the first textual screening of the exact verbatim transcriptions of extempore narratives generated through *narrative interviews*. Therefore, *uno actu*, my paper demonstrates both: firstly a research strategy for the social science analysis of autobiographical narrative interviews, and, secondly, a research strategy for the social science use of published oral history and/or autobiographical materials.

Overview over the Research Steps⁶

The major steps for analyzing narrative interviews are: analysis of the communicative schemes of the text; structural description of the story line and its formal units; analytical abstraction of generalities, which are revealed by the text; contrastive comparison with the generalities of other texts, which are comparable in topic and form (but might be poignantly different in content); development of (a) theoretical model(s); checking, densification, and re-specification of the theoretical model(s) by confrontation with

⁶ This chapter delivers a rather abstract methodological overview over the research steps of biography analysis on the empirical base of narrative interviews. In the course of a first reading, it might be easier to skip it and to look at it only later after having read the rest of the article. For the research steps dealing with several cases I am very much indebted to Glaser and Strauss (1973), Strauss (1987), Strauss and Corbin (1990). Quite detailed analyses of the general structure of extempore narratives of personal experiences and of extempore autobiographical narratives are Schütze (1987; 2005). In the latter text, one can also find elaborate descriptions of the research steps of autobiographical narrative interviews. For the research steps of qualitative social research in general see: Schütze (2005).

pertinent other empirical text materials. But, also in many other interpretive research projects, which are pursued on the base of empirical text materials, research steps like those I have mentioned are followed through in one way or the other, whatever labels assigned to them.⁷ These research steps flow from deep-rooted epistemic principles of investigation and inquiry related most basically to the elementary communicative schemes for reporting, representing, and scrutinizing social reality (i.e., the schemes of narration, description, and argumentation)⁸. Only the first three research steps are confined to single cases.

⁷ A section of one of my German autobiographical interviews, the Hermann interview, which is topically unfocused, but in a very detailed way deals with war experiences, was almost literally translated and published in the appendix to Schütze (1992:359-367). The translation attempts to retain at least some features of the exact transcription of the underlying extempore narration, the preliminary remarks to it discuss several modes of transcription. The excerpt of the German interview might be compared with the Rasmus account for assessment of the impact of editing and for the generation of contrastive ideas regarding the experience of war and the laboring with it. For short outlines on the communicative method of narrative interviewing cf. Schütze (1983; 1987:237-259). The article by Schütze (1989) is such a comparison of one of the other interviews in Studs Terkel's volume "*The Good War*," the interview of Red Prendergast (Terkel 1984:48-66), and one of my autobiographical narrative interviews, that of Georg Fulda, dealing with the topic of one's personal life at large, but, contrary to the Hermann interview, with a second topical focus introduced by the interviewer and researcher on the personal experiences during the Nazi time and World War II.

⁸ Cf. Kallmeyer and Schütze (1977), Schütze (1987). The elementary communicative schemes for dealing with reality (i.e., narration, description, and argumentation) are utilized in any kind of "looking at social reality for a second time," investigating particular features of it, which are problematic, and thinking about it. In everyday affairs, "looking at social reality for a second time" begins with the blockage of action caused by an unexpected problem (cf. also Dewey 1930, chap. III). The interaction partners start to investigate the problem by narrating the events which at first glance amounted to the blocking problem, then, they attempt to describe and isolate ("analyze") the features of the problem and the events in its advent, and finally, they argue about the reasons for the occurrence of the unexpected events and about an underlying pattern of relationship between the features of the problem and the features of the events in its prelude. Such a sequence of narration, description, and argumentation is also utilized in many kinds of *institutionalized* and *functionally specialized* endeavors for inquiry and sense making, e.g., in legal procedures, psychoanalysis, Balint group work, narrative interviewing, etc.

The research step of differentiating between the textual sorts and communicative schemes occurring in the text at hand is focused on the questions of how this text was produced and edited. A basic assumption of my interpretive methodology is that carefully transcribed extempore narratives of personal experiences, unless they are pre-concocted and/or pre-rehearsed, reveal, to a certain degree, what happened in the social area under study from the point of view of the people acting and suffering in it and how they interpreted it, focused on it, faded it out, and/or worked it through. Therefore, the first research step is always focused on the question of how much of the empirical text material is the result of authentic extempore narration of personal experiences (and not of pre-planned and calculated, mostly argumentative, presentation). In the case of published oral history material, the first research step also deals with the question how much the original narrative extempore rendering was edited for publication.

The second research step, that one of structural description, again, concentrates its attention on the narrative representation of the text. It attempts to depict the social and biographical processes (including activities of working through, self-explanation and theorizing, as well as of fading out, rationalization, and secondary legitimating of the informant) rendered by the narrative. This can be accomplished partly by a meticulous study of the representational and communicative work of the informant as narrator, which is orientationally and formally guided and controlled by the cognitive and representational drives and constraints of storytelling.⁹

⁹ Cf. Kallmeyer and Schütze (1977; 1982; 2001) and section "The Narrative Proper" of the present article for a description of the drives and constraints of extempore storytelling.

The third research step, that of analytical abstraction, tries to nail down those cues for general features occurring within the text material, which can supposedly be found also in other topically comparable text materials, on the one hand, and what seems to be unique of the case under study regarding certain text passages and/or the overall structuring, on the other. In addition, it formulates the recurring features and encompassing forms of the biographical and social processes (including the impingement of macro-historical processes on them) revealed in the text, which result in what I already alluded to as their "overall structuring." This can also lead to the explication of supposedly uncommon or even unique features of the case, as mentioned already, uncommon or unique in terms of situation, biography, and/or history. Also, the research step of analytical abstraction attempts to characterize the self-theoretical work as an important part of the biographical work (Schütze 2008, part II:66-71) of the informant as biography incumbent within the context of the *whole* case and *in general* terms, and to view and explain it as her or his cumulative result and/or the working-through of social and biographical processes revealed by the narrative text.

These are three research steps for *single* cases, which always have to be conducted in rigorous social science text analyses of narrative materials. [Of course, the research steps can be named differently, and variations of special research techniques are envisionable. But, by all means, the basic epistemological tasks of the three research steps must be worked on without any exception – whether conducted in a reflected or more or less naive "automatic" mode of handling.] If one, then, moves to the research

steps dealing with *several* cases, three additional tasks have to be mentioned.

By the research step of contrastive comparison (cf. Glaser and Strauss 1973:55-58) one attempts to compare the first case (in terms of categories and propositions reached at through its analytical abstraction) with other topically relatable and yet contrastive cases (in terms of *their* categories and propositions generated through *their* analytical abstractions). The research goals of contrastive comparison are to detect various alternative socio-biographical processes and their features within the field under study, to depict the basic mechanisms and features common to all the alternative processes, and to delineate the theoretical variation of processes and their social frames within the topical field under study. Of course, every case analysis will bring up new categories and relational propositions until some point of theoretical saturation is reached. [The research state of theoretical saturation is reached when, in the course of searching for unprecedented contrast features of processes, new phenomena do not show up anymore within the empirical field under study. Cf. Glaser (1978, chap. 4, 5); Strauss (1987:85f).]

By looking at contrastive features of alternative processes, the researcher, then, is enticed to theoretically follow up and to explicate the ideational kernels of process mechanisms and their social conditions of functioning ("social frames"). These ideational kernels are, so to speak, especially "sparkled" when the focusing on the contrastive features of alternative socio-biographical processes takes place. [Of course, some of them are sparked even earlier in the row of research steps: there is encountered a "tentative

ideational radiation” when curious, difficult, enigmatic text phenomena of a single interview (such as background constructions) must be analyzed or a single overall biographical structuring must be analytically established.] By explication and imaginary development of the ideational kernels, one or several explanatory models of the phenomenon or phenomena under study are constructed (cf. Husserl 1968:72-87; Strauss 1987:170-214; Strauss and Corbin 1990:197-223). They formulate and explain structural processes of biography and/or of the self-experienced history of collective we-units as concatenations and/or interplays of social and/or biographical process mechanisms in socio-historically and situationally specified social frames. The process mechanisms are envisioned as personally experienced principles of the unfolding of socio-biographical and socio-historical processes to be guided by the conjunction of “outer” social frames and of “inner” process-oriented ordering devices, like cascades of conditional relevances or plan-realization sequences.

Finally, the theoretical process model(s) has (have) to be confronted with fresh empirical materials which had not been utilized yet for constructing the theoretical model(s). This final research step of re-specifying the theoretical model is done to permit its applicability to any envisionable social or biographical phenomenon in the topical realm under study. The empirical confrontation detects errors and holes in the original model and hence enforces qualifications written down in careful re-formulations. These cannot be made without a thorough-going differentiation of the explanatory model into core features and elementary process mechanism, on the one hand, and into their situational, life-historical,

and socio-historical realizations, on the other. In all these respects, the research step of re-specification densifies the theoretical model considerably.

I would only have been able to persecute and present the research steps of contrastive comparisons, model construction, and model re-specification if I had documented the analysis of *several* empirical cases (e.g., in addition to the Rasmus case, which will be discussed in the next sections, other interviews from the Terkel volume, or narrative interviews of my own corpus of autobiographical interviews focusing on experiences of World War II¹⁰). This I did not do because it would have destroyed the format of this article, which is mainly

¹⁰ I collected these interviews in a research project on “The biographical impact of World War II” which was financed (to a small extent, but very helpful) by the University of Kassel. The central assumption is that the basic relationship between personal identity and biography, on the one hand, and (large scale) collective identity and collective history (of the nation and the “world society”), on the other, are different for present-day Americans and Germans. The roots of this can be found in the considerably different biographical experiences of the generation of those Americans and Germans who had been young adults in World War II. An example of this contrastive analysis is my article on the question of collective trajectory as mainly experienced by German soldiers of World War II and the question of collective metamorphosis as mainly experienced by American soldiers of World War II (Schütze 1989). The research is empirically grounded on autobiographical narrative interviews with American and German informants who had been young adults in World War II (i.e., born between 1915 and 1930). The selection of the approximate 25 German and approximate 25 American interviews were done, following the methodological principles of theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation within the framework of the grounded theory approach of Anselm Strauss (Glaser and Strauss 1973). The analysis of the transcribed interviews was guided by principles of interpretive text analysis as outlined in this article. Text-analytical research of the last ten years has shown that life historical experiences are mainly expressed by the *narrative* textual structures of the interviews (as compared to the argumentative biographical commentaries in them). However, the reflective, “self-theoretical” working-through, i.e., the biographical work, as well as the imprint of the symbolic universes (and of the collective mentality structures) of societies and other inclusive or exclusive we-groups on the individual life perspectives and autobiographical thematizations are mainly expressed by the argumentative commentaries (regarding the narrative passages) of the interviews and by their abstract descriptions.

addressed to the first three research steps applicable to the analysis of single cases.

Analysis of the Rasmus Case

Now, I will turn to one of the biographical war accounts in Terkel’s volume on “*The Good War*” (Pp. 38-48). It is the case of Robert Rasmus. Robert Rasmus was nineteen years old when he entered the European war theatre in 1945. He told Terkel of his World War II experiences probably about 1982. He did not participate in the Battle of the Bulge, where the American army suffered many casualties and where many American soldiers became prisoners of war. Rasmus arrived in Europe when the German army was already basically defeated. Therefore, he did not have the bad experiences and haunting battle memories that some other interviewees in Terkel’s volume, and many informants in my own interview corpus, had, and still have. For a long time, Rasmus could manage to keep thinking of his being in the German war as something similar to being a tourist. Yet, he did have terrible experiences, too. The mixture of these different frames of experience is what is mainly interesting in the Rasmus account.

Analyses of the Communicative Schemes of the Text

Although the Rasmus text is considerably edited, it shows the general features of a topically focused autobiographical extempore narrative – the focus being on the topic of war as a particular life experience. The autobiographical narrative consists of three parts:

1. an evaluative introductory announcement of the story content, its plot, and its meaning;
2. the narrative as such; and
3. the combination of a narrative coda and a pre-coda argumental¹¹ commentary.

The Evaluative Introduction

The introduction of Rasmus’s story has two constitutive elements. The first element is a story announcement. This is accomplished (1) by narrative “prefacing” sentences (as: “I remember my mother saying, ‘Bob you’ll be in it.’ I was hoping she’d be right” [p. 38, para. 3]); and (2) by narrative “suspense” sentences showing a central change over the course of events, which, as hereby announced by the informant, would be revealed in the narrative if, and only if, the fellow interactant(s) would spend the time to listen (as, for instance, “[a]ll of a sudden, there you were right in the thick of it and people were dying and you were scared out of your wits that you’d have your head blown off” [p. 38, para. 5]). The second element of the story introduction functions in close conjunction with the story announcement: it consists of an autobiographical commentary conducted in a communicative scheme of argumentation. This conveys a central biographical

¹¹ Throughout the paper, I will use the old-fashioned adjective term “argumental.” It designates general features of the communicative scheme of argumentation, such as the term “narrative” designates general features of the communicative scheme of storytelling. Instead, the adjective “argumentative” carries a basic meaning of being fond of arguing or being quarrelsome. There are many types and instances of argumentation that are consensually enacted and carried out without any quarrel. I will apply the term “argumentative” only on those textual phenomena which imply some sort of quarrelling (including cases where the biography incumbent is quarrelling with herself or himself). The dictionary entry of *The Oxford Dictionary* (1933:443, column B) defines “argumental” as “of, pertaining to, or characterized by, argument.” The pertinent quotations are from the 16th up to the 18th century.

meaning to the flow of experiences and to the implied course of events, with sentences such as: “[a]t one level animal fear. I didn’t like it at all. On the other hand, I had this great sense of adventure” (p. 38, para. 6).

The Narrative Proper

The narration as such starts as follows:

I was in training at Fort Benning, Georgia. If you got sick and fell back more than a week, you were removed from your battalion. I got the flue and was laid back for eight days. I was removed from my outfit where all my buddies were. I was heartbroken. (p. 29, para. 3)

The narrative as such finishes with two narrative units in which Rasmus reports his intense feeling, thinking and evaluating during his actual war experiences.

The first narrative unit in pre-closing position is an account of the liberation of the Polish, French, Italian, and Russian slave laborers from their enforced work on farms and factories: here, Rasmus finally reports his encounter with, at least some part, of the evil and guilt of the German enemy (p. 46). Although this underlines the justification of the war that Rasmus had to fight in, he does not make a special theoretical point about it in his presentation. Rather, he stresses the unexpectedness of this evil, and his account is that of a personally acting, experiencing, and eyewitness observing who was involved in the freeing of the slave laborers and in the calming down of their so understandable hatred. Even in this part of his presentation, the account is truly that of an extempore narrative.

The second narrative unit in pre-closing position – associatively linked to Rasmus’s encounter with a liberated Russian slave laborer who was going to kill the alleged German murderer of his best friend and fellow prisoner, and whom Rasmus decided to prevent from accomplishing the execution, although he had realized his understandable desire for vengeance – is a narrative report on his then overwhelming feeling of gratefulness towards the Russian soldiers who had broken the backbone of the German army and saved the lives of so many American soldiers. This report is rather quietly but consciously contrasted with Rasmus’s present day (1982!) anti-Communist feelings, which probably reflect partially the difficult post-war relationship between the two super-powers and the official political rhetoric connected with it (p. 47, para. 1, 2).

Rasmus’s narrative unfolding in-between the first and the last narrative unit just mentioned is quite a normal instance of autobiographical extempore or off-the-cuff storytelling. The narrative units are constructed by a combination of unit announcements, narrative core sentences, narrative “detailization” sentences, and evaluative (argumental) commentary sentences (cf. Schütze 1984:88-92, 108-112; 1987:94-185). Of course, the normal type of narrative framing devices and connectors of extempore oral storytelling (as “ah,” “and then”) are missing because of Terkel’s editing. They are partly substituted for by his segmenting of the text into paragraphs. Terkel’s segmenting seems to be concordant with the internal and overall structures of the supposed narrative units of Rasmus’s rendering (with the “arc of segments” running from announcement sub-segments up to summarization sub-segments). In addition to

the erasure of connectors and framing devices of carefully transcribed oral storytelling, there is some reshaping of formulations observable, because of Terkel’s goal of creating pieces of “oral literature” out of the interviews. In extempore telling of personal experiences as transcribed, particularly the changes of viewpoints, modes, and levels of presenting are always marked, mostly elaborately, but sometimes by intonationality and other prosodic markers only. Throughout these stories of personal experiences it is always specified who of the fellow interactants (including the narrator) is talking, and whether or not the narrative account reports a “then” (once) ongoing conversation (as to be differentiated from conversations *about* those happenings and conversations at later points within the life course). In addition, it is painstakingly marked whether the narrator is talking to himself (“inner speech”) or to others and whether he is talking to himself *now* (i.e., in the situation of narration) or *then* (i.e., during the course of past experiences).

Taking these facts about oral extempore storytelling into account, it is obvious that the following stretch of narrative re-experiencing is made more literary by Terkel: “[a]nd there were our heavy mortars blasting away across the river. I had been seeing shadowy figures moving around. Were they infiltrators or just a bush that I was imagining?” (p. 41, para. 2). In oral extempore storytelling, as carefully transcribed, inner speech would generally be introduced by formal markers, like: “I asked myself,” or at least by very obvious intonation contours (as question intonation and talking to myself in a conceivably low voice) and other prosodic markers (as short pauses, change of speed of speech, etc.). Similarly, sharp contrasts

of experiences are always juxtaposed by markers of demonstrative appositive representation. Thus, the so to speak “naked” rendering of a deep contrast experience as we can sometimes read it in Terkel’s texts is surely heavily literatized. One typical example is: “and the brains were coming out on my hands and on my uniform. *Here’s the mama’s boy, Sunday School, and now I’m-really-in it*” (p. 44, para. 4 [italics by FS]). On the other hand, it has to be admitted wholeheartedly that many autobiographical off-the-cuff stories have their own poetry (although it can be poetry expressing terrible experiences). Surely, the Rasmus story, too, has its own artistic way of narrative representation. Terkel tried to reflect this by his special modes and styles of transliteration. Rasmus’s mixture of contrastive and blurred experiences is quasi-poetically reflected by the oppositive style of his narrative as rendered by Terkel.

A first issue that we are about to examine is the experiential authenticity of the text. The term “experiential authenticity” is here meant in the sense of unhindered expression of personal experiences by extempore narration (cf. Schütze 1993). In this sense, “experiential authenticity” or experiential validity refers to the whole gamut of rendering of life-historical phenomena, autobiographical referring, and biographical work: having personally been entangled in collective, milieu-specific, interactive biographical processes of former days; the experience of, and the emotional interaction of one’s identity with (at least partial aspects of) this entanglement; the partially unknown, and partially conscious and reflected, categorization and interpretation of it; the sedimentation of it in one’s autobiographical memory and topicalization system; the partial change of autobiographical

thematization (and its topicalization system) by new types of focusation and new activities of sedimentation and argumental working-through; provisions of fading out and repressing items and aspects of former entanglements, experiences, and interpretations; taking biographical decisions on the base of both – the entanglements within those social processes, and the inner autobiographical reactions to it; and, last but not least, of course, the unchecked recollection, free association, and communicative presentation of the former entanglements, experiences, interpretations, working-through, and decisions by the explicatory dynamics of extempore narration.

Luckily, a technique for determining degrees and areas of experiential authenticity of texts is available, and this technique basically consists of comparing the edited text structure with the text structures we know from carefully transcribed pieces of extempore storytelling. In general, I do not think that Terkel faked or spoiled the basic style of Rasmus's presentation of his own war experiences. But, one has to be aware that especially the descriptive sub-units of the Rasmus text (about what Rasmus allegedly "pictured" and felt) are literatized. Therefore, I shall not draw on them for my analysis in the first instance. On the other hand, it is obvious that Terkel sticks to the structure of the sequence of narrative units, the inner construction of the narrative units, and the placement and build-up of the argumental commentaries – as produced via off-the-cuff storytelling during the actual Rasmus interview. One can conclude this especially convincingly from the occurrence of background constructions, which abound in off-the-cuff storytelling of personal experiences and which are rare in literary narratives.

These background constructions are the result of the narrative drives and constraints of off-the-cuff storytelling. There are three of them: (1) the drive and constraint to condense, (2) the drive and constraint to go into details, (3) and the drive and constraint to close the textual forms (Schütze 1982). The narrative drive and constraint to condense entails the narrator's being driven to tell only what is relevant in terms of central "knots" of the overall happenings in the story to be told. Single events and situations have to be evaluated and weighed permanently in terms of the announced overall thematic meaning and moral of the story to be told. The narrative drive and constraint, to go into details, has the following effect: if the narrator has told event A, then she or he has to go on and has to tell also event B related to event A as the next link in the chain of experienced events – these events are concatenated formally in temporal succession, causality, finality, et cetera. In case of implausibility of the envisaged narrative proceeding from event A to event B, there has to be a "background search," a checking of the details of the supposed link between events A and B. The narrative constraint to close the forms (*Gestalten*) has the following impact: the narrator is driven to finish the depiction of an experiential pattern (such as an episode in the unfolding of events, an interaction situation, a chapter in one's own life history, etc.). This implies the closing up of embedded experiential patterns. In off-the-cuff storytelling, there is always an undecided competition between these three narrative drives and constraints, whereas in written storytelling the competition between the drives respective constraints becomes re-harmonized and disguised under the polished surface of a literary make-up.

The complications and difficulties of extempore storytelling tend to be eliminated in written narrative accounts. Whereas the oral narrator cannot rewrite his story line, the writer can. Normally, she or he would try to erase the vestiges of unexpected complication and disarray in the storytelling and in the hereby rendered flow of personal experiences. That means she or he would insert the experiential content of the background construction as it would occur in extempore storytelling at the proper sequential position within the unfolding flow of recollected experiences (turning back to earlier parts of it and inserting it there); or she or he would construct preplanned exposition and explanation chapters, in-advance stories or systematic flashbacks, which cut the story line. And, in doing this, she or he would very often distort the original stream of experiences. The reader should not detect that the narrator was puzzled, embarrassed, disoriented, disgusted and therefore, had some difficulties with the narrative reconstruction and/or tended to defocus or even to repress important events. Contrary to these artistic devices, which serve special functions of exposition, explanation and aesthetic expression, background constructions of oral extempore narration are impromptu attempts to get order into the complicated or even "turmoiled" stream of recollected experiences without eliminating the vestiges of these experiential complications and disarrays.

By contrast, in literary narrative accounts such background constructions proper – and, especially, delayed self-corrective background constructions – are rare. Especially, the occurrence of background constructions in many of Terkel's published interviews allow my conclusion that Terkel did not

edit or change the improvised oral renderings of the respective original interview communications enough to run the risk of destroying the flow of oral narrative activities in its time relationships, its sequential structures of unit linking, and its hierarchical relationships of dominance and embeddedness. On the contrary, in other interviews, he even shows some of the interactional work involved in his interviewing – this exactly at points where the coherence of narrative topicalization of the informant is deemed potentially questionable. In other words, he does not change the interview texts in accordance with his own version of a coherent topicalization system as a writer.¹² This is an important conclusion about Terkel's materials

¹² On the other hand, Terkel does utilize some artistic devices for transliterating and arranging his interviews. He does this basically in order to express the dynamics of the inner-psychic processes during the communicative presentation and to express their relationship to group processes in which the informant was involved at the time of the reported events, or is still involved presently. Thus, he interrupts the interview text with graphically specified descriptions of the informant; he puts in some references to paralinguistic phenomena of the actually ongoing interview communication (e.g., "laughs") at some places of the text, but not at others; he keeps some of the disorders of presentations (self-corrections, interruptions, etc.), whereas others are eliminated; he drops some of the formal framing devices for introducing and closing up direct speech and inner speech, which seem to be "void" as carriers of deeper information and meaning, etc.

At any rate, this is of no detriment to the expressive and presentational function or the experiential validity of documentary literature, which consists of in depicting socio-biographical processes. On the contrary, any publication of oral history accounts and of autobiographical narratives has to struggle with the task of giving an understandable, intuitive, and even aesthetically enjoyable rendering. In many cases, to find one's way through the scientific transcription systems for conversation, group discourse (for example, in focus groups), and extempore narration is not an easy task for the lay reader. Therefore, Terkel's way of transliterating and arranging his interviews is really interesting and ought to be studied in terms of interpretive social science methodology and text-oriented analysis of literature. In interpretive sociology, Edward Rose, University of Colorado, Boulder (see his "poetic" transcription of the "Ali Baba Interview" – an interview conversation Edward Rose conducted with a sophisticated user of heroin [1981]) dealt with the problem of artistically transcribing and presenting autobiographical accounts most thoroughly. Through his "art of transcription" he tried to reveal the poetics in the presentational activities of the informant.

because – being confined to retrospective data as a researcher is in many studies of socio-biographical processes (since written materials of that past time period would not be available, or if they actually are, they often would not describe inner ex-

Every system of transcription or transliteration has its own epistemic perspective and potential for revealing insights, on the one hand, and for erroneous presentations, on the other. Terkel's methodological problem is the partial elimination of the formal ("empty") textual devices through which the interactional and presentational work of storytelling is accomplished by the interview partners. Such a "cleaning out" of the interactive text is done for the sake of providing the reader with moving and enjoyable pieces of "oral literature." Taking this into account, we can partially assess alleged methodological "shortcomings" of Terkel's published materials. In fact, there are some "methodological shortcomings" in Terkel's texts, but only then, when they are used as data in qualitative social research. And these "shortcomings" are shortcomings (in terms of social science methodology) just with respect to the text reliability, respective of the literal authenticity of the text (as compared with the original speech production of the informant), and to some dimensions of experiential text validity (i.e., with regard to the textual expression of the original ways of the informant's experiencing and orienting). Other methodological "shortcomings" would be the partial literatizing of the descriptions of inner psychic states of the informants, e.g., of inner speech, as shown already, as well as the presentation of just partial sections of the informants' original speech production and the rearrangement of selections of them in expressively and interpretively "densifying" clusters through the collage technique. [This was quite often harnessed in Terkel's earlier books. Of course, on the other hand, the collage technique can furnish highly artistic and "true" pictures of individual and collective mental states.]

One has to take into account that the "methodological shortcomings" of Terkel's texts are almost unavoidable if the editor of personal documents wants to make them accessible to a wider readership. The paradoxical antinomy between an intuitively understandable and artistically dense presentation, on the one hand, and text reliability, respective textual authenticity, and (some dimensions of) experiential text validity, on the other, is a problem from which the social science researcher is by no means exempt. Terkel's versions of literatized "transcriptions" might enhance the presentational power of the text for expressing the density of meaning and emotions, which is connected with biographical processes of gaining individuality and creativity, as well as with historical processes of collective remembering and working through. The methodology of qualitative social research has to build up some sort of differential theory of unavoidable presentational "mistakes" and limitations of perspective for all sorts of personal testimonies and documents used in social science research. These limitations of perspective are implied in the various styles of rendering of the text materials expressing personal experiences and of opening it up to the reader.

Throughout his book, I was not caused to suspect that Terkel distorted interview stories or inserted falsified texts. Terkel generally seems to stick to his oral text material.

periences and/or often would not provide a permanent description of the overall process, etc.) – only by studying the flow of the extempore narration of personal experiences, the empirically based analytical reconstruction of the flow of former day actual life-historical experiences and their elaborations and re-elaborations throughout the course of later life is principally possible. [Retrospective data are not dependable as such and in isolation; their analysis has to take into account their situational contexts of production, their textual context of presentation, and the processes of oblivion and memorizing, fading out and working through, etc.]

Background constructions are a quite powerful device for testing the questions whether or not a printed narrative account stems from an oral source of extempore narration and if or not it retains its basic architecture of the informant's presentation of her or his stream of recollected personal experiences. By the same token, it is an avenue for assessing the experiential validity and textual reliability, that is, the presentational power and personal authenticity, of printed narrative materials as social science data – social science data on personal experiences of social and biographical events and their concatenations.

By using background constructions in off-the-cuff storytelling, the narrator steps back and inserts an additional story, description or explanation into the main story line. She or he has to delay the telling of the main story line for a while – this generally amounts to some aesthetic impairment of narrative representation as evaluated by the criteria for artistic rendering in literature. She or he has to do this

because unlike the writer, she or he could not prepare in advance for the complications and disarrays ensuing later in the stream of recollected personal experiences by means of interpretation and explanation hints in advance, by means of elaborate expositions or framing passages or even chapters, and/or by means of expounding on additional story lines. The extempore story teller is not able to go back and forth in the story line, to freely detect in advance later coming turmoils of recollection and rendering by this, and to erase or edit those disorders of presentation in advance. In addition, it is impossible for her or him to use devices for the anticipating circumvention of presentational situations in which the need for putting off the main story line would turn out to be demanding in the future. For she or he would not (and in many cases could not) precisely expect and predict the upcoming incidence of these complications and disarrays on the empirical base of experiential data having come up in the flow of recollected experiences. Instead, the extempore narrator is focused on the main story line, concentrating on what is conceived of as biographically relevant events – driven by the narrative drive and constraint to condense.

An additional possible cause for a lack of provision for up-coming complexities in narrative recollection and re-experiencing is that some of the first potential allusions appearing during the course of recollected experiences in storytelling would have been misunderstood, or even forgotten, in their symbolic significance for the (then blurred or even "buried") actual ("original") experiences and biographical ramifications in former life. Or, they would not have been conceived of as "remarkable" in biograph-

ical, situational, or social world terms. Or, they would have been felt to be awkward, traumatic, or shameful. So, if that happens, they are dismissed as chances for expounding. And again, in the ensuing narrative activities, additional possibilities for their explication (as shown in more or less vague or obvious indications of the dynamics of text production permanently monitored by the narrator herself or himself and in the hereby revitalized items of the memory storage) are neglected as potentials for further storytelling and explanation (this up to the point where the story line becomes implausible). These are instances of de-focusation, fading out, or even repression.

In both cases – in the case of failure to expect story complications and additional story potentials, as well as in the case of their de-focusation – a narrator has to realize, at certain points in the ensuing parts of her or his narrative activities, that the account would become implausible if she or he did not insert background constructions. So, the narrator embarks on the unfolding of the background construction – driven by the drive and constraint to go into details. After finishing the background construction, the narrator has to return to the main story line at the very point she or he departed from it – driven by the drive and constraint to close the forms.

In the Rasmus account, two background constructions can be found. The first deals with Rasmus's sorrow ("I was heartbroken") that he had been separated from his buddies during their basic training as soldiers – a sorrow which seems to be paradoxical at first glance because most of his comrades during his basic training as soldiers were killed soon after

in the Battle of the Bulge. The point of implausibility for the listener is this sorrow, and therefore, Rasmus has to insert a background construction (a complex combination of narration and argumentation in this case). This has the function of demonstrating how and why the “comrades of the first hour” had become biographically so important to him, although he shared with them his life only for a little more than one month and although most of them died shortly thereafter.

Here, I shall not analyze the structure and content of this background construction, but some of its important informational features are: Rasmus was in a very susceptible period of his life; the comrades of the first hour were relevant, first, as real and, later, as imaginative significant others for Rasmus – they became points of orientation and evaluation throughout his life course; Rasmus started to feel, and still keeps on feeling, some sort of biographical deficiency compared to them, et cetera.

Rasmus’s second background construction deals with the death in action of one of the very experienced platoon sergeants of his company. This background construction is a very complex one showing a conjunction of storytelling, of argumental proposition and explanation combined with features of recurrence (of the refutational proposition “we did not kill him”), and of typifying the description fulfilling the function of re-normalization (of the demoralization phenomena in Rasmus’s military unit). To summarize its content, this particular background construction is provoked by the narrative re-encounter of the paradox that in the very first combat of Rasmus’s company – consisting mainly of

inexperienced recruits – a German unit was totally wiped out by taking advantage of the surprise factor and of the factor of superior strength, that just two people of the American company got killed, and that one of them was the very experienced platoon sergeant of Rasmus’s platoon. In his flow of extempore narration, Rasmus cannot help but to comment on, and to evaluate, this unexpected happening: “[i]rony again.” Both items – the very fact of the unexpected death of the most experienced soldier of the company and the evaluation of it as “irony” – seem implausible, and Rasmus has to be concerned about that for the sake of his story’s consistency and credibility (not only from the point of view of the listener but also from his own), and therefore, has to commence a background construction.

The construction tells the story of how the platoon sergeant became intensely hated by the enlisted men; how they would start to say with annoyance or even anguish – caused by the insensitive drill practices and machinations of this man: “[i]f we ever get into combat, I am going to kill him;” and how they approved his death with a grin. The background story as such is set into perspective by a descriptive and argumental device of social categorization and framing stating that dislike and even hate between the uneducated but powerful “drill” sergeants, on the one hand, and the at least partly more educated conscripted soldiers, on the other, was quite usual in the American army and would normally not cause detrimental results. Rasmus’s stating and describing of this social frame provide the argumental premise for proposing that the sergeant was surely not killed by American comrades but by the enemy. Rasmus ends his background construction with

a typifying description and comparison differentiating normal cases of demoralization (like damaging one’s weapons, intentionally inflicting wounds on oneself, desertion) from abnormal ones (like killing officers), and stating that his unit showed just the normal amount of demoralization (besides some examples of heroism, too, of course).

What nevertheless remains remarkable regarding Rasmus’s vigorous attempts at refutation is that it seems necessary for him to use argumental disclaimers against the same (imagined) charge, that his own platoon intentionally killed the hated platoon sergeant, again and again. He seems to feel attacked by an inner opponent who has strong accusatory arguments, and this opponent puts him in limbo with serious doubts regarding the innocence of his platoon that are fueled by constraints of argumentation (Schütze 1978:68-80, especially, p. 69, 79) regarding the possible weakness of his own refutation of a conceivable murder charge against members of his own military unit.

Of course, the voice of his inner opponent and his doubt enforced by the opponent’s accusation, are part of Rasmus himself. In Rasmus’s mind there always looms the question: Was the war really as morally clean as he would like to envisage it and live with it? He does not allow himself to tackle this question openly, and exactly this censorship is the condition for the later urgency to fill in the background construction.

The occurrence of the two undisguised, not literalized, background constructions in the Rasmus material properly reflect the cognitive, emotional,

and evaluative complication, and even disarray, in the ongoing flow of recollections of personal experiences and biographical processes which Rasmus had to undergo during his extempore storytelling. These difficulties suggest the most serious actual experiences in his life and the systematic obstacles of their biographical working through. Hence, Terkel’s interview materials, at least those published at their full length (as the Rasmus case is), seem to be sufficiently, and in most parts perfectly, text reliable in terms of the literal reproduction of the oral interview by the published transcript and experientially valid in terms of the expression of biographical processes the informant as biography incumbent was involved in. They are sufficiently, and mostly even perfectly, empirically dependable in terms of text reliability and experiential validity in order to be utilized as social science data. Terkel’s edition, at least in the Rasmus story and in other full-length stories of his volume on World War II (such as the Prendergast account [Terkel 1984:48-58; also see Schütze 1989]), is confined to erasing connectors and paralinguistic phenomena of spoken language and to ornamenting the explicatory parts of the narrative units, especially descriptive sub-units. Otherwise, the text material of the Rasmus account seems to be authentic in the sense that it renders the flow of autobiographical re-experiencing.

The Combination of a Narrative Coda and a Pre-Coda Argumental Commentary

The narrative account as such ends with reporting overwhelming feelings of gratitude towards the Russian soldiers because they had broken the back of the German army (p. 47, para. 1, 2). After

an important interlude (a pre-coda commentary), which will be dealt with below in a moment, the coda of Rasmus's narrative follows (contrastively juxtaposed to reflections on the Vietnam War as a difficult, agonizing war):

World War Two was utterly different. It has affected me in many ways ever since. I think my judgment of people is more circumspect. I know it's made me less ready to fall into the trap of judging people by their style or appearance. In a short period of time, I had the most tremendous experiences of all of life: of fear, of jubilation, of misery, of hope, of comradeship, and of the endless excitement, the theatrics of it. I honestly feel grateful for having been a witness to an event as monumental as anything in history and, in a very small way, a participant. (p. 48, para. 3)

Such a coda is to be found at the end of every off-the-cuff narration of personal experiences. [Cf. Labov (1972:365-366, 369-370); Kallmeyer and Schütze (1977); Schütze (1987:167-175). Of course, many of them are not that embellished as the coda in the Rasmus account is, but many of them really are.] A coda ties the past time of the story events to the present time of actual narration, and it shows the outcomes of the narrated events and experiences for the narrator, his life, and present situation. Whereever the coda shows at least some elaboration, it is combined with an evaluation of the informant's social and biographical processes in their impact on his life course at length, and, too, on the collective "we-units" at large, in which the informant is member and which were at stake during the course of the events depicted. And vice versa, it evaluates the impact of the collective we-units, such as the nation, and their macro-historical processes on the individual life history and its biographical processes. In au-

tobiographical accounts, activities of summarizing and stating of the outcome normally include statements about a (partial) change of the informant's identity as a biography incumbent – caused by the experience of events and social processes, which the narrative transpires. Each of these components can be found in the Rasmus account.

It is always interesting to analyze the answer to the question whether or not the coda statements of result and assessment really cover what has been rendered by the story line, and whether or not the summarizing statements and evaluations of the coda are consistent with those of the various concatenated narrative units. The statements of result and assessment of the coda form part of the biographical self-theory of the informant. They can at least partly be self-delusional. In Rasmus's story, the summary and evaluation statement is: "I had the most tremendous experiences of all life: of fear, of jubilation, of misery, of hope, of comradeship, and of the endless excitement, the theatrics of it." This formulation of biographical outcome, consequence, and value deals mostly with the biographical action scheme of adventurously experiencing new life situations rather than primarily with the trajectory experiences of suffering, disorientation, demoralization, though the latter are dealt with at least in the background constructions of Rasmus's autobiographical accounts. [He mentions fear and misery, but just as the byproduct of the dominant overall experience of excitement.] One can conclude that Rasmus's autobiographical theorizing represents a de-focusing of his own and others' biographical experiences concerning tragic war events and the implied personal sufferings.

In many autobiographical off-the-cuff narratives there can be found an elaborated argumental commentary, which is placed exactly between the last narrative unit proper and the coda of the narrative. The basic reason for this is that in the very process of extempore storytelling of personal experiences the informant is *nolens volens* touching biographical problems, which have remained basically unsolved in her or his life up to now. [Many of them cannot be solved at all even when focused and worked through thoroughly.] Telling (part of) her or his life history reminds the informant of the argumental potential regarding the fundamentals of her or his life. The quite steadily occurring summarizing and evaluation sub-segments of the narrative units, which are piling up during the course of storytelling, are feeding into the recollection of the basic elements and tendencies of the argumental potential for relating to one's own biographical identity during the life course. So, before the informant – as a biography incumbent – can end her or his story line via the production of the narrative coda, she or he, again, has to struggle vigorously with the basic argumental potentials of his or her life and with the difficulties of relating to one's biographical identity. At this point, the communicative scheme of argumentation takes over the rule from the communicative scheme of narration, which (in most interview cases to an overwhelming extent) was dominant throughout the entire interview communication before.

When the informant is involved with deep inner problems, the argumental pre-coda unit can be considerably protracted. In very serious cases, the argumental potential will not allow the straightforward summarization and evaluation activities of the

pre-coda and coda units at all. [However, such a tremendously serious "problem with oneself" obviously does not manifest itself in the Rasmus interview.] Then, the pre-coda commentary is transferred into the coda, splitting the coda into two parts. The first deals with summarizing and assessing activities of formulating biographical outcomes, consequences, and values (which gets elaborated because of the drives and constraints of argumentation). The second part deals with the closing up of the past time of the story events and with bringing in the (present) time of the actual narrative work again, that is, the present of the communicative situation and its social and collective ramifications. And in-between, the two coda parts would be the protracted (sometimes several pages long) argumentative activity, which is propelled by non-saturated argumental drives and constraints.¹³

It is intriguing that the Rasmus account shows an extended pre-coda biographical commentary (p. 47, para. 3 to p. 48, para. 2). The first lines of this biographical commentary are:

I've reflected on why people my age and with my experience don't have that spontaneous willingness to be part of the nuclear freeze. It's the sense that the Germans were willing to lose millions of men. And they did. Every German house we went to, there would be black-bordered pictures of sons and relatives. You could tell that most of them died on the Eastern front. And the Russians lost twenty millions.

Of course, this commentary starts as a commentary on the gratitude of Rasmus and his comrades

¹³ For such split codas see: Schütze (2001). They always document that the narrator, as biography incumbent, has not and is not finished with his biographical work; instead, she or he is trapped in serious biographical identity problems.

towards the Russians – the content of the last narrative unit proper. But, then the unit commentary is elaborated into a protracted argumental consideration: What would have happened if further fighting against the basically undefeated armies of decided peoples who were able to endure extreme sufferings (like the Japanese and the Russians) would have been necessary? Rasmus states his opinion that he and his fellow soldiers were not willing to fight in such a war. This would have meant extreme suffering or even death for them. Rasmus contends that even today the typical member of the American public would not be willing to do this; and that would be the legitimate reason for her or his backing policies of nuclear defense. On the other hand, the pre-coda unit seems to convey some uneasiness in Rasmus's conclusion. There were the comrades who died in the Battle of the Bulge (cf. the first background construction on p. 39, 40). Could it be that he, Rasmus, did not suffer enough as compared to *them*, and that therefore, he did not have the chance to grow really mature? And, could it turn out to be illegitimate if reconsidered properly that his, Rasmus's, "solution" of a technical substitute war (with nuclear weapons) would not take into account the suffering caused to (individual) others on this large-scale collective level, whereas he was able to do so in his personal encounters with dead Germans (cf. p. 44, 45)? Rasmus does not formulate these questions. But, at least he seems to feel a certain contradiction between having experienced some grievances of war and yet his current backing of "deadly" policies of defense with mass destructive weaponry. Otherwise, he would not be tangled in such obstinate argumental constraints (cf. Riemann 1986;

1987:287-322, 449-454; Schütze 1987:138-185) to defend conclusions that he is drawing from his war experiences.

Structural Description of the Rasmus Narrative

In my original analysis, after I had finished the depiction of the overall communicative schemes involved in the production of the Rasmus text, I conducted a systematic segmentation of the Rasmus story into its natural narrative units, sub-units, and supra-segmental relationships using those formal markers of storytelling which had not been totally eliminated by Terkel's editing (e.g., discontinuity markers, like "all of a sudden," time aspects, like "still," paragraphical segmentation as substitute for narrative connectors, like "then," summarizing statements for unit contents in end positions and the evaluations connected with them, statements of announcing in advance the gist of unit contents in an opening position, etc.). Then, I tried to use the outcome of this formal analysis for a structural description of the biographical processes rendered by Rasmus's narrative. It would be a distraction from the limited purpose of this paper to present my original unit by unit structural description of the story line,¹⁴ but meticulous structural description is always the most important part of my analysis of autobiographical narratives.

The research step of structural description is concerned with three types of presentational units:

¹⁴ Examples of an elaborate structural description can be found, e.g., in Maurenbrecher (1985), Riemann (1987), Nittel (1992), Schütze (1991; 1994; 2008), Schröder-Wildhagen and colleagues (2012). The English language article by Schütze (1992 pp. 199-205, 347-355) gives only a shortened version of the result of a structural description.

autonomous narrative units and their parts (like kernel sentences and narrative detailizations); background constructions, which are embedded in narrative units and cannot be produced without them; and supra-segmental compounds of narrative units. The aim of a structural description is – starting with the narrative units – to identify these pieces of talk; to show how they are concatenated in sequential order and how they relate to each other hierarchically (in terms of embeddedness and of being part of an encompassing, stretched out compound of narrative units); and finally, to point out what specific and general features they express which characterize sociologically remarkable situational, social (e.g., milieu, social world, organization, etc.), biographical, and collective socio-historical processes.

Text Segmentation

A structural description always begins with the identification of narrative units, which are the "story grammatical" backbone of any narrative. Every narrative unit starts with a new narrative focusing device. This device makes clear that the narrator is going to embark on the presentation of a new piece of recalled experience. In scientific transcriptions of extempore narratives of personal (and especially – biographical) experiences, one can see that at the end of the just finished narrative unit the voice of the narrator goes down and raises again at the beginning of the next narrative unit. Also, there will very often be a short or even a longer pause between the fading out of the voice and its setting in again. In addition, in scientific transcriptions, quite often there will be seen a paraverbal element at the beginning of the new narrative unit, possibly followed by

a particle with time reference: "ah/now." Finally, in actually ongoing extempore narrative talk, one can see many self-correcting devices, especially at the beginning of a new narrative unit, and many planning pauses – immediately after the narrator has started with the production of the unit.

In edited extempore narratives of personal experiences, such as the Rasmus account, these "disorganized" traces of the actually ongoing "work activity" of verbal presentation and communication are eliminated or "cleaned out." Only the narrative focusing devices, which announce a new piece of recalled experience to be told, are kept. In their minimal form, the focusing devices consist of a narrative conjunct, like "and then." In their elaborated form, focusing devices give an introduction as to what changes of life situation or biographical identity are going to be reported now. Or they set a scene for the events, which are going to happen next within the story. A typical example of the latter is the beginning of the narrative unit in which the second background construction we discussed above (the one about the "irony" that the hated platoon sergeant of Rasmus's platoon was killed) is embedded. "All of a sudden, we spotted a group of German soldiers down by the slope of this hill, perhaps fifty" (p. 43, para. 3).

Every focusing device, which starts off a new narrative unit, implies at least a slight change of perspective during the course of "living through it again" by extempore narration. This can be (a) just a sudden change in the path of events, (b) a fading of activities plus an elapse of time and an ensuing new concentration of activities, or (c) a change of

experiential perspective. The first alternative can be seen in the example just mentioned. Examples of the second and third are: “[t]hree days later we pulled out, crossed the Rhine” (p. 41, para. 6); “[w]e’ve seen a little of the war now” (p. 41, para. 7). There can also be a major change of social processes the informant was involved in – the beginning of the narrative unit then announces that the narrator will now commence the presentation of this change. This is usually the beginning of a new supra-segmental compound of narrative units. One example in the Rasmus account is the narrator’s turning his recollection towards his encounters with German war crimes when he mentions the suffering of the slave laborers from occupied European countries: “[n]ow I began to get an inkling of some other evil abroad. We were very much aware that the Germans had mobilized the Poles, the French ... into workers on farms and in factories” (p. 46, para. 2). The focusing device in this case is much more elaborate, it includes a special technique of switching the frame of presentational reference and of relating to, and evaluating, the now upcoming phase of biography.

Just as every narrative unit employs an orderly opening procedure, it also uses orderly closing procedures. The simplest procedure consists in just following the internal grammar of the narrative unit. In this case, there might be a cluster of sentences describing the details of a scene in the end position of the narrative unit (“I had been seeing shadowy figures moving around. Were they infiltrators or just a bush that I was imagining? And there in sight was the Cologne cathedral amidst all this wreckage” [p. 41, para. 6]). Or, there might

be a cluster of sentences which state the changes the subject is undergoing. “It was reassuring to see how much artillery we had, but disturbing to see all these Germans dead. I had never seen a dead body before, except in a funeral home” (p. 42, para. 3). In these cases, there is no special closing procedure. Instead, the sentences of narrative and/or descriptive explication of stating the change of identity or situational changes (also implying changes of identity of the narrator as biography incumbent) automatically serve as closing devices, too. In actually ongoing verbal encounters, depicted by scientific transcriptions, these and other closing devices are accompanied by a falling voice and a shorter or even longer pause of talk.

But, of course, there can be special and much more elaborate closing devices for ending a narrative unit than have been shown up to now. One would be a summary formulation of the state of identity or its change, as for example: “I was sort of schizophrenic all through this period. I was a participant, scared out of my wits. But, I was also acutely aware of how really theatrical and surreal it was” (p. 41, para. 5). Another special closing device would be an outlook on the expected future as possibly resulting from what experiences the informant has rendered in the narrative unit just to be closed: on encounters with events, difficulties, horrors, or joys to be expected for the time period still to be told within the ensuing narrative units (although they might not really happen: stating “empty expectations” is an artistic device even, and especially, in extempore storytelling). In such a case, the narrator recalls his state of mind during the time of the episode told about in the narrative unit, and he re-

members that he was then expecting many more horrible encounters with death in war, not knowing at that very moment that the one he had encountered right now would luckily turn out to be his last one: “[referring to a dead German soldier:] Once the helmet is off, you’re looking at a teenager, another kid. Obviously you have to go on. There are many, many more engagements” (p. 45, para. 3). Still, another special closing device is a summary statement which is combined with an evaluation of the happenings occurring to the *dramatis personae* and/or to the narrator as biography incumbent that have been told in the just closing narrative unit. One typical example in the Rasmus interview refers to Rasmus’s being among the liberated Belgian population: “[t]here was a sense of victory in the air. They had already been liberated. They were elated” (p. 40, para. 4). Such a closing device is very often linked with the one mentioned earlier which formulates inner states of the narrator as biography incumbent and their changes.

Finally, there is the very obvious closing device of a self-theoretical commentary, which states the relationship of the informant as biography incumbent towards the events which happened in the situations or phases of life talked about in the narrative unit. [Self-theoretical commentaries always tend to be placed at the end of narrative units. If they occur in other parts of the narrative unit, it is a sign of “narrative disorder” reflecting difficulties the informant has with some part of her or his life or identity. Those self-theoretical commentaries have to be scrutinized very closely.] Self-theoretical biographical commentaries tend to be connected with closing devices, which summarize,

formulate inner states, and evaluate. This is the case in Rasmus’s fairly elaborated closing device, which finishes up the narrative unit in which the background construction about the platoon sergeant “ironically having been killed” is embedded:

[t]hose who really went through combat, the Normandy landings, the heavy stuff, might laugh at this little action we’d been in but for me. ... We were passing people who were taking over from us, another company. We had one day of this. Our uniforms were now dirty and bloody and our faces looked like we’d been in there for weeks. Now *we* had the feeling: You poor innocents. (p. 44, para. 6)

Rasmus marks the episode of combat, which was told immediately before in the same narrative unit (p. 43, para. 3 to p. 44, para. 6) as the peak of his war experiences. But, he still feels the problem that the intensity, frequency, and relevance of his experiences might be low as compared with that of the really experienced warriors and sufferers. He argues with himself in a self-theoretical biographical commentary. Then he states the change of his outer appearance and inner identity, having become an experienced soldier now. But again, he has to admit in his summary and evaluation that it was just one day he had of combat experience. Since this episode is still so moving for Rasmus, and still not totally worked through, he combines his theoretical commentary with pieces of narration about the encounter with the fresh replacement company. These pieces of text are dominated by the argumental activity of Rasmus’s self-theoretical commentary. Within the argumental frame they serve as a rebuttal against doubts of immaturity; they, again, state the now matured and “experienced” identity of Rasmus as a combat soldier.

Presentational “Grammar” of Extempore Narration as a Formal Base for Structural Description

The presentational procedure of narrative units has to perform the following tasks: focusing the new stretch of personal experience to be rendered; formulating kernel sentences about what happened and/or what is the change of situation or identity being involved; giving details of the encounters, their social frames, and their impact on personal and/or collective identities being involved; summarizing the general features of the encounter (i.e., the events and the accompanying identity changes); stating the outcomes and evaluating the general features of the outcomes; and finally (but, which is more optional than the other tasks), to give a self-theoretical commentary on the relationship between the identity of the informant and the encounter talked about in the narrative unit. Of course, these tasks are completely fulfilled only in very elaborate narrative units; there are different levels of explication in different parts of an overall extempore autobiographical narrative (as told in an autobiographical narrative interview) and between whole (interview) narratives.

The absolute minimum of a narrative unit is the kernel sentence, which represents an essential element in the chain of sequential narrative units, that is, kernel sentences are the “scaffold” of the narrative. Narrative kernel sentences depict the central steps and turns of social processes, which are the theme of the narrative to be told and the related identity changes of the biography incumbent. As narrative sentences, they have to express

a temporal sequence of different states of the social process to be told, and the related situations and identity systems; between these states there has to be found a temporal threshold of before and after. Every narrative sentence has to exhibit an indexical expression referring to a specific time, location, and state of identity, however vaguely this specific time, location, and state of identity might be formulated by it.

In narrative units with “hot action” and suspense, the first narrative kernel sentence can be identical with the focusing device. Exactly this is the case in Rasmus’s narrative unit telling of the death of the platoon sergeant (p. 43, para. 3 to p. 44, para. 6). “All of a sudden, we spotted a group of German soldiers down by the slope of this hill, perhaps fifty.” The next narrative kernel sentence, which appears some sentences later in this narrative unit is: “[w]e killed most of the Germans” (p. 43, para. 3). An additional compound of narrative kernel sentences follows almost immediately: “[o]ur guys were getting killed, too. Irony again, the first one killed was our platoon sergeant” (p. 43, para. 3). Then, the background construction (p. 43, para. 4 to p. 44, para. 3) discussed above is inserted into the main story line which (much later) resumes by means of the next narrative kernel sentence, “[o]ur captain said, ‘pick up the bodies. We don’t leave our dead to the enemy!’” (p. 44, para. 4). What follows after the production of a few (additional) explicatory narrative sentences is a narrative kernel sentence, including its amalgamated explicatory amendment, which is probably somewhat blurred by Terkel’s literatizing practices in editing. It formulates the relationship between the clash of a terrible outer event (of the

death of the platoon sergeant) and the inner reaction of Rasmus’s identity: “[w]e got the sergeant on ours [stretchers] and, jeez, half his head was blown off. ... Here’s the mama’s boy ... and now I’m really in it” (p. 44, para. 4). The final compound of narrative kernel sentences of this narrative unit again depicts the change of Rasmus’s identity caused by the atrocious experiences of the combat day, but now another aspect of it is dominant: “I remember lying in that slit trench that night. It was a nightmare. I’d now seen what dead people look like, the color out of their face” (p. 44, para. 5). We can see that narrative kernel sentences deal with decisive outer events, with qualifications of outer events from different perspectives, with close connections between outer events and identity changes – these sentences normally are pivotal in autobiographical storytelling (if there is no fading-out from memory and/or presentation within the respective section of the autobiographical narrative) – and, they deal with the outcome of the changes of inner identity, as well as with qualifications of different aspects of identity change.

Explicatory sentences of narrative units add the “flesh” to the “bones” of the narrative kernel sentences – they qualify the experiential aspects. Firstly, they can be detailed narrations of the chain of events, especially, in narrative units with a lot of “hot action,” and/or suspense. In our narrative unit under discussion, the string of detailed narrative sentences commences after the introductory device has been produced, which is at the same time the first narrative kernel sentence:

[a]ll of a sudden we spotted a group of German soldiers. ... We were strung out, a couple of platoons. We

would be on the ground, get up on command, and start firing right into this group of Germans. We did catch them by surprise. (p. 43, para. 3)

Secondly, explicatory sentences can be narrative sentences of detail which provide predicative qualifications to narrative kernel sentences. So, the kernel sentence, “we killed most of the Germans,” is qualified by the following sentence: “[a] few might have gotten away, but we wiped them out” (p. 43, para. 3). This qualification of “wiping them out” is elaborated within the following narrative unit which depicts the “Damascus” of Rasmus – his realization of what really had happened in their “heroic” surprise attack:

[t]he whole thing might have been avoided had we been more experienced and called down in German for them to surrender. They probably would have been only too glad. Instead out of fear, there was this needless slaughter. It has the flavor of murder, doesn’t it? (p. 45, para. 2)

Thirdly, explicatory sentences can be detailing narrative sentences of slight or more obvious identity changes connected with outer events; learning (however problematic it might be) is part of such identity changes: “[i]t was a new maneuver we’d never done in training. We learned” (p. 43, para. 3). Fourthly, explicatory sentences can be a narrative description of identity changes and/or the description of the final result of identity changes (including outer aspects of the identity changes). The summary statement in the examined conclusion phase of the narrative unit exhibits this quality: “[w]e were passing people who were taking over from us, another company. ... Our uniforms were now dirty and bloody and our faces like we’d been in there

for weeks. Now *we* had the feeling: You poor innocents” (p. 44, para. 6). Explicatory sentences with the function of describing the outcomes of identity change are especially apt to serve as summary statements and devices for finishing a narrative unit. They can also generalize and qualify a narrative kernel sentence which depicted a change of the inner state of identity. This is the case of the kernel sentence, which reports Rasmus’s nightmare during the night after the combat: “I’d now seen what dead people look like, the color out of their face. I think each person in my squad went through this dream of mine” (p. 44, para. 5).

Finally, explicatory sentences can introduce and describe the “personnel” and the (web of) social relationships of the encounter to be narrated, as well as the setting, situation, and other social frames in which the encounter will take place, and they can describe the social and technical conditions under which events are happening. Strings of these sentences can be in themselves or by composition a mixture of narration and description. Thus, when Rasmus reports the recovery of the corpses of the two members of the company being killed: “[w]e had to improvise stretchers. I took off my field jacket and turned the arms inside out. We poked rifles through the arms” (p. 44, para. 4). But, these sentences can also be without any temporal threshold depicting a flux of events and/or changes of identity. Such sentences are purely descriptive, their time index is more vague than that of narrative sentences, and they do not delineate a difference of “before the event” and “after the event.” In one of the earlier narrative segments, Rasmus tells how they – the soldiers of his company and he – would stay overnight

in bombed-out buildings: “[h]ere’s a cross-section of a four-story, where every room is open to the atmosphere on one side and there’s another room that is still intact” (p. 41, para. 2). Of course, these descriptive sentences which give a physical, nature-related, and/or socio-cultural frame to the events happening (in this case just staying overnight, making yourself comfortable, and thinking about back home) are very closely tied to narrative sentences that depict the impact of the scenery on Rasmus: “[i]t was almost surreal.”

So far, I have sketched the presentational procedure of narrative units concentrating on the quite elaborate narrative rendering of Rasmus’s most ferocious combat experience and of the “irony” that the platoon sergeant had been killed. Looking especially at the kernel sentences and summary statements about Rasmus’s change of identity, one can conclude that this narrative unit exhibits, at the same time, two general features of biographical change Rasmus has to undergo, conditioned by his war experiences: (a) the aspect of becoming an experienced soldier and growing to maturity, and (b) the encounter with death and senseless killing. At the end of the narrative unit in Rasmus’s self-theoretical biographical commentary, the first aspect of identity change, that of maturation, still prevails. But, it is already challenged by the presentation activities of the background construction, which has been discussed above, and will be challenged to even a greater degree by the following narrative unit in which Rasmus has to realize – coming back to the field of combat – that the killing had probably been senseless because the German soldiers would have probably surrendered if addressed properly

(p. 44, para. 7 to p. 45, para. 3). At least some aspects of Rasmus’s belief in personal maturation seem to be hollow and self-deceptive.

The presentational procedure of the narrative units also provides devices of repair at points of implausibility and disorder within the recollections of the informant. These repair mechanisms are the background constructions. In the narrative unit having been structurally described just before, the narrative implausibility arises that the most experienced platoon sergeant of the company was killed, and almost everybody else was saved even though they were greenhorns. In addition, Rasmus has to deal with the problem that at least some soldiers of his company seemed to be happy about the death of the platoon sergeant, and he cannot totally dismiss the terrible suspicion that the platoon sergeant was intentionally killed by men of his own platoon. This would be a blatant sign of demoralization of his unit (Shibutani 1978; Schütze 1989); it would not fit at all with his predominant biographical orientation of adventurously experiencing the world and of becoming mature. It would also hint at the fact that the two action schemes Rasmus was in up to that point (the one of fighting in a just war and the one of using the military service as a touristic trip) were not quite as completely moral as he had thought before.

The interjected argumentative background construction tries to fight off a potential, irritating, background story of suspected murder of the platoon sergeant by men of Rasmus’s own platoon. But, he cannot totally dismiss or bury this possible story. After having argued: “I’m sure the guys who

said they would kill him were horrified that their wish came true” (p. 43, para. 4), he is caught again by his personal recollection, and he has to go on narratively: “[m]y best friend was leaning against a tree. We were waiting for further instructions. He had this sly grin on his face. I was so aghast. It didn’t occur to me that one of our people had done it” (p. 43, para. 5). Then, he gets the looming, but not expounded alternative background narrative of murder under control again, and – as if under an inner censorship, fighting his own experiences and feelings of suspicion – he goes on with his defensive scheme of argumentation: “I’m really sure we didn’t” (p. 43, para. 5; p. 44, para. 1).

Any background construction is empirically detectable by its impact on the main story line – it cuts the concatenation of the unfolding events. It intersperses something different. This thrown-in string of text is characterized by a totally different mode of presentation – the perspective of experiencing, the time, the line of addressed events, the way of evaluation, or even the sort of communication scheme suddenly changes. Usually, a formal device of de-focusing, contextual embedding, and presentational downgrading is used to make sure that the listener understands perfectly that now a string of talk will follow, which is just a detour from the main story line. All this is obvious at the beginning of our background structure: “[y]ou have to understand the culture of our company” (p. 43, para. 4). This “introductory” sentence turns away the attention from the main story line, addresses instead the listener, exhibits the tone of an “aside” string of talk, it changes time, topics, and experiential perspective, and – most important

in our present example – it dismisses the narrative scheme of communication and instead enacts the communicative scheme of argumentation (cf. Schütze 1987:65-79).

I have contended already that within the narrative unit under scrutiny (that about the death of the platoon sergeant) the controlling or prevailing communicative scheme of the background construction is an argumental one. Although interspersed with strings of description and narration, which serve as elements of empirical evidence, its essential presentational activities and its internal dynamics are purely argumental, except for the string of narrative talk immediately mentioned before, which depicts a chunk of recollected experience of disgust and suspicion (about the friend with a “sly grin on his face”).

In my present article, I will not undertake a meticulous analysis of the internal dynamics of this scheme of argumentation. It is enough to understand here that the basic activity of it again and again is to fight off the “haunting” proposition (not spelled out, but only implicitly being evident) that the platoon sergeant was killed by men of Rasmus’s own platoon and that his company was in a serious state of demoralization. Pursuing his argumentative fight, Rasmus employs the following argumental basic activities: (a) stating counter-propositions, like: “I am sure we didn’t [kill him],” (b) formulating general reasons for the counter-propositions, which either suggest that Rasmus’s company was a normal one and had the normal amount of demoralization (“I am sure our company was typical” [p. 44, para. 2]), or point to the essential unexpectedness, irony, and

brutalization features of war experience in general, and not to the special demoralization of Rasmus’s platoon (“[a]dded to the horror of our first dead is that he’s the one all of us hated so much [p. 44, para. 1]), and (c) attempting to give empirical evidence for his repeated counter-proposition, evidence which only provides examples for the general feature of “normal demoralization” (e.g., “[w]e [i.e., our company] had X percent of self-inflicted wounds” [p. 44, para. 2]) and do not empirically back any specific refutation of Rasmus’s looming alternative “self-accusation” that the demoralization of his military unit would have been extraordinary. It might be concluded that, in this background construction, which originally started as a repair device for narrative implausibility, Rasmus desperately and unsuccessfully attempts to argue away the hurting collective-demoralization features (which are not “just normal” and relatively harmless) and personal guilt features of war he had to encounter during his presence within the European war theatre.

So far, I have dealt with background constructions as repair devices within the presentational procedure of narrative units. As mentioned earlier, the research step of structural description attempts to reconstruct the sequential and internal features of narrative units and embedded background constructions in order to accurately portray the “authentic” (“then” actual and later worked-through and reworked) biographical experiences the biography incumbent had to undergo. Dealing with self-theoretical autobiographical commentaries, too, the structural description additionally tries to spell out the argumental activities of the informant relating himself towards (parts of) his biog-

raphy and identity. Of course, the latter sub-step of structural description is only possible in relation to the narrative flow of biographical experiences reconstructed already. Otherwise, self-theoretical statements would always tend to be interpreted autonomously, that is, methodically treated and understood separately from the context of the textual presentation of the narrative. Self-theoretical statements have always to be tied (a) to their presentational function within the narrative unit and (b) through this to their genesis, development, change, and decline in former and present biographical processes. [This tying and embedding can be called the methodological principle of “pragmatic refraction.”]

The empirically most visible road signs that analytically lead to the actually experienced biographical structural processes as rendered by any extempore narrative of personal experiences are to trace down and follow up the supra-segmental markers which organize the autobiographical text in compounds of narrative units. These compounds represent phases in life where a certain structural process of biography is the dominant organization principle of how the biography incumbent addresses and handles his life and identity. Of course, there can also be a contest between several structural processes; then, the text will reveal a mixture of supra-segmental markers of different biographical processes. But, still, in most cases, one system of markers pointing to a certain single biographical process will be dominant. At least for a while, then, it reflects the frail dominance of a certain structural process during a limited, naturally segmented passage of former life course experiences of the informant.

At the same time, supra-segmental markers expose the *general* features of the temporally prolonged ordering devices of biography (i.e., the basic mechanisms of structural processes of biography), as well as the *unique*, very personal features of the life course experience and organization of the informant. As biography incumbent, for instance, throughout her or his actual life course, she or he employs a general grammar of relating to her or his self-identity and of organizing her or his life experientially, orientationally, and practically. Concurrently, the biography incumbent invests these elementary organization devices with the very specific features of her or his unique life and her or his unique orientation and style of activity towards it. Both aspects, the general and the unique, are expressed by means of supra-segmental markers. Supra-segmental markers together with the joint forces of those unit markers within the introductory and closing parts of narrative units, which as densely formulated preface and summary statements are packed with general depictions and evaluations of the essentials of the informant’s life course, exhibit the most elementary, most empirically based, and most axiomatic – and that means at least partially: most non-reflected and least controllable abstract predicates in terms of which the informant as biography incumbent envisions her or his life course.

The Most Central Outcome of Structural Description: Delineation of Biographical Processes and Their Compounds

In the very process of identifying the narrative units, the supra-segmental compounds of them are recognized, too. This is quite easily accomplished because

– in addition to the obvious fits of narrative units with each other – supra-segmental compounds are marked by very elaborate and obvious segmenting procedures of the narrator at the temporal boundaries of their presentational dominance during the course of narration. Supra-segmental boundary markers as special versions (in introductory and ending position) of the supra-segmental markers already mentioned, in addition to and beyond other symbolic means, depict the stretched out structural processes of biography very clearly. In their special way of enactment and interpretation, these biographical structural processes are the most unique and “personal” ordering devices for individual biographies. On the other hand, their basic constitutive mechanisms universally occur in biographies of all kinds. The backbones of structural processes of biography are specific activity relationships of the biography incumbent to the pertinent phases of her or his life (cf. Schütze 1981; 1984; Riemann and Schütze 1991). There are four of these basic relationships:

- a. Biographical action schemes. They represent the intentional principle of long range (“biographically”) planned social action regarding one’s own life course. By enacting a biographical action scheme, the biography incumbent does something specific with his or her own life and identity by intention.
- b. Institutionalized schedules for organizing biographies. They represent the normative principle of being oriented at and controlled by institutional expectations regarding the life course in general or certain phases or aspects of it (e.g., following an organizational career).

- c. Biographical trajectories. They represent the principle of being overwhelmed by superior, for the biography incumbent, not controllable, heteronomous, mostly “outer”¹⁵ events of the life course (as a serious disease, as the immediate impact of war, as losing one’s occupational position, etc.), and of reacting to the conditional relevances posed by them. The basic experiential mode of biographical trajectories is suffering.
- d. Biographical metamorphoses. They represent the surprise principle of unexpectedly encountering new enriching features (i.e., creative abilities) of identity, as well as enabling potentials of life course situations. They cannot be reached directly by pre-planned steps of biographical activity.

Now, here is just one part of the outcome of the structural description of the Rasmus interview – just that part, which is necessary for me to mention in order to be able to continue my overall argument how to pursue biography analysis and how to state what is the case in the life history of Rasmus. As far as it is revealed through his partial narrative account – “partial” since it does not tell his life before and after the war – Rasmus’s military and war phase of biography contains the follow-up of dominance of three modes of biographical experiencing: (1) a biographical action scheme of adventurously encountering new life situations (using the metaphor of touristic travel [p. 39, para. 3 to p. 41, para. 6]); (2) a trajectory

¹⁵ Of course, those non-controllable, heteronomous, adverse events of the life course can even start in the “inner” social and identity sphere of the biography incumbent – such as disastrous distortions of important personal relationships to significant others or serious mental disorders (as analyzed in Riemann 1987); but even then they are “strange” and in a certain sense “foreign” within, and in a relationship to, the personal identity territory of the biography incumbent.

experience (the experience of being conditioned by overwhelming outer adverse experiences caused by the war and of becoming a sufferer, this without the capacity for effective intentional planning for one’s own [p. 41, para. 6 to p. 45, para. 3]); and (3) taking part in a collective action scheme of conducting a righteous war (p. 45, para. 4 to p. 47, para. 2). [But, it is important to mention that this is just the sequence of *dominance* of biographical structural processes; as sub-dominant and, partly, latent processes all three structural processes stretch over the whole gamut of Rasmus’s war phase of life.]

The pivotal biographical action scheme that Rasmus embarks on is that of adventurously encountering new situations in life. This general type of action scheme is always invoked if and when the biography incumbent feels stuck with the shallowness and boredom of his or her old life situation in which the then dominant biographical structural process no longer delivers productive biographical meaning. Thus, the biography incumbent starts to search for new, sometimes even strange, life situations, which are creative for providing fresh or even unprecedented biographical themes, which might possibly make sense. Job changes, adventurous travels, new social worlds, new socio-cultural milieus, and new personally shaped social relationships could be such creative life situations. Very often, the biographical action scheme of adventurously encountering new situations in life serves as an open avenue to biographical metamorphosis processes. Although Rasmus does not talk about its outcome, since his narrative is thematically focused on the war only, it is quite obvious that he undergoes a dynamic and creative change of identity, a metamorphosis during

and immediately after the war – he expresses his maturation from the state of a mama’s boy into a state of a decided, circumspect “leadership” man who is able to take risks (p. 38, para. 1, p. 39, para. 1) and to look behind the facades of personal presentations (p. 40, para. 1, p. 48, para. 3); he probably goes to university what he presumably did not plan before his military service, and he develops the capacities of an extremely competent business executive.¹⁶

¹⁶ This is just a conjecture, which is based on the following phenomena:

a) on the argumental, self-theoretical parts of Rasmus’s rendering, it is obvious that Rasmus uses the language of metamorphosis in his self-theoretical biographical commentaries, especially, within the introductory parts and in the pre-coda and coda parts of his narrative but also throughout the story line, wherever biographical commentaries come up (especially those which are tied to the explanations and argumentations within the two background constructions). Rasmus’s argumental metamorphosis rhetoric is concerned with his process of maturation allegedly accelerated and partly even only made possible through the impact of war experiences. So, he announces in his story introduction: “I was a skinny, gaunt kind of mama’s boy. I was going to gain my manhood then” (p. 39, para. 1). But, these theoretical reflections are only dimly based in the segmental and supra-segmental organization of the main story line; i.e., he can only recollect faint memories of actual identity changes of metamorphosis in that special (war service) version of adolescent maturation as formulated in his self-theoretical biographical commentaries. [There seems to be some discrepancy, too, between the factual war experiences as rendered by the strings of narrative sentences of Rasmus’s autobiographical account and his activities of self-reflection and theorizing. This does not mean that there is not any metamorphosis processes involved in Rasmus’s new period of life, but they are less obvious than Rasmus assumes himself, and they are very much tied to the *dominant* biographical structural processes in Rasmus’s life in military and war service, which are two biographical action schemes and a trajectory.];

b) on the description which, inserted into the interview text, Terkel gives of the personal appearance of Robert Rasmus (p. 38, para. 2); and

c) on the general metamorphosis perspective of Terkel’s introduction to his volume, where the Rasmus case plays a central role as an example for the collective “growth change,” which the war allegedly caused on the American society (Terkel 1984: 6-12, 15-16).

Of course, the last two groundings of the metamorphosis thesis are just Terkel’s point of view: his interpretation and typification. And the assumption of Rasmus’s going to college is even less grounded. About that there is no hint in the text. But, we know from many other narrative accounts in the Terkel’s volume, and in my own corpus of narrative interviews, how decisive the GI Bill was for the college education of the homecoming soldiers, which in many cases had not been expected before the outbreak of the war.

Biographical action schemes of adventurously encountering new life situations are paradoxical insofar as the focus of their intentional planning and forecasting is very vague, although a grammar of action is employed for their organization and handling. [This grammar of action provides an activity sequence of formulating and announcing goals, of attempting to get consultation and legitimating from significant others, of considering the means for realizing the action scheme, of choosing one way of realization over others, of beginning to perform the core activities of the action scheme, of assessing the initial effectiveness of performance and its impact on identity, of performing further steps of the core activities of the action scheme and assessing their effectiveness, of formulating the results of the action scheme, and of evaluating its over-all performance.] The goals and steps of the biographical action scheme of adventuring into the world are only vaguely sensed, but as soon as they have been grasped, the biography incumbent starts to think that she or he had always known clearly what was going to happen (cf. Schütze 1981:70-88, 133-138).

Rasmus wants to escape from the narrow confines of his protected and parochial adolescent life. The war and the military service offer creative life situations for finding new biographical themes, although Rasmus does not know what these themes will be. Rasmus's biographical action scheme of adventuring into the world is expressed explicitly in the introduction to his narrative: "I had this great sense of adventure. My gosh, going across the ocean, seeing the armies, the excitement of it. I was there" (p. 38, para. 6). Rasmus invests it with subjectively unique biographical features by interpreting the action scheme as his becoming a tourist. Of course, here, again, Rasmus uses an ele-

ment from the common inventory of American (and European) culture, but it is used in a personal, original, and creative way. This evaluation is based on the consideration that Rasmus has to realize his touring, paradoxically, via going to war as a soldier, haunted by the risk of death, and via the bureaucratic army organization. He remarks, for example: "[i]t was wonderment. I was preoccupied with staying alive and doing my job, but it seemed, out of the corner of my eye, I was constantly fascinated with the beauty of the German forests and medieval bell towers" (p. 39, para. 5). On the one hand, Rasmus symbolically schematizes his going to war as a touristic trip, on the other, he himself characterizes the impact of this schematization on his daily life and his biographical experience during his presence within the European war theatre as paradoxical, theatrical, schizophrenic. Just one of several possible quotations: "I was sort of schizophrenic all through this period. I was a participant, scared out of my wits. But I was also acutely aware of how really theatrical and surreal it was" (p. 41, para. 5).¹⁷

¹⁷ At first glance, at least from the European point of view, the symbolic schematization of one's going to war as a touristic trip seems to be extraordinary. But, I also found this stylistic feature in several of my American narrative interviews. Here is the example of the extended narrative interview with Joe Martini: (a) traveling to the training camp: "I went through lot ... of the southern part of the U.S. ... I'm fascinated by things, you know, I see and hear—and things I had read about—(eh) either—seen in movies, or—read in books, or—people had told me about. So I was very interested in ... the whole trip" (13, 21-34), (b) traveling to the embarkation harbor: "[a]gain, this was another—major experience, 'cause again, we were traveling.—And again, there was a s-sight-seeing trip" (16, 52-54), (c) being in a preparation camp in France: "[a]nd we were out in many parts of the countryside, which was again, was another—tremendous experience for me, which I ... just—felt this was—wonderful! But—/ wonderful, yes, but with some, you know, reserve feelings" (18, 40-45), (d) being an occupation soldier in Germany after the war: "I liked what I was doing ... (ah) Again, because of the—variety of things, and the—the fact, that it was, you know, it was—a lot of things to see, and—i—it was a certain amount like, like a, like a *tourist* type thing, up to a point" (38, 20-24). Of course, Joe Martini, too, experiences the particularly *paradoxical* character of this adventuring action scheme, which is framed by trajectory experiences. He, too, encounters these paradoxical phenomena as subjectively unique.

The trajectory experience of war is provoked by the impact of overwhelming collective events on the biography incumbent, events which were not expectable, controllable, or accountable, and which do not obey the usual reciprocity rules of social interaction. Of course, the pivotal aspect of experiencing war events is the always felt danger that they can cause one's own death and that of fellow interactants. [In this aspect, war experiences are comparable to life-threatening illnesses.]¹⁸ The feeling of non-controllability and of constant fear downgrade the capacity of the biography incumbent to plan – be it every day affairs or stretches of the life course. The paralysis of formerly commanded action capacities renders the subject strange to himself or herself – he or she is unable to control situations which had been formerly controllable; he or she does not understand what is happening, and starts to lose self-esteem. Being trapped in such a trajectory situation for a long time without escape can cause transmutations of the trajectory process. Now, its impact on the life situation and identity of the biography incumbent widens – he or she starts to doubt his or her own moral integrity, starts to suspect that the bonds of social solidarity, even in his or her *own* social collectivity, have been destroyed and no one can be trusted, and starts to act towards others on the basis of stra-

¹⁸ The sociological trajectory concept was developed by Anselm Strauss, Barney Glaser, and Shizuko Fagerhaugh when they analyzed work activities of nurses and medical doctors dealing with the control of terminal and chronic illnesses and the respective care of patients. [See especially: Strauss and Glaser 1970; Strauss et al. 1985, chap. 2]. Later on, Riemann and Schütze (1991) applied the trajectory concept to biographical processes proper, and Schütze (1989; 1992:96f) utilized it for the analysis of processes of collective disorder and moral deterioration, as well as of the entanglement of one's individual biography and identity in it.

tegic suspicion and calculation, or even on the basis of symbolic or literal violence, and not on moral rules.¹⁹

Not only Rasmus's experiences in the framework of the biographical action scheme of adventuring into the world but also his trajectory experiences are addressed within the introductory part of his narrative. For example, "I was acutely aware, being a rifleman, the odds were high that I would be killed. At one level, animal fear" (p. 38, para. 6). Rasmus's narrative account of his (individual) trajectory experiences is especially enlightening insofar as it demonstrates that most sub-processes of the (individual) trajectory organization of biography that I have alluded to are happening even in cases where the shaping of *collective* events is not that of an all-encompassing collective trajectory (as it was for the already defeated German enemy), but that of a quite controlled and successful collective action scheme involving the fighting and winning of a perceived just war (as it was for the Allied Forces).

The core of Rasmus's extempore narrative of his biographical encounter of war is the presentational intermixture between the style of rendering experiences in terms of both a biographical action scheme of adventuring into the world and a biographical trajectory. This stylistic intermixture

¹⁹ The *demoralization* transformation of collective trajectory of war, on the one hand, and the *moral-distortion* transformation of it, on the other, are meticulously dealt with in Schütze (1989). See also: Shibutani (2000, chap. XI). The term "moral distortion" (*Entmoralisierung*) means the intentional, radical, and systematic breaking of moral principles in contrast to the more ordinary demoralization phenomena of losing hope and courage, of starting mistrust, of feeling paralyzed.

reflects that in Rasmus's course of actual life experiences the action scheme and trajectory modes of organizing biography were fighting each other. At the beginning the "travel scheme" reigns; after facing possible combat contact with the German enemy (this was symbolically marked for Rasmus by the crossing of a pontoon bridge, perhaps across the Rhine), the trajectory mode dominates. And after the interlude of Rasmus's taking part in the collective action scheme of fighting the just war as a prevailing biographical experience, the biographical action scheme of adventuring into the world becomes dominant again, at least in the sense that it is declared finally dominant by virtue of the evaluations and biographical commentaries connected with the coda of Rasmus's account. The latter does not mean that the biographical action scheme was the more intense and the more lifetime covering and live experience carrying structural process in Rasmus's biography. It only expresses the fact that in later life Rasmus did work through his war experience mainly in terms of a biographical action scheme of adventuring into the world and that he then tended to fade out the trajectory aspect from his biographical attention.

What is most interesting for our ongoing discussion of the Rasmus narrative, too, is that the (trajectory type) conditional mode of experiencing the war, which is so overwhelmingly evident in many German autobiographical narratives – although it is somewhat marked as important in Rasmus's narrative, too – does not overshadow and dominate the other (i.e., the intentional) modes of his biographical experiencing.

Comparing Background Constructions as Unintended Expressions of Disorders of Experience, on the One Hand, and Global Argumental Commentaries and Evaluations as Self-Theoretical Devices for the Interpretive Ordering of Biography, on the Other

Turning now to the sub-units of Rasmus's story line: its two background constructions are especially interesting. The first tells the story of the group of peers to which Rasmus should have belonged, but from which he was separated because of quite an ordinary sickness (p. 39, para. 5 to p. 40, para. 1). Its members underwent tragic experience: many died. Even today, the narrator has the feeling that something very important, that is, a truly fateful, tragic experience, is missing in his life. Possibly, there is some envy for the comrades, envisioned as heroes who underwent their fateful experiences, and some guilt feelings that, as compared to them, things were too easy for him, which is lurking behind the facade of his storytelling.

The second background story deals with the death of the hated platoon sergeant (p. 43, para. 3 to p. 44, para. 3). Although Rasmus stresses that he has no doubt the sergeant was killed by the Germans, he cannot really dismiss his doubts in this direction. This particular background story deals with the possibility of dirty, guilty hands in the American army, and with the gloomy outlook that the conduct of at least some American soldiers (or "nice boys" as seen by the general American public) during the war was not as good as it ought to be. Background constructions very often deal with faded out (cf. Schütze 1992) or even repressed experiences and

mental activities. Questions not to be asked would be: Am I lacking heroic experiences and virtues which many of my dead and my living comrades are able to possess? And, was the war even for "us" dirtier than I would like to think of it?

Now, it is interesting to compare the biographical evaluations of the beginning and the end of the storytelling (p. 38, para. 1 to p. 38, para. 2; p. 48, para. 3) with the two background constructions just discussed briefly. In order to recall the tone of these evaluations, I will quote (again) one sentence both from the introductory part and from the closing section of the Rasmus narrative: "[i]n business, there'll be times when I say, this really worries the heck out of me, but it's really minor compared to having to do a river crossing under fire" (p. 38, para. 1), and: "[i]n a short period of time, I had the most tremendous experiences of all of life: of fear, of jubilation, of misery, of hope, of comradeship, and of the endless excitement, the theatrics of it" (p. 48, para. 3). Comparing the background constructions and the central biographical evaluations of Rasmus's war account, an interesting question is: Do these argumental evaluations (carried out by means of generalized reflective sentences of argumental character representing the "subject theory" of the informant) really cover the factual flow of biographical experiences as actually, at least partially, recapitulated within the concatenation of narrative units?

One gets the impression that the biographical evaluations cover the whole gamut of Rasmus's (two) intentional action schemes enacted and carried out during his time in the war – experiences of adven-

ture, of community, of encounters with the "truth features" of reality, and of righteousness can be found in the argumental evaluations of the story announcement and in the coda commentary. On the other hand, the argumental evaluations of the story preface and the story coda defocus Rasmus's experiences of severe suffering and his encounters with guilt and evil within the "we"-community of fellow American soldiers.

Especially intriguing is Rasmus's theoretical commentary in pre-coda position (p. 47, para. 3 to p. 48, para. 2). As I mentioned already, pre-coda biographical commentaries normally reflect central self-theoretical concerns of the informant as biography incumbent, not only during the present period of his or her life but also during the time span depicted in his or her narrative account. They can even reveal the informant as biography incumbent quarreling with himself or herself. The first third of Rasmus's pre-coda biographical commentary is (p. 47, para. 3 and para. 4):

I've reflected on why people my age and with my experience don't have that spontaneous willingness to be part of the nuclear freeze. It's the sense that the Germans were willing to lose millions of men. And they did. Every German house we went to, there would be black-bordered pictures of sons and relatives. You could tell that most of them died on the Eastern front. And the Russians lost twenty million.

Later, we were back in the States being retrained for the Japanese invasion. The first nuclear bomb was dropped. We ended halfway across the Pacific. How many of us would have been killed on the mainland if there were no bomb? Someone like me has this specter.

Rasmus's pre-coda self-theoretical biographical commentary might be sketched roughly as follows: we, Americans, are not fighters and sufferers of endurance. Because we cannot win a conventional war against a nation of enduring fighters and sufferers (like the Russians and the Vietnamese would be), we have to resort to technological substitutes of classical war (with its unavoidable encounters of man against man) in order to build America into an unconquerable fortress. The most obvious technological substitute, of course, would be a machinery of nuclear weapons. Throughout his argument, Rasmus seems to be lacking an ability to "take the role" or experiential perspective "of the other" (Mead 1934: chap. 20, 33, and appendix III), that is, of the potential victims of such a technologized war machinery which is prone to mass destruction. Yet, he has been able to take into account the sufferings of wounded and dead Germans as individual combatants sufferings he could realize as soon as the helmets of the enemy soldiers were off (cf. p. 44f). But, he cannot translate this experience and its related emotional and cognitive conclusions into notions on the level of conflicting collective aggregates or even conflicting we-communities, that is, mental in-groups such as whole nations that are – and here his thinking lacks both some down-to-earth sense and cohesion – still consisting of individual members, mostly non-combatants, sentenced to death by technological war. In addition, he cannot transfer another important result of his war experience – a result derived from many encounters with suffering or dead Americans and Germans – that every victor might become a victim soon, onto the level of interaction between collective social units (e.g., nations as America and Russia) in nuclear war.

Analytical Abstraction of the Rasmus Narrative

The research step of analytical abstraction is meant as an endeavor to extract systematically the general and the distinctive features of the narrated life history and of the experiential, theoretical, and evaluative relationships of the informant with his own life history. There are two explorative questions to be asked:

- a. What (rather general) portions, aspects, features, and socio-biographical mechanisms of the analyzed stream of experiences in the scrutinized autobiographical text or interview would supposedly occur in other autobiographical texts or interviews, too? This is the question of *common* generalities *shared with* the life experiences of other biography incumbents.
- b. What are *distinctive* features and generalities of the stream of biographical experiences revealed by the autobiographical text – distinctive for this specific biography incumbent? This is the question of notable specificities of the analyzed case.

Normally, the text material of the case as embodied in the autobiographical account or interview repeatably reveals the notable specific features in some sort of self-generalization within the case. What is here in operation is not just the "personal style," but in addition the specific "construction principle" of the case. [And the very fact of recurrence shows that the phenomenon addressed is not just one accidental happening.] It is plausible that a first step in answering the second explanatory question would therefore be to pull together the recurring case specific features and elements of the text materials (including self-theoretical statements)

and to conduct systematic "generalizations within the case" (Geertz 1973).²⁰ After this, in a second step, the stable phenomena as results of generalizations within the case should be studied more closely. This is done to discover the less obvious, the abstract²¹ underlying general mechanisms, which this case still shares with others (in addition to the obvious ones, which were already stated in answering the first question), as well as to detect the distinctive features, which make the case really special. A closer examination can then come up

²⁰ Cf. Geertz (1973:26). Of course, Geertz applies this concept not to single biographies (or single autobiographical texts), but to the "theoretical peculiarities" of "clusters of symbolic acts" of local societies or cultures as collective identities. Although Geertz's cases are collective identities, his methodological concept of generalization within the case is applicable to individual, biographical cases, too. The interpretive procedures or analytical acts of (a) "inferring (presumptive) signifiers" from the empirical case materials and "placing them within an intelligible frame," which makes the order of symbolic activities understandable as partial patterns of (collective or individual) identity and its subareas, as well as of (b) "scanning" the empirical case materials for additional "theoretical peculiarities" on the base of the symbolic patterns, which have already been inferred and understood, are pivotal in biography analysis, too.

²¹ "Abstract mechanisms" in the sense that they are not obvious and only detectable through the systematic comparison of repetitive, similar, and contrastive phenomena within the case. Some are tied to specific paradoxes of the unfolding case, e.g., being at the same time an enchanted touristic traveler and a sufferer particularly prone to death. Abstract mechanisms are here, i.e., the openness of adolescent identity to biographical and social otherness, as well as its proneness to the fading out of possible suffering and death. An additional abstract mechanism connected with it is the (specific historical state of) the informant's (open or closed) symbolic universe of the (national or group) collectivity at the very time in former life when she or he, as actor and biography incumbent, enthusiastically has encountered the otherness of social life in the form of living in foreign countries, of meeting culturally different interaction partners, of getting into strange situations, of exploring one's own unexpected inner developments, etc. Generally speaking, the term "abstract mechanisms" refers to the self-generalizing processes of biography and autobiographical work which imply or even demonstratively unearth "underlying" (i.e., formerly unnoticed or even unseen, "unconscious") patterns, which appear again and again during the life course of the biography incumbent herself or himself, as well as partially, too, in the life courses of other persons (being real or possible interaction partners). Not only the impact of collective (social and historical) processes but also patterns of generality (which are abstractable from single interaction situations, single periods of life, single life courses, and even single collective cultures) occur in any particular biography (as the unique history of an individual) and its autobiographical rendering. Also see footnote 28.

with some abstract conclusions about what is really unique in the case under scrutiny – "unique" at least in the subjective experience and interpretation of the biography incumbent – and the general conditions for this uniqueness should be stated hypothetically. A related question, which should also be faced, is what is openly or covertly shared with other, in many aspects, different cases as members of the same social category. The distinctiveness of this social category as compared with alternative ones should be stated in terms of its abstract and generalized contrastive features as distinguishers between the different single cases of the general social category.

Common Generalities Shared with Other Biographies

Regarding the Rasmus case, answers to the first question might be as follows. The mixture of adventure and sense of mortal danger might be a common feature of (especially) male war accounts. As a concatenation of central collective events impinging on nations and their sub-units, war changes social situations of life, enhancing the feelings of community and offering combatants the chance to enact (or in the case of war experiences probably better termed as: to succumb to) biographical action schemes of adventurously experiencing new aspects of life especially what one could name the "truth features" of life. It is somewhat a sad conclusion, but at least parts of war experiences seem to yield opportunities for enhancing the sensitivity for life and for encountering the truth-values of life, of nature, of social relationships, and of biography.

In this positive regard of encountering the truth-values of life, the war experience can become

a pivotal, intensively experienced time in life, or even the turning point in biography (which, on the other hand, could possibly result in early death. A moving literary account of this is Hemmingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*). Of course, it could also become a turning point of life in many other, much sadder senses: losing the husband, becoming inflicted by serious injuries and diseases, losing faith in life and in mankind, getting killed before "real," self-autonomous, life has started, et cetera.

I have seen the impact of war experiences on enhancing one's sensibility for life even in many German autobiographical narrative interviews with old German informants who had been young adults in World War II and who had experienced – contrary to Rasmus – a collective trajectory of the systematic moral-distortion kind.²² It is not confined to the experiences of those who have won a war. Even in the thematically not war oriented, but differently thematized (e.g., on unemployment, illness, alcoholism, etc.) life-course spanning narrative interviews or topically totally unfocussed, "broad scale" autobiographical interviews²³ with

Germans who had been young adults in World War II, the war experiences are told in a very lively ("episodical") mood with inserts describing interaction situations, ongoing conversations, personality characteristics of persons, et cetera. Instead, earlier and later parts of the biography incumbents' lives *before and after the war* are told in a quite condensed style and depressed mood. [In some of these cases the recollection of war experiences may take two-thirds of the whole autobiographical account or more, whereas their actual extension in lifetime was just one-seventh or less.]

Distinctive Features of the Rasmus Account

A remarkable distinctive aspect of Rasmus's autobiographical account of his life during World War II seems to be his tendential de-focussation of the aspects of combat "dirty work," of encounters of immorality and brutality within the boundaries of the community of "we-people," of becoming guilty oneself, of personal suffering and fear as a human being especially "prone to death," and expecting in anguish to leave behind persons who would suffer desperately. I do not contend that these tragic and

the Hermann interview in Schütze [1992]; see footnote 4 of Schütze [1992:206]). In methodological terms, especially *their* narrative rendering of war experiences is most valuable because by this it is proven that the high biographical impact of war experiences, its "watershed character" in many autobiographical accounts of old people is by no means an interview artifact caused by the interview introduction and/or by an assumed public interest. Thirdly, I did narrative interviews in which the informants were just asked to tell their complete life because it would seem to be very interesting for me (to a certain degree, that happened in the Hermann interview, too, in Schütze [1992]; see footnote 4, p. 206 of that article). Those interviews demonstrate that the life course as such is a cognitive gestalt which can be told, i.e., is a narrative topic. [But, in normal social science research projects, except projects on aging and of oral history, which might naturally deal with the "whole life course," such a broad thematization of the interview topic is not possible since the informants generally expect a substantively specified interview topic.]

fateful aspects are not observable in the Rasmus account, but they typically occur in embedded background constructions as reflections or repercussions of unsuccessful tendencies of de-focussation, or in narrative stretches which are ramified by the presentation of dominant experiences of adventure according to the enacted biographical action scheme of adventuring into new situations and aspects in life. And what is most conspicuous about the treatment of fateful and evil war experiences is that they are not dealt with in Rasmus's biographical evaluations and commentaries in a significant and straightforward way. The latter constitute the textual representation of Rasmus's autobiographical self-theory.

A related twofold question is: a) what is the impact of personal war experiences as such on biography? and b) what is the imprint of the symbolic universe²⁴ which Rasmus did *formerly* orient to in certain phases of his life (especially, during the war) or presently orients to?

It is obvious that symbolic-universe categories of society at large and/or of specific social units or social worlds furnish cognitive and evaluative grids, screens, and frames for the personal interpretation of war experiences. Narrators very often differentiate by their style of rendering and by their

²⁴ According to Berger and Luckmann (1966:88-90), symbolic universes provide ultimate and integrated meaning for a person's collective life and biography. They are the integrative structure of the collective stock of knowledge shared by the members of an inclusive (group, milieu, societal) life world. As social facts and social forces (*faits sociaux*, in the sense of Durkheim), they provide the ultimate meaning and "logic" of the collective stock of knowledge since they deal with the relationship between the course of personal identity, on the one hand, and the course of society (as well as other inclusive collectivities) and its (their) collective history (histories), on the other.

formal representation techniques between, on the one hand, "then" interpretations and evaluations (in the Rasmus case, conclusions having been effective during his time in World War II) and, on the other, the "now" elucidations and assessments (i.e., conclusions being valid during the time of the interview) within an encompassing and systematic self-theoretical framework. Categories of symbolic universe feeding into biographical interpretation and self-theorizing might possibly be the community and collective self-understanding of "we, the Americans" as a nation, set apart from other nations by spatial distance and technological cultivation; the "we" feeling and community of the comrades as members of the same generational age group, raised under the same collective socio-historical conditions (e.g., the Great Depression), and having been imbued with the same type of cultural values and orientations; the community and tradition of the army as an encompassing organization to which one belongs and which might even become one's home; et cetera.

Such "solidarity" categories of symbolic universe, which are relevant and functional for the biographical interpretation and theoretical explanation of certain personal and collective experiences, in our case – war experiences, should not be stated axiomatically, but explored empirically in the text material of the case, for example, in the Rasmus material, the universe categories of "we, the Americans," and "we, the comrades" are empirically present, whereas the universe category of "we, the army" is missing. [The latter is also missing in many of my German materials. The fact that for many soldiers, especially private soldiers and non-commissioned

officers, bonding mechanisms of peer relationship were much more important than the membership in the army organization as such, was of pivotal relevance for maintaining the *esprit de corps* of the army (cf. Schütze 1989).]

The idea which comes to my mind after looking into the Rasmus material is that categories of symbolic universe might play some important role in the overall theoretical interpretation and “working through” of war experiences, as well as in the focusing and de-focusing of important sections of biographical war experiences. [This perhaps more than in the respective treatment of other life experiences because the feelings and emotions in war are extremely intense.] And the theoretical interpretation or reinterpretation by means of symbolic universes could feed into attitudes towards policies on international affairs, multinational cooperation, and defense. My first, very preliminary, expectation is that for present-day European informants it would be much more complicated (i.e., implying more explanatory and legitimatory work) to draw neatly organized, self-assertive, and self-contained, as well as action-oriented and strongly-minded policy conclusions from biographical war experiences than Rasmus does because in Europe there is not such an efficient symbolic universe available of the kind as “we, the people set apart”.²⁵

But, that is just a crude speculation, which can only be differentiated and tested by systematically

²⁵ But, see the category of European mental space (Schütze and Schröder-Wildhagen 2012) as derived from the joint “EUROIDENTITIES” research project conducted during the years 2008-2011. The “EuroIdentities” research project was funded by the EU’s 7th Framework Program under Grant Agreement no. 213998. General Publications: Robert Miller and Graham Day (2012); Kaja Kaźmierska (2011).

comparing autobiographical materials of American and European informants. And the outcome would surely reveal a rather complicated picture, without any simple contrast propositions about “there the Americans” and “here the Europeans.” The respective theoretical model would deal with different types of personal and collective biographical experiences of war and how they shape the categories of symbolic universe for orienting and legitimating social life and politics; with the different types of symbolic universe categories and systems themselves and how they, in turn, exert their impact on biographical interpretations of war experiences; and with the orientational, explanatory, and legitimating power of biographical interpretations of war experiences to shape, in turn, the attitudes towards policies on international relationships, multinational cooperation, and defense. Very different webs of relationships between personal and collective war experiences, symbolic universes, biographical interpretations, and attitudes towards those large-scale policies would be found in each country under scrutiny. But, the more specific questions of the alternative orientational and legitimating functions of symbolic universes are partly beyond the step of analytical abstraction already since the whole systematics and the structural conditions of these functions of symbolic universes need contrastive comparisons in order to be studied in their alternative social contexts.

The Sub-Steps of Analytical Abstraction

The step of analytical abstraction always starts with spelling out the overall biographical structuring of the life course as revealed in the autobiographical

narrative account. One cannot do this elaborately with the Rasmus material because it is basically confined to the war experiences of the informant. But, looking at the segmental and supra-segmental markers of the narrative, it is clear to me that the overall experiential frame of Rasmus’s encounter with war, which has much impact on Rasmus’s later biographical sense-making practices, is a biographical action scheme of adventurously searching for new situations and aspects of life, that is, to open up metamorphosis processes. This type of biographical action scheme is noted for its capacity to reveal new sources of creativity, to furnish new personal capacities, to let the biography incumbent find a “red thread” in life. Rasmus states that his personal war experiences had a great positive impact on his life; through it he detected his own personal strengths, “matured,” and was later probably much more decided regarding his further education and civilian career.

The next sub-step of the analytical abstraction is to spell out the relationships between biographical processes and social (interactional and collective) processes (Kłoskowska 2001; Bertaux 2006). In this regard, we learn from the Rasmus material that the social processes in the American army of World War II allowed for encounters with oneself – for individualization and personal growth; at least in the (very real) personal experiences of Rasmus, the army did not function as a depersonalizing total institution.²⁶ [These attributes could quite frequently be found in autobiographical narrative accounts of West-Germans telling about their experiences of having been drafted into the *Bundeswehr*, before it

²⁶ But, see as a counter example Shibutani’s analytically dense report on the collective demoralization of a Japanese American (Nisei) military unit in World War II (1978).

became a professional army without conscription,²⁷ although in other autobiographical interviews the army service by conscription was also experienced as a valuable moratorium for biographical searching on one’s biographical – educational and occupational – potentials and related capacities of creative developments.] The reasons for the contrast between the army as a suitable social arrangement for biographical development and work, on the one hand, and the army as an mighty and harsh organization barring or even crushing personal development, on the other, can be manifold: such as organizational and leadership differences, differences in biographical preconditions, differences of symbolic universes, differences in the *esprit de corps*, and the collective, especially macro-historical, sense-making potentials of soldier life (that are quite different in post-fascist and long-term democratic states). The reasons for experiencing the army as depersonalizing or not can only be formulated via meticulous and systematic contrastive comparisons of various autobiographical materials. In addition, the Rasmus material reveals that, according to Rasmus’s experiences, comradeship can be a core element for the biographically relevant action orientation in everyday soldier life – the social relationships among fellow soldiers can be pivotal for conduct and comportment in army life, perhaps much more than any formal organizational control or officially inculcated values of “our army” or “my country” categories of symbolic universe.²⁸

²⁷ See, e.g., the case study of Felix in Schütze (1994).

²⁸ This is elaborated in Schütze (1989), which compares an American and a German case (the American one, Red Prendergast, also taken from the Terkel volume of “*The Good War*” [1984:48-66]). In this article, the category of (non-ideological) devices for tying the soldiers to the small solidarity groups within the army (and not to the army organization as such), which was sophisticatedly exploited by the army leadership, has been specified.

A third sub-step in the analytical abstraction is the task of reconstructing the self-theories of the informant from the several argumental commentaries spread out over his or her autobiographical narrative (especially, in preface, pre-coda, and coda positions), and relating them to the factual life course experiences of the informant as revealed in the detailed passages of extempore narration proper. The latter has already been analytically dealt with via the research activities of structural description of the narrative and of spelling out the overall biographical structuring of the life course of the informant (sub-step 1 of the analytical abstraction). But, in addition, a “local analysis” of self-theoretical activities, sub-unit by sub-unit, has already been done within the research step of structural description; now, the task is to find out the overall systematics of these self-theoretical activities stretched out over the narrative and biography at large and to depict their systematic relationship to the overall biographical structuring of the life course. Not so much the question of possible “contrasts” itself between self-theorizing and factual experiencing is interesting. Much more the following issues are at stake: What are the socio-biographical functions of certain self-theorizing concepts (such as finding the key to oneself, legitimating difficult phases in life and their questionable activities, rationalizations, etc.)? Under what concrete life course conditions did they develop? And how (possibly) were they changed later on? Related to this are the questions: What was de-focused (faded out, repressed) in the story line and in the autobiographical commentaries? Under which situational and biographical conditions did those de-focusings occur? What is their impact

on biographical experiencing and self-theorizing? What was re-focused in later phases of life and regained dim or clear awareness by parallel second experiences and/or reflection? And what are the specific stabilizing or destabilizing functions of de- and re-focusing (fading out and recollection, repression, and working-through) for the overall biographical structuring?

In the Rasmus case, one might come to the conclusion that some parts of the informant’s self-theory are roughly “congenial” with his factual biographical experiences, for example, Rasmus’s self-theory about his personal war experiences as the “peak of life” that deals accurately with his “actual” war experiences (the latter reflected in the narrative) as a sequence of inner and outer events within the orientation framework of a biographical action scheme of adventuring into new situations in life. Nevertheless, other parts of Rasmus’s self-theory cannot be envisioned as fitting the experiential base of his life in World War II as rendered by his extempore narrative, for example, he – by means of his self-theoretical biographical commentaries – has not dealt adequately with his other (trajectory) experiences of demoralization and suffering. Moreover, his memory seems to have faded out²⁹ some of his actual experiences, for example, the harassment administered by the platoon ser-

²⁹ The category of fading out is much broader than the Freudian category of repression. Whereas many phenomena of fading out are “seen but unnoticed” (Garfinkel 1967:36), repression is always linked with experiential contents being fallen into oblivion and with socio-biographical processes being unconscious. There are different social and inner-psychic devices of fading out, which are discussed in Schütze (1989; 1992). Of course, devices of fading out were particularly efficacious within the millions of German life courses, which were entangled in the collective trajectory and moral deterioration of Nazi Germany.

geant, which surely must have made the lives of the young novice soldiers very difficult. These episodes are never told in Rasmus’s narrative.

Conclusion

The preceding article demonstrates steps of qualitative or interpretive analysis of autobiographical extempore narratives. It uses as an example one case of Terkel’s volume “*The Good War*.” The article stresses the point that, to a considerable extent, extempore narratives retrieve the actually ongoing experiences during past phases of life. But, since extempore narratives express some important aspects of former life experience only indirectly – and that means through allusions, style, or even partially non-intended and unnoticed paraverbal symptoms of talk – research has to start with the sequential analysis of the *formal* structures of narrative presentation. Knowing the formal structures of the presentational activities of extempore narratives, it is also possible to assess the literal authenticity and experiential validity of edited autobiographical texts,³⁰ such as those in Studs Terkel’s volumes or such as the “subjects’ own stories” of the Chicago tradition of sociology.³¹ The assessment of authenticity is grounded on the empirical criterion of how closely the edited text resembles the structures of extempore storytelling in their presentational orderliness (e.g., in the employment of devices for introducing new narrative units), on

³⁰ In terms of expressing the flow of former socio-biographical experiences.

³¹ Cf., e.g., the Władek autobiography in Thomas and Znaniecki’s *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1958), the Stanley autobiography in Clifford Shaw’s *The Jack-Roller* (1966), or the Wallace Baker diary in Ruth Shonle Cavan’s *Suicide* (1928).

the one hand, and in their seeming disarray (e.g., self-corrective devices like background constructions), on the other.

Interpretive sociological analysis quite often gets caught within the methodological limbo of either to take self-theoretical claims of the informant automatically at face value *or* to ignore them on the grounds of general methodical mistrust. The essay demonstrates how to identify self-theoretical activities of the informant, depict their partially self-deceptive and/or self-enlightening power, scrutinize their socio-biographical genesis or borrowing, and study their change (and their being influenced by other people, and by the modification and substitution of categories of symbolic universe) over the life course, and their practical functioning in organizing biography and everyday life.

Besides exceptions in symbolic interactionism (e.g., Strauss and Glaser 1970; Riemann 1987; Schütze 1991; 1992; 1993; 2012b; Riemann and Schütze 2011), community studies (e.g., Lynd and Lynd 1937, chap. X), ethnomethodology (e.g., Garfinkel 1967:116-185), cognitive sociology (e.g., Cicourel 1968, chap. 5, 6), and phenomenological sociology (e.g., Hildenbrand 1983), interpretive case analysis in the vein of the Chicago tradition of sociology and comparable traditions was not practiced in the social sciences after the 30s. One important reason for the decline of single case analysis was the methodological neglect of general process mechanisms, which are expressed in formal structures of interaction and communication. Through conversation analysis (e.g., Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974; Kallmeyer 1988; Sacks 1989), narrative

analysis (e.g., Labov 1972; Sacks 1978; Schütze 1983; 1987; 1992; 2008; Riemann 1987; 2000; Riemann and Schütze 1991; Schröder-Wildhagen and Schütze 2011), sequential analysis of professional work (e.g., Strauss et al. 1985; Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Riemann 2000; Schütze 2000), and new research procedures and approaches in cultural anthropology for analyzing communicative styles, knowledge systems, as well as scientific interaction and work (e.g., Turner 1973; Gumperz 1982; Geertz 1983; Mondada and Schütze 2004), it is now possible to delineate these formal structures and the constitutive activities which produced them. With such new research capabilities in our hands, we are able to resume the approach of the Chicago tradition of sociology towards the analysis of single cases. This is particularly promising since to quite a large extent the practical problems in our world are illuminated by single cases or even consists of them. Certainly, there are many problems of social collectivities to be encountered in social life, such as questions of war and peace, but these questions – looked at carefully – very often are *collective single case* problems, too. One ought not to confuse “single case” as opposed to “case comparison,” on the one hand, and “individual predicament” as contrasted with “collective phenomena,” on the other.³² Perhaps sociology can

offer new contributions to the analysis and solution of practical problems in personal life, interaction and/or society by a resurrection of single case analysis. It is methodically crucial to be able to extract general and unique (reoccurring) features from the structural processes of single cases.

It is my contention that when grounded on the sequential analysis of textual phenomena of extempore narratives, the extraction of general and unique features from single cases can unequivocally and thoughtfully be accomplished. For this, the research steps of structural description and analytical abstraction must be harnessed. But, of course, one has to keep in mind that single case analysis can only go as far as these research steps of structural description and analytical abstraction really carry the researcher: whereas it is possible to develop new theoretical ideas, notions, and hypotheses on the empirical base of single cases, and, in turn, to apply established theoretical concepts and models in use to single cases, it is not possible to construct new systematic and integrated theoretical models of qualitative sociology on the empirical ground of just one single case. For this, it is additionally requested to undertake contrastive comparisons of various cases. In order to reach at quite general (substantive or even formal) theoretic-

task is to depict the literal interaction of individual (and not of single) cases in order to analyze the production and change of collective phenomena – this done completely within the framework for single case analysis.

On the other hand, collective processes not only contain several *individual* but several *single* cases. That is, in order to reach the level of collective phenomena, the researcher has to compare single cases of collective experience since collective phenomena are also *general* phenomena, which symbolically dramatize features of collectivity experience organized by mechanisms shared many times by many individual members. Through this symbolic schematization the members typify their collective unity as an abstract entity, expecting it to be a set of general features imprinted on unique situations and events, wherever and whenever the collective unit will be encountered.

cal concepts and models, it is obligatory to compare highly different cases, too (i.e., through the research strategy of maximal contrast [cf. Glaser and Strauss 1973:55-58]). It is indispensable to continue the study of additional cases and to compare the analytical results gained from it with the insights received from the analyses of the formerly accomplished (partial or full scale) case studies, until the theoretical variance within the field under study is exhausted (cf. Strauss 1987:35, 36).

In later stages of the research, it is not obligatory any more to carry through *full scale* analyses of all the additional cases left to scrutiny (i.e., to continue to present overall structural descriptions of *complete* narrative interviews). One is then allowed to focus on *partial* aspects of socio-biographical phenomena. However, the deeper meanings of socio-biographical phenomena as revealed in autobiographical renderings are rooted in the *overall* biographical structuring of the life course of the biography incumbent. Hence, in later phases of the research, *shortened* procedures for the assessment of the overall biographical structuring have to be utilized. They must not be neglected or even skipped regarding those additional cases, which are planned to be studied just aspectually.

In my personal understanding at least, scientific methodology is only interesting to the extent that it helps to address basic theoretical and substantive questions of social reality (Schütze 2005). The preceding essay has attempted to depict some of the relationships between individual biographical processes and collective socio-historical processes. It is not just a methodological paper but the first step on

a ladder of additional studies (on additional single cases and/or on several cases compared contrastively) about the impact of war experiences on the life courses and biography constructions of individual members of several societies in order to address more and more contrastive features and case-transgressing socio-biographical mechanisms. Such additional studies could also scrutinize how the life historical impact of war on biographical identity unfolding and reconstruction shapes the ways in which biographical subjects address national and international collectivities and their symbolic universes (e.g., how it is possible to say “we” towards national and other “we-groups” and what follows from that in terms of moral obligation, protest, and sensitivity). Such additional studies (including some on collectivities of all sorts regarding their relevance for biographical identity construction and reconstruction) and how, in turn, these biographical relations to large collectiva (important societal institutions, like school and history education, local community and other territorial legal bodies in their relationships towards the national government, national army or voluntary associations and NGOs, of ethnic communities, of nation and national society and/or of supra-national entities and mental spaces like Europe) influence the underlying practical philosophies of the symbolic universes of national societies and supra-national entities to be compared regarding their policies towards international affairs, multi-national cooperation, and defense.³³

³² I have somewhat oversimplified my text in the hope that the epistemological differences between the aspects of individuality and single case, as well as between collectivity and generality, will be clear. Of course, they are quite often intertwined in a complicated way.

On the one hand, collective phenomena have to be experienced and enacted through individual biographies with their horizons of finiteness and “terminality,” otherwise these phenomena would not have their special sense of uniqueness, historical totality or gestalt, and decisiveness. In addition, the individual biographies exhibit the potential for coming into literal social contact and dynamic interaction with each other. And many of the subjects realize this potential, and then they get into factual contact with each other in order to produce and change collective phenomena by intention. Here, the methodological

³³ The last paragraph of the present article is the only one that was amended considerably. In the meantime, together with others, I worked on studies about the biographical impact of war (Schütze 1989; 1992), on the biographical relevance of Europe (Schütze et al. 2008; Miller and Schütze 2011; Schütze 2011; Schröder-Wildhagen et al. 2012; Schütze and Schröder-Wildhagen 2012; Schütze et al. 2012), and on the biographical work regarding ethnic membership (Schütze 2012a).

Because these questions require new insights into the basic relationships between the biographies of individual members of societies, on the one hand, and societal collectivities and their symbolic universes, on the other, new research methods and steps – both sensitive and systematic – for analyzing biographical processes are required (cf., e.g., Schütze 2008, as well as Schröder-Wildhagen and Schütze 2011).

Postscript

There is some elective affinity or *Wahlverwandschaft* between Studs Terkel and the Chicago tradition of sociology and their respective production and use of documentaries, although Terkel does not talk about it specifically. Nevertheless, in one of his interviews he mentions that his three years at law school of the University of Chicago, which by the way he finally finished successfully with a degree in 1934, “were three wasted years.” [In his written statements in books he is more cautious in his assessment of his University of Chicago law education, but he never practiced law, although he had intended to enter law school in order to become an advocate and attorney of the “damned and underdogs”.] To this negative assessment in the quoted interview he immediately adds:

I could have done something else. I could have gone to the Chicago sociology department; they had the great work on the streets, on the street gangs. In those days, I could have gone to anthropology or history or something. Instead, I was stuck with the law.³⁴

³⁴ Minute/second 4:50 to minute/second 5:05 of part I of the 1999 interview conducted by Karin Hermann of the *Archive of American Television* with Studs Terkel (see: bing.com/videos, retrieved January 11, 2014).

The elective affinity of Studs Terkel’s documentary work and that of the Chicago sociologists consists of the following features:

- A very deep going analytical interest for life histories and autobiographies as the expression and the everyday imprint of macro-history and its social processes. Although each life history and its respective autobiographical account are unique, they share important features of collective history with other life histories and their autobiographical accounts of that epoch, generation, and socio-structural setting, its epochs and their dominant socio-cultural atmospheres and outlooks on the world and the respective “construction principles,” as well as process structures of individual biographical unfoldings.
- Informants for the production of autobiographical texts have to be selected under the criterion of their expectable ability to express their personal experiences and their willingness to do this in an authentic way, that is, searching for the truth-value of their experiences. The produced autobiographical texts should be as much authentic as possible in terms of the expression of one’s own personal experiences of macro-history and its social processes, as well as in terms of one’s own dealing with them and finding one’s own way in the midst of them.
- The selected informants and their autobiographical texts should be theoretically representative for certain historical events, epochs, generations, socio-historical milieus, and/or socio-structural settings.

- The collected autobiographical texts are basically understood to “speak for themselves,” although they can be reanalyzed and then understood in a deeper way. This “speaking for themselves” presupposes some aesthetic “expression power” of the texts. [This has more import in Terkel’s documentaries than in the Chicago materials, although it can be found there, too, for example, in the documentaries edited by Clifford Shaw (1930; 1931) or in the parallel Polish publication edited by Stanisław Kowalski (1933).] The aesthetic quality is not detracting from the “authenticity,” that is, the truth-value of the autobiographical text as renderer of personal experiences, in fact, it seems quite to the contrary!
- The publication of the autobiographical texts must be in the “own language” of the informants. The wording of the original text production should not be changed as far as possible. Of course, there is always a production history of the text (in motivating the informants of Chicago sociology documentaries to start to write a text, to produce a first document and afterwards to amend to it, and, in case of Terkel’s interviews, to tell a main story line and to get prodded by the interviewer to add to it), as well as a history of necessary editing work for publication (including cuts and condensations in case of Terkel’s interviews). To the latter, the editing, with its involved cuts and condensations, is the text reliability of the autobiographical document. The text reliability should be somewhere empirically proven, for example, in publishing the first short document produced in the beginning, together with the expanded final document as it

was done in the Chicago sociology documentaries (i.e., Shaw 1966:200-205) or, for example, in putting some of the voice-recorded interviews into an Internet archive so that readers can compare the original interview with the version published before in the book. This is what was facilitated by Terkel’s move to entrust a list of his audio-recorded interviews to the Chicago History Museum, which conversely put some of these interviews into an Internet portal under the title *Conversations with America* (Terkel 2002).

- In addition, and as a corollary to the interest in life history and its autobiographical text renderings, Terkel and Chicago sociologists had a genuine interest in social settings, social milieus, and social worlds. In Terkel’s case books like *Working* (1974) or *Hard Times* (1970) are of this kind; in the Chicago sociology tradition we find books like *The Gold Coast and the Slum* by Harvey Zorborough (1929) or *The Taxi Dance Hall* by Paul G. Cressey (1932). Of course, these two interests in biography and in social contexts are deeply linked. In the case of Studs Terkel, this linkage is taken account of either by letting the informants descriptively portrait their time and life situation and, in addition, by putting especially expressive pieces of personal life-historical episodes into these portraits (as, e.g., in *Division Street* [1967]), or, as author, by doing the descriptive portraying of oneself in conjunction with using episodic interview material representing life situations, milieus, and social worlds in “memoirs of one’s times” (as, e.g., in *Talking to Myself* [1977]). In case of the Chicago sociology biographical documentaries, descriptions

of sceneries, and milieus, on the one hand, and autobiographical texts (and their analysis), on the other, are brought together in one single book (as in Ruth Shonle Cavan's *Suicide* [1928]; see Riemann 2007). However, in Terkel's production and in that one of the Chicago sociology, there are certain books in which the autobiographical renderings and the interest in the analysis of life history proper are conspicuously dominant (as in Terkel's case "*The Good War*" [1984] or *Race* [1991]). In the case of Terkel's book *Race*, there is, for example, documented the later life history of Mamie Mobley, the mother of the famous 14-year-old Chicago black boy Emmett Till who in the course of a family visit to the Deep South was killed by two white men, or the life history of Claiborne P. Ellis, a former Ku-Klux Klan high-ranking leader and, after his biographical conversion, a union leader and worker for inter-racial relationships (Terkel 1992:18-26, 271-280). In the case of the Chicago sociologists, we find this dominant interest in life history and its autobiographical rendering conspicuously manifested in the *Boy's own Story* and the *Natural History of Delinquent Career* of Stanley and Sidney Blotzman (Shaw 1966; 1968).

As I mentioned already, since the year 2002, one can easily compare some of Terkel's published interviews, especially in the volume "*The Good War*," with the original tape-recorded vocal interviews. Nevertheless, I could not find that the voice recording of the Rasmus interview in the publicly open archive of the Chicago Historical Museum was made accessible through Internet. However, the Red Prendergast interview, which I had analyzed

25 years ago, too, and which I had compared with a German interview conducted by myself (Schütze 1989), was accessible through Internet. Hence, I have instead listened to the whole interview of Red Prendergast. The interview has a length of 86 minutes and 56 seconds, and Prendergast talks very rapidly. His rapid speech production delivered at least 25 transcript pages single spaced; the length of the interview in the book "*The Good War*," however, it is just 10 pages (Terkel 1984:48-58). That means that the interview was shortened quite a lot (over the half of it) for the book publication. Nevertheless, the overall impression is that the interview is still astoundingly authentic, that is, experientially valid, and the text is reliable. In comparing the oral interview recording and the book publication step by step, I could make the following observations (and one could make similar observations on the empirical base of comparing the other seven voice recordings of interviews with the respective printed versions in the book "*The Good War*"):

- Every sentence, every phrase, and even every word which appears in the printed version is uttered in the voice recording of the interview.
- Repeated phrases are normally cut out, in case they do not have a special expressive function.
- Side stories are cut out, although they can be quite interesting. The editor, Terkel, focuses on the *main story line* of the autobiographical rendering.
- The edited written version of the interview focuses on the dominant topic of the experiences in World War II and its imprint on later life.

Longer passages of lifetime before taking part as a soldier in World War II are cut out.

- The sequential order of the narrative units and sub-units in the original voice recording is the dominant ordering principle for the editing of the printed text. However, side stories, flash backs, and detail descriptions that are occurring in the original voice interview at a later point are sometimes moved to an earlier position within the edited text, exactly to that place where they are alluded to or more explicitly mentioned for the first time in the ongoing original voice interview. In these cases, Terkel attempts to orient the sequential order of text items towards the order of the naturally occurring events in the life history of the informant. Here, a conflict of orientation between the originally expressed order of textual presentation items and the order of sequential events that are recounted can occur. In these cases, phenomena of presentational disorder symptomatically expressing disorder in the life and identity development of the informants cannot be analyzed.
- Otherwise, even some self-corrections and background constructions are correctly reproduced and not "corrected" and polished away. This can be seen by formal text markers as we could observe in the Rasmus interview, for example, the change of the communicative scheme from narration to argumentation and reverse, the change of tense, et cetera.
- In case of an interviewer-provoked essential change of textual activities of the informant (mainly: putting in a new topic after the formerly

self-driven narration of the informant has come to an end – that happens in other of Terkel's interviews, but not in the Prendergast interview – or asking for more details or asking for an explanatory background), the prodding or asking activity of the interviewer is inserted into the edited and printed text. But, on the other hand, lots of clarifying questioning is cut out when the straight line of rendering of the informant is just smoothly going on.

- There are lots of speech activities of Terkel himself in the original interview, especially setting topics, clarifying questions, asking for details, leading the informant back to the main story line, showing one's interest and pleasure in listening, giving a sympathetic commentary, doing a comparison with a similar story of oneself or in the belletrist literature (e.g., Prendergast's experience of being bombed as a prisoner of war while he was sitting and being caught in a German prisoners' train is compared by the interviewer Terkel with Kurt Vonnegut's several narrative accounts and descriptions of such situations in *Slaughterhouse Five*). Nevertheless, all these inserted voice activities of Terkel as the interviewer are activities of sympathetic circularity; they do not set a new narrative topic, while the self-driven storytelling of the main story line is still going on. Terkel as the interviewer has a tremendously good feeling for the integrity of the story line and the autobiographical rendering in general (although he does not postpone clarification questions and questions on details up to a second questioning part of the interview, which would be done by an interviewer in the course of an autobiographical-narrative interview). The question is,

however, if Terkel followers are able to feel and imagine so perfectly well the nature of the interactive and presentational order of the ongoing interview situation in a similar way to Terkel.

- Paralinguistic phenomena, like laughing, are reproduced in the printed transcript, in case it is an impressive reaction of the interviewer in the ongoing speech production of the recorded interview and/or it marks and differentiates the emotional mode of presentation and interaction.
- Very rarely can there be observed a fusion and amalgamation of separate comments into one single sentence that is slightly reformulated by Terkel. [In the Prendergast interview this happens just one time, and the amalgamated reformulation is not changing the gist of the meaning: “I don’t know, if I’d have been a blue collar worker. Certainly not what I’m doing now” (Terkel 1984:58, line 1, 2). Prendergast mentions in this context that without the GI Bill he would probably had gone to a city college, since his father had already not been a blue-collar worker. But, without World War II, Prendergast admits, it would not have been possible for him to attend a quite expensive high-quality private university.]
- The editor Terkel places general biographical commentaries with deep self-theoretical insights at the very end of the interview, although these commentaries had originally occurred a few sentences and a few moments earlier in the closing-up phase of the interview.

To sum up at this point: the changes of placement of text segments within the interview are done in

order to (a) cut the interview shorter, (b) to make its rendering denser, and (c) to enhance the aesthetic quality of the interview text (in order to make it more attractive and more easily understandable for the reader). Probably, even present-day qualitative sociologists would have to work on texts in concordance with Terkel’s provisions in order to get an autobiographical statement published as a documentary that is more readable for the general public. However, such changes would never be done with an original transcription. Terkel, too, has always admonished his transcribers to transcribe and/or mention every sound, including all hesitation phenomena, all self-corrections, and all paralinguistic occurrences, in order to re-imagine the original interview situation when reworking the interviews for publication (Terkel 2007:177).

Terkel’s autobiographical memoir *Touch and Go* (2007) mentions the following features of editing his interviews (p. 177f):

- the total transcription of the whole interview without any cut-outs;
- inclusion of important paralinguistic and audible situational phenomena (as representations of the social surroundings: “I want to recreate in my mind exactly what it was like to be with that person...”);
- cutting out most of the activities of Terkel’s own questioning in order to produce the appearance of a soliloquy of the informant in order to underline the integrity of her or his autobiographical rendering; questions of the interviewer are only kept where it is essential to understand the

change of the sequential proceeding of the presentation activities of the informant as provoked by the interviewer;

- relating seemingly unrelated text items and juxtaposing them (as done in the editing of the Rasmus interview) in order “to illuminate from the unexpected quarter” (p. 177); this enhances the aesthetic quality of the text but it also transports the potential of leaving out important narrative or descriptive passages that are not that much dramatically contrastive and symbolically expressive in mode and mood. Terkel is not falling into this trap of a would-be theatre dramaturge since he has absolute respect for the structure and the elements of the original empirical document being the carrier of biographical experience – but, what about any of his non-sensible follower *à la mode*?
- doing the concentration and densification of the original interview transcript as described above for the Prendergast interview, Terkel argues that the overall shape of the book has to be taken into account, while at the same time he is sifting the interviews and cutting parts out of them. Of course, exactly here lurks the danger of destroying the integrity of the gestalt of the single autobiographical rendering and of the respective life history. This is at least true for schematic-thinking editors who are not sensible and circumspect enough for narrative and argumentative presentation gestalts as Terkel is. For the editing work of concentration and densification Terkel uses the metaphor of producing a piece of goldsmith craft or goldsmith art, starting from digging and collecting the gold ore until

displaying the golden craft or art piece within the display window of the goldsmith. Hence, the editing work of Terkel proceeds from the “prospector work” to the “sculptor work.” The aesthetic connotation, which Terkel connects with his editing work, is very obvious here. Whereas Terkel has this deep sense of the integrity of the autobiographical text, some followers in his footsteps could cause lots of harm to the authenticity of socio-biographical experiences as how they have been originally recounted in the oral autobiographical text (p. 176).

In chapter 19, “A casual conversation,” which I have just dealt with, and in the “Prologue” to *Touch and Go* Terkel also writes about the work of finding interview partners and of conducting the open, mostly narrative interviewing as a natural (“casual”) activity of conversation. As a biographical “ethnographer” and “oral historian” of social worlds, sceneries, milieus, generations, macro-historical dramas, et cetera, one must have a social network through which one can find persons who are able to articulate their personal feelings and who have to say something about their life. Mostly, these persons would need to be the “humble,” “ordinary” people since *they* are more in touch with the vicissitudes of everyday life and the macro-historical impact on. First time Terkel came across such humble people and observed their relating to the world in the rooming house of his family and later in the modest hotel of his family in downtown Chicago near the Loop in the 20s of the 20th century. The small worlds of these two accommodation places provided incipient natural social networks for seeking, observing, searching, and finding persons who

would tell about their personal experiences (chapter 3 “The Rooming House” and chapter 6 “The Hotel”). Later on, starting in the second half of the 30s, Terkel as a radio and television media person, built step by step an extremely wide social network. However, most import for finding “humble” people who would be able to recount personal experiences of social and historical relevance were his wife Ida and her friends. They got Terkel in touch with people “who can talk how they see their lives and the world around them. Who can explain how and why they became one way or another” (p. 174). These were people who changed themselves to the better and who reckoned that they would count in the world and, in addition, that they could make a change.

On the other hand, and generally speaking, many of those “humble” informants are modest people to such an extent that they yet did not realize having the potential for personal courage in order to stand up and join social movements. Therefore, the researcher and interviewer has to let them understand and believe that their personal experiences are decisively relevant for the overall picture the ethnographer, researcher, or memoir writer would like to develop in one’s documentary book and/or research about important macro-historical events, historical and/or generational phases, socio-cultural milieus, and social-structural situations, as well as their personal handling of them, their social problems, and their being attacked by social movements, et cetera. Generally speaking, the first step for the interviewer as producer of documentaries or interviewer as researcher is to encourage the interviewees to encounter their

own life by autobiographically recounting it. At the same time, this encourages the interviewees to listen to their own voice as something “objective” and “relevant,” as “instance of the outer world;” Terkel mentions how impressive the listening to their own taped voice would be for some of them (p. XVIII). The interviewer must behave naturally and cooperatively; on the moral base of this virtue, the interviews must become conversational encounters of the informant and the interviewer at eye level. In listening to the numerous open qualitative interviews recorded and preserved in Terkel’s *Conversations with America* of the Chicago Historical Museum, one starts to admire his ability to behave in such a natural way in professional interview sessions, that is, to sensitively take into account and practice the interaction postulates of natural mundane interaction in a complex non-mundane interaction situation of autobiographical interviewing (Schütze 1980; 2008:6-25, no. 3/4). This means not to indulge in orgies of emphatic emotional understanding of the sufferings of the informant, which would be a phony, pretending behavior, on the one hand, and not to behave as just a formal questionnaire administrator who is asking conventional dry standard questions that have nothing to do with the narrative gestalt of the biographical experiences of the informant, on the other (p. 176). In handling the professional paradox of behaving naturally within an artificial formal-professional interview encounter, Terkel was helped – or helped himself? – by ostensive tinkering around with his complex tape recording machines, which he sometimes could not technically handle well, as he confessed. His technical non-perfectness was not just a trick; he

really felt that way. And therefore, the more technically sophisticated interviewees would help him, and this would strengthen their social reciprocity, their mutual taking the perspective of the other, and their assumption, contra-assumption, and use of interaction postulates of cooperation (p. 176f).

The title *Touch and Go* of Terkel’s autobiographical memoir is borrowed from the evening prayer of Rev. Eli Jenkins in Dylan Thomas’ *Under Milk Wood*. Perhaps nothing else can express Studs Terkel’s critical love for mankind, his circumspect humanity better than this prayer. I quote one more stanza than Terkel himself put as a motto of his autobiographical memoir on the frontispiece:

....

And every evening at sun-down
I ask a blessing on the town,
For whether we last the night or no
I’m sure is always touch-and-go.

We are not wholly bad or good
Who live our lives under Milk Wood,
And Thou, I know, wilt be the first
To see our best side, not our worst.

....

Here, again, we can see the elective affinity of Terkel’s documentary work with that one of the tradition of Chicago sociology and its intellectual offspring, the symbolic interactionism.

At the very end one can state the following conclusions:

- Terkel’s reflective writing on his art of interviewing is concordant with his practice of qualitative interviewing.
- Collecting autobiographical renderings of life histories is done by him in a style very similar to the practice of autobiographical-narrative interviewing as an outcome of the documentary tradition of Chicago sociology.
- Terkel stresses the aesthetic character of the products of his type of interviewing in form of *edited* publications of his interviews. Such an editing work treats his mostly humble informants with great respect since they are presented as artists of their own live-histories and their autobiographical recollections. And, in addition, the aesthetic character of the documentary pieces contributes to the experiential validity (authenticity) of the published interviews. When social scientists would like to publish their own documentaries, they must do it with a similar sensibility for the aesthetic expression power of autobiographical documentaries. But, at the same time, they have to be aware of the danger of losing text reliability and experiential validity (or more generally speaking, textual and experiential authenticity) by too much tinkering around with the textual structure of the original production of the autobiographical documentary.
- The methods of autobiographical text analysis on the empirical base of extempore autobiographical narratives are a venue to assess the experiential text *validity* in terms of experiential authenticity, and to assess the text *reliability* in terms of the textual fit between the originally

taped vocal production of the autobiographical interview or documentary and its edited and published version.³⁵

- Autobiographical extempore narratives are the key empirical material for the analysis of the deeper relationships between doing biographical work in terms of personal identity development and of dealing with all kinds of collective phenomena of societies and their macro-histories and how they are shaped by decisive activities of societal members who feel that they personally count, who join together (start collective action) and who step into it).

Appendix:
Two Schemes Regarding
the Presentation Structure
of Autobiographical Storytelling

Scheme 1. Cognitive Figures of Autobiographical
Extempore Storytelling

- Global story line of narration
 - Narrative preamble
 - Coda
 - Biographical commentary
- Concatenation of narrative units: presentation of the sequence of events and related experiences
 - Narrative units

³⁵ When I conducted the analysis of the Rasmus interview 30 years ago, there was no possibility to listen to voice records of Terkel’s interviews and to read of, and listen to, his reflections on his style of interviewing and editing. In my later re-workings, I did not change anything in the wording of my analysis of the Rasmus interview.

- Supra-segmental markers
- Biographical process structures
- Narrator, story carrier, biography incumbent, and their relationships to each other, resulting in, e.g.:
 - Naive self-presentation connected with symptomatic markers (as hesitation phenomena, pauses, self-corrections, laughter, etc.)
 - Reflected self-presentation interspersed with argumentative commentaries that search for the truth by comparing the differences of knowledge between story carrier and biography incumbent
 - Ironic self-presentation showing the naivete of the former story carrier from the point of view of the narrator
- Event carriers: descriptive characterization of other *dramatis personae* beyond the story carrier
- Situations or scenes of biographical importance: narrative units that present peak phases of the concatenation of events in a stylized episodic form
- Social frames: description of social relationships, social contexts, as well as institutional and structural conditions that shape the flux of life historical events and biographical processes

Scheme 2. Presentation Level of Single Narrative
Units

- Falling intonation and pause as a means for “automatic” expressing the segmentation between two narrative units and the related frame switching elements

- Introduction to narrative unit
- Narrative kernel sentences of binominal character:
 - Depiction of outer event related to a social and/or biographical process that passes over a time threshold of a “before” and a “later on”
 - Expression of a change of inner state of the story carrier and biography incumbent (connected with the outer event)
- Textual sections for narrative detailing in the form of:
 - The presentation of pivotal episodes experienced by the narrator, as well as
 - The concretization of higher predicates used in narrative kernel sentences
- Textual sections for the descriptive detailing of inner states, of social frames and contexts, as well as of the characterization of event carriers
 - Explication of higher predicates regarding the inner states of a biographical unfolding
- Interpretation of unfamiliar social concepts
- Explication of enigmatic or partially unknown social contexts and phenomena
- Characterization of event carriers (*dramatis personae*, as well as non-human agents)
- Textual sections for argumentative explanations that render the narrative presentation more plausible
- Background constructions (of the narrative, the descriptive, or the argumentative sort) for the presentation of “difficult experiences” faded out of the foregoing presentation
- Argumentative biographical commentaries in final position for
 - The explanation or legitimatizing of biographical developments and/or for
 - The stating of results, for reflective assessment, and for evaluation of a social process
- “Closing” intonation, frame switching element, final pause of segmentation

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An Interview with Professor Fritz Schütze: Biography and Contribution to Interpretative Sociology¹

The idea to conduct the interview with Professor Fritz Schütze had shown up during my conversation with Professor Krzysztof Konecki who asked me if I could do it, and I am grateful to him for this idea. Professor Schütze agreed to give the interview, and it was conducted in May 2013 when I had the great pleasure of being the guest of Professor Fritz Schütze and his wife Evi Schütze in their house in Wattenbach, Northern Hesse. Since we are both biographical researchers, we decided that the interview would have biographical background, and, as a result, it has a structure resembling an autobiographical-narrative interview. During the first session in July 2013, lasting approximately 1.5 hours, Professor Schütze recounted, in the frame of his biographical experiences, how he became a sociologist and how he developed the idea of autobiographical narrative interviewing. Then, on the next day, for more than three hours, we concentrated on the sto-

ry he had told the day before. I asked for additional explanations and put some questions. Finally, in November 2013, we discussed some details, which I found important after revising the transcription. Then, I sent back the transcript to Professor Schütze, and he worked on it supplementing his story with more details.

Of course, the transcription of the interview presented to the reader is not a typical autobiographical narrative interview – neither in its presentation structure nor in the technical form of a scientific transcription with all its special markers. On the other hand, it resembles the narrative interview in which its author often stops at points of some biographical details or tells about some episodic events to illustrate the specific meaning of biographical experiences. I decided to keep most of such descriptions, pictures, anecdotes because, for me, as a listener, and, as a follower of Professor Schütze's type of text analysis, too, they appear to be very inspiring illustrations of a biography as told in sociological perspective, or vice versa – the story of a sociologist as

told in the perspective of his biographical experiences. When working on the text (by doing a sort of an interviewer's editing work), I also tried to keep the logic of the “main” or “first” story, that is, the story of his life, in terms of the chronology of remembered and re-evoked events, as well as in terms of the sequence of introduced topics. I marked this sequential order of recounted events and addressed topics by putting “subtitles” on top of the following parts.

As a result, it is not a typical sociological questionnaire interview in which the questions are followed by the answers. It is more the narrator's composition of stories, in most cases not interrupted by myself; only sometimes I posed questions. I decided to mark the laughter of both of us since I find it important that the reader can feel the situational mood and the mutual relating to each other in order to understand the intentions and interpretive reactions of the speaker and the listener.

I would like to thank Professor Fritz Schütze for giving his time and sharing “his story” consisting not only of his biography but also referring to a rich part of (German) sociology.

Kaja Kaźmierska: I would like to ask you to tell me how it happened that you became a sociologist and then stepped into biographical studies, and how you developed them as a sociologist.

Fritz Schütze: Let me ask you, would you like to have some biographical background or just focus on

how I worked in sociology and how I developed the autobiographical narrative interview?

K.K.: I think it is a very good idea to give some biographical background, please tell your story as you would like to.

Family Background

F.S.: A story about me as a sociologist must be linked to my life history; so, I cannot fade the “before” out of my awareness and just start with the topic of becoming a sociologist. When I was a little child, I would live with my mother who was a teacher, and she and I were living in Bielefeld together with my grandparents. My father became a prisoner of war in Wroclaw. I guess it was the very end of the war. He was captured by Russian troops, maybe on the 5th of May 1945, or something like that, because Wroclaw, that was called *Festung Breslau*, was kept by the Germans almost up to the very end. Then, my father would be brought to Russia as a prisoner of war. And he always said that the Russians did not have enough food for themselves to eat, too, and the prisoners of war were not treated differently compared to ordinary Russians. Instead, they were treated in a fair way, but there was very little to eat. So, he got the chronic disease of *nephritis* – a very serious kidney disease.

And I can remember that my mother took me to the train station in Bielefeld to meet him when he was coming back from Russia. I do not know in what place in West Germany these men returning from the Russian prisoner of war camps had been collected, that I cannot remember. At the train station

¹ I would like to thank Professor Fritz Schütze for his careful revising of the text, as well as Professor Marek Czyżewski for his proofreading and comments which helped to clear some contexts and meanings that could have been difficult to be understood by the reader.

in Bielefeld I saw a strange man, and it was quite difficult for me to get into an intimate relationship with him as I had with my mother. There were some situations in which we would like each other, for example, when I was interested in doing my own metal constructions with some type of a children's construction set. He was a natural scientist, and he liked that I had some leaning to it. But, generally speaking, at least I felt it this way, I was a disappointment to him because his generation would have expected to have children who would be strong boys, you know this type of a *fit* boy. He was not educated as a Nazi while being an adolescent and a young man, but nevertheless he was affected by the mood of the times, as I would surmise most of the young Germans in Nazi Germany would have been. And, when he had been in the prisoner of war camp, he had imagined that he would have a strong boy at home, and that his son would be a healthy boy. But, the boy he finally encountered in Germany was not healthy. Every month I would have an angina with high fever, and so on, and it was difficult.

Then, when I was 10 years old, I got, maybe connected to these anginas, it is not clear, *osteomyelitis* – a severe bone marrow infection. I had this for 8 years and therefore, I spent my second decade of life in hospital. Last week, I had to sit in a committee for a sociological PhD dissertation in Duisburg University, and enigmatically I felt very happy in this building totally unknown to me, and only later I realized that it was an old hospital building. So each time when I go to hospital, I immediately feel at home because after a short while, I know everything about it because I spent some part of my life in hospital – more than 5 years.

Of course, it was not that nice for my father that he would now have a really sick boy. But, sometimes the interactions with him would be quite nice, I have to admit. I have to underline that, although he was a natural scientist, a chemist, geologist, and geographer, he was very much interested in history, and I learned about crimes of the Germans in Nazi times from him very early. He would not fade it out; he would tell me, for example, about what happened in Wrocław/Breslau, and what harm the Germans would cause to the Russians. He was not a professional soldier; during the war he had been a student, and then, he was put into the army, and in between soldier-service periods, he could study a little bit. At the very end of the war, he became a leader of one of the army companies in Wrocław, but he was not a professional soldier. Yet, he had lots of this what we can call the “Prussian stern face,” and so on, and he had a voice which was extremely loud, and instead, I cannot speak with a loud voice at all.

So, he came back from the Russian POW camp in 1948; he was there for four and a half years. And when he came back, he was very sick. After some months he recovered some bit from the kidney disease, and then he had to go on with his university study in Münster in Westphalia. [During those days there did not exist a university in Bielefeld.] I can remember *his* study in Münster, where we had moved to, and not so much my own. He was a chemist, like your husband, and I can remember all tests he had to write. In terms of his body, he was much older than his official age was. To study was some bit difficult for him, I can remember all of this. Since he wanted to be-

come a school teacher of chemistry and geography, he had to study philosophy, too. Therefore, we would have these regular philosophy meetings at home in our small apartment in order that he would prepare together with other “older” students, having been soldiers, for a quite disliked philosophy examination. I can remember a very nice lady as the philosophy teacher of this bunch of “mature” students by the name of Dr. Annelies Ludat-Deniselle (probably one of the first female doctors of philosophy of Humboldt University Berlin). She would teach these “older guys,” like my father, and prepare them for the examination, and I myself was always present and very interested, and learned a lot of philosophy when I was 8 years old (laughter). Later, Dr. Ludat became a very good friend of my wife Evi and I.

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: My father could manage to become a school teacher, which was called *Studienrat* during those days. He was *Studienrat* in a gymnasium for girls. And he loved that, he was a good teacher – maybe much better than a teacher he would be for boys and young men. You know, my relationship, as son to my father, was typical; it is just one piece or example out of the father-son relationship of millions of people in post-war Germany – of boys of my age who would remember their strange fathers. That is the reason that I dwell on this so much. The manners of these fathers had been developed in Nazi times, or even before, in the times of the Weimar Republic, as some sort of *post-Prussian* period with all this press on the “strength of manhood.” I hated it a lot, and lots of other young German boys hated

it, too. Those young boys, separated for years from their almost unknown fathers, would have developed a very strong and trusting relationship with their mothers, and, of course, it was for these fathers, as husbands, very difficult when they saw all of that. And, in addition, they would have pictures in their mind how their boys should look, and in reality, they were very different.

I think that my father was much more positively affected towards me than I could realize; for example, to other people he talked nicely about me, but at home, it was sometimes not that easy. However, there was one thing which was really nice: he always had a job of “the main teacher of the class” (*Klassenlehrer*), and this job was especially important when the class had to be prepared for the *matura* examination.² In former days, in order to get a *matura* (*Abitur*) in Germany, each school student had to write an essay about her or his personal development and what she/he wanted to do after *matura*, and the main teacher of the class had to write a quite meticulous assessment, too. I can remember, such a teacher's assessment would be about three pages for each student. As a natural scientist (laughter), it was not that easy for my father to write it. So, he used to call me to his working room. I, then, was 15 years old or so, and he would tell me about a young lady who was 3 years older than me, he presented her to me in terms of achievement, personal difficulties, and character, and I had to write the assessment down. (laughter)

² F.S. used the (Austrian) term *matura* as translation of the German term *Abitur*. The *Abitur* is the secondary school leaving examination that hands out the license to enter university.

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: In cases like this I was quite worthwhile for him, but otherwise, from time to time, our relationship would be much tenser and awkward. For example, he had hesitated to let me get a library card for the city library because he thought I would read too much belletristic literature and philosophy, and so on, and I should better study physics and chemistry. (laughter)

And later on, he had two other children with my mother. But, then, when I was 15 years old, my mother died, and later on, when I was about 20 years old, he got married again with a nice and very Catholic lady. [He was Catholic, and I and my mother was Protestant.] The father of the second wife of my father was one of the central guys of the Catholic Centrum party in Weimar times, and later on, in post-war times, of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU). Then, I got a second sister, a half-sister who is 20 years younger than me. However, not after a long time, the kidney disease of my father came back. This recurrence probably was the result of a mistake of medical doctors because he always took some liquid to reduce the swelling-up of the mucous membrane of his nose, and this was a poison to his kidney, and they should have known this. I had not known it, but later I studied it and realized what had happened. It took just two months that he would die.

Anyway, he could still come across Evi, my future wife, and he liked Evi very much. After his first encounters with Evi I became a quite remarkable young man for him because I had this nice girl-

friend, and later wife. (laughter) I guess he essentially started to change his image of me when he met Evi. I brought her home when I was 18 years old. And, something like that happened (and I love this): he would ask her: “Would you really like to get into contact with this guy? He is difficult, think twice about it.” (laughing)

K.K.: (laughing)

F.S.: Anyway, he was quite impressed. Evi looked nice, she had a good outfit, and she cooked well, and he liked all of this, obviously. He had not expected that I would have such a nice girlfriend, so he was really impressed by that. (laughing)

K.K.: (laughing)

F.S.: And since then, our father-son relationship got better and better.

K.K.: Could he see his granddaughters then?

F.S.: Yes, he even could see my first daughter Irene. My father died when I was 26 years old. Although I was very sad, his death was not an extremely severe problem for me, *in terms of my own personal identity development*, since I was rather settled already. Instead, my mother died when I was 15 years old, and this was extremely difficult for me. I had a very, very deep relation with my mother, and it was awfully difficult for her when I got that seriously sick. At the beginning of this disease, my parents might have thought that I would be in danger of dying. [But, I myself never thought I could die.] After half a year, my parents took me out of

the university hospital, where I had not gotten the appropriate medical treatment and nursing care, to a special hospital in the countryside. So my mother had to travel there every week or every second week by train, since we did not have a car during those days, and all of this was very difficult for her.

My mother was a school teacher for all of the classes of the West German standard public school, which was called *Volksschule* (people’s school), it was not a gymnasium. Every child would attend the lower level of this school up to age ten, but children from non-academic milieus would usually go there until the age of 14 finishing class 8. My mother was very much interested in literature. She had originally studied medicine, but she could not stand it if people would die. She had very successfully accomplished what is called the *physicum* – this half-way examination on the natural science stuff for medical students, and then she stepped out of studying medicine. She also could not stand ether, and in former days nothing else was available for administering a narcosis. That is the same with me, if I smell a little bit of ether, I get sick immediately. [I had lots of operations because of my bone marrow infection, and I was almost “dying” each time from my sickness caused by ether. Today, it is so different with all of these beautiful narcosis devises, this sophisticated anesthetics stuff.] So my mother had to step out of her study course of medicine, and then she became a school teacher, like my aunt – her wonderful sister, 2 years older than her, who became later, after the death of my mother, something like my “second mother,” she was married to a countryside doctor. My aunt first became a gymnasium English teacher. She was one of the

few who went to England in the 30s. During those days it was some bit extraordinary that you would go to England; it was almost like a sensation. And later on, she became the helper of her husband in their medical practice. So, she did not continue her profession, but my mother did, and that was extremely important for her.

Where the First Inspirations Came from...

F.S.: In hospital, in the first year of hospitalization, I was 10 years old, but nevertheless I realized that the medical doctors would make mistakes, quite a lot of mistakes. I remember that the head doctor with his entourage, maybe 10 people, would stand around my bed and would keep speaking with these Latin phrases, and I did not know what it meant, but I did realize that they had done and continued to do wrong things. My infected bone broke in the inappropriate plaster cast, and they did not believe me that exactly this had happened, and they started to laugh at me. But finally, when they took the cast off, they realized that the bone had actually been broken and had in-between grown together in a wrong way. So, they had to break the bone again and fit it together in a more adequate way. So, I felt lots of mistrust towards this whole crew of medical practitioners. On the other hand, this established my peculiar relationship of “special interest” to the medical profession and to the professions in general. I was always interested in professions since those days. Of course, I cannot say that I got the idea to study sociology right then – being just 10 years old. (smiling)

K.K.: (smiling)

F.S.: But, this is where my interest for the professions somehow came from. And, there was the interest for the Latin language since all the time, looking at the sick parts of my body, the medical doctors would use it as some sort of secret argot. The Latin language had another very important specific function for me: since I was only for short visits at school, and had to go back to hospital all the time, Latin became “place keeper” for me because you learn it at home in bed or in hospital, and you could become quite good at it, although you had not attended school for a while. And this would rise and keep up my status at school. Therefore, in terms of respect from teachers and co-students addressed to me, Latin was quite important, although maybe some bit it has also damaged my brain because the Latin language has all these complicated syntactical structures, which the German language is fond of, too, as well as the Polish language, as far as I know. So, it is very difficult for me to write in short, simple sentences; this might be caused by this inhaling of the Latin language as a child.

Throughout my whole career in the gymnasium school was not really a big problem for me because the teachers were very nice, and my school friends were very understanding and helpful, too. Of course, there were a few difficult situations because during the first years I was something like a cripple, although I did not see myself as a cripple. In the beginning, I could barely walk, and there were some boys who would beat me up or try to do this. However, I would defend myself to a certain degree. I could not beat them in terms of body power. But, for them those fights turned out that they would get into personal difficulties since they would be

despised by other school students, and this soon caused them to abandon such a practice to use bodily power in order to shape their relationship with me. So it was a really nice school situation. I could come to school whenever I wanted; if I wanted to come at 10 o'clock, it was okay, but I could also come at 12 o'clock.

The only really bad learning subject I had at school was the English language. Whenever I opened my mouth, everybody started to laugh. But, my school fellows did not react that way because they would like to ridicule me; instead, my pronunciation was that awful, that they could not help themselves but to laugh. The reason for my remarkable achievements in English was that I had never *heard* this language. You know, in those days, the English language was not around very much, you did not hear it, and so it was the only time that I would have a “five” as a teacher’s assessment, a *fünf* in the German language, what meant that you could not pass if you would have two “fives” at the end of the school year. I received this really bad, but correct marking of my English teacher just one time as an in-between half-year assessment when I was 15 years old, and then, the mentioned philosophy teacher, Dr. Annelies Ludat, would successfully help me to improve my English competence. Nevertheless, I never dreamed that I would be able some day to speak and use the English language quite easily. I never thought that this would be possible some later day.

Because I spent 5 years in hospital, I needed to have something to do there. Of course, I was happy when I had long novels and history books to read. And I cannot exactly remember how it occurred that

somehow I came across the long and short novels of Dostoyevsky, but – thinking back – this encounter and preoccupation with Dostoyevsky in hospital I would really like to connect some bit with my then upcoming idea to study sociology. Although I did not know what sociology really was, under the headline “sociology” I wanted to study something like what Dostoyevsky had described and wrote about. Maybe I came to him through Boris Pasternak’s *Doctor Zhivago*. I cannot remember that I would read *Doctor Zhivago*, but I listened to it: it was read on the radio when he had gotten the Nobel Prize. I had to develop a technical devise of making sure that my parents could not hear the radio when they would come into my room: in the very moment my parents would open the door, the radio had to go off (laughing) in order that they would not realize that I was listening to the broadcast of Pasternak’s novel all the time. Anyway, I read all the novels of Dostoyevsky in hospital, except *The Adolescent*. I did not come across *The Adolescent*, the only novel formed as a clear-cut fictitious autobiography of the 5 grand novels of Dostoyevsky (which later became important for me in the context of analysis of the textual structure of autobiographies); I did not know why, but I read all the other Dostoyevsky’s novels, the grand and the small ones, in hospital. And out of this, I am quite sure, the idea emerged that I would like to study something like sociology, and I knew then already that it could not be psychology because there seemed to be no social dimension in it. Therefore, I had a certain idea of sociology, although probably I did not even know the name of this social science discipline in the beginning. As I have mentioned, in order to apply for the *matura* in those days in Germany, you had to write an essay, something

like a few pages of an autobiographical statement, and at the very end of such a statement you had to make plausible what you would like to study. So, I produced this statement, and I can remember that I used the term sociology. And everybody would ask me what the hell sociology would be. We are talking about the year 1963/64, yeah? And nobody would know what it is, and I had to explain it to everybody, although I would not know it either. (laughter)

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: So, I did this. The other possibility would have been to become a physicist or to become a physician. To become a physician Evi did not allow because she said I would commit suicide when my first patient would die; so she would not allow me to choose medicine as a study subject, although I would be quite okay as a medical doctor I would say (laughter). I was very much interested in physics, and in school there came into existence what would later be called “special achievement courses.” You had to put some extra effort, special effort into such a chosen subject for advanced school study. And I chose physics, maybe a little bit in order to construct some sort of accommodation between the interests of my father and my mother regarding my future academic development. My mother was very much interested that I would study classical languages and literature, and she would provide all the interesting books for me. It was a big problem for her to get all the children’s books, and later on, other literature for her son in hospital who would read a new book every second or third day. And she would write to me a letter

everyday, and I would write back to her every day. And later on, when I had been able to leave the hospital for the first time, I always had to visit the school which would be the nearest because I could not walk, and finally, my mother managed to get a flat near one of the two classical gymnasiums in Münster teaching Latin and Greek. So, I had to go there and my father did not like it. So maybe in order to establish some sort of a compromise, I took the physics subject as a special achievement subject of mine, but even “from my heart” I was very interested, and still I am interested, in natural sciences. So, I am a bit of an odd type of sociologist, and even today I keep believing that the way I would analyze ongoing interaction, or even a piece of narrative interview, is not that different from the method Newton would use when watching out for the falling apple. Taking physics was not something which had been pressed on me; I had chosen it not only because I wanted to get some acceptance of my father, but in me was some original interest for it, too. And my father liked this, although he was a chemist; he liked that I did at least physics. And this was quite a remarkable pick of mine since we had an outstanding teacher of physics who was also brilliant at Latin and Greek. When we went into classical mechanics, we would read Newton’s original Latin publication *Philosophia naturalis principia mathematica* (the latter two words serving as an *ablativus absolutus*). In class, we would read Newton’s main book in the original Latin version, and in-between he would construct with us all the experiments for studying the phenomena Newton had written about. Even up to now, I know the Latin terms for all the phenomena Newton was writing about. And we had

this very remarkable teacher in mathematics, too, and for me, it was something like enlightenment when we studied *calculus* without using numbers; so, we had to solve classical *calculus* questions without using numbers, instead, just thinking and writing an essay would be allowed. This was something extremely interesting for me, and, maybe looking at background constructions,³ is a quite comparable “structural observation.” I loved this type of mathematics very much.

Learning to Do Liaison Work in Protestant and Catholic Milieu

F.S.: Before in the interview I was thinking if I should put this topic in my story because this relation is totally unproblematic for me today. And then I thought this is something quite important. My father was Catholic and my mother Protestant, and in my generation the difference in type of folklore sentiment connected to Catholicism and Protestantism was felt very much, although maybe in theology there was not a big difference. In folklore terms, there was quite a lot of differences, for example, I can remember when I would go from our family home to the *Martin-Luther-Schule* and vice versa, from there back to our family – to and from the *Martin-Luther* school, where, by the way, my mother used to be a teacher, I had to circumvent in a hidden way the catholic *Uppenkamp-Schule*, situated half way in-between the 1 hour distance from my home to my school, in order not to get beaten up by the Catholic school boys attending that school.

³ Background construction is a feature of spontaneous narratives described by Fritz Schütze as a central symptomatic textual indicator of extempore narratives. See, e.g., Schütze (1987; 1992a; 1992b; 2008a; 2008b).

K.K.: How did they know that you are a Protestant?

F.S.: They knew this because I would not come out of their own school; instead, I would come from another school, and they knew that two kilometers away there was this protestant *Martin-Luther-Schule*. Because there was too little room in that school, my mother taught in the morning, and I attended school in the afternoon and vice versa. So, I was what was called “a key child,” a child who would have the apartment key around her or his neck. My father was at the Chemistry Institute of Münster University, and so I was on my own, and I had to be very careful how to pass that Catholic school (laughter). During those days, different groups of children just forming Protestant and Catholic groups had beaten each other up, which is something odd, really odd; but, as far as I know, felicitously, this does not happen anymore today. During the last 60 years, the relationship between Catholics and Protestants luckily became much better. Of course in Poland, the potential for such a cleavage and conflict relationship is much lower since you have just these 2% Protestants within the overall population, but in Germany it always was, and still is, a 50-50 ratio. Something similar happened in other parts of Germany; in the narrative interviews I collected later are a lot of stories there about similar search and catch episodes (in many of them Catholic children are chased by Protestant ones). The folklore conflict between the two confessions was the reason that I did not like so much to live in Münster because Münster was a Catholic city and Bielefeld a Protestant city. I felt very much that way; I even suffered some bit from this conflict, and so I always looked very much

forward that I could go on vacation to my grandparents in Bielefeld. Later on, I could even impress Anselm Strauss with it. When he was in Germany, my friend, Gerhard Riemann, and I took him to the countryside of North Rhine-Westphalia, and we always followed up the division line between the two religious confessions. On this trip, crossing the religious division line several times, I used to say: “Look, when the cows will be red and white, it will be Catholic country. But, when the cows will become black and white, then we will enter the Protestant part of the country.” We crossed the religious line several times, and each time we would go into the churches to see if they were Catholic or Protestant, and it really worked. (laughter)

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: And Anselm, quasi-seriously asked himself what would be the sociological rule for this coincidence between the colors of the cows and the religious confessions. (laughter) I know that in his teaching in San Francisco he sometimes joked about statistical correlations using this very enigmatic phenomenon as example. Nowadays, the cows are from different breeds coming from all parts of Europe, and this, so beautiful, “sociological rule” does not work anymore, but in those days, it was that way. And what was some bit difficult for me was that my father had lots of sisters who all were very nice, but one of them, a very nice lady, was extremely Catholic, and so I knew from her that my father would be in danger to go to the purgatory because I, as his child, would be Protestant and not Catholic.

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: And this thinking, that I would cause harm to my father just through my religious adherence, was some bit difficult for me. On the other hand, and it's the same with Evi, we both learned very much about catholic culture, too, and we both could have passed to be Catholics perfectly in terms of church behavior and religious folklore. And sometimes we need to enter catholic surroundings because we love it very much, but we had to learn to love it.

K.K.: How did you cope with this Catholic and Protestant upbringing; how did it happen that you managed to divide it and join at the same time?

F.S.: In a certain sense I love that there are different brands of Christianity because all of them have something peculiar and specifically interesting. The confessions can discuss controversial topics, and sometimes they even quarrel with each other, too; it is very lively overall social world of Christian religion with interesting arenas of theological discourse. For example, there were intensive discussions between Protestant theologians and Catholic ones regarding the question of how much Luther would have been a heretic; the result was that his theology would have been "orthodox" or even "good Catholic"; the discussions came to the point that the principles of Catholic and Lutheran theology would be basically the same. As an adolescent, I was considering several times to convert (from the Protestant to the Catholic confession), but then I always realized I had this religious tradition of my mother and therefore, I did not want to do this. In my perspective, there are mainly folklore things which are different between the two confessions, and as a child you feel

a bit cut through because there are these very different folklore habits. But, you have to take into account the development of two (or even more) traditions of something like 450 years of religious folklore development, and as a child, I felt this very much, and I suffered a lot by this religious divide. On the other hand, when I was a young man, and did my university studies (and even before, in school), I got into an intellectual relationship with all this new theological research of Protestants, like Bultmann, for example, and of Catholics, like Karl Rahner, for example, and of people like, and then I realized that it is some sort of competence of mine that I understand very much the Catholic perspective and I started to accept this; and later, I even started to like that.

So, I am the only Protestant in my family of origin left over, my brother and my sister, and my very much younger half-sister are catholic. I am not sure how much this religious divide is powerful today, I really do not know it. Obviously, we can see: Angela Merkel is the head of the Christian Democratic Party which by tradition is much more Catholic than Protestant, but she is the daughter of a Protestant minister, and our president, Joachim Gauck, was a Protestant minister. So, maybe the former bellicose contest between the Catholic and Protestant confession is gone today. In addition, of course, we have to take into account that in East Germany only 21% of the whole population belongs to a Christian church. The GDR government was very effective in erasing the religious roots of the East German culture – totally contrary to the Polish situation. But, exactly in the German areas of reformation things like that happened. If you

look more closely, you will find that even in the 19th century there was lots of stepping out of the Protestant church in the East German areas of Reformation times (in Sachsen-Anhalt, Thuringia, and Saxony), but at the beginning of GDR times the affiliation to the Protestant church still was 70-75%, and at the end of GDR it had gone down to 21%. These are the real divides – and not between the Protestants and the Catholics of today. I really love the different religious cultures of Germany and Europe, and I like to play with them some bit. Of course, there were a lot of ecumenical things going on in Evi's and my life: in later years, when we already lived in the village of Wattenbach in the surroundings of Kassel, we organized an ecumenical Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage⁴ in five stages; we did this together with Catholic people. It was basically Evi, me, and 2 other persons who organized this. There was some disappointment that all these attempts to understand each other stemming from the *Vaticanum Secundum* had withered away during the last 30 years after the "renaissance times" of the second Vatican Council, and therefore, we started these ecumenical travels. But now, I hope, this cordial interest for each other comes back again. However, I do not believe in the unification of the various Christian confessions into one common Church; instead, I think that this religious pluralism is very nice. But, the social and religious relationships, including the folklore relationship between the two confessions could be much better, and life could be much easier for children of mixed religious families.

⁴ In Santiago de Compostela the sanctuary of St. James is situated. It is the destination of the Way of St. James, one of the most important Catholic pilgrimage routes that originated in the 9th century. The route was declared the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in October 1987.

Having been positioned between two confessions in my family of origin, this overall experience taught me to search for compromise. Looking back from today, I like this inter-confessional experience, although it was sometimes quite difficult, but I had to do it in my family. And in more generalized terms, when there was the students' revolt of 1968 at Münster University, I became one of the specialists for the liaison work between the protesting student groups and the professors. For example, when quite radical students had locked up, or "imprisoned," the professors of law in the faculty room in the basement of the law building, and they could not get out for several hours, there was an uproar amongst these very powerful law professors, and they wanted to take the students to criminal court. The student union asked me to approach the most "dangerous" of these law professors and prod him to hold back his legal accusation against a long list of students he had announced to take to criminal court. I personally had to go to his quite impressive private house and had to do the negotiations with him, which luckily turned out to be successful. I have got lots of stories how I did this type of liaison work. Even today I sometimes pursue this, and people afflicted and affected by serious quarrels sometimes even do not realize that I try to do it. I like to be in situations of taking different perspectives. During those days of my studies in Münster of course I did not know that the topic of "liaison work"⁵ would be an important topic of the Chicago tradition sociology.

⁵ See: Hughes (1972:296-309, especially 303f, 306-309). See also in Fritz Schütze's research the application of this concept to the cooperative activities of transnational civil society workers in Europe, e.g., Fritz Schütze and the German team of the EuroIdentities research project (Lena Inowlocki, Ulrike Nagel, Gerhard Riemann, Anja Schröder-Wildhagen, and Bärbel Treichel [2012]).

Taking up Studies – Towards Sociology

F.S.: My parents moved to Münster, which is 80 kilometers of distance from Bielefeld, when my father started – or recommenced – his studies after he had recovered from his kidney disease he had caught as a prisoner of war. [During those days there was no university in Bielefeld. North Rhine-Westphalia, the largest land of West Germany, had two universities – one was in Münster and the other in Bonn.] I had stayed with my grandparents, whom I liked very much, some months longer in Bielefeld. But a little bit later, I came to Münster, too, when I was 6 or 7 years old, since I had to start elementary school. My parents stayed in Münster all the time and therefore, when I was 20 years old, I attended the University of Münster. The University of Münster was one of the few universities teaching sociology to an outstanding extent during those days. The others were Köln and Frankfurt, and in addition, to a certain degree the University of Hamburg and the Free University of Berlin did that, too. And in Münster, the founding father was Helmut Schelsky who wrote about the skeptical generation. He was a really good sociologist, though for the first time he had become a professor of sociology in Strasburg 1943 at the near end of the war (a position he could not realize), and, of course, he must have had some good connections or, at least, an accommodation relationship to the Nazis, otherwise he would not have gotten this professorship in Strasburg. But, you could not feel anything of those possible former concessions to Nazi influence in his teachings during the 60s. During those days Schelsky was not rightwing in his thinking, he was very liber-

al, very skeptical, so this was quite a lively study situation.

However, when I came to the university on my first study day, I went to one of the seminars of the younger sociology docents (not to Schelsky!) and I thought, “This is totally unscientific!” and I thought, “This is not a science at all!” (laughter) So I went to the student inscription office of the university and changed to physics as my main subject

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: because I felt that this subject “sociology,” as I had listened to it in the morning, was not a science at all. And Evi said, “Just find out in the first semester”; so I did physics as my main subject and sociology as my second in the first semester. Practically, I studied both subjects in the first semester, but officially, I was just a student of physics in the school of natural sciences. However, in physics we had to measure and calculate the tension strength of metal springs, and for me, that was quite difficult to measure and to calculate. It took lots of time, and through this awkward experience I realized that it would not be that interesting for me to spend my lifetime doing things like technical mechanics. So, for the second semester, I changed back to sociology as my main subject, and this was again connected with a change to that other school or faculty.

Now I have to just mention that as an important second subject I studied general linguistics with aspecial impact on sinology. So, I got used to the literature and the language structure of the classical

Chinese of the 4th/5th century B.C. I studied sinology for 5 years and got quite deep into the classical language and literature, like the writings of the philosophers Confucius, Mencius, and Hsün-tzu (Xunzi). So I have gotten quite a sense for very different language structures and very different cultural worlds. [But I was never really good at the classical language.] And then, of course, there were all these new developments in linguistics; for me, especially important was not only Noam Chomsky but also Kenneth Pike. The latter was especially important for the development of my thinking. I will show you this book: *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behaviour*. I guess Kenneth Pike is the guy who became the long standing director of the Sommer Institute of Linguistics, this American Christian institution which would study the Indian languages and would develop the grammar of Indian languages in order to translate the Bible in these languages to proselytize all types of Indian tribes (and later other “natives,” too). We know that the work of this institute was quite criticized in terms of endangering native cultures, in terms of enforced assimilation to Western life styles, and in terms of capitalistic neocolonialism. But, Pike’s approach, with its peculiar connection with a formal linguistic perspective and an elementary ethnographic perspective, as well as his peculiar connection between an “outer” natural science type, behavioral observation perspective, and an interpretive-understanding perspective, was very important for me. He was the scholar who introduced the difference between the “etic” and the “emic” perspective of approaching language (and other socio-cultural) phenomena; he had derived this terminological differentiation from the difference between phonetics and phonemics.

In Münster, there was another professor of sociology, Dieter Claessens, who was a very interesting professor, too. Some bit he was in the shadow of Schelsky, although he was quite important in terms of socialization and family research. He was the scholar who brought Norbert Elias to Germany. In my third semester, in summer 1965, as I can remember, he brought a nice old man to our seminar course on philosophical anthropology (writers like Scheler, Dewey, Plessner, Viktor von Weizsäcker, Buytendijk, Gehlen) and said, “This is a man who did very interesting things before, during and after the war. He published his books in exile outside Germany.” Of course, nobody of us knew *On the Process of Civilization* or his book about the Court of Louis XIV (*The Court Society*). All these books were published outside Germany and out of print by then. Nobody, except Claessens and his younger co-workers, would know about these books, and Elias did not say one word about his so eminent achievements in the seminar, or more personally to us as students. And even today I still feel guilty that I did not carefully ask him about his work, when the Nazis had chased him out. During these days I even did not know that before Nazi times he had been a scientific assistant to Karl Mannheim. I did not imagine that later on he would become one of my most cherished classical sociology writers I loved to talk to my students about and worked on his analysis of the proceedings and interactions at the French court. I did not imagine that his concept of figuration I would later envision as most important for basic theoretical thinking in sociology. The only excuse is that I was still very young and not versed at all in sociology. Nevertheless, he invited me for a meal in a nice restaurant,

although I was just a student of the third semester, and he would talk to me, as I can lively remember, about contraception in Roman times. By then he was studying it, and I asked myself, “Why is he dwelling so much in our conversation on contraception in Roman times?” Later on I thought, he wanted to advise me that you need to be careful as a young student not to have a child too early (laughter) because he knew that I was married already (laughter). Perhaps, he thought I should take 1 or 2 years longer before I would have a child. Nevertheless, since Evi is older than me, we decided we should have a child soon: our daughter Irene. (laughter) Yeah, so this was my first encounter with this so lovable man and eminent sociologist, Elias. During those days it was unimaginable for me that later on this man would become so eminently important in German sociology again. He had been totally forgotten by the impact of the Nazi demon and the intellectual isolation of Germany during Nazi times and its parochial outlook to the world afterwards. Later, Elias was in the Bielefeld ZiF (Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies) for a long time; but then, I did not dare to visit this eminent and prominent scholar again.

First Steps in Sociology

F.S.: As I told you, Helmut Schelsky was a very important professor of sociology in Münster, and he had lots of habilitation “children,” and one of them was Joachim Matthes, another was Niklas Luhmann, and numerous other German sociologists very well known today were habilitated by Schelsky. Helmut Schelsky could think basic-theoretically; he wrote a book about defining the posi-

tion of sociology,⁶ which is even today worthwhile to look at again. It is oriented to a certain degree by classical German philosophy, but, on the other hand, it is informed by all the important empirical studies practically conducted by Schelsky in the 50s, and caused by the “conflux” of both intellectual sources, there is therefore a lot of basic theoretical and basic methodological thinking in it. On the other hand, Schelsky was very much interested in the application of sociology, too, and through this interest he became a central educational planner of the government of North Rhine – Westphalia. He planned and organized the establishment of the University of Bochum, and later on of the University of Bielefeld. Conjoining with the latter, the whole institute of sociology of Münster University, with two exceptions, was moved to Bielefeld.

The Faculty of Sociology in Bielefeld is the offspring of the Münster Institute of Sociology. And Schelsky understandably had expected that all the professors he had helped to come into existence by habilitation and/or by call to Bielefeld, after their establishment as full professors in Bielefeld, would not read his wishes from his lips anymore. They would follow up their own smaller or broader interests and therefore, having been “grown up,” they would not have that former respect to him as their academic father anymore. We, as scientific assistants of his “academic sons,” being in this sense his academic “grandchildren,” would naturally understand him some bit better, and we would have liked to keep him in Bielefeld. However, he did something that had never happened in the German academic world before: he took his pro-

⁶ See: Schelsky (1959).

fessorial chair under his arm and brought it back to Münster University. After his return to Münster, he became quite conservative, he allegedly also started to drink and he allegedly could not handle it well; this is a very sad story. Immediately before his leaving from Bielefeld, I was one of the 3 speakers of the scientific assistants, and I tried to help as some sort of liaison worker. We, younger people, tried to do much for him to keep him in Bielefeld, but, of course, he should have gotten relevant words from his academic “sons” and not from his academic “grandchildren,” but, that did not happen, and so he left for Münster. We, as scientific assistants, were very sorry about it.

And 4 years before the start of the University of Bielefeld, still being a quite young student, I came across Professor Joachim Matthes, who later would become my “doctor father.” He invited me to work for him at the Institute for Social Research Dortmund at the University of Münster.⁷ Dortmund is a big city in the highly industrialized “Ruhr Area” (by the way, with lots of former Polish inhabitants stemming from the migration wave before the World War as, for example, mentioned and even some bit documented in Thomas and Znaniecki’s volume *The Polish Peasants in Europe and America*) roughly 60 kilometers south of Münster. I had to work on the religious confessions, the sociology of churches, and on the theory and research in sociology of religion in general. Generally speaking, I had to sift through the books in these fields of study in order to help Joachim Matthes some bit to prepare

⁷ Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund an der Universität Münster (“Außenstelle des Instituts für Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften der Universität Münster”): An Institute of Social Research, which became very sociological after Schelsky had become the director of it in 1960.

his teaching and publication activities in the fields of sociology of religion. Joachim Matthes, although still quite young, by then was known as one of the most important sociologist of religion in Germany. When Schelsky had established the Faculty of Sociology in Bielefeld University in 1970, Joachim Matthes got a call as Full Professor of general sociology and as Professor of sociology of knowledge and religion in Bielefeld, and he asked me to accompany him to Bielefeld as one of his scientific employees and (later, after my PhD) as scientific assistant. So, I started to work in Bielefeld in 1970, and moved with my little family (with my wife Evi and our two daughters by then) to Bielefeld.

Two years later, I did my PhD in Münster, and for this I had to travel to Münster again. You know, I was in the position of a research employee, although I had not finished my studies formally. (laughter) As I said, Joachim Matthes was doing research in the fields of sociology of religion and I helped him some bit to publish his books in this general fields – partly by reading and extracting a lot of books and empirical stuff on religious practices and the churches. It was very generous of Matthes that I could also read all the famous studies of the classical social science writers from Baron Paul Thiry d’Holbach over Ludwig Feuerbach and the young Marx, over Durkheim and Max Weber up to the, by then, most recent studies in the U. S. and in Sweden; you have to take into account that *I got paid* for all of my reading work. But, later on, it proved to be some bit too much for me to study all these religious topics; so I myself never wrote something mentionable about religious phenomena. You can only find some traces of this in footnotes of my writings.

Sometime later I was very much occupied, through Matthes, by the analysis of present-day religious texts, especially sermons of Catholic bishops, of very conservative Catholic bishops. Matthes wanted to find out a sociology-of-knowledge type of method how to analyze these practical productions of religious world views. For this purpose, we would work together with research assistants of the Catholic and Protestant faculty in Münster. And doing this in those days at end of the 60s, we, Evi and I, received lots of visits in our small apartment by Catholic priests who would be scientific assistants, for example, assistants of Karl Rahner, and they loved to come to us and get some cooking of Evi, and after that, we would start to work to do the analysis of those sermons. But soon I realized that we were not able to do really convincing and satisfying sociological research in analyzing those religious practice texts. Perhaps, I had not really understood and realized that Matthes had already developed certain building blocks for such a sociology-of-knowledge type of text analysis in his very remarkable habilitation thesis⁸ on how the federal legislation on social services was prepared, discussed, revised, and decided on in the West German parliament in the year 1961. Even today this legislation, more than 50 years ago, shapes the institution of social work and social services in the re-unified Germany. Looking back from today, I know that Matthes' 1964 analysis of the debates in the German Parliament in 1961 and before, especially how the two churches were able to put their imprint on the parliamentary discussions, encapsulates lots of seminal ideas how to empirically analyze public discourses.⁹ Today, you can

find something comparable, although much more complex, and of course, drawing on much more basic-theoretical background, which was created and/or came into the sight and discussion of the social sciences only much later – in the habilitation thesis of Marek Czyżewski.¹⁰

Anyway, during those days at the end of the 60s, it was not possible for me to bridge the gap between Matthes' interpretive sociology-of-knowledge type of text analysis and the new concepts of analytical philosophy, like those of John Austin and John Searle, which Matthes himself had entrusted to me, that is, he had asked me to make use of. [And, probably Matthes himself did not clearly see the seminal basic theoretical and methodological potential of his habilitation thesis for discourse and text analysis by then.] To put it short, in those days, although I liked our explorations into the field of sociological text analysis very much, I did not see how to put the combined new ideas of analytical philosophy, of neo-positivistic text analysis, and text critique (like those of Ernst Topitsch and Hans Albert¹¹), as well as of phenomenologically inspired sociology of knowledge (like that of Berger and Luckmann) into practical use of text analysis. Of course, you could interpretively muddle through and on with the text analysis of sermons, you could somehow make use of some of the ideas of analytical philosophy and neo-positivism, and you, indeed, got something interesting out of the concrete text analyses. However, we could not develop a really stable canon of methods for sociological text analysis. Today, I feel confi-

dent to have such a backbone of methods for text analysis, and I could go back now to such sermons and I could show what would be the principles of such an analysis.¹² All these exercises in the analysis of religious text were very interesting for me, but I wanted to be able to study social phenomena on the empirical base of texts in a straightforward and clear methodic way, and this, in 1969, nobody could show us. I was expected to write a PhD dissertation in the field of sociology of religion using strategies of sociological text analysis. I did 250 pages on the concept and features of invisible religion, you know, this very intriguing concept of Thomas Luckmann.¹³ But, I wanted to make an empirically researchable set of features out of it, and I realized that I was not able to accomplish this. I was totally unhappy about my failures, and I dropped this really interesting and basic-theoretically complex topic. Looking at my shortcomings, I realized that I should basically know how social reality is put into language by the members of society and how it is expressed through language. I realized that I should study the work steps and layers of the presentation of reality through the medium of language. This is in short, how I came to the most important subject of "my sociological life."

At the same time, Matthes prodded me to read Harold Garfinkel and Alfred Schütz. So I started to do this. Of course, I had to read most of this in English, and I was just able to read English like I would be able to read Latin. I could not pronounce the English words at all, but I was nice-

ly able to read English texts, especially Harold Garfinkel's *Studies in Ethnomethodology* and Alfred Schütz. Joachim Matthes had told me that Alfred Schütz, as a refugee-immigrant to the U.S., was not that easygoing in his use of the English language. So it would be quite easy for me to read his 3 volumes of *Collected Papers*. I had read his German language habilitation thesis *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*; I had done this in my second and third semester, and, by then, for me, this magnificent treatise was almost impossible to understand; but Matthes had advised me, "Just read the *Collected Papers*, this will be much easier for you," and it was really true. Then, I read George Herbert Mead's *Mind, Self and Society* and Anselm Strauss's *Mirrors and Masks* in the German translation. And then, in 1967, the very important book-length joint review of Jürgen Habermas about the new developments within the Anglo-American social sciences, language philosophy, and methodology came out. Habermas had read all the newer American and British texts in the just mentioned fields, and now he explicated what it was all about and he commented on them in a really circumspect way, and by this he laid a really new ground for the logic of the social sciences.¹⁴ This book was extremely important: that we would now have a very circumspect review and assessment in the German language of all these quite complicated books with ideas that would be very new in the parochial German situation not much more than 20 years after the Nazi times with all its burnings of books, chasing out of very good sociologists, and mental isolation. For us, young sociologists, after having read Habermas' review book, it was

⁸ See: Matthes (1964).

⁹ See: Schütze (2009:18-31, especially 20, 30f).

¹⁰ See: Czyżewski (2005).

¹¹ See, e.g., Topitsch and Albert (1965).

¹² See, e.g., Schütze, Lützen, and Schulmeyer-Herbold (1993).

¹³ See: Luckmann and Thomas (1967).

¹⁴ See: Habermas (1970).

clear it would be necessary to get in contact with these Anglo-Saxon researchers.

K.K.: Had you already graduated?

F.S.: No, I just wrote my PhD thesis, and this was not finished by that time. In those days it was quite uncommon to do a *magister* (MA); this new examination had been just introduced, but normally you did not do this if you wanted to stay at the university. I just did my PhD in the year 1972, and I did not write a Master thesis.

K.K.: So what was your status then? Were you a student until PhD?

F.S.: Yes, in legal terms, I was a student until my PhD, but, you know, in my function, I was almost like an assistant. I earned money because of Matthes. He wanted to have me as a young co-worker. I could have done this piece on invisible religion as Master thesis; actually, it would have been a quite nice Master thesis, but this was not common to do a Master at all. I even earned so much that we could live on this. I had married Evi when I was 22, when I was 24, we had Irene as our first child, and then Evi could get out of her work, and we could live on that the money that I earned in the university. Factually, in my function of teaching and research assistant, I was a scientific assistant, although not by status. (laughter) How Matthes could manage to do this I do not know, but in those days something like that was possible. [I was in one of the stipend foundations, too, but in most of my study time I did not need to collect the monthly money assignment from them, since I earned enough.]

Coming back to the work assignments of Matthes for me: there was the idea to analyze sermons, parliamentary speeches, and political and ideological texts – the latter written in order to structure the new societal landscape. You know, connected with establishment of the new law institutions, the writing of new law texts and the ordering of social services in West Germany after the war, you could observe the production of lots of ideological statements. I guess it was in Poland the same way after the breakdown of Soviet control, of course some bit different in content but in function probably basically the same. And I realized – let us, for example, take Mannheim’s contrast set of ideology and utopia, or let us even take the Marxian concept of ideology as such – we were not able to analyze it with concise methods. So I knew we needed to find something new. Having had some knowledge about linguistics, which I have mentioned already, it became quite natural for me that I should find out how social reality is embodied in language. This finally was my dissertation, a very long piece of more than a 1000 pages in two volumes (laughter, showing the book) *Sprache soziologisch gesehen*.¹⁵

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: And even the original dissertation was roughly 1100 pages, and then I worked 3 years longer in order to get it published.

K.K.: And you added more pages?

F.S.: Yes, I added more pages in order to make it more understandable. The language of the disser-

¹⁵ See: Schütze (1975a; 1975b).

tation about language, ironically, was quite complicated; and the linguistics professor, Professor Gipper, very righteously said that I should split the very long sentences; it would be awful to read such long sentences incessantly occurring on a thousand pages.

K.K.: But you never did.

F.S.: No, I did, I did this splitting of the long sentences (a language disease of mine I had never thought about), and this was very time-consuming to do, but I really did it. And in these two published volumes you will find the basic idea of the autobiographical narrative interview, you will find the basic ideas of interaction postulates and communication under constraint, as well as my basic thinking about conversation analysis, which was very intriguing for me. The other thing we did, we published in two volumes what was called *A Reader*¹⁶ of the most important papers – or at least *some* of the most important, as we saw it during those days – of interpretive social science or “West Coast approaches” (not only sociology, but in addition, cognitive anthropology and ethnolinguistics) of the United States, and we did the translations with annotations, quite a long introduction, and the last chapter with our own perspective, how to put these wonderful insights of the American researcher to possible use within the empirical sociology of knowledge in Germany. Yes, I can say we dug quite deeply into it, and the two *reader* vol-

¹⁶ See: Fritz Schütze, Ralf Bohnsack, Joachim Matthes, Werner Meinefeld, Werner Springer, Ansgar Weyman, eds. (1973). The volumes consist of translations of papers of Thomas Wilson, Herbert Blumer, Aaron Cicourel, Harold Garfinkel and Harvey Sack, Georges Psathas, Anthony F. C. Wallace, Charles Frake, and Dell Hymes.

umes were published in 1973, and my PhD dissertation in 1975.

Establishing Contacts with American Representatives of Interpretative Approaches – Encounters, Collaboration, and Friendships

F.S.: In writing my PhD dissertation, I had realized that, looking at the small list of really dependable research methods we had at hand in the 70s for the analysis of socially relevant texts and language productions in general, it was not possible to study those complex phenomena of the social reality I had originally desired to study – complex phenomena which belong to the German tradition of social thinking, like religion and ideologies. I had realized that even if I took the latest sophisticated developments of concepts within the sociology of religion or the sociology of knowledge, like Luckmann’s concept of invisible religion, it would not be possible in those days to accomplish an analyses of phenomena hinted to through those concepts in a methodologically stable way. [Today we have learnt quite a lot more in terms of research techniques, and today, an analysis of the enigmatic features of invisible religion would be much easier to realize.] Taking into account the small methodological and technical possibilities we had in our hands in the 70s, we should be humble and look at most simple phenomena in social reality, and find out step by step, looking over one’s own shoulder, how to successfully harness the expression and marking power of everyday language. This is how it came to my “linguistic turn.”

After I had done my PhD thesis, I knew I should empirically study phenomena which would be

some bit more graspable than these sophisticated sermons and ideological constructions in the parameter of parliamentary debates. I wanted to concentrate on really simple stuff, and I had to develop the general idea of extempore storytelling as a means to get to personal experiences. If you would approach members of social circles and let them tell their personal experiences of sociologically interesting topics, and then you would analyze these narrative accounts, this would be one of the simplest ways to get some grasp of reality. In the context of social circles, that would be of sociological interest, you could attempt to collect extempore narratives of sociologically interesting topics, and through the analysis of those narratives, you would find out how these members of social circles would really feel. I realized that you could not find this elementary relating to social reality in those sermons and ideological constructions I had studied before. This was my basic idea after all my dealings with very complicated basic-theoretical, epistemological-philosophical, and methodological writings. I thought about something that would be socially relevant and not too complicated in order that we could develop our language-related research tools, and, of course, it had to be something that ordinary people would like to talk about.

As I said, I had studied linguistics as second subject, and I had Matthes who was very much interested in language. But then I realized that in the 70s lots of sociologists in West Germany would go into the direction of abstract, “derivatory” Marxism, a style of thinking that was called “structural Marxism,” and in the direction of Luhmann’s system theory. Only a tiny group of German sociologists would

go into the direction of symbolic interactionisms, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and interpretative sociology in general. I had been all the time an interpretative sociologist, even “by upbringing” in several senses. Of course, I never was a follower of system theory and never was an adept of classical Marxism. I loved some works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, for example, the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* or *The Situation of the Working Class in England*, but basically, I was just an interactionist. Looking at the research-political might of all these structural macro-sociological approaches, I got the idea that it could be some strength in it if the few sociologists interested in language-related interpretive research would establish a stable platform of discussion, and then I started to think about other people. Of course, I was very much interested in the work of Ulrich Oevermann, who is a bit older than me; he worked in Frankfurt and Berlin. I had gained a lot from my reading and study of his PhD dissertation; so, I got in contact with him. And obviously, I wanted to study, what Luckmann’s assistants and co-workers did in their research in Constance; so I got into contact with them as well, especially with Richard Grathoff. We founded some sort of official *ad hoc* group “Sociology of Language” in the German Sociological Association in order to later establish a full-sized section in the German Sociological Association (DGS) called “Section of Sociology of Language.” After first negotiations with the DGS, it became the said *ad hoc* group, some bit preliminary accepted by the German Sociological Association (DGS) and by the German Research Foundation (DFG), but in the beginning, it was not institutionalized at all. Later, then, it became the Section of

Sociology of Language in the DGS and, again, even much later, the Section of Sociology of Knowledge in the DGS. [That means: in later days the name was changed in order to make sure that the topic of analysis would be the various layers of knowledge as a legitimate focus of sociological research, and not the working of language as such, which started to be much more seen as the research field of linguistics proper. Today, the section of sociology of knowledge in the DGS is very much controlled by the Foucault type of discourse analysis; the strong import on it might even become quite dangerous for biography analysis. Biography analysis is organized in another section of the DGS: that of *Biographieforschung*. I was not involved in the foundation of the latter, which occurred sometime later. Today, I am much more active in the DFG section of biography analysis.] Anyway, I got into a relationship with Thomas Luckmann, with Hansfried Kellner, with Richard Grathoff, the main assistant of Luckmann, with the two research assistants of Grathoff, Bruno Hildenbrand and Jörg Bergmann, with Ulrich Oevermann, and a little later with Hans-Georg Soeffner, too. I got important help by Ralf Bohnsack and Gerhard Riemann. Ralf, by then, was a research assistant in research projects in the Bielefeld Faculty of Sociology and partially, too, an employee in the newly founded Centre for Interdisciplinary Study in Bielefeld (ZIF); he had used Garfinkel’s approach for the analysis of the institutional processing of the delinquent behavior of adolescents by police and criminal court.¹⁷ Ger-

¹⁷ See: Bohnsack (1973). Later, Ralf Bohnsack developed the very important qualitative or reconstructive social research style of “documentary method” indebted to the legacy of Karl Mannheim. He wrote numerous important research books. Instead of listing them here, we just refer to his *Rekonstruktive Sozialforschung. Einführung in qualitative Methoden* (2003).

hard was still an advanced student preparing his empirical research on a settlement of the homeless and analyzing lots of speech materials he had recorded in this social setting; he was perfectly fluent in English. Especially Hansfried Kellner, Richard Grathoff, Ulrich Oevermann, Hans-Gerog Soffner, and I would meet together, and we worked together in writing applications. We were the founders of this ad-hoc group of “Sociology of Language” and, later on, of the section by this name in the DGS. So, we established this Section of Sociology of Language in the DGS, and then, just to mention this in advance, at the end of 1978, I went to Anselm Strauss in San Francisco and I handed the organizational work for the section over to Jörg Bergmann.

And the most knowledgeable person in terms of doing things and having seen lots of the relevant researchers in the U.S. was Richard Grathoff,¹⁸ who later became very important in terms of his relationship to Poland, too. He had a relationship with Antonina Kłoskowska, not during those days,

¹⁸ Professor Richard Grathoff died in November 2013. Having gotten the first notice of Richard Grathoff’s death by my Polish friends, I wrote to them: “[h]e was extremely important for the foundations of qualitative sociology in Germany. He brought all the American stars, like Goffman, Garfinkel, Cicourel, Sacks, Schegloff, Gumperz, and others to Germany and enabled the first three pivotal conferences in Bielefeld, Gottlieben, and Constance. He was the engine of founding the section of Sociology of Language (later re-named to Sociology of Knowledge) in the German Sociological Association as a first formal acknowledgement of the existence of qualitative sociology in the German Sociological Association (with lots of relevance for later decisions in the German Research Foundation). In addition, without him, I would not have met Anselm and Fran Strauss, my dear friends, and I probably would never have come to Poland (he had sent Marek [Czyżewski] to Kassel in 1981). Personally, I am very grateful to him for lots of stimulation and encouragement, although he also put a lot of work on my shoulders, as I told you. But, he really was a very generous and lovable man. In addition, he was a sociologist and phenomenological philosopher with very deep and seminal thoughts.

but a little bit later. He was a genius of fruitful research relationships, and this was only possible on the base of a very social and lovable personality. In addition, he was an eminent phenomenological researcher of the abysses of social reality. He knew many scholars of the interpretive research approaches in America since he had studied in America and gotten his PhD in the New School of Social Research in NYC. He had studied in a New School of Social Research in New York City. He had written this beautiful dissertation on social inconsistency *The Structure of Social Inconsistencies* (1970) using the English language. So, we got the idea to invite eminent researchers of the various approaches of American interpretative sociology. I do not remember *who* got and *how* we got this idea of mass invitation, but I am sure that the reason of being encouraged to do so was Richard; he was pivotal because he knew all these researchers, and he was such a gifted provider of incentives, liaison worker, and enabler. So, we did an application to the newly founded ZIF – *Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung* in Bielefeld and would put a remarkable list of names in the application, and the ZIF accepted, so they were invited to come over for a quite remarkable symposium. The conference took place in 1973. We did not meet Anselm Strauss by then. But Harvey Sacks, Harold Garfinkel, Erving Goffman, John Gumper, Susan Ervin-Tripp, and some others would be there. There was this cleavage between Aaron Cicourel and Garfinkel; Cicourel had been a disciple of Garfinkel and then they split away. [I cannot remember now when we invited Cicourel, Richard did this later. But, we were aware that it was not polite to invite both together be-

cause there was this tension between them.] So, all quite a number of these very interesting interpretive researchers came over. Maybe I left out one or two people. I can remember that Goffman presented his new book *Frame Analysis*. He was about to publish it, we got it as a manuscript. The conference was done in that way that young Germans would write commentaries to manuscripts of new research coming from America. And lots of young people would attend this conference, including linguists, and all of them would get some bit of orientation by the conference. Some of the famous presenters were later invited again to other conferences. For example, Harvey Sacks came to Bielefeld several times.

And then Richard said, “I can do more.” He had some good relationship to the Thyssen Foundation. It was a big German steel company, and they had a foundation for supporting “free science.” They gave a considerable amount of money, and he could organize other conferences and workshops in the surroundings of Constance. He was helped in this by Bruno Hildenbrand and Jörg Bergmann who I have mentioned already. [Richard had a research project financed by the *Thyssen Stiftung* on psychiatric patients; Bruno and Jörg were a research assistants in this project. The doctoral dissertation of Bruno Hildenbrand came out of this research project.¹⁹ Both, Bruno Hildenbrand and Jörg Bergmann, later became well-known professors of sociology who would do qualitative research.] In my assessment, the most beautiful of these new conferences was the conference in the medieval hotel “Drachenburg” in Gottlieben, Switzerland,

¹⁹ See: Hildenbrand (1983).

in the very proximity of Constance. That was the first time I met Anselm Strauss and his wife Fran Strauss. Fran would later say, “Fritz was barely able to speak a word of English or he did not dare to speak a word of English.” My very close younger friend, co-worker and former student, Gerhard Riemann, would be some bit the inter-mediator or even translator. We, Gerhard and I, got into lots of discussions with Fran and Anselm, and we tried to explain some bit what had happened in Nazi Germany. I got immediately in a deep relationship with Anselm and Fran, and this developed even more in later years.

The encounters with the American researchers of interpretive social science had a big impact on us, the young generation of German researchers in interpretative, qualitative, communicative, reconstructive sociology, and some bit on young sociolinguistic researchers in German linguistics, too. [For example, John Gumperz became a multi-time visitor of the Institute for the German Language – *Institut für Deutsche Sprache* – in Mannheim in the department Language and Society lead by Werner Kallmeyer.²⁰] All these famous professors of qualitative research were very friendly and understanding to us, young German researchers. Goffman would come to Evi’s and my little flat; he was extremely witty and at the same time very modest. He looked more like an American barkeeper (as far as I had an image on such an occupational type of person from American movies), and you would never imagine that this would be a very, very prominent professor of sociology. Being then a professor of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia,

²⁰ See, e.g., Gumperz (1994).

he had an old beetle car with an impaired heating, and in Winter times, he put a *Steinhager flask* with hot water, this kind of earthenware bottle, under his beetle seat in order not to get too icy. (laughter)

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: And Harvey Sacks was a very modest person who did a very interesting type of teaching, he was very concentrated, he would never look at the manuscripts, he roamed around on the stage, went back and forth, and would teach in a very intensive and lively way. And Anselm Strauss was a very nice and modest character, too, as you probably know yourself. And Garfinkel, too, was wonderfully friendly to his younger German colleagues. In the house of Richard Grathoff, he told us his life history, maybe 15-20 people would be around as listeners. We learned from him that he had had lots of difficulties as a young university teacher: since his way of thinking and his topics were so uncommon, he did not have enough students in the beginning and therefore, he got harshly criticized from the university administration in UCLA. Cicourel was a lovely and impressive man, too; his style of presentation was more argumentative and very lively. He spoke fluent Spanish, and he told us about his fights for the acceptance of the Spanish language in Southern Californian public administration. [One special interest of him was the Ladino language of the Sephardic Jews he had spoken in his childhood. He asked us, if there would be university teaching of, and research on, the Jadish language in Germany.] Generally speaking, all these important professors did not behave like old-fashioned German professors, not

like these “doctor-professors,” as one of them put it. We, younger Germans, liked this very much and to some bit became a role model for filling in our own professorships later on.

In the 70s, there were lots of difficulties in Germany regarding this type of (interpretative, qualitative, communicative, reconstructive) sociology. Of course, this sort of sociology has an obvious German-language tradition, too, coming from Max Weber, Ferdinand Tönnies, Alfred Schütz, and Karl Mannheim, especially from Karl Mannheim. But, most of it was invisible in the 70s, because in the 50s and 60s it was the time of Talcott Parsons type of sociology, although, if you look more closely, there is lots of interpretative types of ideas in the work of Parsons. And in the 60s, with the student movement, and especially in the 70s, the structural Marxism and system theory was powerful so there was not very much place for interpretative sociology. There were just the circles in Constance, Frankfurt, and Bielefeld. Although Joachim Matthes had given lots of impulse, he retreated more and more from the new circles of qualitative research, and we, the young persons, got more and more into a relationship with the mentioned American researchers. And today, looking back, I would say a little bit that he naturally felt, although he never mentioned something about it, that we, who attended these conferences, would be the next generation, and he might have had some disappointment about the drifting away of the younger generation. Today, I know that we could have gone on with his idea on how to analyze ideologies, although it was not a manageable method during those days

and maybe we would be too enthusiastic, too rave regarding our heroes, like Goffman or Garfinkel, and he felt some bit put aside by us, but, alas, I did not realize it at all. And through Matthes I had learned about Schütz, Garfinkel, and Goffman. Through him I had gotten in contact with Thomas Luckmann and his main assistant, Richard Grathoff, with Ulrich Oevermann, and with Hansfried Kellner. All of this had been facilitated by Joachim Matthes, but maybe latter on it was quite difficult for him that I would so intensely stay in contact with all these people. Anyway, he stepped out some bit.

When Joachim Matthes left Bielefeld, he went to the University Erlangen-Nuremberg. The University of Bielefeld redefined the denomination of his position as “sociology of the social structure of the Federal Republic of Germany” – in a total contrast to what Matthes had taught and researched on. In some groups of the student body there was disappointment about it. What happened is that students made a go-in into the faculty meeting (perhaps some bit organized by Gerhard Riemann, I really cannot remember it), and the original decision of the faculty was cancelled. The denomination was redefined into a denomination for interpretative sociology, maybe the first professorial position in Germany with such a clear-cut denomination. Of course, there would be people like Luckmann and Kellner, but they would not have professorships defined in these clear-cut terms. Regarding the filling in of the position in Bielefeld: Oevermann got a call for this professorship in Bielefeld, but he had a call to Frankfurt University, too, and he preferred to stay in Frankfurt. And then, Richard

Grathoff got the call to Bielefeld, and he took it. So at least you can say that there was some impact of interpretative sociology on the Bielefeld students, and I had probably had some role in this development that students would get interested in interpretative sociology. Another circumstance might have been that Matthes tended to move into the direction of structural Marxism for a while in the middle of the 70s. So, still being a scientific assistant, I got into some university-political difficulties with him, focusing on a quarrel about the definition of one assistant position: either it was to go onto the side of structural Marxism, or onto the side of interpretative sociology, and finally I won. And then the students, and even these followers of structural Marxist sociology, started to think, “Oh, it must be something worthwhile in this type of ‘small-reach’ sociology because he can manage to do things like this. He must have gotten a special understanding of interaction and negotiations. This seems to be worthwhile, we must study that.” So, tiny things like that developed going into the direction of a more stable situation for interpretative sociology. (laughter)

Working on the Idea of Autobiographical Narrative Interview and Its Analysis

F.S.: During those days in 1972 and 1973, the state or “land” of North Rhine – Westphalia – in the Federal Republic of West Germany decided to organize many mergers of local communities, if they were too small to provide for a good local self-administration and communal services and if these local communities were situated next to each other. Some are split into separate parts

again today, but there was this idea coming from some organizers in the government who thought that it would be a really rational measure to make the administration easier, cheaper, and more effective. [There is a similar conspicuously rational governmental idea of today: the “lighthouse” idea that you put lots of money in a few really famous German universities and not in others in order that you could emulate with Harvard and Oxford. However, by this measure the other German universities will sink down into mediocrity, and you lose the real quality of the German university system – that each university is principally on eye level with the others. There is some sort of notoriously rational engine of sick thinking within most of the German governments; one wave of sickness of thinking is coming after another.] And we had these phenomena of newly fused local communities in the vicinity of Bielefeld. I thought that doing research on the narratives of these mergers of communities would be one of the “simple,” down-to-earth phenomena I was talking about as desirable topics of research sometime before.²¹ So I started in Schloss Holte – Stukenbrock where the communal politicians and ordinary citizens would especially harshly fight about the name of the fused community.²² I thought, “Let’s tell them about it.” And I had very helpful students, who would be not so much younger than me, who helped me. And one of them was Gerhard (Riemann) who has become especially important for

²¹ I wanted to concentrate on really simple stuff, and I had to develop the general idea of extempore storytelling as a means of getting to personal experiences.

²² More detailed descriptions of this project, as well as work on the idea of autobiographical narrative interview is introduced by Gerhard Riemann in his text “A Joint Project Against the Backdrop of a Research Tradition: An Introduction to ‘Doing Biographical Research’” (2006).

me. And so we started to do this type of narrative interviewing on collective stories, and it worked beautifully. After a short while, after the interview with main protagonists mentioned in the newspapers like the two former mayors, other informants in Schloss Holte – Stukenbrock wanted to be interviewed, too, and we had the idea that we would interview all the people who would show up as *dramatis personae* within the recorded narratives about the merging of the community. A very interesting mechanisms of extempore storytelling showed up: it came out that when the informants had started to talk about the quarrel regarding the name of the community, they would – step by step – have to tell the *whole* story about the merger of the communities: not only about the *name* conflict. The informants were driven to tell about the decision who should be the new mayor of the fused community, who, from the group of former mayors (if there would be more than two communities to be merged) and administrators, would be left out from getting a position again, who would be – mostly without a clear-intention in the beginning or “willy-nilly” – withdrawn into criminal acts in the times of “interregnum” with lots of essential lack of legal and organizational regulations, and things like that. Later, we did this type of narrative interviewing in two other fused communities in other West German lands, too. One was consisting out of two former proud towns, one protestant and one catholic, and some additional villages. They are still together today, but in-between, it was quite difficult for them. And I can remember that I would go to the still cherished princess, the very offspring of the former reigning family in the protestant town. By

then, she was a member of the Social Democratic Party and its quite leftist youth movement. But, she was still a princess (a *Fürstin*), and she had lots of other titles. She wanted to be addressed as *Durchlaucht* (*your highness*), or something like that. Both of us, Gerhard and I, had lots of difficulties to address her like that because

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: it felt for us to be so odd. She was politically leftist (laughter), and she would meet us in her little castle. There is a central castle in that Protestant town, but some kilometers outside that town is another smaller castle constructed by one of the most remarkable German baroque architects. And when we put down the tape recorder on this table from the 18th century, it was something that did not belong there

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: but we could manage some bit. And on her lap sat her son, 3 years old, a beautiful boy, like his mother – an arrangement totally beautiful, like a classical art painting. At the very end she would show us a little around in her palace and we saw a painting of a young boy of the 18th century, looking like her boy. So, things like that happened, and Gerhard and I were also doing these types of interviews in a merged community in East Friesland, using the connections of my sister who is married to one of the big farmers there. There it was sometimes difficult to motivate the community politicians in the countryside to tell their personal story since they did not believe that we would under-

stand their Low German, the *Hanse* language, but finally we could manage there, too.

Then we had all these interviews of the 3 fusions and we realized, when looking at the text, that there would be a lot of biographical stuff in it, like that, that somebody got depressed, somebody was about to commit suicide, somebody would feel ashamed because he was postponed, some would get into these “willy-nilly” committed criminal acts, and all this was in it. We thought that we could follow up lots of interesting research questions in these interviews with these informants, but we did not know how to analyze these interviews in a transparent and systematic way, following the methodological rules of validity, reliability, and repeatability. We would have these collective phenomena in the interviews, on the one hand, and we would have chunks of autobiographical renderings in them, on the other, too, and we did not know how to put these two phenomena together in a basic-theoretically and methodically transparent and constructive way; we really did not know what to do with it. In between, dealing in quite practical ways with the recording and the analysis of actually ongoing conversation, I had learned to do an ethnographical type of conversation analysis or interaction analysis. This was done by using parts of the classical Californian conversation analysis, like that one of Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff. [Harvey Sacks we knew very well, as I told you, he came to our apartment several times, and we had a very good relationship.] But, other features of my type of ethnographic interaction analysis as developed together with my linguistic friend Werner Kallmeyer stemmed from

the ethnography of communication (John Gumperz and Dell Hymes) and partially from symbolic interactionism. This type of interaction analysis was quite practicable, and even today I use it basically unchanged. In the second half of the 70s, I started to be able to do this type of interaction analysis.²³ As I said, I did it quite a lot with my linguistic friend Werner Kallmeyer who even today is in a close relationship with me.²⁴ So, I started to use the methodology of our type of conversation analysis when looking at the narrative texts of the fusions of local communities. But, it still was very difficult to analyze these quite different types of empirical text materials – different from the transcripts of actually ongoing verbal interaction. I realized that the reason for this systematic difficulty was that the narratives of collective events were very much interwoven with very personal autobiographical chunks of text material: for example, one of the mayors told us that he suffered a lot by the fusion and got a heart infarction.

It was quite natural then that we, Gerhard and I, surmised that it would be enlightening first to study autobiographical narrative renderings properly in order to learn how to analyze these chunks of autobiographical narration in those narratives by community politicians about collective events in their local communities. And, I have to confess, that

²³ See: Kallmeyer, Werner, and Schütze (1976; 1977), Kallmeyer (1988).

²⁴ In the end of the 70s, Werner Kallmeyer became head of the Department *Sprache und Gesellschaft* of the Institut für Deutsche Sprache (IDS) in Mannheim. He was a director of the important sociolinguistic research project on the city language of Manheim. See: Kallmeyer (1994a; 1994b; 1994c; 1995). Three of his English language articles are: Kallmeyer and Keim (1996), Kallmeyer and Streeck (2001), Kallmeyer (2002).

we did not even know if this would be possible: just to let people tell their life histories in the extempore way, if they would really be able to do it, if this could be done by them in an ordered way. Lots of discussions were going on between, especially, Günther Robert, who very much helped in establishing the method of the narrative interview in biography research, too, and Gerhard Riemann and I. And then I said, "Let's do it and let's ask our friends, if they have friends who we do not know and who would have an interesting life history to tell." (laughter) And that we did, and we got quite a lot of very long extempore autobiographical statements, and it was a wonderful experience that people would tell us these personal stories – sometimes for even 6, 7, 8 hours. Sometimes, we were close to falling asleep since we became so tired. (laughter)

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: In former days, we did all interviews with two interviewers because we thought we should install some sort of collective situation to make sure for the interviewees, but for us themselves, too, that the interview work would be something done in society for society.

K.K.: The real interaction.

F.S.: Yes, the real interaction. And, in addition, in the beginning we felt we had to be very careful in listening. In the narrative interview, there is the rule that after the end of the main story line, you have to exhaust the additional narrative potential of the story to be told. And, in accomplishing this in your ongoing listening, you have to look

for narrative hints for additional experiential material. There are two types of them.²⁵ One type consists out of the "narrative spigots." These are freely given hints of the interviewee that she or he could – and would like – to tell more about if the interviewer would be interested in it. The second type of hints for additional narrative potential would be points of vagueness, hesitation, and discrepancies in the course of extempore narrative renderings of personal experiences. We surmised that at least some of them could be quite difficult to detect by the listener in the course of the ongoing main story line, and, in addition, it could be quite difficult to focus on them in the course of additional questioning. We were afraid that this very careful listening for detecting the additional narrative potential might not be possible when to do it just with one person as interviewer. And, of course, we liked to exchange our experiences as interviewers and listeners afterwards. Later on, we found out that interviewing with two persons is not necessary at all. The situation when there are two interviewers can be quite a good arrangement when there is some need (since the informant is in doubt about the value of such interviewing) to make sure that it is a social situation of cooperative work relevant for society and this work is addressed to the collectivity of the scientific audience. In addition, the two-interviewer arrangement can be very useful in case the expected life history and the topics connected with it could be very complex. [Two interviewers can be more on the alert.] Anyway, it was very important for Gerhard and I to do the first interviews in the

²⁵ See: Schütze (2008a:153-242, 243-298; 2008b:6-77, especially 16f).

style of narrative interviewing together in order to observe what was happening since we did not know if it would be possible at all to get possible informants to tell their life histories off-the-cuff. We did not know about all of this, and we had to observe each other even falling asleep (laughter), and then, of course, the other interviewer would be the person on the alert.

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: And afterwards, we talked about it, and, again, we learned a lot about it in our "afterword" conversations.

And then, I had these long autobiographical narratives and I started to use the general perspective of my and Werner Kallmeyer's type of conversation or interaction analysis on them. In doing lots of sequential analyses, I realized that there would be obvious repetitive expressive items (formulations of general predicates, short summary statements, and evaluations connected with them, and forms of certain disorders like background constructions) in all of these interview texts. I got started to ask myself how to put these repetitive phenomena to analytical use: what to do with all these supra-segmental markers, as I would call them today. Then, I realized that the repetitions of these expression items were linked to the expression of experiential content that would be in-between those markers. In addition, I still remembered my quite nice education in linguistics and I knew that those repeated expression devices would hint to, or depict, general features of experiential information within the topical field of the narrative – the general features of the expres-

sion of biographical experiences. Therefore, quite early I came up with the basic idea that the general features of various biographical process structures would be marked by these supra-segmental markers. This was the central discovery of regarding my type of biographical research.

The problem, which was still unsolved was; when one used these formal structures for one's analysis in doing what I then called "structural description" and "analytical abstraction," how could one put the research process and its results into a *readable* version of representing the research outcome? I was not the person who was able to develop this. It was Gerhard (Riemann) who did this with his doctoral dissertation.²⁶ He invented the readable form of our type of biography-analytical research with chapters on the structural descriptions and analytical abstractions of single interview as single cases, and chapters on their contrastive comparison and developing a substantive-theoretical model. He stressed very much the holistic overall gestalt of the structural description, and his doctoral dissertation remains to be one of the most elegantly readable pieces of qualitative research to date. The import on the holistic gestalts of the analyzed biographies as single cases is important up to today, but there is some deviation from the rule of quoting every line of the interview and giving an elaborate analytical description of every narrative unit of the main story line of the interview (or the interview at all) by separately written statements within the final book as a research report. Later, we found out that, although it is necessary to produce a structural

²⁶ See: Riemann (1987).

description of the *whole* autobiographical narrative interview to be analyzed with all its segmentations, it is, nevertheless, not necessary to put all the meticulous formulations of such structural descriptions into the final book as research report. You could just select some pieces of the structural description, which most conspicuously demonstrate the dominant biographical process structures. It is not necessary to formulate all of the segmentations of the whole autobiographical narrative and all the descriptions of the in-between inner-unit phenomena you have empirically found out about. You just select the most important pieces of the structural descriptions showing the biographical process structures, their dominant developments and their transformations, as well as the changes from one to the other and the oscillations between them. The other parts of the analysis of the interview as a single case you can present in a shortened way by using a somewhat more elaborated form of the depiction of the overall biographical structuring as a first step of analytical abstraction. This shortened way of presenting the analysis of biographical single cases was developed much later. But, Gerhard was the researcher who produced the first really readable text on a substantive topic of biography analysis on the empirical base of autobiographical narrative interviews, that is, on the topic of the life histories of psychiatric patients and of their losing the relationship to their own personal life history and life definition. During those days I was not able to find how to produce this type of readable presentation of the results of substantive sociological topics. In those early days, I was not able to do something that I have done only much lat-

er, for example, the analysis of the fate of small craftsman millers in the world of large marketing organizations of bakers²⁷ or the fate of an Apache Indian,²⁸ who would cross the cultural border between the Native-Indian and the American-White culture. The latter article, of course, is not the analysis of an autobiographical narrative interview, but of a written autobiographical statement. But basically, the analysis is similar. [I don't want to go into the intricate questions about the methods for the analysis of written autobiographical texts here, but it is an important question for the sociological biography research of the near future.]

Of course, biography analysis got further development. For example, the connection between certain types of supra-segmental markers and the four elementary forms of biographical process structures was established in two articles quite important for my scientific development.²⁹ And, although the phenomenon of background construction was something that I found out about very early – even in the times of reworking and amendment of my PhD dissertation – we, Gerhard, Thomas Reim, and I, realized only in the 80s that it is systematically linked with “disorderly” processes in social experience, and especially in biographical development. [These disorderly processes can be of the suffering trajectory type or of the creative metamorphosis type.] Only then we found out how to do the analysis of background constructions. Especially important for my own scientific development was the analysis of extempore stories I did with the

²⁷ See: Schütze (1991).

²⁸ See: Schütze (2012a). The review of the book, written by Katarzyna Waniek, is published in this volume of QSR.

²⁹ See: Schütze (1981; 1984).

book-length study letter *Das narrative Interview in Interaktionsfeldstudien*. It is a 250-page piece about the structure of extempore storytelling of personal experiences.³⁰ After that, I was quite sure that the collection and an analysis of extempore stories of personal experiences would be a manageable method and that it would be possible to analytically go into the intricacies of socio-biographical phenomena.³¹

The Idea of Student Research Workshops

F.S.: And another thing which was important was that Werner Kallmeyer and I started to have some sort of early type interdisciplinary student research workshop in Bielefeld University. We started with that probably in 1974 and continued this up to 1979. We did this every Friday afternoon for roughly 4 hours, and the students endured this working on empirical text materials happily. In addition, we invited almost all the young experts in sociology, or linguistics or anthropology, who would do sociolinguistics and sociology of language in West Germany, and they really came to our workshop without any payment. Werner's and my workshop was principally open-ended, but normally, it started at 2 o'clock p.m. and would end about 5 to 6 o'clock, although it was official-

³⁰ See: Schütze (1987).

³¹ About the same time, Schütze wrote the long article in English: “Autobiographical Accounts of War Experiences. An outline for the analysis of topically focused autobiographical texts – using the example of the “Robert Rasmus” account in Studs Terkel's book ‘The Good War,’” showing the main steps of autobiographical narrative interview analysis. This text for a long time remained unpublished, though the manuscript was read by English speaking scholars. The text, slightly reworked and accompanied with contemporarily written foreword and postscript, is published in this volume of QSR for the first time.

ly 2 hours long. We would look at materials, and many of the empirical text materials were collected by our very interested students. So they would put tape recorders into their flats shared with other students and would, for example, record naturally occurring narratives of personal experiences. These naturally occurring narratives, in turn, were used to compare them with interview narratives in order to find out about possible essential changes caused by the professional action scheme of interviewing and the possibly changed (probably declined) capacity of interview narratives to express personal experiences. [Partly, it depends on the social arrangement of the interview situation; in case the arrangement is in accordance with the basic interaction postulates of cooperation in naturally occurring situations, the difference is not that big.]

So, this was some sort of pre-invention of a type of arrangement for a student research workshop in our home university in Bielefeld. At the same time, Ulrich Oevermann was developing something like that, too. This arrangement of research workshop was a social invention happening in several places at the same time. The second stage of my encounter with the (now full-sized) arrangement of an interactive research workshop was when I was in San Francisco 1978/1979, and saw how intensely and effectively Anselm (Strauss) would work with his research team on his research projects, especially on the research project on medical work in hospitals using sophisticated technologies.³² Reporting about empirical material in a first stage, then analyzing this in a

³² Strauss, Fagerhaugh, Suczek, and Winer (1985).

second, and thirdly, drawing some (tentatively) theoretical conclusions was always the sequential order of the research workshop arrangement. I learned quite a lot from this regular sequential order and the automatic guidance provided by that. I suggested that Anselm would tape the proceedings and let them to be transcribed in order to produce empirical instances for his rich book on research work and its steps and methods *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists* of the year 1987. I am still happy about my quite circumspect suggestion. Generally speaking, the student research workshops, as we practice them today, are a mixture of ideas stemming from our own Bielefeld experiences and Anselm's incentives. From Anselm I not only received new encouragement to arrange open research workshops, but, in addition, I learned quite a lot from him; what the role of the workshop moderator should be, how she or he would carefully listen to a narrative report about the collection of new data and to their description in the beginning of the research workshop, how she or he had to be carefully retrained in order not to overrun other participants with her or his interpretations and suggestions, as well as how the moderator could be most encouraging and propelling for the ongoing analysis of the reporting participant by putting in unexpected contrasts (from his personal experiences, too) and by incenting some sort of "ideational variation" (Edmund Husserl). In the 80s, we started to establish such research workshop arrangements together with our Polish colleagues and friends (who supposedly had already practiced something similar). By this new, joint step in "doing research together" the social arrangement of international

and trans-cultural student research workshops was born.³³

K.K.: Were those seminars from the very beginning also devoted to students?

F.S.: It was always done for students in order that they would get first experiences in research steps and we, in reverse, would learn from their new materials brought in and from their fresh thinking about it. We always had this "research colleague" relationship to our students; they would be treated as members of our research community on equal footing with participating scientific assistants (and later, even with participating professors). I kept doing this up to the end of my work time as professor. Sometimes, you get into some difficulties with it, for sure, when you have participants who were not socialized into the habit of taking the perspectives of the others participants involved. And the workshop arrangement is not something that you could do with big masses of students. Treating the students as equals, when they would be willing to go through the narrow door of opening up for enlightenment through empirical materials and learning from co-researchers, was always our tradition that got started through these workshops with Werner Kallmeyer. I only rarely attended the PhD classes of Anselm, too; I always felt that he did basically the same as he did in his own research project groups. Gerhard (Riemann) attended Anselm's research classes much more regularly. He went to San Francisco 2 years later. Anselm did not have any research project by then and a respective research

³³ More details about cooperation with the Polish colleagues can be found in Andrzej Piotrowski's text published in this volume of QSR.

group. When I was in San Francisco, Anselm had his research project on the social organization of medical work (according to the application for financial support, especially with a focus on using medical technology), and the respective research group would meet regularly every week; so it was not necessary for me to attend all his teaching classes in addition. But, Gerhard did this, and he told me about it in detail. Of course, all these experiences of Gerhard and I had a strong influence of how our later student research workshops in Kassel would develop.

In Kassel, the student research workshop became really institutionalized as part of my ordinary university teaching. I do not know how Ulrich Oevermann established and developed his workshop arrangement, but I know that partially he did this out of the formal university teaching setting, too. Later on, Gabriele Rosenthal and Wolfram Fischer would do similar extra-mural research workshops in Berlin. In my case, the student research workshop was always a teaching institution within the regular university teaching. In the University of Kassel, from the very beginning, it was clear that the student research workshops would be a central and regular part of my teaching activity. Later on, in Magdeburg, the research workshop arrangement was difficult to get licensed within the faculty council, and I had to explain it again and again as not being the normal type of advanced seminar (which consists basically out of the presentations of the students and their being criticized by the seminar docent and the seminar group, whereas the student research workshop consists basically out of the cooperative analysis of the empirical

material brought in by a student who would not talk more than the other participants [mostly, even less in order to get the analytical perspectives of the co-participants]. The openness of the student research workshop (you as the moderator do not know in advance what will be the result of the session – a deadly sin in the context of pre-arranged and content-definite university lecturing and teaching), the treatment of the students as equals, and the larger time consumption (because of the emergent character of the research workshop you need more time than one needs for the normal type of seminar) are conventionally seen as irrational in terms of the features and criteria of highly advanced standard teaching. It is bespeaking that the research workshop arrangement as a regular form of teaching activity in the basic courses of the Bachelor study course of social sciences (with the exception that it is done in the cloak of an irregular "extra activity" by guests like me) was immediately put off after I had left Magdeburg University for retirement. [It might have to do with the tight time organization of study courses organized according to the Bologna regulations.] Anyway, I think it is an extremely important feature of a productive university setting to let students undergo open and cooperative research experiences. Such a social arrangement is not restricted to interpretative or qualitative sociology proper; it can be a productive arrangement within all types of social and cultural sciences. It is a very Humboldtian idea: that you would have a social arrangement for a joint research action schema that the students would freely embark on, that it is totally open regarding the results searched for, that the students as research partners would be principally equal to the docents,

although they are much more inexperienced, they have lots of fresh ideas, and that all the participants would work together cooperatively.

One Year in the United States

F.S.: I have just mentioned that I spent some time in the United States and worked with Anselm Strauss. I did an application to the German Research Foundation (DFG) to go for a year to the United States to see Anselm (Strauss) and to see Aaron Cicourel. This was accepted by the DFG, so we did this with our whole family having three daughters by then (1978/1979). First, we went for half a year to Anselm Strauss, San Francisco. However, it turned out that it would be too difficult after the first half year to move from San Francisco to Aaron Cicourel in La Jolla. The children were at school, and it would be quite difficult to let them change schools again; so, we stayed in San Francisco. Aaron Cicourel was very fair, although slightly disappointed that I could not come for the second half of our Californian year to his teaching and research setting. However, I visited Aaron Cicourel for a shorter visit, too, and he was very hospitable and cooperative in his comments on my attempt to establish a biography analysis on the base of autobiographical narrative interviews. Thinking about the levels of abstractions in the course of autobiographical narrative rendering is very much indebted to his thinking on “higher predicates” and summary statements.

And then, of course, I started to cooperate with Anselm. He put a lot of time into people visiting

him, and his cooperation was not just with me, but with numerous others as, for example, with Hans-Georg Soeffner, Gerhard Riemann, and Wolfram Fischer, too. As you know, he had this bad heart condition, and he needed to do some bodily movement. He was happy to have people to talk to on sociological subjects when he would take walks through the Russian Hill district, where he was living with Fran, or through the Golden Gate Park that was easily reachable from the small Victorian house hosting the Institute for Social and Behavioral Sciences situated in the very vicinity of the compound of the University of California Medical Center. Anselm was extremely cooperative and intellectually helpful to me. So, with the background of *Mirrors and Masks* and *Time for Dying* in my mind, I would talk to him about phenomena of suffering with the autobiographical narrative texts and, of course especially on experiences of suffering connected with diseases. I knew Anselm’s trajectory concept and its constitutive features, and I told him that I had found these features in my autobiographical extempore narrative, too. We looked at interviews with very sick patients, some of them conducted by me in San Francisco; I had encountered these patients within the Cancer Clinic of the Moffitt Hospital of UCSF Medical Center, and we agreed that the forms of narration expressing suffering within in my long autobiographical accounts would basically express the elementary features of trajectories. So it was clear that I would name these phenomena of suffering that I saw expressed in the formal structures and abstract content forms of autobiographical narration “trajectory.”³⁴

³⁴ For the concept of trajectory look at, e.g., Riemann and Schütze (1991), Schütze (2008a; 2008b).

Of course, the narrative structures expressing suffering and the corresponding biographical process structures could have been named differently. I guess that even today most of American social-science scholars do not understand that the term “trajectory” has a peculiar meaning in studies of professional medical and nursing work and in biography analysis, because in America, and in the English language in general, it is a common everyday word in the first instance. It then means something like “plan,” or “line,” or “curve,” or whatever, and they do not understand the deeper sense of it in terms of suffering. It is astonishing that even symbolic interactionists do not realize that trajectory, as understood by Anselm Strauss, means “suffering” and disorderly sequences of events like a “cumulative mess.” You can see this in *Time for Dying* and in some later books, like *Social Organization of Medical Work*. The features of trajectory as a peculiar class of social processes I had seen in my autobiographical-narrative interviews, although Anselm during those days (1978/1979) did not approach and envision those features in terms of biography, but in terms of work. However, even in transcripts of actually ongoing interaction you can find trajectory structures, if you are interested in looking at textual materials like that: the traps of misunderstanding, the deadlocks of verbal interaction, the adversely argumentative conflicts escalating turn by turn are verbal marks of trajectories of actually ongoing interaction processes in contrast to the ordering structures of social action.

But, in *Mirrors and Masks*, the book that states the final summary of his first phase of researching in the field of a sociological social psychology (and

this means to a certain degree: on biographical unfolding, too), Anselm was thinking much more on biographical phenomena of metamorphosis than on trajectories of suffering, although, I guess, he did not use this term “metamorphosis” in that book, but, instead, terms like “learning” and “development” that were very much influenced through his intricate studies of George Herbert Mead and following scholars (like his friend Lindesmith). But, it was Anselm who suggested to me the English term “metamorphosis” as appropriate translation for my German term *Wandlung* depicting the processes of creative inner changes in one’s biographical identity development. So, when I worked with Anselm in San Francisco from 1978-1979, my theory of the 4 elementary biographical process structures (biographical action scheme, trajectory, institutional expectation patterns, and metamorphosis) formally expressed by peculiar supra-segmental markers of autobiographical story telling crystallized, and Anselm would encourage that theory and could deal with it well. [Another series of conversations had been encouraging for me before: I had talked to Harvey Sacks when he used to visit us in the first half of the 70s. I can remember that he had a very interesting idea on how to analyze stories in sociological terms, especially addressed to the use of social categorization. He was convinced that it would be quite interesting to connect conversational analysis with the analysis of stories.]

K.K.: Could you comment on the origins of the term “biographical work” since, not only in my opinion, in Strauss’ works one may find lots of your ideas in this respect?

F.S.: I do not know where it comes from. It could be his idea or my idea, I do not know. (smiling) Lena (Inowlocki) keeps saying that *I* was the inventor of it, but I do not believe it. The term came out of our discussions, and it does not matter where it comes from. You have the use of this term very fruitfully in *Unending Work and Care*. We have a very good German translation of this book by Astrid Hildenbrand, one of the best translations I have ever seen. The book is quite prominent in German health research. First of all, it has to be established – this is very much Anselm-style and the style of the Chicago tradition of sociology in general – that biography is a social phenomenon; biographical processes are social phenomena. This I had discussed with Anselm very much when I had visited San Francisco in 1978/1979 for the first time. As I said, I was there for a whole year. Maybe in former days, before I came to Anselm for the first time, I might have thought that the activities of autobiographical storytelling as such would be just a medium for expressing a certain sort of social reality, but that social processes in their own right would be activated by them (for example, working through and fading out) – this insight came out of the discussions with Anselm. However, the more basic idea was that biographical process structures would be social phenomena depicted by narrative presentation activities. And then, after having realized that narratively expressed biographical process structures would be social processes in their own right, you could think about how the biographical identity subject would start to do work on it; this would be biographical work in a more specific way. So this was the second idea. [More generally, you could come to the conclusion that even autobiographical

storytelling as such would be biographical work already, since it orders the ocean of personal experiences.] The concept of biographical work is not sufficiently developed up to now. We, the biography researchers, must do lots of additional work on this very important list of phenomena. Nevertheless, to sum it up, in the last resort the term “biographical work,” of course, logically came out the taxonomy of work types and work steps as explicated and researched on in Anselm’s magnificent book *Social Organization of Medical Work* published in 1985. And then, Anselm and Juliet Corbin developed this idea and focused on it in the book *Unending Work and Care: Managing Chronic Illness at Home* published in 1988. I do not know who personally got the idea of biographical work first, but probably Anselm. (smiling)

K.K.: But, I think that you developed it, and actually, due to his death, he did not have a chance to work on it.

F.S.: Anselm always said to me: “Fritz, I do not have this feeling for language, I did not study linguistics, and you have to translate these socio-linguistic concepts for me.” He was very much in the sociology of work and social worlds, and, by then, he had all these young people around him who did work with him on social words and work. But almost nobody would take over this peculiar perspective on biographical processes. Admittedly, Juliet Corbin did this to a certain degree, but she went much more into the direction of methodology. Later, she did not develop the concept of biographical work further in a substantial way. Therefore we, on the old continent, have to do it;

I do not see anybody in America who does research on it today.

K.K.: That is what I wanted to ask you: How and why do you think that nowadays in America there is no systematic development of a methodological approach focused on biographical research? American sociology has such a rich potential for it stemming from the Chicago School of sociology.

F.S.: It is very difficult to say. It is such an off course for me that I never thought very much about it. There was this Chicago tradition of biographical research, and we still should work on this a lot. I still have a research paper about it in my drawer. We should do some additional analysis and assessment of what was done in terms of biography analysis in the Chicago sociology of the 20s and the 30s. It was much more sophisticated than we assume today. However, the Chicago sociologists did not work on great numbers, and in the end of the 30s, a conference of the “Social Science Research Council’s Committee on Appraisal of Research” took place on the use of biographical materials for studying crucial social problems. The Chicago sociologist, Herbert Blumer, as one of the path finders of a sociological social psychology, gave a very critical assessment of the lack of probative value and of representativity of the Chicago studies with biographical focus, especially, of the monumental study of William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki on the *Polish Peasant in Europe and America*.³⁵ Herbert Blumer was – I even met him as I also came across Everett Hughes – he was a very sober, science-minded, and fair critical mind, and so he

³⁵ See: Blumer (1939). See also: Angell (1945).

wrote this assessment of the Chicago style biography analysis in 1939, never published in a book later, and he – mostly correctly – pinpointed lots of shortcomings in Chicago style biography research. Some bit earlier, in the 20s, the Thurstone scale had been developed in psychology and sociology, and it was the opening door for quantitative research using big numbers of informants. American science politics recognized that this new type of quantitative social research would be very worthwhile for assessing the general condition of the society. And therefore, the classical style of Chicago sociology focusing on whole social cases in its integrity and dynamics of unfolding, as well as with its approach of analytically digging deep into the mechanisms of case unfolding would go down. Then, in the end of the 30s and in the 40s, Parsons’s style of sociology would develop with import on the system character of society. At least in the *reception* of Parsons’s approach the structure and system aspect of society and its institutional realms were underlined, although Parsons theory, in addition, was an eminent sociology of interaction; it is very much forgotten, for example, that the famous pattern variables are very much features and categories for research on (professional) action and interaction, and not so much features of any type of social system as a whole.

Then, there was a second offspring of interpretative sociology in the United States in Berkeley and other places in California and in Montana. Even then, the main figure for shaping the large sociology department in Berkeley in the 50s was Herbert Blumer. He did not push symbolic interactionism or phenomenological studies, so it was not some sort of new

establishment of symbolic interactionism, which would have possibly led to a recommencement of biographical research in the U.S. In the 60s, there was the republication of Clifford Shaw's *The Jack Roller* (from 1930) with a very informative new introduction by Howard Becker, but that's it. The person who was closest to the tradition of biographical research was, of course, Anselm Strauss. He would work together with his older colleague Lindesmith in George Herbert Mead's tradition, and they wrote *Social Psychology*, but it was more general theorizing stemming from a Meadean thinking, and not so much empirical research. In the style of Piaget, Anselm did the study on the concepts of money; he did this in the second part of the 40s, and at the very end of this social-psychological development *Mirrors and Masks* in 1959. But then, the Chicago Sociology research tradition of biography research was petering out; with the exception of Howard Becker's *Boys in White*, as far as it can be seen as a biographical career study of medical students, and *Unending Work and Care*, there is nothing that comes after *Mirrors and Masks* in the U.S. Anselm almost was to be thrown out from the University of Indiana; he did not get tenure. And then, at the end of the 50s, with the help of Everett Hughes, Anselm and a group of associated researchers (the sociologists Leonard Schatzman and Rue Bucher, the psychologist Danuta Ehrlich, as well as the psychiatrist Melvin Sabshin) did the study on *Psychiatric Ideologies and Institutions* published 1961. In this trailblazing research the concept of social world and the concept of work started to get prominent. When Anselm was invited by the dean of the School of Nursing in the University of California

at San Francisco,³⁶ Helen Nahm, to do research in the field of nursing work, he immediately started with these work studies. As I said, biographical research comes back some bit in *Unending Work and Care*, maybe even a little bit influenced by me. It might be, because he had all these discussions with me about the importance of what had been done in *Mirrors and Masks*. I cannot tell. But, there was never an attempt in American sociology to re-establish the tradition of Chicago style biographical research. The younger American sociologists never got this Chicago idea of a sociological type of social psychology, as Anselm Strauss would call it. It did not come to their attention that this could become an important tool for studying society again, as it had been in Chicago between the two World Wars. For Anselm himself, my type of approach to biography research was quite interesting. If he had lived longer, if we had had more time, we would probably have done something together on autobiographies of black people, at least we had planned to do so. Ordered by Anselm, I had already collected a whole bunch of published autobiographies by African Americans.

In this sense, the interest for biographical research finally came back, at least in the work and planning of one of the important heirs of the Chicago tradition. However, even Anselm was more in the research fields of social worlds and professional and scientific work as you can see in research works of Adele Clarke, for example. In the American sociology, biographical processes and biographical developments did not become attractive again as social

³⁶ The University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) is a center of health sciences research, patient care, and education.

topics worthwhile as such to be empirically studied in sociology, although there had been this magnificent Chicago tradition. In addition, perhaps psychology, as a sister discipline of sociology, got too powerful; it seemed to claim this topic for itself, at least almost everybody assumed such a claim. Even today, if we start to talk about biography, everybody would assume it is a legitimate topic just for psychology. (smiling) [However, most, but not all, of the German psychologists are not interested in biography proper at all; this might be quite different in Anglo-Saxon countries.]

There are some traces of interests to study biography in the research work of the early Garfinkel. Of course, the magnificent study of Agnes in his book *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967) is, amongst other aspects, a biographical study in a certain sense; it is a study of biography meticulously done step by step in ethnographical style. These early movements towards biography could have been developed by Garfinkel into an explicit approach of doing biographical research, but it did not happen; he had to follow up other very important traces and developed his intriguing work study approach. Of course in social psychotherapy you have very interesting biography-oriented researchers in Germany, for example, Jörg Frommer, and in Scotland, for example, John McLeod. They go in the direction of biography research on the base of autobiographical statements quite a lot.³⁷ But, the Anglo-Saxon psychotherapy researchers would probably assume that they get their basic ideas from cognitive science; they normally would not look at continental European traditions.

³⁷ See, e.g., McLeod and Ballamoutsou (2000).

In Germany, there are traditions of artistic autobiography writing, like the *Anton Reiser* by Karl Philipp Moritz; he published this magnificent piece of autobiographical literature in the late years of the 18th century.³⁸ In addition, he was a specialist of Great Britain; he is most famous for his autobiographical narrative on his visit to Great Britain in, let's say, the 1780s.³⁹ And, of course, Goethe's *Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit* (*From my Life: Poetry and Truth*). So, there is this German type of tradition of autobiographical writing, and then we have gotten Dilthey with his realistic hermeneutic analysis of biographical phenomena.⁴⁰ So the German tradition of biography research might come from this tradition of artistic literary work and from philosophical and pedagogical analytical description and reflection. In addition, there are students of Max Weber who did some sort of biographical studies, too, which did not become prominent, but at least there was this type of biography-centered research. And finally, even in German psychology there was a time, for example, Charlotte Bühler and Hildegard Hetzer, who would do biographical research, but after the Second World War it died down in main stream German language psychology. You may find lots of biography-centered contemporary studies in Polish, French, or German social-science literature, but, generally speaking, social scientists got used to the idea that everything that is important is written in the English language and you do not have to read French, Polish, or German. (laughter)

³⁸ The (disguised, since written in „he“ perspective) autobiography *Anton Reiser* was originally published in several partial publications within the time span 1785-1790.

³⁹ This journey took place in 1882.

⁴⁰ See: Dilthey (2002).

K.K.: I have one more question related to your stay in the United States: you have collected different materials there. Some we used in our Polish-German or tri-national workshops; they were still typed on a typewriter. Did you have then any systematic project to work on or did you just gather different kinds of interviews?

F.S.: I collected some empirical material in the field of hospital treatment, like the autobiographical narrative interview with Mrs. Jackson⁴¹ and some other interviews. In these treatment settings I collected even some recordings of actual ongoing communication. In addition, there is a small corpus on Swiss and French watchmakers. Then there are quite a lot of interviews with American soldiers. There are some interviews with German immigrants to the United States, too. For example, I conducted a long autobiographical-narrative interview with a very close friend of Gerhard who is my friend to some degree, too; he fled from the GDR under very dramatic circumstances and lived in San Francisco illegally since he did not get the U.S. immigration ticket as a refugee from communist dictatorship while he had the West German citizenship, what he did not want, but what was ascribed to him automatically. This interview is more than 100 pages long; it is basically spoken in German, but when he comes in his narrative to his imprisonment, since he was expected to get extradited from the United States, he turns to the English language. We have 3 or 4 of these interviews with German immigrants, too.

K.K.: And have you written anything about these watchmakers?

⁴¹ The case of Mrs. Jackson is described, e.g., in the core paper on trajectory of suffering: Riemann and Schütze (1991).

F.S.: No, I use it sometimes, but I did not write about it in a focused way.

K.K.: Is this material transcribed?

F.S.: Some bit is transcribed, but many of the interviews are still on tapes. I bought a special computer program to transform the typewritten interviews into a digital version. Right now I do not have the time to install this program, but I plan to do it. You know, I plan to write a book on biographical processes and biographical work, and for this purpose, I will need these materials. I am very much concerned about the richness of these interview materials. There is another corpus of autobiographical-narrative interviews with Welsh people, which I have not used very much yet. I used it several times in workshops, but I haven't published specifically about it. It is in my thinking, all of this material will be used in the book on biography. Of course, I have to admit an overflow of empirical materials and therefore, I cannot use everything in a very careful way, and some I have to leave out totally. However, this is the situation you have to live in as a qualitative sociologist.

The Impact of the World War II

F.S.: I felt entitled to do real sociological study after I had established the basic theory of biographical processes and the method of analyzing the autobiographical narrative interviews. I started to do research on World War II. When I started to do this, I had no idea that it would have much to do with my own biography, although I had already learned that I could not escape from my existence of be-

ing German. As I told you, I got lots of information from my parents about World War II. I got information that both of them were some bit connected to the Nazi movement. My father was for a while in the student movement of the Nazis, later on he went out of it, but did not separate from it by intention. My mother was not very political, but my grandfather, as a director of a public school, was in the NS party. So both parents were some bit connected to the Nazi culture, whereas Evi's parents were totally against the Nazis. However, both of my parents had told me about the crimes of the Nazi times, and that they hated what Nazi Germany had done. They would bring Jews and other people who had been maltreated by the Nazis in concentration camps to our home. So I had learned about that. At school, Jewish people would come to class and tell us about their suffering in concentration camps, and we had seen all these documentary films and fictitious art films like *Die Brücke* (The Bridge). So I knew all of these crimes of the German nation in Nazi times, but I would see myself more like an earthling. This would stay that way up to the time when I came to America the first time, where I realized that when I even opened my month, everybody would know that I was a German who probably had parents who had been in the Nazi movement, and so on.

When I was in San Francisco the first time, I wanted to do some empirical research with Anselm; therefore, as I have told you, I did some interviewing in the community of French and Swiss watchmakers. And I interviewed one of them in his shop in the basement of one of the skyscrapers of San Francisco. When I started my auto-biographical in-

terviewing, he was working on his watches, and at the same time he would tell me his life history. Suddenly, a middle-aged guy came in and said: "Oh you have this extraordinary typical accent! Last week I had to produce a TV show, and then I would have really needed you. In my arranged scenery a young SS officer was playing the piano most elegantly. I would have needed your voice for him." I could manage to let the watchmaker tell his life history, too, amidst the life history of the French-Swiss watchmaker Alain. It came out of this "embedded" autobiographical interview with the TV-man yearning for my thick German accent that he was the son of a Finnish Jew, and his parents had managed to escape from Finland and the Nazi reign. At the very end of his interview, which took more than an hour, he said to me, "Oh Fritz, I tell you, your voice is so soft that you could even be a Swede." (laughter)

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: Later on I understood that when somebody asked me: "Are you from Sweden?" she or he, and everybody else standing by, would immediately know that I am from Germany, but they did not want to make me feel ashamed. So I realized I could not escape my "Germanhood." Perhaps this episode was the first impulse for choosing the research topic of the life histories of persons having been young adults in World War II. Another reason was that both of my parents were dead already; I could not talk with them anymore about their personal experiences in Nazi times. Those might have been the 2 reasons for choosing the war topic, probably it: my conspicuous Germanhood I was not able

to escape from, and that I could not talk with my parents about the Nazi times anymore. Anselm was interested in the war topic, too, but it was not he who suggested to me that I should choose the war topic as a research subject; it was I myself who did this. And then phenomena like fading out of awareness⁴² would come up in the interviews. After my change to Kassel University, a lot of this interviewing with persons having been young adults in World War II was done. I had lots of students doing autobiographical narrative interviews on persons having been young adults in World War II, and I did lots of interviews myself.

It was very interesting for Evi, too, because as I said already, her life was very much impacted by World War II. She is some bit older than I, and she can remember the war time as a child very intensely. Her father fell at the Eastern front in summer 1943 when the German army started the last massive attack on the Russian troops at the Kuban arc. Since he was a communist, he was put in the first line of attackers, and he was killed immediately. And Evi's mother criticized Adolf Hitler openly when all the neighbors of their flat in Münster would sit together in the big bomb shelter and were shivering from the heavy bombing. She was imprisoned for a while for *Wehrkraftzersetzung* (undermining the energy for war fighting), but she was soon released because there were some nice women connected to Nazi husbands who managed to get her out. She was a remarkably capable dressmaker, and those women needed a good dressmaker. (laughter)

⁴² The phenomenon of fading out of awareness is analyzed, e.g., in Schütze (1992a; 1992b).

Evi's mother got very sick immediately after the end of the war. During the war, because of the heavy bombing of Münster, she and her three daughters were evacuated out of the city of Münster into the rural area. It therefore happened that Evi grew up on a farm, and her second mother tongue was the Munsterlandish, Low-German dialect, which is the German variety most similar to the English language. Evi had to help her mother for 12 years in the household and as a nurse; she could hardly go to school, and I do not know how teachers let her do this: to stay at home and to be the nurse attendant for her mother (what she very much liked to do, but, on the other hand, she loved to go to school and to learn there). So, both of us experienced a very chaotic school education. But, Evi's experiences were more unhappy than mine. Nevertheless, both of us were seriously affected by the war through the fate of our parents. [My mother died very early because of the impact of the war, too.] So, for Evi, it was important, too, that I would deal with the experiences of young adults in World War II and in the Nazi time in general. I never could manage getting stories from convinced Nazis what other researcher accomplished to do. However, today I think it is not that important for me. Now, I try to get at least some informants who would have been closely connected with the DDR state and with Stasi.

K.K.: When you were working on the topic of the war, did you conduct interviews in Germany?

F.S.: Yes, quite a lot and in America, too. And I am still concerned that there are these beautiful American interviews which have not been used up to now

very much. For example, there is the interview with John Hampshire⁴³ who is a very famous construction engineer. It is always on my mind. Interviews like that had an important impact on my thinking.

Relations to Poland

F.S.: I still have guilt feelings, I was invited by Antonina Kłoskowska to come to Poland, I guess to Warszawa or to Poznań, I cannot remember exactly.⁴⁴ And I did not follow this invitation since I felt Richard (Grathoff), my longstanding friend and organizational partner, would be the spiritus rector of this invitation and through this – I was afraid – I would be drawn into new overwhelming responsibilities (which, of course, as I knew later, was not at all the intention of Antonina Kłoskowska, who did not know me at all).

I have to explain this. I had been in this long-standing working cooperation with Richard Grathoff, which I liked very much and from which I had profited a lot in my personal and career development. However, I had one big problem with it: Richard tended to make me organize difficult and time-consuming organizational projects. [This had been some bit similar in my very fruitful relationship to Joachim Matthes.] He was very much concentrated on his very important and world-changing liaison work between various scientific cultures in the social sciences. As I have told you, for German interpretative social sciences, he opened

⁴³ It is one of the interviews analyzed during Polish-German or tri-national student workshops.

⁴⁴ The interviewee was unable to remember the conference he was invited to. Most probably, it was the "Florian Znaniecki Symposium on the Centenary of His Death" in Poznań in December 1982.

the windows to the world; especially import was that through his lovable personality and through his so very warm-hearted attitude to relate to others he laid the ground for many others to establish biographically important new relationships to new significant others they had never dreamt about. But, in my organizational cooperation with him, in which, I have to admit, I sometimes acted in a much too detailed way, the organizational work with and for Richard became too time- and energy-consuming for me. Therefore, I finally felt I had to protect myself against it.

For example, according to Richard's wish – we both worked in the Sociolinguistics Committee of the International Sociological Association, I organized the sociolinguistics section of the World Congress of Sociology in Mexico City in 1982. When I arrived in Mexico City, I was totally exhausted from my preparation of the vastly numerous meetings in the Sociolinguistics section with roughly 500 group sessions. I was the guy who had to organize them in terms of topical differentiation, chairmanship, time schedule, and place. Most of the participants, the majority being linguists and anthropologists, I did not know, and – alas! – I was not able to speak Spanish. Luckily, I got decisive help from Mexican sociolinguists and anthropologists, otherwise I would not have been at all able to prepare the sociolinguistics section of the Sociological World Congress. 2 of my decisive Mexican supporters, Teresa Sierra and Rainer Enrique Hamel, became my personal friends even until today (again, the impact of Richard's liaison work, although in this case unintentionally and indirectly!). In the middle of the World Congress

I got very sick, and I even had to stay longer because I was not able to travel by plane. Through the help of my new Mexican friends the sociolinguistics section of the World Congress of Sociology went very well, but it had been extremely strenuous for me. And Richard was the powerful person who had made me do it – as he had always expected from me to help in other things, too, for example, to write up part of the application to the German Sociological Association in order that we would establish the German Section of Sociology of Language, as I have mentioned before. As I said, he was extremely important for establishing the foundations of interpretative or qualitative sociology in Germany. As I told you, he brought all the American stars, like Strauss, Goffman, Garfinkel, Cicourel, Sacks, Schegloff, Gumperz, and others to Germany and enabled the 3 pivotal conferences in Bielefeld, Gottlieben, and Constance. He was the engine of all this establishing and foundation work. In addition, without him, I would have never met Anselm and Fran Strauss, my dear friends. In addition, I am very grateful to him for lots of personal stimulation and encouragement. However, he was so powerful in his relating to me, that I decided to be careful when he would attempt to engage me again within new activities.

Richard had asked me to invite Marek (Czyżewski) for a conference on “mountain interpretative sociology” I wanted to organize in Kassel University – that strand of interpretative sociology in Montana and Colorado, which was called “Ethnoinquiry” (Edward Rose, Rolf Kjolseth, Charly Kaplan, and others). So I invited Marek for this conference in 1981. And I did this because I understood it would

be good for Marek to get contacts to Western sociologists. However, in-between was this so very exhausting organizational work for and in Mexico City, and I had decided not to get into new projects of liaison work suggested by Richard. I knew that Richard had done tremendous work to help Polish sociology and social philosophy in the times of the Solidarity Movement and in the following period of Marshal Law. He had developed all these new beautiful contacts to Poland. Now, there would be this conference organized by the eminent Antonina Kłoskowska where I, too, was invited. Since I got this invitation through the mediation of Richard Grathoff, at least I had to surmise this, and probably I factually knew this – I was afraid that I was expected to embark on a new very energy-consuming project of discovery, exploration, and establishing new relationships. I was still so exhausted and even sick, and I thought it would be too much. I had to concentrate on my new professorship of qualitative social research, the first position of that kind in West Germany, which I had, by necessity, neglected some bit in favor of the urgent Mexico organization. I remember that later, for another conference in Lodz, Rolf Kjolseth came to our house in Wattenbach near Kassel. He attempted to take me with him to a second Polish conference in Lodz, to which I had been invited, too, and I said, “No, I cannot do this.” Again, I surmised that Richard would be the spiritus rector of my invitation. And I declined again, since I was still afraid of new industrious work coming up.⁴⁵ However,

⁴⁵ It was the conference in Lodz in 1983, “Approaches to the Study of Face-to-Face Interaction,” organized by Richard and Marek Czyżewski. Harry Hermanns, Hans-Georg Soeffner, Jörg Bergmann, and Rolf Kjolseth also were active participants. Publication of the conference proceedings: Bokszański and Czyżewski (1987).

that is a wonderfully ironic turn of events, when in 1984 I worked in Princeton in the Institute of Advanced Studies for a whole year, I got an invitation to a new Poznan conference in 1985,⁴⁶ and then I was in the wrong assumption that this invitation was not triggered by Richard, and so I finally said, “Okay, I can go to it.”

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: So I went to this conference, and I was in Poland then for the first time. Of course, finally I found out that even this invitation to Poland was triggered by Richard. (laughter) And, again, I have to be very grateful to him for this.

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: And at the Poznan conference I met Marek (Czyżewski) for the second time and Krzysztof Konecki (who Marek introduced to me) for the first time. I did not meet Andrzej (Piotrowski) by then. I saw Andrzej for the first time when I came to our first Polish-German research workshop to Lodz in 1986. In Lodz we, the Polish colleagues and Gerhard and I, started immediately with doing our new style of bi-national workshop using the format of a *binationale Forschungswerkstatt* – a bi-national research workshop with students. I cannot remember who had the idea to work in

⁴⁶ It was the conference organized by University of Poznan where many prominent scholars using the biographical methods were present. The book published in 1990 on the proceedings of this conference was entitled *Metoda biograficzna w socjologii*. This volume contained Polish translations of articles on biographical method. Up to today it has remained one of the core publications on biographical research in Polish social science literature. It also contains a shortened version of Schütze’s article “Pressure and Guilt” (1992a; 1992b).

this research workshop format. Probably, it was Marek since I would not have dared to suggest something like that for a socio-cultural university context totally unknown to me. But, it was a seminal idea, something like a boundary object in the sense of the ethnography of science, the research on the social worlds, and work activities conducted by the Garfinkel-type of work studies, Anselm-Strauss- and Adele-Clarke-type of social world studies, and the studies of the French actor-network theory.⁴⁷ And later on (from 1996 on) this developed into three-national workshops with Polish, Welsh, and German students and docents.⁴⁸ Today, this is what I love most in being a university teacher. For example, the last student workshop that we had in Lodz in May (2013)⁴⁹ made possible the most fruitful processes of mutual learning (including the participating professors) we could imagine: people from two nations with different cultures were in it, we had to deal with the shortcomings of our lingua franca, we had to take into account the different national perspectives peculiarly shaped by different historical experiences and traditions, we had to overcome the astonishment and even embarrassment about systematic differences in the assessment of a certain interview passage, we had to find out the reasons for having these different attitudes for

⁴⁷ For these new encounters between symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodological work studies and Latour-type actor-network theory see, e.g., a collection of papers (translated into the German language) from these fruitfully interacting approaches: Mondada and Schütze (2004).

⁴⁸ For the underlying idea of these three-national student research workshops cf. part 11 in Schütze (2005). See also: Inowl-ocki, Riemann, and Schütze (2010).

⁴⁹ Schütze alludes to our last student research workshop organized in Lodz. The frame of the workshop was typical to all the student workshops. The empirical material came from our ongoing Polish-German project, see footnote 56.

interpretation, et cetera. I feel especially intrigued through my various biographical experiences of having been some sort of mediation worker, in-between worker, liaison worker. [Of course, I see the parallel to Richard.]

Looking back, I am totally sorry that I did not meet Antonina Kłoskowska. She is one of the most important sociologists of the second half of the 20th century. I did not realize that she even quoted me. It never came to my mind that I would be important enough for her to be quoted by her. Today, I would love to work together with her. Nevertheless, the work and friendship relationship to the Lodz colleagues – first, Andrzej (Piotrowski), Marek (Czyżewski), Zbigniew Bokszański, and you, still being a PhD student (Kaja Kaźmierska), and later, in addition, Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas, Katarzyna Waniek, and others – has been extremely enriching for my biographical development. It is not only enlightening to realize the systematically different perspectives due to different historical experiences and cultural background, we also learned about our common ground; an ultra-stable trust relationship developed.

Looking back, I also feel responsible to mention the influence of my former teacher and chief Joachim Matthes regarding an earlier very positive attitude to Polish sociology. When I was a young student of sociology in 1964, we had in the Sozialforschungsstelle Dortmund of the University of Münster on display a sociological journal by the name *Polish Sociological Bulletin*.⁵⁰ Matthes

⁵⁰ The English-language quarterly *The Polish Sociological Bulletin* was first published in 1961 by the Polish Sociological As-

sociation. In 1993, the title was changed into *Polish Sociological Review*.
used this journal in his teaching courses on the sociology of language and the sociology of religion. Matthes was very interested in the sociology behind the Iron Curtain, since he grew up in Magdeburg and had been imprisoned by the GDR state (or the Soviet forces?) for almost 1 year in the early 50s or the end of the 40s, since he had brought Western newspapers, journals, and books to East Germany. His conspicuous interest in Eastern European sociology might have stemmed from this quite cruel experience. Anyway, I do not know if you can remember that Jan Szczepański was on the editorial board of the *Polish Sociological Bulletin*, and in the teaching courses of Joachim Matthes we had to read articles of Szczepański and Leszek Kołakowski from this journal. [Actually, they were the first sociological texts I had to read in the English language.] These articles were quite impressive. In addition, Matthes visited Poland several times. [He was one of the liaison persons for the foundation of the Polish-German schoolbook commission.] In winter 1968, he went with me for a month to Czechoslovakia, that is, immediately after the Russians had invaded Czechoslovakia. It was an awful, but very deep and interesting experience for me. And suddenly, Matthes cut all these relationships to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and other countries behind the Iron Curtain, I really do not know why, he never talked to me about it carefully. I guess – I have only a very vague remembrance – he was criticized by the Polish state or by some Polish officials to be a CIA agent.

K.K.: Really? (laughter)

F.S.: He was very furious about it, and after that he cut all his professional relationships with sociology behind the Iron Curtain. [In this vacuum Richard stepped in and established all the new pivotal relationships between Western interpretative sociologists and Polish ones.] I had always kept in my mind the idea that we, younger German sociologist, would have to start an intensive relationship with Polish sociology because I had heard from Matthes that it was one of the most important sociologies all over the world. Very early on I had heard about Znaniecki from Matthes, for example. And in terms of politics, the relationship to Poland was important for me, too. Evi and I had belonged to the many thousands of people who supported the election campaign of the German Social Democratic Party by visiting the voters and optimizing the election campaign by means of the statistical analysis of the socio-structural character of the living quarters in West German cities. [The question was: who would be still undecided and how they could be won for the social-democratic vote.] Of course, the victor of the Social Democratic Party had much to do with the improvement of the relationship to Poland (the acceptance of the border between Poland and Germany at the rivers Odra and Neisse, Brandt's kneeling down in Warszawa, etc.) So, the relationship to Polish sociology and to the "Polish nation" (if this doesn't sound too melodramatic) was extremely important for me in biographical terms. The only reason I had not started it earlier, was because I thought: "Richard is controlling it, and it's so dangerous for me

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: to be burnt out by this liaison work." So, I did not do it. At the very end, it appears that Richard was responsible for my "finally coming to Poland," and I am very grateful for it now.

Biographical Analysis – Present Perspective

K.K.: You have mentioned that the Foucault type of discourse analysis can be dangerous for biography analysis. Could you explain what you mean by this statement?

F.S.: I know about the work and different approaches of discourse analysis, at least since the early 80s, because I was tangentially involved in Mexican research on Otomi Indians. I had to write one of the assessments of the sociolinguistic PhD dissertation of Rainer Enrique Hamel on the bilingual situation of Otomi Indians in the Valle del Mezquital,⁵¹ and one of my PhD students, Michael Appel,⁵² did his PhD research on the biographical processes of Otomi Indians – as some sort of counterpart to the language and discourse studies of the Mexican colleagues on the Otomi in the Valle del Mezquital. Teresa Sierra, the other important researcher on the Otomi, wrote her PhD dissertation under the supervision of a French sociolinguist or anthropologist who had connections to Foucault.⁵³ Therefore, it was a no-brainer for me

⁵¹ See: Hamel (1988 [PhD dissertation on Frankfurt University 1986]). A later important research piece on the discourse and the biographical impact of bilingual situations is: Treichel (2004).

⁵² See: Appel (2001).

⁵³ See: Sierra (1986).

that Rainer, and especially Teresa would use ideas of Foucault's concept of discourse when they were studying the language use and discourse of Otomi Indians. For example, Teresa and Rainer had recorded the speeches of the government representatives when they would address the village community meetings. Of course, the very use of the Spanish language and the manner, in which the state representatives would address the Otomi audiences and give their speeches – none of the officials would use the Otomi language, the everyday vernacular in the villages; most of the village inhabitants had difficulties using the Spanish language fluently – would hint to the power position of the state representatives and to the automatic and effective use of power: the phenomenon which Foucault had addressed so clearly. The research among the Otomi also explicated how the Otomi Indians would overcome the difficulties of being in a discouraging situation of lack of power, when they were barely able to speak the Spanish language. For example, the Otomi women drew on powerful symbolisms – forcing the government men with all their power to be polite and helpful. So I knew that a Foucault-type discourse analysis would be important.

But, during those days in the 80s, there were no rules how discourse analysis could, or even should, proceed by clear-cut methods. In addition, there were several quite different understandings of discourse as a social phenomenon, from casual conversation up to parliamentary debates and/or argumentative exchanges of articles – as those between Sartre and Camus about the historical role of communism and the avant-garde role of

the Soviet Union and its terror. Corollary, discourse could mean just some sort of liberal type of conversation analysis, it could be public opinion analysis, it could be the re-analysis of literary discourse, et cetera; the question of method was totally unclear. In the case of Teresa and Rainer, they would proceed by ethnographic observation and ethnographic description and by the sociolinguistic analysis – a combination of micro-ethnographic conversation analysis and ethnography of speaking – analysis of the transcribed recordings of the public meetings in which power persons would act as local leaders administrators, community mayors, state and federal government administrators, et cetera.

Some bit later I had to do my own work of discourse analysis, and this was on the public discourses about the West-German student revolution in 1968. With two co-workers, I collected newspaper editorials about certain events in the course of the student rebellion. For example, one of these central events was the occupations of the university rector's office building of Freie Universität Berlin. The conservative elite newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote about the young guys who stood up and entered the rector's building. In his editorial, the conservative journalistic commentator attempted to "understand" the life situation of the student protestors – that they would have some sort of prolonged adolescent moratorium, and this would bring them to crazy ideas. Of course, his activities – the journalist tacitly insinuated that without being outspoken on the following topic – were adolescent and premature and therefore, society was not really called upon for re-thinking the

wrong developments and the Nazi background in the universities, and in society at large. I undertook the analysis of this article, and of course, I had analyzed lots of others, too. For these analyses of editorials and other articles, I developed some sort of mixture of conversation analysis of my style (focused on the action schemes in verbal interaction), text sort analysis and arc-of-work analysis in the style of Anselm Strauss. This was my type of discourse analysis or action-text analysis addressed to text manifestations of public discourse in order to find out what are the action schemes of the journalists (as actors of and within public discourse) in those textual manifestations (in editorial) and what are their appeals to underlying, "hidden," shared assumptions of society. So, together with the two students, I wrote a 30-page article, and it was published in an important book by the psychoanalyst, Professor Marianne Leuzinger-Bohleber, the director of the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt and, in addition, a professor in Kassel, a very knowledgeable researcher. The book was on adolescence. However, our article was never discussed at all. It was as if nobody had written it, and, factually, nobody looked at it.⁵⁴ This article, which I am still proud of, was quite easy to write for me because, as I told you, I still had some unconscious or subliminal rest of training in me from those days when I had been the sub-assistant of Joachim Matthes and when he had put me and others (from the Catholic Theological Faculty of Münster University) on the task to analyze sermons of catholic bishops. As I told you, during those early days, we did not have clear methodological rules how to accomplish such an analysis, but in 1964,

⁵⁴ See: Schütze, Lützen, and Schulmeyer-Herbold (1993).

Matthes did this "somehow" – as a "natural gift" – and extremely successfully in his habilitation thesis on the politico-societal discourses discussing the ideas and blueprints for the vast and complex compound of law regulations for social services decided on in the West-German parliament in 1961. In 1964, Matthes opened up a broad road to discourse analysis as we understand it today, although the methodological concepts were not stated explicitly. Again, this study was never looked at a second time for its achievements in the field of sociology of knowledge, for its analysis of the role of public and hidden discourses in it, and for the question how to manage such a complex discourse analysis. Matthes's 1964 study is very rich, and one day, I would like to demonstrate this in a separate article. Joachim Matthes himself had probably not realized that he had started to unravel such a very important methodological and basic theoretical thread; perhaps in the 70s, he was drawn too much into the direction of structuralistic Marxist sociology in order to realize his own achievement; in addition, his young co-workers – me included – have unintentionally discouraged him to unravel his so very beautiful thread further, since we were so very much impressed by the new developments in the U.S. interpretative sociology. It is a tricky story. However, the teachings of Matthes, the careful reading of his early publications, and the practice of text analysis in scrutinizing the sermons of Catholic bishops were the reasons that it was so easy for me to develop my style of action-text analysis (or discourse analysis).

Later on, René Sternberg, who went for part of his studies to Lodz and learned some Polish, did

a Master thesis here, in Magdeburg, on the EU debate about the weighing of votes for the EU parliament in the advent of the Lisbon conference and the Lisbon Treaties. René had collected important newspaper articles published in Poland and Germany during the Kaczyński days as representative pieces of the fiercely argumentative discussion going on in Polish and German newspapers. He used my method of action-text analysis. René Sternberg's research work developed into an elegant, very cute thesis, and I wrote a quite meticulous assessment of it. And thirdly, one of my daughters, my youngest daughter who is a very good social worker, she did as her diploma thesis in her study course of social pedagogy at the University of Bremen the analysis of the introduction of the topic of Viagra into the German print media, and she used the action-text analysis, too. Thus, at least there are some uses of this method in my personal surrounding. In addition, you know yourself as our consortium leader that we proposed this method in the (finally unsuccessful) applications for two research projects we submitted to the Research Committee of the European Commission in the 7th Framework Program.⁵⁵ There connected action-text analysis with biography analysis: it allowed the analyzing of the impact of public discourses on autobiographical narratives and life histories and, reversely, the impact of biographical concepts and biographical work on public discourses.

As you know, Foucault never developed a strict method for discourse analysis, but he "practically" did very intriguing discourse analyses, and he

⁵⁵ In 2011 and 2013, our international consortium submitted two projects to the 7th Frame Program of European Commission.

developed essential basic-theoretical concepts for all sorts of public discourses. Generally speaking, discourse analysis is an important branch of qualitative social science research, both in terms of basic theorizing and methodic approaches. It is not in conflict at all with biography analysis. As you know yourself, when we started to do the FP7 application, it fitted very well: you can analyze discourse in biographies, especially, you can look at the function and impact of discourse in biographical work. And reversely, you can analyze the assumptions regarding prototypical biographies in textual manifestations of public discourse as, for example, in editorials. [And sometimes you can even follow up how a new discourse item emerged through biographical work in a life history – as, for example, the discourse on a school education that takes into account, and fits with, life history and biographical development as in the case of Moritz's *Anton Reiser*.] Half a year ago, in January 2013, we, Martina (Schiebel), Anja (Schröder-Wildhagen), Bärbel (Treichel), Carsten (Detka), Gerhard (Riemann), and I, prepared a bunch of short papers for a shortened research workshop "Triangulation von Biographie und Diskursmaterial: Eine exemplarische Analyse" for a conference in Kassel on biography analysis and discourse analysis. It was the joint annual conferences of the two sections of Biography Research and of the Sociology of Knowledge of the German Sociological Association. Our group used the interview with a woman who also wrote a book about her unsuccessful flight from the GDR. Both in the book and in the interview that impressive lady tells how the idea of the flight developed, how it was planned, how she was captured, how she was imprisoned, how

she was "bought free" by the West German government, and how she (successfully) attempted to bring together her family in West Germany again. In the interview, the autobiographical narrative has a much broader scope, Anja (Schröder-Wildhagen) had conducted the beautiful interview in the context of our joint Polish-German research project. In addition, Martina Schiebel had selected several articles of quality newspapers and journals about the "being free" activities of the West German government in the historical span of more than 20 years in order to represent the development and change of public discourse about this touchy issue. We proceeded with the shortened research workshop (presenting the results of our various lines of research that addressed the different materials and peculiar features of them, to each other and connecting them analytically) very well for 2 or 3 hours, and then we realized, and this was totally unexpected for me, that there was a very critical attitude towards what we did. Since we were seen as biography researchers, nobody ever realized that we had also done our type of discourse analysis or action-text analysis from time to time. It was as if we would not be entitled to do discourse analysis, too. On top of this, it seemed to be illegitimate that we had even attempted to put the two strands of biography analysis and discourse analysis together. Finally, what was especially missing was the melody of Foucault. Of course, I have to introduce to the picture Marek Czyżewski who did his habilitation in Magdeburg with lots of discourse analyses in it, and I learned a lot from it. In addition, in later times, Marek dealt with Foucault's writing quite a lot, too. After that experience at the Kassel con-

ference on biography and discourse, I talked to Marek, since I thought I should consult with him, and he said: "Yes, there is a tendency to see biography research and discourse analysis in some sort of competition or even conflict regarding the position of the leading paradigm in the interpretative or reconstructive social sciences. It might be an important research-political question, which I am not so much interested in. However, I think that in terms of basic theorizing and in terms of basic methodological stances, the potential conflict between the approaches for biography analysis and the approaches for discourse analysis should not happen at all."

The last thing regarding discourse: through a gift of Marek I came across the book *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944–1956* by Tony Judt. Judt shows that the 12 years from the liberation of France from Nazi Germany's occupation up to the invasion of the Soviet Union into Hungary, the years from 1944 to 1956, were the "long decade" of very intensive discourse going on in France about the role and legitimacy of the show trials under Soviet control, about the purges (in the Soviet Union and in the satellite countries), about the role of the communist party in the history of mankind, et cetera. Although Judt does not put it in these terms, by looking at these discourses, very much controlled by Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, on the one hand, and Albert Camus and Francois Mauriac, on the other, we can see that there was no progress propelled by the intensive discourse at all in terms of enlightenment or a surplus of common understanding. No new aspects of observation and assess-

ment would show up, no new insight into all these difficult questions regarding purification (from the Vichy mental demons), the legitimate practice of revenge, the position of legitimate violence in history, the rational development of history, the avant-garde role of the Soviet Union and the communist parties in the course of a progressive history of mankind, et cetera. Judt showed that nothing enlightening came out of these intensive discourse activities. The conclusion is that not all public discourses *by necessity* will elicit, set free and harness a productive epistemic power; not any discourse will add knowledge, such an outcome is not automatic. However, as children of the French enlightenment period, which was so productive in terms of new styles of thinking, sociologists tend to think that way. We should ask: What are the constitutive conditions for epistemic productivity of public discourses and what are the barriers for it? [Some parameters could be found, for example, in features of the structure of social arenas for discourse, in features of the openness or closeness of a historical situation in terms of biographical orientation to the future, in the strength of habits of taking into regard universal moral interaction postulates, et cetera.]

So when I was asked to prepare something for this conference in Kassel on biography and discourse, I realized that I always had the inclination not to treat discourses as processes and mechanisms that would be automatically enlightening in society and history. In addition, I realized that I always had assumed that discourses would not be the most relevant phenomena for ordinary “humble” members of society and even for well-in-

formed citizens in the understanding of Alfred Schütz. Instead, I had always been more interested in the “lower” layers of everyday knowledge, biography, and other more tacit phenomena down to earth (like, for example, elementary schemes of orientation). On the other hand, I also knew that public discourse is shaped by societal power and can produce additional societal power by itself, although this power is not always enlightening or productive in terms of epistemic procedures. [You know, I took part in, and observed all these long discussion processes during the student revolution. Often, the debates were characterized by an interactive escalation mechanism like this: you would take a certain stance and somebody else would find out that even a more radical stance could be taken, thus, a competition got started on who would be the most prolific announcer of radical statements. As soon as the unfolding of such an escalation process got started, discourse in debate sessions of the student revolution had almost nothing anymore to do with questions of real circumstances.] Discourse is not automatically productive in terms of new insights. It can be to the contrary, especially by its embeddedness in power contexts in the sense of Foucault. We should be concerned about the double face of discourse, we should study it closely. Therefore, I decided to take part in the Kassel conference, and even to attempt to establish a potent working group in order to study the complex relationship between biography and discourse. However, I do not think that discourse analysis can be equivalent with the whole of research activities in the realm of sociology of knowledge. Discourse plays an important role in the architecture of layers of societal knowl-

edge. But, there are, too, the powerful elementary phenomena of societal knowledge, which Alfred Schütz, Peter Berger, and Thomas Luckmann were researching.

K.K.: What phenomena would you consider to be developed or worked on? You have already mentioned the phenomenon of the fading out of awareness that you should work on, and we talked about biographical work. Are there any other phenomena?

F.S.: I will just say what I would like to work on: one central research focus is on the various relationships between biographical identity and collective phenomena. Of course, you can find this topic in the work of Anselm Strauss. In *Continual Permutation of Action*, his last book, you can find it to a certain degree. When I discussed the results of our recent workshop in Lodz with my German colleagues, I said that I had not expected that our small joint research project about the impact of real or state socialism on the life histories of longstanding inhabitants of Poland and East Germany would have such an important basic theoretical impact on our thinking.⁵⁶ We have to find out how the collective phenomena are interiorized into, and built in, biographical identity development and biographical work and how, in reverse, they are conditioned by biographical processes. The latter means understanding how these collective phenomena are a little

rooted in biographical development; without these biographical developments they would not function at all. So even in collective phenomena there is to be observed the imprint of biographical processes and structures, and this insight we have to follow up, too. In addition, there is the phenomenon of collective mental space⁵⁷ in contrast to phenomena of collective identities. Collective mental space (for example, in terms of doing continual comparison of life situations and scanning the landscape of opportunities) has an important impact on life history and even on biographical identity unfolding, although, in itself, it is not shaped by an own identity architecture. I gave a long talk last summer in a symposium of the University of Mainz organized by Detlef Garz. It is mostly in German what I have done up to now. But, I would like to do something in English, too. I would like to follow up these questions regarding the relationships between biographical identity and collective phenomena basically in terms of biographical work. How collective phenomena occur in processes of biographical work – basically, this will be my approach.

The second phenomenon, which I think is very important, is the style of autobiographical rendering, the question of different styles and repertoires. This is a much more sociolinguistic question. Perhaps an “orderly” sociologist would not assume that this is sociology at all. But it is very important. My text on biography analysis published in *European Studies on Inequalities and Social Cohesion*,⁵⁸ I am

⁵⁶ The mentioned project is: “The People’s Republic of Poland and the German Democratic Republic in memory and biographical experiences of people born between 1945-55. Sociological comparison based on biographical comparison.” The project is conducted by the Department of Sociology of Culture at the University of Lodz in cooperation with a working group in the Institute of Sociology of the University of Magdeburg. It is funded by the Polish-German Science Foundation, Frankfurt/Oder (2012-2014).

⁵⁷ For the concept of mental space see: Schütze and Schröder-Wildhagen (2012) and Schütze et al. (2012a).

⁵⁸ See: Schütze (2008a; 2008b). The long article has been translated into the Polish language: Schütze (2012b). See also: Scheme 1 “Cognitive Figures of Autobiographical Extempore Storytelling” in the appendix of the “Rasmus” article by Fritz Schütze in this volume of QSR.

very grateful to Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas that it was published, for me, it is the most important statement on biography analysis I have formulated up to now – you will find the topic of the various relationships between the narrator, on the one hand, and the trajectory incumbent and the event carrier in these stories to be told, on the other. It could be a naive relationship, it could be an ironic relationship, or it could be a defensive or legitimizing relationship. Such basic relationships influence the style of autobiographical narration. These complex coincidences should be studied very much.

And then, a third topic of research will be all these phenomena of expression of “unorderly” features and processes of social reality expressed by autobiographical extempore narration. Background constructions are forms of textual expressions of some of these socio-biographical phenomena. They are connected to the fading out of awareness or even to repression. I did not work on these mental and social phenomena very much during the last years. I realized in writing my *Pressure and Guilt* paper that this topic is quite tricky and therefore, I abandoned it for a while, but now I should return to it. Of course, the central textual phenomena for indicating fading out and repression are background constructions. But, it has to be realized that there are social mechanisms of fading out, too, as discussed in my paper on collective trajectory and collective metamorphosis, and they are expressed by other textual features – even by non-thematization. They can be empirically addressed and analyzed only by contextual hints, but how to find them at all? Now, I am most involved within the analysis of the expression of

collective phenomena in autobiographical storytelling. Perhaps from further insights into it will also be gained some advancement of knowledge regarding collective fading out.

K.K.: As you wrote: when we do biography analysis, we can choose between two different perspectives – one more macro-sociological and the other more psycho-sociological. From what you have just mentioned, I understand that presently you are more focused on the more macro-sociological perspective?

F.S.: Yes, for a while, because in the European identity project and in the Polish-German project, we were forced to deal with these collective phenomena, and we still are very much focused on them. There might be a fourth subject that is important, at least for me. This is how to deal with *written* autobiographies. So I went into attempts to re-analyze some of the documentaries of the Chicago tradition or to look at other autobiographical documentaries. My paper on the Apache Indian is very much in this direction. And I have a long manuscript on the *Anton Reiser*. I never published it. Of course, in extempore storytelling, we have all these nice formal and symptomatic (non-intentional) features of “textual disorder” (like background constructions and split codas) to look at in order to find out about disorders of factual biographical and social experiences. One question, for example, is: Can we find forms of background constructions in literary autobiographies? Sometimes we do, but they are disguised, they are polished or embellished by textual re-formulation. But we do not have para-linguistic features and other symptom-

atic phenomena in published autobiographies, like hesitation phenomena. I addressed these questions in a paper for the annual conference of the DGS Section of Biography research in Hamburg in December 2011.⁵⁹ In this paper, I went back to the questions on the use and text (or experiential) validity of written autobiographical documentaries. If you look closely into my analysis of the written autobiographical statement of the Apache Indian Don Decker, you will find traces of that hidden methodology how to utilize written autobiographical statements as data for the analysis of socio-biographical processes (in this case, of cultural and ethnic hybridity).

K.K.: I want to ask you about some ethical issues: when we interview a person and transcribe the narrative it is a rule to anonymize it. However, sometimes this is very difficult to do, especially in these days when you have the Internet and you can google a person. Another difficulty is related to the fact that sometimes you cannot cover everything because then you lose the context. So my question is how to deal with it? And the second part of this dilemma, at least for me, is that we receive the life story, and the narrator usually does not know how we will analyze it. Thus, to some extent the interviewee is not aware that he/she would tell us more than he/she intends to tell. How to deal with this problem?

⁵⁹ Jahrestagung der Sektion Biographieforschung in der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie (DGS): Medialisierungsformen des (Auto-)Biographischen und ihre Kommunikationskontexte. December 2 to December 4, 2011. Universität Hamburg. Fakultät für Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften. The topic of my lecture delivered to this conference: “Autobiographical Documents in der Chicago-Soziologie zwischen wissenschaftlicher Falldokumentation und medialer Darstellungsform: Authentizität und Ironie.”

F.S.: The basic experience I have is as follows: interviewees, who have told their life history in an extempore way, normally assess afterward that autobiographical narration gives some order to their life, or at least it adds to it. Autobiographical storytelling as such is some sort of elementary biographical work they are doing, and normally, it has a productive impact on their life situation and their relating towards themselves. I cannot remember any case in which autobiographical narrative interviewing would distort the relationship of a person towards her- or himself or would make life more difficult for her or him, even if her or his life history or part of it had been very difficult. Normally, autobiographical storytelling is something that is very good for the narrator. I do not go that far as Gabriele (Rosenthal) did for a while – and maybe some of the “narrative” psychotherapists would do – in believing that autobiographical storytelling would have the function of some sort of social therapy or psychotherapy in itself. Thus, I do not feel any type of guilt in the conduction of autobiographical narrative interviewing. It is a strange phenomenon that today you have lots of students who tend to think that doing autobiographical narrative interviewing is something that is unethical in itself, that going to a person and letting her tell her or his life history is something that destroys the private sphere of that person. We have to think about where this belief and this guilt feeling come from: perhaps it is the life situation of tglobal society and information society, in which every piece, every feature of your life can be published on the Internet and Facebook, or whatever. We could see in the European

INVITE⁶⁰ project on biographical counseling in life situations of vocational rehabilitation, where Agnieszka (Golczyńska-Grondas) was in, that we would have lots of difficulties in Great Britain even to get to informants for narrative interviewing. For example, professional institutions for social services and for health care would not be allowed to give us hints regarding people worthwhile to talk to. It was really difficult: lots of discussion with ethics committees and with the British Psychological Association. I think that informants should decide for themselves if they like to give an autobiographical narrative interview or not. Normally they would do, and if it turns out to be too difficult for them, they realize this in advance. At the latest, they realize it at the very beginning of the interview situation, and then they say, “No, I cannot do it.” This had happened sometimes to me as an interviewer. For example, I wanted to do some research on the veterans of the Vietnam War. So I started to do some interviews in that year when there was this big earthquake in San Francisco. I drove a long way to a veterans’ hospital in Northern California, I went into the hospital and into the room of the person who had initially agreed to the interview – I had phoned him before – and he said: “Now I have realized that it is too difficult for me. I have a bad heart condition, let us not do it.” Something like that happened a few times to me as apresumptive interviewer, but I claim that people would normally know what is going to happen.

⁶⁰ The research project “INVITE. New Ways of Biographical Counselling in Vocational Rehabilitative Training” was conducted in the years 2003-2006 under the Leonardo da Vinci program. Its aim was to design *Educational Curriculum* on biographic method application in professional counseling and social work. The main coordinator of the project was the University in Magdeburg, Germany. The team carrying out the project consisted of various university scientists from Austria, Finland, Germany, Poland, Great Britain, and Italy.

Towards the second issue of the upcoming analysis I will do and the interviewee not knowing about its direction: I let the informants realize that I would treat their autobiographical material in a fair way by using Alfred Schütz’s adequacy postulate – I normally do the analysis in a way that I could show it to the interviewee and make sure that she or he would be treated with respect by my analysis and not harmed by it. I do not expect that the interviewee would accept the outcome of my analysis, and she or he should never be forced to say “yes” to it. But, at least she or he should understand how I have arrived at my argumentation for analysis, my general type of analysis, and my conclusions from it. It is not necessary that one agrees with its results but with the general road I took for the analysis: that one understands how I undertook the analysis. However, normally the person who gave you a gift of a narrative of her or his life history would never be interested in looking at the written analysis. It extremely rarely happens that an interviewee wants to see the written outcome of the analysis afterwards. On the other hand, interviewees love to listen to the taped interview. They are very much intrigued in looking at the written interview, although they are sometimes also irritated by the technicalities of transcription and by the fact that it is not transformed into an “orderly” written language.

We have this book on Felix.⁶¹ It is on the empirical base of an interview I did with a good friend. Some day he came to our house because his girlfriend had left him, and he did not know what to do with his life situation and his biographical fu-

⁶¹ See: Koller and Kokemohr (1994).

ture. I said: “You know, you assume that I know a lot about you; however, this is not true and therefore, please tell me your life history.” We conducted some sort of long autobiographical interview. After that, we had the second session, after he and I had listened to the interview. It should be on finding out about his difficulties and about his present potential for development; it should be some sort of “counseling together.” The result from this joint counseling endeavor was the plan for a university study of constructing engineering. He had successfully studied mathematics and physics in a big university of North Rhine – Westphalia up to the half-way examination he had retreated with some other students of that university into the Eastern Hesse woods near the Iron Curtain, since this under-populated stripe of West Germany seemed for him a road “back to the roots and to concrete life circumstances.” He was (and still is) a magnificent mathematician, but this capacity became some “black hole” or object of addiction for him. For example, he wanted to *see* mathematical structures *mentally*, like the Platonian ideas, and this going the whole way back on the road of the incremental abstraction processes in the mental history of European natural sciences was very strenuous for him; it turned out to be too strenuous for him to quit the utilization of any sort of mathematical algorithms that must not be understood and mentally seen in the form of Platonian ideas. On the other hand, he was, and still is, very interested in concrete material and its practical shaping. Anyway, it turned out that studying and becoming a construction engineer was a very good suggestion. After he had lived in a moratorium of late adolescence for several years, he officially cancelled his stud-

ies of physics after the sixth-semester in-between examination, and he started his study course of construction engineering. Today, he is one of the most famous construction engineers dealing with the repair and protection of medieval buildings, like palaces and churches. Some time ago in Magdeburg, he took me on one of the towers of the cathedral pointing out to me all the mistakes they made in the 13th century, and he explained to me how to work on these medieval construction mistakes today. In addition, some day when his mother and his father met me, his mother approached me: “How nice. You are the guy who rescued my son from a successful occupational life...!” This assessment, of course, is not totally true, but nevertheless it pinpoints to the power of autobiographical-narrative interviewing in situations of the need for biographical counseling.

Four years after my interview with him, all of a sudden, Felix brought the interview tape to me and said – we had never talked about something like that at all – that I could do research on it. It was rained through after having been forgotten under the rotten roof of a half-ruined old farmer’s house my friend Felix was living in; it was a miracle that we could reproduce it electronically. I never had thought that his story might be used for scientific reasons. But then, I thought it might be of interest as empirical material for educational research. In the pedagogical seminar of the University of Hamburg a quite stable research workshop group was active that the educational science researchers, Rainer Kokemohr, Winfried Marotzi, and Walter Bauer, had with us, the people from Kassel (Gerhard, Harry Hermanns, and I), and with some participants

from Łódź. I asked my friend, the construction engineer, if I could use the tape and he agreed. So we did transcribe the very long interview (as far as I can remember 102 pages of 60 lines each), and then it was made the empirical material for a special workshop. I do not agree with all the post-modern interpretations of the Felix interview in this book; my disagreement is certainly not the case with the interpretation of Andrzej (Piotrowski), Marek (Czyżewski), and Alicja (Rokuszewska-Pawełek).⁶² Remarkably, Felix never asked me about what we had done with his interview. He even knows that there is the book, but he never asked me about it. And I did not give it to him out of my own incentive, since he needed to do his own biographical work in the very course of his autobiographical storytelling and in the course of his thinking about it immediately after the interview. Admittedly, he expected me to counsel him immediately after the interview, and this is what I did, but he never needed to read the written analyses. Of course I wrote my own analysis⁶³ taking into account seriously that whenever Felix would read it, he could at least accept the way how I would have come to my conclusions (although I did not expect that he would accept all of them in content). I guess the fact that most of the former informants never ask for the outcomes of our analyses is the normal thing to occur. Informants prefer to draw their own conclusions from their intensive experiences of telling their life history.

So, for me, the informants are co-workers, they give to us the gift of their life story, and often it is

⁶² See: Piotrowski, Czyżewski, and Rokuszewska-Pawełek (1994).

⁶³ See: Schütze (1994).

very enriching as it is in the case of the life story of Zofia Pająk.⁶⁴ You know, this interview conducted by Anja (Schröder-Wildhagen) is very moving for me. It gives social scientists the chance to let us know much more about the general relations between personal identity unfolding and collective phenomena. Insights into these general relational processes and mechanisms are good for even *other* informants in case they would like to go get some biographical counsel (what Zofia Pająk certainly does not need at all, but her personal experiences can teach others who are in need of biographical counsel). Of course, it should be made sure that nobody can realize from the analysis and/or the documentation of the interview which person's life history it is. Nevertheless, the masking of the identity of the informant might sometimes be a big technical problem. On the other hand, some persons would not care to get identified, some would even find it helpful (for example, for showing one's own personal example in educational situations), but we certainly are not allowed to reckon on this. Since we would like to draw general conclusions, even if we dig very deeply into single cases, masking should be the strict rule of documenting and analyzing the interview. Otherwise we would drift into the wrong directions of documenting and/or writing biographies of remarkable or even "famous" persons."⁶⁵ In the case of Zofia Pająk, the

⁶⁴ The interview with Zofia Pająk – a representative of a civil society organization for crossing the national-cultural fences, for reconciliation after World War II, and for mutual national understanding was conducted by Anja Schröder-Wildhagen for the FP7 research project "EuroIdentity." The case has been analyzed in Schütze et al. (2012b).

⁶⁵ This is not the case in the artistic books with documentary life-history interviews published by Studs Terkel since he stresses the documentation of the life histories of "humble," ordinary persons. See: Schütze's "Rasmus" article in this volume of QSR.

analysis of her autobiographical rendering shows her beautiful work in theorizing, teaching, social arranging, and establishing good social milieus, she learned this from her own personal experiences under dramatic biographical circumstances, and she did this for the deep mutual understanding between Polish, German, and third-European-country adolescents. So in several cases it should not be a disaster and not too tormenting if the real identity of the informant could be retrieved later. But, we generally should be painstakingly careful in our masking work in order not to let happen the retrieval of the personal identity of the informant.

Now, I have to come to the third ethical question. I cannot give any general statement about the question of anonymization. I think it is important to do the anonymization in order to protect the informant who opened up by very personal information. As I mentioned already, there are some people who would be interested in letting themselves be known under their full authentic name. Then, the interview acquires a slightly different quality: to a certain degree it loses its deep focus on one's personal biography proper; instead, it tends into the direction of a memoir as a description of interesting encounters, social milieus, social worlds, and episodes of a general humanistic quality. Such a tendency I do not like very much; I even experienced the power of an overwhelming tendency into the memoir direction caused by non-anonymization in this very interview by you with me. But, this changed quality we cannot hinder. Anyway, one cannot give general rules for anonymization. If I take my study on the millers: in this study, I got into some difficulties with the masking and ano-

nymization work because the small country-side handcraft mills (with big water wheels) draw a lot of curiosity and interest from regional and local museums on them. These museums would like to know where these handcraft millers would have the mill. Quite often, they wrote to me or phoned me up inquired where these mills would be situated. I had put one or two "misleading" pseudo-traces into the documentation and the analysis of the interview, and the museums never found out where this peculiar miller would be situated. Naturally, I explained to the museum people why I could not support their totally understandable attempt to localize the mill and the miller. Museums always feel responsible for the very opposite to anonymization: they feel responsible for identification and authentication. I explained to them that the intention of sociological biography study would be in-debts analysis and generalization, and both intentions normally would require anonymization. Otherwise the miller with his complicated life history would be changed and degraded into an object for display in a museum showcase. The museum professionals did understand this, and took off their inquiry. However, the masking is more difficult in other situations. I have just returned from the defense of PhD thesis of one of my PhD students who was part of a German Research Foundation project on high-career couples. Alas! Such career couples can be quite famous, and right now I do not know how to mask some of them, it will be published in our book series ZBBS, but we have to find out how to do the masking. And, of course, if you, for example, change a protestant into a catholic or a male into a female or reverse

K.K.: (laughter)

F.S.: (laughter) Yes, that really happened, some young researchers did this. (laughter) This we obviously cannot do, since it changes empirical data (most of the social context) that are pivotal as cognitive resources for the analysis. To sum it up: the anonymization work is difficult, but in most cases, if you work very carefully, you can manage. Perhaps I am one of the German professors with the largest number of supervisions of PhD qualitative research projects. We never caused any difficulties to anybody in our field of research. So it is quite often an exaggeration if the anonymization task is stated as a big or even insurmountable problem. You must and can be very imaginable in putting small misleading pseudo-traces into your empirical documentation (which should not change the matrix of empirical data), and then it normally works fine.

K.K.: Just to sum up, could you mention the research projects you have been involved in?

F.S.: The first inquiry – not a clear-cut research project – that I should mention was that Matthes assigned me to the task of analyzing, together with a group of Catholic theologians, written texts which had some official gestus and importance, like sermons. As I told you, during those days we would not come up with a straightforward method for the analysis of written texts. Nevertheless, at least it sensitized me for the analysis of official ceremonial texts in terms of the hidden verbal actions embedded in them. Since Matthes put me in front of this task, he also brought me to my second

dissertation theme on the relationship between language and action. The first had been the topic of invisible religion. I realized that both phenomena – the sermons and the language manifestations of invisible religion – could not be analyzed without the understanding of the basic relationship between language and action. From these insights it seemed to be possible for me to develop interpretative or qualitative methods for the strict analysis of the manifestation of social phenomena: for example, power- and interest-related actions and ideologies, on the one hand, and elementary levels of biographically relevant levels of knowledge and beliefs (as pinpointed to by Thomas Luckmann in his concept of invisible religion), on the other. The second inquiry was that when I was writing my PhD dissertation, I was thinking how to put my basic-theoretical insights into the relationship between social phenomena as actions and frames of social knowledge, on the one hand, and written or spoken language manifestations to empirical work, on the other. I came up with two central topics or ideas mixing basic theoretical questions with methodical strategies.

The first idea for a more concrete inquiry was the fusion of collective identities in the form of the merger of local communities. For this concrete research field (with others together, especially Gerhard Riemann), I developed the data collection method of the narrative interview. [In the beginning, it was not a method of analysis, but it would be expected to become an instrument for analysis.] In the course of attempting to do the first analyses of the narrative interviews on mergers of local communities, I realized – first seen as a difficulty and not a po-

tential for new insights – the biographical imprint in it. I realized that I should look more closely how verbal manifestations of biographical processes would be present within the verbal presentations of collective processes (regarding all the tasks and difficulties of community merger) and therefore, I had to develop the method of the *autobiographical* narrative interviewing and the analysis of the narrative texts, that is, of extempore autobiographical narratives as produced in these interviews. Again, I did this together with others; I would like to mention here Gerhard Riemann, Günther Robert, Ralf Bohnsack, and later on, Thomas Reim. Of course, the fusion of local communities was my first glimpse towards the question of collective phenomena in everyday life and in biographies of members of society and local communities. However, during those early days, I did not realize that it would later become such an important research topic for me. When I spent a year in America, I also realized that I would be an “inescapable” German. I observed that everybody in America was a bit shocked when they heard my German voice. Of course later, in my first visits to Poland, I observed this, too, but you, my emerging Polish friends, like Fran and Anselm Strauss, dealt with it sensitively. According to those personal experiences, it became important for me to do analytically dwell on collective phenomena and the involvement of biography in it, for instance, the article “Pressure and Guilt”⁶⁶ is some example of this type of inquiry.

The other topic of inquiry that stems from my PhD thesis is communication under constraint. “Communication under constraint” means that you as

⁶⁶ See footnote 42.

a “victim” have to undergo situations of enforced communication: you would not like to communicate at all, but you are institutionally and organizationally enforced to do so. Something like that happens in courtroom interaction or in situations of inquiry into your political biography, when you apply for a position in public administration, in a public school, or in a university institution. [This type of inquiry took place in the 70s up to 90s in West Germany, in case you had been a member of a leftist student organization or in a leftist – “communist” – party, especially those ones connected to the GDR; if you did not pass this inquiry, you would get banned from any type of position in public institutions – of state or communal administration, of schools, of universities, etc.] In many of these communications under constraint, you as a “victim” would be asked to tell your life history in order to demonstrate your loyalty to the state, your authenticity as a regular, law-abiding citizen, your religious attitude against war service, et cetera, and this expected personal communication would take part under conditions under which it would be virtually impossible or totally insensible – in terms of social arrangement controlled by the master of these institutional proceedings – to really tell your life history.

I studied the phenomenon of communication under constraint mainly on the empirical base of recordings and transcriptions of courtroom proceedings for getting acceptance as a conscientious objector.⁶⁷ The first instance of decision about an application for the recognition as conscientious objector was a hearing in an administration of-

⁶⁷ See: Schütze (1978).

fice where the “victim” or plaintiff (technically seen, the presumptuous conscientious objector is not a defendant, but a plaintiff), on the base of his written application, would repeat: “No, out of my unbearable anguish of conscience I am not able to go to the army!” and in front of the administrator he would have to corroborate again and again that he would permanently live under an inner condition of anguish of conscience, and that religious or moral obligation would forbid him to go to war service. In addition, the victim or plaintiff would react to the administrator’s argumentative refutations of his own corroborations and explanations. After that, in case of the negative first decision of the administrator, there would be a second instance of a panel of 3 administrators, some bit higher up within the administrative body, and in case one’s application would not be accepted by the second administrative proceedings, the victim or plaintiff could appeal to the administration court, and in this administrative court an allegedly elaborate “search” for the stated inner event of a conscientious impasse of the plaintiff would be conducted again. This would be mainly done by means of his autobiographical storytelling forced upon him, and then there would be statements by the plaintiff and refutations by the judge, and the final decision would be taken. The central task of the proceedings for the recognition or refutation of conscientious objection is the proof of the plaintiff that such an inner event of moral or religious impasse in terms of conscience had really taken place, and a successful proof of such a proposition would in fact presuppose free autobiographical narration of the plaintiff. To state one of the most important results of my research: such a free autobiographi-

cal narration and other provisions of natural communication for the free expressions of inner events of conscience are situationally not possible in those administrative and legal settings because of the institutional necessity for communication under constraint. When in Munich I had presented my study to an audience of roughly 100 professors of law, they would state at the very end: “Look, these administrative court proceedings for the recognition of conscientious objection are no real legal procedures. They are something extraordinary, an oddity enforced on us, we willy-nilly have to enact them. However, in reality, they are not proceedings of real law at all.” (laughing)

My article was a 100-page long statement with some comments of legal experts put together in a small book, and my research was methodically based on Werner Kallmeyer’s and my peculiar type of action-oriented conversation analysis. My student co-workers and I were again and again thrown out from the courtroom when the judges realized that I would carry on me one or two recording machines Sony TC 55. It was a very heavy, but high-quality forerunner of the later walkman-type audio cassette recorder. And with this Sony TC 55 it always happened that the red button you had pressed down for starting the recording, would spring off at the end of the cassette tape (i.e., after 45 minutes); alas!, the red button that was jumping up made a lot of noise. Thus, the judges realized our hidden recording and – having the power of the room police – threw us out. I wrote lots of applications to the Ministers of Law in several West German states. But, they did not allow me to do official recordings, although courtroom

proceedings are public events open to the eyes and ears of critical observers. I was counseled by a very helpful professor of civic and administrative law, and he said to me: “Do not put these transcripts into the official report of your project, you may get into legal difficulties.” I meticulously worked on transcriptions of the mentioned recordings of courtroom proceeding, but I could not document them for the scientific community, and accordingly, some linguists would criticize me: “He claims the existence of proceedings without any empirical base, it is not a clear-cut empirical analysis.” I was very disappointed by all these difficulties and therefore, I left this field of research. Just 10 years later, the president of the high court in Dusseldorf asked his co-workers: “Where is Schütze gone to?” He wanted to open every courtroom proceedings for my research, but I had to answer to his generous offer: “I cannot do it anymore, now, I am involved within totally different things.”

When I first started to think about empirical research at all, I also had the intention to study the proceedings of labor administration, especially vocational counseling in job centers. In the end of the 60s and in the beginning of the 70s, I tried hard to get a license to observe and record actually ongoing counseling proceedings in job center offices. Several applications to job centers and to the Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (Federal Institution for Work) were declined. And for 40 years up to the times of our “INVITE” project of 2005 and 2006 on biographical counseling in life situations of occupational/vocational rehabilitation, the job centers and institutions for vocational counseling could always manage not to get researched on. Only one

time I partially succeeded because I had one student in Magdeburg working as some sort of substitute worker in a West German job center, and she did open recordings of ongoing vocational counseling; the clients and her boss knew and accepted this. But, even in her case, it was not eventually allowed to officially utilize these transcriptions of vocational counseling in her very cute master thesis. The local labor administration offices, as we know from numerous autobiographical narrative interviews, are one of the most pivotal institutions for biographical planning, vocational decision making, and future management. But, they keep on being able to disguise their big influence on life, including their professional shortcomings.

When in Kassel I got my first professorship in qualitative analysis, the social work department there offered a study course in supervision (including Balint groups). To put it short: experienced professionals (as, for example, social workers, teachers, catholic priests, and protestant ministers, as well as medical doctors) would return to university for a second study in order to conduct a reflected analysis of the ways they do their professional work and of the systematic difficulties involved in it (e.g., dealing with burn-out). I took part in the discourses of the often convened docent panels of this study course on how to analytically look at the action schemes of professional work and what are the essential features of professions, how to analytically and practically deal with the systematic misunderstandings involved within the interaction with clients, how to analytically focus on and practically handle paradoxes of professional action (e.g., on the one hand, pedagogically instructing

the client how to handle certain tasks and, on the other, paralyzing the action competence of the said client by this very instruction at the same time), how to analyze and practically find out about mistakes at work, and how to develop a culture of professional critique and self-critique, et cetera. Especially because of the topics of systematic mistakes at work and of arenas and cultures of their professional critique, the study course on supervision and the accompanying discourse arena of the docents group was very intriguing for me. I was not a psychologist, psychoanalyst, social worker, or supervisor like the other docents and therefore, for them, I was not an insider, but after a while, they accepted my interactionistic-sociological perspective. I was so intrigued that I started to do research on supervision. I even wrote an application to the German Research Foundation, but it was not accepted. Nevertheless, I did my research on supervision as a set of knowledge-generating procedures and as the central place for the “meta-reflexion” of the features and systematic problems of professional work. I got lots of tape recordings of supervision sessions from master supervisors, so I could systematically compare quite a variety of types and styles of supervision. This was written down in some shorter and longer articles on supervision, profession, professional work, professional typification, and especially paradoxes of professional work.⁶⁸ In addition, there existed a research project mainly done by supervision students and research assistants, here, I have to name especially Monika Müller and Arnold Otten.

In my research on supervision, I developed the

idea of knowledge-generating procedures in professional work, and in scientific work, too, which is very important for me today. Certain types of supervision and Balint groups are prototypes of peculiar social arrangements for the establishment and the conduct of knowledge generation procedures – especially, the “oblique” ones using several levels of observation and reflection – including the observation and reflection on one’s own attitudes as professional worker and the involved tendencies for systematic mistakes. With the help of my type of conversation or interaction analysis, I study how theses knowledge generating procedures would function, what would be their essential epistemic principles and mechanisms, how their free functioning could be impaired or even hindered – for example, through communication under constraint – and what would be “milieu work” for the establishment and cultivation of social arrangements and social conditions for their support. Right now, together with Carsten Detka, Susanne Kuczyk, and Bärbel Treichel, I conduct research on the pedagogic dimensions of medical work, funded by the German Research Foundation. Central questions of this research project are: how medical doctors generate their knowledge about the life situation of their patients and what is the quality of this knowledge, how they would typify the patients on the base of this knowledge in their encounters with them, especially on their hospital rounds,⁶⁹ how they would involve their patients into knowledge-generating procedures through counseling processes, and how they would talk to the patients in the context of these counseling sessions using

strategies of teaching, instruction, biographical counseling, supervision-type of impulses for self-search, self-observation, and self-reflection, et cetera. It is obvious that my own involvement into this research project was immensely facilitated by my having been sensitized through my original inquiries into supervision.

I was also interested in the improvement of the case studies in social work. When, for example, the client of social work is an alcohol addict: how, on the empirical base of autobiographical-narrative interviewing, could you, as a professional social worker or therapist for alcohol addicts, find out about the life history and identity development of your client, how could you find out about his involvement within a disastrous biographical trajectory (becoming unemployed, losing one’s partner, etc.), how you could find out from the client’s autobiographical extempore narrative whether alcohol addiction occurred first in the client’s life history or the disastrous biographical trajectory of becoming unemployed and losing one’s bourgeois existence, et cetera. The methodological question is: how can such a biographical inquiry of a professional social worker or social therapist be assisted by qualitative, reconstructive research methods? My long-standing friends and colleagues, Thomas Reim and Gerhard Riemann, are best on the answers to these questions.⁷⁰ We always believed that our type of interactionistic qualitative research methods could be really worthwhile for social work case analysis. We thought that on the base of such in-depth case analyses, professional counseling in social work, social therapy, and oth-

er professions would be much more understanding, circumspect, and far-sighted. Then, the unplanned, “naturally occurring” biographical counseling encounter with my friend Felix happened, which I have told you about. And this, in conjunction with circumspect suggestions and a basic text of Jürgen Voigt, provided the central idea for our European combined research and (meta)counseling project “INVITE” on biographical counseling in situations of vocational rehabilitation. I will not tell the details of this project, but there was systematic training of social workers and psychologists in the professional work fields of vocational/occupation rehabilitation as members of the “INVITE” project for fulfilling the task of conducting autobiographical-narrative interviews with clients and analyzing them. I think the “INVITE” project, circumspectly organized by my former scientific assistant Peter Straus,⁷¹ demonstrated well that qualitative-reconstructive case analysis, by means of biography research, can be very helpful within the processes of professional counseling support for clients in difficult life situations. As I said already, the application for this counseling and research project was not my idea alone; instead, some of my former social work students and now co-researchers would keep saying that the biography analysis and other forms of qualitative case analysis can be fruitfully used in the arcs of work of psycho-social counseling, social work help, and socio-therapy. In addition, as I mentioned already, we had the cooperation of Jürgen Voigt, who was the first researcher in a research project on medical care and counseling for diabetes patients and later in another one on acupuncture (financed by the big

⁶⁸ See, e.g., Schütze (2000; 2002).

⁶⁹ See: Schütze (2013).

⁷⁰ See: Reim (1996) and Riemann (2000).

⁷¹ See: Betts et al. (2008).

German health insurance company AOK and both directed by me). Jürgen knew different European and national support programs, and he proposed that we should apply for the “INVITE” project in the framework of the EU Leonardo da Vinci program. In the truly multi-national “INVITE” project, we compared the potential for using biography analysis in counseling processes for vocational rehabilitation in several European countries (Poland, Wales, Finland, Italy, Austria, and Germany), and we studied essential features of arrangements and steps of the arc of work in biographical counseling for situations of vocational rehabilitation. It is very valuable that Peter Straus and others put together a CD of the “lectures” in the project and that Agnieszka (Golczyńska-Grondas) undertook the very circumspect editing work of publishing the research and counseling procedures and the results of the cooperation of professionals and scientists of the “INVITE” project in two volumes.⁷²

So, this was my description of the stream of inquiry towards the features and difficulties of professional work and case analysis in my life as sociological researcher. For me, the historical background of case analysis is not only the Chicago tradition with documentary publications, like *The Jack Roller*, edited and analyzed by Clifford Shaw, or the *Urke-Nachalnik*, edited and analyzed by Stanisław Kowalski.⁷³ There was also the eminent social worker, Mary Richmond, with two books on case analysis, one is *Social Diagnosis* from 1917, the other is even more important – *What is Social Case Work* from 1922. She

⁷² Research Project “INVITE. New Ways of Biographical Counselling in Vocational Rehabilitative Training.” See: Golczyńska-Grondas, (ed.). (2008).

⁷³ See: Kowalski (1933) and Shaw (1966).

established the first and, nevertheless, astoundingly elaborated version of the arc of work of case analysis and case work. Unfortunately, today, it is not taken seriously enough both by social workers and by sociologists. However, Mary Richmond laid the foundations for a “sociology” of single case analysis, and the unique single cases Mary Richmond took into regard can be individual cases or collective cases. Mary Richmond’s work can sensitize sociologists towards the analysis of single cases of all kinds and lines of counseling empirically based on them, it advises sociologists how to put their analytical and theoretical apparatus to practical use. This is a question not very much tackled in the sociology of today, since sociology lost its relationship to professional work when having split from social work in the 20s. Here, I see an interesting connection line between social-work type, interactionistic-ethnographic type, and liberal-positivistic type of praxis-oriented case studies by Mary Richmond, by Kai Erikson (in his Buffalo Creek Flood study as empirical base of a law suit), and by Hans L. Zetterberg (in his study of a Mid-Western museum and its being counseled by him regarding the question of how to improve its attendance) and the respective counseling processes on their empirical base.⁷⁴ I had originally mentioned Mary Richmond’s achievement for the establishment of a complex method of sociological and social-work case analysis in an article on social work as a humble profession in 1992.⁷⁵ Then, I wrote a long article, together with Gerhard, on the intricacies of her case analysis and case work method in 2011.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ See: Zetterberg (1962) and Erikson (1976).

⁷⁵ See: Schütze (1992c).

⁷⁶ See: Riemann and Schütze (2011).

Of course, what is most important in my research work during the last 15 years is dealing with collective phenomena: in my case, this line of research comes out of both strands of my early inquiry how to use the linguistic expression of social phenomena. My study of collective phenomena and their connection with biography was firstly focused on the war topic. Soon, there were intensive discussions with my Polish colleagues and friends: I thought that we, Germans, would have to deal with the question of a collective feeling of German guilt, and actually, the interviews with Germans having been young adults in World War II clearly showed that in this generation, there existed the empirical fact of a biographical feeling of guilt and responsibility. Later on, I added research on social and inner-psychic mechanisms of fading out (which can be empirically studied with our qualitative and reconstructive methods of biography analysis, contrary to repression in the psychoanalytical sense). You, in Poland, accomplished much more than me, and you concentrated on many aspects of suffering in various sorts of war predicament.⁷⁷

My second research topic of collective phenomena was Welsh collective identity. This was not a circumspect search for a new interesting research topic. It came out of my concern as a university teacher that my new students in Magdeburg, I had changed from Kassel to Magdeburg in 1993, would be so extremely shy in encounters with the “outer world.” Thus, I surmised I would have to use

⁷⁷ Schütze alludes here to the research project “Biografia i tożsamość narodowa” (Biography and National Identity) conducted in the Department of Sociology of Culture in 1992-1994, based on autobiographical narrative interviews focused on experiences of World War II (Czyżewski, Piotrowski, and Rokuszewska-Pawełek 1996).

the social arrangement of ethnographic excursion in order to take them out into the world. [Strangely enough, the culture of ethnographic excursions was not institutionalized in West German sociology teaching, except, of course, in departments of “Sociology of Development,” “Latin American” institutes, etc., as far as I got insight into various West German sociological institutes.] I wanted to find for my shy students the strangest cultural context in Europe, in which the English language would be used. And I thought this context could be Wales. And, at first nicely supported by the Magdeburg English Department, this worked fine. We met in Bangor the very supportive, very understanding docents, John Borland and Aled Griffiths. They built bridges into the Welsh culture and society for us, and the students were enchanted by the Welsh social surrounding, and soon they started to interact with this new world for them. As you probably know, from the very beginning we took students from Lodz with us on those excursions in order that the students from three cultures and historical contexts would be very deeply involved in comparisons. For example, the German students were some bit concerned about Welsh nationalism since they had learnt that in European history nationalism became very dangerous. But, the Polish students would step in and would ask: isn’t it the nationalism of a small country and nation? How can it become dangerous? This small society fights for the endurance of its historical, linguistic, and cultural traditions. We, in Poland, know what this means. Please think twice.

Out of these very lively encounters came the idea – very much prodded by John Borland and Aled

Griffiths – to establish a regular format of a tri-national research workshop for students taking place one or two times a year, with changing the locations for the proceedings each time. And for roughly 10 years this became an intriguing offer for our students and for ourselves – the docents from the 3 countries would always be involved in the research work, too – to transgress the cultural borders in doing intensive research work. As you know, we developed five workshop topics: biography analysis, analysis of Welsh culture, analysis of European identity work, analysis of professional work, and case analysis. In all these courses, there were short introductory instructions on the pertinent qualitative research methods, but the real learning of the methods and of their basic-theoretical grounding took place “on the job.” I got lots of help from three students from Magdeburg, later becoming my research or teaching assistants: Michaela Froberg, Carsten Detka, Nick Thräne, and later Anja Schröder-Wildhagen. Later, students of Bamberg and Belfast would join in, too. The regular docents would be: Andrzej (Piotrowski), Marek (Czyżewski), you yourself, Aled Griffiths, John Borland, Graham Day, Howard Davis, Bärbel Treichel, Anja Schröder-Wildhagen, Gerhard Riemann, and I. The tri-national workshops suggested a lot of professional research work. The remarkable habilitation thesis of Bärbel Treichel on suffering when being positioned between two languages came out of it.⁷⁸ Our EuroIdentity project took shape with 3 applications to the European research committee; the last application chaired by Robert Miller from Belfast and I⁷⁹ was finally successful. Indeed, even our ongoing Polish-German research project

on the biographical impact of real or state socialism is an intellectual offspring of our tri-national workshops. Basically, I dare to say: if you look at all this theorizing about the relationships between individual identity development, on the one hand, and social collectivities, on the other, the basic theorizing about it did not develop very much beyond the level of George Herbert Mead and Emile Durkheim during the last 100 years. Of course, there are some exceptions, like Erik Erikson, Kai Erikson, Daniel Bertaux,⁸⁰ Antonina Kłoskowska, and Peter Alheit,⁸¹ and the research work in Lodz, your own book on biography and memory included. We can say, taking those new embarkments into account, that there is something new on the way; we sail over a vast ocean to undiscovered lands.

Instead of Concluding Remarks...

F.S.: In giving this interview, it was very important for me to let you know how biography research would become so meaningful for me in very personal terms, although in former days I did not think about it. I never thought that I would study biography as such. The topic was forced on me by others research questions I could not handle well. I do not think that in terms of finished studies I have accomplished anything. On the other hand, I tend to think that in terms of the development of my sort of micro-ethnographic conversation or interaction analysis, of my version of action-text analysis for written documents, and of the method of autobiographical-narrative interviews, I achieved something. It is important for me that I was able to teach some of my

students how to utilize these methods for the follow-up of interesting substantive research questions. Especially the tri-national research workshops were a most intensive biographical experience for me as university teacher, although I probably nerved every participant with my so clumsy English.

In my story presented to you, I also wanted to show why it has happened that I became sensible for my perennial “deeper” topics of inquiry. In a certain way, they are the offspring of my complicated biographical experiences: what I have experienced with my father being in the beginning a stranger after his coming back from his long prisoner of war term, and what I encountered during my illness. We did not develop this topic in length in our conversation, but in Germany, I am perhaps more known for my analyses of the professional work than for the autobiographical narrative interview. I did 5 or 6 long articles on the professions, their work, as well as the paradoxes and systematic mistakes of professional work. Naturally, it seems to me, that the topic of professional work has something to do with my quite complicated experiences with medical doctors. Understandingly, I was systematically doubtful towards some of the medical doctors treating me for my bone marrow infection, I did not trust them at all.

Then, a professor of orthopedics in Münster, Oscar Hepp, who helped the Contergan-afflicted children a lot, established a trust relationship with me. He explained to me that every new outbreak of the inflammation would be a chance for his treatment becoming more focused and effective. Such a new move of inflammation I would know much earlier than every-

body else. He was right in his assumption: normally, I would attempt to hide even from my mother that I got fever again. I was able to disguise the fever for a certain while. I would not talk about it and would keep on doing what I wanted to do for a month or so. And only finally, when I broke down, then the new outbreak would be known to my mother and, through her, to him, too. He advised me: “Fritz, if you realize that something new is happening with your leg, please come in immediately and show me what it is.” You know, during those days nothing of all these wonderful picture-giving facilities, like tomography or magnetic resonance, would be around. Therefore, he needed me as a co-worker, and he announced to me: “If you do this, you will probably have 8 or 10 operations or something like that during the next years, but when you reach 18, and your body will not grow anymore, the disease will be gone since we could weaken its stance in your body through exact attacks on the seats and hiding places of the germs in your leg bone. We have this color fluid for marking the inflamed bone. You show me where the inflammation in the bone is, since you feel it. We will inject the marking color fluid exactly in that area of the bone you will have shown to us, and then, after a while, we will see the inflamed areas of the bone since they are now color-marked. And then, we can exactly remove just the inflamed bone and keep the healthy areas.” Oskar Hepp was right, the disease was gone when I was 18 years old. Today, I should be a totally sick person with lots of heart problems, with kidney problems, and what else I do not know (smiling) because it is the most severe infection of the human body by *Staphylococcus aureus*, and I am totally healthy today, everything is okay. It is almost like a miracle. Oskar Hepp did it by his

⁷⁸ See: Treichel (2004).

⁸⁰ See : Bertaux (2006).

⁸¹ See: Alheit et al. (1999).

⁷⁹ See: Miller and Schütze (2011).

counseling. Through his sensitive counseling of a 12-year-old boy he taught me a focused type of co-operation as patient, which turned out to be pivotal for success in treatment.

Our medical sociological research project on the pedagogical dimensions of the work of medical doctors, in which I am still deeply involved, certainly comes out of this intensive experience as a child. And more broadly seen, it is the same with my long-standing interest for the professions. I do not have this sort of critical-shouting attitude towards the professions. I admire the professions as one of the most beautiful research objects of sociology, especially in terms of societal evolution, as Parsons has done it, but, on the other hand, I am much more interested, as Everett Hughes was, in the frailty of the professions and their mistakes at work. For me, this is the most interesting phenomenon in sociology – the topic of mistakes, how mistakes are happening. And this comes from my experiences as a child in hospital. I do not want to conjure that you, as a younger social scientist, should permanently reflect on your biographical experiences as potential for creative topics of research. You cannot develop master plans towards biographically intriguing, and therefore creative, research projects. But, you should have a “listening” attitude towards your biographical experiences. And in cases you really hear something in your biographical experiences, you might consider searching for a reason of that call, and, possibly, you will find a new topic to be followed up.

K.K.: And perhaps this is one of the reasons you had such a good relationship with Anselm Strauss who also had health problems?

F.S.: Yeah, sure, we both knew what chronic illness is, and exactly in this sense he accepted me as a knowledgeable person. (laughter) Yes, and I could tell lots of nice stories of our walks of our *spazieren gehen*, we loved to do this. Anselm always wanted to study bakery shops, he wanted to find out about the different quality of the bakery products of the various nations present in multi-cultural San Francisco. It was a sociological puzzle for him that French cuisine is very fine, but, as he claimed, the French culture was not able to bring forth a social world of good cookies. When Evi and I visited him with our 3 daughters, he would like to take us on a *Spaziergang* to the various national bakery sub-cultures. We would check the cookies in different quarters of the city with different bakery subcultures, we would visit the Italian bakeries, the Polish bakeries, the French bakeries, the Russian bakeries, the German bakeries, the Mexican bakeries in order to find out what would be the best cookies. Our small assessment panel found out that the best cookies were always the Italian ones. Since San Francisco is not Chicago, there was not so much of a Polish population around. Therefore, the Polish question had to be kept out of the assessment procedure. Of course, German and Russian cookies are very similar. Our daughters kept saying that the Russian ones would be the second best. However, since Anselm had had this very nice Jewish German grandmother from Hanau, he would put the German cookies in the second position. Astonishingly, as he wondered, the Mexican cookies had to be put in the fourth position, and my family members agreed unanimously. On the ladder of assessment nothing else would show up for a long time, and only then others would come, including the French ones. Anselm did not understand this embarrassing outcome of the assessment procedure: where would be

the social world explanation for such an unexpected French “falling through?” In addition, he could not explain why all these lesser cultivated national social worlds of cuisine could manage to produce good cookies, why even the Mexican cuisine would be able to produce good cookies, even if, throughout its history, Mexico had been invaded by the U.S.-American forces more than 150 times. By the way, Anselm was the only U.S.-American I met who knew this high number of the U.S. attacks on Mexican territory exactly. (laughter)

K.K.: And what about the American cookies?

F.S.: He did not like them so much.

K.K.: But why not the French ones? I am astonished.

F.S.: Yes, French cookies are not very good. Ask my daughters, they will tell you. (laughter)

K.K.: But, you know, it is not an objective sociological study.

F.S.: You know, it was a panel of counselors with *Urteilkraft* (faculty of judgment). It was a group assessment, and I really think that French cookies are not that good, and in fact, the Mexicans are really good. (laughter) We had established a whole list of graded national cultures of cookies. And Anselm never understood the serendipity pattern of the French and Mexican cookies. (laughter)

K.K.: Thank you very much for this extremely interesting and inspiring talk.

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A Draft Profile of a Very Unusual Scholar

Even in a laconic attempt to characterize the scientific profile of Fritz Schütze, it is difficult to not make any references to his person. With this in mind, I will first briefly discuss his achievements, and later move on to his individual style.

The Approach

The name “Fritz Schütze” is well-known as being linked with the narrative interview technique and the methods of developing materials from narrative interviews. This association is both accurate and misleading. Accurate, because the contribution of Fritz Schütze in the field of the modern biographical method is momentous. It is enough to highlight the contrast between, on the one hand, the largely intuitive method of approaching so-called personal documents in the early Chicago School (i.e., in *The Polish Peasant* [1918-1922], or *The Jack Roller* [1930]) and, on the other, Fritz Schütze’s proposal of the rigorous technology of the narrative interview, and the sophisticated instrumentarium of biographical material analysis. Misleading, as by limiting ourselves to this association, we reduce the scholarly profile of Fritz Schütze to the

figure of *Methodenmensch*, overlooking his achievements as a sociologist, which, in my opinion, are even more significant.

With regard to the latter, we should pay attention to a unique brand of interpretive sociology, which combines contemporary influences, derived, *inter alia*, from interactionist works by Anselm Strauss but also the fields of sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, and conversation analysis, with the key ideas of the early Chicago School. Fritz Schütze played an important role in the intellectual revival of German sociology, which took place in the 70s, and which still remains influential. His most valuable contributions at the time were, among other things, his role in the reception of new ideas, for example, his 1200-page book *Sprache soziologisch gesehen* (1975), or his involvement in a collection of translations of texts by contemporary stars of American interpretive sociology, entitled *Alltagswissen, Interaktion und gesellschaftliche Wirklichkeit*, 1973. But, even these works, not to mention the numerous and extensive publications presenting his own achievements, show an original, authored proposal. Resisting the temptation to sub-

mit to a faithful continuation of existing trends, Fritz Schütze proposed his own sociological idiom, which he then developed and applied in different research contexts.

This specific link between the method and the object has a number of consequences. First, starting from the basic issue: today’s biographical analysis (including, importantly, sociological research on biographical processes) is one of the most dynamically developing fields of sociology, which until recently did not fall within the limits of standard ideas about its tasks. Admittedly, the opposite view is still held by a few influential “hardliners,” but this loses its importance over time when confronted with the knowledge of what has been accomplished by the method. Second, the interpretive analysis of biographical material overlaps with a further interpretive analysis of interactions, conversations, texts, and discourses, together comprising a variety of modern qualitative analyses. The result is more akin to a highly-qualified craft, consisting of the ability to “read” different materials, not only those of a biographical nature, and recognize their multi-level structures, as well as their social, political, and cultural references: the analytical tools here being, *inter alia*, “structural description” and “analytical abstraction.” Third, the research perspective includes both intensive case analysis and, importantly, processes on the meso- and macro-scales. Fourth, the preferred thematic areas relate to individual and collective trajectories of suffering, professional conduct, and European integration. Fifth, a set of original concepts, including “trajectory,” “biographical work,” “fading out” (*Ausblendung*), “schemes of action,” paradoxes of professional conduct, “liaison

work” (in other words, intermediary work), and “mental space,” gradually emerges from a variety of research contexts. These original concepts form an integral sociological perspective.

Teaching

The educational work of Fritz Schütze reveals his personal characteristics and style of scientific work, and although they are implicitly present in his publications, they nevertheless usually remain unnoticed. To a certain, limited, extent this is analogous to the phenomenon described by Harold Garfinkel and his two students, Michael Lynch and Eric Livingston. In an article from 1981, entitled “The Work of a Discovering Science Construed with Materials from the Optically Discovered Pulsar,” they included an analysis of long conversations between astronomers observing celestial bodies. Garfinkel, Lynch, and Livingston contrasted these working conversations with a later scientific article by these astronomers, announcing the discovery they had made.

Despite being very informative, texts written by Fritz Schütze afford an insight in only one part of his sociology. Another, more extensive part incorporates the research seminar format developed together with Gerhard Riemann and other colleagues, which is a long meeting usually devoted to an intensive analysis of empirical material. It also includes in-depth individual consultations, as well as a huge number of reviews of master’s theses and doctoral dissertations, unusual in terms of their size and exceptional scientific quality. It can be added that these reviews would fill several thick

volumes if they were to be published, which gives some idea of the books Fritz Schütze would have written if not for his continuing support of the scientific development of others. One of the themes shared by these atypical forms of educational activity is the acquisition of an idea barely sensed by an entrant, before it is subsequently developed in full, adding further ideas of which the entrant was previously unaware. This is followed by a silent and generous donation of all these ideas to the entrant, with the comment that it was, after all, what he or she had in mind all the time.

The individual characteristics of an author are always important, but not always compelling. In many cases, it is not particularly worth knowing what kind of person an author is. From my own experience, I can say that familiarity with Fritz Schütze's teaching method is an extraordinary asset. This method offers the aspiring scholar an invaluable learning opportunity, and a point of reference when developing his or her own teaching methods. It also allows for a deeper assimilation of the meanings contained in the publications of Fritz Schütze, which should be interpreted with regard to the teaching, and vice versa. Last but not least, Fritz, as a teacher, offers his students the extraordinary gift of his personal friendship.

All these qualities are especially evident against the background of the rules and mechanisms of today's so-called knowledge-based society, which actually favor the mass production of superficial and seemingly useful knowledge by seemingly creative and supposedly innovative individuals, which nevertheless remain oddly similar. These

qualities are also different from traditional nineteenth century authoritarian teaching models based on cultivating distance between the master and the disciple. The research seminar method of teaching and mutual learning proposed by Fritz and his co-workers is a suggestion that goes beyond the opposition of these two models of education. I would see its major advantage, paradoxically, in that this suggestion does not fit the currently prevailing expectations or criteria for evaluation by many academics, students, and representatives of university authorities. All the more reason to appreciate one further contribution of Fritz Schütze, which actually merits a separate honor: the impact of his initiatives on the institutional structure of the sociological community, first, in Germany, for example, by organizing the Section of Sociology of Language within the German Sociological Association, then later, both in Germany and in Poland, through, amongst other things, his contribution to the development of the University of Magdeburg, and the German-Polish and European research projects.

An important link between the publications, and the educational and organizational work of Fritz Schütze is the idea of the fundamental equality of the partners taking part in interaction and reciprocity of their perspectives. While this idea recurs continuously as a basic theoretical concept in his publications, in his teaching, and organizational work, it constitutes a directive, which should be followed in specific situations. It should be noted, though, that this is not a principle evident in any of these contexts. Both in the field of communication theory, and in the area of commu-

nication practice today, it is sometimes challenged by new and influential directions pointing – in my opinion rightly – to the ubiquity of power relations in social interaction. But, even questioning whether knowledge can be separated from power, or whether it is reasonable to postulate such a division, it is not worth losing a sense of openness to different points of view.

Instead of Conclusion

The sociology of Fritz Schütze was originally a component of the ferment of the 70s and 80s, and over the years it has become a component of the classical resource of interpretive sociology. Today, new trends are connected rather with various poststructuralist, and also posthumanist approaches. These intellectually- and socially-significant prospects are

sometimes accompanied by a blunt claim for exclusive access to the light of knowledge and a fairly nebulous instrumentarium of data analysis. This situation by no means represents a paradigm shift, as the social sciences have always been multi-paradigmatic, and invigorating disputes and discussions within the social sciences have been needed, and continue to be so. However, if these debates take place in a quasi-adolescent atmosphere of a struggle for hegemony imposed by new directions, they may lead to artificial aggravation and simplification of the positions, and this would be to the detriment of sociology as a whole. There is ample room in sociology for many points of view and many opportunities to listen, as well as the chance to decide on how the next step should be taken. Although it took me some time, this attitude was one I also learned from Fritz Schütze.

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Fritz Schütze as a *Significant Participant* of the Sociological Milieu in Lodz

To render a history of Fritz Schütze's cooperation with a group of sociologists working in the Institute of Sociology of the University of Lodz, one must start with the first contacts established with him by Marek Czyżewski, a member of that group, who was invited to an international conference on new approaches to interpretive sociology, organized by Fritz Schütze in Kassel in 1981. As a result of those contacts Fritz Schütze visited the Institute of Sociology in 1986 to give a series of lectures on his own approach to *the biographical method* in sociology. Those lectures, as I remember them, were focused, on the one hand, on ways of doing sociology based on a conceptual scheme of biographical processes as a theoretical perspective, and, on the other, they were combined with workshop-like demonstration of how that perspective can be applied to, and explored in, empirical research in a methodical way. The Polish participants, mostly members of the Department of Sociology of Culture, who were familiar with the tradition of biographical approach developed by Florian Znaniecki, and next – by Józef Chałasiński, Jan Szczepański, and Antonina Kłoskowska, the last one being the founder of the Department of Sociology of

Culture in Lodz, and who started in the second half of the 70s their studies on the newer directions in the interpretive sociology (e.g., symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, and phenomenological sociology), found those meetings as inspiring and seminal.

Since that time, the cooperation between that group of sociologists in Lodz, and Fritz Schütze and his co-workers – Gerhard Riemann, Lena Inowlocki, Bärbel Treichel, and Thomas Rheim in Kassel, and then also Anja Schröder-Wildhagen and Ulrike Nagel in Magdeburg, to mention only a few persons most deeply engaged in that network – has been intensified and developed in many forms. One of them is a frequent and regular participation of members of the Department of Sociology of Culture in both international conferences and workshops organized by Fritz Schütze and his collaborators, first in Kassel and then in Magdeburg. During one of our first seminars, we analyzed "Robert Rasmus" autobiographical account published in Studs Terkel's book *The Good War*, and we got familiar with an earlier version of the article by Fritz Schütze on this case and its sociological implications. The article is being

published for the first time in this volume of QSR. It must be noted here, however, that his role in the enlarging of international contacts of his Polish colleagues was not confined to personal invitations addressed to them, as he often was taking a role of a liaison-person to promote and facilitate such contacts.

Another form of Fritz Schütze's ties with Lodz is his manifold contribution to a development of academic careers of a number of persons. On the one hand, Marek Czyżewski, after his visiting professorship in Kassel and then the habilitation scholarship and visiting professorship in Magdeburg, took his habilitation degree in Otto-von-Guericke-Universität in Magdeburg. Katarzyna Waniek, after regular PhD studies in Magdeburg, took her PhD degree there having Fritz Schütze as professor conferring that degree. On the other hand, the habilitation of Alicja Rokuszevska-Pawełek on chaos and pressure in World War II experiences of Poles, proceeded in Lodz and based on a theoretical framework taken from Fritz Schütze's writings, owed very much, as well, to her immediate and personal contacts with him. The same goes, with no doubt, in case of Kaja Kaźmierska's both PhD dissertation on the Polish World War II experiences and issues of ethnic and national identity in Poland's Eastern borderlands, and habilitation on relations between biography and memory studied in the context of Shoah survivors' biographical experiences. Finally, it may be noted that Andrzej Piotrowski's visiting professorship in Magdeburg was an initial point in establishing a regular academic program of the European Studies in the Institute of Sociology in Lodz after his coming back home, and it was Fritz Schütze who played a significant role in promoting that idea and

giving a strong institutional support to it as a representative of the University of Magdeburg, where such a program was already established.

Still another form of the ties that link Lodz and Magdeburg is a series of workshops which have been designed by him to practice the interpretive sociology, orientated to the biographical approach, but equally open to various modalities of discourse analysis and sociosemiotic perspectives in general, so that to combine the educational and research work of students and their teachers/researchers in common endeavors. This idea, grounded in regular practices that have been already worked out by Fritz Schütze and his team in Kassel, has found its application in the context of international cooperation that took a shape, with time, of *Tri-National Research Platform: European Identity Work*, a workshop that was initially grouping researchers and students from Magdeburg, Bangor (Wales), and Lodz, and then, enlarged in its scope, also from Bamberg and Belfast. As there is no place here to document their history in detail, I will only note that anywhere from ten to twenty such workshops took place, that are continued with some breaks since 1997 till today, that they are credited with ECTS points as 30-hour long educational modules, that since, at least, 2005 they are open to students of sociology and the European Studies both in Lodz and in Magdeburg, and sometimes students of social work, and, finally, that since 2011 they have come to form an integral part of activities within the frame of larger research projects (grants) in the universities engaged in that cooperation. The workshop organized in Magdeburg in 2011 was closely linked with the FP7 project "EUROIDENTITIES. The Evolution

of European Identity: Using biographical methods to study the development of European Identity” (carried out in Lodz by Andrzej Piotrowski as a scientist-in-charge for the Polish team, Kaja Kaźmierska, and Katarzyna Waniek), and the workshop in 2013 was connected with a Polish-German project of study (since 2012, led in Poland by Kaja Kaźmierska) on “The People’s Republic of Poland and the German Democratic Republic in memory and biographical experiences of people born between 1945-55. Sociological comparison based on biographical comparison,” carried out in close collaboration of Lodz and Magdeburg.

Finally, it is just the collaboration in the large research projects that forms strong bonds between the sociologists working in Lodz and Fritz Schütze. Two of them have been already mentioned. One may add another and much earlier one (1992-1994), initially planned to carry out together, but eventually limited, for many organizational reasons, to the Polish context, namely, the project on biographical dimensions of the war experiences during World War II, in which Fritz Schütze’s theoretical and methodological perspectives both were playing a decisive role. Results of that project, which was headed by Zbigniew Boksański, have been published in *Biography and the National Identity*, a book edited by Marek Czyżewski, Andrzej Piotrowski, and Alicja Rokuszewska-Pawełek. The idea of this project was the result of discussions and shared interests in World War II. An earlier out-

come of these discussions was the analysis of autobiography of Rudolf Höss, the commandant of KL Auschwitz. Marek Czyżewski and Alicja Rokuszewska-Pawełek’s larger study on this autobiography can be considered as the first analysis based on Fritz Schütze’s approach published in Polish (Czyżewski M., Rokuszewska-Pawełek A., 1989/90, “Analiza autobiografii Rudolpha Hössa,” *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, Vol. 33, No. 2 and 3/4 and Vol. 34, No. 1). One must also point another, earlier large project within the frame of the Leonardo da Vinci program (2003-2006), “INVITE. New Ways of Biographical Counseling in Rehabilitative Vocational Training,” where Fritz Schütze cooperated with the members of the Department of General Sociology (with Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas as a scientist-in-charge in Lodz) and practitioners working in Lodz in the field of social work and related domains.

For all his merits, he was awarded by the University of Lodz in 2005, just in time for its 60th anniversary, a medal *Universitatis Lodziensis Amico*. **Amicus** is indeed a good term here. It renders much more than an academic cooperation in its formal sense. Yet, looking for another category that seems to be apt to render Fritz Schütze’s ties with a number of sociologists who work in Lodz, I propose using also the term **significant participant**. Both of the terms, put together, are adequate to his unusual ability to integrate all virtues of tactful and respectful intellectual mastership with a climate of genuine, non-perfunctory friendship.

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Fritz Schütze Seen Subjectively

Slightly provocatively, my short text about Fritz Schütze was originally written in Polish. There were two reasons for this that are explained below.

In the first place, it was connected with one of numerous, nearly “canonical,” stories recapitulated by Fritz about his own biographical experi-

ences. This one – told and retold many times in different (both institutional and private) contexts – concerns his acquisition of the Polish language. This would be my version of the story: Once upon a time (more precisely in the 80s) there was a German professor who – taking into account his appearance – was not very much focused on “the art of impression management” (Goffman 1990) but

O Fritzu Schütze subiektywnie

Mój krótki tekst poświęcony Fritzowi Schütze, nieco prowokacyjnie, chcę napisać po polsku. A mam ku temu dwa powody.

Pierwszy to taki, że wśród wielu niemalże „kano-nicznych” opowieści Fritza o jego własnych doświadczeniach, co raz powtarzanych przy różnych okazjach, jest i ta o nauce języka polskiego. Dzia-ło się to wszystko w Warszawie (nie w Warschau i nie w Warsaw, ale w Warszawie!) w latach osiem-dziesiątych, kiedy to niemiecki profesor o apary-cji pochłoniętego zgłębianiem tajników wiedzy, a nie wywieraniem wrażenia (Goffman 1990)

naukowca¹ (na dodatek z pewnością nieco zagu-bionego w peerelowskiej rzeczywistości) „stał się niczym dziecko”. Przez kilka dni intensywnego kursu języka polskiego niemalże zapomniał swej ojczystej mowy i jak obłąkany na nowo konstru-ował otaczającą go rzeczywistość codziennej egzystencji (o relacji między językiem a myśle-niem zob. od Johanna G. Herdera [1987] i Wilhel-

¹ Myślę, że nie jest przypadkiem, iż zarówno mnie, jak i Ger-hardowi Riemannowi postać Fritza przywodzi na myśl porucznika Colombo – osobę zazwyczaj lekceważoną ze względu na swój skromny strój, niezdarność i rzekome roz-targnienie. Jednak jego niekonwencyjne, spokojne, lecz nie-zwykle przenikliwe (ugruntowane w nieprawdopodobnej wiedzy) podejście do określonego problemu sprawia, że zo-staje dostrzeżone to, co wielu albo straciło z pola widzenia, albo czego w ogóle nie wzięło pod uwagę i co w rezultacie wiedzie do jasnego (a nawet oczywistego) rozwiązania. Ger-hard Riemann pisze o owym skojarzeniu z Colombo w oko-licznościowym artykule związanym z odejściem Fritza na emeryturę, którego pierwsza część tytułu brzmi: „O życiu z konstrukcjami w tle, procesami metamorfozy i warsztatami badawczymi” (tłum. KW) (2009: 159).

was rather deeply concentrated on studying thor-oughly the reality of daily life from the point of view of an “ordinary man” (see: Schütz 1964). So this outwardly absent-minded scholar,¹ for many reasons that cannot be exposed here, decided to learn Polish in Warszawa (not in Warschau and not in Warsaw, but in Warszawa!). We may pre-sume that in addition he must have been a little bit disoriented in Poland under the communist regime. He often recapitulates that after a week

¹ I think it is not by chance that, for me, and Gerhard Rie-mann, Fritz calls to our mind the character of lieutenant Colombo – a person often disregarded because of his mod-est clothes, clumsiness, and alleged abstractedness. But, his unconventional, calm, and perspicacious (grounded in enormous knowledge) methods lead to unexpected results. Gerhard Riemann writes about it in his paper entitled “Über das Leben mit Hintergrundkonstruktionen, Wandlungsproz-essen und Forschungswerkstätten – Zwischenbemerkungen zu Fritz Schütze” (On life with background constructions, processes of metamorphosis, and research workshops” [trans. KW]) (2009:159).

ma von Humboldta [2001] oraz Edwarda Sapira [1978] i Benjamina Lee Whorfa [1982]). Wszyscy, którzy znają Fritza, z pewnością już wiedzą, że następstwem tego całkowitego „zanurzenia” w obcym języku była długa i obezwładniająca choroba, która przerwała naukę polskiego. Krót-ko rzecz ujmując, mam nadzieję, że Fritz ten tekst przeczyta i zrozumie (bo jak zapewniał wielo-krotnie: na emeryturze będzie miał więcej cza-su... i swój zamiar nauczania się języka polskiego zrealizuje...).

Po drugie, przyznaję, że zarówno ze względu na *genre* jak i na *gender* (choć to drugie podejście trak-tuję tu nieco przewrotnie), inaczej do tego tekstu podejść nie mogę. Tych, których nurtuje mój opór, co do użycia innego niż mój macierzysty języka,

of learning Polish for a couple of hours each day, he “became as a child, and almost forgot how to speak German.” Thus, he felt lost and driven in-sane while trying to (re)construct the reality of ev-eryday existence (for a detailed explanation of the relation between language and reality start with Johann G. Herder [1987] and Wilhelm von Hum-boldt [2001], as well as Edward Sapir [1978] and Benjamin Lee Whorf [1982]). Those who know Fritz already may presume that in the aftermath of his “total immersion” in the foreign language he was taken overwhelmingly ill, and he had to interrupt his Polish language course. One may ask what the story has got to do with my will to write the text in Polish first. To put it shortly, I hope that one day Fritz would be able to read and understand it since he has promised many times to continue to learn Polish in his retirement...

odsyłam do *Sprache soziologisch gesehen* (Schütze 1975a; 1975b).

Doktorvater...

W języku niemieckim istnieje określenie „**Dok-torvater**” i mimo, że znajdziemy jego polski od-powiednik: „opiekun pracy doktorskiej” (czy an-gielski: „doctoral supervisor”, a nawet niemiecki zamiennik „Betreuer der Doktorarbeit”), to wła-śnie owo „Vater”, w tym typowym dla niemieckie-go rzeczowniku złożonym (*zusammengesetztes Sub-stantiv*)², określa mój stosunek do Fritza Schützego. Nie jest tutaj w żadnej mierze moim zamiarem

² Dla wielu Polaków są to po prostu „te strasznie długie słowa po niemiecku”. Dodam, że według strony duden.de najdłuższy taki rzeczownik ma (o zgrozo!) 67 liter.

In the second place, I must admit that both with regard to *genre* and *gender* (keeping aloof from the ongoing disputes on the former issue), I could not write in anything different than my mother tongue. Those who are still bothered with my stubborn attachment to the Polish language, I refer to *Sprache soziologisch gesehen* (Schütze 1975a; 1975b). For this reason, I do not translate literally my words into English but I endeavor to express myself in the foreign language. Still, I am aware that there are things “lost in translation.”

Doktorvater...

In the German language, there is a very intriguing term *Doktorvater* for a professor who guides, supports, and oversees the performances of postgraduate students who write their PhD thesis. Even

though we may find its equivalent in the Polish language: *opiekun pracy doktorskiej* (in English: *doctoral supervisor*, or even its German substitute: *Betreuer der Doktorarbeit*), still, the very word *Vater*, in this, typical for the German language, composed noun (*zusammengesetztes Substantiv*),² defines my personal perception of Professor Fritz Schütze – my Doktorvater. By no means it is my aim here to intrude into his private life (this is unquestionably reserved for his wife Evi, their three daughters, and grandchildren), but it is to show my exceptional and (let’s face the truth) emotional attitude towards him. For me, *Doktorvater* means a career, a master, a father who unobtrusively and sensitively looks at the development of his students and who

² For many foreigners these are “those very long words in German.” Allegedly, the longer one consists of (to my horror!) 67 letters.

wchodzenie na prywatny i rodzinny grunt (ten bezdyskusyjnie należy do żony Evi, trzech córek i wnucząt), ale pokazanie pewnej niezwykłości (albo może nieformalności) w moim postrzeganiu Fritza Schützego, u którego w 2000 roku rozpoczęłam studia doktoranckie. Dla mnie owo niemieckie „Doktorvater” oznacza opiekuna, mistrza i ojca, który nienachalnie i z wyczuciem przygląda się postępom naukowym swoich podopiecznych, ale też dyskretnie i nieprzesadnie włącza się w życie prywatne. Piszę to ze świadomością, że i Andrzej Piotrowski, i Marek Czyżewski pomyślą tutaj o sprawowaniu władzy pastoralnej (Foucault 2006). Co więcej, „Vater” czy „ojciec” po prostu jest – choć, jak każdy, posiada wady. Tę powszechnie znaną i dotkliwą u Fritza Schützego jest bez wątpienia czas oczekiwania na wszelkiego rodzaju

sprawozdania i recenzje, który rozciąga się tak niemiłosiernie, że nadszarpuje wszelkie formalne granice i urzędniczą (choć nie tylko) cierpliwość.

FoKo

Nie do przecenienia dla metody autobiograficznego wywiadu narracyjnego jest rola warsztatów badawczych (*Forschungskolloquium*, które znane są niektórym jako FoKo czy później *Forschungswerkstätten*, ang. research workshops) prowadzonych nieprzerwanie przez Fritza Schützego i jego współpracowników od 1981 roku. Ten rodzaj wspólnej, najczęściej wielkogodzinnej, dostępnej dla każdego pracy seminaryjnej nad materiałem empirycznym Fritz wprowadził za Anselmem Straussem, który zawsze omawiał materiały

skillfully balance between two poles: he must not pressure the student by his own impatience; yet, he must force the movements at those junctures when the fellow appears ready but reluctant to move, is in fact really “there” but does not realize it. (Strauss 1969:115)

But, this also means a person who reticently and moderately participates in your private life. While writing this, I am pretty much aware that Andrzej Piotrowski and Marek Czyżewski would think here about “pastoral power” (Foucault 2006). But *Vater*, *father*, or *ojciec*, who is just a part of your biographical experience and “one must make do with the parents that fate has regaled one with” (Berger and Luckmann 1991), as all of us – has his faults. With no doubt the most dreadful and the acutest “deficiency” of Fritz Schütze is the time one has to wait for his texts, reviews, assessments, et

zgromadzone w czasie swoich badań (np. obserwacje stechnologizowanego szpitala) z praktykami (przede wszystkim pielęgniarkami) i swoimi studentami. Bez względu na omawianą problematykę, zawsze pojawiały się ciastka. Pierwsze warsztaty w tej formule odbyły się na Wydziale Pracy Społecznej Uniwersytetu w Kassel, gdzie Fritz wówczas pracował. Doświadczenia Fritza, Gerharda Riemanna, Petera Straussa, Thomasa Reima i Dietera Nittela zostały zebrane w słynnym artykule zatytułowanym: “Some Notes on a Student Research Workshop on Biography Analysis, Interaction Analysis, and Analysis of Social Worlds” (Riemann, Schütze 1987).

Przez kilka lat mojego pobytu na Uniwersytecie Ottona-von-Guericke w Magdeburgu uczestniczy-

cetera. That is stretched out so mercilessly that it overtaxes the patience of many officials (and not only theirs).

FoKo

One cannot overestimate the role and the significance of research workshops (*Forschungskolloquium*, also known in its shortened version as “FoKo,” or later as *Forschungswerkstätten*, and in Polish as *warsztaty badawcze*) which were conducted by Fritz Schütze and his associates continuously since 1981. This type of common, ordinary time-consuming, open to all interested people work on the empirical data (usually autobiographical narrative interviews) Fritz introduced in Germany following Anselm Strauss, who used to discuss the material collected during the research process (e.g.,

łam w regularnych warsztatach odbywających się zawsze we wtorkowe popołudnia. Współprowadził je wówczas Thomas Reim, który – jak wszyscy przeze mnie spotkani uczniowie czy kontynuatorzy Fritza (Gerhard Riemann, Lena Inowlocki, Peter Strauss, Bärbel Treichel oraz, rzecz jasna, Andrzej Piotrowski, Marek Czyżewski, Alicja Rokuszevska-Pawełek i Kaja Kaźmierska)³ – był osobą o niezwykle skromności i nieprzeciętnej wiedzy. Thomas Reim uchodzi za osobę, której wywiad narracyjny od razu „rozkłada się” na segmenty i suprasegmenty (zob. np. Schütze 2012). Ciężko byłoby mi zliczyć, ile osób zaprezentowało podczas tych spotkań swoje materiały (przede wszystkim autobiograficzne wywiady narracyjne),

³ Kolejność nazwisk odpowiada porządkowi, w jakim te osoby pojawiły się w mojej studenckiej karierze.

observations / memos of hospitals and medical care) with practitioners in the field (in this case, mainly with nurses) and his students. No matter what topic was brought up, cookies were always on the (seminar) table. The first workshops in this form and mode took place in the Department of Social Work at the University of Kassel where Fritz holds the position of University Professor. Accumulated during this type of work, the experiences of Fritz Schütze, Gerhard Riemann, Peter Strauss, Thomas Reim, and Dieter Nittel, were described and analyzed in a well-known paper: "Some Notes on a Student Research Workshop on Biography Analysis, Interaction Analysis, and Analysis of Social Worlds" (Riemann and Schütze 1987).

During my long stay at Otto-von-Guericke University in Magdeburg, I would attend regular research

workshops (FoKo), taking place on Tuesday afternoons, each academic year. Then, they were coordinated by Thomas Reim, who – as all students or followers of Fritz Schütze I ever met (Gerhard Riemann, Lena Inowlocki, Peter Strauss, Bärbel Treichel, and, naturally, Andrzej Piotrowski, Marek Czyżewski, Alicja Rokuszevska-Pawełek, and Kaja Kaźmierska)³ – is a modest and extraordinarily knowledgeable person. Thomas Reim is believed to be able to read a narrative interview and at once "break it down" into narrative units and suprasegments (see, i.e., Schütze 2012). It would be hard for me to count how many people analyzed their empirical materials during these meetings (narrative interviews, but not only), how many interesting topics were discussed, and how many areas of so-

³ "Characters" are presented in order of their appearance during my university studies.

ile ciekawych tematów omawiano i jak wiele o różnych obszarach życia społecznego się dowiedziałam. Bez trudu natomiast mogę wskazać, jaką postawę we mnie ukształtowało uczestnictwo zarówno w tych regularnych wtorkowych FoKo, jak i warsztatach prowadzonych ze studentami w ramach różnych programów badawczych (wcześniej w ramach walijsko-polsko-niemieckiej współpracy koncentrującej się na tożsamościach narodowych, później również w ramach europejskiego grantu „EuropeanIdentities”). Na pierwszym miejscu, jakkolwiek banalnie może to zabrzmieć, wymienię pokorę i umiejętność wsłuchiwanie się w głos innych (a przecież młodym naukowcom zdarza się czasem, że na początku swojej kariery mają poczucie, że już wiedzą wszystko, a na pewno wiedzą lepiej...). Tutaj każdy miał prawo głosu

i prawo zadawania pytań. Zresztą, we wspomnianym już artykule „Some Notes on a Student Research Workshop” Fritz Schütze i Gerhard Riemann pokazują, że wątpliwości zgłaszane przez „mniej wytrawnych” badaczy czy studentów bardzo często odkrywają problemy, które „ugruntowanemu naukowcowi” jawią się jako oczywiste i przez to często zostają pominięte.

Zasada równości wszystkich uczestników warsztatów prowadziła jednak nieraz do komicznego obrotu spraw. W czasie jednego z tak zwanych „warsztatów walijskich”⁴ jeden ze studentów interpretując wywiad narracyjny, odwołał się do pojęcia „kultury prefiguratywnej” Margaret

⁴ To potoczna nazwa serii seminariów walijsko-niemieckopolskich funkcjonująca wśród polskich uczestników.

cial life were examined. But, readily, I can point out what kind of attitude towards “making sociology together” resulted from participation in both these regular workshops, as well as in students workshops that were part of various research projects (e.g., Tri-National Research Platform: European Identity Work with Welsh, German, and Polish students, and then during the European project “EuropeanIdentities”). In the first place, I would mention, although it might seem trivial, humility and the capacity to listen carefully to the (critical) remarks and comments of others (sometimes it happens to young scholars that, especially, at the beginning of their career, they believe that they know everything...). During the workshops, each person is allowed to speak her or his mind and ask questions. Moreover, in the above-mentioned paper “Some Notes on a Student Research Work-

Mead (1970), w której to, najogólniej rzecz ujmując, rodzice czy starsze pokolenie uczy się od dzieci. Fritz, chcąc docenić nieco przestraszonego studenta, zastosował jedną ze swoich sprawdzonych technik: zaprezentował się jako „skromny profesor, który nigdy o tej koncepcji nie słyszał” i poprosił o dalsze wyjaśnienia. Student najpierw zatrwożył się strasznie, że mówi o czymś, o czym nawet Fritz Schütze nie wie, następnie z powątpiewaniem (już domyślając się podstęp) zmrużył oczy i pokiwał głową, a ostatecznie do końca spotkania nie wydusił już z siebie słowa.

Bez końca

Swego czasu (a było to jeszcze w ubiegłym stuleciu) otrzymałam od Bärbel Treichel – socjolin-

shop” Fritz Schütze and Gerhard Riemann show that doubts express by “less advanced” researchers or students usually reveal issues and problems that so-called “mature” scholars consider obvious and therefore, such issues remain unseen and are overlooked.

There is, however, one anecdote showing that the rule saying that all participants of the research (students) workshops are equal may bring funny consequences. Once, during a tri-national meeting, one of the students, while analyzing an autobiographical narrative interview with a Welsh person, referred to the concept of the “prefigurative culture” introduced by Margaret Mead (1970), which says, in short, that parents or older generations learn from the children. Professor Schütze wanted to appreciate and encourage the student,

gwistki zafascynowanej metodą biograficzną – kartkę pocztową będącą reklamą berlińskiego radia „Fritz”⁵. Napis na niej mówił: „Ich höre nur Fritz und gewinne trotzdem!”, czyli: „Słucham wyłącznie Fritza i mimo to wygrywam!” (tłum. KW). I to jest zasada organizująca moją naukową biografię. A nie jest to proste, bo zaproponowana i rozwijana przez Fritza Schützego metoda badawcza początkowo przez wiele lat usytuowana na obrzeżach głównych nurtów socjologicznych, zyskała, co prawda, w ostatnim czasie „popularność”, ale uległa przy tym banalizacji i uproszczeniu, które w istocie podważa autentyczność uzyskanych wyników (o czym dobitnie pisze Marek Czyżewski [2013]).

⁵ Radio to nadaje po dziś dzień. Zob. www.fritz.radio.pl.

and decided to apply one of his “tactics” aimed at presenting himself as a “modest and not-knowing-everything professor,” and said that he had never heard about this idea and asked for further explanation. Unfortunately, the student became alarmed that he is talking about things which even Fritz Schütze does not know, and then (probably knowing already that this was a clever trick) he squinted, nodded his head, and, eventually, he could not say a word.

No End

Once (and this happened in the last century) Bärbel Treichel – a sociolinguist fascinated with the

biographical method – gave me a postcard – an advertisement of a radio station in Berlin called *nomen omen* “Fritz.”⁴ There was writing on the postcard saying: “Ich höre nur Fritz und gewinne trotzdem!” (“I listen to Fritz only and win even so” [trans. KW]). This is one of the most important rules organizing my professional career. And this is not easy since for many years the method developed by Fritz Schütze was seen as a “marginal” approach, and recently, it has admittedly gained recognition but is usually applied in a very simplified way. This results in trivial results and banal outcomes (Marek Czyżewski discusses the issue in detail [2013]).

⁴ The radio still broadcasts (www.frtiz.radio.pl).

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Tribute to Professor Fritz Schütze

Professor Fritz Schütze – as a person who had influenced my professional development – has become, for me, an important *institutional significant other*. As many other students of sociology in the Institute of Sociology, University of Lodz, in the late 80s, I was attracted by the idea of autobiographical narrative interview, in that time – “a new tool for sociological field research” (Hermanns 1987). In the beginning, this enthrallment was rather theoretical – I did not decide to apply the biographical method in my M.A. thesis, as some of my “study-mates” did. In 1990, I had the first opportunity to participate in a conjoint Polish-German workshop dedicated to the analysis of narrations, organized in Kassel. During this workshop I became acquainted with Professor Schütze, I also met his German associates. Even now, after almost 25 years, I can recall a very inspiring atmosphere of our collective work, and the hospitality of the German team and Professor Schütze himself. In the mid 90s, I befell the person responsible for the analytical tasks based on biographical interviews with social work institution clients as part of the research projects on poverty and social exclusion developed by the Department of Applied Sociology and Social Work, and I began

to run biographical and autobiographical narrative interviews myself. A decade later, between 2003-2006, I had a privilege to work in the “INVITE” consortium as the coordinator of the Polish team.

“INVITE. New Ways of Biographical Counselling in Vocational Rehabilitation Training” was an international research project conducted within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Program. The interdisciplinary group composed of academics in the area of sociology and practitioners – psychologists, vocational counselors, and social workers from Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Wales – was coordinated by Otto von Guericke University in Magdeburg in the persons of Fritz Schütze and Peter Straus. The main result of the project was the *educational curriculum* on biographical method application in vocational counseling and social work presented in the form of 15 interlinked modules (CD, *European Studies on Inequalities and Social Cohesion* 1-2/2008 and 3-4/2008). Therefore, sociological, scientific concepts and research procedures have been converted into the professional counseling tool, an instrument of training clients to explore their life and motivating them to do biographical work. In the very idea of

the “INVITE” project one can notice both the “habitual” interpretative sociologists’ concern with the professional intervention development, and the continuation of Professor Schütze’s specific interest in the field of professional (social) work, with its conditionings and paradoxes.

Three years of shared endeavor were the unique experience for the “INVITE” contributors due to the work culture ensured by Professor Schütze’s leadership and his substantive supervision. He guided the project meetings in the way which enhanced individual and collective participation, as well as creativity, and generated the stimulating atmosphere of equal involvement and contribution for all team members, despite their age, vocational background, and formal position. It was a formative experience of scrupulous, reciprocal scientific work, all the more reason valuable during those days when the scientists, even in the field of social research, succumbed to the temptation of rivalry and superficial success. The in-depth, careful analysis of every single interview, and Professor’s interest in practical usage of scientific work, guaranteed that the narrators’ input

was not wasted – this notion is especially important in the research with traumatized and vulnerable groups. In my personal carrier, the involvement in the “INVITE” project has resulted in developing interest in the issues of identity, the importance of *significant others* for identity formation, and life course of social actors in the social worlds of poverty and marginalization.

In addition, allow me to emphasize that it is a great pleasure to meet Professor Fritz Schütze in the situations of more “unceremonious” character. Conference/project dinners and other forms of leisure time during formal gatherings give the opportunity to get to know Professor Schütze as a very open person, with an enormous spectrum of interests, tender-hearted, and always concerned with others and their stories, fascinated by new discoveries and findings, enchanted by richness of social life with a juvenescent curiosity.

Dear Fritz, in the year of your jubilee, I wish you all the best in your further scientific projects and endeavors, and in your everyday life.

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Book Review

Treichel, Bärbel and Guillermo Bartelt, (eds.). 2012. *Don Decker's Apache Odyssey. Approaches to Autobiography, Narrative, and the Developing Self*. Berlin: Frank & Timme

This volume is divided into two parts. The first one is a written autobiography of Don Decker – an Indian poised between the San Carlos Apache people's world and the white Anglo culture. It constitutes an empirical base for the second part of the book, which consists of four analytical chapters (by Guillermo Bartelt, Erica Gericke, Bärbel Treichel, and Fritz Schütze) examining and discussing Don Decker's life history and the development of his biographical identity (*the self*). Thus, this is an excellent opportunity for scientific and lay readers to see how different interpretative approaches are applied to written recollections in order to reconstruct and discuss the development of the "marginal" or "hybrid" self.

The book is a result of Guillermo Bartelt's fascination with Don Decker (both holding the position of Indian counselors at colleges) who dropped to his office and with a vigorous handshake and verbal enthusiasm (what he saw as different from the usual Indian reserve behavior) introduced himself. Bartelt

felt that Don Decker's voice needs to be heard. He (a linguist himself) contacted a sociolinguist working with the autobiographical narrative interview method by Fritz Schütze – Bärbel Treichel. She was so impressed by Don Decker's manuscript that organized a symposium at the 2008 AILA World Congress of Applied Linguistics in Essen that was devoted to analysis of this captivating autobiography. The volume contains revised and extended versions of those discussions.

Nowadays, Don (Denny) Decker lives on the Yavapai Apache Reservation in Camp Verde. He is a teacher and an Indian counselor at college, as well as a quite successful folk musician. In March 1997, he has finished writing his life history entitled *Apache Odyssey. A modern Journey of an Apache*. His recollections consist of two parts. The former deals with the history and the final defeat of the Apache nation, as well as provides a detailed and in-depth ethnographic description of the San Carlos Apache's be-

liefs, rites, values, cultural patterns, and family life. This part of his account shows the collective identity and collective fate of the Apache Indians. The latter is a straightforward written narrative rendering in which the informant deals with his marginal position and painful experiences of transgression of cultural borders.

Don Decker was born in 1944 in Phoenix Indian Hospital. His mother was only 15 years old when giving birth to her son. She was one of five children sent off by their father (who could not provide for the family) to the distant boarding school for Indians in Phoenix. The identity of his father is unclear. Shortly after his birth, Don Denny (this was his name by birth) was placed in a German foster family for two years and then his grandfather and his wife (Don's step-grandmother) got custody of Don. This means that he grew up on the San Carlos Apache Reservation and experienced extreme poverty, deprivation, violence, and social exclusion. At the age of 18, he was adopted by a white family – Don's high-school chorus teacher, Donald Decker, and his wife – Barbara (and therefore, his name had been changed from Don Denny to Don Decker). For the autobiographer, it is, however, intriguing why his grandfather, to whom he was very much attached to, never gave his consent to his adoption (but probably, also saw better opportunities for his grandson's development outside the reservation). Don's adoptive mother offered him an opportunity to start over without former burdens (*a clean slate*), and to get rid of his past in order to be accepted in his new middle-class white community and to win acceptance across ethno-cultural borders. In the analytical chapter, Fritz Schütze argues that he started

to play the role of the covert convert and perfectly enculturated stranger (p. 206), and put a lot of effort into passing as a member of his new we-community and hiding his native Indian background. But, this process usually forces some sort of fading out practices that may threaten one's biographical identity development and may exhaust one's energy. This happened in young Don Decker's life course. He lost his track and experienced some sort of disorder and suffering in his daily life: he had severe problems in high school (problems in concentration and truancy), later on, he flunked out of university being much lured by the world of pop, rock, and folk music, and having a lot of fun rather than studying. His biographical orientation and schemes of reference were dramatically changed after one of his friends was killed in Vietnam. Finally, he graduated from Eastern Illinois University nine years after he left the San Carlos Apache Reservation. Soon after, he got his first teaching position as an art teacher. Then, he was already married for one year. Three years later, his first child was born.

This very interesting life history of a marginal man, or a cultural hybrid, is discussed in four chapters written by four renowned scholars who – drawing on common theoretical and methodological backgrounds – look at the empirical data from many diverse points and/or put an emphasis on different analytical and theoretical frames.

Guillermo Bartelt, in the chapter entitled "Negotiating the Traditional and Modern Self," refers to the ethnography of communication in order to understand the Apache's cultural system from the insider's perspective (manifesting itself in an autobiographical

account of Don Decker) and to examine the constructive processes of the self under very complex life circumstances. The identity formation of Don Decker seems to be very tangled since he must cope with ordinarily incompatible reality sets (Scollon and Scollon 1979) that give rise to clashing ordering structures. Moreover, Bartelt focuses on the language production in autobiographical accounts and discusses the role of different strategies (e.g., insertion of seemingly trivial details into the main story line, introduction of foregrounding constructions) that allow the informant to deal with inconsistent experiences resulting from conflicting traditional and modern values and from his marginal position that causes severe suffering and feelings of reduction of personhood and of powerlessness.

Erica Gericke, in “Discourses of Identities: Applying Critical Discourse Analysis,” views Don Decker’s autobiographical account as a discourse since we may find its four basic features in the Apache Odyssey (i.e., intertextuality, interdiscursivity, recontextualization, and orders of discourse). She points our attention to multiple layers of meaning in Don Decker’s text that may reveal the Apache identity: at the (pure) collective discourse level, he talks, for instance, about being an Apache and being a survivor of the Apache world, being a victim of harsh life conditions on the San Carlos Apache Reservation, et cetera (the world of white Anglos is here a second pair of the contrast-set); at the collective-personal discourse level, he introduces the formulation “me and my people,” which is discussed both in a positive and negative light, he also mentions here respect for animals, honesty, and spiritual well-being; and finally, at the personal discourse level and the intra-personal dis-

course level, he deals with his own attitude towards life and biographical orientation.

Bärbel Treichel deals in her part – “Identity Work, Narrative Analysis, and Biographical Processes. A Sociolinguistic Approach to Identity Constructions in an Apache Autobiography” – with the process of Don Decker’s identity transformation. At the beginning, Treichel points out two things which make the written historical account of the Apache different from linguistic narrative analysis: (1) it is written down (not told) and (2) it presents the story of a large segment of life (not a sporadic, short narration of events). Then, she refers to Fritz Schütze’s approach and proves that it may be applied to the analysis of this autobiography. Yet, we must keep in mind that the authenticity and reliability of the autobiographical narrative account is guaranteed through the dynamic recollection of extempore storytelling and the power of its narrative constraints – the written text seems to contradict the rule. Fritz Schütze (1980) argues, however, (also in this book) that this sort of written autobiography may be analyzed according to the principles of the autobiographical narrative interview method in a productive and reliable way. Next, taking into account Erving Goffman’s notion of social identity, she compares it to the concept of personal identity, as conceived of by Mead, and biographical identity that is defined as emerging from a self-reflexive process of ascription of social categories, self-identifications, and individual life courses (Pp. 138-139). In this light, she conducts a detailed sequential analysis of the key moment in Don Decker’s narrative: his adoption (that inevitably entails transition from the Apache world to the white Anglo world) in which a story of his grandfather’s death is

embedded. The adoption process is seen here (and this is grounded in linguistic realization of the text) as a starting point of his biography transformation.

Fritz Schütze, in his section “Biographical Process Structures and Biographical Work in a Life of Cultural Marginality and Hybridity: Don Decker’s Autobiographical Account,” first of all, discusses the concept of cultural marginality (referring to Park [1950; 1961], Stonequist [1961], and Schütze [1980]) and hybridity (referring to Bhabha [1994]), and claims that living in two meaningfully different cultures brings about serious biographical consequences. In Don Decker’s biography, the most dramatic experiences are connected with transgressing the demarcation line between his former world and his new “unaccustomed” we-community. It seems that a person entering new (usually dominant) group culture endeavors to be “much too good” or a “more than identical” member of the

approached community and does not want “to look back” at his past. The idealized picture of the new community and the derogatory image of one’s culture of origin may result in serious biographical turmoil and estranging and chaotic biographical trajectory process of suffering. Consequently, a life in-between two cultures usually involves a lot of biographical work that must be done in order to understand, and to be able to cope with, chaos in one’s biographical orientation and one’s self-alienation. One of the possible positive outcomes of this work may be the development of bi-culturalism (Kłoskowska 1992).

This volume is a perfect example of the application of the autobiographical narrative interview method, the ethnography of communication, sociolinguistics, and theories stemming from symbolic interactionism to a written autobiography. It might be useful both for the advanced readers, as well as for the beginners in the field.

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