xxx 10. yy Empirical data and results as an answer to unduly narrow party-political and academic approaches: Köttig's biographical research on the life history, ideology and/or psychology of a young, violence-prone woman from the far-right scene ('Jacky')

Looking at the participants in the VPN method provides a good insight into the dimensions of personal-biographical development that a methodological approach involving "subject orientation, relation to the life-world [of participants], and conflict sensitivity" can touch on and open up. A particularly striking example is provided by the case analysis mentioned above from Michaela Köttig's study, which will be looked at in more detail here, particularly in order to include input from the latest *qualitative process- and praxis- research* in the field of rightwing extremism prevention (Köttig 2004 and 2008). This case is perhaps all the more revealing for the fact that Köttig did not choose the purported main problem group – young men – as the object of her research, but instead looked at girls and young women from the far-right, violent scene; for this reason alone she had no choice but to proceed entirely without predisposition and with flexibly in her methodology. This revealed once again, and particularly strikingly, the extent to which processual, relationship-based work centred on the participant's life-world – which inevitably includes biographical (self-) investigation – is essential for successful prevention and reintegration.

It is certainly no coincidence that Köttig, in her critical appraisal of current social-educational practice, starts from the position of a research methodology that itself is consistently subject oriented, addresses participants' life world, and is conflict-sensitive and relationship-based. Köttig's observation that the "accepting" and "confrontational" approaches, in their respective "unidirectional" focuses, fail to recognise "the complex cause-effect relationships involved in far-right orientations", but could potentially present considerable educational potential, is, after all, essentially thanks to her *biographical-scientific perspective*. It has become increasingly clear – for example from experiences at VPN – how strongly these far-right "cause-effect relationships" are determined by "*biographical processes* and *family past"* (2008,1) and that, for this reason, socio-therapeutic work needs to take a differentiated approach that goes beyond mere acceptance of the person or emphatic confrontation with their political views.

It has furthermore emerged that the main tool used in this area of research – open, biographical-narrative interviews and case analyses involving the reconstruction of the

participant's life history – is not only a useful means of qualitative data acquisition, but also always has *quasi-therapeutic effects*. The field of biographical research itself only recognised – or was prepared to concede the existence of – this relationship at a relatively late stage. (It was possibly the anti-psychological mindset in social science and social work as referred to above [cf. p. xx and xx] that rendered the socio-therapeutic potential of biography work less clearly apparent.) In her 2002 essay, Gabriele Rosenthal expressly acknowledged the relevance of "narrative with therapeutic effect in a research and counselling context" for biographical research specifically, and Köttig's study – primarily by making authoritative use of resources from psychological psychotraumatology – began systematically to develop it.[1]

It is the incorporation of the *therapeutic consciousness* into biographical methodology that is significant for our study, because after all the VPN method intuitively emphasised biographical work, if only in order to establish sufficient trust in group and individual work. One promising approach is to consider Köttig's *case analysis*, in which the object of the study intensified their "contact with the far-right scene" "during the very phase" in which they were addressed in an accepting-assistive manner (21). It should be mentioned straight away that the disengagement process was connected to a not inconsiderable extent with the biographical reflection process involved in the study (which included several personal interviews over the course of two years, and interviews with the young woman's brother).

xxx 10.1 'Jacky' 1: Three-generationally transmitted family patterns of violent and abusive relationships

"Born in 1978 in a West German town", Jacky grew up together with a brother four years older than her in a family environment in which she was confronted "with the violence" of her alcoholic father "right from her early childhood" (2008, 14). Jacky experienced her mother as supportive, but that relationship was overshadowed by the presence of her unpredictable father. Furthermore, the mother died from cancer "after a long period in hospital" when Jacky was 12. A year later, her 17 year-old brother left home, as a result of which Jacky was exposed "for a further three years to the misdeeds of her father, which clearly reflected a

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[1] Strikingly, however, even the 2008 essay cited here does not refer at all to the attributes "unconscious" and "mental", so important to a contemporary theory of effective preventive work; the attribute "not conscious" is however referred to on one occasion, and the narratological terms "subject avoidance" and "dissociation" on several.

complete abuse of power: for example in the form of control over Jacky's diet and sleep, brutal physical attacks," and increasingly also "sexualised assaults". As is generally the case in constellations of this kind, the victim experienced extremely powerful ambivalences in her relationship to the parent in question, the like of which can make the necessary abstinence enormously more difficult. For example, Jacky expressly emphasises that, "When my father was sober, I had the nicest childhood ever […] going for walks, artwork, doing nice things" (2004, 216).

The wider family framework also appears to have been so unstable that, when Jacky's mother died, Jacky's contact with relatives on her maternal and paternal side was severed (for reasons that could not be established anymore) and Jacky was left entirely on her own. Both sets of grandparents appear, each in their own way, to have been strongly affected by the War and by addictions to alcohol and tablets, and co-dependency with their respective partners. Jacky's father's family, who live in Austria, additionally appear to have had a certain, but ultimately difficult to pinpoint, connection to National Socialism, and in any case appear to have been more severely psychosocially impaired, because incestuous assaults clearly took place between Jacky's father and his sisters. Jacky's family on her mother's side had a strong presence in the region, and some may have had a Sinti background: "My grandmother used to go around with gypsies […] so I don't have any real uncles or aunts (on my mother's side); they were more like foster children for her (I: Mhm). She lived together with them" (2004, 217). It was not possible to verify whether this was all true or whether it was a myth created by Jacky and her family. In any case Jacky appears to have perceived this grandmother – for whatever reasons – as not being significantly close to her, and even today she continues to be reserved in this regard.

"Jacky's childhood and early adolescence were thus characterised by violence, a lack of protection, and experiences of loss" which certainly resulted in a wide range of "destabilisations", "considerable stress" and various "trauma-compensating" modes of behaviour (14). It can be said that, during her adolescent years, Jacky was forced by her "threatening life situation to disassociate feelings of grief, loss and injury". This certainly took place to a significant extent on a psychosomatic level, yy because Jacky was responding by developing bulimia and losing a great deal of weight. Through her relationship with a young man from the far-right scene and by taking up sports, judo and kickboxing training, she was able to increasingly distance herself from her father. At the age of 16, she finally left the flat

following a number of assaults, fights and police interventions, which have not yet been satisfactorily understood.

xxx 10.2 ‚Jacky' 2: The unconscious acting-out of biographical issues in the extremist peer-group

In her "contact with the far-right scene", Jacky first of all recreated her early experiences of "alcohol consumption and violence", "but this time with the difference that the violence was not directed against her" (15). On the contrary, her association with the scene allowed her "to act out her own aggression", because in that environment "violence against other people" is tolerated and valued. Jacky herself provoked "violent conflicts both within and outside the scene" on several occasions. She became involved in situations in which she only barely maintained control over herself, and "struck out in a knee-jerk manner" (Köttig 2004, 263). It is more due to chance or the inability of law enforcement authorities to reliably identify girls and women as perpetrators of violent acts that Jacky did not have to attend any court proceedings – and consequently did not fall within the spectrum of individuals considered suitable for VPN group training courses (far-right male prison inmates).

When Jacky turned towards the far-right youth scene, *processing and coping* mechanisms – the importance of which should not be underestimated – were also at work. Here she was clearly able to "compensate for" the violence and powerlessness that she experienced in her family, and achieve a situation in which she could "distance herself from the maltreatment she had suffered" – and also make her father's behaviour subjectively more "explainable" and "controllable". On the one hand Jacky "increasingly learned possible forms of action (to enable her) to assert herself against her partners and achieve a situation in which the potential for violence was not directed at her" (16). And on the other hand, "again and again she entered into conflicts with members of the far-right scene – for example about their alcohol consumption," which she saw as a significant cause of her comrades' "self-inflicted unemployment" (2004, 251). So when the study states "that, within the far right-leaning clique, Jacky waged conflicts vicariously" that originated from experiences in her life history with her father and her family, these also include elements of constructive processing.

Then again, however, this "vicarious self-processing" resulted in a profound "*avoidance of the subject* of the real relationship with her father" and a *disassociation* of her memories from her life history, which must furthermore have created considerable difficulties for her in living her life. Not only did Jacky completely "sever contact" with her father (15) and was unaware of the connections between the history of her father-daughter relationship and her current social environment in the far-right clique; she also repeatedly found herself in romantic relationships with violent young men with a tendency to alcoholism. This must have created considerable difficulties in her life and personal development, even if she was able to avoid falling victim to this violence. Clearly, *biographical awareness* and *biographical self-empathy* – the central impact factors in biographical work according to the VPN method – were initially largely inactive for Jacky; instead, a precarious *repetition and projection dynamic* was at work.

This *repetition and projection dynamic* was also apparent in a "*political argument* of the far-right scene" which Jacky herself held and expressed in an "exaggerated" manner: namely the idea that "foreign men are [the main perpetrators of the more] serious sexualised assaults on German women" (17). In the detailed analyses of the relevant transcript sequences and through comparison of various interviews (including those with Jacky's brother), it became evident that, when talking about "foreigners", Jacky was again unconsciously processing her experiences of her father's sexualised assaults, which she had largely mentally dissociated and was unable to include directly in her own account in the interviews. Instead, during both interviews, she appears to experience an "ambivalence between 'not being able to say' and 'wanting to say'", which can be detected in the transcript in the form of "repeated attempts to draw closer to the experience, or to the topic that had been avoided" – attempts from which Jacky, as the narrator, "shies away from on each occasion". Here the general mechanism of *unconscious projection* of troubling – and therefore mentally dissociated – experiences onto an external projection figure (the "foreigner") appear in Jacky's case to be further reinforced by the fact that she also perceived her father – an Austrian – as a foreigner. Paradoxically, however, what she does not do is become aware of his assaults against her and their consequences, or express these as the narrator of her own story.

xxx 10.3 'Jacky' 3: yy Dissociated memories and unconscious projections onto a foe image – and the resolving potential of narrative work

Jacky's adoption of the far right's condemnation of foreigners and foreign men must be seen to a very large extent as a form of *unconscious projection* that allows her to bury and deny personal traumatic experiences, fraught with deep ambivalences. In addition to the element of denial, it also serves a function of aggressive self-empowerment, by permitting an unconscious "reversal of the power relationship between herself and her father". Because although Jacky "experienced her father – both as a parent and a man – as destructive and powerful", according to rightwing ideology he – the "foreigner" – was inferior, and she – the German – superior. All in all, this highly projective behaviour prevented Jacky from more intensively addressing her "real relationship with her father" and starting to relive the affects of "helplessness", "grief" and "loss" (18) from which she had suffered but which she had necessarily dissociated. Naturally it hindered Jacky – as a young, increasingly independent citizen – in forming an appropriate, emotionally moderated picture of the politico-social situation in her country and local area.

Jacky's "foreigner" argument alone provides a fairly clear indication as to why *confrontational intervention* as understood by traditional civic education – which deals primarily with facts, cognitive information and discussion of prejudices against foreigners – is hardly like to be effective in Jacky's case, or certainly not until at least a modicum of mutual trust has been established, and a willingness to recall, voluntarily narrate and reflect on experiences from her own life history. This is because it is hardly possibly to reach on a purely factual level what Jacky is actually referring to when she speaks of "foreigners".

On the other hand, however, the purely *accepting approach* is equally unpromising, as Jacky's story so clearly shows. When Jacky was eventually "housed in a residential community for girls, finished secondary school and started an apprenticeship", her contact with far-right activities actually intensified. Jacky "now approached a (far-right) group independently of her boyfriend, and started to take an interest in the political ideology" (of the scene) (2004, 244). The "ostensible solution to her problem" thus "admittedly (resulted in) a relaxation at the social level (and) to her finishing school and starting an apprenticeship" (20). However it did not lessen her ideological commitment to the far-Right. This was because her commitment was fed by a unconscious *psychodynamic tension* based on – split-off – experiences of violence and trauma from her life history and family biography, yy which not assuaged by supporting her social integration or job situation.

Jacky's "self-positioning in the far-right scene, and her exaggerated arguments" are indeed imperceptibly (rooted) in many instances in her "overall life history" (23). To solve the problem of this psychodynamic tension and the extremist behaviour connected with it, sound *social-therapeutic experience* that incorporated, among other things, biographical-reflective work (certainly including elements of both the accepting and confrontational approaches, naturally complementing one another) was needed. Only through approaches like the one delivered by VPN could Jacky have actualised, felt, and learned to cope with the pain inflicted on her. This, in turn, would have created the indispensable conditions for the gradual regression of her symptoms – i.e. her psychosomatic symptoms and violent behaviour, but also her extremist thought patterns.

xxx 10.4 yy 'Jacky' 4: Projecting fantasy history and family fantasy histories out of personal dilemmas – and the limits of confrontational intervention

In the absence of such experience, Jacky was "forced to find her own method of processing" (21) – which in Jacky's case was based on prejudice affects and projection-laden cognitive constructs incorporating allegorical and *ideologically-bound personal fantasies*. Other ideological concepts demonstrate this even more clearly than Jacky's (relatively conventional) prejudice about "foreign men": For example, as Jacky increasingly immersed herself in the ideology of the far-Right, she developed views regarding "whether, and if so at what degree, Hitler should have ended his aggressions and stopped expanding his power", in order to ensure the long-term success of his politics and social ideas. Here, as in the prejudice about the "aggressive foreigner", the impulse (prompted by personal-biographical circumstances) to "defuse" or "de-dramatise" an excessively powerful *male aggressor figure* was at work. This certainly always involved at least an implicit playing-down or denial of the aggression that she experienced from her father – analogous to the aggression that took place historically in the Third Reich. Such cognitive impulses were highly unlikely to relieve the psycho-traumatic problems linked to Jacky's relationship with her father (just as they certainly do not bring about any socially or ethically sustainable political strategy).

In another projective, fantastical and ideologically-coloured cognitive construct, Jacky did address the subject of her own family – but only in terms of her grandparents, about whom she had very little reliable information. One specific fantasy concerned the role of one of her

grandfathers in the Third Reich: according to Jacky, her paternal grandfather was a National Socialist and a member of the SS, but "his activities" were entirely "non-violent" in nature. Jacky's parents and relatives never spoke about how or to what extent this grandfather was involved in National Socialism, and the results of research in the Federal archive were negative. Nonetheless, Jacky said she remembered how "there were photos of him everywhere in my grandparents' flat […] at events […] in big halls, and in uniform", which her grandmother "proudly displayed" (2004, 247). This vague memory was enough to prompt Jacky to develop her entirely personal ideas about her "important" but "non-violent" SS grandfather.

Like in her deliberations as to when Hitler should have stopped, here Jacky again realised a further possibility for unconsciously *using her imagination to turn evil* (that she herself has experienced, but largely dissociated) *into good*, or at least to mitigate it, in the context of German violent history. Yet again, however, the violence that she specifically experienced in her family (yy and that must have been operative mostly in her father's Austrian side of the family in terms of sexual abuse at least) – which can quite reasonably be considered the cause of these fantasies – remained excluded from conscious acknowledgement. Thus this idea once again allowed "threatening feelings such as grief, loss, helplessness and pain" – which she must have been exposed to "upon the death of her mother" and through the violence and destructiveness of her father – "to be further dissociated" (18) and covered up by a fantasy about an "important" but "non-violent" SS grandfather. Jacky's extensive mental "examinations" thus inevitably had to remain "incomplete", because they addressed "neither the misdeeds of her father nor the violent crimes of Hitler" to any sufficient extent.

xxx 10.5 yy The shortfall of informational, educational or behaviouristic training approaches – in the face of the psycho-biographical complexities of extremists

Once again, it is clear that what is presented here, dressed in political extremist ideology, is in fact essentially a highly *idiosyncratic and projective means* by which Jacky – in a veiled and entirely involuntary manner – processed traumatic burdens from her own biography and family history. This would appear to support Köttig's statement that, "were Jacky confronted – in the manner favoured by 'confrontational' approaches – with her political statements" yy or were she addressed in an informational or behaviouristic training approach, this would

hardly be likely to prove effective. Such an approach would involve, for example, explaining to Jacky in a cognitive-rational and fact-based manner that "'foreign men' do not perpetrate sexual assaults either more or less frequently" than German men, or that being a member of the SS or indeed adhering to National Socialism at all may indeed have involved a range of degrees of forms of violence, but certainly did not involve a "non-violent" lifestyle (22).

For individuals such as Jacky, so deeply affected by dissociated, psycho-traumatically linked prejudices and "trauma-compensating" modes of extremist thinking and behaviour – as basically all extremists are –, experience has shown that pedagogical approaches of a confrontational, informational, educational and/or behavioural kind are entirely fruitless – and methodologically misplaced (Fischer Riedesser, Hirsch 2004 xx). Because of her unconscious method of processing her past "by substitution", it is very likely that Jacky would have come to the conclusion, at an emotional level, that "they don't believe me", or, yy in a more psychodynamic respect, that "the assaults by her father never really took place" (22). This would have destroyed the foundation of trust, so indispensable for any kind of educational dialogue. The psychodynamic distrust reflex is triggered and the relationship breaks off particularly inevitably in constellations of this kind because such assaults within families are always surrounded by potent ambivalences towards the respective parent ("When my father was sober, I had the nicest childhood ever […] going for walks, artwork, doing nice things"; 2004, 216). Thus, to some extent, even Jacky herself did not quite believe in the existence of the assaults (at least insofar as she plays down their gravity and is unaware of the extent of the betrayal of trust involved, and of the personal trauma that they have caused her).

Under conditions such as these, it is thus particularly indispensable – as the VPN coach quoted above suggests – to see far-right statements of this kind as "important" personal messages, to take "a questioning, curiously investigative attitude" to them, and to avoid "all stigmatisation" of them as morally objectionable or unspeakable. If a trusting relationship of this kind cannot be established, then everything taking place after the breakdown of trust would "probably lead to Jacky [developing] even more subtle mechanisms" in order "to distance herself from her father and his violence" through her involvement in the far-right scene (22). In Jacky's case it would have made more sense – again to quote Köttig – "within a safe environment, to engage with her life history, and the awful cumulative experiences that took place during that time, and thereby to enable her to tap into not only her own history, but also her family history", right from the time of her joining the girls' residential group. In other

words, the only way to achieve the desired results is through trust-based, relationship-based approaches involving an investigation of the participant's *personal experience* in the context of their *personal life history and family biography*.

Given the often *anti-psychological* nature of the discourse in traditional civic education – or the *anti-psychodynamic* nature of the discourse in behavioural training – the following may not be immediately clear (cf. chapter xx above): but Jacky's very long "membership of the far-right scene is primarily due to the fact that she is not able to process her traumatic experiences of her father directly – for example in a safe therapeutic environment – but instead deals with her experience by substitution through the rightwing scene and its ideology" (19) – and consequently an alternative, differentiated approach is needed. This was true also for participants in the VPN group method, the vast majority of whom have similarly destructive or neglectful family backgrounds, and whose extremist thinking and/or violent actions are likewise unconscious attempts to deal with their experiences. They, too, are caught in a paradoxical repetitive pattern in which they attempt to turn their biographical experiences – in a chaotic, idiosyncratic way – into something *somehow subjectively positive*, but which always serves only to perpetuate the spiral of violence and the damage to society.

In social-therapeutic work with Jacky, with prison inmates in VPN group training, and with any other young people with similar psycho-biographical backgrounds who have turned to a violent, extremist lifestyle, the following (which the ministry's final report also expressly indicated) should again be highlighted: that a process involving "subject orientation, relation to the life-world [of participants], and conflict sensitivity" – which considers participants' biographical development – is necessary. yy This is already the case if one "only" "*encourages narrative*" in a personally interested way, which, as Köttig (together with Loch & Schulze) determines, in itself constitutes a form of "gentle intervention". After all, "encouraging narrative" about participants' experiences from their life history in a way that shows personal interest and curiosity can "motivate clients to submit to processes of remembering" and enable them to come "into contact with their experiences", which are normally "pushed to the rear" "by their impressions of the present", including the everyday events of their extreme/extremist lifestyles. This is enough to trigger "processes of self-understanding" which are a direct result of the "flow of memories (of) thoughts, images, experiences", and which by narrative means allow participants to "reinterpret" their life path and reassess their ideological views (19). The task that lies ahead is thus to supply a

framework in which this can take place, in other words first and foremost to establish a sufficiently strong subject orientation and personal narrative element.

Köttig, too, yy perceives something that was above determined in relation to the institutional context of social-therapeutic work, and in particular in relation to training for the employees of the respective institutions (p. xx Institution): the fact that not only the clients, but also the educators can – and must – benefit from subject-oriented, narrative approaches. "Initiating conversations that encourage Jacky to tell her life story" could also enable the "responsible social workers" to better understand clients' "biographical development" and their "social life-world" and, on this basis, adopt an effective, development-promoting attitude in working with them – which would certainly no longer be "accepting" or "confrontational"/"moralising" in the narrow sense.

Köttig's work, which has been considered here as representative of the latest qualitative process and praxis research in the field of rightwing extremism prevention, strikingly underlines our findings (and those of quantitative and experimental social psychology in the field of violence and extremism research; cf. p. xx above), namely that taking a process oriented, relationship-based approach is the only option. Neither training courses that take a cognitive, informational approach with an emphasis on civic education, nor short (behavioural) training courses, can achieve lasting effects, for very basic factual reasons. "Social-psychological […] studies" have long since shown "that the effective power of prejudices is closely bounds to emotions and affects" (expert commentary annual report, thematic cluster 3, 2008, 4) and that a person's cumulative biographical experience is highly significant. The content of ideological convictions and their consolidation – and the irrationality with which they are often accompanied – are often largely the result of personal emotional burdens and/or traumas linked to the person's biography, even in the more moderate parts of the ideological spectrum.

xxx 10.6 yy Acknowledging the importance of long-term psychodynamic processes of personal development

It is difficult to deny that any *change in the content of ideological convictions* – and of the elements of a person's identity – must be understood as a long-term dynamic development

process. For practical educational purposes, this primarily means not setting oneself excessively high or inappropriate goals. In Jacky's case, much had already been achieved when she began to enter into disputes with her comrades on the far-Right, became increasingly able to take a step back from her violent behaviour, and started, little by little, to realise the extent to which she tended to recreate powerful burdens from her family of origin in her own adult life. The importance of the fact that she remained linked to the far-right scene and moved within its ideological bounds both during this period and beyond should not be overestimated in relation to the above successes – yy which came about through interviewing only and through her own personal development, since Jacky did not have a VPN training or anything comparable. Several more years passed before Jacky was able largely to detach herself from her far-right behaviour and thinking, during which time a new family was found for Jacky – that of her significant other, Steffen – and, after overcoming considerable resistance within herself, she allowed herself to become close to it. The fact that her partner, on the other hand, rose to the position of district chairman in a far-right party during this time is an indication of the broad implications of such ideological *detachment processes* for families and relationships – processes whose specific consequences Jacky was unable to foresee at that time.

The great *psycho-biographical complexity* of such detachment processes is further underlined by the fact that, during this phase of development, Jacky gradually reached a point where she could work through her experience of her mother's premature death, perceive this immense personal loss as real for the first time in her life, and develop corresponding emotional responses that had previously been omitted. "The other day (1) I had the idea of going to the cemetery, because the lease for the grave had probably ended" (2004, 259). When Jacky was twelve and her brother and father told her the news of her mother's death following a long period of illness, her reaction was: "I don't believe it. You're kidding me." In the interview, Jacky summed up her experience as follows: "I couldn't really grasp what was going on. yy At the funeral I somehow couldn't have a proper cry it all" (2004, 225). Instead, she began to experience the psychosomatic and psycho-social phenomena described above – yy one of which was rightwing extremism. "During this time Jacky [also became] aware – even though she had already known it for some two years – that her maternal grandmother died and lay dead in her flat for several days before being found." When Jacky started to think about her mother and maternal grandmother, she was however emotionally overwhelmed, and it appears that she initially responded in this instance, too, with an episode of severe physical and

psychosomatic phenomena. During this period she experienced unusual allergic reactions, outgrowths of bodily tissue, and dramatic weight loss and hair loss. It is at this point that the processes of biographical-scientific data acquisition and case work came to an end, while the biographical process of detachment from extremist views is certainly still underway.

The following needs to be made as clear as possible: A person's most intimate emotional issues and experiences relating to their family are directly linked, via tortuous mental paths, with their ideological constructs and extremist opinions. Clearly both of these, purportedly so different, affective areas occupy central roles in a person's psycho-emotional system. It thus appears that they can only be processed with lasting effect by considering them within their relationship to each other, and over a medium-term time frame. They require process oriented, relationship-based intervention methods that have been shown to be effective by interdisciplinary research, and which are willing to make use of clinical psychological resources. As Köttig concludes on the basis of Jacky's intense psychosomatic reactions during this life phase of familial consolidation, relationship formation and recollection: For Jacky, the process of "engaging with previously dissociated feelings of grief, pain and weakness, which she approaches through the topic of her mother's death", is a very difficult one. "The severe traumatisation she experienced in her childhood means that she will hardly be capable of coping with this alone", and "it is particularly important for Jacky to accept psychotherapeutic help" – yy for her personally and also to enable her to abstain from violence and extremism (2004, 261).

familiären Gefühlsbelange The underpinning of extremist and violent activities by factors in a person's life history may not be equally pronounced in all participants in the VPN courses, for example because the factor of sexual assault is not likely to be as frequent for male scene members/offenders. But the relationship in general is clearly evident. As already mentioned, process oriented, relationship-based work that maintains "subject orientation and conflict sensitivity" and which deals with participants' "social-emotional" biographical development is the only option. A great deal of money and effort can be saved, and lasting benefits achieved, if future intervention strategies can take into account this often-demonstrated fact and all of its methodological implications.

xxx 11. The biographical research of the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) on violent extremists and terrorists from different ideological backgrounds (2010)
(not yet translated)

11.1 The biographical and personal characteristics of violent extremists and terrorists 1: Dysfunctional family background and developmental stress factors
(not yet translated)

11.2 The characteristics of violent extremists and terrorists 2: Micro-social sphere and emotional attachments (not yet translated)

11.3 Conclusions from the BKA study for prevention, intervention and the VPN approach
(not yet translated)

xxx 12. 'Senay': Familial violence and Senay's favourite film. Methodological parallels in work with accomplices, witnesses and victims of violence – and the factor of culture

Interdisciplinary violence research has proven how important it is to employ process-open, relationship-based and psychology-informed methods in work with extremist violent offenders, a finding that also extends to work with accomplices, witnesses and victims of violent acts. Surprisingly enough, there are methodological parallels between social-therapeutic work with violent offenders and trauma therapeutic work with victims. yy Also recently emerged is the importance of the culture factor and the medial narrative and the positive effects that can be gained when cultural and medial narratives are built in to the process-open intervention concept.

The case analysis presented below concerns a woman suffering from a psycho-trauma as a result of having witnessed an act of violence; here, as usual, the culture-factor is relevant in two respects. First, the violent act witnessed by the interviewee was in many ways culturally and religiously formed. This was a case of inner-familial violence that cannot be understood without taking into account the ethnic background of the family and its connection to Islamic influenced culture. Second, the witness and also the sufferer of the violence emerged during the interview to be a keen reader and cinema-goer. Her favourite film, which she was asked to name towards the end of the interview, demonstrates in many respects – and primarily indirectly – connections to her family biography and the experience of violence it contains.

In the context of our work, this raises the question of how far the person, when she is emotionally engaged in watching her favourite film, associatively establishes – probably more unconsciously than consciously – a mental connection to her personal life story, and how this level of experience of narrative media interaction might be employed in a pedagogical intervention aimed at working through violence. The question is therefore whether the viewer, while she is watching the film, also, as it were, works through her troubling biographical experiences and/or how far she sets up psychological defences against it. The answer to this question is extremely important for any pedagogical intervention and the methodology it employs. The question can analagously be posed with respect to perpetrators of violence, and can also be employed in social therapeutic work with them.

The specialist discipline of psychological media-interaction research (LIR) focuses closely on this field of enquiry and, like all the other subsections of the TPVR, employs a narratological and qualitative empirical method. Here, the research asks how personal media habits and the viewing of films, and more broadly the educational use of cultural and medial narratives in group work, can prompt a person to engage in biographical reflection about him or herself. How do the perpetrators and victims of violent acts deal with such narratives? How do people combine their subjective experience of fictional media narratives into (partly unconscious) processes of mental engagement with their biographical experiences? How are challenges related to a person's biography and personal development, above all when it comes to dealing with experiences of violence, touched upon and worked through (albeit unnoticed)?

Lastly, the question is how one can work with this area of people's personalities in social-therapeutic group work, so that the result is a pro-social change and a rejection of violence; or, in the case of victims of violence, so that psycho-traumatic problems caused by experiences of violence can be overcome.[2] The general social relevance of both areas is evident.

The methods of this research approach represent a new development that very much needed to be made. Neither contemporary qualitative media research nor so-called "media-biographical research" has been able to provide an appropriate interview technique (or even recognized the need for one, see Weilnböck 2008) able (1) to involve not only life-world experiences but also mental (reception-)interaction with texts and media, and 2) to take proper account in evaluating the interview material of the dimensions of developmental psychology and psychodynamics, which undoubtedly are a feature of people's involuntary "(media-)biographical working through" in their life- and media-worlds.

In the LIR method design, the first thing to take place is an interview with each participant about their life story. This follows the existing methodological standards (Rosenthal, 1995; Fischer-Rosenthal, 1997; Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann, 2002; Riemann, 2006), however in the concluding interview phase of external narrative enquiry also draws on central

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[2] The approach of LIR research originally developed from a European Union financed research project entitled "Literature, film and biographical work", and aims to pursue a practical and empirically founded cultural science. The overarching interest of the research is the question of how literature and fictional media material can be used in teaching and educating young persons, as well as in adult education and therapeutic contexts, in order to support competence-building both in life and professional spheres and sustainable biographical development.

biographical aspects from the OPD interview (Operationalised Psychodynamic Diagnostic) and the relationship interview (Grimmer, 2002), insofar as the relevant topics have not been dealt with sufficiently in the course of the interview. At the end of the interview, the person is asked to name a literary text, a film or some other aesthetic experience that he or she would say has had, for whatever reason, an emotional impact on them. The narratological-psychodynamic evaluation of the interview takes place in a different mode – that of "interdisciplinary transcript analysis". In the first phase (I) this follows standard scientific procedure for evaluating biographical material, however in the second phase (II) takes new directions and systematically uses psychodynamic evaluation criteria.

The biographical-scientific transcript analysis (Rosenthal, 1995, p. 218f.; Fischer-Rosenthal, 1997, p. 152ff.; Weilnböck, 2003, 2008a, b) is already based essentially on the contrastive comparison of three potentially conflicting dimensions of the questions and the material: the behaviour, the experience and the narrative of the person. Therefore it is all the more astonishing that biographical research has not from the outset systematically integrated deep- and developmental-psychological resources into its methodology. The "interdisciplinary transcript analysis" does this (initially by means of Operational Psychodynamic Diagnostics and possibly later through additional resources, for example narratological psychology or relationship analysis and/or psycho-trauma therapy). Its reconstruction of the "biographical behavioural-structural rules" of the person enables the investigation of the "psychodynamic behavioural-structural rules" that determine mental processes, and thus the inference of the central "psychodynamic developmental challenges" which the person is currently facing in her or his life. It is only when this has been established that the media behaviour of the person can be assessed in its biographical dimension.

The second (likewise newly developed) methodological element, the "narrative media-experience interview", is carried out after the person, in the days before, has independently and for themselves again viewed/read the media narrative that he or she had identified as being "personally significant". In terms of the way it gathers and evaluates the material, the media-experience interview is considerably more complex. Firstly, with media experiences, interrogative techniques need to be differently and more precisely oriented than with life-world experiences. yy Secondly, the reconstruction here also involves the content/ storyline of the film and its characters – and their fictionally implicit biographies and personalities. It does so as early as during the analysis of the biographical (media-) data of the person/ film viewer

(while narratological text analysis in separate procedures reconstructs the specific "interaction potentials" of the media narrative itself) (cf. HW 2008a, 2011d, Stein xx). In this interview, the person's mental space of imagination becomes more relevant, insofar as he or she develops fantasies and ideas about fictional figures and events. This space of mental action can, if the occasion allows, be intensified by an "experimental phase" of "guided media-experience recollection", in which a passage of the film or the book is directly involved (e.g. via DVD, laptop).

In the evaluation phase, as in the procedure for the evaluation of the biographical interview, the "actual" and the "narrated media experience" of the person are reconstructed and contrasted. The accompanying search for interdisciplinary correspondences with experiential phenomena, such as have been described in psychodynamics and psychotherapy research, enables a more precise understanding of where and why biographical processing needs to takes place. It also answers the central question of how the media behaviour of a person relates to the "psycho-dynamic developmental challenges" that have been discovered in his or her biographical interview. yy The question of whether and how the person, while watching of the film, has been able to unconsciously embark on a mental processing of troubling life experiences that block his or her personal development, is, in its educational-scientific dimension, aimed at conceiving didactic methods of cultural and media teaching that can set in motion and support such processes.

xxx 12.1 Reconstruction of Senay's life story and experience of violence

Below I provide a sketch of the case reconstruction of Senay's psycho-biographical media interaction using the LIR approach, which will necessarily be brief, since the evaluative material on which this shortened version is based is almost four times as long (Weilnböck, 2009). In order to investigate the structural rules of Senay's media interaction, her life story first needs to be reconstructed. How has Senay's life proceeded until now? What familial-biographical background and what contexts of early experience have had an impact? And what biographical consequences – i.e. "psycho-dynamic behavioural structures" and "developmental challenges" – have arisen for Senay?

Senay lives and studies in Austria and comes originally from Kosovo. There she spent the first years of her life in a rural context in the family household, which was marked by patriarchal family structures and a Muslim cultural background. Senay lived there with her paternal grandparents and their sons and wives, in other words her paternal uncles and aunts, each family having one room. Senay was the youngest of eight children and was constantly surrounded by numerous cousins. Then, when she was seven years old, she moved with her parents to Austria, where her father had been working throughout Senay's lifetime.

All in all, Senay describes her childhood as having been close to nature and in many respects happy and lively. However her grandparents were "really nasty" at times, as Senay says, at first cautiously. Scenes of anger and violent attacks, directed especially towards the aunts but also the children, appear to have been part of life. Even by the standards of local customs, her grandparents were obviously rough and intolerant. Senay remembers that, "Grandfather with his stick could be pretty nasty; he was pretty quick-tempered, he used to chase us (children), once he chased me with a stick, I ran away and locked myself in – for three hours until he went away, otherwise he would have beaten me." However Senay adds that, "I know that grandfather was very fond of me, he always used to take me into the room where the men sat." Her grandmother was apparently also a bad-tempered, unpredictable person prone to violent outbursts, who could be cruel to animals and children. When an uncle died prematurely from an illness, his wife was so badly treated and bullied that she felt forced to leave the house, something more or less equivalent to social excommunication. At first the aunt had to leave her son with the family, since he was seen as the property of the grandparents. Senay remembers clearly and in detail as a four year-old watching her aunt move away.

In the subsequent evaluation it became increasingly clear that Senay's mother had also had a hard time. yy Because Senay's father worked in Austria, she too had not protection from the immediate presence of her husband. Senay's father returned home just once a year bringing money; Senay's mother visited him in Austria two or three times a year, depending on visa regulations. Senay's mother had lost her own father prematurely and was married at the age of eighteen via a family arrangement. She had then lived for 27 years with the grandparents and had given birth to eight children. There must have been a great deal of violence and humiliation in her mother's relation within the family. As Senay commented, her mother "didn't want to let herself be pushed around by the grandparents", and as a result there were

frequent arguments and physical conflicts, which sometimes went so far as Senay's mother being "beaten black and blue" and "bleeding all over". Once, Senay's mother had to flee to the neighbouring village with her children, where found shelter however was denounced. The grandparents came with the family, took the children and said, "You can go wherever you want but the children are staying with us." Her mother then returned.

Senay's father had not had an easy life either. He began working at 14 and as the eldest son bore responsibility for his brothers and sisters. Although his successful work abroad enabled his parents back home to enjoy a better standard of life, it seems that he had received hardly any gratitude for this. Even in old age, Senay's grandfather had clearly expressed his contempt for her father, who, he said, "has always been a piece of shit and will always remain one". Senay's father, for his part, also tended towards aggression and bad-temperedness, as was revealed by Senay in an account of an early scene. Visiting Austria as a four year old, she was supposed to be getting a bicycle as a present, however she wanted a red plastic motorbike that she could see in the shop. "Then he went at me in the shop – I think he wanted to strangle me but thank goodness my uncle was there and could stop him". Nevertheless, Senay's father also appeared to have been very fond of her, and Senay could report scenes of affection and paternal pride. Physical attacks and beatings, Senay emphasises even today, cannot be judged by western standards: "At the same time you also saw that your parents were always there for you, unconditionally, you sensed that it couldn't be true that they didn't love you, that's stronger in the end."

That experiences of fear and despair nevertheless imprinted themselves deep in Senay's biographical and psychological structure was something that could be discovered only in the course of the psychodynamically oriented reconstruction. There, later experiences also began to emerge: when Senay was around ten years old and the family had been in the new, western cultural sphere for only a few years, Senay's father and her older brother beat up one of Senay's middle sisters so brutally that she received serious head injuries and had to be taken to hospital, where she stayed for three months. The young woman had not returned home on time and the eldest sister had said something about the involvement of a man. Senay experienced these and similar scenes directly as a child. Alone the fact that before the interview Senay had barely spoken to anyone about this incident, which had happened some fifteen years ago, indicates its subjective weight.

The extent to which the relationship climate of this family must have been fearful, unpredictable and prone to disruption also became clear in Senay's description of a serious illness suffered by her mother. When the latter had to go to hospital after showing signs of a heart attack, she made her husband promise not to tell the children, so that they wouldn't worry. However Senay says, "We knew how aggressive he is, we thought he had killed her or taken her somewhere – and didn't want to say anything." All the while, her mother really was in hospital with a life-threatening condition. It is obvious that existential subjects of life and death, love and hate, as well as the considerable potential for violence, were not dealt with in this family by the parents and adults in a way appropriate for children. Today, Senay's parents appear to be largely alienated from one another. Her brothers and her mother do not get along either, while her elder sisters appear to be heavily taken up with their own, Muslim-oriented families. The job of caring for the parents is thus complicated and is mainly done by Senay, who feels very close to her mother. Additionally, it turned out that her mother originally did not have a heart condition after all, but had been suffering all her life under chronic, psycho-traumatic anxiety attacks. In other words, there emerges an experiential context of violent behaviour and psycho-traumatic suffering extending far back in Senay's family history.

For Senay's individual life history, the question is above all (on the basis of the experience of social psychology and family-dynamics) how far she either (1) repeats the violent experience in a more or less altered form (be it self-/outwardly-directed, psychosocial or psychosomatic) and has recently been acting-out this, and/or (2) how far she succeeds in mentally integrating this experience, processing and neutralising it psychodynamically – however this is expressed and whatever the precise proportion between acting-out and processing turns out to be (Fischer & Riedesser, 1998).

In this respect, what emerges in Senay's case is initially a relatively productive process: as the youngest daughter and "pet of the family", Senay appears to have been seen from an early age as being particularly talented. Indeed, at the age of four she was already able to read and write, and went to visit her sisters at school two years before the school entrance age. She was also was able to deal very successfully with the move to Austria, including the change of language. She was one of just two pupils from her class of Austrian children to succeed in getting a place at a secondary school for academically inclined pupils. This was a school in which there were only three pupils with migration background, and for several years she was class spokesperson. At secondary school she was very closely involved in various different

youth cultures (hippie, punk, hip-hop, etc.). Having successfully finished school, she began a university course in media science and obtained an internship with a TV station, where she was given complete editorial responsibility for a weekly two-hour youth programme. However, just over a year ago she abruptly gave up both this job and her studies and began a course in her home city in social pedagogy, because, as she says, "she had increasingly discovered her social streak". Bearing in mind her intercultural integration, what is striking is that, at the time of interview, Senay was the only daughter in the family to have entered a partnership (before marriage) with someone not from her home country, but from Austria (something she had not yet revealed to her family).

xxx 12.2 Senay's "biographical behavioural-structural rule" – as basis for pedagogical work on personal developmental challenges

Of course, it is only in the systematic narrative-analytic reconstruction work that it becomes clear how the biographical development is actually to be assessed in detail. Its basic finding – Senay's central biographical behavioural-structural rule – will first be presented as a compact formulation and then briefly explained, before significant aspects of procedural and psycho-dynamic experience are described and analysed more precisely. The evaluation of the biographical interviews demonstrated that Senay's life-path had until now essentially followed the biography-guiding behavioural principle of "talented and energetic engagement of prevention of / compensation for violence and injustice".

Despite the colloquial and almost concretistic way in which rule formulations like this are typically expressed in biography research, they are nevertheless intended as highly compact, explanatory conceptual formations that aim to concisely encompass as many heterogeneous aspects of a biography as possible. Thus, Senay's behavioural-structural rule has validity even where themes such as "violence, injustice, prevention, compensation" cannot be perceived with the naked eye or appear not to stand in the foreground. This goes for Senay's entry onto an "engaged" (as Senay understands it) course of study in social pedagogy, however also – as we shall see – for her work in youth television.

This logically also applies to the accompanying attributes. For example, the addition "energetic" indicates not only Senay's general ability to strongly assert herself, but also the

fact that in her manifold and sometimes impulsive acts of "engagement" she sometimes tends to enter into escalatory conflict dynamics and to overstretch her personal resources. Equally, the attribute "talented" indicates a high degree of general aptitude for goal-directed behaviour as well as the specific fact that as a child, Senay was considered "talented". It emerged in the biographical analysis that from the outset this involved her carrying out the far-reaching familial-dynamic function of "talented" stress "prevention". For example, she acted as the favourite granddaughter of the often bad-tempered grandfather, or, as the youngest child, played the clown role in the family, thus carrying out the function of childish-ludic moderator and reducer of tension. Biographical rule formulations are therefore to be understood as structural and broadly defined, above all because they must be applicable to the person at various ages and phases of their life simultaneously and to varying degrees of awareness.

Events and situations that at first appear to be barely understandable, for example the turbulent scene of the furious father in the toy store, yy can then, with the help of the behavioural-structural rule, become more comprehensible. After all, Senay eventually got her red plastic motorbike, in other words, she at this early age was already part of a scene of "justice and compensation" and, *nolens volens*, was "talented" and successful. At the time of the interview, it looked as if this "talent" would probably emerge in a completely different context: as the youngest child, she is able and has taken it upon herself to look after her mother almost single-handedly. The principle ambiguity and value-neutrality of the attributes of a behavioural-structural rule can be illustrated by Senay's "talent". For, this not only implies a general aptitude, but also – in a psycho-dynamically more profound understanding of "talent" (Miller, 1979) – the potential for over-exertion, parentification and thus partial developmental setback.

Of course, the formulation of a biographical behavioural rule must always be supported by evidence that can be directly understood in terms of that rule. With Senay, for example, many elements of the rule are proved by her reports of her activity as a class spokesperson: a post that she carried out with a strong sense of "justice" and often with a corresponding "energetic", militant, but also "talented" "engagement". Narrative episodes about when she was at primary school show that already then, Senay spontaneously took the side of the outsider and the person being teased. At secondary school, Senay also identified strongly with various youth cultures, for example hippie, punk and hip-hop, that on the whole subscribe to an ethos of "justice" and "engagement" against repression, and on the whole also to an

attitude of tolerance and anti-"violence". On the basis of what Senay tells about these areas of her life, it is clear that it was precisely here that she obtained, as she says, "liberation from home" and an invaluable opportunity to "develop her own personality". Admittedly, in the process there none too seldom occurred "energetic" and sometimes "turbulent" conflicts with teachers, and also later with employers, which were not always advantageous either for Senay or for the matter at hand. After secondary school, this "engagement" for "justice" and "freedom" was a major impulse for her – again "talented" – work with the youth television programme. The behavioural-structural rule of "justice and compensation" is perhaps evidenced most strongly by Senay's choice of partner, a young man whose central characteristic and point of attraction for her is a consistent everyday attitude of opposition to prejudice and exclusion.

xxx 12.3 Psychologically deepened biography analysis of Senay

Biographical-scientific rule formulation does, however, come up against its limits when more precise developmental-psychological questions arise concerning the healthiness and social conduciveness of "talent", "prevention", "energetic engagement" and so on. It is only when the aforementioned psychodynamic resources are considered that it is possible to get a clear idea of the extent to which Senay's conflict with authority or the arduous task of looking after her mother, "talent" and "engagement" notwithstanding, go hand in hand with development-retarding and partly psycho-traumatic (over)burdening of herself – a behaviour which can only be explained as the consequence of the high levels of tension, stress and conflict throughout her family- and life-history. The way these development-hindering biographical procedural components are individually arranged in Senay's case becomes clear through observing phenomena that the psychodynamic literature describes as "dependency-autonomy-conflict" (Mentzos, 2000; Rudolf, 2008). These are mental conflict constellations that manifest themselves as "pseudo-autonomy" or "failure to detach", in other words unconscious psychic involvement with or dependency on (parental) figures or relationship systems. They stand opposed to an "autonomous" and "detached" development of the personality and ability to act – and can lead to vehement conflicts when detachment does take place, as illustrated by the numerous conflicts in which Senay has already been involved.

In Senay's case, this dynamic of pseudo-autonomy becomes particularly apparent at the biographically significant point at which she broke off her work in youth television (work in which she was successful early on, which promised career opportunities and which matched her own interests very closely) and began to study social pedagogy in her home town. Senay's very general and essentially conversational comment that this was when she "discovered her social streak" and a desire to "make the world a better place" remain curiously sweeping and barley plausible. After all, a position of responsibility in the media provides a greater opportunity to make an impact than a course in social pedagogy. The sequential narrative analysis of the thematic field of "social streak" shows that Senay understood her decision "to go into the media" in a specific and deeply personal sense as a "socially" motivated action. A crucial aspect of the biographical pre-history of this media work is Senay's varied youth cultural engagement during her time at secondary school (completion of which qualified her for work at the youth television programme and soon led to her being employed there). This engagement, which for Senay was a vehicle of "liberation from home", yy turns out to be a direct consequence of lack of freedom and of stress in her family.

"Social" here is initially meant as liberal-"social". It applies to liberal youth cultures, enables Senay's personal "liberation", and brings her professional independence. However when it comes to Senay's abrupt cessation of work for the liberal-"social" youth television programme, whose importance she overlooks, in order to begin a course in "social" pedagogy in her home town and near to her family and her mother in particular, there is a shift in the meaning of the word that goes unnoticed by Senay. At this biographical (turning) point, "social" assumes the meaning of "familial"-social – and familial obligation. Moreover, it emerges that Senay's subjective understanding of this central concept of "social" is influenced by an unconscious "dependency-autonomy-conflict". The semantic tension between liberal-"social" and familial-"social" yy clearly stretches the concept until ceases to function, something that goes unperceived by Senay while speaking about her "social" streak.

Just how high the stakes were for Senay and what she risked forfeiting, namely the gain in autonomy and liberty that went with her youth-cultural engagement, became clearer at the point at which she recounted that during her time at secondary school she "was finally able to break out of the two worlds I had always lived in". She "had been divided" into "two personalities", she says: "I was completely different at school and also at home". At home, she was on the whole "reserved", sometimes "down" and something also "grumpy"; at school and

with friends she was on the whole "happy", "open" and energetic. She also often played the role of the clown. What Senay calls being "divided" shows parallels with what, in psychodynamics, is described as a "bi-polar, manic depressive position". A situation of chronic anxiety and/or depression is compensated – necessarily but also unstably – by quasi-auto-suggestive bouts of high spirits and energetic activity.

This "dividedness" can simultaneously be seen as part of a "trauma-compensatory schematic" evoked by family experiences. The clown role that Senay adopted with her schoolmates was one she had had played as a young child, when, as the youngest and favourite granddaughter, she carried out the function of a childish-ludic tension-reducer. However Senay was unaware of this in her narrative, i.e. in interview she *de facto* disassociated these parallels between her early childhood and her adolescent peer persona. This could in turn be traced to the fact and the way that the playfulness and spontaneity of the young child Senay was systematically "trained out" of her. This occurred yy by means of culture-specifically induced feelings of "shame", whose impact according to Senay could not be compared with any western concept.

Moreover, Senay's "two-world" "dividedness" exhibits a sensitivity caused by latent aggression, emotional stress, and the humiliating and denigratory treatment present in the family dynamic, a feature of which was, among other things, manic-depressive emotional swings. In the light of this psycho-dynamic clarification, other interview statements could then be understood. Senay also mentioned in passing that this "dividedness" was "a characteristic that I sometimes still have to fight today". Only later, however, did it become clear that Senay did indeed experience bouts of depression, although it proved almost impossible to gain narrative self-statements from Senay concerning this. At any rate, Senay regularly has to deal with difficult days when she has "had enough"; "things fall apart above all in wintertime, the days are too short".

More broadly, in the observational perspective of emotional "dividedness", it was possible to perceive indications of a corresponding tendency for "division" or disassociation in Senay's cognitive style of thought. In the conversation it emerged by chance that, when writing essays at school, Senay had been prone to "uncontrollable mental leaps", "because I always had so many thoughts – and had to bring them together, and then I never explained anything, and then it's impossible to understand anything – and there was no connecting thread anymore". Here, a kind of dissociative cognitive leap was obviously at play that led to interruptions in

personal thoughts and memories. When Senay recalled how her initially so cherished childish precocity was "trained out" of her, the family-dynamic *ur*-scene of the development of cognitive dissociation and affective instability emerged: "When [as a child] I observed something, then I always brought it into connection with something else, and that wasn't always taken to be funny; because that was cheeky, and then you had to be ashamed."

The fact that this precarious constellation of feelings and thought is highly unstable mentally and in social terms prone to conflict, is something that is manifested in Senay's life story, in particular in the phase when she abruptly ceased her work with youth television. Only late in the interview it emerged that Senay had been part of a small living and working community, sharing a flat with a young woman and a young man who were also colleagues at the television station. This three-way community, which then suddenly collapsed, was, as the analysis revealed, very important to Senay, since she had drawn a great deal of strength and support from it. In psycho-dynamic terms, this constellation, "in which we had a lot of laughs" but also "argued and cried a lot", and which Senay curiously saw as a "community of three parentless people", can be understood as symbolically functioning as a familial triangle determined by unconscious dynamics of need that resulted from psycho-affective "detachment". The fact that this constellation collapsed because of largely irrational relationship conflicts (and also indirectly because of Senay's dependency-autonomy conflicts caused by her family dynamic), and the fact that Senay also simultaneously decided to stop working at the television station and to begin studying social pedagogy and to return to her home town, can, in terms of Senay's autonomy-development, be seen as a major setback.

However there was another factor – one more directly connected to the family – that played a major role. Senay's mother had again fallen ill around this time and had to be taken to hospital. In addition, her father, who was able speak the language only poorly and was inept in matters bureaucratic, had omitted to pay the health insurance, and was otherwise of little help. This caused Senay to feel obliged to move near to her parents and to take over care for her mother. It later emerged that her decision to move and change subjects was above all due to the fact that the university in her home town did not offer a course in media studies. It was not possible to assess precisely the relation between these two causalities (i.e. the conflict in the flat-share and the situation at home). However this was not necessary, since by now it was clear that Senay's abrupt and disadvantageous career change, which required that she forfeit her independently attained place in life, was not a purely sovereign decision in the interests of

her "social streak", but a subjectively perceived obligation, as the "talented one in the family", to do what was expected of her.[3]

Late in the interview it became clear how painful and troubling this phase of Senay's life was for her, accompanied as it was by "dependency-autonomy-conflicts". " I couldn't decide – family or study"; "at that time I would often burst into tears in the middle of town, then I couldn't go on any more".[4] Today Senay feels calmer and is enthusiastically and diligently engaged in a new course of study – in other words with "talent" again. However the burden is still great. She works at the same time as studying, looks after her mother and feels, in an "engaged" way, responsible for keeping the family together, particularly the cousins. At the same time, she does not feel she is allowed to announce the existence of her long-term pre-marital relationship. The constant time pressure and phases of over-exertion that Senay complains about can be traced back to early psycho-biographical causes – and is sure to be connected to the depressive days "in the wintertime" when she has "had enough". This does not look like it will change soon, especially since she appears willing to take on no small family burden in the future: Senay, who is in her mid twenties, says that she has talked to her (Austrian) partner of a year "about everything". By this she means that, if they do get married, her mother will move in with them.

xxx 12.4 Senay's "psychodynamic developmental-challenge"

Hence the behavioural-logical and experiential implications of the biographical behavioural-structural rule formulated for Senay become fully clear only when set against the background of the whole biographical reconstruction, and when a broader psycho-dynamic analytical perspective is taken. The fact that Senay follows a principle of "talented and energetic

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[3] The fact that Senay at this point – and certainly also earlier – in her characteristic as "talented", fulfils functions that really ought to belong to her father or at least her older brothers and sisters, who are more established professionally and have families, could also be adduced through a correspondence with a psycho- and relational-dynamic of "parentification". This concerns cases in which a child is obliged to adopt adult and parental functions at too early an age and at the cost of his or her own development. The counteractive processes of mental structural formation are designated as psycho-dynamic "triangulation", because they add a third position to the binary-dyadic and symbiotically narrow structures of the parentified relationships.

[4] The extent to which this phase of life was also influenced by the family-dynamic impacts of the Bosnian war that was going on at this time, and the extent to which these in turn were overshadowed by family-historical events during the Second World War, requires separate exploration and analysis of the pertaining interview material. At an rate, the theme of violence and the prevention of and compensation for violence within Senay's family biography seems to have been made significantly more acute through this world-political constellation of events.

engagement of prevention of / compensation for violence and injustice" becomes insightful and explicatory – as opposed to merely descriptive – only when systematic psychodynamic observation and assessment take place.

In the evaluation procedure of the LIR approach, it was possible to demonstrate that Senay's behavioural principle can, in psycho-biographical terms, be seen as a "trauma-compensatory schematic" and be traced back to the major relationship difficulties within her family. These had caused Senay's psychic structure and mental sensitivity to be profoundly marked by (1) an unconscious dynamic of deep "dependency-autonomy-conflict" and psycho-traumatic "pseudo-autonomy" and of trauma-compensatory "undetachedness"; and more broadly (2) tendentially "bipolar manic depressive" mood swings; (3) a "tendentially dissociative mode of cognition"; (4) a family-based relationship structure of "parentification", together with (5) a corresponding though ambivalent need for a "triangular" extension of this binary-dyadic structure. This is predictably accompanied (6) by a dynamic of (detachment) conflicts.

However what is the "developmental-challenge" that can be adduced from these findings? This question can only be answered meaningfully when understood as a "psychodynamic" question about mental structural changes. Only these – and not concrete life-world decisions vis-à-vis actions – can be reliably assessed as to their long-term impacts on the subsequent biographical development of a person. yy Only these mental structural changes may indicate whether the person's individual ability and freedom to act, as well as their psychological resilience have improved or decrease. yy Lastly, it is at the level of mental structure – rather than concrete instruction on how to act – that principles of pedagogic intervention and psychotherapeutic counselling can reliably be justified.

Senay's "psychodynamic development challenge" can therefore be defined thus: whatever her future routes and ambitions are, whether she becomes more involved with her family or whether she pursues her own life-course, or a combination of both – Senay's challenge will be increasingly to do these things in a way that, given her current "undetachedness", enables her to achieve more psychodynamic self-detachment and, given her "pseudo-autonomy", to arrive at more genuine personal independence from internalised influence from outside.
Senay would then increasingly be able to solve her "trauma-compensatory" "dependency-autonomy-conflicts", which would ease the stress- and conflict-laden proximity-distance regulation, the mood swings and the dissociative "leaps" of thought. A psychodynamically

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well-balanced ability to assume limited and carefully delineated responsibility would develop out of Senay's behavioural patterns of parentification.

Summed up in a formula, Senay's challenge is to develop "increased psycho-dynamic detachment from interiorised parental representations" and "greater relational autonomy of self-representation". This would lead to a "gain in options for mental associations", in other words in an increased "mental and psycho-affective leeway" for personal decision and action. People's media-interaction, where they constantly process a range of psycho-biographical issues without noticing it, is particularly suited to the exploration of such mental changes. It is this realm of mental rehearsals for potential behaviour – that interaction with fictional media narratives expressly grants – in which such processes of mental change would be discernible with the greatest clarity and before anywhere else.

xxx 12.5 Senay's chosen film experience

Which literary or media narrative was it, or more precisely, which media experience was it, that Senay chose for the second interview? She selected a film that she said moved her whenever she watched it, and always caused her to feel a "sadness": *I Am Sam*, a recent Hollywood production that could be categorised under the genre of the family film or, more precisely, the fatherhood film.

The story is about Sam, an adult man with the mental age of a seven year-old, and his daughter Lucy. Sam is loveable, helpful and endearing as a person, but, as might be expected, naive and quickly out of his depth. He does odd jobs in a restaurant chain and is well integrated among his colleagues and guests, as well as among a stable circle of male friends, a self-help group of variously handicapped men, all of whom are bizarre but very likeable all the same. It emerges that a young homeless woman had lived in Sam's flat and had had sexual encounters with him. At any rate, the film begins with Sam becoming a father. He is present at the birth and is delighted with his daughter, however the mother rejects the baby in disgust and leaves both father and daughter straight after leaving hospital.

The film portrays a father who, though ineffective in practical matters, is happy and caring. With a little help from his well-meaning and single neighbour Annie (who is also Lucy's

godmother), together with his friends, Sam lives with his charming daughter Lucy – who, at seven years-old, is the same age as him as it were. Soon, however, Lucy can read and count better than her father, does not want to show this however, thus seeming to place her development at risk. Emotionally, too, Lucy is far more stable than her father, who sometimes reacts nervously and angrily in new surroundings out of fear. Some scenes powerfully show how the alert and gifted daughter precisely assesses the abilities and the limitations of her father and shows due consideration. It is therefore often the daughter that gets the typical parental lines of dialogue and who deals self-assuredly with her father as though he were the child. In a picture that Lucy painted she is tall and holding the hand of her father who is half her size, thus leading her "father child" through life as it were. All in all, Lucy seems to be very satisfied with her emotionally very attentive and playful father. As the film's subtitle – all you need is love – suggests, Sam is actually as good a father as can be imagined.

By chance, the childcare authorities become aware of the situation and, concerned, rapidly begin to take action: as one might imagine, a father with a mental age of seven bringing up a child alone is not unproblematic. In this respect, this very moving film is objectively balanced. There is a court hearing, for which Sam is surprisingly able to engage a successful however somewhat neurotic star lawyer, whose own relationship to her children and whose family situation as a whole is deeply damaged. Many moving courtroom scenes thematise questions about the child's wellbeing. When Sam is finally called to the witness box, the situation is too much for him. In a heartbreaking scene, father and daughter are separated from each other and Lucy goes to live with a foster family, with Sam given limited visiting rights. After the separation Sam is depressed and neglects to keep his appointments with the foster family.

At the end everything turns out well: the foster family and Sam move homes close to one another, and after a few small scale and charming upsets and complications they realize that if they are going to look after Lucy in a responsible and selfless manner then neither the foster family nor Sam can do without one another. Sam's essential qualities at the emotional level are immense, and the loving father-daughter relationship is irreplaceable. Sam, for his part, sees that the competent and sensitive foster mother is indispensable. The dramatic court sentence turns out to have been the right one after all. The lawyer sorts out her family situation and divorces her husband. It even appears that Sam – an here the film is unrealistic –

in some respects grows out of his handicap. At the end of the film, the viewer is confronted with the curious question as to whether Sam and the lawyer could/should become a couple.

xxx 12.6 Senay's media-experience interview

What happened in Senay's experience of this film? What conscious or unconscious processes of mental biographical work took place as she watched it (repeatedly)? What is the meaning of the general reaction of "sadness" that Senay mentioned? The evaluation of the media-experience interview using the recently developed procedure of interdisciplinary transcript analysis demonstrates a high degree of methodological complexity. In it, all empirical areas of the LIR approach are introduceed into the case reconstruction: (i) the person's biography, (ii) their mental interaction with a fictional media narrative, and (iii) the content and the structure of the narrative itself (Weilnböck, 2008a, 2009).

Before we enter the actual "reconstructive narrative analysis", the first step will be to form hypotheses about potential biographical moments and needs that the film could have caused Senay to process. To put it in biographical-theoretical terms: it will be necessary to ask after the mental "co-presences" that Senay associatively posits – more or less (un)consciously – between aspects of her film experience and the mentally virulent aspects of her own biography. The question as to how and whether these potentials and co-presences are in fact realized in the psychological process of reception arise separately and at a later stage. Initially, the question is: what can have moved Senay to select this film in the first place and then to empathise with it personally, and how is this concretely manifested in the specific content, choice and sequence of her personal references to the film in the interview transcript?

The frequency and openness with which Senay talked in the interview about the father Sam, the daughter Lucy, and their relationship and mutual experiences allowed the probable but by no means self-evident assumption that a central issues of psycho-biographical work in Senay's film experience may lie in her personal relationship with her father. However the continuing hypothesis formation and testing required that this assumption be developed in more detail, since Senay also referred at length to Annie, the single neighbour and Lucy's godmother, who despite – psycho-traumatically induced! – handicaps, helped Sam as best she could to care for Lucy during her infancy and childhood. For other reasons, too, it came to seem probable when

interpreting the data, that Senay's relationship to her mother was also relevant to some extent – perhaps already to Senay's perception of the Sam storyline. This may have reminded Senay not only of her relationship with her father, but with her lone mother. More generally, Senay also talked a lot about the men's group that Sam belonged to, as well as his workplace environment as team member of a restaurant, a model of collegial engagement that ensured Sam's integration. Here, it was possible to infer issues of psycho-biographical work not only in the area of Senay's relationship with her parents and her experiences of parental care, but also in the context of Senay's experiences of her extended family and her later surroundings in school, with friends and in youth cultures.

Viewing those parts of the film's storyline that were relevant to these themes allowed further possible co-presences to be observed extending all the way into Senay's family biography. In the film, Lucy is the daughter of a father upon whom the woman was forced somewhat coincidentally and through external circumstances, the woman then departing shortly afterwards, so that only one parent was available to Lucy. Senay, too, is the daughter of a lone parent, in this case her mother, while Senay's father worked the whole year in Austria. More generally, Senay's own parents were forced upon one another by circumstance, namely by a marriage arranged by the family, and although the absence of the father did not cause the marriage to disintegrate, as in the film, the two parents were alienated from one another to a great degree. Just as, in the film, Sam as single father is overstretched in certain important respects, so it needs to be remarked that, in Senay's life story, her parents and parental figures (albeit for very different reasons than in the film) were overstretched in important respects and behaved in dysfunctional and violent ways. From a methodological point of view, however, it is necessary to underline that it is by no means the case that factual concordances between the film and Senay's life story are being sought. Instead what is being attempted – though interviewing and reconstruction – is to create opportunities for Senay to make associations between the two areas, and then, with this spectrum of opportunities in mind, to reconstruct Senay's factual use of the media narrative for processes of psychological self-therapy.

In the course of these observations, it was possible to confirm the general hypothesis that Senay, while watching this film, stood in associative contact with co-present biographical aspects of her familial life story – meaning that, in one way or another, she was mentally processing issues and events that she had experienced as the daughter of a largely absent

father and a single mother, and also as member of the broader interaction context of the extended family and peer group.

It was possible to make an important qualification of this basic inference in relation to the biographical time-phase: the fact that Lucy was a seven year-old protagonist and Sam a man with the mental age of a seven year-old represents an equivalence with the age at which Senay moved to Austria. Thus, it was logical to assume that it was Senay's late childhood phase that was being evoked in particular, one that covered the cultural and linguistic change as well as a particular intensity of stressful and violent familial experiences Senay had at the age of ten.

The assumption could also be formulated that this temporal emphasis of Senay's inadvertent psycho-biographical work with the film narrative arose from – possibly psycho-traumatic – negative experiences during this time: If a young adult woman for whom motherhood is not yet an issue selects a film about late childhood and a girl's father/parent relationship, and if, when discussing the film, she barely addresses the adult topics that are also contained in the film, then it is possible to infer a need for retrospective mental processing of unresolved conflicts from this period of childhood. Hypotheses about Senay's perception of the seven year-old protagonist support this: Just as Senay perceives in Lucy a highly competent and unusually talented child who is impressively able to deal with her difficult family situation, so in her biographical interview Senay herself is the one who appears competent and particularly talented. This reveals a psychological processing relevancy on the part of Senay with regard to her "talent" as daughter. Bearing in mind Senay's "developmental challenge", the question as to whether issues of over-exertion, parentificaton and sporadic depression also belong to Senay's mental engagement with the film, will become important.

xxx 12.7 Narrative-analytical evaluation of the media experience interview

What was it precisely that could be evinced in the narrative analysis and case reconstruction of Senay's actual media interaction? A major finding emerged early on in the data analysis, via a thematic omission: that of familial violence. Despite being a central aspect of Senay's biography, she had only rarely and relatively unemotionally taken up the theme. One notices in the film Senay has chosen that, while "family"/"family problems" are central concerns, there is no immediate representation of violence. The father-daughter relationship in

particular is completely free of violence – even its subtle psychological forms. All other adult relationships in the film can also be described as violence-free and distinctly benign.

Nevertheless, familial violence and violence against children is indirectly thematised, initially as a thematic allusion that at the same time is dramaturgically essential. One scene depicts an ambiguous situation: At a birthday party, the children get disorderly and Sam does indeed grab one of the boys on both arms. A social worker who happens to be present sees this as evidence of a problem and this causes Lucy's adoption process to be sped up. Senay had much to say about this, her sense of justice – already reconstructed in the interview – emphasising the "unfairness" of the accusations against Sam, a reaction by no means inappropriate to the structure of events in this scene, however one that ignored the ambiguity of Sam's action.

The topic of "domestic violence against children" is dealt with in completely unmistakable fashion in the extended courtroom scenes. The lawyer for the adoption agency suggests that, because Sam was raised in a home, he was probably subjected to violence and is therefore actively prone to violence himself. The emotional distress this causes Sam movingly emphasises that he was indeed victim of corporal punishment as a child. Equally moving is the scene in which is becomes clear that Annie – the helpful neighbour who attests to Sam's abilities as a father – has not left her flat for around two decades because she suffers from serious chronic anxiety, which in turn can be traced to traumatisation by her father's familial violence.

However in the interview Senay did not even mention these two aspects of serious familial violence. Even more targeted narrative enquiries by the interviewer – including ones regarding her "sadness" – failed to obtain affect and/or narrative relevancies that might have led to further insights. This despite the fact that the data analysis suggested that it was highly likely that Senay would related emotionally to the scenes with Annie because of striking parallels with her own mother's chronic anxiety attacks. Examining these narrative connections, the conclusion arose that, at the time of the interview, Senay was in a phase of her life where she did not take the opportunities provided by the film to directly process her biographical experiences of violence, but rather blocked these psychologically. This corresponded to Senay's biographical interview insofar as there, too, her (biographical) experiences of violence were barely accompanied by any emotion, and certainly not sadness, but rather a blocking of sadness. For example, until then Senay had told practically nobody

about the experiences, because any kind of sympathy made her angry: "I can't stand it when people say, 'you poor thing'."

Psychodynamic sources were used here to support the long-established finding that particularly in the mental processing of violent experiences, the personal affect profile, ranging from sadness and melancholy to depression and anger, is of essential importance. The absence of sadness and mental grief over what has been suffered – in other words the so-called "inability to mourn" – is one indicator that a continuing barrier to personal developmental and behavioural options exists. Another indicator is a persistent anger and belligerence in reaction to a sense of all-pervasive injustice, however not to the personal pain it creates. It was now possible to adduce that Senay's feelings of "sadness" were clearly ineffective precisely in the context of the topic of violence. The only affect component remotely active in these sequences of Senay's film perception was her indeed easily provoked anger against injustice. In addition, as regards Senay's comment about "sadness", what was remarkable was that she could seldom be encouraged to talk about specifiable and concrete scenes, and that her feelings were thus more a general combination of "emotion" and melancholy that, in Senay's own words, made her "unsure whether to laugh or cry". Moreover, when asked to refer to concrete scenes that caused her to feel "sad", Senay referred to the scene in which father and daughter were separated by the authorities, portrayed in heartrending fashion, however which in retrospect turned out to be good and beneficial for the development of all those involved – and in that respect not "sad" at all.

On the other hand, Senay appeared to be able to receive a greater range of developmental impulses from one sector of mental action that to a certain extent is contrary to grieving: the sector of emotionally positively-toned, subjectively joyous and non-aggressive interactions, whose mental processing seems to be also (and all the more) suited to heightening the person's individual resources, abilities and behavioural options, and to strengthening their psychological resistance (resilience) against the challenges of given life circumstances. These dimensions of Senay's mental film experience, which rather than "the work of grieving" could be called "the work of joy", were reconstructed in particular because of their relation to scenes about the broader circle of Sam's supporters and helpers. Senay's involvement in passages of the film dealing with Sam's self-help group, his colleagues at work and in particular Lucy's godmother Annie – all film figures that biographically were victims of violence and neglect – makes clear that here she was mentally recalling those areas of biographical experience

connected to her numerous social contexts (extended family, home village, school, youth cultures, fellow students). And indeed, throughout her life, Senay has proved to tend to and be very capable in building up network-like support contexts, to collect suitable peers around her, and to draw personal strength – and joy – from these groups.

Alone the way in that Senay revealed, in this thematic field of her film experience, associations of multiple and, in terms of group-logic, interconnected social experiences – and not, for example, dyadically narrow, tendentially idealized and/or narcissistic relationship patterns – allows the general conclusion that Senay is able to summon and strengthen her personal resources of joy and positive, pro-social energy in being together, of mutual support in the group – as well as her ability to cooperate and learn. This must be beneficial to her in every respect. However it may be that in such a resource-strengthening "work of joy", the need arises to mentally process relationship expectations of narcissistic idealisation (and corresponding impulses for mental dissociation/exclusion), as this may apply to Senay's interaction relationship to the Lucy figure. The challenge might also be to develop the mental disposition for an internal ability to deal with conflict within the joyous and strengthening social context, if this – as can be seen in Senay's case – exhibits high susceptibility to disruption and conflict, or a tendency to overburden at the peer level (for example through committing her young partner, at an early stage, to looking after her mother).

In this respect, it can be said of Senay's choice of film that she has obviously opted for a media narrative that, in the behavioural realm of mutual friendly support, demonstrates a thoroughly conflict-free relationship dynamic – and occasionally also storylines that appear to be simplified and slickened as a result of a certain naivety. The self-help group of the variously psychologically and mentally handicapped men is a sanctuary of consensus, friendliness and readiness to help, and the individuals belonging to it all personally charming; this can also be said for the colleagues as well as the neighbourly relationship to Annie, and of course for the central father-daughter relationship itself. With respect to Senay's biographical experiences, it can be said that she has chosen a filmic subject in which the behavioural dynamic of friendship relations lags far behind Senay's own biographical experience of conflict. yy And none of what she said in the interview suggested that she is aware of this relative lack of realness in this depiction of supportive friendship.

Hence the film meets Senay's needs for the avoidance of tension and conflict in peer relationships. Moreover, on the basis of Senay's statements, it is possible to reconstruct that it is precisely this that she values in the film, something underlined by her general emotional attitude, in which she is "moved" by many of these scenes and does not know whether to "laugh or cry". Of course, a tendentially melancholic sense of being "moved" is hardly suited to meeting mental challenges such as de-idealisation and learning to deal with conflict. In general, however, it can be said yy that Senay at least partially takes up the opportunities offered by the film to mentally process her own experiences in the biographical area of supportive and positively-perceived group contexts, using these to self-strengthen and develop resilience. However there is no indication that it will be possible to extend these opportunities to her experiences of conflictual behaviour within the group.

xxx 12.8 Senay's film experience in the light of her "dependency-autonomy conflict", itself caused by her experience of violence

How did the narrative analysis succeed in going beyond findings concerning processes of dealing with issues of violence and self-strengthening, and arrive at observations about how Senay, in her film experience, dealt with the central element of her developmental challenge, namely the dependency-autonomy conflicts? Even if Senay had shown signs of grieving in connection with her experiences of familial violence, this would not have meant that the autonomy conflicts had been resolved yy and her ability to act in independent and self-determined ways increased. Significant information about this can be gained from Senay's comments about the scene where Sam tries and fails to exercise his right to visit Lucy at the home of her foster family.

Senay talked about this scene very early on in the interview and assigned to it her "sadness". Sam is walking down the street holding a bunch of flowers and sees Lucy from a distance sitting with her understanding foster mother in the garden, an easel and boxes of paint in front of her. Sam hides out of sight behind a bush and watches. Lucy, in turn, is waiting for her father, sitting with her teddy bear and looking down the road. The father does not go to the daughter and thus seems to renounce the relationship that previously he and his daughter had fought for with all their might. The disappointed Lucy sits for a while in the garden in front of her easel and hugs her teddy bear. Then the film cuts to Sam, sitting in his darkened flat

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showing all the signs of depression. There is a cut back to the daughter, who begins to paint a striking picture in which she employs a new style with a colour combination unlike any she had used before, the colour red obviously entering to represent the presence of her foster mother. However Sam, too, begins to analyse his depressive feelings and, encouraged by the personal relationship developing with the lawyer, goes on to discover a new competence in relationships.

The dramaturgy of *I am Sam* and the specific "interaction potential" it sets up with the viewer (cf. HW 2008a, 2011d, Stein xx) makes clear, if not in this scene then at any rate by the end of the film, that the loosening of Lucy's close relationship with her father is good for her and that, through this, she experiences "relational autonomy" and independence, a "gain in associational opportunities" and an extension of her "mental and psycho-affective space of action", formulated above as Senay's developmental challenge.[5]

The question was how Senay, who as a viewer who shares essential aspects of this biographical problem constellation, would deal with such a scene. It turned out that she expressed above all regret and disappointment about the failure of the meeting between father and daughter to take place. An initial open enquiry intended to prompt her to talk more about this scene in terms of her own personal experience produced merely an emotion of sympathy for Sam. At this moment, said Senay, Sam "felt ashamed" and again was obliged to see "how inadequate he is as a father". Only after a second, more pointed enquiry about Lucy's painting did Senay start to consider whether the opening up of Lucy's relationship with her father might not just be difficult but also good for her (something that, even aside of her personal life history, as a student of social work and pedagogy, could and maybe ought to have been more obvious to her).

Clearly, Lucy's gain in autonomy played no role in Senay's mental interaction with her "favourite film". It could even be said that in crucial ways Senay appeared to psychologically block the strikingly presented subject of the film – i.e. its specific "interaction potential" (yy which has been determined as such by a highly systematic procedure of narratological text analysis; [cf. HW 2008a, 2011d, Stein xx]). In the garden scene, it seemed that Senay identified less with the daughter position – including her own mental self-representation as child – than with its parental opposite number, in other words Sam (and her own mental

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[5] As if to explicitly confirm the approach of the LIR research, the film seems to want to prove this gain in mental structure through a scene of aesthetic action – Senay's childhood drawing.

parental representation), whose shame, in a highly parentified position, she sympathised with and worried about. The way this parentified – i.e. dyadically narrow and non-triangulated – position interacted with the impulses of shame and rejection of grief, can be seen by the following fact: Although in her current status as adult Senay appeared to fear nothing more than the "sympathy" and "grief" of empathetic others towards her ("I can't stand it when people say, 'you poor thing'"), she develops in the behavioural disposition towards childlike parentification (elicited by the film) a form of sympathy that is directed not towards sorrow or grieving but the – presumed – *shame* felt by Sam. Simultaneously, Senay completely overlooks the possibility that Sam, the father of the child, undergoes an important development towards the position of an adult capable of having mature relationships. Also, in the garden scene, Sam might even have been motivated by the wish to recognise and respect Lucy's new, independent life-space – an option which the film leaves open.

Senay's reaction to this film scene clearly shows the counter-developmental impact of the familial and culturally-based shame talked about by Senay in the biographical interview. It is clearly a crucial reason for the fact that, on the basis of this scene, Senay does not allow her herself to enter into a mental confrontation with her central developmental challenge – her dependency-autonomy conflicts –, and cannot empathise either cognitively or emotionally with the daughter's detachment from her father and the gain in autonomy that ensues. A more profound understanding of Sam's depression and the way he deals with it might have enabled her to obtain a new perspective on her own experiences of depression, also a result of an excess of family worries, that occur on "all too short" winter days. Moreover, when talking about Sam, Senay made a subtle linguistic error that in trauma-psychological terms – in the framework of a violence-formed logic of shame – can be understood as an involuntary identification with the perpetrator (Fischer & Riedesser, 1998, 347). In this scene of retreat, in which Sam begins – among other things – to recognise and respect Lucy's new and independent life and development, Senay says that Sam again notices "how inadequate he *is* as a father", although she meant to say that he only feels that way in this current situation of the garden scene.

More generally, this means that those scenes of the film – and its pertaining "interaction potentials" – that highlight Lucy's premature role as an adult (i.e. her parentification) and hence the necessity for her detachment from her parents, leave no significant traces in Senay. The apparently ambiguous passages of the film dialogue (which are emphatically staged as

such) in which the seven year-old Lucy, in an distinctly adult manner, tells the father that tomorrow is her first day of school and that she wants to get a good night's sleep and therefore can't, as Sam wants, read her favourite children's book one more time, or when she assures her father that everything is OK and that he shouldn't worry about something in particular: these scenes are not an issue for Senay – or at least not scenes that have any sort of emotional content. The fact, then, that in view of Lucy's gain in autonomy, Senay neither shows signs of biographical association nor personal relevancies nor reacts to the – potentially disturbing – parentification of Lucy, permits the conclusion that Senay's mental interaction with the Lucy figure, yy if not necessarily an expressly narcissistic idealisation, is a kind of idiosyncratic appropriation. At any rate, Senay's relationship to Lucy does not appear to contain an emotionally developed awareness of the difficulties of Lucy's position – nor the corresponding childhood position of Senay herself. Formulated in psychodynamic terms, this means that Senay's developmental issues and needs stemming from the area of her biographical experience of early "talent" and parentification remain unmet, and that a structurally expanding process of triangulation, an essential aspect of Senay's personal challenge, fail to get underway.

xxx 12.9 Summary of the findings on Senay – and media-educational implications of LIR research

The narrative-analytical reconstruction of Senay's psycho-biographical filmic interaction could reach the following conclusions: by firmly choosing this film and encountering it with great emotional attention ("it moved me"), Senay placed herself directly at the centre of her personal psychodynamic developmental challenge. *I am Sam* demonstrates manifold associational opportunities – and "interaction potentials" – for key (family-)biographical topics in Senay's life development up to now (e.g. the experiences of domestic violence, resilience formation, dependency-autonomy conflicts). Senay's aesthetic choice and judgement of taste obviously do not rule out her approaching this without doubt highly-charged therapeutic potential. In choosing this film, Senay is on her own track, as it were.

However what stood out in the form that Senay's actual media interaction took, was that she was currently blocking this potential for biographical work inherent in the film, rather than using it for her herself and her own personal developmental challenges. Senay clearly did not

perceive the opportunities it offered to effect direct access to and mental integration of her experiences of domestic violence. The feeling of "sadness" that, in general terms, she said the film caused her remained entirely detached from the filmic associations of experienced violence and emotional stress. As concerns the opportunities offered by the film for Senay to work on her broad range of social interactions in the biographical and social realm of support relationships and experiences, as well as positive group contexts, is possible to conclude that these are partly taken by her. At any rate, by choosing this film she gives herself the opportunity to make progress in her specific developmental-challenge of intra-group conflict dynamics, which would ultimately benefit the stability and resilience of her peer relationships.

More broadly, it is possible to reconstruct that Senay did not build up an emotional resonance to the film scenes dealing with the daughter Lucy's detachment from her father and gain in autonomy, nor the scenes dealing with the reduction of her parentification. Even the representations of Lucy's parentified relations to her parents and other adults provided Senay with no associative and emotional prompts whatsoever. Moreover, Senay did not appear to empathise with Sam's personal development during his emotionally difficult process of dealing with his depression, or even to recognise it as such. This means that Senay did not take the opportunity provided by the film to analyse her own biographical experiences in the sphere of early, parentified "talentedness" in difficult family situations. Above all, it means that Senay does not enter into mental confrontation with the dependency-autonomy conflict that represents the central element of her "developmental-challenge", which in her life has caused her so much stress and led to her promising career taking such a drastic turn.

With her emotional attention to this film, Senay situates herself in an associative space that indeed evokes essential aspects of her psychodynamic developmental-challenge; however she does not perceive these evocations, despite and perhaps because of the fact that the film moves her deeply and makes her "sad". In more technical terms of narratological culture studies: Although Senay has – semi-consciously – arranged an encounter with a promising film narrative, she did not realize the film's "interaction potential" vis-a-vis her biographical "developmental challenge" – at least not yet. If Senay "is on her own track with this film", as has been said above, then it is also the case that a number of important developmental-biographical issues are still awaiting her in her future viewings of her favourite film.

Whenever opportunities for mental, psycho-biographical processing and personal development contained in the empathetic media experience of a (young) person are not – yet – exhausted, while the person at the same time seems involuntarily to want to approach these, then a situation is defined representing a fundamental area of enquiry for teaching research and media-education. This touches on perspectives for benefits and usages that are the starting point of the LIR research approach in the first place. The creation of explorative case studies of this kind that can be concentrated on particular age-groups, social milieus, disadvantaged populations or problem areas can be understood as interdisciplinary foundational research committed to bringing together the resources of cultural, behavioural and human sciences in order to achieve one thing above all: the development of educational-didactic strategies and methods that will benefit instruction in the areas of literary, cultural- and media-studies, as well as schooling and education as a whole, especially in an era of rapidly changing media culture. After all, educationalists have always formulated, in terminology varying according to the epoch, learning goals of personal abilities and psycho-affective key competences – i.e. communicative, emotional and analytical abilities (soft skills).

Of course, it will only be possible to approach this goal if the rules of the mental interaction processes that evolve between the biographically influenced person and the fictional narrative that she or he admires, are comprehended as precisely as possible. This ambitious aim seems increasingly realistic given that in the course of the development of qualitative methods the social science have at the same time become methodically-secure and hermeneutic, and thus have accessible to the cultural sciences, which have always been hermeneutic. Moreover, the welcome integration and employment of resources of psychology and qualitative psychotherapy studies can continue to form a bridge between the philological, psychological and social-scientific disciplines.

xxx 13. Summary: How to work with Violent Extremist Offenders in custody and after release – Abstract of the good practice research on Violence Prevention Network (VPN)

The TPVR Good Practice research project aimed at analysing Violence Prevention Network's (VPN) social-therapeutic approach of group-work with hate crime offenders from right-wing and Muslim fundamentalist backgrounds in Germany. Using a qualitative-empirical design of open, non-thematic methods, as biographical-narrative and focused-narrative interviews with participants and facilitators, group discussions and participative observation, the study (a) elaborates criteria according to which Good Practice in the field of de-radicalization and re-integration may be recognized, (b) analyzes the crucial impact factors of the VPN intervention method and puts them into perspective with recent research on violence, terrorism and hate crime – in particular the 2010 study of the Federal Criminal Justice Agency and other recent qualitative studies. Moreover, reference is made to projects from the current 'Federal Program' of anti-extremism work in Germany.

Violence Prevention Network applies a systematic form of open-process group-training, which is off-set by one-on-one talks, also using biography work, group-dynamic work, civic education/ political discussion, some elements of family counselling, and provides post-release coaching. The method builds on the participants' willingness to speak to a group about oneself, about ones lives prior to prison, about families and friends, ones political orientations, as well as the acts of violence one has committed – which is different from classical approaches such as anti-aggression training or fully modularized cognitive behavioural programs. Pedagogical exercises, confidence-building, roll playing, drawing a biography curve may assist the process. The 'violent act sessions' which aim at precisely reconstructing the actions, thoughts, fantasies and feelings of the each offender during one of his hate crime scenes, form a central element of the work. The recidivism rate, which is generally estimated to be around 80% with this offender type is reduced to under 30%.

As criteria of Good Practice indicating that participants begin to embark on favourable changes of attitude and behaviour, it was found: any signs which indicate that the offender

(1) has begun to build a greater degree of *personal confidence and trust* with facilitators and with the group – and thus increased his capacity to built trust in relationships even during conflicting and challenging phases of (group) interaction.

(2) has begun to build a new attitude about and appreciation for *personal memories* and for the emotional experience of *remembering personally lived-through events* – in particular positively charged events.

(3) has begun to developed a new sense and appreciation for *telling stories*/ narrating personally experienced occurrences – regardless of what scope and significance the experience has – and actively listen to such narrations, and thus increased his/her capacity to *partake in narrative interaction*.

(4) has made experiences of *emotional learning / building emotional intelligence* and thus has begun to realize and reflect upon one's own personal emotions and about situations of emotional involvement – in particular situations and emotions of embarrassment/ shame, insecurity, fear, and helplessness.

(5) has acquired some recognition of *personal ambivalence* and has thus experienced that he himself and/or others often are of two minds about concrete real-life situations and that one has to make decisions and negotiate compromise.

(6) has begun to built a new appreciation for and capacity *to argue or struggle with others in non-destructive ways* – be it issues of political, religious, or personal nature, i.e. to argue without either turning verbally abusive or withdrawing from the interaction.

In view of these basic criteria of favourable personal changes, the following impact factors and practice-guidelines for de-radicalisation work could be determined: The methodological prerequisites of any successful approach are

(i) that the facilitators of the pedagogic intervention come from *outside the institution* and are able to act independently; this is required in light of the indispensable process of confidence-building which is generally most difficult to achieve with this target group; being able to provide a *secure and confidential space* for the participants to speak and interact, seems to be one of the most important success factors of the VPN work;

(ii) that the *institution* does, however, signal its high esteem of the incoming outside facilitators (which requires containment of any impulses of professional competitiveness or feelings of envy) and that the institution itself is *interested and actively involved* – for example in staff training or workshops given by these facilitators;

(iii) above all, that significant parts of the work takes place *in the group and with the group*, and thus attention is paid to the processes and developments in and of the participants and their *group-dynamic* relationships with one another, a prerequisite which is due to the fact that hate

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crimes are generally group-dynamically induced and that hate crime offenders have often been raised in overexerted one-on-one relationships to their single parents – and therefore are all the less experienced in and more vulnerable to escalating group-dynamics;

(iv) that a *conducive dosage* of group intensity (off-set with pedagogical exercises and supplementary-supportive one-on-one conversations) is borne in mind;

(v) that the professional persona and intervention style of the facilitator focuses on generating a *trusting and resilient* relationship, both in the group and in the one-on-one sessions, and that this relationship is nurtured constantly;

(vi) but also, that a facilitator style of *critical attentiveness* is adopted which also seeks out points of contention and conflict, at the same time observing the basic distinction between the person, which is accepted, and the offence, which is confronted – so that an *respectfully-enquiring exchange* can proceed *both acceptingly and confrontationally*;

(vii) that on the basis of this relationship a mode of *lifeworld-narrative* and *relationship-based* access to the young people is created that enables the occurrence of a trusting and *development-conducive* narrative about personal experience;

(viii) that the factor of *civic education*, political and ideological exchange as well as the *factor of culture* is incorporated (for instance in the form of fictional media narratives) in order to add to the experiential depth of the pedagogical process;

(ix) that the intervention on the whole does, however, not feel compelled to following an entirely strict syllabus; due to the above stated principle of the *lifeworld-narrative* and *relationship-based* approach, the need for an *open process* is acknowledged in which the participants group's spontaneous issues are given priority;

(x) the principle of working with an open process *lifeworld-narrative* and *relationship-based* approach also implies *methodological flexibility* and *eclecticism* with regard to pedagogic tools and therapeutic resources. In particular, the VPN study and other topical studies and evaluations have recently demonstrated the pitfalls and deficits of two approaches which have been quite predominate during the last decade: (a) pure *anti-aggression trainings* by themselves as well as (b) fully modularized *cognitive-behavioral trainings* seem to have had less effect then previously assumed – unless they are embedded into and off-set with an open-process narrative framework of proceedings;

(xi) that *protective relationships* are inaugurated already during prison time, calling on suitable family members, friends or community members whose personality is fitting the needs and challenges of reintegrating hate crime offenders;

(xii) that a *post-release coaching* is put into place which assists the ex-offender in beginning his new life in the community.

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