

The Unfolding of Psychological Trauma in Human Ontogeny - Pathways through life



Total number of characters: 159.325
Equivalent of normal pages: 66,4

Caroline Skov Vestbjerg: 20164767

Supervisor: Jaan Valsiner

10.th Semester, Psychology

Master Thesis

Aalborg University
30.05.2022

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the unfolding of trauma throughout the course of life. Trauma is a broad phenomenon grasping many nuances of the content, the context and the specific individual in hand. Trauma are often discussed in clinical constellations in regard to development of pathology herein Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (C-PTSD). These have shortly been presented with the addition of newer terms: development and attachment trauma, which elaborate the complex interplay of traumas in childhood here among neglect of care and domestic violence – physically as psychologically. I have sought to investigate the multiplicity connected to these. In order to investigate the unfolding of trauma through the course of life, I found idiographic science to be a suited methodological approach in terms of understanding the systemic process of trauma through the depth of a single case. I have applied the idiographic approach in the attempt to study the subjective uniqueness allowing for an intraindividual focus upon the unfolding of traumatic experience through life course. I have investigated this by using the biography of Lisbeth Zornig. Following her life, through a long-term process given her biography, I gain insights to her development of personality and behavior embedded in unique personal life contexts. This opens up for the opportunity to study the way experiences becomes weaved into lifespan and are carried on in different ways through life. The focus has been especially on development that has offered a contribution to the understanding of trauma and an expansion of the process through which it evolves.

I have made use of cultural psychological perspectives that are applied in the attempt to further elaborate an otherwise clinical perspective of trauma. The cultural psychological aspects are intended to contribute with a broader approach towards the person<>world dynamic. The construction of self through relating with others and the social environment has been elaborated by exploring George Herbert Mead's theoretical ideas of the I<>ME system. This has been supplemented by Jaan Valsiner's theory of semiotic dynamics which has offered a way of understanding the process of meaning-making through sign-use and the negotiating practices within this. These

have been analyzed and discussed through elaborations of the creation of self-understanding made in the interaction with the social world. Through development, encounters with specific sorts of events has undergone a re-evaluation or redefinition to be able to embrace the movement happening through life.

A developmental perspective has been offered by Tania Zittoun who allows for a focus on development by emphasizing imagination and explorations of ruptures and transitions that are a part of development – some of which leads to change. What are affecting a development have been examined with the intention of exploring both external and internal factors that may affect development and the stronghold of given experiences. These have been elaborated in the attempt to investigate how a trauma may unfold through life regardless of a positive or negative outcome. For further apprehension, I have strived to intertwine clinical and cultural psychological perspectives upon trauma and development to be able to explore the unity of these giving a more holistic understanding.

A presentation of Lisbeth's later life has been introduced and a discussion of social heritage has been conducted. Different arenas are elaborated as areas that contribute to the ability to break social heritage and become a 'pattern breaker'. Moreover, different ways of adjusting to environment and keeping a sense of self are discussed in the intend to elaborate coping strategies and important factors that come to affect the ability to create these. The ability to adapt through using strategies that functions as a way of maintaining oneself have been presented within the case of Lisbeth. Social support it furthermore emphasized with big importance and significant others have been presented in the attempt to analyze and discuss the presence and effect of these for her ability to cope and move on. For this reason, resilience and posttraumatic growth are introduced and discussed as ways of moving out of the circle of trauma and the ability to live on.

What is experienced through life, both traumas as ordinary experiences, becomes woven together through development and the complex interplay come to set the course of life.

List of content

INTRODUCTION	1
SCOPE OF THE THESIS	2
CLARIFICATION OF TRAUMA.....	3
PRESENTATION OF A CASE – LISBETH ZORNIG	6
METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	9
<i>Literary contributions to psychological understandings</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>The way to an idiographic approach – abstraction for generalized knowledge</i>	<i>11</i>
READING GUIDE.....	12
SUMMARY - UNITY OF SCIENCE OF INDIVIDUAL HUMAN LIFE	13
THE PATHWAYS OF LIFE.....	14
THE PATH OF TRAUMA	14
<i>The move – from family to orphanage</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>The second move – from orphanage to Hylleholt</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Summary of the case</i>	<i>27</i>
THE CONSTRUCTION OF SELF IN RELATION TO OTHERS.....	27
<i>Reciprocity</i>	<i>28</i>
THE SEMIOTIC DYNAMICS	31
<i>A meaning-making process through sign-construction</i>	<i>33</i>
SUMMARY – THE CREATION OF SELF THROUGH SOCIAL INTERACTION.....	37
THE DEVELOPING PATH THROUGH EDUCATION	37
THE THIRD MOVE – FROM HYLLEHOLT TO LIVING BY HERSELF	38
<i>Summary of the case</i>	<i>42</i>
EDUCATION AS A STEPPING STONE	43
<i>Developmental trajectories.....</i>	<i>44</i>
SUMMARY – MOVEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION.....	49
THE FOCUS ON LIFE COURSE DEVELOPMENT	50
THE ROLE OF IMAGINATION AS PART OF DEVELOPMENT.....	50
<i>Using imagination as a way of coping.....</i>	<i>51</i>
SUMMARY – SEMIOTIC AND SYMBOLIC RESOURCES	54
THE HOLD IN HUMAN ONTOGENY.....	54
UNDERSTANDING THE UNFOLDING OF THE PHENOMENON OF TRAUMA	55
BREAKING A SOCIAL HERITAGE	58

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA BY INTERTWINING CLINICAL AND CULTURAL APPROACHES	61
THE CURRENT PATH OF LISBETH	62
<i>Work</i>	63
<i>Love</i>	63
<i>Family</i>	64
CONTINUATION OF GROWTH.....	64
CRITICAL COMMENTS AND FUTURE ORIENTED QUESTIONS	66
CRITIQUE UPON THESIS.....	67
TOPICS THAT FIT FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION	68
CONCLUSION – UNITING THE UNFOLDING OF TRAUMA WITH LIFE COURSE DEVELOPMENT	69
LIST OF REFERENCES.....	72

Introduction

Throughout life, traumas may represent themselves in many forms. An encounter of a trauma may appear in unexpected moments and may be induced by random causes or intentional by others. As I decided I wanted to explore the world, I myself was unexpectedly faced with a traumatic incident. I had just turned 20 and I wanted to discover the world and what it had to offer. Only three weeks in, right before I was about to hike the famous track to Machu Picchu in Peru, I got the altitude sickness. It hit at the moment of running of a cliff with a paraglide and I immediately struggled to breath and the rest I do not remember. To this day I struggle with the experience of quick short breathings and I spend a lot of my time trying to master breathing exercises. In contrast the triggering moment when paragliding does not affect me at all and I am ready to do it again.

Human life is very variable - it can go in all directions and the exact course of life is impossible to predict. One incident can come to impact even years later. A track is part of a trajectory pathway with which it gives a continuous aspect of human experience that a person weaves into one's own development. What one has encountered through life may lead in different directions. The question today is which path one chooses to follow and what has led to this. There is a growing individuality in western societies leading the choice of life to be upon the individual and thereby also the responsibility for mastering one's life.

There exists a diversity of options and lifestyle choice is increasingly constituting self-identity which are impacted by the historical and sociocultural structures we engage in (Giddens, 1991). Some life tracks are expected even before birth and will be influenced by expectations (or lack of them), upbringing, social network, educational choices and even political influences. Others may develop due to circumstances even in early childhood that impact behavior and self-identity. This might be in correspondence with some life-tracks more than others. The position that a person might find oneself in can present different opportunity situations at particular important moments in life (Hundeide, 2005). This 'choice' may be done by reflective decision-making but more often choices become a matter of routine and maybe a passive following of the typical action-pattern expected or done by peers. The way one perceives life-track possibilities might be in relation to habitual lifestyle and self-

presentation. The responsibility for life choices and the paths we choose to follow are increasingly determined by personal value and the ability to act accordingly (Hundeide, 2005).

How these paths may present themselves to the individual and what come to influence the perception of ability and opportunity to choose a path is a focus I wish to have in this thesis. I wish to investigate the circumstances that come to influence life choices and how all of these come to impact. More specifically, I wish to focus on traumatic experiences and reflect upon the potential effect a trauma may have for the individual and the degree of impact on both personality and life course development. This is approached by the multiplicity of experiences that may fluently integrate throughout development in life. I seek to understand the traumatic hold on human ontogeny by exploring cultural psychological perspectives along with the dynamics of relating to self and the environment. This is furthermore investigated by applying a developmental perspective to life course. I will integrate cultural and developmental perspectives to gain comprehensive knowledge that benefit the understanding of impact throughout life.

Scope of the thesis

Due to my own experiences and my internship in forensic psychiatry I came to wonder about traumas and their effect upon human ontogeny to such an extent that it impacts the course of life. A curiosity that made me reflect upon the pathways a human life can develop into especially when impacted on an ontological level. Some traumas seemed to result in pathology for some whereas the same traumas for others seemed to be overcome. Questions arose upon the phenomena of a trauma like “what role does the traumatic content have” and “do the number of repeated traumas leave a stronger hold in the person”? and so forth. How do we come to understand a trauma and the effect it has on us and what is it about a trauma that seem to have the power of determining the continuing stronghold? These wonderings resulted in the presented problem statement that seemed to grasp the unfolding of these questions being:

What are different pathways through which traumatic experiences become maintained in human ontogeny?

This is the question I wish to use as navigation when seeking explanations in the attempt to understand the effect traumatic experiences may have over the course of life. I want to explore how trauma unfolds in the unity of positive, negative and neutral outcomes. I aim to explore pathways through which a trauma may guide decision, behavior and attitude towards what is encountered. I seek to keep my focus on multiplicity by approaching different experiences that are displayed by the chosen case of Lisbeth Zornig. Through this I want to investigate how these may be woven together in her development over the course of her life. The role they come to have in life course come together to illustrate not only one site associated with traumas but opens up for the opportunity to grasp the general impact all experiences have and how these are formed in development throughout life. I am interested in how all or some of them feed into the ongoing life course of an individual. The focus on the individual person is emphasised in this thesis. This allows for the opportunity to use a longitudinal story - in this thesis a biography. The restrictions given by the time aspect of the thesis leave the choice of method to be based on the richness the depth of a single case already written offers. With the focus on human development I am able to investigate experiences throughout life and follow the effects they come to have on a person.

Clarification of trauma

A trauma can be described in many ways which I will elaborate in the following section. A number of factors are listed when approaching the topic of trauma and ability for recovery being: resilience, risk – and protective factors, person of support to list a few (Ungarn, 2012). To grasp the wide extend of the phenomenon of trauma I seek towards cultural psychology for elaborations. I seek to apply a cultural angle towards an otherwise clinical question. This, with the intention of approaching the phenomenon differently with a person<>world relation that for me seems to be the most explanatory. I wish to integrate clinical and cultural psychology by applying the groundwork of clinical understandings of trauma to further explore the cultural psychological mechanisms that may offer different aspects of the trauma – person – environment dynamic. Additionally, I believe a developmental take on a traumatic experience stronghold in human ontogeny will serve to illustrate angles of a trauma that are essential for understanding life course development. The focus will not be consequences of these specific events, it will rather seek to offer a holistic analysis of

the events occurring in human life that come to shape development and herein form the pathways of life through self-understanding and social interaction.

It is difficult to give an exact definition of trauma. Diagnostic manuals like International Classification of Diseases (ICD) and Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) can create guidelines for the understanding of the phenomenon but they mainly offer a framework that results in trauma being used as a part of a diagnostical tool. Trauma is associated with the diagnosis: posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and the description for this diagnose in ICD-11 is:

“PTSD may develop following exposure to an extremely threatening or horrific event or series of events. It is characterised by all of the following: 1) re-experiencing the traumatic event or events in the present in the form of vivid intrusive memories, flashbacks, or nightmares...”
(ICD-11, 6B40)¹.

This description has recently been updated to include more general terms from the previous application that centered the importance of the event itself. The definition in ICD-11 has changed to not include specific events but is now based on the assumption that the experience of trauma and the following reactions are subjective (Buhmann & Folke, 2021). This unfolds a variety of trauma experiences which reframes the trauma to be regarding the individual reaction rather than the event itself. There has furthermore been added another diagnosis: Complex posttraumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD) which goes by the description of:

“Complex PTSD is a disorder that may develop following exposure to an event or series of events of an extremely threatening or horrific nature, most commonly prolonged or repetitive events from which escape is difficult or impossible (e.g. torture, prolonged domestic violence, repeated childhood sexual or physical abuse...). All diagnostic requirements for PTSD are met. In addition, Complex PTSD is characterised by severe and persistent 1) problems in affect regulation; 2) beliefs about oneself as diminished, defeated or worthless, accompanied by feelings of shame, guilt or failure related to the

¹ Link: <https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en#/http://id.who.int/icd/entity/2070699808>

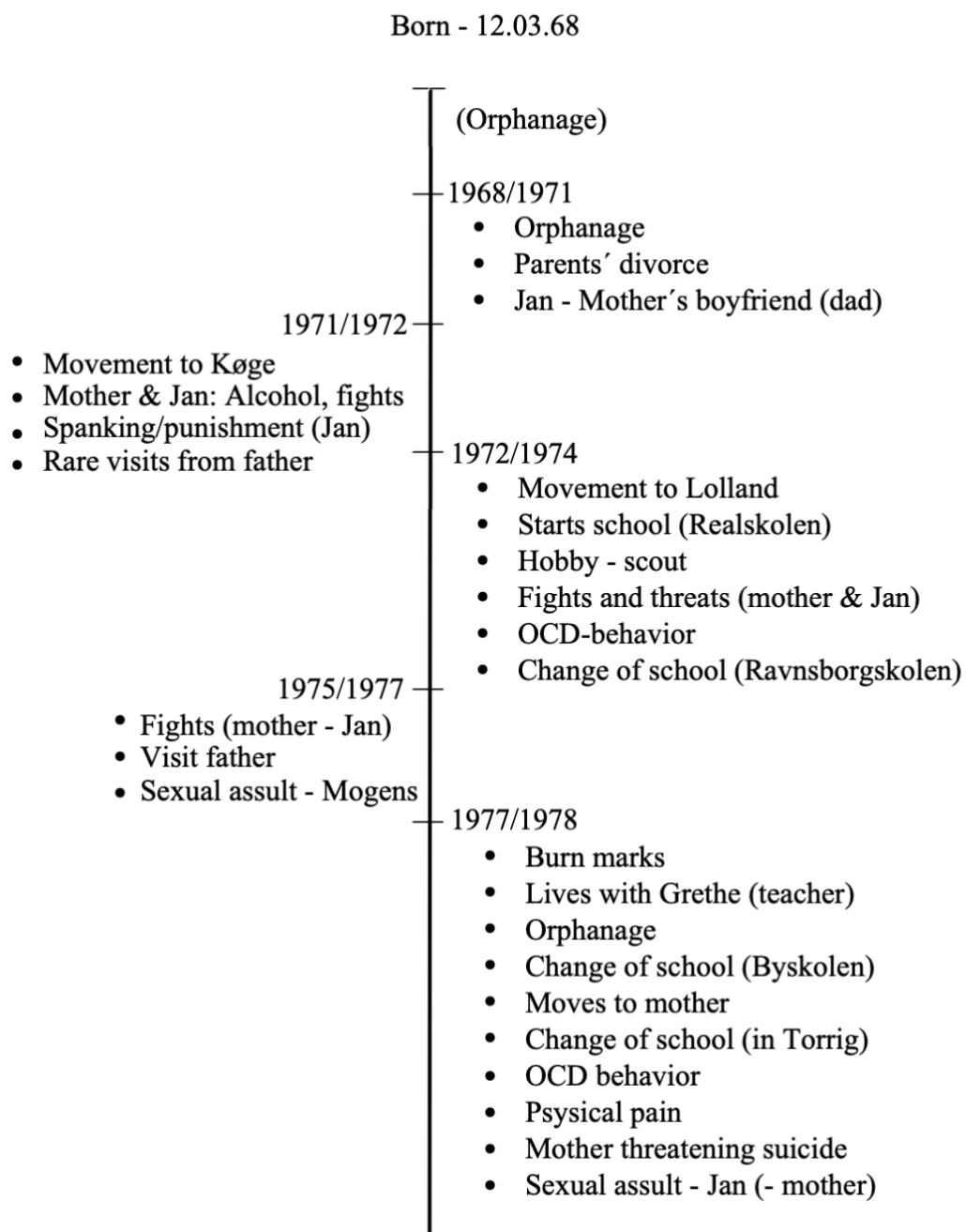
traumatic event; and 3) difficulties in sustaining relationships and in feeling close to others.” (ICD-11, 6B41).

Complex PTSD expands the elements presented in PTSD and adds further 3 elements that are meant to grasp following side effects from the traumatic experience(es). As the word presents, this diagnosis is supposed to embrace the complexity in responses toward a trauma and also include the exit-possibilities from the trauma while it happens. Especially cases of trauma happening at home as domestic violence or abuse, the possibility for escaping or avoiding is almost impossible – this diagnose is created to embrace these conditions.

In addition to the two diognostical descriptions of trauma other types of trauma definition have been discussed being “udviklingstraumer” or “tilknytningstraumer” (development/attachment trauma) (Buhmann & Folke, 2021; Heller & LaPierre, 2014). Traumas of development have been described to be a definition including many ‘types’ of trauma especially concerning early traumas and damaging events that influence the attachment in relation to long-term abuse or neglect of care (Heller & LaPierre, 2014). Heller & LaPierre present these types of trauma to be broader in the definition and thereby the understanding and approach towards them. They believe that these types of trauma typically are associated with a reduced ability to contact and relation-connection and are easier seen with psychological struggles later in life leading to mental illness. Although, they believe that these kinds of trauma are more common which often leads the individual to cope by creating adaptive strategies (Heller & LaPierre, 2014). Factors expressed of importance when approaching trauma are: resilience, coping strategy, previous experiences, available resources and the specific situation from which the trauma unfolds (Buhmann & Folke, 2021). This creates differences among each individual therefore trauma becomes somewhat more difficult to understand and work with. There are different perspectives that contribute to the notion of difficultness when trying to determine a definition that grasp the complexity of a trauma both regarding the origin of it, the event itself, repetitiveness, the individual reaction and so forth. It illustrates the complexity of the phenomenon. The chosen clinical definitions offer a framework for the understanding of trauma and to add further to it, I wish to implement a developmental focus that takes the lifelong process and life course development into account.

Presentation of a case – Lisbeth Zornig

I have chosen to apply Lisbeth Zornig's biography: Zornig – vrede er mit mellemnavn (translation: Zornig – anger is my middle name) as longitudinal data that elaborates traumatic experiences and the development over parts of her life course. Her biography starts at the year of 1968 where she is born to the year of 1986 where she attends Copenhagen University. The biography presents a timeline that divide events into years and her elaborated explanations of most of them. Below is presented a timeline of chosen main events in her childhood and youth.



1979/1980	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holst & Ragna (neighbors)• Friend (Bodil)• Continuing sexual assault (Jan - mother)• Orphanage	
	1980/1981
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexual assault (Stig)• Change of school (Stormarksskolen)• Anger• Observe mother beat up• Stealing• Beat up by boys at school• Friend (Jette)• Sexual assault (guy at motorcykel club)• Shower episode at orphanage
1981/1982	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holst decline contact• Escapes from orphanage• Lives with brother Michael• Mother wants Lisbeth further away• Niels - first boyfriend	
	1982/1983
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moves orphanage (Hylleholt)• Change of school (at Hylleholt)• Foster family (weekend visit)• Hobby - Rowing• One-night stands• Friends (Fatina, Betinna)• Karen (pedagogue)• Ends foster family visits

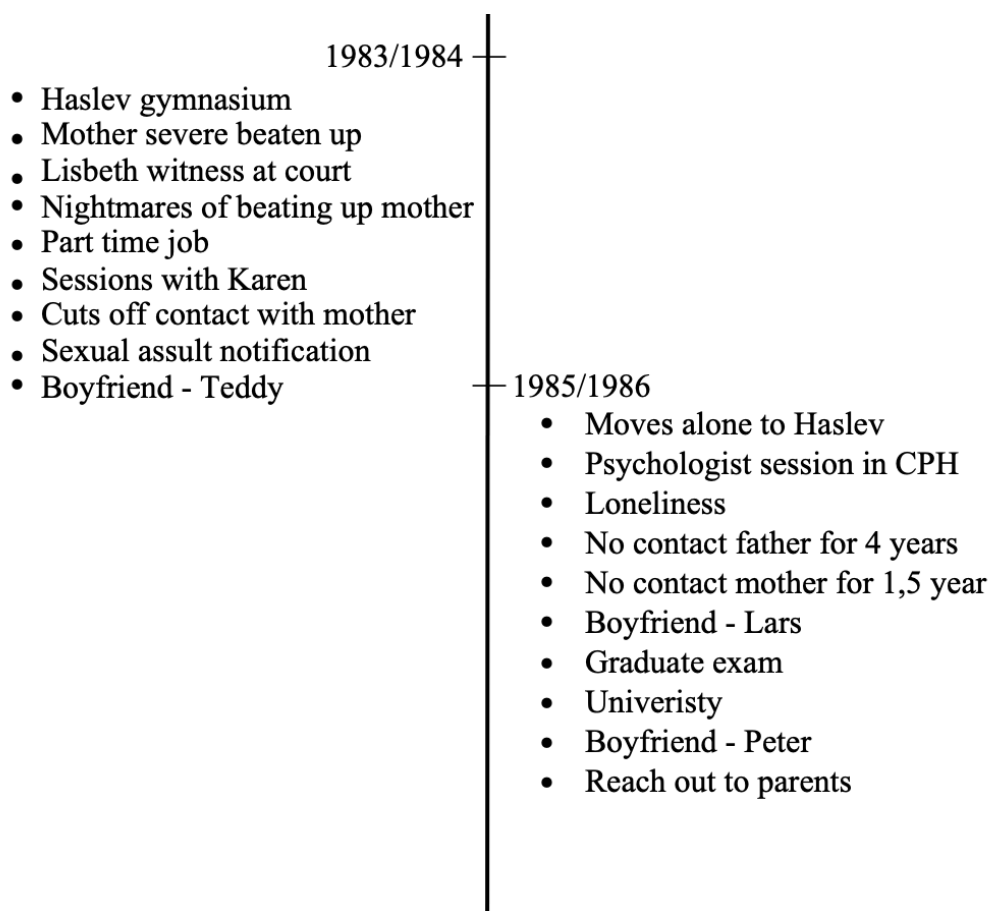


Figure 1: Timeline of events in Lisbeth Zornig's life

The timeline includes chosen notes upon the events happening in her life throughout the years she has elaborated in her biography. These present a picture of the many traumatic experiences that Lisbeth has encountered and also the diversity presenting both neglect of care, domestic sexual abuse, sexual abuse by other, physical abuse and much more. These traumas being repeated, single-events, by family or by strangers grasp the complexity of traumatic experiences and in her case the life-long continuity of dealing with these traumas in different ways and by different means. Throughout the thesis, elaborations will be presented and discussed. This will be supplemented by theoretical contributions that are meant to compliment an understanding and an analysis that allow for investigations of certain angles and perspectives of the chosen material.

Methodological considerations

The methodological perspectives are given importance when gathering data and theorizing concepts and phenomena. There has been a battle in between time periods and paradigms trying to determine the 'right' way of conducting science (Valsiner, 2022b). A discussion seemingly necessary due to legitimization and for creating reliable outcomes. The battle is typically between the conceived opponents being nomothetic or idiographic science, the former representing a sample of the population and the latter the uniqueness gathered in single case studies, giving the purpose to investigate 'people in general' versus 'people in particular' (Windelband, 1998). Nomothetic approaches can derive from the assumption of 'constant principle' and invariance of the functioning way of the phenomena whereas the idiographic approach emphasizes the time-based variability within each unique case. These have resulted in two kinds of variation being IntEr-individual Variation (IEV) and IntrA-individual Variation (IAV) (Molenaar & Valsiner, 2008). The latter, idiography and an intraindividual focus, is the one I will be applying for the purpose of the thesis as the most suited methodological approach. What is decisive for the choice of approach should be the phenomena in hand and this thesis will seek to understand the unfolding processes of traumatic experiences maintained in human ontogeny hence leading the choice of focus to be the systemic process of trauma understood from the depth of a single case. Wilhelm Windelband a century ago addressed himself to the task of making sense of the scientific understanding and use of methods. He elaborated, if the goal of the investigation is to gain detailed knowledge of what once was, the idiographic study is to be applied (Lamiell, 1998). Windelband (1998) argued that in psychology, personality, development and social contexts are time –and culture bound and therefore their lawfulness is necessarily possible to study through the analysis of individual cases. In addition, I find it suitable to make a brief elaboration for the chosen methodological approach, presenting arguments for the choice of data and for the relevance for this chosen method.

Literary contributions to psychological understandings

Data can be gathered in different manners both to cover inter –and intraindividual perspectives. As mentioned above an idiographic thereby qualitative approach to data

gathering will be used in this thesis. Some qualitative data are gathered through the methods of ethnography, autoethnography and other experimental qualitative methods (Brinkmann, 2009). Here among literary texts in different shapes like biography. Fathali Moghaddam is one of the leading voices advocating the widening of the scope of psychological data and considering literature as psychology. I have chosen to use Lisbeth Zornig's biography where Lisbeth tells about her life from the age of 3 to 18, years filled with physical and psychological abuse, no security, constant changes in life and more which will be elaborated throughout the thesis. Her biography will give me insights to the deepest thoughts and experiences she has had throughout her childhood and youth in a manner that allow me to follow the development of her personality and behavior embedded in unique personal life contexts.

This type of data material gives me the chance to follow a long-term process and insights to her life in changing persons and relationships (Moghaddam, 2004). Moghaddam has advocated for advances made by using literature as psychological data that among other reasons allows to follow a process in regard to experimental outcomes. This will allow me to be a part of the process reading her timeline and connecting traumatic experiences with a potential effect on Lisbeth's ontogeny. Literature can be an object for a case study approach where unique and special features of a given person or group can be highlighted. Literature reports human experience in societal and historical constellations and the literary work give support to the understanding of not only the individual personality development over the course of the lifespan but also institutional and collective processes that come to impact the individual development (Moghaddam, 2004).

Through interpretations, I as a researcher, am given the opportunity to create stories of the phenomena that can be viewed as data and explanations from a lived life which is central for a psychologist to concern oneself with in order to broaden the understanding of what a given phenomenon is. This furthermore offers an understanding from the inside of a person where, in this case, Lisbeth has the opportunity to express herself the way she is feeling, behaving and acting, and at times also her reflections upon this. If we wish to look at personality in depth, the idiographic approach is argued to catch individual differences by the in-depth investigation (Lamiell, 1998).

The way to an idiographic approach – abstraction for generalized knowledge

Idiographic science is marked by the focus of the uniqueness. This uniqueness is relevant to encounter given irreversibility of time and an event as socio-culturally bound (Salvatore & Valsiner, 2010; Valsiner, 2022b). What is considered unique will also have assimilation to a more general class which is possible given a construction process that encounter similar cases whereas the phenomena in question can unfold (Salvatore & Valsiner, 2008). If certain data are withdrawn from the single case in hand - as long as there is compensation with value and meaning - the produced material will be able to reach a higher level of abstraction and hence be object for generalization (Valsiner, 2022a+b). Obviously, the validity of single cases and the different interpretations possible while reading a biography can be fluctuating dependent on who does the reading. This might be, and historical and cultural context cannot be neutralized in these cases, or any, anyhow (Moghaddam, 2004). Generalization from empirical data can be understood as a way of overlooking differences that are unimportant and recognizing similarities.

Generalizing is a communicative process and it happens through abstraction of mechanisms that connects the sum of previous events with the anticipation of future ones. This dynamic operates on the generalized categories that are abstracted from unique one-time contexts to a generalized category functioning as tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1962). One may raise the question of generalizing from a single and unique event and the difficulty of this given the individual human action and personal meaning-making. Additionally, this may further raise the question whether a single case can lead to usable knowledge in the broader psychological field and furthermore lead to the speculation whether this thesis may create insights usable to other traumatic experiences and their effect on human ontogeny in general rather than solely the applied case. These are relevant concerns but it can be argued that there is a certain lawfulness expressed in uniqueness (Valsiner, 2022b). To discover the inner sense is to discover the workings of the individual mind which might reveal lawful regularities that qualify as general (Lamiell, 1998). Both the nomothetic and the idiographic perspective strive to gain generalized knowledge and this knowledge is gained through ongoing comparison or by accumulated experiences collected through similar

classified objects – both giving a foundation for generalization (Salvatore & Valsiner, 2010).

Sense-making is the relevant theme covering not only the methodological considerations but also the smaller mechanisms that will present themselves while diving into the phenomenon of trauma and the way of it becoming maintained in human ontogeny. Idiographic science has as its aim to create sense-making that take the parts<>whole dialectic into account and additionally the social environments influence (Salvatore & Valsiner, 2008). The dialectic between internal-external positioning is a part of the idiographic approach and self-presentation from the actor to the observer.

As stated above, in this thesis I will investigate the traumatic experiences that occur in Lisbeth Zornig's life and try to understand the continuing meaning-making that come to define identity and life course. Through a semiotic approach - which focuses on the use of signs in making sense of one's life - I will be able to circle between micro and macro levels of the co-constructed meanings and view the meaning-making process as it unfolds as a function of the social context. This is due to the anticipation that meaning and the intended words written by Lisbeth Zornig in her attempt to draw us into the telling of her childhood to not be as fixed entities but rather as open signs allowing to shape the significance through her linguistic presentation (Salvatore, Tebaldi & Potí, 2008 & Rio & Molina, 2008). Psychological processes take place in relationship to others who reacts, responds and/or evaluate which will be the case here.

Reading guide

Idiographic science is oriented towards understanding general principles of human living and subjectivity over life course. This is particularly why idiography is best applied to understand Lisbeth as critical evidence that allows us to deal with her experiences from her subjective standpoint. Whether an experience is negatively or positively perceived is not of importance when gathering these exact multiplicities of experiences. The focus here is the way they are woven together in her course of life.

This thesis will not make use of the typical separation of units of theory, method, analysis and discussion etc. but will instead be organized in chapters. These chapters will include both presentation of the case of Lisbeth, theoretical contributions,

analytical thoughts and a discussion of the emergence of these in an ongoing process. This will evidently raise more questions even to issues not addressed here. The different units will be intertwined throughout the thesis in the attempt for a more holistic understanding.

Due to the complexity of the case and framework of the thesis not every single event will be possible to analyze in depth. As I seek to gather data that represents multiplicity of experiences and those potential effect for later paths in life, not all will be able to be directly approached but will be presented in the attempt to create a complete understanding of Lisbeth. I therefore wish to approach the more general phenomena of traumatic incidents as a part of life course development. I will mainly focus on three theoretical perspectives offered by: George Herbert Mead, Jaan Valsiner and Tania Zittoun, although others will be integrated as supplements. I wish to look at identity formation based on social interactions by applying George Herbert Mead. Elaborately, I wish to include Jaan Valsiners ideas of semiotic mediation and meaning-construction from a cultural psychological perspective to further understand the negotiating processes that evolves within Lisbeth and in her encounter with the social world. Additionally, I seek to Tania Zittoun for a developmental aspect. She contributes with a focus that brings in development over life course – a focus Mead and Valsiner lack. She will be able to contribute with a broader perspective of how these multiplicities of experiences may come to affect Lisbeth in her path in life.

Summary - Unity of science of individual human life

I aim to apply the idiographic approach to produce scientific knowledge in a unique manner through the expression of psychological phenomena. Given the arguments presented above I will argue the idiographic approach to analyze and conduct scientific knowledge to be a suited fit for the course of this thesis. I will furthermore strive to create knowledge that can function on a generalized plan in the attempt to apply the gathered empirical data to be able to contribute and be usable to similar future cases.

The pathways of life

In the upcoming chapter, I wish to concentrate on the traumatic experiences of Lisbeth's life and elaborate what her traumas have consisted of. This will be presented by a thorough presentation of chosen parts of her case which will later create the foundation for theoretical contributions that allow for an analysis and discussion that serve to expand certain perspectives.

The path of trauma

Lisbeth's description of her life starts at the year of 1968 – when she was three years old. She starts by the earliest she remembers. She tells about her parents and their living situation in a small dark apartment in Sydhavnen in Copenhagen where they live with her and her 3 brothers. She tells a bit about their life at the apartment that is filled with frequent visits from friends and that a big amount of alcohol always is consumed. Not far into her biography she starts telling about one episode she remembers between her drunk parents and the house full of guests.

*“En aften, hvor der er mange mennesker, kan jeg ikke finde mor. Jeg går rundt og leder efter hende. Pludselig ser jeg far stå bøjet over mor ude i entreen, mens han råber vredt ned i hovedet på hende... mor ligger på gulvet helt stille. Jeg skriger højt og løber hen til hende...”*² (Zornig, p. 24).

Shortly after, Lisbeth and her brothers are placed at an orphanage named Kastanjegården and she has been told that she has been there before as a baby. She likes it there but there are episodes where her brothers are humiliated by the personnel in different scenarios and she doesn't like that. She keeps to herself if she is not playing with her brothers. After some time, they get picked up again and they live with their mother and father for a while. One night their mother comes to their room and asks them to hurry down into a car. When they get down to the car a man is waiting for

² Translation of quote: “One night, where there are many people I cannot find mom. I walk around looking for her. Suddenly I see dad standing bend over her in the hallway while he yells angry down in her face... mom lies at the floor completely still. I scream and runs towards her...”

them and they are told this is Jan and he is their father from now on and then they leave to live in Køge.

Jan drinks a lot and he is strict and sets up many rules that need to be followed and if they don't they get spanked. If someone accidentally does something Jan doesn't like he finds a way to punish them often in humiliating or violent ways. It is never their mother who does the punishment nor does she defend them. Jan does not hesitate to put them to bed without water or food if they haven't behaved properly. Lisbeth mentions a time Jan makes her brother Tonny drink water because he was thirsty in the evening although there is a rule with no drinking before bed. Jan forces him to drink water till he throws up while the rest of them stand in line and have to watch.

Lisbeth's mother and Jan drink a lot of alcohol and they often fight. At times it intensifies and Lisbeth remembers a time where Jan takes chokehold on Lisbeth's mother and Lisbeth freezes. Jan leaves and when he gets back no one speaks of the incident. Jan and Lisbeth's mother keep drinking and fighting and spend most of their time at a local bar in Nakskov:

*“Oftere og oftere er vi alene hjemme. Så er mor og Jan taget på værtshus i Nakskov... Vi ved aldrig, hvornår mor og Jan kommer hjem, men kommer de ikke til spisetid, kan vi som regel finde noget brød eller havregryn.”*³ (Zornig, p. 46).

Lisbeth is impatiently waiting to start school and asks to begin ahead of time which is being arranged. She starts at Realskolen in 1972. Soon after her first school change happens and she is moved to Ravnsborgskolen where she begins in pre-school. Lisbeth is in first grade being evaluated by a school psychologist that determines that she is able to skip from first to second grade. From very early on Lisbeth is presented ambitious and very committed to school.

The years go by and the fighting and violent episodes become more frequent. One episode leads Jan to make a death threat where her mother, Lisbeth and the brothers

³ Translation of quote: “More and more often we are home alone. Then mom and Jan has gone to a bar in Nakskov. We never know when mom and Jan will come home but if they are not home for dinner we usually find some bread or oatmeal ourselves.”

have to run and hide at a friend's house. When they got home again Jan had attempted suicide. Lisbeth becomes afraid of Jan or her mother dying and from that day on Lisbeth gets up every night to check the gas stove and the knives:

“Jeg er bange for, at mor eller Jan skal slå os, sig selv eller hinanden ihjel, og det bliver sværere og sværere at sove. Jeg begynder også at tælle. Jeg gentager ting i mit hoved tre gange eller et antal der går op i tre... For hver gang jeg ikke overholder reglen med, at det skal gå op i tre, straffer jeg mig selv...”⁴ (Zornig, p. 48).

The days goes by in the typical routine of drinking, fighting and at times happy memories too. Lisbeth and her brothers play around after school and they often bicycle to different places. Lisbeth is still not old enough to drive her own bike so she sits at the back on her brothers. One day Lisbeth and her brothers drive around and they find an old farmhouse. There is a man living there, Mogens, who just got kittens and he invites them to come visit the cats whenever they want. The next day they visit Mogen's again and he makes them lunch. Lisbeth is sitting on Mogens lab and she is so full she opens up a bottom in her pants:

“Han lægger sin ene hånd på den nederste del af min mave med fingerspidserne inde under min trusekant, mens han stille bevæger fingrene frem og tilbage. Mine brødre kan ikke se, hvad han gør med hånden. Jeg synes, det er dejligt med en varm hånd der.”⁵ (Zornig, p. 52).

While Lisbeth is sitting there and her brothers are still eating, they continue to talk and Lisbeth tells about school. It becomes a tradition for Lisbeth and her brothers to visit Mogens after school every day. Lisbeth is mainly inside with Mogens while her brothers play outside. One day, Lisbeth has to pee and she gets off her usual spot at his

⁴ Translation of quote: “I am scared that mom or Jan will kill us, themselves or each other and it becomes harder and harder to sleep. I start counting too. I repeat things in my head three times or the number has to add up in three... For every time I don't play by the rules I punish myself...”

⁵ Translation of quote: “He lies his hand on the lowest part of my stomach with his fingertips beneath the edge of my panty while he slowly moves his fingers back and forth. My brothers cannot see what he is doing with his hands. I think it is nice with a warm hand there.”

lab and Mogens comes along and wants to help her. When she sits at the toilet he puts his hand between her legs and starts to rub his finger back and forth while he asks if she likes it. She says yes without knowing what he means but she cannot pee with him doing that so she asks him to go out. When she comes out he wants to tickle Lisbeth and brings her to his bedroom. He lays her down on his bed and starts kissing her thighs before he starts licking her. They get interrupted by her brothers who knock on the window laughing and Mogens get up in a hurry and sends them home. Lisbeth's brother Michael tells their mother and Jan what has happened and they are not allowed to come back there anymore.

The times go by and their father and his new girlfriend Anita visit them rarely but when they do Lisbeth wishes she could stay with them. In 1977, 10 years old, Lisbeth is brought to the bar with her mother and Jan and they end up in a big fight where Lisbeth and her mother are thrown out to the street. In that moment Lisbeth's teacher Grethe is passing by and Lisbeth yells to Grethe to bring her with and Lisbeth's mother says go ahead and shoves Lisbeth to her.

Lisbeth now lives with Grethe and her husband and their child. Grethe discovers cigarette burning marks on Lisbeth's arms but she doesn't know what they are or how she got them. While living there, Lisbeth gets a small room for herself. One day a lamp falls down and leave a burn mark on Lisbeth's leg and even though she is afraid of the dark she turns of the lamp every night and then check the lamp 3 times before she goes to sleep. If it is not done right she has to do it over 3 times.

While Lisbeth is living with Grethe and her family school evaluations increase positively both regarding profit from school and also her relation to schoolmates.

*“Der er fuld enighed om, at eleven i den tid, hun har været i familiepleje, har været fuldstændig i balance, glad og tilfreds samt ren og velplejet. Hendes udbytte af skolegangen har derfor været særdeles godt og gode fremskridt er konstateret. Hun har ligeledes været fuldt accepteret blandt kammerater...”*⁶ (Report from social services, Zornig, p. 61).

⁶ Translation of quote: *“There is a complete agreement that during the time the student has been in family care she has been in an absolute balance, happy and satisfies as well as clean and well-cared-*

After living with Grethe and her family for 6 months, with only one visit from her mother during that period of time, Lisbeth gets picked up by the police by the demand of her mother. She is placed at an orphanage temporarily and changes school for the third time, this time to Byskolen in Nakskov. She lives at the orphanage until she can move back home to her mother in a new city, Torrig, where Lisbeth's mother is now living after divorcing Jan. Lisbeth moves in with her mother after a while and they live alone because her 3 brothers have been placed in different places either foster care or orphanages. Lisbeth starts at a new school for the fourth time. At this school Lisbeth mentions Brian who is one of the bullies whom she tries to keep clear of although at times not successfully and otherwise she stays by herself: "*... jeg holder mig for mig selv inde under halvtaget tæt ved indgangen, så jeg kan komme hurtigt op i klassen, når det ringer ind.*"⁷ (Zornig, p. 60). School becomes harder for Lisbeth to focus on due to her mother's mental health status and threats with suicide and Lisbeth's behavior is increasingly characterized with obsessive-compulsive tendencies (OCD).

Jan still comes from time to time and she is afraid of Jan and doesn't like his presence. Her mother keeps threatening with suicide and gives Lisbeth many details of her plan and a second plan if it should fail. When her mother talks about suicide in Jan's presence, he laughs and notes that he would finally get some peace. Her mother's suicide thoughts affect Lisbeth and she gets a harder time focusing on school but also in general. Lisbeth creates special walking routes that contain different ritual-like actions that now become a part of her daily routine.

"Jeg kan ikke koncentrere mig om at læse, for jeg er mere bekymret end normalt og må tælle hele tiden. Træer, biler og huse tæller jeg. Og bagefter tæller jeg

for. Her profit of school has therefore been exceedingly good and good progress has been recorded. She has likewise been fully accepted among schoolmates..."

⁷ Translation of quote: "*... I stick to myself under the pent roof near the entrance so I can quickly get to class when the bell rings.*"

*kombinationer af de tre ting. Men jeg bliver distraheret af tankerne om mor.”*⁸ (Zornig p. 67).

Almost every time Jan is visiting, Lisbeth’s mother and Jan have sex if they are not too drunk or fighting. They all share the same bed and Lisbeth pretends she is asleep while they are having sex. One day, she asks them what they are doing although she already knows. Jan replies that they do something comfortable and that she should try to touch herself between the legs to feel how comfortable it is. Lisbeth does what Jan says but doesn’t feel anything comfortable and Jan and her mother keep having sex.

One day Lisbeth comes home from school, she is 10 years old, and Jan and her mother invites Lisbeth to drink wine with them. She doesn’t like it but Jan keeps pouring her more that she drinks. Jan asks Lisbeth to take a shower before she goes to bed and she does what she is told lightheaded.

*“Jeg har slukket lyset og ligger med ryggen til midten. Jeg lader, som om jeg sover. De tager tøjet af og kryber under deres dyne. De begynder at have sex, men pludselig bliver der stille. Min dyne bliver lige så forsigtigt trukket af. Jan kravler ned i benenden. Han trækker stille mine trusser af, spreder mine ben og lægger sig imellem dem. Jeg gør ikke modstand. Så begynder han at bevæge tungen forsigtigt rundt i min tissekone, mens han ær mig på lårene.”*⁹ (Zornig, p. 69).

The following day Lisbeth pretends nothing has happened and she is keeping a close eye on her mother to see if she is mad at her but she seems unaffected and Lisbeth considers whether her mother was too drunk to remember. The days go by and Jan and her mother continues aggressive sex in the evenings.

⁸ Translation of quote: “I cannot concentrate about my reading because I am more worried than usual and I have to count all the time. I count trees, cars and houses. And afterwards I combine the counting of the three things. But i get distracted by the thoughts of mother.”

⁹ Translation of quote: “I have turned off the light and lies with my back toward to middle. I pretend that I am asleep. They take their clothes of and get under the duvet. They begin to have sex but suddenly it gets quiet. My duvet is slowly removed. Jan crawls down the edge of the bed. He pulls my panties aside and spreads my legs and place himself between them. I do not resist. Then he starts moving his tongue carefully around in my vagina while he strokes my thighs.”

In 1978 an elderly couple, Holst and Ragna, moves in as neighbors. Lisbeth spends a lot of time at their house and she quickly becomes fond of them. Holst and Ragna have many books and a writing machine. Lisbeth is allowed to use both and with time she comes everyday where she reads and re-writes the poems she reads. After the summer holiday Lisbeth begins in fifth grade and Holst begins as a teacher at her school. A new girl starts in school, Bodil, and she becomes Lisbeth's first friend. Up to this point Lisbeth has not described any school friendships merely bullies or her trying to keep to herself. Lisbeth play and make homework with Bodil and they tell each other almost everything but one thing is for sure, Lisbeth cannot tell anyone, not even Bodil, that she shares a bed with her mother and Jan or what is happening at home.

It becomes more and more frequent that Jan begins sex with her mother by doing oral sex on Lisbeth. Whenever Jan reaches a certain point he finishes with her mother. One day, her mother has to pee in the middle of the session and Jan asks Lisbeth to sit at the edge of the bed. He moves his penis around in her vagina while looking at Lisbeth but she looks away. He continues and try penetration. He calls excitedly for her mother to come look and when she appears she looks terrified: "*Pas nu på. Hvis du gør det der, kan det bevises.*"¹⁰ (Zornig, p. 78). Lisbeth comes up with a lie that she has to pee and when she comes back her mother and Jan are fighting heavily and her mother is threatening with turning him in to the police. He replies with a laughter and he states that they won't be able to prove it and that nobody would believe her.

In the year 1980, Lisbeth turns 12, and she is celebrating with a party with beer and cigarettes with Bodil and some guys they have met. They are having a good time and Lisbeth gets drunk so one of the guys are tucking her into bed. The next day, she is told that he has shot himself with a shotgun.

Times go by and Lisbeth's mother finds a new boyfriend, Richard. He moves in and has some guns that Lisbeth starts to play with in the garden. Richard and her mother fight a lot too. Several severe episodes happen where her mother is beaten and

¹⁰ Translation of quote: "*Careful. If you do that it can be proven.*"

sometimes she yells and beat back but shortly after her mother always pretends nothing has happened. One day at school, Holst gives her a number to social services and explains that she can always call them, if she is not happy at home. The same day Lisbeth goes home and calls the number and she gets picked up by the orphanage bus.

The move – from family to orphanage

Her first night she wakes up and realizes there is someone in her room. It is Stig one of the boys at the orphanage. He tells her to keep quiet and Lisbeth is terrified. He takes of her duvet and pull off her panties. He tries to put a finger up Lisbeth's vagina but she screams "ouch" which gives him a shock. Instead, he goes down and starts licking her while he masturbates. When he finishes he looks down at her and curses about how nasty she tasted and that she will keep quiet about this and then he leaves. She gets up and blocks her door with a chair and decides to find a real chair for tomorrow night although Stig never shows up again.

When she first come to the orphanage, a psychological evaluation is made on Lisbeth. She participates in a personality test and session with a psychologist who refers to Lisbeth as normal-functioning and highly intelligent but with a possibility for neurosis due to neglect of care.

Lisbeth changes school for the fifth time this time to Stormarksskolen. Lisbeth gets a friend, Heidi, and she is happy about the school except two boys she avoids - Steen and Allan. She especially likes having Danish (dansk) at school and she gets positive feedback from her teacher. She sets a goal to become the best of her class and from that point on homework becomes her first priority.

At the orphanage, Lisbeth is displaying behavior problems and there are several meetings about her anger issues. Lisbeth has a hard time adjusting if plans get changed or if she feels they interfere in her life. Anger has become an essential part of Lisbeth's life and she often reacts angrily by yelling and throwing stuff if she feels treated bad or unjustified. If she is not exploding in anger she shuts off completely.

Lisbeth continues to see her mother but asks the visits to be limited. Sometimes she visits her mother and Richard at their bar and hang out with them. One day Richard beats up Lisbeth's mother, after she has knocked over a photograph of his previous wife, by accident, and he smashes her head at the edge of the bed so a bloodstream spurts out her head and Lisbeth has to call an ambulance.

Lisbeth begins to self-defense classes with her schoolfriend Heidi. One day she decides to steal cigarettes and money in the changing room and it gets discovered which resulted in Heidi's parents wouldn't allow Lisbeth to be friends with her anymore.

In the eighth grade Lisbeth chooses shop-class (metalsløjde) instead of arts and crafts (håndgerning) like the other girls. The boys attending the class mock Lisbeth and one day a boy, Jan, throws the birdhouse she is making on the floor:

*“... Med den ene arm på ryggen styrer jeg ham langsomt ned på gulvet og beder ham bruge den anden arm til at samle buret op, hvilket han gør, mens de andre drenge griner højt. Desværre ser Steen og Allan, hvad jeg gør ved Jan. Jeg ved ikke helt, hvorfor de synes, de skal hævne Jan, men et par dage efter ... passer de mig op ... Så griber Steen fat i mine arme bagfra og holder mig, mens Allan flere gange hamrer knytnæve ind i maven på mig...”*¹¹ (Zornig, p. 98).

Lisbeth continues her attempts to avoid the bullying boys and focus on school. Later a new girl starts, Jette, and once again Lisbeth has a friend in school. They smoke and drink a lot together and it comes to a point where they show up drunk in class although this only is referred to once. After some time Jette is being moved to 'continuation school' (efterskole) because it is decided that Lisbeth is bad company for Jette.

¹¹ Translation of quote: “... With one arm at his back I slowly guide him down to the floor and ask him use the other arm to pick up the cage, which he does, while the other boys laughs. Unfortunately, Steen and Allan see what I do to Jan. I don't exactly know why they think they have to revenge Jan but a couple of days later ... they pass me up ... Then Steen takes my arms from behind and holds me while Allan multiple times pounds his fist into my stomach...”

Lisbeth starts coming at a biker club. One weekend there is a party at the club. She meets a nice guy but suddenly he is gone. Another guy tells Lisbeth he knows where he is and he takes her outside. He brings her out in the dark and further into the woods and Lisbeth realizes too late what is about to happen. He throws her at the ground and covers her mouth while he tries to rape her. She is saying no but he replies that she herself invited to it by coming and therefore she should stop acting sacred and give in. Lisbeth stops fighting him because she thinks he has a point and that he is right about this being her own fault. She is afraid he is going to kill her so she decides to lie completely still while the tears are running down her cheeks and she is feeling severe pain. When he has finished and walked away Lisbeth walks slowly and painfully back to the orphanage.

The many conflicts at the orphanage continue. Lisbeth tells about an episode where she gets into a fight with a pedagogue and she walks away and slams the door. The next moment Stig and another guy Kim are at her doorway and they drag her out to the bathroom. The pedagogue is watching while they turn on icing cold water. It hurts a lot on her skin and the whole orphanage is trying to get a view pushing each other away to watch. After a while, the pedagogue turns off the water and says to Lisbeth that she hopes she has cooled off now.

Lisbeth continuously tries to find other places to live and escapes the orphanage whenever she can. First, she tries asking if she can live with her father but neither he nor the orphanage thinks it is possible due to her behavior problems. Later on, Lisbeth tries both with her aunt which didn't work out and later her big brother Michael. This was a happy place for Lisbeth and she lived there for a short while but their father did not like it and called the police to get her back to the orphanage.

Lisbeth still sees her mother and they start to go to bars in the weekends. Lisbeth meets Niels, who becomes her first boyfriend. She describes Niels as gentle and patient and that her tough facade slowly fades away with him because of his love and interest in her. They spend most of their time cuddling in bed and if they are not at home cuddling they spend time with his friends. It doesn't bother Lisbeth as long as she is with Niels.

One day, Lisbeth is called to an extraordinary meeting at the orphanage. Her mother and most of the pedagogues are present. They tell her that they can no longer do anything for her at this orphanage and that her mother wishes Lisbeth as far away as possible so she won't be able to visit her whenever it suits Lisbeth. Lisbeth is not particularly interested in the meeting and she looks away while smoking. It is when her mother starts accusing Lisbeth of hitting on Richard that she starts to pay attention. Lisbeth looks at her mother confused and doesn't really know what she is talking about but realizes that her and Richard has had more in common lately on topics to talk about and that it may leave her mother to feel left out. Lisbeth realizes that her mother's wish for Lisbeth disappearing may be because she has become a threat to her. The pedagogues keep telling Lisbeth how much she takes advantage of her mother and the meeting continues mainly with the agenda of explaining how angry and difficult she is. Shortly after, Lisbeth is moved to Hylleholt (Hylleholt husgerningskole) in Fakse Ladeplads.

The second move – from orphanage to Hylleholt

The year turns 1982 and Lisbeth starts at Hylleholt. Lisbeth meets some of the girls living there and she gets a good impression of the pedagogues. Lisbeth uses the first couple of days to settle in. When it becomes Friday, she leaves to go to Nakskov to visit Niels. He picks her up at the train station and they drive home to Lisbeth's mother and Richard to say hello. The atmosphere is awkward and they decide to leave again. Back at Niels place, they cuddle up in bed.

“Jeg er som sædvanlig kold over det hele og har klamme håndflader og iskolde tæer... jeg lægger mig tæt ind til ham... stille og roligt breder varmen sig i mig og jeg spænder mindre og mindre... lige så stille giver han sig til at kysse mig ... jeg spænder igen og er på vagt. Han er på vej ned for at slikke mig, og det vil jeg ikke ha'. Minderne om Jan og Stig vælter op i mig, og jeg er ved at gå i panik...”¹² (Zornig, p. 128).

¹² Translation of quote: “I am as usual cold all over and I have clammy hands and ice-cold feet... I move closer to him... slowly, the warmth spreads inside me and I become less tense... He slowly starts kissing me... I become tense again and I am alert. He is on his way down to lick me and I do not want that. The memories of Jan and Stig rushes over me and I am about to panic.”

Lisbeth stops Niels and he asks what is wrong. She expresses she does not want him to do that. He keeps still for a while and then he starts kissing her and gently initiate oral sex. “*Alt raser i mig, men midt i min frygt er der også en lyst*”¹³ (Zornig, p. 128). He is only doing it briefly and then he stops and goes back to cuddle with her.

After some time at Hylleholt, Lisbeth begins ninth grade at a new school in Fakse Ladeplads where Hylleholt is located. Her class teacher, Børge, is very strict but ambitious with loads of homework. He quickly sees Lisbeth’s school potential which makes him expect more from her performance in school which motivates her. Lisbeth has advanced classes in all courses at school also German which she struggles with. Lisbeth has a fallout with her German teacher, Kubel, at school that makes Lisbeth gather her stuff and leave. At Hylleholt a pedagogue comes to Lisbeth and talks to her about the episode. They agree to set up a meeting with the pedagogues, Lisbeth and the teacher Kubel. They come to the agreement of extra classes personally performed at home with Kubel so Lisbeth will be able to improve her German skills. Lisbeth describes to be confused but relieved. She has not tried this way of finding solutions before.

Lisbeth likes the pedagogues at Hylleholt but her anger issues continues to be a big theme in Lisbeth’s life. She is still struggling and she reacts aggressively when plans get changed if she is not notified. She tells about incidents where she breaks chairs if she is told to do something that has not been planned ahead. The pedagogues approach Lisbeth on this topic and try to reason with her coping strategies while explaining that life can be unpredictable and that she has to learn to manage her behavior. Lisbeth likes the way they manage problems and has never experienced problems been handled by simple dialogue.

Lisbeth has created routines at Hylleholt and she spends a lot of her time with school. She also starts at rowing where two girls she knows also rows. She starts rowing in

¹³ Translation of quote: “*Everything rages in me but in the middle of my fear there is a desire.*”

boats with 4 people and a coxswain. After some time, she becomes the coxswain and that is the part she loves most about rowing.

Lisbeth starts living two separate lives. One at Hylleholt filled with school, chores and rowing and one in Nakskov in the weekends with partying and alcohol. Although Lisbeth is with Niels she meets other guys when partying and one night she decides to go home with one of them:

*“... Efter lidt tid spørger han, om ikke jeg går med ham hjem. Jeg er beruset af følelsen af at være sexet og siger ja... vi styrer direkte mod sengen, hvor vi flår tøjet af hinanden. Han giver sig ikke tid til at gøre mig tryk og varm, men trænger ind i mig med det samme. I et kort øjeblik bliver jeg bange, men gennemfører samlejet.”*¹⁴ (Zornig, p. 140).

After he has ejaculated, he falls asleep and Lisbeth goes back to the club. This becomes the beginning of a marathon of one-night stands. *“Jeg ved ikke hvorfor, men når jeg kan se mit snit til at gejle en mand eller en dreng op, går jeg hele vejen. Det er holdt op med at gøre ondt at have sex, og jeg er ikke bange. Et kort øjeblik bliver jeg verdens vigtigste person for den mand, der får mig...”*¹⁵ (Zornig, p. 141).

Lisbeth continues her weekends by exploring the night life in Nakskov, while her daily life fills with school, chores, friends and rowing. The class teacher Børge's wife, Karen, is a pedagogue at Hylleholt who starts after months away at a seminar. Lisbeth becomes close to her and borrows books from her and Rigmor the manager of Hylleholt. Lisbeth especially gets fond of Karen, and they start weekly homework sessions together. Through these, Lisbeth grows into a bigger relationship with Karen.

¹⁴ Translation of quote: “... After a while he asks me if I want to come with him home. I am intoxicated by the feeling of being sexy and I say yes... We go straight for the bed where we tear each other's clothes off. He does not take time to make me feel comfortable or warm but he immediately penetrates in me. For a brief moment I become scared but I go through with the sexual intercourse.”

¹⁵ Translation of quote: “I do not know why but when I find the opportunity to lead on a man or a boy I go all the way. It has stopped hurting while having sex and I am not scared. For a brief moment I become the most important person for the man that gets me.”

Lisbeth turns 15 and is celebrated at Hylleholt. She is soon done with 9.th grade and she becomes more and more anxious about her finishing grades. The last exam is German and Lisbeth and Karen practise a lot. The day comes and Lisbeth finishes school with 11 in German and generally high grades.

Summary of the case

Lisbeth's case contains a complexity of multiple and differentiating traumatic experiences. From an early age she is faced with neglect of care, troubled relationships to parents, constant movements physically as emotionally and several sexual or violent assaults. As Lisbeth is moved from home to orphanage several times no safe place is established and both home and orphanage come to induce fear and danger. Throughout her development, Lisbeth is faced with a multiplicity of traumas and unstable relations. Lisbeth struggles with anger issues and presents OCD-behavior throughout her development. Not many steady relationships are described but the few she encounters throughout her youth come to have different impact on her. When Lisbeth meets Niels a small change of trust starts growing. Then she is moved to Hylleholt where she experiences personnel who shows real and genuine interest in her. She is furthermore presented with new forms of dialogue and ways of approaching problems and behavior that she has not seen before. A special relationship to the pedagogue Karen is established and they find a common ground of connecting through schoolwork. School is filled with both negative as positive experiences but academic skills becomes a focus for Lisbeth from an early age. After moving to Hylleholt, Lisbeth starts living a more 'regular' life with school, hobby and friends as she concurrently enjoys nights out in Nakskov.

The construction of self in relation to others

Lisbeth is met with different relationship over the course of her life, some more stable than others. As Lisbeth grows up, she encounters several traumatic episodes that come to shape her perspective towards herself, others and the world in general. The ideas of the world are shaped through the encounters with specific others regardless of the negative or positive outcome. Lisbeth's encounters become woven together and they come to have an effect on her self-image and behavior in different manners. The links

through which these come to affect each other will be elaborated in the following sections.

The self-concept of a person is created in the interaction with others. It is through relating to oneself, by the way others relate, that the self is created. There is a dynamic flow that contributes to the created idea of the self, based on the ideas of others. This process is a part of internalization and builds upon the notion of I<>ME dynamics by the concept of George Herbert Mead. The I, is presented by Mead as the reality experienced from within and as the source of which our conscious actions stem from. The I, represents the idiosyncratic and creative aspects of the self and is in constant negotiation with the meeting with the other through 'ME'. ME, is the object for self-consciousness, it is the physical appearance that is observed by others and it represents the social component that is a result of the internalization as a construction of the self (Mead, 2011). It is the reciprocal dynamic between the subject <> object contrast which includes the subjective experience of the actions and reactions of the person's environment (Mead, 1908 in Valsiner & van der Veer, 2000). The emphasis of Mead is upon the relatedness to others which is based on the argument that "*There must be other selves if one's own is to exist...*" (Mead, 1909, p. 407 in Valsiner & van der Veer, 2000, p. 263). The basis of social experience and the external world is understood from the concept of the generalized other. The meetings with others are based on the gathered attitudes one assumes and it is the relatedness and response to these attitudes that we create the generalized other. The generalized other becomes the symbol of normative regulation and ways of perceiving the world that become integrated into the person based on the assumption of the attitudes of the community. This is what the individual regulates and monitors own conduct by assuming the perspectives of the generalized other (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012).

Reciprocity

Mead's theoretical display of the I<>ME dynamics suits to illustrate the self-understanding that one creates based on perceptions of others' ideas in social interaction. His contribution serves to offer an approach to comprehend the movement in between perceived expectations from others and self-reflection that Lisbeth encounters throughout her development. Through interaction with others, these ideas

are accumulated and they feed into the self-made understanding as it feeds forward from the social world.

From an early age, Lisbeth is victimized by the actions of primary caretakers by neglect and then an avalanche of traumatic incidents happens, along with numerous sexual assaults starting from the age of 9. Her first encounter with sexual assault begins with Mogens, the otherwise gentle and comforting older man. His hand in her trousers are not yet experienced as violating although Lisbeth does not understand his intentions behind the act. As he moves along that later results in him following her to the bathroom and bringing her to his bed and initiating oral sex. Lisbeth does not yet describe the feeling of violation but is unsure what Mogens seeks when asking for reactions to his actions. Mead describes age as a factor before a person is able to comprehend the 'other' and to be able to perceive and understand the social rules of behavior (Valsiner & Van der Veer, 2000).

The following sexual assault where Lisbeth in sexual constellations become uncomfortable is when Jan and her mother includes Lisbeth in their sexual act engaging in domestic sexual assault. Lisbeth initially describes being indirectly involved by laying in the bed while her mother and Jan are being sexually active. At a certain point Lisbeth interferes by asking them what they are doing and Jan introduces her to the concept of masturbation which she tries without connecting certain feelings with the act. Her neutrality as an unwilling bystander of Jan and her mother's sex life has been removed. This evolves to what Lisbeth subsequently gets involved in when Jan and her mother pours wine for Lisbeth one day after school which is the first step for involving her directly in their sexual act. Jan initiates sex with Lisbeth's mother by starting with Lisbeth. As it later becomes known, penetration has not been an option because that would make the assault provable. Lisbeth's experience of being a victim of sexual assault continues in different context and by different actors. One night, she finds herself at a motorcycle club, connecting with a sweet guy that disappears and then end up being raped in the forest. Once again, Lisbeth becomes a victim of yet another assault and is at the age where she starts reflecting upon the actions she and her surrounding people do (Mead, 2011a). As she is victimized and sexually violated in the woods trying to escape, her perpetrator argues for her accomplice in the assault by being naive and argues for her implicit content given by following him to the woods. A clash of opposing ideas of the 'I' starts to crumble in the setting of 'I as a victim' to the 'I am at fault therefore ME as an accomplice'. The ME as a concept adapt, revise

and review reactions from others and these come to affect the internalization of feelings and self-portrait. When considering own conduct reactions upon own actions will be remembered in regard to involved others. When essential problems appear, there is a chance for disintegration and reflective thoughts with different voices that may be in conflict with each other (Valsiner & Van der Veer, 2000). James Wertsch worked with the phenomena of semiotic mediation within a thinking person and he emphasized the dynamic process of situation redefinition (Valsiner, 1998). This contained the elements of intersubjectivity whereas persons in a joint activity come to be guided by the context they are engaged in. They may share a similar definition of the situation guided by communication. The components in such a dialogue can be viewed as different voices that may exist both in and around the mind. A voice can become a segment that may represent parts of someone else, which may evolve to a created idea of the generalized other. The origin of the voice may be transcended from a person like a family member or a stranger or it may be created based on more socio-institutional terms. When a voice appears a countervoice, representing an opposite counterpart, may also emerge and they both may be involved in the dialogue. The result of such multivoicedness can be ambivalence. The voices come to form a dialogical relationship which may both include internalization or a separation from the mind and the external social world (Valsiner, 1998). The integration of a voice and the message it represents may pass through the borders of integration. This might impact relatedness towards oneself and influence perception and already functioning ideas of I and the world. As Lisbeth is met with the argument of blame an internalization of the message takes place and her idea of the situation and her feelings toward self may undergo a redefinition due to the situation. As her inner dialogue begins with opposing voices concerning the argument of who is at fault, the voice of the violator may come to represent a generalized idea and re-evaluation of her part in the situation.

There is a reciprocal relation between the I and the ME. "*The new self that answers to this new situation can appear in consciousness only after this new situation has been realized and accepted.*" (Mead, 2011b, p. 62). As Lisbeth is faced with this assault the overwhelming feeling of fear becomes central and she is once again in a situation she cannot escape from. As she is trying to flee the perpetrator rationalizes an argument about her accomplice and she is faced with ambivalent feelings of fear and blame.

Mead does not engage further into how this happens, only that it happens. There is a need to elaborate Mead's contributions by another theoretical system. Mead lacks a dynamic side of meaning construction. His engagement is in the fact that people turn to the outside world not how they do it. To elaborate, the theory of semiotic mediation suits well to make use of semiotic dynamics and meaning-making.

The semiotic dynamics

Looking at the ongoing process of meaning making: Jaan Valsiner's theory of Cultural Psychology of Semiotic Dynamics offer an understanding of a person's constant negotiation with self and environment. The human psyche is regulated by semiotic tools which are created and regulated by the guidance of social others. It is in the interaction with others that the conditions for meaning-making and creation and use of signs is mediated (Zittoun et al., 2013). Human beings are signifying creatures which means that in order to make sense of what is encountered we use and create signs. What we encounter in life and our approach, understanding and action toward this is regulated through a sequence of a constant mediation of these signs. A sign becomes a representation for something like an object that contribute to the creation of meaning-making since signs guide our understanding of what is encountered (Valsiner, 2014). Signs can be defined as:

"... sign is an intricate part of a triadic structure, in which the sign represents its object to the interpretant, and the latter presents the object with a new form of meaning that emerges in this triangular process." (Valsiner, 2014, p. 89).

A human being creates meaning based on the affective ground and in relation to others. The affective state, the relations to people and the environment all feed into the meaning construction that come to determine the relating with oneself and the world. What influence this is both created by personal and socially shared ideas. This is constituted by a dialogue in which a certain meaning construction come to determine the way one feel into oneself and the world - which is regulated by signs. Signs are hierarchal ordered and influenced by the ongoing experience that come to define creation or demolishing of signs and sign hierarchies (Zittoun et al., 2013). People respond to messages through constructing sign complexes by the affective field. It is

through this constructive, maintaining and demolishing use of signs that people set up the conditions for creative modification of the environment (Valsiner, 2019). Signs are likewise able to regulate action. Sign-regulation and meaning-construction is under the influence of irreversibility of time that is based on the fact that relating is in here-and-now moment as it is oriented toward the future (Valsiner, 2018).

The self-understanding is semiotically mediated by the perceptions of signs. The movement in between these is a mediation of constructed sign-hierarchies. The dynamics of sign construction operate by the use of intra-psychological and inter-psychological fields (Valsiner, 2014). Communication contains an interchange of sign negotiating between a sender and a receiver – inspired by the ideas of Karl Bühler’s Organon Model:

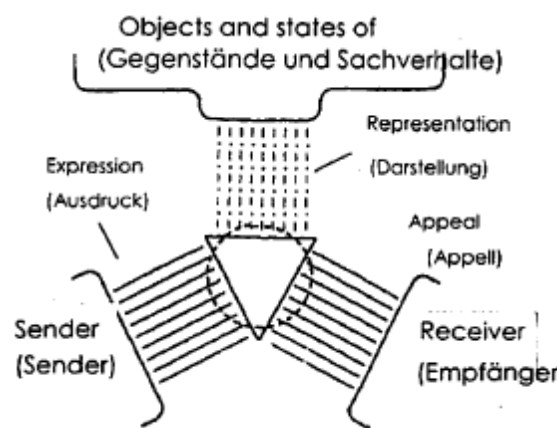


Figure 2: Karl Bühler’s Organon Model of communication 1990

The model presents different parts of the communication illustrating the sender, receiver and the process a message undergoes between these two. An expression is made by the sender who want to give a specific message. The circle in the middle illustrates the object of the message which is also understood as ‘signs’. The message undergoes a reconstruction in the transforming process from one to another in which meaning is negotiated. The receiver will understand the message through own interpretations based on signs comprehended. The sender and the receiver present two different versions of the same referred message. There are two versions of a message and due to the undergoing process through the appeal part, the second version of the sent message is negotiated (Bühler, 1990). Thus, nothing can be understood

completely the same since a reconstructing process happens in the transforming state between the two parties. This process contains steps that add value to the message or object of reference. Despite the subjective unique interpretations and the borders for integration to the depth of personal meaningfulness, generalized knowledge is similarly constructed.

The encounter with the outside world is filled with fields of signs. The first level is the primary representational field where signs as speech are located and herein the meeting with others (Valsiner, 2014). This is the basis for a shared world yet is never objectively the same. Both the affective state, the value added to the messages sent and the depth of the relating to the personal meaningfulness all come together to construct the sense of the field encountered. There is a constant negotiation between a person and the meeting with others and the social world. This is what we see in Lisbeth's life course. Her curiosity of life faced with ambivalence in the meeting of violating others come to construct certain messages and impact the perception of self and the world.

Generalization happens at every moment in our sign use and offer an understanding of abstract phenomena and categories. This generalization is possible due to abstraction that make the features applicable to new specifics (Valsiner, 2019). Some can also go beyond the generalized knowledge and sign field into the hypergeneralized sign field. This sign field is characterized by the inability to verbalizing the affective state and is without precise definition (Branco & Valsiner, 2010). It functions as a process of abstraction involving the experience there has been from past → present and the present → imagined future (Valsiner, 2014). An exchangeable position, led by irreversibility of time brings with it the establishment of hyper-generalized signs. Meaning construction can transcend and develop into hypergeneralized sign fields that are able to operate in the future. Double negation results in hyper generalization process which involves a mega-negation superimposed by the regular negation being A is A and therefore A is not B. A second negation can take place that is not a denial of the first negation but an operative process that allows for a unity that can result in generalization (Valsiner, 2018).

A meaning-making process through sign-construction

As we saw in the case study of Lisbeth, this perspective suits to offer an understanding of Lisbeth and her relating to oneself and significant others. As illustrated by the

I<>ME system of Mead, semiotic mediation fits well to further illustrate the negotiating processes that happens within the individual. All experiences will on different levels be internalized into the I through experiences of ME when they come in contact with the borders of integration (Valsiner, 2014).

As opposing voices represent different aspects of a given situation and hypergeneralized feelings of fear and blame emerges the constructed ideas of the functions of the world may collide and once again ambivalence emerge. Each individual come to create meaningfulness with the world and oneself by a subjective intrapsychological atmosphere that borders and integrate with the meeting of the external world and herein interpersonal relations. It is through relating with the other that a double transformation takes place. The messages that come from the outside world encounter borders for integration by the individual person which might result in an internalization process. The deeper the integration goes the closer it gets to the personal meaningfulness and it is within the deepest layers of personal meaningfulness where the guiding happens. This furthermore affect the messages that are sent out to the world after undergoing a personalized reflection and is being externalized. This is a two-fold process that facilitate the communication that is influenced both by the unique personal world to the external shared world. This process undergoes constant mediation for which a selection takes place for the messages that come to the sphere of the person and which messages that become integrated. The deeper the layers a message comes the bigger the integration into inter-personalized knowledge. It is at these borders of internalization and externalization that semiotic mediation happens (Valsiner, 2014). It is through this process of semiotic mediation by sign-making and sign-regulating that a presentation of self can be manifested.

When faced with complicated relationship to significant others the created meaning and understanding of the world may undergo a process of redefinition (Valsiner, 1998). Just as there are situations where redefinition happens on the basis of colliding ideas of blame and fault, re-definition may as well count for the placements one has given certain roles in the expected imagination of a certain person like a mother. The perception of a mother figure may burst when the expected role and behavior contradicts the created ideas and assumptions. When being unwillingly included in a sexual act with mother and stepfather the expected view of the world and how it

functions collides. The movement between daughter and victim of sexual assault happens via the negotiating process done by semiotic tools. Trying to make sense of the situation in an ambivalent way due to emergence of 'it is my mother but my mother assaults me' lead to ambivalent hypergeneralized feelings. As this sexual assault continues over a period of time the hypergeneralized field of affective sexual relation can include the vague feeling that it is expected. The expectedness entails the experience of being physically roughly mistreated together with the opposite of feeling terrible about being mistreated. The result come to be an overwhelming ambivalence of fearful desire that emerge when Lisbeth experiences sexual excitement later in life as she connects this with past experiences of being physically attacked. The ambivalent hypergeneralized feelings and unfortunate encounters follow Lisbeth into future sexual interactions and affect her expectations and feelings connected to this matter. Meanwhile these interactions come to affect the semiotically mediated self-understanding. The relating to oneself becomes affected by this mediation and negotiation and it guides the meaning construction upon oneself similarly as to the people and world Lisbeth encounters.

When encountering an uncomfortable situation, a person can regulate perception and cognition by semiotic mechanisms of psychological distancing. Distancing becomes possible due to the semiotic mechanisms that construct the relations to oneself and the world. By distancing oneself the person becomes able to survive and overcome a given situation by a hierarchical organization of the self/other mechanisms through meaning. The mechanism of distancing is seen as a tension between what is and what is not and entails the comparison of the here-and-now to what is desired (Valsiner, 1998). This interacts in a dialogical construction that can be illustrated by the tension between opposite voices, representing fear and desire or assault versus consensual. This inner tension will activate mental transformation that may ultimately influence the representational system. By living in the tension of ambivalent feelings and experiences with sex as assault versus sex as pleasurable, changes in the representational system may provide basis for new understandings and meaning-constructions that transform. This regulation is conducted by semiotic means and allow for a variability. The distancing process therefore entails a constant change in meaning-making and re-making where the situation becomes regulated. The negotiating process in double-negation: sex associated with fear, is continuously

regulated by the given context not only in sexual mistreating but also in future encounters when it is engaged with enjoyment (Valsiner, 2018).

The construction of the world surrounding us is based on these exact interactions. Semiotic dynamics function in regulation of feelings and making sense of encountered people and events. The attempt to make sense of any aspect of experience is made of the dynamic of linking past experiences with the given of a situation as it is apprehended (Zittoun, 2017). This process also functions on a microgenetic level by semiotic processes as they are generated in general dynamic dialogical levels among counterparts. A loop of movement in and out of a semiotic stream that is comprehended by the perspectives of available resources and herein involved parties. A reconfiguration of meaning through past experiences creating ambivalence when Lisbeth is later faced with sexual attraction and activity with a boyfriend. An act that is not meant for harm or selfish pleasure regardless of Lisbeth's consent. *"In other words, this loop transforms the semiotic stream in which we live, whether at the microgenetic level in the here-and-now, at the ontogenetic level – opening new life choices- or at a more sociogenetic scale, when new societal futures are made possible..."* (Zittoun, 2017, p. 296).

The traumas of sexual assaults are a big theme in Lisbeth's life while she also has other kinds of traumatic experiences here among bullying and violent episodes in school. Although, bullying and loneliness in school apparently does not get the same stronghold in Lisbeth. Lisbeth appears with another confident attitude in school. It becomes the first place she stands up for herself and defends her own honor. This is illustrated by the incident happening at school where Lisbeth is the only girl attending shop class. The boys nag her about it but nothing that gets under her skin, until one day where a guy shoves her birdhouse at the floor. In this moment Lisbeth apply her taught self-defense techniques and forces him to the ground as she is asking him to pick it up. In this particular moment a shift happens to protector of herself. This is a critical transitioning point in which another victimizing moment leads to empowerment. Past actions become objects of reference and create memory-images of initiated social conduct and perceived responses from others (Mead, 2011a). This experience may come to create a foundation for confidence which may be the breaking point of which she might handle situations in the future. All this is a part of a running

current of awareness which leads the conscious self as both a subject and an object in which stimulations and responses become conscious experience. The self is being observed as it is an observer and in memory it reintegrates the acting self as well as the others acted upon (Mead, 2011b). This calls for a response within the individual herself that may be critical or approving in the reflective self which may affect future responses and actions from Lisbeth.

Summary – The creation of self through social interaction

By integrating Mead's and Valsiner's ideas of self-understanding in the encounter with the social world perspectives have been offered to enlighten the case of Lisbeth. The systemic model of I<>ME dynamics combined with semiotic sign construction offer an understanding of the process of constructing or rejecting elements of an existing self-image of Lisbeth and her perceptions of others. Mead by taking on the relevance of social interaction and the attitudes and ideas of others and Valsiner by emphasizing the construction of sign hierarchies and negotiating practices. This serve to illustrate the dynamic processes that happen in the encounter with others and the social world and how these experiences come to be defined and redefined depending on the specific situation. These are impacted by the process of abstraction in regard to the interplay between past-present-future and come to affect the relating to oneself and the world.

The developing path through education

School comes to have a supportive role which impact positively on Lisbeth's further engagement and commitment to educational success. Education has become one of the major parts of Lisbeth's life that leads to the possibility of changing trajectories. School interest becomes supported by specific others through Lisbeth's youth. First her school teacher Grethe takes her in and acts as foster care family that results in positive increase personally as academically. Later, Holst becomes an essential part of Lisbeth's growing interest in reading and writing and he and his wife offer intellectual stimulation as they create a safe space for Lisbeth. Furthermore, school becomes the framework for which a supportive helper, Karen, becomes available for Lisbeth at her

time at Hylleholt. This forms a trust between the two which create a base for possibility for further developing in life course and the choices conducted.

In the following section, a continuation of the description of Lisbeth's later schoolyears from gymnasium to her first months at University will be presented. These will, in keeping with tradition, be analyzed and discussed in continuation of previous chapters and material presented below.

The third move – from Hylleholt to living by herself

The choice of continuing school is easy for Lisbeth and she begins at Haslev Gymnasium in 1983. She has no idea what it means to attend gymnasium and she only knows Karen who has a graduate exam (studentereksamen). Karen and Lisbeth keep working on homework together and Lisbeth feels comfortable and happy with attending the gymnasium classes. She continues to like Danish and writes poems and short stories one of which she sends to the Danish catalogue 'Alt for Damerne' which starts a career dream of becoming a writer although it quickly ends due to the catalogue's decline of her short story. Lisbeth expresses genuine positivity toward the gymnasium many times:

*"I Gymnasiet er jeg i mit rette element. Jeg suger til mig, og især i samfundsfag er jeg tændt og aktiv... Jeg begynder at ryge Kings, som virker meget mere intellektuelt ... og jeg begynder også selv at skrive digte... Jeg blander mig ofte og højlydt i timerne og bliver hurtigt kendt for at være den irriterende samfundskritiker, man skal være udholdende for at diskutere med. Jeg begynder at få modet til at drille mine lærere, og de driller igen, så det er en fryd ... Gymnasiet repræsenterer en ny og fantastisk verden."*¹⁶ (Zornig, pp. 147-148).

¹⁶ Translation of quote: "In gymnasium I feel right at home. I embrace it and especially in social sciences I am active and passionate ... I begin to smoke Kings, that seem way more intellectual ... and I even begin to write my own poems ... I often interfere loudly in class and get known as the annoying society detractor one should be persistent to argue with. I begin to get the courage to tease my teachers and they tease back, it is a joy... The Gymnasium represents a new and fantastic world."

Lisbeth enjoys gymnasium even though issues arise between her and her teachers. Lisbeth refers to an incident with her French teacher who takes Lisbeth's hair and forces her head to the table after several interruptions with disagreements on the teacher's analysis of "Le Boucher" and the teacher keeps her head at the table for about 5 minutes while the teacher continues to talk. Lisbeth shows up the following day with crew-cut hair as she replies her best in French that this is not a way to keep her silent solely because of disagreements and they both laugh. Episodes similar is presented like the regular process of the geography teacher who throws the blackboard whipping sponge at her every time he wishes her to keep quiet.

The gymnasium is a big part of Lisbeth's life and she separate the wild youth life she has created in Nakskov, with her daily school life in Haslev and at Hylleholt. She separates the two things to such an extent that she will not attend parties at the gymnasium because she thinks that beer, dance and music is connected to Nakskov and has nothing do to with school. Throughout the first two years of gymnasium Lisbeth continues to live two separate lives: one in Nakskov with her mother, one-nights stands and alcohol and another life at Hylleholt with school, chores and hobbies.

At Christmas Lisbeth goes visit her mother and Richard. Richard beats her mother up very seriously and as the fighting starts Lisbeth decides to get up and leave. Quickly, the thought of not being able to help scares Lisbeth and she returns home where they are still fighting. When the fighting stops her mother disappears for a while and when she comes back she pronounces that she has emptied a jaw of sleeping pills. Lisbeth wonders where she would have these from and confronts her mother as she decides to leave. As she is about to leave her mother shouts after her complaining that she has no one, that Lisbeth is the only one left so she cannot leave. Lisbeth is overwhelmed by rage which results in a roar and then she calls an ambulance.

The hospital files a police report against Richard based on the latest assault of her mother. Lisbeth is called to testify in court. The year starts - 1984, Lisbeth has just turned 16 years old and she shows up in court where both her mother and Richard are present. She is asked detailed about the night and Lisbeth tries to answer as precisely as she remembers. She is trying to get eye contact with her mother but her mother dodges. When Lisbeth is done, she leaves the court. Next time she is in Nakskov, she

is informed that the charges had been withdrawn and that her mother had told that Lisbeth was lying. An article was published where Lisbeth and her mother had been displayed and made them look foolish. Lisbeth got angry and confronted her mother like she had never done before. After this incident, Lisbeth starts to dream of beating up her mother very violently in her attempt to kill her. This happens almost every night, and then Lisbeth wakes up scared and covered in sweat. She feels like there is a war happening inside her head. Lisbeth tries to begin counting everything again, but it does not work as it used to.

Lisbeth continues her daily life as much as possible. She gets a part time job that she likes at a butcher near Hylleholt and divides the rest of her spare time between school homework, rowing and other small hobbies she has started. The homework sessions Lisbeth has with Karen starts develop into more private sessions with talk about Lisbeth's private life besides school. They begin to separate the two and have weekly sessions with 'talks'. During these talks Lisbeth confides in Karen and one day Lisbeth decides to tell her everything. She cannot hold her tears back anymore and she cries and cries while telling her whole life story in details to Karen. Then Lisbeth becomes overwhelmed with tiredness, a certain feeling she has never experienced before. She goes to her room and falls asleep. When she wakes up she feels light in her head and she laughs a lot. She feels drunk. She looks to Karen in the common area but Karen is unaffected and that confuses Lisbeth and she starts wondering whether this is not the first time she has heard this kind of story that the other girls may have similar stories. From that day on Lisbeth decides to never go back to Nakskov again. Rigmor, the manager of Hylleholt, notifies Lisbeth's mother about the decision. She does not know what her mother's reaction is but her mother never tries to reach out again.

The weekly meeting with Karen continues and Lisbeth looks forward to them. Lisbeth tried to talk to a psychologist when she first came to Hylleholt but she decided to keep quiet the whole session and they quickly decided to end the sessions again. As the sessions with Karen continues Lisbeth no longer feels a need for her crazy nightlife and she cuts that off completely too.

Lisbeth is told by Hylleholt that she is ready to move by herself. She feels betrayed but the decision is made because they no longer feel that they can do anything for her.

Karen becomes Lisbeth's legal guardian till she turns 18 and they have arranged for psychologist sessions in Copenhagen and accommodation in Haslev near the gymnasium.

Lisbeth moves unwillingly to live by herself and a period of severe loneliness starts and Lisbeth spends all her time alone either walking in nature or reading books. Back at school, Lisbeth hangs out with her friend Helle and they begin to go out in the weekends but not like before: "... jeg er en anden nu."¹⁷ (Zornig, p. 164). Friends become a bigger part of her life now besides the visits she keeps doing at Børge and Karen's house and her part time job in Fakse Ladeplads. Lisbeth also gets a new boyfriend -Teddy.

Lisbeth begins in 3. g (last year of gymnasium):

*"Jeg forsøger at levere toppræstationer hver dag, og jeg trives blandt kammeraterne i klassen. Jeg bruger min fritid på mine venner, og der kommer stille og roligt flere til... Bolette starter i 1. g. Vi snakker sammen næsten hver dag ... jeg lærer hende at ryge... og drikke ... mens vi hører klassisk musik ... og når vi bliver tilpas berusede af rødvinen, reciterer vi digte og prøver at overgå hinanden med viden om forfattere."*¹⁸ (Zornig, p. 169).

The year goes by with friends, boyfriend, homework and a continuing dedication to school. The time comes where she has to decide what is going to happen after gymnasium and the thought of not knowing what to do is terrifying so she wants to decide quickly. She wants an education that leads to a demanding job, a job no one else in the class have thought of. She explores the ratings of unemployment at different jobs and decides to apply 2 different: 'Polit' (economics) and law school. The spring goes fast and the pressure from school becomes big which results in Lisbeth doing her

¹⁷ Translation of quote: "I am different now."

¹⁸ Translation of quote: "I try to deliver top performances every day and I thrive among my classmates. I spend my spare time with my friends and slowly I get more and more... Bolette begins in 1. g. We talk almost every day ... I teach her to smoke ... and drink ... while we listen to classical music ... and when we get just enough red wine to become tipsy, we recite poems and try to outmatch each other with knowledge of writers."

homework long hours into the night but it doesn't bother her. She is doing great but never fully satisfied with her work: "*Jeg kunne have gjort det endnu bedre, hvis jeg havde arbejdet hårdere.*"¹⁹ (Zornig, p. 177). Lisbeth's focus is only on school and starts to neglect the other parts of her life. But the day arise and Lisbeth gets her graduate exam and Karen is waiting for her with her student hat (studenterhue) and face covered with proudness as she finishes her last exam.

In 1986, Lisbeth starts 'Polit' at Copenhagen University and uses her summer holiday to prepare. She had decided to "kick ass" from the first day she starts in school. In the introduction course over the first couple of weeks Lisbeth falls in love with her tutor Peter and they share a genuine interest in literature and he introduces her to the student political life which Lisbeth decides to engage in. They move in together after 2 months and Lisbeth starts her life in Copenhagen filled with Peter and University activities. Lisbeth decides to confide in Peter and tells him everything about her childhood and the experiences she has had and that she no longer speaks with her mother. After a long talk, Lisbeth decides to reach out to her mother again. It has been two years with no contact but when she calls her mother, she is happy and pretend like it was yesterday they last talked. They decide to come by for a meal and that is when Lisbeth's story ends.

Summary of the case

The experiences of Lisbeth, whether it is traumatic or educational are woven together. There continues to be a mixture of a wild nightlife in Nakskov while she is dedicating her everyday life to gymnasium, hobbies and chores. A defining moment happens when Lisbeth's mother is severely beaten up. This results in a report to the police and Lisbeth is called to court. Her mother portrays Lisbeth as a liar which makes Lisbeth snap. She starts having violent dreams against her mother which troubles her. The sessions with Karen evolve and she decides to confide completely in her. This results in a new feeling and a decision to cut off all contact to Nakskov - both her mother and the crazy nightlife. Lisbeth's sole focus is now toward her new way of living filled with school and friends. Hylleholt decides that they have done what they could with

¹⁹ Translation of quote: "*I could have done better if I had worked harder.*"

Lisbeth and that she had to move out and create a daily life for herself. That is experienced as a breach of trust but she keeps close contact to Hylleholt and Karen. When reaching the final year of gymnasium Lisbeth decides to continue her education by applying to Copenhagen University. She gets accepted and she starts studying 'polit' where she meets Peter who becomes her boyfriend. She tells him everything and she decides to re-establish her relationship to her mother so she calls her and this is where her story stops.

Education as a stepping stone

Education has been a big theme throughout Lisbeth's life. Through education Lisbeth has been presented to supportive others that in different ways have formed her life. Academic success continues to be a priority and it seems like an important factor when Lisbeth life starts changing. Education as a term become extended and does no longer solely imply school but becomes a framework for which Lisbeth becomes educated as a person. The following sections will approach selected aspects of education and how it in different ways come to shape her life path and development.

Kurt Lewin's term of life space comprehends the perceived opportunities and possible actions in which an active organism can engage in within time and space. The assumption derives from the principle that a person's possible actions are limited by the perception of material, social and cognitive constraints. Life space is therefore a concept of what the person sees as possibilities and limitations rather than the objective material and social situation. This led to the notion of quasi-phenomena that among other concepts embrace boundary zones of the life space that derives from the idea of limitations of certain parts of the social and physical world (Zittoun, Valsiner & Vedeler, 2013). Elaborately, these life spaces are organized in time which means that only the presence exist and the past and future is present only if they are made actual in the present. Hence for Lewin, the total present situation for a person includes history and imaginations leading this to be a psychological life space. A parallel idea of Lewin's notion of life space is presented by Erwin Goffman that contribute with his term of frame that embrace the understanding a person has of what is at stake in a given social situation. By applying a frame analysis, one is able to examine the terms of the organization of an experience and hereby enables the ability to not only perceive

the social boundary but to create an understanding of the occurring situation (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012). These frames include both the physical objects and casual relationships as they contain the human agency with rules, principles, intentions and so forth. Frames are made by socially shared ideas of rules and principles as they are filled with subjective personal conceptions that are affecting the 'framing' of a situation rectified by the understanding and negotiation of the involved parties (Goffman, 1982). The frames for a situation are therefore negotiated and at times compensated by the socially shared ideas that lead certain behavior to count as normal and appropriate and in other situations wrong and inappropriate. The idea of the surroundings is therefore constructed and changed by the perspective of the person which come to guide the perception of possible actions and constraints all within the framework created both socially and individually.

Frames and the respective setting evolve throughout time and the movement within them. As a person grow up the frames will change and there will be position change and setting regulation when the role of a person changes or vice versa (Zittoun et al., 2013). This evolvment is regulated by social change as it is affected by individual trajectory. Changes can happen on a broader level being sociogenetic, which designates changes in the social world among institutions and social representations. A change can also happen on a microgenetic level in between a person and others and the exchange among them. Lastly, there is the ontogenetic level that is concerned with the changes within the individual person through time. All changes affect each other and they come to influence life trajectories (Zittoun, Valsiner & Vedeler, 2013).

Developmental trajectories

By the notion of Lewin's ideas, the life space of Lisbeth is bound by her perceived as well as actual possibilities and limitations that set the course of life. Throughout her time at the orphanage Lisbeth tries to flee as she seeks refuge first with her father. He decides this is not possible, and she continues to explore her possibilities to escape the orphanage. This becomes harder for her as she tries with new family members but then succeeds with her brother Michael. This is an improvement for Lisbeth but their father does not approve and he sent the police to get Lisbeth back to the orphanage. Her possibilities to flee from the orphanage become further limited. This is just one example of how the perceived or created possibilities and limitations come to guide

and direct paths. As the limitations make Lisbeth behave in certain ways, the notion of social framing by Goffman comes to define the appropriateness of behavior (Goffman, 1956). Lisbeth struggles with behavior issues especially temper tantrums and they are not accepted at the orphanage. Furthermore, they become the object for her father's refuse of her being able to move in with him. Anger and physical outburst are generally not accepted in the common area of social interaction unless the setting supports it. Even though it seems like a natural reaction of frustration it is rarely tolerated. Lisbeth acts out whenever she feels mistreated or a new situation comes up that she has not prepared for. Her aggressive behavior and her lacking ability to control it creates conflicts. This is a big issue at the first orphanage where Lisbeth is placed but there seems to be no solution addressable for them. A more appropriate conduct of behavior is introduced at Hylleholt who neither tolerates the aggressive and extreme reactions Lisbeth displays. The difference between the orphanages lies within the framing of action opportunities. At her first orphanage, her behavior was frowned upon but never guided towards another way of handling feelings and displaying behavior. Whereas Hylleholt uses communication to elaborate feelings that might emerge and a more appropriate handling. This change of social framing is even conscious for Lisbeth as she comments upon this new way of dealing with issues. This is exemplified when pedagogues at Hylleholt approach Lisbeth about her conflict with her German teacher Kubel. The following way of handling this conflict and their way of finding a suited solution is described as unexpected but relieving. Lisbeth encounters sociogenic differences within a given culture of an institution. A person's experience in a specific setting regulates action opportunities as it effects the personal perception and evaluation of such (Zittoun et al., 2013). The history of experiences in given similar settings and the regulated rules, either informal or formal, control acceptance of appropriate behavior. This is given partly by the institutional context and partly by the sociocultural environment. Within these, the growing relationships of involved parties happens in terms of a microgenetic process and set up the conditions for development within these frames. The position change happening constitute development on an ontogenetic level. The developmental pathway of Lisbeth will be a result of these exact frames and interactions within them that interactively construct behavior patterns and the move towards another way of dealing with issues which might impact trajectories in life (Zittoun et al., 2013).

A developmental perspective allows for a redefinition and the past is in a constant construction-in-the-making oriented by an imagination of the potential future. De Saint-Laurent presents 'trajectory of remembering' that covers the elements of remembering throughout life course (Zittoun, 2017). Memories are crafted by the person that engages in various memory acts with specific others. The memory is evolving through imagination of future by making re-visits of certain past experiences. Memories upon behavior and a right way of conducting this may influence future action patterns. Similarly, memories of sex through sexual abuse come to be re-evaluated in the need a new regulation of definition. This new definition is needed when engaging in consensual sex with a partner. This is required for being able to later embrace consensual sexual acts. As Lisbeth grows older, she meets Niels who becomes her first boyfriend. She describes an inner struggle the first time they become intimate. Conflicting feelings emerge when Lisbeth is about to engage in an intimate experience yet this time with a boyfriend. This is another crucial transitioning point in Lisbeth's life where her experiences connected to sexual acts moves towards feelings of consensus and pleasure. The inevitable tension between past experiences and new experiences give rise for new feelings to emerge. Hypergeneralized feelings of ambivalence created of fear from previous memories collides with the emergence of new feelings that contain a growing desire to investigate sex with a boyfriend. As Lisbeth is facing the unpredictable future she is feeling forward in to participation of another sexual event. The process of *abstraction* initiates and induces mental operation. The act of abstraction leads to generalization such as the presented actions becomes applicable to new specifics via the abstraction of features within the specific context (Branco & Valsiner, 2010). This enables one to regulate, re-evaluate and construct new meanings and definitions toward an encountered experience. Lisbeth undergoes an affective process that are semiotically organized, emphasizing the role of the act on a microgenetic level of subjective phenomena. This process allows for development that is able to be consolidated at the ontogenetic level. These new experiences and feelings become abstracted and opens up for possibilities of new mental attitudes and perceptions - for example of a sexual act.

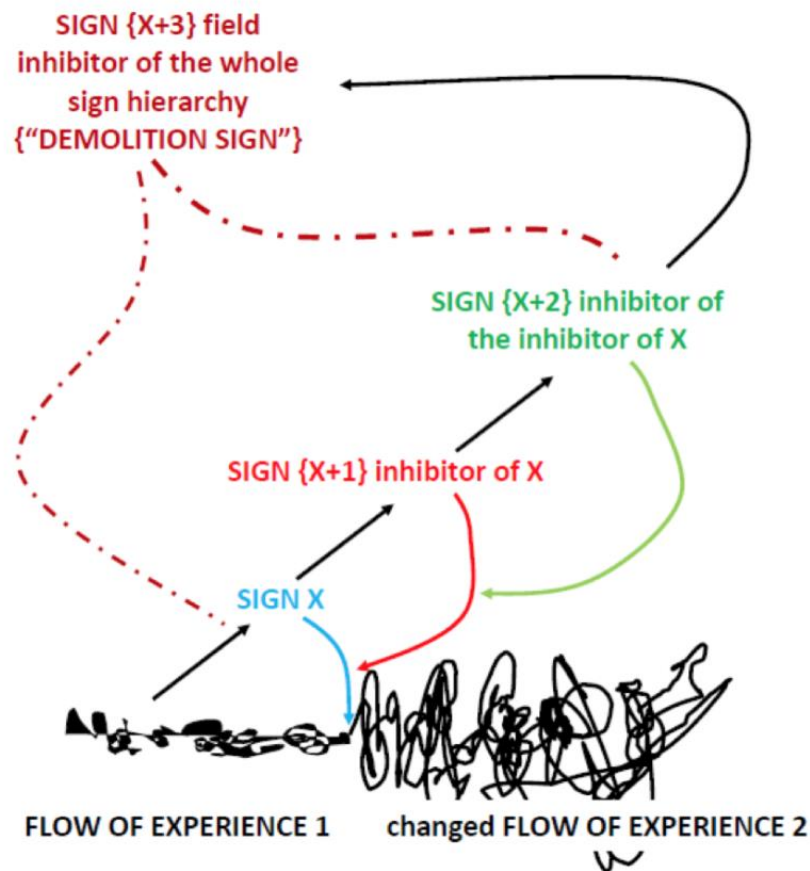


Figure 3 – Jaan Valsiner's model of sign hierarchies

Figure 3 illustrates a flow of regulation and negotiation of signs within an experience. The model visually illustrates the negotiating process that happens when encountering a specific event. The negotiating practices are initiated by regulation of signs. They become re-evaluated and negotiated in regard to the previous one. This can be exemplified by Lisbeth's sexual encounter with a boyfriend. Lisbeth's encounter with sex has from an early age been a mixture of curiosity and fear. As she experiences her mother and Jan having sexual intercourse she becomes curious and asks to what they are doing. The curiosity takes over and she interferes. This results in Jan's inclusion of her in their sexual acts and the curiosity is overcome by fear - leaving her in a state of ambivalence. As she gets older she continues to experience fear connected to sexual acts given the assault from Stig at the orphanage and the guy at the biker club. Then Lisbeth reaches a certain age and starts enjoying nights-out in bars which leads to her first boyfriend Niels. Now the sexual encounter moves from fear to curiosity. Old

memories overwhelm when his actions stem with previous assaults but as she gets more comfortable and feels safe she opens up to the new experience. A relapse briefly occurs when Lisbeth starts exploring one-night stands and the familiar uncomfortable feeling along with fear emerges. As it is overcome a new attitude is constructed when engaging in future sexual acts. A continuation of the process of coping with anxious previous memories of being assaulted is modified by the act as a way of getting approval when later engaging in numerous one-night-stands. The experience of sex undergoes re-construction and negotiation of signs as a new act inhibit or demolish signs.

Meaning-making is created and established in a goal-directed movement (Valsiner, 2014). The actions that we set to accomplish are oriented to ambitions one holds for the future. As Lisbeth ambitiously work herself towards a better future, guided by academic skills and accomplishment and a conscious way of controlling her behavior, her actions continuously correspond to her goal directed movement. At a certain point, Lisbeth lives a life of two opposites, one with a wild party life with one-night stands and another at Hylleholt, later the gymnasium with school and chores. As she is developing a new sense of self, especially guided by her pedagogues and the institutional framework of Hylleholt she comes at a crossroad where a crucial decision is made. Lisbeth has through her conversations with Karen reached a point of relief after sharing her troubled childhood. In the safety of Hylleholt and the caring and nursing comfort of the pedagogues Lisbeth decides to cut off all contact to her mother, Nakskov and the life she had previously lived-out there. In fact, she realizes that this is no longer a necessity for her. A mediation of signs regulating the presence of which a new meaning construction takes place. As Lisbeth decides to cut off her party life and her troubled relationship with her mother, Lisbeth starts focusing ahead. She becomes very clear about her goal-oriented future and where she is heading. Gymnasium becomes a big part of her life as well as an identity. As Lisbeth liberate herself a new way of approaching alcohol and parties are likewise established when noting her change of approach saying: "This is not me anymore". Even though she starts going out and drink alcohol in Haslev a completely different approach is created. Not only in regard to alcohol and partying, Lisbeth likewise changes her approach and behavior when encountering conflicts in the gymnasium. A big change can be detected from her behavior conduct when confronted with an issue with her German teacher in

9.th grade, to her French teacher at the gymnasium. When confronted with disagreements at her gymnasium, Lisbeth takes the challenge as interesting and joyful. When her French teacher forces her head to the table by grabbing her hair, Lisbeth goes home and cut it all off and teaches herself to make a comment upon this in French. Not only has her behavior radically changed, her attitude towards these types of issues has similarly shifted. Lisbeth describes a happiness when being intellectually challenged and she tells about the first period of time attending gymnasium where she slowly builds up a courage to confront her teachers and an even bigger joy when they tease back. Also, within these frames Lisbeth experiences another way of dealing with disagreements keeping it solely academic for her.

Summary – Movement through education

This chapter has elaborated some of the previous discussion points by applying a bigger focus on the developmental aspect of experience and perception. As the analytical ideas starts to grasp self-presentation and social interactions with others, the movement in this chapter is towards understanding the developmental aspects of these encounters. Elaborations upon behavior have been presented by integrating Lewin, Goffman and de Saint-Laurent to offer a theoretical groundwork for the working mechanisms within social frames and possibilities and limitations within them. This has especially been with a focus on development in perceptiveness of sexual acts and display of behavior in different settings. Furthermore, a discussion of memory-acts has been discussed by presenting dynamics of the movement between time periods and the effect it has on perception and representation. Lastly, meaning-making and goal-oriented behavior has been elaborated as a way of approaching development in Lisbeth's behavior and attitude in her later years at Hylleholt and while attending gymnasium. Education as a part of developing grasps Lisbeth's journey through school and the supportive significant people she has had throughout this. In addition, education covers not only school-oriented activities, but in a broader sense comes to be education of life.

The focus on life course development

Development has been considered by the means of external factors with a focus on education through life. That offers a perspective for grasping some of the externalities and it will benefit to further consider some internal factors that might be of importance when considering development of the individual. As presented, memory act may influence perception of presence, just as it may be a part of a necessary re-definition or re-evaluation of constructed meanings. For the upcoming chapter, I wish to focus particularly on development by applying Tania Zittoun and her contribution towards a life course perspective understood through the mechanisms of imagination.

The role of imagination as part of development

Tania Zittoun approaches the phenomenon of imagination as a process that is engaged by some sort of rupture in the flow of thinking and relating to reality. From a developmental point of view, imagination can be understood as a phenomenon that may be triggered through disrupting events. Disrupting events generate a disjunction in the experience of the real world where a loop unfolds making one able to come out of the present here-and-now experience which eventually will lead back to the real world (Zittoun & Cerchia, 2013). Imagination allows for a way of opening up new modalities of thinking. Imagination is hence seen as an expansion of experience. A variety of events can happen, that might impose a rupture. A rupture can be understood as an interruption of the normal flow of events (Zittoun, 2007). A significant rupture can come to question sense of self and sense of continuity when a person's understanding of the world is no longer adequate to apprehend. Ruptures can be experienced on different levels either a significant one due to a crisis that may affect the whole sense of self. It can also be less severe and cover challenges or certain turning points met throughout a lifetime as it can cover single episodes without special impact on the person. After such a process of experiencing a rupture, transition takes place. Transition is a following process that aim to restore the sense of continuity as it allows for a new understanding of what is encountered. A transition therefore includes meaning-making. As the process of transformation and meaning making come together, the movement between the just lost past working towards a new future is engaged. *“With this model of ruptures and transitions I can now attempt to define*

development as a sort of change. Rupture calls for transition processes which are catalyzed periods of change.” (Zittoun, 2007, p. 192). Change can both enable a person to restore a sense of continuity as adjustments to the environment just as it in contrary can lead to the opposite. If a change leads to further loss of self this might problematically impact a person. A change becomes developmental when the person becomes able to engage in new transitions. When a new transition is engaged the experience become meaningful as the person becomes able to mobilize past memories and embodied experiences. These become mobilized in a new way which leaves the person to be able to adopt new perspectives and experience new feelings. Just as events can lead to both rupture and transitions, ‘others’ can also induce both. Otherness may be in dynamic shape that can come to affect the person both from within and from without the self. Others can both facilitate an ability to overcome ruptures and engage in transitions or they can generate limited access toward these (Zittoun, 2007).

Using imagination as a way of coping

From a developmental point of view, imagination can be seen as a way of coping with what is encountered through expanding a given experience. One way of coping is by modifying the reality. The reality can be modified by using rituals (Zittoun & Cerchia, 2013). Rituals opens up for the possibility to transform perception to apprehend the reality. Lisbeth is starting to present OCD-tendencies when she starts coping with unbearable situations. She starts to create systems that has to add up with the number of 3. This behavior is first introduced after a violent episode between her mother and Jan that forces them to flee for a while. When they came home Jan had attempted suicide and Lisbeth becomes afraid that Jan and her mother will kill themselves, each other or all of them. She starts checking knives and gas stove just as she starts counting. This goes on for years, and is presented in her case when an incident happens with a lamp while living with her school teacher Grethe. It increases when she moves from the orphanage back to her mother who struggles with mental health issues and shares threats and details about plans for suicide. Lisbeth finds a particular walking route that she goes every day and counts trees, houses and cars and combinations of these that all add up in the number of 3. Imagination is a part of development through interacting with the social world and herein internalizing concepts, language etc. As a person grows up these become a part of a complex structure of semiotic systems enabling

mental capacities to use signs to direct ones thinking (Zittoun & Cerchia, 2013). This facilitate a developed thinking process that offers a way for solutions when faced with problems. As imagination becomes a part of coping it plays with the elements of experience and makes one able to adjust to reality as it allows for a way of distancing.

Using her imagination to make up systems by counting, Lisbeth gets an active role by applying these systems. This might interfere with the feeling of being powerless as it on some level may evolve to a feeling of gaining some control. This behavior may enable her to emotionally regulate fear and anxiety by creating a specific strategy that comes to function as a resource that she can turn to whenever is necessary. The uncertainty of her encountered situations can become canalized into her systems where objects become props that enable her to re-direct focus and engage in activity in an imaginary space. The act of counting leads emotions of fear and anxiety to be externalized and the new feelings that emerge to be related to her counting. This allows for a way of maintaining oneself through an experience of rupture (Zittoun, 2007).

Another technique that seems to maintain Lisbeth's attention is her commitment to school. When Holst and Ragna move in, Lisbeth has the opportunity to escape her insecure setting at home and dive into reading and writing in the safe place of their house. By engaging fully in poems meanings and relating to the written material might be another way to cope as it can offer a way of internalizing feelings and shape relating. As she re-writes the poems, Lisbeth may be able to externalize experiences and feelings. As the poems may present of state of mind, Lisbeth may be able to relate and the poems may echo feelings that become symbolized in poetic form. The re-writing of poems may become a symbolic resource and becomes of part of developing literary sensibility and academic skills. Lisbeth has no space to share her experiences or feelings throughout her childhood so the symbolic use of literature may create a successful resource to embrace her complicated feelings.

Moving from one place to another is another kind of rupture although the rupture caused by moving itself does not necessarily has to be a dramatic one that impacts the sense of self and the world. Lisbeth lives under harsh conditions and has repeatedly in life experienced the rupture of a move by 'placement' (anbringelse). Placements have occurred from before she can remember and each time Lisbeth has to settle in and learn a new setting, establish contact to new people and become integrated in a new system

and culture (Kristensen, 2015). In Lisbeth's case the move from home to orphanage is a big rupture considering the conditions of which it happens. The day Lisbeth calls the orphanage herself is when Holst had handed her the number and she sees an opportunity to seek refuge a better place than home. She seeks towards a safer place but due to the sexual assault of Stig her first night this is not given. Lisbeth is now in a new place and a new setting with no knowledge of the culture or the people living there. She has a new position and she now needs to find new resources to deal with the transition (Zittoun, 2007). The transition is not smooth or comfortable and besides the fear and uncertainty created by the assault the first night, Lisbeth gets into fights with the pedagogues. This is when her anger issues and temper tantrums are first introduced. When Lisbeth is faced with a system that does not understand her feelings or acts no shared meaning is established upon the underlying causes for this way of expressing herself. This leads into distancing and results in withdrawal and isolation.

A transition involves a change and a change can lead to a sense of alienation – a loss of self and loss of continuity. A senseless self can struggle with a transition which can become problematic for further change as it may limit the possibility or ability to find proper resources when faced with a rupture. When the change does not become developmental it takes the form of repetition (Zittoun, 2007). First when a transition is engaged a change happens. This is never succeeded in the orphanage she first stays at after leaving home. Lisbeth is stuck in an orphanage that offers no support which results in attempts of escaping and a spiral of feelings of anger, fear and uncertainty which becomes expressed by anger outbursts. It is first when Lisbeth is moved to Hylleholt a new transition takes place. When moving to a new institution new knowledge needs to be acquired and the way the pedagogues treat Lisbeth and especially their way of handling her anger and troubled behavior starts a developmental change. This change leads to development as she starts working on her anger and behavior connected to this in different settings. The change makes Lisbeth able to adopt new perspectives and experience new feelings that generate new conduct that makes her able to address new transitions with new learned skills and renewed possibilities. To reinforce the emergence of new conduct social support and interpersonal relationships are of big importance, just as the ability to mobilize new forms of knowledge and experience (Zittoun, 2007). This enables Lisbeth to manage emotional regulation and create redefinitions to encountered situations that guide proper reactions and behavior displayed. Her development evolves as the social

support offered especially by Karen come to influence her behavior not only concerned anger but also nightlife in Nakskov. As Lisbeth is getting deeper into conversations with Karen of years of ambivalent feelings and unbearable experiences an identity change happens.

Summary – Semiotic and symbolic resources

The resources that Lisbeth uses in different encountered settings becomes a part of her way of coping. The resources and applied strategies throughout her development are changing. In her early childhood, her OCD-like behavior enables a repetitive system that briefly gives her a feeling of control. The counting system offers externalization of feelings through the use of props and the ability to re-direct felt emotions towards her applied counting system. As she gets older, the use of symbolic literature allows for both internalization and externalization of felt emotions and experiences that is not perceived as possible to share with others. When moving from home to orphanage, Lisbeth is faced with a big rupture and her way of managing this transition becomes through experience and expression of anger. As Lisbeth is moved to Hylleholt a new transition takes place that allows for creation of new perspectives and new ways of understanding that leads to a developmental change. This makes her able to regulate emotions and control displayed behavior. It leads to development that results in an identity change caused by some epoch-making decisions that come to influence her way in life.

The hold in human ontogeny

Based on the biography of Lisbeth and chosen elaborations of her case I have tried to indicate turning points or transition processes through which we follow Lisbeth's journey from a neglected child to a University student. A special focus has been particularly on her school interest which has been elaborated in previous chapters. Lisbeth's investment in learning may appear as a function through which she achieves adult recognition and personal goals that corporately work as a way of keeping a sense of self. Lisbeth experiences many ruptures in her life and undergoes many transformations some of which leads to developmental change. Different angles have been displayed towards her life and how experiences have been connected to certain

feelings and behavior that has led her development. These have resulted in certain meaning-constructions on how the world functions and has offered a way to perceive oneself and others which is mediated by the encountered social world.

For the upcoming chapter, I wish to discuss the connection of childhood traumas to the effect they may come to have on human ontogeny. I will approach topics already discussed and add further to the discussion by supplementing with clinical understandings of traumas in early life and how that may have influenced development. This will be done with the intention of emerging clinical and cultural perspectives for gaining a better understanding of the phenomenon of trauma. I furthermore want to present a short description on how Lisbeth's life has further evolved from her years at University till she wrote her biography. I will introduce content of her epilogue and discuss her own considerations upon her life situation and how she believes her childhood experiences have affected her daily life. I will briefly present 5 arenas that Lisbeth considers of big importance when wanting to make a change for a person and for them to be able to break social heritage.

Understanding the unfolding of the phenomenon of trauma

Attachment and the formation of attachment style come to influence social relation throughout life. Attachment is seen as a way of producing and keeping a relation to a primary caregiver (Bowlby, 1995). Different styles of attachment have been located and differences within these usually leads to differences in social competence. Regardless of a safe or unsafe attachment, the primary caregiver that offers this, is the one a child seeks to when in need of a base. When attachment is unsafe and starts becoming problematic due to problems in the parent-child relation the mistreatment that happens may come to produce a trauma. A complicated relation to the caregiver is created through ambivalences of the caregiver being the source of comfort and at the same time the source of fear. The trauma originates from the mistreatment in itself but also in the context it is produced (Holmes, 2001). The content of mistreatment may take many forms and are usually covering perversion, inappropriate conduct and degradation. When this is produced by caregivers the context of which this takes place

come to affect the child as the caregivers are the ones producing harm. The context of the abuse is therefore of big importance not only the content itself as the caregivers are main characters of the abuse. This may evolve to uncertainty in other situations that leads to insecurity within the child and in the encounter with the social world. Domestic abuse creates a cumulative trauma that influence long-term reactions. Through development, following incidents with similarities to previous traumas may trigger memories from past experiences (Holmes, 2001). Triggers may not activate a concrete memory but sensations registered in a familiar situation. Memories may therefore be stored in a blurred way or not as actively achievable but is bodily recognition (Levine & Kline, 2007). The way traumas have been stocked in memory therefore come to influence in the future and when encountering events that trigger some sort of similarity. When a memory or bodily sensation is triggered but not directly located it may be somewhat difficult to deal with. This is due to the difficulty of creating meaning based on unprocessed experiences (Holmgren, 2019). The ability to manage and overcome such traumas are usually discussed in regard to the combination of protective -and risk factors among other relevant factors as the individual person, social support, developed strategies among others (Ungarn, 2012). Protective factors can be described as those who promote resistance within the individual which is also known as resilience (Væver, 2015). Protective factors come to stimulate processes that create the foundation for a healthy development. There are also risk factors that may negatively affect development. Risk factors include the personal, social or environmental characteristics that increase risk and the severity of which the negative encounters come to impact development and the person throughout life negatively (Væver, 2015). Both risk – and protective factors are in a complex interplay which both affect the ability of resistance which may guide the future path in life despite a troubled childhood (Erlandsen et al., 2015). Risk factors are usually assessed when considering factors that have affected a development negatively. It can be argued that risk factors themselves not necessarily constitute negative development and a potential continuation of social heritage. Morten Ejrnæs discuss the ability to resilience and emphasizes that many children have good chances to break out of their social heritage (Ejrnæs, 2015). This is due to the complex interplay of factors influencing this. He believes that it is important to not look at ‘single explanations’ (enkeltforklaringer) and to not see a risk factor as a cause-factor. When a risk factor is assessed and understood it is important to analyze what constitute the social problem

here among structures, processes and so forth. Hence, risk factors need to be considered as a probability not necessarily a direct cause. This entails a holistic approach to the individual person. An elaboration of the interplay of risk and protective factors within the individual case in hand needs to be considered carefully since such factors cannot be generalized through single explanations equating a risk with a cause (Ejrnæs & Guldager, 2010). It can be argued that to be able to understand the exact mechanisms of resilience and the ability to break social heritage, one needs to consider the depth of each single case which in this case has been analyzed through Lisbeth's biography (Lamiell, 1998).

Major parts of Lisbeth's first years in life are alcohol, violence and neglect of care – all complicating stability and creation of a safe environment and for developing a safe attachment to her parents. Violence and neglect of care goes under the category of risk factors. A disturbance in the relationship to primary caregivers can result in problematics that later in life causes trouble in emotional bonding, relational connection and feelings of self-worth. This may be a consequence to lacking competences that has not been nursed or produced. Lack of competences may furthermore constitute a risk for development of pathology. Pathology may be a consequence of the missing ability to regulate stress and negative emotions (Væver, 2015). Although, when considering development of pathology, it is important to not mistake personal traits with symptoms of diagnosis (Fisker, 2015). It is usually a matter of historical and cultural context whether a certain behavior is considered diagnostical (Fisker, 2015; Larsen, 2000). Lisbeth displays OCD-behavior in her childhood years as discussed in previous chapters. These seem like a natural reaction to severe pressure, as they become a way of creating a ritual that offer some sort of framework she can act within. Her symptoms of OCD-tendencies disappear throughout her youth. She even experiences the need to use old techniques to overcome pressure in adolescence but describes that her method of counting no longer works. Generally, Lisbeth displays traits of perfectionism and stubbornness and these are a part of her person as they are important traits to consider when evaluating her path in life for good or for bad. These may have been induced by her upbringing. Behavior can be viewed as a display of traits or it can be seen as a reaction (Fisker, 2015).

Breaking a social heritage

Social heritage is often a phenomenon discussed when assessing abilities or lack of them passed down through families. The ones that manage to break out of it are often referred to as 'pattern breakers' (mønsterbrydere). Lisbeth herself has identified 5 arenas through which she believes one can be able to break a social heritage.

The 5 points are:

1. *The fire*
2. *Love*
3. *Trust*
4. *Education*
5. *Listening*

1. The fire - The fire is referred to the inner fire Lisbeth believes all children contain. This fire can be burned out if not supported and it can be directed to become destructive instead of constructive. Lisbeth's inner fire was her anger and it was first approached like a destructive and hateful behavior that was understood negatively. To be able to restore a neglected child, one has to find their inner spark and embrace it even though it can be very well hidden in misunderstood children. Lisbeth experienced a change in approach towards her anger when arriving at Hylleholt. Their way of approaching it in the believe it could be re-directed towards something constructive changed Lisbeth's life.
2. Love - To be able to break social heritage, love and the relation that love brings needs to be established to at least one stabile person. The love can take on different shapes but the important thing is the feeling of unconditional love. Love is a basic need in a human being. Lisbeth experienced many acts of love throughout her childhood and adolescence and what that made her feel like made something change in her as well.
3. Trust - Trust within and towards a child is of big importance for development. When a child is negatively behaved it needs to be seen as an expression.

Children, as all people, wish to succeed and experience joy but for this to happen trust must be established. Lisbeth describes an act of trust from Hylleholt when they decide that she needs to do as she wishes when she continuously goes to Nakskov. It is described that it was of importance to them that Lisbeth needed to discover by her own that she did not need what Nakskov had to offer. They had confidence that Lisbeth would be able to manage it and that she would seek support if she needed it – which happened. Lisbeth experienced when trust was shown to her, she started trusting back. Although, trust can be tested, especially when missing appointments or breaking deals but if trust is shown for the long run – trust will be able to build a person.

4. Education – Through the first 18 years of a child's life one is able to help the person get a foothold but after that the young person is more or less responsible for oneself. Children who has grown in normal families often have a network of support, which is rarely the case for neglected children. Without a support system, education and work become of big importance when one needs to take care of oneself. Both financially and as a part of an identity, one needs a job to be able to move forward in life. Lisbeth experienced a natural joy in school and it became her way of controlling her life and keep a goal-directed movement ahead.
5. Listening - To listen to the child is of big importance when trying to understand and connect with it. When someone listens to the child, most often, better solutions can be created in corporation which may lead to better management of problems or ways of approaching something in general. When the child is heard, and become an active part, one may argue that one is already halfway there. Lisbeth believes that a child knows what is best for themselves, and she experienced not to be heard at all until she came to Hylleholt. She wonders this day today how her life would have developed if the orphanage had listened to her burning desire to get foster care. When she did not feel heard or acknowledged she started resisting and her problems were interpreted as self-caused. Lisbeth continued to display problematic behavior at Hylleholt but she experienced that they always tried to understand her behavior and the underlying reasons for it which made the difference for her.

Lisbeth encounters several traumatic incidents in her childhood and adolescence and she is one who could be referred to as a pattern breaker. Each experience she has had come to regulate self-understanding and relating to the external world with different levels of maintaining the stronghold of an experience. The continuity of confusing situations led by assault in unexpected moments and situations are affectively disturbing. This often results in problematics that a person has to deal with throughout life. What come to create an environment that leads to such vulnerability is usually caused by a complex combination of many things. Several factors had come together to constitute the vulnerable environment Lisbeth has grown up in. Lisbeth has been exposed to a social heritage that leaves her parents themselves with lacking abilities in the role of parenting. Besides her parents' issues with violence and alcohol – which continues with future boyfriends of her mother – economic resources have as well been a problem (Erlandsen et al., 2015). A combination of these factors, among others, had led to poor hygiene which affected both the health of Lisbeth and her brothers, as it affected their ability to get accepted in social environments like with their classmates in school. The correlation between social heritage and vulnerability sometimes influence inequality in school (Jensen, 2015). When considering social heritage as a factor for chances of succeeding in school, it is often referred to by embracing the parent's ability to help and guide their children in matters connected to this. When school is considered one might wonder about cultural and social reproduction which are terms shortly explained as resources divided among social groups and the chance for generating reproduction of imbalance among generations (Jensen, 2015). In Lisbeth's case, there is not referred to a focus on school from her parents nor homework sessions or similar situations where school has a role for other people than Lisbeth. However, several people throughout her schoolyears have come to have big significance for her continuing interests in school – earlier elaborated; Grethe, Holst and Karen among others. The social others come to represent attitudes or expectations some of which one wishes to live up to. Børge, Lisbeth teacher in 9.th grade sees her school potential and starts expecting more. People do not only look towards other people's opinions and expectations but also people's reactions (Mead, 2011). This come to guide actions which might be what Lisbeth is mirroring when wanting to live up to Børge's expectations. Mirroring therefore forestall the future and not merely a reaction towards something in the past (Skovlund, 2015). Mirroring other people's

expectations guide behavior in certain directions and that is something Lisbeth has responded to. These might have impacted Lisbeth's abilities in school and furthermore nursed a growing interest, just as school became a thing Lisbeth succeeded in. Even people without the best resources within the closest family, can find support in the local environment and in social relations. Education and abilities created through this are of big importance when acquiring both skills and identity to master a break from social heritage and become what is referred to as a pattern breaker. Yet the societal expectations play a role when considering education as a condition. As introduced in the beginning of the thesis, the responsibility for mastering one's life is increasingly put on the single individual. Education and work are ways of taking care of oneself of which that attitude is guided by certain welfare-discourses (Hansen, 2015).

Understanding trauma by intertwining clinical and cultural approaches

Cultural psychological approaches have been used to elaborate social dynamics that occur within development of the person and it has offered a perspective towards understanding the mechanisms of meaning-construction in relation to the social world. This has been followed up by a short presentation of basic descriptions of some clinical accounts to development concerning attachment, risk – and protective factors and the ability for resilience. They come together to supplement each other in the attempt to understand the unfolding of traumas from early life and to understand the potential effect throughout a lifespan. As illustrated in the clarification of the concept of trauma, trauma is not easily defined. The ability for recovery of traumas is placed upon the ability to manage resistance, to grasp the factors that influence positively as negatively and the support system offered throughout life. With the cultural approach I have sought to understand person<>world dynamics to recognize possibilities for maintenance of experiences throughout development. Definition of trauma was introduced with the clinical application of trauma effect through developing pathology such as PTSD or C-PTSD (ICD). The new term of complex PTSD grasps the unfolding of a trauma being repetitive and by embracing domestic violence in different sense, grasping the inability to flee and avoid further trauma within the family. As discussed above, attachment has an important role when assessing development of competences.

Attachment trauma includes the diversity of traumas Lisbeth has encountered from early age through long-term abuse and neglect of care (Heller & LaPierre, 2014). The struggles that usually accompany such traumas are problems with interpersonal connection and feelings of self-worth. What is necessary for coping with such traumas are among others described to be coping strategies, available resources and social support (Buhmann & Folke, 2021). As discussed throughout the thesis, coping strategies has been shown in different manners in different settings applied by Lisbeth. Depending on her current situation, different resources have been available. Social support is a factor that is given big importance when discussing the ability to overcome trauma and that has been given by different actors in different constellations throughout her life.

The current path of Lisbeth

This day today Lisbeth has become a known figure for many people because she is open about her childhood traumas. Lisbeth does presentations about her upbringing and she has an active role in the work of approving the social system that works with neglected children. Lisbeth has become a front figure as she has also participated in documentaries about her history.

Lisbeth is 43 years old when she writes the epilogue. Lisbeth describes to struggle with mental health issues. She elaborates that she deals with them in ways she got taught by her mentors in early adolescence. She explains that she finally feels like she is getting close to where she wants to be but that her path through her thirties has been very difficult. Lisbeth struggled with many physical health issues and was very close to dying as 35-year-old. She later explains about waking up one day after turning 43 and suddenly with an inclination to become old – which was the first time she had experienced that. Throughout her later adult years, Lisbeth struggled with anxiety, depression and relationships with other people that she has defined to be caused due to attachments deficit (tilknytningsforstyrrelse). She also struggles with a constant fear of not being good enough and a fear that people would discover her own perceived lack of abilities. She only keeps few people close and the ones she has she keeps – she is still friends with the girls she hung out with at Hylleholt and so forth. Likewise, this accounts for boyfriends that have had a certain meaning to Lisbeth. Lisbeth describes

a continuing issue with anger and ends her books with the words: “*Jeg er og bliver en Zornig. Og jeg er vred.*”²⁰ (Zornig, p. 209)²¹.

Work

Before she wrote the book, she received a phone call from the ministry asking her to be the chairman of “Børnerådet” (Children’s council)²², which she accepted and then became the first chairman who had experienced such a childhood herself. Before making this decision, Lisbeth asked for advice with Karen whom she still keeps in close contact with. Lisbeth and Karen have together written an article about investment in other people’s children and they made an overview upon the financial cost Lisbeth and her brothers have costed the system.

Besides this, Lisbeth started off with demanding jobs in many management positions. At some point she felt too stressed out which caused lack of energy toward paying attention to her children. Lisbeth then decided to quit her job because there was no doubt that her children are the most important in her life. She then settled in jobs that contain predictable assignments so she can keep her focus at home.

Love

Lisbeth and Peter (her University boyfriend) decided to get a baby after being together for one year. She never doubted her wish to have children and she had assessed Peter to be a great father. The birth of her first child started a severe sense of anxiety for Lisbeth and it eventually broke her and Peter up – although they today are close friends. As she decided she wanted more children she sought towards old methods and she and her mother went out in the weekends with the intention to find a suited father. Here she met Ole who became the father of four children throughout a period of six years – and he was everything she wanted and hoped for. Ole and Lisbeth later broke up. Lisbeth meets Michael with whom she is together with today.

²⁰ Translation of quote: “I am and will be a Zornig. And I am angry”.

²¹ Zornig means anger in German.

²² “Børnerådet” is a national council that works with the intention of securing children’s rights by the standards of UN Convention of children’s rights.

Although Lisbeth has had the pleasure of finding good men who have embraced her struggles from the past, Lisbeth describes complications connected to creating and keeping social relations. If a person breaks a deal or disappoints Lisbeth in any way, Lisbeth describes a severe process of work until she is able to let the given person come into her life again, and it can easily be a process that takes several months.

Family

Lisbeth's youngest brother, Rene, committed suicide at the age of 39. He was described with ups and downs and problems with alcohol and HIV. Her brother, Tonny, lives close to Lisbeth and she takes care of him as much as possible. He struggles with alcohol and substance abuse. He has associations with different gangs and are in and out of prison. Her oldest brother Michael has coped with some of his issues by practicing martial arts. He has an alcohol problem and struggles with memory. He is now on early retirement. Lisbeth's mother stayed with Richard till he died, and Lisbeth tries to stay in contact with her although the roles has shifted and Lisbeth functions as a mother to her. Lisbeth explains about her mother's lacking abilities to remember or concern herself with others than herself which Lisbeth has learned to embrace as an expression of her own troubled childhood. Lisbeth's father lives in another country now and she has periods where she does not wish to see him due to anger towards his lack of support in her childhood.

Everyone in Lisbeth's family have dealt with their traumas in different ways and in different manners. The factors expressed of importance for learning to deal with traumas are handled differently by each person. The trauma – although it may be of same content - may influence differently from person to person considering the position and situation from which the trauma unfolds (Buhmann & Folke, 2021). This creates differences among each individual which makes coping and managing specific to the person as it may lead traumatised people in different directions.

Continuation of growth

The term resilience has been given importance when considering the individual ability to overcome obstacles and creating some sort of balance within oneself after encountering stressful events (Ungarn, 2012). Resilience becomes the counterpart to

an event that threatens adaption or development. When approaching the mechanisms of resilience self-regulating systems are emphasized (Lipsitt & Demick, 2012). Resilience is a part of natural defense and is in exchange with the environment learned by the individual. Resilience becomes a way of mastering coping by developing effective strategies. Just as fostering resilience over time come to be influenced by relationships and social support (Rutter, 1985). The phenomenon of resilience is increasingly being viewed as a developmental process (Supkoff, Puig & Sroufe, 2012). Thus, Supkoff, Puig & Sroufe (2012) argue that resilience needs to be considered from the developmental history of the person as it is a contextual and explaining factor in understanding the process of which it evolves. The focus of development for the individual and management of resilience needs to be considered by the constant change that for better and worse shape interaction and development throughout an entire life. All of this is simultaneously working within a changing socio-historical context (Schoon, 2012). Resilience is conceptualized as mobilization of resources that are found both internally and externally to the individual. This leads to a broader definition and approach towards the conception of resilience in which it is seen as something that can be regulated and learned. Resilience come to be a term that is applied when a person is able to manage and overcome severe stressful events, some of which are traumas. The positive management of coping with trauma has gained increased focus and is further investigated within the concept of posttraumatic growth. Posttraumatic growth is applied as a phenomenon that embrace the positive outcomes that come out of significant life challenges (Calhoun et al., 2010). Resilience is characterised by continuing living a life of meaning whereas posttraumatic growth contains the aspect of transformation for the better (Riffle, Lewis & Tedeschi, 2020). When experiencing a trauma, the process of which may lead to growth is not directly begun with the trauma but is prompted if the event disrupts one's world belief that generate the need for new understandings that ultimately create meaning in life (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). When trying to create meaning of a stressful event the distress may lead to two different kinds of rumination. Intrusive rumination may lead to unwanted automatic thoughts after a disruptive event but if one tries to manage the distress by trying to make sense of a given event, the constant flow of thoughts about the event may lead to deliberate rumination that engage a cognitive engagement trying to make sense and accommodate the event (Cann et al., 2011). Being successful by managing posttraumatic growth becomes a constant interplay between engaging in making

meaning of the events as a process and as an outcome retrieved through further development and reconceptualization of one's self-understanding and world-view.

Lisbeth shows emerging resilience that brings her out of the abuse-laden childhood. Lisbeth seeks to strategies that in different ways come to function effectively for her ability to cope. She describes how she still struggles with relationships and self-worth due to problems traced back to her childhood. As she grows older she creates strategies to overcome such challenges both guided by methods taught by significant others and by constantly working to understand and improve skills and approaches to these encountered challenges. Lisbeth is continuously working with herself trying to learn the connection between previous experiences and their effect on her encounter with similarities later in life. She is throughout her case describing development towards a new a better way of behaving and creating self-understanding as well as an understanding of the functions of the social world. Moreover, she describes new feelings emerging and new ways of connecting the past with the present. Growth from traumatic events can be understood through 5 dimensions that covers: personal strength, new possibilities, relation to others, appreciation of life and existential elements (Calhoun et al., 2010). At different levels, the dimensions can be traced through the life of Lisbeth and the role of them towards her power on living on, moving towards the better, despite a troubled childhood.

Critical comments and future oriented questions

In the attempt to identify choices made upon the construction of the thesis, a short discussion of these will be presented. I intend to elaborate the academic reasons for choice of literature and method that are chosen as suiting for offering elaborations toward the investigation of trauma and the effect it may come to have over the course of a life. To reflect upon the multiplicity of experiences perspectives towards development have been emphasized. It has been guided by the created problem statement that has been constructed in regard to offer analysis and discussions from cultural psychological approaches. Additionally, comments upon future oriented questions that offer a greater elaboration of the topics of the thesis will be briefly presented.

Critique upon thesis

Lisbeth's life story is woven together in complex streams of personal and social events some of which I am fully aware I have not been able to completely elaborate. The case of Lisbeth presents a relative medium-size account of human life course which serves to make the foundation for understanding the multiplicity of experiences through life. Obviously, many areas are unfulfilled. The trouble of choosing a broad focus for the thesis is the risk of not being able to fully elaborate it thoroughly. I am aware of the reduction conducted on Lisbeth's life story and that this choice leads to some constraints. For the applied data that has been chosen to be elaborated, I have sought to demonstrate that this kind of question is only answered through a longitudinal account which is not possible in other ways than biography in some kind, simply because of the time constraints of the thesis. It is not a long-term psychiatric account but an autobiographic account that Moghaddam (2004) and Brinkmann (2009) suggest fits for analysis of in depth understanding of phenomena from a single case study. Idiographic science and life course analysis have been applied to best grasp the unfolding of the question by indicating turning points through which we have followed Lisbeth through a childhood of trauma to becoming a University student, to later end up as a chairman of the children's council. The study of trauma intertwined with other experiences through the course of human life is attempted answered despite the unfulfilled areas. Here, I have presented chosen episodes throughout the childhood and adolescence of Lisbeth as material to illustrate some insights in the work of development (Zittoun, 2007). There are various ways to study transitions in life course and within this thesis it has been addressed by identifying change through development with a special focus on the complexity and ambivalences that comes along with a traumatic past. This thesis has offered a way to understand the connection between certain events and elaborating these by approaching self-understanding through the encounter with the social world. Furthermore, it has explored meaning making and the constant negotiation when new experiences call for a need for re-evaluating these. Lastly, the focus upon development has been integrated to illustrate change over the course of life. As I use Mead, the social interaction perspective is emphasized and is the essence within his theory but he lacks both the exact mechanism in the interchange with other as he lacks the perspective of social structures seen from a meta-perspective. As I use Valsiner to understand negotiating processes done by sign-use and meaning-

making, the focus stays upon the individual. The contribution of Zittoun has been to gain an understanding upon the transitions that occur in life and how these may be managed in the attempt to move forward. Zittoun offers a way of gaining insights to long-term living that gives the opportunity for a holistic approach to life course impacted by trauma. Education has been a primary focus, since the path of school plays a big role for new trajectories of Lisbeth. Even though a certain meta-perspective upon influences coming externally guided by institutions and social structures is approached, I lack the specific focus on socio-cultural aspects of human living. Although, this thesis seeks for ways of approaching and understanding phenomena and how they are woven together. I have analyzed specific features of ambivalence arisen through life discovered in different episodes and different places. This has been elaborated by exploring different strategies developing strength. The intention with the project has been to bring together trauma and life course development – offering a new way of uniting clinical and cultural perspectives offering a more general site of trauma and life course development through the depth of a biography.

Topics that fit for further investigation

In this thesis the main focus has been to investigate trauma and its ways of building up the whole person during human ontogeny – based on an idiographic approach of a single case study. This has been enlightened through the case of Lisbeth Zornig who overcame her traumatic childhood and is living as close to the idea of a normal life as possible although not without difficulty. What has not been investigated are cases where the traumatic hold of a person leads in a different direction in life not able to manage or deal with the traumas. What would benefit for further understanding of the unfolding of traumas through development of a life course could be investigations upon the cases that do not end with positive outcomes and growth. Furthermore, for a deeper research project, it would benefit to add different biographies whom of which explains about trauma and the effect they have had over the course of their life – including different ways of experiencing the stronghold and ability to cope with trauma and invasive consequences. If I were to go beyond this study, the study of women cases may potentially cooperate with what I have found, but in the case of men, this is maybe not recognizable. This may be due to social representations and societal discourses that reign which makes the approach and understanding somewhat different. There are

many ways to go forward from here. Understanding the dynamic of trauma and the effect on a lifespan is crucial for psychological practise. The innovation for a clinical counselling domain is offered for example by gaining insights in the developmental pathways out of trauma, not just demonstration of causes of them. Comprehending the ambivalences and multiplicities that are parts of trauma supply needed knowledge to apprehend the ability to overcome trauma and the process of which it happens.

Conclusion – Uniting the unfolding of trauma with life course development

Trauma is often approached by investigating the horrors that usually come of it. In addition to that, the person keeps living on with all complications, difficultness and ambivalences. This is what this thesis has attempted to elucidate by investigating pathways of which traumas unfold and what come to affect the individual person through the course of life. Here, the examined is: *What are different pathways through which traumatic experiences become maintained in human ontogeny?*

For dealing with this question I have sought to an idiographic method that allows for an in-depth investigation studying subjective uniqueness by an intrapsychological account. I have applied Lisbeth Zornig's biography that come to function as longitudinal data. This has given me the chance to study the phenomenon by following a long-term process through insides of her life and to look upon development of personality and behavior embedded in unique personal life contexts. The case of Lisbeth displays various traumas of different character and her path through life has been analyzed and discussed with a special focus on development.

Traumas have been elaborated by presenting clinical definitions of pathology as a result of trauma. New definitions of trauma originating in early life have as well served to clarify the term. Hence, trauma as a phenomenon contains a variety of definitions emphasizing aspects of the content, the context and the person in hand. What seem to be of importance when overcoming traumas seem to be shared - despite different definitions - covering factors like: coping strategies, resilience, available resources, combination of risk – and protective factors and the situation of which the trauma unfolds. The reaction to a trauma is increasingly emphasized to be individual. A

trauma therefore affects differently which lead the maintenance of the trauma and following ability to deal with it to be specific to the person. The paths of which traumas unfold are also guided by what is encountered through life both events as people and these become a part of the possibility and ability move on. To explore the paths through life I have applied cultural psychological perspectives to embrace the person<>world dynamic. For gaining insights to self-understanding and shaping of a person through social interaction I have used George Herbert Mead's theoretical system of I<>ME. This has offered a way of understanding self-regulation through internalizing concepts and ideas from others and how these come to guide perception and self-evaluation. Additionally, I have applied Jaan Valsiner's theory of semiotic dynamics to embrace personal meaning-making and to gain knowledge of negotiating practices happening through the constructing and demolishing use of signs. The negotiating practices have enabled a broader understanding of how they set the possibility to make re-evaluations that allow for new definitions to emerge. Past experiences set the course but in the meeting with similar yet different events an opportunity for creating new attitudes emerge. This allows for new perspectives that come to guide definitions and regulation of feelings and behavior and set the conditions for development and change. Lisbeth has encountered traumatic events of sexual abuse and has later displayed behavioral problems and anger outbursts that through times become regulated through new encounters that open up for new specifics. The traumas of Lisbeth become woven together with other experiences. Some become maintained and keeps affecting through life just as others undergo regulation that set up new conditions for evaluations just as others become blocked or forgotten over time. Moreover, I have attempted to grasp different parts of development through life by applying Tania Zittoun. Zittoun offers a focus on development through the mechanisms of imagination and by exploring ruptures and transitions that lead to changes in life. What come to influence has been discovered by investigating both external and internal factors affecting the individual. External factors are presented as possibilities and limitations for the individual along with the frames a person act within. The framework which sets the conditions for appropriate behavior and constructive communication are displayed essential for Lisbeth's ability to receive feedback and act upon it which is made by an establishment of proper action-possibilities. All of this is impacted by the social support offered and significant others that come to help and guide. Internal factors that help maintain a sense of self may be changing through life and are presented as different useful

strategies and application of available resources. In the case of Lisbeth used strategies have been counting systems, symbolic use of literature and anger – all offering ways of internalizing and externalizing difficult feelings.

With the intention to gain a greater understanding, I have attempted to unify clinical and cultural perspectives upon trauma and development. Both contains factors that are presented of importance when assessing the ability to create strategies of coping. Here are factors like resilience, personal strategies and social support highlighted. Resilience and posttraumatic growth are elaborated to further discuss Lisbeth's ability to move out of the circle of trauma. All experiences, good or bad, come to be woven together of different threads into life course and come to affect the paths in life leading to different levels of maintenance through human ontogeny.

List of references

- Baldwin, J., M. (1908). *Thought and Things – A Study of the Development and Meaning of Thought or genetic logic*. London: Swan Sonnenschein & CO. LIM. pp. 132-138.
- Bowlby, J. (1995). *En sikker base: Tilknytningsteoriens kliniske anvendelser* (2nd ed.). Frederiksberg: Det lille Forlag.
- Branco, A. & Valsiner, J. (2010). Towards cultural psychology of affective processes: Semiotic regulation of dynamic fields. *Estudios de psicologia*, 31. Pp. 243-251.
- Brinkmann, S. (2009). Literature as Qualitative Inquiry – The Novelist as Researcher. *Qualitative Inquiry*, Volume 15, 8. DOI: 10.1177/1077800409332030 Pp. 1376-1394.
- Bühler, K. (1990). *Theory of language: The representational function of language*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Buhmann, C., B. & Folke, C. (2021). *Traumer i psykiatrien*. Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Calhoun, L. G., Tedeschi, R. G., Cann, A. & Hanks, E. A. (2010). Positive outcomes following bereavement: paths to posttraumatic growth. *Psychologica Belgica*, 50 (1&2), pp. 125-143.
- Cann, A., Calhoun, L. G., Tedeschi, R. G., Triplett, K. N., Vishnevsky, T., & Lindstrom, C. M. (2011). Assessing posttraumatic cognitive processes: The Event Related Rumination Inventory. *Anxiety, Stress & Coping*, 24(2), pp. 137–156. DOI: 10.1080/10615806.2010.529901.
- Ejrnæs, M. (2015). Risiko, risikofaktorer og resiliens. In: Erlandsen, T., Jensen, N., R., Langager, S. & Petersen, K., E. (2015). *Udsatte børn og unge – en grundbog*. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag. Pp. 47-58.

-
- Ejrnæs, M. & Guldager, J. (2010). *Helhedssyn og forklaring* (2. udg.) København: Akademisk Forlag.
- Erlandsen, T., Jensen, N., R., Langager, S. & Petersen, K., E. (2015). Grundlæggende videnskabelige perspektiver på udsathed blandt børn og unge. In: Erlandsen, T., Jensen, N., R., Langager, S. & Petersen, K., E. (2015). *Udsatte børn og unge – en grundbog*. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag. Pp. 21-34.
- Fisker, T., B. (2015). Diagnoser og udsatte børn. In: Erlandsen, T., Jensen, N., R., Langager, S. & Petersen, K., E. (2015). *Udsatte børn og unge – en grundbog*. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag. Pp. 159-170.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: Penguin Books. pp. 1-46.
- Goffman, E. (1983). The interaction order. *American Sociological Review*, vol. 48: pp. 1-17.
- Hansen, J., H. (2015). Uddannelse som vejen til inklusion. In: Erlandsen, T., Jensen, N., R., Langager, S. & Petersen, K., E. (2015). *Udsatte børn og unge – en grundbog*. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag. Pp. 272-282.
- Heller, L. & LaPierre, A. (2014). *Udviklingstraumer: hvordan udviklingstraumer på virker selvregulering, selvbillede og evnen til kontakt*. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Helweg-Larsen, K. (2000). *Seksuelle overgreb mod børn i Danmark – Problemets omfang og karakter vurderet ud fra litteraturstudier og en række danske datakilder*. København: Statens Institut for Folkesundhed.
-

-
- Holmes, J. (2001). *På sporet af den sikre base – tilknytningsteori og psykoterapi*. København: Det lille forlag.
- Holmgren, A. (2019). *Komplekse traumers psykologi – beretninger om det ubærlige*. Dispuks forlag.
- Hundeide, K. (2005). Socio-cultural Tracks of Development, Opportunity Situations and Access Skills. *Culture & Psychology*, vol 11 (2), pp. 241-261.
- ICD, International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 11.th. version
<https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en#/http://id.who.int/icd/entity/2070699808>
- Inglis, D. & Thorpe, C. (2012). *An Invitation to Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Jensen, N., R. (2015). Udsathed og social arv. In: Erlandsen, T., Jensen, N., R., Langager, S. & Petersen, K., E. (2015). *Udsatte børn og unge – en grundbog*. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag. Pp. 71-81.
- Kristensen, O., S. (2015). En barndom præget af transitioner – børn og unge anbragt uden for eget hjem. In: *Udsatte børn og unge – en grundbog*. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag. pp. 283-294.
- Lamiell, J. T. (1998). 'Nomothetic' and 'idiographic'. Contrasting Windelband's Understanding with Contemporary Usage. *Theory & Psychology*. Vol. 8(1). Pp. 23-38.
- Levine, P., A. & Kline, M. (2007). *Traumer set med barnets øjne – Heling af traumer hos børn og unge*. Dansk psykologisk forlag.
- Lipsitt, L., P. & Demick, J. (2012). Theory and Measurement of Resilience: Views from Development. In: Ungar, M. (2012). *The social ecology of resilience: A handbook of theory and practice*. New York, NY: Springer Science + Business
-

Media, LLC. Pp. 43-52.

Mead, G., H. (2011a). The mechanism of social consciousness (1912). London: Taylor & Francis Pp. 53-57.

Mead, G., H. (2011b). The social self (1913). London: Taylor & Francis. Pp. 58-62.

Moghaddam, F. M. (2004). From 'Psychology *in* Literature' to 'Psychology *is* Literature'. An Exploration of Boundaries and Relationships. *Theory & Psychology, Sage Publications*. Vol 14(4). DOI: 10.1177/0959354304044922. Pp. 505-225.

Molenaar, P. C. M. & Valsiner, J. (2008). How Generalization Works through the Single Case: A Simple Idiographic Process Analysis of an Individual Psychotherapy. In: *Yearbook Of Idiographic Science*, Volume 1. pp. 23-38.

Polanyi, M. (1962). *Personal knowledge – Toward a Post-Critical philosophy*. The University of Chicago Press. pp. 69-131.

Riffle, O., M., Lewis, P., R. & Tedeschi, R., G. (2020). Posttraumatic Growth After Disasters. In Schulenberg, S., E. (2020). *Positive Psychological approaches to disaster: meaning, resilience, and posttraumatic growth*. Cham: Springer. Pp. 155-168.

Rio, M. & Molina, M. E. (2008). Nomothetic and Idiographic Approaches: Constructing A Bridge. In: *Yearbook Of Idiographic Science*, Volume 1. pp. 75-80

Rutter, M. (1985). Resilience in the form of adversity: Protective factors and resistance to psychiatric disorders. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 147, pp. 598–611.

Salvatore, S., Tebaldi, C. & Potí, S. (2008). The discursive dynamic of sensemaking. In: *Yearbook Of Idiographic Science*, Volume 1. pp. 39-71

Salvatore, S. & Valsiner, J. (2008). Idiographic Science on its Way: Towards Making

-
- Sense of Psychology. In: *Yearbook Of Idiographic Science*, Volume 1. pp. 9-19
- Salvatore, S. & Valsiner, J. (2010). Between the General and the Unique: Overcoming the Nomothetic versus Idiographic Opposition. *Theory & Psychology*, Vol. 20 (6). Sage. Pp. 817-833. DOI: 10.1177/0959354310381156
- Schoon, I. (2012). Temporal and Contextual Dimensions to Individual Positive Development: A Developmental-contextual Systems Model. In: Ungar, M. (2012). *The social ecology of resilience: A handbook of theory and practice*. New York, NY: Springer Science + Business Media, LLC. Pp. 143-156.
- Skovlund, H. (2015). Identitetens betydning for tilbagefaldsproblematikker hos udsatte unge. In: Erlandsen, T., Jensen, N., R., Langager, S. & Petersen, K., E. (2015). *Udsatte børn og unge – en grundbog*. Hans Reitzels Forlag. Pp. 147-158.
- Supkoff, L., M., Puig, J. & Sroufe, L. A. (2012). Situating Resilience in Developmental Context. In: Ungar, M. (2012). *The social ecology of resilience: A handbook of theory and practice*. New York, NY: Springer Science + Business Media, LLC. Pp. 127-142.
- Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (2004). Posttraumatic growth: Conceptual foundations and empirical evidence. *Psychological Inquiry*, 15(1). pp. 1–18.
- Ungar, M. (2012). *The social ecology of resilience: A handbook of theory and practice*. New York, NY: Springer Science + Business Media, LLC. Pp. 1-53.
- Valsiner, J. (1998). The guided mind – A Sociogenetic Approach to Personality. Harvard University Press. Pp. 100-135, pp. 199-233, pp. 324-343.
- Valsiner, J. (2014). An invitation to cultural psychology. *Sage Publications Ltd*.
- Valsiner, J. (2018). Constructive Semiosis Is the Core of the Human Psyche. In Lyra, M., C., D., P. & Pinheiro, M., A. (Eds.), *Cultural Psychology as Basic Science – Dialogues with Jaan Valsiner*. Cham: Springer. pp. 11-17.
-

-
- Valsiner, J. (2022)a. Introduction – Return to the Dog: Ivan P. Pavlov as a Pioneer of Idiographic Science. In: Valsiner, J. (2022). *One Dog Is Enough – Ivan P. Pavlov's Contributions to Idiographic Science*. A Volume in Yearbook of Idiographic Science. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. pp. 7-13.
- Valsiner, J. (2022)b. Pathways to generalization. General Knowledge as Abstract Complementation. In: Valsiner, J. (2022). *One Dog Is Enough – Ivan P. Pavlov's Contributions to Idiographic Science*. A Volume in Yearbook of Idiographic Science. Charelotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. pp. 47-69.
- Valsiner, J. & van der Veer, R. (2000). *Social Mind*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 234-276.
- Væver, M., S., (2015). Tilknytningsvanskeligheder og udsathed i spæd – og småbarns alderen. In: Erlandsen, T., Jensen, N., R., Langager, S. & Petersen, K., E. (2015). *Udsatte børn og unge – en grundbog*. Hans Reitzels Forlag. pp. 133-146.
- Windelband, W. (1998). History and Natural Science. *Theory & Psychology*, Sage Publications. Vol. 8(1) pp. 5-22. DOI: 10.1177/095935439808100.
- Zittoun, T. (2007). *Dynamics of Interiority – Ruptures and Transitions in the Self Development*. Information Age Publishing. Pp. 187-214.
- Zittoun, T. (2017). Dynamic memories of collective past. *Culture & Psychology*, vol. 23(2). Sage. Pp. 295-305. DOI: 10.1177/1354067X17695768.
- Zittoun, T. & Cerchia, F. (2013). Imagination as Expansion of Experience. *Springer Science*. pp. 305-324. DOI: 10.1007/s12124-013-9234-2
- Zittoun, T., Valsiner, J., Vedeler, D., Salgado, J., Gonçalves, M. and Ferring, D. (2013). *Human Development in the Life Course - Melodies of living*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 160-199.
-