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## The perspective of the quality of life of the killer – a critical discussion on the importance of the multicontextuality of experience

**Abstract:** The author discusses the subject of the convicted person's aging, revealing the sense of his duality: age advancement and prison isolation. Discussions on attempts to promote the fuzzy idea of care for the elderly in today's prisons are worrying. The aim of the research was to provide a vision of needs, corresponding to the real circumstances of the seniors from the perspective of their narrative. The subject of exploration was the phenomenon of a specific perception and experience of time by the prisoners, in particular, feedback events. The intention of the researcher was to separate out what had been unnoticeable so far. The text presents an analysis of the biography of the person whose life has been marked by moments of crisis, interpreted by including them in the story of life breakthroughs. In view of the described background, an additional "frame" clarifying the intentions of the hermeneut was an epiphany as a unique experience, an original one, dividing the life of a senior into "before" and "after", "then" and "now".

**Key words:** Experiencing old age, convicted, biography, passing away.

The created image of an older person sentenced for life provokes to create a narrative structure about his convictions, purpose, clarity, unpredictability and mysteriousness of a specific perception and experience of time by the prisoner, in particular, feedback events. The intention of the researcher was to identify the issues not yet reported in studies.

In view of the described background, an additional “frame” clarifying the intentions of the hermeneut was an epiphany as a unique experience, an original one, dividing the life of a senior into “before” and “after”, “then” and “now”. The aim of the analyses was to understand, describe and explain the specifics of the experiences of a senior killer, to attempt “then” retrospection and to analyze the “now” perspective of his life in the context of the criminal punishment objectives.

The text presents an analysis of the fragment of an unusual biography, related to the disease and stigma of the status of a killer and the resulting crises, interpreted by including them in the story of life breakthroughs.

According to Marcin Kafar (2011, p. 51), a man experiencing illumination – epiphany is someone whose consciousness undergoes a significant transformation, whose premonition is turned into certainty, or vice versa – in whom that which used to be certain becomes doubtful and requires change. Promotion of the journey/return only one way – to the “Self”, “Home” of the experienced subject, appropriately to the quality of the journey made and the involvement in its context, exposes the way “out”.

My own research is part of the critical paradigm, an approach proposed by Egon Guba and Yvonne Lincoln (2005, p. 282 et al.). The critical paradigm “lends, from the natural sciences, the acceptance of an objective vision of the world, while in the area of epistemology it presents a subjective approach, much closer to the reality studied. The aim of the study is to explain, but also to make people aware of an ideological rootedness that can be liberated towards true, undistorted consciousness. In this case, reality of beings and existence of some objective truth are assumed, while acknowledging that the cultural rootedness of human actions plays an important role and, in order to get to know them, it is necessary to refer to people’s experiences. A researcher based on critical theory is perceived as a spokesperson and activist. The methodology is defined as dialogical or dialectic, aimed at overthrowing of false beliefs by reaching them using qualitative research [...], knowledge of history, the meaning of values and knowledge of what incapacitation is and in which direction emancipation, liberation or resocialization of individuals should be headed” (Sławecki 2012, p. 80).

In my project, “criticality” refers first of all to an extremely difficult and unrewarding issue which is often researched cognitively – the incarcerated reality, seen through the eyes of a person sentenced to life imprisonment, somehow penetrating into its mysterious complexity, revealing what was previously invisible. Entering the “other”, intricate world of a human/criminal, I sought to update this rehabilitation problem with the intention of showing the existential and philosophical dimensions of criminal punishment as well as loneliness and alienation. Consideration of quality of the research area sets out an interpretative path, very rarely taken in the objective research submitted so far in resocialization. The most important element in its implementation is openness. It has a threefold dimension, as it concerns the level of data collection, the selection of the research sample and

the attitude of the researcher. Of course, each of these levels is accompanied by: usefulness and a specific framework of the method of proceeding, which in turn result from theoretical foundations of a given methodology. "Openness" does not mean randomness of the researcher's actions in terms of selection of the study material to be analyzed or the persons to be surveyed. It is expressed primarily in the expectation that the researcher's preliminary knowledge of the subject of their research will be limited as much as possible, which in consequence will reduce any influence on the results of their inquiry.

The procedures of a well-established theory allow to gradually build the descriptive language of the examined fragment of social reality and to gradually derive the categories and properties that form it. The knowledge acquired by the researcher is contextual and relates to specific conditions. This way, the researcher does not provide knowledge about cause-effect relationships, but allows for an understanding of the way in which participants give meaning and interpret a certain social reality (being studied by the researcher).

An "interpretative" researcher does not become a neutral or objective expert, but enters the world he/she is investigating and even becomes a part of it (cf. Niedbalski 2010, 43–63). By participating "inside" it, he/she tries to understand the senses and interpretations given by the surveyed people (Charmez 2009). The researcher's focus is on the interdeterministic interaction of social actors and their actions aimed at defining, interpreting and symbolizing each other. The interpretative paradigm translates into an understanding of the causes of social order in interactive negotiation processes as well as negotiated interpretations of meanings. Metaphor is often the descriptive language of interpretative researchers, which is the result of the relations and meanings "discovered" by him/her, as well as, in some sense, the result of negotiations, dialog and understanding between the researcher and the researched (Niedbalski 2010, 43–63). The interpretative paradigm is developed within the framework of various interactive trends (symbolic interactionism, ethnographic approach) and discursive trends (conversational analysis, critical analysis of discourse). All of these find their empirical ground in qualitative research, captivating social reality from the perspective of the actor himself (Hałas 1987, pp. 71–83; Wyka 1993, et al.).

Analysis of the everyday reality of a contemporary senior-aged prisoner, from his perspective and in his language, required a reformulation of the living space. In the material (content) apology for reflection of the sentenced person, a reconstruction of the past took place, which consisted in recognizing the risk of being "different", autonomous behind a veil of loneliness; it relatively corresponded to a kind of emotional excitement. The reconstruction of the course of the senior's life at the moment of entering into new types of interaction changed his everyday life. Extraction from the research material of specific fragments that made up specific content categories, allowed to identify and distinguish sub-categories constituting the frames of self-fulfillment in isolation. Coding (i.e. subordination

to specific labels serving the role of categorizing, sorting of data) and analyzing of the narrative allow to reach two dominant categories of description: **Self-perception of an old age in conditions of prison isolation** and **Mapping of the prisoner's life**. Moreover, in this narrative of the prisoner, I distinguished the following sub-categories: a more detailed assessment of life; breakthrough moments in biography; an old man streaked with gray and meaning; 'young wolves' taking away meaning or respecting the status of a senior?; the temporal dimension of life outside of life; loneliness, emptiness, old age; self-forgiveness and finding the meaning of existence. I shall analyze selected sub-categories.

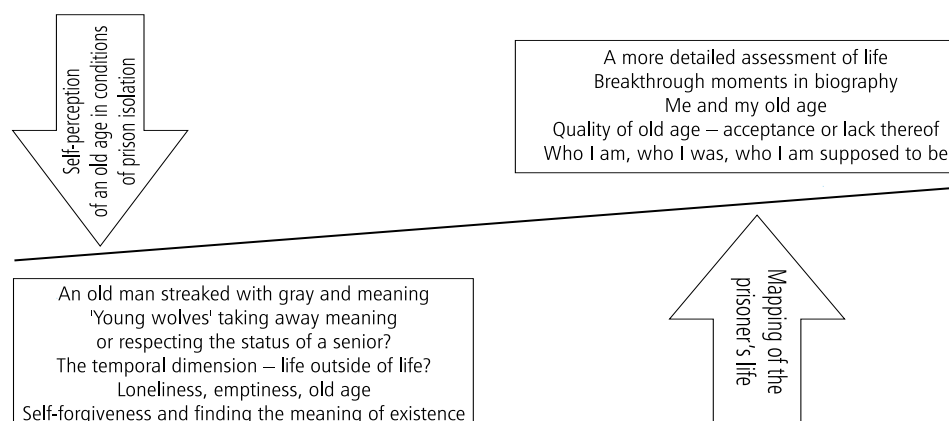


Fig. 1. Reconstruction of a senior's life  
Source: own research.

Bearing in mind the age of the surveyed and the fact that he has been in prison for 55 years, it is impossible not to agree with Danuta Urbaniak-Zajac (2011, p. 22) who observes that the told biography reports and indicates theoretically possible border situations, which have no reflection in reality, but which warn against rigorism or naivety. She states that the elderly teller (free from diseases radically disturbing memory) distinguishes between childhood, youth and adulthood experiences, is aware of the specific nature of feelings at those times, how to look at himself and his surroundings, and is able to distinguish them from his present perspective. At the same time, however, it is unlikely that the human consciousness is based on a "chronicle of life", in which – while keeping the previous records unchanged – successive cards are filled in, and each record from the past may at any time be mechanically reproduced in an unchanged form (see Urbaniak-Zajac 2011, p. 22).

In the context of these statements, while reconstructing the world recreated by the surveyed man, I sought to enrich the perspective of description and anal-

ysis. It was about the richness of reality and the authenticity of the information conveyed by the convict – in his language, his voice. The aim of my investigations was to reconstruct the way in which a senior perceives himself and the reality, in the convention of the purpose of criminal punishment, and not to empirically confirm theories. The intention was to subordinate the meanings to literally understood messages of the surveyed and the meanings given to them, as opposed to carefully adjusting the form to the specificity of the studied issue.

The punishment of imprisonment for life is the most severe penal measure. It excludes an individual for many years from a genuine realization of themselves in social life. Thus, the legitimacy of modern penitentiary practice refers to the struggle of the punished individual with themselves, a kind of social “dehumanization” in the context of inviolability of human dignity. A life sentence means exclusion of the offender from society – it eliminates them socially, leaving them alive (Machel 2007, p. 218). So the punishment ends in death. As Henryk Machel (2007, p. 218) asserts, it has a categorical retaliative purpose, but it differs from death penalty in that it leaves the sentenced person with hope of freedom in the context of the penitentiary effects applied to him/her.

Undoubtedly, one of the key tasks of punishment should be to influence the perpetrator in a way that brings him/her a certain, tangible benefit. In the description of the convicted person’s experiences, I will focus on the three sub-categories of his existence.

## A more detailed assessment of life

The issue of life quality and satisfaction with it – in the context of an in-depth narrative interview with the incarcerated senior – reveals a specific dependency. The sentenced person’s deliberations in the context of assessing the quality of life oscillated around the need to be able to use ‘handyman skills’, acquisition of knowledge of the political and economic situation in the country and in the world, recognition of freedom of action as an overarching objective of functioning, introduction of new solutions, ideas, values into the thought process (conceptual process), sharing with other people his own experiences, thoughts, and attempts to take actions securing health. Perhaps the surveyed convict did not acquire a habit of work, but he did not demonstrate helplessness or a demanding attitude. The aspect of “satisfaction with life” oscillated around attempts to understand himself, what had happened, searching for an answer to the question: was I ready for what happened to me, why did it happen?, running away from the ailments of everyday life. According to the convict, it depends also on the position in the world:

I am who I am, I am where I am, I can try or want, but I have to give up many opportunities that I would have outside of prison. In fact, I am not making choices, my ideas are verified by others and I have to back out, I know what needs to be finished, what I have no control over, and what I am not allowed to give up. For them to treat me because I need it. I have a sick heart. But the medicines I have to take are too expensive for them. I know that I am going to be here until I depart this life. But, fortunately, I have a hobby – repairing watches. I have already repaired them for many guards. I passed my end of high school exam in prison, with a B. Once they took me to Sztum, and gave me a woodworking lathe to assemble. I had a month for that. I would get a 24-hour pass for assembling it. They issued me a card permitting me to bring in parts. And I assembled it, without a technical drawing. I got managerial qualifications [...] The worst thing here is this time, time without limits. There is no one to talk with, and it's normal for a person to go nuts and cuss, your psyche gives out. For years I have been motivating myself to prevent this psyche from giving out completely. Alone and alone. Sometimes I don't even want to eat. But I want to live. Maybe there will be a miracle and I will see the world outside prison.

The calm aging of the surveyed man is conditioned by self-critical assessment of his situation. Accepting old age and death, he agrees to skillfully overcome his own shortcomings in various spheres, and avoids bitterness in favor of working on himself and treating himself as a participant in another existential dimension, at the same time accepting the rules established at the penitentiary.

The dilemma of fair punishment and its advisability in relation to dangerous prisoners boils down to the statement that the process of educating them is to a large extent limited, since this group of prisoners, without fearing any consequences of their unlawful behavior towards other inmates and prison staff, does not usually manifest, also as a result of their far-reaching demoralization and contempt for legal norms, any tendencies or willingness to improve (Miłek 2010, p. 496). The difficulties arising from fulfillment of long-term punishment indicate, above all, a preventive and isolating objective, revealing the fact that working with “such” prisoners is undeniably more difficult. What becomes important is the possibility of a situation in which punishment plays a role completely disconnected from the intended purpose and becomes a means leading to an in-depth demoralization of the convict. Undeniably, the surveyed prisoner, due to the time spent in the cell, presents a kind of individualism and vitality, emanates energy, with a simultaneous sense of apathy or resignation when telling his story. Does his self-valorization translate into an appropriate fulfillment of the sanction decided by the court? As suggested by H. Machel (2007, p. 223), we must not give up psycho-corrective work or other penitentiary effects on older people, as they allow for maintaining mental health of the convicts and are a way to constantly “pester” them in order to weaken or even change negative attitudes.

## **‘Young wolves’ taking away meaning or respecting the status of a senior?**

The portrayed senior revealed a hubristic need, a need for transgression and social participation.

But I mean something here because I know how to be aggressive when a 30-year-old guard teaches me life – a prisoner is supposed to have his cigarettes and coffee – wants to be a wise guy. Once they gave me a young cellmate, 40 years old, lean like a finger. He yapped. I asked what he was in for. Didn’t brag myself. He went into a rage and said he would summon the guard. Guard said he couldn’t open because he was alone. And the youth started to thrash about, scream, say I wanted to murder him, that he would not be able to stand me, so I slapped him.

The convict’s statement draws a completely different image of a senior than the one commonly had. The identity of an integral entity is crystallized in a temporal context, a progressive order of experiencing the institution. Understanding one’s own place, one’s experience of an individual history is achieved by giving meaning to one’s own experiences. A prisoner has a way of perceiving his own reactivity, actions, and understands motives and reactions towards others. The need to share experiences and participate in the life of social identifications is aimed at self-determination, uniqueness and assigning importance to the functioning of the surveyed man.

To a certain extent, satisfying the senior’s own needs is conducive to a sense of security, dignity and sense of life. To him, being a scapegoat for young prisoners is an imaginary problem of people who are indecisive, fearful and over-sensitive. The description of his own situation is mostly about his internal and external resources. The external conditions – isolation and its negative image, predictability of the effects of actions make the senior aware of the expectations of prison staff with regard to his institutionalization, social participation. In the context of the own research sub-category being discussed, bearing in mind the fundamental objective of the execution of custodial sentences – “to arouse the willingness, in the convict, to cooperate in shaping of his or her socially desirable attitudes, in particular a sense of responsibility and need to observe the legal order and thus refrain from returning to crime” (Article 67 (1) of the Executive Penal Code) – we should ask ourselves the following question: how should this goal be achieved by an elderly convict? The surveyed senior, who became a convict at a pre-senior age, and who has been imprisoned for years, is able to function in prison (cf. items 2–11 of Recommendation Rec (2003)23 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the execution by prison administration of the life imprisonment penalty and other long-term custodial sentences) (Szymanowski 2011, pp. 113–114).

The purpose of enforcing a prison sentence is the same for all ages, however, research shows that the internal age classification of prisoners is justified. Proneness to conflicts, aggressiveness and demoralization of the sentenced person presented to a younger prisoner do not support the idea of placing a senior with a long-term custodial sentence in the ordinary system of execution of the sentence, because they require a separate, individualized rehabilitation procedure or even, if there are diagnostic reasons for doing so, they could serve the custodian sentence under the most optimal conditions possible (therapeutic units for convicts with non-psychotic mental disorders or intellectual disabilities). However, as Wiesław Ambrozik points out (2016, p. 106), artificiality, fictitiousness and ostensibility of individual rehabilitation impact programs appear already at the stage of diagnosis, which is to be used in their development. The design and content of these programs are also fictional and do not result from the diagnosis, but from the available conditions and possibilities of a given rehabilitation institution. From a specific perspective, the system of programmatic impact is an idea of the essence of the social rehabilitation process which, according to the researcher (Ambrozik 2016, p. 101), is not perceived in terms of repressive and aversive influences, resulting in impermanent behaviors preventing criminal acts, but rather in terms of actions aimed at the development of new skills and social competences.

## **An old man streaked with gray and meaning**

The opinion on the functioning of older people in prisons is, by definition, a depreciating one. The explored reality, on the other hand, indicates other dimensions of aging. The criminal subjected to the narrative interview was not infirm, did not display traits of loneliness, suffering, lack of mental acuity, courage or initiative. He did not show any physical features of dysfunction, experience of pressure, feeling of loss or insecurity. It can even be said that the convict strove for a causative presence that would continue creation and satisfy his need for activity. It is as if the prisoner exceeded social ideas, not only by extending his life, but also by setting the bar high for himself in terms of his own development and/or finding the sense of passing. In the context of enforcing a prison sentence on an older person, the possibility of developing one's own interests could be associated with an unattainable space. What helped the convict suppress thoughts about passing were emancipatory behaviors which, in his opinion, set higher standards for his own actions and use of his potential.

The condemned stated that development at an old age is possible when one considers the perspective of the future, in relation to the present and the past. According to Danuta Seredyńska (2013, p. 106), "if an individual: conducts a review of his/her own past, releases memories that were not previously recalled, releases and activates the contents of an often traumatic experience, which was



not included in the knowledge system used on a current basis due to excessively high mental costs, he/she has a chance to: get to know himself/herself, use what he/she has learned, which will make it easier for him/her to function, turn to the future in a positive way". In the case of proper personal development and positive solving of developmental crises that precede old age, it can be lived wisely and in a dignified way (Steuden 2011, p. 179), with a sense of fulfillment, joy and gratitude. However, what form does life at an old age take when opportunities for personal development and proper relations were thwarted at earlier stages of life, especially in the context of long-term sentences?

Old age in the present case of a person sentenced to life imprisonment did not constitute an absolutely destructive period of his life. He remained somewhat "beside" the ongoing history of his closest relatives, difficult and problematic situations, economic situations. The convict made the issue of caring for his health conditional on the possibilities offered by the prison, as well as on his specific definition of health, level of knowledge of health, symptomatology or determinants, habits, responsibility for health and the need for medical care in terms of specific diseases (spine, coronary heart disease).

I had to get used to life here. I have been living in jail for many, many years. But I have my place in the hierarchy. I have a two-person cell and treat it as my own. It is best when I don't have a cellmate. I have no addictions. Only heart problems. I have a good memory, I can see and hear well. I attach importance to the quality of food. I tell them when something is undercooked or oversalted. They know me well here. I have my rules and I want to take care of myself as much as I can here.

Getting medical treatment and being a convict do not go well together. Every time I reported my symptoms, the district court replied that treatment was standard. They led me to a heart attack. They connected me to medical instruments funded from Gomułka's budget. At 3 p.m. they took in an ambulance, resuscitated with morphine, psychotropics. Then a question was sent to the district court about the attack, and they got a decision in 15 minutes. This happened in May 2002 and since then the doctor has recommended two visits at the cardiologist's, prescribed medicine, but there was a refusal regarding receiving the medicine because it was too expensive and not verified. I was a pensioner, I had to pay the whole price, so I didn't get this medicine. I have a metal alloy, it cost 1560 PLN, but there are problems with magnetic resonance testing. I know that resonance testing gives a better diagnosis. But what I can count on here. Tomography gives a general picture and also irradiates. This does not help to get better. Quite the opposite. If I didn't sit here, I could take care of myself properly. There is a detoxification detention room here, only three days of detox, ECG, simple procedures. They used to perform some treatments but not anymore, now they practice instead of healing. They are available to the administration. The administration will, of course, say that this is not the case. The moment I was arrested, a policewoman gave me a L4 form to sign whether I was fit for being put in jail. They believed that at the city hospital they would state so, and the polyclinic signed that I could stay at the hospital unit of the prison. It used to be that once a week, once every two weeks, doctors were on duty, the manager of the outpatient clinic, and if I wanted, a doctor would come.

The surveyed man is of the opinion that taking care of health comfort, maintaining the hygiene of life, will allow to achieve a satisfactory old age, without somatic burden or pain. In a sense, he feels neglected by the health care system and pressured by the penitentiary institution, which entails a sense of insecurity, loss or even threat to the senior's health and life.

The excerpt from the prisoner's spoken statement draws attention to a certain moral aspect, the need to "despite everything" search for alternative ways of overcoming barriers related to the need for protection of health. It will be a cliché to say that a sporadic and minimalistic approach to adequate diagnosis of the health condition of the convict will result in advanced and deepening disease problems. In view of the surveyed man and his growing problems with health, should we not take professional medical actions aimed at changing, improving the quality of this already "aimless" life? To what extent do many years, or an entire life, in incarceration determine the deterioration of the convicted person's health condition? Confronting the opinion of the respondent, reference can be made to the provisions setting out the rights of the condemned in Article 4 of the Executive Penal Code, which states that punishments, punitive measures, security measures and preventive measures must be carried out in a humane manner and with respect for human dignity of the sentenced person. This provision expressly prohibits degrading treatment and punishment of a convicted person, where depriving of or hindering access to medical care should be considered as such. The subject of my analyses is not a legal exploration of the issues of medical care in a penitentiary unit or the scope of health care services due to the inmates or their rights, but rather a reflection of specific paradoxes of institutional resocialization dominated by a legal/criminal and administrative/formal approach to the issue. I will limit myself only to a view expressing the need to change the current judiciary concerning medical care of elderly convicted prisoners, the need to replace court decisions that are expressed in the following statement: "It is not an obligation of the Prison Health Service to meet all expectations of the imprisoned, who, in prison, undergo treatment of diseases that were previously neglected, demanding that cutting-edge therapeutic techniques or expensive medications be used. The duty of this service is merely to keep those deprived of their liberty alive and in undeteriorated health" (quoted from: Paszkowska 2010). In the light of the judiciary, the prison health service's task is to keep prisoners in an undeteriorated condition. The sense of the quality of this provision cannot be reconciled in the temporal space of the convicted senior with a long-term sentence.

## Breakthrough moments in biography

There are many things to remember from childhood [...] mother was a Judas. When I got a little older, I didn't let my father beat me anymore. When I was seventeen, my father started to be afraid of me. Raising with a belt did not help...

The penitentiary system comes from the years of socialism. There was no communism as such. I have served more than 50 years. I messed with the wrong people. The public prosecutor in the rank of major, under the influence of alcohol, started a fight with us young hooligans. We were too loud. I took out a knife and ran it along his back, he also got punched on the jaw. They stitched his back and buttock. I got 3 years and there was an outburst in the courtroom why not 5, why did you come here you thug – for such a small sentence?

Another time there were murders committed in defense of necessity. At first I got 15 years. An own brother came to me with four friends, and I took them down, defending myself. I developed a version that I determined.

[...] It was an ordinary day, a day as usual. How it happened, I do not know. But I slaughtered two. I never parted with a knife. They did not understand that they had to stop. I had a broken shinbone, I screamed to one, if I wanted to kick you to death, you would defend yourself! I cut his throat. He ran through fields with blood spurting out of the artery until he fell down. I did not let the other one go either. It so happened that he got it in the heart. Double murder. To calm down, I returned home for breakfast. Did I want to be a butcher? The court justified that they were hit in sensitive places, I got 25 years. On television, they talked about those dead ones, commented on how they could possibly have released a murderer and let him kill again. The judge, a military pensioner, asked why I did not escape? How was I supposed to run away with a broken leg. At least half of this sentence I got unjustly. But what can you do about such violence.

Here, I try not to make my life more difficult, because I know that I will die here, I want to have law and order, there are rules and I have to follow them. The condemned do mess with me, they feel respectful. Officers also have respect, they know that I am quickly annoyed. I am aggressive. Maybe that's why my daughter doesn't visit me, doesn't keep in touch with me at all. She works in a bank. She takes after me, her character. I regret that very much. But I do not lose faith. Maybe one day she will want to talk to me. This is the greatest pain. I have a central nervous system defect – encephalopathy, atrophy of frontal lobes – I have a diagnosis.

I lived in cohabitation, with her and her daughter Eva. Little Eva preferred me to her own mother. I knew how to negotiate with her, I joked: you'll get it with a belt, you're rude... but not that darling kid.

There was a situation where Eva said she was beaten by a lady from kindergarten. I ran up to her, lifted her up by the rags. I put the missy down. Afterwards, she was a completely different teacher. The kid was always top priority to me. I taught her to eat, I never stinted on anything when it came to her.

And once, as a 4-year-old girl, she took me by the hand and, filled with fear, told me that the man with a mustache had been there. The cohabitee was a Judas. She went to him secretly. She didn't like that Eva was with me and she wanted contacts with Eva to end, so she married her off to a German.

The description of the life epiphanies of the senior is dominated by reports about his external and internal “resources”. The system of external conditions consisted of relations with the loved ones, the family, violence and social isolation.

The assassin's attitude, feelings activating his behavior (fits of passion, love, fear, anger, hatred, disgust, anger, compulsion and force, despair, discouragement, pride, pain, vengefulness, cruelty) showed a lack of a clear sense of guilt, simple and naive justifications for the crimes committed, a significant level of demoralization, social aberration.

The convict even manifested a sense of injustice and misunderstanding in the context of being provoked by his victims to murder them, he claimed that he did not control his behavior or emotions. Emotional sphere and dynamism that constitute the character play an important role in the formation of a crime (Świtka 2013, p. 93). The situation of the senior and his available vision of activity oscillated around supporting elements, i.e.: meeting with him, devoting time to him, listening to him, acceptance manifested in proper communication with him – active listening. On the other hand, the factors discouraging him from activity were: stereotypes concerning older people, the temperamental qualities of others, especially young people, and their attitude to seniors, loss of professional activity from the time of youth, loss of loved ones, without any possibility of strengthening existing ties with them, loss of partner support. To some extent, the convicted interlocutor pointed to a kind of mess in his consciousness, self-assessment and self-acceptance, which translated into his behaviors revealing the elements of self-discrimination and the attitude of withdrawal. From his narrative it can be concluded that he does not succumb to the categorization of older people, in particular those with the status of a convict. He derived the strength and willingness to act or adopt attitudes conducive to adapting to his situation from the awareness and sense of being productive and useful, with simultaneous transgression that stimulated the ability not to focus on ailments and deficits of the time of seniority. However, what was surprising in the conversation was that the interlocutor revealed a certain manipulative skill, consisting in the sense of control over what had surrounded him before and surrounded him then. The specific adaptation to the situations that happened and the mobility are, in a way, the hallmarks of an organized killer. The fact that the victims activated defensive mechanisms against the real situations resulted in physical and emotional violence on the part of the respondent. Referring to the first crime, the set of factors present in the subject and the criminogenous situation, as well as the relations taking place between them, preceding commitment of the deed, may be described as the prehomocidal syndrome (Kowalczyk 2010, p. 143). The act was unplanned, committed by surprise, according to the account of the senior, in temporary terms – sudden, so the factors occurring shortly before the act acted as the cause. Further murders are included in the situational scope considered as “the sudden situation”, acting as a trigger factor releasing aggression (Kowalczyk 2010, p. 145). It functioned under the conditions of a continuous situation, which had the characteristics of a difficult situation, to which the individual was subjected for a certain period of time and which caused an increase in aggression.

By encouraging the prisoner to reminisce, I obtained a certain fragment of the situationality, determining his location and the magnitude of his life non-fulfillments. Educational conditions in childhood appear to be extremely unfavorable, disrupting the course of his socialization. For this reason, he showed early signs of demoralization, social maladjustment and educational problems. Analyzing his later "career" of criminal activity, one may assume that the motivational background was the conflicting relations with his loved ones, the family, which is the matrix for the formation of later relations with the society. Traumas and biological stresses manifested themselves. He was hyperactive psychomotorally. He showed significant emotional coldness, a high level of aggressiveness.

Referring to the condemned person's relations, one may get the impression that, in his biography, he did not find any supporting people, as regards the times of both childhood and youth. There was no emotional bond. The prisoner's statement suggests that all the penitentiary institutions, at which he stayed, left their mark on the psyche. By analyzing the pieces of the senior's criminal biography, one can point out the attributes needed to survive in prison: the ability to forcefully 'have it your way', courage, cunning, audacity and even ruthlessness. Through his "established" status as a repeat offender charged with life imprisonment, he was able to quickly and accurately assess the situation and, in accordance with his own preferences, to create the conditions of his own existence. It is as if he were performing a kind of unemotional generalization of reality. Meanwhile, the range of needs revealed by the respondent indicates preference for: dominance, maintaining self-esteem and meaning, affiliation, acceptance and recognition.

Punishment as retaliation, repression, social elimination, physical exclusion, the state's revenge on the perpetrator, should be rationally 'administered'. The purpose of criminal punishment should not be to scare others off, as it will remain in opposition to the modern criminal law, the humanitarian nature of punishment.

The premise of alternative and more effective solutions for rehabilitation of the convicted person should be to strive, in accordance with the objectives of special prevention, to improve and educate him or her. Since, from a pedagogical point of view, the purpose of punishment is first and foremost the welfare of the punished individual, the improvement of his/her functioning and evocation of personality changes that enable proper social behavior, entering into accepted roles and social relations, the current model of institutional re-socialization does not work, reveals inconsistency of assumptions for prisoners sentenced to life in terms of its preventive role or moral/legal improvement.

The excluded man, because this was the name that burdened my interlocutor, made me listen to his stories with great interest. I tried to analyze his attitude towards his own old age, mental suffering, understanding the mechanisms that govern them, searching for some truths. In the discourse with the prisoner, I experienced surprise, because this man, in the end, proved to be powerless in the search for an answer to the recalled moments, illuminations. His narrative clearly

shows that old age in isolation is not individually abstracted, but culturally and socially contextualized. This fact may lead to questions about the relationship between the knowledge created in the scientific space and the vision of a particular researcher, the field of individual experiences or personality predispositions. The fate of thoughts, coupled with the ability to explain them, is sometimes intricate, difficult to predict and, at the same time, simply interesting, especially in a situation where a person cannot return and has nowhere to return to.

Theoretical sensitivity, a concept characteristic of the well-established theory's method, had a significant impact on the course of the whole study. Being a unitary feature of the researcher, it decides whether the research conducted by him/her is unique, original and saturated with the specificity of his/her creativity and imagination. Theoretical sensitivity, or 'researcher's sensitivity', means the ability to understand a phenomenon, to interpret and faithfully report it. During the process of gradual 'blending' into the reality of the respondent, I reached a point where I realized that reflection marks a new way, a distance allowing to see things in a sharper focus. The analyses that I undertook brought me – the researcher – closer to the understanding of the meanings of acquired knowledge, conveyed in the story of a man subjected to permanent isolation, deprived of the chance to reach social consciousness.

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