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**In the Labyrinth of Emotions – Ethnography of a
Humanitarian Organization**

Master's Thesis
In the Field of Organizational Ethnography

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Short Summary

The following master's thesis, written in the field of ethnography has been based upon an extensive study of a humanitarian organization. *Motivational forces* of the members of the researched foundation are the main focal point of this dissertation. The author is investigating why people engage in volunteer work and dedicate their time and passion to an organization. Moreover, on the basis of Maslow's (1943) *theory of human motivation* he is endeavoring to identify the character of each of the motivational profiles researched. This effort is pursued via seeking to answer the question: On which of the levels of Maslow's *Needs Pyramid* do the individual motivations have their roots? Additionally, resorting to the results of a *participant observation* the author is putting his own individual development of the motivational drive under a magnifying glass. Eventually, the whole analysis is concluded with metaphor of a labyrinth.

Key Words

Labyrinth, Maslow's Needs Pyramid, Motivation, Emotions, Physiological Needs, Safety Needs, Love Needs, Esteem Needs, Self- Actualization, Participant Observation

Field in Which the Dissertation is Written (Codes According to the Socrates-Erasmus Program)

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It is the mind which creates the world around us, and even though we stand side by side in the same meadow, my eyes will never see what is beheld by yours, my heart will never stir to the emotions with which yours is touched.

George Gissing¹

1. Introduction

¹ Fifield, Mike 1998/2002: Cognitive Distortion - Quotations

1.1. Background

During one of the first classes on management that I had an opportunity to attend at the university, I heard something that profoundly shifted my point of view. The professor who was then holding a lecture on *classical approaches* within organizational studies quoted one of the fundamental assumptions of Frederick W. Taylor², more or less stating that human beings were economically motivated and their personal interest was capable of being satisfied by economic gain alone (Jones, 1997). It may sound naive and unworldly on my part to say that this statement tarnished and eventually shattered the idealistically embellished image of the reality that I had been trying to maintain before my mind's eye. Yet in fact, that was exactly the case. It is, of course, obvious that I had been aware of the crucial role of money in the world's affairs (*money makes the world go round*, after all), nonetheless never before had I heard anybody so explicitly express the conjecture that economic needs might underlie all the actions of a human being. Although later on, on countless occasions I heard numerous kinds of contrasting assumptions (including, for example, the *Human Relations* attitude, which at the time largely challenged Taylor's view), the notion of an *economic man* continuously echoed in my head. All the other management-related theories about human nature despite the inclusion of some additional, non-economic elements into the concept of motivation within an organization, always inevitably kept the issue of money in the background. This fact subconsciously made me perceive the reasons of the majority of human organizational activities as plainly primitive. I desired to discover some new, different aspects of the worker's motivation. Aspects which would be absolutely deprived of any economically-based stimuli. Such a finding would render the organizational world much more profound and sophisticated from my perspective, thereby contributing to its multidimensionality. *Is there really no way that a human being could be propelled by some more altruistic intentions?* - I asked myself constantly. This relentless urge to discern another facet of the organizational reality, eventually pushed me to embarking on a quest for *a private voluntary organization* which

² Although his view may nowadays be regarded as unscientific and outdated, the fact remains that Frederick W. Taylor is often referred to *as a guru of management* and his theory had an enormous impact on the development of the discipline. I am by no means quoting him to emphasize the universality of his statements, but just make the reader aware of the fact that Taylor's theory was the starting point of the sequence of thoughts that eventually led me to choosing the subject for this master's thesis.

in other words can be described as a *humanitarian organization* and which would constitute the target of my prospective academic investigations.

United States Agency for international Development defines *private voluntary organizations* as tax-exempt, *non-profit organizations* working in, or intending to become engaged in, international development activities. These organizations receive some portion of their annual revenue from the private sector (demonstrating their private nature) and voluntary contributions of money, staff time, or in-kind support from the general public (demonstrating their voluntary nature). (...) Many Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in international development and *humanitarian aid* prefer the term to NGO. NGOs typically include any private or nonprofit entity that is formed or organized independently from any national or local governmental entity. These can include for-profit firms, academic degree-granting institutions, universities and colleges, labor institutions, *foundations*, and cooperative development organizations (Wikipedia, 2004, [n.p.]).

I could not conceal my exhilaration when the members of one of the Polish foundations willingly agreed to letting me conduct my research in their base. The profile of this organization clearly indicated that voluntary engagement of the majority of workers was crucial for its survival. Therefore I found this field ideal to plunge into in pursuit of the non-economic motives and goals of the employees.

The foundation was primarily committed to offering humanitarian aid to children from problematic families as well as to disabled kids. It once constituted a division of an international association, yet due to some coordination-related glitches it was eventually separated. In order to protect the anonymity of the organization and particularly of my interlocutors, I will not divulge any data that might identify them.

Let me briefly describe the main characteristics of the investigated foundation. At the time of my research it employed 7 regular, paid workers and 18 volunteers. Yet, the group of the latter steadily got bigger in the course of my time with the organization, finally to include 56 people. Main activities of the foundation entailed:

- coordination of an Elder Brother Elder Sister Program, which consisted in coupling volunteers in pairs with particular children and the individual face-to-face work at the charge's home

- running a kindergarten (for kids up to 4 years of age) and a children's club (for elder youngsters – up to the age of 15)
- distribution of food and basic hygienic products
- organizing on an occasional basis various events for the blind and the disabled

The financial resources of the foundation comprised sums collected during charity parties and contributions of private sponsors.

Before going on to the next section of this dissertation, which is the formulation of the *research problem*, I would like to draw the reader's attention to one more issue, which I consider a crucial element of my work, and thus worth mentioning in the introduction to this paper - namely, my understanding of *organization*.

After Vickers (1967), I identify an organization with “a structure of mutual expectations, attached to roles which define what each of its members shall expect from others and from himself or herself” (pp.109-10, as quoted in Weick, 1969/79, [n.p.]). It is “an identifiable social entity pursuing multiple objectives through the coordinated activities and relations among members and objects” (Hunt, 1972, p.4, as quoted in Weick, 1969/79, [n.p.]). People tend to create and enter organizations with the aim of shaping the world and their own lives in a specific manner (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992). Additionally, when it comes to the particular structure of the foundation under study, which is largely based on the personal relationships between the volunteers and their charges under the broad vigilance of the headquarters, I would classify it as a *loosely-coupled organization*. This bipolar notion preserves, in one image, opposition between autonomy (loose) and interdependence (coupling) (Weick, 1988). In such organizations workers are relatively free from hierarchical control, have multiple and sometimes conflicting aspirations and a lot of discretion in how to act (VanderPutten, 1983). Owing to such an individual character of the activities carried out by the actors in the field, my research has been conducted on the *micro* (individual, personal) level of day-to-day interactions (Burawoy, 1991a).

1.2. The Research Problem

In case of any qualitative research it is paramount to identify the *research problem* before presenting the actual findings.

The main focal point of this dissertation, as the title already suggests, is *emotions* and, by implication, *motivational forces* of the members of the foundation. I would like to investigate why people engage in volunteer work and dedicate their time and passion to an organization. Moreover, on the basis of Maslow's (1943) *theory of human motivation* I am endeavoring to identify the character of each of the motivational profiles researched. This effort is pursued via seeking to answer the question: On which of the levels of Maslow's *Needs Pyramid* do the individual motivations have their roots? Additionally, I am putting my own individual development of the motivational drive under a magnifying glass. I have grown as a person and student of organization during my research and I would like to dismiss that process in this thesis. Eventually, I am raising the general issue pertaining to why humanitarian organizations work as well as they do. Yet I leave the attempt to explicitly answer this question at the discretion of the reader.

1.3. Structure of the Work

1.3.1. Clarification of the Title

Let me start the description of the structure of this scientific work by explaining its title. During my investigative explorations, I had an opportunity to come across a wide variety of unique people. Being largely focused on the motivational aspects of my interlocutors' demeanor I was gradually falling under a swelling tide of each individual's most intimate feelings such as fear, joy, sorrow, hope hate or desire. That incredible variety of often contradictory human emotions, which were all so intensely discernible in the investigated organization, started at a certain moment to resemble a maze - a labyrinth in which I often found myself wandering around without a clue. Sometimes it even occurred to me that many of the actors whom I observed also seemed to be lost in their own, private

webs of crooked emotional corridors (hence the metaphor of a labyrinth, which constitutes the core of my conclusions at the very end of the thesis). I settled on resorting to this figure of speech in order to effectively reflect the character of my investigations, since, as Ortony (1975) observes “metaphors provide a compact version of an event without the need for the message to spell out all the details” ([n.p.], as quoted in Weick 1969/1979, [n.p.]). They also portray the essential nature or ultimate form of something. “Metaphors are closer to perceived experience and therefore are more vivid emotionally, sensorially, and cognitively” (Ortony, 1975, [n.p.], as quoted in Weick, 1969/1979, [n.p.]).

1.3.2. The Methodology Chosen

Methodology can be defined as “a link between technique and theory” (Burawoy, 1992a, p. 5). There are many methodologies to choose from, yet I decided to reach for *ethnography*³.

What does the notion of ethnography exactly mean? Let me explain. In general terms, ethnography is “a written representation of a culture or its aspects” (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 1), which is a result of an investigation of a unity of the humankind via a study of its diversity (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992). Metaphorically speaking, “ethnographies decode one culture, while recoding it for another” (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 4), they create translations – “they retell, in our language, stories that were told by people speaking in other languages” (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p.42). This particular thesis ought to be classified as *organizational ethnography*, and can be described as an interpretation of organizational processes from the standpoint of the actors involved, collected and retold by a researcher (also representing a certain standpoint). It is polyphony of numerous voices from inside (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992).

The reasons for turning to ethnography were rooted deeply in my nature. I can be characterized as a person with an inborn curiosity for the complexity of the surrounding world. I have always been fascinated by the ways in which other people think and act. Asking questions and observing have been natural means for me to try to comprehend the

³ In this work I use the notion *ethnography* and *anthropology* interchangeably, since as James Clifford (1996) states: “academic ethnography is not distinct from anthropology” (Polish edition 2000, p.16, translation: JG), thus the terms: *ethnographer* and *anthropologist* are also being substituted one for another.

reality, to discover the underlying intricacy of human-related issues. Since an anthropologist's (or ethnographer's) main task in the field is to find the way towards understanding others via ongoing interaction with them (Van Maanen, 1988), I deemed ethnography to be the ideal tool for conducting my scientific investigations.

1.3.3. The Descriptive Style Applied

When it comes to the manner in which the gathered fieldwork is presented, I settled on choosing the descriptive method, which Van Maanen (1988) labels as *confessional tale*.

The confessional tale is an attempt to explicitly demystify fieldwork (...) by showing how the technique is practiced in the field. Stories of infiltration, fables of fieldwork rapport, minime melodramas of hardships endured (and overcome), and accounts of what fieldwork did to the fieldworker are prominent features of confessions. (...) Author-fieldworkers are always close at hand in confessional tales (...) the details that matter in confessional tales are those that constitute the field experience of the author. This human bundle of exposed nerve-endings stands alone in the culture supposedly perceiving and registering the various happenings around him (...) A reader often learns of the ethnographer's shifting point of view during a period of fieldwork in a confessional (pp. 73-77).

Since "no description is just a description and there is always a judgment involved" (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 218), I arrived at a conclusion that through the confessional tale, my identity as a researcher, while being clear and salient, will allow the reader to make an easy identification of the *observer* and the *observed*, and by implication, provoke an obvious mental distinction between them.

Certain fragments of the text (especially the excerpts from the field notes) also bear a close resemblance to another type of stories distinguished by Van Maanen, namely to *literary tales*. Such tales are characterized by the author's explicit borrowing of fiction-writing techniques to tell the story. They combine a reporter's sense of what is noteworthy with a novelist's style of narration (Van Maanen, 1988). The decision about turning to this manner of depicting reality stems from my personal conviction, which can be best illustrated by a fragment of Brown's *cognitive aesthetic theory of truth*:

Truth is not correspondence between a representation and a reality, but a credibility of representation, in terms of motivational plausibility (we understand why actors act as they do) and practical feasibility (we believe that they could do as they did in the story) (Brown [n.d], [n.p.], as quoted in Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 216)

That should absolutely not suggest that the passages of text written in the literary style are partially made up. I am only highlighting the fact that a novelist's style of narration stresses and emphasizes certain elements of the story, thereby making it more appealing to the reader and at the same time remaining absolutely truthful.

Moreover "there is a free spirited authenticity to literary tales that other tales of the field lack" (Van Maanen, 1988, p.134), and that is also the cause which made me apply such a descriptive style.

1.3.4. Detailed Division of the Thesis

I will now focus on a short explanation of how the thesis has been structured and divided. There are five general parts of which this scientific work is composed.

The first one called *Introduction* centers the reader's attention on the general, academic setting of the ethnographic research. It contains the description of the *Background* of the investigated subject along with the formulation of the *Research Problem* that is a set of issues and questions crucial to the whole thesis. The last fragment of this part unveils the *Structure of the Work*.

The second larger section of the dissertation has been named *Theoretical Frame and Method* and is composed of *Definitions* significant to the discussed subject, the description of the research *Method* and *Facts and Reflections connected with the Fieldwork*.

The third section of the thesis is labeled as *The Tale of the Field*. It is in other words the *empirical part* of the work and it portrays the most significant phenomena encountered by the author in the field. This part consists of four *Chapters* depicting four different facets of the whole organization. The first chapter (*Two Opposing Worlds*) centers on the image of the organization seen through the director's eyes. Her vision is then juxtaposed against the viewpoints of the regular workers. The second chapter (What

induces Volunteers to Assist Those in Need?) puts under the magnifying glass the motivational profiles of seven randomly selected volunteers. In the third chapter (*Dwelling on Paradoxes*) the reader has an opportunity to get to know one of the most controversial regular workers of the foundation. And finally, the fourth chapter (*Being a Part of the Game*) is almost entirely composed of the excerpts from my fieldnotes, which reflect the process in the course of which my own motivational drive came to light.

What follows is the fourth larger section of the thesis called the *Discussion and Reflections*. Here, all the afterthoughts are gathered and examined on the basis of Maslow's (1943) *theory of human motivation*, or more specifically, his concept of the *Needs Pyramid*.

The final, brief summary of the thesis entitled *General Conclusions* and presented in form of my own *metaphor of a labyrinth* is what ends the entire dissertation.

2. Theoretical Frame and Method

2.1. Main Definitions

I would now like to present the ways in which I understand the main concepts used in this dissertation. Let me start by clarifying what I mean by *emotions*.

Emotion is such a difficult concept to define adequately that there are at least 90 different definitions of emotions in the scientific literature. A simple definition of emotion is that it is a response by a whole organism, involving (1) physical arousal, (2) expressive behaviors, and (3) conscious experience. (...) emotions contain both physical and mental components, and require conscious awareness (Sung, 2001, [n.p.]

Emotions may also be described as “preprogrammed patterns of behavior which predispose us to react to situations aggressively, fearfully, or lovingly” (Garcia, 1974 [n.p.] Moreover, according to the Psychoevolutionary theory emotions are a complex of *motivational* factors (Wikipedia, 2004, as quoted in Word.IQ.com, 2004)

Thus, inevitably, another crucial term comes to light. Namely – human *motivation*. As Maslow (1970) states “motivation derives from the needs of the person. Needs are a state of tension or imbalance that demands a satisfying activity” ([n.p.], as quoted in Deomi, 2000, p.4). In other words motivation can be defined as “an internal state or condition (sometimes described as a desire, or want) that serves to activate or energize behavior and give it direction” (Kleinginna and Kleinginna, 1981, [n.p.], as quoted in Huitt, 2001, [n.p.]). Therefore its role within the theory of management is absolutely crucial. How would any organization be able to function if its members were not motivated at all?

There are numerous theoretical interpretations of motivation within the realm of science - from the behavioral, via the cognitive up to the humanistic view (Biehler and Snowmann, 1997).

Behavioral views of motivation concentrate on extrinsic factors (external rewards or punishments) and reinforcement of desired behaviors (based on Jon Watsons’ mechanistic concept that behaviors could be totally described in terms of observable responses to certain stimuli) (...) Cognitive views on motivation propose that behavior is influenced by the environment and self-perception.

Compared to the behavioral view of external stimulus/response, cognitive views tend to be more internal and information processing based. (Shirkley, 2003, p.3)

Abraham Maslow, whose theory is evoked in this paper, is one of the most notable representatives of the last of the three approaches. The *Humanistic View* mainly concentrates on the non-behaviorist and non-objective aspects of *human* existence, which the other two theories lack (Biehler and Snowmann, 1997). The concept which lays the groundwork for the conclusive analysis of data at the end of this thesis was the main point of Maslow's article entitled *A Theory of Human Motivation* (1943).

(...) In this article, Abraham Maslow (...) attempted to formulate a needs-based framework of human motivation based upon his clinical experiences with humans, rather than prior psychology theories of his day from authors such as Freud and B.F. Skinner, which were largely theoretical or based upon animal behavior (...) According to Maslow, there are general types of needs (physiological, safety, love, and esteem) that must be satisfied before a person can act unselfishly (...) Abraham Maslow's model indicates that basic, low-level needs such as physiological requirements and safety must be satisfied before higher-level needs such as self-fulfillment are pursued. (Envision Software Incorporated, 1998-2004, [n.p.]

This representation of needs is usually depicted as a hierarchical diagram, either called *Maslow's Needs Pyramid* or *Maslow's Needs Triangle*, with the basic aim to emphasize the vertical mechanism of the theory, according to which - when a certain need is satisfied it no longer motivates the subject and the next higher need takes its place.

These concepts are central for my thesis. Yet there is another notion that definitely ought to be mentioned here. It must be emphasized that my dissertation is based on empirical data, which has been meticulously collected in the field. The mere fact of *being there* gave me an opportunity to experience a fundamental phenomenon which has accompanied all my investigations from their very onset, and in which this paper is inevitably embedded. I am referring to the *culture* of the organization under study.

Although there are dozens, if not thousands, of definitions of culture available within the academic world, I will attempt to elucidate this elusive term by resorting to those explanations, which best suit the purposes of this thesis.

Etzioni, quoting Parsons, assumed that each collective had a cultural system that included sets of values and cognitive perspectives that were, to varying degrees, shared by organizational actors – this is probably the best definition of organizational culture so far! (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 14)

This is a very concrete, down-to-earth portrayal of the term in question, nonetheless attempting to apprehend the notion of culture from a more general perspective, it is also possible to interpret it as a *manuscript* replete with arguments, formulas, melodies, maps and pictures, which are waiting to be discovered and read by the researcher (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992). Moreover, what highly appeals to me is Geertz's (1973) definition of culture. He states:

Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning (p.5, as quoted in Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p.52).

Culture is definitely not something that can ever be known once and for all. It is:

(...) like the elusive will-o'-the-wisp targets that slip in and out of view, appear in many apparitions, look different from different angles and sometimes move with surprising speed (...) Knowing a culture is a never-ending story (Van Maanen, 1988, p.119).

Culture is akin to a black hole that allows no light to escape. The observer knows of culture's presence not by looking, but only by conjecture, inference, and a great deal of faith (Wagner, 1981; Sperber, 1974, [n.p.], as quoted in Van Maanen, 1988, p. 3).

And last, but not least:

A culture is expressed (or constituted) only by the actions and words of its members and must be interpreted by a fieldworker (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 3).

2.2. Methodological Assumptions

It is high time that I divulge the reader all the methodological assumptions laying the groundwork under my scientific explorations. Let me begin with shedding the light upon my choice of paradigm.

I settled on selecting the *interpretive paradigm*. There are a few reasons for such a decision. First and foremost it is definitely conditioned by the *qualitative character* of my investigation, which by the definition lets some air of intuitive way of thinking into the research. As Van Maanen (1998) has it:

Qualitative research is most often designed as it is being done. It is anything but standardized or, more tellingly, impersonal. As Becker (1993) pointed out, qualitative work allows for- indeed, insists on- highly contextualized individual judgments. It is a style of research that makes room for the unanticipated, thus focusing more on specific cases and exceptions than on abstractions and generalizations. (...) Qualitative work generally sidesteps the hypothetical-deductive research model in favor of an inductive, interpretive approach (...) (p.Xi)

The interpretive paradigm can in other words be described as a set of ontological assumptions, according to which the social world is constructed by people inhabiting it. This very postulation underlies the entire exploratory field of cultural anthropology, which, in turn, is a main source of inspiration for the organizational ethnography treating the culture as its *root metaphor*. A root metaphor of culture is the main way of describing the object of investigations (epistemological assumptions) within organizational ethnography, where organizations are seen as cultures. (Kostera, 2003) Organization becomes a *linguistic device* and a resource constructed during human sense-making activities. Therefore, the conceptions of organization are problematic and essentially vague (Van Maanen, 1998). In such a situation the researcher's interpretative attitude appears to be more than welcome.

There is, however, a number of limitations setting more or less clear boundaries around the seemingly liberal investigative practices of the ethnographer. The notion of *interpretation* should by no means suggest that *anything goes* and that the researcher is completely unrestrained in his/her exploratory demeanor. The appropriate conduct of

anthropological investigations is extremely complicated. It demands a great deal of scientific awareness and self-discipline not to get lured onto the bogus routes of human reasoning, which often may prove highly deceptive.

Social anthropologists should not see themselves as seekers after objective truth; their purpose is to gain insight into other people's behavior or, for that matter, into their own. (Leach, 1982, p. 52 as quoted in Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p.43)

And further:

Sooner or later we shall find somebody whose action is "strange" or "incomprehensible". One desirable outcome of such an encounter is a distancing from one's own rationality, a better understanding of it. (...) A defensive defining of somebody else's rationality as "irrational" closes the way to knowledge. (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p.63)

The best way of avoiding all the potential pitfalls and obstacles is to adapt *anthropological frame of mind*. This term, which has been coined by Barbara Czarniawska-Joerges (1992), describes a unique state of mind of a researcher characterized on one hand by openness to new realities and meanings and on the other – by a continuous need of questioning and denial of regarding any issue as obvious (Kostera, 2003). Yet the fact remains that "it is not humanly possible to be free from biases" (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p.6). There is, however, still another means of attempting to strive for apprehending the reality independent of our cognition. It is called *intersubjectivity*.

In order to understand others' ways of life as they are observed, an observer must see reality as others see it. (...) What is accessible to our cognition is our own distortions of other people's distortions. How can we understand what they mean? (...) The answer lies in the intersubjectivity (...) This is the basis of the common core of representations held by actors involved in the same collective action, the core of meanings they share. (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 195)

All the abovementioned assumptions accompanied me as guidelines in the course of the majority of my investigative tasks⁴.

⁴ One stage of my participant observation focusing on my individual relationships with the younger brother (described in the last chapter of the empirical part of the thesis) was however, due to the goals and character of those particular investigations (aiming at the discovery of the process of personal motivation in myself), deprived of intersubjectivity.

2.3. *Research Methods*

Observation, interview and text analysis are the three basic research methods which can be applied by an anthropologist in the field. There are however numerous variations of each of them. The bottom line is to resort to more than one of the methods, in order to make the results of the fieldwork reliable and, by implication, more credible. Such a process is called *triangulation* (Kostera, 2003).

In my case two investigative methods proved to hold the merit of usefulness. The first of them was participant observation.

As a technique of research, participant observation distinguishes itself by breaking down the barriers between observer and participant, between those who study and those who are studied. It shatters the glass box from which sociologists observe the world and puts them temporarily at the mercy of their subjects. (...) the ethnographer confronts participants in their corporal reality, in their concrete existence, in *their* time and space (Burawoy, 1991c, p.291)

Although some call the technique of participant observation *the art of ethnography*, since it allows the researcher not just to observe directly how people act but also how they understand and experience those acts (Burawoy, 1991a), there is a serious encumbrance connected with this method. Namely, as a full participant of the investigated organization (the researcher assumes a role of an organizational member) it is extremely difficult to obtain the state of *detached involvement* that, as Bruyn (1966) declares, “is the ideal state for a participant observer when dropped in the midst of an alien culture” ([n.p.], as quoted in Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 197). The roles of participant and observer are innately in conflict, and tension and anxiety are an inherent part of fieldwork. Yet, as Burawoy (1991c) concludes, “the greater the tension the better the product” (p. 293). Nevertheless, regardless of all the impediments that might render the job of an ethnographer difficult, the basic aim is to “immerse oneself in the flood of alien cultures in order to grasp the direction of the stream and to feel the temperature of the water” (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p.197). In other words, once immersed in the organizational environment, one has an opportunity to gain a direct access to what Peter Winch calls the *nondiscursive knowledge*, that is the tacit, practical consciousness of everyday life, which

is normally not articulated and hence unreachable for the researcher through other investigative methods than participant observation (Winch [n.d.], as quoted in Burawoy, 1991a). The very attempt to *reach for the unreachable* was the primary reason that pushed me to turning to this investigative technique.

However, one should bear in mind Czarniawska-Joerges's (1992) question: "enriching as the observation might be, it will never be comprehensive without the actor's accounts, and what are interviews if not provoked accounts?" (p.198) My second and last research method was therefore the *anthropological* (ethnographic) *interview* (Kostera, 2003)

(...) ethnographic interviews are repetitive, open, and extensive interviews aimed at achieving a representation of people's work and organization (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992, p. 198)

The interviews which I conducted were *unstructured* and *not standardized* (Kostera, 2003). They were based mainly upon a set of open ended, general questions⁵, which were asked in an unspecified order and constantly evolved, being adapted to the particular interlocutor. In the course of my management studies I had already had an opportunity to conduct organizational investigations with aid of this research method, therefore I felt quite comfortable while applying it.

2.4. Facts and Reflections connected with the Fieldwork

The first time that I set my foot in the research field was in June 2002. Back then, I instantly found out that the possibility of conducting a participant observation would not only be my option, but a definite condition⁶ of entering the organization. Otherwise the doors to the field would remain closed. I thus had no other choice but to become one of the volunteers. After a few month break, at the end of November 2002, my regular visits in the foundation started. On average, I tended to appear in that organization three times a week, additionally being engaged as an elder brother within one of the divisions of the foundation

⁵ For example: How did you end up in this organization? What makes you feel good/bad? Is there something you would like to change? Etc.

⁶ I describe the exact, detailed conditions of entering the foundation in the empirical part, at the beginning of Chapter 4.

called Elder Brother, Elder Sister Program⁷. My major activities in *the primary research site* (that is: the headquarters of the foundation, as opposed to my younger brother's home, which I refer to as *the secondary research site*) consisted in regular work at the children's club (English lessons and taking care of kids - one day a week), occasional assistance offered to the main coordinator, participation in monthly meetings within the group of volunteers, involvement in gatherings pertaining to the children's parties and excursions as well as support during them. Moreover, I frequently popped by the organization, under a pretext of discussing some pressing issues concerning my younger brother, yet eventually I always ended up hanging around the foundation, listening, observing and running into other volunteers. Once, I also assisted in a private meeting among the unpaid helpers in one of the Warsaw pubs. Additionally, due to the fact that I have a driver's license, I often offered a lift home to various members of the organization, which was also another opportunity to get to know them a little better. When it comes to my *secondary research site*, I basically devoted one day a week to my younger brother; nevertheless I dropped by him more often every now and then (twice or even three times a week). It all depended on my free time and the urgency of his school-related issues. My tasks of a volunteer ranged from helping the kid with his homework, via offering him a companionship of an adult to acting as his personal tutor.

The longer I stayed in the field, the more attached I grew not only to the ambience of the foundation, but to the people, with whom I shared my fate of an unpaid worker. The fact of being a fully-fledged member of this organization granted me a status of literal invisibility as a researcher to the rest of participants. The fact that I occasionally asked a certain person to meet up with me outside of the foundation for a conversation, by no means appeared to stand in the way of my relationships with the quorum of volunteers. On the contrary, their awareness of my engagement in that humanitarian organization automatically rendered them much more disclosing. Moreover, the mere fact that I bore all the weights of an unpaid helper upon my shoulders, made it much easier and more natural for me to observe, listen and start up a conversation with the others. I *blended in* and began

⁷ I describe this activity as an additional task, since it consisted almost entirely of my private meetings with a young boy, outside of the main organizational building. Although the activity can be seen as additional from my personal perspective, it is not so from the organizational point of view, as the whole initiative (that is - my aid offered to the youngster) was initialized and run under the auspices of the foundation, with an active and more or less regular control of the coordinator of the program.

to understand their modes of thinking. I actually got absorbed so profoundly into the social core of the organization that after a few months two contradictory stances on the investigated reality started to duel in my sub-consciousness: on the one hand, the rationally detached perspective of the researcher, and on the other, the volunteer's emotional viewpoint - full of empathy for others. At that moment I began having an impression that the whole world had totally forgotten about the initial, basic goal which had propelled me into entering the foundation in the first place. In this light, listening, observing and taking detailed notes of those, who seemed to have trusted me so much, appeared to me as pure, insolent act of treachery. I felt as if I were a hypocrite, who behind his pals' backs, takes advantage of their private daily struggles. How relieved I was, when on reading a few anthropological accounts of other participant observers, I realized that my *dual state* was by no means uncommon. It was actually a sound proof of the quality and success of my research technique! In the confessions of other researchers, there was an exact reflection of the feelings and dilemmas that had plagued me so intensely:

I slid into my own insanity. (...) I developed a separate identity at each field. I was simultaneously trying to keep a grip on my identity as a researcher. And I even hoped that there would be some small piece of me left over to maintain a private self. (...) I actually became the roles I was playing. They took on a life of their own. I was caught up in the web of relationships, in the everyday dramas of each group. (...) I found it difficult (...) to work next to people without forming attachments, without beginning to care about them as individuals (...) I became obsessed. I lived, breathed, even dreamt about my field notes. (Josepha Schiffman, 1991, p. 77)

My last visit in the investigated organization took place in June 2003, and was in part provoked by the expiry of my contract with the younger brother and in part by the exceedingly saturated field material. In the course of almost 7 months of my fieldwork, I had managed to conduct 31 interviews, whose length ranged between 30 minutes (in case of the unquestionably shortest conversation) and almost 3 hours (at the other extreme). My scientific material was complemented by a set of tape cassettes containing exclusively detailed descriptions of my participant observations. All in all, I had almost 20 tapes

resting upon one on my shelves and waiting to be transcribed. After nearly a year of arduous and uncreative task of typing, I ended up with 432 pages replete with interviews and detailed *thick descriptions* of observations.

It was now high time that I began the analysis of my fieldwork. Due to the overwhelming enormity and by implication lack of transparency of the gathered material, I first decided to divide my notes into a number of categories. It is a method of analysis tightly associated with *grounded theory* (one of the methodologies available within social sciences), which via *the process of induction* aims at making generalizations across different social situations, looking for what they have in common (Burawoy, 1991b). In my case however, I limited myself solely to identifying the main phenomena emerging from the conducted investigations, without pushing the analysis onto the generalized level. In the end, after a long process of selection of the material, 4 concrete topics crystallized. Each of them is represented by the corresponding chapter of the empirical part of the thesis. I would like to emphasize the fact that the issues I have eventually chosen to describe by no means touch all the subjects, nor depict even the majority of the incidents that I have been confronted with in the course of my extensive research. Limited by the formal restrictions of a master's thesis and in order to keep my accounts compact but at the same time fairly comprehensive, I picked out a few elements which ought to signalize the reader the multidimensionality as well as richness of the investigated environment. It is actually only a tip of an iceberg or a *patchwork*, but as Czarniawska-Joerges (1992) stresses, "a patchwork is better than one deceptively coherent fragment" (p. 45)

It must be mentioned that all the utterances of the actors from the field which will be quoted in the following sections of this dissertation have been translated from Polish into English by the author. In order to keep the anonymity of my interlocutors secured, their names have been coded according to my own personal and subjective matrix. The basic point was to reflect a Polish name in English, yet not via translating it directly, but by preserving the character of the name. For instance, when the original name was short, I intended to make the *translated* name short as well (yet it is not always the case). The pseudo have also been occasionally enriched with other characteristics of the original names such as roughness of sounding or presence of double consonants. In order to avoid

the unnecessary confusion, each of the translated names is distinct, although there were repetitions within the array of the original ones.

Now, the time has come to enter our humanitarian organization. Let the adventure in the empirical world begin!

3. The Tale of the Field

3.1. Two Opposing Worlds – Looking at Various Aspects of the Charitable Activity from Different Angles

“We don't see things as they are; we see them as we are.”

*Anais Nin*⁸

3.1.1. Preface

Why is it sometimes so unbelievably difficult to obtain an answer to a fairly straightforward question? We only intend to reassure ourselves as to some seemingly inconsequential issue and are suddenly thrown under an avalanche of emotionally-laden, woolly statements. Soon it turns out that from our interlocutor's perspective the question was not simple at all and the fortuitously discussed matter plays a vital role in that person's life...

Alas, usually the discrepancy between the individual views does not limit itself solely to one topic... The most serious problems arise when we seek data on complex, unknown subjects and the only informants at our disposal start to sketch some utterly contradictory images of the researched phenomenon before our eyes. Where does the truth lie then?

I was confronted with such a dilemma while intending to explore the roots and essence of the charitable activity within the foundation. I initially picked out Annabelle with the intention of treating her as my principal and only source of information. Who could be a more appropriate person to characterize the functioning of the organization than the creator and the very embodiment of the whole initiative? I planned to put the woman in the center of the analysis in order to portray all the mechanisms merely from her point of view. Fortunately for the sake of my study, I eventually broadened the span of my research. What her accounts showed me was but a part of the picture...

⁸ Quotations which can be found at the beginning of Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 are taken from: Fifield, Mike 1998/2002: Cognitive Distortion - Quotations

3.1.2. Annabelle's "Perfect World"

"Blue blood flows through her veins; She belongs to the upper class of Polish society; That establishment of hers derives from an ancient knight order!" – These, and dozens of similar comments, accompanied me at the onset of my preliminary investigations surrounding the plausible terrain of my prospective research. By the time I was finally granted the possibility to see the boss of the foundation in person, I had already sub-consciously created her mental image in my thoughts. *An elderly, astute woman of wizened, yet noble features, whose dignified, as well as supercilious mode of speaking and acting give a clear, intentional indication of her provenance* - I was more than certain that such would be the general description of the individual in charge of this illustrious organization. Little did I know, how deeply I was mistaken.

3.1.2.1. My First Impression

On entering the main hall of the building I was cordially greeted by the secretary of the foundation and asked into the principal lounge. I went in, having made a few steps over the creaky, well-polished, wooden boards of the antique-looking floor. As soon as Annabelle noticed me, an affable smile curled the corners of her mouth. Not in the least did she resemble the stern, old lady I had expected to meet. The woman appeared to be in her early forties, yet her smooth face devoid of any make-up and frozen in a seemingly permanent grin, made her look rather ageless. Annabelle's fairly short, straight blond hair, descended loosely along her cheeks. She was wearing an undistinguished, dark shirt and modern bell-bottomed trousers. She stood up, welcomed me with a firm handshake, and began to speak. No trace of condescension or arrogance was discernible in her voice. On the contrary, the woman seemed to be extraordinarily amiable and straightforward. *How I wish, I could have such a boss someday* – I thought.

3.1.2.2. Annabelle's Background

I had a truly blissful childhood... [pause] ...that is why I am aware of the degree to which your infancy may influence your whole life! (*Annabelle*)⁹

Annabelle must have been of noble birth, and she eventually got married to a member of one of the most renowned aristocratic lineages in Poland. The initiative of establishing the foundation originated, in fact, from her husband, nonetheless a few months after being set up, the organization landed in Annabelle's hands. She simply had much more time and energy at her disposal to devote to this project...

I did not come up with any mission or vision of what to do exactly, but I just supposed that in order to successfully help those in need, one first had to learn how to do it... (*Annabelle*)

And this is what her initial steps in the field of voluntary work looked like. Annabelle intended to encounter a practical method of assistance. Nevertheless, the fact of being continuously exposed to a direct collision with an utterly different environment planted doubts in the woman's mind.

On the one hand I really wanted to aid those people, but on the other... When some homeless men came to the foundation, I was bothered by their repulsive stench... [pause] Once, an elderly bum wanted to express his gratitude for something and he kissed my hand... He kissed my hand with an open mouth! Just horrible! I remember that right after he had left I went rushing to the bathroom to wash my hands...And as I was grasping at the soap , I suddenly realized that I mustn't react in that way! ...That since I had decided to help those poor people, it was not right to feel repugnance towards them... So I had no other choice, but to find some sort of internal balance to be able to proceed... (*Annabelle*)

⁹ All the directly quoted statements are accompanied by the name of the author in brackets, unless they form part of the field notes.

3.1.2.3. Annabelle's Thorough Engagement

...I suppose that I intended to *wash my hands* numerous times during the first moments of my work here... And each "Eureka" opened another tiny piece of my heart... [smile] When you start to see more, you help more... And it begins to absorb you... Especially when you see those huge, hot tears of gratitude running down someone's cheek... It gives you such an enormous boost of energy...
(Annabelle)

Annabelle's scrupulously cultivated commitment thrived, which, by implication, made the foundation's development pick up the pace. With every new service offered, my interlocutor's personal, as well as emotional input into the good cause grew. When the organization opened up for the blind, she studied Braille's alphabet and learned how to walk with a stick. What is more, as soon as the first meeting of the disabled was called, Annabelle took up lessons of wheelchair maneuvers. Her strong affection to kids acted as a stimulus to founding a children's club and a kindergarten. In the end, to the already vast array of activities hosted by her charity institution, she decided to add one more - a branch of the Elder Brother Elder Sister Program...

If you ask me how I manage to control all that, I can only say that I am trying hard to succeed...But there are so many hundred thousands of strings to pull, that from time to time I may well miss one or two ... (Annabelle)

In addition to supervising all the aforesaid divisions of the organization, my interlocutor also had to engage herself in a relentless search for sources of indispensable financing, organize charity events, not to mention taking care of her own family...

My children claim that I am a workaholic! [laugh] Maybe it is true... I actually live so profoundly through everything that happens here, that I would never like any of our charges to find the door to the foundation closed! (Annabelle)

3.1.2.4. *Annabelle's Idealistic Views*

The more Annabelle got wrapped up in the conversation, the mightier flame of ardor flickered in her eye. At the beginning of our dialogue her mind-set appeared to be fairly down-to-earth, yet as my interlocutor's accounts slightly changed their track, starting to revolve around the ethical values and principles close to her heart, I began to realize that her view of the world was somewhat idealistic, after all. Numerous phrases and countless notions of both sophisticated as well as refined nature, via which Annabelle endeavored to encapsulate her emotionally charged thoughts, only bore out my conclusive inference.

There are actually no barriers to what we do and even if there is a mountain to move, we can do it! The success depends solely on our determination, will to help and love to a fellow human being! [pause] Sometimes, when the situation appears to be disastrous, I just intend to sow some seeds of hope in the ailing souls... [smile] and the awareness, that somewhere in Warsaw, there is such a seed sprouting in somebody's heart... It is nice... Maybe a little egoistic, but nice...
(Annabelle)

Annabelle's approach, also tended to be reflected in her later statements concerning the concepts of the particular activities run by the foundation ...

I am doing my best to make this organization embody the values I always wanted to confer on the whole idea... I will create a second home for those children... I would like each of them to be treated on an individual basis, to make them feel safe and secure... But first and foremost, I want them to sense the presence of the Lord among these walls... *(Annabelle)*

The attainment of my interlocutor's abovementioned objectives would, of course, not have been possible without an essential assistance provided by the third parties...

Those individuals who I look for, are people with passion and zeal, who just like me, love to love others... Workers and volunteers, should above all have God in their hearts... I find it crucial! [pause] And how do I find the appropriate individuals? Well... The Divine Providence plays here a vital role of course... Whenever we need someone, sooner or later the Lord sends us a new angel...
(*Annabelle*)

That unquestionable religious devotion on Annabelle's part seemed to have been propelling her actions right from the very beginning. Moreover, her perseverance throughout all those years by no means appeared to be slackening off. With the enthusiasm of a child detectable in her radiating eyes, my interviewee also told me about her advanced plans to establish a stream of extra activities within the foundation, mentioning a myriad of other future projects as well...

I acutely sense that this initiative will flourish... More and more people will be drawn here every day to participate in this something... Something that is simple, yet so profoundly good... (*Annabelle*)

The reality perceived through the woman's eyes, although initially somewhat confusing, finally turned out to be so endearingly uncomplicated, absolutely deprived of any murky corners or dead ends, so meaningful and tempting... Annabelle appeared to be utterly overjoyed at the course her life had taken. She was the right person on the right track in a perfectly well structured world...

It was not until later that I accidentally stumbled upon people, facts and opinions that put an entirely new complexion on the matter...

3.1.3. The "Real" World

Annabelle's demands show clearly that she has absolutely no idea about how to work with children! In fact, she has barely any contact with them! The rules she tries to impose are totally abstract! (...) The woman's constant interference and

criticism really irritate me! ...And there is no willingness on her part to appreciate and value my accomplishments! Sometimes it makes me wish I could work somewhere else... (*Margaret*)

This comment instantly blew me off my feet. It belonged to one of the regular employees of the foundation and was the very first, tangible indication of the fact that the actual state of affairs in the organization might be much less colorful than I had been made to believe in the first place. From that moment on, I widely opened my eyes, pricked up my ears and soon, a completely different reality came into sight in front of me...

3.1.3.1. Unfeasible Directives

It did not require a long search, to encounter another proof of a blatant discrepancy in visions between the boss of this charity institution and her workers. Samantha, a professional educator, experienced in the area of social care and the main person in charge of the kindergarten also turned out to show obvious signs of irrefutable frustration.

I suppose that Mrs. Annabelle and I have a slightly different view on the subject... She would like the kindergarten to be the second home for the kids, but... [pause] but you do not often find sixteen children in one family... So I assume that Mrs. Annabelle had the home-like atmosphere in mind... But then again, there is another problem that arises... [sarcastic smile] If you consider the fact, that phenomena like aggression, alcoholism or lack of hygiene prevail in houses of the majority of those kids, then none of them would probably want to find the home-like atmosphere here... (*Samantha*)

Annabelle's insufficient understanding of the vital, problematic issues predominating in the foundation also reflected in the way she approached the management style of the children's club supervisor. Margaret, the girl occupying the

main administrative post in that club, who herself in her infancy had to cope with the phenomenon of the domestic violence, thereby gaining vast practical knowledge in the field, was especially critical towards her chief.

When somebody doesn't participate in certain activities at all, and in their head, has just a purely theoretic picture of what the situation should look like, then that person's view will probably never correspond to the reality! (...) Those instructions coming from above are often so absurd... I, for example, have thousands of more pressing concerns, than to look whether something stands straight or not... If Annabelle wants to keep the place sterile, then she should hire a cleaning lady! (*Margaret*)

Putting an emphasis on absolutely insignificant matters or questions simply irrelevant for the cause and consequently making them central rules of the organization, appeared to be one of the boss's domains.

Take her latest brainwave for instance... [raucous laugh] Annabelle decided that kids should be granted points for going to confession! ... We have such a system here, that good deeds are awarded with points and those who gather the highest number, obtain presents... But to treat the act of confession in that way? It is one's private business, for crying out loud! (*Margaret*)

According to my interlocutor's statements, instead of absorbing herself with the continuous invention of those pointless ideas and recommendations, which accounted for the major part of Annabelle's engagement in the children's club, she should have focused on issues of much greater importance, which were in fact constantly being put aside and neglected.

3.1.3.2. Disregarded Matters

The Work and Safety Regulations state that as the temperature in the school approaches 15 grades Celsius, any educational institution is supposed to be closed immediately... And in winter, on average, there are 12 grades here. It has been so throughout the last 2 years... (*Margaret*)

While Annabelle was scurrying around Warsaw in pursuit of luxurious Christmas presents for her charges, in accordance with her principles to bring joy to their little ailing hearts, the same children were freezing 6 hours a day in a dilapidated hangar-like building, adjacent to the headquarters of the organization.

Somebody ought to reevaluate their priorities, I suppose! (...) If it hadn't been for the courtesy of one of the fathers, there would probably still be no electricity in this house! I don't know... Maybe I'm wrong, but I guess that certain investments should have been made in an entirely different order! Annabelle ought to have renovated this building long before turning her thoughts to the plan of opening up the kindergarten... (*Margaret*)

3.1.3.3. Neglected Workers

To cap all the enumerated shortcomings of Annabelle's administration, Margaret finally put forward the last, concluding argument. It concerned the absolute lack of interest on the boss's part, in facilitating, as well as fostering, the professional development of her staff.

This job demands constant training... Provided that one wants to stay abreast of the latest concepts and theories, that is... If you want to achieve something, then the perspectives for improvement are critical... The fact of being deprived of them has already prompted a lot of people to leave this organization... And it will probably eventually induce others to give up their jobs here as well... (*Margaret*)

Yet it was not the issue of “lack of perspectives for improvement” that made Margaret stop working in the foundation two months later. She was simply made redundant. On that fateful day, when the unanticipated news struck her, I happened to be by her side. Although Margaret had received the information with dignity, she could not refrain from pouring out an uncontainable current of bitterness onto my shoulders.

Nobody can believe it! She just threw me out into the street for no reason! I will not even have the right to the unemployment benefit! (*Margaret*)

It transpired that the two women had earlier run into the spot of bother. The conflict revolved around an unlucky accident which occurred during an excursion, when Margaret accidentally burnt one of her charges with hot liquid. A day afterwards Annabelle came tearing to the club and scolded the supervisor in front of all the children, threatening to put the unfortunate incident into her papers as a proof of the girl’s recklessness and irresponsibility.

I told her that she had no right to do that! I had accompanied those kids out of my good will, but against the law, since I should have attended an adequate course first... And it was no one else, but Annabelle who, despite my reservations, had talked me into taking up that trip! [pause] I know that if I were to fight with her in court over that, I would undoubtedly win! Annabelle got scared when she realized that she ran the risk of losing the trial... And in the end she even said she would give me a recommendation... But I lost the job anyway... A similar thing happened to my predecessor, you know... I suppose that no one will stay here long enough to take roots... (*Margaret*)

3.1.4. Where Does the Truth Lie?

Having conducted the last interview with Margaret, I could not suppress a sensation, that her testimony, despite being largely based on pure facts, was somewhat

emotionally charged and, by implication, not entirely clear. Especially the contentious beliefs pertaining to Annabelle's questionable relationships with her subordinates left me perplexed. How was it possible that such a likeable lady would evoke so much hostility in the rows of her direct collaborators? The only sensible manner of trying to find the answer to this nagging question was to investigate the issue further. I eventually settled on widening the perspective on the matter by seeking fresh views and opinions from some more independent individuals. Volunteers appeared to be the appropriate target group of my research.

Annabelle? And who is that? Is it some well-known chick? (*Diana*);

No, I do not know her. I have no idea who that is actually (*Emma*);

Really? There is somebody superior to the coordinator of the Elder Brother Elder Sister Program? I wasn't aware of that! (*Victoria*);

Yes! I know that that woman is in charge of the foundation, but it doesn't change the fact that she is like a ghost to me! I keep hearing about her all the time, but I have never seen her! (*Sheryl*)¹⁰

I was left devastated and dispirited! The aforementioned quotations reflected all I had managed to find out about Annabelle from more than a dozen of volunteers affiliated with the organization! It was incredible that a lady, who purported to be so profoundly engrossed in her activities, did not even exist for a vast array of people who intensely cooperated with her own institution! Or maybe the woman's deep engagement in her duties constantly induced her to run in and out of the headquarters, which eventually made her imperceptible? On the other hand however this theory would somewhat contradict Annabelle's own statements. How can somebody successfully supervise all the branches of the foundation without knowing such a large group of their workers? Or perhaps it was just a question of the personal definition of one's notion of *successful supervision*?

¹⁰ None of the authors of statements quoted in this paragraph will appear further in the thesis, since I decided not to focus my scientific attention on any of the individuals from this particular group of volunteers. Their detailed stories are a part of the unused material from my research. Yet, I settled to mention scraps of their utterances here merely for the purpose of demonstrating an average attitude of the volunteers towards the boss of the foundation.

In the end, I had an impression that no matter how long would I search for new sources of information and how deep into the organization could I eventually plunge, the general picture of Annabelle's charitable activity would basically not change. In spite of maybe being slightly more detailed, it would remain equally ambiguous. Why? Due to the fact that, with every new opinion, I would add another, highly subjective, personal view of the world. The world shaped by one's background, experience, knowledge as well as individual prejudices, expectations and desires. The world composed of the same terms and expressions yet often entirely different definitions...

3.2. What Induces Volunteers to Assist Those in Need? Pondering the Issue of Motivational Drives

“Come to the edge....We can't, we are afraid....Come to the edge....We can't, we will fallAnd they came to the edge....And he pushed them....And they flew....”

*Appolinaire*¹¹

3.2.1. An Introductory Thought

There is an unfathomable, uncontainable power in each of us. A seemingly faint spark, which once ignited, burns brighter and brighter with every step that we take. This very glimmer eventually sets fire to our hearts. It is our subconscious fuel, the infinite source of the perpetual energy, which pushes us forward. It is our *drive*.

Although at first glance, every human being looks alike, as soon as one gazes beyond the apparent, superficial layer of cognition, one will instantly discover a myriad of unrepeatably constituent parts, whose unique set marks each man with utterly exceptional qualities. The motivational force already mentioned in the preceding paragraph, which will also be the central point of the following chapter, is vital among those inimitable elements.

If one said that there are as many reasons, from which our behavior derives, as there are stars in the sky, one would probably be not far from the truth. This is in fact my personal conviction as well. The results of the anthropological investigations conducted by me in the charitable institution have only strengthened my initial confidence in this aspect.

Each and every one of my interviewees turned out to display an entirely different mode of conduct! It was authentically enthralling to observe the extensive variety of the genuine motives which induced my interlocutors to acting. I was profoundly enchanted and desired to produce a comparable effect on the prospective readers of my written

¹¹ Quotations which can be found at the beginning of Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 are taken from: Paralumn New Age Womens Village 2004: Inspirational Quotes

accounts. Eventually, having thought over all the possible ways of presenting the gathered material, I decided to focus on single people - seven randomly selected, unique individuals surrounded by their passions, manias, hopes and fears. The majority of them vigorously participated in the most eye-catching activity of the foundation, namely in the Elder Brother, Elder Sister Program. Each personal story was coupled with the title corresponding to the predominating motivational drive of the interviewee in question, with the ultimate aim of depicting the fascinating diversity of their silhouettes.

It is high time to get acquainted with those exceptional people...

3.2.2. A Mysterious Quest for Acceptance

“... And that’s exactly what I find the greatest about it... the fact that one can do so much with this kid... Go to the cinema, do homework, lend him a helping hand or solve some of his problems...” - He reached a trembling hand into one of the pockets of his worn black jacket and pulled out a packet of cigarettes. Having stuck one of them in his mouth while giving me a furtive glance from the corner of his eye, he leaned with his both elbows on the glassy surface of the table and lapsed into silence, directing his blind look back at the murky corner of the café. He seemed to be ruminating on some distant, niggling problem for a minute and finally continued – “It is a magnificent idea. Cause...” -he stuttered... -”...where else could you find fulfillment, if not in a contact with a kid?”¹²

The first time I heard somebody speak of Theodore, was back in the foundation. He even seemed to be slightly mocked by one of the main employees of that charitable institution. Extreme perseverance on my prospective interlocutor’s part, in falling over himself to be granted a child to take care of turned out to be the reason for such an attitude towards him. The full time worker was getting more and more suspicious about

¹² This paragraph forms a part of my field notes, sometimes made parallelly to the actual interviews. Since my tape recorder failed a few times during some of the conversations, I had no other choice but resort to close observations and notes. All the similar sections of the text that follow (that is – quotations accompanied by my observations of the interlocutor and deprived of the person’s name in brackets at the end) are excerpts from my field notes. Moreover, each of the excerpts is written in italic.

the motives that might be pushing Theodore to engage himself in the activities of the organization. It was not until the following week that I stumbled upon the man in question personally.

I was, along with other volunteers, engrossed in packing various presents, which were due to be handed to the children on the occasion of the forthcoming Christmas, when Theodore entered the building. I remember that the first thought that had sprung into my mind as my eyes rested on him was that he must be one of the older people under the charge of the foundation. His excessively wrinkled face adorned with three days' stubble and huge sideburns, untidy garments as well as a certain degree of sadness in his look, all seemed to back up my theory. How surprised I was, to find out later that I had been in the wrong...

“Once I had a vision of my future as a student of sociology or a cultural attaché”...- Theodore lit his cigarette and let the smoke out of his lungs. A small, translucent cloud formed in front of his face and wafted slowly away through the labyrinth of dim beams of light coming in via the window panes.- “..But the vision of big money had never lured me, and I guess I just decided that I might start doing something different. Not to gain financial benefits, but to reach out for satisfaction and pleasure for myself.”

Until he found peace as a volunteer in the foundation, Theodore's educational and professional career had been full of turns, as well as ups and downs. According to his stories, he always pursued new goals and tended to focus on various objectives simultaneously. Fate made him change schools three times to finally lead him to the faculty of journalism at a certain catholic university. He frequently used to flip through job offers and despite his relatively young age (22), he had already gained quite an impressive amount of experience. Among other activities, Theodore used to work as a journalist in a newspaper, engaged himself in a TV program and had a part time job in radio, not to mention his constant, unlimited penchant for NGOs, especially the institutions which assist the children in need.

“I know the atmosphere of an orphanage...”- Theodore held his breath, not letting his eyes wander off in any other direction, than that distant invisible point, somewhere beyond the walls at the corner of the café. “...because I’ve been a few times in such a house next to the building where I live”- he finished off his thought without blinking. It may have been my imagination, but Theodore’s tendency to avoid any kind of eye contact with me, seemed to intensify at that moment. “The material situation in that establishment may not be up to par with the conditions of an average middle-class home, but a child is always better off being there, than in its own problematic family”- my interlocutor hesitated and stuttered here. Then went on speaking in a slightly lower voice – “Well... Maybe the emotional side is not really so... but still...”

Theodore’s genuine interest in the plight of small children, in addition to his unbelievably strong affinity for them could barely be overlooked. He claimed to be constantly recruiting new volunteers from among a vast array of his friends, hustled and scurried around the main coordinator always looking for new forms of diversion for kids, and above all appeared to want to strike a friendship with as many children as possible. Whenever a party of some kind was organized in the foundation, a nervous dark figure equipped with a digital camera caught the attention instantly. Frequent flashes accompanied by sighs and expressions of delight as to “how photogenic a [certain] kid is” belonged to the domain reigned by no one else but Theodore. Even my interview with him was interrupted a few times by a slide show of photographs of his younger brother from the program as well as his cousins from Norway. Theodore’s uncontrollable urge to create a strong emotional bond with kids was visible not only in the way he painstakingly tried to establish a connection to them, but also in the sensitive and emotionally charged manner, in which he spoke of any signs of a budding relationship - about how kids tried to find physical contact to him, by packing themselves onto his lap or about how positively their family treated him... Some volunteers said that his adoration towards children teetered on the brink of obsession... That was the reason why the coordinator had refrained from assigning him to the program in the first place. Yet in the end, her good will prevailed, despite Theodore’s undeniable failure during his trial period spent in another branch of the foundation...

That person was absolutely out of place! (...) And the most frequent problem of such people, who are definitely not fit for working with children, is a very specific posture that they adapt. They try, namely, at all costs to make kids like them and eventually become their *pals*, supporting them on their side of the barricade. This tendency has tragic outcomes. (*Margaret – the supervisor of the children’s club*)

Unfortunately this attitude of my interlocutor had got him entangled in the vicious circle of his goodness, which, in the end, made him fall pray to his own soft-spot for children. At first, he only brought one small present for his younger brother... Yet there was a pitfall in his acting, he failed to avoid...

I felt it was a little unfair to bring a present solely for Paul, so... You know... I started regaling his brothers and sisters with small gifts as well... (*Theodore*)

So that is when the inevitable started. When all the kids are given something, then the parents should also be treated well...

So I brought them my old clothes, because that family... is really poor... Then I brought them something to eat... Fish from my father...15 kilo of fish actually... (*Theodore*)

The consequences of my interviewee’s noble gestures gradually started scaring even himself.

Maybe I should have restrained myself... Maybe I should not have visited him so often and given him so much... (...) He tells me “I will walk you to the bus stop, if you buy me something” and I say “Ok! What would you like to get?” and he says “this, this, this and this”. To that, I tell him “Oh, no! Either one thing or nothing!” [pause] As you see, I will not let Paul manipulate me to that extent! I

will not take a 20 Zł bill out of my pocket and ask him what he wants!
(Theodore)

Despite the seemingly hard times and numerous burdens in the relationship with his younger brother, my interviewee appeared to be extraordinarily motivated. Keeping his spirits up high, Theodore stated:

You know what..? Some people simply get some benefits out of what they do in the foundation. For example their assistance there counts as a training period necessary for their studies. And I, on the contrary, have absolutely no profits from that... It may look as if I were boasting, but I do not expect anything in return (...) the mere awareness that I do something, brings me an enormous amount of satisfaction. (Theodore)

The fact of having made an interview with Theodore fortunately did not lull me into a false sense of security as to the certainty of the sources of his motivation inferred solely from the scraps of information divulged by my interlocutor during the conversation. Throughout the next few months I had a chance to observe Theodore in different situations, which made some new interesting elements concerning him come to light.

On a few occasions I witnessed the boy show off his newest purchases like an expensive digital camera, cellular phone and palm top. What is more, once I accidentally saw a photo, depicting Theodore with his family in a house replete with rich decoration. It turned out that he lived in another city and must have been quite wealthy, although neither my interlocutor's attitude nor his appearance would have suggested that.

His relationship with Paul deteriorated day by day and in spite of it all, Theodore found enough strength and will to visit him on a regular basis... Although he had no other choice, but to commute to Warsaw a few hours long by train... Would the mere fact that he was doing something good indeed have been the only motivator that made my interviewee overcome so many burdens just to find satisfaction, or maybe there was

something else that pushed him forward? Might it be a crucial fact from his life he did not dare to share with me? Whatever it was, it will forever remain shrouded in mystery...

3.2.3. A Painful Adversity

Minor injury. Just two words, yet in some cases so powerfully overwhelming that from the perspective of an average individual it may even defy comprehension, how much misery they tend to strike in certain people's life. Especially when one's concept of the world is based on physical activity...

It was such a shock for me (...) I knew that I had broken my leg, but the people told me to stand up "Stand up! Stand up!" they said "It may just be a twisted ankle", but, damn it! I knew! [pause] And the first thought that crossed my mind was: "No! I cannot afford this! I have the competition in 2 months! I simply cannot!" (*Mandy*)

Mandy had been training karate for about 4 years, till the day when the accident occurred. This fateful blow put out that meticulously cherished flame of passion, which she had finally managed to kindle in herself despite the twisty course of her young, difficult life. As a kid she felt misunderstood and was permanently forced to taste the bitterness of being lonely.

I spent my childhood in the company of grown up people... But I always had a vivid imagination and played with virtual friends... (*Mandy*)

Her mother worked in an embassy, which on account of official duties, constantly made her travel from country to country. The little girl, had no other choice, but to take the frequent changes of the environment for granted. She was often confronted with agonizing dilemmas, which stemmed from her belief that she was not allowed to get used to the current surroundings, nor to people, since the necessity to move away might

appear at any moment. Having lived in the Nordic countries for 8 years, she finally set her foot back on the soil of her homeland.

One day she accidentally came upon a circle of sportsmen, and that is when Mandy thought, that she had eventually found herself!

This is my real passion! [smile] I know that it may not be too feminine, but I do not think with stereotypes. (*Mandy*)

Dedicating her time to sports gave Mandy a new lease of life. She found contact with other people from her posse reinvigorating as well as rejuvenating. Alas, she could not enjoy those exceptional moments for too long. The accident immediately washed away all the positive emotions. Seemingly eternal break or rather a pitch-black abyss unexpectedly turned up between the notes in her schedule... But then something extraordinary happened. A simple conversation with her friend let a ray of hope into the dreary wastelands of her sub-consciousness. Mandy was told about the foundation...

I wanted... [stutter] I had the feeling that I wanted to do something... That I really wanted to give something to somebody... That I wanted to get to know new people... Although I had never had any contact with those issues... I wanted to see how it all... How the whole organization functions...[pause] No! Above all I wanted to test myself! [louder tone of voice] ...To see whether I would be able to offer that kid a part of me, reach a hand out to him... to a complete stranger... (*Mandy*)

The new challenge made Mandy's heart beat faster. She finally had a goal to achieve. Besides she would develop strong kin links with somebody! At last! Deep relationships, of which she had long been deprived, since the majority of her family was scattered all over the country... And what is more, she always wanted to have a brother!

Unfortunately, reality turned out to have a painful disappointment in store for Mandy... Her younger brother was apparently much less emotionally and mentally

involved in the process of building the bonds with my interlocutor than she had expected him to be.

Maybe I am simply an inappropriate person for him...[lower tone of voice]
Maybe I should be somebody who is an expert in the field of computer games, cars and things like that... but then again...[pause] I know about a lot of other things and sometimes we do not seem to be getting along with each other anyway...(Mandy)

Having been unwilling to cooperate tightly from the onset, the boy did not appear to want to foster the relationship with his elder sister. On the contrary, his light engagement seemed to be increasingly slackening off. He even tended to express slight disdain for the majority of Mandy's ideas as to how they could spend their free time. To make things worse, his family did not evoke any positive feelings in the girl either. They sometimes looked at Mandy as if she was an unwanted intruder in their home, or treated her like a voluntary coach for their kid. To cap it all, her younger brother constantly refused to accompany my interviewee to any of the events taking place in the foundation.

I can understand him a little... Maybe he just does not feel the urge to get to know those other people... Maybe it is better not to try to force him... [pause] I used to be exactly the same, when I was a little girl...[smile] And this is amazing that I can actually often see... That when I observe him, a lot of memories from my own childhood start coming to my mind... (Mandy)

The bleak picture of the hardships and encumbrances that hindered Mandy's attainment of the set objectives in the field of interpersonal relations with the boy, gradually gave way to a tide of incredibly positive recollections about their common experiences. It occurred to me that, my interlocutor had begun uncovering a seemingly nonexistent facet of the pair's history... a side of the relationship, which at first glance appeared not to have developed at all, namely Mandy's deep, emotional attachment to the boy.

Sometimes it was funny... When I saw him opening up to me slowly ... He told jokes or something... And at a certain moment, when he asked what my favorite color was... [smile] I was on cloud nine! He was finally interested in what I like! (...) On another occasion, we went to the cinema together! It was really great! It was winter and we fought with snowballs... And during the movie Joe burst out in laughter several times... Afterwards, he said of course that the movie was stupid... But I suppose that he had a really good time! I saw the kid laugh, after all, so it can't have been that bad... [pause] I am so glad to see him happy... And that's it! The sensation that you can make another person feel good... and this person is a complete stranger... This is so abstract...[smile] (*Mandy*)

Mandy told me about numerous unforgettable moments when they played games together, went for walks and spent hours talking. It all looked as if those events were undeniable heralds of a better tomorrow for the pair. While listening to those detailed, lively descriptions, I could not suppress a feeling that my interlocutor, despite the first impression, had not given up hope and would never leave the sinking ship, which the relationship between the both seemed to resemble.

I have an impression that I'm finally doing something! That I do not waste time sitting at home, watching movies and eating popcorn all the evenings...But that something happens! That there is something to talk about! (*Mandy*)

Mandy seemed not to be capable of stemming the flow of words that was finding its outlet through her mouth. I pricked up my ears and realized that there was much more to the motivation of my interlocutor than met the eye. The behavior of her younger brother was by no means the only factor that induced her to acting after all!

...It was really funny... I went to that meeting of the volunteers, and everybody comes up to me and starts talking! [pause] My secondary school was awful... I mean kind of strange... Theoretically you knew people, but in fact you did not.

There was no such openness to others! [lower tone of voice] I awfully missed such contact with people... So I think, by going to that foundation, I also wanted to do something for myself... (*Mandy*)

At the end of our interview Mandy looked much more animated, than at start. She also appeared to have gained self-confidence. After we had left the underground café, she divulged to me that our conversation had made her aware some important issues concerning herself. Whatever those issues were, they had definitely lightened up the mood of my interviewee... There is no doubt about the fact that the relationship with her younger brother was far from ideal, yet didn't it in spite of all the burdens give some results? Didn't her unfortunate accident turn out to be a quirky blessing that in the end had fortuitously led her to patching up certain gaps from her slightly warped childhood?

A year ago, if somebody had told me that I would be taking part in this program, I would never have believed. I would have asked “*Who? Me?*” (*Mandy*)

We can never envisage how twisted our path may be before we stumble upon what we are looking for... I suppose that Mandy had just been through an essential turn...

3.2.4. Realization of Personal Aspirations

Stephen once told me that the only ambition left in his life to fulfill was to gain some professional knowledge in the field of law and human resources. The rest of his fundamental goals had already been practically attained. It is worth mentioning, that my interlocutor was 23 years old... While expressing his thoughts, the boy's voice often acquired a tutoring undertone, reminding of a style, in which astute, old professors tend to speak. His vigilant eyes, seemed to be examining thoroughly my reactions to each of his statements.

The crux of the matter is the appropriate time management! The time management always comes first! And I am referring to planning every single day, week or maybe even month hour by hour, activity by activity for all contingencies... Everything has to be planned! Sport, entertainment and recreation as well! (*Stephen*)

The abovementioned rule indeed seemed to have been my interviewee's point of reference in practice. From what I had a chance to hear, Stephen had never wasted a single moment in life, fully taking advantage of his every talent or opportunity which might have materialized on his road to glory. Right after graduating from the secondary school, my interlocutor decided to gain new experience by directing his steps to the army. His determination as well as perseverance allowed Stephen to advance extremely fast in that area, finally to be granted a post of a colonel and an interpreter from 3 languages.

I am very satisfied with my idea of becoming a soldier! [pause] I did it surreptitiously and against the will of my whole family, but it taught me really a lot! It taught me dutifulness, responsibility for the subordinates, and above all, better organization! (*Stephen*)

As soon as Stephen developed those features to a satisfying extent, he arrived at a conclusion to move forward. Subsequently he started pursuing an academic career in the faculty of information technology, while carrying out a part-time job as a chief of security in one of the commercial centers in Warsaw. An unexpected chain of misfortune, the consequences of which deeply affected his relatives, made my interviewee wind up in financial difficulties. That event instantly propelled him to put the studies aside and devote most of his time to a regular work. Although Stephen had found employment in two offices simultaneously, he still had enough time to spend training on a football pitch, or attending to classes of aikido, not to mention his engagement in the foundation...

I just always wanted to become a volunteer... And my experience gained from the army, work and all the other activities... well, in general from my active lifestyle, helps me a lot in contacts with my charges and in finding ways how to act... *(Stephen)*

The array of issues, tackled by Stephen within the range of his relationships with his two younger brothers, would undoubtedly seem intimidating to an ordinary mortal. He used to make regular visits at the boys' school, seeking information, as well as advice, from their teachers and psychologists. The data gained induced him to lend them a helping hand in the necessary fields, which, by the way, turned out to be virtually all subjects. Additionally, to contribute to the personal development of his charges, he devised a plan to regularly give them useful reading matter as extra homework, assigned them with other tasks to fulfill and acted as their guide and advisor. Moreover, my interlocutor offered his brothers regular football trainings. He was even willing to organize and partially finance a tournament in their school.

I came up with all these ideas on my own...and I suppose that with my body of knowledge, I am able to accomplish really a lot... And should I see that something starts going in the inappropriate direction, I am always able to capture that in time and change the course of events. *(Stephen)*

Fortunately for my interlocutor, there had been no serious problems or burdens that might have prevented him from reaching the set objectives. He had managed to establish a strong rapport with his younger brothers and saw it advance day by day. Stephen's charges listened carefully to his advice, following scrupulously more and more of his directives. They started changing under the influence of my interviewee.

I can see it especially clearly in the case of the older boy. He treats me evidently as a role model and authority. He pays attention to what I say and does exactly what I ask him to do! But most importantly, he knows now that it is for his own benefit! [pause] My football coach once told me, that no matter how much you

know and how good you are at a certain issue, you are not worth anything if you do not know how to pass your knowledge on to others. That is also the most important thing from my perspective... That I can transmit my views and values to them... What is more, it is another source of vital experience for me that, in the future, will allow me to bring up my own children in an appropriate manner.
(*Stephen*)

The more my interviewee spoke, the greater emphasis he seemed to be putting on the significance of his role as a mentor for the kids. The vision of himself in control of all the affairs, as well as his belief concerning an indispensable necessity on the part of his younger brothers to have somebody to look up to, appeared to animate my interlocutor's conduct.

Those kids need somebody! They need a person, who would help them find their place in life. Who would show them that they are important and valuable... To see their joy, when they start to perceive, that somebody is interested in them... when they start to live and smile... (...) It is one of the happiest moments! And I sure hope, that there will be much more occasions to celebrate! For example their successfully passed exams to the high school or progress made in learning... That is why I am trying, and I will try to the very end, to improve something in their lives (...) And if they, at first, do not appear to focus and follow my advice, I will systematically repeat the same thing, not being discouraged by their lack of response... I'll do it non-stop until they do what I say... No matter how hard they oppose, they will eventually do it ... (*Stephen*)

As I could often observe, my interviewee's strict demeanor raised serious controversies in the circle of volunteers in the foundation. Due to his boastful statements and admonishing remarks directed largely at his colleagues as well, one would not rarely hear other people speak of Stephen in a scathing tone, calling him by the name of "tyrant" or "fascist". I personally, must admit that although my first impression of the man in question, due to his likeable appearance, ranged among *positive* and *very positive*,

I soon began to sense the nagging feeling of irritation in his presence. Any subject touched by him in a group conversation, instantly started revolving around Stephen's undeniable virtues, putting his person in the center of attention. Soon everybody knew that he was "exceptionally experienced for his age" that he "had recently been granted a prize for special achievements at work" or that he "had flair for cooking".

At a certain moment, having coupled the constantly increasing amount of information on my interviewee from various sources, I started noticing serious inconsistencies. When it comes to the factual discrepancies, they may have simply been an issue of the deceptive word of mouth phenomenon, yet the sole number of Stephen's basic activities in life seemed to be much too high, for an average individual... I could not refrain from thinking, that he could have been adding some colors to the description of his personal profile.

In the course of our interview my interlocutor accidentally disclosed to me two seemingly unimportant facts from his life. He confessed that he used to be extremely shy as a kid and stated that his relationship with his own brother left a lot to be desired. Might his engagement in the foundation have had something to do with those apparently inconsequential details from his own childhood? There is no doubt about the fact that he derived an enormous amount of satisfaction from being an authority for those small boys, but might that have been the only reason for his commitment? Or perhaps the mysterious chain of misfortune that had touched his family, ignited in him an uncontrollable will to act? One may conjecture and come up with pseudo-psychological theories endlessly, yet the fact remains that Stephen's motivation was strong and, despite his controversial attitude, my interviewee's efforts to make the kids' lives better appeared to have given effects in the end. That is something that cannot be argued and ought to be remembered...

3.2.5. Inexpressible Loneliness

I shuddered as an inhumane croak of a huge, black crow pierced the thick drape of silence. The bird had been observing me vigilantly from a nearby stone post while I

was locking the car. It seemed to be the only living creature in that desolate district of the city...

On that cool and dreary evening of January, I had come to the foundation to make another interview. Directing my steps to the main building, I passed a row of massive trees, whose bare boughs glistening in a reddish, sunset light, reminded me of desperately outstretched arms of petrified, human-like creatures. It was an eerie sight - the ancient mansion, gradually emerging from thick mists surrounding it, as if it was a mysterious, legendary palace. For a moment I had an impression that I was submerged in an unknown reality, a gloomy, yet picturesque world of silence and loneliness. Little did I know that my instincts were somehow preparing me for the upcoming meeting, as if performing some kind of sub-conscious adaptation of my perception to the mood and state of mind represented by my prospective interlocutor.

Being alone with an object is what my occupation entails. You just sit and work on a piece... It may be funny and bear fruits, but...[lower tone of voice]...But one has to sit alone... Even if you work in a team, then in spite of that, you are forced to be spending the whole time with something still, something dead. (*Ann*)

Ann was an art restorer. She was also one of the few volunteers working in the kindergarten who agreed to meet me. I found it hard to judge her age. I suppose that she might have been in her thirties. The woman had long, black, slightly unkempt hair and was wearing dark, baggy clothing. My interviewee at first appeared to feel a little intimidated by my presence, since she spoke in an extremely low voice, constantly looking away from me. As Ann herself stated later, due to her job, she was simply not accustomed to the company of men. Fortunately, after a while, my interlocutor slowly started to open up to me, revealing more and more intimate details of her turbulent life.

Some time ago I was in a hospital... A mental hospital... I had personality problems... [pause] My mom, trying to find a way to get me out of all that, started to look around and heard from someone about this place. This kindergarten... (*Ann*)

The idea of her engagement in the foundation had not entirely convinced Ann. At least, not at the beginning, when she was still up to her ears in a muddy bog of her psychological difficulties. The whole process was fully being propelled by her mother.

I came to the foundation, with my heart in my mouth, certain that I would not be the appropriate person for the job... and I stayed... The first impression of this place was great! [smile] I came in and I saw a myriad of colors on the walls! Sweet pictures painted with a hand of a child... And I also saw the schedule... I mean the activities for kids that were planned... I really liked them a lot! (*Ann*)

It was clear that the girl, induced by the circumstances and the will to bounce back psychically, would eventually approach her new challenge with open arms.

Having left the hospital, during the first few weeks I used to come here every day...[pause and smile] At the beginning... Especially at the very beginning I bought myself a huge number of books on the subject. They all had something to do with taking care of children and new ideas concerning the work with them... So right after the activities here... I mean after leaving the foundation, I read, read and read... (*Ann*)

My interlocutor's profound commitment to the idea of lending a helping hand to kids soon began to make Ann realize the magnitude of dimensions of their plight, as well as the significance of assistance provided by the foundation to those small members of our society. Yet, most importantly, she started to perceive the positive outcomes of her engagement and enormous gratitude on the part of the children. Finally, she became aware of how vital her role in the entire process was.

I see that those kids really need me! They require a higher degree of emotional input, there is no doubt about that... But it gives me so much satisfaction... The

fact that I can devote my time and care to them... To those, who mostly need it!
(Ann)

At a certain point, Ann's personal interests started reflecting in her activity in the kindergarten. She began transposing her passion for the arts into the area of voluntary work by organizing, for instance, classes of painting in the foundation. Once, she even ventured to stage a small Christmas play with the participation of kids. Despite her initial reservations, as to the outcome of that initiative, everything turned out great in the end.

The children helped me a lot in preparing the decorations. Some pieces were made solely by them!...I don't know... To play with them... and at the same time to mix the elements of my profession with it... (...) It all gives me a lot of joy... (Ann)

The girl appeared to have found something unique. She came to understand that she might have accidentally stumbled upon an indefinable element, so intensely missed, which had been completely absent from her life earlier.

Due to the fact that I myself neither have my own children nor family, this work...[stutter]...this work gives me an opportunity to offer myself to others... It fulfills an emotional necessity of being there for those who need me... (Ann)

Would the foundation indeed be the ideal outpost of tranquility, after the times of turmoil? Might the duties and activities of that one-of-its-kind kindergarten provide Ann with that emotional shelter, after which she had hankered for so long? She rather appeared to believe it, nonetheless, the girl's inborn lack of confidence, seemed to be standing in the way of her actions. At a certain moment of our conversation, my interlocutor threw herself spontaneously into a whirl of plans for the nearest future, as though she desired to make the organization a permanent part of her daily reality.

I would really like to remain here. I want to keep on coming to the kindergarten... [pause] I am currently pondering, whether to start a professional education in the field of pedagogy... But... I guess I will not be able to do that for now... I would not like to give up the restoration, which in fact is my real occupation... But on the other hand, I do not want to stop coming here... However the restoration alone is not enough! (...) Here, you work with living creatures, real people, after all... (*Ann*)

When I was leaving the foundation on that day, Ann's emotionless face still shimmered in front of my mind's eye. I had watched a twinkling sparkle of passion light up in her, then saw it burn with dazzling fire for a second, just to die away in the end. The girl seemed to have caught herself into a maze of hopes, desires and doubts, not being capable of escaping without making painful sacrifices. There was however one positive element in that entire situation - it might have been a difficult juncture in Ann's life, yet at least she was no more confined to one particular course of action! Now, there were alternatives at her disposal! The girl could either settle on fulfilling her emotional needs by plunging deeper into the interpersonal relationships within the framework of the organization, or take a step back by focusing on her passion for arts... The only question that remained was – which way she would deem more worth of pursuing? Unfortunately, I never found out...

3.2.6. A Seemingly Professional Duty

Certain people's mere appearance, as soon as you stumble upon them for the very first time, literally prompts you to throw yourself into their arms. Those individuals, in some inexplicable manner, attract one's attention, evoking an immense feeling of trust towards them. Jovial, warm or affable are the terms in which they tend to be described. None of the three aforementioned notions came to my mind when I first met Olivia. Detached, unemotional and maybe even pokerfaced are the words, which would the most aptly convey my impression of her. Not only her distanced, frosty as well as seemingly strict attitude towards other people, but also her austere and extremely modest look

induced me to think about Olivia in that way. She was quite tall and slender, which along with her exceptionally pale complexion, thin face, big blue eyes, narrow lips and blond hair neatly tied in a short ponytail conferred her nearly a spectral image. The only elements that bespoke of a more playful image were two tiny, red roses tattooed on the backs of her calves...

People, who, just like me, study psychology, have a tendency to treat these...[stutter] ...these relationships with kids like a kind of professional challenge... I regard those meetings as educational classes rather than occasions to strike up a personal friendship. (*Olivia*)

Olivia's consistency in handling the matters concerning her younger sister in a manner of a highly specialized expert in the field was instantly noticeable. The profile of her studies, as well as her strong features of character and her proneness to adapt a position of a leader (which by the way had manifested itself very early in her childhood, as Olivia said) all contributed to a clear, thorough and profound definition of goals and methods of acting in her relationship.

Susan wanted a few concrete things from me... and, at the beginning, it was hard for her to accept the solutions which I had proposed her, since her expectations had been entirely different... She simply wanted to stick to me, enter into my life and get to know my friends. She wanted to *cling to my arm*, so to speak... I could not let her do that! That would absolutely not solve the problems, she was facing! I did not care if she had a good contact with my acquaintances or me. This was not a priority! The most important thing was to make her find her own circle of friends! (*Olivia*)

The method selected by Olivia, despite its controversial character, seemed to be bearing fruits. Her younger sister, after a transitory period of a somewhat rebellious behavior, in the end adapted to the treatment offered. As a consequence, her personal

situation started undergoing a surprising change. Step by step she pushed the obstacles aside from her life.

When I saw something new break loose in her for the first time, I was really elated! [widening smile] I remember that she had managed to cope with one of her most serious problems...[lauder tone of voice] And I guess it brought me the most satisfaction ever! Really! I was full of joy that something indeed had changed! (*Olivia*)

I could not believe that this seemingly austere girl had been lit up by the flames of such profound sensations. She, who just a moment earlier had been reassuring me that the bonds between her and her charge would not stand in the way of the therapy? This sudden display of feelings, as well as the following stories about Olivia's younger sister, by no means lacking in emotions, appeared to be absolutely contradictory to her initial statements...

Sometimes she is so sweet, with her mood changes or phobias... [smile] It all gives me so much... This whole situation... And those pieces of advice, with which she often tries to assist me... I really like Susan very much! And I know that she undoubtedly feels attached to me as well... (*Olivia*)

This mixture of two extreme modes of behavior on the part of my interlocutor had left me perplexed. Where would the source of such a tremendous rift in one's attitude lie? I had a nagging suspicion that something was missing from the picture of Olivia, which she had so scrupulously painted in front of my eyes with her accounts. Eventually, I realized that I may not have asked explicitly enough about one of the fundamental issues that I investigated in my research. It concerned the reasons that pushed a person to engage oneself in the voluntary work. On the other hand, however, I was pretty certain that this question had been raised. I asked it nonetheless and... slowly everything started to make sense...

Actually, in fact... I do not really treat the relationship with Susan as a training period or a method of gathering experience in the field of psychology...I am not going to work as a psychologist, anyway (*Olivia*)

I was frankly astonished to hear this surprising declaration, yet it finally had given me an impression that a real face of my interviewee was starting to emerge from obscurity.

What motivated me... [stutter]... what motivated me much more, was the fact, that I personally had been a subject of a therapy that took one year and a half...[pause]...I approached Susan, because... In fact I had needed help as well... And now that I was finally feeling good again, and also being... you know, at the end of my studies... And besides I have always loved children! So taking it all into consideration, I thought that it would really be a sin not to help others... (*Olivia*)

From that moment on, I was having a conversation with another person. She was constantly smiling, appeared to be much more disclosing and, at certain moments, even almost jubilant. Olivia recounted more stories about her younger sister. She no longer refrained from laughing loudly as soon as she remembered some hilarious events or witty comments of the girl. She also mentioned a few of her visits in the foundation on various occasions. What struck me most about her anecdotes was an extremely strong emphasis put by Olivia on her affinity for children. She had even wanted to set up a kindergarten once...

What I really like about this organization, are the parties for children! Especially the Christmas eve and the carnival ball! I got to know other kids and that made Susan very jealous! [laugh] (*Olivia*)

There were a few more interesting details that were revealed by my interviewee in the course of her several monologues in the second and, to a certain extent, brighter part of our conversation. It transpired that Olivia had come to loathe the character of her studies, which she described as “brainwashing”. In spite of her uncommon aversion to psychology, she confessed, that the academic way of thinking had driven her into a frenzy, in which she could no more combine her common sense, professional knowledge and spontaneity in her cooperation with Susan.

Another issue that surged during our exchange of thoughts was my interviewee’s deep fascination with flowers (hence the tattoos on her calves). At the time of her engagement in the foundation, she was also studying to become a florist.

After that interview, I was unable to get over the astonishment about Olivia’s case for a certain period of time. An incredible transformation had taken place before my eyes. A seemingly strict, unlikeable type of a girl propelled solely by a ruthless will to test her academic knowledge in practice, in fact turned out to be a sensitive, highly internally motivated individual. A vulnerable person that due to a bout of depression once suffered, had entrenched herself by putting on a mask of an unapproachable type. It is undisputed that certain people’s mere appearance may insinuate a lot, however one will never find out the truth about them, unless one is persistent enough not to be discouraged by their seemingly repellent disguise.

3.2.7. Spiritual Illumination

“He is a Devil! A Satan! He tries to manipulate us!” – The coordinator’s big blue eyes were glistening brightly upon her tense features. The girl’s pale complexion, juxtaposed against the gloomy, faint light delicately dancing in the background, conferred her almost a sinister appearance. She sniffed a whiff of the smoke-laden air, continuing in a deadpan tone – “It smells sulfur when he is around”. We all held our breaths and, almost simultaneously, burst out into a loud laughter.

The person we were talking about that day, did not appear, at first, to possess any extraordinary characteristics. The man gave impression of being in his early thirties. He

was tall and skinny, wore a goat beard and yellow-tinted spectacles. Generally, his disposition did not seem to rise above mediocrity. Yet as soon as I entered his office, where our interview was supposed to take place, took a seat and turned my taperecorder on, Graham's new face emerged...

I'm warning you... I will not be like your regular interlocutors...[sinister smile] I will confront you with a number of peculiar phenomena and may well wreak some havoc on your research... (*Graham*)

He spoke, in a self aware tone, modulating his voice like a very skilled actor. Although that comment kindled a faint spark of curiosity in me, I did not in the least sense the dimensions of the spate of bizarre revelations that was about to strike me...

I will not pretend to be humble...unlike the majority of Poles...[pause] If you are exceedingly advanced in your personal development, the most natural proneness in you is to return to the state of a child... You can therefore understand yourself much better with children. This is what happens to me... (*Graham*)

One could ask how Graham managed to succeed in reaching that "exceedingly advanced personal development", as he called it. There is no doubt about the fact that his pathways were long and crooked. From working as a stable boy, through fostering dying patients in a hospice, to occupying a post of a marketing manager in a radio station, my interlocutor relentlessly searched for his own place in this world... until one day an unprecedented opportunity knocked at his door. He left Poland to spend a few months in the company of Buddhist monks...

As soon as Graham came back from India, his attitude to life changed entirely. Having attended a course in psychotherapy, my interlocutor founded his personal office in order to apply in practice his own intuitively-empathic way of alternative psychological treatment.

The sessions consist in a complete, sub-conscious, emotional adaptation of a doctor's attitude to the manner in which a patient perceives the surrounding reality, to help the ailed become what he/she wants to become... (*Graham*)

Graham's idea to let a fresh gust of wind to the dusty field of psychology even induced him to write a book. Nevertheless the pressing restlessness, had still not abandoned him. Despite all the undeniable achievements, my interlocutor would not desist from trying to find new sources of personal growth. His persistent search finally led him to inadvertently enter a new, unknown, yet deeply mesmerizing realm of knowledge. A mere fact of adopting an eastern method of nutrition brought him an indefinable tide of extraordinary sensations.

It is called *premic nourishment* and bases itself on consuming solely pure energy. After a short adaptive period, which results in unblocking certain channels in your body, you are poised to absorb electricity instead of food (*Graham*)

I was completely taken aback by this statement. The expression of disbelief must have been clearly visible on my face, yet it did not seem to have discouraged my interlocutor. On the contrary, he appeared to be somewhat propelled by my reaction and went on, smiling lightly...

Lack of food in your diet activates such high vibrations, that everything around you temporarily loses its sense ... [louder tone of voice] Suddenly you begin to understand that everything is relative...that everything you used to hold dear is an illusion... A sight of an ordinary bird provokes tears... this is such a level...[stutter] ...this is such a level of sensitivity! In this case, what could make more sense, than to offer yourself to another living person? Everything else is worth a shit! (*Graham*)

It was now clear, what my interviewee's following activity would entail. He knew that he wanted to take a child under his wing; nevertheless certain prerequisites had to be fulfilled first.

Above all, if I were to have enough influence on my prospective charge, I did not want the kid to be a teenager! Take a 12 year old boy for example... He already wears a *tiny helmet* composed of values. The sense of what is right or wrong and what is supposedly *masculine* or *feminine* has been imposed on him by his environment! This kid is already crippled! [pause and lower tone of voice] Small children are different, you know... They are not distanced and communicate mainly through a physical contact... Kids, unlike their fucked-up parents, do not attribute some sick inclinations to the touch! Do you know who the adults are from my perspective? They are mutated children with transplanted hearts!
(*Graham*)

Luckily for Graham, a chance to come into contact with a small kid was to be given to him shortly. Via the foundation, he soon got acquainted with a young Albanian boy and his overprotective mother. This is when a new chapter in my interviewee's life began...

Both of them have been extremely close to me from the very beginning! I do not have to pass through all the phases in the relationships with other people, to finally be able to get to love them... For me the feeling is automatic! Yet in this case, the vital thing for me was to feel, that the boy was indeed the child I had been waiting for... And he *was* the child I had been waiting for! (*Graham*)

My interviewee got so deeply absorbed in aiding the pair in their predicament, that he barely had time for himself. Lending a helping hand to his *new family* was at the top of the most important tasks to carry out. Solely within the first week, my interlocutor arranged for the two to move to a better flat, succeeded in finding a job for the mother and last, but not least initiated a lengthy bureaucratic process of granting his charges with

Polish citizenship. The emotional side of the relationship appeared to be thriving as well! Graham managed to establish a strong connection with the boy and saw the attachment between them grow steadily. Suddenly, however, something delicately started to get in the way...

People feel weak, lonely, unloved... And as soon as they make themselves a baby, they put a leash on it...and when the leash gets too long or their kid begins to share its feelings with another person, then the panic breaks out! [sarcastic smile] Paternal affection is usually one of the most tragic, egoistic acts of self-adoration! Should I one day, more clearly sense the heralds of the mother's wild jealousy, our relationship will immediately come to an end... But it will not be me, who will then break out of the contract. It will be them....The couple may not be fully aware of the fact that I am a priceless jewel for them. (...) Since I am ready to do everything I can to improve their lives... (...) But, alas, people overwhelmed by panic and fear when confronted with an opportunity of betterment, often tend to destroy their chance... It is much easier, because then, they are not forced to make difficult decisions anymore... (*Graham*)

My conversation with Graham was one of the richest interviews in terms of the variety of issues raised. Some of them, although seemingly irrelevant to the main topic of our discussion, often shed light on my interlocutor's background or features of character. He frequently accompanied those statements with bitter comments or scathing remarks, divulging his personal views on the matter in question. My interviewee turned out to represent an exceptionally antagonistic posture in relation to the Catholic Church, the institution of family, as well as the most popular social opinions and mechanisms. He also claimed that what he found appalling and unacceptable in Poland was a tendency to treat voluntary work as a phenomenon of rather secondary importance. He encouraged people from that field, to keep their heads up high and dictate the terms in case of cooperation with profit-orientated institutions. He himself maintained to be the embodiment of such a conduct. In addition, it transpired that Graham's forebears used to belong to the Polish aristocracy.

“Strenuously idiosyncratic! These are the two words that cross my mind, when I think of Graham! And to cap it all, he keeps masturbating with his own self!” - The coordinator’s eyes looked as if they were about to strike a lightning – “The guy must have had a horrific childhood, if his bitterness and drive for eccentricity reach such extremes...”

It is true that my interlocutor provoked intense reactions within the foundation. People found it irritating that via his slightly violent behavior, he often tended to put himself at the forefront of attention. At a certain moment he even tried to gain some degree of control over several organizational matters in the program, hence the stormy mood of the quoted coordinator... On the other hand, however, my interviewee was always pushed by noble motives, and that undoubtedly grants him a status of a constructive element in the whole machinery... On the whole, in spite of the fact that Graham presented himself as a highly controversial, self-aware, confident and independent individual with radical judgments, it would never have occurred to me to call him by the name of “Satan”! Yet people with conservative views might indeed regard the man’s certain practices as dubious, plus draw ambiguous conclusions from his several statements ...

3.2.8. Profound Faith

My God, in February had already passed a year of our acquaintance! [pause] This is especially amazing, because the situation of my younger sister is a little bit... extreme... I remember that just a few days after my first visit in the foundation, a telephone rang... I picked it up and the coordinator told me that she had something unusual for me... That it could generally be difficult... and that I could say “no”... (*Lucy*)

Lucy, a devoted student at 2 faculties, and a hard-working, self-educated musician did not hesitate. The girl said yes, although her schedule was filled up with

extra-curricular activities, such as rehearsals or duties assigned to her by the religious movement Light and Life, where Lucy was keenly engaged. She agreed, despite the fact that her potential charge was locked up in a mental hospital and suffering from psychical disorders with no perspectives for improvement...

I did not really care about what the background or the situation of that person would be... I had simply told myself, that as soon as I found somebody in need, I would help them... I suppose my attitude is rooted deeply in my faith... I believe that nothing in life happens by accident and every new experience or opportunity is a kind of *gift* from God. You are not supposed to let it pass you by... (*Lucy*)

Despite her unquestionable determination and relentlessness, my interviewee did not in the slightest anticipate, how unbelievably thorny the task ahead of her would be. As soon as Lucy paid her charge a first visit, she instantaneously realized the dimensions of her sister's predicament.

When I went to that hospital, I was deeply shocked... you know...to see those seemingly healthy, good-looking boys and girls, who in fact were in the middle of a depression or after attempts of suicide...[pause]... and there she was...my Wendy... I came up to her saying "hello! I have some oranges and a juice for you"... but she just sat there indifferently, staring at emptiness, without any flicker of emotion in her gaze... She had been suffering from agoraphobia and anorexia, not to mention the depressive bouts that seemed to have invaded her regularly...[lower tone of voice] If you are in such a state, you do not feel like doing anything. You just remain silent. This is what our beginnings looked like... (*Lucy*)

The first weeks of the girls' contact brought no signs of betterment. My interlocutor resorted to numerous methods of igniting a spark of interest in her younger sister's eye, yet all her attempts seemed to give absolutely no effects. From time to time, it was possible to induce Wendy to expressing her opinions on certain matters; however

it usually demanded an incommensurable amount of hard work on Lucy's part. At start, in the course of the young girl's psychical treatment, their meetings took place in a corridor of one of the hospital wards. Later, following Wendy's discharge, their get-togethers were confined to a bench in front of the infirmary. My interlocutor's sister, despite having been declared healthy, kept behaving in an exactly the same manner as earlier. To make matters worse, she had got so mentally attached to the hospital that it became the only place where the girl felt secure. Lucy gradually started to lose hope. Then suddenly one day something extraordinary occurred. For the first time in two months Wendy opened her mouth out of her own initiative and asked my interviewee a question...

I do not remember what she wanted to know, but the mere fact of displaying the will to communicate with me... [louder tone of voice and smile] My God! It brought so much joy into my heart! Something had finally moved in her! It was amazing! (*Lucy*)

My interlocutor's concerns and worries dissipated immediately. The girl sensed the upcoming changes in the air. She felt elated as well as intensely invigorated. "From that moment on, the matters will certainly take a different course" – Lucy thought. She was not mistaken. Despite the fact, that her younger sister was still besieged by overwhelming fears and plaguing manias, it was now at least possible to establish a stable verbal contact with her. Invisible, unconditional bonds slowly began to tighten between the girls.

There were moments when I saw and realized that I was actually one of the closest people she had...Although in fact, we were complete strangers to each other... (*Lucy*)

Wendy became much more open towards her elder sister, allowing my interviewee to gradually enter her intimate world. Lucy was astounded to discern a new element in the young girl's attitude. It was an increasing, pressing will to change her life.

My interviewee decided it was the right time to move in and act. Somehow, she had to encounter a way of filling Wendy's tedious reality with engrossing activities.

I wanted her to have some daily duties... to attend some classes... But there was a serious obstacle in the way... If Wendy was to go somewhere on her own, that place had to be situated within her *route*, that means somewhere between her home and the mental hospital. Otherwise, it was out of the question! She would simply feel too uncertain! So what could I do? My movements were severely limited... But suddenly I became aware of something! I realized that my ex-school had moved! And was now... guess where! Yes! Within the route! (*Lucy*)

Lucy did not waste time. She went there right away to speak with the headmaster. A week later Wendy was a proud student of one of the most prestigious private schools in the city. What is more, by the courtesy of the authorities of that institution, the girl's mother was exempt from making any financial contributions. In addition, in spite of the fact that Lucy's younger sister had missed one year of classes due to her psychical breakdown, she was allowed to continue the education into the next grade! This sudden turn in Wendy's life provoked incredible changes in her demeanor. She suddenly redefined her priorities and started spending her time constructively. One could even say that, in her terms, the girl was to a certain extent enthusiastic that she finally had concrete objectives to achieve.

A few months later, when I went to Wendy's school to pick her up, her teacher told me: "You have brought us a real treasure!" [smile] Wendy joined the course in November and in February she was already one of the best pupils in the class! Can you imagine? I would never have expected this whole thing to happen! And now she even says, she wants to study in the medical academy afterwards! She really makes plans for the future! (*Lucy*)

It is undeniable, that Lucy witnessed a miracle. What is more, she actively, single-handedly contributed to making this wonder occur. A short, fragile, blond girl

with subtle features and delicate voice proved to carry so much strength, perseverance and determination in her heart... What began as an innocent resolution deriving from my interviewee's religious beliefs, in the end turned out to be one of the most important achievements of Lucy's young life. An accomplishment that may well have turned somebody back from a seemingly irrevocable road to perdition...

3.2.9. A Concluding Reflection

Each of the portrayed characters possessed some distinctive uniqueness. A few were pushed ahead by the outer circumstances, others, on the contrary, found the stimulation in the depths of their own hearts. It was possible to come upon apparently obnoxious types whose dubious demeanor seemed controversial, yet one could also encounter several extraordinarily amiable as well as charismatic individuals. All in all, the qualities of my interlocutors varied significantly. Nonetheless, whatever the personal discrepancies or hidden intentions in my interviewees' circle might have been, there was always one crucial motivational drive that would finally surface, uniting directly or indirectly all the people I talked with. I am referring to the mere, noble urge of the volunteers to aid those who needed assistance the most... To help the kids bombarded with encumbrances look on the bright side of their thorny life...

3.3. Dwelling on Paradoxes - A Story of The Foundation's Main Coordinator

“Contradiction is not a sign of falsity, nor the lack of contradiction a sign of truth.”

Blaise Pascal

3.3.1. Foreword

Another arduous day was unhurriedly drawing to its inevitable end. As several fluffy clouds, aimlessly wandering across the sky, had already got tinged with a reddish hue of the sunset, a yellow-metallic car drove onto one of the rundown bridges that stretched over the murky depths of the Vistula River... I was giving the coordinator a lift home.

While the lively, black-haired girl seated on my right-hand side, was suggestively gesticulating, intending to adorn her fascinating story with as many colorful details as possible, it occurred to me to ask her one, simple question: “You spend practically 24 hours a day, devoting your time and energy to somebody else’s brood... But do you ever think of having your own child?”¹³ Melissa’s enormous, blue eyes widened. Shouting out hoarsely, she retorted vehemently - “No! Absolutely not! I do not even consider it! There are already so many kids in dire necessity of care and love on this earth... They are the ones who need me the most!” The girl’s features froze. She appeared to have fixed her eyes upon an imperceptible spot situated somewhere on the inner side of the windscreen. Her face seemed vacant, yet there was still a glimmer of ardor that filled Melissa’s eye as she continued – “I once dreamed, that I had my own baby...” She looked at me,

¹³ Such a straightforward question may seem not only insolent, but absolutely out of place in the context of anthropological investigations. Nevertheless in this particular case, although it did not constitute the integral part of my research, I deemed the topic worthy of pursuing. I was simply curious of the girl’s stance on the subject. At that moment I had already plunged so deeply into my participant observation, that the invisible boundary between me and the field of research was practically imperceptible by *those on the other side*. My relationship with the mentioned girl had grown so intimate that there were practically no taboos between us. It is worth mentioning that the initiative of tightening our bonds had been shown solely by her.

knitting her thick, dark brows— “... But my love towards it was so profoundly overwhelming, so destructively strong... That I had to leave that child...”

“Paradox - An assertion or sentiment seemingly contradictory, or opposed to common sense; that which in appearance or terms is absurd, but yet may be true in fact”¹⁴. This is how, on the basis of the Webster on-line Dictionary, I would describe a character of my interlocutor’s account that evening. Moreover, I might even venture to state that the aforementioned, however somewhat paraphrased definition would be the ideal illustration of a related, yet much more extensive phenomenon. A phenomenon I was constantly being exposed to, in the course of all my visits to the foundation. A phenomenon which eventually crystalized on paper in the aftermath of my extensive research¹⁵ and analysis of the field material. Namely, the very phenomenon of Melissa’s inimitability...

The more I got acquainted with the girl, the less straightforward was the picture, which gradually materialized in front of my mind’s eye. Inconsistencies emerged in all the aspects surrounding Melissa’s individuality. Contradictions tended to appear not only in her views and statements, but also in her activities as well as the emotional attitude to other people. Nonetheless, despite the unpredictability of some facets of the girl’s conduct, she never ceased to be thoroughly engrossed in her proceedings, and, by implication, always remained entirely natural and convincing to the observer.

I decided to shed the light on Melissa’s distinctiveness from three different perspectives. First, the technical aspects of the girl’s activity will be put under the magnifying glass; subsequently I will address her interpersonal relationships, to eventually focus on the coordinator’s ideological inclinations.

¹⁴ Interapple, Inc PA USA 2004: Webster's 1913 Dictionary

¹⁵ The research material which lays the groundwork for the chapter that follows consists of interviews with Melissa and group of volunteers as well as fieldnotes from my participant observation. Due to my personal engagement, I do not refrain from certain remarks and judgments, which are made solely in the context of the field observed and the comments of the individuals under study.

3.3.2. First Technical Issue - Organizational Paradox

As soon as Melissa came to the foundation, everything changed! Finally something began to move in the appropriate direction! We started going to the swimming pool, to the cinema... She has thousands of new ideas up her sleeve and if it all goes on further in the same manner, the whole program will never stop thriving. (*Mandy*)

Mandy was by no means the only person from that charitable institution to let out a wide stream of profuse compliments on hearing Melissa's name.

Oh Yes! The girl is the best person for the job! And those meetings of the children's helpers that she runs, being concrete and well organized, serve their purpose perfectly! (*Olivia*)

Even the boss of the whole organization could not refrain from expressing her unquestionable approval as to Melissa's extraordinary organizational flair.

At the very beginning, another lady was in charge of our program. She was extremely inefficient and did her work awfully clumsily. But then, suddenly, we came upon wonderful Melissa! And as you can see for yourself, she is brilliant! (*Annabelle*)

Just as there seemed to be no end to the spate of the flattering remarks concerning the directorial role played by the coordinator, I unexpectedly came across an entirely different judgment of the girl's managerial skills.

Well... It is true that we meet, laugh and decide about what to bring to the following party, but that is not enough! Melissa promised that she would ask some experts from the field to come to our gatherings, but so far nobody

appeared ... And their visit might, in fact, be essential to solving certain problems with our charges! (*Lucy*)

This statement was actually the lightest reproach regarding Melissa's organizational activity. The major accusations towards her were yet to come...

Those meetings for volunteers are completely chaotic! People speak just for the sake of saying something... I find it all fairly useless, unless serious matters start being put forward, or some kind of professional advice is offered to us! The issue of the kids is not even tackled! We only discuss the dates of the subsequent, seemingly integrative gatherings, on which, by the way, there is nothing to do apart from eating! (*Trixie*)¹⁶

The first grave signs of dissatisfaction with Melissa's administrative work which started coming into sight, looked as if they were isolated cases. "No matter how much heart you put into your deeds, there is always a group of those who oppose your methods of acting, after all..."- as Melissa herself once said. Since the coordinator's engagement had clearly given a strong boost to the whole program by pulling it out of undeniable stagnation, it may have been reasonable to think that the virtues of the girl's supervision, should eventually prevail... Soon, it became more than clear that this theory was a little far-fetched, for the arguments against Melissa began piling up interminably...

I had no idea that the coordinator was so irresponsible! (*Joan*) ;

I am extremely disappointed in the foundation! The girl in charge of the program is completely disorganized! They are lucky, that they stumble upon people like us! If it had not been for the good will of the volunteers, everything would have collapsed! (*Charlize*);

¹⁶ My interview with Trixie will not be analyzed in the empirical part of the thesis, yet it is worth mentioning that she was a tall, gaunt-looking girl, stranded on the battlefield of alcohol-related hardships originating in the family of her younger brother.

Sometimes Melissa does not seem to have the slightest idea about what to do!
(*Catherine*)¹⁷

All these accusations were somehow inconsistent with the image of Melissa emerging from my own observations... Until one day, I was finally personally exposed to the consequences of the coordinator's negligence...

The organization of a picnic in the forest was probably the most conspicuous example of Melissa's "mismanagement", as one of the volunteers had called it. The coordinator had planned that all the members of the program would, along with their charges, meet up at the last tube station of the Warsaw underground line. We were to take a relaxing walk to the nearby forest in order to eventually make a delicious barbecue in an intimate atmosphere. Not only did at least half of the people not turn up, due to misunderstandings concerning the time of the encounter, but the coordinator herself was approximately half an hour late! Her delay would undoubtedly have been longer, if my earlier telephone call had not woken her up from a heavy slumber. To cap it all, it soon transpired that we had no grill-set at our disposal, since I was supposedly the one who had been asked to take care of it. The aforementioned request had, of course, never reached me. Our group finally ended up kindling a bonfire in the company of hundreds of scouts and slanting-eyed tourists who turned out to have decided to spend that day in an exactly the same manner as we did. It is not hard to imagine, that the family-like ambience was therefore out of the question. Yet, before the kids and volunteers managed to arrive in the woods, they had no other choice but to spend two hours on foot in the scorching sun, traversing dry, littered meadows, for it was the only plausible way of attaining the agreed spot... To sum up:

The picnic in the forest was an absolute catastrophe! (*Joan*)

Later on, I spent long hours ruminating on how Melissa actually still succeeded in presenting herself as a successful organizer in front of a vast array of people, including

¹⁷ A few other statements of these three volunteers will also be quoted in the further sections of this chapter, thereby shedding more light upon their personal situations .

her own supervisor... The fact remains, however, that despite the girl's style of work, the program indeed seemed to be flourishing...

3.3.3. Second Technical Issue – Amount of Work Paradox

Melissa's organizational talents may have been disputed by the volunteers, nevertheless there was no doubt about the broad span of her responsibilities within the foundation. As the girl herself confessed, a wide selection of tasks rested upon her shoulders. Apart from the coordinator's general, periodical duties, such as bestowing students from numerous high schools with canvass-laden lectures concerning the voluntary work, putting up posters of the program all around the city or organizing kids' parties as well as assemblies for their *elder siblings*, Melissa also constantly worked on an individual basis with every single pair. First and foremost, she had to interview and evaluate a prospective volunteer, then couple that person with a corresponding child, to eventually regularly monitor the relationships between the both.

If the bonds linking those two people somehow come asunder or break... then I take it personally. It means that I have not done my job correctly. I may have either inappropriately assessed the elder brother/sister or wrongly assembled the pair... (*Melissa*)

Melissa gave the impression of being acquainted with the most minuscule details of all the circumstances surrounding each and every participant of the program that she was in charge of. The enormity of her emotional engrossment also seemed overwhelming. What is more, she purported to be continuously obtaining the latest information first-hand, 24 hours a day, via her cellular phone.

It is worth mentioning, that the post in the foundation was by no means the only job carried out by Melissa. Additionally, she simultaneously worked in a primary school, attended a club for rich kids and took care of a group of orphans. *How is it possible to engage oneself so profoundly into such a wide range of pressing activities?* – I asked

myself, deeply impressed with the girl's diligence. *She must permanently be immersed in something...* – I thought...

How astonished I was, on noting that practically each time I paid Melissa a visit in her office, she was immersed in... idleness. Once, the girl even greeted me from beneath a myriad of balloons, which she claimed to have inflated solely out of lack of other, more constructive tasks to carry out... Would the coordinator indeed be capable of completing her countless chores in due time so easily, to afford to have such regular suspensions at work? The answer to this question was, surprisingly, not so hard to light upon as it seemed... All I had to do was to start sniffing around via coaxing a few volunteers affiliated with the foundation to share their personal views with me. The responses purveyed, step by step patched up the majority of gaps in my initial depiction of Melissa's conscientiousness in executing her profession.

When, in the beginning, I was being subjected to that meticulously formulated set of questions laid out in front of me by Melissa, I told her I would not be able to assist any kid besieged by problems in the field of mathematics, since I, myself had always been bad at that subject. The coordinator called me up afterwards saying that there was a child to look after... She also told me that my prospective younger sister was stuck up to her ears in math-related difficulties at school... [ironic smile] I have absolutely no idea what the aim of that introductory interview was supposed to be, because later on nothing I had said seemed to have been taken into consideration... (*Catherine*)

The alleged lack of Melissa's willingness to stick to the "matching rules of the program", which she had claimed to be constantly obeying, surfaced several times throughout my investigations. Eventually, it also transpired that the supervisor of the Elder Brother, Elder Sister Program tended to turn a blind eye on much more issues which theoretically ought to constitute the core of her responsibilities as a coordinator. Once, the mere fact of touching the subject of Melissa's range of duties even provoked an unprecedented outburst of anger in a certain volunteer...

She has absolutely no idea about what is really going on in the houses of those kids! Well... Melissa claims to be well informed about all the current affairs, but her sources of data are highly dubious, to say the least... Never in her life has she even tried to visit any of the charges of the foundation in their homes, so how can she imply that she knows anything! Moreover it already happened a few times that the personal situation of the kids turned out to be entirely different from what the volunteers had been made to believe in the first place! (*Charlize*)

It soon came to light that Melissa, despite Charlize's numerous attempts to actively contribute to the well-being of the children, always persistently nipped all her ideas in the bud. No matter how much initiative the unpaid helper might have shown, there was a permanent bottleneck at the coordinator's stage of decision-making. Each of the plans was either tagged as superfluous or initially regarded as interesting, but subsequently passed over in silence. The same situation occurred not only when the positively-spirited, vigorous elder sister single-handedly intended to provide the charges of the organization with a free access to the skating ring, but also when she succeeded in reaching an agreement with the manager of McDonald's for one meal on the house. My interviewee found this whole perpetual mechanism additionally appalling, due to the fact that Melissa's evident disregard for the volunteer's proposals in one field was accompanied by her constant tendency of putting financial burdens onto their shoulders in another. I myself had an opportunity to witness the coordinator in the process of dividing the food-related responsibilities concerning the forthcoming party among the elder brothers and sisters. Assigning somebody with a task of bringing a "salad that ought to nourish 80 people" was one of Melissa's common practices...

Sometimes I wonder whether her reasons to work there are not solely connected with getting the money for the job. It often looks like that, really! [quivering tone of voice] Speaking of this subject always makes me so nervous... I have tried all the time to give awfully lot to the foundation, but that's enough! I will only assist the kids now! Neither the organization nor Melissa will get anything more from me! (*Charlize*)

So where would the truth lie in this case, then? Was the supervisor of the program indeed a hard-working woman who considered her job as a vocation and performed it impeccably, or maybe the picture painted by the volunteers was more faithful to reality? I have no misgivings about the fact that what Charlize said might make the coordinator look as a ruthless fraud who intentionally pretended to be barraged with responsibilities, but in reality indulged in ignoring all the unpaid helpers, while intending to burden them with her own duties. Nonetheless such a view would not only be one-sided, but also extremely biased. Moreover, it would fly straight in the face of the ideologically-emotional aspect of Melissa's professional engagement in the foundation, which will be discussed further in this chapter. In one way or another, the woman's portrait, this time based upon her amount of work as well as personal commitment, once again turned out to be inconsistent...

3.3.4. First Interpersonal Issue – Attitude to Charges Paradox

It is undisputable that the field of charitable activity is, along with providing means of physical assistance to the poverty-stricken individuals, unambiguously directed at fostering the interpersonal relationships among human beings. Therefore in order for any foundation to function faultlessly, the attitude of the average employee towards both the people in need, as well as the fellow workers, is undeniably crucial.

The following section of the chapter will focus on the analysis of Melissa's organizational behavior. Without further ado, let us first examine the coordinator's approach to the charges of that charity institution...

I have always been aware of the fact that I wanted to lend a helping hand to other people...This need must be rooted deeply in my sub consciousness... I was brought up with such priorities, and the profile of my studies, as well as the practical experience in the problematic environment gained throughout my educational career only made me more certain of what I wanted to pursue in life! [smile] My emotional input here is enormous! If I weren't employed in this field I

would probably cease to exist! Assisting others forms a part of my identity! (...)
And work here is amazing! I see the practical effects of what I do and that is fantastic, because nobody ever walks out of here empty-handed! (*Melissa*)

Melissa's incredibly strong beliefs coupled with the girl's extraordinary commitment to the cause instantly made me regard her as a role model of an ideal social worker. The passionate manner in which she relentlessly spoke of the profound needs of her soul to permanently share her daily life with the poor was indeed tremendously heartwarming. At a certain moment, I even grew to be absolutely convinced that the coordinator's conduct could always serve as a perfect pattern for all the volunteers to follow. I would never have envisaged that my image of Melissa, so strongly elevated above the mediocrity, was soon about to unexpectedly collapse to the ground...

The inevitable occurred when I stopped one day by the headquarters of the foundation in order to consult the coordinator on some nagging issues that referred to my own younger brother.

Having crossed the doorstep of the main hall, I caught a glimpse of the girl leaning over an elderly lady. The aged woman, who must have visited the organization to enroll her grandson on the Elder Brother, Elder Sister Program, was reposing in an antiquated couch with the young boy by her side. Once Melissa had offered the couple something to drink, she turned away from them and started approaching me with an artificially tense expression on her face. The girl's lips were tightly clamped and her eyes unnaturally wide open. As the distance between us decreased to a few feet, the coordinator leaned delicately on my right shoulder and whispered almost inaudibly into my ear - "Oh God! Let them go at last! I am so tired that I can barely walk... And to cap it all, that grandma stinks!"

That unanticipated comment literally made my jaw fall to the floor. The whole incident left me rattled and petrified! My mental picture of that "big-hearted", "philanthropic"¹⁸ Melissa immediately blurred before my mind's eye, flickered for a

¹⁸Melissa described herself in that manner once.

while and eventually vanished, never to reappear again. Although throughout my subsequent visits in the organization I had numerous opportunities of witnessing the coordinator's positive gestures towards the unfortunate people, her seemingly innocent remark always kept echoing in my head.

3.3.5. Second Interpersonal Issue – Attitude to Co-workers Paradox

The organizational role of the program's supervisor, by its definition demanded from Melissa not only regular contacts at the level of those who solicited help, but also brought her on countless occasions together with all the subordinate volunteers. As a consequence, the girls' interpersonal relationships within that latter group developed significantly as well. Yet, alas, at the beginning of my investigations, owing to a temporary suspension of children helpers' monthly meetings, I was deprived of the possibility to observe the coordinator's interactions in this area. Therefore, with the aim of learning a bit about Melissa's general view on the circle of unpaid co-workers, I made up my mind to primarily explicitly ask the girl what her attitude to certain individuals was. Her answer appeared to be pretty straightforward...

Listen, I know that some of the volunteers may seem to raise controversies at a first glance... But I do not judge those people! [pause] As long as everybody is satisfied – the parents, the kids and the helper himself, then the atmosphere is perfect and I find the whole situation ideal! Each of the individuals may have their own negative features or personal paranoia, but these are not reasons to classify them in any way! The most important thing is the fact that such people may be found at all, that there is an adequate place for them here in the foundation and finally that this great mission is somehow carried further! This is extremely valuable! (*Melissa*)

Melissa's moving speech elevated me spiritually once again, yet a few weeks later, in the confrontation with the crude reality, its meaning was automatically reduced to pure, empty terms without authentic base. I was simply incapable of comprehension

how such an in-theory-unprejudiced girl could incessantly, bring up in public personal subjects which tended to shed extremely unfavorable light on certain individuals. In the course of practically all the organizational gatherings, the coordinator constantly juggled with facts, events and intimate details that referred to the currently absent volunteers, depicting their profile or conduct in an extremely grotesque manner. Since Melissa was generously gifted with extensive capabilities of mimicking others, her stories were always accompanied by spontaneous outbursts of laughter on the part of the listeners.

At a certain moment, I even realized that the monthly encounters of children's helpers had started bearing a close resemblance to regular *comedy plays*, featuring the coordinator. *The audience* (the volunteers) gathered, listened to two or three *stories of the day* expressively recounted by Melissa, laughed and went home. The core matters to discuss, which in fact constituted the very reasons for our assemblies, were always being left for the last ten minutes of the meeting.

Perhaps Melissa intends to patch up some gaps in her social life that is lacking in intense acquaintances with normal, mature individuals... She spends practically all the days with children, doesn't she? (*Joan*)

One day Melissa went a step further. She namely began putting forward propositions of common excursions to bars, thought exclusively for volunteers. It would not have been in any way surprising, had the girl not confessed me earlier that the only types of contacts she craved for in her life were strong relationships with children ...

From the very beginning of my existence, I just knew that I would never want to generate any interpersonal bonds with grown-ups. And that is true! The only creatures on the face of this earth that I understand and identify myself with are kids! (...) When it comes to mature people, for me they are on the other side of the barricade and seem to be speaking an entirely different language! I cannot refrain from scolding and criticizing them constantly. I may be mean, but that is how I am... (*Melissa*)

In the light of that convincing declaration, the coordinator's sudden influx of willingness to build up the apparently undesirable link with other adults looked from my perspective like another, highly paradoxical phenomenon in the interpersonal field of the girl's relationships. With each unanticipated observation, similar to the one just mentioned, I got more and more astounded by the diversity of contradictions pertaining to Melissa's individuality. Nevertheless at that point of my research, I was still unaware of how ambiguous the ideological facet the coordinator's conduct would turn out to be.

3.3.6. First Ideological Issue – Attitude to the Job Paradox

Throughout the majority of initial conversations that accompanied my introductory explorations of the foundation, the subject of Melissa's attitude to her job was constantly deliberated over. In each case the coordinator strongly emphasized her insurmountable attachment and devotion to practically all the activities that she was in charge of...

This is so fantastic...[smile]...To see a small girl strongly hugging her new elder brother right after the contract has been signed... Or when an overjoyed volunteer comes here to show me a postcard received by him from his charge...(...) I often observe those kids, you know... with bliss and elation illuminating their little faces so brightly... You should take a look at their descriptions in our files. They do not want any presents or toys. Their greatest dream is to have somebody nearest and dearest... And suddenly I am the one who regales them with a friend... In such moments... How can you not love what you do? (*Melissa*)

The coordinator appeared to be completely emotionally immersed in her work. Any issue that would even indirectly be linked with her occupation seemed to consume the girl both physically and psychically. On my question, whether she could say that she was truly content with the course her life had taken, Melissa replied confidently, without a moment's hesitation:

Despite the fact that some of my duties may indeed be draining in the long run, I can sincerely say that I could not be more fortunate! I just see absolutely no sense in doing anything else! (*Melissa*)

It would never have even occurred to me that the next time when I set my foot on the floorboards of the foundation an entirely different person would greet me from the same stuffy office of the coordinator... A few days later Melissa changed out of all recognition. The girl's energetic gaze had given way to an apathetic, blank look and her vivid, optimistic manner of behaving had been replaced by a glum and despondent conduct. It was hard for me to believe that the silent, distanced woman of unhealthy, whitish complexion was still the same Melissa! As soon as she started speaking, overwhelming dread began surging up my spine...

The last month was one of the most horrible periods of my life... There are lots of pairs that have been assembled in that period, but so what? [pause] It does not bring me any fulfillment or pleasure anyway...(...) I do not see any future in this kind of job. It really serves no purpose! I suppose that I will soon have to start looking for something else... (*Melissa*)

My God! Does she indeed mean what she says? - I pondered. All signs on land and earth seemed to be indicating that such was the case, nonetheless, the following days astonishingly appeared to have reverted Melissa to her former approach to the surrounding world. During my subsequent visit in the foundation, the traces of that morose side of the coordinator's personality had long been gone. She was in fact exuding even more vigor and enthusiasm than earlier. The girl almost blew me off my feet, when she announced, with a wide smile enlightening her face, that she had just taken up an additional responsibility of single-handedly running the children's club. This news nearly took away my breath.

"What? Are you sure that you want to do this? Didn't you decide to give up working here, in the first place? Are you aware of all the encumbrances that await you?"

– I asked her shocked, still grasping for air. “Well, maybe I do not know exactly what I am doing... But the fact that I am raising the bar on the range of my duties, gives me an enormous boost of energy! And that is exactly what I need!”- Melissa’s cheeks had acquired a tinge of pastel rouge, as she was excitedly gesticulating with her arms while speaking. The coordinator seemed to be deeply delighted. I would not even hesitate to claim that she gave an impression of being to a certain extent blindingly dazzled by the splendor of the new challenge visible on the horizon. My humble attempts of delicately suggesting¹⁹ the girl that her idealistic, momentary endeavors to reach the most elevated limits of her physical capabilities might, in the end, make her painfully land on the hard ground of reality, eventually provoked one, short comment on her part – “What are you talking about? Haven’t you noticed those wings growing out of my shoulders?”

3.3.7. Second Ideological Issue – The Concept of Help Paradox

Apart from Melissa’s abovementioned attitude to the general character of her job, her mindset displayed another symptom of ideologically-based inconsistency. I am referring to her individual approach to the concept of help, or more specifically, to her private stance on the manner of assisting the children in need.

On the basis of the coordinator’s countless statements, one could clearly notice that the girl’s emotional, internal necessity to reach out a hand to those requiring urgent aid, appeared to constitute an integral part of her personality. Moreover, according to Melissa’s constant declarations, kids harmed by a cruel fate occupied a special place in her heart...

Helping them has always been perfectly normal and obvious for me! In no way do I link this activity with the profile of my work! (...) Sometimes I ask myself, why do majority of people want to receive money for something that lies in the

¹⁹ Any attempts of influencing the behavior of the individuals under ethnographic study are a serious methodological mistake. The only justification on my part may be the fact that my warnings took form of fairly objective questions (e.g. Have you thought your decision over thoroughly? Are you certain that you have time for that? Etc.) And eventually did not have any impact on Melissa’s behavior.

pure nature of a human being? Why do they demand payment for such an inborn mechanism, as offering and giving yourself to others? (*Melissa*)

The girl appeared to be so convincing while she was expressing her thoughts regarding one's supposedly ubiquitous, instinctive proneness to help, that her sudden revelations disclosed to me a few weeks later, struck me like an unexpected lightning...

I went to the orphanage today. I work there from time to time as well, you know... [wide open eyes]... It was horrible! Those poor kids with their little heads and tiny hands stretched out in my direction in a desperate hope of being given a hug... I just couldn't! [pause] Finally I cuddled them of course, but I really did not want to do that! The only person that I can hug with sincere love and clear consciousness is my nephew, but in the case of those children...[stutter]...In the case of those children, I felt psychically exhorted to take them into my arms... (*Melissa*)

In the end of the girl's account, the grade of my perplexity exceeded all the possible limits of incomprehension. To consider the assistance offered to others as an element inextricably linked to our nature, and, at the same time, to flinch from showing a simple gesture of friendliness towards a group of orphans, seemed to me not only contradictory, but simply incongruous. The wide range of paradoxes revolving around Melissa had eventually been completed by probably the most unfathomable one from my perspective...

3.3.8. Pondering the Reasons

Never in my life had I been confronted with an equally controversial, ambiguous, contradictory and unforeseeable person in terms of her views, theories as well as conduct. Some tended to say that the girl might soon suffer an eternal breakdown and disappear from the foundation for ever; yet she persistently kept on reporting for work... Others claimed that the charitable program under Melissa's command would without a

doubt perish in agonies. Nevertheless, despite all the nuisances it lingered... One can never be certain, where the sources of all those inexplicable trends in the girl's demeanor could have been hidden, nevertheless the room for speculation shall always be left open...

From my personal standpoint, the coordinator's manner of acting was one of the most remarkable features of the girl. Her behavior, although often undeniably illogical, as well as nerve-wracking from the perspective of other volunteers, always appeared to be entirely sincere and straightforward. There was no place for keeping up any intentional pretence or urging somebody to read between the lines. Whenever Melissa felt like speaking her mind, she did not refrain from doing it, no matter whether her utterance was to prove coherent or not... With an unbelievable spontaneity and naivety, the coordinator let the spate of her emotions flow out of her heart at any moment. Perhaps the girl's amiable honesty was one of the means that animated the majority of her co-workers to performing their tasks, at the same time preventing them from rebelling against her chaotic management, and by implication contributing to the further development of the program... Or maybe Melissa had other, more recondite methods of successfully attending her duties... In any case, her sudden changes of mood unfortunately had their flip side as well... The girl's optimism may have indeed bestowed her with wings, yet the bouts of insecurity and depression literally pushed the coordinator into the abyss of despair. Regardless of the nature of the circumstances, her responses seemed always direct and absolutely natural. Either elated or gruesomely disheartened, she entered the extreme states of mind as easily as an infant. Might that tendency have been a kind of mysterious defense mechanism routinely applied by Melissa for some obscure reasons?

Once, it transpired that the coordinator had lost her father at the age of eighteen, yet she still treated him as though he were alive. She kept justifying his permanent absence, by constantly dwelling on a theory that he had set out on a long journey. Instinctively, Melissa still believed that one day he would come back home... On another occasion, the girl owned up to me that despite her 28 years of age she still slept with the light turned on. That personal custom was also dictated by a traumatic childhood-based event. One memorable evening, on going to sleep she switched off the lamp in her room.

At the very same moment a man jumped off the adjacent building. The coordinator could still hear the inhumane rattle of bones breaking on the pavement...²⁰

It is obvious that the girl had gone through a lot. Nevertheless, whatever the genuine roots of the coordinator's conduct might have been, the fact remains that without her active contribution to the foundation the Elder Brother, Elder Sister Program would definitely not be the same. One could, of course, argue whether the girl's exceptionality had positive or negative effects on the final outcome of the institution's charitable activity, nonetheless I am more than certain that the lack of Melissa's vibrant personality, would undoubtedly make the whole organization irrevocably lose that distinctive, indescribable charm...

²⁰ Unfortunately I am not able to let Melissa tell those two stories with her own words, since I do not have those specific accounts noted down and at my disposal. Suffice it to say that all the facts and descriptive details concerning my interlocutor, which are mentioned in this particular paragraph, have been taken from her own utterance only.

3.4. Being a Part of the Game – Excerpts from the Researcher’s Personal Diary

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step....”

Miyamoto Musashi

3.4.1. Prologue

We will not allow you to make your research in our organization, unless you agree to comply with one, basic condition...You namely mustn’t interrupt our activities in any way! [pause]...And if you want to know my opinion, the best posture on your part would be simply to help us out...[smile] (*Annabelle*)

In the light of this statement it became more than clear to me that I would have no other choice, but to engage myself actively in the charitable deeds of the foundation... As a researcher, I approached the challenge with open arms, deeming it to be an ideal opportunity to gain more access to all the murky corners of that organization. Being a member of a vast array of volunteers would also allow me to observe certain phenomena from an entirely different perspective! All in all, it was a perfect chance to refine the quality of my scientific explorations... Yet on the other hand, regarding the situation from a more personal standpoint, the step ahead of me seemed to be unusually huge... Never in my life had I been involved in any contact with another human being who would not be, at the most, five years younger than me... A mere perspective of starting up a close relationship with a small child automatically filled me up with irrepressible dread! Moreover, I feared that, considering the particular attitude that I possessed, the ultimate goal of my participant observation could never be attained... Specifically, I planned to focus on the apparently intangible process concerning the development of personal motivation, which was, by the way, also the central point of my soon-to-be-conducted anthropological interviews... Although I profoundly desired to take an active part in this practice, I could not prevent myself from believing that in my case, the

motivation would simply not come into sight. Fortunately, my worries have turned out to be completely unfounded...

In order to appeal more intensely to the senses of a potential reader, I settled on presenting my tale as a series of fairly detailed diary-like excerpts. The accounts of my participant observation that follow, are entirely composed of passages taken directly from the field notes (the italic style of the text indicates that). The story kicks off right after I had been officially examined by the coordinator and subsequently enrolled on a list of potential candidates, soon meant to assist in the Elder Brother, Elder Sister Program...

3.4.2 Part One - Black Clouds Gathering over the Horizon

A few days ago I was courteously informed that I would soon be granted the honor of joining the noble ranks of volunteers. Melissa claimed to have finally come upon an ideal younger brother for me. As she was excitedly unfolding a multicolored picture of the child's detailed characteristics before my eyes, an icy shudder passed across my back leaving a trail of tiny hairs, standing up firmly in its wake... A hyperactive, 11-year old boy by the name of Albert Getty, deprived of regular contacts with his father and harassed by grave problems at school is supposed to be that "perfect charge" of mine. Although the aforementioned, initial scraps of information on the kid may not have alarmed me completely, the fact that the youngster tended to be described by his teachers as "abnormal and aggressive" left me unnerved from top to bottom...

The problematic child was apparently elated by the forthcoming perspective of having me as his guardian and almost fanatically kept writing the words "elder brother" on each document or piece of paper within his reach. I would like to refrain from expressing biased views concerning the subject, but the whole idea of "brotherhood" sounds to me like a kind of obsession on the boy's part... I am slightly afraid that I might not live up to his expectations... Actually, I am scared out of my wits! What If I don't manage to handle him appropriately? I have never even attempted to maintain any contact with a kid, who would be in a similar age or condition, after all... Anyway... According to Melissa's accounts, Albert's mother is relatively affluent, yet regardless of

the fact that the woman's average wage does not correspond to the rules of the program, the coordinator settled on offering her the foundation's assistance anyway. "The exceedingly difficult situation of the child" was supposedly the key reason for that decision.

Despite my initial reservations, I decided to put all the doubts aside and start acting right away. Since the primary step that had to be taken concerned attending the rudimentary procedure of signing the contract, I requested Melissa to get in touch with the mother to fix the date of our first meeting. As soon as she reached the woman on the phone, a wave of bizarre revelations came to light... It namely turned out that Albert had just been robbed and beaten up. He was being interrogated, but did not want to say a word, even refusing to speak with his own mother. The horrified woman desperately asked Melissa to send me to the police station, so that I would attempt to calm down her son! She made that hasty request despite the fact that she knew absolutely nothing of me and the agreement between us had yet been reached! In the end, I did not comply with her wishes, nevertheless the whole incident has lit up a red light of alert in my sub consciousness. "Won't this woman try to put the majority of her own responsibilities onto my shoulders?" – was the main thought that began circulating in my mind. I instantly shared my fears with Melissa. She purported to have had the same impression. "Well, we will just have to precisely inform Albert's mother as to the exact span of your duties. That should make her realize that on no account, will you play the role of the boy's foster father..." - said the coordinator confidently.

Today, we were supposed to sign the contract. The two of them failed to come. I had been waiting for them about an hour long, but to no avail! I could not comprehend it! They did not even bother to justify their absence... I would be lying if I said that the whole situation has not left me annoyed and aggravated... Unless they show some initiative of meeting me in the course of the coming week, I will definitely not hesitate to look for another charge...

3.4.3. Part Two - A Lightning or a Ray of the Sun?

I have just signed the contract! The feelings that I'm currently subjected to are quite indescribable... I would call them a mixture of enthusiasm, uneasiness and anxiety... The boy has turned out to be incredibly likeable! He wanted to know as much about me as possible! With a rosy hue of excitement adorning his cheeks and a wide smile illuminating his slightly plump face, the youngster ceaselessly kept asking me scores of diverse questions. "What type of music do you like? Do you play computer games? Have you ever painted the iron soldier figures?" – These are just a few examples of the matters Albert wanted to discuss. His mother, a huge, red-haired woman did not seem to show so much interest in my person as her exhilarated son. On the contrary, she just limited herself to observing her animated offspring silently. The lady's half-closed eyes appeared to be glittering with indisputable pride. At a certain moment, Mrs. Getty turned her eyes in my direction. As her lips were twisting in a slightly contemptuous smile, she asked me just one question: "What will you get from this?" I can't deny that I was a little bit stunned by the manner in which that unexpected issue had been raised. I had a sensation that the woman was certain that I would be granted some kind of material compensation for my services. Upon hearing that I would work for free, a clear sign of surprise registered on her face. Albert's mother opened her eyes even wider in disbelief after I additionally confessed that from my perspective the mere fact of offering help to others was a value and a goal in itself. I also mentioned my anthropological investigations of course, yet the woman did not seem to be in any way interested or concerned by my status of a researcher.

All in all, my first impression is generally positive; nevertheless I still keep asking myself, what reasons may have rendered that lady so difficult to meet up with. She actually seemed to have ignored entirely the accorded time of our initial get-together before Christmas... Two weeks later it transpired that surprisingly the woman was still interested in joining in the Elder Brother, Elder Sister program, since right after the New Year's Eve she contacted Melissa to set the date of the today's meeting. Yet despite the precisely fixed hour of our appointment she appeared in the coordinator's office 45 minutes earlier... On noticing that I hadn't arrived yet, Albert's mother is alleged to

have said impatiently, in an irritated tone: “What? Something’s wrong again? Oh, God! Another day completely wasted!” It is worth mentioning that the woman lives and works a few hundred meters away from the foundation... I would say that the lady behaved as though she was seriously absentminded and disorganized. Her son, however, evoked solely positive feelings in me... The only issue that struck me as undeniably out of place about the two was their standard of living, as well as their attitude to money. For a pair that is soliciting a charitable institution for assistance, their financial necessities seemed to be exceedingly satisfied... Albert wore top quality clothes, attended a myriad of extracurricular courses and owned various types of luxurious game consoles (Xbox, PlayStation). To cap it all, when I asked him whether he possessed a computer, he smiled, answering with genuine amusement – “No! Not anymore! I’ve recently broken it so thoroughly that it let off a trail of smoke in the end!” The mother grinned sarcastically, as she commented on her son’s statement giving him a pitying look – “Well... And we will have to buy a new PC again ...”

3.4.4. Part Three - An Unanticipated, Icy Gust

I’ve just returned from my first, personal encounter with Albert. I’m exhausted! As soon as I crossed the threshold of his abode today morning, a tight, stuffy apartment plunged into chaos materialized before my eyes. It was quite a disconcerting sight to behold... My younger brother lives on the ground floor of a scruffy, grimy block of flats. His neighborhood may by no means be described as cozy or inviting... It actually forms part of one of the most dangerous districts in Warsaw... At the beginning of my visit, the boy’s mother was still at work, yet once the woman returned home, in no way did she seem to feel embarrassed by my presence on her territory. Neither did she refrain from opening all the cluttered cupboards, searching through the untidy cabinets or unlocking doors that lead to completely messed up rooms. One could note clearly that the two had not prepared themselves in any manner for the appointment with me. I did not sense the slightest signs of hospitality towards me either... It looked as though I had stepped directly and unnoticeably into the real life of the Getty family. Their typical, ordinary day was simply advancing along its usual tracks...

When it comes to my younger brother, his conduct left a lot to be desired... I was in fact deeply taken aback by the boy's mode of behavior! Yet I must admit that there is one undeniably positive element about his demeanor – he is completely unreserved and does not even intend to hold back any of his automatic, natural impulses. The fact remains, however, that the child I saw today was entirely different from the timid, awestruck boy that once visited the foundation with his mother... This time the 11-year old youngster felt absolutely stress-free in his own environment. One of the most striking proofs of the kid's degree of relaxation was the boy's vulgar manner of embellishing practically every remark with a heavy wave of swearwords. As Albert proudly told me, the omnipresent bad language was in fact also the reason that had made hip-hop his favorite type of music! My charge actually gave an impression of being a totally self-conscious and insolent little hooligan, attempting to emphasize his physical as well as intellectual superiority over others. It was particularly noticeable during a short, unexpected visit of his pal from school. Albert kept harassing and mocking that boy while ordering him about to his heart's content! Perhaps my younger brother was only trying hard to impress me, but his crazy ideas exceeded all the limits of common sense! I couldn't believe what I was hearing when, at a certain moment, he came out with an initiative of lighting firecrackers in the staircase. At first, I ignored the idea, deeming it to be just a silly joke, but as soon as my charge opened the door of his flat, and started going out with a bundle of squibs in his hand, I categorically put that idiotic plan out of his mind. I was certain that I would be met with a spate of disapproval and protests on his part, yet to my surprise, Albert obediently returned to his apartment... I must frankly say that the boy's reaction let a ray of hope among the dreary thoughts that had begun to gather up in my head. "Fortunately, there is still some decency left in him..." – I thought.

In the course of the whole next hour, I was practically forced to watch a wide number of my younger brother's favorite video games. Whenever I attempted to touch the issue of his school, the kid nonchalantly changed the topic, claiming that he had absolutely no problems in that field. It came to light later that he was on a verge of failing a few major subjects...

Suddenly, in the middle of my day at the Gettys' home, the front doors to the flat burst-opened forcefully and Albert's mother's huge panting silhouette appeared in the entrance. Not wasting any time, the podgy woman promptly came up to me and still struggling for breath, with a raucous and impertinent tone started enumerating my duties - "So... What I expect from you, is that you take my son for walks and give him lectures on history in the form of diverting stories..." Before I even managed to open my mouth, to comment on her "humble" request, which in reality had a form of an evident statement, a wry smirk lightened the lady's bulbous features. Casting Albert a meaningful look, she added - "Well... There was a girl that used to give him private lessons regularly... But the last time she came, Albert slammed the door shut in front of her face and did not want to let her in... So I suppose that she will not visit us anymore..." The short anecdote provoked an outburst of shrill laughter on my younger brother's part. I could not believe my eyes! Not only did the woman not try to reprimand her son for that despicable deed, but she even seemed to have been to certain extent amused by it, watching the boy's spontaneous reaction with silent approval and a delicate smile on her face...

The rest of the day passed on the alarmed preparations to Albert's carnival ball that was supposed to take place on the same evening. My charge settled on dressing up as a girl. While completing the set of the necessary garments, he shouted disrespectfully to his mother: "Hey! What takes you so long? You are such a slow-coach! Stop prattling ceaselessly and bring me those shoes right away!", "Yes, just a second my dear!" - Answered the woman submissively, while falling over her head to make her insubordinate son's life easier. The lady scurried and bustled around the boy, penetrating all the cupboards, running down to the cellar to look for old clothes and nervously ironing the selected attire. She assisted her mischievous child as though she were his faithful servant! In return, Albert just observed the woman, sneering arrogantly... As soon as everything was in its place, my charge's mother packed the kid into her Peugeot 407 and set out for school (which was, by the way, situated within the distance of a 10 minute walk from the family's home). "Nice car you have there!"- the boy shouted out waving at me from the side window of his fairly luxurious vehicle, which

was about to turn into a narrow, secondary street and disappear behind one of the grayish blocks of flats... That is how my first day as an elder companion of Albert ended.

My feelings are totally unclear at the moment... I am not quite certain whether this relationship has any future or not... If my role is to be limited exclusively to observing the boy's insolent excesses, just as it was today, then I guess, it would be more sensible to back out right away... In fact I have really no idea how I could be of any assistance to that kid! So far, I haven't even been able to identify any concrete, dire miseries that might plague him! Does this boy indeed require help? I have a nagging sensation that his mother decided to turn to the foundation largely out of a pure need for a free coach as a remedy for Albert's difficulties at school... Well, on the other hand, however, she also mentioned something about a necessity for her son to hang out with somebody mature from outside of the family, since according to the mother, the boy spent too much time with her... yet I am not sure what that statement was supposed to mean... Does that lady want me to contribute to the Albert's healthy development as a child without a father, or maybe she would simply like me to overtake some of her own burdens? In any case, I doubt that I am adequately qualified to attend to either one of those tasks... Additionally, the boy's alleged "hyperactivity" is, in my view, an undeniable consequence of Mrs. Getty's highly inappropriate mode of upbringing! Albert is simply completely spoiled! I suppose I will wait and see what the nearest future has in store for me, but I do not exclude an option of breaking out of the contract... The stake of losing my time, energy and nerves with this impossible child is basically too high for my tastes... Besides, I am afraid that in his case, there is nothing I can accomplish ...

3.4.5. Part Four – New Hope

Another meeting with my younger brother has just come to an end. I'm incredibly thrilled! I would never have expected that slightly different surroundings would change Albert's conduct so much! He showed me an entirely new face today! Outside of home and without his mother around, this kid is a real treasure!

We went to one of the biggest commercial centers of Warsaw. It may have not been the most ambitious place to visit, yet considering Albert's attitude to life, I figured

that, for starters, it would be a perfect spot to drop by. I was not mistaken. The kid's eyes sparkled brightly as we were walking among all those countless multicolored window displays... Each time we entered a shop, the boy politely greeted the store attendant and browsed the shelves in silence. His manners seemed to be absolutely impeccable! Moreover, my charge presented himself as quite a bright young man! The boy knows extraordinarily much, when it comes to the field of his own interests (weapons, football) and I have an impression that he would love to gain further knowledge in other areas as well! The only hindrance that stands in the way is the youngster's lack of discipline, as well as his extremely negative perception of educational institutions... The boy claims that his strong dislike towards the teachers is an automatic reaction to their disrespect and contempt for him. Nonetheless, I sensed much more humility in his statements this time around. Maybe his unexpected transfer²¹ to another class has given the kid a kind of lesson, somehow making him aware of the consequences of his careless deeds... I also endeavored to test Albert's knowledge of history, which was supposedly his least favorite and, by implication, most problematic subject. Astonishingly, my younger brother, despite some indisputable gaps in this area, was generally capable of saying quite a lot. Although he had not tended to heed his professors' utterances, some data appeared to have sub-consciously seeped through to his mind anyway! In this light, I have absolutely no doubt about the level of the child's intelligence...

At a certain moment, we came across a collector's store. As soon as Albert discerned a set of antique pistols in a showcase, his features reddened in excitement. The boy hankered after taking one of the revolvers into his hand, yet the lady in charge of the shop was regrettably unwilling to cooperate. Having been met with refusal, my intimidated younger brother directed his steps towards the exit. It was high time for me to enter into action. Having approached the counter I resorted to my undisputable charm (sic!) and was consequently, to the great enthusiasm of my charge, granted a permission to touch the pistols. Albert did not comment in any way on that episode, nonetheless I could clearly sense that I had gained a lot of respect in his eyes... Later on, when we

²¹ Between this and the previous visit, I called Mrs. Getty up to ask her about Albert's schedule for the new semester. Sobbing, she informed me that the boy had been forcibly transferred to another class as a penalty for the inappropriate behavior. It also transpired that the woman had long been engaged in the fight against the school authorities, accusing them of the unfair treatment of her child.

were eating pizza in one of the restaurants on the ground floor of the building, my younger brother was bombarding me with numerous questions concerning my culinary preferences. Upon hearing my responses, the boy made comparisons to his own tastes. Whenever it turned out that we both liked exactly the same thing, a wide smile appeared on the kid's face. I have a nagging feeling that he may have bent his answers a bit so that they would resemble mine...

Once we returned home, Albert's mother welcomed me with an expression of overwhelming apprehension on her pale countenance. Having showed me into her unventilated kitchen, the woman closed the door behind and, with a spark of terror in her gaze, began giving me a fervent account of some school-based stories, whose main protagonist was, of course, her son... I was told about the appalling injustice reigning in the boy's educational institution, about an unfounded accusation of theft, which my younger brother was confronted with, and last but not least, about crushing ostracism directed acutely at the lady's offspring. The woman's features acquired a tinge of reddishness, as she spoke loudly of her intentions to inform the press on that atrocious matter. Additionally, holding a glossy magazine in her shaking hands, Mrs. Getty started enumerating to me the virtues of a purportedly exceptional private school, which she wanted Albert to join soon. As a reaction to my proposition to seek some kind of professional, education-related advice in the foundation, the lady's eyes opened wide in uninhibited trepidation. Piercing me with a panic-ridden glance, she began shouting out in alarm: "No! Better not! What if somebody from this organization has connections to my son's school? Then the information will surely leak out and everybody will know about our plans!" Albert's mother behaved as though she was a believer in conspiracy theory. Sometimes she lowered her voice to a barely audible whisper, looking fearfully around as if to reassure herself that nobody unwanted was listening to her confessions; at other moments I felt like one of the culprits of the woman's dire straits, since she barraged me with heated screams full of resentment... A short utterance about the school psychologist convinced me entirely of the lady's galloping paranoia. "She asked Albert at what time I went out and came home from work!" - Pure indignation was noticeable in the woman's trembling, raspy tone - "How dare he harass my child, intending to pull my personal information out of him?! What are they trying to do, persecute me?"

Just as I was about to leave the Gettys' dwelling, my younger brother became so relaxed, that he started telling me furtively about his alcohol-flowing plans for the evening. "Are you out of your mind??" - I replied angrily. "You are only 11 years old! As soon as you grow up, you will have an opportunity to drink as much as you want, but for crying out loud, not now!" Albert did not seem to be in any way touched or aggrieved by my comment. He just smiled playfully, saying in a jesting manner – "Phew! Don't exaggerate! I think that I am quite a decent kid anyway! You know why? Because A: I don't fuck, although I could, since there was a girl in that ski-camp who wanted to do it with me; B: I don't take heavy drugs, because I know that it's shit, and C: From time to time I only drink some wine. So all it all, there's still hope for me, right?" His shocking declaration took my voice away. Well, I guess that he indeed had a point there...

3.4.6. Part Five – A Sudden Blow

I have just returned from a meeting with Albert. It was a nightmare! I feel totally desperate! The last time I visited him, I was certain that everything would somehow turn out well in the end, but now... I simply do not want to come back there anymore! Anybody who attempts to exercise any influence upon that youngster is doomed to failure! The child is completely disobedient, dishonest and to make matters worse, he sometimes behaves as if he was psychically unbalanced! Today he was allegedly sick, which, by the way, was the reason that made him not go to school. Wanting my charge not to fall behind, I asked him to call up his friend to find out about the homework for the following classes. The boy nodded and took the receiver in his hand. Yet after a five-minute conversation on the phone, during which I could clearly hear the other kid point out a number of exercises, Albert looked straight in my face saying that the teachers had not assigned the pupils with anything to do for tomorrow. I made my younger brother aware that I knew the truth and warned him that the next time I come, he should have everything meticulously noted down. "Or what?" – Said the adolescent ironically "Will you leave me if I don't do that?" Subsequently, he spun around, switched his music equipment on and turned its volume all the way up. His small, untidy room suddenly resounded with a series of deafening feminine orgasmic cries. A smutty sneer appeared

on the boy's face as he observed my remonstrative reactions to the recorded material. My head was on the verge of exploding! Fortunately, just as the familiar clink of keys opening the front door was heard, Albert swiftly unplugged the CD-Player. Before long it turned out however that the daily quota of loud screams in that house had yet been filled... As soon as the mother realized that her kid, despite his dubious "disease" was planning to attend a football match, she started yelling - "No fucking way that you are going to go there! Over my dead body!" The unbearable boy did not remain silent. "Kiss my ass!"- He shouted out at the top of his voice. "Oh yeah? You kiss my ass as well!"- vociferously retorted the mother. The whole scene resembled a pathetic, ridiculous farce. They were fighting like cat and dog with each other, not paying any attention to the fact that I was standing right in the middle of their battlefield. At a certain moment the woman seemed to have suddenly remembered about my presence and turning her plump, fuming face in my direction, sent me a quick, debasing glance. "He does not behave in such a way, when we are alone, you know..." - She stated with a mixture of attack and justification in her tone. "... But when a third party is around, then he starts to show off!" Now, an evident expression of resentment registered in the lady's bulky features. Her aggressive, accusing gaze conveyed an obvious grudge towards me. "And Albert isn't stupid! He knows perfectly well how far he can go in the companionship of that person!"- She finished up hissing with rage. That was definitely too much! "So suddenly I am the one who holds the most responsibility for everything?" - I thought unnerved. I considered starting to scream as well, but since the two statutory hours of my work had already passed, I just collected my things and said goodbye. As I was reaching the main exit from the staircase, I heard the door to Getty's apartment burst open. Albert's mother's desperate screams reverberated momentarily throughout the corridors, just to be muffled by a thunderous slam a second later. Before I knew, my younger brother's small silhouette appeared right in front of me. "I can't stand her anymore! I'm sorry for provoking the rumpus, but she infuriates me so much..."- said the boy in a low tone of voice. I told him not to treat his mother in such a disrespectful manner and to remember that she would always desire all the best for him. The kid did not seem to want to continue the subject. We walked a few meters together in silence and then parted ways...

I have had enough; that is true, but... Despite all the contradictory vibrations that I am constantly exposed to whenever I visit my charge's home, I instinctively sense that Albert does not treat me indifferently... Although he might behave like an undersized ruffian at times, I cannot suppress a sensation that I am slowly becoming one of the closest people to him... It is possible to recognize this promising tendency in the all those seemingly inconsequential details of the child's conduct. In the way he looks at me while saying "see you soon" or in the expression on his excited face when he listens to my personal anecdotes... Besides, the boy actually starts to treat me like one of his closest comrades, each time granting me more and more access to his intimate thoughts and sentiments... No! Leaving him now would be the most treacherous act of selfishness on my part... I cannot do that!

3.4.7. Part Six – Dark Roots of Mayhem

When the first symptoms of Albert's reprehensible behavior started emerging on the surface, I instantly presumed that his mother's supposedly inappropriate method of upbringing, as well as the negative characteristics of the surrounding environment, may have largely contributed to my younger brother's devastating mode of conduct. Nonetheless, having witnessed the latest incident, I no longer have to speculate whether any of my two conjectures correspond to the reality or not. I am now more than certain of the demoralizing effects of both...

Yesterday, when I appeared in front of my charge's block of flats at the accorded time, it turned out that there was nobody at home. The unanticipated absence of the tenants made me somewhat perplexed, yet I settled on waiting for them patiently for at least a few minutes. A quarter an hour later, just as I was about to turn around and walk away, Mrs. Getty's shining vehicle braked robustly right by my side. Almost immediately, my younger brother jumped out of the car apologizing me feverishly for the family's unpunctuality. His mother, on the contrary, just collected her belongings from the seats and without a word of explanation began unlocking the front door of the staircase...

Such a situation did not occur for the first time, by the way. Whenever something went wrong, the bulky, red haired lady always tended to avoid showing me any kind of repentance on her part. As though I were a semi-invisible, emotionless robot, whose only purpose was to hear exclusively about proliferating troubles and dilemmas of the family.... Now that I think of it, she never offered me anything to eat or drink either, although her son was regularly bestowed with delicious edibles... I would even say that the kid seemed to be much more hospitable than his mother... Anyway... returning to the main point...

All three of us entered the building one by one. Mrs. Getty was the first one to go in and I was the last. As soon as the entrance automatically closed behind me, a faint clatter of a wooden cane echoed within the stony corridors of the stairway. Having turned my head in the direction of those soft, regular sounds I spotted an old, frail lady, slowly walking down the last set of steps that lead to the ground floor. A brown, scraggy dog was nervously bustling around her feet. We stopped on the side, to let the woman pass by. What astounded me the most about the couple's demeanor was the mode in which they both instantaneously lapsed into deathly silence. The basic rules of savoir-vivre would at least suggest exchanging a courteous greeting with their aged neighbor, yet apparently the Getty family knew nothing of those rudimentary tenets of good education... All of a sudden, I heard a steady murmur that had started coming out of my younger brother's mouth. The closer the elderly lady got, the clearer Albert's words became. "Oh look! The "stinking two" are approaching us! What a foul, disgusting odor!"- He hummed repeatedly in a cynical tone. Profoundly staggered, I gave his mother a meaningful look. The woman did not even react to my gaze. She seemed to be immersed in some distant thoughts, staring blankly at her son. As the little pet started sniffing around my charge's shoes, he unexpectedly cried out - "Don't touch me, you flea infested mongrel, or I'll kick you straight in the muzzle!" In reaction to that outrageous remark, the shriveled neighbor opened wide her eyes. At first, I was absolutely certain that this time the spoilt son's comment would definitely be met with his mother's stringent disapproval, yet upon seeing Mrs. Getty's facial expression, a wave of shock mingled with indignation almost swept me off my feet. She actually appeared to be smiling! The old woman, not letting her nerves get the better of her, cast her uneasy gaze

back onto the floor and continued her sluggish march. As I reached out my hand to the nearby door to hold it open for her, Albert made his ultimate verbal attack. “And, to cap it all, you’re helping her out? For what reason? – The boy shouted at me. That was the limit! With Mrs. Getty’s tacit acceptance of her son’s contemptible conduct, I felt it incumbent on me to finally scold that insolent kid. I started opening up my mouth to utter the overdue reprimand, yet the wrinkled granny turned out to be much faster... “Shut up, you fucking little dick!” – She screeched raucously and went out... If I had not been left speechless, I would probably have begun laughing with overwhelming despair...

Regardless of my charge’s disgraceful demeanor today, this whole occurrence made me realize one extremely important thing. Namely, that Albert lives in a world that is entirely different from mine. His world is actually situated at the other extreme of the axis, not only in terms of physical surroundings, but also when it comes to the basic, underlying rules of communication and existence. I must be aware of the fact that no matter how hard I try to change my younger brother’s posture or his view on certain matters, eventually, at the end of the day, he will always have to return home. To the place where he was born, brought up and which has immeasurably more influence on him that I can ever dream of having... Taking that into consideration, do my meetings with that boy, by definition, make any sense at all? I suppose I have to believe that they do...

3.4.8. Part Seven – A Heartwarming Revelation

Another day spent with my younger brother has come to an end... And once again my vision of the relationship with the boy, my attitude towards Albert, as well as the outline of a strategy I had planned to apply, all suffered an extreme, unanticipated turnaround...

The last time I was confronted with my charge’s disobedience, a strong determination to change his behavior settled in my mind. Having discussed the matter with the program’s coordinator, we agreed on formulating stringent regulations of my cooperation with the boy. Should he deny complying with any of them, I would have the right to leave his apartment immediately. In such a way, Albert’s appalling conduct

would hopefully be partially, if not entirely eradicated. Today, when we were walking around the thirtieth floor of the Palace of Culture, I spilled the beans a little. My charge's reaction was instant. The kid's features whitened with overwhelming panic and a glimmer of dread appeared in his eye. "They are going to take you away from me, won't they?" - said the boy in a scared, quivering tone. "Don't let them take you away! I really like you and I don't want you to disappear!" - He was looking at me with a begging expression on his small, innocent face. Never would I have expected a similar reaction! A profound thrill of euphoria filled me up completely. For the first time I felt like the appropriate person in the adequate spot! My enthusiasm reached its pinnacle, when on going out of the palace my charge started inquiring me excitedly, whether I would retain my ticket from our visit in the outlook point. "I will certainly keep mine!" - shouted out Albert with uninhibited exhilaration. It was like honey being poured upon my heart! I thought that with his ticket, the child obviously desired to preserve all those positive moments that we had lived through together... I eventually settled on putting the strict-rules-decision off interminably.

3.4.9. Part Eight – Hidden Passion

Oh God... The profile of my sensations in the course of encounters with Albert slowly starts to resemble an ever-changing sinusoid. Today it reached its lowest point again... Yet, perhaps not entirely...

At the outset, my younger brother greeted me with a reproach... "You traitor!" - He screamed out vociferously – "You said the coordinator that I kept hurling abuse at my mother!" It was, of course, a bluff ... Albert generally loves subjecting me to all sorts of peculiar "trials" in order to check out and monitor my reactions. Sometimes he attempts to scare me, crying out unexpectedly or putting a seemingly nauseating object into my hand... On other occasions, he just talks nonsense, pretending to be absolutely serious. Fortunately, I feel that I have not fallen into any of his traps so far... Anyway, returning to the deeds of the day... Due to the fact that the kid has recently flunked a test in mathematics, the whole two hours of our meeting were devoted to that topic. It was an incessant struggle on my part, since the youngster was, as usual, disinclined to

collaborate... Additionally, in an attempt to endow Albert with a harmless outlet for his hyperactivity, Mrs. Getty had rearranged the boy's workplace, replacing his chair with a gigantic, bouncing ball... Well, it is not hard to imagine that the practical results of this "brilliant" movement had a totally destructive influence on any attempt of conversation on my part... Instead of listening to me, the kid constantly jumped around the room, enjoying a ride on his new, fascinating toy. He also relentlessly endeavored to change the focus of our activities, touching a wide number of unrelated, secondary issues...

I found out for instance that my younger brother was well acquainted with a few notorious types living in his closest vicinity. If the child's stories are true, he keeps a close contact with a drug addict and a weapon dealer... I shuddered as he showed me a present from the latter. It turned out to be a real handgun adapted for firing blank cartridges! Albert kept it concealed from view, so that his mother wouldn't find out... Moreover, the kid revealed to me an authentic passion of his. Drawing! I suppose that his creations might in fact provide a psychologist with plenty of room for professional research... What largely predominates in the boy's collection, are bleak, chalk-drawn portraits. They depict a series of extremely depressed, unhealthy-looking human faces. Another theme that often tends to be illustrated by him is an abstract landscape full of unsettling collisions of colors... Those meaningful, subconscious displays of my younger brother's contradicting feelings are unbelievably poignant! Although I cannot describe them as pretty in the classical sense... I have an impression that the act of painting constitutes one of the boy's persistent attempts to express his most hidden emotions and fears...

At the end of our unproductive math class, when I was just about to hit the road, Albert approached me slowly, and with an intimidated smile illuminating his slightly fleshy roguish countenance, reached out his hand in my direction. He was holding a bundle of pictures, carefully selected from among his works... I must admit that this moving, unexpected gesture gave my despondent spirits an instant, positive boost...

3.4.10. Part Nine – The Notorious Shadow of the Mother

The most recent visit by the Getty family differed slightly in its scope and character from the previous ones. This time it was not Albert, but his mother that has found herself in the central point of my attention. That woman is unbearable! Having spent almost an hour in her company, I'm slowly starting to understand the reasons for some of my younger brother's seemingly abnormal outbursts of temper...

Again, I arrived on time and once more, no one answered the doorbell... A few minutes later I suddenly heard a series of nervous horn hoots, coming from the direction of a nearby street conjunction. I turned around and whom did I see? Albert's mother of course! With her tubby fingers impatiently clattering over the rough surface of the steering wheel, the woman was giving me an irritated glance. I seethed with rage. Mrs. Getty's supercilious facial expression reminded me of a mode in which a lord may have looked upon his disobedient, low-class servant. "What is going on? I bet that something is afoot again"- I thought unsettled, while approaching her car. "Get in! Albert is still at school! We will pick him up!"- the woman swiftly explained, sticking her bulky, red head out of a lateral window. It did not take us more than a few short moments to reach our destination. On alighting from the vehicle, my charge's mother addressed me again. "Since you are accompanying me, we can also drop by my son's math teacher!" - I sensed a hue of condescension in her voice – "Now, she will at least have proof that Albert does not circumvent her extra-curricular courses without motive..." I knitted my brows in bewilderment. Having noticed the evident bafflement on my face, the chunky lady sighed noisily, twisting her lips with disdain - "So you don't know that the hours of your visits overlap completely with my kid's additional math classes at school?" Well, I did not. And the woman was obviously deeply bothered by my constant interruption and disturbance of her son's educational career... I was slowly coming to the boil, nevertheless, since it was neither the time, nor the place to get all worked up over the issue, I just clenched my teeth.

First, we set our course for the underground cloakroom. The airless cellar, which resembled a labyrinth of tight, metal chambers, was swarming with screeching children. As soon as we entered that area, Mrs. Getty's neurotic search for Albert began. With a

twinkle of contained panic in her eye, my charge's mother scurried around in the throng of little pupils, obsessively asking about her son. Initially, her inquiries did not seem to provoke any reaction, yet after a few moments a faint voice of a small boy resounded right next to the huge woman. "Yes! I know Albert! Today he almost broke my friend's arm for no reason!"- mumbled the kid in a trembling tone. Mrs. Getty's face instantaneously turned red. Her wide open eyes appeared to be blazing with uninhibited indignation. "Don't you dare telling me such things!" – She yelled. "The fault never lies on one side, never!" – The woman was choking and wheezing with wrath – "If Albert really behaved in that way, then he must have had a good reason for it! Do you understand??" The infuriated mother seemed to be swelling up in passion. It looked as if somebody was inflating an enormous, red balloon. The tiny boy's lower jaw descended gradually in a mixture of dismay and lack of comprehension... I could not believe what I was seeing! Mrs. Getty kept defending her son's rights like a lioness. In the end, she stated that since Albert's coat was missing, he must have already gone home. Without wasting any more time in the crowd of screaming children, we directed our steps up the stairs and to the teacher's room.

While the woman was speaking with her son's tutor, I decided to call the boy up. "Where the hell were you?!"- Welcomed me Albert's enraged voice. "I've been waiting in front of the house for 20 minutes now! I cannot go in, because I forgot the keys and I've got to pee right away!!!" I calmed him down saying that we would soon come back and subsequently approached the kid's mother just as she had finished her conversation. "He is already waiting for us..."- I stated. "What? Who?"- asked the woman absentmindedly. When I explained that I was referring to her son, she only shrugged her shoulders with indifference - "So what? Now, let him wait for us! We still have to speak with his math teacher!" As soon as we stumbled upon the woman, Mrs. Getty changed out of all recognition! She suddenly became an inopportune, perplexed mother, profoundly caring about the future of her unfortunate son. All the acts of disregard and hooliganism on Albert's part were justified by her in a wavering, tearful tone as symptoms of the boy's dire illnesses... The woman was so convincing in her statements that I began to suspect that she herself really believed in those far-fetched theories... In any case, the teacher did not seem to take her weepy utterances too seriously. With a

cynical sneer upon her wrinkled, stern face, the lady curtly stated that Albert had been playing his mother like a kazoo. Subsequently, having been bestowed with a detailed list of the exercises for the following lesson, we left the school.

As my aggravated charge caught a glimpse of us approaching, he started kicking the nearby bushes in fury. “What the hell is this supposed to mean!? How long do you want me to wait for you?!” – He shouted out angrily at his mother. “I’ve had enough of this! You are late all the time! And I think I know why... “– the boy’s eyes narrowed in resentment – “... Because you simply don’t care about anything!” An involuntary blush of rage embellished Mrs. Getty’s features. “No! It’s not true!” – She screamed out hoarsely – “I just have so many pressing things to take care of that I do not manage to do it all in due time!” The woman’s gaze appeared to be skewering her son straight through – “And besides I am ill and I must constantly visit my doctors!” “Oh yeah! Excuse number one! Your damned doctors!”- Commented Albert ironically.

As the family was exchanging their verbal blows for the next half an hour, I began ruminating on the grotesqueness of the whole situation... From my personal perspective, both positive and negative manifestations of uninhibited feelings on Mrs. Getty’s part occurred in completely inappropriate circumstances! That woman seems to me to be clearly psychically imbalanced! I have no doubt about the fact that she loves her son, yet all those emotionally inconsistent signals that she tends to send out in Albert’s direction will, I feel, eventually make a living wreck out of him! My younger brother, despite all the pretences that he so persistently intends to keep up, is still a vulnerable, insecure child after all... He desperately needs signs of affection that would not only be steady but also constant. If his own mother is not able to fulfill this basic need, then I must acknowledge, contrary to what I claimed at the beginning, that the boy indeed is in deep trouble! But alas, I seriously doubt that my position of a volunteer is appropriate to even try to tackle such serious problems...

3.4.11. Part Ten - Alarming Symptoms

Something is definitely going in the wrong direction! Never before have I been so negatively emotionally charged in the aftermath of an encounter with my younger

brother! I am even beginning to lose hope for any sound relationship between us... But let me start from the beginning...

It somehow did not disconcert me that the couple once again appeared 15 minutes later than we had settled... Nevertheless, the offhand introductory statement sent by Albert as a greeting in my direction made me livid with anger... “Oh! You’re waiting for me?”- His forehead furrowed artificially, as if the boy was pretending to be surprised. In a detached tone adorned by a tinge of harshness he continued - “Had I not forgotten the book for my extra curricular math classes, we wouldn’t even have come here, you know...” I instantly felt my features simmer with indignation. “What? And what about our appointment?” – I asked putting a strong emphasis on the last word of my inquiry. “Phew! I never know whether you will come or not!” – replied the kid carelessly. I felt deeply offended! I have failed to arrive for the meeting with him only once, and back then I did all my best to inform the couple in advance of my inevitable absence. I immediately made my younger brother aware of the fact, yet he just turned around and murmured something with indifference. “My God! – I thought to myself in alarm. “The pattern of Albert’s emotional responses towards me is almost exactly as contradictory as the approach of the boy’s mother to him...” It was true. In the course of the following hours my feelings were hurt several times by my charge’s ambiguous behavior...

The sunny and warmish weather made us go out to a park this time... Since the kid had failed his math test again, I intended to lend him a helping hand in revising at least a part of the necessary material. Albert turned out to have other plans of course... I suppose that my younger brother has finally managed to beat a personal record in his degree of reluctance to cooperate! Not only did the boy completely deny solving any of the arithmetic tasks laid out in front of him, but he simply started to hurl abuse at me! The insults applied by the youngster were actually fairly mild and innocent in terms of their character, yet at a certain moment, he began saying something that nearly made me faint... “Do you know what my mother thinks of you?” – The kid’s lips formed a sardonic sneer – “She claims that your “assistance” is pitiable and useless, because I am not making any progress at school! She also says that we may soon send you back to where you came from!” This remark stabbed me... I suppose that the profound shock

must have clearly registered on my face, since a series of my younger brother's subsequent comments unexpectedly took a completely different course. The boy appeared to have suddenly realized that he should not have resorted to that tactless statement at all, and as a counterweight, started bombarding me with a hail of sophisticated compliments. In the end, I was not certain whether Albert's profuse declarations of his strong affinity to me were in fact sincerely uttered from the bottom of his heart or just dictated by the pressing necessity of the circumstances...

In one way or another, my charge's positive conduct did not last long. He soon began kicking the bench on which I was sitting, so that I would finally put the book of exercises aside. Having been at the end of my tether for the last half an hour, I eventually burst out. A few stronger words had to be minced with that impudent boy! "What the hell are you thinking!?" – I yelled at the top of my voice – "Don't you understand that you will never change your situation unless you start studying?" My abrupt display of aggressive emotions did not seem to have made any impression on my younger brother. Casting an apparently calm glance upon me, he stated – "I can't help it! I'm suffering from the disease of hyperactivity..." At that moment, my annoyance reached its absolute peak. "Just perfect! The boy's mother has done a great job!" – I thought bitterly – "Now he will always have an explanation for everything!" Endeavoring to ignore Albert's provocative comment, I decided to go on with my tutoring speech. This time, I attempted to be as solemn as possible. "Listen! I'm warning you now, so that you don't hold any grudge against me later..." – lowering my voice slightly, I looked the kid straight in the eyes – "If you keep on behaving like this, I cannot see what sense there is in visiting you anymore. One day, I will just stop coming..." An expression of disbelief mingled with derision reflected on my younger brother's countenance. "You won't have the guts!" – He said snappily.

I'm completely bewildered by the boy's demeanor today. Would all those offensive statements on his part constitute another phase of his notorious "test of endurance"? Or maybe he truly means what he says? In any case, I am now absolutely certain of the fact that I am not at the top of the most favourite people on Mrs. Getty's list, which by no means makes me feel any better... I presume that if the current state of

affairs does not show any signs of improvement the next time I visit the family, then my only option will be to seriously consider the issue of breaking out of the contract...

3.4.12. Part Eleven – A Message Born of Frustration

Judging from the way I have been treated today, I'm afraid that the Getty family has already made their choice... I had been waiting for them for more than half an hour - in vain... Eventually I inquired one of the family's shriveled, toothless neighbors to grant me access to the building so that I could leave them a note. I wrote what follows: "Having come here on Tuesday at the agreed hour, I found the door closed. I do not comprehend the reasons of your absence. I am feeling deeply disregarded and therefore expect explanations. Yours faithfully, Jerzy Grzechnik".

I'm extremely infuriated now! Not only by the fact that I have been stood up, but because of the general, despicable and patronizing manner in which I've recently been treated by the family... Until yesterday I was doing my best to think as positively as I could about my charge and his problems. Now, I am not even willing to prevent the wave of bitterness from prevailing! I feel as though I've been used up and thrown away without a word of explanation! If this whole incident is met with absolutely no reaction on Albert's or his mother's part, then I will just officially deem them to be uninterested in my services and ask the coordinator to find me another charge. The new relationship will hopefully turn out to be more rewarding...

3.4.13. Part Twelve – My Guts upon the Table

A few, long days had passed and my view on the matter is completely different now... Surprisingly, the tide of bitterness towards Albert appears now to have already ebbed away! Perhaps the awareness that I might no more see or hear the boy has to a certain extent contributed to this unanticipated emotional transformation of mine... Or maybe simply the momentous outburst of uncontrollable rage had, like a wild tempest, ultimately cleaned all the tension out of my sub-consciousness, eventually revealing the

pure, spotless core of the whole relationship... I do not know for certain what the exact reason is, yet the fact remains that my mind-set has undergone a change...

In the course of the last week I had numerous opportunities to reflect on the past three months... That exceptional period was undoubtedly filled up with constant, draining battles, if not against the malicious deeds of my younger brother, then against my own nagging doubts and fears... Yet I suddenly realized that regardless of all the burdens that may have emerged along that fairly long way, whenever the subject of Albert was unexpectedly brought up in any conversation, an instant smile automatically enlightened my face... I find it incredible that all the tiny, positive gestures on the kid's part, proved to have dug so profoundly into my memory, that in the end, the myriad of those much less gratifying deeds, simply ceased to be important. The youngster had brought something unforgettable into my life. His constant puns and bright remarks, along with the unexpected, sometimes controversial turns of events induced by the boy, tinged my arduous, grayish day with incredible colors! Moreover, despite the occasionally conflicting signals sent out in my direction, I strongly sensed that in the depth of his soul, Albert indeed regarded me as a mentor!

I should not forget, however, that the family's ostentatious demeanor throughout my recent visits in their abode bespoke of their unambiguous aversion towards me... On the other hand, I cannot suppress the feeling that the boy's posture could not have really altered so profoundly within such a short period of time... In any case, I will not compel anybody to anything. If the Getty family does not clearly inform me of their aims till the end of this week, I will treat that silence as an explicit declaration of their will to dump me...

3.4.14. Epilogue

They did not call... Almost immediately, Melissa found me another child to take care of, nevertheless the picture of Albert's plump, smiling face kept haunting me interminably... My second younger brother turned out to be probably one of the most charming creatures on earth... Yet eventually, the boy's nauseating sweetness along with his constant, irritating indecisiveness, plus his continuous tendency to beg me for money,

all have come to infuriate me so severely that I began to literally despise the kid! Not even by far would he ever be able to match Albert!

Prior to my first get-together with the new, soon-to-be-infamous charge, Melissa contacted Mrs. Getty to notify her that our contract had ultimately been broken. The woman reacted with a momentous silence. Subsequently, as if nothing had happened, she asked the coordinator to find another volunteer for her son...

Something completely unexpected has occurred! Not even in my wildest dreams would I have suspected that my attachment to Albert could ever prove to be so incredibly strong! Although at start my motivation was limited solely to the mere desire of conducting the anthropological investigation, somewhere in the course of my contacts with the kid, a mysterious emotional drive came into play... That inexplicable force pushed me forward through all the encumbrances, until I finally hit upon the biggest of them all... At that moment I surrendered. Why? Since I assumed that the boy did not need me anymore. But was that true? Perhaps not... He was living in a different world, after all... Maybe some of the family's modes of behavior were in fact not what they appeared to be on the surface... I will probably never find out... Actually, till this day I keep asking myself the same question over and over: Wasn't by any chance that seemingly well-thought-out decision of leaving Albert, one of the gravest errors of my life?

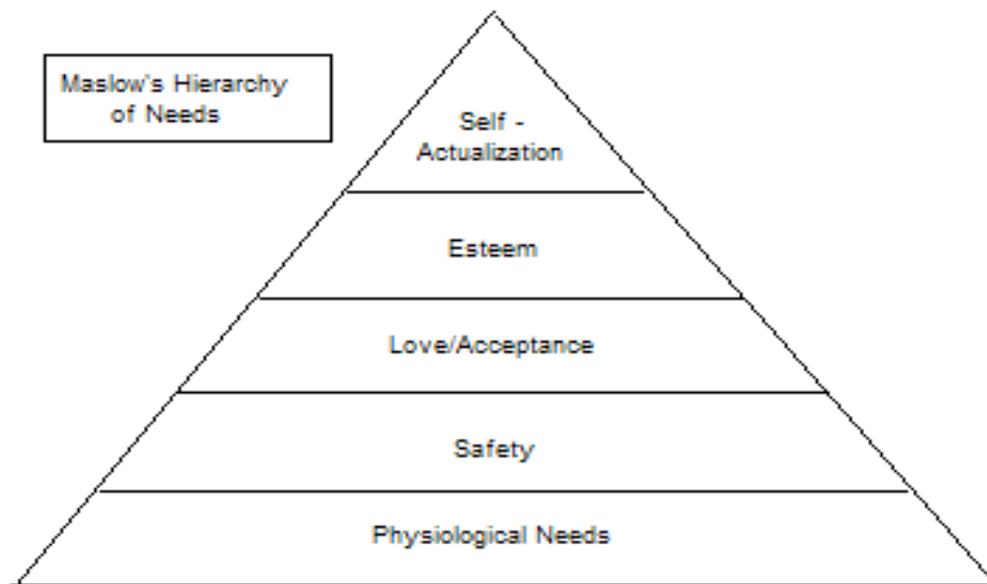
4. Discussion and Reflections

4.1. Basic Rules of the Needs Pyramid

Before going on to the highly exhaustive interpretation of the fieldwork, let me once more highlight the fundamental details pertaining to the concept of Maslow's Needs Pyramid, which will be critical for the subsequent analysis. As the author himself states:

There are at least five sets of goals, which we may call basic needs. These are briefly *physiological*, *safety*, *love* [often also referred to as *acceptance*], *'esteem*, and *self-actualization*. (...)These basic goals are related to each other, being arranged in a *hierarchy of prepotency*. This means that the most prepotent goal will monopolize consciousness and will tend of itself to organize the recruitment of the various capacities of the organism. The less prepotent needs are minimized, even forgotten or denied. But when a need is fairly well satisfied, the next prepotent ('higher') need emerges, in turn to dominate the conscious life and to serve as the center of organization of behavior, since gratified needs are not active motivators. (Maslow, 1943, p.18)²²

As I have already mentioned in the theoretical part of this dissertation, the whole mechanism often tends to be depicted in a form of the following Pyramid:



²²All the quotations that appear in this section of the thesis (apart from the references to the empirical part) are taken from Maslow's (1943) *Theory of Human Motivation*. Thus, from now on they will be accompanied by the reference to the number of the page only.

4.2. Additional yet Crucial Assumptions

The foregoing basic rules of Maslow's motivational model may appear to be fairly uncomplicated, yet one must bear in mind the fact that they are merely the simplified outlines of much more sophisticated phenomena. The groundwork of human demeanor is not as obvious and predictable as to be fitted into neat classifications. A theory will always inevitably be an oversimplification in comparison with social reality. Nevertheless it is possible to widen the set of speculative suppositions in order to make the model more precisely correspond to the elusive, often indefinable rules of the surrounding world. For that particular reason, Maslow supplemented his motivational theory with numerous rectifications, thereby making it a plausible effigy of authentic, real-life tendencies. What follows are chosen assumptions accompanying the model of the Needs Pyramid, which I deemed especially adequate in the light of the investigations conducted and thus useful for the purposes of this thesis.

4.2.1. Unconscious Character of Needs

It is vital to emphasize that the needs upon which Maslow's theory bases itself are "neither necessarily conscious nor unconscious (...) On the whole, however, in the average person, they are more often unconscious rather than conscious" (p.15). This statement suggests that an individual may frequently not even be aware of the drive by which he/she is propelled to action. In this respect, the researcher's abilities of careful observation, comprehensive inference as well as adequate interpretation may prove to be especially helpful. Additionally, since "there are usually available various (...) paths to the same goal, (...) the conscious, specific, local-cultural desires are not as fundamental in motivation theory as the more basic, unconscious goals" (p.2). Therefore consideration of the unconscious aspects of human behavior is not optional, but absolutely crucial to any motivation-related analysis.

4.2.2. The Degree of Relative Satisfaction of Needs and Multi-Motivation

Although the reader may so far have had an impression that the five sets of needs building the Pyramid are in a step-wise, all-or-none relationships to each other, it is in fact not the case. A certain need does not have to be satisfied 100 per cent, before the next need emerges. As Maslow emphasizes,

most members of our society, who are normal, are partially satisfied in all their basic needs and partially unsatisfied in all their basic needs at the same time. A more realistic description of the hierarchy would be in terms of decreasing percentages of satisfaction as we go up the hierarchy of prepotency (...) As for the concept of emergence of a new need after satisfaction of the prepotent need, this emergence is not a sudden, saltatory phenomenon but rather a gradual emergence by slow degrees from nothingness (p.14).

The mere fact of having a few desires *activated* concurrently inevitably entails another vital phenomenon called *multi-motivation*, which indicates that,

within the sphere of motivational determinants any behavior tends to be determined by several or all of the basic needs simultaneously rather than by only one of them. (p.15)

4.2.3. The Degree of Fixity of the Hierarchy of Needs

As soon as one looks upon the general rules of the Motivational Theory, one may assume that the hierarchy of needs portrayed within the concept automatically implies a rigid, fixed order of their emergence. Although in case of the majority of people subjected to Maslow's studies, the identified desires indeed surfaced in exact accordance with the scheme of the Needs Pyramid, on the other hand there were a number of exceptions as well. In certain cases, for instance, self-esteem proved to be more important than love. Moreover, sometimes, even despite the lack of satisfaction of the basic need, self-actualization entered into play.

The concrete examples of reversals in the desire of the needs satisfaction, taken directly from my field material will be described further in this thesis.

4.2.4. The Indirect Needs

There is a degree of incredible intricacy to the motives which push people forward in their actions. Not all the seemingly obvious reasons of fairly typical modes of behavior are what they appear on the surface.

A desire for an ice cream cone might actually be an indirect expression of a desire for love. If it is, then this desire for the ice cream cone becomes extremely important motivation (...) Everyday conscious desires are to be regarded as symptoms, as surface indicators of more basic needs. (p.17)

Such indirect needs are extremely difficult to identify for the researcher, yet it is not impossible to pin them down. The participant observation, which I conducted, led me to realize that in a few cases the foregoing, concealed desires may also have come into being during my research.

4.2.5. Multiple Determinations

According to Maslow, the basic needs are definitely not the only drives that determine human behavior.

Some [behavior] is not motivated at all (but all behavior is determined) (...) There are many determinants of behavior other than motives. For instance, (...), behavior may be determined completely by the field, or even by specific isolated external stimuli, as in association of ideas, or certain conditioned reflexes (p. 16)

Moreover:

(...) there is a basic difference between expressive behavior and coping behavior (functional striving, purposive goal seeking). An expressive behavior does not try to do anything; it is simply a reflection of the personality. *A stupid man behaves stupidly, not because he wants to, or tries to, or is motivated to, but simply because he is what he is.* The same is true when I speak in a bass voice rather than tenor or soprano. (p. 16)

This statement brings an incredible amount of relativity into the whole motivational theory, making the actual analysis of data based upon the model of the Needs Pyramid highly questionable. Nevertheless, what must be clearly stated here, I am not a psychologist, but a student of the theory of organization and this study is absolutely not an attempt to thoroughly investigate a psychosomatic background of an individual, but an effort to recognize and depict the variety of motivational profiles as important aspects of *organizational behavior*. What is more, the fact remains that despite the ethnographer's long stay in the field, it can never be stated with absolute certainty whether the conclusions, at which the researcher finally arrived, constituted even one appropriate step in the process of portraying the definitive reality. The anthropologist may only hope to have intuitively understood the experienced phenomena. Yet, the question of instinctive comprehension and *interpretation* is actually a totally different story from the question of striving for *defining the ultimate truth* (which is a task of philosophers).

4.3. The Analysis

What lies beyond this point of the dissertation is my attempt to analyze and understand the phenomena as well as processes which I had an opportunity to encounter in the research field. I must once more emphasize that the outcome of my reflections is by no means undisputable and may be argued. It is one of many potential interpretations, after all.

The analysis of the fieldwork has been divided into three general sections. The first one focuses on the profiles of seven volunteers, who were the main protagonists of the second chapter in the empirical part of this thesis. I am endeavoring to assign the roots of their motivation to the matching levels of the Needs Pyramid. The second fragment is an effort to examine Annabelle and Melissa in a similar manner. Those women, who played the leading roles in the first and the third chapter of the empirical part correspondingly, differ greatly in their status from the seven earlier mentioned individuals. None of them was actually a volunteer, yet both appeared to exemplify an interesting motivational silhouette. In the last section of the analysis, the outcomes of my participant observation (described in the fourth chapter of the empirical part) are being put under the magnifying

glass. The basic purpose is to identify the set of needs that were evoked in the course of my stay in the foundation. Eventually, as a result of an intertwined comparison among the three sections of the analysis I am attempting to briefly summarize the desires, ideals as well as mechanisms that tend to characterize a worker of a humanitarian organization. In this endeavor, I am resorting to my own metaphor of a labyrinth.

4.3.1. The Needs Pyramid as a Representation of the Volunteers' Motivation

The following section of the Analytical Part is made in a level-wise manner. That is to say that each need depicted on the Maslow's Pyramid is illustrated by a number of references to the corresponding desires and motives of each of the volunteers. As the study advances, I move up the subsequent levels of needs. Thus the description on the physiological level is the first stage, then I advance to safety, proceed through love and esteem and conclude with self-actualization.

4.3.1.1. Physiological Needs

The term *physiological needs* is, according to Maslow, inextricably linked with two other notions, namely *homeostasis* and *appetite*. The former he defines as “the body's automatic efforts to maintain a constant, normal state of the blood stream” (p. 4). The latter is referred to as “the specific appetite or partial hunger” for a food element or a chemical that the body lacks (p. 4). Although both of the mentioned elements often contribute largely to the emergence of a physiological need, it is not always the case.

We can not identify all physiological needs as homeostatic. That sexual desire, sleepiness, sheer activity and *maternal behavior* (...), are homeostatic, has not yet been demonstrated. Furthermore, this list would not include the various sensory pleasures (tastes, smells, tickling, *stroking*) which are probably physiological and which may become the goals of motivated behavior. (p. 4)

In accordance with the general rules of Maslow's Pyramid,

if all the needs are unsatisfied, and the organism is then dominated by the physiological needs, all other needs may become simply non-existent or be pushed

into the background. (...) All capacities are put into the service of hunger-satisfaction, and the organization of these capacities is almost entirely determined by the one purpose of satisfying hunger (...) peculiar characteristic of the human organism when it is dominated by a certain need is that the whole philosophy of the future tends also to change. For our chronically and extremely hungry man, Utopia can be defined very simply as a place where there is plenty of food. (p. 5)

Nevertheless, such a situation may come into being solely in the extreme circumstances, and as Maslow claims, “emergency conditions are, almost by definition, rare in the normally functioning peaceful society” (p. 5). On the other hand however, there is still the question of the already mentioned *indirect needs*. Thus, an individual may unconsciously reveal some evident symptoms of a thwarted physiological need, by resorting to the seemingly unrelated means of satisfying them. I regarded at least three of the encountered individuals as corresponding to such a motivational profile.

The first of them would be Theodore. On the basis of my thorough observations as well as his extensive utterances I found him to be a person who had chronically been striving for *touch and closeness*. “Where else could you find fulfillment, if not in a contact with a kid?” he once said. What struck me the most about his behavior was indeed the boy’s relentless, almost frantic urge to get in touch with as many children as possible. And I do not only mean it metaphorically, but literally. The way he spoke of any signs of a physical contact with the kids was extremely suggestive. While describing for instance “the way, they packed themselves onto his lap”, Theodore lowered his voice and smiled automatically. It seemed to me that my interlocutor may have somehow been deprived of similar relationships during his own childhood. Additionally, his cryptic confession as to the fact that he “knew the atmosphere of an orphanage” only made room for another medley of unexpected conjectures concerning the possible sources of his alleged frustrations.

The second individual who also seemed to have had a physiological desire invoked was Ann. In her case, I would describe the activated need as an unfulfilled *maternal drive*. “I came in and I saw a myriad of colors on the walls! Sweet pictures painted with a hand of a child...” – this is how she described her first visit in the foundation. The topic in any way connected with children always evoked a delicate grin on her face. She was already a

mature woman, yet the fate had somehow prevented her from settling down. What only bore out my inference concerning Ann's maternal needs was her following statement:

Due to the fact that I myself neither have my own children nor family, this work... [stutter]...this work gives me an opportunity to offer myself to others... It fulfills an emotional necessity of being there for those who need me... (*Ann*)

The last volunteer whose motivational drive I would also track back to this particular level of Maslow's Needs Pyramid was Stephen. That interviewee's view of the relationships with his younger brothers looked to me largely as indications of the boy's disguised *paternal drive*. The comprehensiveness of the scope of his self-imposed duties was intimidating. Stephen felt responsible for each and every area of his charges' lives – from their school-related matters, via the psychological aspects of their demeanor up to the organization of their leisure activities. He consulted their teachers and deemed their good education as his point of honor. An appealing part of one of Stephen's utterances especially made me regard him as an unfulfilled father:

the most important thing from my perspective [is]... That I can transmit my views and values to them... What is more, it is another source of vital experience for me that, in the future, will allow me to bring up my own children in an appropriate manner. (*Stephen*)

4.3.1.2. Safety Needs

As soon as the psychological desires are "relatively well gratified there then emerges a new set of needs, which we may categorize roughly as the safety needs" (p. 6). Just like in case of the previous array of wants, "the organism may equally well be wholly dominated by them" (p. 6). Due to the fact that the adults in our society "have been taught to inhibit any threat reaction at all costs" (p. 7), the simplest way to identify the pure desire for security is to observe an unrestrained behavior of a child. On that basis and as a result of a complex comparison with the demeanor of mature people Maslow managed to enumerate various indicators of the unsatisfied safety needs in a grown person:

aspects of the attempt to seek safety and stability in the world are seen in the very common preference for familiar rather than unfamiliar things, or for the known

rather than the unknown. The tendency to have some religion or world-philosophy that organizes the universe and the men in it into some sort of satisfactorily coherent, meaningful whole is also in part motivated by safety-seeking (p. 8)

In the extreme cases, the search for safety may be reflected in the conduct of neurotics touched by the illness of compulsive-obsession, who:

try frantically to order and stabilize the world so that no unmanageable or unexpected (...) dangers will ever appear (...) They are much like the brain injured cases, described by Goldstein, who manage to maintain their equilibrium by avoiding everything unfamiliar and strange and by ordering their restricted world in such a neat, disciplined, orderly fashion that everything in the world can be counted upon. (p. 9)

Since I am not attempting to present my interlocutors as *brain injured cases*, I will once more resort to the concept of *indirect needs*, which emphasizes the unconscious determination of individuals to fulfill their hidden, unsatisfied desires under the pretence of performing some seemingly irrelevant activities. This time, I managed to identify four volunteers who while being apparently largely unaware of their underlying needs, were in my opinion, continuously striving for safety.

The most eye-catching individual, whose conduct could, from my standpoint, clearly classify him into the category of the security-seekers, was once again Stephen. It is vital to stress here that, in accordance with the already elucidated concept of *relative satisfaction*, Maslow's motivational theory deems it absolutely legitimate for a human being to have the desires on various levels of the Needs Pyramid simultaneously activated. What exactly induced me to regarding Stephen as a person subconsciously lacking in safety? Actually, it was my interlocutor's general attitude, supported by his own numerous statements. As a matter of fact, if one treated the boy's declarations absolutely literally, one might even assign him to the array of *brain injured cases*, as all the symptoms appeared to indicate that Stephen was completely immersed in almost an obsessive search for a stabilized and orderly world. Take his following utterance for instance:

The crux of the matter is the appropriate time management! The time management always comes first! And I am referring to planning every single day, week or maybe even month hour by hour, activity by activity for all contingencies...

Everything has to be planned! Sport, entertainment and recreation as well!
(*Stephen*)

The boy's desire for controllability of the surrounding reality was also clearly reflected by his apparently overwhelmingly comprehensive ability to influence the world. Referring to his relationships with the younger brothers, Stephen stated:

I am able to accomplish really a lot... And should I see that something starts going in the inappropriate direction, I am always able to capture that in time and change the course of events. (*Stephen*)

A similar tendency of cultivating an unconscious desire in oneself to make one's life much more predictable was evidently displayed by Olivia. In her case, it took form of imposing a set of clear limitations onto the girl's array of voluntary duties. At the beginning of our conversation she confessed:

I regard those meetings as educational classes rather than occasions to strike up a personal friendship. (*Olivia*)

I had an impression that Olivia was doing her best not to let the matters slip out of her hands and go their own way. She was, in my opinion, deeply afraid of personal commitments, thus she decided to regard her activity as a merely professional aid. Any signs of willingness to tighten up the emotional bonds on her younger sister's part were greeted by Olivia with panic:

She simply wanted to stick to me, enter into my life and get to know my friends. She wanted to *cling to my arm*, so to speak... I could not let her do that! That would absolutely not solve the problems, she was facing! I did not care if she had a good contact with my acquaintances or me. This was not a priority! (*Olivia*)

Another individual, who despite his seemingly self-assured and confident demeanor was suffering from a chronic lack of security, would be Graham. His highly aggressive and hostile attitude towards society was what I considered to be the most evident indication of my interviewee's uneasiness resulting from his suppressed and unsatisfied safety need. In a shrill voice and with a spark of resentment in his eye, Graham generally described all mature people as "mutated children with transplanted hearts!" thereby justifying himself for his extensively developed contact with *real* children. Small kids, owing to their endearing innocence as well as relative lack of threat in their

proceedings may have been the means for my interlocutor to make up for the lack of relationships with other “fucked-up” adults, as he described them, who in their unpredictability seemed to be much less controllable and hence dangerous. What might also support my theory about Graham’s insecurity was his extremely strict attitude towards certain younger brother-related rules and in addition to that, my interviewee’s self-explanatory assumptions:

Should I one day, more clearly sense the heralds of the mother’s wild jealousy, our relationship will immediately come to an end... But it will not be me, who will then break out of the contract. It will be them. (*Graham*)

Mandy is the next volunteer whom I regard as highly frustrated owing to the ungratified security needs. As a daughter of an embassy worker, she was forced to travel to and fro, traversing numerous countries without a chance of harboring a hope to take roots in any particular place. What I found especially surprising about Mandy was the fact that she seemed to be the only person from the group of *insecure* volunteers, who did not even pretend to suppress or hide her thwarted desires. Who knows, perhaps it was caused in part by a different cultural background of the girl? In any case, Mandy attempted to strive for stable, fairly predictable relationships with other people, of which she had been severely deprived throughout her youth. Lack of contact with others appeared to constitute the main reason for the girl’s diffidence and insecurity. Her engagement in the Elder Brother Elder Sister Program was thus an endeavor to patch up that gap in her unsatisfied safety needs. Although eventually Mandy did not succeed to create strong links with her younger brother, there was a clear effort to reduce the failure-related dissonance perceptible in her attitude. My interviewee incessantly resorted to countless explanations and interpretations, in order to try to add sense and a degree of predictability to her charge’s behavior and thereby to present herself as an aware, fairly self-assured unpaid helper.

[about her charge’s unwillingness to visit the foundation] I can understand him a little... Maybe he just does not feel the urge to get to know those other people... Maybe it is better not to try to force him... [pause] I used to be exactly the same, when I was a little girl...[smile] (...)

[After a visit to the cinema] (...) he said of course that the movie was stupid... But I suppose that he had a really good time! I saw the kid laugh, after all, so it can't have been that bad... (*Mandy*)

4.3.1.3. The Needs of Love and Acceptance

In most cases, after the physiological and safety needs have been fairly satisfied, then the love, affection and belongingness (acceptance) needs will emerge.

Now the person will feel keenly, as never before, the absence of friends, or a sweetheart, or a wife, or children. He will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general, namely, for a place in his group, and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal. (p. 9)

The foregoing desires are especially powerful, since "in our society the thwarting of these needs is the most commonly found core in cases of maladjustment and more severe psychopathology" (p. 9). What is also to be stressed is the fact that "the love needs involve both giving and receiving love" (p. 10).

The results of the fieldwork have led me to recognize that six volunteers (from the chosen group of seven) were individuals actively looking for love and acceptance.

One of probably the most appealing examples of such conduct was once again Theodore. His unsatisfied basic desires which were the consequence of the apparent deprivation of physical contact were in fact inseparably connected with the boy's need for affection. My interlocutor's undisputed wish for strong, emotional relationships reflected not only in the way, in which he warmly commented on the positive symptoms of his younger brother's behavior while taking out his photograph from the wallet, but also in an unyielding, almost obsessive manner, in which he attempted to *buy* his charge's acceptance. Theodore's custom of regularly regaling the kid with presents gradually broadened to eventually include the child's whole family:

I brought them my old clothes, because that family... is really poor... Then I brought them something to eat... Fish from my father...15 kilo of fish actually... (*Theodore*)

Nevertheless, in spite of evidently being used and manipulated by his younger brother, my interviewee did not in the least attempt to step away from the chosen track. Instead, he just commented passionately:

I, (...) have absolutely no profits from that [relationship]... It may look as if I were boasting, but I do not expect anything in return. (*Theodore*)

Does it not illustrate an overwhelming impact of Theodore's subconscious desire for love?

Olivia, who despite her seemingly austere attitude at the onset of our interview, suddenly, surprisingly lit up with emotions while describing thoroughly the relationship with her charge, also gave me an impression of being in pursuit of affection. I was profoundly astonished and enchanted, when the girl's features unexpectedly relaxed and she began expressing her strong affinity for the younger sister. The following fragment of Olivia's utterance is a pretty good proof of my interlocutor's urge to offer as well as be given love.

Sometimes she is so sweet, with her mood changes or phobias... [smile] It all gives me so much... This whole situation... And those pieces of advice, with which she often tries to assist me... I really like Susan very much! And I know that she undoubtedly feels attached to me as well... (*Olivia*)

Another volunteer whom I would be poised to define as an affection-seeker was Mandy. What appeared to be especially salient in her case was the girl's seemingly inexorable desire to experience the feeling of belongingness to a group. This need must have been provoked by constant trips abroad in her youth and, by implication, lack of stable, strong bonds with any persons at her age:

I spent my childhood in the company of grown up people... But I always had a vivid imagination and played with virtual friends... (*Mandy*)

As one of the reasons of joining the foundation, she mentioned that she wanted to get to know somebody new. She seemed to be deeply exhilarated by such an opportunity:

...It was really funny... I went to that meeting of the volunteers, and everybody comes up to me and starts talking! (...) [lower tone of voice] I awfully missed such contact with people... (*Mandy*)

She welcomed the chance of taking care of a young boy with enthusiasm, since as the girl divulged to me, she always wanted to have a brother. In spite of the fact that their

relationship was far from ideal, Mandy intended to cherish all the positive recollections of her charge, emphasizing her emotional attitude to the kid:

Sometimes it was funny... When I saw him opening up to me slowly ... He told jokes or something... And at a certain moment, when he asked what my favorite color was... [smile] I was on cloud nine! He was finally interested in what I like! (...) On another occasion, we went to the cinema together! It was really great! It was winter and we fought with snowballs... And during the movie Joe burst out in laughter several times...(Mandy).

Ann, the art restorer driven by maternal instincts was, in my view, striving for love as well. Her desire to share affection with others is particularly discernible in the woman's subsequent statement:

I see that those kids really need me! They require a higher degree of emotional input, there is no doubt about that... But it gives me so much satisfaction... The fact that I can devote my time and care to them... To those, who mostly need it!
(Ann)

Lack of possibility to be a member of a steady group, which was a direct consequence of Ann's profession, constituted another reason that propelled my interviewee to engage herself so deeply in the foundation. What best summarizes the woman's frustration in the field of socialization was her poignant description of her job:

Being alone with an object is what my occupation entails. You just sit and work on a piece... It may be funny and bear fruits, but...[lower tone of voice]...But one has to sit alone... Even if you work in a team, then in spite of that, you are forced to be spending the whole time with something still, something dead. (Ann)

The apparently uncontrollable, almost conspicuous desire to feel, express and foster love was what struck me the most about Graham's attitude as well. Yet this time, my interlocutor's way of acting made me realize that he regarded that need as a permanently activated drive, which would never cease to push him forward. In his case the willingness to gratify this desire did not derive from frustration, but from a seemingly insatiable hunger for love. Graham did not abstain from stressing that fact in his utterances:

(...) I do not have to pass through all the phases in the relationships with other people, to finally be able to get to love them... For me the feeling is automatic!
(*Graham*)

The last person, whose motivational profile enabled me to classify her into the group of affection-driven individuals, was Lucy. This girl's attitude reminded me that of Graham. Love was also one of the crucial points of her life philosophy. Lucy was deeply immersed in genuine faith and although she did not tend to speak so openly about her feelings, I was able to discern an incredible amount of warmth and care in the way she described her younger sister. She often referred to her charge as "my Wendy" and smiled widely while recounting on their common experience. In Lucy's passionate and persistent determination to pull the kid out of her plight, there was also, in my opinion, an incredible amount of genuine love.

4.3.1.4. Esteem Needs

High evaluation of oneself, self respect, self-esteem as well as esteem for others are constituent elements of every individual's set of desires. Although they are always present, in some cases or for certain purposes they can simply be inactive. These needs may, as Maslow proposes, be divided into two subsidiary sets:

These are, first, the desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for *confidence* in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom. Secondly, we have what we may call the desire for reputation or prestige (defining it as respect or esteem from other people), recognition, attention, importance or appreciation (p.10)

Gratification of the self-esteem need "leads to feelings of *self-confidence*, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world" (p. 10), yet its frustration may provoke profound discouragement resulting from "feelings of inferiority, of weakness and of helplessness" (p. 10).

Four individuals from the array of unpaid workers I have focused on turned out to exhibit clear signs of willingness to satisfy their self-esteem.

Stephen was one of them. His overbearing and slightly arrogant manner of making other volunteers aware of his unquestionable qualities was, in my view, an endeavor on the boy's part to increase his degree of his self-confidence²³ by being admired in the environment. There seemed to be no area, in which Stephen would not be at least well experienced. From the flair for cooking, via skills obtained in the army, command of three languages, extraordinary memory, practical knowledge gained from work in security sector and business branch, up to talent in sports and upbringing of small children – my interlocutor was, in short, familiar with practically everything. As Stephen himself stated:

experience gained from the army, work and all the other activities... well, in general from my active lifestyle, helps me a lot in contacts with my charges and in finding ways how to act... (*Stephen*)

I will not speculate whether all of those enumerated qualifications indeed corresponded to reality, nevertheless the fact remains that most of the volunteers did not give any credit to Stephen's accounts, claiming that he was just an average, underappreciated boy, desperately intending to lift up his self-esteem.

Another individual whom I decided to include into this group was Graham. The basic features of this interlocutor's desire to foster his self-assurance were very similar to those displayed by Stephen. They were however focused not on his practical skills, but on his intangible, spiritual knowledge. While describing his "exceedingly advanced personal development" Graham said:

I will not pretend to be humble...unlike the majority of Poles... (*Graham*)

While speaking, my interviewee gave the impression of desiring to be applauded. After each witty remark, he made a short pause, giving me a skewering glance, as though it was high time that I appraised his bright and extraordinary ideas. Although Graham may have indeed been quite self-confident by nature, I could not suppress a sensation that he was intending to confirm and additionally raise his self-esteem by acquiring a status of a noble and helpful volunteer. At a certain moment he boastfully stated:

²³ Conduct characterized by the willingness to raise one's self-confidence might also be treated a symptom of one's desire for safety, yet in accordance with Maslow's definition of self-esteem need at the beginning of this subchapter (self esteem need is among other things "the desire (...) for confidence in the face of the world (...) Satisfaction of self-esteem needs leads to feelings of self-confidence" (p. 10)), I decided to treat all the symptoms of reaching for self-confidence, as crucial components of a need for self-esteem.

I am a priceless jewel for them. [his charge and his charge's mother] (...) Since I am ready to do everything I can to improve their lives... (*Graham*)

Olivia, with her apparently uncontained desire to test herself in the area of professional psychological help was another good example of an individual striving for self-assurance. She decisively stated:

People, who, just like me, study psychology, have a tendency to treat these (...) relationships with kids like a kind of professional challenge... (*Olivia*)

Yet, I suppose that via the act of voluntary aid she was, in addition to checking her specialized abilities, also somehow trying to redeem herself. Perhaps she was endeavoring to gain a huge amount of self-confidence, which she may have lost earlier, during her own therapy. In this light, any success or improvement in the condition of her younger sister would be another step to fulfilling Olivia self-assurance, as to the abilities to potentially cure her own mental state.

Acquiring or raising self-confidence was probably also one of the reasons of Mandy's commitment to the foundation. She did not appear to radiate self-belief and due to her partly unsatisfied security as well as acceptance need, it might be reasonable to conclude that the girl may have also been seeking to gratify her desire for mental strength and self-assurance. In fact Mandy herself clearly stated:

Above all I wanted to test myself! [louder tone of voice] ...To see whether I would be able to offer that kid a part of me, reach a hand out to him... to a complete stranger... (*Mandy*)

4.3.1.5. The Needs for Self-Actualization

Self-Actualization is situated at the very top of the Needs Pyramid and it tends to get activated after an individual has already passed through all (or most) of the already mentioned levels of desires. As Maslow has it:

Even if all these [previous] needs are satisfied, we may still often (if not always) expect that a new discontent and restlessness will soon develop, unless the individual is doing what he is fitted for. A musician must make music, an artist

must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately happy. What a man can be, he must be. This need we may call self-actualization. (p. 10)

The term of self-actualization is used in this theory as a desire for self-fulfillment. It is:

a tendency for a human to become actualized in what he/she is potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming. (p. 10)

I managed to fish out only three volunteers whose demeanor appeared to have fairly corresponded to the general description of conduct aimed at fulfilling this particular desire.

I would definitely point out Graham as the first of them. He appeared to be incessantly falling over his head to find as many *means* that would lead to *self-fulfillment* as possible. How else can one label all the eccentric practices that this individual was resorting to? From visiting monks in India and consequently founding an alternative psychological office, via applying the method of premic nourishment, which “bases itself on consuming solely pure energy”, thereby adapting an organism “to absorb electricity instead of food”, up to activating extremely “high vibrations” in the body. The result of the last practice was, as Graham keenly stated, an achievement of such a level of sensitivity that made him burst in tears at the sight of an ordinary bird. In this situation:

(...) what could make more sense, than to offer yourself to another living person?

Everything else is worth a shit! (*Graham*)

Thus, my interlocutor’s engagement in the Elder Brother, Elder Sister Program, appeared to be directly conditioned by his willingness for self-actualization.

The second individual, whose desires also seemed to rest upon the last level of the Needs Pyramid was Lucy. That girl gave no indications that any other of her desires might in any way be thwarted. Apart from her seemingly innate need to bestow love upon people, there was absolutely nothing that might potentially fly in the face of my conjecture that she was striving for self-fulfillment. Lucy was a good student without any problems in the family and with an agenda replete with extra-curricular activities, yet she settled on taking another duty upon her shoulders, with an ultimate aim to reach out a helping hand to those in need.

I did not really care about what the background or the situation of that person would be... I had simply told myself, that as soon as I found somebody in need, I would help them... (*Lucy*)

I personally regard the girl an ideal (yet alas the only) crystal clear example within my studies of an individual propelled by the highest most noble desires.

The last person that I would like to mention here is Ann. She is also the most controversial volunteer, with respect to the possible willingness to gratify the need of self actualization. The woman was an artist and her professional job entailed completing tasks that demanded *talent* and *potential*. Through the realization of them both, Ann appeared to be contributing to the fulfillment of the highest of her desires, yet despite that, she ended up in a mental hospital. Voluntary work in the foundation became the means to bounce back psychically, since it unexpectedly turned out that the woman's lower needs had been thwarted. Thus, I assume that the best possible way for Ann to fully reach to the top of the hierarchy of desires would be to devote herself to both: voluntary activity and art. Her following statement fully supports that conclusion:

I would not like to give up the restoration, which in fact is my real occupation... But on the other hand, I do not want to stop coming here... However the restoration alone is not enough! (...) Here, you work with living creatures, real people, after all... (*Ann*)

4.3.1.6. Short Summary of the Volunteer's Needs

The subsequent table briefly summarizes the foregoing analysis:

<i>Types of Needs within the Pyramid</i>	<i>Names of People on different Levels of Needs</i>	<i>General Descriptions of Individual Needs</i>
<i>Physiological Needs</i>	Theodore	need for touch and closeness

	Ann	maternal drive
	Stephen	paternal drive
<i>Safety Needs</i>	Stephen	need for an organized world
	Olivia	need for clear, coherent definition of her role
	Mandy	need for stability lacking in her childhood
	Graham	need for predictable, controllable reality
<i>Love Needs</i>	Theodore	need for expressing and getting proofs of affection
	Olivia	subconscious will to create emotional bonds
	Mandy	need to belong to a group
	Ann	need for affection as well as stable contact with a group
	Graham	need for love - inherent to his philosophy of life
	Lucy	affection – ubiquitous in her proceedings, linked with faith
<i>Esteem Needs</i>	Stephen	need for admiration from the environment
	Graham	need to confirm and raise his self-esteem
	Olivia	need to build up her self-confidence after her own therapy
	Mandy	urge to test herself and raise self-esteem
<i>Self-Actualization Needs</i>	Graham	need to develop himself via dubious methods and assistance
	Lucy	clear desire to help and grow as a person

	Ann	satisfaction of maternal drives and need for love as the only conditions of flawless self-development in art
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What especially catches the eye is the fact that, in conjunction with the principle of *relative satisfaction and multi-motivation*, practically all the individuals under study had various needs activated simultaneously. Sometimes the desires emerged exactly in the sequence proposed by Maslow (Olivia, Mandy and Graham), nonetheless in case of the majority of individuals (Theodore, Ann, Stephen, Lucy) they did not appear to follow any specified order, seemingly leaving out one or even two of the needs completely not triggered. That phenomenon is actually also in accordance with another additional assumption formulated by Maslow concerning the *lack of fixity in the hierarchy of needs*. In fact, the author of motivational theory gives us a few examples of individual tendencies in this respect, which correspond exactly to the psychological profiles of two volunteers from my study.

The first irregularity can be defined as supremacy of self-esteem over love and it was exemplified in my investigations by Stephen. As Maslow stresses:

This most common reversal in the hierarchy is usually due to the development of the notion that the person who is most likely to be loved is a strong or powerful person, one who inspires respect or fear, and who is self confident or aggressive. Therefore such people, who lack love and seek it, may try hard to put on a front of aggressive, confident behavior. But essentially they seek high self-esteem and its behavior expressions more as a means-to-an-end than for its own sake; they seek self assertion for the sake of love rather than for self-esteem itself. (p. 13)

It is worth highlighting that Stephen was the only volunteer who did not seem to have shown any symptoms of the need for affection, whereas all the other individuals made it absolutely clear that they were at least in part love-driven. The love need, by the way, turned out to definitely predominate among my interlocutors.

Another reversal in the hierarchy concerned the conduct of Ann. Despite being unsatisfied with regard to her basic physiological and love needs, the woman at the same

time appeared to be striving for self-actualization. She seemed to belong to another, exceptional array of individuals identified by Maslow. Basically, the members of that group are:

apparently innately creative (...) The drive to creativeness [in them] seems to be more important than any other counter-determinant. Their creativeness might appear not as self-actualization released by basic satisfaction, but in spite of lack of basic satisfaction. (p. 13)

Returning to the summary of the analysis of desires, it is worth mentioning that the general tendency among the studied actors appeared to indicate the upward trend only in the subsequent lower levels of the Needs Pyramid. The willingness to satisfy love and acceptance needs seemed to be the peak point, since 6 of 7 volunteers clearly claimed to have been propelled by that particular desire. On the upper stages of the hierarchy the trend was opposite and in the end only three individuals reached the top of the pyramid. I am inclined to believe, however that only one of them, displayed a pure desire for self-fulfillment (Lucy). The last remark which I would like to make here is the fact that none of the investigated individuals had their needs activated at *all levels* of the pyramid concurrently.

4.3.2. Analysis of Two, Unclassifiable Motivational Profiles

As the reader must have already noted, apart from the emphasis put by me upon the unpaid helpers and, by implication, a voluntary character of their job, I also gave a few other workers an opportunity to come into sight within the empirical part of this dissertation. The motivational profiles of two of them – Annabelle and Melissa, will be meticulously examined in the following section of the thesis.

4.3.2.1. Annabelle's Hierarchy of Needs

Annabelle was the chief of the whole foundation and although she did not physically receive any remuneration for the job exercised, I decided to abstain from

assigning the woman to the array of unpaid helpers. Voluntary assistance inevitably implies the initial free will to devote oneself to a certain activity, yet in case of Annabelle the outer circumstances, as well as the fact that she was a wife of a former owner of that organization, appeared to have played a leading role in the decision of her engagement in that work. As the lady herself stated, she even felt a little out of place at first, having no other choice but to discover of her own accord what her new occupation would entail:

I did not come up with any mission or vision of what to do exactly, but I just supposed that in order to successfully help those in need, one first had to learn how to do it... (*Annabelle*)

Additionally her noble provenance may have in fact contributed to Annabelle's naivety and certain psychical vulnerability in relation to the numerous phenomena inseparably linked with this type of activity. As the woman sincerely confessed:

On the one hand I really wanted to aid those people, but on the other... When some homeless men came to the foundation, I was bothered by their repulsive stench... (*Annabelle*)

She appeared to feel inconvenient and insecure in her role. Thus, unlike in case of the majority of the volunteers, Annabelle's engagement in the foundation did not constitute the means to gratify her *need for safety*, but was in fact the direct reason for the emergence of that desire.

Fortunately for the woman, she soon sub consciously managed to jump up to the subsequent level of the Needs Pyramid, by reconstructing her view of the world and consequently activating the *desire for love*:

I suddenly realized that I mustn't react in that way! ...That since I had decided to help those poor people, it was not right to feel repugnance towards them...(...) each "Eureka" opened another tiny piece of my heart... [smile] When you start to see more, you help more... (*Annabelle*)

The need to share affection with others was Annabelle's probably most noticeable desire. It seemed to reflect not only in her passionate commitment to the cause, but also in the woman's flamboyant, slightly pretentious manner of speaking:

There are actually no barriers to what we do and even if there is a mountain to move, we can do it! The success depends solely on our determination, will to help

and love to a fellow human being! [pause] Sometimes, when the situation appears to be disastrous, I just intend to sow some seeds of hope in the ailing souls... (...) Individuals who I look for [to employ them as helpers], are people with passion and zeal, who just like me, love to love others... (*Annabelle*)

On the other hand, however, the exceedingly embellished character of Annabelle's utterances appeared to me as a little bit artificial and ostentatious. I cannot refute the fact that the woman indeed felt a profound desire to offer her love to the ailing children, nevertheless in the light of the entirely different state of affairs, which was reflected in other workers' statements, I started regarding Annabelle's fervent confessions a little like hollow public-relation slogans. How may such a potentially affectionate person disregard certain fundamental issues²⁴ connected with the well-being of kids, after all?

Another mechanism that seemed to propel the foundation's chief in her proceedings was in my opinion the unconscious, perhaps indirect desire to fulfill and raise her *self-esteem*. Annabelle appeared to be continuously intending to reassure herself that her deeds indeed had the intense, philosophical and religious sense. Moreover, the woman gave the impression of being pushed forward by an uncontrollable need to be regarded by others as *a tool in the hands of God*:

first and foremost, I want them [the kids] to sense the presence of the Lord among these walls... (...) how do I find the appropriate individuals [workers]? Well... The Divine Providence plays here a vital role of course... Whenever we need someone, sooner or later the Lord sends us a new angel... (*Annabelle*)

The symptoms of the desire for self-fulfillment were also relatively noticeable in Annabelle's general conduct. She evidently derived a huge amount of satisfaction from getting to know new aspects of life through learning and observation. Via studying the movements on a wheelchair, walking blindfolded with a stick and reading Braille alphabet, she was getting much more empathetic towards her charges, thereby becoming an aware, comprehensively educated and emotionally developed individual. As a matter of fact, taking into account the woman's numerous family-related duties, her actual, by all means

²⁴ Inappropriate investments of huge amounts of funds and at the same time, extremely poor conditions of the building which harboured the children's club were the most striking practical anti-examples of the chief's philosophy.

fervent engagement in the foundation might have generally been described as an ultimate attempt to reach for self-actualization.

All in all, I presume that the chief of the foundation may have had the following desires activated: safety need, love, self-esteem and self-actualization.

4.3.2.2. Melissa's Hierarchy of Needs

Melissa worked as a regular, fully paid employee, yet for the most time, she attempted to convince the whole world of the unconditional and voluntary emotional desire to dedicate herself to this type of activity. At a first glance, I might have been inclined to believe, that the girl's basic motive and goal of the engagement, was indeed solely her irrepressible urge to *become everything that she could be capable of becoming*, or in other words, to reach for *self-actualization*. Her ardent declarations were tremendously appealing:

I have always been aware of the fact that I wanted to lend a helping hand to other people... This need must be rooted deeply in my sub consciousness... I was brought up with such priorities (...) My emotional input here is enormous! If I weren't employed in this field I would probably cease to exist! Assisting others forms a part of my identity!

Yet, as soon as I immersed myself deeper into the organizational environment, the coordinator's seemingly straightforward picture unexpectedly blurred. Having made a few observations and interviewed a couple of volunteers, I quickly realized that apart from Melissa's strong need for self-fulfillment, there may have been a whole large set of other, ungratified rudimentary desires that were animating the girl to act.

The first and the most suppressed, unconscious *physiological desire* was in my opinion her *maternal drive*. I assumed that such might be the case in spite of Melissa's extraordinarily negative and emotionally charged reaction to my question. I asked her whether she had ever thought of having her own child and the girl's reaction was instant:

Melissa's enormous, blue eyes widened. Shouting out hoarsely, she retorted vehemently - "No! Absolutely not! I do not even consider it! There are already so

many kids in dire necessity of care and love on this earth... They are the ones who need me the most!”²⁵

Although our relationship had grown fairly close at that time and we tended to touch countless controversial matters on daily basis, by raising that particular issue, I suddenly had an impression of having entered a taboo land. Motherhood seemed to be that aspect of life, about which my interlocutor had intensely wished to forget completely, by hoping to replace the inborn maternal desires with intense, almost overwhelming contacts with somebody else’s brood. Yet in fact, through her frequent bouts of depression, Melissa displayed clear symptoms of not being capable to succeed in that attempt.

The second basic need which, from my perspective, must have evidently been activated in the coordinator’s case, was her desire for *safety*, predictability of the environment and emotional stability. Perhaps it was in part induced by the fact that she lost her father at an early age? In any case, the girl seemed to be overwhelmed by insecurity in the spiteful, unforeseeable reality of mature people and therefore settled on striving for contacts with such a group of individuals, which might not take advantage of her vulnerability.

From the very beginning of my existence, I just knew that I would never want to generate any interpersonal bonds with grown-ups. And that is true! The only creatures on the face of this earth that I understand and identify myself with are kids! (...) When it comes to mature people, for me they are on the other side of the barricade and seem to be speaking an entirely different language! (*Melissa*)

Despite the girl’s passionate utterances as to her degree of attachment to kids, she clearly appeared to separate the professional and the private world from one another, in that she constantly made herself unavailable or ignored all the attempts of reaching her outside of the exact hours of her work. Additionally, Melissa endeavored to exercise a lot of control upon the degree of her emotional commitment to the voluntary work, so that the possibility to fall prey to her own soft spot for children would be absolutely excluded.

²⁵ To avoid the reader’s unnecessary confusion as to the character and provenance of some of the quotations found in this part of the thesis, I settled on writing all the excerpts referring to the material from the field notes in italic (in the same manner, as it was done in the empirical part). The ultimate aim of this movement is to distinguish them from the direct quotations of my interlocutors’ own words (which are written in a classical font style).

What best illustrated this tendency was the coordinator's account of her visit in an orphanage:

It was horrible! Those poor kids with their little heads and tiny hands stretched out in my direction in a desperate hope of being given a hug... I just couldn't! [pause] Finally I cuddled them of course, but I really did not want to do that! The only person that I can hug with sincere love and clear consciousness is my nephew, but in the case of those children (...) I felt psychically exhorted to take them into my arms... (*Melissa*)

When it comes to Melissa's *love needs*, she was in my opinion the most inconsistent in expressing that particular desire. According to the aforementioned quotation, one might assume that there was surprisingly no affection in her voluntary deeds. Nevertheless on numerous other occasions, the great majority of the coordinator's assertions evidently indicated an entirely opposite attitude on her part. The subsequent statement is a sound proof of that:

Sometimes I ask myself, why do majority of people want to receive money for something that lies in the pure nature of a human being? Why do they demand payment for such an inborn mechanism, as offering and giving yourself to others? (*Melissa*)

Reaching for *acceptance* and *belongingness to a group* is another, love-related desire situated on the same level of the Needs Pyramid. It seemed to be present in Melissa's conduct as well. I was not able to suppress a feeling that the girl was insistently striving for setting up a stable scheme of relationships with the quorum of volunteers. For example, she came up with the idea of organizing extra-curricular gatherings of the unpaid helpers without their charges and on neutral grounds. I even had an opportunity to attend one of such meetings. As one of the members of the Elder Brother, Elder Sister Program aptly stated:

Perhaps Melissa intends to patch up some gaps in her social life that is lacking in intense acquaintances with normal, mature individuals... She spends practically all the days with children, doesn't she? (*Joan*)

The last basic desire, which I deemed to be inseparably linked with the reasons underlying Melissa's organizational activity, was in my opinion her need for *self-*

assurance and confidence. The way in which she tended to picture the scope of her duties and meticulously enumerated each and every one of them bespoke of the girl's craving for being admired and appreciated. Moreover, the bottomless rift separating all those descriptions from the stark reality could only support the inference concerning the unconscious existence of Melissa's foregoing desire.

To sum up, Melissa's motivational profile appeared to have all needs equally activated. They were: the physiological, maternal drive, desire for safety, predictability as well as stability, love and acceptance needs, self-assurance and last, but not least – self actualization (mentioned at the beginning of this analysis).

4.3.2.3. Short Summary of the Two Profiles

Surprisingly, the motivational silhouettes of the two regular workers - Annabelle and Melissa turned out to be just as interesting and sophisticated as those of the seven volunteers. In fact, the character of many of the desires that came into play with regard to these women bore an extremely close resemblance to the needs activated within the array of the earlier analyzed unpaid helpers (I am especially referring to Melissa's profile and specifically the nature of her physiological, safety and self-assurance needs). What might, however, be worth mentioning, is a certain shift in the hierarchy of desires (particularly noticeable with Annabelle) which consists in the clearer and stronger emphasis put upon the higher needs in the Pyramid (self-actualization and esteem). The desire for pure love is present and even appears to be fairly intense, however its symptoms seem to be much weaker, ambiguous and definitely more controversial than in the volunteers' case.

4.3.3. Analysis of My Own Impulses

Having thoroughly examined the motivational background of all the individuals selected from the field, I find it appropriate to finally turn the reader's attention to the analysis of the results stemming from my participant observation in the secondary research field (Albert's home). The following subchapter will therefore tackle the problem of my own personal motivation.

First and foremost, it must be stated that the reasons laying the groundwork under my decision to enter the ranks of volunteers was by no means conditioned by my individual desires. As it has already been stated at the beginning of the fourth chapter of the empirical part, adapting this role was a direct result of the chief's request to me *to make an active contribution to the cause*. Thus, one of the most powerful motivational drives, which usually induces an unpaid worker to take a first step and in times of crises strongly prevents him/her from giving up the voluntary work, was inevitably absent in my case. There were however numerous other needs, which came into being in the course of my stay in the field and which definitely corresponded to the motives that constantly propelled the regular unpaid helpers in their actions.

Although I was unable to identify any physiological desires (like paternal drives, for that matter) which would in any manner push me forward in my dealings with the younger brother, the subsequent need undoubtedly got activated during my personal struggles with the kid. I am referring, of course, to the *desire for safety*, which in my case took form of an attempt to reach for stability, predictability and security in the contacts with my charge. Albert's uncontrollable demeanor (which reflected, among other things, in his alleged hyperactivity, absolute lack of willingness to cooperate with me in the area of school-related issues and the boy's insolent behavior) was so draining and overwhelming that it often made me seriously consider the sense of remaining in that relationship. The following excerpts from the fieldnotes give a clear indication of those dilemmas on three different occasions:

(1) I am not quite certain whether this relationship has any future or not... If my role is to be limited exclusively to observing the boy's insolent excesses, just as it was today, then I guess, it would be more sensible to back out right away...

(2) I simply do not want to come back there anymore! Anybody who attempts to exercise any influence upon that youngster is doomed to failure! The child is completely disobedient, dishonest and (...) behaves as if he was psychically unbalanced!

(3) Something is definitely going in the wrong direction! Never before have I been so negatively emotionally charged in the aftermath of an encounter with my

younger brother! I am even beginning to lose hope for any sound relationship between us...

All the alarming symptoms of my charge's demeanor, coupled with a quirky and often evidently negative attitude of his mother towards me, eventually, made me formulate a set of rules regulating our cooperation. Nevertheless owing to the sinusoidal scheme of our meetings (that is, the off-putting periods followed by extremely positive ones), I always hoped that the more I would get acquainted with the kid, the lesser his impunity would become - since I could more easily foresee and influence his behavior without resorting to extreme measures. Thus the decision of imposing the stringent policy never practically entered into play.

At a certain moment I also realized the existence of a new motive that made me linger on in that seemingly toxic relationship and moreover continuously prevented me from becoming *another strict adult* in Albert's eyes. I would call it the willingness to foster those invisible bonds, which unexpectedly turned out to have appeared between us. In Maslow's terms, the feelings that I was exposed to might actually be described as the *need to be accepted* by the charge and *affection* resulting from my attachment to the kid. Both of them were the direct results of the boy's unanticipated, positive conduct, as well as his lovable and captivating gestures towards me. I was not only surprised, but also enchanted by them:

He showed me an entirely new face today! Outside of home and without his mother around, this kid is a real treasure! (...)His manners seemed to be absolutely impeccable! Moreover, my charge presented himself as quite a bright young man!

(...) my younger brother was bombarding me with numerous questions concerning my culinary preferences. Upon hearing my responses, the boy made comparisons to his own tastes. Whenever it turned out that we both liked exactly the same thing, a wide smile appeared on the kid's face. I have a nagging feeling that he may have bent his answers a bit so that they would resemble mine...

(...) I cannot suppress a sensation that I am slowly becoming one of the closest people to him... It is possible to recognize this promising tendency in the all those seemingly inconsequential details of the child's conduct. In the way he looks at

me while saying “see you soon” or in the expression on his excited face when he listens to my personal anecdotes...

(...) [when I told Albert, I would have to report his despicable demeanor to the coordinator] The kid’s features whitened with overwhelming panic and a glimmer of dread appeared in his eye. “They are going to take you away from me, won’t they?”- said the boy in a scared, quivering tone. “Don’t let them take you away! I really like you and I don’t want you to disappear!”- He was looking at me with a begging expression on his small, innocent face.

(...) At the end of our unproductive math class, when I was just about to hit the road, Albert approached me slowly, and with an intimidated smile illuminating his slightly fleshy roguish countenance, reached out his hand in my direction. He was holding a bundle of pictures, carefully selected from among his works...

As a matter of fact, I might point out similar examples almost interminably. In all instances, the indications of Albert’s apparent attachment to me were so heartwarming that, after a while, I suddenly recognized that they had been at the same time gradually raising my self-confidence. After all, it was incredibly pleasant and encouraging to unexpectedly adapt a role of a mentor, to be looked up to and (occasionally, yet each time more often) listened to. Thus, another need from Maslow’s hierarchy was invoked, namely the desire for *self-esteem*, which bound me strongly to the boy as well. The sudden, profoundly negative turnaround in his mode of treating me, which occurred at the end of our relations, largely contributed to the abrupt plunge in my self-value. It also might have partially been the reason, why it cost me so much to get over the fact of breaking out of the contract.

So far, I have managed to state that my motivational profile was built up from three interconnected needs, which were in turn: safety, love/acceptance and self-esteem. There is however still one desire with regard to the set of my personal imperatives that has not yet been put under the magnifying glass. I am referring to the *need for self-actualization*. I suppose that my fairly strong perseverance to move forward in the relations with the kid constituted one of the general symptoms of the existence of that particular desire. It seemed to be especially active at the beginning of our contacts, when there were neither emotional ties nor common experience that would additionally unite

us. I principally approached the issue of becoming a volunteer as a challenge that could develop my personality and allow me to learn how to deal with small children. There was of course another benefit from that, namely a possibility to conduct detailed anthropological investigations; nevertheless such a reason alone would never have been sufficient to let me pass through the initial phase of my struggles with Albert.

To briefly summarize the examination of my motivational profile, I may state that practically all the tendencies that came into light during my work as an unpaid helper corresponded a certain extent to the set of needs invoked in the seven earlier described volunteers. My symptoms of the needs for safety, for instance, slightly resembled the manner in which that particular drive surfaced in Olivia's and Graham's conduct (willingness to impose some rules to make the reality more predictable). Especially noticeable, however, was my desire for love/acceptance, activation of which was probably equally strong as in case of the majority of the other individuals. Yet, generally, what undoubtedly differed those people from me, was their inherently built-in drive (resulting from life experience), which in majority of the cases (Theodore, Olivia, Mandy and Ann) started up and automatically propelled their actions. I, on the contrary, artificially replaced that unconscious motivation at the onset of my voluntary work with the willingness to develop my personality (initial desire for self-actualization). Similar mechanism also appeared to have emerged in Annabelle's and Melissa's demeanor.

Regardless, the most important point that I would like to make here, is the fact that my at first seemingly weak engagement in the Elder Brother, Elder Sister Program, unexpectedly transformed into an incredibly strong devotion, while invoking a chain of fundamental needs in my organism along the way. Does it not bespeak of the uncontainable power of the mere *course* of voluntary work? In this light, it is unimaginable how incredibly strong my motives may have become, had I additionally been impelled by the initial, experience-based drives, just as it was in case of other volunteers...

5. General Conclusions based upon the Metaphor of a Labyrinth

In order to outline the complexity of the researched phenomena and at the same time draw a conclusive inference out of the foregoing organizational study, I will resort to *the metaphor of a labyrinth*, invented by me exclusively for the purposes of this thesis.

We have met a bundle of various, extraordinary characters, who initially more or less consciously entered the *foundation (the invisible doors to the labyrinth, which was also a passage to a better reality)* to *satisfy a set of individual goals* (in other words, *to eventually find the way out of the maze*). Each person, (*a prisoner of the labyrinth*), while being induced by *passions and desires (energizing edibles scattered randomly around the maze)* as well as thwarted by *encumbrances and frustrations (seemingly undetectable walls of the network of crooked corridors)*, possessed an ultimate *objective to pull children out of their predicaments* (which conditioned their *strategy of movements in the maze*). Not all the prisoners, however, were in the same situation.

There were *seven volunteers (free-willed prisoners)* whose *motivational profiles (individual ways through the labyrinth)* differed greatly from one another (each prisoner was destined to find a *different passage through the corridors*, although sometimes they crossed the ways of others). Additionally, all people from this particular group, were characterized by a *strong willingness* that made them enter the organization in the first place and constantly accompanied them on their way, sustaining their determination to get through (I define it as *a flame, continuously burning in lamps of the prisoners, illuminating the dark corridors of the maze, thereby making it simpler for the individuals to find their edibles as well as locate the way through the labyrinth*). Some *flames* appeared to be principally ignited by a number of ungratified unconscious desires (maternal instincts, lack of stability in the childhood, will to bounce back and redeem oneself after a bout of depression), while the others had their sources in individual eagerness to satisfy one's inborn desires for self development or to follow one's philosophy of life. In any case, despite numerous hindrances along the way, all the volunteers were to a certain extent *united in their incredible perseverance* to move on (*to traverse the labyrinth and get to the other side*).

As the observation of my own profile proved, apart from the initial motives (*the burning flame*) which might have induced one to make forays into a foundation, there was also another phenomenon present. It accompanied a volunteer in the process of

fulfilling his/her duties and consisted in an *extensive, additional activation of certain elements in the hierarchy of needs*. That mechanism animated and immersed the unpaid worker even more profoundly into the love-driven execution of the charitable activity. (I would call it *an ability of the prisoners to sharpen their senses*, which eventually contributed to developing a faster and more efficient manner to *move around the maze*, at the same time giving them access to *more energizing edibles*). At a certain stage it would probably be extremely difficult to identify which of the active drives were inborn and which acquired during the process, therefore I did not even attempt to make any detailed distinctions. The fact remains however that such a medley of needs and motives (*flames, energizing edibles and sharp senses*) proved to lay extremely strong groundwork under the deeds of volunteers, thereby making them determined and mostly unflinching in their *job (to look for their way out of the maze)*.

An opposite tendency was revealed in case of the *regular workers* of the organization (second group, which I call *unconscious prisoners*). Although they were principally only bound to *foster the foundation* (assure the appropriate *conditions of entrance and way through the labyrinth* for the *free-willed prisoners*, without personally getting to the other side), they surprisingly turned out to have practically the majority of the same desires activated (either *burning flames*, or unexpectedly encountered *edibles*, which temporarily lured them to engage in *wandering around the maze* and looking for their own way through - although it was not their task!). They were, however, often either superficial or inconsistent in their proceedings (there must have been something missing - they either had no genuine *burning flames* in their possession, were not able to find the *edibles* or had no *strategy of movements* developed). Basically however, it was a different status of a worker (administrative personnel, as opposed to the volunteer), which seemed to be the reason for certain flaws in their actions (they were not fully aware of all the intricacies which entailed the role of a *free-willed prisoner* and thus automatically did not seem to possess all the necessary means *to get to the other side*). Moreover, they frequently displayed an inclination to subconsciously put more strength upon gratification of such needs as self-esteem or actualization – not love (this mechanism was building the set of their philosophical assumptions underlying their *work-for-the-higher-cause attitude* and seemed to justify their presence in *the labyrinth*

in the first place). The predominance of those two desires also appeared to be a substitute for the lack of the other motivational elements (the mentioned *flames, edibles* and *senses*) which pushed the unpaid helpers forward. Here my metaphor ends.

Regardless of the metaphor of a labyrinth, what might have been the physical, real-life reasons of such a state of affairs? Why did the profiles of the regular workers appear to be much less consistent, than those of the volunteers? Perhaps it was the result of the fact that the latter group did not possess that innate, initial drive to act? Or maybe there were simply no clear-cut goals defined? Might the selection of specific, planned duties and lack of possibility to act spontaneously have been the cause that sometimes made them approach their jobs as imposed drudgery? Could the economic factor of their occupation have also, subconsciously lead them astray?

In any case, by and large we saw representatives of two distinct arrays of workers, which build a humanitarian organization. All of them were driven by their needs and desires of both positive and negative nature. The representatives of the administrative personnel were responsible for the core activities of the organization, such as supervision, coordination and the quality assurance of the services provided. Principally however, it was a volunteer, not a regular worker who, lost in the sophisticated *labyrinth of emotions*, such as deep frustrations or intrinsic, intertwined desires, seemed to have the greatest impact on the development of the foundation by pushing the whole initiative actively forward. Haven't I, by any chance, just formulated a definition of the secret of a well-functioning humanitarian organization?

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