



The rhetoric of a former corporate job

How people construct their working experience in conversation

Alina Petra Marinescu-Nenciu¹

Abstract

The present article looked into the way people construct their former working experiences in conversation. As a main analysis outcome I was interested in the narrative patterns that emerge when people recollect the stories of the jobs they had in different corporations. As a secondary analysis outcome I focused on the discursive construction of the corporate companies as working environments and on people's stories about them taking the decisions to leave the respective jobs. Using the snow-ball method, I assessed six unstructured interviews with men and women alike in terms of age, earned incomes and who held a university diploma. The following analysis was grounded on a constructivist approach and sensible to the interviewees' work of self-presentation. I also paid attention to the interactions people talked about and to the cultural resources they used in conversation. Irony, humor, vocabularies of motives, categories and contrast structures were the discursive tools people engaged in their stories most frequently determining me to consider them key-concepts of the present study. Moreover, gender was taken into consideration as discursive pattern. The conclusions of the paper point out to the fact that various types of narrative patterns emerged when my interviewees recollected their working experiences. One of the most salient was connected with the story-like construction of the recollections. People's narrations included expositions, climaxes, all sorts of good and bad characters and trials they had to overcome. The second important pattern was given by the resembling flow of feelings as resulting from the narrations. All the interviewees were enthusiastic to enter the companies, felt alienated as time went by, deceit - in the end and resignation after some time outside the companies. The third notable pattern came with a difference in gender. In this spirit, women's stories were constructed around their interactions with the others while men's recollections were more self-centered.

Keywords

Story, pattern, discursive constructionism, vocabularies of motives, narrative self, working experience, corporation

¹ Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest, Romania, alina.marinescu@sas.unibuc.ro

Introduction

Story telling is a habit most frequently connected to children and the fairytale universe grown-ups share with their offspring.² Thus tales seem to be more about bed time and a good night sleep than about anything else. The truth is that people tell stories all the time, whether the sun is shining is not, whether at home or anywhere else, whether talking to children or to fellow grown-ups. That is because stories help people get around and make out the world surrounding them. They put together facts, events, opinions, and interactions and build up stories that would organize this otherwise chaotic mix of knowledge. When engaging in conversations people tell a story that very often would involve themselves as a main or secondary actor. Often, the narrator is also the hero who has to face certain trials in order to reach a goal. Moreover, when recollecting things, people make clear their perspectives on different situations or interactions as they choose to mention some aspects and forget about others as they categorize people as good or bad characters (Gabriel, 2004; Watson, 2009).

People tell stories about each and every aspect of their lives. Working experiences make no exception being a more and more important realm of nowadays lives. The corporate world and corporate employees have represented a topic of interest in the last years especially due to the controversial media discussions regarding life in big corporations that would deprive employees of their personal time. Plus, more and more employees decide to leave their corporate jobs and aim for a different type of working place.

The present research is aimed at assessing a narrative analysis on people's stories about their former jobs in corporations and their decisions to leave their working places. I am interested in observing the narrative patterns that emerge when different experiences are presented.

In order to meet my exploratory goal I shall analyze six narrative interviews with former corporate employees, men and women of approximately the same age, holding a resembling income and a university diploma. The analysis will be grounded on a constructivist approach (Silverman, 2004; Dunn, 2005) and will be sensitive to the work of self-presentation done by the interviewees (Goffman, 1959; Bruner, 1997; Byrne, 2003).

To figure out narrative patterns, I shall look into the way the stories unfold in terms of narrative elements as theme, exposition, climax, characters, trials or endings on the one hand and I shall take into consideration different educational backgrounds, on the other hand. Considering the possible emerging of a gendered narrative discourse (also discussed by Butler, 1997 or Byrne, 2003) I shall use women and men as two different categories of analysis when looking into discourse specificities.

² This article has been supported by the research project "Sociological imagination and disciplinary orientation in applied social research" (<http://igel.ro>), taking place in the The Research Center in Human Resources, Management and Marketing of the Department of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest, with the financial support of UEFISCDI with grant no. PN-II-RU-TE-2011-3-0143, contract 14/28.10.2011.

The main research question this article intends to answer is: *How do former employees story the corporate experience they had prior to their decision to leave?*

Consequently, I shall focus on the narration of the events prior to people's leaving, but I shall also take into consideration the way people reconstruct their entire working experience in order to legitimize their decision to leave (Hirshman, 1970; Dunn, 2005; Hopper, 1999).

The analysis will look into the cultural resources people use to build up their stories. I shall analyze how characters, their relationships and their interactions pile up in stories about people and competencies to narratively construct corporations as good or vicious working environments.

The whole analysis will be assessed by looking into the choice of motives made during the narration when talking about attitudes, behaviors or decisions and into the word phrasing used to verbalize these motivations. In this spirit, contrast structures situational arguments, humor, irony and categorization (Attardo, 2001; Geest, 1991; Desantis, 2003; Mills, 1940; Hopper, 1999; Dunn, 2005; Smith, 1990) will be of interest for illustrating the process of knowledge production.

Main aspects in the theoretical background

Interactional and narrative understanding of self-presentation, on the one hand, and accounts aimed to make out and interpret interview interactions, on the other hand, will represent the scaffold of my future research.

Discursive constructionism and narrative research

According to Geest "the statement <<I know>> is only one phase of a social and cultural process. Indeed, <<knowledge>> is not only culture bound, it is situation-bound as well. What is presented as knowledge depends on who the speaker is and who the listener, what the question was, etc. It may even matter, so to speak, whether the sun is shining or it is raining" (1991, p.69).

This approach is considered representative for the realm of phenomenological sociology – the contemporaneous display of Weber's interpretative sociology and Husserl's "phenomenological method" both introduced at the beginning of the 20th century. The new theories opposed a new interpretative methodology to the existing objective one (Vlăsceanu, 1983, p.67). Alfred Schütz was concerned with developing this perspective. In "The phenomenology of the social world" (1932), he states that the phenomenological method is the only one that allows a deeper understanding towards the roots of the social phenomena (apud Vlăsceanu, 1983). His research is focused on people's natural display in the life world. Moreover he pleads for the fact that meaning is created through intentionality – a subjective process guiding people towards objects, relationships and contexts that are imbued with already existing stocks of knowledge. Meaning would appear thus in a sort of backward accounting.

Coming towards more recent allegations, Potter and Hepburn (2006) also claim that discourses are situated environmentally, institutionally and rhetorically: "(...) in

discursive constructionism discourse is understood as situated. (...) That is, constructions in talk are often built in a way that counters relevant alternatives” (p.5).

There are two main manners in which discourse constructionism is considered to work. On the one hand, the discourse itself is constructed out of different kinds of resources ranging from simple words to figures of speech and on the other hand, “discourse is constructive in the sense that these assemblages of words, repertoires and so on put together and stabilize versions of the world, of actions and events, of mental life and furniture” (Potter, Hepburn, 2006, p.5).

People make out of conversation a vital medium for surviving. Moreover, “discourse is the fundamental medium for action. It is the medium through which versions of the world are constructed and made urgent or reworked as trivia and irrelevant” (idem, p.1).

Thus, conversational interaction is both a purpose and a means for people to build up their understandings. At least two actors are involved in the construction process. Each of them makes use of collective “stocks of knowledge” (Schütz, 1932) that generate mutually accepted meanings. Taking over Schütz’s idea, Berger and Luckman argued in their book “The social construction of reality” (1971) that anything that might be taken for knowledge is dealt with and objectified in everyday life. Therefore, “narratives – in the form of stories, conversations, myths, legends, films, newspaper reports and all the rest – play a part in the objectification process” (Watson, 2009, p.430).

People make conversation all the time and when doing it, they usually engage in story-like exposures where they picture themselves merely as positive heroes in various hypostases having to face different life-situations. Other good and bad characters as well as intrigues, climaxes and happy or sad endings are also present in people’s discourses.

The above observation became the study object of social scientific analysis long ago. Some authors consider Thomas and Znaniecki and their famous study about “The Polish Peasant in Europe and America 1918-1920” (1932) to be one of the first papers to use people’s life records as fruitful research materials. Ever since, narrative analysis has flourished and is nowadays considered to “raise epistemological questions about the nature of narrative truth (characterized by sense-making and emotional impact rather than by a pursuit of scientific objectivity) (...)” (Greenhalgh, Russell, Swinglehurst, 2005; Muller, 1999; Riessman, 1993). Moreover, narrative interviews are said to make sense of experience, they are embedded in contexts, action oriented and able to “bridge the gap” between formal, institutional space and informal manifestations like feelings or emotions (Greenhalgh, Russell, Swinglehurst, 2005).

While involved in the meaning construction process, the researcher interprets the narration making use of his / her knowledge stocks. Consequently, a number of questions and observations are salient: “How does the narrator tell the story? What does he or she include or exclude? Some researchers focus on the structural links among concepts or <<semantic grammar>>, showing that both the structuring of narratives and their content reveal key insights showing that both the structuring of narratives and their content reveal key insights. Some researchers examine the narrative as a whole, whereas

others break it down into component parts” (Feldman, Sköldberg, Berner, Horner, 2004, p.148).

Narrative self, narrative identity

According to Murray, when presenting the narratives on their personal level, people don’t construct only their life history but also their own identities. “It is through the very process of continuous narrative construction and reconstruction that the individual maintains a sense of personal identity” (Murray, 2000, p.339). Various other authors have theorized the issue of discursive selfhood and narrative identity (Bruner, 1997; Byrne, 2003; Ainsworth, 2001; Watson, 2009).

One of the common observations regarding this process is that a person models his or her self-image according both to personal knowledge as well as according to others’ reactions regarding them. “Self is constructed through interaction with the world rather than being just there immutably, that it is a product of transaction and discourse” (Bruner, 1997, p.147).

Moreover, according to Bruner, self is also constructed in a retrospective manner. “Even though we would all agree that self grows out of our encounters with events and circumstances of the worlds in which we live (...) the experienced world may produce self, but self also produces the experienced world. And part of that world is the other, to whom we offer the justifications, excuses, and reasons that are so crucial to self-formation” (Bruner, 1997, p.147).

As seen before, narrations offer the proper basis for the unfolding of identity work. Watson defines this process in the following manner: “the mutually constitutive process in which people strive to shape a relatively coherent and distinctive notion of personal self-identity and struggle to come to terms with and, influence the various social identities which pertain to them in the various milieux in which they live their lives” (2008a, p.129 in Watson, 2009, p.431). In discursive narratives, the changing roles displaying self (Goffman, 1976) gets clear representations. Even if within each story self is depicted in a different situation, one has to pay attention at the coherence and consistency of the narration from beginning to end. When inconsistencies appear and the interlocutor reacts, remedial work (Goffman, 1976) is prone to be undergone by the narrator: “the activities can be understood as producing ‘accounts’ which involve practices such as justifications of excuses, ‘requests’ that challenge recipients to respond through the moral force of obligation and reciprocity and ‘apologies’ (...)” (Housley & Fitzgerald 2008, p.240).

Thus, in conversation one recites his / her self (Byrne, 2003) according to the context features as time, place, topic, interlocutors, social position or role taken. At the same time, any situation of discourse might serve as foundation for the future image of selfhood that gets subjectively perceived and understood.

When having to engage in conversational remedial work, people make use of a wide range of tools meant to deal with the various situations and inconsistencies that appear in discourse.

Vocabularies of motives

Account giving to legitimate one's stance regarding a certain behavior or attitude is encountered within any story people would tell. One way or another, they motivate the majority of their decisions and build up arguments that would fit the personal image they want to transmit or to preserve in the eye of the interlocutor. According to Hopper: "(motives are) rhetorical devices that impose a sense of order onto situations that were otherwise fraught with ambiguous and contradictory events, emotions (...)" (1993, p.801).

In addition, accounts help people get out of conversational messes, to transgress unexpected dialogue barriers by explaining or figuring out the facts in front of the other. Pleading for the conversational roots of "vocabularies of motives" (1940), Mills considers that accounts are interpersonal and situational constructs that define action and emerge in social interaction at the same time.

Different authors allege that people select these "vocabularies" in order to construct the self-image they desire at a given moment and that their choices are situational depending on the context of speech (Mills, 1940; Blum, McHugh, 1971; Housley, Fitzgerald, 2008). "Each explanation is part of a vocabulary of motives, a set of historically and culturally situated explanations for behavior" (Dunn, 2005, p.4). The actions of framing and re-framing facts in discourse lead to changes in perceived images and typifications (idem). People want to have their personal status aligned with the actual social norms and build up their stories in order to meet their purpose.

Another interpretation for account giving is introduced by Blum and McHugh (1971) who state that "motives have a grammar": they are used to link people's biographies and the events they encounter. They also have a secondary thesis stating that motives are also "observer's rules" and that they play an important part also on the listener's side as: "Rules make actors' methodical process and concert possible by transforming what would otherwise be nonsense into intelligible social behavior" (idem, p.104).

Humor, irony and categorization

Until this point I have argued that motives are some of the most important tools people use in conversation when they want to legitimate their attitudes and their personal image within the stories they tell. Still, at the same time, there are also other seemingly significant conversational means people employ and must be taken into consideration when assessing a narrative analysis sensitive to the use of cultural resources as the one presented later on in this paper.

In this spirit, humor and irony become salient. Theoreticians usually talk about the two separately. According to Attardo (2011), “irony is a purely pragmatic phenomenon, without semantic counterpart” while humor “consists of two facets”: a semantic and a pragmatic one. Moreover, humor is not seen as an antagonistic mode communication (such as lying) but rather a part of a parcel of non-cooperative communication (p.5).

Usually, in conversation irony is prevailing. People use irony when talking to one another, when telling stories, describing other people, characters in their stories and their competencies. A self-directed type of irony appears more or less frequently according to each individual’s personality, interlocutor and context of conversation. Even if it might stir up laughter, self-irony helps people engage in the conversational remedial work in a direct manner.

Attardo makes a distinction among four important functions of humor and irony in conversation that are prone to explain why people embrace certain attitudes or make certain choices of words: “social management (...) including but not limited to mediation, social control and establishing solidarity, decommitment - the possibility of <<taking back>> something by claiming that one was <<just kidding>>” and evaluation and the persuasive effect. Thus, people can use humor and irony either intentionally or not, but definitely with clear consequences in discourse and conversation. The either ironic or humoristic speaker is able to fight emerging inconsistencies by redirecting the speech flow, make a stance or even convince the interlocutor regarding the truthfulness of the told stories.

Within her study, “K is Mentally Ill: The Factual of an Actual Account” (2005), Smith comes up with another method a narrator might use to deconstruct dissonant representations he / she is confronted with: the use of contrast structures. Smith’s article underlines different methods a speaker uses to picture a certain person as appertaining to a certain category, that of mentally ill people. Using categories helps people differentiate the good from the evil in their stories, to put in order characters, their attitudes, behaviors and competencies. “However, once we look closely at the blocks, we see that they themselves are not solid and defined, but have to be molded in discourse for use in different accounts” (idem). Thus, categorization guides people during their narration work and sustains ones’ point of view, but categories are subjective, even biased and situated by the context of discussion.

Gender as discursive pattern

Last but not least, apart from paying attention to the construction work people engage in discourse and to the cultural resources they use within their speech, the narrative analysis that will be assessed will be also sensitive at the way narrators tell their stories in relation to their gender.

Byrne’s paper: “Reciting the Self. Narrative Representations of the Self in Qualitative Interviews” (2003) is focused on the analysis of three different interviews with white, middle-aged mothers who are asked to tell the stories of their life and her analysis is sensitive to the manner in which gender, class and race are used to frame the

story of the self. According to the author, gender can be understood as a discursive pattern. Apart from other gendered aspects, a feminine account constructs experience as mostly interactional, while a masculine account might rely on a more self-centered and dynamic approach.

On the one hand, men are prone to present themselves as being in-charge of the situations recollected, not depending on others' help. Women, on the other hand, would be inclined to picture themselves in an interactional manner. Therefore, the relations they engage would be considered relevant for the image they want to transmit, the direction the action takes in the stories they tell or for the decisions they take.

Methodological approach, instrument and data

The methodological approach of the present paper is mainly focused on designing, conducting and interpreting focused unstructured narrative interviews with former corporate employees, men and women, quite similar in terms of age, income and education.

Narrative interviews are considered to be one of the four main approaches of narrative use in the field of quality improvement research, next to naturalistic story gathering, organizational case study and collective sense-making (Greenhalgh, Russell, Swinglehurst, 2005). According to the dedicated literature: "narrative research raises epistemological questions about the nature of narrative truth (characterized by sense-making and emotional impact rather than scientific objectivity) (...)" (Greenhalgh, Russell, Swinglehurst, 2005; Muller, 1999; Riessman, 1993).

Taken into consideration the above mentioned features of the chosen method, my analysis will be grounded on an narrative – constructivist approach emotionalist approach (Watson, 2009; Byrne, 2003) being at the same time sensitive to the work of self-presentation done by the interviewee (Goffman, 1959; Bruner, 1997; Byrne, 2003).

The interviews in the present research were taken within different contexts of time and place, the interviewees being selected by using *the snow-ball method* as a non-probability sampling technique (Babbie, 2010). The method "employs social network properties in order to reach the subjects of the interviews" (Şerban, Voicu, 2010). The first interview was conducted with a person whom I previously knew. This first *informant* recommended me another person who came with his own recommendation. The third interviewed came up with the name of the forth and the process continued until the list of six was completed.

I chose to conduct focused unstructured interviews due to the opportunities the method provides for the given subject of interest. The technique was introduced by Robert K. Merton in 1956 and it allows the researcher to discuss the same topic with different persons sharing alike experiences and to base his / her approach on former documentation. Moreover, due to the already known facts the researcher can elaborate an interview guide that would include the main issues that are to be put into debate thanks to the common subjective experience of the interviewees (Chelcea, 2007, p.306).

The chosen method of investigation is prone to a few limitations the most important being the one referring to the fact that the interviewees will answer the questions notwithstanding their psychical disposition or fatigue thus their stories might be influenced by whether a good or a bad mood. At the same time, unstructured interviews make use of unstandardized questions which provide answers that limit the number of possible comparisons (Bailey, K., 1978, p.183 in Chelcea, S, 2007, p.310). To somehow deal with these limitations I asked my interviewees to set themselves the time of our encounter and I tried to use as much as possible alike questions in each interview.

Looking to obtain more than facts and considering the presentation of the self (Goffman, 1959) to be decisive for my research objectives, a thematic, positivist manner of analysis pursuing and aggregating pieces of information was considered to be of secondary importance. Consequently, during the first interviews the emotionalist approach, strongly based on prior knowledge on the part of the researcher, was mingled with the interview bound constructivist one, thus creating a situation where both actors – interviewer and interviewee build up stories, events and characters, as well as common meanings (Silverman, 2004, p.105).

When choosing this approach, I paid attention to the critiques brought to interviews taken in a constructivist manner and especially to the narrowing of the interpretation perspective due to paying more attention to the interlocutors' communicating abilities than to *what* they actually say (*idem*, p.116). To somehow solve this limitation, following Holstein and Gubrium's (1997) ideas I tried to focus my analysis on both *how* and *what* the participants said thus widening the perspective.

I was interested in male and female subjects (three and three), aged 26-29, with the same educational background (university degree) and comparable income who used to be hired in one of the multiple departments of a private institution based in Bucharest, subjects who used to have at least another 200 fellow employees.

I decided to take into consideration the number of employees in order to categorize an institution as corporation after consulting more dictionaries that provided merely legally bounded definitions and no other organizational details. As an exception, the online Business Dictionary defines a corporation as "A large, usually diversified, firm". Consequently, I corroborated this information with the fact that generally the Romanian law considers that in order to be considered "large" a firm must have at least 200 employees.

Within the present research, I was interested in observing the narrative patterns that occur when different experiences are presented. I focused my analysis on the way people reconstruct their entire working experience in order to legitimize their decision to leave (Hirshman, 1970; Dunn, 2005; Hopper, 1999) but I also took into consideration the narration of the events prior to people's leaving a corporate job.

Confronted with the above mentioned fuzzy definitions regarding both foreign and autochthonous corporations as private institutions and taking into consideration the media attention the term has gained especially in the last years, I decided to take a closer look at the way my interviewees would discursively construct the corporate environments they made part of. In this spirit, I analyzed how characters, relationships

and interactions pile up in stories about people and competencies to narratively construct corporations as good or vicious working environments.

Given the emotionalist type of research assessed and my interest in the individuals' self-presentations I paid attention to the differences that emerge when constructing the image of the working environment and depending on the time of the recollected moment – at starters, during the working days or before taking the decision to leave, the analysis looking into the cultural resources people use to build up their stories.

The analysis was sensible to the use of cultural resources as vocabularies of motives, situated knowledge or contrast structures (Geest, 1991; Desantis, 2003; Mills, 1940; Hopper, 1999; Dunn, 2005; Smith, 1990) but also to gender bound patterns.

Interpretation of the interviews

Within the following pages I will discuss the assessed interviews starting with the one done with a person I previously knew and with whom I have been friends with for a couple of years then.

A stubborn struggle for appreciation ended up in resignation

The interviewee who opened the discussions series was S.S., a 26 years old young woman who had worked for three years and a half as journalist in a large Romanian media holding. We have known each other for six years then and I consider our relationship to be one of close friendship, as we talk to each other frequently and share opinions connected to all realms of our lives.

S.S. presented me an overreaching story about one corporate job which represented in fact her entire work experience. The young woman had a chronological approach over the narrated facts. She started with an expository part meant to explain at the same time her desire to be a journalist and her eagerness to make part of an environment about which she knew very little:

Before this job, everything was good. I had that crazy enthusiasm to enter such a corporation and belonging to a group. Especially because it was a desire I had had from adolescence. I knew that I would become a journalist.

Entering the company marked a moment of joy for S.S., representing the actual start of her quest: "I was so excited! It was really what I wanted! It was great! I ignored all that things which bothered me".

Once "inside", it was a matter of months until she was confronted with a series of difficulties she had to solve one way or another:

I had to be organized, sometimes to work even more than 12 hours per day, to be on time at work, usually at 7 A.M., even if it was a liberal profession (...) The schedule was really exhausting and the ordeal began.

Further on, a few characters appeared in S.S.'s story. Most of them represented the category of job superiors who had the interest to determine her to work as much as possible and whom she had "to fight" in order to "survive" safe and sound:

Yes, I was very firm, especially in editorial meetings. For example, once I should have taken a very unhygienic and dirty bus. I definitely refused. The boss looked at me... and said O.K ... I will send someone else.

The other employees represented another category in the young woman's story. They were not individualized, just playing a collective secondary part. On the one hand, they were the group she associates with and with which she empathizes. On the other hand, their mentioning helped her portray the bad heroes in her story, mainly her superiors:

In that company, some employees worked more than others. And the main reason for that situation was the very bad delegation some superiors made. Some employees were exploited, some worked less.

Not long after, her story approached its climax: "(...) my immunity was weak and i got a flu that kept me in bed some weeks and then I took two sick leaves" followed by a final fight she won in a spectacular manner by putting down "the villain":

After my second sick leave I decided to quit my job. (...) A day before leaving my job, I was late at my office... Of course I had a very unpleasant and threatening discussion with my boss. But I had that kind of facial expression: I do not care about your opinion! I was more decided than ever to quit my job then!

Notwithstanding S.'s previous "relation" with the tape recorder, she stated from starters her feeling in a strange situation, not being accustomed to be the one answering the questions. This introduction was part of "setting the stage" for her foreseeable "performance" of self-presentation. As Ervin Goffman (1959) states, "one of the primary concerns of people involved in interactions is to protect their public self-respect or their façade" (Silverman, 2004, p.183). Given the existing friendship between S.S. and me (as interviewer), the encounter had also a stake in our relationship. The fact that she was being quite stressed, in comparison with other previous conversations that we had been quite obvious for me as her interlocutor, given her talking in a high voice, with clearly articulated, attentively chosen words. Still, S.S. graduated Philosophy and her educational background might as well have had an influence on her discourse: she talked extensively, loud and clear, using long phrases. Moreover, she often extrapolated making use of her stack of general knowledge in different domains.

A thematic analysis, pursuing items of information, would conclude that the young woman talked about her experience in the working field and especially in a corporate environment. Her story underlined especially the unpleasant moments of her staying there and put an emphasis on the precarious managerial system about which she argues that it treats employees "(...) like an object" and that "As an employee you had to realize that you did not matter so much as a human being". Still, S. declared herself

satisfied, overall, with having had the experience of working in this company, which she considered very helpful for her professional and moral becoming.

A narrative and constructivist analysis might reach to the fact that “both motives and actions very often originate not from within but from the situation in which individuals find themselves” (Mannheim, 1940, p.249). This thesis was also backed by the fact that her arguments were situation-based. When entering the company she stated that: “I was so excited! It was really what I wanted! It was great!”. While when asked how she felt when leaving the same company she answered the opposite:

How did I feel? I felt really good! Terrific! I felt so great, because there was a terrible atmosphere, not a positive one. Even some colleagues told me they envied me because I had found another job.

Mills argues: “A stable motive is an ultimate in justificatory conversation. The words which in a type situation will fulfill this function are circumscribed by the vocabulary of motives acceptable for such situations” (1940, p.907).

Due to the initial contextualization and to my first question (How was your life before getting employed in a company?), S.S.’s discourse unfolded in a chronological manner starting with her college years that she put in connection with her future occupation. Still, as mentioned beforehand, my involvement in the construction of the woman’s story was consistent due to the frequent questions asked and the emphasizing on the discourse anomalies I noticed.

The young woman’s inconsistent assessments when it came to time periods might be explained by Goffman’s allegation regarding people’s tendency to present themselves in a positive manner. When deeply questioned about her decision to leave, the woman changes her statement probably thinking that six month might be considered too short a period for her to give up:

When I got that job, I was full of energy (...) and my life was beautiful for about six months, after that tiredness appeared” / “Q: But if after six months you were already tired why didn’t you leave the job? / A: Not exactly after six months. Maybe after a year or more...

When questioned why she chose Philosophy when she had intended to work in a corporation, S. answered in a rather defensive and unexpected manner:

From the beginning I wanted to work in a mass-media corporation. I was also keen on entrepreneurship, but first i wanted to work in a company to develop a strong background. / (...) I saw philosophy as something that would help me gain a critical thinking, to develop my communication and writing skills. These things are so important for a journalist. I did not think that philosophy was the professional environment I wanted for me (...). I didn't want to become a philosophy teacher.

The question seemed to barge into her story and her arguments looked like “a diplomatic choice of motives” that Mills said to be “part of the attempt to motivate acts for other

members in a situation”. He explains: “Such pronounced motives undo snarls and integrate social actions. Such diplomacy does not necessarily imply intentional lies” (1940, p.907). Another relevant example came:

Why I did not leave that job? ... I do not know why! I think because of my vanity. Yeah! Because from the outside everyone believed it was the perfect job, but inside the company I didn't meet someone very happy to work there.

Also when she had to explain whether money had determined her to stay:

Nooo.... I could work elsewhere on more money... It was not a mega-salary in comparison with my labor requirements and that job did not make me feel appreciated. / Well, don't you see that lots of people in this country give up their values for money?!... And give everything up to drink their coffee in peace?! I could say that I was able to do this and to sacrifice everything for my professional life (...) But, I realized that it was more important to find our place within this society, our inner satisfaction!

S. hadn't been the perfect employee all the time and tried to bring motives in her defense.

(...) and there came overwork, lack of sleep, terrible tiredness. It was impossible to give yield according to your fair professional value when you were chronically tired. You just could not! And it was even more frustrating that situation, especially because you wanted perfection from you!

S. acknowledged the fact and her recollected interactions with the superiors come to emphasize the idea:

Yes, I was very firm. Even in editorial meetings. Especially when tired. Once I should have taken a very unhygienic and dirty bus. I definitely refused. Boss looked at me ... and said O.K.... I will send someone else.

At the same time, by narrating how she made her point clear, S. pictures her own triumphant self as depicted by the others' words (Bruner, 1997).

In terms of gender analysis, nowadays representations and stereotypes regarding the modern woman depict a strong, powerful and restless being that didn't perfectly match the image she was building. Consequently, she continued to bring arguments to explain her situation:

That tiredness came from overwork. To be more specific, it was that time when economic crisis started, in 2008. Also, the tiredness came more from stressful situations.

Moreover after leaving her job she takes on gendered activities that according to actual social norms would value her feminine self:

(...) I followed some make-up classes; I took better care of myself. I lost some weight and then I changed my look, my hairstyle, my hair color, my clothes.

At the same time, she constantly depicted herself as being part of a group, only rarely in charge of the action flow until taking the decision to leave.

S. often seemed to use the art of cultural “bricolage”. The concept was introduced by Lévi-Strauss in 1972 and pictures a person who in order “to build meaning for himself uses cultural fragments, <<second hand materials>> that are familiar to him. The *bricoleur* is practical by bent” (van der Geest, 1991, p.83). Bricolage appears in the presentation of “value” problematic S. said:

I identified myself with some values of the respective company. Living in an environment with people who thought in a certain way, automatically you became like them (...) It was that feeling of belonging.

Regarding the managerial practice:

And here is also a matter of bad management. A good employer should not exploit his employees in any way, because they won't be profitable for the company. But this employer ceased to invest in his employees, ceased to invest in teambuildings and trainings.... The main idea was that the employees can be easily replaced.

And furthermore:

To be manager is only a position. ... I guess it's just because the managers in Romania are victims of the communist system. Many of them still live in communism, so they can not grow, they can not see beyond. They are victims of fate or, to be more specific, victims of the system.

She put together bits and pieces of former knowledge in order to produce a sensible argumentation. Her discourse was about times she didn't live in and about a type of occupation she knew only from books and by observing and interpreting her superiors' behavior.

S. produced situated knowledge in order to rationalize all the initiatives she remembered to have had during the years of corporate work. The rationalization process usually involved herself and the significant others in her discourse who created the contexts for her story to unfold.

The human resources department should integrate new employees in organizational culture, should make them feel welcomed, feel appreciated. Unfortunately, the phrase: “the employee is our value” is empty of content for most companies in Romania. The most managers in Romania don't realize how important is to delegate tasks well. So, some employees are exploited, other employees work less. And this situation is not good for the growth of the company.

The others were depicted as actors playing secondary parts, but still essential characters in order for S. to present her side of the story. By spontaneously creating motives when answering the questions, S. took over the role of the others.

Last but not least, within her rationalization process, the young woman also made use of numerous contrast structures (Smith, 1990). This is one method she frequently embraced to make her points clear:

From the outside I was very appreciated, while from the inside I was treated like an object. / I didn't actually faint at any point, but my immunity was weak and I got ugly colds. The flu kept me in bed some weeks. / My life was so fine for about six months. Then the tiredness appeared. And eventually there was chronic tiredness.

A rebellious quest for freedom and autonomy

I asked S.S. to recommend me another corporate employee she knew who would meet the research requirements in the present paper and she introduced me to M.B. a woman of approximately the same age, with a university degree in Journalism, alike in terms of earned income with my first subject.

M.B. graduated Journalism 6 years ago and she had had a few working experiences until we met among which two corporate jobs in companies with more than 200 employees, criterion also required by my research. At the time of the interview, she was working as Project Manager in a small business, her duties being of organizing symphonic concerts, different workshops, tutoring programs and social gatherings all connected to the field of classical music.

M.B.'s story was dynamic, centered on herself, her trajectory and her continuous struggle with characters that would hinder her to fit in. Her recollection consisted in a couple of separate narrations equivalent with each job my interviewee had. She depicted every job adventure by focusing on her likes and dislikes regarding the working place:

We were free to go to school and we had a very good relationship with some of our colleagues (...) / There were days when I used to start working at 8.30-9.00 in the morning and returned back home at 2-3 in the morning after having an event and then had to go and write my articles at the office or just go home and write the articles from there and upload them on the website. / (...) our office was in a small apartment chamber. I was working all alone on the whole website (...) I felt like working for a family job. The only thing that I didn't like was that I had a schedule ... Otherwise I was going to work just to write another article or upload the horoscope and the weather report.

Secondary personages were present within each recollection and played an important part in M.B.'s decisions to leave her jobs:

Plus, the bosses... I don't know if there was one working place where I didn't fight with my direct boss; never with the big bosses, only with my department boss. / Q:

Did you ever have contradictory discussions with the other employers? A: Not with the big boss, but with my direct boss, yes! It wasn't just a fight, it was really ugly. / I was coming with some ideas and they asked me to keep the ideas for myself.

Most of the short-stories ended up with a fight the young woman had had with her superiors, clearly depicted as representing the category of the negative characters:

I was bothered by all the corrections she made... / Then our editor left and in his place came a pretty hollow guy who was afraid of the big bosses (...) / If they see that you have common sense, they used you until you dropped. (...) They can bring you at the point when they see you reached your limits they will then slow down for a time because they would need you again afterwards. Practically, you are their slave.

Moreover, at some point, a helper type of personage appeared at some point just to make the process of categorization easier:

One day it was very cold at the office so a colleague gave me her sweater and my boss just yelled at me because I wasn't aloud to wear that sweater at work because it wasn't suitable for my place in the company. She told me: "You have a salary big enough to change your wardrobe!".

Overall, M.B.'s story looked like a quest for the perfect working place that would confer her enough independence in terms of schedule, superiors and tasks. And she had to go through a couple of hard tests until reaching this "trophy".

M.B.'s story was based on her interactions with other characters, her being in every narration both the victim and the hero succeeding every time to escape "the vicious world". The "others" are important personages in the young woman's stories as most of the times she sees their attitudes and behaviors as decisive for her discontent and for her leaving the working places. Thus, her approach follows Blum and McHugh's theory stating that "whatever is cited as a motive serves to more fully and completely characterize the event for which it is formulated, and cannot then be treated as independent of the event" (1971, p.101). The two authors talk about the connection between motives and biography stating that "Motives are the social characterizations, generally available, the grammar which is used when biography and event are to be linked" (*idem*, p.105).

Before officially starting the interview I learned that her father used to be a well-known composer. Later, this detail would shed a new light on my understanding of her satisfaction regarding the work she was doing and on the fact that she was taking easily the besetments she was facing there in comparison to her previous experiences when she considered the same aspects to be more important. The social context and especially the narratives she took over from within her family made M.B. produce differently situated arguments regarding her tolerance degree and expectations: (Before) "Q: Why did you leave if it was O.K.? A: "Because I had there a smaller salary than the one I was offered at the newspaper..." / (Now) "Money ... money is much less now". Her

argumentation is aimed at keeping her status within the boundaries she considers legitimate according to her educational and informational background.

When paying attention to her voice tone, M.B. seemed rather relaxed even when the tape recorder was “on”. She didn’t seem interested in choosing her words as she talked quite rapidly, her flow being frequently interrupted by pauses. Moreover, she jumped from one idea to another. Still, whenever she seemed to be put into an uncomfortable situation of discourse she would take a pause in speech and light up a cigarette. When telling the story about her professional experience, the young woman did not give me any hints regarding her working expectations related to the university profile she attended as S.S. did. This might have happened because she was still a student when starting working. Still, her graduating Journalism might have influenced her speech. She talked very much and fluent not needing continuous questioning from my side.

Seen in a positive manner, most of the former experiences presented seem to have disappointed her one way or another and each decision to leave is legitimated by being put in relation with a negative aspect.

As emerging from her discourse when doing a brief content analysis, the young woman’s discontents seem to have been always connected with four different causes:

1. the superiors she had:

Q: Did you have any contradictory conversations with your boss? A: Not with the big one, our boss, but with our editor! We were on the verge of killing ourselves at times, not only having contradictory conversations. / I had a “small” boss – my direct boss was younger than me ... She was small, hysterical; she used to yell at anything...

2. the schedules:

I had a schedule... That was the only inconvenience. / I have always hated the idea of having a schedule. / Everything was controlled: you had to come at a certain hour at the office and leave at a certain hour.

3. not wanting to feel controlled by others:

I was working alone on the whole website. Nobody was controlling me, I was my own boss! / I had freedom of move and of expression; I was able to write anything I wanted to, nobody was controlling me (...)

4. and the stress she accumulated:

I had some health problems, I felt sick due to the lack of calcium when working at the magazine, and at the agency - from stress and tiredness. / If I weren’t at home or at my job, crying, stressed out, I was at the hospital after losing consciousness.

My interviewer used words that depict a rebellious young woman who doesn't want to be forced into doing anything she wouldn't like, as being at work at a certain time, being told what to do or obeying certain rules. She put all her dislikes in relation with the corporate environment which she described by using both the technique of *bricolage* (Lévi-Strauss, 1972) and by recollecting different aspects and events prone to sustain her stance:

Another issue while working in a corporate world is that everybody tries to pass the tasks to the other and by this I mean stepping over the others just to get a raise or to look better in the eyes of the boss and I hated that! / There is one other thing, another characteristic of the corporatist environment: the employee has to put his head down and the boss has to be a control freak and yell at everyone (...) the employee has to put his head down (...) he executes.

Important to say is that when describing the aim of my research I told M.B. about my special interest in the corporate experiences she had. Consequently, the word "corporation" as it is (and under different other forms) appears no less than 36 times within her replies. The word helps her picture a world she was part of for quite a while but where she didn't fit in. Still, once the context of the discourse was set, my interviewer did her best to construct and legitimate her relation with the corporate environment in general by bringing illustrative examples from her own professional background even from starters: "(...) notwithstanding all the problems and the fights, I didn't feel the corporate environment as such", continuing with the second job experience: "It was six murdering weeks. And that because I was working in a corporate environment" and with the third: "I felt like a corporate person while working at M. (publicity agency) but not entirely (...) It wasn't only about the schedule even if once at every two weeks, I had to work during the whole weekend.

Some of the job experiences are depicted in a highly situational manner depending on the moment the young woman wanted to emphasize:

The first year and the following half represented a very pleasant experience (...) then, the offer from M. came and I thought I would be much happier if I would leave the media and work in PR. And during the first three... four, five months that's how it had been!"

Until: "I felt I didn't fit in ... It was like a close family where if you fit in is fine, if not - fine again".

Her stories were descriptive and dynamic at the same time. Due to the fact that "descriptive" seems to linger over "introspective", M.B. kept a certain distance from her past "self" making out of her actual "self" a non-intrusive narrator: "This negotiation between the self of the present and the self/selves of the past is an inherent part of telling one's life story. To be asked about one's life is, to some extent, to be asked to give an account of one's self" (Byrne, 2003, p.30). By presenting a descriptive discourse M.B. seemed to constantly rationalize her story as it unfolded, by taking conversational pauses

or by noticing and fixing by herself the aspects she considered to have been presented incorrectly or the ones that needed further explanation:

I loved it! It was... It left a mark upon me. (...) After leaving that place, I hoped to find a job or at least a team similar to the one from A. I think the team was... It was a small team, we weren't working in open space, you know?!

The above observation made me conclude that within her speech my second interviewer conducted a constant negotiation among her "past" and "actual" selves notwithstanding the interactional side of our meeting. Inspired by Berger and Luckmann's (1966) "The Social Construction of Reality", Desantis (2003) explains: "(...) understanding of our reality comes only through interaction with others and the social discourse (myths, media, conversations) that is manifested by them in their interactions" (p. 439).

Thus, at least two dynamic fitting processes, an inner one and an outside bound one, took place simultaneously when M.B. delivered her discourse. The young woman constantly rationalized her experiences in order to present me with the image she now holds and legitimize her representations regarding the corporate environment and her decisions. She realizes that the behavior she mentions within her stories might be in opposition with the social standards and "a remedial work" (1976) is needed.

The instances brought as exemplifications when taking the decisions to leave each job also stay under the umbrella of "remedial work". When getting to speak about the respective moments, M.B. says:

I had to be there at 9 A.M. and the office was in the opposite side of Bucharest from my place. And I had a smaller salary than the one I got at the newspaper. / Everything was being controlled: you had to be at the office at a certain hour and leave at a certain hour... / (...) until contradictions appeared. I had opinions and they were not paying any attention to them. They even told me to stop having opinions because mine were different from theirs. / Maybe I could have lasted a bit more ... Strange is that I did quit one week before my vacation. I had an argument with my boss and I lost it, I couldn't bear anymore, it was too much!

Moreover, she makes use of "contrast structures" (Smith, 1990) to mirror her opinions and attitudes with "the others" also doing *bricolage* like job with the details she doesn't agree with:

I will never be able to be like those ladies in PR, so precise, never! I don't think that is what you have to emphasize. Much more important is the ensemble, not the commas... / She was yelling at me regarding the way I was writing, but she wasn't able to write more than one article once at three weeks and she needed seven hours to do it.

Finally, having to motivate why she didn't leave the company when she realized that the respective working environment wasn't appropriate for her, M.B.'s

argumentation resembled S.S.'s: to demonstrate herself that she would be capable to resist even when aware of all the negative aspects of the job. Their attitude and motives meet the nowadays character of the young working women able to do their work as long as necessary in order to be accepted by the society as matching the norm.

Prisoner in an opened door iron cage

Pursuing the “snowball method” of putting together a sample, I asked M.B. to give me the contact of another former corporate employee who would match my research criteria. She came up with the name of a young man, one year older than her, whom she was friends with and who graduated International Relations.

M.D. accepted gladly his friend’s proposal of being part of a sociological research on working experience in corporate environment and told her he looked forward to meeting me as he had plenty of things to tell. His eagerness looked both encouraging and intriguing to me.

M.D.’s story was centered on a single corporate experience where the young man played the part of the heroe caught in a vicious world

The work environment was quite hostile and it was encouraged by the superiors, so that we can perform better – they were saying that we should fight each other, as this was the only way to get results...

populated with villains whom he had to face and to beat in order to grow stronger:

However, my boss and... I was not appreciated for my work. I was the only one appreciating my work, as it was no one else in the company to do so... When I got promoted, it happened only because I promoted myself, I was the one asking for. I asked to have a better position, according to the work volume done, without even asking for more money, as they were always saying that there is no money, the company has financial problems.

He could have escaped earlier but he didn’t want to and acted as if he was kept inside by an unknown force which amazing even for him:

Therefore, it was a case of my image – I was afraid not to lose that position. It was about my ego and a lack of alternatives. Hence, I hoped that my position will disappear before me; I mean that the magazine will be closed. I was hoping this because I didn’t want to accept the fact that I lost or I was fired. Shocking, no?!

In the same spirit as in the previous stories, M.D. pictured his superiors as the negative characters:

The appreciation and recompense for my work were “o”. My boss followed the same ideology as the CEOs, meaning fights, humiliation, because this was their philosophy... The philosophy that treated employees as numbers, not as human beings, as instruments, just some objects... The only persons that were important

were the managers. And their salaries were huge comparing to ours. When they decided to fire people, the slaves were the first ones out, exactly those ones that were actually working. The managers, without any qualifications and without doing any work at all, were still receiving posh cars and high salaries.

M.D. centered the action round himself. He hardly individualized any characters. In general he talked about “managers” and “people in charge” as clear cut categories to blame for his unpleasant experience and for the company’s collapse. In the same spirit, he didn’t emphasize on his interactions with certain persons but stick to describing these groups’ behaviours and the way they would have influenced his stay there.

They didn’t care about the fact that those employees had kids and families or mortgages. The only thing that was important was to pay the managers, those managers that were driving posh cars. / All this time we were doing our job, while they were telling us, derision, that we’ll be paid for.

After paying attention to the opening main question of the interview, the young man told me he was going to talk *in extenso* about his last corporate experience. Still, he took his time to mention a few aspects regarding a former job he had had. His speech was humoristic, full of sarcasm and sometimes even theatrical:

So, unhappy with the fact that each day I was answering with: “Hello! My name is Matias Schultz!”. Actually, I was pretending to be from Germany (even though I wasn’t) and I was inviting people to interviews. / I was happy with my salary – over 10 millions... Then, my colleagues told me that I was a stupid to accept that salary, that I should have been negotiating it... / I was not appreciated for my work. I was the only one appreciating my work... When I got promoted, it happened only because I promoted myself.

Towards the end of our meeting I found out that M.D. had been studying “Art and Theatre” for two years then. Thus, his probably innate oratorical gifts might have been enhanced by dedicated tutoring.

Why did M.D. choose to be funny and ironic during the interview? I consider that M.D.’s narration was highly rationalized in order to fit his present social and (especially) professional positions, that of a part-time employee who decided to return to college at the age of 28 despite being freshly married. Autochthonous social norms come in opposition with such representations of normality, a well-paid full-time job being the generally accepted social rule for married men in their thirties. Moreover, all his explanations may also come to “repair” the dissonance that appears between “the ordeals” he had to go through and his decision to stay there until the lights would go out:

I decided to close the company! To turn off the lights! To close the factory! It didn’t come out as I wanted but... Maybe it’s better because if you don’t spend too much time in a corporation, you risk getting sick from nerves or other ... In fact I think I was not able to leave that place earlier because I was afraid (...) Actually, I was not ready to quit, to give up at that position and prestige, as I enjoyed associating

myself with that company. More than this, even though I was not happy with the salary, I was happy to see that, slowly, my contribution started to bring results.

A resembling hard “remedial work” (Goffman, 1976) is done by my interviewer when talking about his new job.

I work as a freelancer in a small company. Without spending 8 or 10 hours there and working inefficiently, without depending on some incompetent managers, who don't know what they want to ask for from you or how. And, of course, not in an atmosphere in which the employee doesn't matter and it has to be exploited as a slave. / I decided to leave the corporation and to make something with passion, without entering the robot process of those who enter into corporations.

He legitimizes his professional situation by recollecting the bad aspects of the corporate job. He mirrors the present into the past without comparing the two, but just by emphasizing the besetments of the first.

Moreover, the ironic phrases came in contrast with the seriousness of a generally condemning discourse fulfilled with M.D.'s discontents regarding the corporate environment. Notable is also the fact that not having had other such experiences M.D. cannot compare and contrast. Consequently he used the same tools as S.S. did: he made use of his former cultural and social background that he “blend” together with his only working experience in a corporation:

The respect for people and for humanity, in general, in corporations, is equal to “o”... or even “-” infinite! Managers are not good leaders, as they don't know how to do this, they have no competencies (...) / I can only recommend to those who would like to do something with more freedom not to be brainwashed by corporations. Corporation does not create values but destroy them...

When asked why he hadn't left earlier, M.D. presented me with a bunch of motives that went from humoristic to tragic:

I decided to close the company! To turn off the lights! To close the factory! (...) Therefore, it was a case of my image – I was afraid not to lose that position. It was about my ego and a lack of alternatives. Hence, I hoped that my position will disappear before me; I mean that the magazine will be closed. I was hoping this because I didn't want to accept the fact that I lost or I was fired. Shocking, not?!

My interviewer's rhetoric reminds about Foucault's “rhetoric of the self” that: “involves the reflexive examination of the process of subjection – the processes through which individuals come to understand themselves as subjects” (Byrne, 2003, p.31). Thus, when accounting for his decision to leave, M.D. might step from the narrator's role into the actor's part. Notwithstanding the rest of his “performance” this might have been the moment when the young man is reciting his *self* (Byrne, 2003) in a more visible manner.

The above mentioned episode was also illustrative for the manner in which the young man characterized the company where he worked for five years: he presented his

own disappointments as being permanently related with a competitive, yet vicious and disorganized environment

Then the company expanded as Napoleon, it got bigger and bigger... / So, their only aim was to become no 1, with any price. / We had no job description (...) / It lacked a proper management, the managers had no clue how to be a managers, had no competencies. / (...) huge management errors (...) they didn't show any respect towards the employees (...) the team work spirit was not encouraged. On the contrary, the teams were separated because of the hostile attitudes, tension and stress. / In the end the company went down, due to the factors highlighted before.

When looking in depth at the company's status, I found out that the firm wasn't bankrupt but still in a precarious financial situation. M.D. might have preferred to mention "the final countdown" in order to legitimize his motives and attitudes towards the institution and the people inside. In this young man's case, motives might "function as observers' rules of relevance (...) motives might be described as personal properties or characteristics of persons, they acquire their analytic force as observers' rules for depicting grounds of conduct. Motives are ways for an observer to assign" (Blum, McHugh, 1971, p.99).

Time could be also a relevant aspect when analyzing this third interview as M.D. left the company where he worked more recently than the two young women formerly presented within the paper. This fact might have also influenced M.D.'s attitude towards his former job during our meeting as his memories and impressions might have been still vivid.

A quest for discovering one's true nature

My fourth interviewee was a friend's of M.D.'s, a 27 years old young woman who graduated the Academy of Economic Studies (ASE). At the time of our meeting I.L. was spending her Christmas holydays in Bucharest as she had been a student in Scotland for a year then. To cover her expenses she received a scholarship and also had a part-time job within the university campus. All in all she was quite pleased with the money she afforded to spend, her income resembling the ones possessed by the previous interviewees.

Our meeting was shorter in comparison to the others. I.L.'s answers were quite short and clear. She talked rapidly, paying at the same time attention to her words. Consequently, her speech was clear and very few flows appeared. Still, I could notice the repeated use of the words *somehow* ("cumva") and *yes* ("da") as terms introduced in the middle of the sentences without being requested by the questions asked:

I can understand the competition, I can understand that competition comes together with corporations and, yes, sometimes, this competition may overcome your own values and beliefs. When I got the position I wanted I felt that, yes, it was difficult. / Everything apart from my job was, somehow, for granted. / Somehow, I

believe that those activity reports are some of the good things that happened within that corporation.

Both words were used as a self-helping tool when constructing the delivered speech. “Somehow” helped the speaker engage in an eventually required “remedial work” (Goffman, 1976) that might appear due to the listener’s different representations. Thus, the work was half done beforehand, a contradictory reply being less prone to come as a fierce attack. By constantly taking this protection measure, I.L. made credible its discourse and almost all the messages she transmits. In the same manner, by using the confirmatory word “yes”, my interviewee kept her discourse under a protective shelter. She underlined, firstly for herself and secondly for the discussion partner, the consistency of what she was saying. At the same time, I.L. fought her inner dissonance that might come during the rationalization process. She fought the inadvertences that might appear when thinking and also the ones that are prone to appear after she delivers her message. Plus, she enhanced her sayings and gave her words a supplementary power of impact by putting them on a stronger basis.

My interviewee recollected her sole working experience in a corporation by appealing to a well delimited narrative structure and relying on shared knowledge regarding the corporate world: “Automatically, a notorious brand transfers some qualities that you may have or not, but the fact that you are working for a famous brand acts like an endorser”.

Within her story I.L. recollected her corporate experience by taking an attitude of distant narrator. Not only the tone of her voice, but also the words she chose depicted an old story my interviewee was once part of but which she left behind with rather few hard feelings:

I considered that working for that big brand was the perfect place to start my career – a place to learn and grow. Therefore, I decided to do my best. And this is how I started working until 12 pm or even later to do all the tasks I was supposed to. I spent many evenings like this at the office. At that time, I considered it normal, as I had to work hard to learn and gain experience. And, more than this, I was enjoying it! / All in all, I think that all this corporate experience had a positive impact on my development. It made me open my eyes, analyze what happens around me, ask myself who I am and why I am doing that.

The young woman constructed her story as made up of compulsory tests she had to pass in order to grow within the corporation and reach the position she wanted on the one hand and become the person she was when we met on the other hand:

Being young, only 21 years old, it was difficult for me to manage my emotions – and this had a negative impact on my attitude – no courage to stand up for myself, for my points. / Being at the first level of my career, I accepted many things I was not happy with (different tasks, attitudes of my colleagues/superiors), I thought that this is how it should be in order to learn and grow. / What helped me it was that I knew my aim. My aim was to work in a specific department. So I decided to be

patient for some years. To accept those things I was not happy with. / Still, it was an evolution, both personal and professional / All in all, I think that this corporate experience had a positive impact on me.

Her adventure was populated with good and evil characters meant to help or hinder her in reaching her goals. I.L. put together “villains” and helpers. She didn’t individualize, just reckoned their importance for her becoming. Still, a great part of her memories was connected to the personages who appeared within her discourse. The young woman dichotomized them into *good* and *bad* characters according to her perception regarding their attitudes towards her. Moreover she described her working place as an environment that had made her understand better the human nature and be able to categorize:

I worked in an environment where most of my colleagues were older than me. And, some of them, somehow, took advantage of me – of my age, my naivety and lack of experience. I thought that they were my friends and, actually, they weren’t. They were just wearing some “masks” (...) Therefore this is how I learned how to make the difference among friends, colleagues and acquaintances. It was that corporation where I met great people, people that are still my friends, even today, after working together for 5 years. Those people trusted me, they had patience with me and they taught me many things. And, of course, I also met people that took advantage of my naivety, as I said before.

At some extent, I.L.’s story resembled S.S.’s one. Both women had the tendency to generate knowledge according to their former cultural and educational backgrounds. The present interviewee practically opened her first answer with such a construction:

It is well known the fact that corporations hire young people without any experience. This is made in order to transfer some of the companies’ values to those young people and make them identify with those values. Somehow, to some extent, I think it may be called manipulation.

Still, I.L. presented a more coherent discourse, merely lacking in contrast structures and inadvertences. The young woman was not representative for situated knowledge delivery in the classical way – she didn’t approach the same topic in different manners. She presented her experience chronologically by underlining her feelings in relation to each and every context:

Being at the first level of my career, I accepted many things I was not happy with (different tasks, attitudes of my colleagues / superiors). I thought that this is how it should be in order to learn and grow. Still, I have to mention that those moments appeared gradually because at the very beginning of my corporate experience I was the happiest person for getting that job within that corporation.

Thus, her knowledge seemed to be situated in a rationally, precisely controlled way. Her relaxed tone of voice and general distance from the events contributed to the same conclusion.

Another resemblance with the previous interviewees emerged. Within I.L.'s story the image of the company was directly depicted in relation with her own feelings of happiness or disappointment:

When I got there, I felt that (...) finally, I have the job I wished for (...) and it was then when I opened my wings, I started to do all the things I dreamed of. / Still, after a while, I got to the same story: not enjoying it anymore, not believing, and not identifying myself with the job anymore. My only wish was to quite, since I kept asking myself – *What am I doing? Just helping a company to make more money and what's in it for me? Just some money to pay the rent and eat, that's all.*

Blum and McHugh explain how people construct contexts in order to build up their own motivations: "To provide a motive, then, is to formulate a situation in such a way as to ascribe a motive to an actor as part of his common sense knowledge, a motive to which he was oriented in producing the action" (1971, p.100). The young woman contextualized her experience by presenting different displays in relation to her already existing general knowledge and in relation with her interactions. One may note the fact that my interviewer didn't present any specific working situations but chose to disclose only a vague picture of her working place and the contexts she had been involved in. Furthermore she realized this description by using personal background and later rationalizations. Exception was made by an episode that must have affected my interviewer more than others. I.L. talked about choosing to consider her job more important than her social life. Still, she doesn't blame the company for this but she talks about an assumed decision.

Money was one of the main reasons that made her take the decision to leave the company. Still, she didn't talk about it in harsh terms. In the same manner as M.B. did, I.L. took a certain distance from the narrated facts. This approach allowed her to rationalize her discourse even more. Still, she didn't use her discontents as legitimizing tool for taking the decision to leave. The legitimizing process appeared when she talked about her identification with the working place and the social status she considered to have achieved when working in the respective company.

Overcoming all the trials for the sake of the dreamt reward

I.L. introduced me to my fifth interviewee, a 27 year old young man whom she had been university colleagues with. At the moment of the interview, B.S. had left the last company where he worked for three years and had taken over a freelancer job. At the same time, he was struggling to develop his own business – a dream he had had since he was a teenager.

In spite of the fact that our meeting was quite short, B.S. talked rapidly and delivered a concise yet exhaustive speech frequently putting me in the position of not

feeling the need for further questioning. Within his story, my interviewee recollected his entire working experience which counted three corporate jobs in different industries: IT, pharmaceuticals and media. His overall story was a quest for obtaining what he really wanted: to develop his own business:

Ehhh... I wanted to have my own business even since I was in college, without knowing, actually, what's that a business plan. I had no clue about business. I just wanted to try and I don't know if I was influenced by books, movies and people.

Thus, his story consisted in a number of trials he had to overcome, each of these episodes respecting the narrative unfolding.

In most cases, B.S. described the working place, his tasks and benefits (duties and rewards) and why he decided to leave each company:

So, I got a job at a clothing factory. I had no salary, car or phone. I was working only on commission. After two months, I was called to go for an interview at Bazaconii - big firm, growing, with more than 300 employees. I spent about three months there. / Then I got a job at "Scop Computers". They had more than 200 employees, the largest IT distributor in Romania (...) I worked there for 9 months. They gave me a car, a phone, my own office (...) Still, I decided to quit, because I wasn't learning anything from them. More than this, they started to fire people, so I decided to quit instead of waiting to get fired... / Then I went to Remedia in the pharmaceutical industry. They had about 700 employees in the company. I was a salesperson. / And, although I had a nice car, C4, as I wanted, and money... I could reach even 40 million per month... I wasn't learning anything... It was like in a shop, just talking to some doctors.

People and interactions were not of great importance to B.S. He didn't individualize but a few persons. The ones considered to have been his helpers during his quest represented an exception being clearly portrayed:

One Chinese guy once told me that he's gonna pay me as much as I wan't. Still, I won't be able to spend the money properly, because I have no experience. And then he said that, first of all, I should learn how to do it. / After talking with a colleague - everywhere, wherever I worked, I had one colleague who opened my eyes.

The rest of the people mentioned were depicted in a general manner by being included into categories aimed to help my interviewer build up certain images, especially the ones in relation with the corporate environment.

I started to attend those meetings where I used to believe that all the smart people are discussing big ideas and I realised that, actually, in those meetings they weren't discussing anything innovative. In fact, from a certain point, there was so much gossip, no matter who was there - middle or top management. / People were not trying to do a good job; they were giving only some superficial answers when they

were asked. And those people were directors who, at first, I regarded as very smart and innovative people... But it was totally different from what I expected.

Each job experience was carefully rationalized in order to legitimize the image he held and wanted to present at the time of the interview. In the same spirit as M.D. did, B.S. often made use of humor and irony. More than that, he was often self-ironic. Thus my interviewee frequently changed the meanings of the transmitted message by making fun of the situations or of himself: "I had properties at my grandparents', I was rich! Still, I had no money, I was poor" / "I was catchy, but actually, I was a mess!"

Moreover, his humor helped B.S. manage the relation between his past and present selves. He didn't try to legitimize his acts as he didn't agree anymore with the things he had used to believe in beforehand. Therefore, he consciously delivered pieces of situated knowledge that made part of his rationalization process. He clearly positioned his narration *before, during, when deciding to leave and after*.

Indeed, B.S. was the one doing the action, things didn't happen to him and he was not involved in contexts he was obliged to manage. He was in charge all the way with his professional experience and thus with his narrated story. My interviewee was the one acting his role. He didn't take distance in order to put himself at shelter from eventual dissonances appearing at the interviewer's level. B.S. said to have had a clear purpose in mind all the time: he wanted to learn how things are done in order to be able to start his own business. Taken all this into consideration, each time he realized that his own set of motives was not satisfactory anymore, the young man changed his job: "When they appeal to others involved in one's act, motives are strategies of action. In many social actions, others must agree, tacitly or explicitly. Thus, acts often will be abandoned if no reason can be found that others will accept" (Mills, 1940, p.907).

B.S.'s description of the company was situational according to time and expectations. The longer time passed and the more expectations were deceived the more unpleasant was my interviewee's representation regarding the places where he remembered to have had worked. Money, other benefits as a good car and position in the firm were of main importance to him thus bringing most of his disappointment when respective relating expectations were not fulfilled.

His narration marked a pick in terms of difference between the way a company may be perceived from the outside and from the inside. In his story, B.S. seemed to be praising and looking for a chimera that kept turning up to be nothing else but a place where: "(...) everything was fake. Actually, we were only some slaves".

The word "slaves" used in relation with corporate working environment was not a first between my interviewees. Three out of five persons put the term in connection with the institution, while four of them, B.S. included talk about the fierce but still inconsistent manner of managing that can be find in such companies.

The young man also talked about the exhaustion he felt after leaving his last corporate job. Still he didn't emphasize much on this topic. Moreover he rationalized the accounts that made him feel that way and doesn't put the blame on any external factors:

I slept for two weeks. I was feeling like i was actually loosing my health. This may be also due to the fact tha I was not able to manage my time properly – going out and spending nights in the city centre.

A quest for professional becoming

My last interviewer was also a young man, a 29 years old senior project manager who graduated Engineering and was working into a multinational company at the time of our meeting. T.M. was recommended to me by my former interviewer, the two being friends for some time then, as I could grasp. B.S. had told me that T.M. had been in the corporate world for many years then and that he must have had interesting experiences to tell me be about. The man had a rather higher income in comparison with the other five interviewees. Still, as the other research criteria were met and the references recommended him as an interesting actor, I decided to proceed with the interview keeping in mind the differences that might occur given the social status he would want to legitimize.

I might consider our conversation quite atypical when compared to the others as my discussion partner seemed to be constantly waiting for questions from my side. Quite often he ended his phrases with an intonation suggesting the use of dots marking untold words and I felt like he had more to say. Thus, I decided to put aside my decision to let the speaker narrate with minimal verbal involvement from my part. Consequently, within my analysis I had to assume that: “(...) epistemics are perpetually live for both researchers and researched and where any conclusions may apply just as much to the researcher’s own discourse as the discourse under study” (Potter & Hepburn, 2006, p.3).

Paradoxically, in spite of my constant questioning, by comparison to my former interviewees, T.M. didn’t pay much attention to my introductory question that underlined my interest in the corporate type of job experience. In fact he even put into discussion my research premises regarding the definition of a corporation. Still, he didn’t exit the preset context completely, emphasizing on the features of a corporation now and then.

T.M.’s story resembled very much the previous interviewee’s narration, his being also a multiple-episode one each of the “chapters” equaling one of the man’s job experiences. By comparison to B.S., T.M. didn’t have in mind an overreaching goal he wanted to meet. Thus his experiences were rather distinct and a clear narrative thread lacked. Still, his quest might be considered one of professional becoming.

Every narration respected the main part of a classical story from entering a specific working place until taking the decision to leave. Each job was described separately especially by recollecting its business features and emphasizing on interactions he considered relevant: \

I got hired in one of them. The group is called Gilmo and its main business is video games industry (...) The company was young; average age was around 25 years old... Only a few colleagues had more than 30 years but none was older than 32-33.

We grew as a team, as a gang of friends. / I left from a large corporation, to a Romanian company, with Romanian capital and around 20 employees. This was a niche business (...) At the beginning, it was a bit rough and difficult from the processes perspective... They had their working procedures, but not thoroughly defined (...) This company I got hired in had 2 Romanian investors, two really open minded partners and deh! the type of people that crossed the national borders but did not have too much prior business knowledge, education, courses or business management experience, but, simply put, two common guys, warm and kind.

The people approach might have come as a rationalization of the definition of the corporate environment that was debated in the opening

Q: I defined the corporation as a company with more than 200 employees... A: I am not sure this is a correct definition... Q: Why? A: Well, it's plain easy... A company with 200 employees can be also a start-up that grows exponentially in 2 years.

From this point on, references regarding the number of employees appeared in relation with every working place T.M. described.

Out of the six interviewees, T.M. is the one using categories the most and in the most clear cut manner. He talks about: "(...) the smokers group" as "In the smoking area there are you can talk easily off the record..." or about "the group of beer drinkers that, each evening, went out for beers" and also says that "The other board member was similar as she was a minister's wife... Most probably that's why they imagined such a business could work". The young man depicts these groups as representing especially "the evil" in his stories. His image wouldn't fit this associations thus he differentiates himself in relation with these categories: "I mean I never agreed with what happened like this, undercover or behind people backs... I was alywas direct". In opposition he underlines what makes him identify with a certain image, thus what values are congruent to his:

In about 3 months I realized I am dealing with unocorrupt, honest people ... O.K., there are stubs everywhere but ... I get to deal with honest people, well defined processes that are followed thoroughly (...) I am satisfied with it! We speak the same language.

By challenging one of my research premises, the young man made his position clear to me. He was the one possessing the know-how within the business field he was the knowledgeable part of the encounter. More expressions he made use of sustain the same conclusion:

Look! / I did a lot of changes there... / I managed to build a client account up to the point where one third of the company's turn-over came from this... / Don't get me wrong! I don't desire bossiness! I already do this... I am already in a management position.

He talked about his job connected attitudes and behaviors in a self-assumed superior manner which he motivated by mentioning his long experience in the field: “Yes, I am arrogant! Because I reached the point where I afford to be arrogant”. An explanation might come from Mills (1940): “When an agent vocalizes or imputes motives, he is not trying to describe his experienced social action. He is not merely stating <<reasons>>. He is influencing others - and himself. Often he is finding new "reasons" which will mediate action”. Mills’s approach can be also backend by other examples of motivations T.M. brought in order to legitimize his positions in relation to his experiences and especially in connection with his decisions to leave the jobs:

When politicians are involved in the business I consider that I shouldn’t be there...
/ At least for me, when I enter the routine: stop game and start a new one. I hate routine activities... These are not for me! / I left when the studio director, my direct manager, was a jerk that did not know to defend our studio’s strategy.

Great part of his motivational system was also prone to do a self-characterization work. T.M. was constantly preoccupied to build up and transmit a desired image of himself as a man and a professional. In order to be able to picture himself in the desired manner (that of a vertical, knowledgeable, strong young pro), T.M. recollected the roles he had played in different professional contexts. He used his jobs to mirror himself and therefore to continually narrate his self. When narrating his decisions to leave, my interviewer placed his *self* in a clear cut type category of *selves* thus feeling at shelter from possible inconsistencies that might appear during his speech or between his past and present selves: “cultural genres of selfhood also provide an external source of continuity to our conceptions of *Self*, for they give cultural continuity and stability to our place or position in the cultural world” (Bruner, 1997, p.147).

At the same time, T.M.’s narration was permanently aimed at fitting his current image with the socially accepted image of a senior project manager, with a certain experience in the field of work and a respective social status. Bruner (1997) explains the process: “The culture, moreover, prescribes its own genres for self-construction, ways in which we may legitimately conceive ourselves and others” (*idem*). His speech also underlined his image as a young man in charge with his personal and professional life. He was the main actor and he wanted to make clear his stance:

Financially it was O.K... but to do my job and also have a personal life I needed some stuff that did not happen; and to get from board member as they said during my interview to... not that ... because of the differences in policies (...) Plus it wasn’t convenient for me! The headquarters should have been centrally located, well furnished and I find myself in a hole, in the city outskirts, with no perspective in the foreseeable future

Moreover, when he realized that his rationalization might not fit his desired image, he re-storied his motivations:

Five months! I didn't stay there for a long time! But, in fact I think I stayed too long! I lost five months there! Whatever... I learned to do some important stuff... I have to admit... / Don't get me wrong! I don't want to be a boss! I am one, anyway... I am in such a position.

Conclusion

The present article was concerned with observing the narrative patterns that emerge when people narrate their working experiences as a whole and their decisions to leave their jobs in particular. I argued that people would rationalize their stories in order to fit the image they considered to be holding at the time of the interviews. In this respect, they would build-up stories that would respect classical elements of the genre as intrigue, plot, climax, ending or character and make use of and other cultural resources.

Moreover I argued that people would be inclined to turn to cultural resources in order to legitimize their actions, attitudes and behaviors and reconstruct their working experiences in conversation. During my analysis I paid special attention to the way my interviewees have used these cultural resources to deliver a story about people, corporations and competencies. Vocabularies of motives (Mills, 1940), contrast structures (Smith, 1990), use of irony (Attardo, 2001) or categorization (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) were discussed as discourse building tools.

The entire analysis was sensitive to the work of self-presentation my interviewees have done (Goffman, 1959; Bruner, 1997; Byrne, 2003).

The empirical part of the research consisted in the interpretation of six focused, unstructured narrative interviews. I met former corporate employees of approximately the same age, holding resembling incomes. Three of them were women (S.S., M.B. and I.L.) and three were men (M.D., B.S. and T.M.). Three persons held a university diploma in humanistic studies (S.S., M.B. and M.D.) while the other three had graduated a realistic university profile (I.L., B.S. and T.M.). In order to find my interlocutors I used the snow-ball method starting with a friend of mine, S.S., who introduced me to the next person and so on.

All the interviewees were firstly asked to tell the story of their professional life focusing on the corporate experiences they held. The methodological approach was the narrative interview. Given the method and the exploratory purpose of my research, the present analysis has privileged a constructivist approach (Silverman, 2004; Dunn, 2005) with variations function of the interviewees' features – when discourse inconsistencies appeared further questions from my part were asked. Furthermore in this spirit, all the interviewees have engaged myself in their stories by sharing stocks of collective knowledge (Schütz, 1932), asking for my approval regarding their narrated attitudes and behaviors or questioning my understanding of the story.

With no exception, the six stories my interviewees presented about their working experiences were tale-like constructed, holding a narrative theme or an exposition, different categories of positive, negative and helper like characters, a plot, trials the

narrators had to overcome in order to reach their goals and endings equivalent with their decisions to leave the jobs.

On the one hand, a difference in narrative pattern was given by the type of experience people hold – whether a more extended one consisting of a bunch of different jobs as M.B. or T.M. did or a sole corporate job – in the case of S.S. and I.L.

On the other hand, another pattern was given by the way the stories unfolded according to people's decisions to whether stick to one experience that they considered to be of great relevance as M.D. did or to recollect their whole working experience by mentioning one episode after another as B.S did. Notwithstanding the type of experience, all the stories followed a pattern starting with an enthusiastic image of themselves feeling deeply compatible with their new job. Progressively, a process of alienation was described, followed closely by deceit as they unveiled the truth regarding the working environment. Their decision to leave brought them to either a martyr or a hero like hypostasis. Money and managers were the two most frequently palpable mentioned reasons for leaving one's job. "Superiors" represented a clear cut category of negative characters within all the stories while "money" was always depicted as considered a secondary account, the interviewees frequently finding other motives that would explain their request for more "money". The more time passed after leaving a job the more people's attitude became one of resignation or even one of gratefulness towards the company for the accumulated experience.

Notwithstanding the focus on a sole comprehensive job-story or on multiple ones, people rationalized their working experiences in order to legitimize the situations they narrated, their decisions to leave the jobs and their present identities of former employees. Two different patterns of accounting for their experiences emerged: one that could be recognized when people took a certain distance from the recollected story taking over the role of an uninvolved narrator and one presented by an acting type of narrator depicting himself/ herself in the middle of clearly individualized events and encounters.

Moreover, during the legitimization process, my interviewees used tools like humor, irony or self-regulatory speech – they storied and re-stories their own words even before supplementary explanations were asked from my side. Taken as a whole, their narration constructed a social and professional image as a legitimate, persuasive self-description at the moment of the interview. Thus, they told their stories also emphasizing on people, interactions and competencies, making use of all the resources they had and that might have helped them construct a generally positive professional and personal self-image.

When paying attention to the way people storied their interactions, two distinctive narrative patterns emerged function of gender differentiation. Women had the tendency to globally construct their experience as mostly interactional, while men had a more self-centered and dynamic approach. Still, both women and men tried to present themselves as congruent with the perceived image of the interviewer and in the way they wanted to be perceived. Men were the ones in charge of their professional

lives, rarely mentioning “the others”. By comparison, women constructed their whole narrations around their interaction with other characters as colleagues and superiors.

The two types of education, realistic and humanistic, brought differences in the way people formulated their experiences in that the ones belonging to the first category were inclined to use shorter phrases and base their recollections on facts and even on numbers while the others used, on average, longer phrases their stories being enriched with more collective stocks of knowledge appertaining to their cultural background.

Depending on the moment of the story, people constructed a self-image that matched the social norms they praised for when they were employed but also the social norms important to them as former-employees. In this spirit, all the three young women brought on vocabularies of motives that would fit their interview image with the one generally embraced by nowadays norms, that of a strong, carrier lady, capable of getting along by her own. Both men and women have negotiated permanently between their *past* and *present* selves (Byrne, 2003). The differentiation brought up interesting examples of vocabularies of motives. The whole process was narrated so it would fit the present personal and professional image of every speaker: freelancer, student or project manager.

In the same spirit, the “company” was constructed as an either good or a reluctant working environment depending on the moment of the story. At the beginning, all the interviewees reckoned to have been really glad to make part of the respective corporations, feeling appreciated and even lucky. The time spent on the jobs was depicted as a mixture between positive and negative aspects and encounters. Further on, the closer they got to the moment they left their working places, the worse their recollections. Their initial happiness disappeared and disappointment took its place.

A slightly different story was displayed by my last interviewer, T.M., project manager. He was the only one still working in a corporation when we met and earned more than the others. T.M. emphasized more on the structural particularities of the corporations he was part of and was less virulent when invoking general knowledge regarding the corporation as a working environment. Moreover, he was the one preoccupied the most with legitimizing his professional image. T.M. was also the one interviewer who didn’t make out of his story one of personal struggle.

By contrast, all the others talked about large companies in rough terms using words as “slaves”, “being lashed in order to produce more” or about repeated carelessness on the part of the managers. Plus, the corporate environment was described as a medium where one might fit only if he / she was especially constructed for it (M.B.), where you could get ill because of exhaustion (S.S., M.B), be a slave (S.S., B.S., M.D.) or lose your friends (I.L.). Still in order not to be judged or to prevent dissonance from emerging, none of the interviewees said to have learned nothing from their corporate jobs. All of them considered to have had important professional experiences but some of them wouldn’t recommend it to someone else (S.S., M.D.). Overall the higher the position in the company and the higher the salaries the less discontent and less virulence when storing one’s experience.

Even if expected to be more personal, my friend's, S.S., story didn't differ from the others'. She didn't bring into discussion any commonly shared experiences and paid great attention to her self-presentation. A reason for her carefulness in discourse might have been the image I hold of her, that she wanted me to preserve.

Special limitation and further research

Next to the theoretical and methodological limitations discussed in the dedicated part of this paper, one of the most important debates the article might start is connected with its solipsistic feature, mainly the tendency to reduce meanings only to the individual's perspective given by one's experience. Thus, the whole present analysis might be considered highly relative and passible to the afferent critiques of "anything goes". Still, according to Schütz (1932), people constantly deal with collective stocks of knowledge that they manage during their every day interactions. Great part of the knowledge stocks already exists in the life world, people creating personal stocks just episodically. Moreover, the process of taken for granted is important for the existing a continuity in socially accepted meanings.

The above observations conduct to the conclusion that meaning and life world mainly reality are interconnected being subjective and objective at the same time. Thus meaning gets created in interactions and is understood due to the already existent stocks of knowledge that allow process as individualization and categorization to exist. In conclusion, during our encounters, my interviewees and I have constructed meanings by making use of the already existing collective stocks of knowledge thus we aimed at generating new personal perspectives by using generally agreed upon background information.

The narrative patterns that emerged from the present analysis may open the door for further research regarding working in corporations. The different approach men and women have when coming to interactions might determine employers to find accordingly different incentives for people to enter the alienation phase of their working experience as late as possible. Moreover, companies might conduct personalized studies in order to find out how the process unfolds from enthusiasm to deceit in their case and try to find out the narrative patterns that appear within the stories told by their employees.

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Alina Petra Marinescu-Nenciu is a Ph.D candidate in Sociology at the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work. Formerly, she received her master's degree from the same institution after graduating "Research in Sociology". Alina is interested in studying the dynamics of values in relation to the corporate environment, the reversal of "the values pyramid" and the issue of "meritocracy". She graduated as valedictorian from the Faculty of Journalism, Media University, in 2007, with a thesis on informing and manipulating through the written press. Short after graduation, she developed a carrier in corporate communication working for the media holding "Adevărul" as PR Specialist, PR Manager and Corporate Affairs Manager.