

Social Psychology and Literary Texts
An Empirical Analysis of a Contemporary Indian Novel

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The *aim* of the present talk is to illustrate the contribution which could be made by using literary texts in social psychology, and particularly in the study of the Self and social relationships.

In previous studies on interpersonal and intergroup relations, we pointed out the benefits of archive research with literary texts for analysing the historical development and changes in a specific relationship (i.e. *friendship*) (Contarello, Volpato, 1991), the interplay between interpersonal links and social macro-contexts (Volpato, Contarello, 1995), as well as the effects of extreme situations on delegitimized groups (Volpato, Contarello, 1999).

Along these lines, we took the social representations approach proposed in social psychology by Serge Moscovici as a suitable *meta-theoretical framework* (cf. Contarello, Volpato, 2002; Laszlo, 2002). This perspective enhances the constructive nature of social knowledge, and literary texts, as creations of their time, affected by and with effects on their own environment, are considered worth of study as they help to create “possible worlds”. They constitute something in the nature of an “intermediate formation” (Kaës, 1989) functioning as 'moulds' on which many lives might be modelled. Literary texts, in this case, may be studied according to the methods and procedures typically employed in social psychological research.

The analysis I will present – part of a broader research project which aims to study identities and relationships in different social environment – concerns an Indian novel. However, I would first like to briefly overview the use of literature in social psychology as well as the socio-psychological analysis of Self and relationships in the Indian cultural context.

Social psychology and literature

The use of literary texts as a source of data to test ideas and theories in social psychology and related disciplines is not widespread, but neither is it rare. It has proved to be suitable, in particular, for cross-cultural and historically oriented research on social psychology and

personality issues in order to enrich and extend our knowledge. There are a number of such studies aimed at illustrating and corroborating socio-psychological theories and models (cf. also Contarello & Volpato, 1991; Volpato & Contarello, 1995). Adamopoulos and Triandis, for example, analysed epic works in order to explore universal dimensions of personal relationships as maintained in Triandis's (1978) model. An author who particularly developed this line is Seymour Rosenberg who analysed Dreiser's collection of short stories *A Gallery of Women* using multidimensional scaling in order to detect the writer's implicit theory of personality (Rosenberg and Jones (1971). He also developed a method of analysis and a computer based algorithm (HICLAS) in order to study Thomas Wolfe's personality as depicted in his autobiography (Rosenberg, 1988) and compared the use of personality and emotional terms in some U.S. and Hungarian novels to investigate possible personality and emotional differences linked to cultural variables (Rosenberg, 1990, cf. also Rosenberg, 1997).

As previously mentioned, within social psychology, strictly speaking, the use of literary texts is less common. However, the discipline is typified by a variety of approaches, some of which usefully employed literary material.

Cognitive Psychology

In the main stream, cognitively oriented, literary texts are seen at most as databanks which may usefully parallel scientific knowledge. Oatley (1992), for instance, supported his and Johnson-Laird's (1987) communicative theory of emotions with the analysis of literary texts. The author emphasised that it is only through experience that we may cover a fundamental aspect of understanding emotions which scientific research cannot fulfil - *Verstehen* or imaginative 'reliving' - and this is provided masterfully in good art. Oatley's method for analysing literary texts is based on two criteria, similar to those used in history or literary criticism for inferring intention and conflict in narratives: the criteria of consensual understanding and that of consistency. In this vein, Oatley's analysis of texts, a kind of literary criticism, runs parallel to his more scientifically-oriented research. The method chosen by the author to analyse literary texts owes a lot to human sciences and makes no attempt to intertwine humanistic and scientific knowledge. It is almost as if the author had decided to take time off from the 'harsh main stream' of cognitive psychology and had deliberately looked elsewhere not only for his sources but also his research method.

Other approaches developed in the last few decades gave voice to literary texts in a more direct way. It is particularly so with what is called

The Narrative Turn

Bruner, one of the leading scholars of this approach pointed out how literary productions are particularly suitable in the study of *regularities and deviations* in self-making (or world-making, 'life-making') ... which "depends heavily upon the systematic system in which it is conducted – its opportunities and constraints" (p.36).

In his words:

".. literary inventions are inspirations to new modes of life, invitation to experience fresh ways of violating the banalities of folk psychology, and we honour the Laurence Sternes and Natalia Ginzburgs, the Virginia Woolfs and Anais Nins as much for their 'human insights' as for their literary skills" (Bruner, 1991, p.30 ed. 2001).

However, Bruner's research and his school focussed more on everyday-life narratives (e.g. autobiographies of an entire family) than on literary ones.

The narrative and relational turn

The central importance of language in the social construction of the world and of narration in psychological theory is emphasised in the social constructionist approach proposed by Kenneth and Mary Gergen (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Gergen, 1994). "Aware of the potentials of language as a means of creating reality", they focus their attention on the power literary forms have to shape reality and within it self (i.e. "some form of bounded but permeable entity which can be inhabited by the voices of the surrounding culture" (Gergen, 1995, p.155). Within this framework, Mary Gergen (1994) turned to literature, and, more specifically, to autobiographies, noting that, in agreement with gender stereotypes : a) the theme of achievement is present both in men and women with differences in how crucially important it is in a person's life, b) the range of emotional ties varies, with more pervading emotional ties in women's autobiographies, c) physical embodiment assumes different trends, the body being an integral part of women's identities, but often an impediment or simply a "house where personhood is merely" (p.36) contained for men (the essence of a man's personhood is merely housed in his body).

For his part, Gergen (1989) stressed the special power of persons of letters – including poets, historians, journalists, essayists, philosophers, novelists – and thus their important potential role in the study of the diachronic development of self-understanding and self-construction. He wrote:

"Although the unfolding of psychological discourse frequently takes place on the level of daily relationships, special power may reside in certain enclaves. Specifically, the culture and/or its various interest groups may rely on those with well-honed language skills. If the language is to be

forcibly reshaped or transformed, then those with a talent for games of language are required. Persons of letters – including poets, historians, journalists, essayists, philosophers, novelists and the like – are of special interest in the study of the diachronic development of self-understanding. It is such groups in particular that have most effectively pushed forward the dialogue of self-construction” (p.76). (Although James Joyce might be considered a good candidate for Gergen’s remarks, we find Mary Gergen’s research in the social constructionist approach is on bestsellers). The author goes on to say:

“By using ... narrative conventions we generate a sense of coherence and direction in our lives. They acquire meaning, and what happens is suffused with significance. Certain forms of narrative are broadly shared within the culture; they are frequently used, easily identified, and highly functional. In a sense, they constitute a *syllabary of possible selves*” (Gergen, 1994, p.193-4, my Italics).

The Discursive Turn

We might expect an even more widely shared reference to literature in what has been named the discursive turn, an approach which also stresses the importance of language. Along these lines Harré suggested episodically resorting to fine literature. But the only explicit analysis I found is a book written in the mid-eighties by Potter, Stringer and Wetherell (1984) who argue that literature and social psychology “in certain important respects... share their concerns, methods and theoretical perspectives” (p.1). In promoting Discourse Analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Potter, 1996), the authors examine topics such as gender identity, environment, groups, and the Self, recommending for social psychology the same kind of *critical deconstruction* which has been influential in recent literary criticism. According to these authors, literary texts have been erroneously employed as depositories of real life facts. On the contrary, they should be analysed as discourses involved with sense-making as a constructive activity, just as social psychological discourse should be.

The chosen texts are, again, important passages of literature relevant to the various topics treated. But throughout the book, the authors consider works with varying degrees of authoritativeness, touching on Musil's *A Man without Qualities*, and works by Tolstoy and Shakespeare (through Harré's reading), both revising and criticising previous uses of such texts and proposing their own perspective. The method which they suggest is framed within a post-modern and deconstructionist perspective, close – like Oatley’s - to contemporary literary criticism.

The social representation approach

As previously mentioned, the theoretical framework we chose for our research is Moscovici's social representation approach. A social representation is defined as a kind of knowledge ("savoir") which is social (being shared by individuals through communication), practical (i.e. aimed at mastering concrete problems and issues), and situated (that is: located within specific contexts and faced by different groups of people in different positions) (Moscovici, 1961/76; Jodelet, 1984). Knowledge of self, i.e. self-making (as well as life-making), interpreted within this conceptual frame, might better be understood by taking into account the specific 'food for thought' offered by the social context in which one happens to be living. We can thus try to detect the main concerns of a specific social, practical, situated social context and to bring to the foreground the main dimensions along which identities and relations may unfold, analysing themes treated in cultural artefacts, such as literary works. Along this path, our aim is to look for – within the literary domain – suggestions and hints, and particularly 'bricks' (Flick, 1998) and architectures, through which such representations are constructed. We consider novels and short stories the most suitable literary genres to this end.

Although one might expect widespread use of fine literature in the social representation approach, there only a few studies employing literary texts (Chaumbart de Lawe used children's literature in the study on social representations of childhood). Interestingly enough, aside from his analyses on social representations, Moscovici (1986) himself explicitly maintained the potential of literary works to offer a. descriptions of emotions, relationships, behaviour to be interpreted through social psychological models; b. theoretical thought to be gained by rendering explicit the writers' implicit worldview; c. interplay between science and art in those authors who use social psychological theories as a starting point for a novel or the other way around. (The author on whom Moscovici focus attention was Proust.)

We agree with this view and believe that descriptions of individuals and their relationships as portrayed in literary works may prove useful both to test social psychological theories and to expand social psychological knowledge. For these reasons, we began a research project into models of selves, identities and relationships in different cultural contexts. More specifically, we turned to novels and short stories by women writers in various contexts (Contarello, 2002) and, in the present paper, in India, with the aim of testing and expanding models and theories advanced in social psychological research.

Selves, Identities and Relationships

Self and identity are central concepts in social psychology and have been studied from different perspectives and theoretical positions. Consistent with trends in the emerging multidisciplinary field of cultural psychology, however, there is considerable agreement with the assumption that “the self is constructed in and dependent upon the social context, assuming a multiplicity of self-definitions” (Deaux, 2000, p.2) and there is growing attention to the varieties of “meaning and practices of the self and the meanings and practices of the relationships between self and others” (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, 1995). Bearing these considerations in mind, the present research attempts to explore *social representations of selves, identities and relationships offered in a literary text by Anita Desai, a recognized writer of Indian contemporary literature in English*¹. In the analysis, we will follow Doise (1998)’s suggestion to study “identity, as other social representations, as cognitive organization, oriented by a meta-system of social regulations” (p.14). Considering that “individuals use common knowledge systems to describe themselves” (p.17), we will explore: a. forms of “common knowledge on identity” in a specific socio-cultural context; b. “organising principles ruling individual positioning in relation with this common knowledge frame”; and c. “specific social insertions and experiences modulating such positioning” (p.14).

In his search for organising principles, Doise himself briefly reviews studies which aim to detect the dimensions underlying social relationships and identities, concluding that:

“These representations of social relationships offer important coordinates for individuals who have to position themselves in self-descriptions”. With reference to classic authors such as Erikson, James, Jung, Klein and also Markus’s ideas of ‘possible selves’, and in line with research by Adamopoulos and Triandis, the author points out that “The two major thematic lines around which the content of identity can be organised are *agency* (power/mastery/separation) and *communion* (intimacy, surrender, union (Bakan, 1966)” (p.18). Further dimensions indicated in people’s self-descriptions are those indicated in the Big Five model: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional stability, Culture (Goldberg, 1981), while the dimensions considered in the study of personal relationships refer to Affect, Status, and Intimacy (Triandis, 1978).

Other authors interested in Self as representation are Oyserman & Markus (1998) who maintain that “social representations are the *building blocks* from which the sense of self is constructed” (p.108)and, with Holland & Quinn (1987), think that these *cultural frames or schemas* are

¹ In the present context I will use interchangeably the terms Self and Identity, meaning with them structures of knowledge regarding oneself as intertwined with structures of knowledge regarding other persons in one’s own social environment.

powerful devices, which “condition habitual culture-specific patterns of thinking, feeling and acting..., core cultural ideas about selfhood and the everyday social practice through which individuals live out these core ideas” (pp.110-111).

In both papers, the authors review the most pervasive “organising principles” or “representational repertoire” and note the pre-eminence of individualism-collectivism, independence-interdependence, agency-communion. The first (I/C) is a variable often called upon to explain different outcomes in self-making, and in the different importance these various forms of identity come to have in different periods and societies (Triandis, 1990). Societies located at different points along the theorised continuum should facilitate the construction of different selves, as well as bringing to the foreground the one or other form of self-representation, with different social and psychological results. The second (independence/interdependence), introduced by Markus & Kitayama (1991), is considered closely related to the first. The authors also underline the intertwining between emotional experience and social relationships (“there should exist a mutual and highly dynamic interaction among emotions, the self, and social relationships”, p.441) and thus the importance of a further dimension – social engagement vs disengagement – for defining and characterizing different cultural macro-contexts (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, 1995).

Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto (1995, p.443) note that both dependence and interdependence are assumed to be present in every culture, and also assume that one is in the foreground – “manifested in culturally elaborated and shared ideology, customs and practices” – the other in the background – “relatively implicit and not collectively elaborated or prescribed.” We are more inclined to consider these continua as dynamic forces in movement. In the study of both self and relationships, it has been independently suggested that dynamic forces underlie and direct social life, opposing, in particular, the need to belong and the need to develop autonomy (cf. Brewer, Roccas, 2001; Baxter, Montgomery, 1996). In the study of self, the optimal distinctiveness perspective postulates the interplay of two opposing social motives: need for inclusion, i.e. “the desire to be a part of, embedded in, or assimilated to larger social collectives” (p.220), on the one hand, and, on the other, the need for differentiation of the self from others. In the study of relationships, dialectical approaches pose contradictions – i.e. dynamic interplay between unified opposites - at the base of social exchanges, more specifically “constellations of complex, overlapping domains of centripetal or dominant forces juxtaposed with centrifugal or countervailing forces” (Montgomery, Baxter, 1998, p.4). Most authors agree upon the primacy of such contradictions as autonomy-connectedness, openness-closedness, novelty-predictability, but increasing attention is given to ‘indigenous’ or ‘emic’ dialectics emerging from specific frameworks and contexts.

By paralleling social-psychological and literary-art “savoirs” or understandings, we would be better equipped in our studies of selves and relationships in societies. We will thus explore social representations of selves, identities, relationships and see how various social identities position themselves along the underlying dimensions which give structure to such representations. Enclosed in a wider project, the present research focuses on a contemporary Indian novel. Why India? There is growing interest in research on India and, more broadly, Asia in social psychology.

Self, relationships, India and social psychology

Most of this research has been aimed at mapping similarities and differences among cultures. As previously stated, social psychological research sensitive to cultural diversity indicates that Indian and more generally Asian cultures – compared to Western cultures – privilege interdependence over independence and social engagement over disengagement (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, 1995; Menon, Shweder, 1994). A psychoanalytical study by Roland (1987) brought to the fore the importance in Indian culture of a familial self - a We-self - in which close relatives’ expectations and needs are interiorized by the individual. Roland distinguishes among the familial, the individualized and the spiritual selves, which he sees as “three overarching or supraordinate organizations of the self” and, on the basis of his psychoanalytical experience with Asian and North-American clients, gains a “strong impression that the traditional psychological makeup of Indian and Japanese consists of varying integrations of a familial self with a spiritual self” in dramatic contrast with the “American psychological makeup, where the individualized self is the dominant note, with background chords of the familial self” (p.3-9).

In a study explicitly aimed at exploring self-concepts across two cultures, India and the US, Dhawan, Roseman, Naidu & Rettex (1995) found that students invited to answer the TST showed the great effects of culture. Although “in both cultures the largest proportions of responses fell into the self-evaluation and social identity categories, American students made many more self-evaluation statements than did Indian students, whereas Indians made more social identity statements than did Americans”. The latter also referred in a larger proportion to positive psychological states and ambitions. (Interesting but less sharp differences resulted as regards gender.)

In line with these findings, Radhakrishnan & Chan (1997), testing Higgins (1987)’s theory of self in Indian and US respondents, found that Indians appeared to pursue less concrete and individualized goals than Americans and to endorse, more than the latter, personal aspirations fitting their group’s expectations. In both groups, discrepancies between personal and group expectations

appear to cause psychological unease, but the US group tend to suffer more the discrepancy between the actual and Ideal Self, whereas the Indians suffer the one between the Actual Self and what they feel they should be (Imperative Self).

Together with previous studies on attribution processes - showing higher dispositional attribution in US and higher contextual attributions in Indian participants (Miller, 1984) as well as higher dispositional attributions in cases of success by US, accompanied with feelings of pride, while external (fate, destiny) by Indians, with feelings of gratitude (Smith & Whitehead, 1984) – and on conceptions of the person – showing more abstract (US) versus contextualized (India) conceptions (Shweder & Bourne, 1982) - this body of research suggests a sharp division in the two cultures with one of two broad types of self-construals typical of each context.

However, controversial results were obtained by Verma (1985), showing that US participants conformed more than Indian ones to ingroup norms. In a similar vein, Lalljee & Angelova (1995) in a study aimed to test Shweder & Bourne's (1982) notion of abstractness - US should endorse more abstract and decontextualized conceptions of person, while Indian more concrete and contextualized ones - in British, Indian and Bulgarian participants found no evidence of the expected trend: the most abstract and decontextualized descriptions were given by Bulgarian while Indians and British respondents did not show great differences.

More recently, the Individualism/Collectivism dimension – and the common view that Asians are more collectivistic while Westerners more individualistic - has been submitted to debate. Takano & Osaka (1999), in particular, after reviewing 14 studies (comparing in this case Japan and the US), concluded that this common view is not supported by data and that the interpretation of I or C property as “an enduring personality-like internal disposition (i.e. ‘national character’) that underlies a wide variety of overt behaviors of the respective nations” (312)) has more to do with cognitive biases (rare first-hand knowledge of Asian psychology, confirmatory bias in research planning) than with empirical evidence. Suggesting we take into a greater account situational factors, these authors come to agree with Lalljee & Angelova's (1995) conclusions stressing “the flexibility and contextual variety of the person's communicative repertoire” (p.656).

The research

Method A novel by Anita Desai - a recognised authoress, well known in both India and Western countries – has been submitted to content analysis. The novel treats the complex relationship between two sisters in Delhi, set in the background of India after Independence. Correspondence analyses have been carried out to detect dimensions underlying the portrayed characters and

relationships with the aim of paralleling and expanding knowledge advanced by social psychological inquiry.

Main results The book was content analysed, identifying 13 main characters and the lexical forms which represent their personal and relational features (e.g. self-confident, generous). After an equivalence procedure through which such features were reduced following rules of synonymity, 72 categories were identified. The data was submitted to two types of correspondence analysis (following both the Asparm and Aplum procedures) in order to detect the underlying dimensions used by the writer in portraying her characters.

Table 1. Desai - <i>Clear Light of the Day</i>	
Aplum Results: Characters	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability and fear Afraid passive fragile awkward sweet innocent shy <i>Baba Tara Dr.Biswas (Adult)Aunt- Mira</i> • Vitality Proud imaginative stubborn unfulfilled self-pitier curious lively worried <i>Raja Bim Dr.Biswas Tara</i> • Pride and relational closedness Proud imaginative irritated arrogant self-pitier scornful stubborn frustrated (dispirited) <i>Raja Mother Father Bim</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger and confidence Angry self-confident attractive ambitious sharp impatient irritated <i>Bim Bakul Raja Father Hyder-Ali Tara's daughters</i> • Detachment Indifferent/unapproachable absent care-appearances silent absent-minded (dreamily, absorbed in other worlds) irritated <i>Mother Father Baba (Old)Aunt-Mira Bakul</i> • Attraction and openness to the world Attractive sophisticated elegant generous worldly rational (vs emotional) self-confident <i>Hyder-Ali Bakul Tara's daughters (Young) Mirsa-Sisters</i>

The first analysis, performed on the matrix crossing characters and personal/ relational features, singled out various dimensions. The first three factors will be described, accounting for 39.34% of

total inertia (Table1). The first opposes features of fear, fragility, innocence and shyness – linked to one of the two sisters, Tara, together with characters who are depicted as vulnerable and losers (the mentally weak Baba, the eccentric Aunt Mira, the awkward Dr.Biswas) on the one hand - to anger, self-confidence, sharpness and attraction – linked to the other sister, Bim, the powerful and attractive men described in the texts and Tara’s young and cosmopolitan daughters, on the other. It can be defined as *Vulnerability and Fear vs Anger and Self-confidence*.

The second factor singles out, at one pole, elements that are common to the two sisters, as well as to two different portraits of man (winner and loser), referring to pride, imagination, curiosity, but also stubbornness, unfulfilment and worry and, at the other pole, features of cutting off and detachment, associated with the sisters’ parents, their weak brother, their eccentric Aunt and Tara’s husband, Bakul. We propose to call it *Vitality vs Detachment*.

The third factor opposes features of self-contained, fierce pride (typical of Bim’s, her brother Raja and her parents) to ones of sophisticated care and interest in the outside world (typical of powerful men such as Hyder-Ali - a venerable and wealthy gentleman, nearly a myth – and the cosmopolitan Tara’s husband as well as of her daughters and other young ladies depicted in the novel). It can be summarized as *Pride and Relational Closedness vs Attraction and Openness towards the World*.

While not fitting too well with the dimensions foreseen in the Big Five model – the first reminding us of a combination of Extraversion and Conscientiousness, the second containing elements of Extraversion and Openness to Experience, the third suggesting a blend of Agreeableness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience again) - nor with the ones foreseen in Eysenck’s PEN model - these dimensions seem to reflect wider continua spanning from Independence-(Inter)dependence (the first) and Social Engagement-Disengagement (the second). Both the poles of these dimensions are well represented by characters portrayed in the text.

Of particular interest in our view are the great contributions of fear and anger at the opposite poles of the first dimension. Fear, particularly when combined with embarrassment, shyness and shame, gives voice to the emotional side of dependence and interdependence, and it would not be surprising to find its depiction in the cultural context described in the text. On the contrary, anger, irritation, fierce self-confidence, refer to an emotional constellation linked to independence. We find it represented in the powerful male characters portrayed in the novel, but also – and with larger contributions - in the main character, Bim, a woman both highly devoted to norms and traditions and determined to defend her own position.

Table 2. Desai - *Clear Light of the Day*

Aplum Results: Relationships

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deny Affection Parents-Children Tara-Raja Bim- Raja (adult) Tara-Bakul (married) Bim-Tara Raja-Father <i>Neglect do-not-love seek-for-attention elude suffer do-not-understand exclude</i> • Ambivalent Conflictual relationships Parents-Children Tara-Misra-sisters (young) Tara-Baba Tara -Misra-sisters (adult) Tara-Aunt-Mira <i>Neglect do-not-love seek-for-attention suffer feel-touched embarrass</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give Affection Tara- Misra-sisters (young) Tara-Aunt- Mira Tara-Bakul (engaged) Bim-Tara's- daughters Bim-Aunt-Mira Raja-Aunt- Mira <i>protect love patronize invite feel-touched feel-proud be-generous</i> • Affective Conflictual Relationships Bim-Raja (adult) Bim-Tara Bim-Bakul Bim-Raja (young) Bim-dr.Biswas <i>feel-angry insult feel-humiliated wish-for feel-jealous reject hurt</i>
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A second analysis, performed on a table crossing the relationships among characters (some of which distinguished in different phases of the narration = 20) and their social behaviours (87), also highlights the importance of these two emotional constellations. The first two factors resulting from the Aplum procedure (total inertia=20.84%) are illustrated in table 2 and may be interpreted as *Giving vs Denying Affect* (thus recalling the first dimension envisaged in Triandis's model) and *Conflictual Relationships* permeated with affection and embarrassment on the one hand and anger and jealousy on the other. Moreover, further analysis performed following the Mocar procedure, which enables us to detect lexical forms typical of each character, give support to the co-presence of opposite features in the depiction of characters. For instance, Bim, the main character, is portrayed as angry, scornful, ironic, confident, strong, cruel, cynical, stubborn, but also responsible for the whole family and preoccupied. It is no surprise that good literature gives rich and complex portrayals of people and situations, but this co-presence of elements both referring to agency and communion, which develops through the narration, give us a particular blend, which seems to transcend the categories dominating mainstream psychology (cf. Misra, 2001).

From the depictions of the individuals portrayed and their relationships – as well as in the structures which emerge from the analyses – we feel one could detect the author's view, or 'implicit theory'. The writer is well-known, and her writings are available, relevant, widespread (as required for

materials in cross-cultural research). Her imaginary world can thus be considered part of a broader framework which enters into the construction of social psychological knowledge. If world-making, as well as self-making are seen as constructed in everyday life through communication, then a special place may be given to literary communication and constructions. It is interesting then to see how these depictions partially support but also broaden and extend social psychological knowledge on Self and relationships.

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