

Exemplifying sociological social psychology perspectives

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no. Exemplifying Sociological Social Psychology Perspectives In the field of sociological social psychology, there are many perspectives that help explain the behavior of individuals, mainly by analyzing the elements that influence individual thoughts, actions and feelings. This essay uses five examples of “real” life scenarios from movies and literature to explicate the ideas proposed in the perspectives of symbolic interactionism, social structure and personality (SSP), and group processes. In symbolic interactionism, people attach meanings to social life, during their interaction with others. According to Rohall et al., individuals are able to derive meanings from interacting with and forming complex relationships with others (26). As a result, these acquired meanings determine the behavior of individuals. This idea is well elucidated in “Carmen,” a short novel by Merimee who tells of the love story between Jose Navarro, a bandit, and Carmen, a gypsy. Before ever meeting Carmen, Navarro was a good soldier loyal to his country and safeguarding it against evils such as banditry. However, as Merimee writes, after breaking the law and allowing Carmen, who is charged with murder to escape, Navarro starts on a road towards self-destruction (23). According to Rohall et al., the way people interpret interactions is different, but these interpretations are the ones that guide their behavior. Rohall et al. state that according to the Thomas theorem, interpreting a situation as real makes it becomes real (33). Accordingly, Navarro’s relationship with Carmen causes him to commit treason, murder, and robbery, among other vices, all in the name of love. Merimee states that Navarro ends up killing Carmen for refusing to elope with him, and surrenders to the authorities to answer for his many criminal charges (51-53). The SSP perspective, according to Rohall

et al., states that the connection to social life is between the individual and larger societal conditions (37). Harvest Time is a film that portrays the life of a family destroyed by World War II. Antonina is a woman forced to work extra hard to provide for her family after her husband returns from the war without legs. The war is the societal element that affects Antonina, and in an effort to feed her family and continue impressing her bosses, Antonina ends up not giving her family the attention it requires. This, according to Rohall et al., is the proximity principle that affects someone in their immediate environment (38). The psychology principle comes into play when Gennady, Antonina's husband, turns to alcohol to drown away the apparent desertion by his wife. Although Antonina tries her best to cure her husband of his drinking problem, even going as far as performing a ritual in which she slaughters the family's only goose, the family is totally ruined. "' Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman" also serves to exemplify the SSP perspective. Harlan Ellison writes about a society in which people are controlled by a clock's ticking. The state apparatus, according to Ellison, forcefully ensures that the citizens obey the clock, or risk having their cardioplates stopped (163). Rohall et al. state that in this perspective, people have the ability to act independently and resist societal impositions (42). In this novel, Ellison writes that the harlequin chooses to be defiant and goes out into the streets dressed as a clown and starts telling people not allow the authorities to enslave them (220). In another film Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, the ideas proposed in SSP are also explicated. Here, Kremer Stanley, the director, shows Joanna, a white woman who goes home with her African-American fiance, John. Joanna's father and John's parents are opposed to the

inter-racial relationship. At some point, Joanna is ready to defy their parents and get married without their approval. John, however, insists on getting the support of all parents and after a lengthy process of convincing, all parents agree to support the relationship. Group processes, according to Rohall et al., involve the study of how group contexts are influenced by social processes (44). *The West Side of the Story* is a film about two rival gangs, the American "Jets" and the Puerto Rican "Sharks." The leader of the Sharks is Bernado, a brother of a girl named Maria. Interestingly, Maria is in love with Tony, one of the members of the Jets, making theirs a complicated relationship. During one of their frequent battles, Bernado kills the leader of the Jets by accident, an action which infuriates Tony who, in turn, kills Bernado. On seeing this, Chino, a Puerto Rican who had been rejected by Maria, kills Tony and in the end, Maria loses both a brother and a lover. Essentially, the group processes perspective analyzes how the processes involved in a group impact individual members, because membership in a group can influence personal feelings and behavior. All the deaths at the end of the film are caused by the influences that each group has had on its members, for example Tony kills Bernado, the group's status, as stated by Rohall et al. (46). Works Cited Ellison, Harlan. "'Repent, Harlequin!' Said the Ticktockman." ENGL 200: Composition and Literature. McGraw-Hill Create, 2012. Print. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. Dir. Kramer Stanley. Perf. Spencer Tracy, Sidney Poitier, Katharine Hepburn. Columbia Pictures, 1967. Film. *Harvest Time*. Dir. Marina Razbezhkina. Perf. Lyudmila Motornaya, Vyacheslav Batrakov, Dmitri Yakovlev, and Dmitri Yermakov. Risk Film and Video Studio, 2004. Film. *Merimee, Prosper. Carmen and Other Stories*.

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