

“La psychanalyse, son image et son public” fifty years later: explorations via the Social Networks

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La psychanalyse, son image et son public

- **1961-2011:**
50 years of history from an idea to “more than a theory”
- **2011:**
a birthday and a re-baptism → *Celebrating Events and Publications*. The best way to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Social Representation Theory is to announce, at its birthday, new-borns, both on the **a)** editorial and **b)** research perspective.

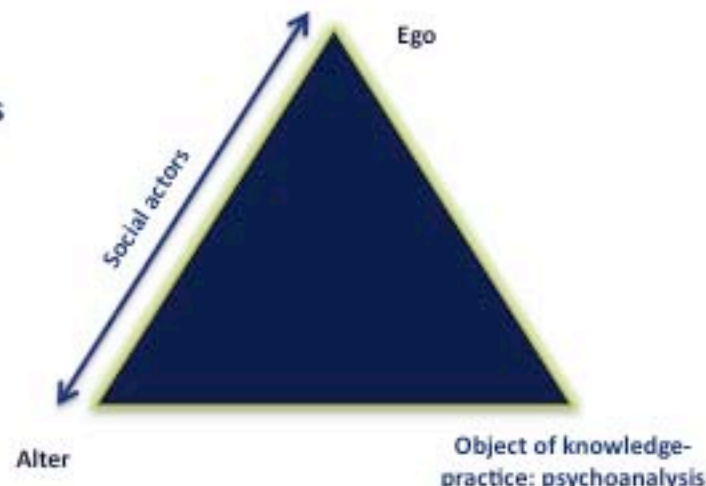
This fertility of the theory allows Denise Jodelet (2008) to qualify it as “*A Beautiful Invention*”, on the basis of criteria settled by Tarde.

The Follow-up of the seminal study by Moscovici (1961, 1976) 50 years later

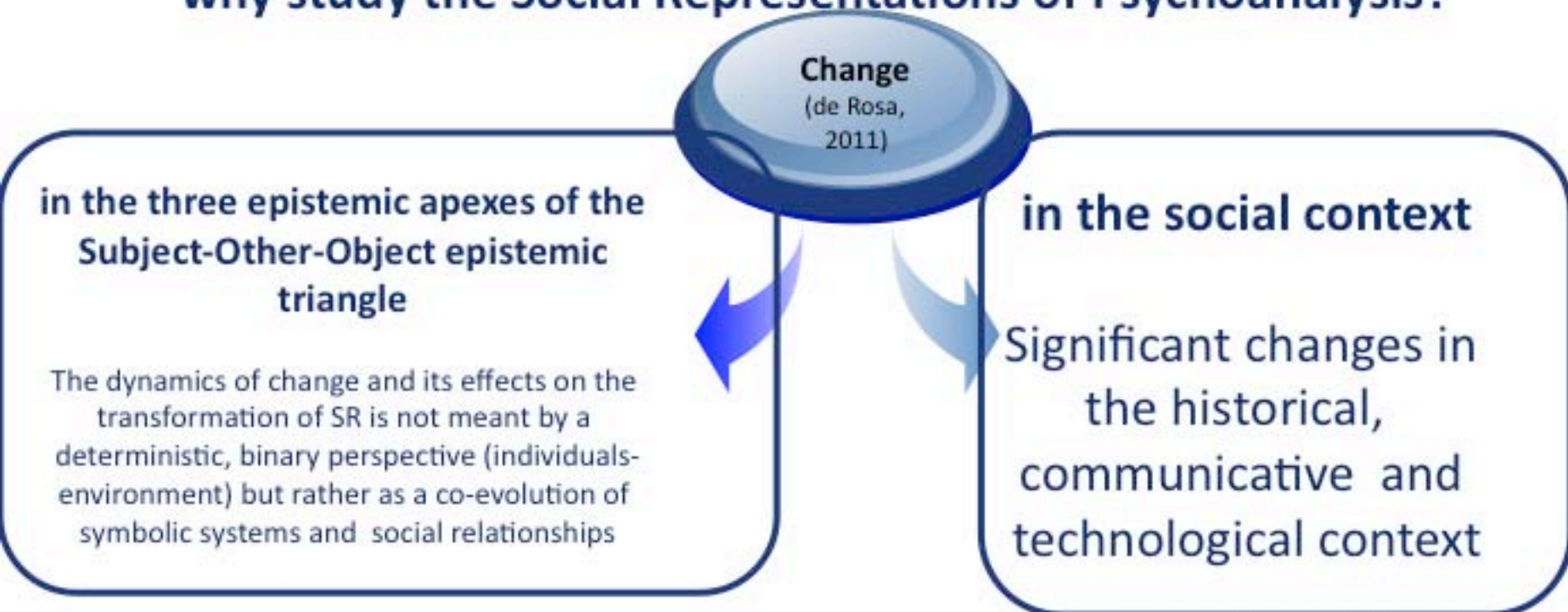
It will be presented as a special opportunity to study the stability and possible transformations of social representations, given the changes that have occurred not only in the three epistemic apexes of the Subject-Other-Object epistemic triangle, but also in their socio-historical, ideological and communicative contexts.

Regarding the **three epistemic apexes of the Epistemic Triangle**, changes have occurred:

- a) In the development of the 'object' of knowledge-practice itself: psychoanalysis
- b) In the social actors (Subjects-Alter)
- c) In the socio-historical and communicative context



50 years later: why study the Social Representations of Psychoanalysis?



Changes in the “object”

- due to the **internal evolution of the psychoanalytical thought and practices and of the wider field of psychotherapies;**
- due to the **evolution in the field of the psychiatry:**
 - a) from one side given the radical changes of the nosography and asylums under the pressure of the radical **anti-psychiatry;**
 - b) from the other side given the impressive development of the **neurosciences.**

Co-evolution of changes in the Epistemic Triangle

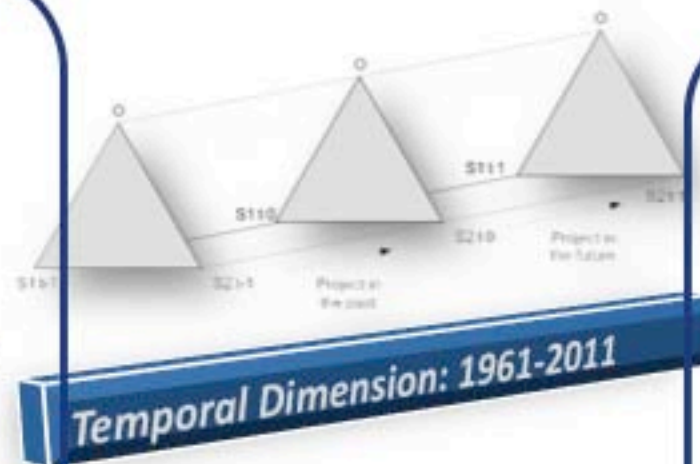
Moving from the observation of an Epistemic Triangle (S-O-A) along a temporal dimension (S-O-P-S, see the “Toblerone Model” by Bauer & Gaskell, 1999) it is possible to identify:

EGO-ALTER:
social actors

**LAYPEOPLE, EXPERTS,
EXPERTS IN TRAINING**

Changes in:

- **socio-cultural milieu**
- **lifestyles**
- **practices** related to health, illness, mental disease and related therapies,
- **exposition to scientific knowledge** and personal and professional environments in which they operate



OBJECT:

**PSYCHOANALYSIS,
PSYCHIATRY**

Both

- **Internal evolution** (new paradigms, schools, clinical applications)
- **external changes** (new psychotherapies, confrontation with the anti-psychiatric movement and the explosion of neurosciences)

Contextual Changes

A

Deep changes in the international political scenario:

- end of the Cold War
- fall of the communism
- globalization
- system of values
- communication channels

Historical and Ideological changes

B

From the **Gutenberg era** of **press media** (Castells, 2000), integrated by the **radio and cinema**, as media complementary to school,

to the **digital era** of TV running forward to the ICT, and **Web revolution** and the appearance of **Social Networks** on the public scene

Communicational changes



Following-up the seminal study of the FWR

Given the hypothesized **co-evolution of social representations and the above-mentioned fundamental axe of changes**, the follow-up cannot consist in the mere cloning of the baseline research but must necessarily consider the compatibility between the **“replicability” of the seminal study** and the **introduction of innovative elements** (new techniques besides the original interview-questionnaire) and **its extension** (in terms of tools, populations, countries, media system, objects of representations: psychoanalysis and psychiatry; psychoanalysts and psychiatrists). Moscovici himself, in 1976, highlights the importance of a Follow-Up in validating the results of Propaganda in the communist press.

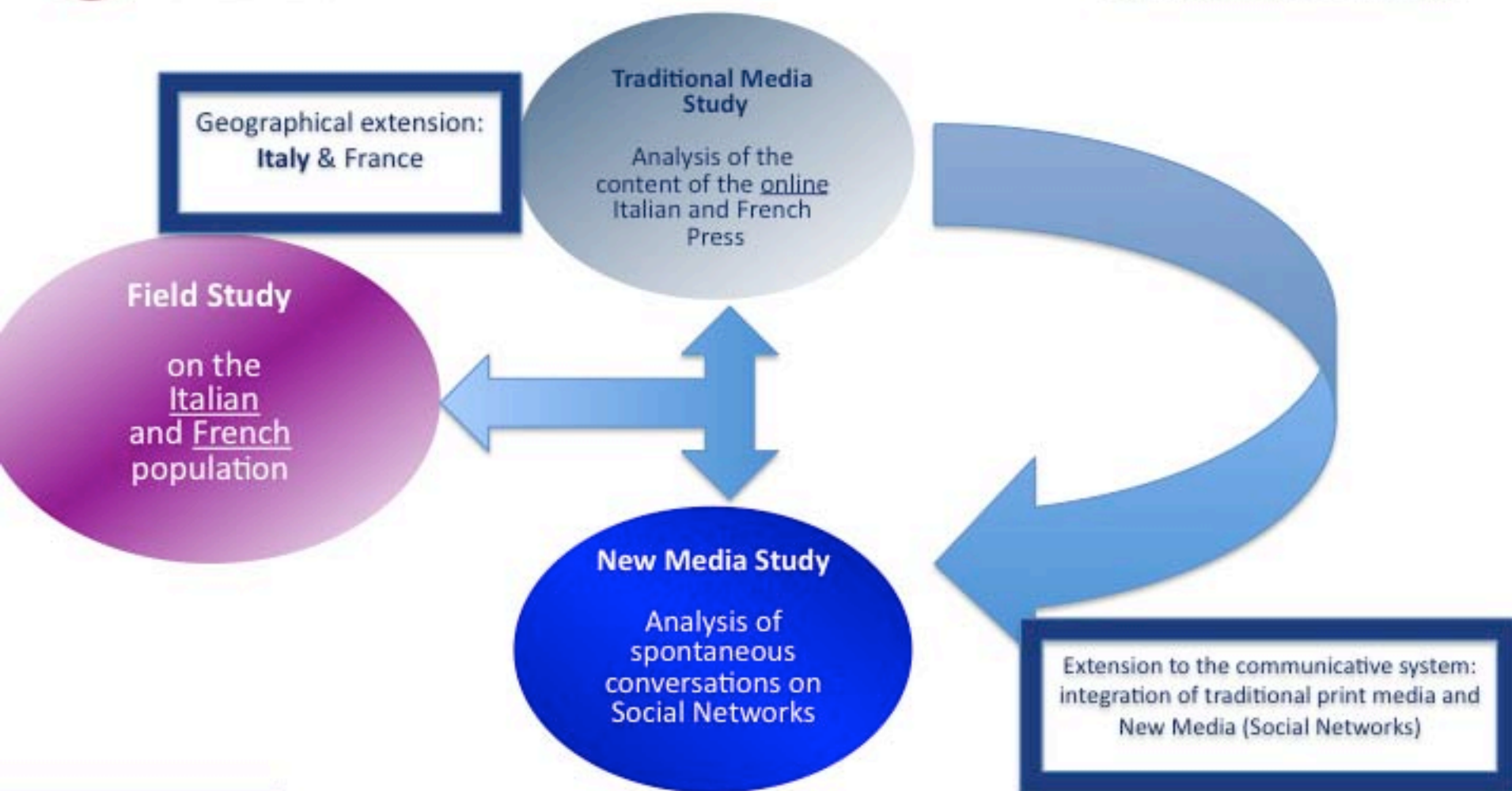
The structure of the Follow-Up



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The Social Networks Study

Content Analysis of spontaneous conversations on Social Networks

Social Networks analysed		
Yahoo! Answers	Facebook	Twitter
		

About the social relevance of Social Networks

- **Facebook** (activated since february 2004): more than 800 millions (812.119.060) world wide registered users (if Facebook was a country, it would be the fourth most crowded contry in the world!). Almost 44 millions of users inthe two countries involved in the research: Italy (21.298180: 36,66% of the country's population) and France (23.599.600: 36,44%) respectively on 9° and 11° place in the country ranking order (7,2% of the total website traffic). Potential stock market Wall Street IPO between 5 and 10 miliards of dollars, the highest in the story of internet companies, Company evaluation estimated between 75 and 100 billion dollars); **Source: socialbakers.com (March, 2012)**
- **Twitter** (activated on 15 July 2006) has registered 000 in 2007 to about 200 millions in 2011, almost a milion and half for each of the two countries involved in the follow-up (4% of the total website traffic); specifically, there are 119 million Twitter accounts following one or more other accounts and 85 million accounts with one or more followers, and the number is constantly increasing; **Source: businessinsider.com (March, 2012)**
- **Yahoo! Answers** is a service launched by *Yahoo!* in July 2005, with almost 250 millions of users: in Italy and in France almost 17 and 7,5 milions (9,8% of the total website traffic). Recent data reveal that the size of the medium surpassed 1 billion answers in 2011; **Source: Liu et al., 2011)**



About the social relevance of Social Networks (II)

- The relevance of the social networks does not concern only the **snowball effect** of the exponential growth of their users, but the kind of social relations that they structure within them and the “**familiarity effect**” that they determine among their members. The kind of **trust** that they generate determines the “**small world phenomenon**” (the tendency of making small the world thanks to the social chain of friends of friends...).
- According to **Ivana Markova** (2009: 239) in the daily exchanges the **trust/distrust** dimension – besides being an object of representation – “might be considered as a thema, as a relational and contrastive fundamental category”.



Hypotheses (Social Network research line)

- a) Occurrence of **new communicational styles** defined by the context of **Social Media**
- b) Emergency of different informative/experiential/sterotypical **conversational exchanges** in ***Yahoo! Answers*** vs ***Facebook***, as function of their communicative constrains
- c) Use of the social networks as **conversational space** for sharing and negotiating personal emotional/psychological problems and providing social support (the members of SN as therapists)
- d) Use of irony (and personal trust-confidence) as an **anti-institutional communicative style** in the web users versus the seriousness of scientific communication on official sources

The Research lines on SOCIAL NETWORKS

Content Analysis of spontaneous conversations on Social Networks

Variables in analysis

Objects of study:	Level of analysis:	Selected keywords for data collection via Google:
SR of Psychoanalysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of each discipline and its goals • Level of knowledge of the discipline and its thematic language • Attitude towards the discipline • Diffusion of the discipline • Efficiency as a therapy/theory • Domains of application • Relations with ideologies • Image of the experts • Relationship expert/patient 	Psychoanalysis
SR of Psychiatry		Psychiatry
SR of the Psychoanalyst		Psychoanalyst/s
SR of the Psychiatrist		Psychiatrist/s
SR of Mental Illness and Disease		Mental Health, Mental Illness

Methods (SN study)*

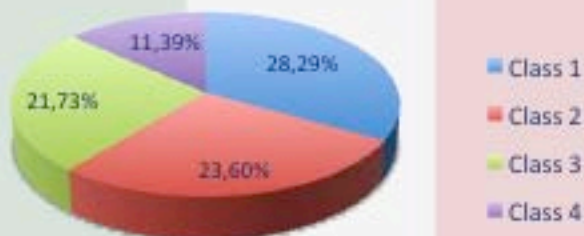
- **Data collection: implementation of a ad hoc methodology by the** collection of a text corpus of public, spontaneous conversations extracted from the SN through Google's advanced search function, according to the following criteria:
 - **a) Time range (1/3/2010-1/3/2011);**
 - **b) Country (Italy-France);**
 - **c) Pre-defined keywords (in two versions, Italian vs French)**
- **Data analysis: submission of the obtained text corpus to a Descending Hierarcical Classification (HDC) by the Software Alceste (Image, V. 4.5).** This method carries out successive splits of the text, looking for the strongest vocabulary oppositions in the text and then extracts some categories of representative terms (see Reiner, 1993)

* Data from Twitter are available, but still in progress of analysis

Preliminary results: *Yahoo! Answers*

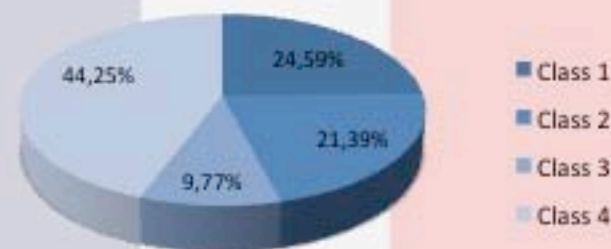
Italian Context

- 217.357 total occurrences
- 7070 elementary context units
- 4 classes identified



French Context

- 161.669 total occurrences
- 5.236 elementary context units
- 4 classes identified





Preliminary results on Italian context: *Yahoo! Answers*

4 Classes Identified

1. Divulgarion of the expert knowledge: representation of psychiatry as a medical science vs psychology and psychotherapy
2. Social Networks users replacing experts: informal tips and therapeutical support by laypeople
3. Sexuality, religion and madness: focus on pedophilia and omosexuality
4. Representation of mental disease as a pathological event in the familiy context



Preliminary results on French context: *Yahoo! Answers*

4 Classes Identified

1. Representation of mental disease as a neurophysiological phenomenon, whose cure is essentially constituted by psychotrope drugs following the comparison of psychiatric symptoms
2. Representation of psychoanalysis as a discipline in decline - evoking a gap between religion and science – and of the psychoanalyst as a charlatan
3. Legitimation of psichiatria in the legal-forensic context and social security
4. Exchange of experiences, emotional support and therapeutical suggestions among the social network's members



Yahoo! Answers: Final Remarks on results

Class.1 (Italy) and Classes 1 and 3 (France) → formal and technical language, both in the psychiatric and forensic field: ***sharing and legitimating expert knowledge***

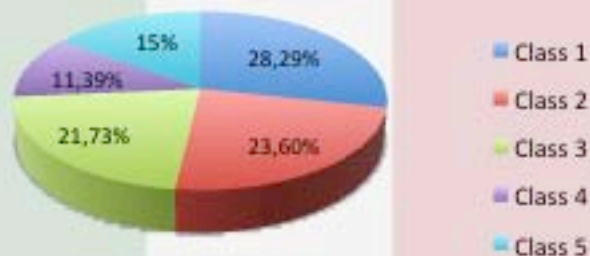
Classes 2 and 4 (Italy) and 4 (France) → informal and emotional language. There is not a real exchange of information but of experiences, establishing an intimate relationship among users: ***emotional exchange and experiential support***

Class 3 (Italy) and 2 (France) → ambiguous language alternating formality and informality. It is not dealing with providing information but clarifying a personal position about the specific problem: ***affirmation of positions suspended in-between science, religion and common sense***

Preliminary results: *Facebook*

Italian Context

- 204.146 total occurrences
- 5530 elementary context units
- 5 classes identified



French Context

**Data are available,
currently under analysis**



Preliminary results: *Italian Facebook members*

5 Classes Identified

1. Representation of **mental health** into an **institutional framework**
2. Representation of mental health into an **informal communicative context of mutual support**
3. Representation of **psychiatry as a discipline** aiming to cure psychopathologies (meant as individual problems) through the application of psychotrope drugs
4. Representation of **familiar distress** and call for **psychiatric intervention**
5. Representation of **psychoanalysis as a theory**

Comparison of results from FB and YA (IT)



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Class 1: *Representation of mental health into an institutional framework*

Class 2: *Representation of mental health into an informal communicative context of mutual support*

Class 3: *Representation of psychiatry as a discipline aiming to cure psychopathologies (meant as individual problems) through the application of psychotrope drugs*

Class 4: *Representation of familiar distress and call for psychiatric intervention*

Class 5: *Representation of psychoanalysis as a theory*

Class 1: *Divulgence of the expert knowledge: representation of psychiatry as a medical science vs psychology and psychotherapy*

Class 2: *Social Networks users replacing experts: informal tips and therapeutical support by laypeople*

Class 3: *Sexuality, religion and madness: focus on pedophilia and omosexuality*

Class 4: *Representation of mental disease as a pathological event in the familiy context*

Final Remarks

- Aware of the temerity of the intellectual enterprise, our hope in this audacious attempt to have at least understood the **desire for continuity** with which Moscovici says his own work in post-faction *"The work of science is never done and its virtue lies in its start."*
- Our research aims to honor the fertility inspiring the *Opera Prima*, that rightly Gerard Duveen (2008) valued as follows: **"It is a classic text, but not the kind of store shelves of a library (...)** Rather, it is a text that should be of interest to contemporary social psychologists and attract their attention".



Final Remarks: de Rosa (2011)

“In accordance with the Opera Prima and its author (who are celebrating today, and whom I greet with affection those who had the privilege to know and to love his work and the person), **I am taking this new research with the humility of the performer of a famous symphony, which does not pretend to recreate, but to renew the pleasure of play it back**, updating it with some variation on the theme”.