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Layers of Intimacy and Emotional Exchange: Applying Social Exchange and Social Penetration Theories to Sally Rooney's Normal People

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Abstract
Most people, when they begin and end a relationship, whether it was satisfying or dissatisfying, do not know the reasons that led to this result. This study examines the relationship between the main characters, Marianne and Connell, in the novel of *Normal People* by the Irish writer Sally Rooney. It traces the relationship linearly from its first stage to its end, focusing on the changes and developments that come after. This paper also follows two theories to examine this relationship. Firstly, Social Penetration Theory, which explains the concept of self-disclosure and how the main characters become emotionally closer by sharing their personal information with each other. Second, by Social Exchange Theory, which explains how Marianne and Connell deal with the costs and rewards of their relationship through the exchange of emotions, and how this affects the continuity of their relationship. Finally, by applying these two theories, the study offers an interpretative approach for understanding human relationships not only within Irish society but also in general. The findings of this study call for more empirical solutions for understanding human relationships, especially when each partner comes from a different cultural background. This interdisciplinary framework clarifies the complex narrative of the novel and also reaffirms the relevance of social penetration theory and social exchange theory in a wider sense when explaining the nature of human relationships.

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1. Introduction

As a witness to the complications of human experience, emotion, identity, power, and society, literature has always provided a clear mirror. It's a boon for writers, who can creatively embed the values, conflicts, and dreams of their cultural moment, and also for readers, as it allows them to study their personal and collective truths. It is a miraculous moment when personal experience is converted, both optimized and transmuted, into the shared experience of literature. Understanding the epics of Homer and the tragedies of Shakespeare, literature has long been both a conduit for historical change, not only in its consumption but also because texts emerge from their political and ideological circumstances. Especially, when it merged with psychology to understand how individuals would act accordingly, "it can tell us something about how literary texts are actually formed, and reveal something of the meaning of that formation" (Eagleton, 2011, p.155) [10].

With the increasing practical role of literature in society, most of the critics have changed the way they deal with texts; they have moved from only close reading and started using ideas related to other fields like psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Barry stated, "the purpose of literature is essentially the enhancement of life and the propagation of humane values" (Barry, 2017, p.18) [3]. The borders between different fields are no longer clear or strict, and literature is appeared not only as an art of

imagination, but also as a way to understand knowledge and interpret human phenomena. It is a ground where individual's behaviors, relationships and beliefs are experienced and challenged. This study has shown that literature is not a separate domain but rather interconnected with other fields that offer explanations and interpretations for human phenomena such as behaviors, especially social issues, within these selective frameworks.

The literature of the 21st century has turned the focus from the outside world, like praising the kings in battles and talking to nature to the inside world of human beings, just like inner consciousness, a fragmented sense of identity, and emotional exchange of personal relationships. This thematic emphasis on psychological intimacy and relational dynamics suggests new directions for the study of psychological and sociological theories. Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and Social Penetration Theory (Altman & Taylor, 1973) provide useful ways to understand the relationships as portrayed in fiction by explaining reciprocity, self-disclosure, and emotional risks. The theories are applied to detect the mechanisms of relational depth and conceptual intimacy that can be discovered in components of literary discourses.

Irish literature occupies a space of its own within this wider body of critical and theoretical work. With a past colored by colonized repression, religious segregation, and cultural renaissance, Irish literature has often been concerned with questions of identity, resistance, and home. From the earliest oral mythologies and epic stories to the modernist experimentations of W.B. Yeats and James Joyce. As Brown explained in his book, "that the study of the literature, culture and society of Ireland often requires an awareness of developments in the neighboring island". (Brown, 2010, p.11) [6]. 21st-century writers are turning out a more intimate literature of relationships and nuance, led by Sally Rooney. Her 2018 novel, Normal People, illustrates this phenomenon by examining love, miscommunication, and social inequality. Rooney's stripped-down prose and psychological acuity lend themselves well to theoretical approaches such as those of social exchange and penetration, and her work opens a window into the complex and often fragile nature of modern intimacy, set against the very specific backdrop of Irish society.

Theories drawn from psychology and sociology are often used in interdisciplinary frameworks within literature studies, considering the elements of inner personality and external social life. Social penetration theory and social exchange theory serve as useful tools for looking at character's interactions, emotional exchange, and intimacy in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century fiction, especially at a time when most of the literary texts were short and meaningful. Similarly, the frameworks stress that self-disclosure, reciprocity, and vulnerability are fundamental for making human connections in general, and for relationships they identify as constitutive of contemporary literary texts concerned with identity politics, hegemonic power, and emotional codependency.

Minimalist prose, emotional nuance, and psychological realism are actually a hot trend again in fiction, especially post-2010. Such a literary development also represents a movement from the plain plot-based story to greater self-consciousness about narrative technique and a commitment to internalized consciousness, unconsciousness of affect, and covert interpersonal communication. Instead of working on rising plot events, these stories deal with the slow unraveling of their character's psyches, the decay of communication, and the flowing borders of intimacy. The modern writings examine how love is affected by the relationships that are shaped by class differences and social pressures, which it prevents people from expressing their needs and desires in their society. It also discusses the problems of the digital age, where people are always connected, but emotionally separated. As Locher & Jucker stated, "The pragmatics of fiction is clearly rooted in the wider tradition of social pragmatics. It relies on empirical investigations of how communication works in specific situations" (2021, p.8). Sally Rooney explores these themes by focusing on silence, conversations and what her characters feel inside. Her characters are often caught between being close to each other and feeling alone. Rooney's writings also show the conflict between real emotions and social expectations in modern Irish society, where intimacy can be both possible and difficult. This would also reflect the nature of Irish society and the way they adopt their relationships.

Normal People follows Marianne and Connell, two young people from Ireland who have a complicated, on-and-off relationship that unfolds from their school days in a small town through university in Dublin. It ultimately ends with stories of socially ostracized people. The author adopts a double perspective, at both the individual and political-economic levels. It modifies the timeworn Bildung structure to accommodate the contemporary Irish post-Celtic Tiger scenario, with folded chronological time and present-tense storytelling to underscore the liminal condition of the generation of Irish youth. It is in a broken form and a realist text with modernist strategies (Barros-Del Río, 2022) [2].

The existing literary criticism on Normal People is extremely rich for such an application of these communication theories, even though they may not be referred to explicitly. Academically, work on this topic has centred on a connected subset of themes related to exchange and intimacy. For example, Barros-Del Río (2022) [2] reads the novel as a story of identity construction driven by the socio-economic demands in recessionary Ireland, stressing that external structures (in SET-terms costs and rewards) shape the protagonists' subjectivity and intimate interactions. In a like manner, Yang (2024) examines how the conglomeration of gender identity and the material body become fetishized forms of autopsy, whereby they are peripheral to the tokens of acceptance that others seek as compensation for participation contained within Marianne's and Connell's respective interactions with each other in light of their existential economy. Also, the narrative has been seen as a key element of how the complex relationship between the characters is portrayed. As Elaref explains, "a non-linear chronological structure, efficaciously tracing the evolving relationship between Marianne and Connell, enabling audiences to observe their growth within more than one timescale." (Elaref, 2025, p.1777) [11].

The plot of the novel reflects the structures of personal revelation, and in doing so, it shares the SPT's core idea by revealing how a character's history and vulnerabilities slowly peel away in order to reach their state of intimacy through different depths. From the indispensable perspective of cultural sociology, but from what one could call an aesthetic position, Váňa (2025) writes that it correlates to a "structure of feeling" in which characters negotiate the unexamined social pacts and ideals regarding relationships bearing on the conflict between internal desires and external social

agreements. With both social exchange theory and social penetration theory arguing, the new studies placed the novel in a social context, individual history, and communication together, which can help to tie/ contextualize them for consideration in what often comes down to an even more direct act of theoretical intervention.

While previous scholarship has focused extensively on class, gender, and psychology as rich themes in *Normal People*, this study's most important contribution is the organized use of Social Exchange Theory and Social Penetration Theory to account for the core relationship in the novel. It does this by drawing together two theoretical constructs within the field of communication to offer a theoretically informed discussion of the mechanisms of human relationships and communication examined in Rooney's novel. It not only tells us what happens between Connell and Marianne, but also how and why their relationship develops and declines at different stages. These approaches bring together literature, history and social sciences. This would help us to see how literature contributes to find solutions to many conflicts between individuals in real life.

The study explains the way that intimacy and emotional exchange work in the novel by using social exchange theory and social penetration theory. The critical issue is to comprehend how the emergence and disruption of emotional closeness rely on costs, rewards, and self-disclosure. Rooney's best-selling book, praised for its emotional realism, follows the intertwined lives of Marianne and Connell as they challenge each other and themselves, and lean on each other for support through changing social stratospheres. Social exchange theory points out that relational decisions are based on the idea that all relationships have both rewards and costs, and that people are motivated to form and maintain relationships to minimize costs and maximize rewards. Social penetration theory, on the other hand, points out that the concept of intimacy is like peeling an onion for different layers and reaching different depths. Using these models, the study explores how the path of the emotional journey of these protagonists is consistent with patterns of revelation, retreat, reinforcement, and inequity. This study also addresses that gap by offering a close reading of some key relational scenes in the novel with respect to the fundamental tenets of social exchange theory and social penetration theory.

This study theoretically applies social exchange theory and social penetration theory as the core of the conceptual framework. On one hand, Homans introduced the model, which was later elaborated by Blau (1954). SET is based on the idea that social relationships are rational and a function of the differences between received rewards (benefits) and the costs (disadvantages). In a relationship, each partner tries to maximize benefits and minimize costs as clearly seen in the relationship of Marianne and Connell. On the other hand, Altman and Taylor (1973) [1] introduced social penetration theory, which defines intimacy as something that grows as people expose themselves more and more. They stated that a partner is like an onion; each time you peel a layer, you get closer to intimacy. Together, these theories provide a strong basis for understanding emotional depths, changing relationships, and the development of intimacy in the texts. They help to keep the analysis based on well-known ideas about human interaction, which makes it easier to understand the character's actions and feelings. The purpose of the approach is to rigorously expose the network of narrative, character connections, and dialogue, and how such relationships are represented in terms of layers of emotional disclosure and negotiated transactions. Qualitative study, especially literary interpretation, is often more appropriate for interpreting the symbolic, emotional, and psychological dimensions of a text and allows for a close exploration of both the form and content (Creswell, 2013) [8].

The data in the present study were collected purposively in textual ways. Speeches from the novel are included here, which one feels that these speeches are representative of the issues of self-disclosure, cost-reward, and relationship development/breakdown. Such scenes are coded interpretively and thematically by reference to the conceptual frameworks. For instance, the moments when Marianne and Connell are involved in personal vulnerabilities or fail to be honest about one another's feelings are analyzed in terms of the Social Penetration Theory, which suggests that intimacy increases as people disclose more and more aspects of themselves (Altman & Taylor, 1973) [1]. Conversely, instances of emotional withdrawal, perceived injustice or relationship adjustment are studied in the context of Social Exchange Theory, which suggests that individuals assess relationships on the basis of their rewards, costs and other alternatives. "A resource will continue to flow only if there is a valued contingent upon it." (Emerson, 1976, p.359) [12]. This analysis is deductive because it derives the themes from the theory. This method makes the analysis clearer and more organized and it connects theory to the story in a systematic way. It follows Braun and Clarke's (2006) [5] model of thematic analysis, which helps to find common themes, patterns in speeches and changes in characters' psychology.

2. Discussion

2.1. *Normal people* under the SPT

Social penetration theory believes that in relationships, intimacy develops greatly as partners share more personal information and become more self-disclosing; by doing so, they move gradually from superficial to deeper levels. The self-disclosure model is represented like peeling an onion: each layer exposes more inner and private thoughts, feelings, desires and experiences (Greene *et al*., 2021). Self-disclosure, or sharing personal information with others, is the process through which relationships move from acquaintances to close bonds. Marianne and Connell's relationship in the novel is a strong and clear example of this theory in action. Their friendship shifts between secrecy and intimacy, and their confessions help strengthen their relationship despite of outside pressures and personal fears. Early in the novel, Connell describes the privacy he feels with Marianne: "When he talks to Marianne, he has a sense of total privacy between them. He could tell her anything about himself, even weird things, and she would never repeat them, he knows that. Being alone with her is like opening a door away from normal life and then closing it behind him." (Rooney, 2018, p. 4). This is the line to deeper levels of social penetration, where vulnerable private failings are revealed in a safe and controlled interactive context.

Social Penetration Theory explains the development of interpersonal relationships by examining self-disclosure from superficial depths to more intimate levels. A norm of reciprocity, a principle which encapsulates mutual sharing, properties involved in both depth and breadth. Sally Rooney's Normal People shows this in the relationship between Marianne and Connell. Self-disclosure is an intimacy-building relationship that works with as much

breadth as depth, and it is one of the pillars in the novel. They share more and more personal details to be connected emotionally. At the beginning of their relationship, we start with very shallow details and gradually reveal more intimate aspects as trust deepens: "The norm of reciprocity is fundamentally situated within these interactions" (Carpenter & Greene, 2015, p.1) [7]. This idea was supported by Nurfadliyah when she said, "In social penetration theory, it discusses how relationships become more intimate because of the self-disclosure factor. One way to reveal yourself to each other with a partner is to stay open." (Nurfadliyah & Maryam, 2024, p.640) [21].

That is well demonstrated by the stages of social penetration in Normal People between Marianne and Connell. Their early exchanges have a tentative, superficial quality, one that is an outgrowth of Connell's social-climbing self-consciousness. Sooner or later, they start talking about more intimate thoughts and feelings, and connections deepen. As it was written in the final lines of the novel, "He brought her goodness like a gift, and now it belongs to her" (Rooney, 2018, p.185) [24]. This is an example of how a common vulnerability builds intimacy. Their interaction involves reticent openness leading to deep openness, which corresponds to Altman and Taylor's model.

The theory suggests that reciprocal self-disclosure of similar personal information creates emotional intimacy and trust, particularly among adolescents and young adults. Laurenceau *et al*. (1998) [18] define intimacy as the feeling that a partner responds to self-disclosure with understanding and care, which encourages and deepens mutual sharing. Marianne and Connell's early relationship shows this as they secretly share their feelings of being different, their family issues and their personal desires. A shared secret complicates their relationship, as it creates both anxiety and closeness. This idea fits with Social Penetration Theory (SPT), that highlights how managing boundaries is necessary in the early stages of relationships (Greene *et al*., 2021) [13]. After their first kiss, Marianne does not see Connell's laughter and shyness as rejection. Instead, "They'd been laughing together, at a shared situation they'd found themselves in, though how to describe the situation or what was funny about it Marianne didn't know exactly." (Rooney, 2018, p. 11) [24]. This shows that intimacy does not come only from words, but also from shared emotional moments that create closeness and reassurance.

Intimacy in a relationship develops when partners influence each other's feelings by creating a zone of comfort and understanding for both. According to the Interpersonal Process Model of Intimacy (IPMI), intimacy happens in an exchange manner between two partners of a relationship, where one of them becomes partner A as a 'discloser' and the other partner B acts as a 'responder' to him. As their interpersonal communication grows, the intimacy increases with the increasing number of interactions. In this model, Intimacy is produced by a continuous process of interaction, so what is more important than exposing partner A to his/her personal feelings is partner B's response. (Laurenceau *et al*., 2005; Reis *et al*., 2004) [19, 23]. In *Normal People*, Connell and Marianne talk of a hypothetical situation if they were in Dublin. In this conversation, Connell represents Partner A as he interacts with Marianne for a long time in their relationship, and he expects to be in that comfort zone:

Then we'd both be in Dublin, he says. I bet you'd pretend you didn't know me if we bumped into each other. Marianne says nothing at first. The longer she stays silent the more nervous he feels, like maybe she really would pretend not to know him, and the idea of being beneath her notice gives him a panicked feeling, not only about Marianne personally but about his future, about what's possible for him. Then she says: I would never pretend not to know you, Connell. (Rooney, 2008, p.17).

But the speech shows that Partner B's response does not fit Partner A's disclosure. This would lead Partner A to reassess his relationship with Partner B, because the standard of intimacy is based on compatibility and care that arise through deep communication in the relationship.

The relation between self-disclosure and liking becomes clear when the 'recipient' understands that the 'discloser' has chosen him personally to expose his personal information. In this case, the recipient feels trust and admiration and begins to evaluate the disclosure process positively. This would also lead to providing a clear response each time they interact, and this increases the intimacy level between them. (Wortman *et al*., 1976) [26]. In the novel, Marianne chooses Connell personally to tell him about her personal life: "Marianne told him this thing about her family. He didn't know what to say. He started telling her that he loved her." (Rooney, 2008, p.32). This shows how the relationship between self-disclosure and liking can create an intimate response in a relationship. Despite in relationships, sometimes this understanding turns to tension, especially when the intimacy is at a deep level and everything is revealed then then the partners ask for every detail regardless to the value of the information: "Sometimes I feel embarrassed telling you stuff like that because it just seems stupid." (Rooney, 2008, p.184). This tension reflects a form of vulnerability that is common and obvious in adolescent's relationships (Greene *et al*., 2021) [13]. The characters move from a secret relationship to an open one, which mirrors in social penetration theory. The theory believes that a pure form of intimacy includes taking the risk of sharing personal feelings openly, not only privately.

Applying social penetration theory helps to analyze the relationships in the novel of Normal People. Despite the fact that sharing personal information can bring characters closer, but also lead to many problems because of social expectations and pressures. Marianne and Connell's relationship develops from being distant at first to becoming emotionally closer. But this came at the cost that one of them would get what they wanted from the relationship, while the other would make some sacrifice, that is what will be discussed in the next step in this study. By scenes of telling and not telling, the novel bears witness to the transformative power and danger of the revelation of the self. Their story dovetails well with a new study that underscores self-disclosure as the pulse of intimacy, particularly when set against the context of the labyrinth of social identity, cultural shame, and adolescent growth.

2.2. Normal people under the SET:

In the second part of the discussion, Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964) [4], explains why and how humans create situations benefiting from costs and rewards when they build relationships by exchanging these factors

with each other. In brief, people tend to have relationships when the rewards of emotional support, validation, and intimacy outweighs the effort, vulnerability, and social risks and consequences. (Emerson, 1976) [12]. In Sally Rooney's Normal People, the reader finds a literary representation of SET in the complicated and ever-changing relationship between Marianne and Connell. Their relationship resembles a series of social, emotional and symbolic bargains on both their parts, balanced against the clear emotional benefit to the secret state but also its social costs and interpersonal misalignment. Early in the novel, Connell can have all the intimacy and attention he wants from Marianne without social consequence. "Don't go telling people in school about this, okay? he said. Like I would talk to anyone in school." (Rooney, 2018, p. 27). This emotional reward guides his ongoing commitment, despite the fact that he is unwilling to publicly admit to other people that he shares such a relationship, reflecting the calculus of costs and rewards at the heart of SET.

During the story, Marianne and Connell's relationship changes in a way that is compatible with social exchange theory' principles. The theory suggests that in relationships, people want their benefits to be greater than their costs according to their expectations. (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) [16]. Connell's shifting between internal intimacy and emotional distance in public with Marianne shows how he tries to control the scale of benefits and costs. He dreads social costs like mockery or a lowered status in his circle, whereas for Marianne, there is emotional validation and sexual awakening for which the relationship is worth maintaining as a secret. This imbalance in costs and benefits eventually sets a tearing edge to their relationship. Emotional investment and public recognition are skewed for Marianne; "She felt she would do anything to make him like her, to make him say out loud that he liked her" (Rooney, 2018, p. 29). These types of experiences provide testimony to SET's proposition that when one member of a couple views the relationship as unbalanced, having invested more of oneself than has been invested in return, resentment and distancing can result (Cropanzano *et al*., 2017) [9].

Social exchange theory is related to the concepts of alternatives and dependence, and these anomalies are closely connected to a number of the most significant decisions in Normal People. According to SET, people evaluate their perceived alternatives when deciding whether or not to stay in or leave a relationship (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) [16]. Connell's casual alienation of Marianne during their first year at college corresponds to his tentative exploration of other relationships that could provide social capital without emotional exposure. And yet, regardless of the superficial options, the emotional depth of his relationship with Marianne consistently trumps them, suggesting high levels of relational interdependence. For her part, Marianne is willing to pay with personal consequences like social constraints and emotional risks as she comes to experience pleasure being correctly understood and desired by Connell "He knew she was probably getting dressed in her room, and whatever clothes she was wearing when she came back down would be the clothes she had chosen to put on after she saw him in the hall" (Rooney, 2018, p. 19).

The theory argues that relationships contain an exchange of rewards and costs, and partners try to maintain this exchange over time to make the relationship feels fair (Emerson, 1976) [12]. One of the most important principles of SET is the concept of 'reciprocity', which suggests that each partner expects equal treatment from the other, but this idea does not work in a constant way. The balance of costs and rewards plays a crucial role in making the relationship fair. Also, the imbalance of cost and rewards pushes partners to reassess their relationship and, in this case, the relationship can be considered as an unhealthy relationship. (Kumar& Shailaja, 2024) [17]. Marianne experienced secrecy and emotional investment in their relationship, and she desired to be recognized. This is shown when: "Their secret weighed inside her body pleasurably, pressing down on her pelvic bone when she moved." (Rooney, 2018, p.17). This speech shows that she gives a great emotional vulnerability for the sake of being recognized while Connell profits from this private intimacy without delivering her public recognition. If this imbalance continues over time, the relationship may become unstable. This idea goes alongside with one of the principles of the theory.

Over time, the rewards and costs in relationships shift in ways that match Social Exchange Theory. The theory explains that relationships are always being negotiated and adjusted, which helps us to understand and interpret human behaviors in close relationships. When they went to college, they started to experience new partners. Marianne, for instance, experiences a new relationship as a way to control the pressure was caused by Conell. Even if these new relationships are not satisfying, but they can be seen as a way of restoring control of their relationship. People would look for external solutions or alternatives to heal and manage their own relationship, and this idea is also suggested by social exchange theory. (Hatfield *et al*., 2011) [14]. In the story, Connell began to experience the emotional cost of his distance, and realized that the deep intimacy he shared with Marianne cannot be replaced. This explains why our first relationships remain in our memories. Sally Rooney highlights their moments of strong emotional longing, especially Connell's words at their last conversation: "You know I love you, says Connell. I'm never going to feel the same way for someone else" (Rooney, 2018, p. 178). This emotional exchange analyzes the idea that relationships are often formed by feelings of unfairness, leading one partner to withdraw or look for alternatives to compensate the costs paid in the previous relationship.

The theory offered an analytical framework for understanding the emotional and social pressures and struggles that Marianne and Connell faced throughout their relationship in the novel *Normal People*. The relationship of the main characters embodies the ongoing balance between costs and rewards. The incorporation of inequity and the consideration of alternatives also provide additional evidence of SET's explanatory utility; if Marianne is under-benefiting and Connell values social ease, then delay/discontent inevitably arises, leading to episodes of distancing and repair. But although life sends them in different directions, their relationship works because, at the end of the day, the emotional benefits, understanding, closeness, and the sensation of actually seeing outweigh the costs.

SET proposes that the connections endure, not just because they are fair in the here and now, but because the balance of benefits that they perceive continues to outweigh the costs of what they are giving up over time. Rooney's novel reveals that Marianne and Connell's long-term relationship demonstrates the deep emotional rewards that people can receive in their private lives, can carry them through years of inequality, miscommunication, and self-punishment, and ultimately shows the difficult circumstances that people negotiate to be intimate with one another.

3. Conclusion

The current study used dual theoretical frameworks of social penetration theory and social exchange theory to explain the relationship between the main characters in the novel *Normal People*. By addressing both sociological and psychological perspectives, the study analyzed Marianne and Connell's negotiation of intimacy and relationality as they navigate their intimate relationship. The framework of the social penetration theory explains their relationship as a transition, where they move from one layer to another layer. They experienced different levels of privacy of thought, emotional vulnerability, and new situations to both of them. They experienced that in a way that only they hear about over the dinner table or in front of the television screen. The study shows that the process of self-disclosure depends on the nature of the interaction between the partners. Psychologically, the discloser interacts more if the response is satisfactory and reassuring, this leads to a well-balanced relationship.

In every relationship, there are costs and rewards, and their balance depends on several factors such as social, psychological, and even ethical factors. Social exchange theory is used to explain this balance and imbalance of rewards and costs in a relationship. The study referred to the idea of 'reciprocity', which is one of the main tenets of this theory, describing it as a state that is difficult to maintain at the same level. The balance of costs and rewards, in a relationship, leads to the emotional exchange and creates a trusted and comfortable atmosphere. This leads the relationship to be wavering between stability and instability. Regarding the relationship between Connell and Marianne, their imbalanced scale of costs and rewards produced a deformed picture of the continuity of their relationship. The reason might be attributed to their varied cultural backgrounds, in which this study suggests that more empirical studies on sociology and psychology should be conducted to identify the cultural differences, especially of the past, to understand why people behave divertingly when they are in a shared frame.

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