

Operant Subjectivity

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The Presentation and Remembrance of Self in Everyday Academic Life: Building the Case for Single-Case Studies in a Science of Subjectivity

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Abstract: William Stephenson's career-long commendation of single-case studies as a critical component of subjective science was accented in his senior years by a series of "self studies." In the most frequently discussed of these studies, he utilizes Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* as a vehicle for conducting a Q-study of himself upon his formal retirement from the University of Missouri in 1970. In the research reported here, I use the occasion of my own retirement to undertake a slightly modified version of Stephenson's self-study of my own self, including what Singer and Salovey regard as my *self-defining memories* of my Goffmanesque "performance" as a professional academic. Results reveal important differences between subjective perspectives on the self understood as "me" vs. "mine," thereby invoking "James's Law" while also illustrating how Stephenson pragmatically reconciled "lawfulness" with investigations of the single case. A concluding discussion seeks to make the case that genuinely scientific understandings of the self are attainable *solely* on the basis of single case studies.

Keywords: "James's Law", Q methodology, "Rogers's Law", self-defining memory, self-presentation

Introduction

In his later years, William Stephenson (1989, 1990, 1992, 2011; Good, 2011) devoted considerable attention to the valuable role that single-case analyses would play in a subjective science anchored in the foundation of Q methodology. As was the case with so many of his ideas, Stephenson's views on the scientific significance of the single case were neither readily accepted nor well understood by the vast majority of his contemporaries. If anything, the situation today is worse: the authors of current bestselling texts on quantitative research methods border on outright dismissiveness of the single case (e.g., Babbie, 2015). In a sense, this is an ironic consequence of R methodology's lack of confidence in the precision of its measures: indeed, the customary calculation of reliability coefficients generated from averaging several individuals' responses to particular tests, scales and the like, can be viewed, in effect, as a "concession" to this fact. The absence of corresponding statistical norms for Q samples, derived in accord with the principle of self-reference, instead of casting doubt on the representative character of their composition, stands in harmony with Stephenson's scientific bullishness with respect to the single case.

While single-case studies have fallen out of favor in mainstream social science, Q methodology is not alone in extending scientific legitimacy to "intensive analyses" of individual cases. Brown (1980), for example, cites none other than B.F. Skinner, Contact author: dani.thomas@wartburg.edu

generally regarded as an authority within the human sciences, as an ally of Stephenson on this score: "Operant methods make their own use of Grand Numbers; instead of studying a thousand rats for an hour each, or a hundred rats for ten hours each, the investigator is likely to study one rat for a thousand hours" (Skinner, 1969, p. 112, as cited in Brown, 1980, p. 112).

Notwithstanding the emphasis placed on single cases in his later writings, Stephenson's views on the matter have displayed remarkable continuity over the years. In fact, he devotes Chapter XI in *The Study of Behavior* (1953) to an extended discussion of how psychology might put the study of *the self* on a more secure empirical (as opposed to theorists' speculative) footing by "paying careful attention to what a [single] person says about himself, what he believes he is like" (Stephenson, 1989, p. 2).

Critics, of course, were quick to pounce on such a suggestion, and Stephenson (1989) vividly recalls a typical question put to him by a colleague in the early aftermath of the volume's appearance in 1953:

...Suppose I am interested in measuring the attitude of a professor toward his work; he could perform a Q-sort at 60, at the retirement age of 65, and again at 70, and from these sortings certain hypotheses or trends could be stated, how they vary, etc. But what about all the other professors? What is the use of the "single case"?

My reply could only be brief, that no matter what other professors may do, this in no way could alter what the *one* had performed. The problem in science was to make what was done for the *one*, serve for all others. (pp. 2-3)

In this paper, I draw heavily on the self-study undertaken by Professor Stephenson upon his retirement that informs his subsequent reply to his skeptical questioner. Indeed, I mimic the empirical demonstration that lies at the heart of his response by using the occasion of my own retirement as a college professor to conduct a Q-study of myself framed by Erving Goffman's (1959) focus on the presentation of self in everyday life in a volume bearing the same title. I use the word "mimic" in this context instead of the more formal scholarly term "replicate" even though my use of Goffman's ideas as they apply to my retirement as a college professor is virtually identical to the study undertaken by Stephenson upon his own retirement in 1970. The rationale for this terminological distinction rests in part on the meaning of the last sentence in Stephenson's brief, prefatory reply to the questioner challenging the value of the single case. In claiming that "the problem in science was to make what was done for the *one*, serve for all others," Stephenson was *not* insinuating the same set of factor results found in his self-study would be replicated in similar studies of others. What Stephenson was *insinuating* in these remarks was almost precisely the opposite, in the process suggesting that if the study of the self were to acquire a legitimate scientific footing, it would ultimately have to embrace a focus on single cases. The principal purpose of what follows is to show why.

Subjectivity and Self-Presentation in Everyday Academic Life

Adopting the use of the Goffman volume as a concourse source, a Q-sample of 40 statements was selected (in a manner that ensured that the specific statements reflected my own self-referent character with duplication of only five verbatim items used by Stephenson). With this sample, I performed 12 Q-sorts, for the following conditions C₁ to C₁₂.

Conditions

- C₁ My feelings at my official retirement
- C₂ My view of College Administration's preferred viewpoint
- C₃ My ideal (what I wish were true at retirement)
- C₄ What "social control" would do to influence my feelings
- C₅ Goffman's "dramaturgical" standpoint with respect to me
- C₆ My feelings when I *began* my career
- C₇ My view of myself at the "prime" of my teaching career
- C₈ My view when "depressed" over a setback
- C₉ The feelings that others attribute to me
- C₁₀ Myself as I feel I will be *in the future*
- C₁₁ My view when in a "playful" mood
- C₁₂ My "disgruntled self" (after having a class canceled)

Eight of the conditions were duplicates from Professor Stephenson's paper; numbers 7, 8, 11 and 12 were created anew for this project. Q-sorts for the 12 conditions were completed over a two-week period following my official retirement from Wartburg College on May 31, 2016. The dozen Q-sorts were analyzed by PQMethod software (Schmolck & Atkinson, 2012), utilizing both centroid/judgmental and principal components/varimax factor extraction/rotation criteria. Ultimately, the three-factor PCA solution was settled upon, the main features of which are presented in Table 1. As can be seen, all 12 sorts are significantly loaded on at least one of the three factors; one – the one depicting my understanding of the Goffman thesis applied to me – is loaded on two factors: the first positively and the bipolar third negatively.

Table 1. Factor Loadings from Vocational Self-Presentation Study

Conditions (c)	Operant Factors		
	A	B	C
C ₁ my retirement	-	X	
C ₂ Admin's view	X		
C ₃ ideal	X		
C ₄ social control	X		
C ₅ Goffman	X		-X
C ₆ as a beginner	X		
C ₇ my "prime"			X
C ₈ "depressed"			X
C ₉ character (as given)		X	
C ₁₀ future		X	
C ₁₁ work as "play"		X	
C ₁₂ "disgruntled"			-X

(X = significant loading. All other values insignificant)

Factor A: “Faith in Idealized Fairness” – Presentation of Self in a Perfect World

Factor A consists of the significant loadings of Q-sorts for five of the 12 conditions of instruction in this study. As noted, all but one of the sorts emerged from the analysis as a purely loaded defining variate on one factor only. The exception, the Q-sort describing Goffman’s “dramaturgical” analysis applied to me (C₅), occupies a confounding status, achieving significant loadings on both Factors A and C. In the latter case, the loading is at the negative end of a bipolar factor; in the present case, the loading, like the four purely loaded sorts, is significantly positive. This alone suggests that Factor A reflects a mode of professional self-presentation notably in line with expectations derived from Goffman’s theory. Briefly put, the central tenet of that theory is that we humans are fundamentally preoccupied in developing a self based on impression management, that we are all actors on a stage, veritable “merchants of morality” in rendering performances of the characters we wish others to regard as constituting the core of our selves. The notion that Factor A as in accord with Goffman’s thesis is strengthened substantially when we take into account the particularized nature of additional facets of my vocational self that define the factor.

Perhaps the most noteworthy in this respect is the sort for C₃, my self-ideal (how I wish I could have described myself at retirement). Since the sort describing myself as I felt at retirement defines a separate factor, we see here evidence bearing on Carl Rogers’ notion of self-ideal convergence. This observation, which incidentally duplicates the independence discovered to obtain by Professor Stephenson for his own self and ideal, bears underscoring for more important methodological reasons. Indeed, Stephenson’s pragmatic treatment of theory, laws and lawfulness, and the single case is (arguably) not well understood even by veteran members of the larger Q community. That being the case, it may prove beneficial to pause briefly from a consideration of the operant subjectivity of Factor A and use this occasion to insert a caveat intended to clarify Stephenson’s thinking in this regard within the larger context of a science of subjectivity.

To Stephenson (1961), Carl Rogers’ claim regarding the congruence of self and ideal self under conditions conducive to psychological adjustment is amenable to regard as a “law,” but not in the sense of a statement signifying a generalization with implications “about the unity or lawfulness of nature, but for future *use*.” Such laws, Stephenson continues, “are essentially *rules* to help the investigator find his way about in reality... These [laws] are not merely flattering designations; on the contrary, they mediate conditions of instruction for Q-sorts, which provide the *operations* essential to science” (p. 7). Stephenson concedes that his conception of laws “as mere rules to guide inquiries into things” is one that social scientists who are accustomed to regarding “lawfulness as conclusions” will have difficulty comprehending, let alone appreciating and incorporating into their own research practices. In the case at hand, however, it can hopefully be seen what the conversion of theories as “wannabe laws” not only looks like, but can be useful. After all, in the 60-plus years since Goffman’s volume first appeared, it would be unfair to conclude that the assertions it contains – for example, that the imperatives of impression management make all of us “merchants of morality” willing to privilege popular self-image when encountering ambiguous situations in which self-authenticity or integrity dictate otherwise – have achieved the status of laws in the empirically verified sense. And yet the argument it sets forth, buttressed by selective anecdotal evidence assembled by Goffman himself, is eminently *useful* as a guide for generating self-referent Q-sample statements and conditions of instruction that, together, comprise the bridge between theoretical speculation and scientific operations

in the single case. Likewise, with regard to Rogers' "law," we can say that, on the basis of operations giving rise to these factors, my own sense of my self, as understood subjectively of course, deviated to a demonstrable degree from the self-presentation I would have preferred, as the latter is depicted by Factor A.

That Factor A encompasses my own ideal combined with my interpretation of what a Goffmanesque version of self would look like is, in retrospect, not surprising, though I confess I did not expect this discovery. Nor did I expect that my ideal would share factor space with my view of the College Administration's preference for the stereotyped persona of the institution's faculty. The presence of social control's influence, on the other hand, is not surprising, nor is my view of what I saw as my own self-presenting demeanor as a junior, untenured member of the faculty nearly four decades ago.

When the factor scores for A are examined, the subjective commonality of these associations naturally gains sharper relief. Looking at the four highly ranked statements below, it is difficult to escape the impression that hope and perhaps naiveté loom as foundational in Factor A's idealized stance. The "proper attitude" of the (young) college professor is one that rests on confidence – or hope – that genuine professional academic quality, though perhaps difficult to define in the abstract, will be discernable and decisive to those who, in the end, exercise control over the terms of my employment. Underlying or accompanying this hope is a faith that "academic karma" will prevail, that quality will be recognized and rewarded while phonies will not. Finally, Factor A entails an appreciation for academic freedom (in the literal sense of time on the clock) combined with a sense of responsibility to bear witness to the idea that, in academe, hard work can and should be treated as play.

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| 5 | -1 | -3 | (2) | The criteria for measuring "quality" in academe are, like obscenity, hard to define in the abstract; but you know it when you see it. |
| 5 | -3 | 4 | (10) | Phonies and frauds inevitably get exposed in academe. I have faith in "academic karma" in the long run. |
| 3 | -1 | 2 | (22) | Work-life for a college professor is pretty much what he/she makes of it. If the attraction is lack of supervision and the sparse time-demands, it's a good gig. |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | (40) | Teaching can be hard work, but it can also be play. Helping students and colleagues appreciate this is a critical part of the job. |

Much the same message is conveyed when the negative end of the Factor A array is examined. Again, the common subjective denominator seems to be a hope that issues often seen as controversial in small-college environs are not truly so, that the "rules" as espoused in public displays are, in fact, followed in practice. Echoing the highly ranked items, we find a host of distinctly low scores indicative of strong denial for claims that phony standards have undue influence in performance evaluations, that inequities exist in compensation packages awarded to administrators compared to teaching faculty, that official retirement ceremonies are hollow and superfluous, and that standard defenses for diversity in higher education are, when subjected to scrutiny, actually quite superficial.

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| -5 | -1 | 3 | (1) | Status-seeking in higher education is often based on phony standards, e.g., one's Ph.D. program and early publications. |
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- 3 0 1 (16) The pay and compensation differential between college administrators and faculty members is too great to be based on any reasonable justification.
- 3 0 -1 (27) The public spectacle of “official retirement” is something of a farce in my mind. Too much is made of it in my opinion.
- 4 0 3 (32) Though diversity is given lip-service as a desideratum in colleges today, it is not defended very deeply: cultural marginality can lead to creativity beyond demographic breadth.

Factor B: The Self-Defining, Defining Self at Retirement

The second factor is defined by four purely loaded Q-sorts, one of which is describing myself as I felt at retirement. Interestingly, this is the only one of the 12 renderings of my professional, academic self done in “real time.” In other words, it is only one of two sorts – the other being that of my future, post-retirement self (C₁₀) – that does not rely on memory, to a greater or lesser degree. Even when I performed a sort under a “hypothetical condition” (e.g., from the standpoint of Goffman’s thesis or under the likely influence of social control), I was drawing on memories of my everyday self-presentation over a career spanning more than four decades. This point warrants emphasis for reasons transcending the well-established vicissitudes of research raising doubts about the veracity and reliability of human memory (Loftus, 1979). Indeed, the role of memory in an exercise such as this deserves attention in light of a growing body of evidence and line of argument to the effect that memory performs *important self-defining functions* in the development of human personality (Singer & Salovey, 1993). In fact, it is the discovery and recognition of Singer and Salovey’s work in *The Remembered Self: Emotion and Memory in Personality*, along with the research it has spawned, that accounts for insertion of the word “remembrance” in this paper’s title, which is otherwise borrowed directly from Goffman’s classic volume.

The notion of “self-defining memory” also accounts for the label selected to describe the subjectivity lying at the core of Factor B. In addition to the “real time” accounting of my own feelings about myself vis-à-vis my life in academe at my retirement and my extrapolation of the same into the future, Factor B is defined by two additional sorts: one – the Goffmanesque notion of “character” as given – represents my rendition of myself as seen generally by other members of the college community, particularly faculty colleagues. That it bears such a close resemblance to the two sorts representing my own view of self speaks to the reference group of close colleagues I had in mind in performing the sort for C₉ as it does for self-confidence that my self-presentation was generally held by associates to be authentic in nature. Finally, the presence of myself when in a “playful” mood (C₁₁) on Factor B is clearly self-defining in an affirmative way, in as much as it typifies the generally fond memories of my work life as a college faculty member.

When the numerous factor scores that distinguish Factor B are cited, below, the nature of the subjective, self-defining and self-enhancing play – and also, albeit less visibly, of self-denying pain – at issue in my everyday academic life is given both greater specificity and depth. In the first four items that follow, with all except number 24 receiving factor scores on B significantly higher than on A and C, attention is drawn to the nature and sources of the joy I associated with self-presentation as a college professor. These roots extend from the rather commonplace recognition college teaching allows for professional autonomy to more truly self-defining tactics such as

acting the part of a creative contrarian, being protective of time regularly devoted to playful, agenda- and interruption-free “puttering,” and gratefully acknowledging an ability to enter into a trancelike state akin to meditation in conducting a classroom lecture. The pair of painful acknowledgments among the positive factor scores laments the effects on teaching in the latter days of my career in a real-world American political environment of heightened partisan polarization coupled with growing concerns about the preparedness (or lack thereof) of recent undergraduates to undertake critical scrutiny of never-before-questioned assumptions and beliefs. Interestingly, these lamentations do not surface with such clarity in either of the other factors, and it is their frankly acknowledged presence on the otherwise self-defining second factor that ironically gives credence to the “realism” of this particular perspective on a long professional career teaching thousands of undergraduate students. Finally, it bears mention that a careful look at these factor scores will explain the seeming redundancy in the label assigned to Factor B. Not only are these statements “self-defining” in the sense intended by Singer and Salovey, they also point to behaviors that are freely chosen – from a dual emphasis on scholarship and teaching, to a proclivity for protecting “personal puttering,” to treating lectures as opportunities for yogalike meditation – thereby distinguishing the factor as self-defining in a second sense, independent of memory. (In Stephenson’s terms, Factor B and A, respectively, reflect William James’s Law of *me and mine* in relation to my everyday professional self.)

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| 0 | 5 | 5 | (24) At its best, teaching at the college level is akin to a <i>meditation</i> : Time and classroom distractions disappear, as if one enters an enjoyable “trance” for an hour or more, exiting refreshed yet relaxed at the end of the class. |
| 3 | 4 | 2 | (25) Few professions offer the same opportunities for questioning conventional wisdom as college teaching. Being creative often means being contrarian, and that can be great fun. |
| -1 | 4 | 1 | (39) To keep fresh and energized, a certain part of every work day should be set aside for “personal puttering” without fear of interruption. |
| 0 | 2 | -1 | (13) The person who chooses to put his/her eggs all in one basket – teaching OR scholarship – is depriving themselves of alternative rewards when one endeavor goes sour. |
| -3 | 4 | 0 | (21) Teaching politics at the college level has become increasingly difficult of late due to the polarization of real-world American politics. |
| -2 | 2 | -1 | (17) Undergraduate students these days are definitely less well-prepared than their predecessors in previous generations. |

If anything, the scores on the negative end of the Factor B array elaborate on this second sense of the meaning of “self-defining.” That is to say, notwithstanding their phrasing as claims eliciting strong disagreement, they nonetheless share a common subjective valuation of freely and self-chosen – and, implicitly, self-governing – endeavors.

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| -3 | -5 | -4 | (37) Participation in faculty governance is generally a waste of time, not much different in principle from student government. |
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| 0 | -3 | 0 | (14) Faculty meetings are typically a hoot: when you cram 100 PhDs in a single room to deliberate reasonably over contentious policy issues, you can expect chaos. |
| 1 | -4 | 0 | (34) Personal self-disclosures unconnected to course content have no place in the academic classroom. |

Factor C: The “Split Self”: Professional Auto-Pilot vs. Anxious Outlier

The third and final factor is bipolar: Q-sorts for two conditions – myself in the prime of my teaching career (C₇) and myself when feeling “depressed” (C₈) – define the positive end of the factor. Likewise, the opposite end of the factor is anchored by two conditions: one is the sort based on Goffman’s dramaturgical analysis (C₅), which, as noted earlier, is strongly and positively associated with the idealistic first factor; the other, defining Factor C-, is that describing my “disgruntled self” (C₁₂) based on feelings experienced in the wake of an administrative decision to cancel a class I was scheduled to teach due to inadequate enrollment. The state of anger did not persist for a lengthy duration; however, the occasion typifies the intermittent feelings toward administrative actions that occurred more frequently in the years immediately preceding my retirement. In this particular instance, the state of aggravation was due to the fact that the cancellation decision was made before the end of the formal period for course registration.

Initially, this combination of factor loadings appeared rather puzzling. What could possibly explain the subjective overlap between my sense of my professional self-presentation at my prime, on the one hand, and my performance in the throes of a depression, on the other? And why would the subjectivity held in common under these seemingly disparate conditions comprise a mirror-image opposite to myself in a state of anger, an ego state, which from my standpoint also embodies the antithesis of Goffman’s theory of self-presentation?

Checking the factor scores that distinguish C from A and B at both the positive and negative ends, answers to these questions begin to materialize. At the positive end of Factor C, the statements earning endorsement when in a state of “high-functioning depression” – one way of describing the synthesis into a single subjective hybrid of two ostensibly disparate modes of self-presentation – one finds several clues pointing to a resolution of the mysterious coupling of “feelings of depression” with recollections of classroom self-presentation anchored in my “professional prime.” In the first place, it is worth noting that all items receiving significantly high scores for Factor C reflect concerns that the rules governing appraisals of quality performance as a faculty member at my college may not match up with the idealized fairness envisaged by Factor A. Such concerns – regarding standards of rigor displayed by some colleagues popular among students, along with disquieting doubts about whether college officials shared allegiance to the same criteria and understanding of academic excellence that I did – may well make sense as itemized complaints or lamentations accounting for the appearance of the “depressed” state memories on Factor C+. At the same time, however, such lamentations would not appear to fit the bill for a condition recalling one’s feelings when performing at the top of one’s game. One possibility stems from the fact that many, if not most, of the depressed feelings in these years had their roots in personal, familial issues apart from the workplace. In fact, I can recall a conversation with a former president who offered an unsolicited reduction in my teaching load in the wake of a delicate surgery to remove a cancerous brain tumor from my former wife’s pre-frontal cortex. I declined the offer at the time, given that my students and classes at the

time were primarily responsible for sustaining a positive outlook to counter the effects of otherwise trying circumstances.

For Stephenson (1989, 2011), it is worth recalling, the quantum-theoretical character of Q methodology is revealed, in part, in its proclivity for unearthing unexpected, even “spooky” subjective phenomena very much like the logic-defying physical phenomena – for example, dark matter, entanglement and the like – encountered by physicists in their explorations of the sub-atomic world. When forced to rethink or process more deeply unanticipated findings like these, it becomes necessary, even plausible, to consider “out-of-the-box” theoretical possibilities. In the case at hand, it is therefore appropriate to ask, *what functional, subjective order or sensibility* might well have been illuminated by the coincidence of “prime” and “depressed” versions of my vocational self-presentation? Reconsidered in this manner, what on first impressions seems illogical becomes subject to a reconstituted, more inclusive meaning, one entailing a “metanarrative” sensibility. Two specific accounts recommend themselves for consideration with respect to Factor C’s intriguing character, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

The first account is focused on the statements defining the positive end of Factor C+. To be frank, they voice concerns that represent perennial, albeit intermittently salient, sources of annoyance over the duration of my entire professional life. The college where I taught was a religiously affiliated institution whose by-laws mandated that the school’s president be a Lutheran. I was an unapologetic agnostic, indifferent at best toward institutionalized religion. In addition, the college showed no hesitation toward hiring its own graduates, thereby sowing seeds of morale-eroding suspicion with regard to the application of genuinely equitable standards of evaluation in personnel matters. Finally, the college’s political culture was decisively conservative, particularly insofar as its student clientele was concerned. Factor C+’s positive end signifies a “reconciliation” of sorts between these realities and my presence as an agnostic liberal Democrat inclined for the four decades of my work life to consider myself as residing at the margins of the dominant culture of my employer. Seen in this light, the reason for the high score given statement 32, read with an emphasis on the second rather than the first part, makes sense. This is not to say that the entire duration of my prime years as a college instructor were lived in a depressed state. Rather, the series of (minor) annoyances that would periodically flair and, on occasion, set off feelings of depression stemming from a sense of alienation, of not fitting in, of occupying a place at the margins of the school’s major emphases and initiatives – these came to be accepted and tolerated in the spirit of a professional contrarian.

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| -1 | -4 | 5 | (18) Colleagues with reputations among students as “easy A’s” do not do their students or more demanding instructors any favors by pursuing the “little arts of popularity.” |
| -4 | 0 | 4 | (28) Private liberal arts colleges should make it a practice not to hire their own graduates. Failure to do so hurts morale – and quality – among the faculty generally. |
| -4 | 0 | 3 | (32) Though diversity is given lip-service as a desideratum in colleges today, it is not defended very deeply: cultural marginality can lead to creativity beyond demographic breadth. |
| -5 | -1 | 3 | (1) Status-seeking in higher education is often based on phony standards, e.g. one’s Ph.D. program and early publications. |

- 2 -1 2 (15) A good principle to live by in teaching at the college level is that if all students in the class understand your lectures, then a good many are not getting their money's worth.

When the negative end of the Factor C array is examined, it bears reiterating that these sentiments, while being rejected by the positive "professional auto-pilot" state, are embraced by C-, defined by the disgruntled self and the inverted dramaturgical sorts. Looking at statement 5, adamantly rejected by C+, it may seem odd to label this end of C with terms that seem to connote an orderly and routine work life. Again, the holistic meaning seems at odds with particular statement placements without considering their *dynamic contextuality* (Lasswell, 1948). The configuration of items at the negative end of C+ can be viewed as a collective concession that there were some elements of this working environment that fell short of idealized preferences – the expectation of due respect, for example, as a *sine qua non* – and at times (e.g., when angry over an administrative decision) these elements would surface to produce the discomfiting sense of an "anxious outlier." For the most part, however, the lid was kept on such sentiments in an effort to ensure that their effect on public *self-presentation* (as opposed to private feelings of the subjective self) were, to the extent possible, neutralized. To the degree that my memory is accurate on this score, this condition was chalked up to cost side of a cost-benefit analysis that was typically tilted, over the course of a career, in favor of the latter.

- 3 -2 -5 (5) Most of my work life has been orderly and routine, and I like I that way.
 4 5 0 (7) I expect people to give me my due respect.
 1 1 -2 (8) We are all "old boys" when we get together socially, dropping customary decorum in favor of old-fashioned horseplay
 0 4 3 (21) Teaching politics at the college level has become increasingly difficult due to the real-world polarization of American politics.

Finally, the second theoretical account aimed at making the most sense of Factor C, unlike the foregoing, draws attention simultaneously to *both* ends of the bipolar factor. In so doing, it focuses especially on the two emotional states that define C+ and C-, namely *depression* and *anger*. These two states virtually duplicate the two developmentally crucial, emotionally antithetical sides of Klein's (1959) *paranoid-schizoid* and *depressive* "positions," so termed to identify the infant's dramatic alteration between states of rage, in which the caregiver/mother is viewed, as a result of "splitting," as the "bad breast," the source of the baby's mad demeanor. As the infant's needs are addressed and he or she comes to realize that the good- and bad-breast mother is actually one in the same person, the primitive splitting gives way to a sense of depression accompanying the realization that the good and bad caregivers are in fact fused. Klein's theory warrants consideration here as a possible account for Factor C due to her insistence on the developmentally positive nature of depression, fortified by her belief that "our adult world" remains crucially affected emotionally by its roots in infancy.

Discussion: Self-Presentation and Authenticity in Everyday Life

In turning to the key conclusions and implications of the foregoing, it is instructive to first call attention to the relatively large number of consensus items which remained

after factor extraction and rotation. Due to space considerations, the specific statements whose scores did not differ appreciably across the three factors will not be examined here, but they can be found along with the entire set of factor scores in the Appendix. Apart from the precise nature of these commonly held sentiments, their existence is itself noteworthy because of the character of this study's subject matter: the self – or, more specifically yet, *my* self. Granted, due to the reliance in this research on Goffman's theory of *self-presentation* in everyday life, the conditions for my Q-sort renderings of self are mostly predicated on *my impressions of how others perceive me*, and this theoretical footing gives rise to expectations of enhanced situational/conditional differentiation among the selves described. And this being the case, one would likely expect fewer consensus items failing to distinguish one such self-presentation from others. It therefore bears noting that the discovery of 12 such items from a Q-sample containing a total of 40 items may well signify a degree of subjective coherence or inelasticity in the range of one's self-images, a practical and theoretical possibility that begs for comparative attention in subsequent single-case studies devoted to other, perhaps deeper investigations of self and self-presentation.

Such a prospect borders on an important theoretical concern with the case at hand, namely the proposition regarding the nature of self that lies at the heart of the Goffman volume:

The self, then, as a performed character is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from the scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited. (Goffman, 1959 p. 253)

As Stephenson (1989) points out, Goffman's "theatrical" conception views self as a product of social encounters (envisaged as "scenes" or "frames"). As such, the self is not a cause of behavior; rather, the social environment is the driving force in self-presentation. Goffman does allow for the existence of an "inner" self when he distinguishes between the person as a performer and as a character. The former, in fact, may have feelings, wishes, fears and the like, but these phenomena – while they might be important to the nonacting person or to a psychotherapist, spouse, parent, sibling or close friend – are regarded as solely "inside" and therefore are not part of the overt self as presented in social life.

For his part, Stephenson (1989, 1992, 2011) not surprisingly takes issue with Goffman's dismissive regard for subjectivity, and in his own self-studies – using a Q-sample drawn from the pages of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* – presents a three-factor empirical model of his own subjective feelings elicited of and by and toward William Stephenson himself as he imagines he is seen by others. The significance of this achievement for the prospect of a science of subjectivity defies exaggeration. At the same time, however, it is a matter of some curiosity that in his effort to interpret the three factors emerging from his self-study, Stephenson elects to do so in a dualistic manner: one set of interpretations is given for the overt or explicitly presented self, while another set is supplied for the covert or implicit meanings of the same factors. (Stephenson argued strenuously throughout his entire scholarly career against resorts to Cartesian dualism methodologically, so the use of "dualism" in this instance refers to the contending subjectivities at issue when one observes that one's own opinion about a generalized other's opinion of the same are at odds.) When we

look, for example, at the third factor from his self-study at retirement, its straight-forward subjective cast is one of *ostracism* based on poignant feelings of disappointment (and outright hurt) that the value of his scholarly innovations stemming principally from Q methodology had gone for a half-century by then either unrecognized or misunderstood by the bulk of his professional contemporaries. This, however, comprised only the “overt” or explicit meaning of Factor 3; according to Stephenson, the “truth” was that he’d never doubted the significance of his work in spite of the straight-forward reading of professional rejection given initially. In discussing the rationale for this dualistic overt/covert interpretation, Stephenson refers to the quantum-theoretical character of Q as a mode of inquiry capable of producing “spooky” findings, where “topsy-turvy” factor interpretations are in order.

For present purposes, it seems appropriate to suggest that a more parsimonious alternative to the dualistic approach to factor interpretations is one that simply acknowledges that Goffman is not dealing with, nor is he purporting to deal with, the self in all its manifestations apart from its “presentation” in preferred modes in social encounters that have a certain ritualized form. When confronted with the opportunities for self-presentation in such “scenes” – for example, for a professor on the first day of a class – there can perhaps be no gainsaying the claim that, as Goffman proposes, “we are all merchants of morality,” seeking to be seen in the most favorable light possible. But while such “posturing” may account for a high percentage of the frames of professional self-presentation for the college professor, surely this should not be taken to imply that there is nothing more to the professor’s self than the character he plays in front of a classroom audience. If all there was to the self in everyday life was what Goffman is seeking to call attention to, then what would become of self-authenticity? Is there no circumstance in which the demands of impression management collide with genuine self-preference? And even if “all the world’s a stage and only a stage,” what to do when public self-presentation as a performer means taking on the role of a bit-part character expected to complement chief-character roles already assumed by others? In this study, it seems clear that Factor A constitutes the self-presentation factor Goffman’s analysis would expect. The factor representing the “real self,” however, is B; it is the second factor that approximates Singer and Salovey’s (1993) notion of the “remembered self.” It is also noteworthy that the second factor encompasses the self as projected into the post-retirement future and also the self at its most “playful,” thereby illuminating the relevance of yet another theoretical vantage point on the self quite distinct from Goffman’s (Huizinga, 1950; Stephenson, 1967). Finally, Factor C in this study is not exactly what one would expect if Goffman’s was the solely reliable theoretical source available to a scientific account of the self. Indeed, the Q-sort representing Goffman’s account is inversely related to C, sharing factor space with a sense of righteous indignation far removed from the roster of performances most would recognize as holding personal appeal. Viewed holistically, then, these findings point to a partial value in Goffman’s theoretical approach to the self, while at the same time adding an important qualifier to the author’s claim that “we are all merchants of morality.” Taken to excess, the self implicit in Goffman’s account of self-presentation can be seen as a denial of the ontological possibility of an authentic self. This shortcoming of Goffman’s account of the self, as if its entirety can be reduced to its properties as a social performance dictated solely by the interaction of the image-conscious actor with the expectations of onlookers, is underscored by Singer and Salovey’s work. Specifically, their approach reminds us that 90% of anyone’s self is comprised of memory. Moreover, these authors provide ample evidence that such memories are indeed self-defining so as

to aggregate in coherent narratives, but in *stories that differ for each self*. Inasmuch as the data from Stephenson's and my own self-study reported above demonstrate differing narratives, despite "idiosyncratic adherence" to both James's and Roger's Laws, the case for the single-case in a science of subjectivity is supported if not advanced. In light of the foregoing, it would not be unfair to conclude that the onus for supplying a persuasive scientific strategy for the investigation of self is hereby placed on the shoulders of those who would argue for averaging across many selves as the most productive pathway to real understanding when the consequence is tantamount to the destruction of the singular entity for which a scientific vantage point is sought.

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Appendix: Factor Arrays for Vocational Self-Presentation Study.

Item No.	Statement	Factor Scores		
		A	B	C
1	Status-seeking in higher education is often based on phony standards, e.g., your Ph.D. program, early-career publications.	-5	-1	+3
2	The criteria for measuring "quality" in academe are, like obscenity, hard to define in the abstract; but you know it when you see it.	+5	-1	-3
3	Only a fool will expect common honesty in all academic matters.	-5	-2	-4
4	Much of what we do is "make-work" to make an impression.	-4	-5	-5
5	Much of my work is orderly and routine, and I like it that way.	-3	-2	-5
6	Familiarity breeds contempt, so it's a good thing to keep a social distance.	0	-4	-3
7	I expect people to give me my due respect.	+4	+5	0
8	We are all "old boys" when we get together socially, dropping customary decorum in favor of old-fashioned horseplay.	+1	+1	-2
9	Peer-review is a necessary and generally effective counterweight to the place of student ratings of instruction.	+4	-2	+4
10	Phonies and frauds inevitably get exposed in academe. I have faith in "academic karma" in the long run.	+5	-3	-4
11	Variety is the spice of (work) life, and that means avoidance of narrow specialization is a good thing in this business.	+4	+3	+1
12	Ritualized activities like Commencement when faculty don their traditional regalia, amid the pomp and circumstance, are genuinely fun.	+2	0	-1
13	The person who chooses to put their eggs all in one basket - teaching OR scholarship - is depriving themselves of alternative rewards when one endeavor goes sour.	0	+2	-1
14	Faculty meetings are typically a hoot: when you cram 100 PhD's in a single room to deliberate reasonably over contentious policy issues, you can expect chaos.	0	-3	0
15	A good principle to live by in teaching at the college level is that if all students in the class understand your lectures, then a good many are not getting their money's worth.	-2	-1	+2
16	The pay and compensation differential between college administrators and members is too great to be based on any reasonable justification.	-3	0	+1
17	Undergraduate students these days are definitely less well-prepared than their predecessors in	-2	+2	-1

	previous generations.			
18	Colleagues with reputations among students as “easy A’s” do not do their students or more demanding instructors any favors by pursuing the “little arts of popularity.”	-2	+2	-1
19	Technology has been a mixed blessing in Higher Ed. PC’s and laptops make information far more accessible; cell-phones and social media wreak havoc with already-short attention spans	-2	+2	-2
20	Tenure, as a protection for academic freedom, is perhaps overrated these days; the flip-side is a “loyalty tax” where senior professors, unable to move horizontally, see smaller pay raises than junior colleagues.	-1	+3	+4
21	Teaching politics at the college level has become increasingly difficult due to the real-world polarization in American politics.	0	+4	-3
22	Work-life for a college professor is pretty much what he/she makes of it. If the attraction is lack of supervision and the sparse time demands, it’s a good gig.	+3	-1	-2
23	In theory, I’m in favor of merit-pay for college teachers. In practice, I am not convinced that administrators in “teaching colleges” can be trusted to develop adequate metrics to implement such systems.	-1	+1	+3
24	At its best, teaching at the college level is akin to a <i>meditation</i> . Time and classroom distractions disappear as if one enters an enjoyable “trance” for an hour or more, exiting refreshed yet relaxed at the end of class.	0	+5	+5
25	Few professions offer the same opportunities for questioning conventional wisdom as college teaching. Being creative often means being contrarian, and that can be great fun.	+3	+4	+2
26	Employment as a college professor does entail a high degree of professional autonomy. At the same time, it can also spill over into professional loneliness.	-2	-3	-1
27	The public spectacle of “official retirement” is something of a farce in my mind. Too much is made of it in my opinion.	-3	0	-1
28	Private liberal arts colleges should make it a practice not to hire their own graduates. Failure to do so hurts morale – and quality – among the faculty generally.	-4	0	+4
29	Far too much is made of the difference between “teachers” and “researchers.” Too often, in small colleges especially, faculty seek to use the former as a foil for ignoring the latter.	-4	0	+3
30	The “for-profit” college sector has wrought havoc with standards of conduct and quality for institutions of higher education. Government has been forced to respond, with effects not always	+1	0	-4

	beneficial.			
31	Academe is not exempt from standards of “fashionability” that operate more visibly in the commercial realm. “Critical theory,” for example, has affected several disciplines in this manner.	+1	-1	0
32	Though diversity is given lip-service as a desideratum today, it is not defended very well; cultural marginality can lead to creativity beyond demographic breadth.	-4	0	+3
33	Faculty who “teach to the SRI’s” may be acting rationally from a self-interest point of view, but it is a strategy that is ethically dubious from a professional point of view.	0	+1	+2
34	Personal self-disclosures that have no connection to course content have no place in the classroom.	+1	-4	0
35	I tend to resist specificity in responding to student questions soliciting details on “what do you want?” regarding class assignments.	-1	-2	0
36	One of the foremost obligations of any undergrad instructor for a political science course is to challenge students to re-think what they believe they already know.	+2	+1	+1
37	Participation in faculty governance is generally a waste of time, not much different in principle from student government.	-3	-5	-4
38	Team-teaching, participating in committee work, and engaging in collaborative research projects are all useful in avoiding burnout.	+2	+3	+1
39	To keep fresh and energized, a certain part of every work day should be set aside for “personal puttering” without fear of interruption.	+5	+2	+2
40	Teaching can be hard work, but at the college level it can also be play. Helping students and colleagues to appreciate this is a critical part of the job.	+2	0	0