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Fiction in Goffman

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Abstract

There are no references to creative fiction in Erving Goffman's founding statement of his sociology of the interaction order, his 1953 Chicago doctoral dissertation (*Communication Conduct in an Island Community*). Yet four pages into his first and best-known book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), Goffman cites a 'novelistic incident' describing the posturing of Preedy, a 'vacationing Englishman' on a Spanish beach. It is introduced in order to articulate the distinction between 'expressions given' and 'expressions given off' and to indicate their capacity for intentional or unintentional engineering. The page-long passage about Preedy, found in a 1956 collection of William Sansom's short stories, is often mentioned in reviews and summaries of Goffman's groundbreaking book. This article describes the types of fiction drawn upon by Goffman and examines the 'work' that fictional illustrations distinctively do in his writings. The discussion sheds light not only on why Goffman elected to include fictional illustrative materials in his sociology and why eventually he dropped their use, it also underscores some strengths and limits of the fictional for interactional analysis in sociology.

Keywords

ethnography, Erving Goffman, illustrative materials, novels, realism, short stories, William Sansom

Introduction: Preedy and *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*

If there is a single fictional figure that Erving Goffman may have propelled to an odd kind of fame, it is Preedy, an Englishman on holiday, whose knowing posturing on a Spanish beach was included in Goffman's first and best-known book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959).[1] Preedy was the creation of William Sansom (1912–1976), a popular and respected British novelist, travel and short story writer.[2] Goffman (1959, pp. 4–6) cited a lengthy passage from Sansom's (1956) short story 'Happy

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Holiday Abroad', describing Preedy's[3] carefully planned posing that seemed designed to impress his fellow beach-goers. The second of the four paragraphs quoted from Sansom gives its general flavour:

> But it was time to institute a little parade, the parade of the Ideal Preedy. By devious handlings he gave any who wanted to look a chance to see the title of his book – a Spanish translation of Homer, classic thus, but daring, cosmopolitan too – and then gathered together his beach-wrap and bag into a neat sand-resistant pile (Methodical and Sensible Preedy), rose slowly to stretch at ease his huge frame (Big-Cat Preedy), and tossed aside his sandals (Carefree Preedy, after all). (Sansom, 1956, p. 231, cited in Goffman, 1959, p. 5)

It is an arresting discursive move by Goffman. Straight from his foundational analytic remarks on the distinction between expressions given and given off, Goffman plunges the reader into the practicalities and vagaries of beach life. Then back to the sociological analysis of the interaction order, the realm of social life generated by copresence: Goffman (1959, p. 6) suggests, "the novelist wants us to see that Preedy is improperly concerned with the extensive impressions he feels his sheer bodily action is giving off to those around him".

As Goffman acknowledged, it would be easy to malign Preedy for the artifice of his posing. Indeed, those witnessing Preedy's antics may well have surmised his affectation for themselves. But for Goffman the important point remained that 'the kind of impression that Preedy thinks he is making is in fact the kind of impression that others correctly and incorrectly glean from someone in their midst' (Goffman, 1959, p. 6). In Goffman's (1963a, p. 34) more developed theory of situated expressivity, as socialized interactants we are readily able to read Preedy's 'body idiom' – the conventionalized symbolism through which an individual gives off or exudes information through their body's gestures, postures and movements. In *Presentation* Goffman was more interested in the very general mechanisms Preedy used to produce these impressions (which were not so very different from those employed by non-fictional persons in their everyday lives) than in adjudging the artificiality or falsity of Preedy's posing. Body idiom, Goffman would argue, was an essential element of any encounter because while 'an individual can stop talking, he cannot stop communicating through body idiom; he must either say the right thing or the wrong thing. He cannot say nothing' (Goffman, 1963a, p. 35).

Evidently, Goffman admired[4] Sansom's writing enough to cite from his stories twice in *Encounters* (1961b, pp. 40, 135–136), then twice again in *Behavior in Public Places* (1963a, pp. 85, 157–158) before providing another long Sansom extract in the text of 'Where the Action Is' (Goffman, 1967, pp. 250–252). Goffman may have sensed a kinship between Sansom's writing and his own sociological work. Certainly, the critical commentary on the novelist uses a language not dissimilar to that found to characterize Goffman's own work. According to Elizabeth Bowen (1963, pp. 9–10) 'all Sansom stories are scenic stories' that offer little sympathy for, or identification with, his often undeveloped and 'pallid' characters. Bowen continued, 'we are held by not what happens but by how it happens' and especially, the minute observation of the changing 'sensations' the characters undergo. Similarly, Goffman deployed a stripped-down 'minimal model of the actor' – likened to novelist Robert Musil's 'the man without qualities' (Helmer,

1970) – in a sociology that focused on situations and the fluctuating management of emotions within them, summarized in the programmatic slogan: 'Not, then, men and their moments. Rather moments and their men' (Goffman, 1967, p. 3). Sansom's writing evinced a dry ironic humour and a voyeuristic gaze (he listed 'watching' as his recreation in his *Who's Who* entry). Sansom was 'brilliant in description (he was never without his notebook)' (www.williamsansomauthor.com/biography).[5] Correspondingly, for Goffman direct observation of naturally-occurring interaction was the gold standard. He 'lived the ethnographic life'[6] not only by conducting sustained ethnographies – of a community (in Shetland), an organization (St Elizabeths Hospital) and an activity (casino gambling) – but also by drawing upon events he personally witnessed in his daily life as illustrative materials. He was a distinctive and sometimes even a graceful writer in a discipline renowned for the absence of such qualities.

In Sansom 'compulsive awareness' was prominent: 'everything is gripped as if all the senses were on the alert' (Cosman, 1955, p. 175). Goffman was similarly said to overplay the self-conscious awareness of the mutual dealings between persons (Messinger et al., 1962). Sansom's 'subject matter was ordinary (usually London) lives, but his prose has an almost visionary quality which transforms the quotidian into something altogether rich and strange' (Parker, 2010). Goffman worked a kindred sociological alchemy on our face-to-face dealings, suggesting concepts and analyses that generate a 'look again' experience offering fresh insights into everyday actions. As Alasdair MacIntyre (1969, p. 447) remarked, Goffman displayed an extraordinary ability 'to see the familiar with the eyes of a stranger, while at the same time retaining his familiarity with what is being viewed'. Each writer attracted favourable comparison with the work of Franz Kafka (Berman, 1972; Neumeyer, 1966). Sansom's stories tended to insist on their meaning, leaving little to the reader (Young, 1964, pp. 124–125). Similarly, Goffman's analyses were conducted from the definite vantage of a 'strong' writer. In these ways it is possible to detect some convergences between Sansom's and Goffman's orientations and outlooks on the world.

Novels and short stories in Goffman's sociology

Presentation's bold insertion of a substantial extract from fiction just a few pages into the first book by a beginning academic sociologist begs questions about the kind of enterprise that Goffman undertook. Sociology, after all, prides itself upon explaining the 'real world' and its analyses are based in 'facts', not the fictions invented by creative writers. It seems fair to ask, what use are the works of fictional writers in Goffman's efforts to construct a sociology of the interaction order? To address that question, it is necessary first to chart the extent of the use of fictional sources in Goffman's writings.

There are no references to creative fiction in Erving Goffman's founding statement of the sociology of the interaction order, his 1953 Chicago sociology doctoral dissertation entitled *Communication Conduct in an Island Community*. Of the dissertation's 86 references, only five are non-scholarly sources. Of these five, three are references to books of manners and two to memoirs by George Orwell.[7] Goffman was understandably reticent about using novelistic sources as he sought to establish his distinctive sociological approach. Thus, his early journal articles from the 1950s largely eschew mention of fictional works. The single

exception is the footnoted reference to J. D. Salinger's 1951 novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, in Goffman (1957, p. 55 n. 7) mentioned for its 'interesting observations on the cult of boredom and the place of this cult in the world of an adolescent'.

The books, however, were a different matter. As already noted, when a major New York publisher, Doubleday, invited Goffman to submit an expanded version of *Presentation* (Goffman, 1959), Goffman felt comfortable enough with fictional sources to include four paragraphs from Sansom's short story early in the book's Introduction. The use of such sources was one (and only one) component of the distinctive sociological worldview he forged. Fictional sources were used, but in moderation. A survey of the literary sources in Goffman's first book shows that there are 12 explicit citations of the work of writers well-known for their fictional work, only six of which are straightforwardly works of fiction. Of these six, only two merit quotation in the main text of *Presentation* (Sansom, Franz Kafka); one, a quotation in a footnote (Ivy Compton-Burnett); and in two cases (Gore Vidal, Mary McCarthy) a footnote directs the reader to a short story. In the sixth case, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* features in the main text in a discussion of the gendering of aggressive redefinitions of the situation (Goffman, 1959, pp. 193–194). The remaining six sources written by authors renowned for their fiction turn out to be memoirs or writings having an extensive documentary basis in the author's biographical experience. They include George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1951), Herman Melville's *White-Jacket* (1850) and Mrs Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832). From a conventional social scientific standpoint, the inclusion of six fictional sources is notable only because that number is larger than zero. Approximately 70% of *Presentation*'s 282 references derive from conventional social scientific sources (Jacobsen, 2022). Of the remaining 30% we can see that fictional sources are far outweighed by memoirs and other popular sources. Goffman's use of popular sources (chiefly memoirs and related forms of biographical writing) was even more pronounced in *Stigma*, making up 58% of the references cited (Bynum & Pranter, 1984).

The success of *Presentation* may have emboldened Goffman in his employment of fictional sources. All his books in the following 15 years – with one exception, *Strategic Interaction* – would include several fictional sources. There is no obvious pattern discernible in Goffman's selection of the stories selected for mention and quotation. Their choice may reflect nothing more than an indication of his leisure reading. Presented extracts deal with the sartorial preferences of New York hipsters (Goffman, 1961b, pp. 146–147), the touching of a friend's wrist to reassure them that no offence was intended by the remark just made (Goffman, 1971, p. 183), and the predicament faced by a lone male in a gay bar who has no matches to light his cigarette (Goffman, 1963a, p. 142). There are writers we have heard of and many others that we have not. Classics and pulp fiction are each represented. Henry James finally appears (Goffman, 1971, pp. 202–203) to make good Goffman's earlier allusion to his 'lovingly empirical view' that contrasted so sharply with his elder brother's, William's, 'abstract view of human action' (Goffman, 1961b, p. 143). Fictional and other documentary sources were used by Goffman (1961a) to provide a comparative basis to extend his year long observational research of St Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, DC, into a general theory of total institutions.

Goffman used fictional sources but used them carefully. He usually announced their novelistic or short story status and was careful to distinguish them from memoirs, popular 'true crime' tales and the like, with phrases such as 'a good fictionalized treatment

may be found in . . .'. The work of writers working in the zone between memoir and the creative invention of fiction would continue to attract Goffman. Sometimes, Goffman recognized, the categories need to be interpreted flexibly. For example, material from Mary Jane Ward's 1955 book *The Snake Pit* was prefaced by 'as illustrated in a fictionalized record of an actual sojourn in a mental hospital' (Goffman, 1961a, p. 8). When Melville's *White-Jacket* (subtitled *The World in a Man-of-War*) was cited, a book often classified as a novel, it did not attract Goffman's usual classificatory preface but was allowed to stand alone – in effect, inviting the reader to regard this work as a proxy ethnography.[8] Comparison of the first and final versions (Goffman, 1958, 1961) of the total institutions paper shows that Goffman found Melville's book a rich resource. After writing the first version he returned to Melville's text to find additional examples to further illuminate the characteristics of total institutions.

As noted, *Strategic Interaction* (Goffman, 1969) is the exception and a somewhat surprising exception since it appeared at the end of the decade in which the novels and movie adaptations of spy novelists like Len Deighton, Ian Fleming and John Le Carré became enormously popular. In *Strategic Interaction*, Goffman's focus on the calculative elements of information control reached its apogee as he explored the interactional structures and processes that 'render agents a little like us all and all of us a little like agents' (Goffman, 1969, p. 81). It is accurate to describe the book as drawing upon 'spy stories'. However, the stories that figure as a major source of material for Goffman's analysis are, contrary to what is sometimes asserted, *not* fictional stories – with a single exception: Eric Ambler's 1964 edited collection of short spy stories (see Goffman, 1969, p. 44 n. 73).[9] Thus, the SMERSH that Goffman (1969, p. 39 n. 65) mentioned was not the villainous organization of James Bond fame but rather the umbrella agency Stalin devised to cover the different branches of the Red Army's counter-intelligence work.[10] The principal espionage stories that *Strategic Interaction* drew upon were real stories culled from Goffman's meticulous reading of biographies and memoirs of spies who had worked in the field. Once again memoirs served as the documentary source of choice, not fictional works.

Works of fiction figure most extensively in *Frame Analysis* where Goffman (1974, p. 15) provocatively argued:

> Since this study attempts to deal with the organization of experience as such, whether 'actual' or of the other kinds, I will have recourse to the following: cartoons, comics, novels, the cinema, and especially, it turns out, the legitimate stage. . . . My excuse for dipping into this pre-empted domain is that I have a special interest, one that does not recognise a difference in value between a good novel and a bad one, a contemporary play or an ancient one, a comic strip or an opera. All are equally useful in explicating the character of strips of experienced activity.

Frame Analysis, with its attention to the organization of experience, marked a shift away from Goffman's usual concentration on the organization of face-to-face interaction. The book gave prominence to fictive domains that Goffman argued were a bigger part of everyday life than customarily thought. A key point of reference in the development of Goffman's frame analysis was Alfred Schutz's (1945/1962) famous theory of multiple realities. Schutz contended that individual experience took different forms depending on whether it was a dream, the viewing of a work of art in a gallery, laughter at a well-told

joke, a child turning to play with its toy, or a scientist conducting a laboratory test. Each of these forms of experience was real in its own terms, forming a 'finite province of meaning'. Each of their realities can be charted in terms of a distinctive 'cognitive style'. But one reality, the reality of everyday life, had 'paramount' status in our experience because it was that reality which we return to from our excursions into dreaming, viewing art works, joking, playing, or doing a scientific investigation. The transitions from one reality to another involve a sense of 'shock', as occurs for example when we wake up suddenly from a vivid dream.

Goffman (1974) questioned Schutz's claim that everyday life was a single distinct, paramount reality. Schutz did not catalogue the variety of features of everyday life to Goffman's sociological satisfaction. In particular, Goffman suggested that an adequate categorization of the everyday must fold in elements of make-believe (day dreaming, joking, theatrical gestures), not divide them off as separate finite provinces of meaning. Goffman also disputed Schutz's account of the transitions from one reality to another as involving 'shock'. Instead, using a terminology of primary frames, keyings and fabrications, Goffman noted how smoothly people could transition from the 'straight' activity of everyday life to fictive activities such as pretend acting or playful teasing or rehearsal or hoaxing, all without any sense of shock or radical shift in attitude. Goffman (1974, p. 562) concluded: 'life may not be an imitation of art, but ordinary conduct, in a sense, is an imitation of the proprieties, a gesture at the exemplary forms, and the primal realization of these ideals belongs more to make-believe than to reality'.

In summary, novels and short stories were absent from Goffman's earliest work. It was only in his first book that they begin to serve as a significant source of illustrative materials in his work, a pattern that continues (with the single exception of *Strategic Interaction*) up to and including *Frame Analysis* (1974), the book that made the most extensive use of fictional sources, especially drama and film. Thereafter, fictional sources dropped away sharply. A Doris Lessing novel was cited in support of conjectures about women's own assessment of their 'attractiveness' (Goffman, 1977, pp. 329, 331 n. 15). There was a single extract from Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in *Gender Advertisements* (Goffman, 1979, p. 62 n. 20) – interestingly, it does not appear in the book's list of references. By the time of Goffman's last book, *Forms of Talk*, literary (and other types of popular) sources have all but disappeared, except perhaps for a stray remark about how the noticing of self-talk contained 'a Lewis Carroll touch' (Goffman, 1981, p. 81). To understand better how fictional sources fell out of favour for Goffman, let us consider further their role as illustrative materials, which in turn requires an outline of the wider aims of Goffman's sociology.

Fictional sources and the work of illustration

Goffman (1953, 1983) framed his work as an exploratory sociology of the interaction order. The mutual dealings that go on between persons when they are in each other's 'response presence' was his primary focus. The novelty of his work was the consistently sociological approach it took to the analysis of the interaction – the moments, the situations in which persons were lodged were always the central focus. The interaction order, Goffman claimed, was in sociological terms a *terra incognita* awaiting exploration.

Goffman proposed that a conceptual approach – articulating the key concepts that would identify the main landmarks of this undiscovered land – would provide the groundwork for further investigations. The way forward, Goffman felt, was to develop the basic concepts and generalizations that might help to map out a new terrain for sociology. In this respect his sociology could be seen as following in the footsteps of Georg Simmel yet it was an approach that also chimed in the early 1950s with Talcott Parsons' efforts to develop a categorial framework for sociology and neighbouring social sciences. In other respects, such as his concern to illustrate his concepts with often arresting illustrations, Goffman's sociology was very different from that of Parsons. An early reviewer of *Presentation* found Goffman's illustrative practices striking:

> They are distinctly out of the rut, though not out of the ordinary. We watch the transformations of French argotiers, or the devices of the British Court and Civil Service, we hear about the West Coast shipyards when women come to work there and put pin-up girls in jeopardy, or about the middle-class housewife's secret consumption of *True Romance*. There are stimulating observations, many of them quoted from unpublished theses, on a wide range of occupational roles, including doctors, musical accompanists, teachers, furniture salesmen and bellhops. In the end, however, these strategic examples come to rest again and again on a small island hotel where we are allowed to stand on both sides of windowless swinging doors that divide the kitchen from the dining room, to the annoyance of the maids and at the insistence of the management. We see the masks go on as the maids leave to serve, and have the account confirmed for us by ably aligned quotations from W. F. Whyte, George Orwell and Monica Dickens, who all say they have seen the same thing. (Naegele, 1956, p. 631)

The illustrations functioned as exhibits that he artfully curated and which he used to give instances of a concept introduced or an analytic point he sought to explore. Goffman (1959, p. xi) cautioned the reader about the 'mixed status' of his 'illustrative materials' that ranged from well-established social scientific generalizations to 'informal memoirs written by colorful people', adding 'many fall in between'. Such a range of materials, as Goffman (in Verhoeven, 1993, p. 340) acknowledged, was important if robust concepts and generalizations were to be derived.

As an example of how Goffman (1963a, p. 85) deployed a fictional source to advantage, consider his use of an extract from William Sansom (from the same story introduced in *Presentation* though a different passage). Goffman suggests that 'civil inattention' is such a 'delicate' adjustment that persons will often disregard it. Sunglasses 'allow the wearer to stare at another person without that other being sure that he is being stared at'. A footnote then quotes Sansom's Preedy, who knows that dark glasses do not conceal inquisitive looks as often thought but just the opposite: 'as soon as they are swivelled anywhere near the object it looks like a direct hit. You cannot appear to glance just beyond with your dark guns on' (Sansom, quoted in Goffman, 1963a, p. 85 n.4). Preedy is right – 'with your dark guns on' there is no real freedom to stare. The civil inattention rule is still in play. The fictional extract encouraged Goffman to avoid any easy generalizations about sunglasses and staring possibilities, instead suggesting a more nuanced generalization about the uncertainties of staring and being stared at through sunglasses. The fictionality of the extract did not gainsay the validity of Goffman's points about civil inattention. As Anthony Giddens (1984, p. 285) observed:

> [T]he social sciences draw upon the same sources of description (mutual knowledge) as novelists or others who write fictional accounts of social life. Goffman is able quite easily to intersperse fictional illustrations with descriptions taken from social science research because he seeks very often to 'display' the tacit forms of mutual knowledge whereby practical activities are ordered, rather than trying to chart the actual distribution of those activities.

Howard S. Becker (2007, p. 24) made a similar point in his analysis of Jane Austen's novels: 'the stories and their details have verisimilitude. They accord with our experience of life, with our (conventional, of course) ideas about how people behave.' Yet for fictional stories to display 'verisimilitude' they have to display significant elements of emotional or documentary realism. Even when Goffman approached an experimental text like Joyce's *Ulysses* (with which he was long familiar [Winkin, 2000, p. 194]) it was in terms of the typographical devices used 'to give the impression of real subjectivity' (Goffman, 1974, p. 527 n. 25). Goffman's (1979) justification for the use of advertising images in *Gender Advertisements* might be extended to apply to his fictional illustrations. There Goffman acknowledged that advertising images presented an edited, prettier and more affluent view than the world of our everyday acquaintance. The gender displays enacted in advertisements were a stylized, exaggerated or 'hyper-ritualized' version of those found in daily life. But to work as advertisements that viewers can understand, they must draw upon the same body idiom that persons in daily life employ. So too with novels: they also draw on the same ritual and body idioms that order our talk and nonverbal dealings with each other. They offer perspicacious instances of our dealings occurring in murkier mundane circumstances.

Critics from ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (CA) would disagree. Part of their critique was that Goffman did not dwell sufficiently on what was 'witnessable' and instead devoted too much time to invented examples, fictional sources and other data that are merely 'imaginable'. According to Emanuel Schegloff (1988), Goffman did not give adequate attention to what people were doing in interaction and how they were doing it because too often his data were 'domesticated' rather than the raw recorded data that CA used to investigate interactional details. Goffman was sensitive to part of this critique. His later work did include recorded and reproducible data (advertising images, recordings of bloopers, taped radio programmes).[11] However, in Goffman's defence Robin Williams (1988) proposed that imaginary and fictional data had a definite role to play in Goffman's sociology since so much of it was driven by a process of conceptual articulation in which possibilities were explored rather than actualities demonstrated.

Conclusion

This article has explored some of the senses in which Goffman might be said to have 'used novels for illustrations almost as if they carried the same empirical authority as field notes' (Menand, 2009, p. 296). Goffman knew they did not carry that authority but still found value in them. If Goffman's use of fictional sources was less prevalent than is commonly thought then that is due first to their deployment alongside memoirs and life writing that generated occasional and sometimes quite genuine confusion about the status of the literature cited. The volume and range of material that Goffman used as

illustrative materials (including the indeterminate documentary status of work by writers best known for their fiction) helped create an impression that novels and short stories were a major data source when they were not. The concentration of fictional sources in publications over a restricted time span of 1959–1974 seems to suggest that Goffman was wary about the use of sources that were vulnerable to easy critique, at least in the early stages of his career. The disappearance of such sources in his writings from the mid-1970s on may be due in part to Goffman's qualified acceptance of the critique from CA. In this period, also, Goffman's interest in a range of sociolinguistic questions would have encouraged his use of transcripts that had quite simply become the way to work in this field. Goffman's intellectual outlook was always to look forward to the next project and he may well have considered fictional sources and related life story materials redundant in light of his developing interests. In addition, Goffman's sociology stood in a Chicago tradition that was always open to the use of literary sources in sociological analysis (Cappetti, 1993; Jacobsen et al., 2014). Thus, Goffman's use of fiction was less risky and innovative than might appear at first sight.

Goffman's use of fictional and other literary sources undoubtedly helped to broaden his appeal beyond academic sociology and contributed to his status as a 'crossover writer' (Menand, 2009). This was evident in his own lifetime in the enthusiastic reviews of Goffman's last book, *Forms of Talk*, by playwright Alan Bennett (1981/1994) and literary critic Christopher Ricks (1981). Bennett went on to make a film, *Dinner at Noon*, conceived as an application of Goffman's dramaturgical ideas, while Ricks (1974) made effective use of Goffman's theory of embarrassment in his study of Keats. More recently, a number of literary scholars have appropriated Goffman's frameworks to add to their analytical toolbox (e.g. Jaffe, 2020; Thompson, 2015).[12] Of course, not everyone welcomes this development: 'Goffman does not see literature as a storehouse of human potential, experience, or feeling. His accounts of the rituals and gestures of everyday interaction are full of details, but not rich or warm' (Love, 2010, p. 378). Even outside his home discipline Goffman continues to be controversial.

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Notes

1. *Presentation* was first published in 1956 by the University of Edinburgh's Social Sciences Research Centre, not the more prestigious University of Edinburgh Press. Michael Banton recalled that its novelty was instantly apparent, as was the likely difficulty of finding a mainstream publisher to handle it, 'so we published it, not without some hesitation, in an offset-photo edition' (Banton, 1964, p. 110). The earlier Edinburgh edition of *Presentation* understandably lacks Sansom's Preedy story, which was also first published in 1956. Subsequently, the US publisher Doubleday asked Goffman to revise and expand the book into the definitive 1959 edition. All of Goffman's subsequent 10 books appeared in one edition only.
2. The Wikipedia entry on William Sansom remarks: 'In his classical work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman used an extended paragraph of Sansom's *A Contest of Ladies* to develop his model of the social role and the dramaturgical approach to sociology'. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Sansom (accessed 28 October 2021).

3. In the short story Sansom only ever refers to this character as ‘Preedy’. In his autoethnography (if we can call it that) of his writing practices, Sansom (1972, pp. 44–45) noted that he preferred short surnames for his male characters, likening such naming to a formal introduction that implies there is more to be found out. In light of how the plot of the story unfolds it may also be ironic that ‘preedy’ is a dated British dialect term meaning ‘with ease’ (*Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, G. & C. Merriam, 1913).
4. Goffman (1963a, p. 85 n. 4) described ‘novelist William Sansom’ as ‘a notable observer of face-to-face conduct’.
5. A 2011 retrospective assessment remarked that Sansom had been ‘described as London's closest equivalent to Franz Kafka. He wrote in hallucinatory detail, bringing every image into pin-sharp focus’ (Fowler, 2011).
6. The title of Dan Rose’s 1990 book, *Living the Ethnographic Life*, was suggested by Goffman.
7. In regard to both the cited sources, the essay ‘Shooting an Elephant’ and the book *Down and Out in Paris and London*, the factual basis of what they report has been contested.
8. David J. Alworth (2014, p. 246) observed that Goffman’s ‘citations of *White-Jacket* suggest that he was drawn to the novelist as an intellectual ally: a fellow student of the interaction order’. See also Menand (2009).
9. In contrast, in *Frame Analysis* Goffman (1974) quotes from spy novels by Len Deighton, Ian Fleming, Michael Gilbert and Adam Hall.
10. An excerpt from one of Fleming’s novels does make an appearance in the main text of a Goffman book – see *Frame Analysis* (1974, p. 154).
11. In a 2003 interview Schegloff acknowledged this shift in Goffman’s way of working although he also observed that Goffman ‘never committed himself to that view in print’ (Schegloff, in Prevignano & Thibault, 2003, p. 34).
12. Just as the work of early twentieth century Chicago sociologists Robert Park, Ernest Burgess and Frederic Thrasher served as a point of reference for the literary discourse of James T. Farrell, Nelson Algren and Richard Wright (Cappetti, 1993, p. 57), so too we might enquire about how Goffman’s sociology has shaped the production of creative literature from the 1960s on. The question seems almost entirely neglected. One volume that might figure in such an assessment is Jane Schapiro’s (1999) novel *The Dangerous Husband*.

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