**Prof. G’s Rhetorical Self**

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I define myself as a college professor, a creative writer, a professional, a quasi-spiritual and philosophical seeker, and a brother, friend, and teammate. I hope to be seen pretty much in these terms by the various social groups I belong to: my work environment, my professional and community endeavors, and my family and friends. To these ends, I tend to emphasize my personal, intellectual, and creative qualities more than my physical appearance.

In my normal manner of dress, I choose comfort over attractiveness. Right now, I’m wearing a green wool pullover, which I wear quite often in cold weather. My mother used to worry about people seeing her wearing the same clothes over and over, but I don’t care. I give as little thought to my everyday wardrobe as possible. As long as it’s clean and warm, I’ll wear it. I’ve learned that people are more interested in how they appear than in how I appear; those who judge me harshly for what I wear are not people I care to impress anyway.

That said, I dress up when the situation warrants it. When I am serve as a representative for the university or appear in a professional capacity (such as for community projects), I wear a dress shirt and dress pants. For some occasions, I wear a tie. I want such groups to see me not as an individual, but as a representative of an organization that matters to me. They are not looking at me; they look at the group I represent.

My social media presence is marginal, at best. I see social media as an extension of having conversation with friends, but it is very limited in this capacity. When I share ideas, I may get a few “likes,” but they rarely lead to thoughtful conversation. I’ve learned through painful experience not to engage in political “discussions” in social media (or in most other situations unless there is a very strong exigence for doing so). I have little to share on social media beyond the occasional quip or details of a book I’ve read.

A special kind of social media for me is *Legion World*, a fan site devoted to the comic book series Legion of Super-Heroes. Here I wax more in depth because I know my comments are appreciated by likeminded fans and they often lead to more commentary—a real conversation happens among people I’ve never met in person.

The rhetorical effects of these choices are that I am a very private person who pays attention to his rhetorical persona when there are specific reasons to do so. I have a very limited number of social groups I engage with on a regular basis, and I have very clear-cut purposes for engaging with them and specific effects I want to achieve. Some groups may be personal, educational, companionable, professional, or a combination of the above. I am not calculated in how I engage with these groups, but I am aware of what I want to accomplish and of the value each group has. For the most part, I want to be “me,” but I’ve come to understand that “being me” does not mean asking everyone to accept me as I am. It could mean adapting myself to complement the needs of certain groups that matter to me.