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## An Interview with Steve Derné

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# An Interview with Steven Derné

Ethan Owens

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Steven Derné is Professor of Sociology at SUNY Geneseo and ten-year sponsor of GREAT Day. He sponsored three papers that appear in this volume of *Proceedings of GREAT Day*.

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## **Could you tell me about some of the nominations you made for GREAT Day?**

The latter two papers [Odette and Vick] are from a senior seminar. In the senior seminar, which they are from, all of the students did two interviews about the experience of wonder. Wonder is something that's understudied in sociology. Sociology is very concerned with disenchantment, but has no theorization of enchantment.

So, the second paper by Vick, there hasn't been much empirical research and philosophers often think that wonder comes from things where you encounter something that you don't know. So, some of the interviews found that people did encounter wonder from what they did know. So, Vick's paper showed that opposed to what the philosophers say, that wonder doesn't always follow from the unknown. It also could follow from knowing things.

[Odette's paper] is also a really radical change. In philosophy, people assume that wonder is something that people don't talk about in themselves. They talk about wonders that they came upon something that wonders. So unlike other emotions wonder is something that, the philosophers say is, in the event, not in the person; however, many of the people who we interviewed, roughly one third, talked about how they felt wonder on their skin how they, had they tried to chase after wonder. So, basically these papers are making great contributions to sociology of wonder, which is an understudied topic. And I got to revise and resubmit writing a paper with these people. It just goes to show how it's super important research. So that's why I shared them, it's well written stuff but it was also smart important research.

So, we had read some studies about how class shapes what people learn about emotions. The basic idea this is very common in the sociology of emotions, that people who are upper middle class, children learn that their emotions matter their parent's emotions matter. Then in the working-class families, the research tends to show that it's more of behavioral, instead of controlling emotions they control behavior. Camilo's paper suggests that this class differences are kind of over layered on some kind of cultural differences associated with being a Latina, so that means that, although her parents were middle class, she argued that some of the cultural traditions associated with being a Latina played some role in shaping that parenting styles. Now, with the other papers. I tried to look at what are the best eight papers in the class trying to put together a panel. But

Camilo really reached out to me that she wanted to do GREAT day, which I thought was really great. Those papers were done in the spring, so she had to wait all year to do them. And I think it really showed excellence in terms of, well it was good paper and smart for sure, but she also showed excellence and kind of reaching out to like to GREAT Day. And in this case, actually I didn't have to do that; rather, Camilo reached out to me.

**Has GREAT Day changed over the past ten years, that you could notice, in any sizable way?**

This is obviously the first time doing virtual GREAT Day but no, the greatest thing about GREAT Day, the thing I like most, is that the students rise to the occasion, so they always do very good papers. Sometimes the papers are not that good in writing but they're very good when they're presented, and the students support each other.

**How do you think an undertaking like virtual GREAT Day affects the landscape of GREAT Day, if at all?**

If the students didn't want to do it, I wouldn't do it. I think it's great that the students research is recognized. I think that it's good, but I think it's going to be a darn lot more difficult. The students rise to the occasion and they can do whatever they want but this situation is just like everything else, it's not going to be as good. However, it's good to see student researchers recognized. That's the most important thing is to see research is recognized.