Self-Presentation Through Social Media

As people we like to think that we are our own, authentic selves one hundred percent of the time. We often claim that we don't care about what others have to say or want their opinions on things. In reality that isn't the case. We often judge ourselves based on other people's opinions and reactions towards us. As social media becomes more popular, Erving Goffman's idea of "the stage" becomes more apparent. Social media has become a place where we change ourselves to get likes or followers. Platforms have encouraged people to put up a facade and present an idealized version of themselves.

The "Presentation of the Self" as described by Goffman uses the analogy of "the stage". This idea is that individuals engage in efforts to control or manipulate the impressions of others, as if we are actors on a stage. When actors put on performances they have specific roles and we have different roles based on the social context. People have to "read the room", define the situation, and act accordingly. With this idea, we have to think about the backstage and the frontstage. The backstage is the comfort zone, it's where people can relax. Although, he doesn't think we are our "true selves" backstage. The idea of a true self isn't one that Goffman has because he truly believes our identities are created through social interactions. Goffman describes the front stage as where the show is put on. People become invested in not only their own roles but invested in the roles of others. Social media is an example of both stages.

It's easy to put on a show for social media. People use it to make themselves feel better. Everyone wants likes on their posts and are constantly seeking validation from what they put online. Social media creates this pressure on people to present themselves a certain way. This causes people to only put the best parts of their lives on social media. In order to create this idea

Instagram, allow you to curate your life to meet the expectations of others. Photos are constantly being edited and filters are getting applied, all for a like. Humans feed off of feedback from others and want nothing more than validation. Charles Cooley shows this through his concept of the "looking-glass self".

The "looking-glass self" is the idea that our sense of self is developed through how we interact with others. We see ourselves based on the way other people perceive us, as if we were looking in a mirror at their reactions to us. Along with this idea comes what is called a double projection. The double projection is feelings you form about yourself based on what you believe others believe about you. We take note about what evokes a good reaction and try to live according to that. Our self-image is based on not only social interactions, but the feedback that comes from them. The way that others react to us is an important part of how we build our identities. Most of the time people's online presence is completely different than in person. We want people to react well to our posts, so we post what will get the most likes and comments. Then we judge ourselves based on the number of likes and comments as well as who is liking and commenting. Social media is full of people who only care about numbers and will pretend to be something they are not to get a good reaction from others. Cooley says that this is interaction creating the experience of self.

Goffman and Cooley share some similar ideas. They both focused on the role social interactions have in shaping our identities and self-presentation. We often engage in self-presentation to create a desired image or to gain acceptance in different social settings. The way Goffman explains it is putting on a show. We play different roles and present ourselves in ways that align with the image we are trying to portray to meet the expectations of others. Social

theories. Social media can be seen as a digital stage where we can totally control our image.

Ultimately, social media increases the effects of self-presentation and the perception of others. As we explore the digital stage, we are curating posts to seek validation in the form of online interactions. Since we care so much about what others think, putting up a facade is second nature to us. It's important to be aware of the impact social media is having on you and to try to maintain authenticity in our online presences.