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Sociology

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Setting My stage

Everyone has a role,a part,a place for them, but the question is, will those called to their roles stand up and accept them. An act,a fictional representation of a story, an outlet for the actors to play a character with the main goal of pleasing the audience around them. Everyone acts whether it is on an actual stage or simply just in one's own social scene, everyone plays a role. This is the presentation of self created by Erving Goffman,calling out the way that in society one's needs and urges create social deception in order to meet social standards.

January 18 2019, a day I will never forget, I came home from school to be greeted by my mom in the kitchen. She was acting weird,forceful laughs,black stares covering up her running mind, a routine that from her was new to me. I ask her what's wrong to be only answered by a quick and forceful "nothing", hiding the truth, I badger asking repeatedly knowing something was wrong. After more questioning she caved,not the caving where she gives a long sign and tells you because you were being annoying but the sign followed by tears, the only tears she had left in her.Cancer, a small word, powerful meaning, still to this day I don't know exactly what this word means to me. Sure, everyone knows what it is and means but I am not here to give you the sob story of a lifetime but to explain that my whole journey dealing with one of my parents

play Goffman's presentation of the self using the front and back "stage".

Setting the stage, even in our home we were constantly performing for each other and as silly as that sounds and how artificial it was it was natural. We as a family were on the front stage,as a whole depending on each other, playing a part, whether that be false confidence or just pretending to be happy not wanting to add more stress to one of the other members consequently messing up the act. See, setting the front stage requires everyone, and yes it seems so weird phrasing my family members in this way but it is the truth, everyone in any social setting plays some sort of role on the front stage. My mom comes home everyday from taking my dad to yet another doctor appointment acting perfectly fine, unfazed, and my dad coming home from another agonizing session fighting the anger and exhausted with a smile. We all put on a front, not for ourselves, but for each other,we all do this. Whether it be to support a friend or to make a situation look less intimidating. We are there for each other, collectively, each person supports the roles of the group,depending on each other. When one person fails, for example,if I break down and show the emotion the group is really feeling, we all go down. I know this is a harsh way to look at it but as a whole this is how we function outside our home. This front stage persona is used with everything,like taking up a new leadership responsibility, making sure to act in order to be looked up to and respected, making new friends and following the "norm" procedures in introducing yourself.

Why do we do this,why are we ingenuine,that's what I constantly asked myself, I struggled to understand that the most, confused on why must we not let others understand what we are feeling and seek outside help that I feel we needed. At first these these felt stupid to me and im not even going to lie I was mad that I felt their needed to be an almost secretive mentality

society?

We all front,lie, and act, maybe to look cooler,stronger or to be accepted by a certain group. We all try to fit the social cast that we view on the daily shying away from the uncomfortable, and that's what this was, uncomfortable, telling people things that require empathy is personally to me uncomfortable,now some people may be different but it is hard for many to leave that state pity, almost a feeling of embarrassment. For us I was never sure what the reason was for keeping it such a secret in the beginning but after a while it became clear that we needed to look strong and maybe this is a concept that I am still trying to grasp but the thing is we all needed to play our role.

What was I feeling, my emotions, something I felt that unless I was protected by the walls of house I simply just could not express,it wasnt that I wasn't allowed to do but just not able to.I told my friends everything every little problem,every minor inconvenience they knew about,but this was difference the severity of me and my family's situation was ungraspable and I felt that this would give a completely different view on me. I never wanted pity, and that's what I was afraid of for igenuine words by the people I never considered by friends. I remember that each time we would hear that treatment isn't working or getting better, I prepare myself for the next day of school making sure to mask my emotions to the best of my ability. Preparing for my performance at school, taking breaks between classes to sit and gather my thoughts exhausted by the end.

My experience through this was my own stage, with my audience being the scariest communitators of them all, high school students. Going through each day with a new act

stage is different and everyone has their own examples.This experience to me most prodmiltly explains what Goffmans theories mean in my own personal life and where I feel like they were mostly exemplified. My front stage where me and my family would collectively rely on one another to continue to be strong.

The front stage in a whole is the idea of where in a social situation one relies on the society around them to play out one's role. Caricaturas, formed from social normality, being acted out as they are previceved. Just like an actual play, everyone plays a part of this, each person makes an impact with the goal of staying on track to normality. Embarrassment can occur when one's role is not played out correctly, for example when a teacher doesn't know the answer and the class feels uncomfortable,making the teacher's role discreditable.This is wha

The back stage is evident when one is preparing to go out on the "stage", when me and my family were dealing with our own hardships and made the decision to keep it private, we were preparing to act normal in social situations. Though at times this was extremely difficult and at times felt like it wasn't possible to act like nothing happened and everything was ok, we as a whole were preparing for our "performance" in a way. I know in a way this sounds so superficial but it is exactly the society we know and all past society has been derived from the performance that society will accept. I understand that the situation I was in would have been supported and accepted but the actions we put forth to conceal it for a while had made me feel on stage more than ever before. This to me was more different and extreme then your typical fake conversation and social respect that I and so many of my friends had strived for. This was an act that was almost unactable to me, which in a way fully made me understand Goffman's theories better.

Through the stage and backstage the situation that all of us face was premodiated without thought,the things we say and do are tailored to our social formality. We are so familiar with this yet we don't even realize we are doing it. We are influenced in some way to act whether that be television,news,friends,communities or family we all accept a role. Those who don't accept the roles are often considered "social outcasts" or "losers", not wanting to necessarily fit into society. That is what many fear and why so many strive for social praise and excellence and some just want to fit in, there are so many ways the "stage" can be perceived and there are many ways the roles can be performed, it is truly on how you act.

In conclusion I believe that in my own personal situation that through analyzing Goffman's presentation of the self that threw the "stage", it was evident that though we might not even realize it, everyone is playing a part in some way, as societies advance and change so does our view and actions to our own roles. Through my own personal story, though sad, I was able to identify the actions that we were displaying were all a part of our front stage role, that was seen by the people around us. Understanding that in order to continue to keep our social life normal we must act like it was as a whole in our own social scenes. Still being able to seek comfort from one another in our own "backstage" aka our home. The backstage is represented as being the time that we had spent as a family supporting each other and preparing to take on the obstacles that were ahead of us. This concept of the stage allows us to understand in a broader aspect of the social conduct that one is expected to present. Since the evolution of society the social exception has evolved and been expected to be preserved and carried out by communities for years, the stage is where it takes place. The question is how are you going to step into your role?