

Dramaturgy

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My Dramaturgy All of us engage in dramaturgy. Erving Goffman (2006) argued that individuals play a variety of roles in their everyday lives and interactions, as a performer would act in a stage play. When I consider my own life and how my self-perception influenced me, I observed that I exercised a back-stage and front-stage approach. The backstage is what occurs behind the scenes, or in private, just as when practicing dialogues or performing costume change, engaging behavior and feelings that are not ought to be witnessed by others. The front stage is what those you interact with notice or see, like what the viewers see in a stage play. I was self-assured, composed, and bold in my front-stage self. On the contrary, in my backstage self I was anxious, timid, and detached. According to Goffman, in the backstage part we can “ drop our front, forego speaking lines, and step out of character” (Wallace & Wolf 1999, 231). In other words, we can express our ‘ true selves’ in the backstage. On the other hand, when we are front stage, we usually show our ‘ superficial selves’ or a persona that the society wants to see of us.

We are seldom given the opportunity to be our true selves. We are always pretending to be someone else, appearing in different ways, acting in different ways. Most people, I think, normally, are not aware of their true identity. Erving Goffman explains thoroughly the backstage where “ actors do not need to engage in impression management; they can be themselves” (Wallace & Wolf 1999, 231). It is this part that I am trying to examine, develop, and perform at the front stage. I believe that if I can strengthen my backstage personality I can pursue my aspirations and not give in to the pressures and expectations of the society. When I am with my family and

peers I immediately activate my front-stage self. My front stage self refuses to show that I am overly conscious of my physical imperfections, but backstage I am always concerned about how I look like, and how others think of or see me.

The notions of the backstage and front stage are all about impression management or the techniques a person use to guide and manipulate the impression from other people. My inner thoughts significantly affect my flawed actions. We appear to have two reflections of ourselves, the inside and the outside, the front stage and backstage. We know for sure that throughout the socialization process, we gain the ability to view ourselves as others view us and to examine our own identity based on other people's treatment of or attitudes toward us. Our physical being is the most observable or noticeable part of our selves. Simply put, how we carry ourselves in front of others expresses our own self-image. Therefore, my goal is to learn how to balance my front stage and backstage selves so that I can still be the true 'me', partly, even in the presence of other people.

References

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Lightining Source, 2006.

Wallace, Ruth & Alison Wolf. *Contemporary sociological theory: expanding the classical tradition*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1999.