

Chapter 3
Topic 8 Action theories
Page 228
Activity: Media
Goffman and the performed self

Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Identify key features of Goffman's dramaturgical model.
- Evaluate the usefulness of Goffman's dramaturgical model.

A. Watch the first one minute and 20 seconds of clip 1 and then in pairs answer the questions that follow.

Clip 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Z0XS-QLDWM> "Erving Goffman and the Performed Self"

1. What does Goffman argue in his dramaturgical model?
2. What are the parts we play determined by?
3. When do the different parts we play become most apparent?

B. Watch clip 2 and then in pairs answer the questions that follow.

Clip 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krgUVduKFL4> "Blackadder"

This clip relates to the images shown in clip 1.

1. How does it illustrate Goffman's model?
2. Suggest a situation where you may need to play two inconsistent roles and juggle your masks.

C. Read the section on Goffman in your textbook (pages 227-228). Then individually, write your own response to the following question:

How far do you agree that society is best understood through an analogy with the theatre? For example, are we just 'playing a part' when we interact with one another, or is there more to us than this?