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Life as Game: A Theory Elaboration

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INTRODUCTION
Throughout history, individuals and groups have attempted to manage how they are seen in the public eye. People usually play interaction games with their audiences in order to make themselves appear more positive and desirable. Some cases, however, include individuals or groups who do not want to fit in, and who do not want to appear desirable. This analysis examines Goffman’s theory of impression management with the metaphor, *life as game*. The theory is applied to two cases of differing organizational level—an individual, Maynard James Keenan, and a large, complex organization, the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. Theory elaboration is an integral part of studying social theories. When new social groups, patterns, or norms emerge, new ways to think about society must be introduced. Theory elaboration is, according to Vaughan, “the process of refining a theory, model, or concept in order to specify more carefully the circumstances in which it does or does not offer potential for explanation” (Ragin & Becker 1992:175). Theory elaboration allows social theories to remain relevant and applicable to the societies in which they were created. Some consider that, “the examination of data with theory elaboration as the goal is seen...as a major (if not the major) building block of a positive science” (Ragin & Becker 1992:181). Therefore, the “Evaluation” and “Elaboration” sections of this essay depart from the application of Goffman’s ideas and examine his theory for holes or insufficiencies, so that new definitions may be created to increase the relevance of *life as game* to societal interaction. Through a comparative case analysis, it is discovered that Goffman’s theory must be elaborated upon to include a definition of a “team” metaphor, instead of only describing individual interaction; room must also be made for individuals whose motivation is not to gain advantage by appearing desirable to an audience.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Erving Goffman’s theory, *life as game*, describes interpersonal interaction as a game which has winners and losers, involving both players attempting to find advantages and pleasure (Lemert & Branaman 1997). Games are intended to be fun (for the winner, at least), as Goffman explains, “games are fun to play when the outcome or pay-off has a good chance of remaining unsettled until the end of play” (Lemert & Branaman 1997:130). Even though one side must lose this game, fun comes from simply being part of the game. The two main ways that these games are played are through withholding or manipulating information in order to make oneself be perceived more favorably, and to make a target person be perceived more unfavorably (Sato & Nihei 2009:267).

Goffman considers the social games one plays to be betting games. Such games must have stakes that are not too low for the player to lose interest nor too high for the player to fear the consequences enough to quit the game. If one is playing a social betting game, insignificant lies are not enough to perk an individual’s interest, but lies that are too grandiose may ruin a player’s credibility (Lemert & Branaman 1997).

A player in this game makes certain “moves” that will elicit certain responses. Goffman identifies five basic moves that a player can make in social interaction. These moves are the unwitting, the naïve, the covering, the uncovering, and the counter-uncovering moves. Each move is constructed to gain a direct advantage or to discover the strategy of another player (Goffman 1969:11-27). The *unwitting* move occurs when a player seems unaware or unconcerned with the fact that he or she is being observed. This move allows a player to take

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162 Goffman (1969) refers to the two parties in social games as “subject” and “observer”, but to make the *game* concept more representative, I will refer to the “subject” as a “player”. 
what is being presented at face value. The player does not feel the need to mask any motivations because the individual does not care about the consequences of the action. The naïve move occurs when the observer believes that the player is genuine, not involved in an unwitting move, and can be taken at face value (Goffman 1969:11). This move causes the observer to underestimate the player, giving the player a strategic advantage to make further moves later in the interaction.

The third move is known as a covering move, which is an intentional effort by a player to produce actions from the observer. In this process, the player is aware that what is said and done will have an effect on how the observer interprets the situation. The player thinks ahead to understand how the early phases of interaction will affect later phases and begins to plan these interactions to make the end product favorable. Covering moves depend on the player’s ability to read the expressions of others involved in the interaction. In contrast, an uncovering move is employed when the observer suspects that information is being withheld or that he/she is being misled, and then attempts to find out if he or she is being misled by the player. Goffman explains this move using law, espionage, and politics as his sources for examples. The ultimate purpose of an uncovering move is to discover the player’s motive and intent (Goffman 1969).

The final move is the player’s reaction to being in the spotlight of an uncovering move: the player attempts to counter these actions to maintain his or her validation through counter-uncovering moves. This move involves the player giving the observer a “false sense of having an advantage” (Goffman 1969:20), thereby making it possible for the player to distance him/herself from the observer. This distance can be in the form of confusion or mystification, which allows the player to keep his or her motives hidden from the observer.

Goffman notes that intelligence security is difficult to maintain, since information can be stolen without being removed. Spies exemplify such concealment in that they are constantly dealing in covering and counter-uncovering moves to keep their motives and true identities hidden. They must practice this ability to read people’s reactions and plan their next moves to further their assignments (Goffman 1969). While spies are an ideal example of life as game, everyone participates in these processes of interaction, thinking up false pretenses to get out of a responsibility, providing a rationale for doing something when actual motives are different, or claiming righteousness when participating in shady activities. All people have misconstrued information to make themselves appear favorable or to make someone else appear unfavorable.

Goffman’s metaphor of life as game explains the motivations and processes behind daily interactions. Many people do not realize they are playing games with others in interaction. However, within an interaction, both sides are looking to further their ends or to gain an advantage over the other. The interaction games that individuals play do not always work, resulting in winners and losers. Not everyone can win all the time, but the fun is in playing the game. However, Goffman did not take into account that perhaps one may not want to win the game. One may take pleasure in appearing unfavorable to audiences and may desire the kind of attention most would interpret to be negative.

**The Case of Maynard James Keenan**
Maynard James Keenan is an interesting individual who seems to have many different interests and many different personalities. Keenan is best known as the lead-singer of the rock bands Tool, A Perfect Circle, and Puscifer. Aside from his music career, he has performed stand-up comedy and acted in a few films and television shows. He is also charitable, supporting causes such as the Life Through Art Foundation, the Los Angeles Mission, and the Humane Society.
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Although NRA experiencing Election stated, “This is a concert. And if people get into a plane and fly to their deaths to make a statement, it might make sense to step back and ask questions about why this happened, rather than just waving flags.” Some fans booed. Keenan says the group’s music was temporarily banned on radio stations around Ohio. (Farber 2004)
Keenan also holds strong views against religion. Tool’s first album, *Opiate*, is a reference to the Marx line, “Religion is the opiate of the masses”. There are many anti-religious lyrics throughout the band’s songs, including “Jesus won’t you fucking whistle something from the past you’ve done” in the song, “Sober”, and “Jesus Christ why don’t you come save my life now, open my eyes and blind me with your light and your lies” in the song, “Opiate”. He explains his disdain for religion to be aimed generally at the middle men (i.e. pastors and priests) who manipulate people with religion for their own financial benefit. He believes these men to have ruined any good that could possibly come from religious experience (diCarlo 2001). This feeling may have been produced by the Southern Baptist upbringing of his stepfather, where he directly witnessed the hypocrisy of people claiming a set of beliefs while acting contrary to them (diCarlo 2001).

He likes to keep fans on their toes, never doing anything that is predictable. Keenan has built his whole career on thwarting expectations (Farber 2004).

Maynard James Keenan has many interests and branches into many forms of entertainment, life, business, and interaction. He uses his public persona in contrast to his on-stage persona to purposefully convey two separate messages to audiences. One is that he is a tortured maniac. The other is that he is an intelligent, politically conscious, loving, regular person.

**Analysis of Case**

Maynard James Keenan demonstrates life as game in his role as a popular musician who has influences over millions of fans throughout the world. He is a recluse who aims to keep his personal life separate from his professional career, so he must employ various techniques to maintain his public appearance as a confusing and mysterious entity.

Maynard James Keenan’s most apparent technique of life as game he uses is withholding information. He keeps all information about his son, Devo, (other than the fact that he exists) hidden from the public. This withholding allots him a strategic advantage to protect his son from the prying eyes of the media, allowing for a healthier family relationship.

Keenan intends for his lyrics to connect with listeners on a personal level. He does not include lyrics to the songs with the albums when they are released, which is a practice of many musicians. Instead, he withholds this information in order to make the listeners look within themselves for self-identity, understanding, and reflection (diCarlo 2001).

In his lyrics, Keenan also plays a covering move. He knows that people who buy the album want to know the lyrics, and that they will become intrigued as to what the lyrics of the song are (since much of the content is sung incredibly fast or distorted, which makes it nearly impossible to identify the actual words), forcing them to take a closer look at what is said. When the listeners look closer at the song to find meaning in the lyrics, they are performing an uncovering move. Keenan plans this stage of interaction to set up a future phase, when he posts the lyrics on the band’s official website a few months after the album is released. The end becomes more favorable for Keenan because people have found deeper meaning in his songs.

He also plays a covering move in being a recluse. This covering move allows him to maintain a confusing public perception by keeping his goals and motives hidden from the public. This causes the public to be on its toes, wondering what he is going to do next. He plans for this perception to give him an advantage in the area of creative freedom, allowing him to start side projects. The public reaction that he creates in being a recluse makes the public invest time and money into discovering the new projects that he investigates and, ultimately, making him more famous.
In performances, when Keenan is situated in an unlit area toward the rear of the stage, with his back to the audience, he is performing an unwitting move. This stage performance makes it seem as though he is unconcerned with the fact that people are watching him, because he situates himself so that the audience cannot even see him. He does not feel the need to be concerned with the consequences of this action because no one can see what he is doing; the audience can only hear him singing. This move worked to Keenan’s advantage during a concert, when a fan crawled on the stage and attempted to give him a hug. The fan was in a naïve move; he underestimated Keenan’s knowledge of the observation and assumed that Keenan would not care if he climbed onto the stage. Keenan then acted on this advantage and threw the fan to the ground. Keenan held the fan down by sitting on his back and choking him while he screamed the lyrics of “Pushit” into the back of the struggling fan’s head (Bayer 2009).

With an individual as confusing and mysterious, yet incredibly famous, as Maynard James Keenan, it is inevitable that people will play an uncovering move, in an attempt to discover the mass amount of information he is covering. To counter these efforts, and to manage his impression, he has resorted to many different forms of counter-uncovering techniques to keep his personal life to himself. For example, he used to carry and hand out business cards with the name “Jesus H. Christ” printed on them (Harris 2005). This misconstrued observers’ interpretations of him by claiming that he is not Maynard James Keenan, so he is not the subject of their analyses. Another counter-uncovering move he has employed is the practice of using a paintball rifle to force trespassing fans off of his property (Loder 2003). In firing the paintball rifle at the trespassers, he is countering their efforts to find out more about his motivations by keeping the observers at a quite literal distance.

When Goffman compared social games to betting games, he explained that the stakes must be high enough for the player to sustain interest in the game, but not so high as to cause the player to quit the game out of fear of the consequences (Lemert & Branaman 1997). Maynard James Keenan appears not to care about the consequences of his efforts to confuse the public. In beating up, shooting paintballs at, and lying to fans, he conveys the message that he does not care about their reactions, whether they quit buying albums or completely turn their backs on him. There is some evidence that he is aware of this balance of stakes, shown when he apologized for the hoax about the tour bus crash after seeing the trouble it caused for the concert venues and his manager (Akhtar 1997).

Through his political activism, Keenan participates in “character contests.” When he erupted at the fans of the show in Ohio, who were chanting “USA” shortly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he was having an interpersonal dispute with those individuals over whose character identity was more desirable. He claimed that their status was that of followers and mindless patriots. His displayed character identity was of one who asked questions and wanted to find out the true motivations of our heads of state. His identity in this situation was definitely the quality that would prevail, for it was the quality of an intelligent person who thought for himself. These character contests also came into play when he talked about how every time he spoke of his political beliefs, it was edited out. This character contest attempts to display those who edited out his comments as the “bad guys” for not taking the time to listen to what he had to say.

Maynard James Keenan’s public persona can be evaluated in terms of life as game because he plays interactional games with everyone who watches or listens to him. He withholds information from fans and the media to keep parts of his life secret. He manipulates information to keep fans on their toes about what he is going to do next, making him more popular. He performs all of the moves that Goffman (1969) outlines in Strategic Interaction for many
different reasons. He plays these moves to keep people who may want to learn more about his private life away from it, to keep audiences and fans guessing as to what he is going to do, as well as to keep them interested and invested in his career. He partakes in character contests through his political views and how he expresses them, and he understands the stakes of social games and how far he can push these games to keep the public invested in finding out the outcome of the game.

**EVALUATION OF THE THEORY**

*Life as game* is an effective theoretical model for explaining the public persona of Maynard James Keenan. Analysis of His social life demonstrates the theoretical aspects of *life as game*. This theory helps us to understand Keenan on a more sophisticated level. Keenan plays to be awkward and undesirable during his concerts to allow him to maintain a more secret private life, and to make audiences more interested in what he is doing and what he is going to do in the future. It is understandable why he manipulates the public to believe things he tells them that are not true. Through hoaxes, he is gaining satisfaction from winning the social games he sets up for the public to play with him. This model helps us to understand his motivations in not releasing song lyrics with his albums because it shows that he has plans to make the listeners find meaning in the songs for themselves before being given the lyrics.

The theoretical model provides an effective insight into his personal life and accomplishments. Through manipulating and withholding information, he is able to live a private personal life which gives him space to investigate his own creativity further, allowing him to create new and interesting opportunities in life.

The theory of the naïve move does not apply soundly to Keenan. He seems to never be underestimating anyone or anything, or taking any situation at face value. He is always planning ahead and performing the manipulating. The naïve move can still be applicable to this case, however, because when Goffman (1969:11) explained the naïve move, he explained it as a move of the observer, which the player uses to gain an advantage. This is the case for his fans, especially the one who climbed on the stage during a performance, and for the people who believed what he wrote on the band’s website.

The theory of the uncovering move also does not apply well to Keenan’s case. He usually seems to be covering and counter-uncovering to conceal information or to maintain his public perception. He seldom seems to be looking to find anything out about the other players in the game. He has a plan and sticks to it; he has been consistent with his public persona throughout his career. Because of this issue, Goffman’s relation of *life as game* to espionage does not fit in with how Keenan conducts his life. This is a little disconcerting, given that *Strategic Interaction* (1969) focused primarily on the tactics used by spies in intelligence gathering.

*Life as game* does not have much of a place in explaining Keenan’s views on religion. His religious views are more of a product of his upbringing and what he observed within the religious community. This part of Keenan’s life is comparable to *symbolic interactionism* because he applied meaning to what he experienced and observed in religion, and then formed a belief based upon these meanings.

Overall, *life as game* does an exemplary job of analyzing Keenan’s case, except for the case of his motivations, which can be seen as “winning by losing.” He wants to appear undesirable to many audiences, which makes him much more desirable. *Life as game* now must be evaluated in terms of a large organization.
THE CASE OF R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY

The R. J. Reynolds Tobacco company is the second-largest tobacco company in the United States. The company manufactures, packages, advertises, ships, and sells some of the most popular cigarettes in the world, including Camel, Pall Mall, Winston, Kool, and Salem (R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company 2009).

Once established, the Reynolds company faced a problem which every company making products that are considered luxuries faces: how to continue to sell a product that people do not need; the answer is marketing and advertising. One of the first strategies of marketing that the Reynolds company used was the story of the humble upbringing of the founder and owner, R. J. Reynolds. Rumors had circulated about the poor family he grew up in and about his lack of schooling, which was seen in his bad spelling and reluctance to write anything down—he actually had a pretty comfortable upbringing and could not write well because he was dyslexic. The company did nothing to stifle these rumors because they caused competing businesses to underestimate his abilities (Reynolds & Shachtman 1989:54).

After the Reynolds company began selling stock and built up a board of directors at the turn of the century, he built a new, six-story, block long factory for packaging the tobacco. The factory was the largest in the state, and the company fell into debt because of construction costs. The solution was advertising. An advertisement was sent to stores all over the country that said: there is no limit as to what they can accomplish with the most popular chewing Tobaccos offered...They have recently equipped the largest and best Tobacco Factory in the South, and are now much better prepared than ever to make the shuffle (Reynolds & Shachtman 1989:55).

The company issued calendars; one which portrayed “a ravishingly beautiful olive skinned and dark tressed maiden” (Reynolds & Shachtman 1989:55) and began the tradition of “sex sells” that almost every marketing company uses.

Tobacco companies use about fifteen percent of the sale price from every pack of cigarettes they sell to advertise their product (Parker-Pope 2001:74). Tobacco companies reported spending $14.15 billion on advertising in the year 2004 alone (Federal Trade Commission 2007:4). Advertising is essential to tobacco companies like R. J. Reynolds because, after all the lawsuits and regulations against the tobacco industry in recent years, the company still has to survive.

In 1998, R. J. Reynolds was involved in the class action lawsuit against Big Tobacco which resulted in a $206 billion settlement given to forty-six states. In 2003, the companies had to pay out over $10 billion after a court case ruled that “light” cigarettes deceived smokers (Boyd 2004:45). The company is also involved in a $289 billion lawsuit from the federal government that claims tobacco companies are “guilty of fraud, racketeering, and conspiracy by concealing catastrophic health risks of tobacco products” (Boyd 2004:46).

R. J. Reynolds Tobacco started as a one-man operation and grew into one of the largest and most profitable businesses of all time. Today the company has 4,800 employees, with thirty-one percent of employees in the fields of management, marketing, and financial analysts (R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company 2009). What makes this amount of expansion and sustainability possible? The best explanation is that the company plays social games in order to profit and grow, despite some of the harshest smear campaigns and legislations ever received.

ANALYSIS OF THE CASE

The clearest way to evaluate the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company using the life as game theory is through the company’s advertising and marketing techniques. There are also clear examples shown in the way the company has handled the large sum of class-action lawsuits and anti-
smoking campaigns. The company has to manipulate existing and potential customers to sell the most deadly—yet one of the most widely used—products in the world.

The R. J. Reynolds company had to plan future moves when it first started out. Like other successful businesses of the time, R. J. Reynolds predicted that a large demand for tobacco was about to happen and went into debt attempting to expand as fast as possible. In this particular case, the gamble paid off, and the chess move worked perfectly. The company became the second largest tobacco company in America.

The fact that cigarettes can cause many different health concerns such as lung cancer, emphysema, and heart disease was not known for many decades after R. J. Reynolds Tobacco was in business. It is now known that smoking tobacco causes one in five deaths and millions of illnesses every year in the United States (American Cancer Society 2009). The fact that the American public did not know of, or were unconcerned with, these health risks was in part because of the covering moves employed by R. J. Reynolds. The company advertised the product as one that makes an individual more popular, attractive, and happy. This can be considered a covering move, since the advertisements masked the harmful effects of the cigarettes in order to get more people to buy them. This can also be considered a manipulation of information, where the positive effects of smoking that were implied through the commercial were not at all what happens to a person when he or she smokes.

The public, along with the Surgeon General and the American Cancer Society, were involved in an uncovering move against the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. This uncovering move was used to show to the rest of the world what harmful effects smoking has on the human body. The uncovering tactics of these anti-smoking organizations have moved to discredit R. J. Reynolds’ claim that the products released by the company were not harmful.

Because of the uncovering move from the public to expose the health risks associated with tobacco products, the tobacco company employed a counter-uncovering move, which was the denial that a clear link between smoking and cancer had ever been conclusively shown to exist. This relationship was denied until the early 1990s. (Reynolds & Shachtman 1989:318). Although this move failed to receive validation from society, it helped the company to maintain composure and confidence, as well as fooling some of the consumer market by claiming there was a possibility that the company’s cigarettes were not as harmful as people thought.

R. J. Reynolds Tobacco used a naïve move when the company was fined for a 2007 advertisement in Rolling Stone that used cartoons as a means to sell Camel cigarettes. Cartoon advertising has been strictly forbidden by law because the cartoons are said to appeal to children. The nine page advertisement was explained by the company by stating that it did not feel that the advertisement fit the definition of a “cartoon” (Elliot-Engel 2009). The naïve move allowed the company to portray the image that it did not know it was violating a regulation. This move was not validated because the company was still criminally charged. The R. J. Reynolds Tobacco was fined $300,000 and forced to run an anti-smoking advertisement in the next Rolling Stone issue (Elliot-Engel 2009).

R. J. Reynolds may fit into the concept of an unwitting move in that the company—due to lack of competition or regulation—was able to do whatever it wanted without any scrutiny or consequences. This freedom can be applied prior the late 1980s, when anti-smoking campaigns, legislation, and lawsuits began to force the company to be concerned with the observations of others. In earlier times, though, cigarettes were not known to be harmful, so the company could put advertisements in any walks of life. There were children’s cartoons which portrayed the main characters smoking. Advertisements were everywhere, from television, the movies, the sides of
buses, magazines, and the radio. The company knew that people were observing its actions, but people were buying cigarettes, so it was a good thing.

One of the main goals one follows in social interaction, according to *life as game*, is to make oneself appear more favorable than the competition. This tactic was implemented by R. J. Reynolds during the legal issues the company endured. The company ran four advertisements in magazines during 1998, one of which included,

a plaintiffs’ lawyer flashing a thumbs-up sign while lounging by a swimming pool and monitoring a police scanner, cell phone in one hand and lit Camel in the other. Three women wearing neck braces hoola-dance nearby while an ossified butler approaches with a tray of martinis. In the background are a gold Mercedes, a set of golf clubs and a billboard blasting: “1-800-I-Sue-4-You” (Geyelin 1998:B1).

Advertisements like these attempted to show the hypocrisy of the competition. They made a statement that everybody smokes, and the fact that people can fight a lawsuit against a company which they pay money to is a fallacy of modern society.

Another part of the character contests R. J. Reynolds faced was in the smear campaign led against the company, which usually exploited the fact of the deadliness of cigarettes and the knowledge, yet unconcern, of the tobacco company over this. One television advertisement in Florida even went so far as to paint the company as evil:

[The commercial] features a “Demon Award” ceremony cast in hell, where the nominees are murderers, drug dealers and a tobacco executive. In the audience are Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. The nattily dressed executive smiles as he accepts the award, saying: “This is for all you smokers out there” (Geyelin 1998:B1).

This commercial was a backlash to the game tactics that the company had used in the past, which claimed that the company had been “unfair” or “cheated.” Whether or not the company is actually “evil,” one fact remains true; both sides manipulated information to further a cause—the player’s euphoria from winning the game.

**EVALUATION OF THE THEORY**

The theory of *life as game* applies fairly well to the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco company, but there are some areas where it falls short to explain what happens. The only goal that the company seems to have is profit, so in order to make profit, the company needs to keep selling cigarettes, so it needs to understand what the public is looking for. This understanding that is needed to make any sort of profit cannot be achieved if an unwitting move is happening, because the company must always be aware of observation and constantly changing to meet the demands of modern society.

Areas where the metaphor fits well to the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company are through withholding and manipulating information and through the character contests played against plaintiff lawyers and anti-smokers. By withholding the fact that cigarettes are dangerous and by manipulating advertisements to appeal to children, the company was able to start a whole new generation of smokers and to keep cigarettes in the hands of individuals, regardless of age. The character contests pitted against the anti-smokers are the best examples of pitting oneself against another entity and stacking them up, highlighting negative aspects of the other, and the player attempting to look as saintly as possible.

Goffman’s metaphor seems to fit perfectly within the motivations, moves, and desired outcomes of *life as game*. The only difference between a large organization and the criteria for Goffman’s theory is that he wrote on an individual level, not including a definition for a team or
organization.

Comparison of the Cases and Elaboration of Theory

These two cases differ in one main aspect. Maynard James Keenan is a single person, and the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company is a large corporation with almost five thousand employees. The theory of *life as game*—a theory of face-to-face, interpersonal interaction—falls short in explaining the behaviors of groups. It is much more applicable to Keenan, since he is a single person and can interact with individuals better than a large company, which has to talk to everyone who is watching. Another way that the two cases differ greatly is in their motivations. Maynard James Keenan seems not to want to be validated in his actions, but is rewarded for this behavior and is validated with the large fan following he enjoys, which may have been his overall goal in the first place. R. J. Reynolds Tobacco wants badly to be validated by the public, or observers, but has been failing miserably in recent years. The companies do not sell as many cigarettes as they used to, not as many people smoke anymore, and cigarettes are not allowed to be advertised in place where children are likely to see the advertisements. R. J. Reynolds is not playing a game in which it wants to come out on top and enjoy euphoria, but instead is playing a game in which it is just trying to survive in a world where the product and company itself are becoming highly demonized throughout mainstream society. Because of a couple of the problems we run into in *life as game*, there is some refinement of the theory that is necessary for it to include larger organizations and a survival factor.

The metaphor to games must be expanded from just including “players” and “observers” to including “teams.” Athletic teams cannot function without working together, and without this working together, a team will surely lose the game. This must be established in the definitions of the theory so that we can understand that teams play games as well. Within these teams, there must be cohesiveness in order to achieve success. Certain members of the team must be specially trained or qualified to be direct opponents to certain members of an opposing team. This can be seen most clearly in a football game, where linemen are pitted against linemen, running backs are pitted against linebackers, and receivers are pitted against defensive backs. It can also be applied to a “team” such as R. J. Reynolds, where the company needs group cohesiveness in order to come out ahead. The company has many different people employed in many different positions, and each person has a specific job with specific tasks. Some employees deal with advertising, some deal with research, some deal with legal issues, and some deal with management and financing. Every part is equally important in keeping the company alive, which leads to the next area of refinement.

The theory of *life as game* must be refined to add another motivation besides simply euphoria. Life is much more complex than happiness and sadness. The best way to describe many individuals’ motivations is through life and death. Survival is the topic on the top of most everyone’s instinct list. Sometimes, we need to play social games in order to acquire the structural resources we need to keep ourselves, or at least our social identities, alive and working. Since the early 1990s, R. J. Reynolds has not been fighting to stay ahead of anybody. The company has been fighting legal prosecution and the threat of losing business. In times of desperation, “fun” no longer helps to explain interaction. Granted, there are winners and losers (winners live, losers die), but happiness can simply be in the form of being alive. Something more has to be done in order to achieve euphoria. Goffman should have taken this into account, instead of thinking that everything is pleasure-driven.
There must also be an addition to Goffman’s theory to include an individual’s motivation to appear undesirable or unfavorable, as in the case of Maynard James Keenan. Sometimes, appearing desirable may not garner as much attention as seeming weird. Keenan is a prime example of this possibility. Through insulting his fans and keeping a low public profile, he has peaked the interest of many people, causing him to be rich and famous.

Goffman’s life as game is an effective and well-proposed theory on how we as humans work in a world where power and happiness are the main drives of society. However, these are not the only motivations of society and interaction, and the game of life is not always an individual effort. There needs to be more taken into account. Adding to the theory would cause life as game to be more apt to explain our society and the way people and groups interact. This may cause Goffman’s theory to be more valued in the sociological community.

**Conclusion**

Goffman’s theory of life as game is a structured approach to understanding the interactional games that individuals and larger organizational groups play with each other on a daily basis. These games are intended to make one’s self appear favorable to the public or to gain an advantage over another player or players. They can also be aimed at making another individual or group appear less favorable. There are a variety of techniques used to participate in these games, which must have a clear winner and a loser. The observations of others’ reactions and an ability to plan future moves based on those reactions are critical in coming out on top in these games. There must be some risk involved with playing the games, but not too much risk as to make the consequences outweigh the benefits of the outcome. Maynard James Keenan and R. J. Reynolds Tobacco are both prime examples of the interactional games we all play for almost every interaction in which we take part. Is there any sincere motivation, or is everyone in the whole world constantly attempting to take advantage of someone else, or at least planning future moves where an advantage could be taken? It is a startling notion to consider what the true motivations of the people whom we encounter every day may be.
REFERENCES


