

Erving Goffman, Sociologist and Author, Dies

By WILLIAM DICKE

Erving Goffman, a sociologist who searched for the meaning in the routine transactions of everyday life, died Friday in Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia after a long illness. He was 60 years old.

Dr. Goffman, the Benjamin Franklin Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, argued in a number of books that even seemingly innocuous social acts could be calculated to show an individual in the best light. People are essentially performers whose main business is fabricating an identity, he argued.

Geoffrey Nunberg of Stanford University, reviewing Dr. Goffman's book, "Forms of Talk" in The New York Times Book Review last year, said that the sociologist had acquired a wide audience because he brought "a mordant irony to the pretensions and theatricality of everyday interaction" and had "considerable gifts for rendering the everyday as bizarre and amusing."

He added: "But Mr. Goffman's moral very sad because his skepticism is believed. In his catalogues of effects,

he finds only the management of impressions; there is rarely an intimation that anything animates our performances beyond the terrible fear of being caught out."

Dr. Goffman's other books included "Presentation of Self in Everyday Life," "Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates," "Interaction Ritual," "Encounters," "Behavior in Public Places," "Strategic Interaction," "Relations in Public," and "Gender Advertisements."

Called an 'Important Influence

Alice Rossi, president of the American Sociology Association, said that Dr. Goffman was a "very important influence on two generations of researchers and students."

Erving Goffman was born June 11, 1922, in Manville, Alberta. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto, and his master's degree and doctorate at the University of Chicago. Mr. Goffman joined the faculty of the

University of California at Berkeley in 1958 and became a full professor in 1962. He joined the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania in 1968.

Mr. Goffman was president of the American Sociological Association in 1981 and was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Anthropological Association.

In the 1970's, he served on the Committee for the Study of Incarceration, which concluded that prisons should be retained but only for individuals convicted of the most serious crimes.

He is survived by his wife, Gillian Sankoff, graduate chairman of the department of linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania; a son, Thomas, and a daughter, Alice. Funeral services will be private.