Philosophies and Psychology of Self-Presentation through Arts and Proxies: Interpretation of Filmic Portrayals as Direct and Indirect Actions

Johnson Arua[1], Chidiebere F. Emefesi[2], Jude C. Agbo[3], Alphonsus Ugwu[4], Francisca C. Onwuasoanya[5] & Emeka Aniago[6]

[1, 2, 5]Fine & Applied Arts, University of Nigeria

[3, 4]Mass Communication, University of Nigeria

[6]Theatre & Film Studies, University of Nigeria

ORCID id: 0000-0003-3194-1463

Abstract: Self-presentation is a universal human phenomenon, an umbrella term and concept representing every action emanating from individuals regardless of their gender, race, and social status, which provides basis for impression formulation by others. Most scholars look at self-presentation as people's purposive, direct and proxy actions that relay impressions through conscious actions, with very little elaboration on unconscious and inadvertent actions as self-presentation. To deepen existing knowledge, this study adopts interpretive approach to illustrate instances of unconscious self-presentation (during sleep), inadvertent self-presentation (behavioural residue), and proxy self-presentation through arts (identity claims) as portrayed in a Nollywood film *Kambili*: *The Whole 30 yards*. In the end, this study demonstrates that intersecting interconnectivity exists between visual metaphor and behavioural residue, which instigates process of meaning-making regarding arts and environment as channels of self-presentation.

Keywords: appearance, impression management, personal space, self-presentation

An animal resting or passing by leaves crushed grass, footprints, and perhaps droppings, but a human occupying a room for one night prints his character, his biography, his recent history, and sometimes his future, plans and hopes.

John Steinbeck, Travels With Charlie

Introduction

Self-presentation is an inescapable and a complex day-to-day universal human phenomenon common to all perceptive humans, regardless of their gender, age, race, inclinations and social status. The complexity in reading others' self-presentation dynamics to understand the embedded information increases proportionally as individuals' meet, intersect, and relate. Through self-presentation, individuals consciously and inadvertently relay their inclinations, status, health, mindset, emotions, and worldviews to others, who

then apply attribution and deduction approaches to arrive at interpretations. Existing literature and theorizations show that self-presentation is essentially categorized into two groups – the direct (conscious and purposive manifestations) which most studies dwell on, and the indirect (proxy, reflex and unconscious manifestations) which receives lesser attention. Multiple significations embedded on each individual's physical form and outlook such as body physique, deformities, augmentations, adornments, costumes, make-ups, ornamentations, body arts, race and gender are components and variables that connote visual metaphors of direct and indirect self-presentation. Human behaviour encompasses attributes of verbal and non-verbal communication such as gestures, mannerisms, movements, and speech patterns representing mostly direct self-presentation. Human utterances subsume polemics of identity through language, communication of worldview, knowledge, inclination, and many other realities, which we are classifying as direct self-presentation. Indirect self-presentation includes attributions emanating from the reading of the realities of an individual's immediate surroundings praxis. The focus of this study shall be on the following four components of self-presentation, namely, appearance, behaviour, utterance, and immediate surroundings. To provide dependable articulation on the above-mentioned components as examples of indirect and direct self-presentation, this paper utilizes relevant excerpts and snapshots from the film Kambili, to deepen knowledge on their intersection praxis and their channels of information encoding. More so, other relevant texts shall be part of our illustration were tenable.

Theories and Perspectives

To intensify this discussion, the following questions will serve as conceptual trajectories intended to highlight specific suppositions seeking cogent elucidation. Can self-presentation occur at all times, through proxies, during sleep, and are other people's presence, specific situations, circumstances, and environment mandatory for self-presentation to occur? In response to these questions, we start by observing that the theoretical standpoint of this paper revolves around the premise that self-presentation is an incessant chain of actions common to all humans, thus it occurs consciously and reflexively while individuals are stationary, in motion, and asleep. Before delving into an elucidation, let us look at some prominent theories and scholarly perspectives. In their pacesetting works, John Locke (1975) and George Herbert Mead (1934) provided useful insights on the variables, dynamics and polemics of interconnectedness of each individual's responses to mindset manifestation, choice reflection, inclination indication, and identity projection through actions. For instance, Locke observes that humans are "thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection" which are purposive presentations of tendencies that projects realities of self (1975, 335). Then Erving Goffman in his foundational theorization in his widely studied work The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life illustrates copiously how inter-personal interactions in immediate physical presence subsume nuances and shades of self-presentation approaches as examples of consciously propelled actions. Goffman's theory which borrows significantly from Mead's conceptualization of 'self' as a product of social life, extends existing narratives interpreting 'self' as manifestation of complex aggregation in response to life's realities. 'Self' denotes

varied impressions and persona of an individual. People tend to categorize the self as the social self, the religious self, the private self, the political self, the actual self, the assumed self, the true self and so on. Illustratively Goffman observes; "when an individual appears before others he will have many motives for trying to control the impression they receive" (8). The 'self' an individual presents in the context Goffman portrays above is a product of rationality and intentionality. Through the above illustration, Goffman contextualizes self-presentation as a strategic, conscious, and purposive action, achievable through verbal and non-verbal impression management approaches such as speaking patterns, choice of words, demeanour, modes of dressing, kinds of dresses, and grooming variations. In line with Goffman, self-presentation purposively occurs at home, at work, during worships, at meetings, while travelling in trains, airplanes, buses, ships, and taxis, and while walking on street as well as during buying and selling.

The summary of Goffman's theory is that self-presentation subsumes an individual's purposive and deliberate shaping of externalized actions to achieve customized impression projection for a specific others' appreciation. Goffman's supposition is plausible because in response to specific social dynamics, each individual's "performance is socialised, moulded, and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented" (1959: 44). In instances were individuals act purposively, such actions are classified as strategic self-presentation and according to Sandra Metts, strategic self-presentation is a product of impression management because "individuals possess countless idiosyncrasies – habits, mannerisms, beliefs, attitudes, values, abilities, needs, interests, family history, and so forth" which directly or indirectly influence their self-presentation (2009, 506). In line with Metts, strategic self-presentation, impression management occurs when individuals intentionally encode messages through verbal and non-verbal communication channels; whereby, preference and rationality combine to regulate such actions. Therefore, the bedrock of strategic self-presentation or impression management is evidential when individuals "consciously select choice characteristics from their psychological and behavioural matrix that they believe will present the choice self in each occasion and circumstance" (2009, 506).

Illustrating impression management as a purposive conscious action, Metts notes that when individuals intend to be perceived as 'likeable' and 'friendly', they usually adopt positive emotion displays during interactions, such as self-deprecating humour, extending of compliments and favours. When they wish to appear competent, they relay their accomplishments through face-to-face interactions, or through displays of items that denote accomplishments such as plaques and awards (Metts 2009, 509). In the illustration above, Metts contextualizes self-presentation as that which is tenable in proximate individuals' presence and attainable through proxies, whereas strategic self-presentation is a response to specific expectations, situations, circumstances and environment specific realities. Furthermore, Metts avers that when an individual intends to appear helpless, relevant supplication strategies such as appearing sad or weak are useful, and to appear 'powerful' "the strategy of intimidation and the tactics of displaying anger or demonstrating the willingness to punish or cause harm to others" will suffice (2009, 507). In line with the conceptualization by Goffman and the elaboration of Metts, impression

management or strategic self-presentation is a conscious purposive action, primarily skill enabled, regulated by cognition, influenced by circumstance, concomitant environmental realities, and motivated by each individual's expectation permutations. Conscious self-presentation is an impression management manifestation, which includes deliberate acting, appearances, speaking and other deliberate actions that relay exteriorities that subsume attributions defining each individual's personality, intentionality, inclination, worldview and other things that an individual embody and represent.

Espousing on the tools of impression generation and their inter-connectedness with nature and nurture derivatives, Norbert Oyibo Eze et al observe that human "idiosyncrasies are products of complex dynamics of human nature and nurture which each individual is endowed with and/or assimilates through day-to-day living" (2024, 232). Eze et al suggest that the realities of each individual's environment, his past and his subsisting experience, in many ways influence the aggregation of his worldview, perspectives, and personal culture. Eze et al views align with the positions expressed in some theories on human genetics, social adaptation, cognitive development, and social learning. For instance, Robert J. Brym and John Lie observe that "nobody hands values, norms, roles, and statuses to us fully formed, nor do we accept them mechanically" rather consciously "we mould them to suit us as we interact with others"(2006, 144). This articulation by Brym and Lie re-emphasizes Goffman's supposition that self-presentation is in many ways a product of complex interplay of human nature dynamics and nurture derivatives. As regards to nature derivatives, studies revolving around theories of cognitive development, both in children and adults variously suggest that the desire and attempt to present self or read another individual's self-presentation naturally begins from childhood and continues in adulthood (Trevarthan 2011; Shwe & Markman 1999; Astangton 2006; Gallagher & Hutto 2008; Hutto 2008, 2009). These studies, variously relay that reading and interpretation of self-presentation is tenable through an understanding of the dynamics of "innate and indefinable human concepts which provide the bedrock of human cognition and communication" (Wierzbicka 2001, 507). According to Trevarthan, the possession of inert cognitive propensity means that, "infants, it appears, are born with motives and emotions for actions that sustain human inter-subjectivity" (2011, 121). The notion here is that self-presentation is a product of complex intersection dynamics of inert qualities of human genetics (nature) and the nurture derivatives, which aggregate continually. Thus, through combined abilities from nature and nurture, each individual consciously and continually strives to gain convincing understanding of others' personality and intentionality metaphors, polemics and dynamics, evident in their self-presentation, by reading their mood, behaviour, appearance, and utterance(s) continually as the need arises. This is because each individual requires this knowledge as a matter of necessity to attain desired goal(s), such as the appropriation of the best approach to engage, relate, associate, collaborate, or exploit in each circumstance.

Elucidating variously on the centrality of nature and nurture in self-presentation in their studies revolving around theories explaining realities of human personality and psychology, M. W. Baldwin & L. Sinclair (1996) and C. Ashton-James et al (2007) support the view that beyond the acquired genetic variables, environmental factors influence

individuals' behaviours and self-presentation. Similarly, J. Brockner, et al (2005) and J. Goncalo & B. Staw (2006) in their studies, which affiliate largely to organizational psychology, observe variously that environmental and circumstantial factors are propelling variables in people's inter-personal relationship that instigate varied manifestation of self-presentation. More so, R. Zhu & J. Meyers-Levy (2009), Sedikides, C. & Brewer, M. B. (2001), and Y. Zhang & L. J. Shrum (2009) in their studies revolving around consumer psychology theories, relate the influence of environmental and circumstantial factors to patterns of sale and purchase of goods and services. On elucidation of self-presentation with theories of self-agency, H. Tajfel & J. C. Turner (1979 & 1986), P. T. Costa & R. R. McCrae (1988), T. Bayne (2008), M. Synofzik et al (2008), Voyer, B. G. and Franks, B. (2014), and M. Balconi (2010), variously apply self-agency concepts, to deepen the understanding of strategic self-presentation as an articulate, purposive, and agenda driven action.

In line with the theories of human behaviour, Roy F. Baumeister and Debra G. Hutton describe self-presentation as "behaviour that attempts to convey some information about oneself or some image of oneself to other people" (71). This definition describes a component of self-presentation – purposive behaviour, which "denotes a class of motivations in human behaviour" and "these motivations are in part stable dispositions of individuals but they depend on situational factors to elicit them" (Baumeister & Hutton 71). Situational factors influence how an individual decides to act, dress, speak, walk, laugh, dance, sing, eat, and so on, because of the regulatory capacity of the specific circumstances. Elaborating on the nexus of conscious undertaking as central to every strategic self-presentation, Baumeister & Hutton observe that "self-presentational motivations are activated by the evaluative presence of other people and by others' knowledge of one's behaviour" (71). The above supposition subsumes the idea that self-presentation reflects each individual's cognitive density and elasticity. This is because each person is required to read situations, circumstances, and other relevant variables before deciding on the most prudent and suitable impression management approaches. In addition, Baumeister & Hutton, opine that self-presentation (as a purposive action) revolves around two motivations, namely 'pleasing the audience' and 'self-construction'. They explain that a major propelling force behind 'pleasing the audience' is the need "to match one's self-presentation to the audience's expectations and preferences" whereas the force behind 'self-construction' is the need "to match one's self-presentation to one's own ideal self" (Baumeister & Hutton 71). The above contribution by Baumeister and Hutton revolves around intricacies of conscious actions, consequently it is pertinent to understand that "the expression of the audience-pleasing motive varies across situations, especially since different audiences have different preferences; one presents oneself differently when attending church with one's parents than when attending a party with one's sorority or fraternity mates" (71). This contextualization highlights the propelling variables such as intents and circumstances that induce specific human behaviour. Baumeister & Hutton explain that an action can instigate varied interpretations by different individuals, thus, "the audience pleasing motives can even produce inconsistent or contradictory self-presentations with different audiences" hence, "audience-pleasing self-presentational

motivations vary in strength as a function of the audience's power and importance, particularly with regard to how much the self-presenter is dependent on the audience" (71). More so Baumeister & Hutton contend that instances "the self-construction motive is presumably a fairly stable disposition" it is tenable to expect self-presentations that are essentially consistent across different situations and different audiences (71).

In summary, Locke (1975), Mead (1934), Goffmann (1959), and Baumeister & Hutton (1987) in their theorizations agree that conscious self-presentation is purposive, rational, and premeditated. Metts (2009), Brym and Lie (2006), and Eze et al (2024) in their contributions extended the narratives on self-presentation by highlighting the dynamics and mechanics of derivative variables responsible for impression management approaches and manifestations and the contributions of nature and nurture in each circumstance. The contributions of Trevarthan (1979), Shwe & Markman (1999), Astangton (2006), Gallagher & Hutto (2008), Hutto (2008, 2009), and Wierzbicka (2001), variously explain how human genetic components influence self-presentation. The interpretations of M. W. Baldwin & L. Sinclair (1996), C. Ashton-James et al (2007), J. Brockner et al (2005), J. Goncalo & B. Staw (2006), R. Zhu & J. Meyers-Levy (2009), and Y. Zhang & L. J. Shrum (2009), highlight how environment remain perpetually a compelling variable of nurture and its influence on self-presentation. These studies variously emphasize the centrality of human intent, relevant circumstantial dynamics, the observers' expectations, and the presenters' cognitive propensities as core factors that combine variously to influence self-presentation choices and outcomes. Lastly, despite these illuminating studies, answers to the following questions: do individuals engage in self-presentation at all times, such as when they are alone, asleep or through proxy; and do individuals require others' presence, specific situations, circumstances, or environment to engage in self-presentation remain sketchy and peripheral.

To provide answers to these questions, this study utilizes a Nollywood film Kambili: The Whole 30 Yards, which relays the travails and triumphs of a 29-year-old Nigerian Igbo woman named Kambili Maduka who resides and works in cosmopolitan Lagos as the primary study text. Kambili is worried that her desire to get married on or before the age of 30 may not materialize because John, her boyfriend of two years did not propose, rather he dumps her. According to John, Kambili is not a 'wife material'. John is convinced that Kambili is apparently irredeemable because her private space (her apartment) which remains continually filthy and disorganized is unequivocal. John detests Kambili's obsessive reckless binge shopping which keeps her in perpetual zero savings. John thinks that Kambili's making of herself a continual nuisance at her work place through her persistent outrageous unpunctuality and apparent non-dedication, which at some points attracts six months suspension without pay is troubling and disenchanting. Regardless of Kambili's inadequacies, which disenchant John unreservedly, Chidi (Kambili's long-term best friend) earnestly believes Kambili is a 'wife material'. Chidi's supposition revolves around his observation indicating that Kambili saliently possesses a remarkable aura of kindness, great sense of humour, and an outstanding loyalty disposition. Philosophically, Chidi sees a Kambili that is amenable to positive change through proper influence, which he believes he represents. Consequently, he subconsciously wishes that Kambili would

notice his unconditional romantic adoration towards her. At Kambili's most depressive and vulnerable time, it is through the unconditional solidarity from Chidi, her other friends, her mother and her mother's boyfriend (who provided fund for her art gallery start-up), that Kambili found solace to begin gradual exit from deep sadness and melancholy. As part of Kambili's positive regeneration and rehabilitation, she begins to clean and arrange her apartment consistently and her start-up business 'an art gallery' receives her dedication leading to growth and profitability. A few months later, Chidi proposes marriage to Kambili and she accedes.

Can Self-presentation occur all the time, during sleep, through proxies, and are others' presence, specific situations, circumstances, and environment mandatory?
To illustrate that self-presentation occurs at all times, that it occurs through proxies, during sleep, and that the presence of other people, specific situations, circumstances, and environment are vital but not mandatory, we shall utilize three snapshots of Kambili's bedroom, which represent Kambili's choices prior and after her break-up with her boyfriend John. Meanwhile, the following excerpt containing the dialogue between Kambili and John at a restaurant, the day John broke their two years romantic relationship relays John's interpretation of Kambili's self-presentation.

John: I was not going to do this today. Here we are. I was going to do this on Friday but...
Kambili: Friday is my birthday. You are going to break up with me on my birthday.
John: I ahh... forgot, actually. Sorry I forgot, honestly Kambili it is not me. It is not you, it is I, that is what I want... what I want to say is that I am sorry. Can we just leave it there?
Kambili: You want to break up with me using cliché lines. You cannot even get it right.
John: Kambili I said I am sorry okay.
Kambili: I thought we are good together! I thought everything was okay! You told me you wanted to marry. I thought you were going to propose today.
John: You thought that I was going to propose Kambili. If I led you on, I am sorry okay. It was not really my intension, but come on, let us be honest, between you and me, let be honest here. You are not really... you know... not exactly ehmm...
Kambili: Exactly what?
John: You know!
Kambili: I do not know!
John: You are really going to make me say this, are you? [Pause and hesitation] Wife material...you are not exactly a wife material.
Kmabili: What are you talking about... of course, I am.
John: You are not.
Kambili: I am.
John: Sure, you are not.
Kambili: [sobs]
John: Okay calm down. Calm down... look you are actually the best girl friend I have ever had.

Kambili: It is amazing babe! John that is perfect. [She extends her hands and romantically holds his hands on the dining table softly]

John: [Coldly John removes her hands and says] Just keep that there for now. [Adjusting himself on his chair, he continues] I am not looking for a girl friend now. I am looking for a wife... someone who is responsible... someone who is focused... prudent... may be someone who is a little driven...

Kambili: [Teary Kambili responds] John... I am responsible, I am focused ... and those other things you mentioned...

In the excerpt above, categorically John observes that there is no prospect of marriage between him and Kambili. John avers that Kambili is not 'a wife material' because she is not responsible, not focused, not prudent, and not driven based on her behaviour and lifestyle (self-presentation) within the two years of their romantic relationship. In Snapshot 1 next page, Kambili sleeps on her untidy bed, littered with clean and dirty clothes. Some of the clothes are indiscreetly scattered on the floor and a few pants dangling on her wardrobe doors. The displayed untidiness is a visual metaphor that instigates multiple impressions and inferences about Kambili's private life and personality traits. The attribution from Snapshot 1 image according to John's philosophy and psychological analysis, Kambili is disorderly, lazy, emotionally disturbed, dysfunctional, and ultimately not a 'wife material', however, the question is to what extent is John's supposition a dependable, a fair, and a candid interpretation? The notion here is that an individual's immediate surroundings such as an apartment and an office are channels of indirect self-presentation that provide attributions for observers. Physical appearance, nonverbal expression, behavior and belongings, evoke inferences, thus each observer usually forms an impression of a stranger in milliseconds based on the observer's cognitive strength and requisite knowledge (Borkenau & Liebler, 1992). In a study by Samuel D. Gosling et al titled A Room with a Cue: Personality Judgments based on Offices and Bedrooms, they observe that personal environments elicit impressions from independent observers and observers rely on valid cues in the rooms to form impressions about the occupants (379). Gosling et al note that "the mechanisms linking individuals to the environments they inhabit fall into two categories: identity claims (self-directed and other directed) and behavioural residue (interior and exterior)" (380). The items in the snapshot such as the paintings suggest identity claims, whereas Kambili's conscious decision to allow the room to be untidy is an example of behavioural residue.

Snapshot 1 presents Kambili's bedroom where she is laying in her bed

Snapshot 1 shows that Kambili's room is filthy and the items therein are disorderly, her clothes litter the bed because she does not take out time to arrange them accordingly, which falls within behavioural residue (see Gosling et al 2002). Allowing the bedside lamps, the paintings, the piles of magazines beside the bedside lamp to remain in disarray and improperly placed and the unwashed plates and cutleries to remain a long time at the dining table are unequivocal instances of visual metaphors highlighting Kambili's behavioural residue (see Gosling et al 2002). An instance of an application behavioural residue in referring to Kambili's personality is the time Kambili's mother visits Kambili after her break-up with John. Kambili's mother on seeing her living room, bedroom, and kitchen, re-echoes John's view, noting that the level of untidiness in her apartment will inspire a negative impression on most men who wants to marry her. To John, Kambili's inability to view her bedroom and dining room as filthy and disorderly places her as an 'irresponsible' girl. In addition, Kambili's inordinate spending on beauty items rather than investing in value yielding things according to John suggests lack of prudence. Kambili sees a display of beautiful shoes from the shops glass window while commuting to work and compulsively she instructs the cab driven to stop so that she can go for an unplanned and unscheduled shopping. This compulsive action results in her arriving to work significantly late, forgetting her bag in the taxi and spending so much money shopping clothes and shoes thereby depleting her salary badly, thus rendering herself mostly broke are all part of Kambili's behavioural residue. John sees this compulsive behaviour as signs of being 'irresponsible' and 'lack of prudence' on Kambili's part. Kambili's penchant for habitual late attendance to work attracts admonishment, rebuttal and six months suspension from work, which John believes project Kambili as 'irresponsible' and 'not focused'. These behavioural residues are direct self-presentations but they are inadvertent because Kambili did not intend them as her choice identity. John notes that he seeks in a woman signs that indicate focus, prudence, and drive, however, his observation of Kambili's self-presentation suggest that she lacks all the three qualities. The quality of one's immediate surroundings can project impressions to other individual; which usually influence their decision about the concerned person, just as the disorderliness of Kambili's apartment influenced John' decision to dissolve their relationship. John proclaims Kambili's inadequacies as reflected
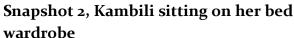
through her self-presentation as troubling and irredeemable, hence his conclusion that Kambili is not a 'wife material'. In their contributions, Webb et al (1966) and Buss and Claik (1983), observe that personal environment , such as apartments and offices were an individual spends considerable quantity of time, can help others to make plausible philosophical and psychological interpretations the dweller's character, worldview, inclination, and philosophies. Thus, it is plausible to aver that Kambili who stays alone in her apartment is continually engaging in conscious and indirect self-presentation as she continues to disregard her untidy bedroom and kitchen.

Sleeping and Self-Presentation

In snapshot 1 where Kambili is sleeping, she is indirectly engaged in self-presentation because her room (immediate environment) relays impressions about her. More so, snoring and mumbling while sleeping projects impressions involuntarily and this category of impressions are describable as non-purposive and unconscious self-presentation. According to Fakir Md. Yunus et al in their paper Relationship of sleep pattern and snoring with chronic disease: findings from a nationwide population-based survey, there is an overwhelming evidence linking snoring during sleep to chronic morbidity (46). The idea here is that while an individual is sleeping oblivious of the fact that another individual is observing him, the observer formulates ideas from the manifestations emanating from the sleeping individual, such as indication of emotional and spiritual anomalies. Meanwhile, in crime solving, hidden camera helps to relay vital information about a subject even when they are asleep and oblivious of any covert observation. During sleep when an individual is under the influence of alcohol or 'hard drugs', usually his/her conducts are describable as 'drug induced' indirect self-presentation and based on the impressions he/she relays inadvertently and non-purposively he/she may be labelled a drunk, a junky, a druggy, a maniac, a psychotic and so on. The utility of remote observation with the aid of camera is applicable in the study of mental patients and terror subjects to provide observers with dependable understanding of the subjects' tendencies and dynamics, which will aid towards dependable decisions.

In snapshot 2 below, Kambili appears deeply stressed and emotionally depressed and both are manifestations that fall under non-purposive and inadvertent self-presentation. The state of Kambili's apartment exhibited through proxies such as the scattered clothes, bags, and the improperly placed arts pieces are attributable to intense traumatic stress, which manifests as mood depression state.

Snapshot 2, Kambili sitting on her bed wardrobe

Snapshot 3, Kambili's bedroom and

This impression, which emanates from her body language and facial expressions in combination with her disorderly room relay a disturbing scenario and atmosphere. The impression, which emanates from snapshot 2 is that Kambili needs help from a trained psychologist who will facilitate her reset.

Arts as Self-presentation Proxies in Kambili

As part of the self-directed identity claims, according to Gosling et al "people spend many of their waking hours in their personal living and work environments, and they often decorate these places" and "people choose colours, patterns, motifs, and decoration that fit their own personal taste and aesthetic" (380). In a bid to make private space such as a room inculcate their ideologies, philosophies and worldviews, individuals like Kambili may adorn them with self-defining identity claims such as posters or frames iconic individuals or places, which typify specific ideas, sentimental values or inclinations. Our contention is that an individual's self is appreciable by an observation of purposive, involuntary, compulsive, and proxy actions. 'Self' includes all attributes that defines each individual, and these attributes are interpretable through attributions gathered from observation. Therefore, the 'self' is the claimed knowledge of a person's exteriorization of all presentable attributes, both the physical and nonphysical. According to Daphna Oyserman, et al "self and identity researchers have long believed that the self is both a product of situations and a shaper of behaviour in situations" (4). They observe that several "self and identity theories assume that people care about themselves, want to know who they are, and can use this self-knowledge to make sense of the world" (Oyserman et al 4). Furthermore, they are of the view that, "self and identity are predicted to influence what people are motivated to do, how they think and make sense of themselves and others, the actions they take, their feelings and ability to control or regulate themselves" (Oyserman et al 4).

Therefore, in line with our purview in this paper, self is the definition of an individual's personality attributes, and each time a person sees or reflects on another person's actions and appearances, the generation of meaning is expected to flow through intricate attribution intersecting the person's past, current physical attributes, expressions, belongings, behaviours, inclinations, affiliations, proximate environment, associations, and

contributions. In these variables, certain aspects of a person's behaviour are describable as involuntarily or unconsciously exteriorized which constitutes unintended impressions portrayal, so not all impressions are managed.

In the film, Kambili, arts and their placements are symbolic depictions of Kambili's behavioural residues suggesting her nuanced ideological views, inclination, behavioural tendencies and personality subsuming variances of dysfunctional patterns. The quantity, quality, genre and messages of the art pieces in Kambili's bedroom are items of identity claims and inclinations. The arts portray Kambili as an art enthusiast with peculiar interest in African feminine arts. The painting with rings is an identity claim, which in many ways projects Kambili's inclination as a pro-marriage and a pro-family individual. The idea here is that creative arts are in different contexts literal and metaphorical embodiment of conscious or inadvertent self-presentation by individuals in various capacities as artists, literati, consumers, and collectors. The quantity and quality of arts in the bedroom also inspires ideas about Kambili's self, as regards to her emotional state, ideology, inclination, and social awareness. Self-presentation can occur through the medium of art, which can serve as an efficacious means through which individuals express and construct their identities, beliefs, feelings, agenda, and messages. Self-presentation through art allows individuals to express personal narratives, experiences and ideas. Self-presentation through art includes personal expression, cultural representation, political commentary, identity projection and agenda setting. Art has its own meaning and ways of displaying the artist's skill quality, inclination, worldview, creative vision and message. In Kambili's rooms are paintings and drawings placed randomly. The collecting and placing of the arts indicates her liking for them, however, the manner of placing them places her as less pedantic and obsessive. Through the arts in her bedroom captured in snapshots 1 and 2, various kinds of suppositions are bound to emanate. It is plausible to aver that Kambili loves arts that portray 'Black People's culture' and that she can afford art. These suppositions are attributions emanating from various metaphors the items and their placement in snapshots 1 and 2 conjure as proxy or indirect self-presentation by Kambili. This is appreciable in the choice of cloth Kambili wears at different occasions in the film. For instance, an artist may create a drawing or painting that reflects cultural background laden with emotions. The choice of colour in a drawing or painting can go a long way in extending the narrative.

Conclusion

Actions and inactions of diverse kinds, which are perpetual human realities, are variously examples of self-presentation and they manifest as a conscious/purposive or an unconscious/inadvertent, direct or indirect action. When self-presentation is conscious or purposive, impression management, rationality and intentionality drives it. Outward visible signs or exteriorities are elements of self-presentation and they variously occur at any time and in any space such as homes, places of work, worship, in trains, airplanes, buses, taxi, hostels, streets, or markets. Sleep realities present illustration of unconscious self-presentation, while behavioural residue subsumes inadvertent self-presentation. Conscious or purposive self-presentation can translate to strategic self-presentation when

an individual utilizes definite patterns to achieve impression projection. Dynamics and mechanics of strategic self-presentation relay concomitant human circumstances, cognitive density and knowledge depth as key propelling variables. Strategic self-presentation evolves, aggregates, and changes in response to the concomitant realities. All forms of creative and performance arts are mediums of conscious, inadvertent, direct, indirect, and proxy self-presentation in different circumstances. Items and state of individuals' spaces are mediums of self-representation.

Self-presentation and its reading are both an unending human realities because every human action is a form of self-presentation regardless of its designation as conscious or inadvertent, direct or indirect. The conscious and unavoidable attempts at reading another individual's exteriorization of interiority begins at infancy when a child attempts to decipher the subsisting mood of his/her parents, siblings, teachers and friends, which are the displayed exteriorities, before choosing the best approach to relate. This pattern continues in adulthood on a day-to-day basis and it never ends, rather its complexity multiplies as one meets more people. It is through a plausible and an adequate interpretation of the actions of others that individuals can achieve better appreciation of others emotions, social status, affiliation, inclinations, worldview, ideology, health, social status, likes, dislikes, and life journey, which aids in deciding on the most prudent way to relate or act. The ability to understand the literal and non-literal meanings embedded in human self-presentations provides the basis for practical and effectual inter-personal relationships. Individuals who have the skills that enable deeper understanding of the meanings embedded in the verbal and non-verbal self-presentations of others are at a greater advantage in achieving successful responses, hence, individuals perpetually have continued to channel interest and resources towards attaining a deeper understanding of others' self-presentation.

References:

- Ashton-James, C., van Baaren, R. B., Chartrand, T. L., Decety, J., & Karremans, J. (2007). 'Mimicry and me: The impact of mimicry on self-construal' Social Cognition, 25: 518-535.
- Astington, J.W. (2006). The developmental interdependence of theory of mind and language. In: Enfield, N.J., Levinson, S.C., Editors, Roots of Human Sociality: Culture, Cognition, and Interaction. New York: Berg.
- Balconi, M. (2010). Neuropsychology of the sense of agency: From consciousness to action. New York: Springer.
- Baldwin, M. W., & Sinclair, L. (1996). 'Self-esteem and 'if...then' contingencies of interpersonal acceptance' Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71(6): 1130-1141.
- Baumeister, R. F. and Hutton, D. G. (1987). 'Self-presentation theory: Self-construction and audience pleasing' Mullen, B. et al. (eds.), Theories of Group Behavior, New York: Springer-Verlag Inc., 71 – 87
- Bayne, T. (2008). 'The phenomenology of agency' Philosophy Compass, 3(1): 182-202.

- Brockner, J., De Cremer, D., van den Bos, K., & Chen, Y. (2005). 'The influence of interdependent self-construal on procedural fairness effects' Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes, 96(2): 155-167

- Brym, Robert and John Lie. Sociology: Your compass for a new world. London: Cengage Learning, 2006.

- Buss, D. M., & Craik, K. H. (1983). The act frequency approach to personality. Psychological Review, 90, 105–126.

- Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (1988). 'Personality in adulthood: a six-year longitudinal study of self-reports and spouse ratings on the Neo personality inventory' Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54(5): 853-863

- Devine, P. G., & Brodish, A. B. (2003). 'Modern classics in social psychology' Psychological Inquiry, 14(3): 196-202.

- Eze, N., Egwu, A., & Aniago, E. (2024). 'Obstinate conceit and strategic humility as self-presentation: Politics and efficacy of impression management in Soyinka's The Lion and the Jewel' Agathos: An international review of the humanities & social sciences, 15, 1(28): 231-246

- Eze, O., Nnanna, N. & Aniago, E. (2021). 'Antimonies of crude oil production in the Niger Delta: Reflection on Ahmed Yerima's trilogy' Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities, 13(3): 1-12.

- Gallagher, S., Hutto, D. D. (2008). Understanding others through primary interaction and narrative practice. In: Zlatev, J., Racine, T., Sinha, C., Itkonen, E., (1987). Editors, the Shared Mind: Perspectives on Intersubjectivity. John Benjamins, Amsterdam and Philadelphia.

- George Herbert Mead. (1913). 'The Social Self', Journal of philosophy, psychology and scientific methods (10): 374-380

- Goffman, E. (1959). The presentation of self in everyday life. New York: Doubleday Goncalo, J., & Staw, B. (2006). 'Individualism - collectivism and group creativity' Organizational behaviour and human decision processes, 100(1): 96-109.

- Gosling, S. D., Ko, Sei Jin, Mannarelli, T. & Morris, M. E. (2002). 'A room with a cue: personality judgments based on offices and bedrooms' Journal of personality and social psychology, 82(3): 379–398

- Hutto, D. D. (2008). Folk psychological narratives: The socio-cultural basis of understanding reasons. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

- Hutto, D.D. (2009). 'Lessons from Wittgenstein: Elucidating folk psychology' New ideas in psychology (27): 197-212.

- Locke, J. (1975). An essay concerning human understanding. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Mead, G. H. (1934). Mind, self and society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

- Metts, S. (2009). 'Impression management' In S. W. Littlejohn & K. A. Foss (Eds.), Encyclopedia of communication theory, London: Sage Publications, 506 – 509.

- Oyserman, D. & Elmore, K. & Smith, G. (2012) Self, self-concept, and identity. J. Tangney & M. Leary (Eds). The handbook of self and identity, 2nd Edt, 69-104, NY: Guilford Press.

- Sedikides, C., & Brewer, M. B. (2001). Individual self, relational self, collective self. NY: Psychology Press

- Shwe, H.I., Markman, E.M., (1997). 'Young children's appreciation of the mental impact of their communicative signals' Developmental psychology 33, 630-636.

- Synofzik, M., Vosgerau, G., & Newen, A. (2008). 'Beyond the comparator model: A multi-factorial two-step account of agency' Consciousness and cognition, 17(1): 219-239

- Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. C. (1979). 'An integrative theory of intergroup conflict' In: W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), the social psychology of intergroup relations. Monterey, CA: Brooks Cole.

- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). 'The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour' In: S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), Psychology of intergroup relations, Chicago, IL: Nelson Hall, 7–24.

- Trevarthen, C. (2011). 'What is it like to be a person who knows nothing? Defining the active inter-subjective mind of a newborn human being' Infant and Child Development 20, 119-135.

- Trevarthen, C., Hubley, P. (1978). Secondary intersubjectivity: Confidence, confiding, and acts of meaning in the first year. In: Lock, A., Editor, Action, Gesture, and Symbol: The emergence of language. Academic Press, London.

- Voyer, B. G. & Franks, B. (2014). 'Toward a better understanding of self-construal theory: an agency view of the processes of self-construal' Review of general psychology, 18(2): 101 – 114.

- Webb, E. J., Campbell, D. T., Schwartz, R. D., & Sechrest, L. (1966). Unobtrusive measures: Nonreactive research in the social sciences. Chicago: Rand McNally.

- Wierzbicka, A. (1996). Semantics: primes and universals. , Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Wierzbicka, A. (2001). 'Comments' Current Anthropology 42, 506-507.

- Yunus, F. Md., Khan, S., Mitra, D. K., Mistry, S. K., Afsana, K. and Rahman, M. (2018). 'Relationship of sleep pattern and snoring with chronic disease: findings from a nationwide population-based survey' Sleep health, (4): 40 – 48

- Zhang, Y., & Shrum, L. J. (2009). 'The influence of self-construal on impulsive consumption' Journal of consumer research, 35(5): 838 – 850.

- Zhu, R., & Meyers-Levy, J. (2009). 'The influence of self-view on context effects: How display fixtures can affect product evaluations' Journal of marketing research, 46(1): 37-45.