

The Culture of Silence Amongst Rape Victims and Its Challenge: A Study of *Alter Ego* and *Tales of Lucy*

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Abstract

*The culture of silence is a worrisome trend evident amongst rape victims due to stigmatization from family and the society. These victims through a conscious effort adopts silence to protect their reputation rather than be labeled victims of rape. The erroneous attitude posed towards rape victims forms their culture of silence which becomes a negative consequence and an after effect of rape which is harmful and accounts for traumatic symptoms such as flash backs, night mares and depression. This paper critiques the representation of the culture of silence amongst rape victims by analyzing two Nollywood films *Alter Ego* and *Tales of Lucy*. The research method applied for this paper is the qualitative research method and the tool used is the content analysis, through a dissection of the culture of silence captured in the films. This work is anchored on Noelle Neumann's spiral of silence process which induces fear of isolation and propels the victims to constantly assess opinion climate and often to change his or her opinion in accordance with the perceived major opinion of the public. This work concludes that fear of isolation, stigmatization, reprisal attacks are identified reasons why rape victims accede to the culture of silence. This research therefore recommends care and responsive support from family, friends of rape victims in order to help victims recuperate from such harrowing experience and make them perform optimally.*

Keywords: *Rape, Culture of Silence, Stigmatization, Repression, and Trauma*

Introduction

Rape is a controversial subject of debate which Nollywood as a platform for portraying social realities validates. The issue of rape is highly topical, yet it goes mostly unreported as the victims have to suffer in silence. The worrisome trend is that these victims due to stigmatization remain silent rather than be labeled 'rape victims'. Achunike and Kitause (2014) observe that there

appears to be a culture of silence surrounding rape in Nigeria (p.36). This silence is devastating and accounts for why victims suffer serious psychological issues such as unquantifiable anguish, low self-esteem, flashbacks, depression and suicidal inclinations amongst others. Wole Soyinka's quote "a man dies in all who keeps silent in the face of tyranny" (www.brainyquote.com), is contextual here to connote that silence is not always golden but could be devastating when we do not stand up and speak against evil and injustices meted out in sensitive matters.

This under reportage and the culture of silence is without a doubt attributed to several factors amongst societal negative conception surrounding rape, fear of retaliation from the attacker (rapist), shame and embarrassment etc. Tjaden and Thoennes (2006) note that the primary reasons given to this culture of silence include the "fear of their rapist, embarrassment and not considering this rape as a crime worth considering as police matter". (p.2). Ujiro (2009) observes that most of the women keep silent owing to the fact that "it is severally stigmatized in most cultures in sub-Saharan African countries, such as Burundi, Ghana and Nigeria" (p. 59).

The attitude held in society about rape is erroneous, which ought not to be perceived or spoken about openly. Hence, many shy away from such topics and when a woman steps forward with such information about her sexual assault experience, she is considered wayward not minding the circumstance surrounding her molestation. The most painful of it being that the victim is blamed for whatever atrocities meted against her. Thus, the feeling of humiliation and stigmatization contributes to the heavy cloak of silence drawn. Thereby making the woman to bear the pains in silence. Crawford and Unger (2004) attribute this forced silence by stating that the culture in general, and men specifically, may accuse her of teasing and dressing provocatively and also of nagging and being disrespectful (p. 473). In quoting Swiss (1998), Ujiro notes that the reason attributable to this silence is identified as the "survivor who steps forward may be blamed, ostracized and punished. She may also be unable to marry or stay married" (p. 59). By the same token, Brigneti and Egbonomali (2002) note that in Nigeria, when a female is raped and it comes to limelight, "she and her family are 'ostracized' due to the dishonour associated with rape" (as cited in Achunike and Kitause, p. 36). The victims are faced with social and cultural pressure which refrains them from bringing shame upon their family's name. It is in this light that Achunike and Kitause submit that the social degradation linked with rape, forces female victims to hide their assaults in order to save themselves from public embarrassment (p. 36). By this assertion, societal pressure and stigmatization is identified as reasons for the under reportage of rape incidents. Consequently, the victims bear this violence, go through their ordeal and suffer in silence because they are afraid of stigmatization.

Also, another strong reason attributable to why women are silent in the face of such victimization is for fear of retaliation from the attacker. Tjaden and Thoennes (2006) posit that the fear of retaliation from the rapist and embarrassment were some of the reasons why such incidences were not reported (p. 33). In view of this, Obama (2012) quips that victims suffer in silence due to "fear of retribution, lack of support, or that the criminal justice system will fail to bring the perpetrator to justice" (as cited in the White House Council on Women and Girls, 2014). Crawford and Unger (2004) in quoting Griffin (1971, p. 33) blame the implantation of this fear on society by means of social conditioning. Griffin avers that "each girl as she grows into woman hood is taught fear" (as cited in Crawford and Unger, p. 473). This fear is the form in which the female internalizes both chivalry and the double standard upon which the society operates. Hence,

she becomes paralyzed with fear, restrict her behaviour i.e. not go out alone, not do anything without her partner's permission or try to appease her attacker. (Crawford & Unger, p. 474). Accordingly, Dworkin (1976) contends that "due to the risk of rape, all women live in continuous jeopardy and in a virtual state of siege" (p. 37). This fear results in a passive response to male aggression. This paper thus critiques the representation of silence amongst rape victims. Against this background, this study tries to fill this gap and uses two Nollywood films: *Alter Ego* (Inwang, 2017) and *Tales of Lucy* (Aniebonam, 2018) to expose the societal negative mind- set response showered on rape victims and the culture of silence suffered by these victims.

Theoretical Framework

Professor Noelle Neumann's spiral of silence theory is a social psychological theory whose theoretical development focuses on the relationship between people's perception of the opinion climate and their willingness to speak out. The spiral silence theory explains how a new public opinion is formed and how an established public opinion spreads or dwindles. She uses two extensive field surveys to explain how people picked up the opinion climate and this perception affected their behaviour and opinion.

The first instance, was observed during the German Federal Election in 1965. The two major parties, the Christian Democrats (CD) and the Social Democrats (SD), ran a neck and neck competition for a period of six months. People favoured the CD on a four to one ratio over the SD as a probable winner in the election and the CD won the race with a solid nine percent lead (Nam, 2002, p. 6). However, in 1972, German Federal Election, this time because of the favourable perception of the SD, some people who initially supported the CD, changed their voting intentions to the SD. At the end, the SD won the race with a four percent margin.

Secondly, as a professor at the University of Mainz, Noelle Neuman also encountered first-hand experience of her students. She observed that although students who wanted to hear her lecture constituted a majority, however, they were silenced by a group of protesting students active in public. She attributed the silence of the majority to fear of isolation and becoming unpopular with their fellow students for supporting her (Noelle-Neumann, 1989 pp 9-10 as cited in Nam, 2002. p. 6). In both cases people picked up the opinion climate that was, and this perception affected their behaviour. It is on this premise that Neumann published the result of her research findings under the name of Spiral of Silence theory in 1973. The spiral of silence theory views humans as opportunistic creatures whose opinions and behaviours are based on the perception of the opinion climate rather than based on their own beliefs and reasoning (p. 1-2). This theory argues that in order to avoid the social isolation caused by having a minority opinion, people are likely to be silent while they will be more likely to assert their opinion with confidence if they perceived that their opinion belongs to a majority opinion or a winning side (p.1).

According to the spiral of silence theory, this personality is formed based on the social and psychological interaction amongst members of society and shapes the direction of society by pressuring individuals to conform to silence and for fear of isolation propels individuals to constantly assess the opinion climate and often to change his or her opinion in accordance with the perceived majority opinion of the public. Neumann further argues that this human characteristic should not be viewed as a 'weakness' because it is in fact the "precondition of the survival of a society" (Noelle-Neumann, pp. 7-8). This is granted that the social approval of a particular view

in society is considered. Noelle-Neumann (1984, pp. 107-114) argues that whenever a person is not free to speak or act in accordance with his or her inclinations and must consider the views of the social environments to avoid isolation, the spiral of silence is at work.

Nam (2002) attest that there exist different kinds of personality types namely: the independent and interdependent, self-construal personality. Nam notes that people with strong interdependent self-construal would behave in accordance with the spiral process while people with a strong independent self-construal would not. He affirms that public opinion pressures every member of society to conform (p.3) which indicates social approval of a particular view in society.

According to Markus and Kitayame (1995), people who empathize independent self-construal behave primarily as a consequence of internal attributes rather than reference to thoughts, feelings and actions of others while those who emphasize interdependent self-construal see the self as part of a social relationship. This, their behaviours depend on the actions, thoughts and feelings of others (as cited in Nam, p. 46). Altemeyer (1981) believes that people form their attitudes and behaviours towards an object through learning from other people and their environment (as cited in Nam, p. 52). In this context, the erroneous attitude posed towards rape victims forms their culture of silence which becomes a negative consequence of rape. The stigmatization experienced by rape victims in the past has conditioned others to imbibe the culture of silence. This situational factor pressures rape victims to conform to silence which indicates social approval of a particular view in society. Admittedly, Locke (1982) as cited in Nam 2002, p. 15) succinctly captures the rationale behind the culture of silence as experienced by rape victims which is dependent on the current attitudes of that place:

the measure of what is everywhere called and esteemed 'virtue' and 'vice' is this approbation or dislike, praise or blame, which by a secrete and tacit consent establishes itself in the sexual societies tribes and clubs of men in the world; whereby several actions come to find credit or disgrace amongst them, according to the judgement, maxims, or fashions of that place (p.15).

In the perception of the opinion trend, rape victims believe the society would ostracize and stigmatize them as rape victims and also blame them for being the reason for their own misfortune rather than blame the perpetrator for his actions. In his words, Locke explains it further thus:

But on man escapes the punishment of their censure and dislike, who offends against the fashion and opinion of the company he keeps... Nor is there one of ten thousand, who is stiff and insensible enough to bear up under the constant dislike and condemnation of his own club. He must be of a strange and unusual constitution who can content himself to live in constant disgrace and disrepute with his own particular society. Solitude many men have sought, and been reconciled to; but nobody that has the least thought or sense of a man about him can live in society under the constant dislike and ill opinion of his familiars and those he converses with. This is a burden too heavy for human sufferance (as cited in Nam, p 15).

From this excerpt therefore, it is deduced that it is societal approval that enables rape victims to conform to the culture of silence and unwilling to express their experiences.

Synopsis of *Alter Ego* (MOSES INWANG, 2017).

Alter Ego captures the sad tale of Barrister Ada Igwe, a prolific human and child right activist who bears the pain of her rape ordeal by her secondary school teacher. As a victim of rape, Ada suffers a personality disorder known as ‘alter ego’. This movie spotlights her plight as a rape victim, her traumatic experiences in addition to the coping mechanism she employed to overcome this psychological torture. To overcome her trauma, Ada Igwe is driven with the passion to fight legal battles and seek for justice for the under-privileged and sexually abused victims while ensuring that rapists and child molesters are prosecuted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Synopsis of *Tales of Lucy* (CHINONSO ANIEBONAM, 2018).

Lucy lives with her elder sister, Grace and her husband, Francis. Unknown to Grace, Lucy is serially raped by her husband daily and he threatens to kill her if she divulges the incident to his wife. Consequently, Lucy is paralyzed with fear from her brother-in-law and does not disclose this atrocious deed to her sister. Moreover, she endures to save her sister's marriage. On one occasion, Lucy stabs Francis, in a bid to save herself from his grip, which led to his death. Lucy is then charged and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Analysis of the Spiral of Silence Test on *Alter Ego* and *Tales of Lucy*

Noelle-Neumann argues that a topic used to test the spiral of silence process should be controversial enough to induce fear of isolation amongst members of society (Nam, p. 56). There is no doubt that *Alter Ego* and *Tales of Lucy* meets these criteria. This section pays attention to the culture of silence amongst rape victims in the understudied films and spotlights illustrations exhibited by these rape victims as well as the salient contributory reason behind their silence. The culture of silence amongst rape victims is profound as depicted in the character of Ada and Lucy who are shrouded in secrecy at different occasions.

Ada conforms to the test of spiral of silence when she represses all thoughts of her rape experiences. Ada engrossed in her taunted thought, finally opens up and confides in Timothy about her rape experience by her teacher when she was in J.S.S.2 and this affected her tremendously causing her to remain traumatic.



Plate 1: Ada is hysterical and narrates her rape ordeal to Timothy

From her explanation, it is deduced that negligence on the part of parents or guardians is one of the major factors that put children at the risk of rape. Through Ada's viewpoint, the audience gets to understand that her parents were very busy. Her father was a chief judge and her mother, a rice importer; whose duty it was to pick her up from school. However, her mother is carried away by her business and she is often left in school alone in company of Mr. Kolade (Chukwuemeka Kelvin), her teacher. Left in the care of her physical health education teacher, they would both wait hours after school before her mum would come. At some instance, the teacher would even volunteer to take her home. Then one day, he took advantage of her mother's late coming and took her to the staff room, touched her and forced himself on her with no one coming to her rescue. Here, *Alter Ego* avers that neglect from busy parents who are always preoccupied and unavailable for their children, do so at the detriment of their children's safety. Ultimately, this film serves as a wakeup call to all parents, caregivers, on the need to protect the girl child. Also, this movie points to the fact that parents shouldn't be too busy as not to observe minute changes in their wards behavior. They should be able to monitor, note every discomfort and attitudinal change and spend quality time with their children and discuss and probe further uncomfortable matters like rape.

At this revelation, Timothy is taken aback, angered and enquires why she didn't tell anyone? To this question, Ada's response captures the reason given by most rape victims attributed to the culture of silence. In her words when queried by Timothy about her silence and non-confrontation of the teacher who raped her, she reiterates thus:

He threatened me! I was so young. What did I know? I was so afraid. Even when I summoned the courage to try to tell, my parents were always so busy. They were just never there. I was so scared. I concealed it. I became my own secret!

From this excerpt, salient points have been brought to bear why rape victims are shrouded in secrecy. The first point is attributable to threats by rapists to harm their victims and the concomitant fear of being hurt by their rapists, if they disclose their experience. As a result, these victims keep their ordeal to themselves, thus, rape experience continues given that rape thrives in secrecy. Ada at this point, breaks into tears, condemns and belittles herself which is one of the after-effects of rape wherein the victim is overwhelmed by emotions of guilt, despair and shame. This gives credence to Hampton's (1999) position that “rape does more of a moral injury to its victims’ value” (p. 135) making the victim to suffer personality disorder. Little wonder, Henderson (2013) points out that rape is “traumatic and can affect the self-esteem and self-confidence of victims” (p.3).

In the same vein, *Tales of Lucy* acknowledges fear of possible reprisal from rapists, as reasons why rape victims delay disclosure and are shrouded in secrecy. It is on this ground, that Lucy also exhibited the culture of silence. Lucy is too scared to reveal her ordeal based on Francis’ repeated threat to kill her if she discloses the incident.

Francis: I will kill you if you ever disclose this to your sister.

Francis then eyes her disgustingly, and walks off the room leaving Lucy withdrawn and crying hysterically as the camera lingers over her body from her unkempt hair to her toe. Here, *Tales of Lucy* highlights the place of fear of reprisal from the rapist as a cogent reason for muteness as exhibited by Lucy. This is why Lucy pleads with Gina to keep it secret to avoid Francis' threat

to kill her if she discloses what transpired between them. Gina discourages Lucy from keeping it secret. She enlightens Lucy that Francis only used the tactics of intimidation and threat to paralyze her. Aniebonam, in this movie reveals that more often than not, rape victims are trapped in speechless terror and suffer in silence with no one to relate with for fear of retaliation from their rapists. However, *Tales of Lucy* and *Alter Ego* uses this medium to sensitize and discourage rape victims from shrouding in secrecy, bringing to light the importance of speaking out.

Secondly, having scanned the opinion climate, Lucy conforms to silence in order not to be tagged a 'home breaker'. The reason given for such silence is, in order to protect her sister's marriage from falling apart as well as the avoidance of stigmatization from society whom she believes would hold her accountable for such wreckage. Though Lucy later confides in Gina, but she is skeptical about telling her sister, Grace about her serial rape in the hands of Francis. Thus Lucy proclaims "I don't want people seeing me as one who came into a happy home to put asunder". Therefore, she decides to remain mute rather than have her sister's marriage destroyed. Therefore, she is willing to sacrifice her happiness to protect her sister's marriage from being destroyed and also to save her face from stigmatization as she is most concerned about societal notions and opinions because she is aware that society blames rape victims instead of the perpetrator. Furthermore, for the sake of saving herself from condemnation and being called a 'home breaker', Lucy is most concerned about social opinions as she is aware that society blames victims and absolves the perpetrator of what happened.

Thirdly, *Tales of Lucy*, *Alter Ego* draws out a strong reason why rape victims are heavily drawn on the clock of silence and shrouded in secrecy based on stigmatization. This aspect is reiterated by Francis who reminds Lucy that rape victims are not believed by society in respect to rape rather she is questioned and blamed for what happened. There by, revealing the deeply entrenched victim blaming attitude show cased in the Nigerian society which ultimately makes the victims to remain silent. Again, another reason drawn out from Francis is the fact that Nigeria remains a patriarchal society, 'a man's world' where in women are without a doubt blamed; bear the consequences for every giving action. In *Tales of Lucy*, Francis is quick to remind Lucy that a female victim who steps forward might remain unmarried as men would avoid her as a plague and that it is a man's world where her expressions, thoughts and narrations are not valued. He reminds her also of the opinion trend that any woman who goes public to narrate her rape ordeal remains unmarriageable. Francis throws a rhetoric question at her "what makes you think that if you go out there to tell people that I raped you, what makes you think that they would believe you. Huh?". From this question, this movie, reiterates the fact that most female rape victims are not believed by society in terms of their rape experience. Ironically, the testimony of a female victim who speaks up in respect to rape is rather questioned. She is not believed but instead blamed for what happened. In reality, she now assumes the position of the accused. To crown this stigmatization, Francis sarcastically reminds Lucy that she is a woman:

You see, even if they believed you.
You would have made a fool of yourself.
Every single man out there would avoid you. You are a woman.
Let me tell you something; at this part of the world,
it's a man's world.

Again, based on the opinion climate of stigmatization, Lucy in *Tales of Lucy* is wary of the views of the society in terms of stigmatization concerning the issue of rape. Thus in order to uphold and save herself the embarrassment of being ‘the talk of the town’, and to checkmate blame attitudes, she decides to bear the brunt of her rape. However, Gina on the other hand shares a contrary view pointing out the essence of speaking up as well as the danger attached to keeping quiet in such circumstances, as the traumatic effect could destroy Lucy's future. *Tales of Lucy* discourages the culture of silence but urges victims to speak out no matter the circumstance which is inexcusable. In reference to this, Gina volunteers to speak to Grace as she is in the dark and believes all is well. More so, this follows the common ideology and thought pattern of rape victims who have this notion that no one would believe them. However, *Tales of Lucy* and *Alter Ego* uses this medium to sensitize and discourage rape victims from shrouding in secrecy, bringing to light the importance of speaking out. Here, *Tales of Lucy* spotlights the general attitudes of disbelief for rape claims as one of the contributory factor why rape victims maintain silence. This persistently held disbelief is in line with Doyle & Barbato’s (1999) rationalization that a lady who lays claim to be raped is lying basically as a way to seek revenge, cover up or to save her reputation from seek revenge, cover up or to save her reputation from seek revenge, from a regrettable action (as cited in Maier, 2013, p.1415). Resultantly, to evade being depicted in this perspective, Lucy maintains silence and decides to internalize her shame for fear of being judged or disbelieved.

Thus society based on its erroneously held belief forces and conditions rape victims to delay disclosure or even remain silent as evident in *Alter Ego* where Samantha’s mother prefers to remain mute and allow the rape case of her daughter by Pastor Abude slide rather than draw attention to her daughter. These movies, therefore sensitizes rape victims to break away from the culture of silence and encourages the complete shift and elimination of blaming victims. The movies also preach the need for society to pay attention to rape victims and also create a listening atmosphere. *Tales of Lucy* uses Gina's consolation and empathy to echo the idea that a supportive relationship along with love and friendship should be offered to rape victims as a way of strengthening them so that they will not easily be broken or turned away from the path of recovery. This involves putting ourselves in the other person's shoes and through the other persons’ eyes understand their predicament and empathize genuinely.

Also, speaking up proves to be the biggest step towards exposing the rapist with the benefit of total freedom from the clutches of the rapist whereas these movies forewarn victims and the audience alike on the dangers of the culture of silence and urges victims to speak up as at when due. Consequently, Lucy's silence lands her in jail as she is charged for murder. *Tales of Lucy* brings to the fore salient points to give insight to the audience about the inability of society to believe rape victims. This is why Lucy tries to point out from her own perspective that Francis' murder was perpetrated innocently, without implied malice.

Lucy: but the world needs to understand me. I am a victim! Not a murderer!

Gina: only if you can prove that in court. See how you ended up because you failed to speak up. Lucy, I warned you earlier. I warned you.

This is why she labels herself as a 'victim' and not a 'murderer' but from the worldview of society, she is a murderer. Ironically, the defendant becomes the accused. Here, there is a symbolic twist, which is what *Tales of Lucy* builds upon to show how literarily the victim becomes the accused. In relation to this, this narrative supports Gina's suggestion, which is as a result of Lucy's failure to speak earlier. The camera captures Francis who tries to rape Lucy. He grabs and chokes her while the camera captures Lucy's hand as she impulsively picks up the pen she was initially writing with.



Plate 2: Francis stabbed with a pen by Lucy

With a slow-motivated effect, the camera pictures Lucy's hand held up and with a gravitational force, she stabs him on the neck. Here the director employed the use of slow- motioned effect technique for the purpose of clarity in action. Resultantly, Francis lets out a loud scream while letting Lucy free. Francis is taken aback and holds the stuck in pen with blood gushing out from his neck. At this juncture of regained freedom, Lucy exclaims "I will tell the whole world our story of how you raped me". This film re-emphasizes the need to speak out at the right time. This is given that if Lucy had spoken up earlier, the situation would have been managed rather than her sitting on a ticking bomb, with a catastrophic result.

Also in *Alter Ego*, Ada is triggered by her traumatic experience that she has gnawed on for years, Ada pulls out a pistol to kill Kolade whilst he is captured engulfed with fear.



Plate 3: Ada seeks revenge and tries to kill her teacher, Kolade

However, she gets disenchanted to seek revenge after seeing Kolade's pitiable plight. Ada is deeply pained and burst out in tears; which is a sign to indicate her grieving. This movie therefore advances that grieving is a part of human nature in line with Bloom's assertion that grief is essential if rape victims are to move ahead and negotiate recovery as unresolved grief is disastrous and leads to further traumatic catastrophe. Resultantly, Ada retreats and puts back the gun in her bag, an indication of her disenchantment at seeking revenge. Her words summarily capture this, "I can see you are already in hell" to suggest he is already suffering the consequences of his actions. As she makes her leave, Kolade is stricken with a cardiac arrest and dies shortly after.

Finally, Ada Igwe lets out a loud cry and kneels down at Kolade's compound whilst spreading her hands astride which is symbolic of a freed bird set to fly and which metaphorically explains that she is released from the emotions, trauma which had held her captive for too long.



Plate 4: Ada screams and sets her hands astride; symbolical of a freed bird to depict her extrication from trauma

This is in line with Bloom's submission that though recovery from trauma is painful, to heal, a “survivor must open up the old wounds, remember and reconstruct the past, resolve the accompanying painful emotions and reconnect to their internal world and the world around them” (p.536). These movies, therefore sensitizes rape victims to break away from the culture of silence and encourages the complete shift and elimination of blaming victims. The movie also preaches the need for society to pay attention to rape victims and also create a listening atmosphere. Bloom (2003) however laments that the ‘cries for help’ of these victims fall on deaf ears. She notes that instead, “we condemn, exclude and alienate the person who is behaving in a self-destructive, or anti-social way without hearing the meaning in the message” (p. 516).

Giving a listening ear to the victim is one of the certain ways to assist her in re-establishing control over her life. Thus by talking to a loved and dependable person, there is an ease of tension and this sort of serves as a therapy for emotional, mental and also physical support. Therefore, it is imperative for the society to create an air of assurance between them and the victims in order to get out such traumatic experiences. Kainulainen reiterates that, “the experience of being treated with disbelief is particularly distressing for the woman” (p.274), and her typical reaction would then be a sense of powerlessness; where the victim feels she has not been provided with enough support. This is because the focus is directed towards her behaviour rather than the transgression of the perpetrator. Consequently, Kainulainen criticizes this view, as it absolves the perpetrator and blames the victim (p.274). He therefore recommends that society ought to be sensitive on how to treat rape victims. He also admonishes that they should be careful with their words and behaviour in order to gain the victims’ confidence by convincing her that first, she is not guilty.

On this note, *Alter Ego*, and *Tales of Lucy* spotlight social degradation, stigmatization, disbelief of rape victims, blame attitude, fear of reprisal amongst others as reasons attributable to the culture of silence amongst rape victims. These films therefore speak out against such culture and the severity of rape. These narratives therefore campaign and advance the call for society to pay attention to the cries and yearnings of these victims; bind up their bruises without condemnation as this support would enable victims to crawl out of their shell as well as negotiate psychological recovery from traumatic experiences in no distant time.

Summary of Findings

- Culture of silence is a disturbing attribute amongst rape victims. Accordingly, the spiral of silence process is a common phenomenon evident amongst the character of Ada Igwe and Lucy in the understudied films. Ada Igwe and Lucy, are shrouded in secrecy as a result of stigmatization and fear of reprisal from their rapists.
- A crucial lesson to be learnt here is that except this culture of silence is broken, rape would persistently be reinforced encouraging other intenders since those who indulge in it, escape punishment.

Recommendations:

Based on the observations made, the researchers hereby make the following recommendations:

Firstly, there is a need for government to establish and fund psycho-rape crisis support centres which require the training of responsive personnel on the dynamics of counselling to cater for, assist rape victims overcome their traumatic adversity and weather their emotional storms.

Secondly, the place of support for rape victims can never be overemphasized. This support must begin with family and friends as this is the smallest unit and bedrock of the society. This is given that a society that fails to recognize and intervene on behalf of its own and keeps quiet in a world which resonates with the cries of abused women has failed in curbing rape. The society is therefore called up to bind up the physical and psychological bruises of rape victims who have suffered not only from rapists but from the passive violence of the society. There should be an increased level of empathy rather than stigmatization wherein the victim is blamed, judged or condemned for what has happened to her.

Conclusion

Conclusively, this research focused on the culture of silence amongst rape victims in Nollywood using *Alter Ego* and *Tales of Lucy* as case studies. It took a cursory look at the implications of silence; and its resultant effects. Also, this paper concludes that society must not be oblivious of rape victims around us. But at all times, we need to be attentive to the cries and anti-social behaviour of people who are faced with traumatic stress and help immobilize their challenges through emotional support.

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Filmography

Title of film: *Alter Ego*.
Screen play: Moses Inwang.
Director: Moses Inwang.
Producer: Moses Inwang/ Esther Eyibio.
D.O.P: Zezom Gnawni.
Year: 2017.
Language: English.
Company: Sidomex Universal.

Starring: Omotola Jalade Ekeinde, Wale Ojo, Jide Kosoko, Victor Olaitan, Tina Mba, Esther Eyibio and Chukwuemeka Kelvin.

Duration: 110 minutes.

Title of film: *Tales of Lucy.*

Screen play: Chiamaka Nwokeukwu.

Director: Chinonso Aniebonam.

Producer: Chiamaka Nwokeukwu.

D.O.P: Chuks Nwali.

Year: 2018.

Language: English.

Company: Golden Steps Production.

Starring: Dave Ogbeni, Chiamaka Nwokeukwu, Georgina Ibeh, Gloria Okafor and Chuks Ihemadu.

Duration: 75 minutes.