



## THE REPRESENTATION OF RAPE IN KUNLE AFOLAYAN'S *OCTOBER 1* AND MOSES INWANG'S *ALTER EGO*

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**ABSTRACT:** *Rape is one of the serious crimes committed every day in Nigeria with many negative effects on victims, perpetrators, and society. However, the enormity of the crime is not fully represented in Nollywood films leading to subpar treatment of rape as a subject matter in most Nigerian films. Using a descriptive approach, the study examined the subject of rape in Kunle Afolayan's October 1 and Moses Inwang's Alter Ego. These films were selected using a purposive sampling technique that enabled the researchers to select from several Nollywood films that dwell on the issue of sexual violence. The study adopted Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi's Self Control Theory to interrogate the motivation, perception and attitude toward rape. The study revealed that rape is committed within the institutions that are responsible for the development and protection of young people, resulting in latent physical, psychological and sociological problems for the victims, perpetrators, and society. The study recommended that Nollywood film practitioners should use their works as weapons against all forms of sexual violence, and concluded that social and cultural institutions have a major role to play in the intervention and survival of victims of rape by intensifying awareness of the dangers of sexual violence in Nigeria.*

**KEYWORDS:** Rape, Sexual violence, Nollywood, October 1, Alter ego.



## INTRODUCTION

Nollywood is one of the biggest film industries in the World, and remains at the forefront in the treatment of societal ills in Nigeria, part of which is the problem of sexual and gender-based violence. Hence, some film practitioners have through the medium of film technology represented the growing socio-cultural concern on rape and its dangers in society to bring about corrective ideas and interventions that perhaps will re-engineer the consciousness of the viewers, society, and government to tackle the lingering scourge of rape and other forms of sexual violence in the country. Some of these films include but are not limited to *Yet Another Day* (1999), *The Price* (1999), *Last Girl Standing* (2004), *Slave to Lust* (2007), *Tango with Me* (2010), *Child, not Bride* (2014), *Code of Silence* (2015), *Zahra* (2017), *Azonto Babes* (2018), and *The WildFlower* (2022).

However, most of these films treat sexual violence as a subtopic and thus lack the needed performance to represent the enormity of the crime, as such lacking the capacity to create adequate awareness for the fight against the scourge of rape in Nigeria. Worried by the lack of serious treatment of sexual violence by Nollywood film practitioners, Omolayo (2021) asserts that:

The consequences and treatment of the matter are extremely subpar. Its treatment trivialises the matter and disregards the importance of consent. Most importantly, it delivers little to no backlash on the aggressor. The lack of legal and even social consequences delivers an underlying message that rape is not an abominable act. (Parr. 16)

Although the Nigerian film industry can lead the chase in the fight against rape (Ejiofor, Ojiakor & Nwaozor, 2017), Nwalikpe (2018) in an empirical study on the role of *Nollywood Films in Combating Sexual Violence Among Female Adolescence...* reveals that “female adolescents have not fully felt the impact of Nollywood film in combating sexual violence” (1). This is so because the aesthetics of rape and style of representation employed by Nollywood film producers and directors “tends to promote the male over the female and are discriminatory towards the female” (Omoera, Elegbe & Doghudje, 2019, 138), a problem Oladosu (2021) notes is underpinned by the lack of feminist studies on rape. The unintended trivialisation and misrepresentation of the subject of rape and other acts of sexual violence in most Nollywood films show a gap between the diegetic performance and the actual reality of rape in our society. Hence, Olateru (2021) affirms that because Nollywood treats rape with levity, culprits do not do jail time, psychological effects are not given an in-depth portrayal and most victims are even allowed to marry their aggressors. The perfunctory representation of rape and other forms of sexual violence, and the trivialisation of their effects and consequences on victims, perpetrators, and society in Nollywood films inform the problem of the study.

## LITERATURE

Sexual violence is any unwanted act aimed at undermining the sexuality of another person. It includes rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, human trafficking, and all forms of sexual threats. However, the major concern of this paper is rape which is the most brutal of all the forms. Generally, rape is the act of forcefully having penetrative sex with someone against his/her will. It is one of the many violent crimes against humankind that deprives human



beings of the freedom to express feelings of mutual consent. Globally, the crime of rape is a social enigma that poses a huge threat to gender-based relationships.

Schewe (2007) defines rape as “non-consenting sexual behaviours committed against an acquaintance, a dating partner, or a stranger” (224). According to Ben-Nun (2016), it is:

A type of sexual assault usually involving sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration perpetrated against a person without that person's consent. The act may be carried out by physical force, coercion, abuse of authority, or against a person who is incapable of giving valid consent, such as one who is unconscious, incapacitated, has an intellectual disability, or below the legal age of consent. (15)

While Ben-Noun's definition of rape presents a balanced interpretation of rape, most definitions and arguments on rape present it to be a type of crime committed mainly by men against women. This perception stems from the fact that “90% of victims of rape are female” (Chiazor et al., 2016, 7765) hence, Okorie (2019) notes that, “rape is a classical example of gender-oriented crime in that it can only be committed by a male upon a female” (6)

The argument above is further undergirded by historical and legal perspectives on rape. For example, Peltola (2021) notes that:

Rape and sexual violence have been committed against women and girls for as long as man has inhabited the planet. These acts have been cited in historical documents, including the biblical Old Testament and other religious works, depicted in sculptures and art pieces, and found in literary tomes used in Homer's *Iliad*. (3)

Even some legal definitions implicate women as ultimate victims of rape. For instance, the Criminal Code Act of Nigeria, a legal document that criminalizes rape in Southern Nigeria-States defines rape in section (357) as:

...unlawful knowledge of a woman or girl without her consent, or with her consent, if the consent is obtained by force or by means of threats or intimidation of any kind, or by fear of harm, or by means of false and fraudulent representation as to the nature of the act, or, in the case of a married woman, by personalising her husband...

Relatively, in Northern Nigeria, the Sharia Penal Code section 127(1) also defines rape as:

Sexual intercourse with a woman... (a) against her will; (b) without her consent; (c) with her consent, when her consent has been obtained by putting her in fear of death or hurt; (d) with her consent, when the man knows that he is not her husband and that her consent is given because she believes that he is another man to whom she is or believes herself to be lawfully married; (e) with or without her consent, when she is under fourteen years of age or of unsound mind.

By implication, Alao (2018) notes that rape is widely “seen as a common phenomenon against the female gender as they are the most vulnerable” (1). Implicitly, men are seen as key perpetrators while women as victims.

However, “there are many rumoured or even reported cases of men who have been raped in contemporary societies, including Nigeria” (Akinwale & Omoera, 2013, 5). Though little



material exists on the subject and the numbers remain unclear (Sivakumeran, 2007, 254), Amnesty International (2020) acknowledges that “men and boys are also subjected to rape but to a lesser extent” (1). But Sivakumeran’s (2007) study on *Sexual Violence against Men in Armed Conflict* reveals that “sexual violence is committed against men more frequently than is often thought, and that victims are raped at home, in the community and in prison; by men and by women; during conflict and in time of peace” (253). Furthermore, Sivakumeran (2007) explains the different forms through which male victims are raped. According to him, “victims may be forced to perform fellatio on their perpetrators or on one another; perpetrators may anally rape victims themselves, using objects, or force victims to rape fellow victims” (265). By and large, rape is used as the most brutal weapon of war to exercise power and dominance against men and women and to undermine the ethical fabric of society (Peltola, 2021, 2). Despite, that “little attention is paid to cases in which the victim is male” (Idisis & Edoute 2007) owing to issues of “masculine stereotype” (Sivakumeran, 2007, 255) and identity, Lowell (2010) affirms that, “rape statutes in their jurisdictions are gender-neutral and apply equally to perpetrators of either sex” (158). Therefore, beyond the polemics on the appropriate victims of this crime, rape is an unlawful and violent sexual act that can be committed across genders, cutting across ages, tribes, races, religions and statuses, as well as, posing serious threats to the security of the victims and society.

The effects of rape on victims are deleterious. These effects are physical, psychological, sociological, economic, and spiritual. To a large extent, it affects the perpetrators and society at large. Rape by its very nature is a physical but violent attack that leads to serious pain and bodily injuries. In a worst-case scenario, it leads to the fatality of the victim. Perpetrators of rape most times resort to the use of dangerous weapons to subdue and repel any form of resistance from their victims. Akinwale and Omoera (2013) further highlight some other physical effects of rape on victims as, “injuries from beating, or choking, such as bruises, scratches, cuts, and broken bones; swelling around the genital area, bruising around the vagina, injury to the rectal vaginal area, sexually transmitted infection (such as herpes, gonorrhoea, HIV/AIDS, and Syphilis), and possible pregnancy” (10). More often than not, the ordeal victims of rape go through in the hands of perpetrators leaves them traumatized for a long period. A. Alhassan, as quoted in Chiazor et al. (2013) observes that “in the months following a rape, victims often have symptoms of depression or traumatic stress. They are more likely to abuse alcohol or drugs to control their symptoms” (7778). And most times they suffer from “poor self-image, unhealthy sex life, and depressive or post-traumatic stress disorders in their lifetime, long time negative effects on sexuality and inability to form or maintain trusting relationships are common” (7778).

Unfortunately, rapists are not aware of the psychological havoc or trauma they have inflicted on their victims (Aloa, 2018). The danger of the physical and psychological distresses caused by rape is that it makes rape a hurdle to economic development (Chiazor et al., 2016). Generally, “it is difficult to place a monetary value on the harm caused by sexual assault, but it is important to recognise that there are financial costs to the victim/survivor and the wider community” (Boyd, 2020, 6). Therefore, Jones and Walker (2014) affirm that rape “is broadening beyond the immediate physical and psychological trauma of the individual victims to include not only the long term impact on their lives but also the broader social and economic impacts on families and communities”(2). Relatively, rape victims go through moments of spiritual ebb as a result of violent infiltration of not just the physical body, but the inner sanctuary and sanctity, thus causing a dent in the purity of the human soul. By this,



a victim spiritually feels “unappreciated and exploited” consequently affecting his/her whole being and setting his/her soul on fire for “spiritual hunger and emptiness” (Ezenweke & Kanu, 2012, 11). However, no crime ever goes unpunished. Rapists are not severed from certain consequences resulting from their actions. Chiazor et al. (2016) posit that:

No rapist goes free, even if he is not apprehended by law enforcement agencies. He will always be hounded by the memory of the evil perpetrated on his victims. The offenders should know that rape has severe consequences, ranging from incarceration to poor health, guilt and condemnation, social stigma, bad criminal record, sexually transmitted diseases and several others. (7777)

Each rape attack is a tragedy for the victims and their relatives, the witnesses, the community to which they belong, and even the perpetrator (Okorie, 2019). Since society is a major beneficiary of the enormous dangers of rape and other acts of sexual violence, there is every need to treat the matter with the seriousness it requires. Every social institution has a part to play in the fight against rape and other forms of sexual abuse against men and women.

There is no doubt that rape and other forms of sexual violence are a global problem with multifaceted effects staring unblinkingly in Nigeria. It is like a cankerworm that seems to be thriving and deepening its roots at an alarming rate today in Nigerian society (Mofoluwawo, 2017). The failure of fundamental social institutions like the family, school, and church in creating adequate awareness of this problem, coupled with other factors contribute to the rising cases of rape in the country. Mofoluwawo (2017) attributes the culture of silence and lax Nigerian laws as some of the factors that enable rape to thrive. Jewkes and Naeema (2002) note that the victims’ fear of not being believed by society as well as the lack of supportive institutions (Chiazor et al., 2016) and stigmatization of victims all contribute to the rising cases of rape which Jewkes and Naeema (2002) argue reflects a high level of social tolerance of the crime.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is hinged on Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi’s Self Control Theory, which is also known as the General Theory of Crime. The core of this theory is that people with social bonds have high self-control and tend to disassociate from any form of aggressive behaviour while people with low social bonds develop low self-control and are prone to deviant social behaviours. Control theorists hold that “individuals who possess weak or broken social bonds to conventional institutions are more likely to engage in deviant behaviour” (Peguero et al., 2011). Hence, the development of low self-control over time makes such individuals susceptible to sexual violence while forming a strong social bond with social institutions, goals and belief helps a potential aggressor to overcome the impulse to commit any crime, including rape. Therefore, Peguro et al. (2011), opine that the Self Control theory “is based on bridging the link between individuals and conventional social institutions in order to explain delinquent behaviour” (260).

Furthermore, Control theorists believe that self-control is a learned behaviour that starts in the formative age and can undergo the process of resistance over time. They trace the connection between criminal behaviour and age. For example, Cretacci (2008) agrees that “people who



engage in criminality suffer from low self-control that is stable over time” and “formed early in life,” (539) and consequently, “predisposes offenders to live of crime, and is manifested in personality problems” (539). He goes further to state that the masked manifestations of low self-control are evident in “immediate gratification, impulsivity, taking risks, laziness, and assaultive behaviour” (539). Ultimately, the essential element of criminality is the absence of self-control which Lowell (2010) agrees explains the “impulsivity of man towards aggressive behaviour” (160) and intrinsic desire to use sex as a means to an end.

While Control theorists generally agree that the important factor behind any crime is a person’s lack of self-control, Schreck and Hirschi (2021) emphasise that crime and delinquency result when the individual’s bond to society is weak or broken. Therefore, the first task of the control theorist will be to identify the important elements of social bond (Schreck & Hirschi, 2021), that enables an individual to overcome his/her personality problems. These elements they identified as commitment, attachment, involvement and belief. However, the importance of social institutions is at the heart of control theorists in interpreting the four elements of social bond. According to Peguero et al. (2011),

An individual’s bond to social institutions consists of four elements: emotional attachment to parents, peers, and conventional institutions such as school and work; commitment to long-term educational, occupational, or other conventional goals, involvement in conventional activities such as work, homework, hobbies; and belief in the moral validity of the law. (260)

They argue further that while these four elements of social control can independently inhibit delinquency, the combined effect of the four elements of social bond on delinquency is greater than the sum of their individual effects Therefore, this theory is pertinent to this study because it seeks to evaluate the important role of social institution in the human relationship because sexual violence is often influenced by factors operating both at the individual level and the level of society. It will further help to understand the characters’ impulsive responses toward sexual violence and consequent survivalist strategies.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this study is descriptive, aimed at examining rape and its consequent effects on victims, perpetrators, and society in Kunle Afulanyo’s *October 1* and Moses Inwang’s *Alter Ego*. These films were selected through a purposive sampling technique which enabled the researchers to select two films from a range of Nollywood productions that present the theme of rape and other forms of sexual violence. More so, these films were selected due to their serious treatment and exploration of the reality of rape on the victims, perpetrators, and society, and consequently, they were discussed using Content Analysis for critical interpretations and discussions.

### Rape in *October 1* and *Alter Ego*

*October 1* revolves around Aderopo, the prince of Akote who rapes and kills his victims in a manner that indicates a serial killer. Inspector Danladi Waziri is sent to Akote a few weeks before Nigeria’s Independence to unravel the mysterious murder of two women in Akote. Waziri’s arrival coincides with the public arrival and reception of Prince Aderopo, who had just finished at the University of Ibadan as the first graduate in Akote. Waziri’s examination



of the corpses reveals that the deceased were raped before they were strangled and slit with a razor by their assailant. To put an end to the security and tension caused by the mysterious killings, a dusk-to-dawn curfew is imposed. Regrettably, the security measure put in place does not deter Aderopo from carrying out more attacks. Unfortunately, he is killed in the process of trying to evade the scene of another rape attack on Tawa, his boyhood sweetheart.

*October 1* examines the causes and the numerous effects of rape on victims, rapists and society. Aderopo and Agbekoya are two out of the three brightest students in Akote favoured by Rev. Father Dowling, a British priest to be taken to Lagos to further their education at Kings College. The decision to take them to Kings College to explore their academic potential is welcomed and appreciated by the people of Akote who consequently entrusted their future and safety to Father Dowling's guardianship. The prospects of attending Kings College are enormous and expectations are high for these teenage boys to realise the dream of attaining sound education and prominence like Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Samuel Akintola who are celebrated as precursors of the newly independent Nigeria. But, behind the facade of Father Dowling's holy appearance lies a hidden and dark motive, one that eventually changes the boys' perception of care, trust and Western education. Agbekoya in his confessional statement reveals the traumatising experience they went through at the hands of Rev. Father Dowling.

**Agbekoya:** I was fourteen; Ropo was twelve when we left for Lagos. During the daytime we attended school but every Thursday night Father would beckon... the man would do unspeakable things in that room, things I couldn't understand, things that destroyed my soul. Afterward, it will be Ropo's turn. That man violated me every Thursday for five months. I couldn't take it anymore. One day I stole some of his money, boarded a bus and I came back to Akote.

From Agbekoya's narration of the dehumanising past, we see the role of the environment in the effectuation of rape. Most institutions of learning, especially boarding schools, are fertile ground where the act of homosexuality is incarnated. Unfortunately, Father Dowling, a homosexual uses his position in society and church to sexually violate teenage boys entrusted in his care. As a priest, his behaviour counteracts the Christian doctrines on sodomy as an abominable sexual relationship, more so in Nigeria where there is zero tolerance for such acts. Father Dowling's sense of ethics and morals depicts him as a person with low self-control, and his immoral act is seriously a let-down for the boys. Unfortunately, homosexuality and moral degradation are on the increase within religious institutions today. The traumatic experience Agbekoya undergoes does not only question his belief in the ideology of colonisation and subsequent westernisation of all aspects that violate the cosmological existence of the African people, but it also takes a toll on his soul and pushes his hunger for redemption. Unable to bear the unspeakable violation of his sexuality by the one who is expected to be a purveyor of moral and spiritual security, he takes the courage to give up his education and return to Akote to become a farmer.

Generally, rape and other forms of sexual violence are serious offences against the personality of the victim. To Agbekoya, rape is an *unspeakable act*. But, his inability to reveal the untold experience enshrines the culture of silence which is one of the factors that motivate rape to thrive both in traditional and modern Nigerian societies. Erroneously, he blames his family and society for exposing him to such evil and goes through posttraumatic



nightmares, fear and shame due to his rape experience. The intimidation, shame, and agony of being raped constantly for five months by a priest force him to reject Western education and any attempt to suggest sending his son to school, and further sever him from society. However, he channels his commitment to becoming a successful farmer as a means of escaping the trauma of sexual abuse, as well as for economic and cultural survival. Unfortunately, the culture of silence motivates rapists to continue in their acts without recourse to the overall damage they inflict on their victims. Agbekoya's reticence on the issue exposes Aderopo to further sexual abuse at the hands of Father Dowling. In his confessional statement, he tells Inspector Waziri that he "*had five months of Father Dowling, Ropo had six years*". Unlike him who takes the easy way out to preserve his sanity, Aderopo is determined to get to the apogee of his educational career to the envy of his contemporaries like Mr. Olaitan and Miss Tawa. But his personality is masked in pain and deception from the six years of constant rape by Father Dowling. Like Agbekoya, he blames society for his ordeal and thus resorts to raping and killing female virgins in Akote to represent the torture and abuse he endured. Aderopo's choice of raping and killing his victims without any regard for his position as the Prince and heir apparent to the throne, a responsibility that entails the protection of his subjects is ironic.

Rape is condemned in Akote and is a source of great dishonour to a woman, her family and community, and can mar a woman's chances of getting married. Afonja who is more bewildered by the desecration of a woman's purity than for her death informs Inspector Waziri that *all the young women in Akote are virgins* and that *it is a dishonour to lose one's virginity before marriage*. By this, the film director underscores the role of abnormal eroticism and hyper-sexuality in the effectuation of rape on women. However, we find out that Aderopo's rampage is beyond his uncontrollable sexual desire but a form of patriarchal show of dominance that he learned from Rev. Father Dowling. This can be seen in the crude manner in which he reveals his identity to his victims, the struggles and forceful penetration, as well as the incisions he makes on the mutilated bodies of his victims.

Interestingly, rapists are hardly strangers to their victims and environment, and their actions are never spontaneous; they are carefully planned and executed. Hence Inspector Waziri warns his officers that the *killer knows the layout of the land well. Like the river of blood, he moves in and out of will at his pleasure* and the need to be battle-ready. Aderopo's onslaught in Akote goes beyond mere rape and killing of female virgins to represent his identity crisis and the quest for false retribution. His act shows a man that is in enmity with his environment. Unfortunately, his approach to justice is barbaric and defies the cosmological existence of Akote. He is filled with hate, pain and fear but fails to seek any form of help. Like Agbekoya, he blames social institutions -community, family, school and church- for his low self-control and inability to form a bond that would enable his healing, hence he sees rape as a means to an end. Though Aderopo regrets the man he is; a man far below the expectations of his people, he cannot help the situation he finds himself in. Instead, he reimagines himself as a demon far greater than Rev. Father Dowling's thus raising the issue of the role of society in assuaging the pain, stigma and other latent psychological illnesses associated with rape and the reintegration of self-belief and worth. Unfortunately, he is shot and dies and thus, misses the opportunity to get any form of healing and restitution. More so, justice is attained through the death of Father Dowling whom Agbekoya suffocates on his bed during one of his episcopacy visits to Akote. The death of both Father Dowling and Aderopo





signals the director's absolute rejection of rape crime that undermines the cultural and ethical beliefs of a people.

*Alter Ego* tells the story of Ada, a human rights lawyer who seeks the course of justice for helpless victims of rape in urban centres. Driven by her childhood rape experience at the hands of her Physical Education teacher in secondary school, Ada is fuelled by the hunger to defend vulnerable women who are abused by men every day, including her love interest, Mr. Timothy. Unfortunately, she suffers from hyper-arousal, a Post-Traumatic Stress disorder that makes her crave sex indiscriminately with men especially, with her male domestic staff and office employees and this becomes her albatross when her sister's fiancée-Daniel becomes her victim. Her sister, Ngozi is infuriated and disappointed with Ada for taking advantage of Daniel. She connives with Daniel to stand as a witness against Ada in court during the trial of Timothy for revenge for her betrayal. Nonetheless, Ada is not deterred by her sister's consequent betrayal in court but pursues her case against Timothy and eventually wins.

*Alter Ego* highlights the vulnerability of rape victims in a society that prioritises sex as a means of gratification. Ada's case is one of the many underage stories of sexual abuse in the metropolis. The film is set in Lagos, a metropolitan society that is widely regarded for hustle and bustling. Her parents are career-oriented with little or no time to look after her welfare and need for care and protection. Consequently, her childhood is devoid of adequate parental care and attention due to her parents' pursuit of an economic breakthrough. This exposed her to sexual violence, ranging from sexual assault, rape, and consequent threats to her education if she told anyone. Her rape experience at the hands of Mr. Kolade; her Physical Education takes an adverse effect on her like many victims of rape. Consequently, she is mentally broken and seeks a leeway out of her conundrum. She narrates her childhood experience to Timothy thus:

**Ada:** I was thirteen, JSS 2. My parents were the busiest in the world. My mother had just started her importation business and my father was a court judge. It was my mother's duty to pick me up from school but she always ran late. Every damn time she would run late, I would be the only one left in school for hours. There seemed to be this teacher, Physical Education; he would wait hours after school with me for hours until my mom would come to pick me up. Sometimes he would even volunteer to drop me at our store. My mom loved him. Oh, why won't she? Then one day he took me to the staff room, then he started to talk to me the way he had never spoken to me before. He started to touch me and he made me touch him, he showed me his private and I just knew something wasn't right and I screamed, I yelled, I scratched. There was no use. He forced himself on me that day. That was just the beginning. He did it frequently. I lost count. I would beg my mom please don't come late, not even one second, but she would come late every single damn time. He did it so much that by the time I turned fourteen, I had already gotten used to it.

Her parents' near absence in the early stages of her life created a vacuum for Mr. Kayode to assert his inordinate sexual fantasy about her. Ada blames her mother's insensitivity for her constant defilement and suffering. Worst still, she did not receive any encouragement to speak up and thus bottled up her trauma for many years. She confesses to Timothy further that she could not tell anyone because:



**Ada:** He threatened me. I was so young. What did I know? He said if I ever told anyone he would turn it all on me and that he would make sure I never got into any other school again. I summoned the courage to tell someone, my parents were always so busy. They were never just there. I was so scared. I just kept it to myself. I became my own secret; my dirty little secret.

The failure of Ada's parents is an indictment of the quality of parenting and the failure of the family as an institution in providing social security for children, especially young girls. More so, society expects people like Mr. Kolade to be role models to the younger generation. Unfortunately, people like Mr. Kolade are wolves in sheep's clothing and will stop at nothing to achieve their sexual orgy. His inappropriate relationship with Ada traumatised her to the point that she got used to the abuse within a year. However, she is not deterred by her ordeal, rather the anger and resentment she feels drive her desire to survive and become successful in society.

As a human rights activist, she dedicates her time and mission to the fight for justice for vulnerable girls and women that are constantly raped and battered. She stops at nothing to ensure that she gets justice for her clients, even if it means publicly exposing and disgracing perpetrators. For example, she films Pastor Duke's sexual abuse of a woman seeking prayers for the fruit of the womb in his office and plays the tape during church service before the full glare of his congregations, and further goes ahead to prosecute him in court for raping a minor. Her combination of legal and orthodox approaches amazes his soon-to-be in-law; Daniel, who confesses that "*this is an operation perfectly executed. I mean, it is different from the way lawyers I know handle cases*". Her new course in life sees her challenge powerful individuals and institutions that encourage sexual violence against poor and vulnerable women and children in society. Hence, she explains to Daniel that when "*the poor and the vulnerable ones are taken advantage of. It fills my rage. It is perceived that they have no voice, no identity. I choose to be their voice*". Unfortunately, her success in the legal field and attendant fame in society are marred by her addictive and uncontrollable sexual urge, a disorder that was caused by her constant abuse by Mr. Kayode. This health condition, by and large, creates an inner personality that has an insatiable desire for sex. This personality is an image of her past that refuses to go away regardless of the years and resources she has spent on therapy. In other words, her past experience keeps conflicting with her present reality. Her excessive craving for sexual pleasure sees her sleep with her male domestic and office employees, including Daniel, her sister's fiancé. Hence, Timothy accuses her of being a *nymphomaniac and a sex pervert* who takes advantage of her position as a successful independent woman to lure young men into having sex with her. While she is not in denial of her debility, she recognises that she is dealing with a force greater than she can control and thus, confesses to her sister Ngozi that "*there is something in me. I can't control it.*" She blames her teacher for creating that monster in her. But we observe as events unfold that she is not docile about her situation. Through her conversation with her psychotherapist, Dr. Tochi, we realise the difficulties she is faced with in maintaining her treatment plan. Choked in-between success and pain, the old experience and new reality Dr. Tochi blames her for the slow pace of her recovery.

**Dr. Tochi:** We had treatment plans for you. You didn't follow it. What's important now is to follow your treatment plan. Fight! Fight!



Her inability to overcome her sexual disorder underscores the life-threatening effect of rape on a victim and the need to seek professional help. However, she bases her recovery on creating a successful alter ego as a lawyer to escape the trauma of her past experience. However, it is the society that profits more from her gesture than she does, because behind a successful law career is a child that seeks revenge for the wrong done to her. But as Tochi later advises her, the needed purgation of emotion and healing of the mind comes through timely intervention, adherence to treatment plans and determination to rise above pain and uncertainties.

One of the uncertainties Ada faces is her ability to fall in love with a man. This opportunity presents itself with Mr. Timothy, a globally renowned gentleman who runs a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that caters to the needs of internally displaced persons in various camps. His interest in the welfare of women and children in displaced environments endears him to Ada who later reveals to her sister that “*I don’t even think I have felt this way for any man before*”. But, far beyond his humanitarian work is a sexual predator that leverages his connection and influence to rape, abuse and molest young female beneficiaries. His masked personality is revealed by Aisha one of his victims of sexual abuse.

**Aisha:** Mr. Timothy forced himself on me and when I refused, he raped me after beating me mercilessly. He threatened that if I told anyone he would remove my brother and I from school... and he would kick us out too.

Consequently, Aisha warns Ada to be wary of Timothy as he is not who she and the world thinks he is. Ada is enraged by Timothy’s monstrous action against vulnerable people like Aisha and decides to bring Timothy to the book regardless of the romantic attraction she feels for him. Timothy is sneaky in his approach to using emotional blackmail to talk Ada out of having any legal battle against him. He pleads thus:

**Timothy:** Baby, listen to me. You shared your story with me, I listened, I understood, I cried with you, I felt your pain. Now, I want you to hear my story and give me the same understanding and empathy... I was sexually abused as a child as well by my nanny between the ages of twelve and eighteen. I was repeatedly sexually abused by that demon. And like most abused children, I am suffering the after effect of repeated sexual abuse. Am sure you are familiar with such conditions.

Timothy’s personality reveals a man that lacks self-control and as such, lacks belief, commitment, and confidence in the ability of social institutions in fostering protection for rape victims. However, Ada is neither threatened by his sarcasm nor having her emotional feelings clouds her sense of justice. Therefore, she corrects Timothy that, “*raping and assaulting people are not side effects of sexual abuse*”. She goes further to ask him:

**Ada:** having suffered the consequences, the humiliation and degradation of sexual abuse, how could you possibly do that to another human being?

Ada understands the pain and trauma of being a victim of sexual abuse and this gives her the courage to prosecute Timothy in court and with the belief that “*every time a child molester faces*” her in court “*he or she must go to jail*”. Ada’s quest for just desert leads her against all odds to triumph over Timothy in court, and consequently get him a fourteen-year jail sentence. Relatively, as the film ends, we see that her Physical Education teacher was



unrepentant, and by an act of providence gets deserving retribution for his crime against humanity. He confesses to Ada thus:

**Mr. Kolade:** When you left the school, I tried to rape another girl, but I was caught. I faced the wrath of jungle justice. Even so, I faced fourteen years of my life in jail. When I was released from prison, I was sick, homeless and hopeless. Strangers feed me with their crumbs.

Mr. Kolade's confession is a pointer to the fact that nature arouses any form of crime against humanity, more so when such crime is targeted at the sexuality of any individual. Hence, through his ordeal, we see that society and natural justice have set him on a course of abject penury and abandonment. However, Ada's courage to face her past aggressor is tailored toward her recovery and desire to get justice. The film director uses her vociferousness and personal struggles in life to advocate for an immediate response to the crime of rape and all other forms of sexual violence that nether the growth and development of proper human relationships in society.

## DISCUSSION

Rape is undoubtedly a challenge facing both traditional and contemporary societies. The enormity of this crime traverses beyond personal aggression to become an attack on institutions that foster human relationships. Unfortunately, the primary perpetrators of this crime are individuals who are supposed to be moral agents, whose immoral acts against the younger generation and vulnerable in society result in a vicious cycle. From the analyses of these films, we see the characters of Father Dowling and Aderopo in *October 1*, and Mr. Kolade and Timothy in *Alter Ego*, as representatives of abusive and decadent institutions, who see sex as a means of personal gratification and thus use their positions in society to experiment their sexual fantasies on their victims. Their low self-esteem and lack of control drive their impulsiveness towards rape. Unfortunately, most victims of rape are younger generations entrusted with the care of these social agents. Due to age, the tendency to model deviant sexual behaviour is high, thus creating a vicious cycle, as well as latent psychological effects that manifest in adulthood. In *October 1*, the director shows the vicious nature of rape and its latent effect through the dotage Aderopo goes through, resulting in his adoption of rape and consequent killing of his victims as means of assuaging his pain. Also in *Alter Ego*, the character of Mr. Timothy is developed to show the latent and vicious cycle effect of rape on individuals. The obvious implication is that society mainly suffers. Afolanya and Inwang use the pain and traumatic experiences of these characters to underline the dangers of sexual violence on young minds which often than not, result in severance from all emotional attachment, commitment, involvement and belief in social institutions thereby, informing an adoption of violence as means of survival.

In contrast, the characters of Agbekoya and Ada are projected to have a strong will to survive their experiences and channel their anger and pain toward the fight against rape. The directors are able to achieve this through their personal pursuits in life and their quest to speak out and defend the vulnerable around them. In *Alter Ego*, Ada's combination of orthodox and legal methods of justice proved potent in instilling the consciousness that society and the law arbore sexual violence. Furthermore, her ability to seek professional help from a psychologist shows that the survival of rape victims is a function of personal willingness and



timely intervention from supportive institutions. Though she is a product of an abusive institution, her ability to maintain a strong social bond with social institutions through attachment and commitment in her law career, involvement and belief in the legal system enables her to tow the path of self-redemption.

Furthermore, the films highlight the role of parenting and the environment as factors that contribute to the vulnerability of young people and exposure to rape. The films show that perpetrators of rape are products of the environment in which they operate and therefore the role of parents in ensuring the safety and active participation in the education of their children is imperative. These films thus become an awareness campaign and clarion call for the involvement of parents in the security and health education of their children.

## CONCLUSION

The role of film in the fight against societal ills like sexual violence is not in doubt. It is important for Nollywood film practitioners to use their works as weapons against the culture of rape and all other types of sexual violence in society that nether human development. This can be achieved by fully exploring the narrative of sexual violence to help expose the aesthetics of crime and help victims to seek appropriate help. More importantly, social institutions like the family, school, church, government and Non-Governmental Organisations despite their failure still have a major role to play in the intervention and survival of rape victims in Nigeria. The ability of these institutions to intensify awareness of the dangers of sexual violence, as well as, take a stand in the prosecution of sexual offenders will go a long way in reducing the crime in Nigeria.

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