

Social Castration and Its Psychosocial Effects on Male Migrants in Irene Isoken's *Sweet Revenge***JEGEDE, Francis Olabisi (Ph.D),**

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<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2944-4896>**DOI:** [https://doi.org/ 10.5281/zenodo.10989152](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10989152)**Abstract**

This paper explores emasculation as a form of social and political castration of men both in the public and domestic spheres. Of course, men have been studied in the past from the perspective of their professions such as accountants, teachers, footballers, builders etc., but not as gendered beings until recently. The patriarchal dividends that seem to accrue to men from masculine mystique and gender role schema are deeply investigated in this study. Adopting a qualitative approach, the study employs literary text analysis of Irene Isoken-Salami's *Sweet Revenge* to investigate circumstances and situations that emasculate the man. The paper combines masculinity and psychoanalysis as frameworks for analysis. The study discovers that a migrant is beset with double yoke – the problem at the home front and the challenges in the country of residence. From Sota's experience, migration, no doubt, creates social fault lines in marriage with resultant negative effects such as alcoholism, drug abuse, diminishing self-esteem, broken marriage among others. It is, therefore, suggested that male migrants from Africa to Europe, America or any part of the world, should do so with their spouse and children. This will help to keep the family together. Again, the male migrant should resist the temptation of making a new home in his country of residence so as to avoid its attendant social and psychological trauma which will ultimately emasculate him.

Keywords : Emasculation, Masculine Mystique, Migration, Patriarchy, Schema

Introduction

Migration and the issue of the African diaspora have drawn the attention of African critics and scholars in critical discourse and literary productions for decades. At one historical time or the other, Africans have engaged in intra and inter-migrations that have affected the people culturally, socially, economically and politically. This probably explains why in contemporary time, the issues of who a diasporan is and the pattern of migration become such a serious one that generates debates among African scholars both within and outside the shores of the continent. Basically, the term has been linked in particular to the descendants of the West and Central Africans who were enslaved and shipped to the Americas through the Atlantic slave trade from around 1500 A.D to 1800 A.D with their largest populations in Brazil, the United States, and Haiti. According to the African Union, African diaspora refers to the people of African descent living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union. The African Union further declares that it shall invite and encourage the full participation of the African diaspora as an integral part of the continent, in the building of the African Union and indeed, the development the African continent. From this perspective, diasporic African accounts not only for those enslaved and incapable of tracing their particular places of origin on the continent but also those who have found solace in Europe and America as a result of the challenges and failure of leadership in their home country.

A lot of factors are responsible for the mass movement of African from their places of birth to entirely new abode in Europe and America irrespective of the attendant hardship and humiliation some of them have to endure. In 2009, Human Development Report noted in Amie and Shreyasi (2011) that 'movement both within and between nations is predominantly driven by the search for better opportunities.' This is not to say that Africans migrating for the purpose of a better life do not nurse a hidden phobia in the face of uncertainty which awaits them in the white man's land. Despite the euphoria of an Eldorado, many simply resigned to fate under the assumption that a living dog is better than a dead lion. Migration and the euphoria which accompanies the decision have had adverse effects on so many Africans in terms of some ugly experiences which many cannot recount in their many years of sojourn abroad.

Conceptual Framework

Men have been negatively portrayed in critical discourse and creative literature. One of such negative descriptions is the claim by many feminist critics and writers that the subordinating condition women find themselves in the world was caused by men. Whenever oppression becomes the issue in gender discourse, men have always been indicted as aggressors, oppressors, privileged and the empowered. For instance, while commending women for being custodians of the cherished values of her society, Ogakason (2019) asserts that “women have been faced with challenges and misrepresentation in the society for ages”p.430. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Wollstonecraft argued that all women, irrespective of status and social hierarchy are oppressed both in paid employment and marriage (Dobie 2009:105).

To complicate his identity, man has been constructed as breadwinner, provider, father, strong, self-reliant, independent, rational, powerful, emotionless and aggressive within his socio-cultural milieu (Goldberg Herb 1976:86-97). This underscores the place of culture in the gender discourse in terms of role construction. Citing African society as an example, Maryam and Jegede (2019) emphasise the fact that “culture is central in gender discourse and more often than not, it is used to legalize and rationalize the way men and women are positioned...with each sex having associated roles”p.446. The man is therefore seen to belong to a masculine social group defined by an “ideology that made masculinity the gender norm against which both men and women were measured” (Kimmel and Messner xix). It must be noted that men’s numerous challenges and internal contradictions are glossed over because of feminists’ preoccupation with oppression of women by men to the extent that other male sexual dynamics become less obvious (Kilmartin, 2001:29-30, Pease, 2002:167).

Recent studies have however, revealed that among men are hierarchies in which they individually accomplish their masculinities according to their social status, economic and political power in the society. These are parameters set by the social environment to determine who is qualified to be categorized as real men. Tobalase (2012) posits that “anyone who meets these parameters is seen to be masculine while the male that falls short of these expectations is tagged feminine” p.123. Those who are upscale are men whose social, economic and political statuses remain the standard for which other men are categorised.

Such men occupy the masculinity hierarchy called hegemonic, a term coined by Antonio Gramsci, an Italian philosopher for the privileged and holders of power in the society (Kimmel 1994:120-125). Men who belong

to this rank are constructed to be lucky, with good jobs, educated, rational, intelligent, responsible husbands and caring fathers. These qualities in men do not only make them unique but command for them respect such that the male character is constructed to be superior to the female in all spheres (Connell 2005:829-859). Against this class of men are those dependent, incapacitated by the social system, impoverished by new economic order, imbalance in the distribution of resources, political power, post-colonialism and all forms of alienation in the society. The jobs these men do to earn a living are the type described as “menial, difficult and hazardous” (Adu and Mordi 2018:146). The inability to perform masculine roles constructed for them in history and creative writing as physically strong, caring husbands, providers and breadwinners renders them emasculated. These are the characters in the chosen texts that this study identified and analysed with the relevant theoretical tools.

This research employed psychoanalysis and masculinity as theoretical frameworks for the study. The two theories are known to be useful as tools for the analysis and interpretation of gender-related issues in literature. The theories are well-suited for the examination of portrayal of male emasculation and their literary representations in Nigerian drama.

Freudian psychoanalysis (Freud 1931) was deployed as a tool to examine ethical wrongdoing, guilt and the relationship between bottled up emotion or unconscious repressed aggressive feelings and violent outburst of identified characters. Masculinity as a theory on the other hand was used as a tool for the analysis of “ways of being and becoming a man in a given culture”(Haywood, C and Mac an Ghail 2003:157). The theory was employed for the in-depth analysis of traits, sex roles, gender-role schemas and masculine mystique in character portrayal, social construction and gender-power dilemma (Kimmel 2000a, Kimmel et al 2005, Kimmel and Messner 1995, Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2003, Connell 2005, O’Neil and Nadeau 1999) in the selected texts. The theories facilitated identity creation, literary representations of male characters and psychological dimensions of emasculation on the identified characters and the society.

James and Nadeau, (1999:98) in “Men’s Gender Role Conflict, Defence Mechanisms, and Self-Protective Defensive Strategies” defines emasculation as the “fear of losing masculine status and power in the eyes of others” (p.98). According to them, emasculation is one of the fears associated with gender-role schemas which can be experienced consciously and unconsciously and the capacity to ‘play a significant role in males’ interpersonal relationships with both men and women’ (p.96). James and Nadeau posit that “One of men’s

greatest fears is to be emasculated. To be emasculated means to be deprived of virility or procreative powers; to be castrated; to be deprived of masculine energy, vigor, or spirit; to be weakened; to be unnerved by others in terms of your masculine gender-role identity (pp.98-99).

Such men are seen in their society as failures, useless and lazy. For instance, Emecheta's male characters are said to be "irresponsible heads of families who are mostly insensitive to the needs of their wives and children," Taiwo (1984:19). This statement, true as it sounds, fails to consider social condition(s) that create these characters in those contexts. The question is what is the social construction of these male characters in terms of role performance and trait exhibition that make them insensitive and irresponsible?

No doubt, certain social conditions have created these men who are products of unrealized ambition and failed aspirations, as social lepers, failures and unlucky beings, the Igbo refer to as *agbala*.

Jeffrey (1995:75) says to be masculine is "a cultural construct and adult men need the opportunity to perform normatively appropriate male behaviours." As a social construct, therefore any denial of opportunity to perform the socially constructed roles, emasculates him. He becomes subordinated to the social group behaviour regarded as the standard. Such men see themselves as outcasts and social misfits not by any fault of theirs but the way opportunities are structured. Jeffrey refers to this as 'masculinity anxiety' which arises "when adult men know the script and wish to perform according to the directions but are denied the opportunity to act..(p.74).

Emasculation occurs in a verity of ways. For instance, it occurs as a result of the imbalance in human interactions, and exclusion from privileges enjoyed by the others in a social setting. In terms of exercise of power, exhibition of traits and performance of roles, standard has been set in all of those areas against which all men are measured and assessed. This standard actually defines individual's hierarchy in masculinity. The emasculated individual is made so because of certain inabilities or deprivation in the social system. By the set standard, the individual or group of individuals do not measure up. Emasculation crosses gender boundaries to include racial segregation and ethnic subordination. According to Kimmel (1995:42), Jewish men are perceived to be less masculine because they are characterized to be emotional, nurturing and caring. Any relationship among men in a given society that tends to create for others a complex, and a sense of inadequacy, surely will emasculate. Such tendencies arise often from intimidation and harassment by "men with the properly sanctioned educational credentials in our society" Brod (1985:6).

The heterosexual man provides grounds for the homosexual (gay) man to see himself as social misfit, and despised within a social setting where homosexuality is an aberration. Tim Edward (2005:54) says gay men are perceived as the wrong sort of men -rendered effeminate in all ramifications. Gay men are often castigated as the wrong sort of men: too promiscuous, too phallic, or too lacking in masculinity, somehow incompetent at, or simply effeminate.

Synopsis of *Sweet Revenge* by Irene Isoken Salami

Sota, Aisosa's husband gets a four-year study leave for a PhD in International Relations in England. The four years eventual turn to eight years during which, so many things have happened to him and his family back home in Benin. Married to Aisosa, (his Nigerian wife and a medical gynaecologist, back home), Sota's eight years sojourn in Britain get him entangled in another relationship with Cheryl, a Briton without the knowledge of his Nigerian wife. Again, Sota succeeds in keeping the secret from Cheryl about his marriage with his Nigerian woman. Sota's agreement with Aisosa when leaving Nigeria is "You stay back to take care of our children while I go in search of the Golden Fleece". He has since gotten a job and settled down comfortably in London inventing one lie or the other for not returning home.

Sota, however, receives a mail from his people to return home and contest as senator in his Federal Constituency. The privilege is given to him because of his political activism in diaspora as a member of the Movement for Democracy. So, when the Senatorial seat was zoned to his local government, his people called him to occupy it. This means he has to return home. When he breaks the news to his British wife, she rejects the idea initially, but with Regie's explanation that it is a clarion call, she agrees that Sota should go. However, she says Sota must come back to London few weeks to her delivery as she is carrying a seven-month pregnancy.

Back home, things have changed dramatically. A once beautiful Aisosa has become ugly and unattractive as a result of eight years of abandonment. The lawn is bushy and the children look unhealthy, dirty and lean. He complains about the food, the water and everything becomes nauseating to him. Aisosa, however, loses her patience, still furious for her abandonment for eight years and the fact that Sota returns without a pin as something to show for the eight years sojourn in Britain. She says, there is no way she could have looked attractive, beautiful and live in a palace with the paltry ten thousand naira (N10,000) monthly allowance with

his sister, his mother and their four grown up children. After all, he forces her to resign as consultant gynaecologist so as to take proper care of the children.

Sota complains that Aisosa is sweating like Christmas goat, her body has developed folds everywhere, “Your breasts are saggy and you’ve put on weight. Your body does not appeal to me at all.”p.23. It is after these words that Sota wants his wife in bed which she turns down. This signals more trouble and tension in the marriage so much so that Sota says he can no longer cope with her and will like to file a divorce. The election holds and Sota wins with a landslide victory courtesy of Aisosa’s mobilization of support from women who vow to compensate her for being a faithful and dutiful wife for eight years of her husband’s absence. She sends her and the children out of the house which Aisosa builds with the inheritance from her parents. All efforts by Nosa, his friend, to make him have a change of heart fall on deaf ears. Rather, he tells his friend he is going to bring Cheryl, his British wife to join him in Abuja, as Senator’s wife.

Aisosa moves to Abuja with Nosa and Ede his wife where she hopes to rebuild her life. After a while, she gets a well-paid job with eight years arrears to be paid to her for a research she conducted with the organization before she resigns. Nosa bounces back and now economically buoyant and beautiful. Cheryl’s relocation to Nigeria brings her face to face with Aisosa after about two years. The two women apologize to each other for being deceived by Sota. Cheryl promises to return to her country and put Sota behind her but asks that Aisosa will take her two and half year-old daughter and the ten million pound Sota deposits in her London account. Aisosa agrees to the idea of taking care of the baby, but counsels her to return the money to the Nigerian government. Back to London, Cheryl nominates Aisosa for an award for being a dutiful and faithful wife which she will collect in the United States of America.

However, Sota’s political career crumbles as he is recalled from his senatorial seat by the women delegates who he arrests and detains for three days. The bank also comes after him for the loan he takes for the land on which their Benin house is built. The house is taken from him. He loses all the positions and the seat in the Senate offered to his wife, Aisosa who becomes the Senate President and re-elected unopposed.

Sota’s life crumbles. He is down and out. He has no choice than to cringe before his wife, Aisosa who also rejects him. He loses his self-esteem, humiliated and his masculine essence belittled. He becomes a squatter in someone’s boys’ quarter as his life gradually grinds to an unfortunate halt.

Emasculation as Social Castration and Its Socio-Cultural Implications for the Male Migrant in *Sweet Revenge*

Irene Isoken-Salami's *Sweet Revenge* presents social and economic perspectives to the understanding of men in their different capacities as oppressed migrants and men of double personalities. The discourses in the play touch so much on the masculinity of the principal character, Sota and the social dimension to the enactment of his masculine traits and roles as a gendered being. His character portrayal as a man across two different climes and culture attest to the fluidity of masculinity, its plurality and its cultural definitions. Sota's world is divided between his manhood validation in Nigeria and the UK in terms of masculinity success and fulfilment. While in Nigeria, life goes on well for Sota Ojo. His sex role as a bread winner, responsible and caring father and good husband define his masculinity.

He is heterosexual, not polygamous, educated, masculine and not feminine. His marriage to Aisosa with four children can be described as successful within Benin socio-cultural setting because of her ability to bear children. Sota can be said not to be emasculated socio-culturally, economically and biologically. However, his migration to Britain and marriage to Cheryl, a Briton, marks the beginning of Sota's slide to social alienation that eventually emasculates him. For keeping his marriage to Aisosa back home a guarded secret from his British wife only postpones the evil day as the two women eventually know each other when duty calls to the Senate in Abuja. Although he attempts to consign Aisosa's memory to his past by pronouncing a verbal divorce, the two wives reconcile and unite to humiliate him. The double standard and deceit that characterise his marital relationship invalidate his bread winner, good father and caring husband sex roles which should validate his sense of manhood.

Sota loses his position in the Senate, loses his house in Benin and becomes an escapist father and an irresponsible husband. He becomes a social misfit that no one wants to associate with. Sosa and Segie, his friends keep safe distance from him having warned, counselled and attempted to put him back on his feet. On the social as well as political scales, Sota has been grounded, rendered effeminate and socially castrated. These are the social dynamics that reveal Sota's socio-cultural emasculation as a fallout of his migration to Britain in search of a higher degree.

It must be noted that Sota has been made as a thoroughbred African man, masculine in every respect of the word. He has been constructed socially as a man, culturally as a heterosexual Benin man before he got to

London. In London, however, he begins to acquire double identities especially with his marriage to Cheryl, a Briton who he deceives into the marriage because of the pressure of getting his stay in Britain. In his marriage back home with Aisosa, Sota knows that he is fully secured because he can file a divorce without losing anything but not with Cheryl who is protected by the British law. As a migrant, this consciousness defines his relationship with Cheryl while they lived in London and ultimately makes her the preferred wife when he eventually comes home to become a member of the senate. The rejection of Aisosa in favour of Cheryl is a confirmation of Sota's failure in the performance of his gender roles as a breadwinner and caring husband.

Gender-role socialization provides the basis for which an individual becomes what he associates his/her gender identity with. On this premise are established distinctive or sexist stereotypes and learned behaviour within a social system. These are femininity and masculinity coupled with the roles and traits that go with them. They are like scripts written for the individual male or female from infant to adulthood. For the man, he is born male but through socialization process, he becomes a man. What it takes to become a man indeed is coded in sexist values and beliefs referred to as masculine mystique. According to James and Nadeau (1999:93), "masculine mystique is a complex set of sexist values and beliefs that define optimal masculinity in society and in men's lives." Masculine mystique is a rigid stereotypical gender-role for men which they are expected to internalize from childhood to adulthood. It must be stated that this praxis is premised on different assumptions, temperaments and attitudes as to what "manhood" really means. To Pleck 1995 cited in James and Nadeau (1999:95), masculine mystique is an ideology within the framework of masculinity study which implies that:

- (a) men are superior to women and masculinity is superior to femininity.
- (b) power, control, competition and dominance are essential to prove one's masculinity,
- (c) emotions, feelings, vulnerability, and intimacy are to be avoided because they are considered feminine and weak and
- (d) career successes and heterosexual potency are measure of one's masculinity.

The masculine gender-role socialization above gives a possible interpretation to Sota's dysfunctional behaviour that makes him victim of emasculation in *Sweet Revenge*. Again, radical psychoanalysts' perspective to Freudian "social function of sexual repression and creation of exploitation and authoritarian

social order” (p.95), also calls for an investigation into Sota’s childhood emotional dynamics. Some of these childhood emotional dynamics are largely unconscious and instinctual.

For instance, it is Sota’s belief in “career successes and heterosexual potency” as measure of one’s masculinity that makes him travel to Britain to acquire a PhD in International Relations without taking his wife and children along. When he returns to complain bitterly about the deplorable state of things at home; the children’s haggard looks and the wife’s ugliness and unfashionable appearance, Aisosa reminds him “After all, some of your colleagues who value spousal relationship left with their wives and children”(p.26).

In masculine mystique, “men are superior to women and masculinity is superior to femininity” and that is the reason Sota shouts her down when she says his eight years absence reduce her to a father, mother, doctor, tailor, nurse and all others. He retorts:

Sota: Stop that Aisosa, you drive me crazy. You are an absolute failure. You have failed as a wife; you have failed too as a mother. You cannot even meet my sexual needs. Sexually, you are dumb, Of what use are you as a wife? (pp.26-27).

Emasculation more often than not results from reaction to men’s domination. Any social setting where men predominate, and oppression or deprivation defines gender relationship, the men holding sway in such social setting are vulnerable to emasculation of one form or the other because of the feminist’s sentiment that will eventually turn the table against them.

To most critics, especially feminists and profeminists, a man’s life is a function of the consequences of previous choices he made. This is ‘essential psychoanalysis’ employed by De Beauvoir to the question of gender in the *Second Sex*, (Connell 1994:30). Critically examined, Sota’s masculine gender-role socialization dictates to him that nothing is morally wrong with keeping two wives separately, one in Nigeria and the other in Britain – for six years, afterall, heterosexual potency is a measure of one’s masculinity. No wonder, when Cheryl, his British wife finds out he is already married to Aisosa with four kids, he dismisses her with impunity:

Sota: I am an African. My father married six wives. Every father prays for his child to perform better than himself. Polygamy is no crime in Africa, Cheryl.(p.57).

This is palpable sign of a man losing grips of his masculine mystique even as he struggles to reclaim it. Sota's outburst here can be likened to 'Freudian slip' which gives a hint to his childhood emotional dynamics which of course compels a psychoanalysis of his father. This becomes necessary because, if Sota is revealing to Cheryl his polygamous instinctual inheritance, six years after their marriage, then it stands to reason that for the most part of their stay in London and Abuja, he has repressed this desire (bizarre in British context) to the unconscious Psyche. Sota's emotional dynamics is a product of his father's patriarchal authoritarian marriage which provides a framework for him to explain his action. Cheryl reminds him in anger:

Cheryl: Shut up criminal. You have no conscience Sota. You have the guts to celebrate your evil and glory in it? I wish you well Mr. Senator. The next time you step into Britain, you will spend the rest of your life in jail (p.57).

Finally, his masculine mystique teaches him that emotions, feelings, vulnerability and intimacy are to be avoided because they are considered feminine and weak. It must be stated here that some of these gender-role socialization expressed in the masculine mystique prepare the ground for Sota's eventual emasculation. First, it explains his alienation from his mother, his conscienceless and disdainful treatment of his wife, Aisosa and the eventual divorce, his loss of ten million pound and collapsed second marriage, and finally his eventual humiliation. Rather than 'it-serves-him-right' disposition, Sota's situation presents a pitiable sight of a castrated, humiliated and demeaned character, squeezed and waiting to be discarded.

Emasculation and Sota's Childhood Emotional and Unconscious Dynamics

Childhood emotional dynamics points to the direction of child's upbringing and the social responsibilities, attitude and temperament inherited from parents in the process of rearing them to become men. Apart from this masculine mystique, Sota must have inherited his heartlessness, lack of feelings and emotions from his father. It goes to show that a boy child raised in a loveless environment by a dominating father will probably grow to dominate other women. A dominant and heartless husband is highly vulnerable to the emasculation of those he dominates who might seek ways of putting him in check by financially, politically and psychologically incapacitating him.

Many people who have had encounter with Sota have either concluded that, he has no conscience or out of his mind. For instance, his friend Sosa reminds him about the way he abandoned his wife in Nigeria to marry a white woman. He says:

Sosa:While you were away this woman kept herself for you ... You come back and she labours for you to win an election and in appreciation you asked her to leave your house because she does not befit your new position? Sota, remember this woman was a consultant gynaecology when you asked her to resign her job... That is cruel. Very, very cruel(p.20)

In response, Sota says “I cannot change my mind. It is made up”(p.20).

Sosa could not comprehend his friend’s dead feeling when he reminds him that Aisosa labours to build the house in Benin in “your name with the money she inherited from her parents” (p.21). He replies rather carelessly, “She has not done anything extra – ordinary” p.22. He promises to go to London for two weeks to bring Cheryl to Nigeria having divorced Aisosa verbally. His friend finds it difficult to believe as he says “Sota, don’t you have conscience? Do you have no regard for God and His judgment?” (p.22).

What Sota is going through is psychological and it predisposes him to emasculation and social humiliation. For instance, his shabby treatment and arrest of the women delegates sent to him in Abuja by the women politicians from his constituency is the reason for recalling him as a senator. The heartless and deceitful manner he treats Cheryl in Nigeria makes her call it quits with him and in the process returns to the federal government coffer, the ten million pound he stashes into her foreign account. This has a lot to do with his personality and it is one of the reasons for his emasculation. This much psychoanalysis has been able to reveal beyond the way the author has presented the character. After all, Connell says “psychoanalysis required a strenuous balancing of concern for the person and critique of what the person says – an affectionate and curious scepticism balanced by a sense of the pain and poetry of life?”(p.16).

The pain and pressure he undergoes to meet up his masculine mystique make him more vulnerable to emasculation. In most cases, he does not meet up. All the hypermasculine exhibition in his relationship with his wife and other men come back to him as a form of negative reaction that make his emasculation inevitable.

Emasculation and Restrictive Emotionality as Fallouts of Migration in *Sweet Revenge*

Restrictive emotionality is a psychic process where emotions and feelings are repressed and consigned to the unconscious state of the mind. As a man, his masculine orientation instructs him not to express emotion, therefore bottled up emotion are left beneath the conscious state. This accounts for some heartless decisions taken by Sota Ojo that look so unbelievable and bizarre to his friends. For instance, when he returns from Britain, he does not remember to buy a pair socks or an handkerchief for any of his four children or his wife. Rather, he wants to end a marriage Aisosa has sustained for eight years with her sweat and perseverance. He says with a note of finality "Enough of that, I am sick and tired of you, Aisosa. For your information I am filing a divorce"(p.27).

Even when his wife persuades him to have a rethink because of the children, Sota no longer feels any compassion or emotional commitment to the marriage.Sota's handling of the divorce issue with Aisosa is suggestive of a man with a heart of stone lacking in filial love and care for the children. His mind is made up. In fact, he tells Aisosa to keep the children."I have had enough. You can keep the children; find them another father if you wish. Please stay out of my path"(p.27).

When Madam Power Power, one of the delegates from Sota's constituency sends to him for the traditional payback for supporting and voting for him, and reminds him of his commitment to the women wing of the party, he dismisses them with a wave of the hand. In fact, he pretends not to know any of them. He eventually arrests and detains them till the next day for trespassing on his privacy. To Sota, showing gratitude is being emotional and sentimental, none of which he wants to express. This personality development turns out as one of the reasons for his emasculation.

For instance, these women from his constituency, whom he disparages, pull the rug off his feet by recalling him from the senate. Again, after his life has crumbled, Sota comes back to Aisosaasking for forgiveness, but his heartlessness of the past does not give room for any consideration. He pleads, "Sosa if you don't take me in, I will lose my sanity." (p.83).

Unfortunately, all of these heighten his emasculation because he remains alienated from those with whom to share his burden, those who should pick him from the gutter, those bastions of hope who ought to restore to him his dignity and salvage his manhood.

Migration and the Psychology of Rejection in *Sweet Revenge*

Revenge is usually a reprisal or a retaliation for the wrong done someone in the past. In *Sweet Revenge*, it connotes action taken from which pleasure is derived. This connotation is given vent to by the playwright's titling of the play. For the one who is hurt, payback time is pleasurable or sweet according to the playwright.

Sota's emasculation is a fallout of his heartless and disparaging treatment which he has meted out to the people he encounters. For instance, the painful deceit of Cheryl about his marriage to Aisosa in Nigeria becomes so unbearable for her that she decides to return to her country leaving their two and half year-old baby behind with Aisosa. Hurtful experience can force the victim to activate a revenge to get back at the stressor. For instance, when Cheryl realises that Aisosa is Sota's Nigerian wife, she becomes so hurt and emotionally traumatised "Oh my God! What? You mean Aisosa is Oga's wife? Oga had a wife before me?"(p.39)

For her hurt, Cheryl could not come to the knowledge of forgiveness because it is not only psychological but emotional. Therefore when the opportunity presents itself for her to take a pound of flesh, she does not hesitate. First, she makes up her mind to reconcile with Aisosa by apologising that if she had known Sota had a wife in Nigeria she would not have married him. Secondly, she decides to blurt everything that will remind her of Sota including their two year-old daughter. Thirdly, Cheryl decides to wreck him economically. All his life savings, looted from the nation's treasury, is returned to the Federal Government rendering him totally impoverished. Cheryl is not prepared to allow Sota enjoy the loot of ten million pounds in her custody. Not even Aisosa is interested in the money. The two women decide to return it to government coffer to get back at him for molesting them. Cheryl tells Aisosa:

Cheryl: I have two and a half year old daughter, Rieme, I would appreciate if you can take care of her for me. I want to move ahead with my life without any memory of Sota and his deceit. He has deposited ten million pounds in my London account which he claims he got from an oil contract and was paid just two weeks ago. (p.53).

Aisosa replies in a tone that betrays sweet revenge:

Aisosa: There you go. Cheryl, do us a good favour, return the money to the Nigerian government (p.54).

Aisosa misses no moment when Sota's payback time comes for all the hurts and spiteful treatments he subjects her to when he returns to Nigeria after waiting for eight years. When he begs Aisosa that she may take him back, she replies "I am sorry Sota, it won't work. I can see you haven't changed either. You are here out of necessity. I have my life well organised, it's not going to be easy to bring you in just like that"(p.82).

Except for a promise of financial support, Aisosa finds it difficult to forgive him. According to her, you cannot pull back the hand of the clock, no matter how hard you try. To both Cheryl and Aisosa, the two women hurt by Sota's heartless and disparaging treatment, revenge becomes a psychotherapy. Again, since emasculation is a reaction to masculine domination and oppression here, the two women find revenge handy as a basis to castrate their stressor.

Sota's quest for higher degree and greener pasture makes him a victim of socio-political and economic emasculation. Masculinity is validated at all the hierarchical levels by both economic and political strength of the man. To a man, the loss of these two powers to a woman presupposes loss of bread winner and provider roles in the relationship. This is a serious challenge to his masculinity. If the wife is economically more empowered than the husband, that economic power becomes a weapon of emasculation of the man. In the same vein, man's controlling power validates as always his masculinity in the social environment, and with power comes economic strength. Therefore, if the man loses power, he loses control in the process and becomes vulnerable to emasculation.

This reality finds relevance with Aisosa's empowerment economically and politically. When Sota prepares to go to Britain, he instructs Aisosa to quit her well-paid job as a gynaecologist so as to have time to care for the four children. However, when he comes back, Aisosa has become pauperised so much so that even Sota says she stinks and that is one of the reasons he sends her to the street with her children. Aisosa's status changes as she gets a good job with good pay and eight years arrears, having been involved in a project in Benin before her husband forces her to resign. She becomes so empowered that she can afford good life for herself and the children. The table has turned now and the breadwinner vacuum is no more. She can afford to put Sota behind her as a forgotten history because she is economically independent.

Her economic power becomes her weapon of revenge and emasculation of Sota, whose life comes tumbling down. Aisosa rises steadily on the ladder of success and her effort is crowned with an award in the United States of America, courtesy of Cheryl who nominates her. With this economic strength, there is a reversal of the bread winner and provider roles between Sota and his abandoned wife. Her economic strength no doubt subjects Sota to social and economic emasculation. As a two times senator, Aisosa tells Sota to calculate his daily expenses for a year for her to pay so that he does not come back to disturb her. She says:

Aisosa: You know what Sota? Add up your monthly expenses, multiply it by twelve and I will write a cheque for you right away.(p.81).

With economic empowerment also comes political empowerment. The position from which Sota is recalled has been offered to Aisosa by the women politicians at no cost. In fact, for her, the women offer her the senate seat as compensation for her faithfulness and virtue while her husband stayed away in Britain. Madam Power Powercomes with a message from the women for her to vie for the vacant senatorial seat vacated by her estranged husband. With economic and political power coupled with educational qualification, as a Medical Doctor, Aisosa possesses needed weapons of emasculation. New status is conferred on her, confirmed by Nosa, who tells Sota, his friend: “she has several houses now, moreover, she has forgotten about you and the house. She doesn’t even remember that she was once married to someone like you”(p.74).

One of the reasons for Sota’s emasculation and psychological trauma is mother wound. Mother wound is an extension of Freudian’s Oedipal complex of male detachment from the mother to desire his father for fear of castration. This detachment by the boy child makes him to repudiate every emotion learned from the mother in order to establish his own manhood. “In societies where men do little parenting, both young boys and girls have a primary identification with their mother” (Kimmel and Kaufman 1994: 270-271). The mother’s orientation is believed to have the capacity to feminize the boy child. This is otherwise known as mother wound, the tendency for the boy to want to renounce the emotional nurturance imbibed from the mother in the process of establishing his own identity and individuality. “It is a psychic process in the boy’s struggles to renounce identification with the mother and the nurturing she represents, and embrace identification with father” (p. 270).

This explains Sota's distance and refusal to see his mum after he breaks with his wife. While in London, Aisosa takes up his mother's upkeep. His daughter, Ota attests to this: "His mother rather stays here with us than go to him. Can't you see how close both of you are in spite of the fact that you are her daughter-in-law" (p.64).

As a matter of fact, throughout his state in the Senate, he never associates with his mother because he has not been able to overcome his 'mother wound' that requires "healing". This explains why he accuses his mother of conniving with Aisosa, his wife, to persecute him. His friend, Regie suggests he should take some money, renovate the house and bring in his mother to cook for him, but he laughs "My mother? My mother and Aisosa are best of friends. Since Aisosa left, the only time I saw my mother was when I was recalled, and all she said was that I deserved what I got. She spends most of her time with Aisosa(p.75). This is one of the effects of emasculation engendered by psychological fear arising from threat to one's masculinity which can be likened to castration anxiety.

Every man has some elements of femininity in him which he represses and allows to be expressed in the secret. Otherwise called *anima*, it is the life force within an individual manifested in a man's fear of being feminine, or being called weak, therefore repressed. "In the male, it is composed of the male elements in the self" while in the female it is composed of the female elements of the self (*animus*) (Dobie 2009:71). So, a man has both the masculine and feminine elements of the self which he represses to the private sphere. Sota fights this trait or element in his personality so much so that it eventually leads to his humiliation in the National Assembly. When he receives the clarion call to contest as a senator, Regie and Cheryl advocate that he should project the interest of women. He rejects this counsel in order not to be called 'woman wrapper' (p.12).

It is the fear of the expression of his *anima* that makes him arrogantly refuse to attend to the women party delegates from his Senatorial district. Instead of being hospitable, he arrests and detains them. The women write him a letter demanding an apology for the ignoble way they have been treated. This he ignores to his peril anyway, because the women pull the rug from under his feet by recalling him from the senate. The vacant seat is offered to Aisosa, his estranged wife, on a platter of gold. The women clip his wings, render him effeminate, cowed and humiliated. He cries blue murder "My brother, I was victimized, set up by some women here. They connived with Aisosa and pulled the carpet from under my feet" (p.73),

Sota's consciousness of and bid to repress his feminine trait dictate some of his actions with the women that ruin his political career. The *anima* in him remains the personality he refuses to reckon with which helps his emasculation and the collapse of his masculine defence. For instance, he reacts violently when his friend, Regie advises him to come to Abuja so that they can all apologise to Aisosa, his wife for the purpose of their reunion. He sees this as a sign of weakness or an expression of his femininity. He rejects it immediately "Will you get out of my house? What do you mean? You mean I should go to beg a woman to accept me back?(p.76).

This resentment only ends up deepening his humiliation because by the time he finally falls, it is beyond redemption. Sota who vows never to beg Aisosa, eventually does so crawling with cap in hand. (*Sota goes on his knees and pleads with her*) ...(p.81) Compared to his former boisterous, super-masculine status, the new Sota on his knees, is a demeaned man whose manhood is hopelessly molested and vilified. Like a castrated male animal, his manhood has lost touch with reality and the essence of life, leading shamefully to dysfunctional behaviour.

Sota's experience with rejection creates emotional trauma that forces him on his knees before his wife who he abandons for a Briton. Sota is rejected by everyone. Friends abandon him, his wives quit the relationship, and his children do not want to see him. Rejection is one of the psychological effects of emasculation. For Sota, as he moves from one person to another in search of solace and succour so is he rejected. He battles the emotional trauma resulting from such rejection by trying to reinvent his restrictive emotionality traits to no avail. An attempt not to be emotional, Sota later finds out, is to bottle up some pressure in the unconscious psyche and this usually leads to some dysfunctional behaviour. When his friend tells him to plead with his wife so as to pick the pieces of his life, he says:

Sota: Well, I am not prepared to crawl to anyone simply because I need support (p.76).

Sota fights a terrible battle with self and this psychological condition creates paranoid jealousy as he accuses Nosa of illicit affair with his wife. Nosa sees Sota's emotional collapse early before his total emasculation when he advises him to seek help. Nosa insists "Sota, you need help. Seek for it fast" (p76). Rather than seek help, Sota continues to battle the inner man who refuses to bow to the reality of the moment. This battle begins to take its tolls on his emotion and occasionally manifests in some unreasonable outburst. For

instance, Regie and Nosa suggest a quick reconciliation move between Sota and Aisosa which must be initiated by him, but his inner man, his masculine essence, refuses to bow. He says “You can go to hell for all I care. Please keep out of my life. (*returns to his seat*) I will rather die than accept assistance from Aisosa.”(p.76).

Sota’s refusal makes his marriage a casualty of emasculation because when he eventually convinces himself to go to Aisosa, it has become too late to salvage the eight-year marriage blessed with four children. Eventually, there is no divorce because neither Cheryl nor Aisosa files a formal divorce. What can be said to be the immediate casualties of Sota’s emasculation in the relationships are “collapsed marriages.”

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Migration, no matter how desirous, usually come with its complications especially for couples who are already married before such critical step is taken. No doubt, the male migrant, is forced by differences in culture and enabling laws to acquire double personalities which ultimately alter his status as a thoroughbred African man. Again, as a result of his social construction as a man in the culture where he grows to learn masculinity, first as a heterosexual man as against gay, and secondly, as a bread winner whose masculinity is defined by a masculine mystique that makes him superior to a woman, anything that alters this equilibrium will definitely emasculate him.

The male migrant also becomes a victim of emasculation because of certain socio-cultural conditions that put him under intense pressure of meeting up with his social construction. Sota, for instance, abandons his Nigerian wife for British-born Cheryl all in the name of changing his status as illegal migrant to becoming a citizen. From the analysis above it is also obvious that survival instinct will make a patriarchal African man under pressure to hide his identity by becoming profeminist. Under this condition, he has no choice than to lick his psychological wound in secret as an emasculated man. Where migration is not well planned and agreed upon by couples, its negative effects on marriages can only be imagined. As a matter of fact, the male becomes vulnerable to psychological challenges such as humiliation and suicide. The migrant is beset with double yoke – the problem at the home front and the challenges in the country of residence. From Sota’s experience, migration, no doubt, creates social fault lines in marriage with resultant negative effects such as alcoholism, drug abuse, diminishing self- esteem, broken home among others.

It is, therefore, recommended that male migrants from Africa to Europe, America or any part of the world, should do so with their spouses and children. This will help to keep the family together. Again, the male migrant should resist the temptation of making a new home in his country of residence so as to avoid its attendant social and psychological trauma which ultimately emasculate him.

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